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THE DANGERS OF LONGWALL MINING TO OUR WATER

How will Sugar Camp mine affect the water you drink and recreate in?

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) plans to issue a permit to allow Sugar Camp Energy, L.L.C., a company from Beckley, West Virginia, to destroy streams and wetlands in their construction of an underground coal mine. Attend the Public Hearing held by IEPA on **August 6, 2009 at 6 p.m. at the Franklin County Extension Building, 1212 Rt. 14 West in Benton** (just south of the Country Companies building) to learn more about the issue and/or to voice your concerns about this mine proposal.

Direct impacts to streams and wetlands:

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has listed the entire watershed of the Middle Fork of the Big Muddy River as one of 30 Resource Rich Areas in the entire state. Despite this significant designation, Sugar Camp Energy will be allowed to destroy 5,416 linear feet of tributaries to Akin Creek; destroy almost 8 acres of wetland to build the surface facilities of the proposed Sugar Camp underground mine; pull water from the Middle Fork for its operations; and build two on-site dams.

Sugar Camp's plans include the damming of two Akin Creek tributaries to form a 75-acre impoundment that will receive mine process water. Thus, these waters of the U.S. will be turned into treatment works for the company where water quality standards will not be met. This is not in keeping with the principles of the Clean Water Act.

Mitigation for these impacts include channel and stream restoration of 2390 feet of Sugar Camp Creek and 10.24 acres of wetland restoration along Sugar Camp Creek and the Middle Fork Big Muddy River. The tributaries to Akin Creek will be lost forever.



Runoff water picks up contaminants from coal waste piles, such as the one shown above at the Monterey Coal Mine.

Land shifting and sinking:

Sugar Camp Energy's plan is to subside, or sink, the land in the 10,839-acre "shadow area" by utilizing longwall mining techniques. Subsidence will disrupt the hydrologic balance of the entire shadow area, yet the current mitigation plan does not address the loss of stream and wetland functions in the underground mining area. The Army Corps of Engineers has refused to consider upfront the likely drainage problems that will occur, despite mining plans that clearly show how longwall mining panels will cross existing stream courses. Buildings, roads, farm tiles, water wells, and homes will almost certainly be negatively affected and there will likely be reduced farm productivity and drops in land values.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources has recommended that the permit not be granted due to the likely negative effects of the planned subsidence on tributaries to the Middle Fork Big Muddy River which contains 32 species of fish, including game fish such as largemouth bass, channel catfish, crappie and bluegill.



Above: Longwall mine subsidence in Macoupin County flooded farm land, subsided roads, and destroyed the community.

All around destructive:

Longwall mining is destructive to watersheds and farmlands. The underground networks of soil layers and surface features that are essential for our area watershed are delicate and nobody can restore these watersheds to the way nature made them. Hundreds of acres of Franklin County lands will be sunk and likely flooded. Huge amounts of water will be used, regardless of drought conditions or drinking water needs. Longwall mining on flat farm fields leaves large basins in the land and could negatively affect farmers' livelihoods for years to come. Water where you fish, swim, or boat is at risk of becoming polluted by mine waste.

The short-term profits earned by the coal company is not worth the long-term and perhaps permanent impacts to the land and water resources of the community.

What you can do

Attend the Public Hearing:

This Public Hearing is being held for citizens to express concerns about how this project will affect them, as well as to ask questions and learn more about the project. There will be IEPA staff there, and it is anticipated that representatives from Sugar Camp Energy will also attend, although they are not required to answer questions from the public.

Speak Up:

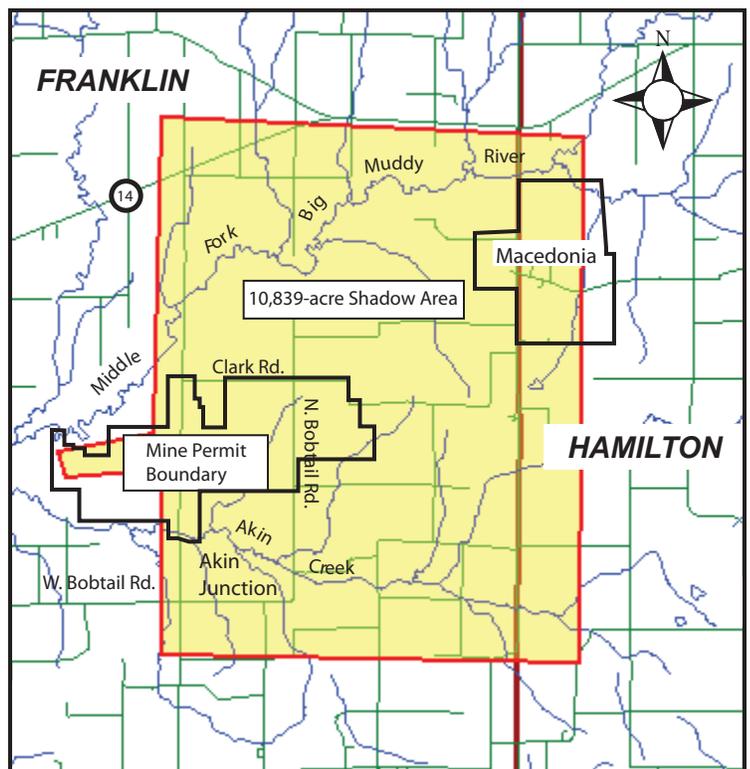
Do you have a strong concern about your livelihood or the well-being of your community; about the water and the land; about your water well? Speakers need not know technical aspects of the issue – this is the time to tell your story to the IEPA and your neighbors about how you feel about the project. Participants may make oral comments at the Public Hearing and will be allowed to submit written comments.

Written comments must be postmarked or emailed by midnight, Sept. 8, 2009. Mail to: Hearing Officer Dean Studer, IEPA, PO Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794. Email: Dean.Studer@Illinois.gov -- Subject line must include: IEPA hearing

Want to do more?

Write a Letter to the Editor about the issue – tell your neighbors and legislators how you feel.

**IEPA Public Hearing on
Sugar Camp Mine:
6pm Thursday, August 6th
Franklin County Extension Building
1212 Rt. 14 West
Benton, IL**



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