

Letters to the Editor

Leave it this way and leave it alone

Dear Editor,

As a family with a long history in this area, it is imperative that I respond to the advertisement printed by Steve Ingle of Twin Pines Minerals LLC on September 25, 2019.

Mr. Ingle, clearly you fail to understand the bottom-line concern about the proposal submitted by your company to mine for titanium along Trail Ridge next to the Okefenokee Swamp.

This area may be an ideal location for your company to mine from many financial standpoints and you see many, many dollar signs when looking at this property. But there are many people who see dollar signs and quite a lot of other value when they pass through that area.

The people here see the beauty, serenity, and peacefulness of this prop-

erty. We see habitat for the wildlife that has for centuries fed thousands and thousands of families throughout the years and continues to feed families today.

Those who have been born and raised here know how important it is to protect the land that our wildlife needs to sustain themselves. That wildlife will in turn sustain us when we need to put food on our tables. You plan to mine 12,000 acres of habitat that the wildlife in this area needs to sustain US, the residents of South Georgia. This land has been feeding south Georgians for thousands of years and is still doing so.

We all remember previous owners just like YOU. In the late 1990s everyone rallied to fight the Dupont mine, and after such an outcry, min-

ing proposals subsided in the area. Now, here we are, 20 years later, and suddenly YOUR company comes in and wants us to just shut up and let you mine. Apparently, Dupont didn't understand it 20 years ago and YOU don't get it now. This is our livelihood. This is how we feed our families.

It is your job to provide the science on your activities. Our job is to share with you what we know to be true of this area: I have 52 years of living experience to tell me that you can't destroy over 2,000 feet of creeks and 4,000 acres of wetlands and not cause severe drainage issues. Hurricane Katrina was proof that natural water flow will win out over man's attempts to "reroute" that water. Natural water flow WILL win out EVERYTIME.

The vital history of

this area involves blood, sweat, and tears that were shed fighting for this land. Events like the Wildes Family Massacre demonstrate the intensity of ownership fights. Those events are not lost on us. None of us. When the government came in and "restored" lands back to the native people, they gave them what was thought to be the worst of the worst of the swamp-land. Little did the government realize then that the land they were giving the natives would one day be worth so much money.

Phase I of your mining operation actually fronts that crappy land the government turned over to the natives. The Cherokee Tribal Council owns the "restored" land next to property that may soon be destroyed and stripped just for another

white man's short-term profit. HISTORY ALL OVER AGAIN.

Residents of Southeast Georgia - all backgrounds, all races, and all communities are joining forces to fight for these lands that we love and hold so dear. The blood that was shed settling these lands from both the natives and the white man WAS NOT IN VAIN. We cherish this land and we will fight for it AGAIN. Mr. Ingle, if you value this place, you would know this and you would respect this.

With that being said, I wonder what led to your advertisement on September 25? Why were you compelled to insult the citizens of this area by calling us selfish for wanting to preserve and protect what is so important to our individual livelihoods? You originally claimed to be coming

here as a good neighbor and to use your money to rejuvenate this poor, pitiful area; then you so openly insult us? Why? With \$330,000,000 at your disposal, you could mine titanium anywhere in the world!

Bottom line, if you want scientific proof of the impact of your mining operations, it is your job to provide it to us. We have been clear and will remain steadfast in opposing your proposal. Mr. Ingle, our land is not poor or pitiful, our people do not need your operations. We do not want your mine here. The Okefenokee is perfect. It is worth fighting for now, and always has been, and always will be worth protecting and preserving it. I vote to leave it this way and leave it alone!

**Patricia Griffin,
Waycross**

There are no guarantees

Dear Editor,

Regarding the recent op-ed article by Christian Hunt "Twin Pines Should not be Given the Keys to the Okefenokee", I could not possibly agree more.

I attended the Charlton County Commission meeting on August 15, 2019 and witnessed the unanimous passage of a proclamation to allow titanium mining in an area perilously close to the Okefenokee Swamp. The passage occurred with no discussion and without allowing any comment from citizens who live outside Charlton County. This included citizens who lived along rivers draining from the Okefenokee, Native American landowners adjacent to the swamp, citizens who share the aquifer underlying the Okefenokee and members of several prominent environment groups. After the meeting, upon doing some research, I found that it is not normal or authorized

for the Commissioners to restrict comments only to citizens of Charlton County. In the proclamation there was no mention or concern about any issue other than the promise of dollars and jobs being added to the County as a result of the mine. Surprisingly, some of the important studies about hydrology had not even been completed and the Commission still rushed to pass the proclamation. Unsurprisingly, a Twin Pines lobbyist was in the audience.

The previous evening, I had attended a presentation sponsored by the mining company during which they claimed that the impact on the environment, the Native American culture, and tourism would be minimal. When one of the presenters was asked if he could guarantee that the impact would be minimal, he said, "There are no guarantees." Additionally, it became clear

to me during the Twin Pines presentations that some of the important hydrology studies had not been completed. Also, all of the studies on impact to hydrology, wildlife, vegetation and wetlands were done by employees of Twin Pines. The County Commissioners, in passing their proclamation, clearly were not concerned about scientific omission or scientific bias.

I have lived in St Marys, Georgia for almost 20 years and I don't believe I ever have been more concerned about a potential environmental disaster being caused by an industrial enterprise as that proposed by Twin Pines. One of the company's representatives admitted to me that they had not mined in this particular way at a site even vaguely similar to the proposed site in Charlton County. All projections about the environmental impact are

based on modeling, not actual experience. They say they will restore the thousands of acres of wetlands but were vague about how they would not adversely affect the hydrology of an area if they cannot recreate or even approximate the original stratification of the disturbed wetlands.

The Okefenokee Swamp is a fragile and complicated ecosystem. Its wellbeing impacts the economy, the culture,

and the rivers which flow from it. No endeavor which threatens this natural wonder should be undertaken. Thank you,

Mr. Hunt for your powerful words of caution.

**Thank you,
Dr. Andrea L. Gunn,
St. Marys**

Thank you for your help

Dear Editor,

If you want to see energy in motion, drop into a Zumba class at Anytime Fitness. Joy Campbell and Debbe Arwood, Zumba instructors, wanted to give to a local charity in our community. They sponsored a Zumbathon for Called to Care of Charlton County on Saturday, October 26. No words can express how thankful I am they chose the group I serve as Director. These two ladies danced their hearts out leading 16 participants shaking and moving for a good cause. I also want to thank all the businesses who gave

donations for door prizes. Called to Care or soon to be known as Charlton Cares, appreciates all the teamwork utilized to make this event the success it was.

To the Zumbathon participants and contributors, I appreciate each and everyone of you for your kindness and generosity.

We want to thank the following businesses for the door prizes they contributed: Anytime Fitness, Callie Kay's, Hilliard Pharmacy, Quick Chick, Folkston Auto Supply, Advance Auto Parts, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Whistlin' Dixie,

Okefenokee Adventures, Serenity Therapeutic Massage, Heaven to Seven, Glow Esthetics, Styles by Glenda, Hopkins-Gowen Oil Co, Charlton County Herald, Okefenokee Restaurant, Folkston Furniture, Farmers & Builders Ace, Cane Pole Cafe, Floyd's Hair Shop, Five.5 Grille, Four Seasons Floral Co, Southern Blend, Brickhouse Restaurant, Gantt Hardware & Hunting, The Crossings, Pizza Hut, Mane Salon, Paisley Peach, Jalen's BBQ

**Barbie Dinkins,
Director of Called
to Care of Charlton
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Myers  



Second Annual

Charlton County Veterans Day Parade

**NOVEMBER 9
BEGINNING AT 10:00 A.M.**

Parade begins on Third Street, across from the Old Gym ending at the Charlton County Annex

Ceremony to follow at Veterans Park

Come Honor our Veteran's Service To Our Country

Lunch for Veterans after Ceremony

**Email editor@charltonherald.com
to submit a letter.**