

Welcome to Save the Scenic Santa Ritas!

Save the Scenic Santa Ritas is a non-profit organization working to protect the Santa Rita and Patagonia Mountains from environmental degradation caused by mining and mineral exploration activities. Our current activities focus on the proposed Rosemont Copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains.

September 2014: For the latest information regarding the proposed Rosemont mine and the recent acquisition by Hudbay Minerals, please see www.rosemontminetruth.com . For links to recent news articles, see our [news page](#)

SPECIAL REPORT: Heavy Rains Produce Toxic Acid Runoff from Old Mines in Patagonia Mtns.

[Press release, June 23, 2014](#)

HudBay's acquisition changes nothing – Rosemont is still a bad project

(TUCSON, Ariz.) Today's announcement that Augusta Resource Corporation has accepted Toronto-based Hudbay Minerals' hostile takeover bid does nothing to change the simple facts that the proposed massive Rosemont open pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson would inflict devastating impacts on southern Arizona's environment and economy and still faces daunting regulatory challenges.

"The proposed Rosemont Mine will always be a bad project no matter who owns it," said SSSR president Gayle Hartmann. "The massive open pit mine threatens southern Arizona's drinking water, air quality, wildlife and mountains. We will continue to oppose this terrible proposal until it is defeated."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has stated that the massive open-pit mine that would destroy more than 3,000 acres of Coronado National Forest would result in ‘substantial and unacceptable impact’ to water supplies of ‘national importance’ and that proposed mitigation measures are ‘scientifically flawed’ and ‘grossly inadequate.’

Today’s news that Augusta accepted the bid also exposes the company’s repeated promises that it was “committed” to the region as nothing more than a deceptive public relations campaign trying to convince southern Arizonans that the Rosemont Mine was somehow essential to the future of southern Arizona’s economy.

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” said Dr. Tom Purdon, a Green Valley physician and SSSR board member. “And the truth is something both Augusta and its Rosemont Copper subsidiary have been playing fast and loose with since Day One. There are some places that mines don’t belong because the harm that would be caused outweighs any potential benefits, and the Santa Rita Mountains are one of those places. The proposed Rosemont Mine will inflict irreparable damage that will destroy one of the most important watersheds in Arizona and threaten the health of area residents until long after the mine is closed.

HudBay now assumes the regulatory burden of getting the project approved which, given recent developments, is far from certain. Major regulatory hurdles remain, including:

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is inadequate and may have to be revised or supplemented. Not only does the FEIS for the proposed mine present significant new information that must be put out for another round of public comment but it is missing information on impacts of the mine to private well owners, impacts of displaced recreation, invasive species, impacts to migratory birds from the toxic pit lake, revegetation, and many more potential economic and environmental effects. In addition, its identification and analysis of the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures is seriously flawed. While the Forest Service has rejected a number of specific objections filed by Arizona citizens and local governments, earlier this month the Regional Forester directed the Coronado National Forest Supervisor to consider either revising or supplementing the FEIS in light of new information and following the completion of a new round of consultation under the Endangered Species Act.

Rosemont air pollution permit challenged in court. A lawsuit has been filed in Maricopa County (AZ) Superior Court seeking to overturn the state’s illegal decision to issue an air pollution permit for the Rosemont mine. The suit alleges that the modeling information Rosemont provided the state was based on data that was manipulated in a misleading attempt to show that the mine operations would comply with air quality standards.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Service reinstate Endangered Species Act consultations. The recent photograph of an ocelot near the proposed Rosemont copper mine site, combined with new information on the impacts to water supplies on which other endangered species depend, has triggered a new round of formal Endangered Species Act consultations between the two federal agencies. New information about the proposed mine's potential depletion of water resources on the federally-owned Las Cienegas National Conservation Area located in the valley immediately east of the Santa Rita Mountains indicate that the project impacts on water-based endangered species is much more serious than previously anticipated.

The US Army Corps of Engineers deems the plan to mitigate the Rosemont Mine's damage to vital watershed inadequate, thus jeopardizing the essential Sec. 404 permit. The Army Corps notified Rosemont last month that its most recent mitigation plan in its application for a Clean Water Act permit fails to fully compensate for damage the proposed mine would cause to springs, washes and wetlands. The mine cannot be built without the 404 permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended denial of the Rosemont Sec. 404 Clean Water Act permit. In a November letter sent to the Army Corps, the EPA states that the proposed wetlands mitigation plan to compensate for the loss of jurisdictional waters of the United States is "insufficient to avoid 'significant degradation' of the aquatic ecosystem." The EPA stated "the proposed mitigation is grossly inadequate to compensate for the mine's impact."

It is important to note that ultimately EPA has veto authority over this permit.

Federal, State, and County jurisdictions object to water quality certification for the Rosemont project. Pima County, the EPA, the Army Corps and the Arizona Department of Game and Fish have all raised serious concerns regarding a critical state water quality protection certification that is needed before construction can begin. The state certification must be issued before the Army Corps can approve the 404 permit and construction can begin on the mine.

The proposed Rosemont Mine will significantly impact the water resources of a congressionally-established National Conservation Area. The BLM-managed Las Cienegas National Conservation Area lies in the valley directly east of Rosemont's proposed mile-wide, half-mile deep open-pit copper mine. The 45,000-acre conservation area was protected by Congress in part to protect the northerly-flowing Cienega Creek that bisects the site. The Final

Environmental Impact Statement states the mine is likely to have negative impacts on Cienega Creek by lowering the groundwater table and reducing the surface flows on important tributaries, including Empire Gulch and Davidson Canyon. Two streams flowing from the Santa Rita Mountains into the conservation area are listed as Outstanding Arizona Waters and are legally protected from any degradation.

Key state groundwater pollution permit taken to court. SSSR filed a lawsuit challenging the issuance of the Aquifer Protection Permit (APP), a key state water permit needed to begin construction of the mine. The project would be constructed in a watershed that provides recharge to a primary drinking water aquifer for a community of almost 1 million. The suit alleges, among other things, that the state illegally issued the permit without taking into account the mine's impact on surface waters. A decision is expected later this summer.

The proposed mine's devastating impacts to the land and water has generated widespread and determined opposition to the project. Opponents include:

Native American Communities -- The Tohono O'odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe, the tribal governments in the vicinity of the proposed mine, stated in a jointly authored column published in the local paper, that "this mine will destroy our sacred lands known as Ce:wi Duag by the Tohono O'odham and Heweli Sewa Kawi by the Pascua Yaqui that link our ancestors to our future generations."

Local governments -- The City of Tucson, Pima County, Santa Cruz County, Town of Patagonia, and Green Valley Community Coordinating Council have all passed resolutions against the project. Opposition remains steadfast in spite of Rosemont's failed attempts to influence local elections by backing candidates seeking to defeat elected officials and candidates that oppose the mine.

National and Arizona conservation organizations -- In January, a dozen Arizona and national environmental groups sent a joint letter to elected officials requesting that they oppose the construction of the proposed mine. The "short-sighted mining proposal, [is] a project that would primarily enrich a handful of foreign investors at the expense of those of us whose lives and livelihoods would be jeopardized by the mine's depletion of precious groundwater supplies and its pervasive round-the-clock water, air, noise, and light pollution," the letter stated.

Check out the below report from March, 2014:

Latest News



County takes 90 days to review Rosemont Mine mitigation fee proposal

http://azstarnet.com/news/science/environment/county-takes-days-to-review-rosemont-mine-mitigation-fee-proposal/article_608c72b5-2c6f-516a-b798-6942efafa58f.html

Augusta ignores Army Corps concerns and continues to tell investors 404 Clean Water Act permit will be issued by June 30

<http://www.rosemontminetruth.com/?p=3042>

Hudbay extends hostile bid for Rosemont developer

http://azstarnet.com/business/local/hudbay-extends-hostile-bid-for-rosemont-developer/article_db1b4dd5-f91c-5093-b8d8-0290db147079.html

How you can get involved

This mine is still **FAR FROM A DONE DEAL!** [Find out what you can do to help](#) or learn about events where you can [volunteer](#)

at our information table.

What's new?

To make sure you get the most up-to-date news about the proposed mine and what we're doing to stop it, click on the buttons to the right to "Join our email alert list" or "like" us on Facebook.

March 2014

NEPA update: What's Next in the Forest Service's Review Process for the Rosemont Mine?

The Coronado National Forest published the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the proposed Rosemont Mine [online](#) in December 2013. The objection period closed on February 14, 2014, and we are waiting to hear the Forest Service respond to the 200+ page objection we filed. [\(Read more...\)](#)

SSSR Press Release December 13, 2013

Five facts to keep in mind about the Rosemont Mine FEIS and Record of Decision

Forest Service analysis incomplete

(TUCSON, ARIZ.) The Coronado National Forest has announced the publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Draft Record of Decision for the proposed Rosemont open pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson. A pre-publication version of the FEIS was posted on the [Forest's website](#) last week.□□

In the face of the [PR spin that inevitably emanates from Rosemont](#) and its parent company, Augusta Resource Corporation, it is important to keep these five key facts in mind:

1. Rosemont is a long way from receiving final approval – The release of the FEIS and draft Record of Decision does not mean the Rosemont mine is going to be approved. On the contrary, it still has a long way to go. Those who submitted written comments on the Draft EIS can raise objections to the FEIS and Draft ROD. The Forest Service must address these comments in writing. Additionally, Rosemont must receive a Clean Water Act permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers to deposit potentially toxic mine waste in environmentally sensitive areas where they could threaten southern Arizona water supplies. EPA's recommendation to the Corps that Rosemont's proposed permit not be issued is significant because the EPA has veto authority over this permit. Additionally, key state groundwater and air quality permits are under appeal. Finally, even if the Forest Service approves the project, mine opponents have the option of challenging that decision in federal court.□

2. The FEIS is incomplete - By the Forest Service's [own admission](#) , there are numerous significant problems with the Rosemont proposal that were raised by local, state and other federal agencies. These have not been resolved and fully addressed in the FEIS.□

3. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Says Rosemont 's Water Protection Plan is "Grossly Inadequate" – After conducting a comprehensive and thorough review of Rosemont's proposed water pollution mitigation plan, the EPA informed the US Army Corps of Engineers, in a [November 7 letter](#) , that Rosemont's proposed plan is "grossly inadequate" and "does not comply" with Clean Water Act Guidelines. EPA concluded that the Rosemont mine project "should not be permitted as proposed."□

4. Tribal Nations Are Opposed to Rosemont - None of the 12 tribal nations and communities that were included in the FEIS consultation signed the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement. To quote Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. of the Tohono O'odham Nation in a [letter](#) sent to the Coronado National Forest, the Rosemont Mine will "irrevocably alter the cultural landscape of Ce:wi Duag (Santa Rita Mountains)."□

5. Rosemont will permanently destroy a significant portion of the Santa Rita Mountains and will dump mine waste in a critical southern Arizona watershed. Regardless of what Rosemont says about it being a 21st Century mine, it will be an old-school open pit mine that will blast a mile-wide, half-mile deep hole in the Santa Rita Mountains and bury several thousand acres of National Forests under a billion tons of potentially toxic mine wastes. In the process, it will

forever destroy an irreplaceable environmental, recreational and cultural treasure while jeopardizing southern Arizona's water supplies, wildlife and economy.

Press Release: November 20, 2013

EPA Recommends Against Federal Water Permit for Rosemont Mine
Mine would cause "substantial and unacceptable impact" to southern Arizona water supplies

(TUCSON, Ariz.) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has dealt a dramatic and potentially devastating blow to Augusta Resource Corporation's proposal to build the Rosemont mine, a massive open-pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains just south of Tucson.

In a [Nov. 7 letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) , the EPA recommended that the proposed Rosemont copper mine should not receive a permit that would allow the company to dump potentially toxic mine wastes into area waterways.

After completing a comprehensive and detailed analysis, EPA concluded that Rosemont's proposals to mitigate the mine's severe and permanent damage to area water supplies are "scientifically flawed" and "grossly inadequate," and advised the Corps of Engineers that the project "should not be permitted as proposed."

The EPA's recommendation to deny Rosemont's permit application is a potentially devastating blow to the mining project because EPA has veto authority over the permit, which would be issued by the Corps of Engineers only if the proposed mine meets Clean Water Act standards. The permit is required before construction could begin on the mile-wide, half-mile deep open pit mine.

EPA was highly critical of all three components of Rosemont's mitigation proposal, undermining the company's high-profile attempts to claim that the mine will comply with environmental standards. In particular, EPA said that it agreed with the Corps of Engineers that two of the three sites Rosemont was proposing to acquire (Sonoita Creek Ranch and Mulberry Canyon) "would not provide appropriate compensatory mitigation for impacts to waters from the

Rosemont Mine project."

With respect to the third proposed Rosemont mitigation acquisition (water rights and land below Pantano Dam), the EPA indicated that it might have some mitigation value for a much smaller project ("e.g., flood control or highway project") but "is inadequate compensation for impacts proposed to be permitted at Rosemont Mine."

EPA's recommendation to deny the Clean Water Act permits comes at an inopportune time for Augusta Resource, Rosemont Copper's parent company. Its stock is hovering at a 52-week low and the company reported less than \$750,000 in cash reserves as of Sept. 30, according to regulatory filings released last week.

Augusta's cash crisis raises serious questions as to whether Augusta will have the financial capacity to secure technical expertise to address EPA's latest criticisms of the crucial Clean Water Act permit.

The full EPA letter and analysis can be downloaded at:

www.scenicsantaritas.org/20131107_EPA_Letter.pdf

Press Release: October 31, 2013

“Cyanide Beach” documentary wins “Best Education Film” at Yosemite International Film Festival

InvestigativeMEDIA is pleased to announce that its documentary film “Cyanide Beach” has been named “Best Education Film” in the 2013 Yosemite International Film Festival. The Yosemite festival awards recognition for some of the world's finest and most visionary independent films made by many of the leading contemporary artists and creative minds working in cinema and screenwriting today.

“Cyanide Beach” is InvestigativeMEDIA’s first documentary film. The video tells the story of how the same Canadian businessman who are seeking state and federal permits to construct a massive open pit copper mine in Santa Rita Mountains on the Coronado National Forest south of Tucson, Arizona operated a now abandoned gold mine in Sardinia, Italy.

InvestigativeMEDIA’s editor John Dougherty and photographer and videographer Liz Allen traveled to Sardinia in May 2011 to investigate what happened at the shuttered gold mine near the farming village of Furtei.

The 27-minute film was shot almost entirely with a hand-held Sony Handycam digital camera. The documentary was screened at theaters and private showings throughout southern Arizona in the fall of 2012 and was broadcast twice on a Tucson television station. The film was also screened last April in Berkeley, Calif. and in Washington, D.C.

“Cyanide Beach” was released on Youtube last December and has nearly 7,000 views, including many from Romania, where the film is being used to help stop development of a major gold mine by another Canadian company.

Watch [Cyanide Beach](#) , an explosive documentary from award-winning investigative journalist, John Dougherty. The film chronicles the deceptive business tactics of top executives at Augusta Resource Corporation - owner of Rosemont Copper - when they owned and operated an open-pit gold mine in Sardinia Italy from 2003-07. You’ll see their trail of unpaid vendors, a misspent government loan, hidden investors, and a toxic mess that locals call "Cyanide Beach."

Learn more at Dougherty’s [Investigative Media website](#) .

Press Release: Oct. 15, 2013

Save the Scenic Santa Ritas releases Investor Update on Augusta Resource Corporation

Today, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas (SSSR), a non-profit environmental organization comprised of ranchers, small business owners and community members opposing the proposed massive Rosemont open-pit copper mine released an Investor Update on Augusta Resource. This Investor Update can be accessed by [clicking here](#) .

Augusta Resource, a junior Canadian mining company, is seeking through its Rosemont Copper subsidiary, permits to build a massive open-pit copper mine on 4,000-acres in the Santa Rita Mountains on the Coronado National Forest just south of Tucson.

This Investor Update provides current and potential investors with essential information that the company may not have provided in its investor relations efforts. It is not intended to provide investment advice, but rather to share critical information upon which to base future decisions.

The Investor Update describes important actions concerning Augusta's proposal, provides an overview of the company and the questionable background of key officers, and identifies unresolved regulatory issues that could block approval of the mine. The information in the update is robustly sourced having been derived from regulatory records, Augusta Resource's financial filings, and technical reports and various media accounts.

The proposed mine would have devastating impacts on Southern Arizona's water, air, wildlife and economy and there is unprecedented opposition. Political, business, tribal and environmental leaders have joined with citizens from all walks of life to oppose this project. Their opposition is based on its impacts to the quality of life and economy of both current and future Southern Arizona residents and businesses.

Because of its devastating impacts on the Santa Rita Mountains and threats to regional water resources, [BankTrack](#), a global network that tracks the environmental impacts of the financial sector is closely following the proposed Rosemont Copper mine. [Click here](#) to read the BankTrack report on the Rosemont project.

SSSR is a non-profit organization working to protect the Santa Rita and Patagonia Mountains from environmental degradation caused by mining and mineral exploration activities. Our current activities are focused on the proposed Rosemont Copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains.

Press Release: Sept. 16, 2013

**Forest Service Makes the Right Call on Rosemont Mine
“Unresolved legal requirements” preventing release of environmental analysis**

(Tucson, Ariz.) The Forest Service’s announcement today that it is delaying the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Rosemont copper mine is a major victory for citizens concerned about the environmental and economic threats posed by a massive open-pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson.

The Forest Service’s decision allows the agency more time to fully and accurately address the significant criticisms leveled at the Forest Service’s most recent analysis of this project by 11 local, state, tribal and federal agencies.

“The Forest Service made the right call on not rushing the Rosemont FEIS out before its serious deficiencies were addressed,” said Gayle Hartmann, President of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas. “When 11 of 13 agencies asked by the Forest Service to review its latest draft all weigh in with significant criticisms, you know there’s a big problem. It’s time for an analysis that fully identifies the severe, unavoidable and permanent adverse impacts that the Rosemont Mine would have on southern Arizona’s air quality, water supplies and economy.”

Today's announcement means that the consideration of the Rosemont project will fall under new Forest Service administrative appeals regulations. These regulations require that objections to the proposed project must be addressed before a final, Record of Decision is issued.

The new regulations allow members of the public and organizations that submitted timely comments to the draft environmental impact studies to object to provisions in the FEIS. The Forest Service must answer the objections in writing. The objection and review process must be completed within 120 days after publishing the FEIS. The Forest Service cannot issue a Record of Decision on the proposed mine until the objection and review process is completed.

Augusta Resource's Rosemont copper mine facing questions and mounting opposition

TUCSON, Ariz., Nov. 15, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Two Arizona Congressmen and a southern Arizona county executive have raised serious questions about Rosemont Copper Company and its proposed copper mine near Tucson. [Read full press release](#) or [download the release here](#) .

Update on Rosemont's Air Quality Permit application

The deadline to submit comments to ADEQ on Rosemont's proposed air quality permit has passed. If you would like to view the comments submitted by SSSR and our broader coalition, they may be downloaded here:

[SSSR Comments to ADEQ on the proposed Rosemont Air Quality Permit](#)

What would happen if a haboob were to sweep across Rosemont's proposed massive "dry stack" waste dump? It would spread poisonous dust and debris across nearby communities, including Tucson. Check out the below video!

PRESS RELEASE - 11/2/12

Air permit for Rosemont Mine threatens public health and air quality

Letter from 130 Southern Arizona residents and organizations asks State to withdraw draft permit

(Tucson, Ariz.) A broad-based citizen's coalition, citing threats to public health and air quality in southern Arizona, is calling on the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to withdraw a draft air quality permit for the proposed massive open-pit mine in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson.

[Read the full press release...](#)

PRESS RELEASE - 5/14/2012

Local Coalition Files Appeal to Protect Tucson and Southern Arizona Water Supplies

A diverse coalition of southern Arizonans charged today that a key water quality permit will allow Rosemont Copper Company to pollute area groundwater supplies with mercury, arsenic, lead and other dangerous contaminants —without oversight or consequence—for at least two years after mining operations begin.

[Read the full press release...](#)

PRESS RELEASE - 4/2/12

Rosemont Copper CEO Admits Company Didn't File Disclosures in Arizona

[Read the full press release...](#)

PRESS RELEASE - 3/29/12

Rosemont Copper Conceals Prior Bankruptcy in Arizona Filings Local Group Asks: "What Else Are They Hiding?"

[Read the full press release...](#)

The complaint and supporting documents can be downloaded below:

[COMPLAINT TO ACC.pdf](#)

[Complaint Volume I.pdf](#)

[Complaint Volume II.pdf](#)

Story in the New York Times!

This week (March 21, 2012) the Rosemont issue went national, with a special report in the New York Times!

[A Clash over Mining and Water](#)

by Erica Geis

Latest News: Augusta Resource's Proposed Rosemont Mine In Trouble

EPA: Deficiencies in critical Clean Water Act permit "could provide an adequate basis for permit denial"

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week warned that Augusta Resource Corporation's proposed Rosemont Copper Mine may not obtain a key water quality permit needed to build the mine because of its potential impacts on "aquatic resources of national importance". The EPA letter, sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, stated that the deficiencies in Rosemont's Clean Water Act Section 404 application "could provide an adequate basis for permit denial...". The mine cannot be built without the 404 permit.

[Click here to download the EPA's letter](#)

Next steps for Rosemont (as of February 2012):

Now that the comment periods are over for the Forest Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, and ADEQ's aquifer protection permit, these agencies will be reviewing public comments and will come to some decisions. The next step for the Forest Service is to write a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which will go out for public review and comment before a record of decision is signed. However, several of the cooperating agencies have asked that a supplemental Impact statement be written first (and many people made comments asking for this as well), and the Forest Service has hinted that this may be a possibility. If a Supplemental EIS is written, there will need to be public review and comment on the supplement before the Final is written, and the Forest Service would likely hold a series of public meetings.

The next step for the Army Corps will be deciding whether to grant the permit or not. The Corps has no time limit and it may ask for more information before making a decision. The Army Corps is not bound by the 1872 Mining Law, so they have every right to deny the permit. If the permit is denied, it would be extremely difficult for the project to move forward!

[Southern Arizonans speak out against the proposed Rosemont Mine - a video series.](#)

[View more videos on Save the Scenic Santa Rita's You Tube Channel](#)

Act Now! Sign our online petition and join our alert list!

[Sign now](#) and [join now](#) !

These mines have NOT been approved! Permitting takes many years and requires numerous approvals from government agencies.

With YOUR HELP, these mines CAN be stopped.

Raise your voice! Keep our public lands public!