



POTOMAC
RIVERKEEPER®
NETWORK

Embargoed until 11 a.m. Eastern
February 28, 2019

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POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER NETWORK FILES NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUE SPECIALTY GRANULES, INC.

Settling Pond Discharges Polluting Pennsylvania Streams in the Potomac Watershed

Washington, D.C. – February 28– Potomac Riverkeeper Network today filed its [Notice of Intent](#) to sue for the ongoing unlawful discharge of suspended solids from the sediment pond at Specialty Granules LLC’s Charmian facility, located at 1455 Old Waynesboro Road, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214.

Upper Potomac Riverkeeper Brent Walls said, “My [investigations](#) have demonstrated continuing and unauthorized discharges which discolor Miney Branch and nearby wetlands and risk the quality of Miney Branch, Tom’s Creek, the Monocacy and the Potomac Rivers. The Clean Water Act is being violated and nearby residents, and all six million of us who rely on the Potomac watershed for our drinking water, deserve better.”

PRKN’s investigation reveals ongoing point source discharges into Miney Branch and an adjacent wetland that cause a white to green cloud. Neighboring property owners stated that these discolorations have persisted since at least 2010, have become more frequent over time, and are worst for a period of approximately one to two weeks after rainfalls. PRKN also has evidence that Specialty Granules is discharging suspended solids from the base of its sediment pond through one or more natural and/or engineered discharge points. Discharges from these points have also caused a white to green cloud in Miney Branch and the adjacent wetland area. These discharges are not authorized by Specialty Granules’ Permit granted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and therefore constitute unlawful, unpermitted discharges in violation of the Clean Water Act.

Walls and other environmental supporters, including members of Friends of Tom’s Creek, also today presented a citizens’ petition to deny a new permit to Specialty Granules, Inc., which would allow additional discharges into Miney Branch and Tom’s Creek.

“Our goal is to convince Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to deny the permit, a permit that would allow stormwater from the mining expansion to impact Tom’s Creek,” said Walls. “SGI is using a weak social and economic justification for DEP to allow discharges into a state designated High Quality stream.”

DEP is in the final stages of reviewing an expansion permit for SGI to mine and process Greenstone, which is crushed into a fine grit for the production of asphalt shingles. Greenstone is known to contain naturally occurring asbestos, a carcinogenic material hazardous to human health, in which the crushing process introduces contaminants into the air and water.

“We are at the tipping point at which PA DEP must give meaning to the laws that protect a ‘specially protected watershed’ from the destructive environmental impacts and economic burdens caused by greenstone removal and processing,” said Hazel Keahey, board member of FOTC. “It is up to us, a small rural community, to stand up and fight to preserve fresh clean water, critical habitat, and for the economic and environmental health of our community.”

If permitted, the project will blast and excavate right next to residential properties, within 100 feet of scenic historic roads, and within 300 feet of Tom’s Creek and four ecologically-diverse wetlands containing unique and endangered species.

Sue Deveer, secretary and treasurer of Friends of Tom’s Creek as well as a downstream neighbor, said, “Tom’s Creek flows through the front our property. I have lived here for only 7 years, not long, but long enough to watch with horror Tom’s Creek flowing under our bridge, water sickly green from an ‘accident’ upstream at SGI. I love Tom’s Creek, the huge trees and all the wildlife here which these special wetlands and woodlands support. I have pledged to work to preserve it for future generations.”

About Potomac Riverkeeper Network

Potomac Riverkeeper Network is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization with three regional Waterkeeper branches: Potomac Riverkeeper, Upper Potomac Riverkeeper, and Shenandoah Riverkeeper. Our mission is to protect the public's right to clean water in our rivers and streams. We stop pollution to promote safe drinking water, protect healthy habitats, and enhance public use and enjoyment.

For more information, visit [our website](#).

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