Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
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Date: January 15, 2010

To: Parties on the EAW Distribution List
Other Interested Persons

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Subject: Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area
Record of Decision on Environmental Assessment Worksheet

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), as the Responsible Governmental Unit for environmental review of the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area Project in St. Louis County, has issued a Record of Decision regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

The MDNR has concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required because the project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects. The justification for the determination is contained in the Record of Decision. The Record of Decision also contains the Department's responses to all substantive written comments received on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet.

Issuing this Record of Decision concludes the State environmental review process for this project according to the Minnesota Environmental Quality board rules, Minnesota Rules, part 4410.1000 to 4410.1700. This project can now proceed to permitting and approvals.

Attachment: January 15, 2010 Record of Decision

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

RECORD OF DECISION

In the Matter of the Determination of the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area project in St. Louis County, Minnesota

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS, AND ORDER

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) proposes to develop a 2,704 acre expansion to the existing Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area (OHVRA), Gilbert, Minnesota. The proposed expansion site is located one mile north of the existing Iron Range OHVRA, partially within the City of Virginia, Minnesota. The Virginia Expansion site will be managed out of the existing facility, which will be linked to the expansion area by a connector road. This proposed expansion includes the development of the connector road, a core trail system, vehicle-specified trails, and perimeter fencing. Hereafter the project area is referred to as the Virginia Expansion site or the Virginia site.

2. The Virginia expansion to the Iron Range OHVRA was legislatively authorized in 1999 (*Minnesota Session Laws, 1999, Chapter 231, Sect. 99, Subd. 4).* The expansion was intended to complement off-road riding opportunities available since 2002 at the Gilbert site, making the Iron Range OHVRA a viable long-distance destination and an attractive, challenging recreation experience for trail riders. The Iron Range OHVRA was intended to include both the original Gilbert site and the Virginia site to insure the availability of sufficient acreage for constructing a sustainable trail system.

3. Pursuant to the State Outdoor Recreation Act of 1975 (*Minnesota Statutes* section 86A.05), completion of a Master Plan approved by the MDNR Commissioner is required prior to construction, or official designation, as a State Recreation Area.

4. A Master Plan was prepared for the Iron Range OHVRA, Gilbert Site. The Master Plan will be updated to incorporate additional management and mitigation requirements applicable to the Virginia site. The Gilbert site encompasses a 1,200-acre state-owned and operated State Recreation Area with about 40 miles of established off-highway vehicle trails. The Gilbert site will serve as a logistical base for managing the Virginia Expansion.

5. The Environmental Review Program rules designate the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) as the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for conducting environmental review for recreational trails constructed on state-owned land or funded, in whole or part, by grant-in-aid funds administered by the MDNR (*Minnesota Rules* part 4410.4300, subpart 37).

6. The proposed project, which is to construct an off-highway vehicle recreation area, requires preparation of a State Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) according to the rules of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and the Minnesota Environmental Review Program (*Minnesota Rules*, part 4410.4300, subpart 37, item F).

7. The MDNR prepared an EAW for the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area project, pursuant to *Minnesota Rules* part 4410.4300, subpart 37, item F.

8. The EAW is incorporated by reference into this Record of Decision on the Determination of Need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

9. The EAW was filed with the EQB and a notice of its availability was published in the EQB *Monitor* on November 16, 2009. A copy of the EAW was sent to all persons on the EQB Distribution List, to those persons known by the Department to be interested in the proposed project, and to those persons requesting a copy in writing. A press release announcing the availability of the EAW was sent to newspapers and radio and television stations statewide. Copies of the EAW were also available for public review and inspection at the MDNR Library (St. Paul), MDNR Northeast Regional Headquarters (Grand Rapids), Minneapolis Public Library, Arrowhead Regional Library (Duluth Public Library), Gilbert Public Library, and Virginia Public Library. The EAW was also made available to the public via posting on the MDNR's website.

10. The 30-day EAW public review and comment period began November 16, 2009 and ended December 16, 2009, pursuant to *Minnesota Rules*, part 4410.1600. The opportunity was provided to submit written comments on the EAW to the MDNR by U.S. Mail, by facsimile, or electronically by email.

11. During the 30-day EAW public review and comment period, the MDNR received written comments on the EAW from 52 agencies or individuals. A copy of the comments is attached to this Record of Decision as Attachment A.

    1. Michael Vespa
    2. Matthew Coty
    3. Jason Christensen
    4. Christopher Wilson
    5. Jeffrey Jukich
    6. Richard Gorr
    7. Rod Arnold

8. Rich Pederson
9. Nate Delaney
10. Pete Goepfert
11. Barry Krayer
12. Richard McKagan
13. Michael Hughes
14. Ethan Campbell
15. Linda Brownlee
16. Kyle Crocker
17. Pat Herold
18. Barbara Partington
19. Les Stenerson
20. Mark Friederichs
21. Wyatt Johnson
22. Dave Neph
23. Brent Ostwald
24. John Schnorr on behalf of the Wisconsin Off Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA)
25. Rick Langness
26. Christina Oleson
27. Scott Dorau
28. Jeff and Audrey Rasmussen
29. Brian Bergeron
30. Edward Meyer
31. Kevin Olsen
32. Brad Nelson
33. Russel Telker
34. Kurt Hujanen
35. Lorenzo Salinas
36. Zach Walker
37. Brent Baxter on behalf of the Rock Bottom 4x4 OHV club
38. Mark Kitlinski
39. Mike Beaulieu
40. Shannon or Bobbie Halverson
41. Brad Baxter
42. Riley Roberdeau
43. Terry Leoni on behalf of Virginia Dept. of Public Utilities
44. Kevin Rasmussen
45. Jason Boie and Jessica Maninn
46. Matt Chapin
47. Derrick Langeslay
48. Mark Filonowich

49. Andrea Whiting
50. Mark Pucel
51. Michael Tardy on behalf of Minnesota Department of Transportation
52. Mark Sawyer

12. After the conclusion of the 30-day EAW public review and comment period, the MDNR received written comment letters on the EAW from Dan Heddle (Commenter #53), Kelly Gragg-Johnson on behalf of Minnesota Historical Society (Commenter #54), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Commenter #55).

    The MDNR is also providing in this Record of Decision a response to substantive comments received after the conclusion of the 30-day review and comment period.

13. Some comments that were received expressed an opinion about the merits of the proposed project and did not address the completeness and accuracy of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), specific impacts that require further investigation, the potential for significant environmental effects, or the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These comments will be provided to the project proposer and to permitting and/or approval entities and/or authorities for their consideration as part of further decisions about whether to permit, approve, and/or implement the project. Those individuals submitting comments in this category will generally find their comments regarding the merits of the proposed project not addressed in this Record of Decision. Many commenters noted their support for the project because it would provide additional OHV riding opportunities. The MDNR notes and acknowledges these comments. The following two comments do not address the potential for significant environmental effects of the proposed project. The responses are provided to improve clarity about the project proposal:

    a. Stains on Clothing and Corrosion on Machines

    Comment Letter #20: Mark Friederichs
    Comment: Commenter states that trail riders using the proposed project site would be vulnerable to lasting stains on clothing and excessive corrosion on machines.

    Response: This comment will be referred to the project proposer for consideration as to the merits and design of the proposed project. Wear on machines and clothing should be expected when riding off road vehicles. Dust and corrosion on vehicles is likely to be quite similar to other areas and should not be considered abnormally high when using the Iron Range OHVRA. User complaints of dusty conditions will be addressed and potentially, some segments could be rectified with additional gravel or closed to users until conditions improve.

b. One-way Traffic

Comment Letter: #52 Mark Sawyer
Comment: Commenter suggests that all new and existing trails be designated for 'one-way traffic' in order to avoid conflicts or collisions with vehicles traveling in the opposite direction. The commenter believes that this would improve overall trail safety.

Response: This comment will be referred to the project proposer for consideration as to the merits and design of the proposed project. In the MDNR's experience, one-way trails actually foster higher speeds that could potentially result in more serious accidents. Riders often wrongfully assume that they will not meet another vehicle along the trail. Too often, riders do travel against traffic either inadvertently, or to return to the trailhead after encountering mechanical problems or trails that simply exceed their riding skills or their vehicle's operating capabilities. One-way trails can lead to serious problems and crashes with stalled vehicles or with vehicles traveling in the opposite direction.

14. Five commenters provided timely, substantive written comments. These are presented below. Substantive comments address the accuracy and completeness of the information provided in the EAW, potential impacts that warrant further investigation and the need for an Environmental Impact Statement. The MDNR response follows each comment. Comments received during the public review and comment period addressed the following topics:

a. Effects on Watershed for Drinking Water Source
b. Connector Road Crossing of Trunk Highway Highway 135
c. Reroutes of Trunk Highway 53
d. Noise and Other Conflicts with Other Outdoor Recreationists
e. General Pollution and Disturbances

15. The comments and MDNR's response are organized by topic. The written comments received are listed below, as compiled and summarized from the comment letters. Where multiple comments on one specific issue were received, those comments are combined in a summary form that represents the essence of the comment. The MDNR's response follows each comment.

a. Watershed Used For Drinking Water Source

Comment Letter # 43: Terry Leoni on behalf of Virginia Department of Public Utilities
Comment: As representative of the City of Virginia, the commenter states that the proposed project would expose the City's public water source to contamination, which could result in adverse human health impact. The commenter proposed to rectify the problem by removing from the project area that portion lying west of the "Landfill Road" in Section 16, thus creating a larger setback from the waters of the Mesabi Mountain Pit.

Response: The project boundaries have been moved further from the Mesabi Mine Pit, the source of the City of Virginia's drinking water, since this issue first surfaced in 2000. Following extensive hydrologic modeling, a number of statutory boundary modifications were enacted, including a change in 2006 *(ML 2006, Chap. 236)* which deleted all of Section 9, and the east half of Section 8 of Township 58N Range 17W, just east of the Mesabi Mine Pit.

The 'unused area' in the Northwest corner of Section 16, including the area lying west of the Landfill Road in Section 16 and preferred as a setback zone by the City of Virginia, remains a part of the current project design but will not be developed for OHV use or used in other ways by park visitors. It will serve solely as an inaccessible buffer separated from the rest of the park by the St. Louis County Landfill Access Road. The buffer area will prevent potential sedimentation and any associated increase in turbidity from affecting the City's water supply. The Landfill Access Road is a busy thoroughfare which is unsafe to cross at-grade. There are no plans to construct either an overpass or underpass to access this area.

b. Connector Road Crossing of Trunk Highway 135

Comment Letter # 51: Michael Tardy on behalf of Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT)
Comment: Commenter has concerns that the current grade of TH 135 will not allow placement of a box culvert for the proposed connector road under the TH 135 roadway. If this is the case, an at-grade crossing would not be allowed at this location because of sight distance concerns. Mn/DOT notes that a safer at-grade crossing would be near the junction of TH 37 and TH 135.

Response: MDNR will cooperate with Mn/DOT to design and build an appropriate connector road crossing of TH 135. As noted in the additional Mn/DOT correspondence of January 7, 2010 to MDNR, the final location for the proposed box culvert under Highway 135 will be determined during the detailed design phase for the project. The trail crossing will be subject to meeting the requirements of a Limited Use Permit that will be developed as part of the process. Environmental effects of an alternate crossing site would be the potential additional road necessary to reach the crossing (up to 0.3 miles); change in road-side drainage; and additional wetland-fill along the alternative route. The wetland impacts of the alternative siting would be addressed through the Wetland Conservation Act's wetland sequencing procedures, which are defined in the EAW as delineation, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation.

c. Reroutes of Trunk Highway 53

Comment Letter # 51: Michael Tardy on behalf of Minn. Department of Transportation
Comment: Commenter noted that there is a strong likelihood that TH 53 in the Eveleth-Virginia area will be re-routed in the future to allow for mining activities under the

existing highway. At this time, it is unknown where the new route would be located or what impacts this would have on the Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area.

Response: MDNR will cooperate with Mn/DOT on the TH 53 reroute process. Without an alternative placement plan, MDNR will not be able to consider the changes in the environmental effects on the Virginia site due to the highway reroute. It is considered that the potential reroute could change the boundary and operation of the Virginia site but should not cause any changes in the environmental effects of the proposed project.

d. Noise and Other Conflicts with Other Outdoor Recreationists

Comment Letter: #18 Barb Partington,
Comment: Commenter states that OHV engine noise carries for a long distance on certain days and can be quite annoying. Noise monitoring of individual machines should be conducted by MDNR.

Response: This comment was made in conjunction with a suggestion that a separate series of horse trails be established on the proposed Virginia site. In such consideration, the commenter notes that the machine noises can be quite annoying to horses and horse riders. It is the conflict of such recreational uses that are avoided by providing OHV riders with a special area to operate. The suggestions of combining other nonmotorized uses of the recreation area will be provided to the project proposer and permitting entities or authorities for their consideration in deciding whether to permit and implement the project. As described in the EAW under Item No. 6, only vehicles equipped with the required safety and noise suppression gear that meet the Minnesota's noise emission standards are permitted to enter the facility. Spot checks are periodically conducted within the facility to ensure compliance with state noise regulations. Repeated ambient testing conducted by MDNR staff, with the assistance of MPCA staff, at occupied dwellings located adjacent to the Gilbert facility, has shown that MPCA Noise Standards can be met regardless of seasonality, or prevailing wind conditions, or the numbers or types of vehicles.

e. General Pollution and Disturbances

Comment Letters: #16 Kyle Crocker and #29 Brian Bergeron
Comment: The commenters suggests that the sport of OHV riding causes air and water pollution, damages to the land, conflicts with other users, and uses fossil fuels that contribute to global warming.

Response: These comments were addressed under many items in the EAW related to affects on vegetation cover, wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, erosion, sedimentation, noise, etc. By establishing trail systems for OHV riders within a State Recreation Area and elsewhere on public lands, the MDNR is striving to reduce the potential for off trail riding on public lands. The Virginia site also would reduce the potential for conflicts with other non-motorized recreational users in the area. Erosion and sedimentation

problems have been identified and mitigation has been defined for the project's design, construction, maintenance, and operation.

The release of carbon dioxide from OHV use within Minnesota is minor when compared to the carbon dioxide release from other recreational venues, and minimal relative to combustion sources of other economic sectors. The release of carbon dioxide during rides conducted on the proposed Virginia site will be a very small percentage of the total released by these vehicles throughout the state. The loss of forest cover and wetlands, which would make forest ecosystems more vulnerable to climate change, has been minimized through the use of existing corridors as much as possible.

16. The comments of the Minnesota Historical Society and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are listed below. The MDNR's response follows the comment.

a. Archeological Investigations

Comment Letter # 54: Kelly Gragg-Johnson on behalf of Minn. Historical Society
Comment: Commenter #54 recommends that an archaeological survey be completed.

Response: As stated in the EAW in response to Item No. 25, no known architectural, historical, or archaeological (cultural resource) sites will be disturbed and there is no specific indication that sites are present on the Virginia site. The MDNR requires archaeological, historical, and/or cultural resource investigations and field surveys, if necessary, for all land management projects proposed or funded by the department to assess the potential effects of these projects on such sites and to assure the MDNR is in compliance with applicable state and federal laws. Once the corridors have been sited, appropriate archeological authorities will be contacted to conduct an archaeological assessment of the construction zone. Should any archeological resources be identified, MDNR will consult with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Office of the Minnesota State Archaeologist (OSA) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), who would assist in determining the nature and scope of any effects and need for mitigation.

b. Wetlands

Comment Letter # 55: Tamara Cameron on behalf of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Comment: Commenter #55 states that all areas of new trail construction and areas of trail expansion should be field verified for the presence of wetlands.

Response: As described in the EAW under Item No. 12, development of the connector road, core trail system, and vehicle-specified trail network will comply with provisions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' regulatory authority of the Clean Water Act (under General Permit or Letter of Permission Evaluation). Wetland mitigation sequencing steps, i.e., delineation, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation will be followed during all phases of project development. When unavoidable wetland effects are identified,

impacts will be minimized and wetland loss mitigated according to the "no net-loss" requirements of the Wetland Conservation Act.

17. Based upon the information contained in the EAW, provided in the written comments received, and based on the responses to comments provided in Findings 15 and Findings 16, the MDNR has identified the following potential environmental effects by topic associated with the project.

a. Project Design, Construction, Management, and Maintenance
b. Land Cover
c. Habitat Fragmentation
d. Invasive Species
e. Wildlife including Species in Greatest Conservation Need
f. Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Species
g. Erosion and Sedimentation
h. Aquatic Resources including Wetlands
i. Traffic and Vehicle Related Emissions
j. Release of Toxic Substances
k. Noise - Nearby Human Receptors
l. Odors and Dust
m. Land Use Plans, Regulations, and Management
n. Archeological, Historical, and Architectural Resources
o. Cumulative Environmental Effects

a. Project Design, Construction, Management, and Maintenance

The design, construction, management, and maintenance of the proposed project were discussed in the EAW under Item No. 6. The Virginia site is partially located within the two Cities of Virginia and Gilbert, Minnesota. The Virginia site has a surface area of 2,704 acres. The site will be connected by an approximately one-mile long road to the existing Iron Range OHVRA - Gilbert site (1,200 acres).

The site will be developed for recreational riding of Off-highway Vehicles (OHVs) including All-terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Off-highway Motorcycles (OHMs), and Off-road Vehicles (ORVs) (includes 4x4 trucks and jeeps). The project consists of four facility developments: 1) a one-mile connector trail, 2) a core trail system (about eight miles), including a few day-use picnic or rest areas and overlook clearings; 3) a series of vehicle-specified trail networks consisting of about 66 miles of trails; and 4) a series of perimeter fences. The connector trail and core trail system will be constructed to serve as multi-use arterials suited for both Off-highway vehicle (OHV) and Highway Licensed Vehicle (HLV) travel. They will require 12 to 20 foot wide corridors and, to achieve a high load bearing capacity, they will be constructed to forest road standards. The vehicle-specified trail networks will be constructed mostly along new corridors and designed to accommodate three OHV classes: 1) ATV/OHMs, 2) OHVs, and 3) ORVs. Alignments

of the core trail and vehicle specified trails remain indeterminate at this time. Surplus highway barriers have proven to be effective in preventing unlawful entry into the Gilbert site and trespass onto adjacent properties. A similar barrier system will be constructed for the Virginia site.

Little or no construction is proposed along most existing corridors, where limited remedial measures, i.e., improving cut and fill slopes, filling ruts and holes; soil stabilization, outslope maintenance, etc., will be required. New trail corridors for vehicle-specified trails will typically be sinuous and limited to the required OHV class widths of from two- to six-feet. Clearing new corridors will entail flagging suitable pathways, removing brush, limited cutting of small trees, and delimbing larger trees to a height of 10-feet. The ground surface of the treadway will be grubbed to remove roots, stumps and large rocks. The debris will be removed or pushed away and rocks and soil materials will be reused when possible or deposited at old borrow sites and reseeded after construction. The locations of borrow pits are not known at this time. Development of new trail corridors may require treadway elevation, outsloping, bench cuts, culvert installation, and/or surface blading. Grading and filling will shape the trail's treadway to shed water and stabilize soils. Road and trail low spots will be leveled rather than excavated with heavy equipment to minimize disturbances that increase the potential for erosion and drainage problems. In areas of highly compactable soils, use of dry granular soil or gravel will be spread on the treadway to improve stability.

The Virginia Expansion site will be managed out of the existing facility and have the same general management policies and operating guidelines as the Gilbert site. The Gilbert site has a vehicle wash station, maintenance facility, and several classroom buildings that will be available to users of the expanded Iron Range OHVRA. Dates of operation, periods of reduced schedules and trail closure during deer hunting season, spring thaw, and periods of heavy precipitation events will be applied similarly to both sites. However, deer hunting is not allowed on the Gilbert Site but will be allowed on the Virginia Expansion area, pursuant to Minnesota Laws 2000, Chapter 393.

Riders will enter the joint facility via the Contact Station at Gilbert, where vehicle registrations are checked and are subject to sound testing. Only registered vehicles that are compliant with sound regulations and possess the required safety equipment, mufflers, and spark arrestors will be admitted to the recreation area. Trail conditions will be monitored by MDNR staff and damaged sections will be routinely repaired as problem areas are identified. Trail ambassadors would assist staff in monitoring the trail conditions, identifying invasive species, and providing first aid. Legislative appropriations for the Iron Range OHVRA – Gilbert site has provided additional funds for the monitoring and enforcement at the recreation area. Joint MDNR and local police patrols have been conducted for the Gilbert site and, with special appropriation funds, enhanced monitoring would continue in and around the Iron Range OHVRA.

b. Land Cover

Environmental effects of the project related to land cover were discussed in the EAW under Item No. 9 and Item No. 10. Open pit mining operations that were active on the Laurentian Divide until the mid-1980's resulted in the removal and disposal of large quantities of overburden and waste rock within the Virginia site. Multiple layers of imported stockpile materials were deposited in a series of linear embankments. Of the 2,704 ac. project area, twenty-nine percent (784 ac.) is composed of mined land and the remaining seventy-one percent (1920 ac.) supports mostly natural vegetation communities.

Uplands composed of grasslands, shrublands, and woodlands makeup seventy percent of the project area. Aspen-birch woodland covers a majority of the site and jack pine/red pine covers a minor portion of the area. Lowland or wetland vegetative covers nineteen percent of the site. Most mine lands have become revegetated since mining activities were terminated. Therefore the disturbance categories of Unvegetated mine lands, roads, and trails and open water cover only eleven percent of the project area.

Under a full development scenario, the proposed project will result in a 75 mile-ten-foot wide disturbance corridor estimated to be 91 acres in size. It is estimated that brush/grassland cover would decline by 73 acres and woodland cover, by 18 acres. Although core trails will be wider than ten feet, most trail construction will not exceed nine feet. The calculation of the disturbance zone presumes that construction corridors are essentially 'undisturbed,' which is often not the case for the core trail segments. The unmined portion of the Virginia site has been disturbed somewhat as a result of road or trail building, informal public use, and mineral exploration.

c. Habitat Fragmentation

Environmental effects of the project relating to habitat fragmentation were discussed in the EAW under Item No. 11. The system of trails will cause some habitat fragmentation on the Virginia site. Trail bed grading and shaping will be required along most new trail segments, and along portions of some existing corridors. Forest canopy alteration will only occur along the new trail segments, where vegetation will be cleared to a height of about 10-feet for rider safety.

Habitat fragmentation will be minimized by: 1) using primarily existing corridors, 2) maintaining narrow corridors, and 3) limiting disturbances along corridors used for new trail construction. The overhead forest canopy will be retained where possible and trail alignments will be altered to avoid damaging large trees or fragmenting the higher quality forest stands. Other avoidance and mitigation steps to limit environmental effects on area wildlife include: avoiding wetlands and observing appropriate construction setbacks from surface waters; routing trails around (rather than through) contiguous habitat types; and limiting public access to nesting sites, key habitats, or critical habitat features. Mining

impact areas are preferred for trail development because lands of this nature have a lower value for wildlife.

d. Invasive Species

Environmental effects of the project related to invasive species were discussed in the EAW under Item No. 11. Construction of the road and trail network will expose mineral soils over approximately 91 acres of the Virginia site. Exposed soils create a suitable medium for invasive species to become established. The use of fill material from borrow pits can also create opportunities for invasive species to become established in new areas. Trail riders can also spread invasive plants.

The presence of invasive species will be identified in the construction zone once trail alignments are known. Measures to prevent the spread of the invasive species during construction will include: 1) working in non-infested areas first before moving to infested areas; 2) thoroughly cleaning equipment after working in infested areas; and 3) revegetating disturbed areas with weed free seed mixes soon after construction is completed in an area.

The spread of invasive weeds from borrow pit areas will be avoided by removing organic soil layers prior to excavating fill materials. Borrow pits will be situated as close to work areas as possible. Any material (top soil, gravel, seed) brought to the site from an outside source will be certified weed free.

The trail system will be closely monitored for invasive species during the first year after construction and periodically thereafter, according to established MDNR standards and protocols, as defined in Operational Orders 59, *Pesticides and Pest Control*, and 113, *Invasive Species*. These guidelines contain procedures specific to trail development and operation that are designed to "prevent or limit the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive species" and to "implement site-level management" for their control. When infestations are identified, controls will be applied to eradicate the population and to prevent their spread to uninfested areas. Keeping riders on designated trails limits the potential of transporting invasive species to uninfested woodlands. An equipment cleaning area is already established at the park entry so that seeds, dirt, and vegetative material can be removed from vehicles. Information on invasive species identification and prevention will be provided to park users.

e. Wildlife including Species in Greatest Conservation Need

Environmental effects of the project related to wildlife were discussed in the EAW under Item No. 11a. Wildlife species likely to inhabit the site are similar to those found in comparable upland habitats and forested wetlands throughout the Mixed Laurentian Forest Province of northeastern Minnesota. Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) are included among wildlife species that could potentially be affected. The SGCNs are defined as animals whose populations are rare, declining, or vulnerable to

decline and are below levels desirable to ensure their long-term health and stability. The Mesabi Iron Range is likely to have a somewhat diminished presence of wildlife and SGCNs due to a wide range of developments associated to the mining industry.

Trail construction will reduce the quality of wildlife habitats found within the Virginia site. Game and non-game species will be subject to disturbances caused by the additional human activity and noise associated with OHV use. Noise from the operation of OHVs will be generated collectively when ridden in groups or individually when operated alone. If ridership increases by fifty percent, as projected, there would be approximately 38 to 68 riders daily, on average. Based on the projected rate, the average distribution of machines would range from 60 to 100 acres per user, as each machine is a potential noise source. If riders choose to ride in groups of two on average, the noise distribution would be 120 to 200 acres per noise source. On heavily used days, projected at 100 riders per day, noise distribution would be 40 acres per rider, when fully dispersed across the project site.

Given the area's long history of forestry, mining, and landfills, most of the common species present in the project area are likely more tolerant of disturbance and less affected by a project of this size and character at the site- or population-levels. For other species inhabiting the project area, displacement may occur and some mortality could be expected from intra-species competition or loss of habitat. However, most of the animals would likely adjust their habits to avoid project developments and associated OHV traffic. The distribution of noise sources indicates that there will be fair opportunities for wildlife to escape areas where riders and machines are active, given that large areas of the Virginia site are not proposed for development, including wetlands, shorelands or buffer zones. Fair-sized undeveloped areas are found on the southwestern side, 2) within the buffer areas and private inholdings, 3) along a broad wetland zone of the Pike River, and 4) in vegetated zones along the boundary.

Key habitats, considered important to conserving SGCN species populations, have been defined for the Nashwauk Uplands. Less than ten percent of the Virginia site has key habitats that are important to SGCNs. These habitats include jack pine woodlands, upland deciduous mixed hardwood-pine forest, and stream habitats. Trail construction in or near these habitats will be minimized and any trails crossing these habitat types will be sited and designed to maintain the integrity of the key habitats. Area Management Team wildlife and fisheries members have guided development and operations of this facility since its inception and will continue to consult and advise facility managers and the standing Iron Range OHVRA Citizen's Advisory Committee on natural resource issues.

f. Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Species

Environmental effects of the project related to endangered, threatened and sensitive species were discussed in the EAW under Item No. 11b. The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) review indicated that several rare species are known or have been known to occur proximate to the Virginia site. Surveys were conducted to identify

rare plants present on the project area. No state or federally protected plants were identified to occur on the Virginia site. Additional effort was made to evaluate the Virginia site for the presence of rare plants because the pale moonwort grape-fern, a state-listed endangered plant, which grows on substrates of former tailings basins, was found during the environmental review of the Iron Range OHVRA - Gilbert site. In 1998 an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared for the Gilbert site to describe and mitigate for environmental effects of the Gilbert site project on the rare plant.

The Peregrine Falcon, listed threatened by the State of Minnesota, was previously identified to use the Rouchleau Mine Cliffs near the Virginia site. A nest site in this area was last observed in 1992. Peregrine Falcons are no longer thought to inhabit the area. Although a portion of the project area contains mature forests typically used for foraging and nesting by Red-shouldered Hawks, the habitat appears to be marginal for Red-shouldered Hawks. Only limited tracts of intact forest habitats are present in the project area. As additional detriment to the Red-shouldered Hawk, numerous small and large developments are located in proximity to the forested habitats. With little clearing of mature trees, the project should have minimal effect on the Red-shouldered Hawk habitat.

The Canada lynx, a federally-listed threatened species, has been documented to use nearby habitats similar to those found on the project area. Approximately one-fourth of the sightings reported to MDNR since 2000 were located in St. Louis County. Given the large size of the lynx's home range, potentially the lynx could be using suitable habitat on the Virginia site. Lynx are generally tolerant of human activity, including mechanized activities, such as snowmobiling and logging. Although mining areas on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range, were specifically excluded from the recent federal Critical Habitat Listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the MDNR is committed to maintaining a diverse forested landscape on the Virginia site that is consistent with Canada lynx requirements. Should the Canada lynx or any other endangered, threatened or special concern species be identified during project planning, design, construction, or operation, appropriate avoidance and disturbance minimization steps would be taken.

g. Erosion and Sedimentation

Erosion and sedimentation were described in the EAW under Item No. 12, Item No. 16 and Item No. 17. During the construction of the roads and trail system, approximately 150,000 cubic yards of substrates will be disturbed/moved along an estimated 10-foot wide, 75-mile corridor. Semi-impervious surfaces will be increased by 91 acres, which is about four percent of the project area. The relatively small amount of surface disturbance would be widely dispersed across the site. The construction activities would cause a loss of vegetative cover along new corridors and the treadway would remain exposed to weathering throughout the life of the recreation area. Accelerated rates of soil erosion can result from improper trail design, especially if soils are poorly suited for trail construction. Treadway surfaces that experience soil displacement from tread action, compaction, and rutting are prone to erode and contribute sediments to nearby water sources.

Soil characteristics help predict the suitability of a landscape for trail development. Soil erodibility in the construction zones is referred to as the soil's k factor, which represents both its susceptibility of soil erosion and rate of runoff. Soils of the project's construction area have moderate k values and are considered moderately susceptible to detachment and therefore, could produce moderate runoff, if soils are left exposed and mitigation measures are not applied. Slope is another key soil characteristic that helps predict erodibility. Fifteen percent of the project area has gentle to moderate slopes (five- to fifteen percent) and one percent of the project area has strong slopes (fifteen- to thirty percent). The remainder of the site has representative slopes of less than five percent. On-site investigations may be necessary to validate some soil interpretations and confirm soil limitations at targeted sites.

NRCS erosion hazard ratings identify limitations that might affect the development or long-term performance of unsurfaced forest roads or trails. The ratings are based upon soil erosion factors, slope, and content of rock fragments. Thirty-five percent of the project area is classified as moderately suitable for road construction due to one or more specified limitations of low strength, stickiness, slope, and stoniness. Thirty-six percent is classified as poorly suited because the limitations listed above are more severe. Much of the poorly suited soils are excluded from the development areas because they make up the bulk of the wetland and shoreland areas that would be generally excluded from trail development. Areas rated wet, unstable or highly erosive will be avoided, including some unstable slopes of mine stockpiles. NRCS rutting hazard ratings for the site suggest that 40 percent of the project area contains soil types that can pose a 'severe rutting hazard.' A 'severe' rating indicates that ruts form readily as a result of equipment operation. Excluding wetland and shoreland zones, it is likely that 440 acres of those exhibiting a severe rutting hazard would be considered for use in placement of trails.

Best management practices (BMPs) and appropriate trail designs will be employed to ensure that trails can sustain projected visitor usage, especially along moderate or steep slopes (greater than 5 percent) and areas prone to rutting. The MDNR's *Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines* (MDNR 2006) provides guidance for building sustainable trails across challenging slopes, soils, or sub-soil conditions, and in areas with increased rutting/erosion hazards. During the design phase of the project problematic areas will be identified and remedies will be prescribed into the design plans. Off-site soil loss beyond naturally occurring levels will not be tolerated. A wide variety of trail construction practices will be used to mitigate for the potential of rutting, erosion, and sedimentation.

The core trail system and vehicle-specified networks will be aligned to segregate potential erosion hazards away from aquatic resources by avoiding waterways, wetlands and shoreland zones. During the construction phase, the MDNR will minimize runoff and its effects on aquatic resources by employing a variety of measures that: 1) minimize erosion of road/trail surface materials; 2) disperse runoff away from ditches and surface waters; 3) reduce the erosive energy of road/trail drainage; 4) minimize amount of

sediment carried in runoff toward lowlands; and 5) minimize surface damage and rutting. Typical mitigation measures that would be employed include the following:

1) Although mechanical action will be required along both new and existing corridors, the areal extent and depth of excavation will be kept to a minimum. MDNR will partition the trail's watershed to prevent flows from accumulating along shoulders and ditches by raising treadway elevation and/or installing rolling tread dips and crowned, crested or out-sloped treadways. Maintaining an outsloped treadway, a crowned trail cross-section, and good surface drainage will protect against soil compaction, rutting, stormwater run-off, and erosion. The corridors will be configured to control erosion in hilly areas by incorporating a variety of trail design improvements, such as grade dips, grade reversals, rolling dips, and switchbacks, into the alignment.

2) Runoff will be dispersed along the corridors by constructing water bars or intercept ditches that re-direct water into vegetated areas. In drainage areas that accumulate surface water flow, energy dissipaters will be employed to protect the trail and ditches from erosion. Such measures may include rock aprons, armored ditches, or check dams. A few construction areas may require the installation of sediment catchment-basins to minimize amount of sediment carried in runoff. Temporary erosion control measures to be implemented in the construction zone include such activities as restricting overland flow with hay bales, check dams, and silt fences. Surface drainage along runoff collection points and at ephemeral drainage crossings will be maintained or improved (when retrofitting old trail crossings). To insure proper flow, culverts will be installed or modified, if existing structures are unsatisfactory.

3) Erosion of road/trail surface materials will be controlled by spreading gravel or other suitable aggregate material on the treadway. In some instances, geotextile construction fabric or geocells (structural stabilizer blocks) will be applied to unstable, erosive or rutted areas to stabilize and elevate the trail's treadway. Gravel or other aggregates enhance the durability of the treadway by hardening its surface. To meet the specified trail alignment and drainage requirements, irregularities in the treadway will be rectified by fill materials rather than dozer cuts. All hardening techniques that provide "fill" materials to the treadway would be consistent with regulatory and permitting requirements.

4) Treadway width for the vehicle-specified trails will be kept as narrow as practical. Mulch and/or a suitable weed free seed mix beneficial to wildlife will be applied to the exposed soils of non-trail areas, such as cut banks and trail ditches. The potential for erosion will decrease markedly as exposed slopes, cut and fills and road shoulders become revegetated and stabilize. The additional cover will reduce the impervious surfaces to the treadway area. Trail segments situated on soils with additional limitations or those that experience elevated traffic levels may require additional engineering measures to improve their stability.

5) Erosion and stream sedimentation will also be mitigated by establishing construction setbacks in riparian areas, along steep slopes near wetlands, or in unstable soils. Water crossings will be avoided whenever possible. Where crossings prove necessary, bridges are preferred to culverts. The proposed setbacks and maintenance of adequate vegetated filter strips will help to isolate/buffer wetlands, shoreland zones and other aquatic resource areas from the construction zone and active use areas.

6) A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed for trail construction as part of coverage under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Construction Stormwater General Permit. The SWPPP will include best management practices for preventing erosion and sedimentation.

7) A good measure to protect the treadway from soil compaction and rutting is to minimize vehicle operations during vulnerable periods by applying seasonal or temporary road and trail closure during wet, unfrozen periods, especially on soils susceptible to rutting or erosion. Temporary trail closures will most likely occur during the spring thaw or following summer rainfall events. Riders will be kept on designated trails by erecting signs, fences and/or physical barriers to limit unauthorized riding. Unauthorized trails or tracks will be closed or obliterated to avoid further damage.

8) After construction is completed, the trail system will be monitored to identify unacceptable deterioration in the treadway and detrimental levels of soil erosion, compaction or rutting. It will be necessary to periodically rehabilitate/reconstruct chronic trouble spots and areas exhibiting excessive erosion or insufficient drainage, such as on areas damaged by snowmelt, rain storms, or traffic. Maintenance grading, trail grooming, and additional fill will be applied to improve the treadway surface strength, slope, and/or drainage.

h. Aquatic Resources including Wetlands

Environmental effects on aquatic water resources were described in the EAW under Item No 11, Item No. 12, and Item No. 17. The potential changes in surface water runoff would result in an increase in sedimentation affecting aquatic resources of the project area. Wetland disturbances are anticipated. The eastern portion of the Virginia site occurs in the headwaters of the Pike River, which belongs to the Lake Vermilion watershed. Its western side belongs to the Lake Superior watershed; these surface waters flow into reclaimed mine pits (Mesabi Mt. Pit Pond), thence southward into the East Two Rivers River, a tributary of the St. Louis River. Potentially, Manganika Lake could receive waters from a small portion of the Virginia site. Manganika Lake is included on the 2008 MPCA List of Impaired Waters (per Sect. 303(d) of the Clean Waters Act) due to its having a heightened level of nutrient eutrophication. Potential sediment generated from the project reaching the lake is considered to be negligible. The Pike River and Lake Vermilion were both listed as impaired in 1998 due to elevated levels of mercury in

fish tissue. Considering that nearly all of the mercury reaching Minnesota's surface waters is from atmospheric deposition, there is no likelihood that the proposed project would increase mercury levels in these waters. The wetlands that occur on the site have been identified as shallow marsh, deep marsh, open water, shrub swamp, and wooded swamp. According to National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) results, marsh/open water habitats makeup about twenty percent of the wetlands on site and shrub/wooded swamp habitats comprise the remaining eighty percent.

The MDNR will design, construct, operate, and maintain OHV trails with the goal of protecting and maintaining water quality and surface hydrology. Every effort will be made to avoid or minimize trail development in areas with wet, unstable or erosive soils. When configuring new trail alignments, streams, wetlands, seepage areas and shoreland zones will be avoided during the design and siting of trail alignments. Hydric soils will be avoided whenever possible during the placement of both the core trail system and the vehicle-specified trail network. The unnamed water basins that were created by mining activities will be protected to similar standards as other public waters found in the project area. The steep, unstable slopes adjacent to the ponds will be avoided. Areas of vehicle-specified trails will be selected from soil units having the fewest limitations and highest ratings for the proposed treatment.

The design and construction of trail segments will meet or exceed local shoreland ordinances. Trail construction will be setback reasonable distances from the Ordinary High Water Level (OHWL) of all surface waters and tributaries, with the exception of public waters, where setback distances will be at least 100 feet wide. Where no feasible placement alternative exists, trails will maintain as sizable a setback distance as possible, and feature enhanced vegetative filters strips. Public water access will be limited to footpaths which will be signed, fenced, gated and/or landscaped to prevent vehicular access. It is anticipated that off-trail riding will not generate noticeable erosion on the Virginia site. There have been only a few encounters of riders venturing off specified trails on the Gilbert site.

All crossings will be designed according to best management practices (BMPs) guidelines and permit specifications. The core trails and vehicle-specified trail system will be designed, located, and constructed in a manner that will not impede the natural stream flow. Only one larger-sized crossing of surface waters is anticipated. Existing roads and trails will be selected for use to develop most of the core trail system. Little new construction or retrofitting will be necessary along many of the existing road or trail segments that already have bridges or culverts in-place. If these drainage crossings and culverts are insufficient or contribute sedimentation, the crossing structures will be repaired or replaced. Vehicle-specified trails will avoid all major crossings but some minor crossings of ephemeral drainages may be unavoidable.

Minor drainage crossings will be constructed using a combination of culverts and rock rip rap installed to protect the beds and banks from wheeled-traffic, while providing for a hardened trail surface. All culvert placements will be appropriately sized and installed

during dry periods. Upstream and downstream culvert ends will be protected with rock and rip rap material.

The proposed development would include the construction of a forest road crossing of the Pike River along an abandoned east-west road corridor in the Northeast Quarter of Section 14. The bridge crossing the Pike River at this location no longer exists and the 1,100 foot-pathway through wetlands is overgrown with wetland scrub-shrub vegetation. The Pike River crossing would require the construction of a new bridge and fill would be necessary along the wetland segment. Guidelines for construction of road crossings are provided in the 2006 MDNR report, *Best practices for meeting MDNR General Public Waters Work Permit (GP 2004-001).* Efforts to minimize the impact of the Pike River crossing would include the following:

- Obtain Public Water Work Permit and implement mitigation procedures incorporated into the permit;
- Collaborate with hydrologists trained in stream geomorphology to help design the crossing feature to minimize the potential for altering stream flow patterns;
- Use materials or design features that minimize the area of wetland that would be affected and the amount of fill material necessary for construction;
- Use floating design features, if possible, to allow water flow over or under during high flows;
- Construct a sufficiently-sized bridge with a long span to accommodate natural flows; and
- If culverts are used on minor side channels, they should be appropriately sized and placed to maintain stream regimen.

Beaver dams are an integral part of the aquatic system of the Pike River on the Virginia site. Seven or eight beaver dams are sequentially positioned between the gravel mine and the proposed crossing. Several more are found below (north of) the proposed crossing. Beaver activity, resulting in extensive ponding of water, is expected to be advantageous to the control of sedimentation on the Pike River headwaters. The beaver dams and associated wetlands help to capture sediments and stabilize substrates in this headwaters system. The beaver dams will not be affected by project developments except at the proposed crossing. However, if the integrity of the roadway crossing is threatened, the potential hazards from beaver activity would need to be addressed.

Wetland mitigation sequencing steps, i.e., delineation, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation will be followed during all phases of project development. Development of the trail system will comply with provisions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' regulatory authority of the Clean Water Act (under General Permit or Letter of Permission Evaluation), Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA 1991), and the Governor's Executive Order (No. 91-3) on no net loss of wetlands. As defined by WCA rules, wetland delineation along proposed trail segments will be in concurrence or authority of the applicable LGU (Cities of Gilbert or Virginia), which have jurisdiction

over the project site, or the MDNR, which owns a large portion of the project site. Wetland mitigation will be in place and in-kind, whenever possible. Restoration of previously degraded wetlands will be given consideration.

The project will comply with terms of the General Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities, which is issued by MPCA as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. This permit requires a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that describes erosion prevention and sediment control practices that will be implemented. Permit application materials will include detailed plans that specify planned design and construction practices for the project area.

i. Traffic and Vehicle Related Emissions

Traffic and emission related environmental effects were described in the EAW under Item No. 21 and Item No. 22. Visitor traffic is expected to increase at Iron Range OHVRA. The typical number of visitors using the existing Iron Range OHVRA – Gilbert facility during the summer ranges from 25-45 visitors per day. The July-September riding season, which is the period with the highest numbers of visitors, averages approximately 700-1,300 visitors monthly. With the Virginia expansion, MDNR expects visitation to increase by approximately 50 percent over current daily, weekly and yearly visitor numbers. This equates to projected visitation of an average of 38-68 visitors/day and approximately 15,000 visitors annually, once the expansion project is completed and operational. The expected peak visitation will increase to 150 per day and approximately 1,050 – 1,950 visitors monthly.

Existing public access roads and parking/overflow parking areas at the Gilbert site, which has a capacity for 40 vehicles and 70 vehicle-with-trailers, will easily accommodate the additional traffic. No local or regional transportation system improvements will be required to handle this projected increase in visitor traffic. A traffic impact study is not necessary for developments that do not generate significant traffic volumes, such as the proposed project.

Vehicle exhaust emissions will increase during both construction and facility operations. Construction-related vehicle emissions will be minor and temporary in nature, arising from the use of heavy equipment. Gasoline and diesel fuel exhaust emissions, including a mix of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, reactive organic gases, sulfur dioxide, and suspended particulate matter will contribute to the area's ambient pollutant levels and could incrementally increase associated health risks.

Operation of HLVs, used to access and manage the site, and OHVs (ATVs, OHMs, ORVs) by park users will result in long-term emissions generated on-site. Emissions from these sources, currently considered to be low, are estimated to increase by fifty percent over current levels. Off-highway Vehicles (OHVs) emit pollutants that can linger, especially at intersections or where vehicles congregate. Local climatic conditions will, however, act to dissipate, dilute, and control concentrations of noxious vehicle

emissions. Winds are more pronounced in open areas, atop mine stockpiles, and in other upland areas where most road/trails will be located. Although OHV tailpipe emissions may be objectionable to some, they are unlikely to exceed state or federal air quality standards. The improvement of fuel efficiency standards of OHVs and HLV will help to reduce the *percapita* emissions resulting from this recreational development.

j. Release of Toxic Substances

This item was addressed in the EAW under Item No. 24. No solid wastes or hazardous wastes will be generated by the proposed project. However, combustion fuels, antifreeze, and hydraulic oils will be used on-site during construction, maintenance, and operation of the trail and construction activity may require the use of temporary portable fuel tanks. Spills from refueling and accidents, such as vehicle roll-overs, equipment breakage, or hydraulic hose ruptures are expected to be rare. Vehicles and hazardous fluids used in the construction and operation of the recreation area will be managed according to standard agency practices and procedures. All construction and maintenance-related refueling will occur at locations setback from streams, wetlands, highly porous soils, and steep slopes. Operators will be made aware of the environmental effects of spills and ways to prevent them. Staff working with hazardous materials on-site will be trained and certified in proper handling procedures. If a spill does occur, it would be reported to the Minnesota Duty Officer and the Regional MDNR representatives. The Minnesota Duty Officer Program provides assistance and state guidelines for reporting petroleum spills and how to properly contain and clean the contaminated area.

k. Noise - Nearby Human Receptors

This item was addressed in the EAW under Item No. 24. Noise will be generated during trail construction and facility operation. Construction-related noise will be temporary and occur only during daylight hours. As visitation increases, a fifty percent increase in noise propagation can be expected.

With the assistance of MPCA staff, MDNR staff conducted repeated ambient testing at occupied dwellings located adjacent to the Gilbert facility. The testing has shown that MPCA Noise Standards can be met on the Iron Range OHVRA regardless of season, wind conditions, or vehicle clustering. Despite the remoteness of the expansion area, some neighbors may still characterize the ATV/OHM engine sound as “annoying,” especially considering the low ambient noise levels typical for the area. Since operations of the active Iron Range OHVRA - Gilbert site began in 2002, no noise complaints have been submitted to local authorities, despite the close proximity of several homes and businesses. The facility at Gilbert has achieved a voluntary 10-15 dB(A) reduction from noise levels allowed under state standards. This has been achieved through the use of setbacks, berms and buffers; the implementation of various trail design techniques that help to muffle noise; and the establishment of a mix of vehicle use and traffic flow restrictions. The reduced noise standard will not be necessary in the proposed Virginia Expansion site due to its lack of nearby sensitive noise receptors, its remote location, and

its industrial land-use classification. Opportunities to control noise exposure will be incorporated into the design of the trail system for the Virginia site. While acknowledging the potential for annoyance, the MDNR does not believe anticipated noise levels will, under any circumstance, constitute a 'nuisance' under state law [See *Minnesota Rules Chapter 7030*]. MPCA, acting in concert with MDNR and local governmental units, is charged with enforcing State Noise Standards at this site. Although the additional OHV traffic and noise will produce increased noise levels over current conditions, over the longer term, OHV noise, in the aggregate, is expected to decline with the advent of newer, quieter machines.

Vehicles will generally be dispersed throughout the Iron Range OHVRA but some concentrations of vehicles can be expected. The Virginia site is substantially more remote and has fewer close neighbors than the existing Iron Range OHVRA - Gilbert site. Noise propagation is mitigated by foliage and dense understory vegetation during the summer months and snow during the fall and winter. The hilly landscape, remoteness and wind patterns will help attenuate and 'muffle' vehicle generated noise. Under normal operating conditions, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Daytime Ambient Noise Standards will not be exceeded by park visitors. Vehicles entering the facility are routinely tested and certified to ensure that they have the required noise suppression equipment installed on their vehicles and meet the established state standards for vehicle noise emissions. Registered vehicles that possess the required safety equipment, mufflers and spark arrestors are admitted, if they comply with applicable sound regulations.

Recreational vehicle traffic in and around the project area will, to some extent, disturb the solitude of the four private properties surrounded by the planned expansion of the Iron Range OHVRA at Virginia. Noise, traffic, and exposures to vehicle exhaust emissions will increase for the temporary occupants of these properties. Discussions with property owners have resulted in activity setbacks and sound and sight buffers around each of the four properties. The provisions should provide landowners with a degree of privacy, and protection from trespass or vandalism by park visitors. Conditions near private lands will be regularly monitored and actions will be taken, should problems or complaints surface, or proposed measure prove inadequate.

l. Odors and Dust

This topic was addressed in the EAW under Item No. 24. Construction- and maintenance-related odors and dust produced during the life of the project will be minor and temporary. Operational emissions will vary in intensity as a function of the amount of OHV traffic generated along established trails. Operation of OHV's during dry conditions on graveled or natural surface trails will generate dust hazards. Conditions which expose visitors to higher levels of dust and odors are anticipated to be short term and the hazards will dissipate quickly under typical ambient climate and wind conditions. Dust generated during dry, windy conditions can be troublesome for some visitors. However, these conditions are expected to be localized, limited to heavily traveled road and trail surfaces and limited to a narrow zones along the trails. Little or no off-site

transport of fugitive dust is anticipated. User complaints of dusty conditions will be addressed and potentially, some segments could be rectified with additional gravel or closed to users until conditions improve.

m. **Land Use Plans, Regulations, and Management**

This topic was addressed in the EAW in Item No. 6, Item No. 9, and Item No. 27, and Item No. 29. The Virginia site is contained within the city limits of the Cities of Virginia and Gilbert. Virginia's business and residential districts are located more than one-half mile from the project area; Gilbert residential areas extend from the southern boundary of the project site southeastward. The land-use districts in eastern Virginia include mostly mining and open space categories of land use, but a mix of other land-use classifications, including public property, industrial, and residential, are also defined. Land-use classifications in the portion of the site within the city limits of the City of Gilbert include a 'public, recreation, and forest reserve' district and mining and industrial activity classifications. Development of the Iron Range OHVRA expansion will require no variance in zoning ordinances. Public recreation is a 'permitted use' in each land-use districts described for the area.

The western third of the Virginia site lies over an iron bearing formation, geologically referred to as the Virginia Horn, which is part of the Mesabi Iron Range. The area has experienced extensive mining activity, including both underground and open pit mines. The site is bordered on the west by the inactive Missabe Mountain, Minnewas, Sauntry and Rouchleau open mine pits operations. United Taconite mine is operating just southwest of the site. Within the next 10-15 years, United Taconite plans on moving its mining activities into the southwestern quadrant of the project area, potentially requiring the need to reroute Highway 53. The development would restrict OHV activities within that part of the Virginia site for an extended period. OHV activities would be adjusted as the new operation comes on-line. The Arcelor Mittal Minorca Pit and Mine Processing Plant are in proximity to the Virginia site on its northwestern border. Active mining operations and the haul road of the Arcelor Mittal Mining Company's Laurentian Mine flank the eastern and northern borders of the Virginia site. Planners are anticipating that an active gravel mine found within the northwestern part of the Virginia site could eventually be reclaimed for use as an area for developing additional OHV trails.

Despite its mining history, this site still contains significant mineral reserves. The eastern portion of the Virginia site contains mineral reserve lands of an unmined landscape. As stipulated in authorizing legislation, mining can occur in conjunction with the proposed recreational developments. Consequently, limited development and very little infrastructure are proposed. The taconite and other mineral reserves will remain available for future mining without encumbrance from proposed policy or developments of the Iron Range OHVRA.

The St. Louis County Maintenance Facility, State Highway 135, and a small gravel mine are located south of the Virginia site. The active St. Louis County's Regional Landfill

facility is found centrally located in proximity to the Virginia site; its haul road crosses the site. The MDNR has no plans for using the project area situated to the west of the haul road, an area that is considered important to the City of Virginia's drinking water supply. The closed East Mesabi Sanitary Disposal site, which has been sealed and is presently monitored through test wells by MPCA, is located near the project boundary. Riders will be kept out of active and closed landfills by fences constructed to specifications acceptable to MPCA. Discussions are underway with MPCA to allow for some limited OHV use of approximately 150 additional acres in the west half of Section 15. Usage of areas peripheral to the dump site and proximal to the site boundary is being sought for incorporation into the recreation area.

The Iron Range OHVRA - Gilbert Site serves as a hub for various local and regional recreational trails. Trails at the Virginia Site will be linked to existing trails at the Gilbert Site via an off-road trail under Highway 135. Several OHV and snowmobile GIA trail connections already exist or are planned. The paved multi-use Mesabi Trail also winds through both the Virginia and Gilbert portions of the Iron Range OHVRA. Camping is available at a city-owned park located on Lake Ore-be-Gone in the City of Gilbert. Officials of the Cities of Gilbert and Virginia are interested in promoting compatible and complementary motorized/non-motorized recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the Virginia site. The Virginia expansion project will be compatible with recreational land uses and plans for area.

Four non-industrial private properties totaling 90-acres are located within the site's statutory boundary. All are seasonal recreational properties; only two have buildings. Screening and fencing will be provided, where necessary to ensure that trespass or disturbance to these private property owners is avoided. The MDNR is unaware of any liquid or natural gas pipelines, abandoned storage tanks, or any other potential environmental hazards, located within the primary project area.

The MDNR will manage this area within the administrative and policy constructs established in state law and rule for State Recreation Areas (SRAs). SRA's are actively managed to provide a range of goods and services, and can host a mix of commercial, industrial and resource management activities, including timber harvest, mining, tree planting, and both motorized and non-motorized forms of outdoor recreation.

The proposed project is compatible with goals and objectives of the Iron Range OHVRA Master Plan. The Master Plan guides the development, operations and management of this State Recreation Area. Goals of the plan are to provide diverse and challenging opportunities that are safe and enjoyable for OHV riders in an environmentally responsible manner and conserve and protect sensitive natural and cultural resources potentially affected by the proposed development. With the addition of the Virginia site to the SRA, the Iron Range OHVRA master plan will be updated.

n. Archeological, Historical, and Architectural Resources

This topic was addressed in the EAW under Item No. 25. The cultural resources database search conducted by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) did not identify any historical or architectural features in the Virginia Expansion site. Several historical properties located within one mile of the project area would not be affected by the proposed project.

The MDNR requires archaeological and historical cultural resource investigations and field surveys, if necessary, for all land management projects proposed or funded by the department to assess the potential effects of these projects on sites of architectural, historical or archaeological significance and to assure that the MDNR is in compliance with state and federal laws. Once the corridors have been sited, appropriate archeological authorities will be contacted to conduct an archaeological assessment of the construction zone. MDNR will consult with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Office of the Minnesota State Archaeologist (OSA) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), who would assist in determining the need for additional field surveys and mitigation, should any archeological resources be identified.

o. Cumulative Environmental Effects

The potential cumulative effects related to this project would be associated with environmental effects from other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects that have the same or similar effects in a similar temporal or spatial scale as the proposed project. As described in the EAW under Item No. 6, Item No 9, Item No. 27 and Item No. 29, developments in proximity to the Virginia site have several similar environmental effects as those identified for the proposed Virginia Expansion site.

Noise, surface water runoff, and vegetative cover type changes are the environmental effects of the mining, waste disposal, and other industrial operations that could combine with environmental effects of the proposed expansion of the Iron Range OHVRA. For each of these environmental effects the relative contribution from the proposed Iron Range OHVRA project is small, dispersed, and would likely be immeasurable compared to the effects from the nearby industrial operations.

Habitat fragmentation has occurred along the Mesabi Iron Range due to multiple past and present mining operations and associated developments located along a geologic feature trending in a northeast-southwest direction through St. Louis and Itasca Counties. The iron bearing rock transects the Virginia Expansion site and continues many miles on either side of the project area. The mining operations straddling the formation, associated roads, and adjacent communities create a barrier to north-south wildlife travel routes. Although the proposed Virginia Expansion site is also located along this linear feature, it will not create a barrier to north-south wildlife movements because much of the site will maintain suitable wildlife habitat. Barriers as used along public highways are proposed to prevent ingress and egress along the recreation area boundary. The barriers bar

vehicular traffic from crossing the project boundary but allow wildlife free passage through the area.

Gravel mining and other developments along the Highway 135 corridor just south of the project area (upstream of the proposed core trail crossing) could increase sedimentation in the Pike River headwaters in addition to that produced by proposed trail developments and stream crossings on the Virginia site. Natural and artificial controls on stream flow are in place along this portion of the stream. For example, a pond has been established just south of the Mesabi Trail at the gravel mine and beaver structures and activities help to inhibit Pike River flow. Beaver activity, which has resulted in extensive ponding of water along the stream, is expected to be advantageous to the control of sedimentation on the Pike River headwaters. The beaver dams and associated wetlands help to capture sediments and stabilize substrates in this headwaters system. Proposed mitigation measures to be implemented on the Virginia site include proper aquatic resource setbacks, appropriately designed crossings, and trail erosion control measures, as defined in previous sections. The resulting increase in sedimentation on the Pike River from the proposed development is expected to be relatively minor.

Noise, dust, exhaust fumes, additional surface water runoff, and vegetative cover type changes are environmental effects also related to urban and mining land developments, as identified under the land use section in this Record of Decision. The area's transportation system includes many established road, highway and railroad corridors proximal to the Virginia site. These corridors are constantly being maintained, upgraded, or expanded. Increasing the number of travel corridors as proposed at the Virginia site would combine with the environmental effects of the other trail and vehicular corridors in the area. Usage and management of U.S. Highway 53, State Highway 135, and the array of secondary routes and city streets contribute to environmental effects on the area's resources. The recreational vehicle traffic in and around the Quad Cities Area (Virginia, Eveleth, Gilbert and Mountain Iron) of St. Louis County will increase marginally with the expansion of the Iron Range OHVRA - Virginia site. Noise, traffic, and vehicle exhaust emissions would increase accordingly. The additional increment of disturbance associated to OHV use is not anticipated to be problematic or deleterious, when considered on an area-wide scale.

Several trails are developed or being planned in proximity to the Virginia site. The Moose GIA Trail is a planned seven-mile ATV/Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) Trail that will soon connect the City of Biwabik to the Iron Range OHVRA at Gilbert. The Mesabi Mountain GIA Trail entails development of a 4.1-mile trail designed for use by registered Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) (four-wheel drive trucks and jeeps only). The proposed trail will begin just east of the Mesabi Range Community and Technical College in Eveleth and travel northeastward through public and private lands. The trail's proximity to the Iron Range OHVRA will provide park visitors with an additional local riding opportunity. The Genoa ATV / OHM Trail is a 3.5 mile, gravel-surfaced trail that provides a direct connection from the City of Eveleth to the City of Gilbert, starting at the Highway 53 and Highway 37 intersection in Eveleth and ending at the Sherwood Forest

Campground in Gilbert. It also serves as a connection between the Iron Range OHVRA and hotels and restaurants in the City of Eveleth. The Mesabi Trail is a non-motorized paved hike/bike trail that connects many communities in the region, including Gilbert and Virginia, where it winds through both the present Iron Range OHVRA and along the proposed Virginia site. Paving a 3.5 mile link of the Mesabi Trail between McKinley and Biwabik is proposed in the summer of 2010.

The system of core trails developed in the project area may provide additional access to the area for other types of outdoor recreation and land uses. Access to fishing areas, game ranges, mineral exploration, and forest stands could result in additional traffic and contribute some additional effect on the landscape, including timber harvesting or stand improvements.

18. The following permits and approvals are needed for the project:

Unit of Government	Type of Application	Status
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System/State Discharge System Permits – Construction Stormwater "General" Permit Activities (incl. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan)	To be submitted
	Clean Water Act, Section 401 Water Quality Certification	To be submitted
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act, Section 404 Permit	To be submitted
MDNR	Permit to Work in Public Waters	To be submitted
	Wetland Conservation Act Approval	To be submitted
State Historic Preservation Office	Historical Clearance Section 106 MOA	To be submitted, if needed
Cities of Gilbert and/or Virginia	Wetland Conservation Act Approval	To be submitted
	Land Use Zoning Review and Approval	To be submitted

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Minnesota Environmental Review Program Rules, *Minnesota Rules*, part 4410.1700, subparts 6 and 7 set forth the following standards and criteria, to which the effects of a project are to be compared, to determine whether it has the potential for significant environmental effects.

   In deciding whether a project has the potential for significant environmental effects, the following factors shall be considered:

a. *type, extent, and reversibility of environmental effects;*
b. *cumulative potential effects of related or anticipated future projects;*
c. *extent to which the environmental effects are subject to mitigation by on-going regulatory authority; and*
d. *the extent to which environmental effects can be anticipated and controlled as a result of other environmental studies undertaken by agencies or the project proposer, including other EISs.*

2. *Type, extent, and reversibility of environmental effects*

Based on the Findings of Fact above, the MDNR concludes that the following potential environmental effects, as described and discussed throughout these Findings of Fact, will be limited in extent, temporary, or reversible:

Project Design, Construction, Management, and Maintenance
Land Cover
Habitat Fragmentation
Invasive Species
Wildlife including Species in Greatest Conservation Need
Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Species
Erosion and Sedimentation
Aquatic Resources including Wetlands
Traffic and Vehicle Related Emissions
Release of Toxic Substances
Noise – Nearby Human Receptors
Odors and Dust
Land Use Plans, Regulations, and Management
Archeological, Historical, and Architectural Resources
Cumulative Environmental Effects

3. *Cumulative potential effects of related or anticipated future projects.*

With the addition of the Virginia site to the Iron Range OHVRA – Gilbert site and to the suite of motorized recreation trails in the Quad area, the cumulative potential effects, including erosion, sedimentation, habitat fragmentation, increase of invasive species, noise, dust, global warming emissions and other pollutants, would be proportional to the length of the trail networks and increased user numbers of the Virginia site. The proposed project would increase these environmental effects but the increases would be relatively small in comparison to existing regional and local trails and levels of traffic already experienced in the area. It is estimated that use of the Iron Range OHVRA would increase by fifty percent. The Iron Range region offers recreational vehicle riders more opportunities and more diverse terrain and quality riding experiences than any other area in the State of Minnesota.

The area supports extensive past and present active mining of aggregate resources (sand, gravel and crushed stone) and metals (iron and potentially others). Also proximal to the Virginia site are secondary developments to the mining and other industries in the region, including urban developments, transportation and utility networks, and land fill management. Potential improved access to forest reserves in the area would increase the likelihood of additional timber management and potential harvesting on the Virginia site.

There will be cumulative effects of erosion, sedimentation, noise, habitat fragmentation, and reduction in the quality of wildlife habitats associated with urban lands, utility corridors, operation of mining and other industries, and trail and road transportation corridors. The project's environmental effects are a small portion of the total effects and the small addition does not result in significant cumulative environmental effects.

4. *Extent to which environmental effects are subject to mitigation by on-going public regulatory authority.*

   Based on the information in the EAW and Findings of Fact above, the MDNR has determined that the following environmental effects, as described in Findings 17, are subject to mitigation by ongoing public regulatory authority, including permits approvals, enforcement of regulations or other programs:

   Prohibited noxious weeds (invasive species) must be controlled or eradicated as required in *Minnesota Statutes*, section 18.78. The Noxious Weed Law charges county, city, and township officials to inspect land and compels owners to destroy their noxious weeds.

   Environmental effects on water resources, including construction related effects on fish and wildlife resources, water quality, and soil stability at stream crossings and approaches (erosion, siltation, and sedimentation) (MDNR Public Waters Work Permit; the USCE, Section 404; and MPCA Clean Water Act, Section 401 Certification and Construction Stormwater General Permit, as under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination [General Permit MN R100001]).

   Loss of wetlands (St. Louis County SWCD in compliance with the Wetlands Conservation Act).

   State Noise Standards are enforced by MPCA (*Minnesota Rules* Chapter 7030) in concert with MDNR and local governmental units.

   Archeological, historical and architectural resources are protected under the rules and laws governing the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Office of the Minnesota State Archaeologist (OSA) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), who would assist in determining the nature and scope of recommended studies, environmental effects and need for mitigation.

The MDNR will manage this area within the administrative and policy constructs established in state law and rule for State Recreation Areas (SRAs); with their creation, a master plan is required prior to construction of the new facility (*Minnesota Statutes,* section 86A.09, subd. 1); the document is also made available for public review. Physical development shall enhance and promote the use and enjoyment of the natural recreational resources of the area. Pursuant to *Minnesota Statutes* section 86A.05, subd. 3, scenic, historic, scientific, scarce, or disappearing resources within state recreation areas could be recommended for authorization as historic sites or designated scientific and natural areas, pursuant to *Minnesota Statutes* section 86A.08.

5. *Extent to which environmental effects can be anticipated and controlled as a result of other environmental studies undertaken by public agencies or the project proposer, of other EISs.*

   Environmental effects related to trail design, construction, maintenance, and use of ATV/OHM/ORV trails can be anticipated and controlled as a result of the following studies.

   Hesselbarth, Woody, Brian Vachowski, and Mary A. Davies. 2007. Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook, 2007 Edition. 0723-2806-MTDC. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development Center, Missoula, MT (In cooperation with United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration) 178 p.

   Meadows, D., R. Foltz, and N. Geehan. 2008. Effects of All-Terrain Vehicles on forested lands and grasslands. USDA Forest Service, National Technology and Development Program. Report No. 0823 1811-SDTDC. 110 p.

   MDNR. 2007. Trail planning, design, and development guidelines. MDNR, St. Paul.

   MNDR 1998 (December 31). Facility Design, Development and Management Plan. Master Plan. Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area. 142 pp. + attach.

   Recent Environmental Review Documents Completed by MDNR

   MNDR 2009. UPM Blandin ATV/OHM Trail. Environmental Assessment Worksheet and Record of Decision.

   MNDR 2002. Moosewalk/Mooserun ATV Trail Designation. Environmental Assessment Worksheet and Record of Decision.

   MDNR 1997-1998. Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area Project (Gilbert Site). Environmental Assessment Worksheet, Record of Decision on EAW, Environmental Impact Statement, and EIS Adequacy Determination.

6. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has fulfilled all the procedural requirements of law and rule applicable to determining the need for an environmental impact statement on the proposed Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area project in St. Louis County, Minnesota.

7. Based on considerations of the criteria and factors specified in the Minnesota Environmental Review Program Rules (*Minnesota Rules* part 4410.1700, subpart 6 and 7) to determine whether a project has the potential for significant environmental effects, and on the Findings and Record in this matter, the MDNR determines that the proposed Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects.

ORDER

Based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources determines that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area project.

Any Findings that might properly be termed Conclusions and any Conclusions that might properly be termed Findings are hereby adopted as such.

Dated this 15th day of January, 2010.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Larry R. Kramka
Assistant Commissioner

Attachment A
Public Comments Received
Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area
Record of Decision on Environmental Assessment Worksheet
November 16, 2009 to December 16, 2009

Comment #1: I am totally for the expansion.

Mike Vespa
Duluth, MN
No address provided

Comment #2: I'm writing in support of the Virginia OHVRA. My family and I enjoy taking our Jeep on camping trips and driving it off road at the OHVRA in Gilbert, MN.

My wife, daughter and I make the trip to Gilbert many times throughout the year. Having another destination in the area will make it that much better! I think having two parks will have a very positive impact on the community! I know we spend allot of money up there during the year between, hotels, camping, groceries, fuel and going out to eat. Having two parks will really put the area on the map drawing visitors from out of state! Again, I support the Virginia OHVRA! Thank You,

Matthew Coty
No address provided

Comment #3: I can't begin to describe my excitement for the expansion of the OHVRA into the Virginia site. I have been following this project for many years, and I am a frequent visitor of the current site at Gilbert. My family and I have enjoyed the beautiful outdoors along the Iron Range since 2001, and this addition into the Virginia site looks to be the perfect home for the future of the OHVRA.

I would like to applaud the efforts of those who have taken such a dedicated and responsible approach to the expansion into the Virginia site. It appears from the environmental survey to be an excellent location to enjoy the park responsibly, while preserving the beautiful outdoors that the site is located. I look forward to seeing this addition to Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments. Thank you in advance,

Jason Christensen
1331 Eleanor Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55116

Comment #4: I support the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area.

Chris Wilson
1781 160th St
New Richmond, WI 54017

Comment #5: Build it!!!!! It's great use for old mining land and an economic attraction for the area.

Jeff Jukich
4621 Bass Lake Road
Gilbert, MN 55741

Comment #6: Gentlemen, Let's get this thing open and bring some revitalization to the area!!!

SFC Richard A. Gorr
Public Relations
Recruiting and Retention Battalion
Minnesota Army National Guard
211 N. McCarrons Blvd
Roseville, MN 55113

Comment #7: My family has been "Jeeping" for as long as I can remember. We have been all over the country doing it. I can say with all honesty that the Gilbert OHV Park is the cleanest, most friendly place I have ever been. There is no trash on the trails, the folks at the gate are fair and informative and the trails are some of the best around. It's also nice knowing that when you are done having fun in the park you have so many options as far as entertainment goes. Restaurants, Bars and a couple Gas Stations are within walking distance from the campground. With that being said, I can't wait for the Virginia Expansion!!!!!
Thank you,

Rod Arnold
No address provided

Comment #8: The expansion of the Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area would be an awesome addition to the recreation opportunities in Minnesota. My son and I are off road motorcycle enthusiasts from Wisconsin and visit the recreation areas in Minnesota a couple of times a year. Having additional off road opportunities within a short drive will allow us to continue to participate in a the sport that both thoroughly enjoy. Having places like this to ride off road, help to deter illegal off roading. I would urge you to continue with the expansion. We would really enjoy having more areas to ride off road. Thank you for your time.

Rich Pederson
982 E Stonewood Dr
Oak Creek, WI 53154

Comment #9: This is a great idea and I strongly support it. We need more areas open to off road vehicle use in the country, not less. Please add the additional land to the OHV area. Thank you,

Nate Delaney, No address provided

Comment #10: Hello - I am writing to urge you to go ahead with the purchase & expansion of the OHVRA near Virginia. This is a great addition to an already excellent program. I'm sure that the entire area will benefit from additional revenue brought in by users. Although I am from a neighboring state, we do enjoy snowmobiling in the Virginia area. We have put many hundreds of miles on the trails in the Iron Range system. This expansion would only make an already great recreational area even better. Thank you.

Pete Goepfert
N5050 Hyland Circle
Monticello, WI 53570

Comment #11: I visit the Iron Range OHV area once a year when I and family come to Minnesota to visit relatives and ride our OHV's. This is a great idea, to expand this very popular area, and will help the local economy more than ever. Sincerely,

Barry Krayer
Phoenix AZ
No address provided

Comment #12: I am writing to show my support for the 2,704 acre expansion to the existing Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area (OHVRA), Gilbert, Minnesota. I believe that this is a wonderful way to encourage responsible motorized recreation and bring much needed money to the local communities. The existing area has been used responsibly and shown to be a great success. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and hope that this project will move forward. Thank you,

Richard McKagan
10049 Quebec Ave S.
Bloomington, MN 55438

Comment #13: I believe the expansion of the Iron Range OHV Park into Virginia is a good idea as there are not yet enough OHV trails developed.

Mike Hughes
35599 W. Mcavity Lake Rd
Grand Rapids, MN. 55744

Comment #14: I like it; this is a great area to go riding in. This park offers the most flexibility. I went here for the first time this past summer and had a blast with my family. It is a long drive from the metro but it was worth it. I think any expansion of the park would be a plus!!

Ethan Campbell

2160 111th ln NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

Comment #15: It is great to hear that you are planning an expansion of land for off road vehicles. Please take my vote as a big "yes". I hope this creates a thought process for our USFS to consider freeing up more land for multi-recreational use. Sincerely,

Linda Brownlee
No address provided

Comment #16: Why does the DNR persist in serving at tax-payer expense a renegade 'recreational' activity that has been shown in multiple federal and state scientific studies to cause lasting (and expensive) damage to public lands and waters? Are you as a State of Minnesota agency now the wholly-owned subsidiary of a wanton pair of companies located in Minnesota? Why are you pushing hundreds of lawful users off public lands and degrading the environment of thousands more?

I've lived many years on the verges of the Headwaters State Forest, and only recently seen the compliance of the DNR, against the judgment of its own scientific staff, in allowing the unlawful, destructive invasion of a few criminal abusers of this public resource. No effective signing, gating, fencing, CO enforcement has made any difference. OHVs constitute a socially errant 'culture.' Would you, in a parallel example, accommodate extortionist gangs by providing them with publicly meeting halls? I suppose none of you, out to do some healthy skiing, have been fired upon with long guns by OHV riders? Chased by them with violent intent.

Wake up! Stop helping criminals, thinking you're 'containing' their activity. Sincerely,

Dr. Kyle R. Crocker
806 Balsam Ridge Road NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

Comment #17: The trail system that is in place now is a great setup and if this expansion goes through it will be a one-of-a-kind park in the state. One that will be used very extensively. The only thing wrong with this is that there aren't more parks like this one. I say "Go for it!!!" People are running out of places to ride and this will help secure some of that freedom.

P.S. Keep up the good work!

Pat Herold
110 134th St NW
Rice, Mn 56367

Comment #18: It would be nice if a non-motorized trail, specifically horse trails, could run in the same area...but not on the same trail. My horses do well with 4-wheelers...but they go way too fast for anyone else to be on the same trail. It would also be beneficial if they had a meter for the noise coming from each

vehicle. If they were too loud, they could not be on the trails. The sound really carries for long ways on certain days and it can be quite annoying.

Barb Partington
22550 432nd St
Zumbrota, MN 55992

Comment #19: I am happy to know that you are looking to expand a crucial area for OHV enthusiasts. Please continue to expand these riding areas as the number of OHV enthusiasts continues to grow and the available public riding areas seem to be shrinking. We need places to ride. Thank you, Sincerely,

Les Stenerson
Glyndon, MN
No address provided

Comment #20: I believe that you should have a disclaimer on everything about the Gilbert OHVRA site. It will ruin everything taken there. Your machine, your clothes, your curtains, your carpets, it's a bust. Wonderful people in Gilbert, great food, great campground and great riding. It's just the trip you will never forget because the stains and corrosion are forever.

Mark Friederichs
7501 Western Ave
Golden valley, MN 55427

Comment #21: What would it take to get something like this built in Northern Minnesota inside of Beltrami State Forest, the State's second largest State Forest? Thanks!

Wyatt Johnson
DEED Representative
MN WorkForce Center
1730 University Ave
Crookston MN 56716

Comment #22: I am writing in regards to the expansion of the Iron Range OHVRA. I think the expansion is a great idea that would bring more tourism to the area. This would, of course, help the local economy. As a resident of Michigan, I would be willing to drive to this area, since OHV areas are limited here. The expansion will make the area more attractive to people like myself. Thank you,

Dave Neph
Cheboygan, MI
No address provided

Comment #23: I have not been able to view the proposed expansion trail for the Iron Range OHV Recreation Area. However, as a member of ATVAM, I have heard about the possible expansion trail for somewhere around 3 years now. Whatever steps are necessary to complete the environmental assessment

and continue with the process, please try to expedite this in a timely fashion. I support a well planned, sustainable trail connecting other trails and services from communities such as gas, hotel, and restaurants. Sincerely,

Brent Ostwald
Maple Grove, MN
No address provided

Comment #24: I am writing on behalf of WOHVA (Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association to express our comments to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Assessment Worksheet for Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Recreation Area (EA).

WOHVA is an umbrella organization representing motorized recreationists from the ATV, OHM and 4WD communities here in the Badger State. Collectively WOHVA represents over 1000 Off-Highway Vehicle enthusiasts.

Motorized recreation is the fastest growing type of recreational activity in the country and WOHVA appreciates the stress that this growth is putting on the roads and trails in all of our National Forests. WOHVA encourages all OHV enthusiasts to recreate responsibly and enjoy the great outdoors. This increase in use has put additional congestion on already crowded roads and trails.

With this additional and growing demand for motorized recreational opportunities, WOHVA supports your EA for the proposed expansion. WOHVA has reviewed this document and concurs with all of your findings.

WOHVA encourages the DNR to work with motorized recreational groups to develop a partnership with these groups. It is our belief that by working with motorized recreational volunteer groups the DNR can find partners to assist with the proposed expansion, thus helping to reduce their financial and budgetary restrictions and challenges.

Thank you for your time and I am available to answer any questions DNR may have. Feel free to contact me on this and any other issue which involves OHV recreation. Happy Trails,

John G. Schnorr
Executive Director
Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association
P.O. Box 1865
Fon du Lac, WI 54936-1865

Comment #25: I believe this will be a good thing for the off-highway usage and economy for the people in the area. Look at what the Gilbert site has brought to the area already and this should increase.

Rick Langness
Equipment Services (Shoreview, MN)
No address provided

Comment #26: At least 10-15 people from Des Moines, IA make the trek to this OHV park each year and LOVE it! We are really excited to see the park expand and look forward to it. We spend time in Gilbert at the campground, Evelth at the grocery store, and Virginia at the restaurants. Can't wait until we can spend time in Virginia at the trails!

Christina Oleson
2403 60th Street
Des Moines, IA 50322

Comment #27: I am an avid off-roader residing in Iowa. I visited the park last year with my Jeep and fellow club members. I look forward to the expansion and our club returning to Gilbert on vacation! Sincerely,

Scott Dorau
117 N.W. 27th St.
Ankeny, IA. 50023

Comment #28: My wife and I discovered the awesome offroad park at Gilbert two years ago and we're back again this year. We plan on annual visits in the furture and the proposed park expansion will definitely be a plus. We camped at the Sherwood Forest campground which was very convenient for off-road access to the park. Keep up the good work,

Jeff & Audrey Rasmussen
Nichols, IA
No address provided

Comment #29: Hi, I am adamantly against expansion of the OHV Park in Gilbert. There are so many reasons this plan is wrong. Pollution, both air, and noise, a complete waste of the use of our precious land, and rapidly dwindling fossil fuel and global warming to name just a few. We should be doing more to support quiet recreation. We should be implementing plans which encourage our populace to get off their machines and get some exercise. I encourage you to take a look at the following two web sites:

http://www.stopthrillcraft.org/
http://www.mnresponsiblerec.org/

Please stop implementing plans which encourage motorized recreation and instead encourage non motorized recreation. I challenge you to look past the short term economic benefits of motorized recreation and think long term with respect to our rapidly dwindling resources. Sincerely,

Brian Bergeron
5164 Country Lane,
Hermantown, MN 55810

Comment #30: Upon recently hearing the news of the prospect of a new park/addition, I want to share my excitement you have brought to my family. I hadn't ever been to the range until I attended college up

north over a decade ago. Being from the city I must say the area is absolutely beautiful. Either just a family weekend with our kids, or grouping together with friends on an expedition, it is always a highlight when away from the daily grind. We have recently added a couple vehicles to the garage that we can't wait to be able to break in the right way. Hope to hear more good news in the near future!

Edward Meyer
No address provided

Comment #31: I fully support the expansion of the Iron Range Off-Highway Recreation Area. I would also like to see other trails throughout the state. Thank you,

Kevin Olsen
4955 Gooseberry Ln.
Hermantown, MN 55811

Comment #32: I am writing in support of going forward with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) proposed development of a 2,704 acre expansion to the existing Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area (OHVRA) in Gilbert, Minnesota.

The EAW was done very well, and I look forward to the future "75 miles" of new and existing trails. I look forward to driving my ORV on these trails.

Brad Nelson
Trail Rider
No address provided

Comment #33: I would just like to voice my support for the Virginia expansion to the Gilbert OHV park. I believe this will be nothing but good for the local area and that any environmental impact will be minimal. Not to mention pretty much any effect humans can have on the area has been done already with the mining activities. I believe this is an excellent use for an area that is not being utilized that will bring in money to a few towns that desperately need any influx of business they can get.

Russell Telker
3652 County Rd. 140
Barnum, MN 55707

Comment #34: I really hope the state goes through with the expansion to the existing Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area. We need more places for off-road vehicles to legally run. My understanding is that the area was old mining property previously. You couldn't ask for a better place to expand the park.

Kurt Hujanen
6355 Tarkman Rd
Tower, MN 55790

Comment #35: I would like to express my support for the Virginia OHVRA expansion. I have been going to Gilbert's OHV park for 3 years now and have been enjoying Jeeping with my wife and children and friends.

Lorenzo Salinas
1406 Fallbrook Lane
Woodbury, MN 55125.

Comment #36: I am in favor of the Virginia expansion plan. I travel to Gilbert from Burnsville at least 3 times a year to camp and off road. I love the area and am glad to see that more terrain is now available. This and future expansions will not only attract Minnesotans to the Iron Range but will bring in many out-of-staters once they discover the world class wheelin we have in our backyard. I want to thank everyone involved in this and future projects. I hope to be enjoying the new park in the near future.

Zach Walker
No address provided

Comment #37: I am Vice President and board member of a young club, Rock Bottom 4x4. We are committed to educating wheelers about having fun, while leaving the area better than we found it. Our approach to the sport of "off roading" is catching on as our membership has doubled in the past year with no signs of membership slowing. I bring up the facts of our club due to the passion and love of the Gilbert area OHV park and how appreciative we are to have an area so relatively close to the Twin Cities. We are all active, proud members of the Minnesota 4 Wheel Drive Association and the addition of the Virginia area would be amazing to say the least.

It's my understanding there are currently 0 active trail miles designated for 4 wheel drive vehicles only; ATV's excluded. This is disheartening due to the current ramping trend of responsible, family oriented wheeling. I believe local businesses would feel the benefits of the added family traffic, not to mention it would attract those like myself who have fond memories of loading up the jeep for a weekend of camping with our kids.

Having the added Virginia OHV area would be a wonderful step in the right direction. The added area would go along way in helping educate the public about responsible land use and while expanding an already fun way to spend a weekend with your family.

I speak for all our Rock Bottom 4x4 members and their families in saying we're very excited to help out in any way we can and look forward to the new park OHV area. If there is anything myself or our RockBottom4x4 can do, please feel free to contact us. We're ready. Regards,

Brent Baxter
Vice President
Rock Bottom 4x4
www.rockbottom4x4.com
No address provided

Comment #38: I am fully in support of the new site proposal. While I would prefer more areas designated to OHV (truck/Jeep based), I feel like the current proposal will keep me coming back to the area for a long time in the future with new trails to explore. A group of people from my area have been making trips to Gilbert for the last 4 years and it is a great place to spend a vacation! Thanks for your hard work on this new park! Sincerely,

Mark Kitlinski
3278 E Clinton Ave
Des Moines, IA 50317

Comment #39: I am e-mailing in support of the expansion of the OHV Park near Gilbert, MN. I am a WI resident but many people, including myself, frequent this OHV park and bring out business to Gilbert and surrounding businesses. We are very fortunate to have this type of place. Thank you for your time,

Mike Beaulieu
Wisconsin
No address provided

Comment #40: This is a good idea to build a Virgina OHV park so there are places to driven our off-road vehicles. That means a lot more obstacles an trails to drive on and have fun. I am happy about this because that way I have a place to drive my jeep and have lots of fun where I live. I support this one hundred percent. (Mr. Happyface)

Shannon or Bobbi Halverson
No address provided

Comment #41: I am an avid off-road enthusiast and part of a very family oriented off-road club (rockbottom4x4) I am also a board member. Myself and others like me fully support the Virginia OHV expansion area. If there is anything that myself or Rockbottom4x4 can do please feel free to let me know! Thank you,

Brad Baxter
No address provided

Comment #42: I am looking forward to the Virginia expansion for OHV use. Three and a half years ago I moved to the area from the Black Hills in South Dakota. I have been an avid "Rockcrawler" for at least 12 years. I enjoy the outdoors and take every precaution to preserve the trails for others to enjoy. My wife and I are starting a family and hope to spark the interest of my two daughters by bringing them with us on the trail.

Events like the "Crawl for the Cure" and some others that I participated in South Dakota highlights how rock crawling can enable individuals with a common interest to network, raise money for a good cause, and have fun.

I am sure that when the Virgina expansion, Missabe Mountain trail, and the existing Gilbert OHV park are all complete, this area will be a nationwide destination for OHV groups and will substantially increase

the tourism revenue for the Iron Range. I also believe that by having such a variety of trails in these areas, the amount of "rogue" trail riding in unauthorized areas will decrease. Thank you for your time,

Riley Roberdeau
No address provided

Comment #43: Pursuant to your public notice to comment, The Virginia Public Utility on behalf of the City of Virginia and the responsible party for the City's drinking water supply has the following concern. We believe that due to susceptibility or the likelihood that a contaminant will enter the public water supply at a level which may result in an adverse human health impact, there should be a greater set-back between the Mesabi Mountain Pit, the source of the City's drinking water supply, and the boundaries of the OHVRA. Our concern has been well documented with the Minnesota Department of Health and our state agencies including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. We believe the resolution to this would be to have the North and West site boundaries, as depicted in Figure 3 – Project Detail Map, end and the defined "Landfill Road" in Section 16. Sincerely,

Terry J. Leoni,
General Manager
Department of Public Utilities
618 South 2nd Street
Virginia, Minnesota 55792

Note: Please See the Figure on the Following Page

Comment #44: I think the Iron Range OHV Park is great. I belong to a club with about 15 members (+wives, friends). We are a responsible group that love the fact that there is a park like this in the state of MN. We go to Gilbert a couple times a year. It is a great sport and is a good thing for revenue for MN. We would love to see more land opened up. Let's put MN on the 4x4 map. Thank you,

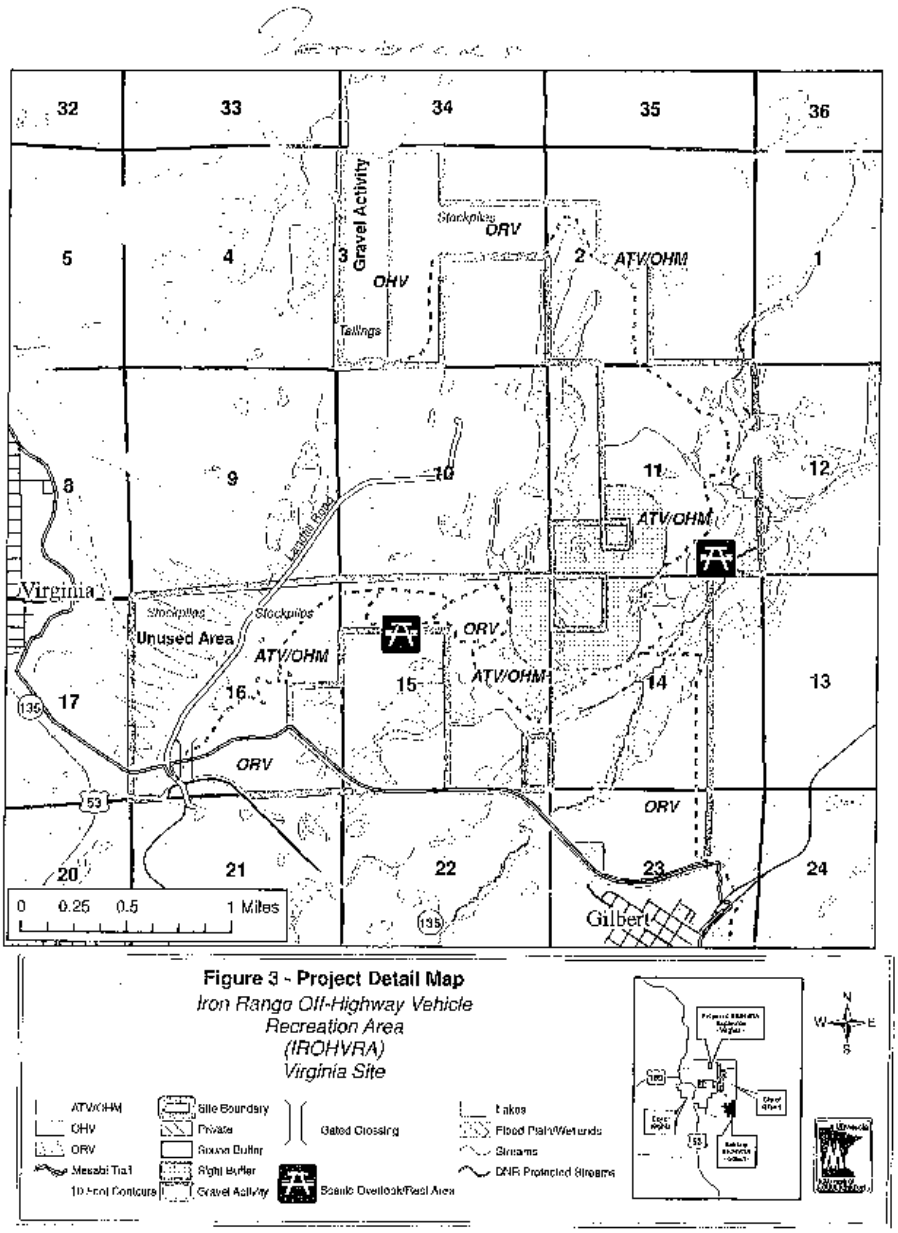
Kevin Rasmussen
832 Bailey St.
Hastings, MN 55033

Comment #45: We belong to an off road club that consists of about fifteen men, wives and children. We are more than just a club; it's a family of friends that are dedicated to the responsible way of wheeling and having fun. We're committed to leaving places better than we found them and making great friends along the way.

We think the iron range and expansion is a wonderful thing! It brings people with the same interests together for a fun responsible time. It is a family event where I bring my son and he always has a great time. We go to Gilbert a couple times a year and it is a great way to get out and enjoy a hobby we love and take in all the beautiful nature. We would love to see the expansion of the Iron Range in Virginia!

Jason Boie
Jessica Maninn
2150 Sycamore Trail

Figure from Comment #43:



Comment #46: I'm from Hastings and also a member of the Dakota Dirt Diggers, Minnesota 4 Wheel Drive Association, and Midwest 4WD Assoc. I'm emailing you to show you my support for another OHVRA park in Virginia. I have enjoyed many, many weekends at Gilbert; I am all for having more recreation areas in this state. This new park would be a great thing to the 4 wheeling community and the communities of the Iron Range area. We bring revenue to the small communities whom need it badly, and who seem to welcome us with open arms to their towns. I believe it would be very wise of the state of Minnesota to allow another OHV park in Minnesota, whether in northern Minnesota or even a park in the south. But beggars can't be choosers and I will drive four hours to go wheeling and enjoy time with my family, if that's what it takes to enjoy my hobby of choice. Thank you for your time.

Matt Chapin
Dakota Dirt Diggers
No address provided

Comment #47: I think the Iron Range OHV park is great. I belong to a club with about 15 members (+wives, friends). We are a responsible group that loves the fact that there is a park like this in the state of MN. We go to Gilbert a couple times a year. It is a great sport and is a good thing for revenue for MN. We would love to see more land opened up. Let's put Mn on the 4x4 map. Thank you,

Derrick Langeslay
23 27th St. East
Hastings, MN 55033

Comment #48: Please include my name as a supporter of the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range OHVRA.

The present facility in Gilbert is well run, brings significant tourism dollars into the area, and has proven itself to be an environmentally sound resource. Adding to the existing facility and utilizing the existing DNR management will only enhance this area as a vacation destination for people interested in legal OHV use. I look forward to visiting the area again and spending money at local businesses, as well as encouraging others to join me to support this valuable resource.

Mark Filonowich
4510 Ridgeview Drive
Eagan, MN 55123

Comment #49: I am writing in regards to the proposed OHVRA Expansion.

I strongly agree with and encourage this expansion. This area really needs a large attraction, such as the one proposed, to draw more tourism into this area. This area has so much to offer to potential users of this recreation area...phenomenal riding, dining at great area restaurants, site-seeing opportunities around the Range, shopping, lodging, etc. I don't think anyone can fully comprehend the positive financial impact this could have. This area relies too heavily on large industry to support the local economy. When times are good there isn't a problem. However, when the economy hits a down-turn, everyone is hurt. This area needs something to help balance the reliance on large industry. Tourism is the perfect

alternative to create this balance. And what better way than to use something that is currently deemed "worthless" or "unusable."

What a brilliant way to increase tourism traffic to the area...use something that's already here and not being used. Thank you for your time. Sincerely,

Andrea Whiting
5422 Carnation Ave
Virginia, MN 55792

Comment #50: As an avid & lifelong off-road enthusiast, I am very pleased with the opportunity to voice my wholehearted & overwhelming support of the Gilbert OHVRA Park expansion.

Considering the ever increasing restrictions we face in our chosen past-time, I believe the development of previously mined & 'stripped' land is a win-win situation. It not only provides local people like myself with a designated riding area, but more importantly, brings a priceless increase in 'tourist' traffic into our community. This tourist traffic should increase greatly following the completion of this expansion, a much needed economic boost for our area. Additionally, this park provides a rare outlet for our area youth, many of whom can be susceptible to self destructive lifestyles when 'bored' & without positive alternatives such as the OHV Park.

I see endless opportunities presenting themselves with the addition to this park, above & beyond any previous possibilities considered with this expansion (I personally have a very exciting proposal for park officials). I view the future of this park as very promising, as it's popularity grows with this expansion, I believe future expansions are inevitable, transforming this area into a national (& possibly international) destination for off-road enthusiasts.

I don't believe there is a more constructive way to utilize this property. The immeasurable return on this investment will last for generations to come. I hope & pray that this project moves forward on schedule & without complications. Respectfully,

Mark A Pucel
Owner - Graphic Artist - Marketeer
P.O. Box 161
Virginia, MN 55792

Comment #51: Thank you for the opportunity to review the EAW referenced above. This EAW was reviewed by Mn/DOT's District 1 Planning, Project Development, Traffic Engineering and Permits sections and has resulted in some traffic related issues.

There is concern that the current grade of TH 135 will not allow the placement of the proposed box culvert under the roadway. If this is the case, an at grade crossing would not be allowed at this location because of sight distance concerns. A safer crossing would be near the junction of TH 37 and TH 135

There is a strong likelihood that TH 53 in the Eveleth-Virginia area will be re-routed in the future to allow for mining activities under the existing highway. At this time, it is unknown what the new route will be or what impacts this would have on the Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area.

It is necessary for the developer to apply for a Limited Use Permit. The permit process should be initiated with Wayne Scheer, Mn/DOD District One Permits Manager. Please contact Wayne at (218) 725-2780 at your earliest convenience. Sincerely,

Michael Tardy, P.E.
Assistant District Engineer
Minnesota Department of Transportation
1123 Mesaba Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811-2798

Comment #52: Please consider making the new (and all existing) ATV/OHM trail systems within "condensed areas" such as Gilbert, General Andrews, Nemadji, etc., ONE WAY TRAFFIC. Me and my kids have been riding our OHM's on these trails and have had many 'close calls" with other riders either because of the narrow width of the trail or more frequently because of the (poor-dangerous) riding habits of these other groups. One-way trail would be so much safer for all people and would soon become considered the only way to desigh trails in the future. Always hopeful, Thank you!

Mark Sawyer
4713 Peabody St.
Duluth, MN 55804

RECEIVED AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE 30-DAY REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD

Comment #53: After reading the EAW I would like to add my support for the report and the proposed expansion of the Iron Range OHVRA. With this being the premier OHV destination for our state I can only see positive results from the expansion for OHV users and the local economy of the range.

Dan Heddle
847 4th Ave S.
South St. Paul, MN 55075

Comment #54: (SHPO Number 2010-0613). Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

Due to the nature of the proposed project, we recommend that an archaeological survey be completed. The survey must meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation, and should include an evaluation of National Register eligibility for any properties that are identified. For your information, we have enclosed a list of consultants who have expressed an interest in undertaking such surveys.

If the project area can be documented as previously disturbed or previously surveyed, we will evaluate the need for survey. Previously disturbed areas are those where the naturally occurring post-glacial soils and sediments have been recently removed. Any previous survey work must meet contemporary standards.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36CFR800, procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the protection of historic properties. If this project is considered for federal assistance, or requires a federal license or permit, it should be submitted to our office with reference to the appropriate federal agency. If you have any questions on our review of this project, please contact me at (651) 259-3455. Sincerely,

Kelly Gragg-Johnson
Review and Compliance Associate
Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Boulevard
West, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Enclosure: State Historic Preservation Office Contract Archaeologists, Last Updated (11/20/2009). This listing is comprised of individuals and firms who have expressed an interest in undertaking contract archaeology in the State of Minnesota. (Four pages not reproduced for this record but available upon request).

Comment #55: Operations - Regulatory (2009-05292-TWP)

This letter is in response to your request for comments regarding the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), dated November 16, 2009, completed for the Virginia Expansion of the Iron Range Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area.

The maps provided with the EAW are not detailed enough for us to determine whether the project would or would not impact Corps jurisdictional wetlands.

The Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged and fill material in waters of the U.S. to ensure that projects serve a valid purpose, and are developed in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on the water body or wetland. Waters of the U.S. include most lakes, rivers, streams, and their tributaries, as well as most wetlands adjacent to these water bodies. All areas of new trail construction and areas of trail expansion should be field verified for the presence of wetlands. We have found that the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps for this area are not accurate and not suitable for permitting purposes.

If you have any questions, contact Timothy W. Peterson in our Two Harbors office at (218) 834-6630. In any correspondence or inquiries please refer to the Regulatory number shown above.

Tamara Cameron
Chief, Regulatory Branch
St. Paul District Corps of Engineers
190 Fifth Street East, Suite 401
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1638