



## **Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wed. October 5, 2022, 10am CT**

*Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting on Wednesday, October 5, 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. October's meeting will compare the Eagle Mine in Michigan with the Talon Tamarack Mine and cover additional updates. Thank you for signing up for our email newsletter.*

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.

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.

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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## **Extractive Industries Cannot Compete with Tourism and Recreation as an Economic Driver by Lynn Mizner**

For the second time during the past decade, residents of Aitkin County are being subjected to an avalanche of marketing materials designed to persuade them that embracing proposed extractive industries would be in the best interest of their families and communities.

The first instance was the Enbridge Energy project dubbed "Line 3 Replacement," a

pipeline designed to carry tar sands crude oil from oil fields in Alberta, Canada to Lake Superior in Minnesota. Despite significant opposition from Minnesotans who engaged in public comment, provided testimony and appeals to their legislators and governor, the project went ahead.

Now another foreign company, Talon Metals, Inc. is using the same or similar playbook to convince Aitkin County residents to embrace an underground nickel sulfide mine proposed for location in and around Tamarack, a village between McGregor and Cromwell on Hwy. 210. Talon Metals has the task of marketing this potentially disastrous mine. Talon is not a mining company and does not have the financial resource to do the actual mining, so its staff is working hard to build community support and to promote investment in the company. Eventually, if all goes as Talon plans, a mining company will purchase the rights to mine and will undertake the actual mine operation.

As was the case with Enbridge Energy's campaign, Talon Metals message is that embracing a mine in Tamarack will be a huge economic boon to Aitkin County. The argument is that this project will create high-paying union jobs for residents, will include the construction of worker housing, road building and related projects that will bring outside dollars into the county.

Scientists and others who recognize the value of Aitkin County's wealth in terms of wetlands, lakes, rivers and the wildlife, forests and plants that depend on them for survival are skeptical. Indigenous residents of the area who have rights to harvest manoomin (wild rice), fish, game and medicines from the highly productive wetlands are concerned about contamination of those resources with airborne and water-borne contaminants that would arise from the mining operation. At a recent conference of water scientists and geologists sponsored by Freshwater, attendees spoke about those concerns and provided examples of other sulfide ore extractions that have raised the sulfate levels in waters above the Minnesota standard of 10 parts per million (ppm), creating an environment where manoomin cannot reproduce. In addition, sulfur lowers the pH (increases the acidity) of the the waters, making it more likely that mercury will be released into the water column and taken up by fish, birds and humans who eat creatures that live in the water.

The risks of this kind of environmental degradation from mining operation include potential economic damage to Aitkin County and surrounding areas. Lakeshore property values will be negatively affected, as will outdoor recreation values that have become a key component of Aitkin County's economic welfare. All-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails are creating a huge draw to the county from all over the state and beyond. Boating is increasing in popularity, bringing well-heeled visitors who rent cabins, buy gas, food and liquor. Paddling adventures on the Ripple, Swan, Snake and Mississippi Rivers trails abound. Resorts and motels are seeing increased seasonal business as people come to enjoy the clean air, water, fisheries, hunting and world-class ATV trails. All of this is threatened by the likely contamination that would occur as a predictable outcome of a nickel sulfide mine.

In 2001, then-governor Rudy Perpich commissioned a study of bottlenecks to

economic development in the arrowhead region of northeastern Minnesota. The study region encompassed a twelve-county area of northeastern Minnesota that centered on the city of Duluth (St. Louis County). Also included are Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Cook, Isanti, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Lake, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties. The resulting report is linked at <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/189294>.

Although this study is now 20 years old, even at that time tourism and recreation was identified as a major economic driver for the Northeast Minnesota economy. The industry represents a substantial and growing share of regional employment, a much larger share than in other parts of the state. The report also identified management of public land as having a tremendous impact on the tourism and recreation industry. Since the time of that report, Aitkin County's ATV, snowmobile and bicycle trails have increased as local government units recognize the sustainable and growing tourism and recreation sector and seek to increase their shares of that economic growth. Aitkin County's campgrounds are booked out a year in advance, for the first time in history.

Why would the residents of northern Minnesota put that long-term growth at risk by embracing a nickel sulfide mine that may or may not bring a short-term blip of economic investment into the area? The proposed mine will negatively impact the long tourism and recreation business – after all, who wants to vacation at a toxic mine site? It doesn't make sense.

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## 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](https://talonmetals.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Talon-Tamarack-PEA3_2021.pdf)

Talon plans to pump up to 2.3 million gallons of water a day out of our local aquifers. (SOURCE: PEA p. 276). Even if filtered, this level of pumping will surely lower water levels substantially in our lakes and wetlands. And where do they put all this water?

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). We know that such liners leak over time resulting in future contamination of the area.

Wind will blow the dust from the contaminated tailings pile and mine ventilation shafts into the surrounding area, and dust from normal mining operations will contaminate the environment and pose human health risks.

Learn more at [tamarackwateralliance.org](http://tamarackwateralliance.org) and [tamarackmine.org](http://tamarackmine.org). 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.



*Allowing sulfide mining to take place in Aitkin County is like borrowing the neighbor's tool and returning it dirty and mangled. Minnesota has her share of bankrupt mines that left their mark on the landscape. Our rural paradise is worth protecting and promoting with tourism.*

**Learn more about Aitkin county natural resources:**

Aitkin Outdoor County birding/wildlife, bike trails, fishing, snowmobiling, ATV Trails, Golf Courses, Canoeing Rivers, Area Parks, Great River Road.

<https://aitkin.com/outdoor-recreation/>

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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](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf))

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

- Talon Mine Risks,
- 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,
- Responsible Mining
- 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.

