

Protect Your River: Stop the Pipeline

St. Johns Riverkeeper opposes the construction of a pipeline by Georgia-Pacific (GP) to divert its wastewater from Rice Creek to the heart of the St. Johns River. The pipeline will not restore the health of Rice Creek and will only intensify existing pollution problems in the St. Johns River. We believe that viable alternatives to the pipeline exist that have not been fully evaluated by GP.

- The Georgia Pacific (GP) paper mill in Palatka has been discharging polluted wastewater to Rice Creek, a tributary to the St. Johns River, since 1947.
- GP discharges 20-28 million gallons of wastewater to Rice Creek every day.
- GP's permit to discharge wastewater into Rice Creek expired in August 2007. The mill has been violating water quality standards and discharging without an active permit since that time.
- GP is the largest point source of nitrogen pollution in the freshwater section of the St. Johns and the second largest overall source of wastewater pollution in the river.
- GP's effluent and settling ponds have polluted Rice Creek. Sediments in the creek contain dioxin, chlorophenols, and other toxic compounds.
- Rice Creek is not able to assimilate the pollution from Georgia-Pacific's wastewater discharge and meet state water quality standards (WQS). As a result, GP has been proposing the construction of a 4-mile long, 36" diameter pipeline to divert its wastewater from Rice Creek to the middle of the St. Johns River since 1994.
- In 2002, the state of Florida issued an administrative order (AO) requiring GP to take corrective actions to comply with water quality standards (WQS) in Rice Creek. If WQS could not be met, GP would be required to build a pipeline and relocate its wastewater to the St. Johns River by 2010.
- In 2008, samples analyzed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revealed that GP was discharging dioxin (a highly toxic carcinogen related to Agent Orange) in its wastewater at levels two to five times higher than is allowed by law.
- GP continues to fail acute toxicity tests causing organisms to die when exposed to GP's wastewater.

- In 2008, St. Johns Riverkeeper and Clean Water Network spent over 6 months working with GP to establish a technical advisory panel to review GP's processes and suggest technical solutions to its ongoing pollution problems. Unfortunately, GP was unwilling to participate and ended discussions with the two groups.
- In 2009, the DEP required Georgia-Pacific to implement further corrective actions to address water quality concerns, granting GP a deadline extension for building the pipeline.
- In 2009, GP was required to conduct an engineering study of possible alternatives to the pipeline. The GP-funded study has been used to justify the pipeline, yet has received no independent analysis and provides no assurance that GP will address and resolve its pollution problems.
- St. Johns Riverkeeper is funding an independent analysis to determine the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the GP pipeline study.

Contact Governor Scott. Ask him to help stop the pipeline and find real solutions to this pollution problem.

Office of Governor Rick Scott

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or

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