



FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

April 25, 1980

Senator John Vogt, Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
Florida Senate
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Dear Senator Vogt:

The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society, representing Florida members of the leading organization of professional wildlife biologists in North America, has recently examined the fifth draft of the "Surface Mining and Reclamation Act." We recognize that this bill will significantly affect fish/wildlife habitats and future quality of life for Floridians. Certain provisions of the proposed legislation are critical to realizing these quality of life objectives. These include the following statements from the fifth draft as follows:

1. The land and waters which have been altered by surface mining require reclamation to prevent permanent damage, to restore the natural functions of the land, water and related natural resources, and to prevent and eliminate hazards to health and safety; and ... (Section 1, Chap. 378.202 (3)).
2. Protect biologically or hydrologically important uplands, wetlands, and water bodies; geological formations; and historical and archeological sites through mitigation, preservation or restoration (Section 1, Chap. 378.205 (2)).
3. A map depicting names and the locations of all wetlands, lakes, rivers, reservoirs, streams, creeks, and other bodies of water which may be affected by the contemplated operation and the types of existing vegetative cover on the area and ... (Section 1, Chap. 378.207 (5) (d.)).
4. The natural resource inventory of the land before mining and anticipated natural resources inventory after reclamation, including net effect on the hydrology of the area, water quality and fish and wildlife values; (Section 1, Chap. 378.207 (5) (g)).

5. The capacity of the land to support its anticipated use following reclamation, including a discussion of the capacity of the reclaimed land to support alternative uses; (Section 1, Chap. 378.207 (5) (j)).
6. The capacity of the land to support its anticipated use following reclamation, including a discussion of the capacity of the reclaimed land to support alternative uses; (Section 1, Chap. 378.207 (5) (j)).
7. Restore the natural functions of the mine area so that it may be used for a variety of useful, productive and beneficial purposes, including agriculture, commercial forestry, industry, recreation, residential development, or commercial development; and as wetlands, lakes or ponds, fish and wildlife habitat or natural areas (Section 1, Chap. 378.208 (1) (c)).
8. Incorporate water quality and fish and wildlife considerations into the design of lakes, ponds, wetlands and natural areas and incorporate fish and wildlife mitigation measures into other land uses where compatible; (Section 1, Chap. 378.208 (1) (d)).
9. Before, during, and for a reasonable period after mining, all drainways for the affected area shall be protected with silt traps or dams of approved design as directed by the regulations. The operator may elect to impound water to provide wetlands, lakes or ponds of approved design for wildlife, recreational, aesthetics or water resources purposes; (Section 1, Chap. 378.208 (1) (e)).

In addition, the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society wishes to focus your attention on two other items:

- A. The prevailing reclamation procedures create environments containing few of the original fish and wildlife values. We suggest that an attractive fiscal incentive would encourage the industry to restore original or similar values. In particular, the severance tax fund for reclamation, the hold back provision, and the bonding provision appear to offer opportunities for designing such incentives.
- B. We strongly encourage the inclusion of additional (and/or existing) wording which will implement the recommendations of the Environmental Impact Statement with respect to:
 1. Discouraging the proliferation of above-ground slime ponds and rock dryers;

2. Protecting endangered species and Class I (and adjacent) wetlands;
3. Providing adequate, long-term monitoring for radionucleides in fish and wildlife;
4. Requiring a logical mining sequencing analysis to precede mining.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of these suggestions from our organization.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Stout, Ph.D.
President

JS/sls
cc: Florida Wildlife Federation
Florida Audubon Society
Sierra Club