

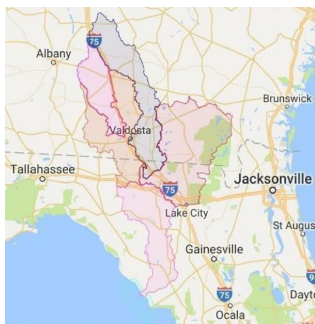
August 17, 2017



WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc



the WATERKEEPER® Alliance  
Member for the Suwannee,  
Withlacoochee and Alapaha Rivers



- Upper Suwannee River HUC 03110201
- Withlacoochee River HUC 03110203
- Alapaha River HUC 03110202
- Little River HUC 03110204
- Lower Suwannee River HUC 03110205
- Suwannee River Estuary

WWALS Watershed Coalition advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.



Danny Riddick, Chairman  
Bradford County, Florida, Board of County Commissioners  
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Re: **HPS II Phosphate Mine proposal**

Dear Chairman Riddick, Commissioners, and Staff,

Thank you for your warm welcome at your meeting of July 20, 2017. The videos I took of the entire meeting are on YouTube as promised: <http://www.wwals.net/?p=35374>

I look forward to seeing you all again this Thursday at your meeting of August 17, 2017.

In that meeting and in others, I urge you not to limit your review of this phosphate mine proposal to the consultant you are considering hiring. Many knowledgeable parties are ready to help you, from as far away as Alachua County and Tampa. Please do not rush a decision that will affect your citizens and people downstream for generations.

Meanwhile, please find on the following pages a slightly expanded transcript of what I said in July. In addition to the points made in it, there are others to consider, including:

- Where does the phosphate from current mines go, and where would phosphate from the HPS II mine go? Even Mosaic, owners of four phosphate mines in central Florida and four fertilizer manufacturing facilities, including the one that notoriously had a sinkhole a year ago that still has not been fixed, says in its [Phosphate Operations in Florida](#): "Phosphate nutrients play an essential role in meeting the needs of a growing world." That would seem to indicate phosphate is exported. Do you want your county's waters risked for foreign gain?
- Is there actually any need for new phosphate mines? Especially for phosphate actually used in Florida, better prevention of fertilizer runoff would conserve phosphate while helping meet the severe goals for reduction of fertilizer leachate in FDEP's Suwannee River Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).
- What is the track record of the mine proponents to support their claim of saving 90% water compared to other phosphate mines?
- Jobs are always the main promise of any new development. But jobs should be weighed against the destruction, hazards, job safety issues, noise, traffic, and general quality of life that any mine would bring even if it lived up to the rosy claims of HPS II.
- There is another way to bring jobs to Bradford County that does not require any water use nor land destruction: [solar power](#). The people of Florida twice voted last year for solar power, and it is ready now. In 2016, more new U.S. electricity came from solar power than from any other source (more than wind and more than natural gas). Solar power is creating jobs twelve times faster than industries on average. Many of those jobs are local, in architecting, delivery, and installation, on housetops, business roofs, parking lots, airports, and marginal farmland.

Please accept assistance to choose wisely.

Sincerely,

John S. Quarterman, Suwannee Riverkeeper  
President, WWALS Watershed Coalition  
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229-242-0102, [wwalswatershed@gmail.com](mailto:wwalswatershed@gmail.com)

Augmented transcript [from July 20, 2017, http://www.wwals.net/?p=35374#John-S-Quarterman](http://www.wwals.net/?p=35374#John-S-Quarterman):

*I'm John Quarterman. I'm the Suwannee Riverkeeper. I've been asked by several people in the area to come...*

*Chairman Riddick: Your address?*

*Oh, yes. I actually live in Georgia. The address for Suwannee Riverkeeper is PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632. The Suwannee River Basin, as you're aware, runs all the way from the Okefenokee Swamp to the Gulf, and this phosphate mine, as Jim Tatum pointed out, is upriver on the New River, the Santa Fe, and the Suwannee.*

*So my concern is mostly with water. I've flown over the phosphate mine in Hamilton County a number of times, and it looks like flying over the moon. Except the moon doesn't have strange parallel, jagged, water repositories with who knows what in them.*

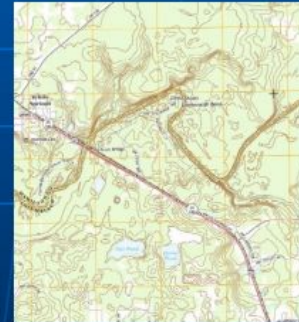


[PCS Phosphate Mine 2016-10-22, Southwings flight for WWALS, pictures by Jim Tatum, http://www.wwals.net/?p=32043](http://www.wwals.net/?p=32043)

Addition: There is little evidence of land reclamation in Hamilton County; most of the mined area still looks like a moonscape. What are the plans for management and storage of hazardous waste and restoration of disturbed land after HPS II phosphate mining? Presumably the same FDEP that should be enforcing restoration of the PCS mine would be enforcing restoration after HPS II. Or local authorities including the Bradford BOCC and its emergency responders would be left to deal with it unassisted.

*Of course White Springs, which had a famous resort there, with a big bathhouse and all, is dry now. The mine says they had nothing to do with that.*

# White Sulfur Springs



1. Matt Williams: JEA responsible for low water levels
2.  $Q = K \cdot i \cdot A$ , where  $Q$  = discharge,  $K$  = Permittivity constant,  $i$  = hydraulic gradient, and  $A$  = area

PotAshCorp Field Trip Summary by Bob Palmer and David Wilson, [slides presented by David Wilson](#), 13 April 2017 at a Santa Fe River Springs Protection Forum at Otter Springs, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=34954>

*But, do you really want to risk that kind of effect on your waters? I've heard that this mine would use basically all of the flow of the New River. And what effect would it have on the aquifer?*

Addition: I have been asked to document the amount of water the HPS II mine would use. Many have tried, but so far as I can tell, none have succeeded. The amount of water the proponents of HPS II say it will use is so small compared to what the PCS mine uses that the HPS II number is not credible. Supposedly HPS II would use a brand-new technique that would save 90% of water compared to other mines. What examples of this technique actually working can the mine proponents point to? What is their own track record for doing this, or for running any phosphate mine?

HPS II says the New River's flow comes mainly from waters close to the surface, yet they plan to block off surface waters to mine while saying that will have no effect on the New River. The amount of water the mine is likely to use and its likely effects on the New River and on underground waters down to the Floridan Aquifer is a very basic question that needs to be answered and verified by independent third parties before any permitting is done.

The burden of proof is on the mine proponents, but they cannot be left to self-verify such important questions.

*Now one point of view is: approve it, put strict requirements on it, and then make sure they follow them.*

*I have to admit I'm a little sceptical, because for a number of years we've been opposing the Sabal Trail natural gas pipeline. It is approved, permitted. And just this Sunday it had a leak at the Dunnellon Compressor Station, and none of the permitting agencies seem to know anything about it.*



Aerial of the site, in 19 Questions from WWALS about Leak at Sabal Trail Dunnellon Compressor Station Site, <http://www.wwals.net/?p=35429>

Addition: Sabal Trail wrapped it in towels, sprayed a deodorant, and waited until morning for somebody to show up to fix the leak of hazardous Mercaptan odorant. <http://www.wwals.net/?p=35711>

None of the state or federal permitting agencies has done anything about this situation despite requests from numerous parties. The only response from two of them is that they were not even notified by Sabal Trail. State agencies that permitted Sabal Trail or sold it easements and now do nothing to deal with this chronic leak and other problems include the same Suwannee River Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection that HPS II claims will prevent problems.

Local emergency responders also were not notified by anyone other than the public calling 911, not by Sabal Trail, and not by state or federal agencies. It was the same the first time Sabal Trail leaked and when it happened again two weeks later. <http://www.wwals.net/?p=35916>

The leak is so obviously unsafe local emergency responders backed off when they saw it, and WWALS has reported it to OSHA. <http://www.wwals.net/?p=35932>

The Mercaptan Sabal Trail leaked in Marion County is quite hazardous, according to OSHA. Trucks of sulfuric acid for phosphate mining would be even more so, as well as the other chemicals used in that mining or released by it.

Marion County Fire Rescue is repeatedly spending tax dollars to respond to a situation that was forced upon them by those same state and federal permitting agencies that continue to do nothing.

In Bradford County you have the power to stop the phosphate mine.

*So the safest course is: just don't approve it.*

*Thank you.*

**End of Transcript.**