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The Myth of the Flambeau Mine

If you go to the website of Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company (a subsidiary of Rio Tinto of London), you will find the following Q&A:

Q: Has there ever been a metallic mineral mine that succeeded in protecting the environment?

Kennecott says: "Yes. Not only has there been, but at the Flambeau Mine in Ladysmith,Wisconsin, Kennecott Minerals is the company that successfully designed, operated, and reclaimed a sulfide host metallic mineral mine while protecting the environment from adverse impact."

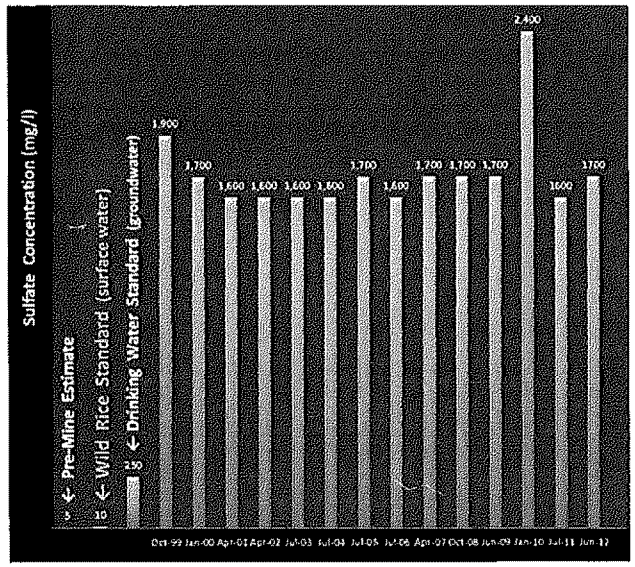
The above statement from Kennecott is **blatantly false**. The groundwater at the Flambeau Mine site is **highly polluted**, and we have the graphs to prove it.

Sulfate Pollution in the Water at the Flambeau Mine Site

In Minnesota, the sulfate standard set to protect wild rice is 10 mg/l. There is a well at the Flambeau Mine site that has registered sulfate levels as high as 2400 mg/l – 240 times the wild rice standard.

Promises Broken: Sulfate Levels (mg/l) in Well-1013C at Flambeau Mine Site

(Well-1013C is 610' from Flambeau River & 200' deep)

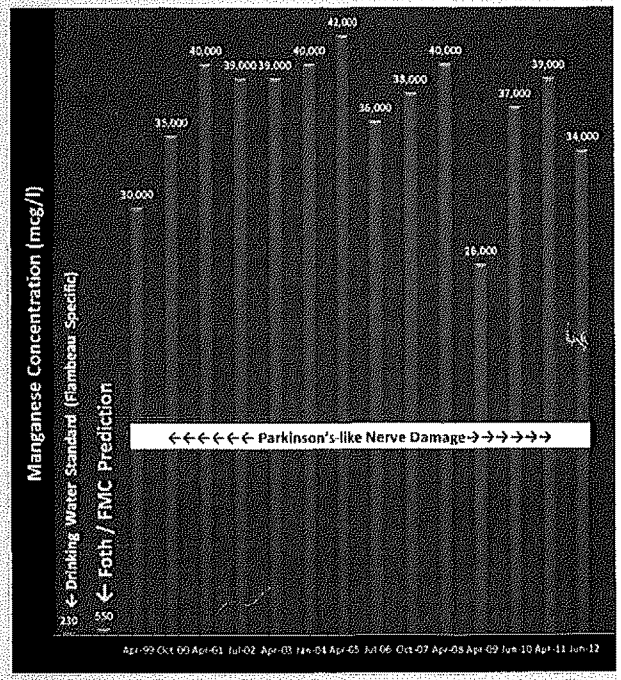


According to Kennecott, it's going to take **3,000 - 4,000 years** for sulfate and various metals that are polluting the groundwater at the Flambeau Mine site to return to normal!

The groundwater has been polluted forever.

Promises Broken: Manganese Levels (mcg/l) in Well-1013B at Flambeau Mine Site

(Well-1013B is 610' from Flambeau River & 86' deep)



Kennecott told the people of Wisconsin that manganese levels in the groundwater at the Flambeau Mine site would end up being about **550** mcg/l, but a well located 610 feet from the Flambeau River has registered levels of **42,000** mcg/l - **75 times higher** than predicted! Drinking water with that much manganese in it is known to cause the kind of nerve damage seen in Parkinson's disease.

If the Flambeau Mine were a pea, the new mines proposed for Wisconsin's Penokee Hills, Minnesota's Arrowhead Region and Michigan's Upper Peninsula would be watermelons.

The Flambeau Mine pit was 32 acres in size, a half mile long, 550 feet wide and 220 feet deep.

Water is Life!

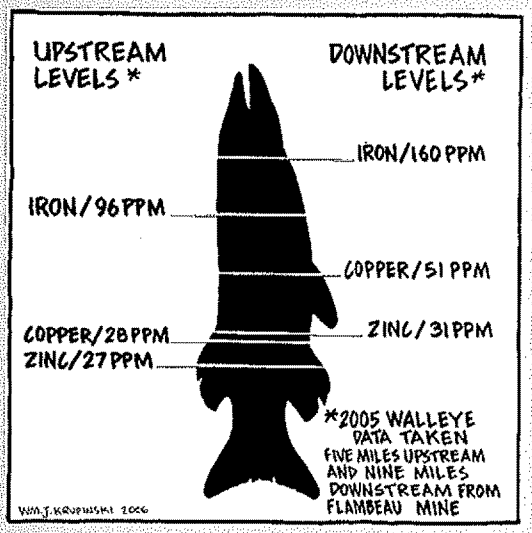
We need to STRENGTHEN our mining laws, not weaken them.

It's as simple as that.

IS THE FLAMBEAU MINE HARMING THE FLAMBEAU RIVER?

Between 1991 and 2011 Kennecott was required to test walleye in the Flambeau River for heavy metal accumulation, both upstream and downstream of the Flambeau Mine site. Before the mine was built in 1993, the **upstream** walleye had **higher** levels of copper and zinc in their liver tissue than the **downstream** fish. That reversed in 1996 (at the height of mining); for the next ten years (1996-2006) higher levels of copper and zinc were measured in the **downstream** fish. A graph of the 2005 data is shown below.

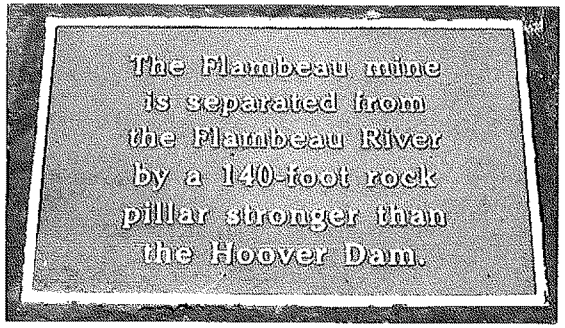
Flambeau Mine Walleye-ometer



What the future holds for the walleye in the Flambeau River is unknown. Polluted groundwater from the Flambeau Mine site continues to enter the river through fractured bedrock, but, with the end of mandatory walleye testing in 2011, Kennecott is now "off the hook."

Kennecott Lied to the People of Wisconsin

The Flambeau Mine pit was dug to within 150 feet of the Flambeau River. During the permitting process, people were worried that groundwater polluted with heavy metals would get into the river from the mine site. Kennecott responded by telling the people that there was nothing to worry about because the bedrock between the mine pit and the Flambeau River was like the "Hoover Dam." The plaque pictured below was actually posted at the mine site:



Only later did the public learn that Kennecott had lied. An open records request of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources revealed that Kennecott knew in **1989**, before the mine was built, that the rock between the pit and the river was **"fractured"** and that the contaminated groundwater leaving the mine pit would **"flow directly into the bed of the Flambeau River."** That includes the water contaminated with sulfate and manganese shown in this brochure!

Deer Tail Press
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For more information go to:
http://flambeaumineexposed.wordpress.com/

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Protect the Water!

Expose the Myth of the Flambeau Mine

CHERISH and DEFEND
Wisconsin's Penokee Hills,
Minnesota's Arrowhead Region
& Michigan's Upper Peninsula

If the mining industry was **not** able to keep the water clean and prevent long-term pollution problems at Wisconsin's Flambeau Mine ("the **newest** and **smallest** copper mine in the world") there is no way the industry will be able to protect Lake Superior, the Bad River and other public waters at the **monstrous** new mines proposed for Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan.

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