

Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board

Report on Key Areas of Focus and Activity for March 14, 2023 Mineland Vision Partnership Meeting

Significant recent areas of focus and activity for the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board include:

1. Seeking legislative support for three priority areas: (a) state funding to support DNR planning and construction to address the problem of rapidly rising waters in the Canisteo and Arcturus-Hill Annex open pit mine complexes, where uncontrolled outflow is predicted to occur as waters continue to rise with no current natural outlet for either of those pit areas and with the situation requiring revisions due to the 2022 discovery of zebra mussels; (b) funding and schedule certainty for completion of the remaining eight miles of the cross range expressway, for which some initial studies are already underway due to 2021 legislation; and (c) ensuring policy stability for continued operation and maintenance of the Hill Annex Mine State Park until such time as active mining resumes there.
2. Attention to developments related to mining projects in the western Mesabi area, including MagIron, the future course for the Mesabi Metallics project and site, direct reduction grade pellets at Keewatin Taconite, and others.
3. Continued efforts to protect the mineral resources of the western Mesabi area so they are available for future mining development, pursuit of a greater role for local government members in issues having to do with leasing, permitting, operation, and post mining land use, and development and use of the mineral resources of northeastern Minnesota including critical and strategic minerals. This includes review of the Iron Mining Overlay District of the Itasca County Zoning Ordinance and its administration, and re-education of local government units and others regarding application of the overlay zone in local decision-making. This is also considered a priority for 2023.
4. Seating and familiarization of several representatives of local government units newly elected in November.