

Georgia-Pacific Paper Mill Pipeline Timeline

1947: The Georgia-Pacific (GP) paper mill in Palatka begins operation and begins discharging its polluted wastewater effluent into Rice Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns River.

1993: Sediment and fish samples collected near the Georgia-Pacific (GP) mill outfall in Rice Creek contain elevated levels of dioxin, a known carcinogenic compound.

www.scopus.com/record/display.url?eid=2-s2.0-0027703490&origin=inward&txGid=TCGNA8ml-MAkGwTeiWjMpe4%3a2

1994: A temporary operation permit is issued to discharge the mill's effluent in Rice Creek. The temporary permit includes a compliance schedule which requires Georgia-Pacific to apply for and construct a new discharge pipeline to the St. Johns River.

www.dep.state.fl.us/northeast/Current-Topics/pdf/GP/finlao.pdf

1998: A study of female mosquitofish found in Rice Creek with male attributes concludes "that there is a relatively clear association between the degree of masculinization and the level of exposure."

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/081598/met_2b1fish_.html
www.springerlink.com/content/t6vaavgl56vx78xn

1999: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) releases a report of the results of a technical and economic analysis of the Georgia-Pacific Palatka Mill and its discharges. The report concludes that GP could meet Florida Water Quality Standards (WQS) in Rice Creek, if EPA's recommended process changes are implemented over the next several years.

<http://yosemite1.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/6427a6b7538955c585257359003f0230/31dc2b733383e95185257360006f6782!OpenDocument&Start=4.8&Count=5&Expand=4.10>

May 2001: Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issues a Notice of Intent to Issue a wastewater permit to Georgia-Pacific that includes an Administrative Order (AO) authorizing the construction of a pipeline to the St. Johns River if the mill demonstrates that it cannot meet water quality standards in Rice Creek.

February & March 2002: An administrative hearing is held in response to a petition by Putnam County Environmental Council, Stewards of the St. Johns River, and Linda Young challenging DEP's intent to issue a

permit to Georgia-Pacific for the pipeline. The petitioners contend that the pipe would deliver up to 60 million gallons of polluted wastewater to the river every day, potentially increasing occurrences of toxic algal blooms, lowering oxygen levels (which causes fish kills), and contaminating fish with toxic chemicals like dioxin.

www.savethestjohns.org

July 2002: An Administrative Law Judge issues a Recommended Order supporting the DEP's intent to issue a wastewater permit and order to build the pipeline.

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/northeast/Current-Topics/pdf/GP/GPHearingOrder.pdf>

August 2002: DEP issues an industrial wastewater facility permit to GP and the Administrative Order that provides a compliance schedule for the construction and operation of the pipeline. The permit will expire on August 5, 2007.

www.dep.state.fl.us/northeast/Current-Topics/pdf/GP/finlprmt.pdf

July 2003: A study commissioned by Georgia-Pacific is completed that finds the St. Johns River to be in a "general state of ecological collapse." The study, "Final Report – Analysis of the Impact of the Palatka Pulp Mill on the Rice Creek/St. Johns River System," by Robert J. Livingston concludes that "nutrient loading from the Palatka mill is the single most important influence on the ecological conditions of the St. Johns River."

www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org/content/issues/savethestjohnsriverfinal.pdf

October 2003: Natural Resource Defense Council, Southeast Clean Water Network, and St. Johns Riverkeeper submit comments to the EPA opposing the issuance of a dredge and fill permit to Georgia-Pacific by the Army Corps of Engineers for the construction of the pipeline.

www.savethestjohns.org/101003_letter2EPA.pdf

August 2004: St. Johns Riverkeeper and the Clean Water Network file a 60-day Notice of Intent to Sue the U.S. EPA if it fails to set sufficient limits for nutrient pollution in the St. Johns River.

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/100504/met_16820568.shtml

January 2006: In response to the St. Johns Riverkeeper and Clean Water Network lawsuit, the EPA establishes a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen and phosphorous pollution.

2008: St. Johns Riverkeeper and Clean Water Network of Florida (CWNF) spend over six months negotiating with GP to develop a plan that would allow the mill to continue to discharge in Rice Creek and avoid the need for the pipeline. St. Johns Riverkeeper and CWNF propose a study involving technical experts to outline alternative

treatment solutions that would enable GP to meet water quality standards in Rice Creek and save money by avoiding the expense of a \$40 million pipeline. Unfortunately, GP decides that it would not abide by the results of a study and ends discussions with the two groups.

September 2008: In the summer of 2008, the FL Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requests that the EPA sample the GP discharge for dioxin using a sensitive sampling technique called high volume sampling, or HVS. The sample collected from the GP effluent contained concentrations “which were higher than the EPA water quality criterion” for dioxin.

www.dep.state.fl.us/northeast/Current-Topics/pdf/GP/HVS_Q&A.pdf

November 2010: GP officials send a letter to the FL DEP indicating their intentions to proceed with building the pipeline.

December 2010: DEP responds by saying that GP does not need a permit to proceed with the pipeline, but they “are not authorized to use the pipeline to discharge wastewater until you have obtained proper wastewater permitting authorizations from the Department.” DEP indicates that “questions remain whether GP has fully demonstrated that its discharge cannot meet applicable water quality standards in Rice Creek.”

www.dep.state.fl.us/northeast/Current-Topics/GeorgiaPacific.htm

December 2010: DEP sends a letter to GP stating there is still a problem with toxicity in the mill’s discharge. In addition, the DEP says additional biological sampling in Rice Creek is necessary.

December 2010: St. Johns Riverkeeper funds an independent analysis of a GP-funded study being used to justify the building of the pipeline. St. Johns Riverkeeper believes the GP study is not comprehensive and other viable, cost-effective solutions are available to allow GP to meet water quality standards in Rice Creek. The results of Riverkeeper’s analysis will be released to GP and the public in January 2011.

Media Coverage of Georgia-Pacific Pipeline Issue

Putnam mill starts preparations ahead of state sign-off, Florida Times Union, December 6, 2010

<http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2010-12-06/story/putnam-mill-starts-pipeline-preparations-ahead-state-sign>

Mayor justly uses clout to protect the St. Johns River, Florida Times-Union, August 8, 2008

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/080808/opl_315488884.shtml

Mayor should oppose paper mill's pipeline, Florida Times-Union, August 3, 2008

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/080308/opl_312496260.shtml

Waste line aimed for St. Johns, Florida Times-Union, July 31, 2008

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/073108/met_311503262.shtml

Bush, Cabinet give OK to paper mill pipeline, Florida Times-Union, June 27, 2003

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/062703/met_12895768.shtml

Pollution huggers agenda threatens St. Johns River, Florida Times-Union, July 19, 2002

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/071902/opl_9951338.html

Judge says paper mill OK, Florida Times-Union, July 4, 2002

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/070402/met_9835296.html

Permit for Georgia-Pacific is a bad idea for the river, Florida Times-Union February 26, 2002

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/022602/opl_littlepage.html

Local groups fight paper mill permit, Florida Times-Union, February 19, 2002

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/021902/met_8658088.html

Pollution pipeline put on hold, The Gainesville Sun, January 13, 2001

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=6aMpAAAAIBAJ&sjid=TewDAAAAIBAJ&pg=5888,2872068&dq=georgia+pacific+pipeline+st+johns&hl=en>

Putnam mill pipeline on hold, Florida Times-Union, January 11, 2001

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/011101/met_5098799.html

Putnam mill still considering options, Florida Times-Union, January 16, 2000

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/011600/met_1816372.html

Pipeline option deflated, Florida Times-Union, June 3, 1999

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/060399/met_2a1epa_R.html

Georgia-Pacific pipeline plan gets OK from few residents, Florida Times-Union, Sept. 30, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/093098/ner_m3georgi.html

Why spend millions to clean river then use it as a dump?, Florida Times-Union, Sept. 27, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/092798/opl_927page_.html

Georgia-Pacific dumping proposal bad news for St. Johns River, Florida Times-Union, August 27, 1998 [http://](http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/082798/opl_thuoppag.html)

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/082798/opl_thuoppag.html

Fish may be affected by chemicals, Florida Times-Union, August 15, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/081598/met_2b1fish_.html

St. Johns River: Vocal support against pollution needed, Florida Times-Union, August 2, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/080298/opl_Sunleadl.html

Putnam pipeline scrutinized, Florida Times-Union, July 16, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/071698/met_2b1PIPEL.html

Proposal will make St. Johns a corporate dumping ground, Florida Times-Union, April 5, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/040598/opl_405page_.html

Critics worry plan by Georgia-Pacific will harm St. Johns, Florida Times-Union, February 7, 1998

http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/020798/2a1Rice_.html

People taking notice as pollution in St. Johns affects bigger species, Florida Times-Union, August 10, 1997

<http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/081097/1a1River.html>

St. John toxin levels turn up higher, Lakeland Ledger, March 20, 1992

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=4qQsAAAAIBAJ&sjid=BQ8EAAAAIBAJ&pg=3479,5885880&dq=georgia-pacific+st-johns-river&hl=en>

EPA warns of dioxin in fish, Gainesville Sun, September 25, 1990

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=bsFWAAAAIBAJ&sjid=QeoDAAAAIBAJ&pg=2494,8820294&dq=georgia+pacific+dioxin&hl=en>