



MEMBERSHIP MEETING SUMMARY
Tuesday, March 14, 2024 (9:00 AM – 11:00 AM)
1003 Discovery Drive | Chisholm, MN 55719
And via Zoom

MEETING OBJECTIVE

VISION | Shaping evolving landscapes for future generations.

MISSION | A regional collaboration that invests in our diverse community by:

- Developing opportunities for dynamic minescapes,
- Preserving lands to sustain current and future mining, and
 - Providing resources and education

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Optimizing Organization & Communications
2. Investing in Mineland Communities
3. Enhancing Stakeholder Partnerships
4. Educating Partners & the Public

Check out the updated website: www.mvpmn.org

MEETING SUMMARY

- Welcome & Introductions
- IRRR Update
- Public Land Order 7917
- Iron Mining Association
- Introduce New MnDNR Lands & Minerals Assistant Director
- Better in Our Backyard
- PolyMet Merger with Teck in February: NewRange Copper Nickel
- Building for the Next Seven Generations

P R E S E N T A T I O N

IRRR Update

Linda Johnson, Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR)

Johnson provided an IRRR agency update. Ida Rukavina assumed the commissioner role on January 2 and was confirmed by the senate on March 8. With the new commissioner, the agency is currently reviewing programs, the strategic plan and grant programs, and they are planning for the next stages. Bobby Joe Champion was appointed to IRRR board. The board will be holding a meeting at the end of March at which they will reorganize and appoint a chair.

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Public Land Order 7917

Withdraw from Future Mineral Leasing on the Superior National Forest

Thomas Hall & Matt Judd, Forest Service

Tom Hall introduced Matt Judd, the lead on the application for the mineral withdraw. Matt Judd presented virtually.

Judd provided background on the Superior National Forest, which is comprised of 4 million acres, including the 1.1 million of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). The Superior National Forest is the 8th most visited in the nation. The U.S. Forest Service is a federal agency, under the Department of Agriculture.

Judd defined a “withdrawal” as a withholding to limit activities. It temporarily modifies what is allowed on federal lands. It does not apply to private lands. In a withdrawal there are three main roles: the forest service applicant, which is the surface land manager; the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who manage the minerals (they review the application); and the secretary of the interior who has the authority to make the withdrawal decision.

In the withdrawal process, case file documents are provided to the BLM. The National Policy Act (NPA) process requires studies and a public comment period. For this withdrawal they received 231,000 comment letters and 1,900 attachments to the comments (journal articles, etc.). The BLM and the Forest Service consulted with local tribal leadership. This review resulted in changes in the final environmental assessment. It took into consideration mineral needs for national defense, green energy, etc.

Judd explained the rationale for the withdrawal. The BWCAW is an irreplaceable resource. Recreation, high water quality, and millions of visitors supporting a \$100 million a year tourism economy topped the list. The Rainy River watershed drains into the BWCAW, and it is important to the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa.

The agency’s position is it is an appropriate action to withdraw. Adverse impact to the BWCAW, and tribal and public value of the watershed justify this action. Following the secretary of interior’s decision January 26, 2023, no new applications for leasing hard rock minerals will be considered for 20 years. Other activities will remain unaffected.

Boundaries were set due to watershed flow into the BWCAW. The BLM NEPA register can be found at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2022642/510>

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Iron Mining Association

Kristen Vake, Executive Director

Vake was hired by the Iron Mining Association (IMA) in July 2022. Her hire coincides with a shift in focus of the organization. Previously the IMA was a lobbying association. Now the focus is on storytelling. How do we engage people in the story of how the industry affects each of us? Vake shared she comes from generations of family members who work in the mining industry. In this new role, she has engaged in conversations with residents. Vake shared an example of tabling

at the State Fair in the education building. 95% of people she spoke with had no idea about iron mining. Once they were engaged in the conversation, they wanted to learn more. Vake said this experience validates the IMA board's shift in focus.

With new lawmakers in Minnesota, Vake said we have an opportunity to share our story. The IMA has been making good connections with new lawmakers, including recently attending the Duluth and Saint Louis County days at the capitol. They continue outreach, including sponsoring the student breakfast at the upcoming SME event in Virginia.

PRESENTATION

Introduce New MnDNR Lands & Minerals Assistant Director

Ted Anderson, MnDNR

Anderson began his new role January 23 as the assistant director of minerals. He works out of the MnDNR Hibbing office. Anderson's background is in mining, working for Pete Clevenstine, a "shameless promoter of Minnesota minerals." The MnDNR Hibbing office has re-opened its core library. And Anderson shared that transitional uses (Redhead, Tioga) are exciting.

PRESENTATION

Better in Our Backyard

Ryan Sistad, Executive Director

Sistad defined the charge of "Better in Our Back Yard" as promoting responsible industrial development. The mission of the organization is to be a leader in advocating for that development. Better in Our Backyard was created to be able to respond to challenges to industrial projects coming out of groups that have become, in essence, litigation focused entities. Sistad shared a list and map of projects for which Better in Our Back Yard advocates.

Sistad provided details on Line 5, an oil pipeline running through Wisconsin into Canada, and the Perpetua Resources site in Idaho which aims to produce Gold, Silver, and Antimony.

In the past year the organization has evolved. Efforts include a new, more regionally inclusive logo. They have held quarterly events and have utilized social media to keep members and the public engaged. They have used a strategy of quotes and infographics. The group stays up to date on proposed policy, and they are interviewing key players. Sistad shared a list of their board as well as their partners and members. More information can be found on:

<https://betterinourbackyard.com/>

PRESENTATION

PolyMet Merger with Teck in February: NewRange Copper Nickel

Bruce Richardson, New Range Copper Nickel

Richardson, communications director for NewRange Copper Nickel, opened his presentation by sharing a :30 spot on NewRange Copper Nickel that was featured during the hockey tournament. The campaign's tagline is: "Safe. Responsible. Respectful."

NewRange Copper Nickel is a 50:50 joint venture between PolyMet and Teck. It brings the NorthMet and Mesaba deposits under single, stand-alone management. Initial funding for the venture is a ~\$170 million investment. The company is based in Hoyt Lakes at the NorthMet project site. The site is a significant global resource. Richardson shared the combined partner attributes including strengths in addressing regulatory concerns and collaborating with communities and indigenous groups. Glencore is a 70% shareholder of PolyMet Corp., with representation on the management committee. The values of the new joint venture are "health and safety, responsible, respect, sustainable, and entrepreneurial." The vision is to lead in delivering minerals and metals that accelerate North America's transition to clean energy. The mission is to responsibly deliver a multi-generational supply of those critical minerals.

Tannice McCoy was appointed General Manager. The management committee is made up of PolyMet, Glencore and Teck Resources folks. The staff of both NorthMet and Mesaba were combined with offices in Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt. There is a combined 27 full time employees with aggressive growth in coming months. They currently have seven open positions. (<https://newrangecoppernickel.com/contact-us/#careers>)

The focus is to develop NorthMet, get it through litigation and regulatory processes, and advance the studies for Mesaba. Nothing has changed on the permitting for NorthMet. It is a brownfields site; importantly they are cleaning up legacy water quality issues from historic iron ore mining at the site, resulting in a net reduction of sulfates in the St. Louis river. Richardson shared the list of permit and regulatory approvals. Three are on hold: Permit to Mine, NPDES Water Discharge, and Section 404 Wetland permits. NewRange construction projects include preconstruction and salvage work with local contractors and labor, shortened timeline. The timeline starts with the Final EIS in 2016, and it ends with future production.

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Building for the Next Seven Generations

Cathy Chavers, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa

Chavers was born and raised in northern Minnesota, Orr. Her grandmother (deceased), mother and she are enrolled members in the Bois Forte band. Chavers has been reaching out to the Laurentian Chamber of Commerce, PolyMet, to educate on the tribal perspective.

Chavers noted it was sovereignty day at the capitol yesterday (3/13). Chavers said the nature of tribal relations can be attributed to history. In school students (including Chavers) are not taught Native American history. When she was a child Chavers did not know she was a band member, nor what that meant. Boarding school history is not shared in this country. Chavers shared there was a boarding school in Tower. There were 14 boarding schools in Minnesota. The federal government has tried to assimilate and eradicate Native Americans since the beginning, and boarding schools were one of the ways they tried to do this. "Kill the indian, save the child." Chavers shared a second-hand story she heard from Grace, a woman who was inducted into the Carlisle School. When Grace was brought into the school they scrubbed her with kerosene, and when she cried, she was beaten. Grace does not cry to this day. Chavers suggested the group look up Carlisle school. <https://carlisleindianschoolproject.com/>

There is a mistrust of the federal government due to this history. The government implemented boarding schools, and it has not held up their end of the treaties. There are federal policies in place to eradicate Native Americans. Chavers referenced Bois Forte was established by the 1854 and 1866 Treaties. Bois Forte lost their land through the Allotment act and Homestead Act. the Homestead Act which located the Bois Forte tribe first in Tower, then Nett Lake. Chavers explained how land was allotted: 80 acres per family, and the rest was given away to non-tribal members. Parts of the reservation are not owned by the Band today. The 28,000 acres recently recovered from Potlatch was the largest land reclamation project. In the reservation the government owns the land. Members lease their property. They don't pay property taxes; therefore, there is not funding provided to the tribal government.

Chavers is the President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), which includes six sovereign tribes. They are here to provide the culture and language for the next generation. Their biggest resources are the culture, language, land, and water. They are stewards of mother earth. They lived/live from the earth: wild rice, chaga, berries, and maple syrup. As tribal leaders, they are trying to educate who they are, where they come from, and how they got to where they are today. The MCT has made great strides with the State. They had a great relationship with past commissioner. They are working for new relationships.

Counties, townships, local municipalities... are listed in legislative funding. Tribes are not mentioned. Chavers noted that Native peoples are the most scrutinized and regulated people in the nation. Chavers shared examples of challenges the tribes face in law enforcement, health disparities, incarceration, etc. Things are complicated, sometimes, unjust. Tribes are dual citizens and sovereign governments. Chavers wants their band members to be working. She noted we are all dealing

with the same issues. We have a lot in common. Chavers noted the Band wants to help our neighbors and build those relationships. In the past, tribes have been invisible. They are working for education for all. Chavers said, don't afraid to ask questions. Don't think it will be disrespectful. We are all learning. Don't be quiet, come visit. A lot of good things are happening. Tribes want to be at the table. We all are intertwined.

In response to a question, Chavers recommended that when communicating with tribes, face to face is formal consultation. Informal consultation is a phone call. The tribes are flexible. It is important to call.

- Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.
- Save the date of June 14, 2023, for our next MVP Partnership meeting.

A d j o u r n e d

Mineland Vision Partnership thanks its financial contributors:



CLIFFS



U. S. Steel

