

Laurentian Vision Partnership

Transforming pits and piles into lakes and landscapes

Vision

Transforming pits and piles into living lakes and landscapes...our legacy for the future.

Mission

The Laurentian Vision Partnership is a regional coalition that promotes the development of productive post mining landscapes by cooperating in:

- Preserving lands necessary to sustain current and future mining
- Promoting landscape options for post mining uses
- Identifying and discussing new development opportunities
- Providing the tools to achieve these goals

In the late 1990's US Steel, Iron Range Resources, the Minnesota DNR and the University of Minnesota began exploring how active mining processes could reshape the mined landscape of the Mesabi Iron Range. While individual taconite mine sites throughout the Range had been regraded and replanted for over forty years, no large-scale effort focused on the planned reshaping of mine sites for common economic, aesthetic, recreational and natural resource goals had ever been undertaken. Today, the Laurentian Vision Partnership is tackling that challenge. Several years of voluntary meetings, data collection, mapping sessions and public design workshops that visualize future uses for exhausted mines have set the stage for how active mining and community goals can help reshape the physical landscape of the region's future.

Who We Are

The Laurentian Vision Partnership is a coalition of mining, business, government, education, professional and community interests representing all parts of the Iron Range, which promotes sustainable mining and the reshaping of mining sites into productive future landscapes. The Partnership serves as both a convener and a land planner. It facilitates discussion and decision making among all interests, and it helps identify lands for economic, recreation, and resource uses that meet mining and community goals. Playing both roles allows the Partnership to encourage, help craft future goals for the region, and clarify the steps needed to transform them into realities on the ground.



Laurentian Vision Partners

The Partnership is open to all interested stakeholders, whether private property owners, mining company representatives, business or community interests. Partners typically contribute in-kind services, funds, or other financial and human resources to sustain the Partnership's mission. For a current list of the Partner organizations and individuals, check the website at www.LVPMN.org.

What We Do

Laurentian Vision Partnership (LVP) supports the Mesabi Iron Range as a healthy place to live and work by transforming pits and piles into lakes and landscapes. It encourages planned design efforts by mining companies and communities throughout the Mesabi Iron Range, promotes new ideas for the long-term restoration and development of individual mine sites, and facilitates meaningful actions among all stakeholders. It uses an integrated method of five tools to meet these goals.





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1. Community and Regional Visioning

Laurentian Vision Partnership promotes visioning to assist stakeholders in creating new possibilities and maximizing potential. By developing a clear sense of purpose, decisions are made and problems solved by relying on the vision of the future as a guide. The Partnership helps mining companies, communities and regional interests identify goals that promote sustainable mining and community enhancement. Clear stakeholder priorities are developed through the visioning process for preserving necessary lands for current and future mining, enhanced post-mining landscapes and regional economic growth. The Partnership's visioning process uses neutral meeting-sites so that group goal-setting and other exercises result in legitimate participation, focused discussion and quality decision making.

2. Land Design Workshops

The Partnership conducts public design workshops (called charrettes), hosted voluntarily by a mining company, property owners and neighboring communities, and staffed by teams of local and national designers and planners. Each workshop identifies goals, which help the design teams devise realistic development scenarios for former minelands. The workshop sequence takes place, uninterrupted, over several days; the resulting drawings, diagrams, maps and other illustrations capture the teams' ideas and are presented and discussed with the mining company and community. The resulting scenarios are then translated into planning actions and development strategies that stakeholders can implement in both the short and long term.



The Partnership uses the charrette format because it is an effective, affordable way to quickly visualize future uses for former minelands. The charrette is also a great way for stakeholders to participate in legitimate discussions about development ideas that may affect them. Since 2001, Laurentian Vision Partnership charrettes have generated great enthusiasm for potential projects in the Virginia, Hibbing/Chisholm and Biwabik areas, and have resulted in funding for the research and mapping of multiple future land design sites.

3. GIS Mapping

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a computer system capable of capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information. The Partnership has created several GIS based maps and is continuously refining them as new mining and land use data becomes available. GIS maps provide stakeholders with powerful information about how things are, and how they may be in the future. The Partnership develops maps for land design workshops and ongoing development projects that are mining related. GIS is used to plan how land can be used after mining by mapping important site information like pit lake elevations, the shaping and location of stock piles, delineation of underground mines, and pit-wall slopes.



The Laurentian Vision Partnership identifies and maps the resources and land needed to sustain mining in the future at expected production rates. Mining resources are delineated by the time frame in which development would most likely begin: 0-20 years, 20-50 years, and greater than 50 years. Auxiliary lands needed to develop these resources, such as stockpile areas, tailings basins and their expansion areas, blast buffers, environmental setbacks, and haul routes are also mapped. This mapping process helps everyone understand the mining industry's future land use needs and locations, preserves areas for taconite development, and avoids potential land use conflicts by non-mining development.



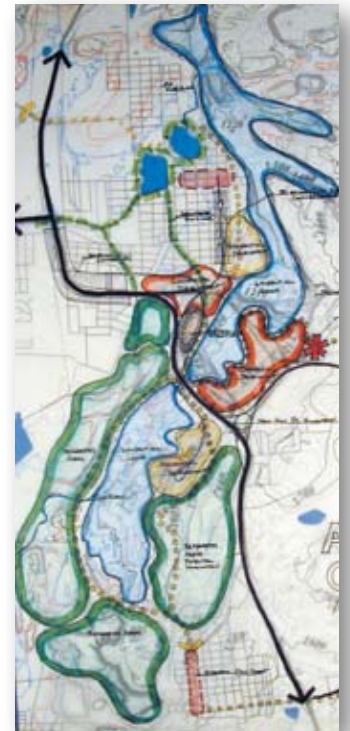
4. Innovation Grants

The Laurentian Vision Partnership provides Innovation Grants to operating taconite mining companies, local communities and other organizations interested in:

- Exploring future uses for lands disturbed by mining (e.g. commercial, residential, recreational and/or environmental enhancement)
- Providing jobs or generating revenue from such ideas
- Solving public safety issues associated with the public use of private minelands
- Active local community participation in the planning, design and implementation of mineland projects

Innovation Grants provide an exciting, new opportunity for mining companies and community interests to collaborate in deciding how post-mining lands can best be developed to benefit Range businesses, communities and the landscape.

Iron Range Resources provides funding for the Innovation Grants and expects that the applicants will provide a match, which may include in-kind services or other non-agency funds. Grant applications are reviewed by the Laurentian Vision Partnership Coordinating Committee at its quarterly meetings along with Iron Range Resources staff. Recommended applications are then reviewed and approved by the Iron Range Resources Commissioner and Board.



5. Cooperation – We Work Together

Laurentian Vision Partnership members participate in “work groups” that engage in specific tasks and projects that support the Laurentian Vision Partnership mission. Four “regional groups” represent their geographic areas of the Iron Range and include: Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board (WMMPB), Central Iron Range Initiative (CIRI), Quad Cities, and the East Range Community Readiness Committee.

The task of the “Regional Groups” is to:

1. Assist in the implementation of existing land design workshop plans.
2. Help identify specific sites and projects that could benefit from more detailed LVP technical or monetary support.
3. Provide information to the Laurentian Vision Partnership on current activities in their area.
4. Facilitate communication and the flow of information among each other and with the LVP on behalf of local interests
5. Operate as community liaisons from the LVP to their constituents; presenting new ideas, concepts and projects, providing region wide information to their members and receiving direction from the Partnership for their respective region.



www.LVPMN.org

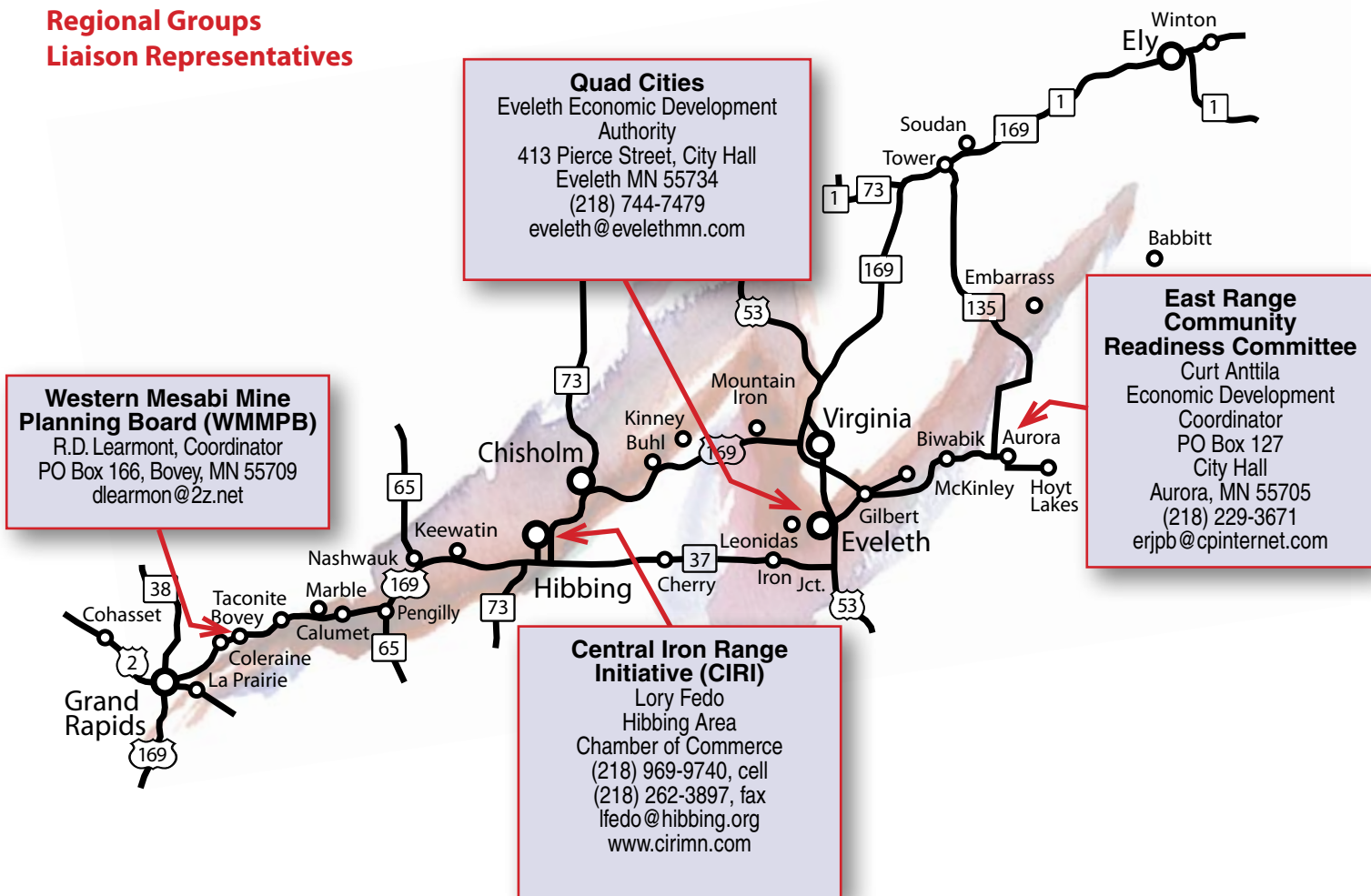




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Regional Groups Liaison Representatives



How the Laurentian Vision Partnership Can Help You

The Laurentian Vision Partnership is energetic in its commitment to sustaining a productive region by using former mine lands as the footprints for new projects that enhance the prosperity and beauty of the Mesabi Iron Range. If you are interested in participating in the Laurentian Vision Partnership, desire assistance for your company or community on a project, or need more information about the Partnership's activities, please contact:

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