SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA

FIGHTS PROPOSED PHOSPHATE MINE IN NORTH FLORIDA

GET INVOLVED

Voice your objections to the HPS II mine

Attend County Commission meetings.

Write your County Commissions:

Union County–secretary@unioncounty-fl.gov

Bradford County–rachel_rhoden@bradfordcountyfl.gov

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Share your concerns on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

Join a conservation organization that is working to stop the mine.

Tell Army Corp of Engineers that the new mine should not be permitted without first conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) An EIS is a document that describes the impacts on the environment as a result of a proposed action.

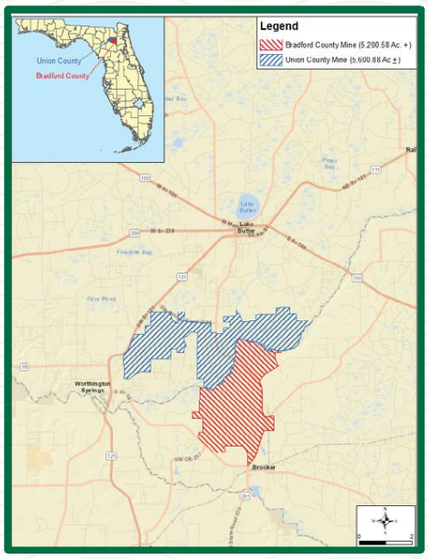
Contact:
Contact John P. Fellows at john.p.fellows@usace.army.mil
Re: HPS II Union Bradford Counties phosphate mine project, USACOE file # SAJ-2016-01212

For the most up-to-date information and action items visit the following:

Sierra Club Suwannee-St. Johns Group

http://ssjsierra.org/bradford-union-county-phosphate-mine-2017/

Our Santa Fe River
http://oursantaferiver.org/



This mine would operate over 11,000 acres in Bradford and Union Counties straddling the New River which flows into the Santa Fe River.

STOP THE HPS II PHOSPHATE MINE

New River, Santa Fe River & Our Water Resources are at Risk

HPS II Enterprises wants to strip mine for phosphate on both sides of the New River in Bradford and Union counties. The surrounding lands are identified as water resource caution areas. New River feeds into the impaired Santa Fe River and then into the Suwannee River. The potential for permanent negative impacts on ground and surface waters is an unacceptable risk!

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LONG TERM RECREATIONAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES OF NEW RIVER FAR OUTWEIGH ANY BENEFITS FROM MINING

ABOUT PHOSPHATE MINING

Phosphate is an ingredient in chemical fertilizer (vs. organic fertilizer alternatives) and is found in six districts in Florida. The Northern District, which includes areas of Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Hamilton, Putnam, Suwannee and Union Counties, has phosphate rock deposits that are found 30 or more feet below ground.

Phosphate rock is removed by strip mining. After the land is cleared, draglines with huge buckets are used to remove the top layer of soil to reach the rock.

Historically, a mix of sand, rock and clay is dug up and treated with thousands of gallons of water and reagents to release the phosphorus. This leaves behind acidic water, sand and clay that is returned to the mine site and stored in clay settling ponds (CSAs). The experimental method proposed by HPS II will not leave CSAs, however, the mining company has not been able to demonstrate that this method will work. If it fails, HPS II may find they have to use CSAs after all. CSAs take decades to dry out and settle before they can be reclaimed. CSAs will forever cover 40% of the reclaimed mine site and have very limited uses. Phosphate mining damages the environment in other ways. For example, the product, fertilizer, often pollutes surface and ground water as stormwater runoff from lawns and farms. Fertilizer in runoff fuels algae growth in streams and springs and can turn them from crystal clear to slimy green.

No phosphogypsum stacks will be located on the HPS II mine site. However, this waste byproduct created when phosphate rock is processed into fertilizer will be plaguing the area where the fertilizer is made. Phosphogypsum is required to be stored in huge stacks. The stacks emit radon and are also used to store and circulate acidic process water. The ponds on top of the stacks have sometimes overflowed after strong storms and heavy rains. Spilled acidic process water has caused large fish kills and long-term damage to aquatic vegetation. Florida gyp stacks also present risks to ground water resources because sinkholes can form under the stacks.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- The economic and social contributions from outdoor recreation, fisheries and agriculture to local communities are much greater than those of phosphate mining.
- Phosphate mining will forever change the wetlands, ground and surface water flows, wildlife habitat values and the communities in the vicinity of the mine.
- Mining is often incompatible with adjacent land uses. Neighboring landowners must tolerate land clearing, years of dust, truck traffic and the constant drone of equipment and machinery. It can take decades for a mine site to be reclaimed and released.
- Reclamation does not mean that land is returned to its pre-mining condition. Subsurface ground-water systems that are altered by mining cannot be put back together. The proposed new reclamation technique may significantly change the way water travels through the amended soils, affecting the riparian wetlands or flows of New River. In addition, habitat types like forested wetlands and xeric scrub are especially difficult to reclaim and take decades to mature.
- Mined land can also have elevated levels of radioactivity from radium-226 and other radionuclides including radon. Radon (222) is a radioactive gas that can cause documented negative health effects for those living in homes on reclaimed land.
- The proposed mine calls for an unproven, experimental process that claims to use less water and eliminate the need for clay settling ponds (CSAs). But this process has never been done large scale so we don't know if it will work.
- Even if CSAs are not needed, the reagents used to separate phosphate from the ore will remain in the sand/clay mix. Will those reagents (including fuel oil) contaminate the floodplain of New River?