

BREAKING NEWS» U.P. among areas to receive part of \$40 million for Michigan conservation projects

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Those were the days»

USGS, KBIC cooperation on water study positive

April 29, 2013

The Mining Journal

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The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community recently announced it had reached an agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey, which will see the federal agency undertake a four-year water quality study of the Yellow Dog and Salmon Trout rivers watersheds.

We think this cooperative program is a good idea. Despite other water monitoring ongoing by Rio Tinto and the Superior Watershed Partnership -indirectly funded by the mining company- this new venture would provide more independent data and more analysis to help protect not only the rivers and groundwater, but ultimately the Lake Superior Basin the streams empty into.

Tribal discussions with the USGS about a potential cooperative water quality study of the Yellow Dog Plains began in the summer of 2011. A formal request for USGS water monitoring was made by the tribe in March 2012. After agreeing on the scope of work to be performed, a USGS joint funding agreement was authorized by the KBIC Tribal Council last month.

The USGS water monitoring on the plains would be new testing conducted from 2013-2016, with a report summarizing the results due to the tribe in 2017.

The Huron Mountain Club will contribute funding and the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve was instrumental in developing the program, a group collecting water quality information on the Yellow Dog Plains since 2002.

KBIC Tribal Chairman Warren Swartz said the tribe contacted the USGS because it was concerned about potential adverse ecosystem impacts. He said the USGS is "widely considered the nation's premiere science agency."

Rio Tinto's Eagle Mine is located on the Yellow Dog Plains. Several roads are being improved for mine truck traffic. Production is expected to begin in late 2014.

With the Eagle Mine a test case for non-ferrous mining projects in the Upper Peninsula, we think it is especially important the project be successful from an environmental aspect, as well as from a commercial perspective.

We think the new monitoring project will help ensure if problems do occur, they will be detected early. With the waters of these two rivers, tributaries and Lake Superior at stake it is greatly important to keep a keen eye on factors potentially affecting the quality of these water resources now and into the future.

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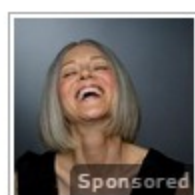
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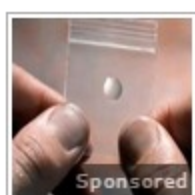
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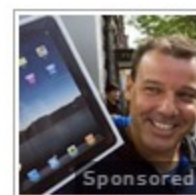
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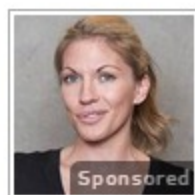
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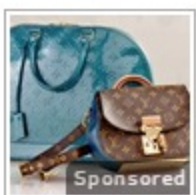
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