



## DNR Declines to Reinstate Meteor Timber Wetland Fill Permit

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The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources today issued a decision that continues to block the out-of-state frac sand company Meteor Timber, LLC, from destroying 16 acres of globally rare wetlands in Monroe County.

At issue in this case is whether DNR violated state wetland laws when it granted a permit to Meteor Timber to build an industrial sand processing facility and rail project in the Town of Grant. In early May 2018, an administrative law judge ruled in favor of the Ho-Chunk Nation, represented by Midwest Environmental Advocates, when he issued a decision that invalidated the permit.

The Ho-Chunk Nation, MEA, and partner Clean Wisconsin successfully argued that the DNR should have denied the permit based upon inadequate guarantees against significant adverse impacts to the environment. The project would have destroyed irreplaceable wetlands that provide critical functions, like flood prevention, and serve as habitat for threatened and endangered species. Three witnesses, including a now-retired wetland expert who worked at DNR for over 30 years, testified on behalf of the Ho-Chunk Nation and Clean Wisconsin about the unprecedented impact of the proposal.

Expert testimony was a primary basis for the Judge's invalidation of the Meteor wetlands fill permit, yet Meteor Timber, citing a little-used DNR rule, asked the DNR Secretary in summer 2018 to suspend and reverse the independent judge's decision. When then-Secretary Daniel Meyer agreed to review the case, MEA and Clean Wisconsin challenged the decision on the grounds that DNR lacks the statutory authority to do so.

Today, Secretary Preston Cole agreed that judicial review is the appropriate venue for any appeal in this case. Said Carolyn Garnett, Legislative Attorney for the Ho-Chunk Nation, "the Nation is heartened that DNR declined to intervene in an impartial judicial review process, leaving the challenged permit invalid. The permanent destruction of these rare wetlands would have a profound impact on the Nation's people, land, and cultural heritage."

For more information on developments around the Meteor Timber proposal, visit [Midwest Environmental Advocates](http://MidwestEnvironmentalAdvocates.org) website.

*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.*

*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](#).*

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