

# **Laurentian Vision Partnership**

## **Meeting XXIX Report**

### ***"Planning and Project Implementation 2005-2006"***



***"Transforming pits and piles to living lakes and landscapes...our legacy for the future."***

Wednesday, September 14, 2005  
Iron Range Resources, Mesabi Room  
Eveleth, MN



**Laurentian Vision Partnership  
Meeting XXIX**

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***“Planning and Project Implementation 2005-2006”***

**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 *hear progress reports from priority action Work Groups and Regional Groups on major new and ongoing initiatives* being implemented. In addition, the group was asked to discuss a proposed new challenge grant concept and provide feedback to the Commissioner and the Iron Range Resources Board –Mineland Reclamation Liaison Group.

**Meeting Summary**

**Participant Introductions and Agenda Review**

The meeting opened with a welcome to the new and former participants around the table and everybody introduced themselves by sharing their names, role and reasons for joining the Laurentian Vision Partnership meeting. There were several new local-regional group representatives in attendance. See Appendix B for the list of attendees.

The Facilitator highlighted the organizational work completed at our last meeting and the evolution of the Partnership to an ongoing implementation phase with regular reporting as a major agenda focus. One carryover organizational activity that was not completed and will need attention is the *Partner Roles and Responsibilities Assessment*. The action step was to re-survey Laurentian Vision Partnership members by emailing three (3) questions originally sent out prior to the June meeting. Partners would complete the survey and send back to the Facilitator to be compiled and shared. It was agreed that this information is important and the Facilitator will initiate this action and compile a results summary, specifically, resources and expectations to share at our next LVP meeting.

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

**Work Group Action Update Reports**

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

<b>Action Areas</b>	<b>Work Group Priorities</b>	<b>Work Group Members</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b><i>Facilitate Regional Visioning</i></b>	1. Develop and Implement an Iron Range Communication Strategy	Marlene Pospeck, <i>Convener</i> Tim Pastika Doug Learmont John Koepke, <i>Primer/Handbook</i> Joe Scipioni	1. John Koepke was sick and could not attend today. Ray Svatos reported on the <i>LVP Primer/Handbook</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work is in process with completion expected in October-November.</li> <li>▪ A draft will be shared with the membership for comments prior to our next meeting.</li> </ul>

Action Areas	Work Group Priorities	Work Group Members	Next Steps
<p><b>Deliver Tools and Resources</b></p>	<p>1. Update mineland map.</p> <p>2. Proposal to begin a Charrette at Mittal Steel USA Minorca Mine area.</p> <p>3. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Assessment</p>	<p>Marty Vadis, <i>Convener</i>  Tim Pastika  Dennis Hendricks  Pete VanDelinder  Doug Learmont  Tom Gardner</p> <p>Dan Jordan, <i>Convener</i>  Dave Yappel  John Chell  Ray Svatos</p>	<p>1. The mapping was originally completed in 2001 and needs to be updated. MDNR is gathering data and preparing to make the refinements. Work will be completed in winter 2005-2006.</p> <p>2. Mittal Steel Inland/Ispat mine expansion in process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EIS will be complete in June 2006</li> <li>▪ Water level issue has been raised as a concern</li> <li>▪ Currently building the mine model and plans</li> <li>▪ Working on a new road alignment, core drilling will be underway soon.</li> </ul> <p>3. Charrette planning is underway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A stakeholder-planning meeting was held in July. Ray Svatos shared a written report highlighting the discussion and outcomes of that meeting with University of Minnesota representatives. Terry Lowell, Biwabik City Administrator and participant provided comments.</li> <li>▪ Definite interest in conducting a Charrette.</li> <li>▪ Planning an event in Spring/early Summer 2006.</li> <li>▪ There was some confusion about the EIS process and coordination with the Charrette timing.</li> <li>▪ EIS will feed the Charrette</li> <li>▪ Major concern is the funding needs of \$60-\$70,000. Will remain a challenge to be addressed as we move ahead.</li> <li>▪ Mixed ownership around the pit was another key area of concern that will need to be addressed.</li> <li>▪ Charrette process is not identified with either the Quad Cities or East Range Readiness Committee efforts and will need to be discussed further.</li> </ul> <p>4. Sharing Iron Range GIS Assessment findings to determine interest and next steps in developing an integrated GIS system for the Iron Range. Currently major gaps in GIS capability and capacity at the local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Iron Range Assessment Report that was reviewed with the LVP in June will be sent out to all communities on the Iron Range with invitations.</li> <li>▪ Workshops to be held on September 29th in Chisholm and October 11th in Eveleth. City Administrators and other local officials are invited for this educational event. Agenda will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– GIS Overview</li> <li>– County uses</li> <li>– Community usage in Hibbing and Grand Rapids</li> <li>– State uses</li> <li>– Need for Range Collaborative that is community driven?</li> <li>– Tie to LVP initiatives</li> <li>– Next steps</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Looking at opportunities to leverage resources and make this a cost effective tool for communities and LVP. Will also coordinate with the community colleges and Blandin Foundation</li> </ul>

Action Areas	Work Group Priorities	Work Group Members	Next Steps
<b>Target Priority Projects</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Met with WMMPB to discuss LVP and Iron Range Resources reclamation.</li> <li>2. Other sub-regional group formation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convince Biwabik &amp; McKinley to join Readiness Group</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Quad Cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forum planned w/speakers to discuss LVP (Virginia on 10/18) to provide info, current projects, interests in an ongoing group</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Keewatin Council Meeting attended by Joe Scipioni, re: possible Charrette.</li> </ol>	<p>Ray Svatos, <i>Convener</i></p> <p>Dan Jordan  Doug Hildenbrand  Doug Learmont  Barry Lesar  Delyle Pankratz  Marlene Pospeck  Tim Pastika  Vickie Tuskan  Randy Lasky  Tiffany Anderson</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a process for sub-regional groups to prioritize, propose and coordinate Charrette/land design projects on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>2. Conduct a follow up meeting with Biwabik and McKinley and representatives of the East Range Readiness Committee to determine inclusion Ray Svatos and Facilitator.</li> <li>3. The forum originally scheduled for July has been rescheduled for October 18th. Tiffany Anderson is coordinating with Ray Svatos and others.</li> <li>4. Interest has been expressed by the City of Keewatin to learn more about organizing a Charrette for the Keewatin Taconite area. LVP provided input to representatives on the cost and benefits and agreed to assist with an information meeting. The following actions will be coordinated by Ray Svatos with other sub-regional stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invitations will be made to the city councils of Keewatin and Nashwauk, Nashwauk Township and the Western Mesabi Planning Board for a joint information meeting and discussion of interest.</li> <li>▪ Hope to use the new primer/handbook if completed.</li> <li>▪ A representative of CIRI offered to attend and share their Charrette experience. Doug H. will coordinate.</li> <li>▪ To be held this Fall at Keewatin City Hall.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

**Sub-Regional Group Updates**

Representatives of the Central Iron Range Initiative (Doug Hildenbrand), Quad Cities (Tiffany Anderson and John Tourville) Western Mesabi Planning Board (Doug Learmont) and East Range Readiness Committee (Curt Antilla and Rick Bradford) reported on recent sub-regional group activities.

Sub-Regional Group	Current Projects
<b>CIRI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCMR Project will be underway for the next 2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mapping/geological survey</li> <li>○ Water levels assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reaching out to Keewatin to involve them in planning for the area</li> <li>• Still working on a problem with \$1.7 million bonding appropriation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Question about the use for planning</li> <li>○ Could affect \$300,000 - \$400,000. Won't lose the money but may have to find a different use</li> <li>○ May lose sport fisheries study</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working on the notion of developing a master plan from Chisholm to Buhl</li> <li>○ Want to work with LVP to do a Pit Lake prototype project design for lakeshore development. More on this in the future.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Sub-Regional Group	Current Projects
<b>Quad Cities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Charrette renderings were shown to the LVP.</li> <li>• Laurentian Vision Forum to be used to present past works to the public and develop support for several major implementation projects and expanded interest and involvement by key local stakeholders.</li> <li>• Information Forum to be held October 18th</li> <li>• Communities are planning to seek state bonding funding for several major projects. Funding needs have been targeted for 2006, 2008 and 2010 to address implementation priorities. State Bonding Legislative Committees will be visiting the area this fall. We will be presenting our request and vision to those two groups.</li> <li>• United Taconite recently met with MnDot officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EIS possible for re-routing a segment of TH 53</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It was suggested that a MnDOT representative be invited to attend and participate in LVP. Ray Svatos will invite a representative for the next meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Western Mesabi Planning Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Mesabi Planning Board was started ten years ago, all in Itasca County</li> <li>• Joint Powers Board – 11 government unit members</li> <li>• Areas of focus related to LVP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Caneseo Pits Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Water filled</li> <li>– Safety issue</li> <li>– Not an active mine area</li> <li>– State bonding \$2.2 million request to MDNR (project approved in 2005 bill)</li> <li>– Use for detail design – water level stability assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Excelsior Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Water need – 5k to 10k gallons per minute</li> <li>– Hill Annex &amp; other pits will come into play</li> <li>– Not ready for Charrette yet but soon</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ K-Tac westward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Multiple governments to be involved</li> <li>– Minnesota Steel tie-in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIS underway</li> <li>• New information coming on the scope of the project</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Possible Charrette '06</li> <li>– EIS mitigation needs to be determined and could be part of the process discussion</li> <li>– Want to share the Primer and Handbook with group</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Tie into Itasca County Planning &amp; Zoning Process (Comprehensive Plan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Looking at updating mining overlay zone</li> <li>– Coordinate with the cities and Itasca County</li> <li>– LVP could help address questions being posed on the long-range, cumulative environmental impacts of these pending projects. How do we fit with their plans?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>East Range Readiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with project specific environmental concerns related to Mesabi Nugget and PolyMet</li> <li>• Involving key players in the sub-regional area</li> <li>• Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mesabi Nugget – EIS and permits in place</li> <li>○ PolyMet EIS underway</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Workforce needs becoming an issue with the “boom” anticipated. More planning needed</li> <li>• New opportunities need to be communicated – LVP role? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Iron Range Economic Alliance will be discussing some of these broader issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Will need a map update for the area to include additional areas with mining potential – future phase and possible Charrette</li> </ul>

## Challenge Grant Concept

Deputy Commissioner Brian Hiti explained that members of the Iron Range Resources Board who sit on the Mineland Reclamation Liaison Group recently met and suggested that a Challenge Grant competition be initiated for the mining companies in 2005-2006. The concept is to focus on projects that result in “moving dirt”. This would be different than a community driven request process and would focus on “value added reclamation”. The work must have a pre-1980 focus to be eligible for use. Approximately \$800,000 could be available for this use. Commissioner Layman asked that the LVP provide input on this concept today.

Mining company representatives, sub-regional community representatives and others members provided the following reactions and comments on the concept.

- Potential project use – identify potential wetland mitigation sites across the Iron Range
- Grants are now done on a project by project basis and should be continued
- Promote regional cooperation rather than single community focus
- We have already initiated projects cooperatively with area mining companies to help implement reclamation work tied to a past Charrette implementation plans. We should continue to use these dollars for that kind of coordinated activity.
- Partnership requests should be made by mining companies and communities/regional groups in concert. Could be testing, planning related or dirt movement. What are the key needs and return on that investment for the area and companies.
- Mining company representatives in attendance agreed to discuss this with their respective organizations. This would be followed by sending a letter to Ray Svatos containing their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and proposals for a challenge grant program for “value added reclamation” projects on pre-1980 mined areas.
- More discussion is needed.

## Coordinating Committee Meeting in October

It was suggested that the Coordinating Committee meet in late October to stay focused on the tasks at hand, set the next LVP agenda and address any other needs. Facilitator will email dates to Work Group and Sub-Regional Group chairs to finalize a date. Possible dates are Oct. 26-28 or the week before.

## Next Partnership Meeting

The next Laurentian Vision Partnership meeting will be held **Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 A.M. to Noon at the Mineland Reclamation Classroom** at Ironworld Discovery Center in Chisholm.

## Laurentian Vision Partnership Meeting XXIX



Wednesday, September 14, 2005 – 9:00 AM - Noon  
Mesabi Room  
Iron Range Resources Office, Eveleth, MN

### *"Planning and Project Implementation 2005-2006"*

#### Objective

Hear progress reports from Work Groups and Regional Groups on major new and ongoing initiatives underway for 2005-2006.

#### Agenda

- 9:00 Laurentian Partnership Debriefing:** What are partner and program news and views?
- Participant introductions and expectations
  - Opening comments
  - Review of Meeting XXVIII results and next steps
  - Overview of the meeting objectives and agenda
- 9:30 Partnership Priorities:** Work Group Action Progress Reports
- Work Group Updates
    - 1) Facilitating REGIONAL VISIONING
      - LVP Primer/Handbook John Koepke
    - 2) Delivering TOOLS and RESOURCES
      - Mineland Mapping Update Marty Vadis/Tim Pastika
      - Mittal Steel, USA Minorca Mine Expansion Update John Arola/Tom Gardner
      - Mittal Steel, USA Minorca Mine Area Charette Planning Ray Svatos/Terry Lowell
      - Iron Range Community GIS Assessment Dan Jordan/John Chell
- 10:30 Break**
- 10:45** 3) Targeting PRIORITY PROJECTS
- Quad Cities Forum Update Tiffany Anderson/John Tourville
  - Keewatin Taconite Area Charrette Joe Scipioni
- 11:00 Partnership Priorities:** Regional Group Action Progress Reports
- Regional Group Updates
    - 1) Central Iron Range Initiative (CIRI) Doug Hildenbrand
    - 2) Quad Cities Tiffany Anderson
    - 3) Western Mesabi Planning Board Doug Learmont
    - 4) East Range Community Readiness Curt Antilla

**11:30 Challenge Grant Concept**

Commissioner Sandy Layman

**11:45 What's Next?**

- Next meeting date and agenda
  - Coordinating Group – October 25, 26, or 27?  
Representative from each Work Group and each Regional Group
  - Laurentian Vision Partnership – January 11, 2006?
- Wrap up announcements and conclusions

**12:00 Adjourn**

**Meeting Participants**

Arrowhead Regional Development Center	David Yapel
Chisholm/CIRI	Doug Hildenbrand
City of Biwabik	Terry Lowell
City of Chisholm	David D. Carlstrom
City of Hoyt Lakes	Rick Bradford
City of Keewatin	Tom Sampsow
City of Virginia	John Tourville
East Range Joint Powers Board	Curt Anttila
Eveleth EDA	Tiffany Anderson
Hibbing Chamber of Commerce	Lory Fedo
Hibtac/Utac	Julie Varichak
Iron Range Resources	Brian Hiti
Iron Range Resources	Dan Jordan
Iron Range Resources	Matt Sjoberg
Iron Range Resources	Ray Svatos
Itasca County Land Commissioner	Garrett Ous
Minnesota Power	Dan Markham
Mittal Steel	John Arola
MNDNR	Marty Vadis
Northspan Group, Inc.	Randy Lasky
U.S. Steel	Jerry Dombek
U.S. Steel	Bruce Kniivila
Utac	Jeff Hammerlind
Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board	Doug Learmont