

## MINUTES

### MINING METHODS, ENVIRONMENT, AND RECLAMATION SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THE COMMITTEE ON MICHIGAN'S MINING FUTURE

Virtual Teams Meeting

November 6, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The meeting began at 10:06 a.m.

#### **Roll Call**

Jim Kochevar – present

Hal Fitch – present

Evelyn Ravindran – present

Adam Wygant – present

Steve Kesler – present

Peter Rose – present

#### **Others**

Jim Plummer – IRR

Linda Johnson – IRR

Sandra Karnowski

Doug Needham

The agenda was reviewed to discuss what would be covered at today's meeting. Members should review minutes from the October 9, 2020, meeting and send any comments to Jim Kochevar.

Jim Plummer from IRR gave a presentation on mining. The mining service territory is primarily in northern Minnesota. Funding comes from Taconite production tax by mining. In an average year, fund contributions are \$100 million to the service area. About \$35 to \$40 million goes to their agency. The rest of the \$100 million goes to the counties, education and the community. Focus is on businesses, community and workforce development. Everything they do is due to the mining industry.

Mineland Vision Partnership (MVP) has been in business for over 20 years. They changed their name about three months ago from Laurentian Vision Partnership to Mineland Vision Partnership. They have financial contributors which each contribute about \$300/year which pay services for facilitators; these financial contributors are: US Steel Corporation, Minnesota Power, Cliffs, ArcelorMittal, MN Department of Iron Range

Resources and Rehabilitation, and Cleveland-Cliffs. The initial core group includes: US Steel, University of Minnesota, the DNR, and the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation. They have around another 100 years of mining.

MVP's vision is shaping evolving landscapes for future generations. Their mission is a regional collaboration that invests in our diverse community by developing opportunities for dynamic mindscapes, preserving lands to sustain current and future mining, and to provide resources and education. For every 40 acres the Minnesota DNR has to that is unmined land, a billion dollars of gross inactivity goes into the land.

Who is MVP? They are mining companies, state government, and communities. They optimize the organization and communities and enhance stakeholder partnerships, invest in mineland communities, and education partners and the public. Optimizing the organization and communication includes: MVP is a convener for regional discussions on mining and land use; MVP is the coordinating committee, regional groups, and communication. They hold meeting workshops that include 50+ people, and they have drawn a lot of interest that has been taking pace for 20 years. They create stories relating to grant programs.

In addition, they educate partners and the public. MVP has reclamation design tools, they collaborate with mine engineers, they have large scale project maps (partnership with the DNR), and a mine land use map. They also have a field guide o how to build soil. They won an award from the American Society of Landscapes for this project.

MVP has a large scale projects map and has many active future mines. Their mining area is 100 miles wide and 3-4 miles high. They have communities building into the iron formation; they have 26 communities across the iron range, and most are sitting on iron formation. The maps are broke into different segments for steel and taconite. They use this for communication with the 26 communities across the iron range.

MVP invests in mineland communities. They have mineland reclamation and have \$350K in awards annually; some example of grant projects are reclamation, recreation, energy, and tourism attractions.

They developed the Buhl Disk Golf MVP Grant. This was designed around a mine; they leave lakes that are great for swimming and fishing. In addition, they worked on the United Taconite-Barrier Berm project. This project expanded Taconite toward a city in Virginia; berms mitigate dust and noise. Cleveland-Cliffs has put a lot of time and effort into this. They had two grants that valued at \$200,000 for this project.

In addition, they have the Hibbing Mine which had to be moved due to Hibon Taconite. The new site is close to the old site, and it is better than the old site. They have a 250 foot high stockpile. You can see the city of Hibbing, US Steel and other places from

here. The city of Hibbing received bonding money and will put up buildings for indoor space. With the United Taconite Stockpile, they have collaboration, create natural topography, soften manufacture terraces, and have diverse vegetation. Stockpiles need to be reshaped and revegetated.

They created the RedHead and Tioga mountain bike parks. They used ten mines to turn these mines into bike parks. They created the perfect soil, because they are well drained. Some bike trails have to be closed down, because the soil isn't good. We can educate the public on how this is done. On June 12, 2020, RedHead opened, and we have had people from all over the country visit. It is by far, the favorite trail for most people. If mining will continue in the area of RedHead and Tioga, they will have to be moved. The board gave \$5.3 million for three bikes trail projects. These trails were professionally built. The landscape is what attracts people to these bike trails.

A lot of towns were dying and received 50,000 visitors once these bike trails were created. Over three new businesses have been created because of these bike trails. What should be left as a legacy? The land needs to be left so that it can be used in the future by shaping and revegetating.

Does anyone have any questions?

**Peter Rose:** Does the state law require reclamation but no standards? Can the surface owner request how they left the land when they are done?

**Jim Plummer:** We have standards for mine reclamation. The statute requires mine reclamation, but it does not require the planting of trees and no slope to return the property back to looking natural. MVP helps with standards that come with the permitting process.

**Steve Kesler:** Is there any discussion about long range plans, like 200 years from now?

**Jim Plummer:** Ore is dipped to 7% grade. The south boundary has ore formation. We need the economy's perspective with ore and iron. There is more ore under there, and it could continue south. Iron ore comes out of the ground. His great grandfather discovered seven iron ranges. We have had to move major roads in the last five years. Every project is a sign as to how things are developed in their region and funded by mining production tax.

**Evelyn Ravindran:** Is there a rebate a company gets for mine production tax?

**Linda Johnson:** The tax is paid as a production tax but not property tax.

**Sandra Karnowski:** We bring in consultants for projects and use the foundation for contributions for other projects as well.

**Evelyn Ravindran:** Does the board make the decision for projects?

**Jim Plummer:** Some projects by statute have to go to the board to be approved. Others are approved by the budget, but guidelines have to be met.

**Steve Kesler:** Is mining in the Duluth complex included in your area?

**Linda Johnson:** Nonferrous projects are. They work with those companies. They are taxed after they are operating and in production. They are part of MVP. We keep current information on what is going on. The last Zoom meeting we held, we had 81 participants. Zoom is a great tool for those that cannot travel to meetings.

**Peter Rose:** Do new operations present a post mining land use plan, goal, or vision?

**Linda Johnson:** We have not gone through this exercise. We are working through the requirements through the DNR. We have not looked at large projects for the future.

**Jim Plummer:** Reclamation plans are not required. Mining companies must reclaim their land. Please feel free to participate in our future meetings.

The committee took at break at 11:26 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:31 a.m.

**Jim Kochevar:** There are different iron range resources in Minnesota. We need to look at a mature process. Minnesota has the benefit of state and regulatory tribes and interested parties. They have lots of state tax money funding, and the money is used differently in Minnesota. Michigan has one active ore mine and one active nonferrous mine. Minnesota has six – five are producing and the sixth will be starting.

**Hal Fitch:** Minnesota is a good model. Michigan has a lot of aggregate mining activity it can apply to and take note of potential for the community involvement. People like to feel like they have a voice.

**Peter Rose:** I agree with Hal. We need to take the stakeholder approach.

**Steve Kesler:** We are not talking about an organization like MVP who is preparing the land. We don't know where the next mine will be to encourage mining in the state.

**Pete Rose:** Mapping deposits are part of the Research committee.

**Steve Kesler:** An organization needs to include the state, stakeholders, and community to help prepare the ground.

**Evelyn Ravindran:** Long term planning is looking at the landscape and what the land is and focus on this.

**Peter Rose:** We need to focus on education with one of the other subcommittees.

**Steve Kesler:** Some stakeholders will say the land can't be used for mining.

**Evelyn Ravindran:** We need to identify areas early on and give stakeholders time to plan and tell which ones they feel strongly about. What are we looking at for mining in 10, 20, or 200 years?

**Jim Kochevar:** We'll elevate this to the whole committee. Maybe there is an overlap in another committee. The Natural Resources Institute gave a presentation at MVP.

**Adam Wygant:** I sat in on all the subcommittees. This has come up in all the meetings. Research and Mapping will formulate areas for mining. Some companies prefer not to identify resources for long term planning. If we use this approach with stakeholders, where would we want mining not to occur? Minnesota has more active mining companies.

**Jim Kochevar:** This information is valuable for this committee and others. Information is available to the public with resources and where they are. We are confined at Cliffs with the Tilden area. We won't have 100 mile radius with 26 communities like MVP.

**Adam Wygant:** How can we keep the public aware of all iron ranges and let them know that maybe for the next 20 to 200 years the area is potential mining ground?

**Jim Kochevar:** 200 years is a long time to look at. How far do you go out?

**Adam Wygant:** Climate goals are coming faster. The Governor's goal is to be carbon neutral by 2050. Where do we put advance manufacturing?

**Jim Kochevar:** This could benefit a group like a stakeholder group. Maybe they are different today than tomorrow; this would be beneficial.

**Steve Kesler:** We have a long way as a society as we have to dig holes to find what we need. As long as we have large urban areas, we are okay. We have a wide variety of mineral potential. I am hoping we can keep a short term view of enhancing our existing mining but long term range of educating the public.

**Adam Wygant:** I see a push towards electrification for 1000 volt battery. It takes 500 pounds of mining to produce one battery. The future will be minerals.

**Steve Kesler:** We should get numbers from Minnesota and include aggregates to get more people down state.

**Jim Kochevar:** The period table of phone elements shows how many elements it takes to make one phone. Extractive activity needs to continue. Industry will be regulated to solve complex problems. Minnesota has pay to play associates that help educate the public. Michigan does not have this resource.

**Adam Wygant:** When OGMD reviews mine plans, they would have a strong united voice in the public comment period. We have diverse groups to evaluate for use when the mine is done or future use.

**Evelyn Ravindran:** We need to include stakeholders and others as well by having conversations with them. We could do it like MVP did with their projects but realize they will have to move the bike trails if needed.

**Peter Rose:** They invested money in temporary projects, but I am glad they are weighing risks for future mining.

**Jim Kochevar:** We have had a lot of great discussions today. We will pick up at the next meeting and discuss our objections.

The next meeting for this subcommittee will be December 3, 2020, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Jim will send the meeting notice.

At the next meeting, we will review the subcommittee topics and brainstorm with the comments we discussed at this meeting.

Any new business? No.

Adam Wygant: Thank you for setting up this meeting with MVP.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.