



## **Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wednesday, April 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, April 3, 2024 at 10am CT. Topic: An Ojibwe Man's Perspective on Extractivism.** Nagaajiwanaang gichi-ayaa'aa/FDL Elder Ricky DeFoe will speak about his recent trip to Serbia to support local people resisting a Rio Tinto lithium mine in the Jadar Valley.

“Extractivism is a short-sighted model of development seen around the world that exploits natural resources on a massive scale, creating significant economic profits for the powerful few in the short term, but too often resulting in minimal benefits for the communities where these resources are found.

(<https://columbanjpe.org/article/what-extractivism>)

**WATCH VIDEO** (<https://youtu.be/EHRXO6K1Gpg>) Elder Ricky Defoe in Serbia

**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 [here](#)

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](#) at

[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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## **An Ojibwe Man's Perspective on Extractivism – Nagaajiwanaang gichi-ayaa'aa/FDL Elder Ricky DeFoe**

“By exploiting geopolitical tensions and the climate crisis, the mining industry has been able to evade oversight, often on our Indigenous lands and waters.”-Nagaajiwanaang gichi-ayaa'aa

St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology defines extractivism as, “A short-sighted model of development seen around the world that exploits natural resources on a massive scale, creating significant economic profits for the powerful few in the short term, but too often resulting in minimal benefits for the communities where these resources are found.”

In February 2024, Fond du Lac elder Nagaajiwanaang gichi-ayaa'aa, or Ricky DeFoe was accompanied by Tamarack Water Alliance volunteers to a conference held in Serbia for representatives of communities targeted by a global wave of new mining proposals. Minnesotans met their counterparts from Portugal, Ireland, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Greece, all facing a rush on minerals justified by transitioning from fossil fuels.



The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Minnesota would be negatively impacted by pollution if Glencore's PolyMet open pit copper-sulfide mine in Hoyt Lakes (renamed NewRange) were permitted to start operations. As a panelist at the Green Horizons Academy held in Belgrade and featured on numerous Serbian news outlets, Ricky spoke to the Fond du Lac Band's successful resistance to the PolyMet mine. The delegation from Minnesota and their Serbian hosts share a common threat from a mining giant with designs on Serbia's lithium and Minnesota's nickel – the British-Australian multinational company that is the world's second largest metals and mining corporation – Rio Tinto.

Although at the beginning of 2022, after mass protests throughout Serbia, the authorities announced that the plan of "Rio Tinto" to open a mine in this place was stopped, at the beginning of 2024, messages arrived that the company had not left Serbia after all. (<https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/rio-tinto-aktivisti-sad-srbija/32824791.html>)

A recent example of Rio Tinto's ruthlessness was demonstrated by its destruction of ancient Aboriginal rock caves in Australia in 2020.

The international delegation visited the village of Gorni Nedeljice in western Serbia to get a first-hand look at the so-called 'Jadar Project' targeting the Jadar River Valley.

*"Since mid-2022, the year Serbia's government revoked licences for a \$2.4 billion lithium mine, Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto has spent at least 1.2 million euros on land in the area that it hoped to exploit."*

<https://balkaninsight.com/2023/02/23/rio-tinto-spends-million-euros-on-serbian-land-since-mine>

In Gorni Nedeljice, the delegation witnessed a village whose housing stock had been eviscerated at Rio Tinto's request and left in place with roofs and windows removed, warning signs declaring the structures unstable. This was widely understood to be a tactic of psychological warfare against the holdouts.

The delegates received a traditional welcome at a pavilion built by the villagers as a meeting place, rejecting a company offer to fund community space. After greetings and conversation facilitated by interpreters, the guests were given a tour of the area which drove home the scale of the proposed open pit lithium mine which would swallow the landscape. Inspecting drilling sites, the hosts pointed out how nothing would grow around the bore holes. This was attributed to heavy metals released from exploratory drilling.

*"Each case is different, but the tactics are the same. As everywhere in the world, Rio Tinto buys land from the local population and invests heavily in lobbying politicians,"* says Shanai Matteson from the Tamarack Water Alliance.

Talon Metals is headquartered in the British Virgin Islands and has never operated a mine. It owns 51% of the proposed Tamarack mine project. The other 49% is owned by Kennecott Exploration Company, a subsidiary of Rio Tinto, which is the power and money behind Talon's public relations efforts promoting the plan to mine nickel.

The sense of mutual support was profound for all the participants. There was recognition that Rio Tinto's playbook of financial coercion and leveraging political systems is the same in Serbia as it is in Minnesota. The ruined houses of Gorni Nedeljice may foreshadow the future of the area surrounding Tamarack in Aitkin County, Minnesota. Serbia rose up because the people recognize Rio Tinto would have little incentive to stop consuming the land once it had become established.

Serbian radio (Radio Slobodna Evropa) quoted DeFoe, *"We need to have access to clean resources, uncontaminated areas to hunt, fish, grow and harvest nature's fruits. That's not possible when the area is polluted."* He explained further, *"We are here to help each other. When we talk about nature, about life, it concerns all of us."*



## DAMAGE MINING COMPANIES INFLICT

**Gorni Nedeljice Village, Serbia - One of a number of demolished houses left in place by Rio Tinto with warning signs declaring the structure unstable as a tactic of psychological warfare against the holdouts.**

### **Mining Blasts Wrecked Her Home**

What to do when vibrations from mining blasts damages structurally sound homes? I live in a home my husband built in 1976. Throughout the years, the home has always been maintained very well.

I, like many people on the Iron Range live close to a mine. As time passed, mining operations have come closer to my property...the mining company will conduct several blasts a week. **These blasts can be very large and even simulate an aftershock or earthquake.** Pictures and items on the shelves move during the blasts ...I have called the company numerous times and they have sent people out to the property. I was told different reasons, none of which were a result of their blasting....no admit to the damage being caused by the blasting except for a broken window in the garage that they agreed to fix.

A contractor came out to fix the basement at my expense. I was faced with a bill

of more than \$23,000...I am an 80 years old on a fixed income. I was forced to dive into my savings and take out a loan to pay for these damages. This is only the basement. The damage to the main floor is still there.

*Nina Burla, Mountain Iron, Minnesota*

*Excerpted from Inbox, The Reader, Duluth, MN Feb. 22, 2024*

<https://duluthreader.com/articles/2024/02/22/127462-letters-feb-22-2024>

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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.



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