

Strong Opposition to Mine Extension

January 29, 2017



More than 100 are scheduled to speak. County officials say the meeting may go beyond Monday if the interest continues to grow.

The [Bradenton Times](#) has published the following article by John Rehill, regarding the controversial mine extension by Mosaic Company. This company has ripped up the earth and poisoned our aquifer, and is now coming before our elected officials requesting permission to do more of the same.

A meeting scheduled in September, 2016 was delayed by Mosaic because of their catastrophic blunder, and now extended from last Thursday because of all the citizen's input. They are meeting strong opposition from the people of their area. We wish the commissioners wisdom and courage to do the right thing and deny them permission to destroy the earth and poison our waters.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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

John Rehill

Friday, Jan 27, 2017

BRADENTON – At first it appeared the Mosaic mining company was on track to receive another permit to mine phosphate in Manatee County, but Thursday's Land Use meeting ended unlike those of the past.

Mosaic's request is for approval of a resolution granting Mosaic Fertilizer, LLC a Master Mining Plan (MMP) for the Wingate East Mine 4,341 acres impacting 686 acres of jurisdictional waters, including 649 acres of wetland habitat. The company requested special approvals to mine and disturb 269 acres of upland habitat and 9.5 acres of isolated wetland habitats in the Peace River Watershed Overlay District.

Mosaic's usual routine for approvals started to stall soon after their presentation to the county commission ended. According to many opposing the permit, the staff report that followed started a plethora of concerns beyond the ones naysayers brought with them.

Many said the staff report sounded like it came from Mosaic's camp. Parks National Resource Division Manager Rob Brown made it hard to decipher his role, if he was the county employee whose job was to inform concerned citizens to the task at hand.

Brown almost limited his brief introduction to the T's being crossed, the I's dotted and a brief study of mining acronyms; and then passed the staff presentation off to Lisa Barrett, Manatee County's planning manager. Barrett's report was also brief. But after Barrett, Joel Christian took the stage for

roughly 20 minutes.

Christian challenged the ways he could mention the \$2.5 million donation Mosaic provided as a gift to the Manatee Community Foundation. That gift was to help ensure that the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast acquired a parcel for preservation or to enhance an existing project with similar environmental benefits as the Myakka River Headwaters Restoration Project.

Then Christian said, "Manatee County could buy 250 to 1,000 acres of land," as if it was the prize for doing business with Mosaic. Christian is the environmental specialist with the job to explain the mitigations values, the Umam scores and how we protect our wetlands.

Staff determined that Mosaic's application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance 04-39 with special considerations. They claim the mining activities will not cause a degradation of water quality or adverse impacts on water quantity within the affected watershed.

After lunch citizen comments took the meeting to a level unseen at a mining land use meeting. More than 100 people signed up to speak to the commission about the mining application.

Stewart Smith, representing Sierra Club said, "... the zoning ordinance would violate the county's Comprehensive Plan and its Mining Code in multiple ways."

"The Comprehensive Plan only allows 'unavoidable' wetland impacts," Smith said, among another dozen statements that contradicted Mosaic's presentation.

Robert Fellman had a career of cleaning up radioactive waste sites, mostly radon gas. He said Mosaic was ignoring the elephant in the room; the New Wales sinkhole. Fellman said,

“Mosaic doesn’t know where any of the toxic material went, that there was no way they could.”

The seven or eight people that got to speak before the commission shut down spoke for 10 minutes each. With so many citizens left without the chance to have their say, the meeting was given an extension that will begin at 10 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 30.

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