



Forest Service

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Route To:

Subject: Rosemont SIR cover letter

To: Project Record, Rosemont Copper Project

Since the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD) for the Rosemont Copper Project (Rosemont) were published in December 2013, new information pertaining to resource conditions, analysis methodologies, and cumulative effects analysis has come to my attention.

The Objection Period for the FEIS and draft ROD occurred from January 1 through February 14, 2014. After reviewing the objections, the Regional Forester issued an objection response letter dated June 13, 2014. This letter noted that a number of Objectors introduced what they presented to be “new information” that was not previously considered. The Regional Forester thereby instructed the Forest Supervisor to review that information prior to issuing a final ROD to determine if this “new information” would require additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.

Additionally, the Coronado National Forest (CNF) decided to reinitiate formal consultation under the Endangered Species Act in May 2014, based in part on the sightings of an ocelot within the project area. Since this decision, the CNF has made an effort to refine the existing analysis that was completed for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the project’s previous biological assessment (BA) and several supplemental BAs. The CNF was striving to improve the accuracy and/or reduce the uncertainty of the original BA analysis associated with the biological opinion that was prepared for the FEIS. In particular, the agency was looking to improve the uncertainty related to impacts within the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and within the riparian areas along Empire Gulch and Cienega Creek. In order to better document baseline conditions and refine the hydrologic analyses related to these riparian areas, the CNF invited numerous federal agencies to participate in meetings in a renewed effort to exchange information and enlist their resource expertise. This exchange brought forward numerous documents, field data, and analyses not previously provided to the CNF, some of which was new information that must be considered under NEPA.

The CNF’s Interdisciplinary (ID) Team and our consultants reviewed all the new information in light of the conditions, analysis, and conclusion of impacts presented in the FEIS. This review considered the potential effects of the new information on all of the resource areas (i.e. biology, hydrology, air) previously addressed in the FEIS. The effects of the new information were compared to the effects disclosed in the FEIS and determinations were made as to whether incorporation of the new information would result in changes to baseline conditions, analysis methodology, or the conclusion of impacts. The results of this review are presented in the Rosemont Supplemental Information Report (SIR), May 2015.



While consideration of some new information resulted in changes to some baseline conditions and analysis methodologies, it did not result in major changes to any of the conclusions of impacts disclosed in the FEIS. Furthermore, review of the new information revealed no significant deficiencies in the FEIS analysis. However, there are some minor changes or clarifications needed, which will be addressed in one or more errata to the FEIS.

Based on the review documented in the SIR, I have determined that the new information and/or changed circumstances are within the scope and range of effects considered in the original analysis. Therefore, no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts were found that would require a supplement or revision of the Rosemont FEIS.



JAMIE KINGSBURY
Acting Forest Supervisor