

RECLAMATION SAFEGUARDS MINNESOTA'S NATURAL BEAUTY

Mining Minnesota, a mining trade association, recently released a series of fact sheets which answer four questions an activist group posed to Governor Dayton regarding copper-nickel mining in the state. Each fact sheet provides details about how one of the world's largest undeveloped resources of copper and nickel can be responsibly mined, protecting Minnesota's environment and creating unprecedented economic opportunity. This week, Mine Reader provides a synopsis of Mining Minnesota's explanation of the reclamation standards that mines must meet when a mine is closed.

Multiple state and federal agencies have strict requirements and environmental standards in place for the reclamation or maintenance of all mining and processing sites, including the mines themselves, tailing basins, waste rock storage areas, wetlands, and other disturbed ground.

Before a mining company is issued a permit, the state of Minnesota requires the company to have bankruptcy proof financial assurance instruments in place that would cover the estimated costs of any

potential environmental clean-up. The financial assurance instruments must be available to the state at any time during the life of a mine, and the amount of financial coverage required of a company is reviewed annually and adjusted if necessary.

Since the state requires that post-closure activities reduce the need for maintenance as much as possible, passive reclamation methods for post-closure treatment are preferred to active methods. Passive methods are those that require minimal maintenance to sustain reclamation. There are some instances, however, when the state recognizes that active treatment methods may be necessary along with passive methods to meet all of the reclamation goals. In these cases, mining companies are required to provide continued maintenance.

Strong financial assurance and analyzing the need for post-closure maintenance before issuing a permit are some of the ways that state and federal agencies are working with mining companies early during project development to ensure Minnesota's air, water and land remain healthy for future generations.



The reclaimed Flambeau Mine in Ladysmith, Wis.