

Dear Stop the Sand Mine supporters,

As many of you know, what began as a **local zoning fight** over a sand mine has now **escalated** into a high-stakes environmental and political issue—**with the State of Florida stepping in**.

We want to update you on where things stand and what the science—and the record—really say.

Context: Why This Matters More Than Ever

The proposed mine site is **not just another parcel of land**. It lies within:

- **A Priority Focus Area (PFA),**
- **An Outstanding Florida Spring (OFS) zone,**
- **And an Outstanding Florida Water (OFW) designation—**

All tied to **Kings Bay and Crystal River**, one of Florida's few **First Magnitude Springs**, producing over **64 million gallons of water per day**. These are **some of the most powerful, ecologically critical, and economically important springs in the state**.

Yet as of today, **none of these protections appear to have been acknowledged** by permitting agencies. The site is being treated as though these safeguards don't exist.

What the Science Tells Us

The mine's own consultants admitted that:

- **Excavation will intersect the shallow water table, and**
- **No protective clay layer separates the surficial and Floridan aquifers—meaning a direct hydraulic connection exists.**

In plain terms: **contaminants introduced here can quickly enter the aquifer system** that feeds our springs, wildlife habitat, and drinking water supplies.

These risks are amplified in karst terrain like ours, where groundwater moves rapidly and unpredictably through underground conduits—sometimes traveling miles in just days. Once impacted, the aquifer cannot easily be restored.



And There's Already Damage

Flow from Kings Bay has **declined by up to 60% since the 1930s**—with an additional 10–20% lost just in recent decades. Every gallon counts.

This mine—whether through **oxygenation, dewatering, or long-term runoff**—would further degrade the aquifer and could **reverse millions of dollars in restoration.**

To date:

- **More than \$20 million** has been invested in spring restoration here since 2007;

- An additional **\$10 million in Legislative Appropriations** has been allocated in the last two years and there is more

We must protect that investment—not only to safeguard our water, but to **honor the decades of citizen-led efforts and scientific restoration work already underway.**

What Happened This Summer

- **May 27:** FDOT official Justin Hall asked Citrus County to **waive public hearings and setback protections** for sand mines within 5 miles of the Suncoast Parkway. He admitted that **“they’ve been able to source the material”** elsewhere and that FDOT was now **seeking land “outside of local regulations.”**
- **June 27:** A **Special Master** ruled that the mine would cause **irreparable environmental harm**, violating the Comprehensive Plan.
- **August 12:** The public hearing was **cancelled hours before it was set to begin**, denying citizens the chance to speak.
- **August 13:** FDOT filed **eminent domain on 50 acres** of the mine property. Rumors of more land acquisitions are circulating, but records remain unclear.

Where We're Going

We're still waiting for the State to respond, and we are:

- Meeting with **State representatives**, to request **recognition** of this site's environmental sensitivity;
- Filing **records requests**, sending emails to many of the agencies involved, and talking with these agencies.
- Preparing a **formal legal and scientific case** to oppose state acquisition and push back against further permits.

This is **no longer just a county issue**. It's a **watershed moment for Florida's springs**.

How You Can Help

Please visit our website and see how you can help and please share our website; stopthesandmine.com and please sign our petition: https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-sand-mine?recruiter=1287868778&recruited_by_id=4a568d00-731f-11ed-b169-877545fe0256&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=psf_com-bo_share_initial&utm_medium=copylink&utm_content=cl_s

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We are incredibly grateful for your continued support. Together, we're not just trying to stop a sand mine—we're protecting the **legacy of Crystal River and Kings Bay.**

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Thank you, Stop the Sand Mine Committee