



Invitation to Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting - Wed. June 8, 2022, 10am CT

Welcome to the Tamarack Water Alliance sixth monthly newsletter. We thank you for signing up for these updates. Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 at 10am CT. This is an opportunity for you to learn about risks to the community of the proposed Talon Metals mine in Aitkin County and whether Minnesota's regulatory agencies always protect the environment. Please bring your questions, concerns, and ideas. We will also share updates on other facets of our work to inform our neighbors and community.

For this month's newsletter, we focus on the dual role of Minnesota's regulatory agencies to both support development while protecting the environment and how that does not always work out so well.

If you believe nickel-sulfide mining is too risky in Aitkin County, Tamarack Water Alliance has yard signs with this messaging available for a \$6 donation.

We hope you will share this information with others and keep in touch as we build a community that can protect water and health from the dangers of sulfide mining.

Tamarack Talon Metals Mine Risks

We are NOT making this up. All of this information is published in the Talon Metals PEA, a lengthy 350 page document posted on their website. You can read it here: https://talonmetals.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Talon-Tamarack-PEA3_2021.pdf

Talon's marketing says nothing about these details that will deplete our aquifers, contaminate our water supplies, and make Tamarack a permanent toxic waste

site.

- Talon plans to pump 2.3 million gallons of water a day out of our local aquifers. SOURCE: PEA p. 276.
- This dirty water may not be treated, yet will be contaminated with sulfide ore and dust. SOURCE: Talonmetals.com/commonly-asked-questions/ "Most modern mine water is not toxic."
- Additionally, a great deal of water will be needed for the first stage of mineral processing on site. SOURCE: PEA p. 248
- And where will they put all this contaminated water that they do not appear to want to filter?
- In 12 years after mining ceases, Talon plans to cover not remove the 82 ft high 75 acre high sulfide and cobalt contaminated tailings pile. SOURCE: PEA p. 264. Overtime the tailings pile will deteriorate and contaminate the surrounding area. SOURCE: pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23625128/. Do we want a permanent toxic waste storage facility in Tamarack?
- Real estate values will drop. Who wants to own property next to a toxic mine?
- Talon owns mineral rights to 32 square miles which will affect a large number property owners. Clearly this is a BIG project.
- The toxic "Mt. Talon" formed by the high sulfide tailings pile will be a new geologic feature, visible for 15-20 miles. It will be located on the highest ground around, with Horseshoe, Lake Minnewawa, Round Lake, and Big Sandy all downhill. SOURCE: en-gb.topographic-map.com/maps/ilbc/Aitkin-County/.
- Wind will blow the dust from the contaminated pile and mine ventilation shafts into the surrounding area, and dust from normal mining operations will contaminate the environment and pose human health risks.
- The large majority of jobs will go to skilled contractors (not employees) outside the area who will not have benefits. SOURCE: PEA p. 238.
- What happens when Talon leaves since it is a non-US company? What if they go bankrupt? Is our community left with a mess?

We hope you will share this information with others and keep in touch as we build a community that can protect water and health from the dangers of sulfide mining.

Do Minnesota's Regulatory Agencies Really Protect The Environment?

Two Minnesota agencies are involved in the regulation of mining activities in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

- Promulgates and enforces Minnesota's copper-nickel mining rules,
- Oversees the environmental review process for proposed mining operations,
- Grants permits to mine and

- Oversees the reclamation process once mining operations cease.

In addition, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency ("MPCA") participates in the environmental review process and oversees the granting of air and water permits for mining operations. However, the MPCA generally begins its regulatory role after mine plans have been approved. As such, the DNR is the lead agency relative to mining in Minnesota from start to finish.

The DNR, based on Minnesota mining laws, has a dual mandate to both promote copper-nickel mining development and to regulate the environmental impacts of such mines. This dual mandate has the potential to create serious environmental consequences in an already dangerous situation. We cannot assume that the DNR is looking out for the local community and the environment as they go through mine reviews and permitting processes. Although many in the DNR and MPCA care deeply about the environment, more often than not, the "development" mandate takes priority.

There are many cases to demonstrate the DNR's preference for "development" and their often cavalier approach to environmental damage. The United States of America v. Reserve Mining Company, 408 F. Supp. 1212 (D. Minn. 1976), was a US District Court for the District of Minnesota case that determined that Reserve Mining Company was responsible for amphibole asbestos fibers found in the public drinking water of Duluth, Minnesota and other North Shore (Minnesota) communities. It is interesting to note that it was NOT the DNR or MPCA that filed this case but the US Department of Justice on behalf of the EPA. The DNR and MPCA seemed just fine with allowing asbestos fibers in our drinking water.

Indeed, the Reserve Mining Company claimed that it was impossible to dump the tailings on land. During the trial, however, subpoenaed documents showed that Reserve had already examined dumping the sediment on land as an alternative method of disposal. And indeed, in 1980, 10 years after the original lawsuit, Reserve began to deposit waste in an inland pond. Reserve Mining as well as Minnesota agencies sat on their hands for 10 years before finally taking action.

This dual mandate creates a split within the DNR. Many agency employees are truly dedicated to preserving a clean and healthy environment. However, mines generate significant royalty and tax revenue for the state that help fund programs that benefit the people of Minnesota. But does it have to be either / or? If we all work together, it is possible to support development along with a healthy environment.

As such, we must continue to press mining companies to clean up their act, providing good solutions to mitigate environmental impact and we must insist that the DNR and MPCA not compromise on health of our environment.

As we apply these lessons to the Talon Tamarack Mine project, we must make sure that Talon adequately addresses the concerns raised (they have not addressed any of the concerns) and that the DNR and MPCA does their job to "regulate the environmental impacts" to eliminate damage to the local environment. So far Talon simply relies on marketing fluff statements that they'll be green. They do not seem to

care that their detailed mining plans published on their website beg to differ.

References:

1. <https://minnesotalawreview.org/2022/04/01/copper-nickel-mining-and-the-minnesota-department-of-natural-resources-dual-mandate-how-to-ensure-environmental-consequences-in-the-industry-can-be-alleviated/>
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_v._Reserve_Mining_Company

As landowners we can collectively raise our voices and say “Nickel Mining- Too Risky.” The Tamarack Water Alliance has these yard signs available now for a \$6 donation.

If you believe nickel-sulfide mining is too risky in Aitkin County we encourage you to convey your opposition to this mine. Email waters@tamarackwateralliance.org to arrange pick up of your sign.

Learn more about the concerns of the Talon Metals mine at <https://tamarackwateralliance.org/> and <https://tamarackmine.org>.

Download the most recent community concerns slide presentation <https://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf>

Download the Tamarack Mine Risks Flyer <https://www.tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TalonMineRisks.pdf>



"From the White House to local newspapers, a hubbub about demand for new minerals is underway. Demand projections are so complicated that they're often accepted at face value and subsequently used to justify incredibly risky mining projects. That's dangerous for a myriad of reasons. Given the implications this faulty narrative has on other natural resources, such as water, as well as on our urgent efforts to counter the climate crisis, it's important to dive deeper into the biases and uncertainties driving such projections.

...It's important to keep in mind that mining companies have incentives to inflate demand in order to attract investors and garner political influence. Their bottom-line is to protect their profits, not a liveable climate.

Unfortunately, the regulatory system in Minnesota was not built to balance the costs of mining for new materials against the potential gains of one type of climate action. As a result, conversations that focus solely on metals and energy fail to take the 360-degree perspective needed to weigh the true costs and benefits of climate actions and ensure we invest in the ones that will actually protect our climate and communities into the future. "

**Abby Rogerson, Northeastern Minnesota Program Associate
MCEA Duluth Office, author of April 5, 2022 post
*Unpacking Critical Mineral Demand Projections***

(<https://www.mncenter.org/critical-minerals>)

Who We Are

Tamarack Water Alliance (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.

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.

