



Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10am CT

TOPIC: Talon Metals/Rio Tinto Drilling, Sumps, and Cumulative Threats to Tamarack Region Waters and Communities

PRESENTER: Paula Maccabee, Executive Director & Counsel

WaterLegacy's Executive Director and Counsel, Paula Maccabee, will provide scientific and legal context to understand exploratory drilling by Talon Metals and Rio Tinto for potential nickel, copper, and platinum group metals in the Tamarack Intrusive Complex. Paula will then share information on Talon Metals/Rio Tinto exploratory drilling and sumps in the Tamarack region, their potential for cumulative harm to local waters and communities, and the environmental review and regulatory processes that apply to drilling, sumps, and the proposed mine.

Since graduating from Yale Law School in 1981, Paula Maccabee has served as a public interest lawyer focusing on human rights, and environmental protection, health, and justice. Paula is the Executive Director and Counsel for WaterLegacy and has directed WaterLegacy's advocacy, communications, and organizing work for 16 years.

Register for the meeting and receive the Zoom link [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/php/eventreg.php?eid=16)
(<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/php/eventreg.php?eid=16>).

NEW FACT SHEETS:

- **Difference Between High Sulfide Mining and Taconite Mining**
(<https://www.tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/HighSulfideVSTaconite.pdf>)
- **Minnesota Has Listed Round Lake as Impaired**
(<https://www.tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/RoundLakeImpaired.pdf>)
- **Talon Metals Dumping Toxic Drilling Waste**
(<https://www.tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TalonToxicSumps.pdf>)

NEW Tamarack Water Alliance Presentation

Science of Sulfide Mining: Dangers of Sulfide Mining
(<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/SulfideMining-details.pdf>)

DOWNLOAD Tamarack Water Alliance fact sheets/flyers [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html#flyers)
(<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html#flyers>).

DONATE to Tamarack Water Alliance: [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/donate.html)

(<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/donate.html>). Our current focus is on providing education about the risks of sulfide mining, narratives to counter the greenwashing and divisiveness that some mining companies promote, as well as forging connections to other communities concerned about sulfide mines in Minnesota, across the Midwest, and around the world.

Your donation goes to support our community educational activities which include tabling at community festivals and parades, participation in other community events, targeted speaking engagements with interested local organizations, monthly informational public zoom calls and an associated email newsletter, website and social media, letter writing campaigns and articles in local news outlets, interviews with media, and other community outreach and canvassing.

Sign-Up To Receive Updates from the DNR on Talon Metals Environmental Impact Statement here [here](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/tamarack-nickel-project.html) (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/tamarack-nickel-project.html>).

Too Risky: If you believe nickel-sulfide mining is too risky in Aitkin County, Tamarack Water Alliance has yard signs with this messaging available. Your \$6 donation helps defray costs. Email waters@tamarackwateralliance.org to arrange pickup of your sign.

Volunteer with the Tamarack Water Alliance. Send us an email at waters@tamarackwateralliance.org.

Sign Up For This Newsletter: Encourage your friends, family and neighbors to sign up for the monthly Tamarack Water Alliance email newsletter at tamarackwateralliance.org/php/articlereg.php.

Talon Metals/Rio Tinto Drilling, Sumps, and Cumulative Threats to Tamarack Region Waters and Communities



RIO TINTO - TALON METALS HEADQUARTERS | DRILLING FLUID SUMPS

Paula Maccabee is the Executive Director and Counsel for WaterLegacy, a non-profit organization with a mission to defend clean water and the communities that depend on clean water resources. Her presentation will provide important context to understand sulfide ore mining and will outline concerns with drill borings associated with Talon Metals/Rio Tinto exploration for nickel, copper and other metals in Aitkin and Carlton Counties, MN.

Talon and its partner Rio Tinto have drilled more than 554 drill borings in the Tamarack Intrusive Complex, collecting drilling wastes in unlined permanent sumps. Drilling in sulfide ore generates waste with high levels of salts (sulfate, chloride) and toxic heavy metals (e.g. arsenic, manganese, nickel, copper). No Minnesota agency has so far required Talon to test pollutants in the sumps, in surface water, or seeping into groundwater.

WaterLegacy's position is that both testing and environmental review is necessary to identify the adverse impacts of the sumps, mitigate the effects of drilling, and provide information needed by the public. Talon exploratory drilling activities and their cumulative effects should also be evaluated as part of any environmental impact statement for a proposed Talon/Rio Tinto mine project. WaterLegacy and community members are also separately requesting state agencies to conduct chemical analysis of sumps and drill sites and take additional regulatory as needed.

Potential cumulative effects of Talon exploratory drilling activities include contamination of wetlands, surface waters, groundwater, and drinking wells, adversely affecting aquatic life, wild rice and other culturally significant plants, biodiversity, wildlife, and human health going forward.

Paula's presentation will provide background on the relationships between copper-nickel mining pollution and harm to wild rice and increased mercury contamination of fish. She will also explain why an Environmental Assessment Worksheet should be required for Talon exploratory borings and describe the unique and vulnerable landscape within the Tamarack Intrusive Complex in the Mississippi River and St Croix River watersheds. Finally, Paula's presentation will explain the current status of the Talon/Rio Tinto proposed mine project and how members of the community can become involved in government regulatory processes. Questions and dialogue are welcome.



We Have A Sacred Duty to Protect Water and Manoomin (wild rice)

by Jean Skinaway-Lawrence, Chairwoman of the Sandy Lake Band of the Mississippi Chippewa and Sophia Patane, Community Engagement Director for Water Legacy

"Did you know the natural stands of wild rice (manoomin) in the lakes and rivers of Minnesota's Tamarack Region are among the most abundant in the world? The health of our relative, wild rice, sustains the health of our lakes, fish, wildlife and human communities."

"But the sacred and ecological abundance of Minnesota's "wild rice basket" is threatened by Talon Metals and Rio Tinto's proposal to mine copper and nickel from sulfide ore in one of the wettest areas ever considered for such a project."

"No sulfide ore mine in a water-rich environment has avoided polluting nearby surface and/or groundwater. Rio Tinto, Talon's minority owner, has a global track record of pollution and is notorious for destroying sacred indigenous sites. Talon Metals has never operated a mine."

"...Unlined sumps with high sulfide tailings already scab the region. One of the region's most abundant wild rice waters, Big Sandy Lake, is directly downstream from the proposed mine."

"Big Sandy and its flowage are designated "outstanding" wild rice waters by the Minnesota DNR. This abundance attracts indigenous and non-native harvesters from across Minnesota. DNR surveys have shown that 25% of wild rice harvesting trips in Minnesota—more than any other county—were in Aitkin County..."

"...While we come from different spiritual backgrounds, many of our beliefs share a teaching of reciprocal care. All living beings are part of God's creation and caring for that creation is a sacred duty."

"For the Ojibwe, protecting manoomin is a covenant. Wild rice is a sacred gift from and to the Creator. Losing this relationship with manoomin would be devastating."

Read Entire Letter: Aitkin Independent Age, August 14, 2025, Letters from Readers
https://www.messagemedia.co/aitkin/opinion/letters/letters-from-readers---8-13-25/article_e47fa20a-f5b3-4993-aad1-835bc31d302c.html

Who We Are

Tamarack Water Alliance is a group of local residents and landowners working together with others from across Minnesota to protect water and community health from the dangers of sulfide mining near our beloved lakes and wild rice beds, at the headwaters of the Kettle River and in the Mississippi River watershed. Visit our website [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/index.html) (https://tamarackwateralliance.org/index.html).

A proposal by a foreign owned mining company, Talon Metals/Rio Tinto to mine nickel and other metals near Tamarack in Aitkin County threatens the health of our communities. This kind of sulfide mining, especially in water-rich environments, has never been done without severe impacts to water and the health of those downstream. Mining here is also a threat to environmental justice and the long-term economic security of nearby native and rural communities.

Review our [community slide presentation](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf) (tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf) and download [informative flyers](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html) (tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html):

- Talon Mine Risks,
- Geology of Aitkin County,
- Talon Dumping Toxic Drilling Waste,
- Minnesota Declares Round Lake Impaired
- High Sulfide Mines Create Acid Mine Drainage,
- Nickel Not Needed for Future EV Batteries,
- Minnesota's Prime Wild Rice Lakes Under Threat,
- Difference Between High Sulfide Mining and Taconite Mining,
- Minnesota Regulators Poor Record In Protecting The Environment,
- Eagle Mine Environmental Report & Saving Our Meager Nickel Reserves
- Is There Really A Talon Tesla Supply Agreement? (no)
- Rio Tinto: A History of Corruption
- Green Bridge Metals -Canadian proposed sulfide mine near Duluth seeks to acquire battery rich mineral assets
- Copper and The Green Economy
- Prove It First!

We will send this monthly newsletter to keep you informed about this project, to share information and opportunities to act to protect clean water and community health.

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