

# Midwest Environmental Advocates: Wetlands destruction permit challenged over significant harm

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*Ho-Chunk Nation asks for review of DNR's approval*

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MADISON, WI – On Monday, Midwest Environmental Advocates – on behalf of the Ho-Chunk Nation – filed a petition to challenge the wetland fill permit issued to Meteor Timber LLC for an industrial sand processing facility and rail project. [Clean Wisconsin also challenged the permit and requested administrative review by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](#). The petitions ask to put the wetland fill on hold until the parties can get review of the agency's decision.

The request is urgent. The DNR's approval for Meteor Timber to fill over 16 acres of rare and high-quality wetlands puts valuable natural resources in danger of irreparable destruction.

“The public needs the DNR to protect natural resources like wetlands,” said MEA staff attorney Sarah Geers. “The agency admitted in Meteor Timber's permit approval that this action may lead to increased applications to destroy rare wetlands. Without our DNR as a gatekeeper, we will continue to lose valuable wetlands that provide irreplaceable habitat and ecological functions. Meteor Timber's promise to conserve land or rebuild wetlands isn't a guaranteed fair trade.

These rare, high quality wetlands are very difficult to recreate and provide vital and disappearing habitat for threatened or endangered species. “

The Ho-Chunk Nation and Midwest Environmental Advocates are challenging the Meteor Timber wetland fill permit because:

- **Meteor Timber's project will cause irreparable harm to high quality wetlands and habitat** - the DNR acknowledges the significant adverse environmental impacts of this project, but allowed this large wetland fill anyway.
- **The DNR approved the permit without enough information** - the agency needed more information on the net positive or negative impacts of Meteor Timber's wetlands destruction and mitigation plan before making a decision.

Information is still missing on how many acres are shifting from cranberry production to industrial use, whether a wildlife underpass would be successful, restoration and reservoir drawdown plans, wetland and vegetation surveys for mitigation plans and other details about threatened and endangered species protection.

- **Meteor Timber did not prove there would be an economic benefit for the public** - the applicant did not do enough research on other sites that would not cause as much wetland destruction on the false promise that the project would provide economic benefits to the community, despite significant public opposition to this project.
- **The DNR's findings of fact prove that DNR should not have issued the permit** - in the Meteor Timber wetland permit, the DNR could not guarantee there would not be significant and adverse impacts to the environment, and the DNR should have denied the permit on this basis.

The Ho-Chunk Nation and Midwest Environmental Advocates have been raising questions about Meteor Timber's application by [submitting formal comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in July 2016](#) and [to the DNR in April](#).

[For more information on the environmental impacts of the Meteor Timber application, visit the MEA website.](#)

Midwest Environmental Advocates is a public interest organization that uses the power of the law to support communities fighting for environmental accountability.

Learn more about the Midwest Environmental Advocates on the web at [midwestadvocates.org](http://midwestadvocates.org), like MEA on [Facebook](#) or follow @MidwestAdvocate on [Twitter](#).

The Ho-Chunk Nation is one of the strongest indigenous Nations in the United States. The Nation's land extends throughout the Midwest, including significant tribal and trust lands in Wisconsin. There are many Ho-Chunk members throughout the state, and their history and culture is tied to Wisconsin. Ho-Chunk members and lands are dispersed throughout the area of Wisconsin most heavily impacted by industrial sand mining. The Nation's government is dedicated to protecting their people and their lands for this and future generations. The expansive and permanent destruction of the landscape, including wetlands, for industrial sand mines threatens the Nation's people, land, and cultural heritage

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