



Rosemont Copper: Things are Not Always as They are Portrayed

by David F. Briggs



A recent photo of what appears to be a live, fire-breathing dragon flying over the Santa Rita mountains has re-energized opponents' efforts to halt the development of the Rosemont copper project.

On seeing the photo, an advocate for a local NGO couldn't believe the good news. "If this doesn't stop Rosemont, nothing will." They immediately filed a petition with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to declare it an endangered species and demanded a 10-million acre critical habitat be established to protect it.

A reporter for a local newspaper called for an investigation claiming officials of Rosemont Copper have known of its existence for some time and concealed this information from the public. A resident living near the proposed mine site and long-time critic of Rosemont supported this effort, stating he always knew Rosemont was hiding something, but could never really prove it until now.

A leader of a local special interest group fighting the development of the proposed mine blamed Rosemont's recent drilling program for awakening the dragon from its underground lair. "In addition to all of Rosemont's other problems, now the citizens of southeastern Arizona have to contend with a new threat, fire-breathing dragons."

In order to preserve the illusion of an extensive, regional network of underground passages connecting Rosemont with other southeastern Arizona localities, officials closed Kartchner Caverns claiming dragons at Rosemont may use these passages to migrate to the popular tourist destination, located near Benson, Arizona.

Recognizing this discovery would add millions of dollars to the coffers of local governments, an anonymous official had a different take on the situation; calling for the creation of a national park that would draw tourists from all over the world to catch a glimpse of this rare creature. "These revenues can be used to fund all sorts of new and exciting projects, like Rio Nuevo." Quickly realizing he should have placed fixing our roads at the top of his list, he abruptly terminated the interview.

Concerned about public safety and potential fire dangers that might result from someone inadvertently aggravating a fire-breathing dragon, a spokesman for the U. S. Forest Service announced the Coronado National Forest would be temporarily closed while officials verify the authenticity of the photo.

However, despite high unemployment rates, one of the area's most prominent elected officials and long-time opponent of the domestic mining industry urged the Forest Service to permanently withdraw the area from all commercial development, stating "preserving the area for dragons is more important than the few jobs it would provide Arizonans".

A recent lawsuit alleging violations of the outdoor lighting code was dismissed after plaintiffs were unable to eliminate the fire-breathing dragons as a possible source for the lights.

In the meantime, local NGOs staged peaceful demonstrations at several sites along Route 83, urging officials to protect the dragons. They were joined by a large contingent from the news media and citizens, who hoped to catch a glimpse of a dragon. However, to everyone's dismay no dragons were sighted.

Since initially being photographed at Rosemont, additional unconfirmed sightings of dragons have been reported at Wildcat Silver's Hermosa project near Patagonia, Resolution Copper's project near Superior and Taseko Mines' proposed copper project at Florence. This coincidence prompted an unidentified official from Rosemont Copper to remark, "This has to be an elaborate hoax. Why would dragons only appear around proposed mining projects?"

Any similarities between characters portrayed in this fictionalized satire and actual participants involved in the Rosemont controversy are coincidental. The sole purpose of this article was to find an effective way to show how different parties of this debate might respond to a reported sighting of a dragon in the Santa Rita mountains.

Both the Forest Service and the official from Rosemont Copper were skeptical of the reported sightings of dragons.

The Forest Service's decision to temporarily close the Coronado Forest was the responsible thing to do, while they verified the authenticity of the photo.

Rosemont Copper is a subsidiary of Hudbay Minerals, Inc., a public company, who is regulated by U. S. and Canadian securities authorities. As such they are bound by a strict set of rules and regulations that govern the information they release to the public.

However, opponents of mining are not limited by any such rules or regulations. They commonly disseminate false, distorted, misleading and contradictory information to the public. Their web sites, news releases and public statements are full of it. And it doesn't really matter whether they actually believe the information to be true or not. They knowingly deceive the public because it furthers their agenda.

Well-informed citizens are the best defense against propaganda of this type. When studying controversial proposals, such as Rosemont, the public is urged to closely examine both sides of the issue. Seek advice from unbiased, third parties. Think about what is being said. Then ask yourself; does this really make sense? Is this logical? How reliable are the sources of information? What are the motives of those making the statements? Only then, will we be able to make informed decisions that are based on a valid assessment of the facts.

Acknowledgements: This article was inspired by Jonathan Duhamel's recent article in the Arizona Daily Independent titled, "[Celebrate Earth Day, Save Dragons](#)". Keep up the good work Jon, I really enjoy your articles.

Disclaimer: David F. Briggs is a resident of Pima County and a geologist, who has intermittently worked on the Rosemont project since 2006. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Rosemont Copper.

Copyright © (2015) by David F. Briggs. Reprint is permitted only if the credit of authorship is provided and linked back to the source.

Published by the Arizona Daily Independent on May 5, 2015.