

Georgia, in addition to affecting the Swamp itself, which is partly in Florida, and the St. Marys River, which forms part of the border between Georgia and Florida, and the Suwannee River, which flows mostly through Florida and its state song.

Thus this EPA restoration of underground water protection should lead the Corps to revisit and retract its abdication of oversight over that mine, especially combined with the *Mississippi* Supreme Court decision.

Features such as extended floodplains can carry pollution into groundwater. This is not just some theoretical matter. Withlacoochee River water going into Shadrick Sink west of the river, then under the river and miles east, forced the city of Valdosta to sink its water wells twice as deep, as documented by the USGS in 1999. See Appendix A.

This is not just an issue for Valdosta, or Lowndes County, or Georgia. Florida has even more sinkholes and springs than south Georgia, and underground water also moves sideways all over the Floridan Aquifer, as has been known since at least the 1980s. See Appendix B.

The direction of water flow into or out of the ground can depend on aboveground water levels. See for example the Little Alapaha River, which usually disappears into a complex of swallets (exposed windows into the underlying aquifer), yet may sometimes flow all the way to the Alapaha River, and in February 2022 we witnessed absorbing Alapaha River water, making the Little Alapaha River a distributary, presumably taking that water into sinkholes or swallets into the aquifer.⁹

This is in addition to the well-known Dead River Sink, which takes water from the Alapaha River via the Dead River, so much during much of the year that the last 19 miles of the Alapaha River are dry,¹⁰ with the water coming back up at the Suwannee River Rise and Holton Creek Rise, two springs on the Suwannee River.

Such swallets also occur on the Withlacoochee River in Florida, such as Sullivan Slough and Sink.¹¹ That Sink appears to actually be a swallet, sometimes discharging water into the river, and sometimes absorbing it, like the afore-mentioned Shadrick Sink in Georgia.

More recent USGS research also finds salt water moving in layers among the fresh water, including the “Apalachicola salinity feature” all the way from the Gulf of Mexico to Lowndes County, Georgia, with a special additional “brackish Valdosta feature”; see Appendix C.

If natural river water and sea salt can move underground for many miles, there is no reason to expect that sewage or chicken, cattle, or hog manure or coal ash or pipeline leakage or drilling fluids or fracking waste could not do the same.

Directional sheet flow over upland can, for example, overflow a wastewater treatment system, such as happened with Valdosta, Georgia’s, old (now-closed) Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in 2009 and 2013, sending

⁹ WWALS, February 7, 2022, Little Alapaha River, Swallet, Bridges, Source, Mouth 2022-02-07, <https://wwals.net/?p=57695>

¹⁰ WWALS, January 9, 2022, Pictures: Dead River Sink 2021-11-07, <https://wwals.net/?p=57466>

¹¹ WWALS, January 21, 2022, Sullivan Slough and Blue Sink by Amanda Davis 2022-01-18, <https://wwals.net/?p=57588>