

Biodiversity

WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS TO EQUINOX GOLD

In the face of a global biodiversity crisis, there is an urgent need to protect fragile ecosystems, critical habitats and endangered species from a range of threats and further loss. In December 2022, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference reached an historic agreement to safeguard at least 30% of the world’s lands, oceans, coastal areas, and inland waters by 2030. Businesses must step up to support this global effort by taking decisive action to both mitigate their impacts and help restore biodiversity, and we at Equinox Gold are committed to doing our part.

Our Approach

We continue taking meaningful action to prevent biodiversity loss and support healthy ecosystems throughout the lifecycle of our mines.

As articulated in our Environment and Climate Change Policy, we are committed to protecting the species and habitats of the areas in which we operate and promoting conservation of local biodiversity. We adhere to all local and federal regulations related to biodiversity protection, and we go beyond these mandated duties by implementing additional voluntary standards including the World Gold Council’s RGMPs for Biodiversity, Land Use and Mine Closure and the TSM Biodiversity Conservation Management protocol.

Equinox Gold operates near some important ecosystems including the Amazon Preservation Area in Maranhão, Brazil and the Caatinga region in Bahia, Brazil; the Zopilote Gorge in Guerrero, Mexico; the Mojave National Preserve in California USA, and the Avi Kwa Ame National Monument in Nevada, USA. We carefully manage our activities to minimize and mitigate both short- and long-term adverse impacts on the flora and fauna in these areas, and give special consideration to locally threatened species and critical habitats near our sites.



MORE INFORMATION

- [Environment and Climate Change Policy](#)



A Comprehensive Approach

Our approach to biodiversity is multi-faceted.

- Prior to commencing construction and operations, we develop a baseline inventory of flora and fauna to understand the biota of significance, both ecological and cultural.
- With this understanding, we develop biodiversity management plans for each mine. These plans detail our actions to mitigate or eliminate harm where possible and include monitoring and reclamation of habitats for local protected species. We update the plans as necessary to reflect evolving circumstances and the stages of mining development.
- Before undertaking any work, we conduct biodiversity impact assessments to understand our site’s characteristics, allowing our local teams to ensure that native flora and fauna elements are identified and relocated during clearing procedures.
- We maintain plant nurseries at most of our sites to preserve plants salvaged during the clearing process and grow plants from locally sourced seeds that can be used to replant areas as they are reclaimed.
- When undertaking reclamation, we set vegetation density and species targets that mirror the surrounding natural area so we can monitor the success of our reclamation activities.
- We collaborate with local communities, non-government organizations (NGOs),

government and academia to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes in the regions in which we operate.

Since we work in a variety of ecosystems, each site’s biodiversity plans and activities are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the area. For example:

- In Brazil, as required by law, we create conservation areas by purchasing undisturbed land to protect natural ecosystems. We protect these conservation areas from development, hunters, poachers and illegal small-scale mining activity, and also document the biological wealth of these areas and their importance to the maintenance of regional biodiversity.
- Near Santa Luz and Fazenda, we have purchased and now protect compensatory land in the Caatinga region, the only exclusively Brazilian biome; a large part of its biological heritage cannot be found anywhere else in the world.
- At Castle Mountain, we partnered with the Searchlight Township to transplant Joshua trees throughout the community, an initiative that protects the Joshua trees and also expands green spaces in the community. We have also partnered with local communities and NGOs to protect local bighorn sheep and golden eagles, and have taken measures to safeguard habitat for the threatened desert tortoise.



Our Performance in 2022

75%

of performance indicators of the TSM Biodiversity Conservation protocol achieved

18,966

trees planted in reforestation projects around our sites

145ha

of land reclaimed

- Continued with progressive reclamation activities at our mine sites
- Supported several projects to protect and increase biodiversity in the regions surrounding our mines

During 2022 we implemented the TSM Biodiversity Conservation protocol across our mine sites and achieved a Level A rating for at least 75% of the indicators. We will continue this program in 2023 to achieve Level A for 100% of the indicators, with the longer-term plan of achieving Level AA or AAA across all of our operations.

We continued to undertake progressive reclamation activities at all of our mine sites. In addition, at Los Filos we are researching the potential to turn reclaimed heap leach pads and waste rock deposits into viable agricultural land. Five years ago, we commenced a project to remediate the soil and improve growing conditions on a reclaimed waste rock deposit

area. Several techniques have been used to restore organic content in the soil, and results show increased biomass and soil quality adequate to grow food-safe crops. In 2022, we expanded this initiative to cover one hectare of land with multiple crop rotations, with the intention that these lands can be fully reclaimed and suitable for agricultural purposes following mine closure.

During the year we supported several projects aimed at protecting and increasing biodiversity in the regions surrounding our mines. For example, the Castle Mountain team helped the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and researchers from Oregon State University to conduct an annual health assessment on a herd of desert bighorn sheep near the mine. During the health assessment, nine female sheep were trapped and lifted to a safe spot at the mine site so wildlife biologists could perform various diagnostic health tests and fit the ewes with tracking collars. Castle Mountain also entered into an agreement with the [Desert](#)

[Research Institute](#) to establish a collaborative long-term program to advance and analyze the success of Joshua tree seedling ecology, germination, transplantation and survivorship. In addition, Los Filos provided funding and 17,500 plants of four native forest species from the mine’s plant nursery to reforest areas degraded by fires, agriculture and livestock in a nearby community.



PRIORITIES FOR 2023

- Achieve TSM Level A rating for all indicators for the Biodiversity Conservation Management protocol.

CASE STUDY

Environmental Remediation Initiative Generates New Life

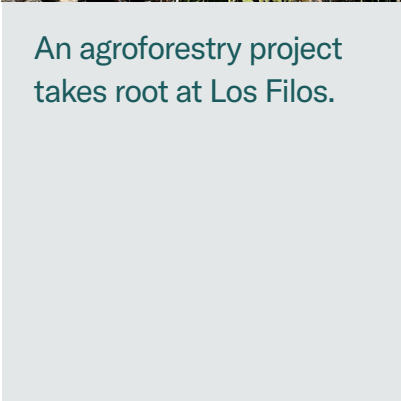
At Los Filos, we continue to implement a unique environmental remediation program that is giving new life to a former mining area.

Since 2016, more than 100 hectares of waste rock piles on the mine site have been hydro seeded, reforested and protected against rain and wind erosion. Various techniques have been applied including contouring of slopes, constructing water diversion channels and placing biodegradable materials such as coconut mesh on the slopes to provide a stable surface for regrowth. These techniques have resulted in the successful growth of new vegetation and many species of insects, birds, mammals and reptiles have established themselves in the remediated areas.

In 2022, we launched an agriculture conservation project at the site, covering 1 hectare of the waste rock deposit, on which we planted ten genetic materials of corn seed (7 hybrid, 2 synthetic, 1 Creole) to identify the material that best adapts to the agro-ecological conditions of the area. We also tested various fertilization techniques. The project is ongoing for the next four years with the objective of progressively restoring the soil and its organic layer and natural characteristics so that local communities can use this land for agricultural purposes following mine closure.



Equinox Gold is supporting the long-term conservation of Joshua trees in California, USA.



An agroforestry project takes root at Los Filos.



A bighorn sheep is transported for a health assessment as part of a wildlife preservation program funded by Equinox Gold.