



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

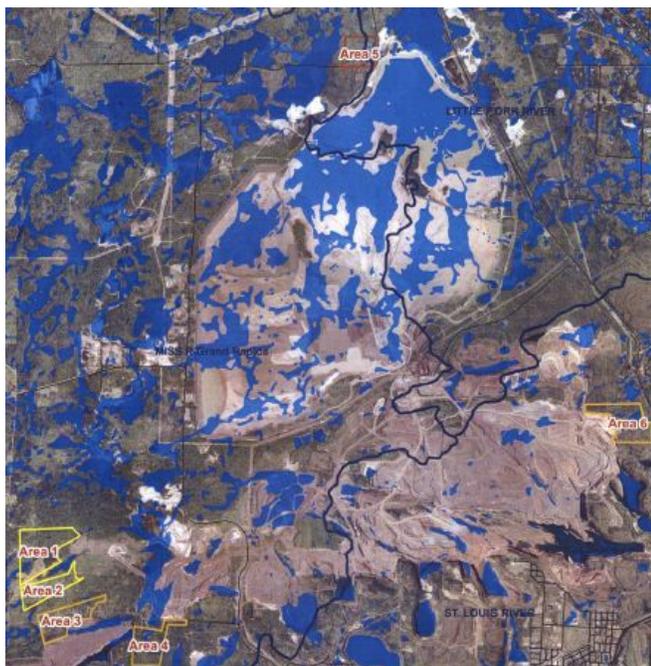
Regulatory Program: Hibbing Taconite— Managed by Cliffs Mining Company, Mine and Stockpile Expansion, Hibbing, Minnesota

Contact

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Description

In June 2008, Hibbing Taconite Company submitted an application to the Corps for a proposed project to expand its mining operation by enlarging existing and former taconite iron-ore mine pits in three (3) areas, develop two (2) new stockpile areas, and develop a clay borrow area near the city of Hibbing, in St. Louis County, Minnesota. The project footprint would cover approximately 670 acres and would result in an impact to 98.2 acres of wetlands in six (6) areas. The project would require an individual Section 404 Clean Water Act permit.



Area 1 and 2 stockpiles; Area 3, 4, and 6 mining areas; and Area 5 borrow area. Aquatic resources shown in blue.

Background

A Corps public notice for the project was issued on August 7, 2008. Two comments were received and forwarded to the company; the Minnesota State Historical Society (SHPO) requested the area of potential effect, historic properties identified, and analysis of effect; the Bois Forte

analysis of effect; the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe made a recommendation to conduct a cultural resource inventory in areas that have not been previously impacted.

The company submitted a Phase I cultural survey in March 2010 which recommended that a Phase II survey be conducted in Area 3 because of the historic Stevenson Mine/Town location. The company submitted a Phase II cultural survey dated May 3, 2010, which described the Stevenson Mine as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Corps review of the Phase II survey report and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer is ongoing to satisfy Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Corps has not completed a permit decision.

Status

Hibbing Taconite Company submitted a letter in April 2012 explaining fill activities in wetlands had taken place in Area 4. Hibbing indicated that it was unaware that the Corps' review initiated in 2008 was incomplete and that no permit had been issued for the project. The Corps completed a field site investigation for Area 4 in May 2012 to review possible impacted areas. The Corps also completed an aerial review and second field visit for Areas 1-5 to collect information for a jurisdictional determination requested by Hibbing in July 2012.

Recent site evaluation has revealed a wildlife corridor on the project site that was not identified in the 2008 application materials. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) may be required.

An approved jurisdictional determination (JD) is being completed for all the wetlands located in the review area. Completion of the JD is expected October 2012. The Corps' scope of review may change based upon the conclusions of the approved JDs and will inform the level of consultation necessary under Section 106 of the NHPA and Section 7 of the ESA.

Authority

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977