

Citizens from all walks of life oppose Rio Tinto's plans to destroy Oak Flat, a sacred recreational and ecological haven that had been (and will be again) public land in Arizona, USA. Oak Flat has been used for holy ceremonies, picnicking, hiking, birdwatching, rock climbing, 4-wheel driving and other activities. Oak Flat is home to many species of animals, birds, and plants including the endangered Arizona Hedgehog Cactus.

Rio Tinto's plans are to destroy Oak Flat by creating a 3.2 kilometer wide, 305 meter deep crater resulting from ground subsidence if they were to build an underground block cave copper mine. The proposed copper mine is a joint venture between mining giants Rio Tinto and BHP. Mining experts have determined that the project will fail for multiple reasons if built as currently planned.

Oak Flat is vital for the religious freedom of Native Americans. Oak Flat has been used for holy ceremonies for a thousand years and is the place where Native American holy beings live. To destroy this place would kill a people's religion. Rio Tinto would destroy someone else's religion for the sake of corporate greed.

Rio Tinto attempts to gain public support by bullying citizens and organizations to either support the project or leave.

Arizona is in the 25<sup>th</sup> year of continuous drought which is the worst drought we've faced in 1,200 years. The proposed project would steal an amount of water that would be used by a city of 180,000 people for 50 years. In essence, Arizona would be exporting this water overseas as raw, unprocessed copper. In addition to this water being used by communities, farmers, and industry, the whole of Oak Flat would be dewatered, killing plants and animals that live at Oak Flat. The proposed project would require placing 1.5 billion tons of toxic waste into an unlined dump in the watershed of the Gila River which flows through Arizona into Mexico and ends in the Sea of Cortez. This waste

dump would pollute the watershed and should the unsafe dam that would hold this toxic waste fail, pollution could flow all the way to Mexico.

Recently, through a series of shady and unethical deals, Resolution Copper, an entity jointly owned by Rio Tinto and BHP now owns Oak Flat. The US 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed an injunction that had halted the land exchange on March 13, 2026, and the US Government immediately transferred Oak Flat to Rio Tinto/Resolution Copper.

The land transfer marks the first time the United States government has given a Native American sacred site to foreign mining companies and the largest give away of recreational rock climbing on public lands. The land transfer did not give Rio Tinto/Resolution Copper the necessary permits they need to build the mine.

Because the transfer was done so hastily and the government and the courts have not been forthcoming with information we need, organizations working to protect Oak Flat are reviewing our legal options, but it is safe to say that further legal action will be taken to stop this project.

Rio Tinto/Resolution Copper will now begin to conduct a feasibility study. Neither the Rio Tinto Board of Directors nor the BHP Board of Directors will decide whether to move forward with the project until the feasibility study is complete. We are confident that if the feasibility study is fair and impartial (rather than being a greenwashing exercise), the study will recommend that the project not move forward.

Because the project is untenable for many reasons, we demand that Rio Tinto and BHP halt the project and give the land it unfairly obtained back to the federal government to again be public land. We ask the Board of Directors of both Rio Tinto and

BHP to order the feasibility study be impartial, thorough, and comprehensive.