



Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wednesday, October 2, 2024 10am CT

Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting **Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at 10am. Topic: Talon, What is the Real Story with Chris Baldwin, retired mining engineer.** His last position was Technical Services Superintendent helping with permitting and starting up the historic sulfide Haile Gold Mine in South Carolina. Baldwin has spent half of his career on the Iron Range in a variety of positions including mine management, mine planning engineering, tailings dam construction and underground mine planning and operations. Minnesota must be realistic about what the whole Talon nickel mine project is likely to entail. Can we really contain and clean up long term sulfide mining pollution?

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>)

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](mailto:waters@tamarackwateralliance.org) at waters@tamarackwateralliance.org.

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

The Talon Mine and The Nose of the Camel

Chris Baldwin, Retired Mining Engineer

Accelerating Exploration by International Mining in Minnesota

The Minnesota Regional Copper Nickel study (1979) describes a camel whose nose was just poking inside the tent. This deceptive beast is not unlike another one that first appeared as an inconspicuous feature on the landscape, and has since grown into a nearly 100 mile long iron mining district of interconnected pits, waste dumps, and tailings ponds that carve a deep cleft on the landscape.

Now, accelerating exploration by international miners to discover and develop a shrinking number of low-cost mineable resources is putting pressure on Minnesota's regulators to expedite mine permits without considering the regional impact of multiple projects as in 1979. Currently, Talon is asking for a permit to extract from only a tiny high grade zone while they continue to drill to expand into a potentially district-sized mining area. Since I wrote the ["Beware 'limited scope' Talon Metals project"](#) oped last year, new copper nickel discoveries and expanding mine plans have been announced by the international miners, raising concerns about the regional impacts.

Relevance of Halle Gold Mine in South Carolina

What was once the site of America's first gold rush in 1827, I helped the permitting team as the Mine Technical Superintendent restart the Haile Gold mine which became a full scale, modern mining operation, with world class sulfide waste containment. In my presentation (on the upcoming October 2024 Zoom call) I will talk about the work we did to win mine permits in three years, and how we arrived at our decision to use a double lined sulfide containment system that has become more commonplace in modern mining. Our group intention was to make the Haile Gold Mine in South Carolina an example of how sulfide mining could be done responsibly. And even with this level of design that still couldn't guarantee complete pollution containment

Public Awareness Necessary Regarding Sulfide Containment

I don't see this level of sulfide containment being proposed in any new copper nickel mine plans submitted for permitting approval in Minnesota. The public needs to be aware that without at least a higher class of containment, a crisis of heavy metal pollution in our state's lakes and streams is inevitable.

Rio Tinto (Talon's parent company) and the other international miners appear to expect the same low cost, minimal sulfide pollution containment as the taconite miners currently enjoy. Measurable amounts of sulfides present in the taconite ore can, and have already caused similar environmental effects as copper-nickel mining. The profit margin of these lower grade ores raises the risk of sulfide pollution due to the high cost of water treatment and sulfide containment in taconite mines, and likely copper-nickel mines as well.

Chris Baldwin's Background

As a Colorado School of Mines graduate ('79) mining engineer currently residing in Hibbing, my last position before retirement in 2018, was the Mine Technical Services Superintendent at Romarco Minerals Inc. I am a third generation iron ranger and have worked as a mine engineer and or manager in six underground mines and two open pit taconite mines, and as a plant engineer, built a large factory in Denver. I was awarded Engineer of the Year in 1997 by the Society of Mine Engineers.



Early Opposition to Mining in Tamarack

In 2002, Susan Derby, longtime Tamarack land owner joined Kenny Petersen, a local dairy farmer, and other residents to oppose mining in Tamarack.

"I wonder what Kenny would say today if he knew his farm is dead center on a planned underground nickel copper mine that will create sulfuric acid as part of the process of extraction, as the nickel and copper mix with air and water? ...Maybe he would quote Mark Twain who said, "A mine is a hole in the ground owned by a liar."

"I am the ghost of Kenny Petersen", Susan Derby, Aitkin Independent Age, September 11, 2024

https://www.messagemedia.co/aitkin/opinion/letters/letters-from-readers---9-11-24/article_2fbd38f0-6ae3-11ef-b184-afec5d5c8299.html

Waste Water Treatment Concerns with Talon

Kiah Dessaro, a resident of San Diego with a background as environmental professional for ten years learned of the proposed Talon Metals sulfide mine while purchasing wild rice online. She wrote a letter to the Duluth News Tribune September 7, 2024 expressing her concerns.

"I read the comments between Talon Metals/Rio Tinto and the State of Minnesota and became concerned about the improper waste water treatment and processing."

Learn more [here](#).

<https://www.duluthnewstribune.com/opinion/letters/readers-view-water-waste-treatment-a-concern-with-talon-metals>

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>)

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](#) (tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf) and download [informative flyers](#) (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.

