

OSFR Quoted In Opposition to Mine.

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The phosphate industry in Florida has a long history of accidents, environmental destruction and bankruptcy, leaving behind millions in liabilities that taxpayers have had to clean up, according to Jim Tatum of Fort White, a retired university professor.

The [Gainesville Sun](#) reports on the Union County Board of County Commissioners when they voted to extend the mine permit

moratorium. Read the complete article [here](#).

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-

Moratorium extended on Union County phosphate plan

By [Cleveland Tinker](#)

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The decision to allow phosphate mining in Union County is still on the shelf, while Bradford County officials are moving forward with reviewing an application submitted by a company who wants to mine for phosphates in the rural county northeast of Alachua County.

Union County commissioners voted on Tuesday to extend through February 2019 its moratorium on accepting and processing applications for special-use permits that will allow phosphate mining. Union County officials will discuss the issue several more times this year as it reviews its land development regulations and comprehensive plan, said Dianne Hannon, Union County Commission secretary.

However, a special-use permit application to mine for phosphates submitted by HPS Enterprises – a partnership formed by the Hazen, Howard, Pritchett and Shadd families, who combined own thousands of acres in Bradford and Union Counties – is still pending in Bradford County.

HPS has plans to mine some 7,400 acres combined in Union and Bradford counties, stripping away trees, vegetation, sand and

clay to dig 35 to 40 feet below the surface to extract phosphate. Its application for a permit to mine for phosphate in Bradford County is pending, Bradford County Attorney Will Sexton said.

Currently, the issue isn't scheduled to be discussed at any Bradford County Commission meetings or public hearings in the near future, Sexton said.

"I think we are looking at having a public hearing on the issue within the next six months or less," Sexton said.

Bradford County has hired Onsite Environmental Consulting of Jacksonville to help it review the special use permit application submitted by HPS because the county doesn't have the expertise to do so, Sexton said.

Supporters of the proposed mine say it will bring jobs and economic development. Opponents say it won't bear the promised economic gain for the community and will damage the environment.

According to the HPS website, the company's mining would create more than 150 jobs, increase ad valorem taxes collected in Bradford and Union counties by 28 percent and add more than \$155 million to the area's economy.

The families that formed HPS have lived in Bradford and Union counties for years, and have a vested interest in returning the land to productive use for wildlife, agriculture and other purposes after mining has taken place, Jim Taylor, an attorney representing HPS, said in an editorial published in The Sun last year.

Phosphate, which has been mined in Florida since the late 1800s, is an essential source for nutrients critical to support a

growing population, Taylor said.

The phosphate industry in Florida has a long history of accidents, environmental destruction and bankruptcy, leaving behind millions in liabilities that taxpayers have had to clean up, according to Jim Tatum of Fort White, a retired university professor.

Although the law requires that land used for phosphate mining be returned to its original use, the process takes years and the land is never as good or as productive as before, according to Tatum.