

Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board

Recent Key Activities for May 25, 2016 Laurentian Vision Partners Meeting

Improvements to Highway 169:

A 1.5 mile section of current 2 lane highway is to be upgraded to 4 lanes as a result of construction this year and next. WMMPB is involved in efforts to resume planning and consider possible alignment changes to the remaining 9 miles of existing 2 lanes for upgrading to 4 lanes to complete the Cross Range Expressway.

Captive Rail:

WMMPB is actively involved in the Regional Rail Initiative which has an objective of reducing or eliminating dependence on very limited freight rail operations on the Mesabi Range. Current efforts focus on West Range Connector studies.

Hill Annex Mine State Park:

Recent further reductions by the MN DNR Parks and Trails Division have substantially reduced availability of this state park to regional tourists. WMMPB is involved in meetings with collaborators working to find ways to maintain this important site as a tourist and educational object while preserving accessibility to its substantial iron ore resources for future mining.

Joint Powers Agreement modifications:

WMMPB has a committee that is studying possible changes to the joint powers agreement that guide and coordinate WMMPB's fourteen local government unit members.

Financial aid to local communities:

WMMPB has established a committee to focus on ways to preserve and expand local government aid to the local area and also to develop and implement ideas that would provide more benefit to local communities that are most specifically impacted by newer mining operations.

Continue mining tours:

WMMPB wishes to continue its efforts to educate local government officials and employees, as well as the general public, about the importance of the mining industry to the local economy, including periodic tours of operating mines and plants, mineral exploration and development projects, and businesses and activities related to mining even if not themselves involved in mining.

Comprehensive planning:

WMMPB continues its efforts to develop and coordinate comprehensive planning and zoning rules and ordinances involving and for its members.