



Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wednesday, November 6, 2024 10am CT

Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting **Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 10am. Topic: The Nexus of Water and Our Future Energy Transition with Peg Furshong, Director of Programs, CURE.** As we move to decarbonize our energy sector the elephant in the room that no one is talking about is water. Many of the existing and emerging technologies are extremely energy intensive and as a result – water intensive. We will provide an overview of what we at CURE see is on the horizon for Minnesota and talk about the challenges to protect our natural heritage.

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>)

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:](#) In March 2024 Tamarack Water Alliance incorporated as a Minnesota non-profit. We are not certified as a federal non-profit (e.g. 501c3). 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)

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.

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

What Do CO2 Pipelines, Hydrogen Hubs, Data Centers and Industrial Agriculture All Have in Common? Water

Peg Furshong and Clovis Curl, CURE

With many new projects on the horizon for the Upper Midwest, it is time we pause and reflect on a critical question: What is the value of water?

Here in the Midwest, we often pride ourselves on being “water rich” – think “Land of 10,000 Lakes” – but this overlooks the growing strain on our water from rapidly-expanding water intensive industries. Let’s consider how these growing industries will affect our future. While it’s hard to imagine not having water in the midst of a rainy season, just this time last year we were in severe drought that left some communities scrambling to figure out how they were going to supply their community with drinking water. One – or two or three– rainy seasons won’t make this issue go away.

Let’s tease this out a bit.

Industrial Agriculture – The Upper Midwest is known for our roots in agriculture and yet many know that west central and southwestern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota is home to North America’s largest corporate dairy operation. Yes – [Riverview Dairy](#) is based in

Stevens County Minnesota. Their entire corporate footprint extends into North Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico and Arizona. Online you can find that they have over a dozen dairies and nearly 100,000 cows in Minnesota alone. On average and depending on the time of year, a dairy cow consumes 40 gallons of water per day. That is roughly 4 million gallons of water per day. There are also crop farms that grow the feed for these cows and many of them irrigate at some point in the season. Dairy operations are only one component of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) system; there are also swine and poultry barns throughout the landscape. Many of these operations, if not all, rely on Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Water Allocation permits for wells. Many of these wells are not monitored by any flow meter and the MNDNR relies on the permit holders to report the water use on these permits. These permits begin at \$140 for up to 50 million gallons per year and then the permit holder pays \$3.50 to \$8.00 for each million gallons of water over 50 million gallons per year. Basically – pennies on the dollar.

Biofuels Industry – Take ethanol production: In addition to the water it takes to grow the corn, it takes roughly 3 to 3.5 gallons of water to make one gallon of ethanol. A single plant, like the Green Plains Ethanol Plant in Fergus Falls, MN, uses about 165 million gallons per year (mgy) of water to produce 55 mgy of ethanol.

CO2 Pipelines – In 2022, Summit Carbon Solutions filed permits to build the Midwest Carbon Express, the “World’s largest CO2 Pipeline,” spanning five Midwest states and connecting over 57 ethanol plants. To put the CO2 (gas) in the pipeline, it must first be captured, distilled, and compressed for transport. This Carbon Capture process is extremely water and energy intensive. Based on current permit applications, this technology more than doubles the water and energy footprint of making ethanol. For a plant like Green Plains, water use would jump to over 300 mgy.

Hydrogen Hubs: Hydrogen hubs are seen as part of the US strategy to decarbonize difficult industries that are seen as essential parts of our economy such as chemicals, shipping fuel, fertilizer and steel production. Because these industries are essential to the US economy, it is thought that it warrants public investment in this infrastructure to keep the US on track with our climate goals in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). While the production of hydrogen seems to provide options for these industries, hydrogen is not all that it seems. It is yet another extremely energy and water intensive industry that has many environmental groups concerned as we see the cumulative impact on our freshwater supply.

Data Centers: To accommodate the rapid growth of mobile internet and cloud-based services, data centers (DCs) are popping up across the Upper Midwest. These facilities are extremely energy intensive and require significant amounts of water to cool their processors. The more

energy they consume, the more water they need, creating a feedback loop of increased demand. DCs can only be built in places that have reliable access to energy and water – putting stress on areas that have access to both and straining existing resources. As the Information Revolution evolves, there is a need to address the sustainability of the resources needed to support the growth.

What does this mean for the Upper Midwest? We may think of ourselves as “water rich” and only industries located in the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, West Coast and Southwest are struggling with water. We see this in the agricultural, biofuels, microchips, and energy sectors just to name a few. It would be strategic for local and state governments to start paying more attention to their freshwater supplies and examine their water use, consumption and footprint.

While there is always a focus to build local rural economies, we must do so smartly. Climate change is already adding stress to our freshwater drinking supplies. How can we plan better for the future? What policies should we be putting into place to protect our water?

The million-dollar question remains: What is the value of water? We know we cannot live without it. Water is an essential part of all that we are and do. It’s time we go beyond putting a price tag on it and make water a core consideration in every part of our plan for the future.



Closed for Three Decades Panguna Mine (Rio Tinto) Impact Thousands

Bougainville Island's decommissioned Panguna mine — once one of the world's most profitable — poses ongoing risks to humans, a new report has found. Toxic waste, mine rock and decaying infrastructure from the Rio Tinto-operated mine continue to threaten thousands of residents, even three decades on from its closing.

A large-scale study of social and environmental impacts from Rio Tinto's abandoned Papua New Guinea Panguna mine in Bougainville has found a plethora of actual and potential human rights violations, including risks to life. Results from the Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment will be publicly released next month.

Landmark report uncovers human rights abuses at Rio Tinto gold mine in Bougainville, 35 years after closure, Exclusive by Papua New Guinea correspondent Marian Faa

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-10-13/human-rights-abuses-found-at-rio-tinto/104463224>

EPA Determined Sulfide-Ore Mining 'the Most Toxic Industry'

David Lien, an avid hunter and paddler in the BWCA reminds readers of President Joe Biden's Public Land Order 7917 which protects the headwaters of the Boundary Waters for 20 years, via the withdrawal of thousands of acres of federal land from the federal mineral leasing program. He goes on to quote former St. Louis County Commissioner Frank Jewell who wrote in a February Duluth News Tribune op/ed

*"The EPA determined this kind of mining to be the most toxic industry..Don't forget that sulfide-ore mining has never been conducted in Minnesota--ever. **Some people who don't know or who ignore the facts will tell you it's safe. Don't be swayed.**"*

- Local View: [Sulfide Mining Destroys Watersheds](https://www.duluthnewstribune.com/opinion/columns/local-view-sulfide-mining-destroys-watersheds), David Lien, Duluth News Tribune, October 12, 2024

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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,
- 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
- Prove It First! (The AFL-CIO Has Its Facts Wrong!)

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.

