

# Support Your Neighbor's Faith Freedom

## #SaveOakFlat

### What is Oak Flat?

*Chí'chil Bitdagoteel*, loosely translated as "Oak Flat" in English, is an ancient sacred site for the Apache and several other tribes. It was an ancestral burial ground and a source for food, water and medicinal plants. It is the only place where certain religious rituals can be performed.

### Why is this Land at Risk?

In March 2026, the federal government officially gave Oak Flat to a foreign mining operation so that a low-grade copper deposit under it can be mined. The crater that will swallow Oak Flat will be almost 2 miles wide and up to 1,100 feet deep — that's the length of the Golden Gate Bridge and more than three times the height of the Statue of Liberty.



### Why Do People Support Legislation to Save this Land?

#### Religious Freedom

Oak Flat is a sacred outdoor sanctuary where many Indigenous people connect to the Creator. It should continue to be protected — the sacredness is not lessened because the Apache do not use steeples to mark sacred spaces.

#### Tribal Nations

*Chí'chil Bitdagoteel* is a sacred site where religious rites and cultural ceremonies are performed. The federal government has a treaty obligation to protect it.

#### Environmental

The new mine will destroy the local water tables and is expected to consume enough water to supply a city of around 140,000 residents every year for 50 years.

#### Track Record of Destruction

The primary owner of Resolution Copper, LLC, is Australian mining company Rio Tinto. To expand a mine in 2020, Rio Tinto destroyed Australia's Juukan Gorge, an Indigenous sacred site with evidence of continuous human habitation for more than 46,000 years.

#### Gift to Foreign Governments

China stands to financially profit off both the extraction and refinement of America's copper supply. Chinalco, a holding company for the People's Republic of China, is Rio Tinto's largest shareholder. The copper ore is expected to be shipped through Mexico to China for refinement, as American smelting companies are at capacity.

#### Recreational

Oak Flat is the premier rock climbing and bouldering area in central Arizona and the site of the world's largest rock climbing competition. Losing Oak Flat to mining would be the largest loss of a climbing area in the history of the United States.

#### Protecting America's History

Oak Flat is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its religious and cultural significance. Its petroglyphs and Indigenous archaeological sites remind us that *Chí'chil Bitdagoteel* is one of our historic treasures.

Learn more and get the latest updates at [BJCOnline.org/SaveOakFlat](https://BJCOnline.org/SaveOakFlat)

