

# Laurentian Vision Partnership

## Meeting XXXXI Report

### "Planning and Project Implementation 2009"



*Laurentian Vision Partnership*  
Transforming pits and piles into lakes and landscapes

Wednesday, January 7, 2009  
Mining and Reclamation Classroom  
Chisholm, Minnesota



# Laurentian Vision Partnership

## Meeting XXXXI

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

### “Planning and Project Implementation 2009”

#### Meeting Objectives

The Facilitator reviewed the past meeting results and next steps, highlighted meeting objectives and went over the agenda for today’s meeting.

*The primary objective for the meeting was to learn about the status of the PolyMet Project, Hoyt Lakes to Babbitt Road Alignment Project, future applications of LVP reclamation design principals, GIS Collaborative Project outcomes and progress reports from Work Groups and Regional Groups on major new and ongoing implementation initiatives underway for 2009.*

#### Meeting Summary Laurentian Partnership Debriefing

- Participant introductions and expectations
- Opening comments
- Review of Meeting XXXX results and next steps (October 2008)
- Overview of meeting objective and agenda for the day

#### Presentation: Hoyt Lakes to Babbitt Road Alignment Study Pete Eakman, St. Louis County Public Works

A project team led by Pete Eakman and including St. Louis County Commissioner Mike Forsman, Jack Forslund, Project Manager with WSB and Associates and Kimberly Sannes, Compass Rose Inc. provided an overview of the status, recommendations and next steps in the county’s evaluation of a new road connection between the City of Hoyt Lakes and the City of Babbitt. The notion of a new road alignment between the two cities has been a topic of conversation for years. Most recently Congressman Oberstar has shared an interest in the project as local leaders have discussed the need for an alignment that would provide a safe and efficient way to hookup with Forest Highway 11 and 16 as well as serve the growing economic needs of the corridor for mining, tourism, logging and commuting. In 2007 a project alignment alternatives study was initiated. To date \$2.6 million has been spent to scope corridor alternatives under the direction of WSB & Associates. Jack Forslund and Kimberly Sannes shared a PowerPoint presentation that provided the history of the project history, outlined the Phase I planning process and road alignment analysis and alternatives considered, and the next steps and opportunities for public input as the environmental/design phase begins in January 2009. The three phase project study has concluded Phase I and moving to the environmental and preliminary design Phase II with the final design as the third phase. The project is still a concept that would require significant funding in a range of \$21 to \$29 million and would not be positioned to construct for at least six years. Significant federal funding would be needed to bring this project forward. To date a total of five of 11 alternative routes have been identified through a public process involving all the key stakeholders as the start of the next phase work. Consultants went on to highlight major issues to be reviewed and the project schedule beginning with two open houses in the respective communities in late January. Work is planned to continue through May of 2010. LVP members inquired about the role of the mining companies in evaluating the routes and potential impact on mining reserve areas and whether a cost benefit analysis was to be included in the assessment process. The project team acknowledged the participation of the mining companies and reiterated that they still lack a lot of information and more in-depth analysis will be needed as the next phases unfold. The project scoping document will be submitted to the EQB on January 12<sup>th</sup> for public distribution and review and will be placed on the project web site. Members asked that we add today’s PowerPoint presentation and a link to the project web site on the LVP web site. Jim Plummer will add this material and link.

**Presentation: PolyMet Non-Ferrous Mining Project**  
LaTisha Gietzen, PolyMet Mining

LaTisha Gietzen, Vice President for Public Affairs, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the scope and status of the proposed PolyMet, non-ferrous mining project near the City of Hoyt Lakes. PolyMet has been in the process of exploring and planning a full scale mining operation that would use the latest hydromet technology to mine and process ore to extract copper, nickel, cobalt, palladium and other strategic materials. The project investment would be in the range of \$312 to \$602 million to construct and open the mine, requiring 1.5 million man hours (250) full-time construction workers and will create 400 permanent jobs. The project is expected to pay an occupation tax vs. a production tax like iron mining. The project will mine ore that is very low in sulfide at less than 1% and will be a zero (0) water discharge operation that will make extensive use of existing facilities at the former LTV mine site. IRR and other regional economic developers are looking at value added opportunities for use of the strategic metals as well as the major by-product which is 98% pure gypsum. PolyMet has a major strategic partner, Glencore that is a major metals marketer and will take up to 100% of the product. They have provided a \$50 million loan and have a 10.5% ownership interest in PolyMet today.

LaTisha went on to highlight the amount of misinformation about the project, federal land needs and other key environmental issues and concerns being discussed by various interests largely in opposition in the Twin Cities. She talked about the strong local support and the fall event that was well attended and highlighted the project and tours of the site. The EIS preliminary draft has been completed by MNDNR and is being reviewed in house. There will be a 45 day public review period when the final draft EIS is released in the first quarter of 2009. Members asked questions about the feasibility of an underground operation and the water runoff concerns being expressed by some interests. She explained that an underground operation would not be economically feasible and explained the extremely low sulfide content of the ore and steps that would be taken to achieve zero discharge with long term monitoring and reclamation planned as part of the project. Members asked that the PowerPoint also be added to the LVP web site by Jim Plummer.

**Partnership Priorities: Work Groups and Sub-Regional Group Reports**

Individual work group representatives provided the following reports and next steps.

Action Areas	Work Group Priorities	Work Group Representative(s)	Update/Next Steps
<b>Targeting Priority Projects</b>	1. FY Bricks and Mortars Projects Review (Innovation and Reclamation Grants)	Dan Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dan provided an overview of the history and intent of the Innovation Grant Program started four years ago.</li> <li>IRR wants to see landscapes developed for the future through collaborative projects with the mines and communities working together. He went on to highlight major projects including the Wind Energy Project at Minntac, Biomass Project at United Taconite and the Underground Mapping Project – Phase II.</li> <li>Dan emphasized that we need to continue to identify collaborative bricks and mortar projects to fund and to help us think about possibilities we will share additional background information on a design project at Minntac and mine land reclamation requirements.</li> </ul>

**Presentation: Minntac West Pit Design Project**  
Jerry Dombeck, USX

At this point in the meeting we were hoping to have Jerry Dombeck join us to highlight MinnTac's work on the long-term design of the West Pit area for future reuse. He had a last minute conflict and was unable to join us. We will try to have this presentation for a future meeting.

**Presentation: ArcelorMittal Laurentian Pit Closure**  
Steve Mekkes, ArcelorMittal and Steve Dewar, MNDNR

Steve Dewar of Minnesota DNR, Mineland Reclamation, provided a PowerPoint presentation on mineland reclamation requirements and standards that have been in place since 1980. He highlighted the permits required,

plans required for the mine and later reclamation and shared the minimum standards that must be met. He then used the Laurentian Mine and discussed in-pit stockpiling and wetland creation opportunities that have been applied in the region as well as other general reclamation concepts. Detailed information is on line and can be accessed.

Steve Mekkes of ArcelorMittal shared information on the reclamation plans for the Laurentian Pit and steps that have been taken today. He also commented on the new pit expansion and Charrette work and its application in the future. These were good examples of the kinds of planning and mining/post mining work that can support future landscapes and uses for productive land use opportunities.

Both presentations will be placed on the LVP web site.

**Presentation: Laurentian GIS Collaborative Pilot**  
Kara Kent, ARDC

Kara Kent, ARDC Planner and GIS Specialist, provided an update on the status of the Laurentian GIS collaborative project that has been underway for over 18 months. She shared an overview of the communities involved, scope of the information and capabilities being developed and the next phase of work. A major portion of the funding for Phase II has not been secured as yet. ARDC would like to expand the number of communities participating and further enhance the capabilities of the GIS system. ARDC maintains the hardware server and provides technical support for the communities involved. Each community has choices on the scope of information being maintained and has access to the software to manipulate the data with technical support in place to meet their customized needs. Data retention, access and standardization are some of the issues being addressed in this collaborative framework. ARDC and its partners will continue to improve and expand the system and its applications for land use planning and host of other spatial data applications.

Action Areas	Work Group Priorities	Work Group Representative(s)	Update/Next Steps
<b>Delivering Tools &amp; Resources</b>	1. Minorca Charrette – Update on CR 715 alignment alternatives around Biwabik	Pete Eakman/Jim Plummer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pete Eakman provided information on the status of the CR 715 alignment in Biwabik. He commented on the Charrette alignment options and the preferred alignment being considered. Members asked to be kept informed as the planning process continues.</li> </ul>
	2. Laru Mesabi Iron Range Large Scale Projects Map – member quarterly update and access	Tim Pastika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tim asked members to provide him with update information and he will update the Large Scale map with access on the LVP web site. The Magnetation project was mentioned as a possible addition.</li> </ul>
	3. LVP Training for Engineers Project Update	John Koepke (Jim Plummer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jim Plummer and Dan Jordan reported on the status of the training session to be held in February. Interest has been very good and Chris and John are ready for the event. We hope to develop design templates and guidelines that can be used and adapted for a variety of projects in the future. A presentation on the results will be provided at the next LVP membership meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitating Regional Outreach</b>	1. LVP Coordinators Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mining 101</li> <li>o LVP Design Guidelines 1011</li> <li>o Web site use</li> </ul>	Jim Plummer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jim Plummer is working with Dean Selner of MNDNR Lands and Minerals to prepare a draft of the Mining 101 and Design Guidelines for review at the next meeting.</li> </ul>

## Regional Group Updates

Two of five Regional Groups were present and provided an update on their major activities related to LVP.

Sub-Regional Group	Current Projects
CIRI - Lory Fedo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No report was provided</li> </ul>
Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board - Doug Learmont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No report was provided</li> </ul>
East Central Range Partnership - Jeff Jacobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jeff commented on the work continuing on the Charrette implementation. The group continues to meet and discuss immediate priorities and is making progress.</li> </ul>
East Range Readiness - Curt Anttila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curt would like to discuss the Red Top Shooting Range Project at the next meeting. Other current priorities are PolyMet and housing development.</li> </ul>
Quad Cities - Representative to be named	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No report was provided</li> </ul>

## Other Business/Discussion Topics

### A. Range Readiness Initiative (RRI) Update - Randy Lasky

The Range Readiness Strategy Team met in December and is concentrating on its communication needs, workforce development, housing, community planning and supplier development opportunities. Randy reported that the group discussed the status of various large scale projects and the continued implementation of at least four projects under construction and several like PolyMet and Mesabi Nugget that are preparing for environmental reviews and permitting. All of the RRI Work Teams are continuing to meet and another Projects Team meeting may be scheduled in the first quarter of 2009 as needed to assess project status and needs given the global recession and tight credit markets for debt and equity needs. More layoffs are expected in the taconite industry as demand continues to slow.

### B. Future Topics

The group discussed a number of possible discussion topics highlighted on the agenda by the Coordinating Committee and settled on four (4) priorities for future upcoming meetings:

- Essar Steel Minnesota, LLC
- NE Wetlands Taskforce – Banking Assessment and Policy Recommendation Development Update
- Brownfield’s Funding Development
- MNDOT Sink Hole Project Assessment Update
- Other?

## Coordinating Committee Meeting

The next Coordinating Committee will be held **in mid-March on a date to be determined from 9:00 A.M. to Noon at the Mining and Reclamation Classroom**, at Ironworld Discovery Center in Chisholm.

## LVP Quarterly Meeting

The next Laurentian Vision Partnership meeting will be **held on May 6th from 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. at the Mining and Reclamation Classroom** at Ironworld Discovery Center in Chisholm.



**Laurentian Vision Partnership**  
Transforming pits and piles into lakes and landscapes

**MEETING XXXXI**

Wednesday, January 7, 2009– 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM  
Mining and Reclamation Classroom  
Chisholm, Minnesota

**"Planning and Project Implementation 2009"**

**OBJECTIVE**

Learn about the status of the PolyMet Project, Hoyt Lakes to Babbitt Road Alignment Project, future applications of LVP reclamation design principals, GIS Collaborative Project outcomes and progress reports from Work Groups and Regional Groups on major new and ongoing implementation initiatives underway for 2009

**AGENDA**

- 9:00 Laurentian Partnership Debriefing** *Randy Lasky*
- Participant introductions and expectations
  - Opening comments
  - Review of Meeting XXXX results and next steps (10/08)
  - Overview of the meeting objective and agenda
- 9:15 Presentation: Hoyt Lakes to Babbitt Road Alignment Alternatives Study Overview and Next Steps** *Pete Eakman,  
St. Louis County Public Works;  
Mike Forsman,  
County Commissioner;  
Jack Forslund, Project Manager with  
WSB & Associates; and  
Chris Hiniker, SEH*
- 10:00 Presentation: PolyMet Non-Ferrous Mining Project and EIS Process Overview and Update** *LaTisha Gietzen, Vice-President of  
Public, Government and  
Environmental Affairs*
- 10:40 Break**
- 10:50 Partnership Priorities: Work Group Action Progress Reports**
- 1) Targeting PRIORITY PROJECTS
    - Bricks and Mortar Projects
      - Review past Innovation Grant Projects *Dan Jordan*
      - Presentation: Minntac West Pit - Design Project *Jerry Dombeck, USX*
      - Presentation: ArcelorMittal Laurentian Pit Closure and Potential for Implementing Design Considerations *Steve Mekkes ArcelorMittal and  
Steve Dewar, MDNR*
      - Discussion: How do we support a post-mining landscape beyond state requirements? *Randy Lasky and Jim Plummer*

- 11:25 Partnership Priorities: Work Group Action Progress Reports**  
 2) Delivering TOOLS and RESOURCES  
 ○ Presentation: Laurentian GIS Collaborative Pilot Project Outcomes Summary and Online Demonstration *Andy Hubley and Kara Kent, ARDC*
- 11:40**  
 ○ Minorca Charrette – Update on CR 715 alignment alternatives around Biwabik *Pete Eakman and Jim Plummer*
- 11:50**  
 ○ Mesabi Iron Range Large Scale Projects Map – Member Quarterly Update and Access *Tim Pastika*
- 11:55**  
 ○ LVP Training for Engineers Project Update *John Koepke*
- 12:00 Partnership Priorities: Work Group Action Progress Reports**  
 3) Facilitating REGIONAL OUTREACH  
 ○ LVP Coordinators Report *Jim Plummer*  
 – Mining 101 and LVP Design Principals 101  
 – Web site use and analysis
- 12:10 Partnership Priorities: Regional Group Action Progress Reports**  
 ● Regional Group Updates  
 1) Central Iron Range Initiative (CIRI) *Lory Fedo*  
 – Brownfields  
 – Pine Planting on mine dumps  
 2) Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board (WMMPB) *Doug Learmont*  
 3) East Range Community Readiness (ERJPB) *Curt Anttila*  
 – Red Top Shooting Range Project  
 4) East Central Range Partnership *Jeff Jacobson*  
 – Strategic planning – City of Biwabik  
 5) Quad Cities  
*Quad Cities Representative*
- 12:20 Other Business Updates**  
 ● Range Readiness Initiative (RRI) Update *Randy Lasky*  
 ● Future Topic?  
 ○ Essar Steel Minnesota, LLC  
 ○ NE Wetlands Taskforce –Banking Assessment and Policy Recommendations Development Update  
 ○ Brownfield’s Funding Development  
 ○ MNDOT Sink Hole Project Assessment Update  
 ○ Other?
- 12:25 What’s Next?**  
 ● CY 2009 Meeting Schedule (January, May, October) *Randy Lasky*  
 ● Next meeting date and agenda  
 ○ **Coordinating Group** – April \_\_\_\_\_ 2009?  
 – Representative from each Work Group and each Sub-Regional Group  
 ○ **Laurentian Vision Partnership** – May\_\_\_\_, 2009?  
 ● Wrap up announcements and conclusions
- 12:30 ADJOURN**



**Laurentian Vision Partnership**  
Transforming pits and piles into lakes and landscapes

**Meeting Participants  
Laurentian Vision Partnership  
Meeting XXXXI**

Wednesday, January 7, 2009 - 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Anttila,	Curt	East Range Joint Powers Board	erjpb@cpinternet.com	(218) 229-3671
Bloomquist,	Lee	Iron Range Resources	lee.bloomquist@state.mn.us	(218) 744-7312
Eakman,	Pete	St. Louis County	eakmanp@co.st-louis.mn.us	(218) 625-3841
Engesser,	John	DRN Lands & Minerals	john.engesser@dnr.state.mn.us	(218) 231-8448
England,	Dan	Eveleth Fee Office, Inc.	efoinc@gmail.com	(218) 744-4646
Forslund,	Jack	WSB & Associates	jforslund@wsbeng.com	(218) 287-8532
Forsman,	Mike	St. Louis County	forsmanm@co.st-louis.mn.us	(218) 365-8200
Gietzen,	LaTisha	PolyMet	lgietzen@polymetmining.com	(218) 225-4417 x 4237
Halverson,	Doug	Cliffs Natural Resources	douglas.halverson@cliffsnr.com	(218) 827-2020
Heltunen,	Peter	RGGS Land & Minerals	pheltunen@rggs.us	(218) 749-1291
Henderson,	Pat	ARDC	phenderson@ardc.org	(218) 529-7547
Hiti,	Brian	Iron Range Resources	brian.hiti@state.mn.us	(218) 744-7400 x 2
Holliday,	Mary	Rendrag	mary.holliday@msn.com	(218) 393-6711
Jacobson,	Jeff	City of Biwabik	administrator@cityofbiwabik.com	(218) 865-4187
Jensen,	Ray	Hibbing Community College	raymondjensen@hibbing.edu	(218) 262-7255
Johnson,	Gabe	Cliffs Natural Resources	gabriel.johnson@cliffsnr.com	(218) 279-6117
Jordan,	Dan	Iron Range Resources	dan.jordan@state.mn.us	(218) 254-7967
Kent,	Kara	ARDC	k.kent@ardc.org	(218) 529-7539
Lalich,	Mike	NRRI	mlalich@nrri.umn.edu	(218) 720-4297
Lasky,	Randy	Northspan Group	rlasky@northspan.org	(218) 529-7561
Lesar,	Barry	St. Louis County	lesarb@co.st-louis.mn.us	(218) 742-9840
Maninga,	Daryl	RLK, Inc.	dmaninga@rlkinc.com	(218) 262-5528
McReynolds,	Mary	St. Louis County Env Svc, Solid Waste Div	mcreynoldsm@co.st-louis.mn.us	(218) 749-0648
Meineke,	David	Global Minerals Eng	david.meineke@globalmineralseng.com	(218) 262-0799 x 6
Mekkes,	Steve	ArcelorMittal	steven.mekkes@arecelormittal.com	(218) 749-5910
Minne,	Jon	Barr Engineering	jminne@barr.com	(218) 262-8688
Pastika,	Pete	Babbitt	info@babbitt-mn.com	(218) 827-2188
Pastika,	Tim	DNR Lands & Minerals	tim.pastika@dnr.state.mn.us	(218) 231-8467
Plummer,	Jim	Iron Range Resources	jim.plummer@state.mn.us	(218) 744-7344
Rand,	Heather	MN – DEED	heather.rand@state.mn.us	(218) 722-4223
Rian,	Dave	Barr Engineering	dcr@barr.com	(218) 262-8605
Rutherford,	Steve	Mesabi Nugget	steve.rutherford@stld.com	(218) 225-7330
Sannes,	Kimberly	Compass Rose, Inc.	ksannes@compassrose-inc.com	(218) 260-9017
Stoller,	Eric	St. Louis County Planning & Dev.	stollere@co.st-louis.mn.us	(218) 742-9563
Swearingen,	Jim	PolyMet and City of Biwabik	jimswear1@aol.com	(218) 865-4460
Talarico,	Maureen	Cliffs Natural Resources	maureen.talarico@cliffsnr.com	(218) 279-6120