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**DNR To Consider Permit For The North Canton Mine**

3:31 PM THU APRIL 25, 2013

## Canton Discusses Mine Permit Renewal

By [SCOTT STUNTZ](#) ([/PEOPLE/SCOTT-STUNTZ](#))

The Illinois department of natural resources held a hearing in Canton to gather public comments on whether to renew a permit for a proposed coal mine near Canton Lake.

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3:46

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A couple key questions were raised during the hearing.

The first, does the mine have a valid permit to renew?

The original permit the DNR issued for the proposed North Canton Mine was partially struck down in a review by the state agency in February.

Brian Perbix is a grass roots organizer with the Prairie Rivers Network.

He said his group, as well several other environmental groups, hoped the February ruling would force the mine operators to resubmit their entire permit application before the renewal.

However, the DNR is not requiring that and Perbix said that leaves him wondering what is being renewed.

“To date neither the applicant nor the department have specified what changes will be made to the permit that is currently up for renewal, and the public has had no opportunity to review changes to the operations plan or even to view a map of these proposed changes. And it does not appear that the department intends to afford the public this right,” Perbix said.



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/wium/files/201304/canton.jpg>

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<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/wium/files/201304/canton.jpg>

Credit SS

Public Hearing for the Renewal of the North Canton Mine's mining permit in Canton, IL

The DNR emphasized the permit was only partially denied, and can still be renewed if the mine makes the DNR's recommended changes.

Scott Fowler with DNR's Land Reclamation Division was on the panel for the hearing. He said the revised permit would not necessarily be open for public comment.

“No, we would make the decisions ourselves, we would not open it up for public

comment. There is just too many changes and opportunities for changes. It would just be those that are of a significant nature, that would change the permit significantly that we would open it up for comment,” Fowler said.

Neither side is happy with the February decision, and both are challenging the findings in court. The mining company, Capital Resources Management, wants the entire permit to be upheld.

The Prairie Rivers Network, the Illinois Sierra Club and Canton Area Citizens for Environmental issues want the entire permit denied.

The second major question was whether the mine is a good idea in general.

Canton resident and retired civil engineer Cliff Sagaser said there a no serious alternatives to Canton lake as the community's main water supply.

“I don’t think there’s very many people in this room that are opposed to this coal mine, I bet there isn’t five. What we’re opposed to what it’s going to do to the community and not support jobs. Our most valuable asset is our water supply,” Sagaser said.



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wium/files/201302/North-Canton-Mine-Proximity-to-Canton-Lake.jpg>  
[Enlarge image](#)

*Credit Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues*

But Kevin Williams, chair of the group Fulton County Citizens for Growth, viewed it differently.

“You’re my elder and I beg for forgiveness. Our greatest resource is not that water. Our greatest resource is the people of the community. I understand where you were coming from, Thank you for your comments and believe in what you’re saying. The greatest resource is the people in this community who have the resolve and the opportunity to come together and talk about how do we get through this.”

He was also one of many people at the hearing who wore black T-shirts with white letters on the front spelling out the message “We support the North Canton Mine.”

Several mine opponents at the hearing also brought up the case of the nearby Industry Mine which is owned by the same people hoping to open the North Canton mine.

The Illinois Pollution Control Board found the Industry mine violated its water pollution permit more than 600 times.

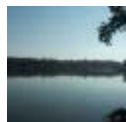
The board has yet to assess fines in that case.

Before the DNR can decide whether to renew the Canton Mine's permit it has to approve the changes to the original permit prompted by February’s review.

So far, no revised mining plan has been submitted. In addition the lawsuits filed by the environmental groups and the mining company over the February permit review are still in court.

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