

# Say NO to Sulfide Mining in the U.P.



In 2002, *Kennecott Minerals* [Exploration] discovered a small nickel and copper deposit located in Marquette County in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. A sulfide mine is now being proposed on the Yellow Dog Plains by *Kennecott Minerals* in order that they gain access to the nickel and copper deposits. This appeal has erupted into a large controversy, and is referred to as the Eagle Project. Although the Upper Peninsula has a long history with mining, it has traditionally been with ore-based mining. Sulfide mining is a much more dangerous and harmful form of mining. Unlike ore-based mining, sulfide mining extracts nickel, copper and other deposits from sulfide-rich rock compounds. *Kennecott Minerals* is pushing for this project under the guise of responsibility, sustainability, and economics, while various environmental groups and local, concerned community members are working to oppose it on the basis of potential environmental destruction, wildlife devastation, and economic downfall.

A sulfide mine is a mine in which the ore body and the mineral(s) being pursued were formed in the presence of sulfur. Nickel is not usually found in its pure form but as a component of other minerals (ore) which are often bonded to sulfide compounds. In effect, nickel mining is usually also a form of sulfide mining.



SOURCES: Media Mouse. "International Mining Company to Request First Permit under Michigan's New Sulfide Mining Regulations." February 22, 2006; "The Mining Process." <http://www.gliwfc.org/pub/sulfidemining.pdf>

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## THE YELLOW DOG PLAINS



The Eagle Project would be located on the Yellow Dog Plains, a 50 mile stretch of land that currently has few roads, no railroads, no electricity or power lines, no permanent settlements (only remote camps), mostly healthy natural ecosystems and is home to five streams and rivers that eventually empty into Lake Superior. The Salmon Trout River is one of these rivers, and it has been the focus of much attention partly because the proposed mine will be carved out from underneath it, but also because within it, the last remaining run of native coaster brook trout along the entire south shore of Lake Superior live and spawn. Mining on the Yellow Dog Plains could destroy this trout population. Additionally there is concern that pollution from the Eagle Project will negatively impact the water quality and flow of the Salmon Trout Rivers potentially spreading to and threatening the health of various waterways, even so far as to include Lake Superior. This is a huge concern, especially considering the fact that 20% of the entire world's freshwater is located in the Great Lakes. This water must be protected from pollution as well as from privatization and as a resource necessary to all life, it is much more valuable and important than nickel. The mine is not worth the risk.

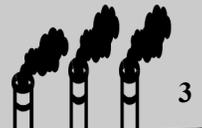
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SOURCES: Save the Wild UP. "Fish Habitat Threatened by Acid Mine Drainage"; Save The Wild UP. "Metallic Sulfide Mining: A Threat to Coaster Brook Trout." ; COSENTINO, LAWRENCE. *Lansing City Pulse*. July 6, 2005. Save The Wild UP. "Not just an environmental issue: Water is currency in the economy of the 21st century."

## ACID MINE DRAINAGE

One of the largest concerns regarding the mine is water contamination through acid mine drainage. Sulfide mining produces sulfuric acid that can leak into wells, streams, and lakes, which is known as acid mine drainage (AMD). Water pollution from mine waste rock, AMD, and tailings may need to be managed for decades, if not centuries, after closure. In this way, acid mine drainage poses a long-term threat to the environment and directly impacts it by polluting streams, rivers, waterways drinking water, and groundwater, disrupting wildlife habitat, and destroying the natural landscape. This is dangerous, especially because the Lake Superior region is likely to have a large amount of Nickel and Copper Sulfide deposits. If mines like this are allowed to be developed, the UP may see a significant increase in sulfide mining. This is not to mention the other infrastructure mining entails. The infrastructure needed to support the Eagle project, for example, will require the construction of paved roads in previously unpaved areas, power grid expansions, and railroad expansion.

**KENNECOTT MINERALS:** Kennecott Minerals develops, manages, operates, and participates in gold, silver and base metal operations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. Kennecott has multiple operating mines within the United States, some of which have significant environmental problems. In 2003, for instance Kennecott was accountable for two of the top five most polluting mines in the United States and has been labeled as one of the top polluters in the U.S.



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SOURCES: Environmental Protection Agency. "What is Acid Mine Drainage?"; Zylbe, Joseph. "A Proposed Nickel Mine in Marquette County." *The U.P. Catholic Editorial*. October 7, 2005

# ECONOMICS

*"...we face not a choice between protecting jobs and protecting the environment but rather, a choice about how best to protect the community's long-run economic vitality."*

From "In Golden Dreams, Poisoned Streams" by De Rosa and Lyon

Mining can often be categorized as a "boom and bust" economy, as the jobs that a mine does provide will not be permanent. The Eagle project, for instance will create around 100 jobs, lasting only about six years. Research has indicated that towns are twice as likely to experience negative impacts from mining than they are to benefit from them and more specifically for the U.P., tourism and clean water are perceived to be more imperative to the economy than the few short jobs the mine may create. Mining is a dangerous job and miners deserve protection and representation, but Kennecott Minerals is an explicitly non-union company. Beyond this, the Flambeau Mine in Rusk County Wisconsin was also run by Kennecott and proved the company untrustworthy. Although Kennecott states that if a community does not want them to develop a mine, they won't, Kennecott bypassed a local government decision against the mine in order to develop it anyway. During the 4 years that Kennecott operated the Flambeau Mine (1993-1997), Rusk County had the highest unemployment rate in the state and 20-25% of the 50-70 employees of the Flambeau Mine were non-local residents.

SOURCES: Paul Gingras. Mining Operation May Have Major U.P. Impact: Will Sulfide Project Compromise Economy, Water? The St. Ignace News November 3, 2005.; and Save the Wild Up.

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**THE WINNERS AND LOSERS OF THIS MINE ARE CLEAR. BUT UNTIL KENNECOTT HAS ITS PERMITS THIS MINE CAN AND MUST BE STOPPED OR MODIFIED THROUGH**

- Legislation
- Tribal rights
- Public outcry
- Ballot initiatives
- Legal challenges
- Press campaigns
- Shareholder resolutions
- Grassroots organizations
- Permitting

## TAKE ACTION!

### HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Contact your representatives as soon as possible and tell them not to support the Sulfide Mine.
- Visit [www.savethewildup.org](http://www.savethewildup.org) and click on "ACTION."
- Educate others on the issue.
- Visit [mediamouse.org](http://mediamouse.org) for more information on what's going on in the local area.