

News Release

Forest Service

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Tonto National Forest releases Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Pinto Valley Mine project

PHOENIX, December 13, 2019 — For Immediate Release. Today the USDA Forest Service released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Pinto Valley Mine project for public review and comment.

The mining plan of operations submitted by Pinto Valley Mining Corp. proposes to expand existing open-pit copper and molybdenum mining operations from private lands onto National Forest System lands. The proposal would extend the mine life to 2039 and consolidate prior authorizations that are reasonably incident to mining and processing of mineral resources. Expansion is estimated to produce 2.4 billion pounds of copper and 23.7 million pounds of molybdenum from 2020 to 2039. Copper is heavily used in industrial, agricultural and energy applications and is a common component of electronics.

The proposed expansion would extend about 700 jobs during mining operations. Expansion also would result in about 1,011 acres of new disturbance, including 245 acres on National Forest System lands and 766 acres on private land owned by Pinto Valley Mining Corp. Existing surface disturbance associated with Pinto Valley Mine facilities encompasses an estimated 3,845 acres, of which 3,389 acres are on private and 456 acres are on National Forest System lands.

“The Forest Service’s multiple use mission results in balancing demand for economic productivity with our commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability,” said Tonto National Forest Supervisor Neil Bosworth. “The Forest Service is required to consider proposed plans of operations for mining. If the plans of operation meet environmental regulations and other requirements, we’re required to approve them under the General Mining Law of 1872.”

A Notice of Availability was released in the Federal Register and begins a 45-day public comment period from December 14, 2019, through January 27, 2020. The DEIS along with ways to comment are available at: <http://www.pintovalleymineeis.us/>.

The Tonto National Forest prepared this DEIS to evaluate and disclose the potential environmental effects from approval of the preliminary mining plan of operations.

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A limited number of DEIS hard copies are available at the Tonto Supervisor's Office, located at 2324 E. McDowell Road, Phoenix, AZ 85006. Interested parties are encouraged to call 602-225-5292 in advance to ensure hard copies remain.

Tonto National Forest staff will host two public meetings in January 2020. Maps and other materials will be available and forest staff will be on hand to answer questions. Dates and locations are:

- January 7, 2020 – from 5-7 p.m. at Superior Junior/Senior High School multipurpose room in Superior, AZ
- January 8, 2020 – from 5-7 p.m. at Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum in Miami, AZ

According to Judd Sampson, Tonto National Forest project manager, the Forest Service looks forward to a healthy exchange of information with interested parties during these meetings.

“As the lead agency for this project, the Tonto National Forest appreciates comments that are specific to the proposal and include supporting reasons for us to consider, Sampson said. “These types of comments will help us prepare a thorough Final EIS.”

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