The following presentation was given by Bob Rehak during the November 10, 2020, Sand Mining Rulemaking Petition Stakeholder Meeting. Mr. Rehak is a stakeholder representing ReduceFlooding.com and is not employed by, or otherwise affiliated with, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). This document is being made available by the Executive Director purely as a courtesy. The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors. The TCEQ does not endorse, represent, or necessarily agree with the following information or its accuracy.
San Jacinto River

Source of sand for dozens of mines

Source of water for 2 Million People
About ReduceFlooding.com

• Started after Hurricane Harvey to:
  • Explore causes of flooding
  • Lobby for mitigation
• Thousands of regular readers
• Focused on Lake Houston and upstream
• New stories every day
• Work with mainstream media
• Rent helicopters almost every month
• More than 17,500 photos since Harvey
Early on...

- Identified sand mining as large contributor to sedimentation
- USACE found San Jacinto River 90% blocked (left)
- Studied best practices
- Tried to engage TACA with no success
Three Critical Measures Remain Out of Reach

- Minimum setbacks from rivers
- Performance bonds for reclamation
- Mandatory compliance with best practices
Why Greater Setbacks

• Virtually all SJR mines located in floodways
• Mines regularly overrun by floodwaters
• Dikes break, release sediment-laden process water
• Dikes also obstruct floodways and increase:
  • Flooding
  • Erosion
• Taxpayers pay to remove sediment
• Water Quality
Virtually All Sand Mines Located in Floodways
Frequent Breaches
Constriction of Floodways

• Cut off floodway on one half of river
• Force water to other side
• Increases velocity, sheer factor
• Accelerates erosion
Sediment Dams Contribute to Flooding, Cost Hundreds of Millions to Remove
Why Performance Bonds for Reclamation

- Walking away from obligations is cheaper than compliance
- Some will always try to pass cleanup costs on to public
- Waterways and cities littered with mining refuse, safety issues
Revegetation Costs More than Abandonment
Industrial Litter
Why Mandatory Best Practices

• Why obey regs when it’s more profitable not to?
• Even with regs many still try to cheat
• Don’t put those who comply at a competitive disadvantage
• Safety
More Profitable Not to Comply

Abandoned mine in Humble, TX with steep sides, no berms, or fencing endangers neighboring properties and roads

Hazard to children
Even With Regs, Many Cheat
Competitive Disadvantage for Compliance
Safety

NG and HVL pipelines exposed by headward erosion due to mining too closely
Conclusion

Month after month, muck comes from sand mines. We must stop pollution, flooding, waste of tax dollars.