

Scoping Documents Explained



The environmental review process begins with two key documents: The Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet (Scoping EAW or SEAW) and the Draft Scoping Decision Document (DSDD). These documents work together to define what the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will study.

Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet

A Scoping EAW is an information gathering tool. It uses a standard form of 31 questions from the Environmental Quality Board, often supported by maps and figures. Its purpose is to:

- Lay out the basic facts of a proposed project and its potential impacts at a high level.
- Provide enough detail about potential environmental impacts to inform the DSDD.

Draft Scoping Decision Document

Using information from the SEAW, agencies determine which topics need to be studied, and what additional data or research is needed. The DSDD is the blueprint for the EIS. The information in the DSDD is considered preliminary and may change based on information received during the public comment period. The DSDD is made up of the following eight sections:

Section 1—Introduction and Purpose

This section provides a brief summary of the project that is based on the more detailed project description from the Scoping EAW. It also provides details about the environmental review process.

Section 2—Project Alternatives

The DSDD identifies the project alternatives that will be assessed in the EIS. The DSDD for the Tamarack Mining Project includes the following alternatives for analysis:

1. No action alternative
2. Alternative discharge locations for water treated by the Contact Water Treatment Plant
3. Using all electric trucks and equipment for mining
4. Transport ore and/or waste rock by rail to a port on Lake Superior, then transport by ship to the processing facility in Marquette County, Michigan
5. Alternative locations for managing overburden from construction

Continued

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Section 3—EIS Issues

The DSDD lays out the issues to be covered in the EIS. It describes how the issues will be addressed and identifies any data that may be needed. The EIS issues identified for the Tamarack Mining Project are as follows:

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| 1. Climate Adaptation and Resilience | 11. Surface Water and Wetlands |
| 2. Land Use | 12. Groundwater |
| 3. Geology, Soils and Topography | 13. Wastewater |
| 4. Contamination, Hazardous Materials and Waste | 14. Air |
| 5. Fish, Wildlife, Plant Communities and Sensitive Ecological Resources | 15. Elongate Mineral Particles |
| a. Wild Rice is included in this section | 16. Socioeconomic Impacts |
| 6. Historic Properties | a. Economics |
| 7. Visual Resources | b. Demographics |
| 8. Noise | c. Infrastructure and Community Services |
| 9. Transportation | d. Tribal Resources |
| 10. Cumulative Potential Effects | e. Environmental Justice |
| | f. Human Health |
| | g. Reclamation and Financial Assurance |

Sections 4 and 5—Identification of Phased or Connected Actions; Tentative EIS Schedule

The Tamarack DSDD does not identify any phased or connected actions. It also contains a tentative schedule.

Section 6—Special Studies or Research

The Tamarack DSDD identifies 17 required studies or plans to provide information on the EIS issues identified in section three.

Sections 7 and 8—Mitigation and Monitoring; Permitting

The DSDD identifies that the EIS will include a section that identifies mitigation opportunities as well as monitoring likely required by permitting. It also states the EIS will identify all permits and approvals for the Project, and that no permit or approval decisions can be made until the completion of environmental review.

Disclaimer: This document is a working document. This document may change over time as a result of new information, further deliberation, or other factors not yet known.