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Judge Approves Settlement Requiring Cleanup of Warrior Met Coal's Mine No. 7

Birmingham, AL — A federal judge in Birmingham has [granted a request by Black Warrior Riverkeeper](#) to approve a Consent Decree which requires Warrior Met Coal (WMC) to fix its leaking coal slurry impoundment and stop discharging polluted wastewater without a permit at Mine No. 7 near Brookwood in Tuscaloosa County. WMC is a metallurgical coal mining company which purchased several coal mines, including this underground mine, out of Walter Energy's 2015 bankruptcy.

The unpermitted discharges from Mine No. 7's approximately 160-acre Slurry Impoundment No. 14 flow into an unnamed tributary that eventually feeds into Texas Creek, a tributary of Davis Creek, which flows into the Black Warrior River at Holt Lake. Black Warrior Riverkeeper filed the lawsuit in 2022 over the coal mine's unpermitted discharges, which fail to comply with the Clean Water Act of 1972 and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

The discharges flow from a leaky part of the mine's Slurry Impoundment No. 14, which combines and holds wastewater from all aspects of underground mining and coal preparation. The settlement calls for WMC to implement an action plan approved by the federal Mining Safety and Health Administration, which includes the installation of a liner to fix the leaky dam holding back millions of gallons of coal slurry at Impoundment No. 14. WMC will conduct detailed sampling after the action plan is complete to help evaluate the success of the liner in stopping the discharges.

WMC has also agreed to enroll in Alabama's Dam Safety Program, which will add another layer of inspections and requirements for the maintenance and care of Slurry Impoundment No. 14. Finally, WMC will pay \$250,000.00 to the Freshwater Land Trust for the establishment of a supplemental environmental project (SEP) in the Black Warrior's Davis Creek subwatershed and reimburse Black Warrior Riverkeeper for \$28,000 in costs and attorneys' fees.

"Texas Creek and Davis Creek, regularly enjoyed by locals and wildlife, deserve the utmost protections afforded by law" said Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior Riverkeeper. "Holding Warrior Met Coal accountable for their unpermitted coal slurry wastewater discharges is Black Warrior Riverkeeper's role, given that state regulatory agencies were asleep at the wheel on this one."

Black Warrior Riverkeeper's Staff Attorney Eva Dillard added, "This case is a textbook example of why citizen suits are a critical enforcement mechanism when governments fail to enforce the law. We are pleased that WMC was willing to take responsibility for the problems at Mine No. 7 and establish a SEP that will give back to Davis Creek."

For an interactive map of Mine No. 7 by Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior Riverkeeper, [click here](#).

For a picture by John Wathen, volunteer, showing polluted water discharged without a permit from Mine No. 7, [click here](#).

For a picture by John Wathen, volunteer, showing Slurry Impoundment No. 14, the source of the unpermitted seep discharges, [click here](#).

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[Black Warrior Riverkeeper](#)'s mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. The nonprofit organization promotes clean water for the sake of public health, recreation, and wildlife habitat throughout the Black Warrior River watershed.