2016 First Quarter Mining Report

Facility Name:	**PolyMet Mining's NorthMet Mining Project**
Current Actions:	1) Support DNR on a joint state/federal Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed copper/nickel mining and processing operation 2) 401 Certification discussions in parallel with 404 permit preparation
Project Supervisor	Ann Foss
Project Manager:	Jim Robin (WQ), Steve Sommer (AQ)
Lead Staff:	Suzanne Baumann/Hassan Bouchareb (AQ), Richard Clark /Stephanie Handeland (WQ), Catherine Neuschler/Jen Oknich (401)
Lead Agencies:	EIS: DNR, Army Corps of Engineers, US Forest Service AQ and WQ permits, 401 Certification: MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- MPCA staff continued to support the Co-lead Agencies, as needed, in the process of finalizing the Final EIS. DNR issued its Adequacy Decision on the Final EIS on March 3, 2016.
- MPCA has begun meeting with PolyMet to discuss the air and water permitting processes. MPCA has not received applications for permits.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- MPCA staff will remain in communication with the EIS Co-lead Agencies as the federal Records of Decisions on the FEIS are considered.
- MPCA, and as appropriate, other permitting agency staff (i.e., DNR and USACE) and PolyMet will meet to discuss issues related to future submittal of permit applications.
- MPCA staff will participate in DNR's Pre-application Public Informational Meeting for the Permit to Mine.

Facility Name:	**US Steel (USS) - Minntac**
Current actions:	1) Water quality permit reissuance (NPDES/SDS Permit No. MN0057207) for the tailings basin 3) Multi-media Schedule of Compliance (SOC) 4) 404 permit/401 certification application for installation of a Seep Collection and Return System on the Dark River (west side) of the tailings basin
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	Steve Sommer
Lead Staff:	Jim Brist (401 Certification), Erik Smith (WQ), John Thomas (WQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- On March 28, 2016, MPCA issued a 401 Certification for the Dark River Seepage Collection and Return System. The 404 permit hasn't been issued by the United State Corps of Engineers yet.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Minntac's recurring six-month Groundwater Sulfate Reduction Plan progress report for MW12 will be due to the MPCA..

Facility Name:	**US Steel - Keetac**
Current actions:	Water quality permit compliance schedule (NPDES/SDS Permit No. MN0031879)
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	Steve Sommer
Lead Staff:	Brandon Smith (WQ), John Thomas (WQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- MPCA issued an Administrative Order to Keetac on February 12, 2016, for violations of the sulfate compliance schedule in its NPDES/SDS permit.
- MPCA rescinded the Administrative Order to Keetac on March 11, 2016, in order to negotiate a Schedule of Compliance (SOC) for pilot testing a sulfate removal technology. The SOC was executed March 11, 2016.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Receive a draft Pilot Test Work Plan from Keetac and then meet with them to discuss the plan per requirements of the SOC.

Facility Name:	**Cliffs Erie LLC – Hoyt Lakes Mining Area and Tailings Basin Area**
Current actions:	Reissuance of combined water quality permits (NPDES/SDS Permit Nos. MN0042536 and MN0054089)
Project Supervisor:	Ann Foss
Project Manager:	Jim Robin
Lead Staff:	Richard Clark, Stephanie Handeland
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- Continued discussions with the company to acquire necessary information for permitting and to assure continued progress on Consent Decree requirements.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Continue internal discussion with the goal of refining the permitting approach and continuing progress on the schedules for the various mining areas/discharges.

Facility Name:	**Northshore Mining Company**
Current actions:	1) Water quality permit reissuance for Silver Bay Plant and Mile Post 7 (MP7) Tailings Basin (NPDES/SDS Permit No. MN0055301) 2) Air permit major amendment application from Northshore to remove the Control City Standard and MPCA-initiated permit action to clarify the Control City Standard (Draft Permit No. TBD) 3) EAW for Peter Mitchell Pit Progression
Project Supervisor:	Jeff Udd (WQ) Suzanne Baumann (AQ)
Project Manager:	None
Lead Staff:	Brandon Smith (WQ reissuance of plant site permit), Richard Clark (EAW)
Lead Agency:	MPCA for AQ and WQ Permits; DNR for EAW

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- Reviewed submittal regarding projected fluoride concentrations from tailings basin discharge to facilitate continued progress toward NPDES/SDS permit reissuance, and evaluated potential compliance schedule options for use in permit.
- With finalization of the DNR's Permit to Mine amendment for the Peter Mitchell Mine Progression project, MPCA formally approved the Virginia Formation Management Plan required by the NPDES/SDS permit (thereby triggering the additional water quality monitoring requirements related to Virginia Formation stockpile development).
- Worked on the fiber-related air permit amendment.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Discuss schedule for compliance with fluoride limitations with Northshore, and proceed with public notice of draft NPDES/SDS Permit MN0055301.
- Continue work on the fiber-related air permit amendment.

Facility Name:	**United Taconite LLC - Fairlane Plant**
Current actions:	Air permit moderate amendment to produce higher flux-content taconite pellets (including installing low NO_X burners on both induration lines) (Draft Permit No. 13700113-007)
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	Steve Sommer
Lead Staff:	Hassan Bouchareb (AQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- On December 18, 2015, United Taconite submitted revised air permit application materials and MPCA sent a revised construction authorization letter to United Taconite on March 1, 2016 .

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Continue drafting the operating portion of the moderate permit amendment.

Facility Name:	**Hibbing Taconite Company**
Current actions:	Water quality reissuance of tailings basin NPDES/SDS permit No. MN0049760
Project Supervisor:	Richard Clark
Project Manager:	None
Lead Staff:	Ben Underhill (WQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- Reviewed submitted information for NPDES/SDS permit reissuance.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Continue work on Mine Area and Tailings Basin water quality permit (no longer any discharges from Mine Area).

Facility Name:	**Magnetation Plant 1**
Current Actions:	1) Water quality permit reissuance (SDS Permit No. MN0069221)
	2) Air quality initial permit issuance (Draft Permit No. 06100076-001)
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	None
Lead Staff:	Erik Smith (WQ), Ben Wenkel (AQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- Continued work on the draft SDS permit reissuance for Magnetation Plant 1.

Plans for next reporting period:

- Continue work on the draft permit.

Facility Name:	**Mag Mining Plant 4**
Current Actions:	Air quality initial permit issuance (Permit No. 06100079-001)
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	None
Lead Staff:	Sarah Seelen (AQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- The air quality permit was issued on March 15, 2016.

Plans for next reporting period:

- None.

Facility Name:	**Mining Resources, LLC**
Current Actions:	1) Air quality initial permit issuance (Draft Permit No. 13700341-001)
	2) Water quality permit major modification (SDS Permit No. MN0070050)
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	None
Lead Staff:	Sarah Seelen (AQ), Stephanie Handeland (WQ)
Lead Agency:	MPCA

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- The MPCA is working on drafting an initial air quality permit for Mining Resources, LLC.

Plans for next reporting period:

- The MCPA will continue working on a draft air quality permit.

Facility Name:	**Twin Metals**
Current actions:	Support DNR on an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for a proposed bulk sample
Project Supervisor:	Suzanne Baumann
Project Manager:	Ann Foss
Lead Staff:	Vacant
Lead Agency:	DNR

Accomplishments during this reporting period:

- No MPCA activity during this reporting period.

Plans for the next reporting period:

- Continue to assist DNR as needed.

MAJOR PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED THIS QUARTER

No major permit applications were received in first quarter 2016.

COMPLETED MINING PROJECTS

Project Name: **Mag Mining LLC Plant 4 – Initial Air Quality Permit Issuance**
Completed: Part 70 major air quality permit was issued March 15, 2016 (Permit No. 06100079-001)
Lead Staff: Sarah Seelen

Project Name: **Magnetation Plant 2 Water Permit**
Completed: Water quality permit reissued on October 10, 2015
Project Coordinator: Suzanne Baumann
Lead Staff: Erik Smith, Ben Underhill

Project Name: **US Steel – Keetac – Water Quality Permit Modification**
Completed: Water quality permit modification to modify turbidity limits (NPDES/SDS Permit No. MN0031879) was issued on September 4, 2015, with an effective date of October 1, 2015
Lead Staff: Brandon Smith

Project Name: **Magnetation Plant 2 – Initial Air Quality Permit Issuance**
Completed: Part 70 major air quality permit was issued August 18, 2015 (Permit No. 06100078-001)
Lead Staff: Hassan Bouchareb

Project Name: **United Taconite – Wet to Dry Particulate Control Change and Modify Scrubber Solids Wasting Requirements**
Completed: Major air permit amendment to replace 22 wet scrubbers with baghouses that control particulate emissions from material handling operations and modify the scrubber solids wasting requirements. Issued on May 19, 2015 (Permit No. 13700113-006).
Lead Staff: Owen Seltz

Project Name: **Hibbing Taconite Company – Wet to Dry Particulate Control Change and Modify Scrubber Solids Wasting Requirements**
Completed: Air permit major modification (Permit No. 1370006-007) to update GP 019: In-Pit Crushing and Cobbing (IPCC) for increased flexibility. Issued on June 1, 2015.
Lead Staff: Sarah Seelen

Project Name: **Northshore Mining Company – Material Handling Equipment Project**

Completed:	Moderate air permit amendment to install additional material handling equipment in the finished pellet yard was issued on February 5, 2015 (Permit No. 07500003-010).
Lead Staff:	Cindy Schafer

Project Name:	**Northshore Mining Company – Low NOx Burner Project**
Completed:	Major air permit amendment was issued on January 26, 2015 for the installation of low NOx burners (Permit No. 07500003-009).
Lead Staff:	Hassan Bouchareb