

Queen Creek Coalition

Board of Directors

May 28, 2009

Statement of Current Position with Regard to Oak Flat (re: S. 409 and H.R. 2509)

A little over a year ago members of the Arizona rock climbing community formed the Queen Creek Coalition (QCC) to look after climber interests with regard to the proposed exchange of federal recreation land for other lands of significant ecological value by Resolution Copper Mining, LLC (Resolution), a joint venture owned by Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton, as they move forward with mining operations on a large copper ore deposit near and potentially under what is referred to as "Oak Flat." The land exchange and mining operations would potentially destroy climbing areas or eliminate access to the rock climbing in the area.

Last fall, QCC presented to Resolution a list of the concerns of the rock climbing community and laid the basis for points, which, if agreed to, might alleviate those concerns. Resolution representatives have presented draft responses and proposals designed to address these concerns. In many cases the concerns have been addressed straightforwardly, but in other cases Resolution advised QCC that the rock climbers' concerns could not be alleviated; most significantly, maintaining the surface and ecology of the land above the mine.

The last version of an offer from Resolution could be characterized as having two components: 1) a set of responses to rock climbing concerns that would be placed in the legislation; and 2) additional regional rock climbing access and opportunities reflecting the present and future co-existence of copper mining and rock climbing in the region. Resolution maintained that it was willing to offer the latter only if QCC signed a letter endorsing the land exchange legislation.

While Resolution has made serious and what appear to be good faith efforts to work out a reasonable compromise that is responsive to the rock climbers' concerns about the land exchange legislation and proposed mine, QCC, on behalf of the rock climbing community, is not prepared to endorse legislation which authorizes the transfer, and makes possible the eventual destruction, of the unique resource that is Oak Flat. QCC believes that Resolution should furnish to the climbing community the elements offered by Resolution in their last draft without requiring QCC to endorse the land exchange (or any legislation contemplating such exchange)."