Water On the Line: Gogebic Taconite’s Push to Mine the Penokee Hills

815 Acres of critical wetlands on the proposed iron mine site would have their current protection eliminated by Wisconsin’s proposed new mining law.

Wetlands in areas of special natural resource interest (ASNRI wetlands) are defined as either within the boundary of or having a direct hydrological connection to areas and waterways with a special designation, including trout streams and Lake Superior. Under current law, ASNRI wetlands cannot be mitigated to offset damage done by development. The mining bill introduced to the State Legislature on December 8, 2011, partly written by G-Tac, would allow them to be filled or removed for iron mining and mitigated by conservation projects anywhere in the state.

Sources: Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter NR 103; LRB-3520; Wisconsin Legislative Council Memo to Members of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Small Business, and the Economy (Dec. 9, 2011).

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815 Acres of wetlands within the mine site are directly connected to designated waterways.

Mead Creek and Mud Creek are Class II Trout Streams that flow into the mine site.

Tyler Forks passes through a unique canyon and over two waterfalls very close to the potential mine pit.

Bull Gus Creek, a 2.5-mile-long Class III Trout Stream, lies entirely within the Iron County Forest land leased for mine waste.

Devil’s Creek, a Class I Trout Stream, drains the north slope of the mine pit site.

Maki Lake

McCarthy and Maki Lakes are designated Priority Navigable Waterways.

Land leased by Gogebic Taconite from Iron County for mine waste.

Bull Gus Creek, a Class I Trout Stream, skirts the mine site.

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Inset: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 15N. Elevation data from 30 meter USGS Digital Elevation Model. Waterways and polygons from same sources as wetlands map.

Distances derived by measurement in ArcMap 10 (line) and Google Maps (road) respectively.

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