



Terry Rambler  
Chairman

## SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE

P.O. Box 0, San Carlos, Arizona 85550  
Phone (928) 475-1600 ❖ Fax (928) 475-2567

Tao Etpison  
Vice-Chairman

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2025

#### **San Carlos Apache Tribe Welcomes Appeals Court Order Temporarily Preventing the U.S. Forest Service from Giving Sacred Oak Flat to China-backed Resolution Copper**

**Contact: Matt Smith, 520-907-1234, [matts@simginc.com](mailto:matts@simginc.com)**

*San Carlos Apache Reservation, Ariz.*— The San Carlos Apache Tribe’s 20-year battle to save sacred Oak Flat from being destroyed by the proposed Resolution Copper Mine won a last-minute victory Monday afternoon when a federal appeals court stopped the government from trading the land to the two largest mining companies in the world.

*“The Apache people will never stop fighting for Chi’chil Bildagoteel,”* said San Carlos Apache Tribe Chairman Terry Rambler. *“We thank the court for stopping this horrific land exchange and allowing us to argue the merits of our pending lawsuit in court.”*

The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued the [order](#) late Monday afternoon, just hours before the U.S. Forest Service could have traded Oak Flat to Resolution Copper Mining, LLC, which is owned by London-based Rio Tinto and Melbourne-based BHP.

Resolution Copper is seeking to develop one of the largest copper mines in the world that would collapse Oak Flat into a massive crater. Resolution Copper plans to extract 40 billion pounds of copper that is expected to be exported overseas, mostly likely to China. The Trump administration published an environmental study in June that triggered a 60-day deadline for the Forest Service to trade Oak Flat to Resolution Copper.

The Tribe alleges the government failed to publish a legal Environmental Impact Statement that is required by a 2014 law that mandates the land exchange.

“We grant a temporary administrative injunction to preserve the status quo while the motions are pending,” the three-judge panel stated in its brief order. The order requires the Tribe to file its opening brief by Sept. 9 with answering briefs from the Forest Service and Resolution Copper due by Sept. 29. Optional reply briefs are due by Oct. 14.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Re: Appeals Court Order Temporarily Prevents U.S. Forest Service from Giving Sacred Oak Flat to China-backed Resolution Copper*

August 18, 2025

Page 2 of 2

---

The order also granted a motion filed by the Arizona Mining Reform Coalition to allow it to argue the merits of its case that is also seeking to stop the land exchange.

*“We will continue praying that the court understands the grave injustice of trading our sacred grounds to foreign mining companies that seek to destroy Chi’chil Bildagoteel to extract copper that will be exported overseas,”* Chairman Rambler said.

*“This mine will severely deplete groundwater supplies in the East Salt River Valley and reduce the value of thousands of acres of Arizona State Trust Land by more than \$500 million. It’s a bad deal for our Tribe, the state of Arizona and American taxpayers and must be stopped.”*

###