

# A Resolution

## Against Phosphate Mines in Florida

**WHEREAS**, Waterkeeper Alliance Members are obligated and dedicated to protect the water resources, citizens' interests, and related benefits in their jurisdictions; and

**WHEREAS**, phosphate mines have been shown to threaten and cause actual harm to these resources, interest, and related benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, there are several phosphate mine projects in various stages of permitting in local, state, and federal agencies including county and city governments, Water Management Districts (WMDs), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); and

**WHEREAS**, there seems to be no public list of current phosphate mines and related facilities, which include at least

1. The [PCS phosphate mine in Hamilton County on the Suwannee River](#).
2. [Owl Creek Phosphate Mine in Lafayette County](#), five miles northwest of Mayo, in the Suwannee River Basin.
3. According to FDEP, Mining and Mitigation, [Phosphate Mines](#): "Today phosphate mining occurs primarily in the central Florida area (Polk, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Hardee counties). The central Florida phosphate-mining region covers approximately 1.3 million acres of land known as the "Bone Valley.""
4. "There are 27 phosphate mines covering more than 491,900 acres. The smallest phosphate mine is approximately 5,000 acres with the largest approximately 100,000 acres. Of the commodities mined in Florida, phosphate mining is the most land intensive, disturbing between 5,000 to 6,000 acres annually; approximately 25 to 30% of these lands are isolated wetlands or wetlands connected to waters of the state." —FDEP, [Phosphate Mines](#)
5. Many people still have not even heard of this: "Mosaic Company's New Wales fertilizer factory about 20 miles east of Tampa has developed a sinkhole which dumped more than 215 million gallons of highly acidic wastewater along with slightly radioactive phosphogypsum waste material into the Floridan Aquifer."—Sierra Club, [Phosphate Mining](#)

as well as perhaps others; and

**WHEREAS**, there seems to be no public list of current or proposed phosphate mines, which include at least

1. [HPS II in Union and Bradford Counties on the New River](#) (a tributary of the Santa Fe and Suwannee Rivers)
2. [Mosaic expansion in Bone Valley](#) (parts of Hardee, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Polk Counties) on the Peace River
3. [Mosaic new phosphate mine in DeSoto County](#) on the Peace River

as well as perhaps others; and

**WHEREAS**, opposition to each phosphate mine project seems to be mostly local, with each opposition group or coalition attempting to reinvent everything; and

**WHEREAS**, the huge amount of water used by phosphate mines and its ill effects on rivers, springs, and wells is not generally known to the public; and

**WHEREAS**, severe reduction of spring flow, river flow, and lake levels are evidence that current pumping has overstressed the Floridan Aquifer; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan determined that current water withdrawals cannot meet demand without causing unacceptable impacts to natural water systems; and

**WHEREAS**, unsustainable alternative water supply projects are being targeted that are expensive publicly-funded projects and have a high risk of unintended consequences; and

**WHEREAS**, the extent, locations, and effects of phosphate mining worldwide are relevant to phosphate mines in Florida; see [USGS World phosphate mines, deposits, and occurrences](#); and

**WHEREAS**, it is not clear there is any need for additional phosphate; and

**WHEREAS**, preventing fertilizer runoff would conserve phosphate while helping meet Florida's Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the undersigned Florida Waterkeeper Alliance Members and Affiliates are opposed to any new phosphate mines:

1. They offer information, publicity, and other assistance to groups opposing phosphate mines, and;
2. They offer to assist in engaging local, state, and federal permitting bodies in educating them about the hazards of phosphate mines and in persuading them not to permit any, and;
3. They will publicize the hazards of phosphate mines so the public and potential financial backers of mines will be aware and will oppose them.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE UNDERSIGNED FLORIDA WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES, this eighteenth day of December 2017.

John S. Quarterman, Suwannee Riverkeeper, WWALS Watershed Coalition



Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper



Laurie Murphy, Emerald Coastkeeper



Dan Tonsmeire, Apalachicola Riverkeeper

