



The urgent call to protect the Upper Pecos River from mining

FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Action for today and the long view

For the past four years, we've been working with partners to stop a mining operation

planned near the Pecos Wilderness and the Pecos River. There is a lot at stake because the mining would threaten the river and downstream communities and is in a proposed Wilderness area just 16 miles from Santa Fe. In 1991, runoff from older mining operations killed 90,000 fish in the Pecos River and continues to affect local communities and visitors.

The threat from the proposed mining calls for two types of action where I believe your New Mexico Wild excels. First, when there is a conservation threat to public lands, we can mobilize quickly with our many

partners to stop or slow the proposed harm.

Second, we have proven effective at working on long-term solutions that require federal or state intervention. Often these long-term solutions take years or decades to achieve but we have seen how persistence pays off.

This summer, after substantial advocacy, the Department of the Interior prohibited drilling on federal lands for the next 20 years in a 10-mile zone around the Chaco Culture National Historical Park. That success took years of dedicated work from our organization and partners. It also gives us time to work on more permanent protections at greater Chaco.

Today, New Mexico Wild's ability to be both nimble to take immediate action as well as engage in sustained ways to achieve long-term solutions is more important than ever.

Your support makes it possible for us to respond to imminent threats and to see things through. Thank you.

Mark Allison
Executive Director
New Mexico Wild

The situation

The Upper Pecos Watershed is under threat from a foreign mining company seeking to extract copper, gold, zinc, lead, and silver across 4,300 acres of the Santa Fe National Forest. To address this, New Mexico Wild helped launch the Stop Tererro Mine Coalition. Tributaries of the Pecos River run through the proposed mining area. For that reason, New Mexico Wild worked with the national organization American Rivers to name the Pecos River one of the ten most endangered rivers in the United States in 2021 in response to the mining threat.



Federal solutions

A permanent solution to stop mining activity in much of the Pecos watershed would happen with the Congressional designation of the proposed Thompson Peak Wilderness. Many of the mining sites are within that boundary. Those designations often take years for approval. The New Mexico congressional delegation had proposed a ban on new mineral claims in the watershed, but that bill died in a Senate Committee in 2021. However, the Pecos Watershed Protection Act was reintroduced into Congress this October and a vote is expected in coming months. Additionally, the Department of the Interior could temporarily ban new mineral claims on as much as 170,000 acres of the watershed,

much as they did in the Chaco region. New Mexico Wild is working with legislators, agencies, land managers, and partners on all of these options.

State solutions

In 2022, New Mexico Wild asked the state to secure the highest level of protection for the waters most in danger from the mining threat. We organized support and helped secure the community petitioners under the Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) law. That

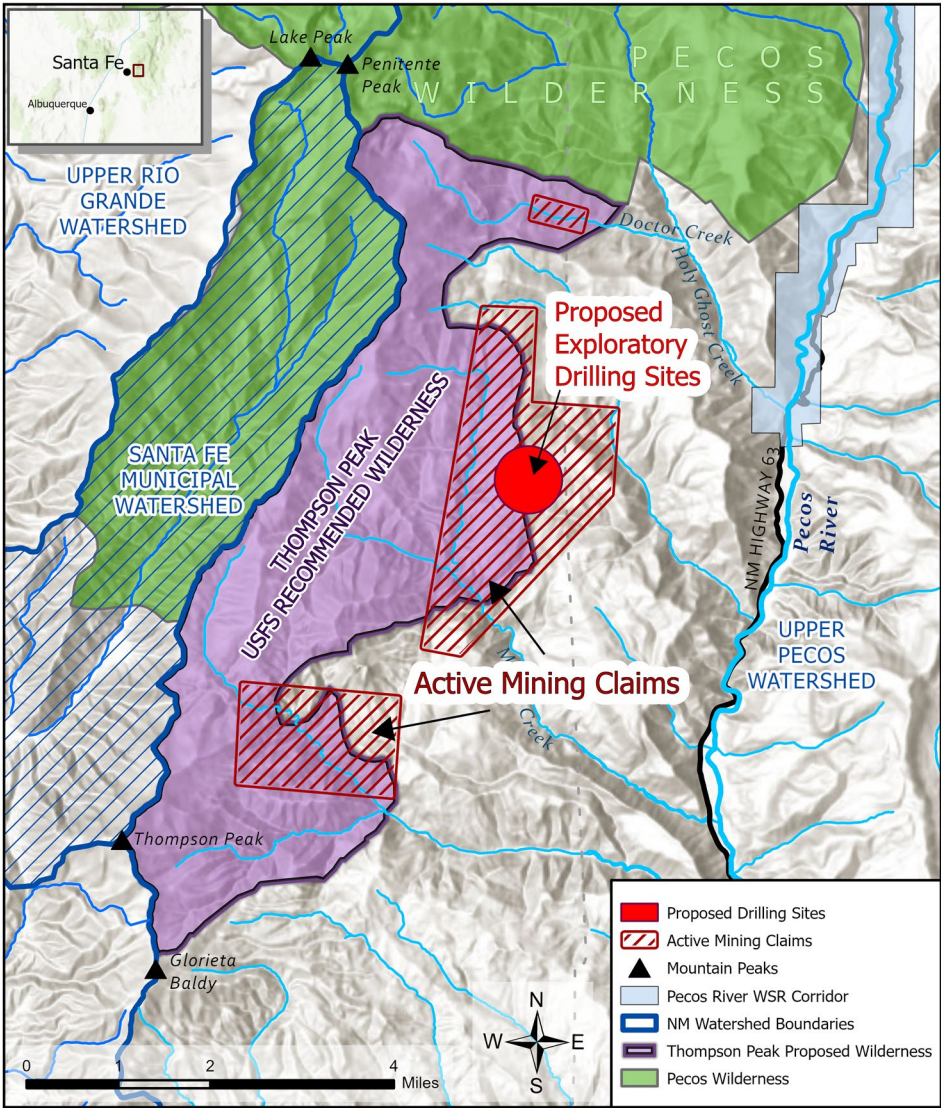
protection was approved and designates nearly 180 miles of streams and 43 acres of wetlands precluding any degradation of water quality except for minor and temporary decreases under very limited circumstances. The designation has been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which extends further protection under the federal Clean Water Act. This solution is important while we work on federal protections for the watershed including the new Thompson Peak Wilderness.

What's next

We continue to support the Stop Tererro Mine Coalition while working with state and federal officials on longer-term solutions. Legislation to protect the Pecos watershed gained momentum during a key U.S. Senate committee hearing last month. Our members have been highly supportive of efforts to protect the river sending over 2,600 comments to the Santa Fe National Forest calling on the Forest Service to do a more in-depth review of the mining plans.

The recommended Thompson Peak Wilderness would further protect the Pecos Wilderness and its important watershed.

Active Mining Claims in the Upper Pecos Watershed Adjacent to the Thompson Peak Recommended Wilderness Area



The public lands of the Pecos Wilderness and nearby watershed are important to many New Mexicans. Your support will help us protect these treasured lands. Donate online or with the enclosed form.

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