



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Coronado National Forest  
Nogales Ranger District

303 Old Tucson Road  
Nogales, Arizona 85621  
Phone (520) 281-2296  
FAX (520) 281-2396

File Code: 1950/2830

Date: December 20, 2010

*Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest:*

I am writing today to advise you that the Coronado National Forest (Forest) is considering a request by a private firm (5 Amigos) for approval of a plan of operations (PoO) to conduct a minerals exploration project near Greaterville, Arizona. The project would be undertaken in an area approximately 9 miles northwest of the town of Sonoita in Pima County (see enclosed map).

With this Scoping Notice, I've provided a brief description of the proposed action and am asking for your comments on the scope of the upcoming National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the proposal. Your response to this notice will play a vital role in our understanding of issues and the development of alternatives, if necessary. Information on how to comment is provided below.

**PROPOSED ACTION**

The Forest Service's proposed action is to approve the PoO. Approval would authorize 5 Amigos to explore for locatable minerals by excavating trenches approximately 3 feet wide, 3 feet long, and 2 feet deep in mine waste from the Morning Star mine. All excavations would be done using hand tools. Excavated mine waste would be concentrated on the project site by gravity separators. The mineral concentrate would be placed in 5-gallon buckets and transported off the Forest by pickup trucks for further processing. Up to a cubic yard of concentrated material may be removed over the year that the PoO is in effect.

Vehicles would access the project area from National Forest System road 163. Crews of up to five persons would excavate and process material in shifts over three consecutive days, up to twice a month, for up to a year. Processing equipment may include manual and gas- or electric-powered gravity separators (similar to Keen Dry Washers<sup>1</sup>) having a footprint of approximately 4 feet by 4 feet and attached to one or more sections of sluice boxes. Additional sections would increase the footprint by 4 feet in length. Equipment would be placed near the mining waste excavation areas, and gas-powered motors would be used to run the separators or generators. All gas-powered engines will have collectors underneath to contain fuel spills or overflow. If water is needed for processing, it would be imported to the site by truck. Process wastewater would be placed in plastic drums and hauled off-site for disposal at an appropriate facility.

<sup>1</sup> [www.keeneng.com](http://www.keeneng.com)



Rejected waste would be returned to the area from which it originated near the mine.

## OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

The Forest Service values public input as part of its NEPA process. You are encouraged to submit comments regarding the proposed action and the scope of the NEPA analysis of this project<sup>2</sup>. To receive full consideration and to best assist the Forest Service in this effort, your comments should be submitted to us within 30 days of your receipt of this notice, or before January 15, 2011.

Written comments may be sent by U.S. mail to Mr. Karl Sandwell-Weiss, Minerals Resource Geologist, Coronado National Forest, Supervisor's Office, 300 West Congress Street, Tucson, AZ 85701; by facsimile to his attention at (520) 388-8305; and by electronic mail (email) to [comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us). You may submit email comments in any of the following ways: text of your email, in a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) attachment, or in rich-text format (.rtf). Please identify your facsimile and email comments with "5 Amigos Minerals Exploration NEPA" in the subject line.

To provide telephone or in-person comments and for further information on the project, please contact Mr. Sandwell-Weiss at (520) 388-8348 or visit the Forest Supervisor's office at the address above between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Questions on the NEPA process may be directed to Ms. Andrea W. Campbell, Forest NEPA Coordinator, at (520) 388-8352.

*Thank you for your interest and participation in the activities of the Coronado National Forest,*



JAMES D. COPELAND  
District Ranger

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<sup>2</sup> *Comments and personally identifying information associated with them, such as names and addresses, become part of the administrative record of this NEPA review. This information is available to a third-party upon request under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). If you do not wish for your personal information to be released in response to a FOIA request, you may choose not to include it with your comments. Or, you may request an exemption from FOIA with your comment submittal. Should you choose the latter, you will be informed by the Forest Service as to whether or not your request qualifies for an exemption. If it does not, you will be offered an opportunity to resubmit your comments without personal information or to withhold them.*

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