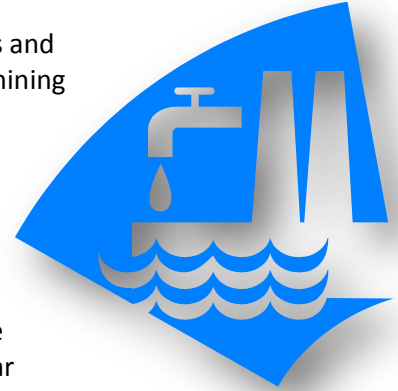




## **If you want clean air and clean water, you'll have to work for it!**

During the past quarter it has been demonstrated that a significant commitment will be required to protect Lake Superior and its watershed from the pollutants generated during the mining, processing and shipping of copper-nickel sulfide and taconite ores. Corporations, politicians, media, educational and government institutions all continue to publically assert that these activities do not harm the environment and that the only challenges posed by these operations are business and financially related. However, many informed citizens do recognize that the real challenges involve the long term preservation of clean air and water and are much more difficult to understand than short term financial benefits.

Careful analyses of proposed mining plans, applications for relief from regulations and rules to control pollution reveal fundamental inaccuracies and inadequacies. The mining plan proposed by PolyMet Northmet Mining reveals inadequate attention to the means of stopping the drainage of mercury and heavy metals from waste storage pits into adjacent surface and ground water. Seepage from the former LTV basin currently exceeds federal water quality limits. Now they propose to dump more toxic waste on top of the existing tailings. Thousands of comments from experts, individuals and the U.S. EPA on the proposed plan in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for PolyMet have challenged the adequacy of the plan to prevent serious water pollution. Many SLSA members also submitted similar comments.



The processing of taconite ore on the Iron Range and on the North Shore continues to generate fine fibrous particles that pollute the air and water around the plants. The recent disclosure of four more cases of mesothelioma in mining communities should be cause for alarm. Instead Northshore Mining Company continues to challenge the validity of the Control City Standard regulating emissions of fibers at the plant in Silver Bay. Current test results confirm the presence of significant numbers of the most dangerous fibers in the ambient air along the North Shore near Silver Bay. These same fibers are also found in monitors at Babbitt and Hoyt Lakes communities where the regulation has yet to be implemented. The emission of asbestos and asbestos-like fibers remains a constant public health issue globally.

Untreated ballast water from lakers and salties continues to be discharged into our harbors in Duluth and along the North Shore. Evidence clearly shows that ballast water is the main transport vector for Aquatic Invasive Species such as zebra mussels and VHS fish virus. Scientists from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, recently detected the VHS fish virus in Lake Superior harbors including Duluth. The only local reaction to this finding focused on damage control to prevent the movement of the virus into inland waters. Treatment of ballast water could still prevent the virus and other foreign species from becoming firmly established in Lake Superior. Would flying carp hauled in from lower Lake Michigan provide more incentive?

Claims by industry that effective control of these many pollutants would lead to financial disaster are a recurring and ridiculous theme faced by those in the battle against pollution of the waters of Lake Superior. Progress toward reducing and preventing pollution would become more effective if more citizens demanded better pollution controls. Only you can prevent pollution.

LeRoger Lind, President

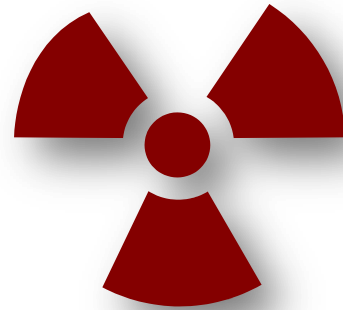
## **Lake Superior once eyed for a North Shore nuclear power plant**

Renewed efforts have been made to repeal Minnesota laws prohibiting new nuclear power plants in this state, so says MEP (Minnesota Environmental Partnership.) Maintaining a nuclear moratorium is one of MEP's 2010 priority issues.

It has been a half-century since Minnesota Power, then known as Minnesota Power and Light, was exploring

the possibility of building a nuclear facility in Clover Valley near Duluth. The source of the millions of gallons of water to cool the reactors would have been Lake Superior. The Duluth-based company joined a consortium in 1956 that included eighteen firms including Northern States Power, General Mills and Minneapolis Honeywell. It was called the Minnesota Nuclear Operations Group. The plans never advanced very far before the company decided to go with coal-fired generating plants instead.

MEP (of which SLSA is a member) states, “More nuclear energy is not a sensible or cost-effective solution to increasing our energy independence. Until solutions can be found to answer the concerns about new nuclear power plants, Minnesota should focus its efforts on increasing energy efficiency and developing more clean, renewable energy resources.” SLSA contacted Minnesota Power to learn whether it has recently given some thought to reconsider studying the nuclear issue. Company spokesperson Amy Rutledge assured us there have been no such discussions and none is planned. She said, however, Minnesota Power supports the move seeking to have the ban lifted that has kept additional nuclear facilities from being built.



### **Enforceable Shoreland rules on the way**

It was a nice try but doomed to failure when, twenty years ago, the Minnesota DNR issued a set of “voluntary” standards to protect our shorelands. The aim of the regulations was to protect the habitat and ensure better water quality. The concept looked good on paper but this wasn’t turned into action. The DNR ultimately had to accept the fact that, by and large, the local governments ignored the standards.

Starting in 2004 the agency decided to get tougher and, with the backing of the 2007 legislature, began setting a “new and improved” set of rules. The legislature allocated a million dollars to implement the project by 2009. The DNR says it should be ready by mid-summer.

### **No fat siscowet lake trout for Jack Sprat**

If the finicky character of traditional nursery rhymes were still around, his “no fat” diet would turn him away from the siscowet strain. Had he been aware of the benefits to his health in eating them to get the omega-3 fatty acids in their flesh he might have reconsidered. Jeff Gunderson, the new head of Minnesota Sea Grant, writing in his agency’s Seiche publication, pointed out that siscowets “are not highly regarded as table fare” because of their high fat content but that it could possibly have some alternative valuable qualities suggesting commercial harvesting.

Dan Yule of the US Geological Survey Station in Ashland, Wisconsin estimated there could be as many as 47 million pounds of these “fatties” in Lake Superior with a yield of one and a half million pounds in an annual commercial harvest. Professor Jim Bence, co-director of Quantative Fisheries Center at Michigan State, an authority on siscowets, says this trout strain probably out-numbers the lean lake trout twenty to one! It was estimated that 17 percent of the harvested insoluble siscowet flesh could be turned into fish protein as food for animals while the soluble protein part would be available for humans.

In the Depression years there were plans for a factory in Two Harbors to process fish entrails collected from commercial Lake Superior fishermen and turn them into fish meal. The product was then to be spread on potato fields to increase production. The lack of financial support to build the plant killed the plans.

### **Radio active barrels in Lake Superior? Maybe so!**

Bits and pieces of information on the contentious secretly disposed barrels continue to fatten our files, most of them pointing to the need for removal of the drums without further delay.

We recently came into possession of a document with the seemingly innocuous title of Installation

Restoration Program: Preliminary Assessment of the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant---the contents are significant to us because this plant created and dumped the barrels into Lake Superior under the direction of the Army Corps of Engineers.

In a concentrated search of the ammunition plant records twenty-two years ago by the U.S. Department of Energy a "Preliminary Assessment Information" was printed and circulated. With it was this notice: "Distribution is limited to U.S. government agencies only, for protection of privileged information." This meant that both the state of Minnesota and the city of Duluth were kept in the dark!

More than sixty references from the search, cryptically limited to two or three lines each. The fourth item is of particular significance, though it contains no explanation. This is verbatim how it appears in the document:

***4 Date 2/7/55 Type:General File cabinet JSR-1 Radiation Data and Lake Superior Rad dumping: Note from Honeywell P.O. 4/24/78; Monthly***

John LaForge, head of the NukeWatch environmental group, told us he has tried for the past two years to get an official explanation of this disturbing entry in the document. His research queries have largely been met with dead ends. A spokesperson for the Argonne National Laboratory, one of the official agencies privy to the document, told him they couldn't help him "because the records are too old to be recovered." LaForge did locate documents that might prove or disprove the suspicion that radioactive waste is in some of the barrels but the relevant sections were redacted---blacked out so as not to be read! He also said several pages were missing.

**Getting sewage out of Lake Superior---progress and failures.**

By Glenn Maxham

Researching and writing about the accidental release of raw sewage into the environment is hardly my favorite subject and, I suspect, is not something you want to read about. But when you learn, as I did, that "overflows" from the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) in Duluth are now in the category of "good news and bad news" you should want to know the details.

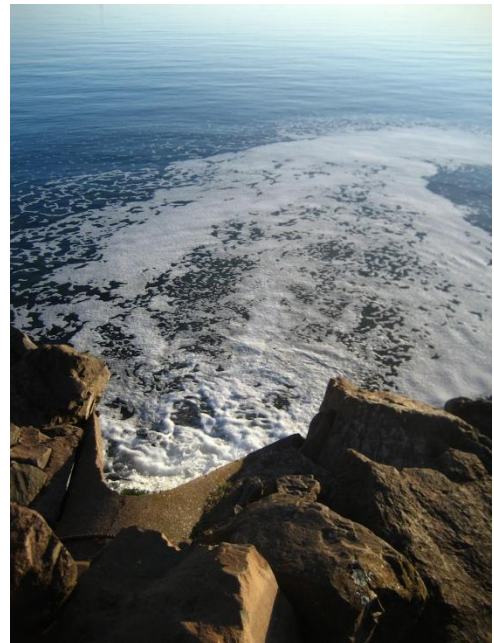
Why, you might ask, is this report relevant to the mission and concerns of SLSA? The answer is obvious. Millions of gallons of effluent have escaped from the pipe lines after three major rainstorms in the past five years and some reached the waters of Lake Superior!

My query to WLSSD Executive Director Marianne Bohren was to seek information on what the agency does after these spills to make sure the public health is not endangered and that sufficient steps are being taken to reduce and eventually eliminate such overflows.

The good news is that the volume from overflows has been substantially reduced from a high of more than eleven million gallons after an October 3rd, 2005 rainstorm from 25 locations to 790,000 gallons from seven locations on August 19th, 2009.

The bad news is that sampling to detect pathogens in the sewage entering the water is not always carried out, thus raising the possibility of failure to determine the possibility of pollution harmful to humans. Jaramie Legelin of WLSSD told me, "We may sample once in a while if we can." All samples are taken before the release enters the receiving water and dilution ratios are not completed." He said during his five years on the job, "We have not had any fish kills noted (at the spillage site) or noted harm to aquatic life or to gulls or other bird life.

Again the releases usually are close to or under their discharge limits except for fecal coliform. (Coliform in amounts exceeding levels safe for humans often causes the closing of swimming areas on Park Point and



elsewhere) All releases, he said, are required to have a public notice and warning signs are posted.

What about attempts to recover the sewage after it penetrates public waters? The City of Duluth and WLSSD are required to limit and recover as much of the release as possible. It is difficult once it hits the receiving water to recover, Logelin concluded.

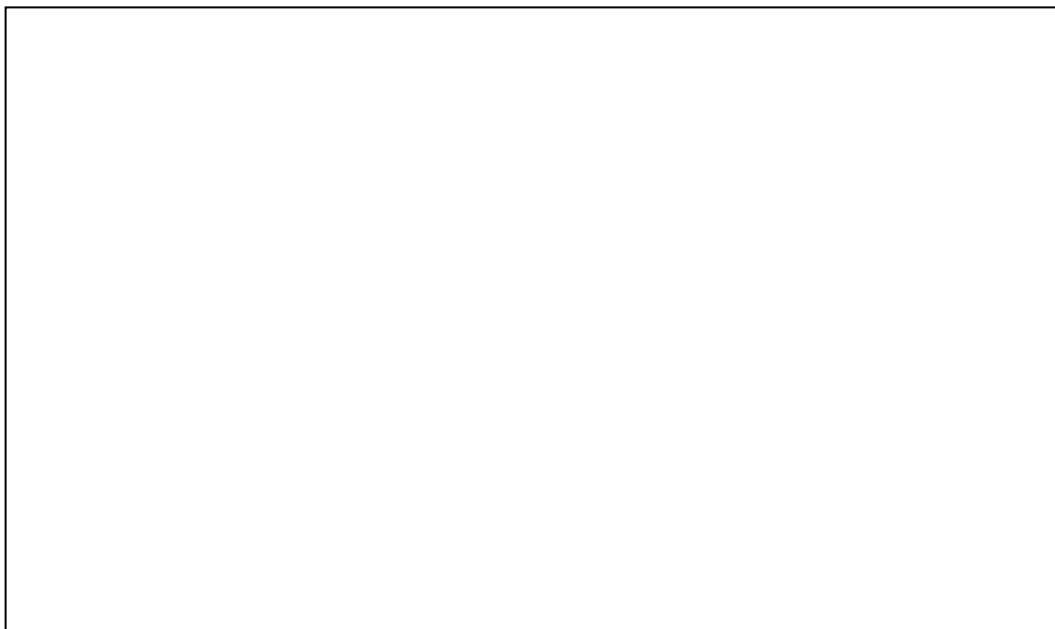
Ms Bohren explained, "WLSSD has a long-standing commitment to the elimination of sewer overflows and is equally concerned about the impact of overflows on public and environmental health in the region."

The executive director noted that, WLSSD and the city of Duluth are operating under a consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to eliminate sewer overflows in our system by 2016.

Duluth is hardly an isolated case of raw sewage flowing into public waters. The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) notes there are 55,000 straight-pipe septic systems dumping raw sewage directly into Minnesota's rivers and lakes. This has been in violation of state and federal laws for decades!

MCEA says, "At the rate the agency (Minnesota Pollution Agency) is dealing with these systems, it will take more than a thousand years to finish the task." MCEA is waiting to

hear from the Environmental Protection Agency regarding its petition sent to the federal agency asking that it "either require the MPCA to correct deficiencies in its Clean Water Act permitting program or withdraw the state agency's authority to run the program."



### Your SLSA Board Members

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Your renewal date appears on the mailing label.  
Please send us your change of address when applicable.

### New Membership Dues

Please check your Newsletter mailing label for expiration date. If the date is 2009 or lower, it needs to be updated.

Membership dues increased January 1, 2010.

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)

The Lifetime option is only available to new members or members whose label is 2010 or later.

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

We appreciate your interest as well as your support.