**Tribe works to prevent oil spills**

To report an oil spill to the USCG call this 24-hour, toll free number: **1-800-424-8802**

**Wisconsin’s sulfide mining problems Michigan’s future?**

Four years after Kennecott Minerals Company notified the state of Wisconsin that it had reclaimed the Flambeau mine site, the company’s own reports document an ongoing release of contaminants at the site. These unresolved contamination issues are causing unease among officials at Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC).

The Wisconsin mine uses the same mining technique — sulfide mining — that Kennecott proposed for the Yellow Dog Plains in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

“The Flambeau mine site continues to be a source of contaminants to waters of the state, and efforts by Kennecott to fix the problems have been unsuccessful,” said Mic Isham, vice chairman of GLIFWC’s Voigt Intertribal Task Force, in a recent GLIFWC press release.

Controlling copper, silver and gold ore, the mine located on the Flambeau River just south of Ladysmith, Wis., operated from 1991 to 1997. The orebody is what is known as a sulfide deposit, meaning that the metals are bonded to sulfur, forming sulfide minerals. When exposed to air and moisture, a chemical reaction generates sulfuric acid that can leach into the surrounding environment and can cause the release of metals such as copper.

Previous efforts to control contamination at the site involved removal of the company’s rail spur and its gravel base. In spite of these efforts, discharges of contaminated water continue, and copper has been measured in this water at levels several times the state standard for surface waters, according to the release.

Kennecott proposed for the Yellow Dog Plains — sulfide mining — that involves removal of a gravel parking lot, according to the release. But because the extent of the contaminated soil is unknown, it is unclear whether the plan will resolve the problem. GLIFWC has asked the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to hold Kennecott accountable for the ongoing problems at the site and to require the company to perform additional investigations into the sources and extent of the contamination.

These problems are fueling additional concerns for GLIFWC’s Voigt Intertribal Task Force, according to the release.

Kennecott recently submitted permit applications to Michigan regulators to construct and operate a new sulfide mine on the Yellow Dog Plaines, an undeveloped expanse of wild land situated between the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the City of Marquette.

Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority opposes the proposed sulfide mine on the Yellow Dog Plains because of the likely contamination threat, especially since the Yellow Dog River is home to the last wild coaster brook trout population in the state of Michigan.

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community announced May 9 that it joined Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve Inc. and the Huron Mountain Club in a petition to stop the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality’s consideration of Kennecott’s permit application to mine the Yellow Dog Plains, claiming that the application is incomplete.

The 60-page petition, filed with Michigan’s Office of Administrative Hearings, states that the application is missing information and documents required by the sulfide mining statute. The MDEQ should have deemed the application administratively complete instead of considering it for approval.

The tribe said information missing includes but is not limited to: groundwater and hydrologic data, surface water level and discharge rate data, meteorological data, terrestrial flora and fauna data and transportation plans and impacts. The petitioners want any action stopped until the information is supplied.
Congress urged to implement Great Lakes Plan

The Great Lakes Commission is urging Congress to approve the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act, introduced in House and Senate bills April 5. The legislation would implement key recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration to address the Great Lakes’ most pressing restoration and protection needs.

“The average person on the street may not realize it, but the Great Lakes are facing a crisis,” said Tom Huntley, chair of the Great Lakes Commission. “There’s a very real concern that the combination of stresses they are facing could push them beyond a ‘tipping point’ where we could see massive and potentially irreversible damages to the Great Lakes ecosystem.”

The U.S. Senate bill (S.2545) and the House of Representatives bill (H.R.5100) authorizes concrete steps to fight invasive species, clean up toxic pollutants, spend $150 million per year on efforts to clean up sewage overflows, and increase funding for Great Lakes programs by $10 million per year and improving existing research programs; revised standards that can be met through developing the recommendations of the President Bush, Great Lakes governors, bipartisan group of Great Lakes senators, and the American Indian Policy Advisory Committee.

The states’ lawsuit was filed in 2006, responding to a call from Massachusetts Attorney General Jared Snyder and New York Assistant Attorney General Frank Ettawageshik. “All of this plan and the hundreds of proposals for action. A coalition of environmental organizations, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and Environmental Defense filed a related petition the same day.

The states’ lawsuit was filed in federal appeals court for the District of Columbia Circuit. The case is being handled by New York Assistant Attorney General Jared Snyder and Environmental Protection Bureau Chief Peter Lehner. The Clean Air Act requires that EPA and review emission standards for new pollution sources every eight years to ensure that they protect public health and the environment. On February 27, 2006, EPA issued revised proposals in accordance with a court order. However, the revised standards completely fail to regulate power plant emissions of carbon dioxide, the major contributor to global warming. In addition, the revised standards for other air pollutants harmful to public health are acceptably lax. Massachusetts Attorney General Tom Reilly summed it up: “This administration acknowledges that global warming poses serious dangers to our environment and health, but continues not to do anything to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, we have to take legal action once again. We are taking on this challenge to protect our environment for the future. If we don’t, what kind of world will we leave to our children and grandchildren?”

First, EPA refused to regulate carbon dioxide, despite overwhelming research and scientific consensus that carbon dioxide contributes to global warming and thus harms “public health and welfare.” EPA’s claim that it does not have the authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions is contrary to the plain language of the Clean Air Act. Second, EPA failed to set adequate standards for sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, power plant pollutants that contribute to soot, smog, acid rain and higher levels of respiratory disease. The law dictates that the emission safeguards be set at levels that require use of the best demonstrated technology, but EPA is setting weak standards that can be met through less effective technologies. The petition for review is available at: http://www.oog.state.ny.us/press/2006/apr/Petition_for_Review.pdf
By Jennifer Dale, CORA

MANISTEE — The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) has seen its streamside sturgeon-rearing efforts expand from one “sturgeon starter” facility to five. Since the program inception in 2004, the portable streamside rearing facility has been deemed a success and four more were ordered from the Northern Environmental Technologies, Inc., which designed the original portable “sturgeon starter.”

“We are very glad to have the opportunity to work with the Little River Band on this project,” said Alan H. Hooper, Northern Environmental Technologies, Inc. “They have truly had the vision and we have been proud to support them. It has been great to watch the project grow from a local initiative to a regional one with the placement of additional facilities in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula.”

Improvements were made to the original sturgeon starter based on its performance, said LRBOI Inland Fisheries Biologist Marty Holtgren. System upgrades included sediment filters, total dissolved gas monitors, and a telemetry warning system, according to Holtgren. High sediment loads during high rain events needed addressing, and the warning system ensured rearing conditions are being continually met, he said.

Working in cooperation with the LRBOI, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Northern Environmental will place the new facilities at locations on the Milwaukee and Manistee Rivers in Wisconsin and the Cedar and Whitefish Rivers in Michigan. The Great Lakes Fisheries Trust funded the project, according to a press release.

This next step drives the plan toward the 25-year goal of establishing a self-sustaining naturally reproducing sturgeon population and the seventh generation of returning the population level to its former glory, according to an essay by Jimmie Mitchell, Natural Resource Commissioner.

Lake sturgeon were once abundant throughout the Great Lakes but became victims of commercial fishing and lumber industries. Human actions of the last 100 years in mind, the Little River Ottawa should be thanked for its determination to reclaim the Nmé for all of us.

Before installing the first facility, the tribe had learned that the Manistee River sturgeon population was naturally reproducing but the population was very small and spawning habitat was limited to only two small areas, according to Holtgren. Each population of sturgeon possesses a unique genetic identity, including the river’s spawning population. So, the tribe decided to use stream facilities, rather than off site hatcheries, in an effort to imprint the sturgeon with the physical and chemical characteristics of the river in which they were born, and returned to when they are older. This would help preserve the river’s unique sturgeon population, according to Holtgren.

Last fall, the tribe released a number of juveniles in a special ceremony. “When putting the sturgeon back in the river I felt it was one of the most meaningful acts the LRBOI has done,” reported Marcella Leusby, one of those volunteering to release a juvenile. “It was very emotional.”

“Working with the Tribe in this endeavor is my most rewarding professional experience. As a biologist, I am fortunate to have such overwhelming support to rehabilitate this species. The sturgeon has been severely mismanaged for so long, it is good to see the sturgeon once again being valued, said Holtgren.”

42-foot Gill Net Tug

FOR SALE — 42’ Gill Net Tug “Nibirg Nimnido” (Formerly the “Francis Clark”). This steel tug was constructed in the 1960s, but has been well maintained and is very clean. The vessel is powered by a 630 Cat-erpillar diesel engine and has a 30’ lifter. Currently docked at the Arthur Duhamel Marina at Peshawbestown, Mich. Contact Don Chippewa or Rose Weese at 1645 S. Center Highway, Suttons Bay, MI 49682, for more information. Or, contact the Grand Traverse Basin Natural Resources Department at 231-534-7600 to relay a message.

Dates to Remember

CORR 2006 HOLIDAYS — For the remainder of 2006, the CORA office will be closed on the following days: May 29, July 4, September 4, September 22, November 10, November 24, December 25-26, and Jan. 1 & 2, 2007.

BIA 2006 HOLIDAYS — The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) offices will be closed: May 29, July 4, September 4, October 9, November 10, November 23 and December 25.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS ACCORDINGLY. To place important dates in this FAQ box, please contact Jennifer Dale at 906-632-0043 or jmdale@chippewaottawa.org.

STRAINED BY THE STREAMSIDE — The efficient streamside portable sturgeon starter, a high tech trailer, has everything a baby sturgeon could want. Above, community members tour the original facility. The tribe learned a lot from the first unit and have ordered four more. Compact and portable, the streamside facility uses the water in which sturgeon were hatched, and where they will someday live.
Planked Lake Whitefish

The lack of federal funding to support the Great Lakes Fishery Commission sea lamprey control program is a slap in the face of restoration efforts by citizens, tribes, states, and federal agencies and most especially the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration that especially stressed the devastation caused by exotic species. The proposed cutback is also a slap to support the Great Lakes fishery. According to the Commission, the proposed funding cut will:

- Force the Commission to reduce sea lamprey control, leaving millions of sea lamprey larvae in the system. The damage caused by the sea lamprey abundances will be costly and devastating.
- Curtail construction of new sea lamprey barriers and prevent repairs to existing barriers that will allow the expansion of sea lamprey habitat, requiring future costly treatments.
- Hamstring the development of innovative alternative sea lamprey control techniques, such as the use of pheromones, just as the investments are ready to pay off.
- Undermine millions of dollars state and tribal authorities invest in their fishery management and fisheries restoration programs. Readers, please contact your US Congressman and US Senators to tell them the Great Lakes Fishery Commission needs the federal government’s support to keep the lampreys at bay. The Commission needs at least $18.9 million for its highly successful and essential sea lamprey control program. Tell them the proposed budget for the Commission will leave millions more sea lampreys in the system to devour Great lakes fish and harm $4-plus billion Great Lakes industry.

Below are representatives in the 1836 Treaty Ceded area. Write or contact them or her through their websites:

District 1 Congressman Bart Stupak
2325 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
http://www.house.gov/stupak/

District 2 Congressman Pete Hoekstra
2234 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
http://hoekstra.house.gov/District/

District 4 Congressman Dave Camp
Washington D.C. Office
137 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515
http://camp.house.gov/

Senator Carl Levin
269 Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
http://levin.senate.gov/

Senator Debbie Stabenow
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
http://stabenow.senate.gov/

TROUT word puzzle answers in alphabetical order: or, ort, our, out, rot, rout, rut, lo, tor, tot, tour, lour, lrot, trot, tut, tutor

NEW ZEALAND MUDSNAILS FOUND IN LAKE SUPERIOR

The New Zealand mudsnail (Potamopyrgus antipodarum), an invader that has wreaked havoc in U.S. western rivers, has been found in U.S. waters of Lake Superior, in both the Duluth-Superior Harbor and St. Louis River Estuary. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) made the announcement near the opening of fishing season and officials are urging anglers and other river users to take steps to prevent accidentally spreading mudsnails. (See the stop aquatic hitchhiker box at right for gui)

New Zealand mudsnails cause concern because their sheer numbers can disrupt the ecosystem by pushing out important native species. “They have adapted so well in Western rivers that they have pushed out almost all of the native insects, snails, and other invertebrates that are important food for fish,” said Doug Jensen, aquatic invasive species program coordinator for Minnesota Sea Grant. “More than 700,000 snails per square meter cover the bottoms of some rivers.”

Over 100 snails were collected last fall by a research team from the EPA’s Mid-Continent Ecology Division in Duluth. The team was conducting a species survey as part of a project designed to look for new invaders in Great Lakes harbors. This is the first finding of the tiny snail in Minnesota and Wisconsin waters.