



## **Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wednesday, January 3, 2024 10am CT**

*Hello from the Tamarack Water Alliance! If you are new to our email list we welcome you.* Local residents who volunteer with Tamarack Water Alliance compile and send this monthly newsletter to share updates, invitations, and informational articles.

Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting on **Wednesday, January 3, 2024 at 10am CT**. Our topic is **Protecting Our Lakes and Rivers**. Our speaker is **Jeff Forester, Director of Minnesota Lakes & Rivers** since its inception 30 years ago, author of the award winning book *The Forest for the Trees*, with an extensive background in forestry and public policy. In addition Forester is the lead organizer under Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI) criteria and has a strong background in lobbying, civic organizing, and navigating mining issues in Northern MN.

**Download** Tamarack Water Alliance fact sheets

<https://www.tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html>

**Sign-Up To Receive Updates from the DNR** on Talon Metals Environmental Impact Statement

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/tamarack-nickel-project.html>

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](mailto:waters@tamarackwateralliance.org) to arrange pickup of your sign.

**Volunteer** with the Tamarack Water Alliance. Send us an [email waters@tamarackwateralliance.org](mailto:waters@tamarackwateralliance.org).

Encourage your friends, family and neighbors to sign up for the monthly Tamarack Water Alliance [email newsletter](http://eepurl.com/hOboEb) (<http://eepurl.com/hOboEb>).

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## Protecting Our Lakes & Rivers

**Jeff Forester, Executive Director of Minnesota Lakes & Rivers**

This article was first published in its entirety *Emily Mine Group Providing Information on the Proposed Manganese Mine in Cass County* by the Crosby-Ironton Courier by Emily Hasskamp. Read full article (<https://mnlakesandrivers.org/emily-mining-group-providing-information-on-proposed-manganese-mine-in-cass-county/>).

Jeff Forester, as the Executive Director of Minnesota Lakes & Rivers, and a registered lobbyist spoke to an audience of thirty people in Emily, MN on October 16, 2023 in a letter writing and listening session regarding their concerns about a proposed manganese mine in Emily, MN. His group works to protect Minnesota's water. Forester provided an update on the current water quality in the state. He believes we are at a turning point. In 2018, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency reported 40% of surface waters were impaired. By 2020, this number had risen to 56%.

In his position, Forester regularly attends lake association meetings. With over 100,000 members, it's the largest civic organization in the state. Despite the large numbers, members haven't united into a single advocacy voice. He stated numbers matter and encouraged people to join this group and make their voices heard. He touched on the significance of heritage concerning family cabins and homes. While he wouldn't mind if his children sold the family home in the Twin Cities after his death, he jokingly said he would come back to haunt them if they ever sold the family lake home in northern Minnesota. Using his own family as an example, he wanted to illustrate how important lakeshore property is to generations of families. He stated 88% of residents living on lakes and rivers want to pass the property along to their children.

Forester spoke of the important role water plays in Minnesota. The state is one of only two places in the world where three continental watersheds meet. Additionally, it is the headwaters of the Mississippi River. He said we are the water source for the eastern half of the United States, which makes it crucial that we learn how to extract minerals without damaging our water.

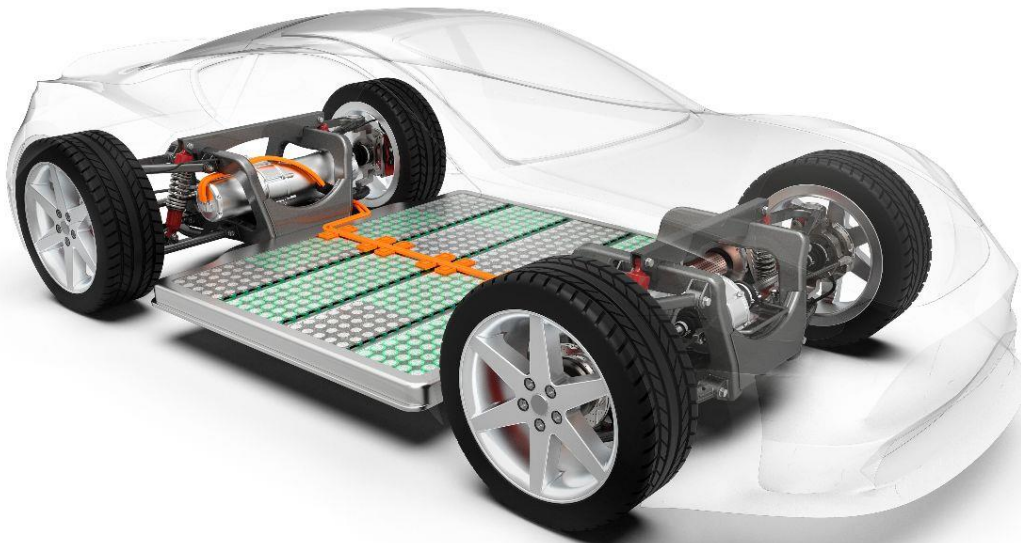
Several of those in attendance expressed concern about how mining would impact their water quality. Forester said if water quality declines, then everything is affected, including property values. He couldn't think of a city or town in Minnesota that isn't located on a lake or river, emphasizing that water connects us all. One of the challenges he sees is balancing the needs as we transition away from carbon with the need for water. Since minerals are essential, a solution must be found.

Compared to iron ore, Forester said manganese poses a greater risk because manganese contains sulfide. Since the Emily deposits are among the richest in the world, it's imperative to find a way to balance mining with water preservation. Several people in attendance raised concerns about their own water quality and encouraged others to have their water tested by an independent company.

Forester stressed the importance of having local voices on important issues, such as water and encouraged people to write handwritten letters to legislators since they receive so few of them. He said enacting change through a regulatory agency such as the DNR can be challenging, but it is possible at the legislative level because politicians require local support and need to be responsive to their constituents. Additionally, he highlighted organizing a base over time helps build political capital.

Dan Brennan, a community resident concluded the meeting by emphasizing the importance of engaging in discussions and working together as a united community. He expressed they are the guardians of their area and must face the ongoing challenges. Brennan encouraged the expansion of the group, welcoming diverse perspectives and fostering open communication to enhance the well-being of all community members.

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## **There's No Reason To Claim That Nickel Is Needed In Transition To A Green Economy**

**Tom Anderson, MSEE**

Battery and auto manufacturers have been racing to find new battery chemistries that are affordable, safe and long-lasting even at 100% charge. These new chemistries replace nickel and cobalt with iron, sulfur or sodium, all of which are

far cheaper.

Some people argue that nickel is critical to the green economy going forward. That assertion, examined in more detail, could not be further from the truth.

Myths are often founded in shards of truth. Certainly, in the past, electric vehicle (EV) batteries were almost exclusively powered by lithium-ion batteries that need significant amounts of nickel, manganese and cobalt. These lithium-ion batteries had high initial energy density but many shortcomings as well.

Tesla has been a leader in replacing lithium-ion batteries with new chemistries such as a lithium ferrous phosphate battery (commonly called LFP) that has no nickel or cobalt. LFP batteries are much safer and last two to four times longer than a lithium-ion even when charged to 100%. Tesla reported in the first quarter of 2022 that nearly half of their EVs were shipping with LFP batteries and they intended to transition their entire fixed storage product line to LFP very soon...

In addition, new battery chemistries are in development using lithium-sulfur and sodium that are all less costly, safer and perform as well if not better than lithium-ion batteries signaling the end of the nickel / cobalt based lithium-ion era.

Technology is changing quickly and we need to dispel the green nickel myth as its implications affect Minnesota in many ways: from mining of nickel in Tamarack, Minn., to the ideas of one Minnesota politician that electric vehicles are too expensive and don't work in cold weather (hint ... you need to replace the nickel-based Li-Ion batteries with the new battery chemistries coming out).

"There's No Reason To Claim that nickel is needed in the transition to a green economy" MinnPost, Opinion Dec.18, 2023

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2023/12/theres-no-reason-to-claim-that-nickel-is-needed-in-the-transition-to-a-green-economy/>

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## Who We Are

**Tamarack Water Alliance** ([tamarackwateralliance.org](http://tamarackwateralliance.org)) 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.

A proposal by a foreign owned mining company 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,  
([tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf](http://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf))

Download informative flyers: (<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html>)

- Talon Mine Risks,
- Geology of Aitkin County,
- High Sulfide Mines Create Acid Mine Drainage,
- Nickel Not Needed for Future EV Batteries,
- Minnesota's Prime Wild Rice Lakes Under Threat,
- Minnesota Regulators Poor Record In Protecting The Environment,
- Eagle Mine Environmental Report & Saving Our Meager Nickel Reserves

We will be sending this monthly newsletter to keep you informed about this project, to share information and opportunities to act, and to invite you to gatherings where you can connect with others who share a passion for clean water and community health.

