

A Resolution for the Okefenokee Swamp and against the Twin Pines Minerals strip mine

Draft of September 10, 2023

WHEREAS, Clinch County prides itself on timber, blueberries, and honeybees; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Clinch County value the natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities afforded by the Okefenokee Swamp and the Suwannee River and their watersheds such as fishing, swimming, boating, and birding; and

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee Swamp is a unique natural, cultural, and economic treasure known worldwide and frequented by citizens of Clinch County; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified it as an Aquatic Resource of National Importance; it is a National Natural Landmark and a National Wilderness Area; and it has been designated a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation of wetlands; and

WHEREAS, a bipartisan coalition of members of Congress support a bid by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to move the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge from a tentative list to become a full UNESCO World Heritage Site; and

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee Swamp is the headwaters of the St Marys River and of the Suwannee River, famous in song worldwide, around 85% of the Swamp is in the Suwannee River Basin; and

WHEREAS, the Suwannee River runs more than eighteen miles through Clinch County and is frequented by citizens of Clinch County; and

WHEREAS, Fargo Boat Ramp provides public access to the Suwannee River in Clinch County, and the Suwannee River Eco-Lodge provides lodging for river users; and

WHEREAS, the Clinch County Commission demonstrated their commitment to water quality and waterway recreation by approving the Comprehensive Plan, which states among other things that “The Suwannee River corridor needs special attention and protection from groundwater intrusion, contamination, and incompatible development,” noting that “The primary mission is to maintain and improve critical water quality, preserve endangered species, preserve wetlands, educate future generations and add stability to the eco-system”; and

WHEREAS, the citizens value the Okefenokee Swamp and the Suwannee River for water quality and habitat protection; and

WHEREAS, Twin Pines Minerals LLC (TPM), of Birmingham, Alabama, proposes to strip mine for titanium dioxide on Trail Ridge within three miles of the Okefenokee Swamp, and;