



## **SPEECH: What if there was no Ironwood Forest National Monument?**

*Presented at the Monthly AMIGOS/Arizona Mining Alliance Meeting, Tucson -June 9, 2017*

Hello everyone. For those that don't know me, I am Jim Briscoe, the founder and CEO/ Chief Geologist of Liberty Star. I have 5 minutes to talk about Liberty Star's East Silverbell Porphyry Copper Project, which I will get to, but first I would like to ask, "what if there was no Ironwood Forest National Monument just north of Tucson." So, what? What would change if the protective national monument designation was removed from that area?

1. Let's start with the preservation of the endangered *ferruginous dessert pygmy owl* that started the whole thing and the outcry for a protected area in the late 1990's. But today the pygmy owls are not endangered. They were declared no longer *Endangered* by the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit court of Appeals in 2006. Without the National Monument designation that population is fine.
2. The preservation of the endangered *lesser long-nosed bat*: of which one specimen was found some time ago and are regarded as migratory and not settled to the area. Without the national Monument designation, that situation doesn't change.
3. *Bighorn sheep*. What would change without the national Monument designation? A small herd has thrived in the North Silverbell mountains for about 60 years of my personal experience and they interact with humans and their habitat is enhanced by the active mines: once they thrived all over Pinal and Pima County but with hunting pressure they declined and have been absent from most of the area for decades. The national Monument designation didn't change things. Recently, hunting organizations and the State Game and Fish have tried to introduce new herds around the Tucson Foothills without much success but around the mines the bighorn sheep have thrived.
4. Another endangered species: the Nichols Turk's Head cactus. Those don't naturally persist near ironwoods in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, only living on Silurian limestones (I learned about these cacti while out on a field visit with science contractors from the Arizona – Sonora Desert Museum). There are minimal Silurian rocks in the Ironwood Forest National Monument, ergo few Turk's Head cacti. It is generally regarded that there may be more on the Silurian limestone on the Tohono O'odham outside but adjacent to the Ironwood Monument. They grow elsewhere where there is a rock friendly environment for them.

What would happen then if the protective designation ended for the endangered flora and fauna just mentioned? They will be fine. For southern Arizonans? What changes is the ability for local vendors and workers to work at copper mines. And we do believe there are potentially 10 targets large copper mine targets, one of which has been verified by drilling, in the area, in addition to the 4-mine operation currently running under ASARCO.

IF THESE PORPHYRYES PROVE AS PRODUCTIVE AS THE CURRENTLY KNOWN ORE BODIES THEN THE POTENTIAL IS FOR \$80 BILLION IN COPPER AND CO-PRODUCT METALS OF MOLY, LEAD, ZINC, SILVER, GOLD AND OTHER BYPRODUCT METALS.

BUT THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN IF THE IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT DESIGNATION IS REJECTED.

Also, this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we aim to bring the technological advances in our industry to the area.

Modern mines (of my design) will not emit sound, dust, light, or contaminated water. Slopes will be revegetated immediately on construction of perimeter berms within which all mining and operations will be contained. Because slopes will be revegetated immediately, all mining facilities will be concentrated interior to the berm and all evidence of the mine will disappear. All mine overburden, if any, will be placed inside the exterior walls as will the crushed, cleaned, rock -CCR (previously referred to as tailings) will be consolidated as back fill or sold as a valuable byproduct. On exhaustion of economic mineral reserves, all mining equipment will be removed, perhaps to another location, and any remaining industrial facilities will be conserved for future use.

The above described operation will have a very small footprint. Animal life and typical vegetation will be enhanced and the terrain will go back to the way it was as soon as the initial berm is constructed, and multiple uses such as cattle grazing, hunting, outdoor recreation will continue as before, with no evidence of mining except for connecting road work which will be concealed by natural vegetation and colorization.

The cities of greater Tucson, Pima County, Maricopa County, Pinal County, and contained cities will benefit from tax revenue, jobs, and other economic benefits. For example, please review [An Assessment of the Rosemont Copper Project on the Economies of the Cochise/Pima/Santa Cruz Counties...](#)[2009] by Dr. Madan M. Singh, former Director of the Arizona Dept. of Mines & Mineral Resources.

The status of the Ironwood Forest National Monument is currently under review by the Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke. We have asked our shareholders and interested citizens to make public comment in favor of repeal so that Liberty Star can get back to the business of exploring the East Silverbell Porphyry Copper Project: 26 unpatented federal (BLM) lode mining claims covering a previously unrecognized porphyry copper center.

The exploration would be a continuation of the work halted in 2000 when the Ironwood Forest National Monument was declared. Before the termination of exploration, JABA (USA), under the leadership of myself and noted U of A scientist and educator Dr. John Guilbert, **had discovered an enriched copper blanket typical of porphyry copper deposits and particularly the Silverbell porphyry verified by drilling** of ROTARY DRILL HOLES. Sampling problems typical of this type of drill in sample dilution requires that additional drilling should be by HQ size diamond drill core to get an accurate measure of the true grade of the copper mineralization and rock alteration.

The **East Silverbell Porphyry Copper Project** exploration data, including soil geochemistry and drill logs is going to be released soon and kept on our website for further inspection as public information until we choose to remove it.

The stated reason for the reviewing of 27 national monuments, mostly in the western states, is to roll back unnecessary and unfair withdrawals of public lands from becoming productive.

Reconsidering and abolishing the national monument status of the so-called Ironwood Forest with this reason in mind, to give land back to the people so they can make it productive, should make for a quick and easy decision to repeal. Yet, there are loud cries from preservationist calling for the retention of the protected status for biological imperatives that simply do not exist.

Because of a string of victories based on specious science and emotional appeals, we need to worry about the repeal of the Ironwood Forest National Monument not happening. Local and national environmental groups are very good at getting their loyal cadres in front of politicians. We in our industry have not performed as effectively. This needs to be the time. I appeal to you to make comment to the Department of the Interior, the White House and your local representatives to lift the ban from using the land at Ironwood Forest for mining. Instructions on how to make comment on line are available on [our website libertystaruranium.com](http://ourwebsite.libertystaruranium.com) The comment period ends in early July, so please take the time to comment on this important issue now. I promise you, those that oppose developing American mining assets are responding in droves.

#### References

1. [http://www.defenders.org/sites/default/files/publications/90-day\\_finding\\_on\\_listing\\_pygmy-owl.pdf](http://www.defenders.org/sites/default/files/publications/90-day_finding_on_listing_pygmy-owl.pdf)
2. [https://www.desertmuseum.org/programs/ifnm\\_bat.php](https://www.desertmuseum.org/programs/ifnm_bat.php)
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