



## SAVE LAKE SUPERIOR ASSOCIATION 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING WELL RECEIVED

On Saturday, October 15, a large group of members and friends of the Save Lake Superior Association gathered at Lafayette Square Park in Duluth and heard three excellent speakers talk about “Threats to Lake Superior”. Laura Gauger presented a talk entitled Environmental Degradation at the Flambeau Mine: A Cautionary Tale for Minnesotans. Laura experienced the issues concerning the Flambeau Mine first hand while living in Wisconsin. Nancy Schuldt, who has served as the Fond du Lac Water Projects Coordinator since 1997,



presented a talk entitled “Protecting Anishinaabeg Resources from the Headwaters to the Big Lake” and Nelson French, currently Great Lakes Lake Superior Program Supervisor at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, discussed Restoring and Protecting the Great Lakes: Restoration Initiative in Action in Minnesota talking about progress on the Areas of Concern (AOC) in the St. Louis River and Lake Superior. Our Mission since 1969 has been “to prevent further *degradation* of Lake Superior and to promote its *rehabilitation*. Some media outlets feel that this is too strident and should be altered to “to *protect* Lake Superior” and promote its rehabilitation. We think not! The lake is being degraded by many sources and they need to be identified and called out. The lake would then be more protected.

In addition to the speakers, the second annual Award of “Excellence in Achievement” was given to Len and Bethel Anderson of Cloquet for their continuing work on issues regarding the health of the St. Louis River. More details are given in a separate article. Local officials were also invited to attend. Minnesota State Representative Erik Simonson came to the entire meeting and shared with the group some of his concerns regarding environmental issues. Representative Mary Murphy also attended and presented her concerns. In this day and age politicians discussing the environment are “walking on thin ice” but both put their position into the context of today’s politics and we thank them and wish them well in their campaigns.

Also during the meeting, officers for the next year were voted on with the following results. LeRoger Lind will continue as President, Dan Rau as Vice President and the office of Secretary and Treasurer is now combined with Will Munger, Jr. serving in that role. We encourage members and friends to become more active in our organization by attending Board meetings as “active” members and potential Board members. Contact us by mail at our postal address, via the internet at [www.savelakesuperior.org](http://www.savelakesuperior.org) or via our Facebook page.

Sally Munger

## Leonard and Bethel Anderson Receive Excellence in Achievement Award in 2016

The SLSA Board of Directors authorized the annual SLSA Award to be given to the member(s) "in recognition of his/her outstanding efforts" directed toward meeting SLSA's goals and objective to preserve and protect Lake Superior. Len and Bethel meet these criteria without question. They came to Cloquet in the late sixties and began developing a strong environmental program based on the watershed concept, in the Cloquet Public Schools, where he taught the science classes, and Bethel was an



RN at the local hospital. Len started the St. Louis Riverwatch monitoring program by involving hundreds of students, and demonstrated love for the clean waters by taking students on whitewater canoe, kayak and rafting outings, and on trips to Isle Royale. Len and Glenn Maxham produced a video on the state of the river that got the local power structure so upset that they tried to get Len fired. Len and Bethel joined other concerned citizens and fought the proposed power plant at Brookston on the St. Louis River, to the State Supreme Court, where it was denied (probably without comment).

In 1989, Len began serving on the Citizens Advisor Committee for the Remedial Action Plan, which addressed the legacy issues that caused the DLR estuary to be labeled an Area of Concern on the Great Lakes. Len helped develop the St Louis River management Plan, which now protect 22,000 acres of riparian zones along the river. Both Len and Bethel served on the St. Louis River Mercury TMDL committee and Len served on the state Mercury TMDL Implementation Committee.

Their efforts in the last 12 years focused on metallic sulfide mining issues, including the State's Wild Rice Research Advisory Committee. They have always felt that one of the best ways to protect Lake Superior is to try to keep the toxins of modern life out of the watershed that feeds into the lake, and food webs, and eventually into the blood of new born babies. Len and Bethel helped to get the medical professionals organized to demand a Health Risk Assessment for the proposed PolyMet copper-nickel project threatening to discharge sulfates, sulfuric acid and toxic metals into Lake Superior and its watershed. It's difficult to imagine time and effort spent on these efforts. We thank them.

Gary Glass

### **Membership Dues**

Please check your Newsletter mailing label for expiration date. If the year is not current, it needs to be updated.

Repeat of new dues structure:

ALL EXCEPT LIFETIME ARE PER PERSON PER YEAR.

\$10 Fixed income	\$50 Sustaining	\$200 Lifetime
\$20 General	\$100 Benefactor	(per person)
\$30 Family		

The Lifetime option is only available to new members or members whose label is currently up-to-date.

**Please designate your choice when you renew.**

We appreciate your interest as well as your support.

## **RATIONAL FOR PLAN OF ACTION TO STOP MINING PERMITS FOR POLYMETS COPPER MINE**

From my perspective (Glenn Maxham) there is a need for a well-coordinated plan that will clearly inform the public and legislators of what the harmful impact is likely to be with specific examples if permits are granted. This is best presented by citing anti-permit arguments already promulgated by experts with impeccable credentials. I suggest we lay out our concerns in a priority manner to address, where applicable, those that adversely affect the greatest number of residents in northeastern Minnesota.

From the HUMAN HEALTH perspective, we should support the statement from the group of Duluth physicians who issued a news release warning the public of health risks if sulfide mining is approved. We should request specific information on what damage can be done to children and adults by ingesting drinking water polluted by PolyMet.

HARM TO AQUATIC LIFE needs to be explained and spelled out in layperson's terms. This would be of particular interest to fishermen/women and duck hunters. Sulfide chemicals permeate not only flowing water in streams, they also would permeate the substrate and thus threaten the lives of fish and amphibians that inhabit these ecosystem. A reduction or virtual elimination of food sources, obviously, would remove the infected streams and lakes from visitation by anglers and wildfowl hunters. The principal question to the DNR is whether it has yet conducted tests to determine what impact on aquatic life would result from sulfide pollution in the St. Louis River watershed, Lake Superior and the BWCA. It should also be asked whether the Water Lab has run such experiments. If not, why not?

TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION businesses have already spoken out about the negative impact that would result with DNR approval of PolyMet's permits to begin mining operations.....the so called "downstream" group. It should be contacted to seek ask for an updated version of its previously voiced objection to issuance of the permits. Perhaps some of the major real estate firms located in northeastern Minnesota should be quizzed about devaluations of property located on or near areas of projected sulfide pollution. They may have some thoughts worth hearing. Owners of cabin real estate abutting the St. Louis River would likely be among the first to suffer financial losses along with those adjacent to the BWCAW.

WILD RICE CROP LOSS AFFECTING NATIVE AMERICAN LIFE has both environmental and cultural significance. Representatives of the Fond du Lac tribe are faced with acceptance of the higher toleration levels of sulfide secure by the mining industry from the State. The DNR worked with mining interests to create a revised standard that accommodates higher amounts of sulfates. Tribal representatives and qualified non-Indian volunteers have aided the Ojibwa's in formally rejecting the position of PolyMet and the MNDNR in revising long-standing regulations. Len and Bethel Anderson have worked on wild rice research of years and continue to this day. (It should be noted that Glenn offered this as a draft and that it has been reduced in length to a certain extent. The thoughts are relevant now and will be expanded upon in future editions of the SLSA Newsletter. He offered this as a limited guide for future public actions.)

## **NORTHSHORE MINING WANTS TO REMOVE ASBESTOS FIBER STANDARD FROM AIR PERMIT**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Metallic Mining Division staff over the past year has been working on a draft air quality permit amendment that involves the regulation of 'Minnesota fibers' in the ambient air at the Northshore Mining Facility in Silver Bay, MN. The draft amendment for the facility includes the removal of an older permit requirement called the 'control city standard', a condition established as a result of the Reserve Mining court decisions from 1975. The amendment also includes newly developed permit conditions to regulate fibers in the ambient air around the facility. The original 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit decision that vacated the Reserve Mining requirement for the control city standard as being moot but that it was written as enforceable into the state permit requirement. We stipulated to dismissal of the 2007 case based upon assurances from the agency that it was going to come up with a numeric health-based standard for the permit and now it is going back on its word.

At this point we have a number of concerns that need to be addressed by any changes in their air emissions permit with respect to asbestos-like fibers:

1. A scientific definition of "Minnesota fibers" and how it would relate to current amphibole/chrysotile differentiation is needed for consistency in enforcement.
2. The continuing ability to identify the type of amphiboles captured such as ferroactinolite and cummingtonite grunerite to identify the relative toxicity of these fibers and the exposure limits assigned in terms of fibers per cubic meter.
3. The use of engineered test procedures such as originally proposed by an MPCA engineer. Ambient conditions are not currently recorded in the present test procedures. Large fiber events based upon high winds from the northwest over MP7 are not assigned as a cause that must be included in any permit revision calculations.
4. Data security both in procurement and analysis must be improved. The current measurement stations are not well kept or positioned. The Silver Bay Marina, Black Beach and the City of Beaver Bay are currently not monitored and are downwind from the production plant and air emission stacks.
5. The assignment of a maximum fibers per cubic meter (f/m<sup>3</sup>) allowable should be a permit standard. Past data has shown levels as high as 40,000 f/m<sup>3</sup> on high wind days. There were some discussions about allowing permit levels as high as 25,000 f/m<sup>3</sup> which from any perspective would not be protective. Data shows that levels above 4000 f/m<sup>3</sup> would be unacceptable on a health basis as a starting point until the MPCA develops a credible health-based standard.
6. The plan for and progress on developing a "health-based standard" should be based upon the research of Dr. Phil Cook at the USEPA lab in Duluth. There is plenty of precise data available that has been discounted by lesser scientists. The toxicity of the fibers at Silver Bay, Beaver Bay and Babbitt is as much as 20 times higher than that of Libby fibers. Fiber data from the Taconite Workers Health Study is of little value in determining the amount of toxic fibers in the air on the Iron Range since the chemistry of the fibers was not tested in most cases. The Control City Standard is the only valid and enforceable air pollution regulation existing for these harmful fibers and should be applied to the mine at Babbitt as well as the production facility at Silver Bay. Test data from very accurate instrumentation shows high levels at the test site there similar to those in Silver Bay and Beaver Bay. Other vulnerable sites also exist.

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