



**GREEN LAKE
ASSOCIATION**
WE CARE FOR OUR LAKE

492 Hill Street, Suite 205, PO Box 364
Green Lake, WI 54941
kristen@greenlakeassociation.org
www.greenlakeassociation.org
(920) 294-6480

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

PROPOSED MINE THREATENS WISCONSIN'S BIG GREEN LAKE AND OTHER WATER RESOURCES

By: Kristen Pieszko Rasmussen – Director of Communication, GLA

GREEN LAKE, WISCONSIN, OCTOBER 21, 2022—Unique ecological treasures on the east end of Green Lake—Wisconsin's deepest natural inland lake—are currently threatened by a proposed Kopplin & Kinas mining operation.

In August, three local entities—the Green Lake Association (GLA), the Green Lake Conservancy (GLC), and the Green Lake Sanitary District (GLSD)—united with a landowner to file two appeals challenging Green Lake County's approval of a conditional use permit for the Kopplin & Kinas Skunk Hollow Mine.

The area at risk is a natural resource haven, dotted with beautiful creeks, natural springs, sandstone bluffs, a 40-foot waterfall, and Green Lake's two primary trout streams. Several of the features are designated as environmentally sensitive areas that flow into Green Lake—a lake already in need of protection, as it was declared as an impaired water body in 2014 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

"We are not opposed to mining, but we are concerned about mining *here*," said Stephanie Prellwitz, Executive Director of the GLA, on behalf of the appellants. "Our organizations have been working tirelessly to protect these natural resources. We cannot sacrifice short-term gains for potential permanent damage to our tremendous ecological assets."

The proposed Skunk Hollow Mine is a 40-acre nonmetallic quarry one field away from Mitchell Glen and Powell Spring, two nearby ecologically sensitive springs. Nonmetallic mining has been shown to disrupt groundwater levels, which can harm springs and deplete reliable sources for local drinking water.

"One of the first springs on our new farm, our neighbors to the north invited my family down to see where snowmelt runoff water went after it left our farm," shared Carl Nehm, a dairy farmer adjacent the proposed quarry. "We were amazed to see a massive waterfall at least 2/3 as high as our tallest farm silos. We had no idea Mitchell Glen, this beautiful, deep ravine, was even there!"

Mitchell Glen is a protected site, owned by the GLSD, within a sandstone gorge that forms an unusual microclimate able to sustain flora and fauna unique to the region. The GLC recently acquired an adjacent property, Powell Spring, which discharges enough fresh spring water to form a 10-foot-wide river directly from the exposed limestone bedrock.

The group also has concerns over sulfide minerals found within bedrock in nearby parcels. These sulfide minerals do no harm when left alone. However, when exposed to oxygen—during mining operations, for example—a chemical reaction can create arsenic in drinking wells and acid mine drainage that can cause fish kills in downstream waterways. Further study is necessary to determine expected outcomes at this site.

Surface runoff and groundwater from the mine site would drain toward White Creek and Dakin Creek, two trout streams that flow to Green Lake. The GLA recently partnered with the WDNR, Patagonia, local municipalities, and landowners to re-establish a brook trout population that has been absent from Dakin Creek for over 70 years.

A WDNR survey completed this month confirmed that brook trout are now naturally reproducing in Dakin Creek, an early sign of success for the fish species. Brook trout rely on clean, cool water to survive. The group worries that Skunk Hollow Mine, should it proceed, could potentially jeopardize this ecological milestone.

A Board of Adjustment hearing for the appeal of the Skunk Hollow Mine conditional use permit will be at the Green Lake County Government Center in the coming months. Additional details will be provided on the Green Lake Association's website as they are made known.

On behalf of these water resources, ecological treasures, and the community, the three organizations urge you to take action. The Green Lake Association welcomes supporters to sign their petition, which is already 850 signatures strong—and growing. Learn more by visiting www.greenlakeassociation.org/skunk-hollow-mine.

ABOUT THE GREEN LAKE ASSOCIATION

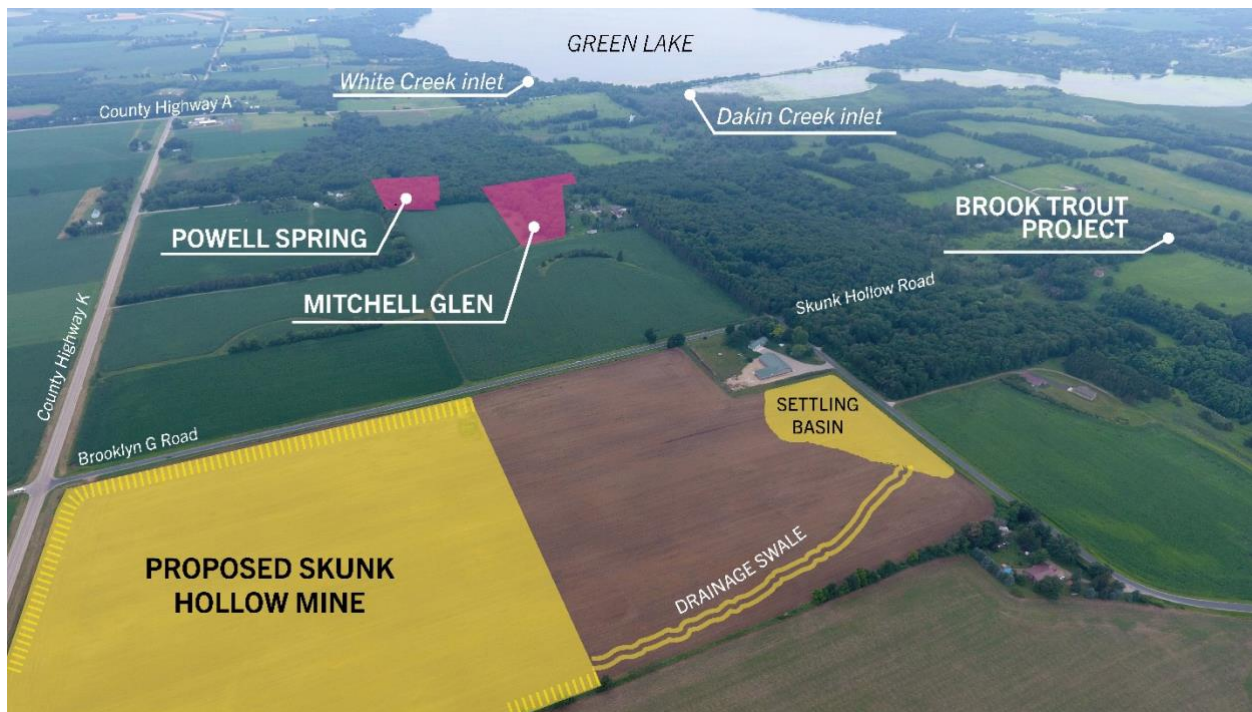
The Green Lake Association is an environmental non-profit based in downtown Green Lake, Wisconsin. To support their mission for a cleaner, more resilient Big Green Lake, visit greenlakeassociation.org.

###

VISUALS: For supporting visuals, find high-resolution photos and video available for download here: <https://we.tl/t-5BBRpwuJhP>

Video Credit: © ClearView Productions

Photo Credit & Captions: Listed below



Aerial overview of the approximate location of the Skunk Hollow Mine and its stormwater features in proximity to Green Lake and surrounding water resources. Groundwater flows from the proposed mine site northwest, toward Green Lake.

Photo Credit: © Mat and Henry Boerson

Graphics: Green Lake Association



Caption: *The source of Powell Spring pours out from the side of a limestone rock face, located just below the cabin shown in this image. Powell Spring is dependent on groundwater and is located 2,000 feet from the proposed Skunk Hollow Mine site.*

Photo Credit: © Green Lake Conservancy.



Caption: Mitchell Glen, an iconic Green Lake landmark owned by the Green Lake Sanitary District, supports a remarkable biodiversity of plants and animals, and provides ecosystem services that benefit the public.

Photo Credit: © Tom Eddy



Caption: A WDNR stream biologist shows off a young-of-the-year brook trout in Dakin Creek that was found during a fish survey in July 2022. The fish demonstrates that brook trout are now naturally reproducing and are not solely reliant on stocking. Brook trout have been missing from Dakin Creek since the 1950s, require clean and cold water to survive, and were recently restored after an effort by the Green Lake Association, Patagonia, and WDNR.

Photo Credit: © Dave Bolha