

Op-Ed On Chemours By Mark Lyons

June 8, 2017



Mark Lyons has published on June 8, 2017 the following article in the [Baker County Press](#) regarding the Chemours (formerly DuPont) mine. The mine is located in Baker County but is now crossing the county line into Bradford County. It is a little known fact that some wastewater/toxins from mining here go into New River and thus into the Santa Fe.

Also of interest is the fact that Chemours has been mining in Bradford County with no permit from them. Paul Still has stood before the Suwannee River Water Management Board as well as the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners and explained this, and neither agency seems at all interested. They thank

him and he sits down.

Thanks to Mark Lyons for his good work.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-
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Letter: More questions on Chemours mining

Dear Editor:

I would like to address a couple of things that were not covered in the article on the approval of the special exception for Chemours' Mining.

Jobs for Baker County Residents: Commissioner James Croft asked Chemours' attorney Tom Ingram if any of their 63 employees were Baker County citizens. Mr. Ingram's answer was "We believe so." After Mr. Ingram consulted with other Chemours employees and the plant manager who was present, he still could not give Mr. Croft an answer.

Commissioner Croft in desperation for any kind of an answer replied, "It doesn't have to be exact, a guesstimate will do." Still no answer. So, we have a company that has been doing business here for over 30 years and we have the "Big Wheel" at the podium and they could not say how many locals they employ.

After that response and hearing Mr. Ingram earlier in the meeting bragging about Baker County jobs and economic income and then later finding out Chemours was sent this question in an email early in the day of this 6 p.m. meeting, I'm betting on the "none" category.

Wetlands: Commissioner Cathy Rhoden's statement on the Chemours re-created wetlands in Clay County she was shown on her guided tour by Chemours was, "The recreated wetlands looked great. They looked better actually than some of our regular wetlands that are out there."

Wetlands work by functionality and not by aesthetics; it doesn't matter how ugly or how pretty they are. Wetlands were created not by man but someone of higher power, and are a very delicate and intricate layered topography that filters and helps recharge water to our aquifer. You can't strip mine a wetland and think you are going to put it back to function as it did pre-mining.

We are once again losing more wetlands in the county with the approval of this new tract of land Chemours' has purchased. There are approximately 87 acres of wetland/depressions on this new 400-acre tract that will be obliterated. Of course they will mitigate the wetland loss via the Army Corp's mitigation program, but those wetland mitigation credits will be applied elsewhere out of this county as we have no wetland mitigation banks here.

Most often these credits are applied to South Florida and so I ask how is that helping our eco-system and water supply recharge here? If they recreate them, they will not function like the original and most times the waters are so mineral rich they are overtaken by non-beneficial aquatic plants and sometimes toxic algae.

The Right Thing: Commissioner James Bennett repeatedly touted that he always does the right thing and votes for the right thing concerning issues before him. Commissioner Croft stated that he was pretty environmentally oriented. Commissioner Jimmy Anderson went on and on about all Chemours has done and offered the county.

Cheryl Dugger, a Baker County citizen, property owner and resident of the Blackbottom area spoke to the board of multiple wells drying up in the area and of a fish pond that drained completely when the Chemours dredge was a few thousand yards from their property. So, is the right thing and most environmentally-oriented and proactive thing to postpone the approval hearing and investigate and vet your constituents concerns over their wells and pond drying up?

Or is it to unanimously vote to approve a project that very well may be affecting your tax paying constituents' wells. Priced a well on Trail Ridge lately? Tried a day without water at your home?

I encourage all citizens to go to <http://www.bakercountyfl.org/commissioners.php> and listen to the audio of the Chemours' final special exception public hearing on 5-16-2017. Chemours didn't have simple facts, but yet they received a unanimous vote of approval. Citizens may not have any control over their wells and ponds drying up, the drought conditions we've been suffering or the water restrictions put into place by the water management districts, but they can have control at the polls.

Marc Lyons

Glen St. Mary