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MCWC Potash Mine Watch Press-Release:

Hersey, Michigan 11/14/18:

MCWC repeatedly warned both the EPA and Michigan's DEQ that Michigan Potash Company's proposed mining venture was both ill-conceived and inadequately funded. This week that became abundantly clear when the company began bulldozing the site chosen for its 10 high-capacity injection-wells. **The company, which has no experience in solution mining in Michigan, began by choosing a horrible location perched above, and sloping into, one of the largest marshes in Osceola County.** The site itself contains wetlands which actively flow into the marsh and creek 200 yards away. These, in turn, flow into the nearby Muskegon River.

This week, Michigan Potash stripped the entire 12-acre site of topsoil and piled it against (and in) the surrounding wetlands. Within two days, after a moderate amount of rainfall, silt was pouring into the marsh via two separate routes. Concerned residents were then denied a copy of the Sedimentation and Erosion Control Permit for the site. Members of the Osceola County Planning Commission were likewise denied access and were forced to file of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. **What kind of out-sized influence does Michigan Potash Company wield in Osceola County, whereby they receive permits hidden from the public and even from County officials?**

It appears Michigan Potash Company is treating the site like nothing more than the drilling-pad for an oil or gas-well. In reality, that site is slated to contain 10 well-heads and to function as the gathering-point for an entire network of pipes, valves, pumps, and tanks continuously transporting massive volumes of hot concentrated brine solutions. **Operating at extreme (2000 psi) pressures and at flow-rates of 1200 gallons-per-minute, a breach in such a system would prove catastrophic on a site that is essentially a funnel on the edge of a marsh and trout-stream.** This would have major impacts on adjacent landowners and especially on the marsh and stream

system itself. To our knowledge, this diverse and prolific wildlife area contains not a single species which can survive in those corrosive liquids.

The likelihood of a catastrophic spill will be multiplied by the financial realities the company faces. Chronically low potash prices coupled with high production and transport costs (w/ no rail-access) promise to yield meager profits at best. On top of that, the company plans to borrow over a third-of-a-billion dollars, thereby imposing a crushing debt-burden on their operations. **Financially-strapped companies inevitably cut corners in personnel and maintenance activities, creating a perfect-storm of risk at a such a vulnerable site. The recent destructive site preparation is proof of our point.**

If it goes forward, this potash-mining project will have major impacts in both Osceola and Mecosta Counties. **We therefore demand, as concerned stakeholders, that the MDEQ, DNR and any other responsible departments visit this site immediately to determine how much damage is already done to the wetlands and how much will be done if this construction continues. We cannot wait until January to find out if permits have been violated or even exist.**

MCWC Board

