

**PUBLIC HEARING VERBAL TESTIMONY**  
**Northern Sands , LLC**  
**Public Information Hearing**  
**July 29, 2015**

Hjordis Olson, Colfax, WI

My name is Hjordis Olson and I live in Colfax. I don't have a long comment but I feel that this is a big experiment and I think intelligent people know that and we are the guinea pigs.

I just wanted to recommend Will Allen, he's an expert on regenerating soil, composting on a large scale in an urban area in Milwaukee. He has won a McArthur Genius Grant and he is sought after throughout the country for his knowledge of soil reconstruction, and he's a brilliant man. I think he would be an asset to the discussion of... if it's even feasible to regenerate the topsoil to sustain both trees and wildflowers. He's available, I mean it's Milwaukee, it's not that far, so I think he would be a great resource.

I live probably around a mile from where this is but I'm in a different county so to be honest, we're screwed. I mean, we really don't have a say so I want the people that are making this decision to take our lives into consideration....that this is a fantasy, I think, in 30 years, that everything is going to be hunky dory. I'm sorry, as good intentions that people have, and I am sure some people have great intentions, it still is an experiment and I really want you to take this very seriously as this affects our lives.

We chose to live in a rural area, a beautiful scenic area. Pastoral with deer, bear, birds, turkeys.... people hunt. I think it is very important to consider what this is going to do not just to the visual landscape but to the animals in this landscape that are very important to the people that live in rural areas and important to people who don't live in rural areas who value visiting.... and they'll see this ugly site for 30 years. What's that going to do to our whole area? Let's face it, it's going to be awful. It's gonna be an ugly, industrial site no matter how many berms they put up.

I'm in a lot of distress about this. It's very emotional, sleepless nights..... you know, people can say, you can move. Oh yah, right, right. We built our whole life in this spot – fixed our house with our own hands, painted our house, done things to our landscape and then we're supposed to take bottom dollar because there is going to be a mine a mile from our house.... probably. And at our age, my husband is 64 and I'm 56 , it's not exactly easy to jump up and move, especially because we have a business at our home too, a small business.

I guess my main point is I think that Will Allen would be a great resource for you for your science, your understanding of science. He is just a tremendous asset to the State of Wisconsin.

Thank you.

Katherine Stahl, Colfax, WI

See written comments.

Toni Moody , Colfax, WI

See written comments

Mark Leach, Menomonie, WI

See written comments

Lisa Bragg - Hurlburt

See written comments

Additional verbal comment – “Also, considering the long length of mining – 30 years – how do we know that we’re going to be dealing with the same companies for that length of time? You know, Red Flint sounds great but, you know, they’re not necessarily going to be who we will be working with for that length of time, so I think we all need to consider that.”

Linda Stoffel, Colfax, WI

I’m Linda Stoffel from Colfax. I have two points that I’d like to share with you. Some of this piggy-backs on what Lisa just said.

Section 3.2 of this reclamation plan states “Railroad trans load facilities and railroad car storage track will remain on the site. These structures and facilities will be converted for use as a commercial or agricultural materials business hub, potentially to include grains storage and transfer. The site would serve the agricultural business community and provide a commerce center for grain storage, fertilizers, and/or liquefied natural gas”.

This is not a reclamation plan. It is an abandonment plan.

We ship none of these materials nor are we likely to. We are not located in the grain belt. We are primarily a dairy/agricultural ag area with some beef. As such, grain and hay is brought into our area rather than shipped out and the need for rail shipping of local dairy products is nonexistent. In the rest of this reclamation plan, if the rest of this reclamation plan is approved, the Township would have even less cropland than they do now so there would be an increase of importation of feed instead of an excess to ship out.

As to other commercial possibilities, the site would likely have crystalline silica and PM 2.5 levels way above OSHA standards, so it would need extensive reclamation to make it safe to work at this site without protection. There’s no entity given in the reclamation plan who has agreed to take over this site. Even if there were someone, they would need to address the reclamation issue. Loose sand would need to be taken care of in such a manner to prevent pollution of the air when windy and pollution of water when wet. Any toxic chemical residue or breakdown product from the onsite processing needs to be tested and disposed of properly.

The railroad trans load facilities rail car storage track, structures, and facilities need to have an actual reclamation plan that does not just give abandonment with the hope that someone will possibly want to be or able to do something with it once the mining closes. Even if that hope transpires, there needs to be an actual reclamation plan in place that would be met by either Northern or the entity taking over the site. If that hope does not transpire, then abandonment of the site is not a acceptable reclamation plan.

The second point is the removal of the conveyor system does not address what is going to be done with all the silica sand, PM 2.5 or higher, that has fallen from the conveyor system . As long as the sand remains exposed, it will contaminate the air on any windy day. Chemicals used to process the sand need to be tested to make sure there is no toxic residue left to leach into the groundwater or run off into surface waters.

The reclamation plan should include PM 2.5 and chemical compliance monitoring by an independent agency to make sure it is below the health benchmarks. There is no mention of the costs of any of the technical assistance needed to do any testing or costs of any of the actual testing necessary to make sure post mine land meets any of the standards set. These costs need to be included in the reclamation plan.

Thank you.

Norm Pestka

Hi. My name is Norm Pestka from Pestka Construction from Upper Michigan.

Short story.... first of all I would like to compliment Chippewa County people for taking this meeting on and Red Flint for doing the project and putting this together. I think...I'm in the sand & gravel business for about 50 years. We're working on a site in Tomah ,WI as we speak.

Bigger reason I'm here is listen to you people. I think you all got really great comments and I would like to get some of them because I need to carry that forward to Monroe County, because what I... what the people are talking about here is great but what I talk about is jobs, tax base, keeping the environment safe. I think all our regulars that you deal with..... it's pretty hard for a company to just say they aren't going to do anything right. If they do it wrong, they get fined...they don't get a commendation for it.

I don't know much about Red Flint but I know they've been in business for a long time. The County has been here for a long time. You've got other sand mines. I am not coming to Chippewa but I am working in Tomah on a site and some of the comments that we have, I would like.... if someone could get them to me in my email form....I'll leave my card with you, Seth or Dan. Like you said earlier Dan, you probably don't have all the answers, but what the people are bringing to the table could be put into their plan with conditions, correct? That would make sense.

I think we should do it properly. Protect the environment, protect the people. I know there's neighbors. I've been at the site, I know where it's at. I think it's a nice.... it's a secluded site. I think it's a great place to have a sand mine. I see that you got sand mines right along side the highway. I don't know what conditions you have with those guys but I think it's a great idea cause it brings jobs to your community, and I know it's gonna pay a lot more taxes than farmland does.

Thank you.

Ron Koshoshek, Chippewa Falls, WI, (Representing Town of Howard)

See written comments – SCS Engineering

Additional verbal comments – I would encourage you to write to or email the Town Clerk at the Town Clerk's email address which I will give to the citizens here now. It is [clerk@chip-howard-wi.org](mailto:clerk@chip-howard-wi.org).

Thank you for your time.

Ron Koshoshek, Chippewa Falls, WI

Should I...I have only one paragraph to read, my personal and then I can be...you'll never have to see me again.

I would like to talk about the parameters which are going to be sampled in the well... are going to be tested for from the samples drawn from the wells.

The company proposes a list of contaminants, which can also be called analytes, which they will look for in the groundwater samples taken from their test wells both prior to the commencement of mining in Phase 1, and annually during the first 2 years of operation. They then propose that strong consideration be given to removing any analyte from the list of things that we ... from the list of things that they would test if these 3 conditions are met:

1. It is not detected at all in the first 2 years of operation and sampling.
2. That if it does not increase, even if detected during that 2 year period.
3. The amount detected falls below the preventive action limit for that contaminant.

This list that is provided by Red Flint is impressively extensive and it is certainly reasonable that one should consider removing an analyte from that list if it is not detected after repeated testing events. Two tests may not be enough but you need not go on forever in the life of the mine testing things that are not originally detected.

I think this should depend on whether it is undetected in samples of groundwater taken from all of the wells located in all three phases of the mining operation, so it would have to be done after sampling in the second and third phases.

I do not think it is wise, however, to remove a contaminant from the list simply because it falls below the preventive action limit. That for me is a red flag. Preventable action limits are preventive action limits because they say danger. It is a flashing red light and so...if something is near or at, it could lead... if it approaches or is near the preventative limit, even though below, it should be continuously monitored and watched so that it doesn't go above it.

I don't think failing to violate a preventive action standard should even be considered for elimination of an analyte from the list.

The plan indicates that there are two watersheds. This is another light topic. It indicates that there are two watershed within the mining area. The Elk Creek watershed and what they call the Red Cedar Watershed by the Eighteen Mile Creek watershed, which is the name of the 2<sup>nd</sup> watershed that the Co. has used.

But the plan, and I really looked at this hard, the plan seems to assume that the groundwater flows to the same watershed as surface water flows. That is often not the case at all.

I know in the EOG mine, the armchair engineering using the same regional watertable maps and elevation depths that were used in in presenting this plan. In the case of the EOG mine, the watertable was estimated 25-35% feet lower than it actually was. When EOG bought the reclamation permit with that kind of thing in it, they found that once they couldn't go 5' feet below the watertable, that the 33,000,000 tons of frac sand that they were going to get from the site was going to be reduced to 13,000,000 - 15,000,000 tons. It took them 6 months to get rid of the partnership with Canadian Sand & Proppant and to bring in the Kramer Co. for EOG mining in the Town of Howard.

The other thing they found was that even though the surface water drained into a tributary of Elk Creek, the groundwater direction, the direction of the groundwater flow went to the Red Cedar River. Well, just because, I think, they made these assumptions initially that the groundwater table mirrored the surface water...that the groundwater direction mirrored the surface water direction. Now, it is true that these things cannot be done before...there is at least some movement in the direction of receiving a permit because they are very costly and they have to be done. I mean, they're intrusive and very costly so it seems reasonable to wait until there's some initial approval that we might have something here worth

pursuing but I would not approve...I would definitely not approve of the mine until the groundwater flow and the surface...until the groundwater flow has been established, the direction and depth of the groundwater table.. Regional maps do not provide the key and Dan mentioned before, they don't rely on them so much anymore, but nevertheless, that field observation and drilling of wells as not yet occurred.

The plan also focuses...seems to focus extensively on the elevation of the groundwater table but the plan ignores the elevation at which most well water is drawn from. That may be an issue and I know it has been issue in some other cases.

Finally, as I am reading it...as I was listening to the excellent presentation that Bridget gave....it seems as if stormwater is going to be managed by trying to do their very best to keep everything recharged into the groundwater...into the stormwater...recharging into the groundwater so that this would resemble an internally drained system. Internally drained stormwater and internally drained mining, whether it's....it certainly works better than managing runoff on private lands or into public water by simply putting in retention ponds, because retention ponds require very long-term and periodic and regular maintenance.

Their infiltration has to be keep at a maximum and the ponds have to be large enough to carry the large scale rain events that we have had in the last few years, that we should really expect and continue in the foreseeable future.

That's not to me... that's not a suggestion that... I more or less have a question about if we can get more internal management of stormwater within the mine site itself, as is done in some mines.

Thank you.

*Diane Rose, Colfax, WI*

See written comments.

*Lee Bohland, Elk Mound, WI*

See written comments.

*Pat Popple, Chippewa Falls, WI*

See written comments.

Additional verbal comments – Thank you for allowing comments. I'm Pat Popple, 561 Summit Avenue, Chippewa Falls. I have been engaged for the last 7 years in working on some of the issues regarding frac sand mining. I'm still not an expert but I think I have at least a few things to say as I looked over this report.

I take issue with the statements that frac sand mining and sand & gravel operations are not different from each other. If you look at the studies and the work being done, you will find great differences.

*Johnne Smalley, Colfax, WI*

See written comments.

Melissa Morgan, Colfax, WI

Melissa Morgan and I live in the Town of Colfax, in Dunn County. I'm 1.5 miles from the proposed site.

After listening to testimony here about water and the reclamation ponds, I am wondering if those ponds could have held up to the 8 ½ inches of rain that I received in less than 24 hours in my valley. That's 8 ½ inches, not 6, but 8.5. I watched a 10 foot wall of water come over my pond and continue to come over my pond for several hours, spread out into an appropriately vegetated native field.

That is all I have to say.

Kevin Moore, Colfax, WI

Kevin Moore, I'm in the Town of Colfax, 1 ½ miles from the proposed mine site.

I don't have well prepared remarks. I just want to reinforce the experience that happened with the Gogebic Taconite mine site. When they actually got boots on the ground and saw the quality and magnitude of the wetlands, it was clear that it was going to cost more to try to restore that area than it would have been worth for the miners to actually do the mining and that's why that mine is not happening. It wasn't politics, it was money, so we really need to have the wetlands clearly surveyed before anything happens.

Thanks.