

Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board

Recent Key Activities Report for June 7, 2017 Laurentian Vision Partners Meeting

Improvements to Highway 169:

Construction work has resumed to upgrade to 4 lanes a 1.5 mile section of current 2 lane highway east and west of Taconite, Minnesota, the result of years of planning. WMMPB is now involved in planning efforts including possible alignment changes to upgrade the remaining 9 miles of two lane highway 169 to four lanes to complete the Cross Range Expressway.

Captive Rail:

WMMPB has been actively involved in the Regional Rail Initiative which has an objective of improving competitive freight rail options across the Mesabi Range. Current efforts have focused on West Range Connector studies.

Hill Annex Mine State Park:

Major reductions and the renewed possibility of park shut-down by MN DNR Parks and Trails Division resulted in accelerated WMMPB activity to counter that possibility. WMMPB members view the park as having potential to become a tourist destination site and providing important opportunities for mineral-related education while preserving accessibility to its substantial iron ore resources for future mining. Legislative activity resulted in the park remaining open for the approaching biennium and a multi-member effort is to be undertaken to develop a longer term plan for the park. Volunteers are expected to supplement state personnel for this tourist season.

Continue mining tours:

WMMPB envisions another field tour next summer to educate local government officials and employees, as well as the general public, about the importance of the mining industry and other significant activities in the local economy. These field trips typically include tours of operating mines and plants, mineral exploration and development projects, and businesses and activities related to mining in this region even if not themselves directly 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.

Industry Developments:

People are carefully watching Western Mesabi mining industry developments, including the recent resumption of operations at Keetac and developing events with regard to reactivation of the former Magnetation facilities, new developments on the former Butler site, and others.