

SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK FROM MINE WASTE



Nearly a third of the world's mine tailings are stored within or near protected conservation areas, University of Queensland research has found. A 2023 study concludes that mine waste facilities pose an enormous risk to some of Earth's most precious species and landscapes.

<https://phys.org/news/2023-11-sensitive-ecosystems.html>

To quote lead researcher Bora Aska, from the Sustainable Minerals Institute and School of the Environment:

- "We found of the 1,721 disclosed tailings facilities, nine percent were within declared protected areas and 20 percent were within five kilometers. Our findings suggest that mine wastes threaten biodiversity within protected areas all over the world."

Copperwood would very much be included in the 20% of tailings facilities within five kilometers of a declared protected area.

- The mine is **directly adjacent** to Porcupine Mountains State Park, the largest designated Wilderness Area in mainland Michigan, and the largest mixed coniferous-deciduous old growth ecosystem remaining in the Midwest
- Because Copperwood's ore-grade is only 1.5%, nearly 99% of everything that comes out of the ground will be waste. For every ton of extracted material, only 30 pounds will be copper, and 1,970 pounds will be toxic mine waste, to be stored in a 323-acre tailings facility, forever, right next door to Michigan's most beloved State Park.
- The waste facility will be 244 football fields in area and 20 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty in height. It will tower over the landscape and be visible from multiple scenic overlooks, including Copper Peak and Lake of the Clouds.
- **In conclusion, the main thing this grant would be subsidizing is not copper, but over 30 million tons of toxic waste, stored in one of the least suitable locations imaginable.**