



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St Paul District

**APPLICANT: Essar Steel, LLC**

**REFER TO: 2005-00546-JKA**

## **Special Public Notice**

**ISSUED: September 1, 2015**

**SECTION: 404 - Clean Water Act**

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ESSAR STEEL, LLC (Essar) HAS REQUESTED A MODIFICATION TO PERMIT 2005-00546-JKA.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The processing plant will be location is in Sections 35 and 36, T. 57 N., R. 23 W.; and the tailings basin location is in Sections 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 17 and 18, T. 56 N., R. 22 W., all in Itasca County, Minnesota. The approximate UTM coordinates are 484580 East, 5244390 North.

**BACKGROUND:** On August 30, 2007, the St. Paul District issued a permit to U.S. Steel authorizing the discharge of fill material into 764.9 acres of waters of the U.S., including wetlands, to construct and operate an open pit taconite mine at the former Butler Taconite site and to construct and operate new facilities: a crusher; a concentrator; a taconite pellet plant; a plant for producing direct reduced iron (DRI); and a steel mill consisting of two arc furnaces, two ladle furnaces, two thin slab casters, and a sheet rolling mill. The former Butler Taconite Stage 1 tailings basin was also reactivated for disposal of concentrator tailings as a part of this project. This U.S. Steel project was subsequently purchased by Essar, and the D.A. permit was transferred to Essar on October 8, 2008.

**DESCRIPTION OF PERMIT MODIFICATION:** Essar has requested a permit modification to impact an additional 3.75 acres of wetland in conjunction with modifications to the original design of the tailing slurry pipeline and associated return water systems. Associated infrastructure that is part of this modification includes maintenance roads and pump stations. Although this system was included in the environmental review and permitting process, it was only conceptually designed at that time. Final design details have been developed, and although the design minimizes impacts to the extent possible, the system will extend beyond the area originally permitted, resulting in the additional 3.75 acres of wetland impact.

The proposed work would impact Pickerel Creek, a MDNR designated trout stream. The water return pipeline would be located under Pickerel Creek. In addition there are three proposed culvert crossings and a channel restoration area on Pickerel Creek. The proposed wetland and stream impacts are shown on the attached plan sheets and tables numbered 1 of 6 through 6 of 6. The Pickerel Creek impacts are best displayed on sheet 6 of 6.

**MITIGATION:** Wetland mitigation at a ratio of 1:1 would be provided at the established project specific Woodward Farm wetland mitigation site.

**FEDERALLY-LISTED THREATENED OR ENDANGERED WILDLIFE OR PLANTS OR THEIR CRITICAL HABITAT.** Consultation with the USFWS was completed on July 16, 2015. The USFWS concluded that the proposed work may affect, but is not likely to affect the northern long eared bat or the grey wolf.

If you have questions about the project modification, call Ralph Augustin at the St. Paul office of the Corps, telephone number (651) 290 - 5329.

Ben Cox  
Chief, North West Section

Enclosures

Table 5: Wetland Impacts within the 2015 Project Areas

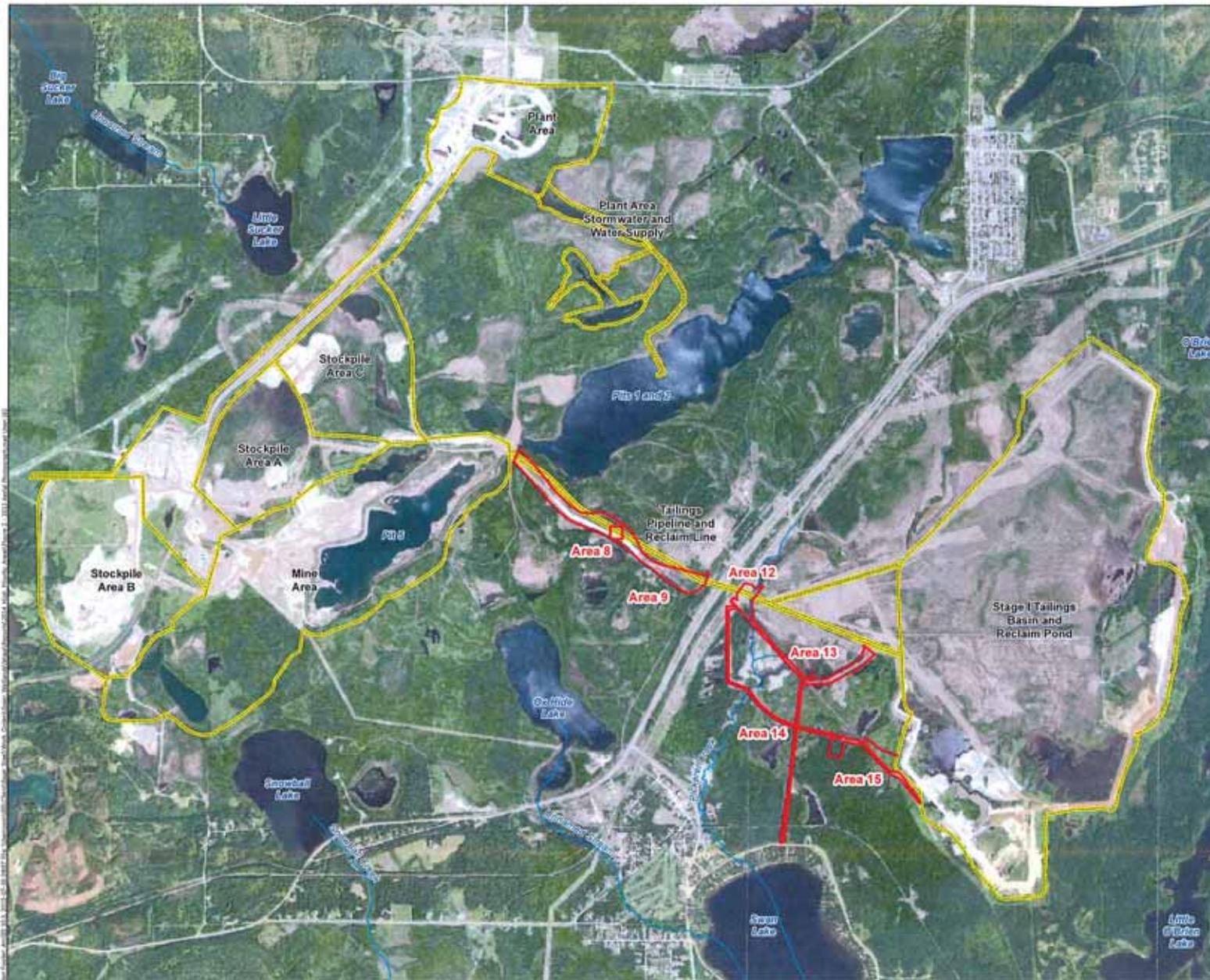
Project Area	Wetland / Riverine ID <sup>1</sup>	Wetland Evaluation		Riverine Evaluation		Wetland/Riverine Classification								
		2015 Total Wetland Area (acres) <sup>2</sup>	2015 Wetland Impacts (acres)	2015 Total Riverine Area (acres) <sup>2</sup>	2015 Riverine Impacts (acres)	Dominant Circular 39 Type	Secondary Circular 39 Type	Additional Circular 39 Type	Dominant Cowardin Type	Secondary Cowardin Type	Additional Cowardin Type	Dominant Eggers and Reed Classification	Secondary Eggers and Reed Classification	Additional Eggers and Reed Classification
Area 9	558/562	1.63	1.63			6	2	7	PSS1B	PEM1B	PFO1B	Shrub Carr	Fresh (Wet) Meadow	Floodplain Forest
Area 8/9	566	0.79	0.79			5	3	6	PUBH	PEM1C	PSS1C	Shallow, Open Water	Shallow Marsh	Shrub Carr
Area 8/9	571/576	0.72	0.03			5	3	6	PUBH	PEMC	PSS1C	Shallow, Open Water	Shallow Marsh	Shrub Carr
Area 9	2044	0.51	0.02	0.00		2			PEM1B			Sedge Meadow		
Area 9	2045	0.20	0.04			1			PEM1Ax			Seasonally Flooded Basin		
<b>Area 8/9 Subtotal</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>									
Area 12	2037			0.46	0.10	90			RUBH			Riverine		
<b>Area 12 Subtotal</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.10</b>									
Area 13	664	20.20	0.15			3	6	5	PEM1F	PSS1B	PUBHx	Shallow Marsh	Shrub Carr	Shallow, Open Water
Area 13	667	0.95	0.01			3			PEM1Cx			Shallow Marsh		
Area 13	712	16.48	0.10			5	7		PUBH	PFO1B		Shallow, Open Water	Hardwood Swamp	
Area 13	715	5.64	0.07			7	5	90	PFO1A	PUBHx	RUBH	Floodplain Forest	Shallow, Open Water	Riverine
Area 13	725	1.95	0.01			4	6	5	PEM1F	PSS1C	PUBF	Deep Marsh	Shrub Carr	Shallow, Open Water
Area 13	726	13.44	0.04			3	4	7	PEMC	PEMfx	PFO1B	Shallow Marsh	Deep Marsh	Hardwood Swamp
Area 13	2037			0.46	0.04	90			RUBH			Riverine		
<b>Area 13 Subtotal</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>58.66</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.04</b>									
Area 14	2035	2.42	0.05			7	2		PFO1B	PEM1B		Hardwood Swamp	Sedge Meadow	
Area 14	2036	1.70	0.003			6	3		PSS1C	PEM1C		Shrub Carr	Shallow Marsh	
Area 14	2043	4.35	0.06			7	2		PFO1B	PEM1B		Hardwood Swamp	Sedge Meadow	
Area 14	2047	12.96	0.01			7	6		PFO1B	PSS1B	PEM1B	Hardwood Swamp	Shrub Carr	Fresh (Wet) Meadow
<b>Area 14 Subtotal</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21.43</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>									
Area 15	781	6.76	0.09			7	3	5	PFO1B	PEM1C	PUBH	Hardwood Swamp	Shallow Marsh	Shallow, Open Water
Area 15	1063	0.81	0.00			4	3	7	PEMF	PEMB	PFO1A	Deep Marsh	Fresh (Wet) Meadow	Hardwood Swamp
Area 15	2041	1.31	0.01			7			PFO1B			Hardwood Swamp		
Area 15	2047	12.96	0.48			7	6		PFO1B	PSS1B	PEM1B	Hardwood Swamp	Shrub Carr	Fresh (Wet) Meadow
Area 15	2049	0.16	0.12			3			PEM1Cx			Shallow Marsh		
Area 15	2054	1.74	0.03			2	6		PSS1B	PEM1B		Shrub Carr	Fresh (Wet) Meadow	
<b>Area 15 Subtotal</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23.74</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>									
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>107.69</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.14</b>									

<sup>1</sup>Riverine systems are accounted for separate from wetlands in the assessment of areas and impacts.

<sup>2</sup>The Total Wetland Area and Total Riverine Area column reports the total area of each system. Note that 1 wetland (2047) and 1 riverine system (2037) are in two Project Areas. Therefore, the total of these columns report more acres than are within the combined Project Areas.

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1 28 6



- Legend**
- 2015 Project Areas
  - Original Project Areas
  - Public Water Inventory (PWI) Watercourse

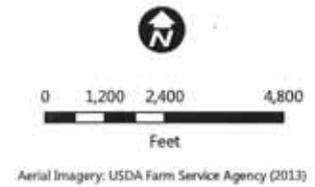
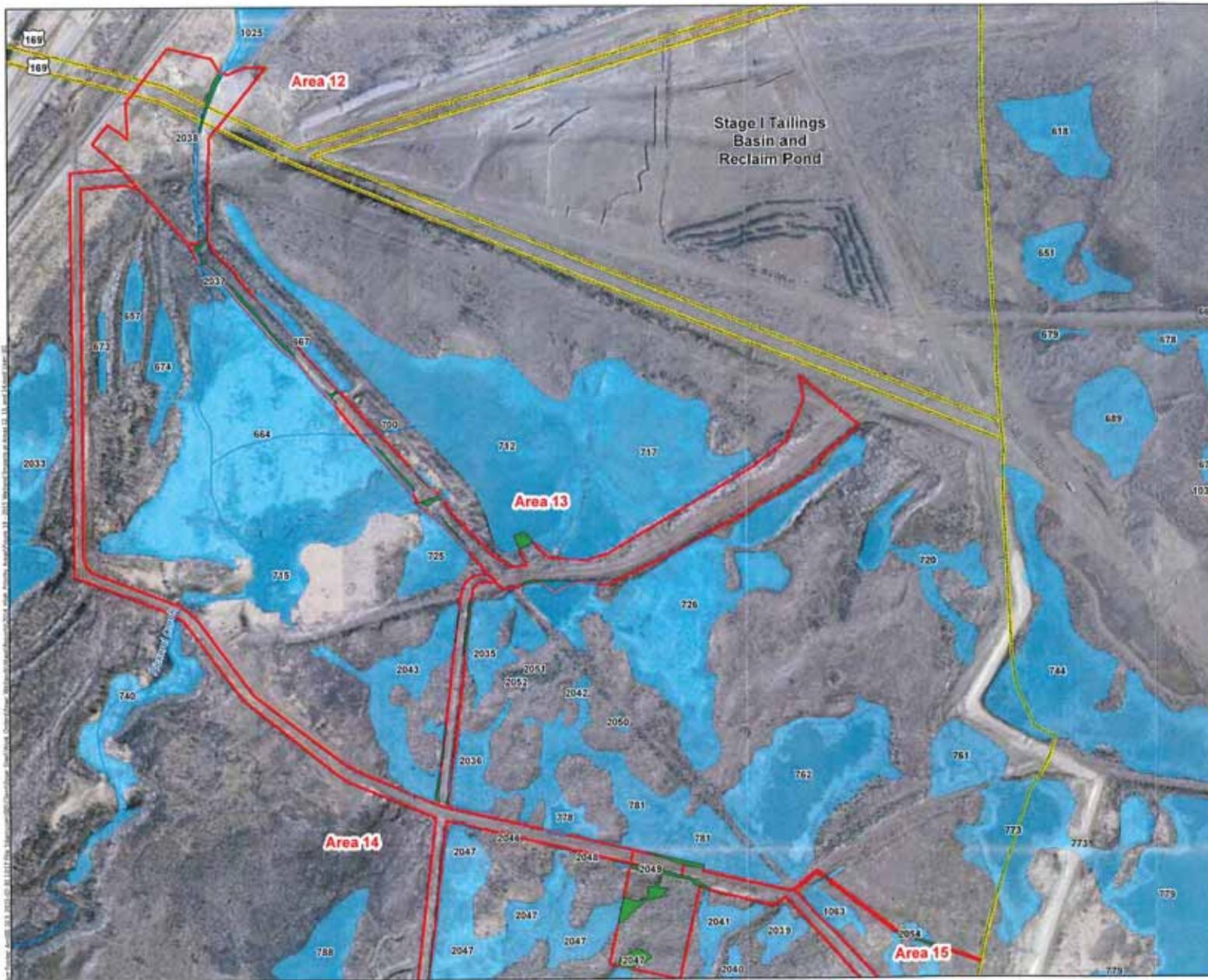


Figure 2

2013 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH  
Tailings Pipeline and Pumping Infrastructure  
Essar Steel Minnesota LLC  
Nashauk, Minnesota  
2005-546-JKA  
2.06.6





**Legend**

- 2015 Project Areas
- Original Project Areas
- Public Water Inventory (PWI) Watercourse
- 2015 Wetland Delineation
- 2015 Impacted Wetlands



Aerial Imagery: DNR (2013)

**Figure 19**

**2015 WETLAND IMPACTS  
AT AREAS 12, 13, AND 14**  
Tailings Pipeline and Pumping Infrastructure  
Essar Steel Minnesota LLC  
Nashwauk, Minnesota

2005-546-JKA  
4 of 6



- Legend**
- 2015 Project Areas
  - Original Project Areas
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  - 2015 Impacted Wetlands

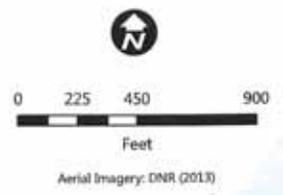
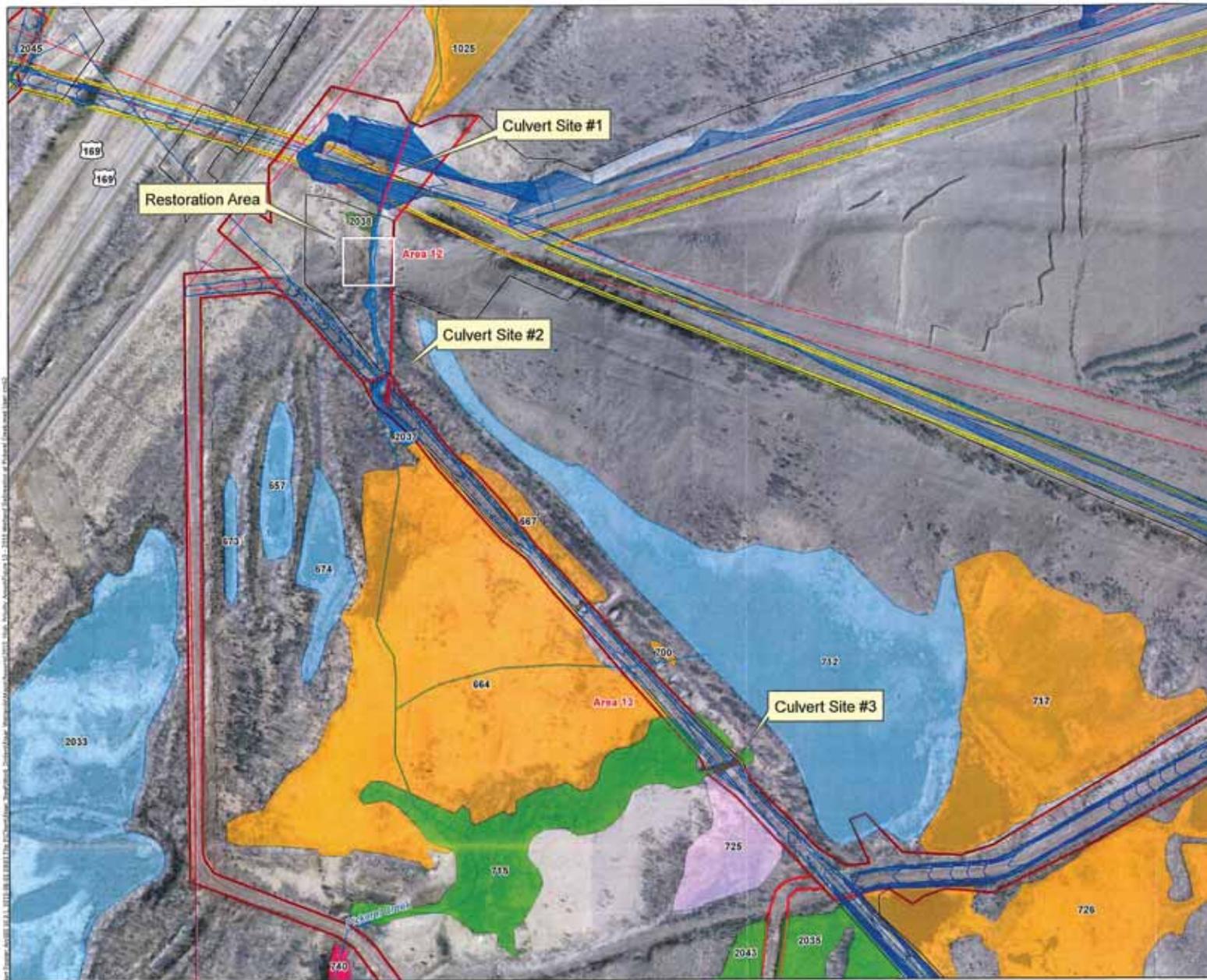


Figure 20  
 2015 WETLAND IMPACTS  
 AT AREAS 14 AND 15  
 Tailings Pipeline and Pumping Infrastructure  
 Essar Steel Minnesota LLC  
 Nashwauk, Minnesota  
 2005-546-JKA  
 5.06.06



**Legend**

- 2015 Project Areas
- Original Project Areas

**Circular 39 Classification**

- Unknown
- Type 1
- Type 2
- Type 3
- Type 4
- Type 5
- Type 6
- Type 7
- Type 8
- Riverine
- Public Water Inventory (PWI) Watercourse\*

\*Note: The PWI watercourses are shown as mapped by the MDNR, which were based on 1:50,000 or 1:100,000 scale USGS quadrangle maps. Actual stream crossings are at Culvert Sites #1, 2, and 3.



Aerial Imagery: DNR (2013)

Figure 13

2015 WETLAND DELINEATION  
 AT PICKEREL CREEK CROSSINGS  
 Tailings Pipeline and Pumping Infrastructure  
 Essar Steel Minnesota LLC  
 Nashwauk, Minnesota  
 2005-546-5KA  
 6-26-06