

Appendix B

Final Scoping Decision Document

UPM/Blandin Paper Thunderhawk Project

Final Scoping Decision Document February 2005

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the UPM/Blandin Paper Thunderhawk Project proposed by UPM/Blandin Paper within Grand Rapids in Itasca County, Minnesota.

The project will include the installation of a complete new paper manufacturing line, efficiency improvements to a second paper manufacturing line, shutdown of another existing paper machine and related infrastructure, additional pulping capacity, a new water intake structure, energy infrastructure improvements, a new paper warehousing facility, and wastewater treatment facility modifications. All project elements occur within the site confines of the Blandin Paper Mill except certain offsite options being considered for paper warehousing. Paper production will increase by an estimated 314,000 tons per year.

The Environmental Impact Statement is discretionary for this project pursuant to Minnesota Rules part 4410.2000, subpart 3.B; the rule directs that an EIS shall be prepared when the RGU and proposer agree that an EIS should be prepared. The EIS will meet applicable requirements of Minnesota Rules part 4410.0200 to 4410.7800 (MEQB Rules), which govern the Minnesota Environmental Review Program. The DNR is the responsible governmental unit (RGU) for this project, but will engage the services of a consultant to assist in EIS preparation. The DNR will retain responsibility for EIS content.

The Scoping Decision Document is a companion to the Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) prepared for the project. The purpose of the Scoping Decision Document is to identify those project alternatives and environmental impact issues that will be addressed in the EIS. The Scoping Decision Document also presents a tentative schedule of the environmental review process.

2.0 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The MEQB rules require that an EIS include at least one alternative of each of the following types, or provide an explanation of why no alternative is included in the EIS (*Guide to Minnesota Environmental Review Rules*, page 12): alternative sites, alternative technologies, modified designs or layouts, modified scale or magnitude, and alternatives incorporating reasonable mitigation measures identified through comments received during the EIS scoping and draft EIS comment periods.

Minnesota Rules part 4410.2300, subpart G directs that an alternative may be excluded for the analysis in the EIS if “it would not meet the underlying need for or purpose of the project, it would likely not have any significant environmental benefit compared to the project as proposed, or another alternative, of any type, that will be analyzed in the EIS would likely have similar environmental benefits but substantially less adverse economic, employment, or sociological impacts.” Selection or dismissal of alternatives will be documented in the EIS.

2.1 PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

The EIS will describe the proposed project and the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects outlined in Section 3.0.

2.2 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The EIS will describe the expected condition if the proposed project is not developed, with respect to the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects outlined in Section 3.0.

2.3 SITE ALTERNATIVES

The MEQB rules allow the RGU to exclude alternative sites if other sites do not have any significant environmental benefit compared to the project as proposed, or if other sites do not meet the underlying need and purpose of the project. The MEQB's Guide to Minnesota Environmental Review Rules lists a number of factors for the RGU to consider when deciding whether alternative sites would meet the underlying need for or purpose of the project.

The DNR does not propose to evaluate alternative sites for the project. Alternative sites would not meet the underlying need or purpose of the project. The proposer was originally incorporated as the Itasca Paper Company and has owned the site since 1901. Paper has been milled at the location for 103 years. Renamed the Blandin Paper Company in 1929, the proposer is a subsidiary of UPM-Kymmene North America since 1997. The site is an integral part of the project, which is the addition of new paper manufacturing capacity and supporting infrastructure, and facility modernization. Use of alternative sites would result in inefficient utilization of existing infrastructure.

2.4 TECHNOLOGY ALTERNATIVES

2.4.1 Paper Production Technologies

The DNR does not propose to evaluate alternative paper production technologies. The proposed project relies on the latest and best-proven technology for the products being produced. Significant environmental benefit over the proposed project is not provided.

2.4.2 Fiber Sources

The DNR proposes that alternative sources of wood fiber be evaluated in the EIS. The feasibility to use wood fiber sources other than aspen, spruce, and balsam will be evaluated with respect to the environmental and socioeconomic effects outlined in Section 3.0.

2.4.3 Forest Management

1. The DNR proposes that forest management measures to increase forest productivity and utilization be evaluated in the EIS. The issue will be evaluated with respect to the environmental and socioeconomic effects outlined in Section 3.0.
2. The DNR proposes that rotation ages by tree species or native plant community on proposer-managed lands be evaluated in the EIS. The issue will be evaluated with respect to the environmental and socioeconomic effects outlined in Section 3.0.

2.5 MODIFIED DESIGNS OR LAYOUTS

2.5.1 New Paper Machine and Onsite Infrastructure

DNR does not propose to evaluate a modified design or layout for the new paper machine because the underlying purpose of the project will not be met. Alternative layouts would not improve on the balance between project features, nor provide environmental benefits.

2.5.2 Paper Warehouse Options

The EIS will discuss the potential impacts of five different locations for project-related paper warehousing. Specific sites have been selected for Options 1-4. Options 1 and 3 occur within the confines of the mill while Options 2 and 4 are proposed to be located offsite but in the immediate project vicinity; a description will be provided of the facility in terms of the structure itself and supporting infrastructure, such as access roads and parking areas.

The specific location for Option 5 has yet to be identified. The proposer is now evaluating the feasibility of locating the proposed warehouse facility within the City of Coleraine or the City of Duluth. The EIS will evaluate Option 5 to the degree that a specific location is known.

2.6 SCALE OR MAGNITUDE ALTERNATIVES

2.6.1 Operational Change in Project Scale or Magnitude

The project complements the efficiencies of production. At this time, there are no known environmental reasons for reducing the proposed scale of paper production. If EIS analysis identifies significant environmental impacts that could be reduced through scale modification, this alternative will be reconsidered.

2.6.2 Statewide Timber Harvest Levels

The EIS will address the potential impacts of three timber harvest level alternatives that are defined as the: 1) GEIS Base Scenario; 2) Without Project Scenario; and the 3) With Project Scenario. The values to be evaluated are:

- The GEIS Base Scenario projected a statewide timber harvest level of 4.0 million cords per year, which was the 1990 level.
- The Without Project Scenario will be based on the most recent available data on the level of statewide timber harvest. The most recent data is for the year 2002. Total wood harvested that year was 3.675 million cords.
- The With Project Scenario will be based on the assumption that all of the projected increase in wood use is from timber harvested in Minnesota (e.g., no imports). The amount for this alternative is the sum of total wood harvested in 2002 and the project-related increase of 197,000 cords per year. The value for this alternative is 3.872 million cords per year.

2.7 INCORPORATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES IDENTIFIED THROUGH PUBLIC COMMENTS

The MEQB rules require consideration of mitigation measures identified through comments on the scope or the draft EIS, informally called the “fully mitigated alternative.” The EIS will consider all mitigation suggested through public comment, and will recommend incorporation of reasonable mitigation measures into project design and permitting. EIS preparation will identify mitigative measures, which will be recommended as warranted.

3.0 EIS ISSUES

The purpose of scoping is “to streamline the document, to identify only potentially significant and relevant issues and to define alternatives,” (MEQB Guide to Minnesota Environmental Review Rules, page 10). Issues have been identified and described in the Scoping EAW and are categorized below by significance and amount of additional analysis required in the EIS. Mitigation measures that could reasonably be applied to eliminate or minimize adverse environmental effects will be identified in the EIS in both the section describing environmental effects and in a separate chapter for permitting reference.

3.1 *Topic has been adequately analyzed in the EAW. Topic is not relevant or is so minor that it will not be addressed in the EIS. The Scoping EAW will be appended to the EIS for reference; the relevant EAW item number is provided in parents () after each topic.*

Listed species and sensitive ecological resources (Item 11b)
Water-related land use management district (Item 14)
Water surface use (Item 15)
Vehicle-related emissions (Item 22)
Odors and dust (Item 24)
Archaeological, historical, or architectural resources (Item 25a)
Prime or unique farmlands (Item 25b)
Scenic views or vistas (Item 25d)
Other unique resources (Item 25e)
Infrastructure and public services (Item 28)
Electric utilities (Item 29)

3.2 *Significant impacts are not expected; topic will be discussed briefly in the EIS using the same information as in the EAW.*

Fisheries (Item 11b)
Geologic hazards and soil conditions (Item 19)

3.3 *Significant impacts are not expected but information beyond that in the EAW will be included in the EIS.*

3.3.1 Potential conflicts with past and surrounding land uses (Item 9)

The EIS will discuss potential land use conflicts in sections addressing offsite traffic and noise.

3.3.2 Cover Types (Item 10)

Specific mill site development details will be developed during preparation of the EIS. The EIS will include updated cover type information and “before and after” cover type maps, and will describe the conversion of existing land cover types that will result from project implementation.

3.3.3 Wildlife Resources (Item 11a)

The EIS will discuss the potential for aquatic wildlife to be affected by appropriations from the proposed water intake structures. Mitigation measures will be identified.

3.3.4 Physical impacts on water resources (Item 12)

The EIS will discuss both proposed water intake structures. For the new intake structure, a description of site selection criteria, a proposed design, construction techniques, and an estimate of soil/sediment disturbance will be provided. For the existing structure, proposed improvements to reduce the potential for impingement/entrainment will be detailed. The EIS will list available BMPs appropriate to this type of activity.

3.3.5 Water use (Item 13)

The EIS will provide a water balance comparing current versus proposed appropriation levels. A table will be provided that identifies where process water is recycled during the paper production process.

3.3.6 Erosion and sedimentation (Item 16)

The EIS will provide schematics that show: 1) where grading and excavation will occur, 2) the proposed storm water drainage system, and 3) areas where new landscaping or access roads will be installed along the Mississippi River on the south side of the project area.

3.3.7 Water-quality: surface water runoff (Item 17)

The EIS will provide specific estimates of pre- and post-project runoff quantities. A qualitative description of runoff quality and the related impact on the receiving water will be provided. The EIS will also detail the changes to the existing storm drainage system needed for the project and what additional water treatment measures, if any, are necessary to protect water quality. Possible changes to the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be listed.

3.3.8 Water quality: wastewaters (Item 18)

The EIS will identify the proposed improvements to the WWTF, which constitute a connected action to the project, and will summarize the results of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Modifications Study. The Study will incorporate the recommendations of the MPCA. The EIS will also identify the anticipated pollutant flow and thermal loading associated with the non-contact cooling loop discharge. The EIS will describe any potential water quality impacts that may be associated with the mill's use of hydrogen peroxide, sodium hydroxide, sodium silicate, EDTA, and sulfuric acid.

3.3.9 Solid wastes, hazardous wastes, storage tanks (Item 20)

The EIS will describe and list the types, amounts, and compositions of solid and hazardous wastes produced during future operations. Regarding the use of pigments in future papermaking operations, the EIS will describe the projected volumes of use, movement through the facility into the natural environment through effluent, emissions, or spills. The EIS will identify all ASTs to the level of detail recommended by MPCA.

3.3.10 Stationary source air emissions (Item 23)

The EIS will present reasonable estimates on the quantities of emissions generated for the sources listed in EAW Table 5. The EIS will also provide a qualitative discussion of the control types listed for various sources in EAW Table 5.

3.3.11 Designated parks, recreation areas or trails (Item 25c)

The EIS will address potential impacts to Syndicate Park that might result from implementation of Warehouse Option 4. The assessment will be qualitative and limited to operation of the park itself, including the Mississippi Melody Showboat Site and Showboat dock. Any associated socioeconomic impacts will be addressed as part of the EIS evaluation noted in Section 3.5.

3.3.12 Visual Impacts (Item 26)

The EIS will briefly discuss the current available technology for controlling water/steam mists and how this technology may be applied to the project.

3.3.13 Compatibility with plans and land use regulations (Item 27)

The EIS will address any potential zoning changes that might result from Paper Warehouse Option 5 being implemented in the City of Coleraine.

3.3.14 Infrastructure and public services - Streets (Item 28)

The EIS will address the issue of abandonment of NW Third Street if Warehouse Option No. 2 is pursued. Changes in local traffic patterns and access to local businesses will be identified. Any associated socioeconomic impacts will be addressed as part of the EIS evaluation noted in Section 3.5.

3.4 Potentially significant impacts may result; information beyond what was in the EAW will be included in the EIS.

3.4.1 Traffic (Item 21)

The EIS will evaluate traffic-related effects based upon generally accepted principles of traffic analysis. The EIS will provide existing traffic counts on access points to the mill and projected increased trip generation by mode, vehicle type, and direction of travel. Planned changes in access, (e.g., intersections; roads; rail), related to the project will be described and analyzed in terms of peak hour design/traffic capacity and safety. The EIS will consider adjoining roads and other connecting roads that may be adversely impacted. Appropriate measures of congestion will be considered, including level-of-service and delay times. The 2002 Grand Rapids Transportation Plan Update will be considered as part of the analysis in terms of its recommended actions and status of implementation. A qualitative description of potential regional impacts to highway or rail systems will be considered.

3.4.2 Noise (Item 24)

The EIS will identify sensitive receptors, such as houses, and evaluate potential noise impacts to residents. The EIS will describe potential noise control measures, evaluate their effectiveness, and recommend additional measures if warranted.

3.4.3 Timber harvest (Item 29)

The EIS will include a major discussion of the potential significant cumulative environmental effects upon forest resources as a function of project-related wood use and timber harvest. The EIS will undertake the following:

1. Compare forest conditions under the most recent level of statewide timber harvesting activity without the project (Without Project Scenario) to the Base Scenario evaluated in the GEIS.

The GEIS Base Scenario will be used because it is the GEIS harvest scenario that most closely reflects the current level of statewide timber harvesting activity. A quantitative comparison of the most recent level of harvest to the base scenario will likely be done to determine the relevant benchmark condition by which to evaluate the project.

Data sources used to develop the Without Project Scenario will be the most recent statewide timber harvesting statistics compiled by the MN DNR and statewide forest inventory data provided by the USDA-Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis survey (FIA). This comparison will focus on identifying differences between these two scenarios in the following three areas:

- a. The projected change in Minnesota's forest conditions at decade intervals from the present to the year 2040. Forest conditions will be characterized in terms of forest extent and diversity as measured by covertype and age class structure.
 - b. The 17 significant impacts projected in the GEIS Base scenario and other relevant cumulative impacts of potential significance.
2. Compare forest conditions under the most recent level of statewide timber harvest with the expansion project (With Project Scenario) to the Without Project Scenario. The level of use assigned to the project will be as if all roundwood were procured within Minnesota (e.g., no imports) to ensure examination of maximum potential impact to Minnesota forest resources. This comparison will focus on identifying differences between these two scenarios in the following three areas:
 - a. The projected change in Minnesota's forest conditions at decade intervals from the present to the year 2040. Forest conditions will be characterized in terms of forest extent and diversity as measured by covertype and age class structure.
 - b. The 17 significant impacts projected in the GEIS Base scenario and other relevant cumulative impacts of potential significance.
 3. Assess the long-term ability to sustain forest outputs and values by evaluating the extent to which the projected significant cumulative timber harvesting impacts will be mitigated under the With Project Scenario based on progress in implementing the Timber Harvesting GEIS's Strategic Programmatic Responses. Measures being implemented by the proposer on its ownerships or through its open-market purchases will also be detailed.
 4. Discuss alternatives for addressing any potential unmitigated impacts associated with the With Project Scenario. Alternatives examined will include:
 - Alternative sources of wood fiber for the expansion project.
 - Investments to increase forest productivity and utilization.
 - Any alternative(s) incorporating reasonable mitigation measures identified through comments received during the comment period for EIS scoping or for the draft EIS, or through development of the Draft EIS.
 5. Provide a qualitative evaluation of how rotation ages by tree species or native plant community will change the natural growth stage mix of proposer-managed lands.

To achieve these results, the EIS will consider the following factors.

Modeling. The EIS will not re-run the GEIS models. Alternative modeling approaches will be used with updated FIA data to generally gauge the degree to which current and projected future harvest levels will substantially differ from GEIS forest type, volume, and age-class projections. The analysis will likely be both quantitative and qualitative.

Use of the New FIA Dataset. The new FIA dataset will be used to compare current forest conditions with those projected for the first decade under the GEIS Base Scenario. It will also serve as the starting point to project out and then evaluate the extent to which projected changes in forest covertype and age class structure have or will likely deviate from similar projections in the GEIS Base scenario. The EIS will also identify: a) differences between the FIA survey designs between 1990 and 2003, b) how these differences have been addressed, and 3) what if any covertypes might be more likely to be affected by the differences.

Use of the Forestry Generic EIS Implementation Progress and Accuracy Assessment Project (e.g., GEIS Report Card Study). The EIS will consider the results of the cited study to incorporate into the analysis: 1) progress toward implementing the GEIS recommendations to mitigate possible adverse timber harvesting impacts (see GEIS Executive Summary on pp. xxiii-xxvi), and 2) the accuracy of the GEIS in predicting changes in forest resource conditions over the first 10 of study's 50-year planning horizon (e.g., 1990-2040). The study is now currently underway and its results should be available for consideration in the EIS.

Impact Assessment. The EIS impact assessment will be both quantitative and qualitative. Changes in forest condition, in terms of the covertype and age class, will be quantified to the extent possible; what the change in forest condition means in terms of the GEIS' 17 areas of potential significant impact will be a qualitative assessment. The results of the GEIS Report Card Study will likely be considered in this evaluation. Guidance issued by the federal Council on Environmental Quality regarding cumulative effects assessment will be considered in the impact assessment as noted in MEQB's *Guide to Minnesota Environmental Review Rules*.

Updated Information. The Without Project Scenario and With Project Scenarios will use updated information, generated in part from the GEIS Report Card Study, about land management practices to project and describe associated potential environmental impacts. Major departures between assumed and actual practices will be described and considered in assessing the degree to which significant impacts projected in the GEIS Base scenario remain valid. Other factors may be considered as deemed relevant, such as new information on levels of timber imported from outside Minnesota.

Scale of Analysis. Most of the analysis in the EIS will be at the statewide level. The EIS will provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of impacts at the ecoregion scale that is conceptually consistent with the approach used in the GEIS analysis.

Precision of Analysis. Regarding comparisons of forest conditions in terms of: a) projected significant impacts, b) changes in Minnesota's forests, and c) the long-term ability to sustain forest values, the EIS to the extent possible will quantify and interpret any differences, including causes where they can be identified. Where it is not possible

for differences to be quantified, the EIS will attempt to describe the direction and most likely impacts on important forest resource outputs (e.g., timber, recreation, habitat, biological diversity).

Meaning of the term “forest outputs and values.” The EIS will consider the project’s impacts in the broad context of sustaining important outputs and values associated with forests. These include: marketable timber and wood products; outdoor recreation opportunities; fiber production; plant and animal habitat; biodiversity; forest landscape patterns; hunting and wildlife watching; and utilitarian uses. The DNR and consultant will enhance the list as determined necessary to ensure a balanced presentation of the term, including consideration of items suggested from public comments.

Other Factors. The EIS will consider other factors not anticipated by the GEIS, such as forest certification, current increase in the sale of industrial timber lands, or infestation in the state by the gypsy moth or Sudden Oak Death, or other factors identified by DNR or the consultant, and how these could affect the respective impact projections. Development of the list will include consideration of items suggested from public comments.

The EIS will also consider other available studies or data that is relevant to the analysis, such as the Results from the Minnesota Spatial Analysis and Modeling Project [MFRC, December 2003].

The EIS will not consider the potential cumulative effects of timber harvested outside Minnesota that is imported into the state for sale and use. The EIS assessment will be limited to the project’s impacts upon Minnesota forest resources only.

3.4.4 Regional transportation impacts (Item 29)

The EIS will consider the potential for project-related truck and rail traffic to impact the regional transportation network.

3.5 *Socioeconomic Effects*

The EIS will discuss project costs, and evaluate the economic effects of the project on employment and the local economy. Potential project-related impacts to the community’s affordable housing stock will be assessed and mitigation identified. The potential for Paper Warehouse Option 2 to adversely affect the businesses in the Old Mill District, particularly blocks 17 and 18, will be discussed; potential economic impacts and available mitigation will be identified, and the findings of the Central Business District’s Downtown Study will be incorporated into the EIS, including identification of historic properties.

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF PHASED OR CONNECTED ACTIONS

4.1 Paper Warehouse Option 5

The project includes the development of a new paper warehouse where five options have been identified by the proposer. A location for Option 5 has not been identified. The proposer is now evaluating the feasibility of locating the proposed warehouse facility within the City of Coleraine or the City of Duluth. The EIS will discuss any impacts and mitigation requirements.

If a specific location is not identified over the course of the EIS, any future pursuit of Option 5 is a phased action and will require preparation of a supplemental EIS. Minnesota Rules part 4410.2000,

subpart 4 indicates where it is not possible to adequately address all the project components or stages at the time of the initial EIS, a supplemental EIS must be completed before approval and construction of each subsequent project component or stage. DNR is the designated RGU for the preparation of any supplemental EIS.

4.2 Precipitated Calcium Carbonate Facility

The project includes the addition of an onsite precipitated calcium carbonate (PCC) facility that will be operated by an independent vendor. No vendor has been identified but the technical specifications of such an operation are known. This project element is a connected action. The EIS will discuss any impacts and mitigation requirements.

4.3 Energy-Related Infrastructure

The project includes four energy infrastructure-related elements that are proposed to be conducted by Allete/Minnesota Power. The following list of proposed additions and/or facility modifications are connected actions: steam accumulator; water demineralization plant; back-up boiler; and electric power feed lines. The EIS will discuss these necessary improvements and any impacts and mitigation requirements.

4.4 Grand Rapids Wastewater Treatment Facility

The project includes modification to the Grand Rapids Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), which is operated by Grand Rapids Public Utilities. The modification to the WWTF is a connected action. The EIS will discuss any impacts and mitigation requirements.

5.0 EIS SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

January 2005	Scoping EAW comment period (includes public meeting)
February 2005	Final Scoping Decision Issued
March 2005	EIS Preparation Notice published
August 2005	Draft EIS issued for public review (includes public meeting)
September 2005	Final EIS Issued
October 2005	EIS Adequacy Decision

6.0 SPECIAL STUDIES OR RESEARCH

6.1 Traffic Analysis

The EIS will require preparation of a traffic analysis to evaluate potential project-related impacts and identify potential mitigation. Coordination will occur between DNR and the Minnesota Department of Transportation regarding study requirements. The traffic analysis will be prepared by a consultant under the oversight of DNR. The traffic analysis will be based upon generally accepted principles of traffic analysis. The EIS will incorporate the findings of this study.

6.2 Wastewater Treatment Facility Modifications Study

The EIS will use information from a study being conducted by Grand Rapids Public Utilities to determine what modifications are necessary to the Grand Rapids WWTF to treat project-related effluent. The study is being conducted by consultants secured by Grand Rapids Public Utilities in consultation with the proposer. The EIS will incorporate the findings of this study.

The Study will address the following issues in consultation with the MPCA:

1. Whether the amount of heat to be discharged from expanded mill operations will inhibit biological activity in the upgraded WWTF, which would result in interference with or compromised treatment plant removal efficiency.
2. If a fine bubble diffused aeration upgrade is proposed (to replace the current surface mechanical aerators) in the WWTF, the temperature impacts of this WWTF modification need to be considered for its effect on WWTF removal efficiency performance.
3. An analysis of the thermal loading from the upgraded WWTF discharge and its impact on the Mississippi River.
4. The system analysis for temperature – from expanded mill discharges, changes to the aeration basin system, or Mississippi River impacts – needs to determine whether (and at what point) cooling of the industrial influent and/or mixed liquor aeration basin(s) is required.
5. An analysis of expanded mill discharges/loading to sludge handling/dewatering facilities. Specific detail should be included identifying changes in quantities and qualities of primary and secondary solids (e. g. separate and/or in combination with each other prior to dewatering). Impacts of expanded mill discharges/loading on current facility operations, and any necessary upgrades to equipment/facilities needs to be included. Design life of current sludge handling/dewatering equipment should be considered.
6. Some discussion of the types of tanks to be added to the facility (e. g. concrete) should also be included for completeness.

6.3 Generic Environmental Impact Statement Study on Timber Harvesting and Forest Management

The EIS will use information contained in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Timber Harvesting and Forest Management (GEIS); MEQB, 1994. GEIS-related information will be used in the evaluation of the project's potential impacts upon Minnesota forest resources and identification of appropriate mitigation. The EIS will incorporate information from the GEIS by tiering into the project-specific environmental review consistent with Minnesota Rules part 4410.0200, subpart 88.

6.4 Future Forest Condition Analysis

The EIS will require preparation of a future forest condition analysis to evaluate potential project-related impacts and identify potential mitigation. DNR will engage the services of a consultant for this analysis, which will be conducted under the oversight of the agency. The analysis will model future forest conditions in terms of cover type and age class for the With Project and Without Project timber harvest level alternatives. The results of this modeling will be considered in the context of GEIS-related information under the GEIS Base Scenario. The EIS will incorporate the findings of this study.

6.5 Forestry GEIS Implementation Progress and Accuracy Assessment Project

The EIS will use information contained in the Forestry GEIS Implementation Progress and Accuracy Assessment Project (GEIS Report Card Study). The study is being conducted by consultants secured by DNR with the agency's oversight. Information collected in the GEIS Report Card Study will be used in the EIS-required Future Forest Condition Analysis where appropriate. The EIS will incorporate the findings of this study.

6.6 Noise Analysis

The EIS will require preparation of a noise analysis to evaluate potential project-related impacts and identify potential mitigation. DNR will engage the services of a consultant for this analysis, which will be conducted under the oversight of the agency. Baseline data will be collected and used to model future noise levels as a function of facility operation. The noise analysis will be conducted under generally accepted principles of noise-related impact assessment. The EIS will incorporate the findings of the study.

7.0 Governmental Permits or Approvals

The EIS will identify all permits and approvals required for this project. While some permit application review may occur concurrently with EIS preparation, the EIS will not necessarily contain all information required for a decision on those permits. No permits have been designated to have all information developed concurrently with the preparation of the EIS nor will any require preparation of a record of decision pursuant to Minnesota Rules part 4410.2100, subpart 6.D.

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