



## **Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wed. June 7, 2023, 10am CT**

*Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 at 10am CT. As summer quickly approaches, many of us here in the Northland are turning our attention to the lakes, rivers and outdoor activities that we love. We also continue to talk with our families and neighbors about the importance of protecting our precious places for future generations. How can we protect clean water and conserve natural resources, while also consuming those resources to build a healthy rural economy?*

This is one of the contradictions facing our community, a place of abundant clean water and wildlife - and a place where international mining company Rio Tinto is prospecting for metals they claim are necessary to solve the problem of climate change.

**Tamarack Water Alliance welcomes author Aaron Brown to our June 7th monthly community Zoom meeting.** Brown is a prolific writer about history, life, culture and politics on Minnesota's Iron Range, where Brown was born and raised. Known for iron ore and taconite mining, the Iron Range is also the site of two other proposals for copper-nickel mines, which are bound up in high-sulfide ores.

Download Tamarack Water Alliance fact sheets

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

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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## Perspectives on Minnesota Mining with Aaron Brown

Brown wrote recently in his piece about **The Troubled Border Between Consumption and Conservation**, “Respecting this thin, jagged line between consumption and conservation is not just some hippie fantasy... It is the sole purpose of our existence on this land. This border, cloaked in rich but threatened forests, represents the viability of our civilization. Once crossed, there is no going back.”

This is a sobering thought. If we allow sulfide mining in Minnesota, it will be impossible to clean up the environmental damage that is likely to persist for 500+ years in our water-rich environment. A literature review on acid mine drainage concluded that “no hard rock surface mine exists today that demonstrates that acid mine drainage can be stopped once it occurs on a large scale.” <https://earthworks.org/issues/acid-mine-drainage/>

Brown in his article **Hope for the Iron Range Economy, But We Must Put the Past Behind Us**, raises the question of “What if Minnesota iron didn’t just make steel, but could be used as an efficient way to store energy in cutting-edge batteries?” In this way Minnesota could participate in a viable climate change solution that supported the transition from fossil fuels to electrification. While northern Minnesota does not have enough of the rare minerals necessary for battery storage for EV’s and solar power, Brown explores the innovative solution of iron-air batteries developed by Form Energy which creates iron-air modular storage units that store energy for days not hours. “Iron-air batteries turn iron to rust and then reverse the process to create energy” says Brown. Imagine northern Minnesota could fuel wind and solar energy with iron-air batteries. Brown argues that Minnesota needs to be open to the real developing iron market for battery storage so as not to be left in the past.

Mining is not the only solution. Brown turns his attention to the potential of e-waste recycling to meet the demand for minerals without relying on new mines, “Even modest improvement would generate a mine’s worth of economic impact that can be sustained beyond the life of mining.” In his blog post **Minnesota Can Lead and Prosper in E-Recycling** Brown states that mining may not be the practical or environmentally sound way to go. He goes further: **Minerals from recycled products are just as valuable as those that are mined!** Brown quotes a study from Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability, Macalester College and Repowered that says only 24% of Minnesota’s electronic waste is recycled. ‘Think of jobs and revenue that could be developed if there was a state-wide recycling program in addition to copper for the manufacture of 155,000 EV’s and enough silver to produce 441,000 solar panels.’

Much of Aitkin County is considered part of the “service area” for the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board or IRRRB, because of its proximity to the Cuyuna and Mesabi Ranges – and we look forward to learning from this conversation about our shared past and future as a region.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS NEEDED BY MAY 31st!** **Say No to New Nickel Prospecting & Pollution in the Great Lakes!**

Talon Metals, an exploration and marketing company that works on behalf of global mining giant Rio Tinto–Kennecott and Tesla, is already developing a massive nickel mining district in northern Minnesota, in Tamarack near the Mississippi River and Anishinaabe wild rice country.

Now, Talon Metals also wants to begin exploratory drilling for nickel on 400,000 acres of land in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, including parcels to which the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) holds mineral rights. *This would put even more of our public lands and waters at risk, including Lake Superior. The Great Lakes hold one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water!* Add your voice alongside others in Michigan, and beyond! New nickel mines are not needed to solve climate change, but clean water is critical to us all.

**Submit your comments to the [Michigan DNR](#) by May 31st**

**[Talking Points and Sample Letters to the Michigan DNR](#)**

**EMAIL your comments by May 31st directly to the [MICHIGAN DNR](#)**



### **Volunteer With Tamarack Water Alliance**

Do you enjoy visiting with other people and sharing about the places you love?

Volunteer with Tamarack Water Alliance this summer! Join us for a couple of hours or for one of the many day-long events and festivals we attend together. TWA volunteers typically share informational handouts and talk to neighbors who care about clean water and the future of our community. You can also volunteer from home with phone calls or by helping us to prepare communication materials to be mailed or hand delivered to neighbors.

Send a note to [waters@tamarackwateralliance.org](mailto:waters@tamarackwateralliance.org).

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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 seven 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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