



EARLY LEADER OF SAVE LAKE SUPERIOR ASSOCIATION PASSES AWAY

Arnold Overby, one of the early leaders and longtime President of Save Lake Superior Association passed away in early June of this year. Born and raised on the North Shore of Lake Superior, Arnold worked tirelessly to protect the lake from environmental damage, most notably during the legal action to stop Reserve Mining from discharging 67,000 tons of taconite tailings into the lake each day from the production plant in Silver Bay, MN. Arnold offered a typically understated summary of this period in our history in 1995 as “History of the Save Lake Superior Association” as follows:

“SLSA was originally organized to do something about the taconite tailings being dumped into Lake Superior. Reserve Mining Company began processing taconite at Silver Bay, Minnesota, in late 1955. Approximately 60,000 tons of tailings were discharged into the lake daily; 5400 tons of which were finer than face powder. The fine tailings were carried away from the discharge zone by lake currents. By 1957-58 it became obvious that the tailings were moving all over the western end of Lake Superior. The green discoloration created by the fine tailings extended for miles beyond the discharge point. Commercial fishermen found that the tailings were coating their nets and that herring avoided the colored water.

Several native North Shore residents met in February of 1969 to form the Save Lake Superior Association. Their observations about the lake were now supported by information gathered by a study group of the Department of the Interior. Thus began a long involvement with hearings in Duluth conducted by the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration (now EPA), participation in state and federal court proceedings, and eventual success in forcing Reserve to deposit their tailings on-land. At the height of the Reserve controversy, membership in SLSA exceeded 2,000.”

A co-founder and past President offered the following remarks about Arnold’s dedication and service in protecting the lake: “Arnold Overby began his many years of service to Save Lake Superior Assn soon after its formation on Feb. 22, 1969. Although he wasn’t present at that first meeting, the 18 or so who were agreed that he should be Vice-President. Its early success owes much to Arnold’s thoughtful, calm presence, his steadfast loyalty and firm leadership. SLSA’s first years were not easy for those living and working in the midst of the battle with Reserve Mining over its tailings disposal in Lake Superior. Arnold traveled countless miles to meetings, events and sports shows to distribute literature and attend events focusing on SLSA’s issues. He became president of SLSA six years later when its first president resigned to run for political office, and after many years stepping aside himself to continue serving in several other capacities, most recently as treasurer. “

From my perspective we all owe Arnold and the other founders and thousands of citizens, organizations, activists, government employees, legal experts and supportive politicians a huge amount of gratitude for this accomplishment of stopping the discharge of the tailings and other waste into Lake Superior. Arnold will continue to hold a special place in our memories. According to an “experienced” fisherman, Walter Sve of Split Rock, it took 25 years before they began to harvest herring again at his dock.

LeRoger Lind



LAKE SUPERIOR FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN UP FOR RENEWAL

The Lake Superior Area Fisheries Division of Minnesota’s Department of Natural Resources is currently developing the 10 year update to the plan released in 2005. As in the past SLSA is focused on maintaining and increasing the opportunity for Minnesota residents and visitors to enjoy native fish caught and served locally. As usual the devil is in the details. SLSA VP, Dan Rau, an experienced and knowledgeable authority on the fishing industry in western Lake Superior is representing SLSA on the plan update Advisory Group.

After a great deal of detailed analysis, SLSA’s position on an “Overall Goal for Fisheries Management on Lake Superior” is that the Lake Superior Fishery should be providing a sustainable supply of high quality food to the

people of the region. Sustainability includes both concerns about fish populations and also the fishing operations that supply fish to the community. This should reflect the interests of ALL the people of the state which includes recreation, aesthetics and preserving a natural ecosystem.

One of our more controversial recommendations is to remove the current restrictions on the herring catch in Minnesota since there is no evidence that the Minnesota herring fishery ever had a significant effect on the herring population. Control of the smelt population appears so be more important in maintaining the herring population due to the predation of smelt on herring larvae and fry. Restricting commercial fishing of smelt adversely affects the herring population. It appears that state control of both herring and smelt fishing is counter-productive with respect to supplying nutritious locally supplied food from Lake Superior.

SLSA is also recommending no more lake trout planting in Lake Superior since the lake trout population is self-sustaining. We are also recommending expanding public access to lake trout via expansion of commercial harvest. Stocking of exotic fish such as Steelhead and Kamloops should be reduced and other means of supporting native trout populations pursued.

We will post the research and other materials used in substantiating our positions on our website www.savelakesuperior.org for those interested in Dan's research. The final product of the update to the 10 year Lake Superior Fisheries Plan for Minnesota will also be posted.

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Material from Dan Rau

Northern Minnesota groups file lawsuit against MDNR decision to not require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Northshore Mining expansion

Duluth, Minnesota --- June, 17th, 2015 --- Save Our Sky Blue Waters, Save Lake Superior Association, and Wetlands Action Group have filed notice to appeal the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decision to deny an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Northshore Mining Company Progression of the Ultimate Pit Limit located in St. Louis County, Minnesota. The groups believe that the DNR failed to take the required "hard look" at the proposed Project because the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) indicates there may be potential for significant environmental effects.

By expanding taconite operations at its Babbitt, Minnesota site, Northshore will uncover a layer of sulfide ores, thus exposing them to the environment (air and water) and allowing for pollution that includes sulfates, heavy metal leaching and potential acid mine drainage (AMD). This process has previously occurred when sulfide ores were exposed at the former LTV taconite mine's Dunka Pit. The removal and stockpiling of the sulfide ores at the Dunka site has already caused significant and long standing environmental harm. After 50 years, the Dunka Pit sulfide-bearing waste rock continues to leach heavy metals into Bob Bay of Birch Lake / Kawishiwi River, which flows into the Boundary Waters. "Before we let the mining companies open up another sulfide ore body in Minnesota, we should make sure they can clean up the mess from the decades-old, ongoing pollution at the Dunka Mine site. This project will destroy wetlands, and could degrade streams, rivers and lakes. Our waters are too valuable to be traded away for short term mining company profits." said Bob Tammen - Wetlands Action Group.

Of further concern are the impacts to Northshore's Milepost 7 tailings basin, which is located just upstream of Lake Superior and the North Shore communities of Beaver Bay and Silver Bay, where the additional taconite tailings would be stored (the sulfide bearing rock would be stockpiled at the mine site). Decades ago, the Reserve Mining Company was forced to stop dumping its tailings into Lake Superior--and contaminating Duluth's and surrounding communities' water supplies with asbestos-like fibers. The DNR initially opposed Milepost 7 as the preferred on-land tailings disposal site because of safety concerns. The Company prevailed in court, however, and the Milepost 7 location was eventually chosen and completed in 1980.

The recent Canadian mine disaster at the Mount Polley mine site is an example of the potential for catastrophic tailings basin failures. Like the Mount Polley tailings dam, Milepost 7 is located on potentially unstable glacial foundation materials. In addition, an Independent Expert Engineering Investigation and Review Panel released a report on Mount Polley in January 2015 that calls for an end to wet tailings storage for mine waste. As Milepost 7 is now situated, any break in the wet mine tailings basin dike would send the dangerous mineral fiber laden contents directly downstream into Lake Superior and nearby communities.

“We can’t just continue to permit these mining projects without considering whether they are safe for the impacted communities. Dangerous asbestos-like mineral fibers from the East range threaten human health. We are concerned about the contamination of drinking water and consumable fish in Lake Superior. Northshore Mining’s proposed expansion must be fully analyzed in an EIS.” said Le Lind - Save Lake Superior Association.

Need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) completed for the Northshore expansion does not present adequate information on the potential treatment of the sulfides that will be exposed, and the subsequent continued load of sulfates, mercury and methylmercury into the environment. Nor does the EAW adequately address impacts to the waters and wetlands from the project to the Partridge River and Dunka River watersheds. The DNR is thus remiss in failing to address and predict potential significant impacts to the environment of the kind and scope that could result from the proposed expansion of Northshore Mining’s Peter Mitchell mine site, and the kinds of mitigation and financial assurance that would be required ahead of any potential environmental damage. For example, it is known that the heavy metal leaching from exposed sulfide ores can last for hundreds to thousands of years, requiring near-perpetual treatment. In addition, the Northshore Mine site is situated on the Laurentian Continental Divide, straddling two watersheds. After pit closure, all discharges will be diverted into the Rainy River basin, which includes Birch Lake and the Kawishiwi River. This is a significant environmental impact to the Partridge River and will undoubtedly result in negative impacts to the St. Louis River and the Lake Superior watershed. Removing thousands of acres from the Lake Superior watershed results in a large diversion of water out of the Lake Superior Basin, and is contrary to the Great Lakes Basin Compact.



Both the Rainy River and Lake Superior watersheds have the potential to have significant, adverse and long lasting impacts from Northshore Mining’s proposed taconite mine expansion, both are waterways of international importance. Being that the impacted watersheds lie within Native American Tribal Ceded Territory, pollution and degradation of food sources such as wild rice, and water resources - is also an environmental justice issue. “The Minnesota DNR needs to take a hard look at the significant issues involved in Northshore Mining’s proposed expansion, and cannot continue to sweep the environmental impacts of mining activities under the proverbial rug for future generations to deal with. The quality of the environment, the wildlife, the

fish, and the water of this area directly affects the health of the human population living here.” said Lori Andresen - Save Our Sky Blue Waters The groups are seeking a reversal of the DNR's negative need declaration for an EIS on the proposed Northshore Mining expansion. The groups are asking the Court of Appeals to reverse the MDNR decision because the administrative record establishes that the MDNR failed to take a "hard look" at the relevant environmental issues, made the decision based upon an error of law, the decision was arbitrary and capricious, and substantial evidence does not support the decision. The northern organizations maintain that an EIS is required, due to the type, extent, irreversible, and cumulative potential environmental effects from the proposed Northshore Mine project.

LAKE SUPERIOR DAY DRAWS LARGE CROWDS AT HEAD OF THE LAKE

At our Lake Superior Day tabling display many visitors asked what type of water pollution we are concerned about. In cases involving invasive species we continue to explain that many of the invasive species actually originate in the lower great lakes or in foreign ports and are transported into Lake Superior in huge Lakers and salties. Sportsmen and women that are affected by critters like sea fleas then actually transport them to places like Lake Vermillion in or on their boats. Legislators from these areas offer little if any assistance in adopting effective legislation to require treatment of ballast water in these large vessels. About 98 species of invasives have been transported into Lake Superior. As explained previously and verified again on local media, MN state agencies are focusing on monitoring and controlling the spread of these fleas, mussels, gobies and others by inspections, cleaning and fining fishermen on inland lakes; not a word

about the continuing replenishment of these species through infected ballast water dumped into Lake Superior.

As reported in the Duluth News Tribune, spiny waterfleas have been confirmed in Lake Vermilion near Tower and Cook, and the lake has been designated as infested waters the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources announced recently. Crane Lake downstream from Lake Vermillion is already designated as infested for them according to the MN Department of Natural Resources. In standard procedures signs are posted at public water access points to alert boaters of the infestation, boats must be cleaned when leaving, all water removed, drain plugs pulled and unwanted bait disposed of. Invasive species have become a source of jobs and income instead of a call to action from state and federal agencies for rapid preventive measures at the source of the problem.

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