

Clean water rollbacks enable destruction of 400 acres of wetlands near Okefenokee—

November 3, 2020



Suwannee River soon after emerging from Okefenokee swamp, looking southwest. Photo by Jim Tatum.

<https://www.ecowatch.com/trump-epa-rollbacks-covid-2648440328.html?rebelltitem=1#rebelltitem1>

Here we have one more layer of protection removed from our [destructive federal administration](#) which is dismantling piece by piece decades of work to protect our environment. It is unclear if these policies are by design or stupidity, but the result is the same and what is clear is that neither our federal nor our state agencies are willing to protect our natural water resources.

The current policy of money and industry over conservation found in our federal government is paralleled here in Florida with business lobbyists controlling our governor and Legislature.

Unfortunately the Army Corps of Engineers sees itself in a position where it must abandon this last protection, leaving the swamp and river open to pollution by unnecessary mining by an incompetent company which refuses to abide by the rules.

Read the entire article here at [Southern Environmental Law Center](#).

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.
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– A river is like a life: once taken,
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

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One impact of the Trump administration's cutting of protections

under the Clean Water Act is a massive mine's plans to destroy nearly 400 acres of wetlands at the doorstep of the Okefenokee Swamp without a federal permit.

"[Similar] decisions are being made across the country, and we're only starting to see the consequences," said Senior Attorney Geoff Gisler, leader of SELC's Clean Water Program, in an October 21 [Associated Press article](#). "I think what we'll see over the next several months, until this rule is thrown out or changes, is that we're going to lose the streams and wetlands that we depend on."

Laundry list of reasons why mining next to the Okefenokee Swamp is a bad idea

[At the request of a mining company](#) following the Trump administration's removal of protections for many waterways and wetlands, the Army Corps of Engineers revised a jurisdictional determination related to the massive proposed heavy mineral sand mine. The new jurisdictional determination made under the new "definition of waters of United States" concluded that the mine tract would impact *no* jurisdictional wetlands. Under the prior definition of "waters of the United States," the mine's first phase included about 400 acres of protected, jurisdictional wetlands...

SELC represents Defenders of Wildlife, as well as 13 other organizations, in that litigation and both groups are monitoring this proposed mining operation that would encroach on the pristine wetland in Southern Georgia that's home to the state's treasured Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. For a laundry list of reasons why mining next to the Okefenokee Swamp is a bad idea, [click here](#)....

