

The Okefenokee Swamp and its National Wildlife Refuge are important to Florida.

As former U.S. Rep. Al Lawson noted,¹⁰

While the mining would occur in Georgia, the Okefenokee Refuge sits in Baker County, Fla. — making it one of Florida’s most valued resources. In addition to the pristine habitat for wildlife, the Refuge benefits small businesses and provides millions of dollars to the local economy. This area is unparalleled in natural beauty and biodiversity and is home to hundreds of species.... My constituents depend on a healthy Okefenokee Swamp, and it is unacceptable that such little consideration has been given to how the project will affect Florida’s resources.

The ONWR provides more economic benefit to each of Florida and Georgia than any other NWR.¹¹

As previously mentioned, downstream from the ONWR on the St. Marys River is Nassau County, Florida, in addition to Baker County, Florida.

Little Swanee Creek, which runs out of the southwest part of the Okefenokee Swamp into the Suwannee River, flows through Columbia County, Florida, across the river from Hamilton County, Florida. Downstream on the Suwannee River are Suwannee, Madison, Lafayette, Gilchrist, Dixie, and Levy Counties, Florida. The Suwannee River is the subject of the state song of Florida.

The Hamilton County, Florida Board of County Commissioners this February passed a resolution supporting the Okefenokee Swamp against the proposed TPM mine.¹² They joined thirteen Georgia counties or cities in passing such resolutions: the cities of Homeland, St. Marys, Kingsland, Waycross, Valdosta, and Savannah, and the counties of Ware, Echols, Clinch, Dekalb, Berrien, and Atkinson.¹³ Among those resolutions are ones by four counties downstream on the Suwannee River from the Okefenokee Swamp: Ware, Clinch, Echols, and Hamilton.

Waterkeepers Florida, consisting of all the Waterkeepers of Florida, has four times filed comments with USACE or GA-EPD objecting to the proposed TPM mine.¹⁴

As you know by reading TwinPines.Comment@dnr.ga.gov, numerous other groups and individuals from Florida oppose this mine because they value the Okefenokee Swamp, the Suwannee and St. Marys Rivers, and the aquifers.

¹⁰ Reject or EIS: Twin Pines Minerals mine near Okefenokee –U.S. Rep. Al Lawson 2020-02-13, <https://wwals.net/?p=51590>

¹¹ Banking on Nature 2017, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, June 2019, https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USFWS_Banking_on_Nature_2017.pdf

¹² Hamilton County, Florida, resolution for the Okefenokee Swamp, against the strip mine 2024-02-20, WWALS, February 29, 2024, <https://wwals.net/?p=64308>

¹³ Resolutions for Okefenokee Swamp, against strip mine, accessed April 9, 2024, <https://wwals.net/pictures/2021-12-09--sgrc-okefenokee-tpm/>

¹⁴ Waterkeepers Florida passes resolution against titanium mine application near Okefenokee Swamp, WWALS, November 1, 2019, <https://wwals.net/?p=50562> Waterkeepers Florida to Army Corps and EPA against strip mine near Okefenokee Swamp 2020-04-10, WWALS, April 13, 2020, <https://wwals.net/?p=52164> Please stop a strip mine near the Okefenokee Swamp that threatens both Florida and Georgia –WKFL 2020-12-11, WWALS, December 23, 2020, <https://wwals.net/?p=54375> Please stop a strip mine near the Okefenokee Swamp that threatens both Florida and Georgia –Waterkeepers Florida, WWALS, March 18, 2023, <https://wwals.net/?p=61437>