



SLATE MINE SLOPE AFTER TREATMENT WITH ZEROSION
(RESTORATION TECHNOLOGIES PHOTO)

GILA WOOD PRODUCTS DEMONSTRATES BENEFITS OF 'ZEROSION' AT SLATE MINE

by Allyson Siwik, GRIP Executive Director

Gordon West of Restoration Technologies and his partners at Gila Wood Products have completed installation of a reclamation project at Freeport-McMoRan's Slate Mine using woody biomass from the residues of forest restoration thinning and a new product called "Zerosion." The Slate Mine, a reclaimed site at the Cobre Mine, is experiencing degradation from stormwater sheet runoff that washed away topsoil, mulch, and seedings placed there in 2009. West and his team installed Zerosion—an innovative erosion-control material made from woody biomass and a cementitious binder—along with side-oats grama and blue grama grass, testing out a range of alternative applications. Sally Smith, GRIP's Director of Responsible Mining, facilitated the initial contact between West and FMI.

"We are excited to see the results of application of this local material in reclamation activities," said Smith. "If it proves effective, Zerosion can provide a valuable use for forest thinning byproducts." Added FMI's Manager for Environment, Land, and Water, Tim Eastep: "(Our company is) continuously on the lookout for innovative and cost-effective methods to improve our reclamation processes. Zerosion has the potential to do just that. Furthermore, implementing a product that was developed and is being sourced locally has economic development benefits to the community where we operate, a key sustainability objective for Freeport-McMoRan."

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noted Rebecca de Neri Zagal, executive director of the ONRT. "But we extended the comment period until November 18 to accommodate requests for additional time. Several people associated with GRIP have been involved in the process." Revisions were made "based on comments we received and new information we obtained," according to de Neri Zagal.

The Draft Restoration Plan outlined potential restoration Tier 1 projects—those the ONRT considered prime candidates for the remaining \$11 million dollars in funding—that included removal and clean-up of the San Vicente Mill Site along San Vicente Creek, a Bayard Wastewater Treatment Plant re-use project, sewer line improvements in Santa Clara and Hurley, a Grant County Liquid Waste Groundwater Protection Program, and a Grant County Water Conservation Plan and Program. Other projects were considered by ONRT, but the aforementioned were the only ones passing Tier 1 criteria. Approximately \$1.5 million from the settlement was appropriated by the legislature for costs associated with legal issues on the Lower Rio Grande in New Mexico and \$206,000 went to reimbursement of ONRT assessment costs.

The U.S. District Court approved the consent decree leading to the settlement last February. The ONRT, FMI, and U.S. Department of the Interior are negotiating a separate settlement "for damage to birds, surface water, and terrestrial habitat and terrestrial receptors" caused by FMI's Grant County mines. Information on both, including copies of the latest Draft Restoration Plan, is at www.onrt.state.nm.us/ChinoCobreTyrone.html.



INJURIES TO LOCAL GROUNDWATER RESOURCES WILL BE ADDRESSED BY PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE ONRT'S FORTHCOMING \$11-MILLION FINAL RESTORATION PLAN (GRIP PHOTO)

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