Prepared for Hawkinson Construction Company
Prepared by Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.

LEAR000946 Lease Expansion – Soring Pit Project Environmental Assessment Worksheet

September 10, 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Note to reviewers: Comments must be submitted to the Responsible Governmental Unit during the 30-day comment period following notice of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet in the EQB Monitor. Comments should address the accuracy and completeness of information, potential impacts that warrant further investigation and the need for an Environmental Impact Statement.

1. PROJECT TITLE

The LEAR000946 Lease Expansion – Soring Pit Project. This will be referred to as the Project in this EAW.

2. PROPOSER – HAWKINSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Contact Person: Brian Anderson
Title: Project Manager / Crushing and Aggregate Sales
Address: Hawkinson Construction Company, 501 West County Road 63
City, State, Zip: Grand Rapids, MN 55744
Phone: 218.326.0309
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3. RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT UNIT

Contact Person: Tony Valitinson
Title: Zoning Officer / City of Cohasset
Address: 305 NW 1st Avenue
City, State, Zip: Cohasset, MN 55721
Phone: 218.328.6225, extension 20
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4. REASON FOR EAW PREPARATION

Required	Discretionary
☐ EIS Scoping	☐ Citizen petition
☒ Mandatory EAW	☐ RGU discretion
	☐ Proposer initiated

If Mandatory, give EQB rule category subpart number(s) and name(s).

An EAW is required for under Minnesota Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 12, Item B – Nonmetallic Mineral Mining.

5. PROJECT LOCATION

County: Itasca
City/Township: Cohasset

Public Land Survey Location: S½ SE¼ of Section 1 and NE¼ NE¼ of Section 12, Township 55 North, Range 26 West

GPS Coordinates: 47.161017, -93.345175 (center)
Tax Parcel Number: 05-001-4000, 91-006-3300, and 91-007-2200

This EAW is supported by:

- County map showing the general location of the project **(Figure 1)**
- U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 minute, 1:24,000 scale map indicating project boundaries **(Figure 2)**
- Current Conditions Overview **(Figure 3)**
- Site plans showing all significant project and natural features. Pre-construction Site Plan **(Figure 4)** and Post-construction Site Plan **(Figure 5)**.
- Surficial Geology Overview **(Figure 6)**
- Soils **(Figure 7)**
- Site Topographic Overview **(Figure 8)**
- Water and Wetland Resources **(Figure 9)**
- Sensitive and Impaired Waters **(Figure 10)**
- Wells and Environmental Records **(Figure 11)**
- Public Conservation Lands **(Figure 12)**
- Rare Resources and Communities **(Figure 13)**

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

a. Project Summary

Provide a brief project summary to be published in the EQB Monitor.

Hawkinson Construction Company (Hawkinson) has applied for a lease expansion (LEAR000946 Lease Expansion) from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lands and Minerals Division, for its existing Soring Pit in Cohasset. Raw material extracted from the Soring Pit is sent to Hawkinson's sand and gravel quarry and distribution facility at 3000 Rangeline Road in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. The lease expansion would expand the Soring Pit to 58.4 acres and would extend quarry life and aggregate production to 2030. No change in quarry operations or production levels is proposed. Aggregate produced from the extension will continue to be transported to and processed at the existing Hawkinson processing and distribution facility southeast the Soring Pit.

b. Description

Give a complete description of the proposed project and related new construction, including infrastructure needs. If the project is an expansion include a description of the existing facility.

Emphasize 1) construction, operation methods and features that will cause physical manipulation of the environment or will produce wastes, 2) modifications to existing equipment or industrial processes, 3) significant demolition, removal or remodeling of existing structures, and 4) timing and duration of construction activities.

The Soring Pit is located on Minnesota Trust Land leased to Hawkinson by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The lease is for the removal of earth materials per cubic yard. Materials allowed to be extracted with the lease boundary include sand, gravel, boulders, and uncrushed rock. The lease will be in effect from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027, with an option to renew. Revenues generated from the lease go to support State of Minnesota's Permanent School Fund.

Construction, Operation, and Features

The existing Soring Pit is located east of Soring Road on the eastern municipal boundary of Cohasset. Operation of the Soring Pit began in the mid-1980s when it was operated by Rajala Construction Company. Hawkinson purchased the gravel pit in or around 2005. Based on historic aerial imagery, the total quarried area since the mid-1980s is approximately 28.2 acres. An access road and conveyor system extends approximately 0.5 miles southeast from the Soring Pit into Hawkinson's main processing and distribution facility at 3000 Rangeline Road in Grand Rapids. Raw material from the Soring Pit is transported to the main facility via a conveyer system. The conveyer system operates under a separate permit issued by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. At the main facility, the raw material is washed and crushed (if necessary) to produce aggregate to meet local- and regional-market demand for the construction and roadway development.

Extraction and processing operations currently conducted at the gravel pit consist of the removal of earthen material for aggregate mining. In general, the process includes the use of crushers, screens, conveyors, heavy equipment for extraction and reclamation. No water is used to process the aggregate within the existing gravel pit. Internal roads along the perimeter of the gravel pit change periodically as mining activities advance. Berms, fences, gates, and landscaping are implemented to provide safety buffers. The Soring Pit is one of three active pits Hawkinson uses to obtain aggregate mostly for use in road and building construction for base course, hot mix asphalt production, and ready mix concrete from at its 3000 Rangeline Road facility.

The Project proposes to expand the existing gravel pit to the south and southeast of the existing pit. The proposed expansion area encompasses an approximately 30.2-acre area adjacent to the eastern and southern boundaries of the existing gravel pit. The proposed maximum mining depth is 50 to 60 feet below the current ground surface.

The expanded pit is proposed to operate on a year-around basis – Monday through Saturday during daylight hours (6:00 am to 8:00 pm) from April through November. Occasional operations requiring extended hours may occur due to the needs of particular projects or due to the need for specific aggregate materials at particular times, especially during road construction season. At the present time, specific noise limitations or restrictions to reduce possible effects on nearby residences and neighbors or on wildlife resources are not planned or proposed.

Activities at the existing Soring Pit include:

- Gravel mining
- Reclamation

Operations will include removing the topsoil and overburden and stockpiling it for future reclamation of the site. Some of the overburden is a sand product that may be commercially used. Removal of overburden will be typically done using excavators, haul trucks, dozers, and/or scrapers. Once the overburden is removed and the aggregate is exposed, the aggregate rock is removed with front-end loaders and transported to a loading area, where it will be placed on an existing conveyor system which connects the Soring Pit with Hawkinson's main facility for washing, sorting, and crushing (if necessary) for size reduction of the product into marketable crushed stone products. Blasting will not be used to extract materials. As operations continue, the mining extends to greater depths within the gravel and sand beds. Once the limits of the Permit Area have been reached and reclaimed, the operation will focus on the bottom of the pit. Drag lines or some similar equipment will be used to obtain the targeted material when the water table has been reached. No water discharge into area streams and lakes will occur as part of the pit operation. Dewatering (or water removal from the quarry) will occur within the self-contained pit. Consequently, a discharge permit or approval from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is not being sought as part of the expansion permit.

As the quarry operations migrate to the southeast and south, the existing conveyor system and access road on the southern edge of the existing pit will be removed, and the ground underneath both features may be quarried.

Once mining operations are completed, Hawkinson plans to return the land to a safe and stable state using currently accepted best practices. It is anticipated that approximately 58.4 acres of land will be reclaimed, including the existing gravel pit and proposed expansion. Reclamation efforts will be completed concurrently as mining efforts move south and southeast and will consist generally of site preparation, slope stabilization, soil conservation, and revegetation.

Once all mining operations have ceased, all equipment, conveyor systems, and roads built exclusively for mining will be removed. If necessary, the access road will be removed and revegetated. Site specific grading, re-vegetation, or other control measures will be conducted (as necessary) to minimize soil erosion. Any piles of excavated material or overburden will be removed.

Reclamation will occur concurrently as mining activities advance southeastward and southward to provide erosion control and drainage protection. Grasses will be planted in 3 to 4 inches of topsoil following slope stabilization during the most favorable time of the growing season. The gravel pit slopes will be seeded with a hydro seeding technique.

Sand, clay, and some gravel will be used to bring the side walls of the gravel pit to 1:3 grade to minimize erosion, and the bottom of the pit will be left level and allowed to fill with groundwater. Any remaining large materials would also be crushed down and used as fill. Soil capping and re-grading will be conducted as needed. In areas where there is soil compaction, ripping and disking will be used to loosen the soil and create viable areas for regrowth.

Maintenance activities include spraying for weeds, moving topsoil, sloping, and seeding. Public safety will be maintained using warning signs and fences and gates to control access to the property.

Potential future land uses range widely, including grazing/agricultural, industrial, fish/wildlife habitat, residential, recreational, forestry, water management, scientific, and educational. The future land use will be determined once mining operations have been completed.

Modifications to Existing Equipment or Industrial Processes

The proposed expansion of the gravel pit would not change the existing operational activities or require new equipment. Existing gravel mining operations would gradually shift to the south and southeast towards Hawkinson's main facility. No new buildings or structures are proposed as part of the Project, and no structures are present within the existing pit or expansion area.

Significant Demolition, Removal or Remodeling of Existing Structures

The Project would not alter buildings, structures, or substantially change the existing aggregate extraction activities at the gravel pit, but it would extend the operations southeast and south. The expansion would occur within the existing property leased by Hawkinson within the city limits of Cohasset. Physical alteration and waste product is anticipated to be similar to the existing quarry.

Timing and Duration of Construction Activities

Expansion of the gravel pit would commence once all permits and approvals have been obtained for the Project. It is anticipated that permits and approvals would be obtained summer or fall 2025. Aggregate extraction activities within the expanded pit are anticipated to occur over the duration of approximately 5 years.

c. Project Magnitude

Table 1. Project Quantities

Project Feature	Quantity
Total Project Acreage	58.4 acres
Currently Active Quarry	28.2 acres
Proposed Quarry Expansion	30.2 acres
Linear Project Length	N/A
Number and Type of Residential Units	N/A
Residential Building Area ($feet^2$)	N/A
Commercial Building Area ($feet^2$)	N/A
Industrial Building Area ($feet^2$)	N/A
Institutional Building Area ($feet^2$)	N/A
Other Uses – Specify ($feet^2$)	N/A

Structure Height(s)	N/A

d. Purpose

Explain the purpose of the project; if the project will be carried out by a governmental unit, explain the need for the project and identify its beneficiaries.

The Soring Pit is an integral part of Hawkinson's Grand Rapids operation, which supplies large quantities of sand, gravel, and crushed stone products for the cities of Grand Rapids and Cohasset, Itasca County, and surrounding areas in north-central Minnesota. Future road and building construction and maintenance projects in these geographical areas require a continued source of aggregate product. The majority of the products produced at this site are used to make road base, hot mix asphalt, and ready mix concrete. The proximity of this resource to its likely users makes it an economically viable resource for area merchants and contractors.

e. Future Stages

Are future stages of this development including development on any other property planned or likely to happen? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, briefly describe future stages, relationship to present project, timeline and plans for environmental review.

It is anticipated that a future expansion may occur but is dependent on market conditions. The timing of a future expansion is not known at this time. A future expansion of the gravel pit will be subject to the federal, state and local regulations in place at the time that a future phase is proposed. Any necessary environmental reviews pursuant to the *Minnesota Environmental Policy Act* (MEPA) and permits for a future phase will be obtained.

f. Prior Stages

Is this project a subsequent stage of an earlier project? ☒Yes No
If yes, briefly describe past development, timeline and any past environmental review.

Hawkinson has operated the Soring Pit since 2005, when it obtained a lease from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. They have developed and quarried the pit incrementally since that time under permits issued by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Land and Mineral Division. As all previous permits have fallen below the threshold for environmental reviews established under Minnesota Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 12, Item B – Nonmetallic Mineral Mining, an Environmental Assessment Worksheet has not been developed or prepared for operations at the Soring Pit. Because the current permit would exceed the 40-acre threshold, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Land and Mineral Division staff is requiring this Environmental Assessment Worksheet as part of their permitting of the LEAR000946 Lease Expansion – Soring Pit Project.

7. CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Describe the climate trends in the general location of the project (see guidance: Climate Adaptation and Resilience) and how climate change is anticipated to affect that location duringthe life of the project.

The Project is situated within the city limits of Cohasset, Itasca County, Minnesota, and falls within the Mississippi Headwaters Watershed. Dynamically down-scaled climate data from the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership's (MCAP) Minnesota Climate Mapping and Analysis Tool (MnCliMAT) provides high resolution climate data at a 2.5-mile grid scale level. Climate data for an Area of Interest comprising 35 grid cells centered on Cohasset were used to identify temperature and precipitation trends.

Temperature Trends

According to information from MnCliMAT, average annual temperature for historical simulations (1995 to 2014) was 40.0° F. Under intermediate emissions (SSP 245) and very high emissions (SSP 585), average annual temperature will increase over the next several decades, ranging from 3.8° F to 4.5° F (43.8° F to 44.5 ° F) by mid-century (2040 to 2059) and 6.7° F to 11.7° F (46.7° F to 51.7° F) by the end of this century (2080 to 2099). In both the intermediate and very high emission scenarios, seasonal warming is increasing fastest from December to February, when temperatures are projected to increase (compared to historical simulations) between 4.8° F and 5.4° F by mid-century and 8.3° F to 14.2° F by the end of this century.

Precipitation Trends

Based on modeling from MnCliMAT, average annual precipitation for historical simulations (1995 to 2014) was 28.5 inches. Under intermediate emissions (SSP 245) and very high emissions (SSP 370), average annual precipitation will increase over the next several decades, ranging from -0.7 to 0.5 inches (27.8 to 29.0 inches) by mid-century (2040 to 2059) and -0.3 to 2.6 inches (28.2 to 31.1 inches) by the end of this century (2080 to 2099). In both the intermediate and very high emission scenarios, seasonal precipitation increases in spring and fall and decreases in summer. Spring precipitation is projected to increase (compared to historical simulations) between 0.6 and 0.7 inches by mid-century and 0.9 and 2.2 inches by the end of this century. Summer precipitation in contrast is projected to decrease (compared to historical simulations) between 0.8 and 1.4 inches by mid-century and 1.3 and 1.6 inches by the end of this century.

Climate Trend Summary

The temperature and precipitation trends described above indicate that the climate in Cohasset is expected to get warmer and wetter throughout the life of the Project (2025 to 2030) and beyond. As identified above, seasonal variation in temperature and precipitation is projected to result in warmer annual temperatures, more annual precipitation, warmer and drier summers, and wetter springs and falls. Recognizing the seasonal changes in temperature and precipitation is important as these climate impacts may affect the Project into the future. Warmer and drier summers may require the use of more water on-site for dust control. The changing climate overall is not expected to noticeably affect quarrying operations during the life of the pit.

For each Resource Category in the table below: Describe how the project's proposed activitiesand how the project's design will interact with those climate trends. Describe proposed adaptations to address the project effects identified.

Climate Trend	Project Components	Potential Environmental & Social Impacts	Effects the Local Community	Adaptation Strategies
Average Temperature Increasing	Expansion of the Soring Pit (quarrying)	• No impact	No	
	Land reclamation (site prep, slope stabilization, soil conservation, and revegetation)	• No impact	No	
Winter Average Temperature Increasing	Expansion of the Soring Pit (quarrying)	• No impact	No	
	Land reclamation (site prep, slope stabilization, soil conservation, and revegetation)	• No impact	No	
Average Annual Precipitation Increasing	Expansion of the Soring Pit (quarrying)	• No impact	No	
	Land reclamation (site prep, slope stabilization, soil conservation, and revegetation)	• Greater potential for erosion during significant precipitation events	No	• Monitor and adjust reclamation practices to ensure erosion prevention, sediment control, and revegetation

Climate Trend	Project Components	Potential Environmental & Social Impacts	Effects the Local Community	Adaptation Strategies
				objectives are being met.
Spring and Fall Precipitation Increasing	Expansion of the Soring Pit (quarrying)	• No impact	No	
	Land reclamation (site prep, slope stabilization, soil conservation, and revegetation)	• Greater potential for erosion during significant precipitation events	No	• Monitor and adjust reclamation practices to ensure erosion prevention, sediment control, and revegetation objectives are being met.
Summer Precipitation Decreasing	Expansion of the Soring Pit (quarrying)	• Increase in dust from disturbed materials	No	• Additional spraying of soils to reduce dust
	Land reclamation (site prep, slope stabilization, soil conservation, and revegetation)	• Drier soil more susceptible to erosion • More challenging conditions to re-establish cover vegetation	No	• Adaptive management of sidewall material mixture to reduce erosion. • Additional vegetation maintenance (weed spraying, seeding, and watering).

8. COVER TYPES

Table 2 describes the land cover features pre-project and post-project. Currently, land cover within the Project Area consists of the existing gravel pit; disturbed, fallow ground which was recently harvested for timber; the haul road connecting the Soring Pit with the main Hawkinson facility; three small pools/standing water within the existing gravel pit; three small potential wetlands; and several patches of even-aged timber which were not subject to recent harvesting. Immediately outside of and adjacent to the pit, cover types can be characterized a mosaic of recently disturbed ground associated with a timber harvest; stands and patches of even-aged trees; lakes; utility and pipeline corridors; extensive wetland complexes; and isolated single-family residences. After quarrying has been completed in or around 2030, the Project Area will increase the amount of reclaimed land planted in native vegetation and pools/surface water. See **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** for existing and proposed land cover maps.

Table 2. Land Cover Before and After

Project Feature	Before (acres)	After (acres)**
Gravel Pit/Haul Road/Conveyor*	28.7	0
Reclaimed Ground/Open Water	0	58.4
Wetlands	0.6	0
Forests and Forest Patches	3.4	0
Disturbed, Fallow Ground	25.7	0
TOTAL	58.4	58.4

***Approximately 5.2 acres are considered impervious due to mining activity/compaction from large machinery**
****Land cover is projected and acreage may differ slightly based off constraints**

9. PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

List all known local, state and federal permits, approvals, certifications and financial assistance for the project. Include modifications of any existing permits, governmental review of plans and all direct and indirect forms of public financial assistance including bond guarantees, Tax Increment Financing and infrastructure. All of these final decisions are prohibited until all appropriate environmental review has been completed. See Minnesota Rules, Chapter 4410.3100.

Table 3. Permits and Approvals Required.

Unit of Government	Type of Application	Status
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 *Clean Water Act* Permit	To be Submitted
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation required as part of the Section 404 *Clean Water Act* permitting process	To be Completed
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)	NPDES/SDS Construction Stormwater Permit	Existing Permit
	Air Permit	Existing Permit
	401 Certification (required for Section 404 *Clean Water Act* permitting process)	To be Completed

Unit of Government	Type of Application	Status
	Stormwater Permit	Existing Permit
	Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan	Existing Plan
Board of Water and Soil Resources /U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Joint Permit Application and *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act* (Wetland Delineation Review and Approval)	To Be Submitted
BWSR-WCA LGU/USACE/Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Joint Permit Application and *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act* (Wetland Replacement Plan/404/401 Certification-Antidegredation)	To Be Submitted
State Historic Preservation Office	Section 106 concurrence required as part of the Section 404 *Clean Water Act* permitting process	To be Completed

10. LAND USE

a. Land Use Descriptions

i. Existing Land Use

Describe existing land use of the site as well as area adjacent to and near the site, including parks, trails, prime or unique farmlands.

Existing land use includes the active and reclaimed Soring Pit; recently harvested timber east of the pit; and a small patch of upland forest on the northern edge of the lease boundary – all of which is within Hawkinson's Grand Rapids facility. Some portion of the pit has been operating since the mid-1980s. The Soring Pit has incrementally expanded to the southeast since that time. The area southeast of the Project is part of Hawkinson's Grand Rapids facility at 3000 Rangeline Road. The pit is between a pipeline corridor on the south and a high-voltage transmission line on the north. The general area can be characterized as rural, with numerous isolated rural residences and undeveloped open space and lakes. High density commercial, industrial, and residential areas are located approximately 1.0 mile to the south along U.S. Highway 2 in Cohasset and Grand Rapids. Access into the pit is through a private road operated, controlled, and maintained as part of the Hawkinson's operation, though some limited commercial traffic does access the site via Soring Road on the west. There are no trails, parks, or conservation areas within or adjacent to the site. Nearby land uses include small businesses and single-family residences along Soring Road to the east and Nike Road and Cranberry Lane to the north. Agricultural operations are absent within or close to the Project.

Approximately 81.4 percent of the soils are classed as Prime Farmland, and approximately 18.6 percent is classified as Not Prime Farmland (NRCS, 2025).

ii. Planned Land Use

Describe planned land use as identified in comprehensive plan (if available) and any other applicable plan for land use, water, or resources management by a local, regional, state, or federal agency.

State

The Project is located on lands designated for School Trust Lands with a surface interest and School Trust Lands with a mineral interest. Minerals management by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources plays an important role in the ongoing funding of the state's Permanent School Fund.

Itasca County

Itasca County adopted its most recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 2013. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan establishes goals related to desired future conditions for the county and seeks to balance goals related to economic development and responsible natural resource management. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan includes applicable goals directing land use change related to the Project:

- Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Itasca County residents and visitors for employment and services.
- Promote land and water uses that result in the sustainable use of natural resources by balancing development and environmental commitment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and resources of the county for this and the next 1,000 years.

City of Cohasset

The City of Cohasset adopted its most recent Comprehensive Plan in 2024. The plan identifies the Project within the Rural/Suburban policy area. Specific policy areas within the Rural/Suburban area primarily concern the development and redevelopment of residential land uses. This includes: 1) encouraging low-density residential; 2) allowing home-based/extended residential compatible businesses; and 3) connecting residential areas. Policy areas applicable to directing growth and change of industrial development include:

- Increasing the use of screening of development in rural areas and use of conservation design techniques for new development or redevelopment.
- Retaining appropriate buffer around existing and viable industrial development outside the industrial/commercial area and transition these properties to residential uses when opportunities arise. Discourage new commercial development other than home-based or home-extended businesses.
- Restricting signs and maintain natural character of roads and roadside viewsheds.
- Evaluating the housing market of the next 20 years and develop a housing strategy which will identify how to maintain or increase the supply of affordable housing in Cohasset and determine the role that the Rural/Suburban area should have in providing for that need. It

may be that these areas of Cohasset should be targeted for additional housing development that could serve new employees at new or expanded businesses in the area.

The City further defines several central aspirations in the Comprehensive Plan aligned to the above goals for the future vitality of the community and the region. These aspirations include:

- Maintaining rural character by preserving the existing infrastructure and enhancing safety instead of embarking on significant geographic growth.
- Growing the commercial tax base in ways which have a positive return on investment.

ii. Zoning

Describe zoning, including special districts or overlays such as shoreland, floodplain, wild and scenic rivers, critical area, agricultural preserves, etc.

The Project is located within the City of Cohasset's Rural Residential District (05-001-4000) and adjacent to the City of Grand Rapid's Rural Residential (91-006-3300) and Mining Overlay District (91-007-2200). The Project is surrounded by properties zoned Rural Residential to the north and west and by properties zoned for the Cohasset Industrial Park and Rural Residential to the south. The City considers this to be a continued usage and would not require a conditional use permit, as it is the continuation of the same activity on the same parcel.

The Project is located outside of the Shoreland Area District and Flood Hazard District.

b. Land Use Compatibility

Discuss the project's compatibility with nearby land uses, zoning, and plans listed in Item 9a above, concentrating on implications for environmental effects.

The Project is compatible with nearby land uses, zoning, and local plans. The Project proposes to expand existing quarrying activities along with concurrent reclamation of land as mining advances. The Project is within lands permitted by Cohasset for these activities, subject to adherence to specific performance standards under the zoning ordinances. Continued operation of the Project contributes to the County and City's goals related to retaining industrial employment, as they work to diversify their economic development opportunities. The ongoing operation of the Project preserves taxable land base that funds the state's School Land Trust.

In the long-term, expansion of rural residential areas near the Project could create the potential for conflict due to potential effects related to noise, dust control, truck traffic, and other operations. However, the development horizon of these rural residential areas is anticipated to occur beyond the 2030 lease extension horizon proposed for the Project. Land reclamation activities proposed for the Project are consistent with Cohasset future land use.

c. Mitigation Measures

Identify measures incorporated into the proposed project to mitigate any potential incompatibility as discussed in Item 9b above.

Operation of the Soring Pit will be subject to the Performance Standards identified in Cohasset's zoning ordinances related to setbacks, screening, noise, dust control, traffic, and other potential nuisance conditions. These standards are intended to minimize the potential for land-use conflict.

11. GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND TOPOGRAPHY

a. Geology

Describe the geology underlying the project area and identify and map any susceptible geologic features such as sinkholes, shallow limestone formations, unconfined/shallow aquifers, or karst conditions. Discuss any limitations of these features for the project and any effects the project could have on these features. Identify any project designs or mitigation measures to address effects to geologic features.

The bedrock below the site is described as tonalite, diorite, and granodiorite of the Giants Range batholith (MGS, 2018). Nearby well logs indicate that the depth to bedrock is greater than 239 feet (MDH, 2022a). The surficial geology above bedrock is described as glacial lake sediment modified by currents (MGS, 2019). Nearby well logs show next layers of clay, silt, sand, and gravel to a depth of at least 80 feet (MDH, 2022b).

No susceptible geologic features have been identified in the area, so no mitigation will be required.

b. Soils and Topography

Describe the soils on the site, giving NRCS (SCS) classifications and descriptions, including limitations of soils. Describe topography, any special site conditions relating to erosion potential, soil stability or other soils limitations, such as steep slopes, highly permeable soils. Provide estimated volume and acreage of soil excavation and/or grading. Discuss impacts from project activities (distinguish between construction and operational activities) related to soils and topography. Identify measures during and after project construction to address soil limitations including stabilization, soil corrections or other measures. Erosion/sedimentation control related to stormwater runoff should be addressed in response to Item 11.b.ii.

Soils consist of glacial features associated with moraines and outwash plains, with more fine-grained deposits in depressions or low-lying areas.[1] Soils include primarily loamy glaciofluvial deposits over sandy and gravelly outwash associated with the Itasca silt loam and Itasca-Goodland silt loams – both

[1] Hawkinson has not undertaken any geotechnical analysis at the Soring Pit location.

well-drained, non-Hydric soils. In general, the proposed gravel expansion area is comprised of coarse-grained glacial sediments associated with a mixed outwash plain. Sand and gravel material will be hauled off-site during the operation of the gravel pit expansion.

NRCS SSURGO data mapped two Predominantly Not Hydric soil units within the Project Area (**Table 4**). Soils range in textures from silt loam to fine sandy loam. Approximately 81.4 percent of the site is comprised of soils classed as Prime Farmland, and approximately 18.6 percent is classified as Not Prime Farmland. Parent material includes silty glaciolacustrine deposits over loamy till. None of the land area has been or is currently being farmed. The Erosion Hazard Ratings range from slight to moderate. Given that the site is fairly flat, they are not a concern in terms of the proposed Project.

The mining operation will remove sand and gravel from an additional 29.7 acres It is estimated that approximately 3,000,000 tons (2,200,00 cubic yards) of additional material will be excavated from the pit.

Table 4. Soils

Soil Unit	Percentage	Farmland Class	Erosion Hazard Rating	Hydric Classification	Drainage Class
618B – Itasca silt loam, 0 to 10% slopes	81.4%	Prime Farmland	Slight	Predominantly Not Hydric	Well Drained
870E – Itasca-Goodland silt loams 12-20% slopes	18.6%	Not Prime Farmland	Moderate	Predominantly Not Hydric	Well Drained

Topography in the Project Area is relatively flat, with only slight changes in topography across the site. The flat terrain should not cause any concerns with erosion from steep slopes. The Project will include berms constructed around the edge to keep any runoff on-site. Soil permeability is generally high, with well-drained soils throughout the Itasca silt loam and Itasca-Goodland silt loams.

12. WATER RESOURCES

a. Surface Water and Groundwater Features

i. Surface Water

Describe surface water – lakes, streams, wetlands, intermittent channels, and county/judicial ditches. Include any special designations such as public waters, trout stream/lake, wildlife lakes, migratory waterfowl feeding/resting lake, and outstanding resource value water. Include water quality impairments or special designations listed on the current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 303d Impaired Waters List that are within 1 mile of the project. Include Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Public Waters Inventory number(s), if any.

The Project is located on a low, rolling ground moraine separating a series of interconnected lakes, waterways, and wetland complexes. No surface water features (stream or lakes) occur within the

Project Area on the National Hydrography Dataset; other federal or state datasets or databases; or the U.S.G.S 7.5' series topographic map.

The closest public water basin (an unnamed lake) is located immediately north of the Project Area. The closest named lake is Forsythe Lake, which is less than 0.5 miles to the southwest. Three pit pools or areas of standing water, which are a collection point for rainwater in the current gravel pit. Approximately 1.7 miles southwest of the Project Area, Bass Brook connects Bass Lake to the north and the Mississippi River to the south – both of which are public water watercourses. The Mississippi River is also designated an Outstanding Resource Value Water classified as "restricted" by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

A number of lakes located in the general area are listed as "impaired" by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Forsyth Lake is classified as impaired due to high levels of mercury in fish tissue, along with Bass Lake (1.0 mile) and Little Bass Lake (0.8 miles).

There are other waterbodies upstream and downstream that have significant biological significance. Bass Lake (1.0 mile), Little Bass Lake (0.8 miles), Nagel Lake (0.7 miles), Hale Lake (1.4 miles), and the Blandin Reservoir (1.1 miles) all are considered "outstanding" by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, the Minnesota County Biological Survey identified Bass Lake Swamp (1.8 miles) as a biological site of moderate significance.

In addition to the presence of lakes in the immediate areas, the National Wetland Inventory includes over 400 indexed wetlands located within a 1.5-mile radius of the Project Area. These wetlands represent a variety of wetland community types. Wetland community types in the around the Project Area include shrub wetlands (PSS1D, PSS1C), open bogs (PSS3/EM1Dq), coniferous bogs (PFO4/SS2Dq), deep marsh (PEM2H), and shallow open water (PABH). Additionally, the immediate Project Area contains all or portions of four shrub-carr wetlands (PSS1D). **(Figure 9)**

ii. Groundwater

Groundwater – aquifers, springs, seeps. Include: 1) depth to groundwater; 2) if project is within a Minnesota Department of Health wellhead protection area; 3) identification of any on-site and/or nearby wells, including unique numbers and well logs if available. If there are no wells known on site or nearby, explain the methodology used to determine this.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources divides the state into six groundwater provinces. The Project is within the Central Province (Province 4). The Central Province is characterized by buried sand aquifers and relatively extensive surficial sand plains, part of a thick layer of sediment deposited by glaciers overlying the bedrock. The Central Province has thick glacial sediment, sand and gravel aquifers are common, and the deeper fractured crystalline bedrock has poor aquifer properties and limited use as an aquifer. This Province is underlain by sedimentary bedrock with good aquifer properties.

The Minnesota Department of Health enforces the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, including the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations created under the Act. These regulations are legally enforceable standards and treatment techniques that apply to public water systems that protect drinking and source water. As a result, Minnesota adopted the State Wellhead Protection Rule

4720.5100-4720.5590 in 1997. The Minnesota Department of Health is responsible for administering the State Wellhead Protection. Under the State Wellhead Protection Program, public water systems are required to develop and implement a plan that protects its drinking water source. Wellhead Protection Areas are approved surface and subsurface areas surrounding a public water supply well or well field that supplies a public water system, through which contaminants are likely to move toward and reach the well or well field. Drinking Water Supply Management Areas contain the Wellhead Protection Program but are outlined by clear boundaries. The Drinking Water Supply Management Areas is typically managed by a wellhead protection plan.

Nearby residential wells draw water from buried sand aquifers (QBAA) greater than 50 feet below ground surface. The proposed project will not require the use of groundwater for operations, so groundwater use at the site will not be an issue. Hawkinson attempted soil borings in the area but were unable to due to the soil conditions in the area. There are no registered wells on the site (MDH, 2022a). There are no unlisted wells in the Project Area.

Groundwater will likely be encountered during excavation of the pit. The Project plan is to allow groundwater to naturally accumulate and transform the gravel pit into a pond when mining operations are complete. In a typical year, the water table is approximately 4 or 5 feet below the deepest parts of the active pit.

As part of their Stormwater Pollution Prevention and Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure plans, Hawkinson implements the following best practices to protect groundwater resources:

- Allowable discharges under Hawkinson's current permits include:
  - Emergency fire-fighting activities.
  - Fire hydrant and sprinkler system flushing.
  - Potable water line flushing.
  - Uncontaminated condensate from air conditioners, coolers, compressors, or the outside storage of refrigerated gases or liquids.
  - Landscape watering if all pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers have been applied in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
  - Pavement wash water if no detergents are used and there are no spills or leaks of pollutants such as salt, fertilizer, toxic materials, or hazardous materials, or all spilled material has been removed.
  - Uncontaminated groundwater or spring water.
  - Discharges authorized by a separate permit.
  - Dust control.
- Hawkinson's stormwater permit prohibits the following discharges:
  - Dewatering of quarry areas (due to receiving waters designated as trout streams).
  - Hot mix asphalt production wet scrubber wastewater to surface waters.
  - Water from washing commercial equipment or vehicles.
  - Surface water discharge from equipment/vehicle washing, cleaning and maintenance wastewaters, and sewage.
  - Contaminated ground water discharges.

- Discharges of hazardous substances, lubricants, fuel leaks, or fuel spills.
- Facilities that manufacture asphalt or asphalt emulsions.
- Discharges prohibited in Minnesota Rule 7050.0180, subpart 3, 4 and 5. This includes certain discharges to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageur's National Park, parts of Lake Superior, parts of the Kettle River and the Rum River and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Scientific and Natural Areas.
- Any new or expanded discharge that may cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards unless it meets the requirements of 40 § 122.44(i).
- Discharge that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency determines will cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards unless it meets the requirements of 40 §§ 122.44.

Hawkinson documents all non-stormwater discharges (including any spills and leaks) that have been evaluated and all discharges not allowed by its stormwater permit that have been eliminated.

The site is not located in any source water protection areas (MDH, 2022b). The site borders a Drinking Water Supply Management Area. Due to the type of activity involved, no chemicals or explosives are planned to be used – thereby minimizing risk to drinking water in the area.

b. Impacts and Mitigation

Describe effects from project activities on water resources and measures to minimize or mitigate the effects in Item b.i. through Item b.iv. below.

i. Wastewater

For each of the following, describe the sources, quantities and composition of all sanitary, municipal/domestic and industrial wastewater produced or treated at the site.

1) ***If the wastewater discharge is to a publicly owned treatment facility, identify any pretreatment measures and the ability of the facility to handle the added water and waste loadings, including any effects on, or required expansion of municipal wastewater infrastructure.***

2) ***If the wastewater discharge is to a subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS), describe the system used, the design flow, and suitability of site conditions for such a system.***

3) ***If the wastewater discharge is to surface water, identify the wastewater treatment methods and identify discharge points and proposed effluent limitations to mitigate impacts. Discuss any effects to surface or groundwater from wastewater discharges.***

Within the Soring Pit, Hawkinson uses water exclusively in their dust-control efforts. No runoff is discharged into nearby surface waters or a treatment facility. Any wastewater drains into depressions created by the mining process. No effects are expected for water that filters naturally or evaporates.

ii. Stormwater

Describe the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff at the site prior to and post construction. Include the routes and receiving water bodies for runoff from the site (major downstream water bodies as well as the immediate receiving waters). Discuss any environmental effects from stormwater runoff. Identify specific erosion control, sedimentation control or stabilization measures to address soil limitations during and after project construction.

The Project will not discharge stormwater to surface waters. Stormwater will be retained on-site. Quarrying activities create depressions in the landscape that direct the flow of water towards the interior of the gravel pit. As soils are classified as Hydrologic Soil Group A, they are well-drained soils that produce low rates of runoff. The mining area of the site drains to a series of infiltration basins located in the existing gravel pit. The infiltration ponds are designed to allow water to infiltrate and do not discharge water off-site. No new impervious surfaces will be created.

Hawkinson has developed and implemented a management plan for industrial stormwater discharges as required by its existing Minnesota Industrial Stormwater General Permit MNG490000 for Nonmetallic Mining and Associated Activities. The goal of this plan is to eliminate or minimize contact of stormwater with significant materials that may result in pollution of runoff, as well as identify and correctly manage non-stormwater discharges. The plan includes current and future operations at the Soring Pit.

The Project Area is not within a Minnesota Department of Health Wellhead Protection Area or a Drinking Water Supply Management Area. Based on a review of the Minnesota Department of Health's Minnesota Well Index, focusing on domestic water wells located near the Project, the depth to static water level ranges from 50 to 60 feet.

The elevation of the landscape ranges from 1,296 to 1,355 feet. The Project has higher elevations surrounding the boundary, while the landscape generally slopes into different depressions ranging from 1,296 feet to 1,316 feet.

The Soil Survey Geographic Database shows a uniform soil profile, with well-drained slopes dominating the area. There is currently approximately 5.2 acres of impervious surfaces from conveyer belts used to transport raw material out of the pit, as well as gravel roads the haulers and compacters use to navigate the site. There are no existing stormwater management facilities to treat runoff prior to its collection within the lower elevations of the gravel pit.

The entire Soring Pit drains internally into depressions created by and for sand and gravel mining purposes where water infiltrates or evaporates. Stormwater will not discharge from the Soring Pit via overland flow to area surface waters. All stormwater is captured on-site and infiltrated. Best practices at the Soring Pit are designed to maintain this internal drainage.

Hawkinson designs and implements best practices for stormwater control measures to address the potential pollutants associated with the activities and materials identified in this Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Hawkinson is committed for best practices to remain in place until the site has been permanently stabilized. This includes:

- Keeping exposed areas that may contribute pollutants to stormwater sufficiently clean to reduce or eliminate contaminated stormwater runoff to the maximum extent practicable through use of:
  - Secondary containment for all fueling and maintenance activities, as applicable.
  - Covered storage containers for hazardous materials to prevent exposure to stormwater, as applicable.
  - Spill kits kept on site.
  - Proper employee training including proper fueling and maintenance and spill response procedures.
  - Drip pans and splash guards placed where spills may frequently occur during hot mix asphalt production activities.
- Implementing the following erosion prevention practices:
  - Temporary and permanent stabilization, as applicable.
  - Phasing to reduce exposed soils.
  - Vegetative buffer strips surround the site and adjacent to receiving waters and discharge points.
  - Dust control to reduce and eliminate any wind erosion, as applicable.
  - Proper employee training including environmentally sensitive areas not to be disturbed.
- Applying the following sediment control practices:
  - Installing sediment control on all down-gradient perimeters prior to any up-gradient land disturbing activities.
  - Allowing stormwater to infiltrate within depressions from sand and gravel mining activities or a vegetated pond following a runoff event to reduce the amount of drainage leaving site.
  - Applying sediment control mechanisms to all temporary or stripping/overburden stockpiles that are stored outside of the pit.

Additionally, Hawkinson has developed and implements the following additional best practices to all their pits to protect and preserve receiving water, including operations at the Soring Pit. Best practices developed in its stormwater permit include:

- Stabilizing all soil areas with a continuous positive slope of 3:1 or steeper towards receiving waters (including tributaries) with temporary erosion controls or permanent cover within 3 days of the area no longer being actively worked. All other slopes towards receiving waters (including tributaries) shall be stabilized within 7 days of the area no longer being actively worked.
- Maintaining a 100 linear feet of undisturbed buffer from receiving waters (including tributaries) at all times.
- Maintaining a vegetative berm between the site and associated facility activities and receiving waters and tributaries.
- Minimizing all new and connected impervious areas at all pits to minimize any increase in temperature of runoff to the maximum extent practicable.

Hawkinson ensures all best practices implemented at its Soring Pit (including those intended to protect and preserve receiving waters) are monitored and maintained to confirm integrity and verify that restricted industrial stormwater discharges are not occurring on site through routine inspections and associated documentation with its Stormwater Protection Plan. Preventative maintenance of all stormwater best practices are conducted annually, at a minimum. If Hawkinson staff identifies practices which are not functioning properly at any time, they replace, maintain, or repair the compromised practice within 7 calendar days of discovery. If a replacement, maintenance, or repair cannot be completed within 7 calendar days, they implement effective backup practices (temporary or permanent) until effectiveness of the original best practices can be restored. They document the justification for an extended replacement, maintenance, or repair schedule of the failed practices and store it with their Stormwater Protection Plan.

iii. Water Appropriations

Describe if the project proposes to appropriate surface or groundwater (including dewatering). Describe the source, quantity, duration, use and purpose of the water use and if a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources water appropriation permit is required. Describe any well abandonment. If connecting to an existing municipal water supply, identify the wells to be used as a water source and any effects from water appropriation, including an assessment of the water resources available for appropriation. Identify any measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental effects from the water appropriation.

There is currently no plan to appropriate water for this Project, and there is no dewatering plan, as any groundwater that collects as the mining pit increases depth will be kept to be used in reclamation efforts by forming a lake within the pit. Mitigation is not required.

iv. Surface Waters & Wetlands

Wetlands – Describe any anticipated physical effects or alterations to wetland features such as draining, filling, permanent inundation, dredging and vegetative removal. Discuss direct and indirect environmental effects from physical modification of wetlands, including the anticipated effects that any proposed wetland alterations may have to the host watershed. Identify measures to avoid (e.g., available alternatives that were considered), minimize, or mitigate environmental effects to wetlands. Discuss whether any required compensatory wetland mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts will occur in the same minor or major watershed, and identify those probable locations.

Waters of the United States (including wetlands, waterways, lakes, natural ponds and impoundments) are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*. A permit is issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that authorizes the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (33 USC 1251 et seq.). Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, requires Federal agencies to implement "no net loss" measures for wetlands (42 § 26951). These no net loss measures include a phased approach that include wetland impact avoidance, then minimization of impacts if wetlands cannot be avoided, and finally mitigation.

Discharges of dredged or fill material, excavation, and mechanized land clearing in waters of the United Sates requires authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*. Final authorization for activities in waters of the United States (waters of the U.S.) must be authorized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' District Engineer.

If permanent wetland impacts can be kept under 0.10 acres, project activities and impacts fall within the defined parameters of Nationwide Permit 44 – Mining Activities or some other national or regional permit. Additionally, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers notification and authorization would not be required. If project impacts include 0.11 to 0.50 acres of wetlands, compensatory mitigation would be required under the *Clean Water Act*. Impacts greater than 0.51 acres would require compensatory mitigation and issuance by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of an Individual Permit.

As projects in Minnesota waterways, floodplains and wetlands often require both State and Federal authorization, these projects require a federal permit for a potential discharge of fill or dredged material to a waterbody a state-issued *Clean Water Act* Section 401 water quality certification may be required. A federal permit for discharge of fill or dredged material may not be issued without a state issued Section 401 water quality certification or waiver. Any wetland or stream impacts would require a Section 401 water quality certification be issued by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

There are four government agencies with primary regulatory authority over wetlands in Minnesota. Three Federal Agencies: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service make up this list along with two state agencies: the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Wetlands present on the Project Area may or may not be jurisdictional under the *Clean Water Act* but are likely jurisdictional under the *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act*. Any features within the active use area may be considered incidental subject to *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act* determinations and therefore not subject to *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act*. If impacts to *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act* -jurisdictional wetlands are anticipated, mitigation and monitoring would be completed, at a minimum, according to state regulations. The purpose of *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act* according to Minnesota Rules 8420.0100 is to:

- Achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's existing wetlands;
- Increase the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota's wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands;
- Avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of wetlands; and
- Replace wetland values where avoidance of activity is not feasible and prudent.

Specific regulatory requirements related to wetland impacts are strongly dependent on final project design and subsequent findings of the wetland regulatory review process. If the Project advance, agency coordination would be critical to determine final mitigation measures.

An initial screening and desktop wetland review of the study area was conducted as part of this assessment to evaluate the presence or absence of wetlands and other jurisdictional waters(USFWS, 2025a). Evaluation of the study area included a review of the National Wetland Inventory and Soil Survey Geographic hydric soil classification data. Additionally, off-site evaluation measures included review of historical aerial imagery, streamlines GIS web layer, high-resolution digital elevation data, flood data set, topographic survey data, and morphological evaluation of the in-situ soil profile.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has established an initial screening process using the National Wetland Inventory and SSURGO soil hydric classification layers, topography (LIDAR) data, and aerial imagery to determine if there is potential for wetland impacts from a proposed project.

The following data were collected and reviewed prior to reviewing historical aerial imagery:

- High-resolution digital elevation data and 2-foot elevation contours.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service SSURGO hydric soil classification data.
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data and National Hydrography Dataset waterbodies.
- Minnesota Flood Dataset.

Based on the review of these sources and materials, the Project Area has the following characteristics and attributes:

- Soils are predominately non-hydric.
- Indexed wetlands on the National Wetland Inventory dominate the surrounding area, with a large complex north of the Project Area.
- Indications of standing water in low-lying and depressional features in one concentrated area corresponding to National Wetland Inventory polygons are evidence on historical aerial imagery covering the Project Area.
- Four polygons on the National Wetland Inventory are mapped within or adjacent to the Project Area. Each of these polygons corresponds to low depressional areas likely to accumulate water which would support wetland communities.
- Three pools or stands of open water within the active gravel pit used to obtain water for dust-control and other efforts at the quarry. These are considered "Incidental Wetlands" and are not usually subject to federal or state laws and statures protecting wetlands.

Four potential wetlands are completely or partially within the Project Area (**Table 5**). In all, approximately 0.61 acres of potential wetlands were identified in this initial review. All four areas correspond to depressional, low-lying areas often supporting wetland communities. Additional wetland resources may be present and not identified on the National Wetland Inventory. None are included in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Wild Rice Atlas.

Table 5. Summary of National Wetland Inventory.

Wetland	Wetland Type	Size
1	PSS1D	0.2 acres
2	PSS1C	0.2 acres
3	PSS1D	0.2 acres
4*	PSS1C	0.1 acres

***Wetland is larger than 0.1 acres, Project Area contains 0.1 acres.**

A formal wetland delineation will need to be completed as part of the permit conditions and stipulation. The goals of the delineation will be to: 1) determine the presence or absence of wetland conditions; 2) assess the size and condition of any delineated wetlands; and 3) provide initial recommendations and information to be used to establish if the wetlands are regulated resources under Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*. All wetlands are – regardless if they are jurisdiction and regulated resources under the *Clean Water Act* – are regulated and protected under the *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act*.

Hawkinson will reduce and minimize wetland impacts to the greatest extent possible. If wetland impacts and loss is unavoidable, a mitigation plan consisting of purchasing wetland credits at an still-to-be determined ratio from an accredited wetland mitigation bank in the Mississippi Headwaters Service Area will be completed as part of the permitting process. These conditions will be included in the lease permit issued to Hawkinson to expand its operation at its Soring Pit.

v. Other Surface Waters

Describe any anticipated physical effects or alterations to surface water features (lakes, streams, ponds, intermittent channels, county/judicial ditches) such as draining, filling, permanent inundation, dredging, diking, stream diversion, impoundment, aquatic plant removal and riparian alteration. Discuss direct and indirect environmental effects from physical modification of water features. Identify measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental effects to surface water features, including in-water Best Management Practices that are proposed to avoid or minimize turbidity/sedimentation while physically altering the water features. Discuss how the project will change the number or type of watercraft on any water body, including current and projected watercraft usage.

There are no other surface water within the Project Area that would be affected due to quarrying activity. As mentioned in the previous section. three "Incidental Wetlands" in the active gravel pit used as a source for water for dust-control efforts in the pit and access road are present within the existing pit.

13. CONTAMINATION, HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, AND WASTE

a. Pre-project Site Conditions

Describe existing contamination or potential environmental hazards on or in close proximity to the project site such as soil or ground water contamination, abandoned dumps, closed landfills, existing or abandoned storage tanks, and hazardous liquid or gas pipelines. Discuss any potential environmental effects from pre-project site conditions that would be caused or exacerbated by project construction and operation. Identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects from existing contamination or potential environmental hazards. Include development of a Contingency Plan or Response Action Plan.

A review of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's *What's in My Neighborhood* database was conducted to identify documented potentially contaminated sites within or in the vicinity of the Project Area (MPCA, 2025). No records are located within the Project Area. The Minnesota Shooting Sports Education Center is approximately 1,750 feet east of the Project. This property (MNR000103325) is reported as generating hazardous waste. No records are located within approximately 500 feet of the Project Area.

No Hazardous Waste, Air Pollution, Water Discharge, Toxic Release, Superfund, or Brownsfield locations are reported in the Project Area with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Hawkinson facility at 3000 Rangeline Road has been issued Hazardous Waste (RCRAInfo) and Air Pollution (ICIS-AIR) permits (EPA 2025c). No violations have been reported at the facility. No other sites occur within 0.5 miles of the Project Area.

b. Project Related Generation/Storage of Solid Wastes

Describe solid wastes generated/stored during construction and/or operation of the project. Indicate method of disposal. Discuss potential environmental effects from solid waste handling, storage and disposal. Identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects from the generation/storage of solid waste including source reduction and recycling.

Solid wastes generated will be typical of a mining and quarrying project. Waste produced during operation of the gravel pit is not expected to change in type or volume from the existing operations. Waste will be disposed of properly in on-site dumpsters and collected on a weekly basis by licensed waste disposal provider.

c. Project Related Use/Storage of Hazardous Materials

Describe chemicals/hazardous materials used/stored during construction and/or operation of the project including method of storage. Indicate the number, location and size of any above or below ground tanks to store petroleum or other materials. Discuss potential environmental effects from accidental spill or release of hazardous materials. Identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects from the use/storage of chemicals/hazardous materials including source reduction and recycling. Include development of a spill prevention plan.

Trucks and equipment used during operation may require the use of potentially hazardous materials, such as gasoline or diesel fuels, motor oils, hydraulic fluids, and other lubricants. Handling, storage, and disposal of this hazardous waste would be conducted to prevent contamination of the site, following standard industry best practices. Vehicles responsible for the transportation of hazardous materials will be equipped with spill kits for rapid response to any spills, and refueling procedures will be implemented to eliminate leakage. Fueling of trucks occurs at Hawkinson's main facility to the southeast of the Soring Pit. Though no hazardous wastes are anticipated with this project, Hawkinson would dispose of any in compliance with Federal, State, and local laws or regulations.

d. Project Related Generation/Storage of Hazardous Wastes

Describe hazardous wastes generated/stored during construction and/or operation of the project. Indicate method of disposal. Discuss potential environmental effects from hazardous waste handling, storage, and disposal. Identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects from the generation/storage of hazardous waste including source reduction and recycling.

The Project is not anticipated to generate hazardous waste during operation. If hazardous materials are discovered, they will be properly separated and disposed of at Minnesota Pollution Control Agency - permitted sites. Disposal of Hazardous waste and materials within the it is prohibited under the terms of the lease.

14. FISH, WILDLIFE, PLANT COMMUNITIES, AND ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a. Fish and Wildlife Resources

Describe fish and wildlife resources as well as habitats and vegetation on or near the site.

The Project Area includes the existing Soring Pit; disturbed second growth forest; four mapped National Wetland Inventory wetlands in the east and southwest; an access road and conveyor system on the south; and disturbed, fallow ground. A second quarry (referred to as the Pipeline Quarry) is located immediately southeast of the Soring Pit. A ribbon of wetlands and an unnamed lake are located immediately north of the Project. Mapped National Wetland Inventory wetlands and forest surround the Project, and several isolated, rural residences are located to the north and west.

Land cover for the existing pit includes the sparsely vegetated active quarry; reclaimed areas covered with grasses and forbs; disturbed herbaceous upland; disturbed timber stands; several wetlands; and several pools of standing water within the existing pit. Of the natural land cover in the Project Area, most is in poor ecological condition and dominated by non-native, second growth, or weedy species. The natural land cover area in the eastern part of the Site is in relatively poor ecological condition due to a recent timber harvest. The near shore aquatic habitat is an exception and consists of swamps, emergent marshes, shrub wetlands, and aquatic vegetation beds. This area is located along the northeastern edge of the Project Area. The strip of natural area along the southern boundary of the site is also in poor ecological condition from the access road and timber harvest.

b. Rare Features

Describe rare features such as state-listed (endangered, threatened or special concern) species, native plant communities, Minnesota County Biological Survey Sites of Biodiversity Significance, and other sensitive ecological resources on or within close proximity to the site. Provide the license agreement number (LA-2023-054) and/or correspondence number (ERDB) from which the data were obtained and attach the Natural Heritage letter from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Indicate if any additional habitat or species survey work has been conducted within the site and describe the results.

A review of the ecological resources in the vicinity of the Project using the Natural Heritage Information System was conducted using license agreement number LA-2023-054 (**Appendix 1**). No state-listed endangered or threatened species were identified within or near (1.0-mile radius). Two state-listed species of special concern (the least darter and northern sunfish) were noted in the vicinity of the project. Suitable habitat for both of these species is absent within the Project Area.

No sites of Biodiversity Significance were identified within the immediate Project Area, but two sites of Biodiversity Significance were identified within a 1.0-mile radius. The nearest site (Nagel Swamp) is located 0.4 miles to the north. The Nigel Swamp has regionally important biodiversity significance; is classified as "Below" state-wide biodiversity significance; and includes a mosaic of native plant communities (Northern Wet-Mesic Boreal Hardwood-Conifer Forest, Alder Swamps, Northern Spruce Bogs, and Northern Open Bogs).

The second site of Biodiversity Significance is the Bass/Little Bass Lake Swamp, which is located 0.8 miles to the west and north. Bass Lake Swamp has regionally important biodiversity significance; is classified as "Moderate" state-wide significance; and includes a mosaic of native plant communities (alder swamps and dry to wet-mesic boreal hardwood conifer-hardwood forests). The Northern Mesic Hardwood Forest (ranked as S4 in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' classification system) overlaps with the Project Area. This native plant community is considered secure, uncommon, but not rare. A second native plant community identified as a Northern Open Bog (ranked as S2 – imperiled) is mapped immediately outside of and along the western and northern edges of the Project.

An Information for Planning and Consultation Resource List Report was reviewed for information on endangered species, critical habitats, migratory birds, refuges and hatcheries, and wetlands that may occur within the Project Area. Four federally protected species that may potentially be affected by the Project were identified: Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Gray wolf (*Canis lupus),* Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi)*. No Critical Habitat was identified. See details of the report in **Appendix 1.**

The Project Area contains poor to mediocre foraging habitat for the Canada lynx. The Canada lynx prefers boreal conifer forests where there are dense populations of Snowshoe hare (USFWS, 2025). The forests are characterized as patches of immature mixed hardwood-conifer forests, which are further degraded from the fragmentation by roads and continued development.

Although the Gray wolf is a generalist species found in a range of forests, grassland, and tundra habitats, the Project Area contains poor to unexceptional habitat. The Gray wolf prefers areas of low-human activity and disturbance, as well as more suitable habitat for their prey.

The Project Area provides poor to negligeable habitat for the Monarch butterfly. Most of the natural vegetation is comprised of forests or shrubland, which would provide few floral resources for monarchs. The open grassy road margins would have the best potential for Monarch butterfly foraging and egg laying habitat.

Finally, the Project Area provides poor to negligeable habitat for the Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee. The eastern portion of the site contains second growth conifer forest upland areas, but these upland areas have been largely disturbed and fragmented.

The forested and surrounding wetland areas on the Project Area could provide habitat for nesting migratory birds and bald eagles.

c. Impacts to Ecological Resources

Discuss how the identified fish, wildlife, plant communities, rare features and ecosystems may be affected by the project. Include a discussion on introduction and spread of invasive species from the project construction and operation. Separately discuss effects to known threatened and endangered species.

The most significant potential impact to fish, wildlife, and sensitive resources would be impacts to wetlands. The proposed project could impact approximately 0.6 acres of wetland area, but the total wetland impacts are still being determined.

The second most significant potential impact would be to the small patch of second growth northern mesic hardwood forest area located in the eastern part of the Project Area. The removal and impact of this forested area would decrease the habitat value for protected species such as nesting birds, Bald eagles, and the Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee. However, considering the abundance of higher-quality forested areas and trees in the vicinity of the Project, impacts would be negligible for those species. Further development of the site would also decrease the foraging value for Canada lynx and Gray wolf but cause negligible impact. The impacts on Monarch butterflies are anticipated to be negligible as well.

The third impact would be the risk of introducing invasive species. Erosion control best practices and cleaning of heavy equipment are proposed to minimize the risk of spreading invasive species.

d. Ecological Impact Mitigation

Identify measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to fish, wildlife, plant communities, and sensitive ecological resources.

No fish, wildlife, or sensitive ecological resources will be adversely impacted by the Project.

Proposed mitigation would attempt to reduce and minimize wetland impacts to the greatest extent possible. If wetland impacts and loss are unavoidable, then a wetland credit mitigation plan from an accredited wetland mitigation bank in the Mississippi Headwaters Service Area will be completed as part of the permitting process. This would include the purchase of wetland credits at a still-to-be determined ratio.

Development of uplands will be primarily located in areas of poor ecological value and concentrated in former industrial and disturbed areas between the two mining pit sites. Preservation of higher-quality upland and wetland habitat in the north and eastern portion of the site would be achieved via limited pit boundary expansion. Limiting the expansion area of the pit will reduce any potential impacts to higher quality water, wetland, and forested areas directly north and adjacent to the Project.

The Project proposer understands that the introduction and spread of invasive plant species from operation requires consideration. While there is the opportunity for invasive plant species to be introduced during the life of the Project, it is unlikely that these species would persist in a meaningful way following reclamation. The Project will be fully reclaim the site in accordance to its permit conditions. If present, invasive plant species will be controlled by the applicant in accordance with local and state invasive and noxious weed regulations.

15. HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Describe any historic structures, archeological sites, and/or traditional cultural properties on or in close proximity to the site. Include: 1) historic designations, 2) known artifact areas, and 3) architectural features. Attach letter received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Discuss any anticipated effects to historic properties during project construction and operation. Identify measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to historic properties.

An archaeological and cultural resources desktop review and preliminary assessment was prepared as part of this assessment. The review concluded:

1. No properties currently listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are within 1.0 mile of Project.
2. No archaeological resources are recorded within 1.0 mile of the Project.
3. No Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission sites are reported within 1.0 mile of the Project.
4. The Project Area has not been previously inventoried to determine the presence or absence of archaeological resources.
5. The site is within an area modeled as having a predominately low potential for archaeological resources.
6. No architectural or historical resources are recorded within 1.0 mile of the Project.
7. No cemeteries or known burial are reported in or near the Project.

Pursuant to the *Minnesota Field Archaeology Act* (Minnesota Statue 138.40), the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed the proposed aggregate extraction leases for potential effects to cultural resources in November 2024 (**Appendix 2**). The review found that no cultural resources have been identified within the Project Area. Furthermore, review of historic imagery, LiDAR derived elevation models, and the statewide archaeological predictive model suggest that cultural resources are unlikely to be present within the areas to be potentially affected by the lease.

Wild rice stands are well documented cultural resources (often referred to as traditional cultural properties) that are important to Native history, identity, and on-going cultural practices. They are often evaluated as significant cultural and historic resources eligible for or are listed on the National or Minnesota Register of Historic Places. Adjacent lakes and wetlands are not identified as wild rice stands in the Minnesota Wild Rice Atlas. Nagel Lake located 1.0 mile northeast and Bass Lake located 1.1 miles west are included in the Atlas as lakes supporting wild rice stands (MnDNR 2025). Operation of the Soring Pit will not affect these resources.

16. VISUAL

Describe any scenic views or vistas on or near the project site. Describe any project related visual effects such as vapor plumes or glare from intense lights. Discuss the potential visual effects from the project. Identify any measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate visual effects.

The visibility of the quarry will be very limited from all vantage points. Existing views are comprised mostly of isolated residences, forest and wetlands, pipeline and high-voltage electrical transmission corridors, the existing Hawkinson facility at 3000 Rangeline Road, and an industrial and commercial area along U.S. Highway 2. There are no prominent scenic views or vistas on or near the Project Area. Industrial uses are present to the south. The eastern portion of the Project is adjacent to the existing gravel (Pipeline) pit. Residential uses are present to the west and north.

The development of the Project is expected to result in minimal visual effects, as no intense lights creating glare, no tall structures, vapor plumes, or similar visual impacts will result from the pit expansion. The main visual effect will be a transition of views from mostly recently harvested forest to an open sand and gravel pit. The existing gravel pit has been in operation since the mid-1980s. The Project will gradually expand this existing gravel pit and is compatible with the existing industrial uses.

The Project will create a natural barrier as excavation will be done to a maximum of 30 to 60 feet below the natural ground surface. The design will include maintaining the existing buffer along the property boundary the western boundary of the Project along Soring Road, which will minimize the visual effects of the operation of the gravel pit to the nearby residences and roadway north and west of the Project Area.

17. AIR

a. Stationary Source Emissions

Describe the type, sources, quantities and compositions of any emissions from stationary sources such as boilers or exhaust stacks. Include any hazardous air pollutants, criteria pollutants, and any greenhouse gases. Discuss effects to air quality including any sensitive receptors, human health or applicable regulatory criteria. Include a discussion of any methods used assess the project's effect on air quality and the results of that assessment. Identify pollution control equipment and other measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects from stationary source emissions.

No buildings are located on the property, so no emissions would be incurred. One generator, a 1992 CAT 3142 DITA Generator runs on average 1,585 hours a year. This generator produces typical emissions from a diesel engine, which is made up of semi-volatile and nonvolatile compounds, including hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and soot. These particulars can impair human health through the eyes and respiratory tract, causing issues of lung damage, eye irritation, and cancer. Furthermore, it can negatively affect the environment through ground-level ozone, acid rain, and greenhouse gas emissions.

To assess the impact to air quality generated from stationary sources, an emissions calculator from the EPA, the *Diesel Emissions Quantifier (DEQ),* will be utilized in conjunction with the emissions from the vehicles used on site to better assess the projects effect on air quality.

Due to the isolated use of stationary power sources, a focused approach can be used to reduce the emissions from the generator used on site. This includes regular generator maintenance, the use of quality fuel for more efficient engine use, and particulate filters to reduce or eliminate certain pollutants from leaving the atmosphere. Additionally, the generator would only run during normal operating hours. Due to the size and quantity of the generator, no rules that apply to stationary engines are likely to apply in this case.

b. Vehicle Emissions

Describe the effect of the project's traffic generation on air emissions. Discuss the project's vehicle-related emissions effect on air quality. Identify measures (e.g., traffic operational improvements, diesel idling minimization plan) that will be taken to minimize or mitigate vehicle-related emissions.

The vehicles are in standard use from start to close of the gravel pit. Standard use consists of running throughout the day to meet required quotas for gravel and aggregate production. Table 6 provides a specific breakdown on the vehicle type, hours of use, and average.

Table 6. Equipment running hours per year (2020-2024)

Equipment	2020 hours	2021 hours	2022 hours	2023 hours	2024 hours	Average hours
2018 CAT 986K Wheel Loader	2,796.0	1,616.0	1,465.0	1,637.0	412.0	1,585.2
2022 CAT D8T Bulldozer	161.0	294.0	264.0	257.0	32.0	201.6
2022 Komatsu PC490 LC Excavator			154.0	121.0	32.0	102.3
2004 CAT D8N Bulldozer				121.0	34.0	77.5
1999 CAT 988FII Wheel Loader			9.0	49.0	6.0	21.3

This project is not expected to increase the production rate and vehicle use in the Soring Pit. Demand will be determined based off nearby geographical needs and upcoming construction projects. As the pit expands to the southeast, old pit locations would be reclaimed. No additional emissions would be expected from traffic, as it is not expected to increase. Since 2020, the number of operating hours have decreased due to less accessible mining material.

The equipment utilized is a mix of heavy machinery commonly used in construction or mining operations. These vehicles emit a variety of emissions that have been shown to be harmful to human health and the environment. Humans that inhale diesel exhaust can experience damage to their respiratory tract and different bodily tissues from semi-volatile and nonvolatile chemicals. (OSHA, 2013) Additionally, diesel exhaust can cause air pollution in the form of ground-level ozone, acid rain, and greenhouse gas emissions.

To better protect and mitigate diesel emissions on site, replacing or repairing equipment is often the preferred course of action. Given the age of come of the equipment utilized on site, including the wheel loader from 1999, equipment replacement is a natural pathway as older vehicles break down and work less efficiently. An emissions reduction plan will be the main method to cut diesel emissions, particularly through regular maintenance, higher quality fuel, and reduction of engine idling times.

Regular maintenance would include either replacing worn down engine parts to improve engine function, or installing a retrofit kit in order to reduce emissions. Higher quality fuel would contain less particulates and burn more efficiently, creating less emissions in the process. Reduction of idling times would cut back on unnecessary emissions for the work for aggregate production.

c. Dust and Odors

Describe sources, characteristics, duration, quantities, and intensity of dust and odors generated during project construction and operation. (Fugitive dust may be discussed under item 16a). Discuss the effect of dust and odors in the vicinity of the project including nearby sensitive receptors and quality of life. Identify measures that will be taken to minimize or mitigate the effects of dust and odors.

The Project will generate a minimal amount of dust during operation. The amount of dust generated will vary by the type and intensity of activities and the prevailing meteorological conditions. The early phases would include removing the topsoil and overburden and stockpiling it for future reclamation of the site, aggregate extraction, and reclamation. Most of the fugitive dust will result from sand and aggregate rock removal and vehicle and equipment traffic. Most of this work is anticipated to happen from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

The effects on air quality from fugitive dust generated during operations will be minimal, temporary, and localized. Dust receptors near the Project include scattered residential areas located to the west, north, and east of the study area, as well as a range of small businesses and services north of U.S. Highway 2. The trees within the Project Area will mitigate dust exposure to local residences and to U.S. Highway 2. Areas with disturbed, exposed soil would be re-seeded as soon as practical. Fugitive dust from will be further minimized by water application and other best practices outlined in the Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Dust minimization and prevention efforts will be consistent with state standards contained in Minnesota Rule 7011.

Odors generated by the project during operation are expected to be odors typical of quarrying – dust and diesel exhaust. It is possible that organic matter – particularly the degradation of organic matter – may be uncovered as the expansion area is removed of topsoil and overburden. This is especially relevant if the wetland direction southeast of the Soring Pit is removed or altered. This organic matter could initially generate unpleasant odor but would fade once the plant material was removed.

18. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS/CARBON FOOTPRINT

Greenhouse Gas Quantification

Greenhouse gas emissions from the Project will result from two sources: the operation of heavy equipment and tree and brush removal during the conversion of forest to prairie/wetland. Emissions from heavy equipment emissions were calculated by using methods identified in the guidance document and standard metrics from the U.S. environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Emission Factors Hub (https://www.epa.gov/climateleadership/ghg-emission-factors-hub). The Project is to unfold over 5 years to complete and require the use of five pieces of heavy equipment, as needed. Anticipate equipment needed in the quarrying operation include one excavators, two wheel loaders, and two bulldozers. Fuel consumption differs depending on the equipment. If not specified, then 4 gallons per hour and 8-hour working days were used to calculate total fuel use:

Fuel use = days * hours * fuel use per hour * number of vehicles

Emissions were calculated using this equation from the EQB EAW guidance document:

Tons CO_2 = fuel use in physical units *CO_2 Emission Factor (kg CO_2/physical unit of fuel use) * conversion of kilograms to tons

Emissions rates in **Table 7** were retrieved from the Emissions Factors for Greenhouse Gas Inventory (EPA, 2025b) for diesel non-road heavy equipment.

Table 7. Rates of Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Non-road Heavy Equipment.

CO_2 (kg/gal)	CH_4 (grams/gal)	N_2O (grams/gal)
10.21	1.01	0.94

Totals emissions from heavy equipment equate to 5,817.2 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e), which were calculated using the appropriate global warming potential for each Greenhouse Gas and the appropriate unit conversion factor. The high number of carbon dioxide equivalents are due to the high emission production of heavy equipment.

Land use conversion from forest to grassland is the second category of emissions from the project. However, only 3.4 acres are proposed to be removed, so emissions from conversion of "living" forest to prairie is significantly less for this project. While there will be removal of top soil, any removal will be intermediate and will be restored in more than 5 years. Only 5 years will suffer any emission gain due to the loss of a carbon sink, as reclamation of old pit area will begin within 5 years of the construction start. 29.7 acres of fallow ground and soil will be removed.

Three small wetlands are planned to be removed as a result of the expansion. Banking of these wetlands would result in no net loss of carbon sequestered.

Using the EPA's Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks to estimate an average carbon loss per acre for conversion from forest to grassland, there would be an estimated loss of 14.8 tons of CO_2e per acre converted, which equates to 31.1 tons of CO_2e for the proposed land conversion. The University of Minnesota's *The Potential for Terrestrial Carbon Sequestration in Minnesota* report outlines carbon sequester rates in Minnesota. Native prairies sequester an average of 1.6 tons of C per acre when compared to row crop, which was the category most similar to the bare ground that will result from the gravel pit expansion. (UMN, 2008). Due to the temporary loss of 29.7 acres of fallow ground, 47.5tons of C would be lost. The total potential project-related emissions are an estimated 5,915.0 tons of CO_2e (**Table 8**).

Table 8. Emissions Estimates Per Year.

Scope	Type of Emission	Emission Sub-type	Project-related CO_2e Emissions (tons)	Calculation Method(s)
Scope 1	Combustion	Mobile Equipment	5,817.2	Linear rate of diesel non-road construction equipment emissions
Scope 1	Land Use	Conversion from Forest to Grassland	50.3	Estimated from nationwide averages for conversion from forest to grassland
Scope 1	Land Use	Carbon Sink loss	47.5	Momentary loss of grassland and topsoil
TOTAL			**5,915.0**	

Greenhouse Gas Assessment

The project will require the use of Tier 4 Emissions level vehicles. All the reduction methods considered have already been incorporated into the project.

It is not anticipated that the Project will require other inputs during its life. The Project will reduce the potential for soil erosion through planting the seed mixed required by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources under the terms of the permit. Establishment of diverse vegetation through the remediation plan will increase sequestration of carbon through the dense growth of plants and subsequent storage of carbon in the soil through the root systems.

19. NOISE

Describe sources, characteristics, duration, quantities, and intensity of noise generated during project construction and operation. Discuss the effect of noise in the vicinity of the project including 1) existing

noise levels/sources in the area, 2) nearby sensitive receptors, 3) conformance to state noise standards, and 4) quality of life. Identify measures that will be taken to minimize or mitigate the effects of noise

Existing Noise Levels and Sources

Existing noise sources include the gravel pit, Hawkinson's facility at 3000 Rangeline Road; commercial and industrial activities within the in the Cohasset Industrial Park to the south of the Project; and traffic along U.S. Highway 2 to the south. The existing gravel pit generates noise mostly during regular operating hours. Hours operation are 6:00 am through 8:00 pm, Monday through Saturday, from April through November. Noise is typically produced by heavy machinery along with vehicles and trucks entering and exiting within the Project Area. Noise-generating equipment include conveyors and mobile equipment (loaders, excavators, and haul trucks).

Nearby Sensitive Receptors

The closest residential units are approximately 650 feet west from the Project. An approximately 250-foot wide tree-lined buffer separates the gravel pit from the residences. A second group of residences is located approximately 1,200 feet north of the Soring Pit. An approximately 900-foot wide forested buffer separates the pit from these residences.

State Noise Standards and Mitigation Measures

State noise standards are contained in Minnesota Rule 7030. The noise standards are based on the land use at the location of the person that hears the noise and the sound level in A-weighted decibels (dBA) over 10 percent (L10) or 50 percent (L50) of an hour.

Property in and around the Project is zoned Rural Residential District (05-001-4000). Noise limits for residential locations are L10 = 65 dBA and L50 = 60 dBA during the daytime and L10 = 55 dBA and L50 = 50 dBA during the nighttime. Noise limits for commercial uses are rated higher at L10 = 70 and L50 = 65 during day or night.

Hawkinson is not aware of any past documented noise complaints associated with the current gravel pit while it is in operation and does not expect increased noise from the proposed expansion.

Quality of Life

The Project is not anticipated to emit more noise that would exceed noise levels associated with the existing quarrying operations. Excavation will create a natural berm around the perimeter of the gravel pit, which will provide a noise barrier. To minimize potential noise impacts to sensitive receptors, the Project will maintain a minimum 650-foot buffer from rural residences. Operations will generate noise consistent with industrial uses and is not anticipated to affect the quality of life for nearby properties. The Project will be required to adhere to City, State, and local noise regulations, including City of Cohasset Ordinance 21, as amended, and Minnesota Rule 7030.

Minimization

To minimize noise during operation, Hawkinson would comply with any state regulations and/or local ordinances. Operational activities will typically be limited to daytime hours (6:00 am through 8:00 pm, Monday through Saturday, from April through November). Hawkinson would be required to use equipment that meets federal or other applicable environmental and noise requirements, including mufflers. This limitation would reduce noise pollution for the neighborhoods closest to the Project during operations. The untouched wetland and forest areas bordering the Project would provide a dampening effect on any noise during operation.

20. TRANSPORTATION

a. Traffic Related Aspects

Describe traffic-related aspects of project construction and operation. Include: 1) existing and proposed additional parking spaces, 2) estimated total average daily traffic generated, 3) estimated maximum peak hour traffic generated and time of occurrence, 4) indicate source of trip generation rates used in the estimates, and 5) availability of transit and/or other alternative transportation modes.

Access to the Soring Pit is via a private road with control accessed from Hawkinson's main facility at 3000 Rangeline Road or from Soring Road, which is also subject to controlled access for safety purposes.

Parking

Approximately five informal parking spaces are present near the existing gravel pit. No additional parking spaces are proposed.

Average Daily Traffic Generated

Up to five employee or company vehicles and two haul trucks access the existing gravel pit during operation on a daily basis. No changes in access to the pit are proposed as part of this project.

Peak Hour Traffic Generated

Vehicles enter and exit the gravel pit facility throughout the day during operational hours from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm from Monday through Saturday, April through November. The Soring Pit is not in operation during the winter season (December through March).

Trip Generation

No changes in the number of truck and employee vehicles accessing the gravel pit would result from the Project.

Availability of transit and/or other alternative transportation modes

No transit and/or other alternative transportation facilities are available within the vicinity of the Project.

b. Effects on Traffic Congestion

Discuss the effect on traffic congestion on affected roads and describe any traffic improvements necessary. The analysis must discuss the project's impact on the regional transportation system. If the peak hour traffic generated exceeds 250 vehicles or the total daily trips exceeds 2,500, a traffic impact study must be prepared as part of the EAW. Use the format and procedures described in the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Access Management Manual, Chapter 5 (available at: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/accessmanagement/resources.html) or a similar local guidance.

The Project would not increase operational traffic. Existing truck traffic, typically consisting of up to two vehicles per day, will not change as a result of this Project. As access is controlled and on a private road, traffic patterns on local roads will not be affected by the project. No new access points are proposed as part of the Project.

c. Traffic Mitigation Measures

Identify measures that will be taken to minimize or mitigate project-related transportation effects.

The Project will not change existing traffic volumes and access from local roads. No traffic minimization or mitigation measures are proposed as part of the Project.

21. CUMULATIVE POTENTIAL EFFECTS

(Preparers can leave this item blank if cumulative potential effects are addressed under the applicable EAW Items)

a. Geographic Scales and Timeframes

Describe the geographic scales and timeframes of the project related environmental effects that could combine with other environmental effects resulting in cumulative potential effects.

Cumulative effects result from the incremental impact of the proposed project added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. The geographic area considered for cumulative potential effects is the area proximate to the project limits. No additional developments are anticipated on the properties bordering the proposed Project.

The Project will occur gradually expand the Soring Pit over the next 5 years. Other projects in the surrounding area that are known to be in construction, operation, or planned were considered in the cumulative potential effects.

b. Future Projects

Describe any reasonably foreseeable future projects (for which a basis of expectation has been laid) that may interact with environmental effects of the proposed project within the geographic scales and timeframes identified above.

No such reasonably foreseeable future projects are anticipated. it is anticipated that a future expansion may occur but is dependent on market conditions. The timing of a future expansion is not known at this time. A future expansion of the gravel pit will be subject to the federal, state and local regulations in place at the time that a future phase is proposed. Any necessary environmental reviews pursuant to *Minnesota Environmental Protection Act* and permits for a future phase will be completed at the time that they are proposed.

c. Cumulative Potential Effects

Discuss the nature of the cumulative potential effects and summarize any other available information relevant to determining whether there is potential for significant environmental effects due to these cumulative effects.

No reasonably foreseeable expansion or new gravel mining operations are known at this time. Any future gravel mining projects will be required to obtain local permits through City of Cohasset and complete an environmental review per *Minnesota Environmental Policy Act* requirements as applicable. Through the environmental review process, any future gravel mining project will be required to identify potential environmental impacts and implement avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures as required.

Possible cumulative potential effects as a result of this expansion project may occur to water resources and air quality.

Water Resources

The Project Area is not located within a designated Wellhead Protection Area and Drinking Water Supply Management Areas. It is not anticipated that the Project would adversely affect groundwater given the extent of the proposed mining depth and that the Minnesota Department of Health well data indicates a clay confining layer creates a barrier between the buried aquifer used for domestic water supply and potential on-site contamination sources. Item 11.a.ii provides additional details on the groundwater evaluation. Best management practices to minimize the potential to contaminate groundwater have been identified through the existing Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan. Any future gravel mining operations proposed within the Wellhead Protect Area and Drinking Water Supply Management Areas will also be required to implement best practices to avoid potential contamination to groundwater in compliance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and local requirements.

The Project may result in wetland impacts, so wetland mitigation are proposed as part of this project. Mitigation includes: 1) conducting a wetland delineation to confirm and define the extent of potential wetlands identified on the National Wetland Inventory; 2) identifying ways to eliminate or minimize wetland impacts; and 3) purchasing wetland credits from an established wetland bank within the Mississippi Headwaters Service Area an unknown ratio if wetlands impacts cannot be avoided. Items 11.a.i and 11.b.iv summarize wetland resources in the vicinity of the Project. Wetlands are protected by state and federal laws, Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*, and *Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act*, which require avoidance of wetland impacts when possible, and when avoidance is not possible, impacts must be minimized and mitigated. Other future gravel mining operations may have the potential to impact wetland resources. Any future gravel mining operations proposed in the surrounding area will be required to evaluate potential wetland impacts and will be subject to wetland regulations and mitigation requirements in place at the time that they are proposed.

Air Quality

The existing gravel pit operates under a Nonmetallic Mineral General Permit issued through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The Project will be required to continue to comply with the allowable emission conditions established in the Nonmetallic Mineral General Permit. The Project is classified as a small nonmetallic mineral processing facility. Small stationary sources are considered to have a low potential for PM/PM2.5/PM10 emissions associated with processing equipment. Item 16 provides additional details regarding air quality.

In compliance with the conditions of the existing Nonmetallic Mineral General Permit, dust control measures will be implemented to minimize the potential for particulate matter to become airborne. It is not anticipated that the Project would result in adverse air quality impacts.

Any future gravel mining operations in the surrounding area will be subject to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency air emissions permit requirements. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has the authority to regulate these facilities and require mitigation and minimization measures as warranted. Other future gravel mining operations may have the potential to emit particulate matter and fugitive dust. Future gravel mining projects in the surrounding area must comply with the requirements of Minnesota Rule 7011.0150 requiring that all reasonable measures are taken to prevent avoidable amounts of particulate matter from becoming airborne.

22. OTHER POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

If the project may cause any additional environmental effects not addressed by items 1 to 19, describe the effects here, discuss the how the environment will be affected, and identify measures that will be taken to minimize and mitigate these effects.

No additional environmental effects are expected.

RGU CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that:

- The information contained in this document is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- The EAW describes the complete project; there are no other projects, stages, or components other than those described in this document, which are related to the project as connected actions or phased actions, as defined at Minnesota Rules, parts 4410.0200, subparts 9c and 60, respectively.
- Copies of this EAW are being sent to the entire EQB distribution list.

Signature Anthony A Valtinsen Date 11-17-2025

Title Zoning Officer

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FIGURES

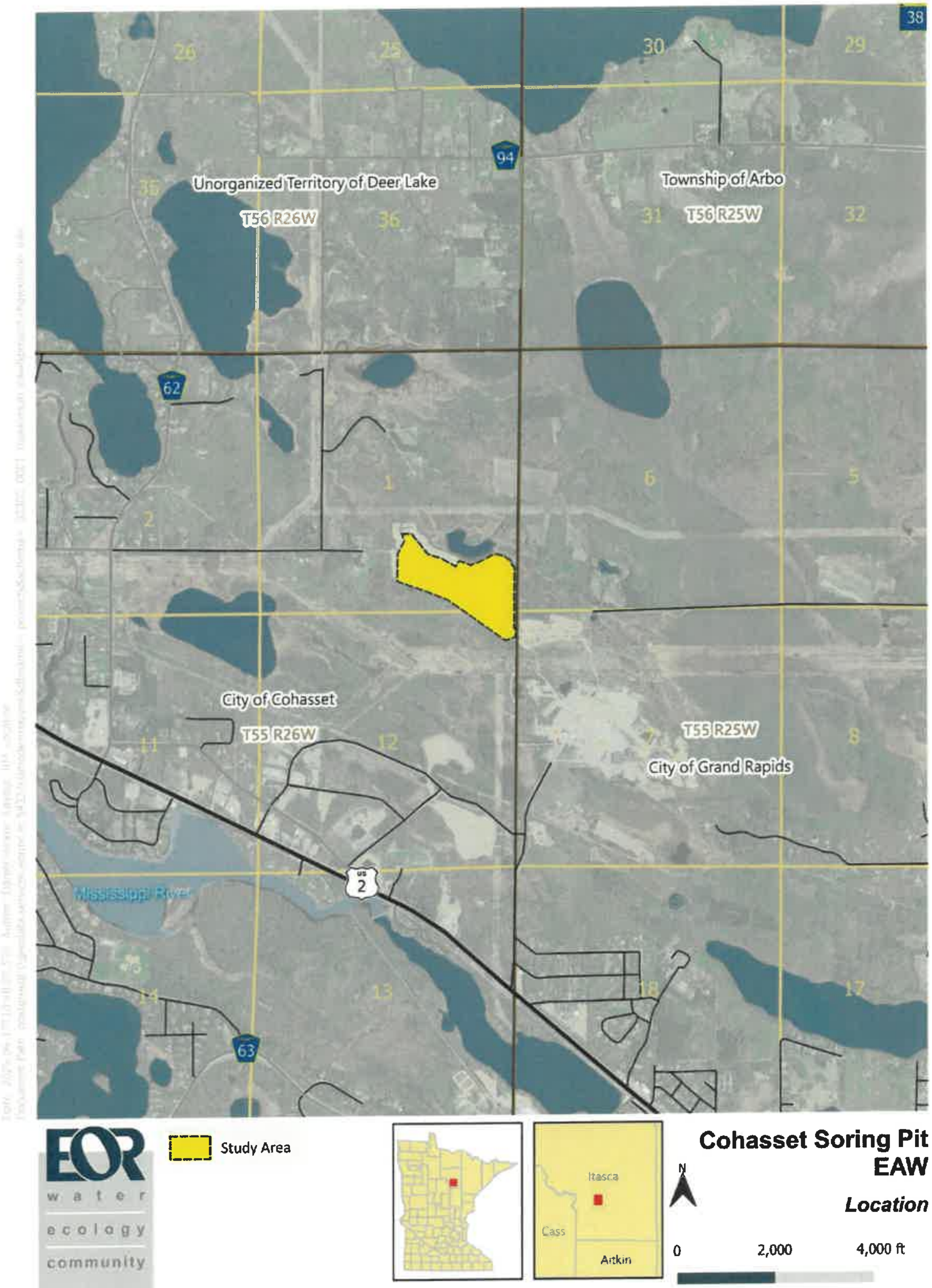


Figure 1. Location.

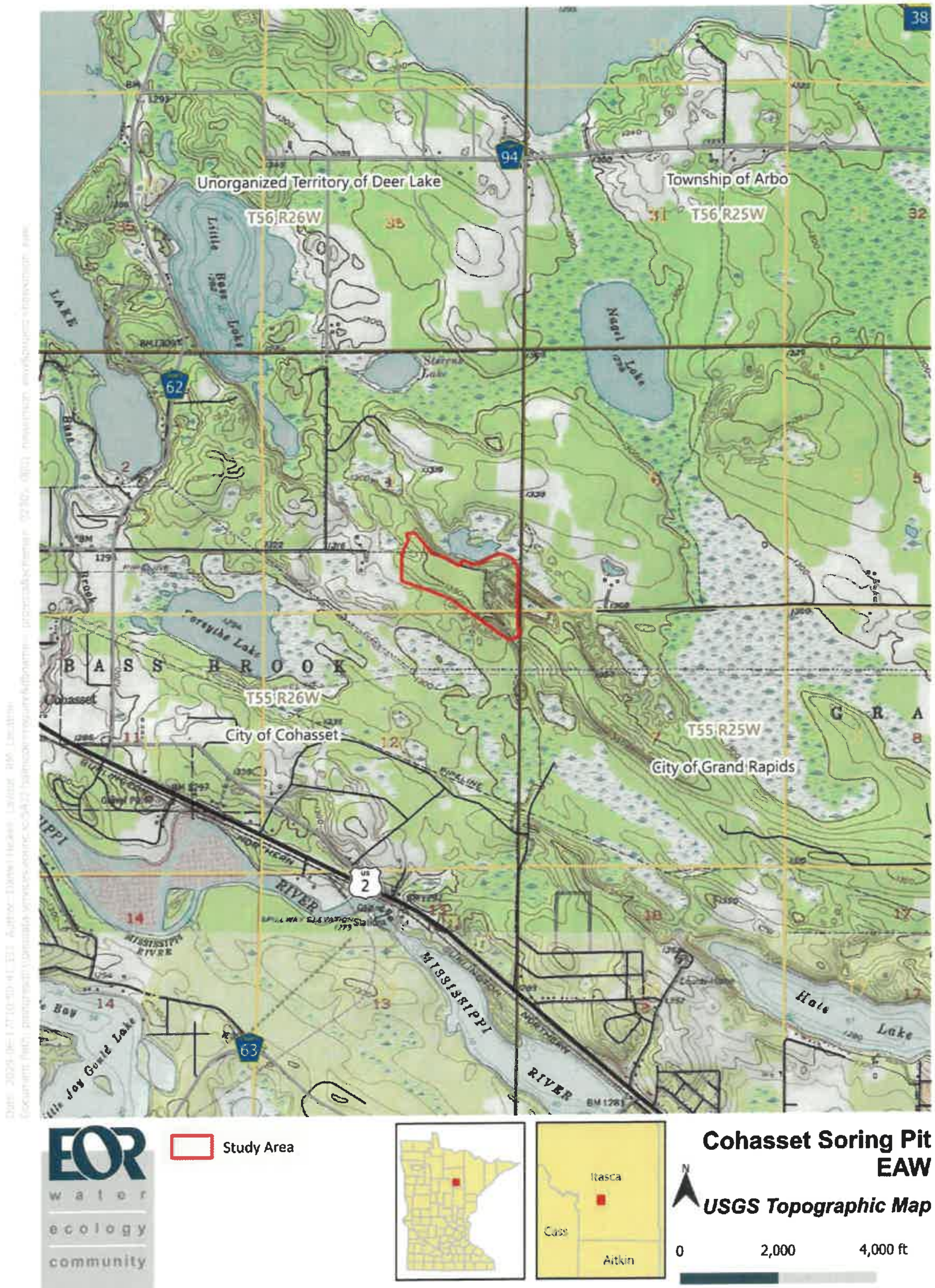
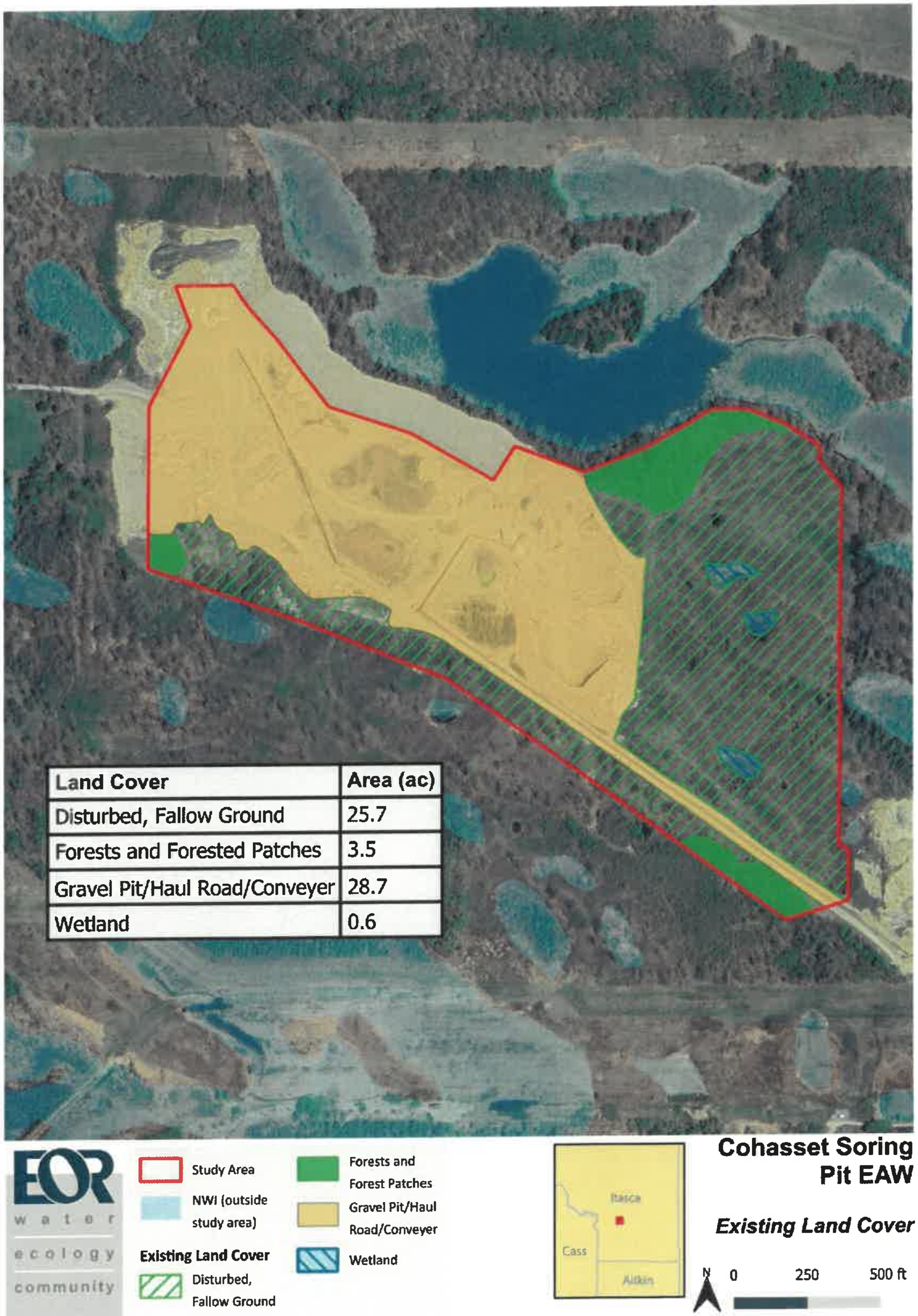


Figure 2. USGS 7.5' Series Topographic Map.

Figure 3. Existing Conditions.



Land Cover	Area (ac)
Disturbed, Fallow Ground	25.7
Forests and Forested Patches	3.5
Gravel Pit/Haul Road/Conveyer	28.7
Wetland	0.6

Figure 4. Existing Land Cover.

Figure 5. Anticipated Land Cover.

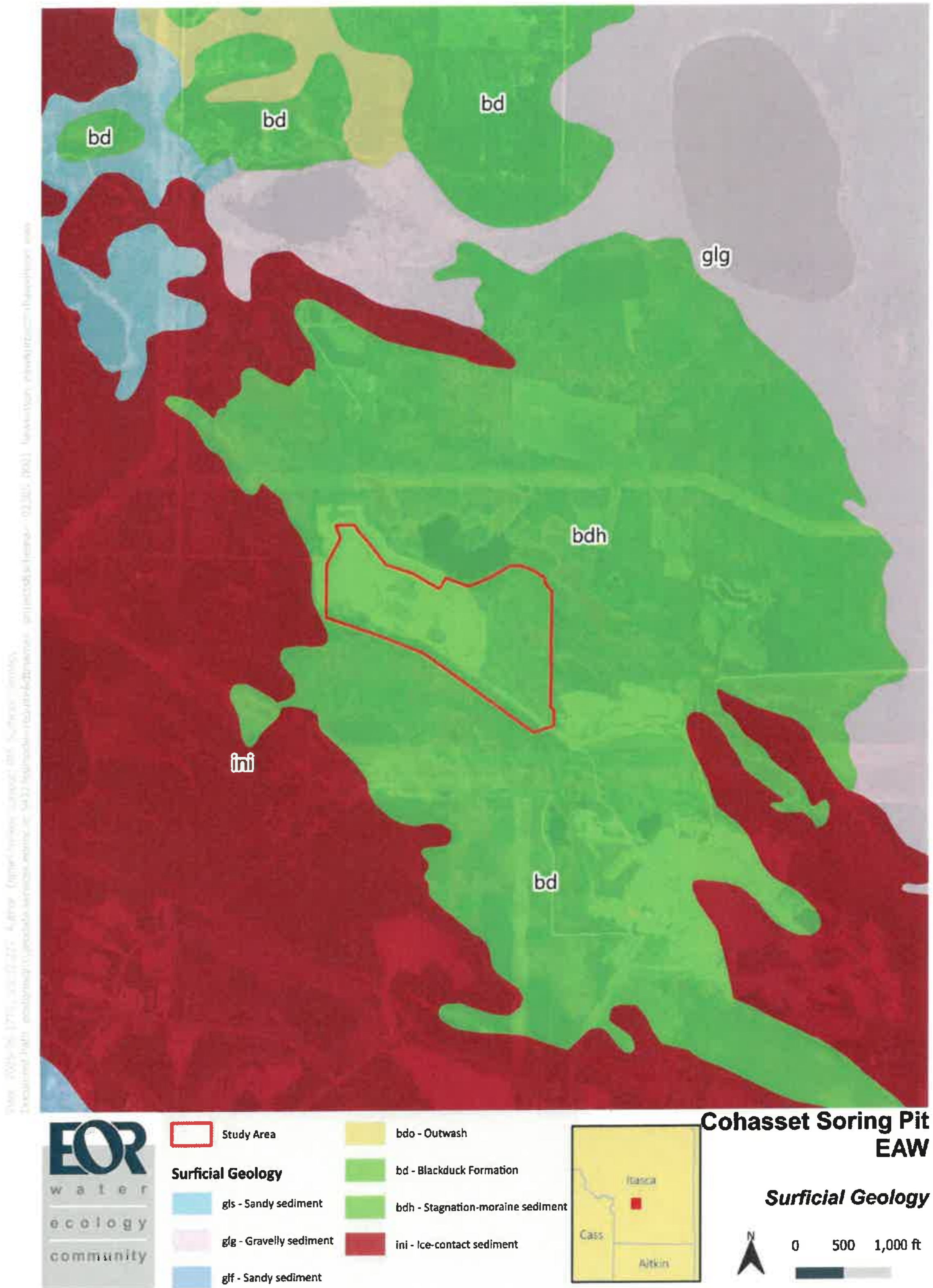


Figure 6. Surface Geology.

Figure 7. Soils.

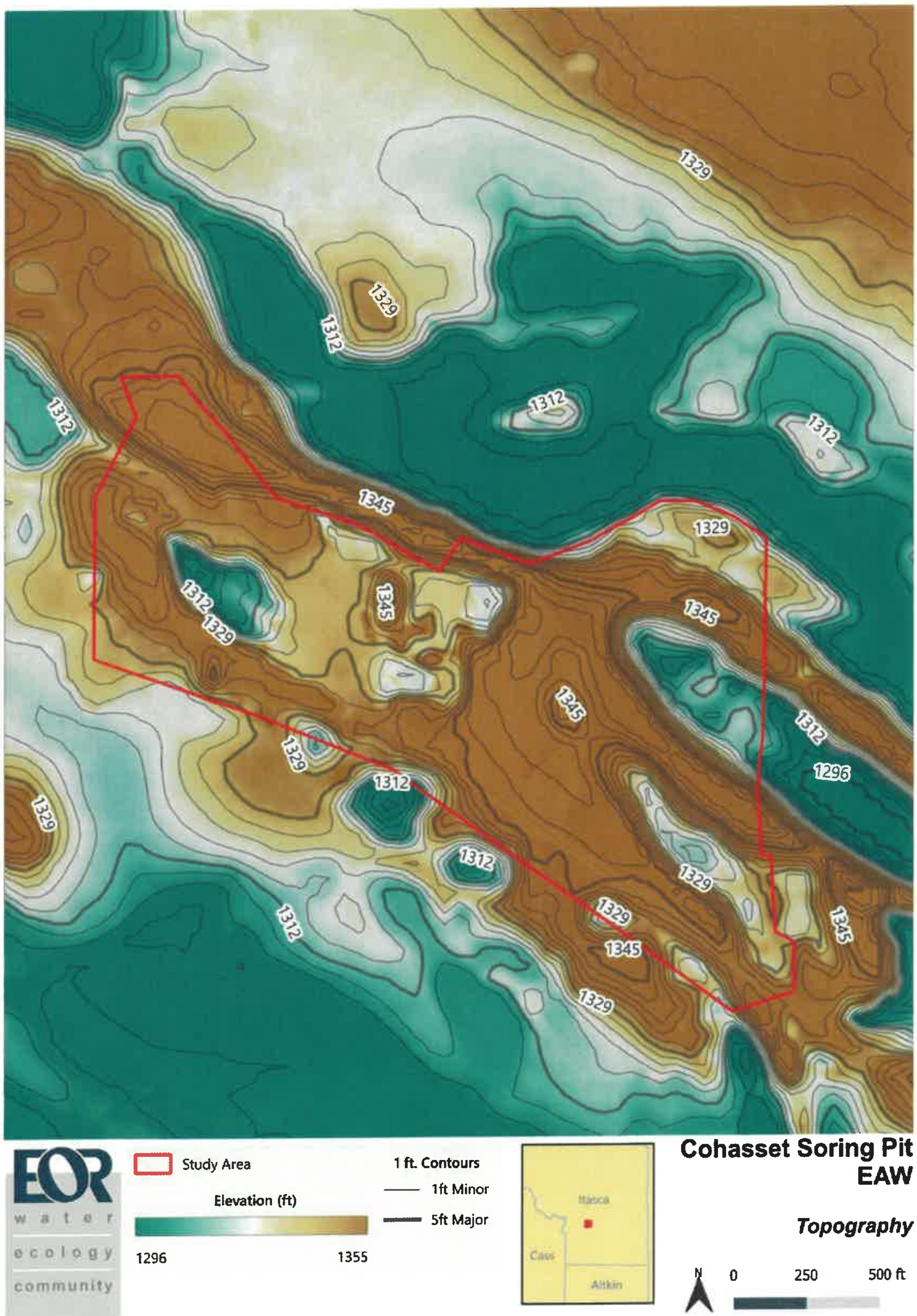


Figure 8. Topography.

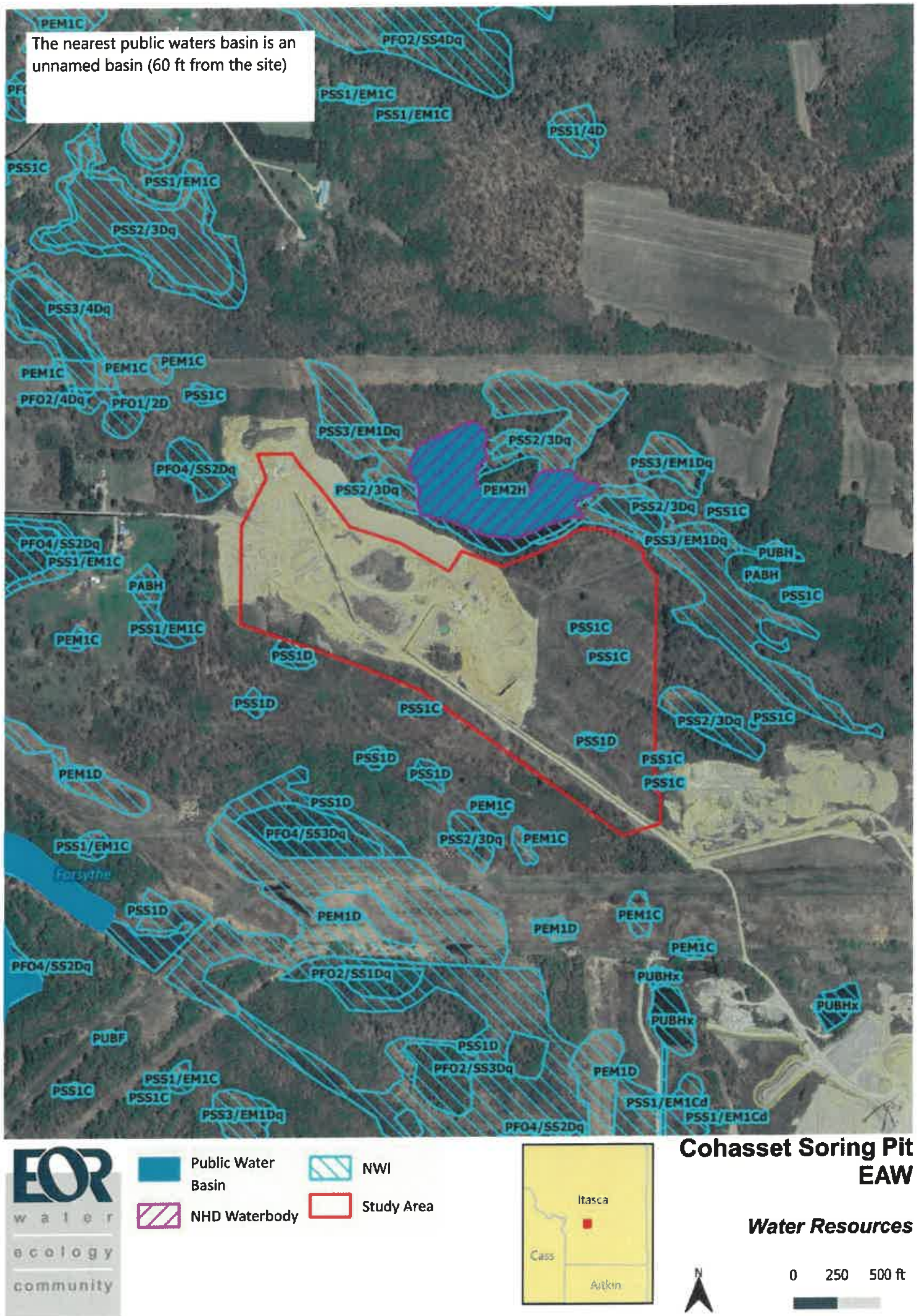


Figure 9. Wetland and Water Resources.

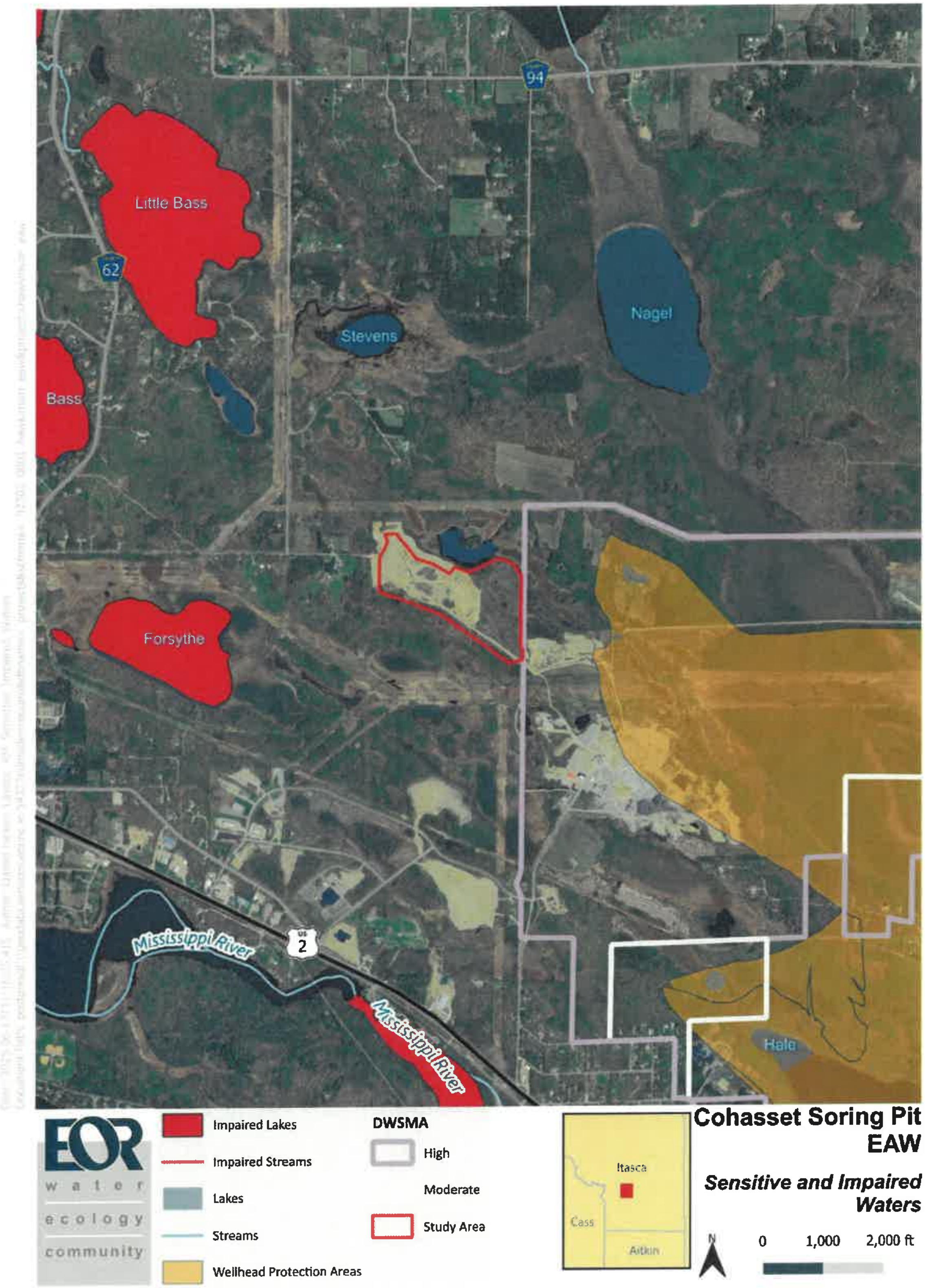


Figure 10. Sensitive and Impaired Waters.

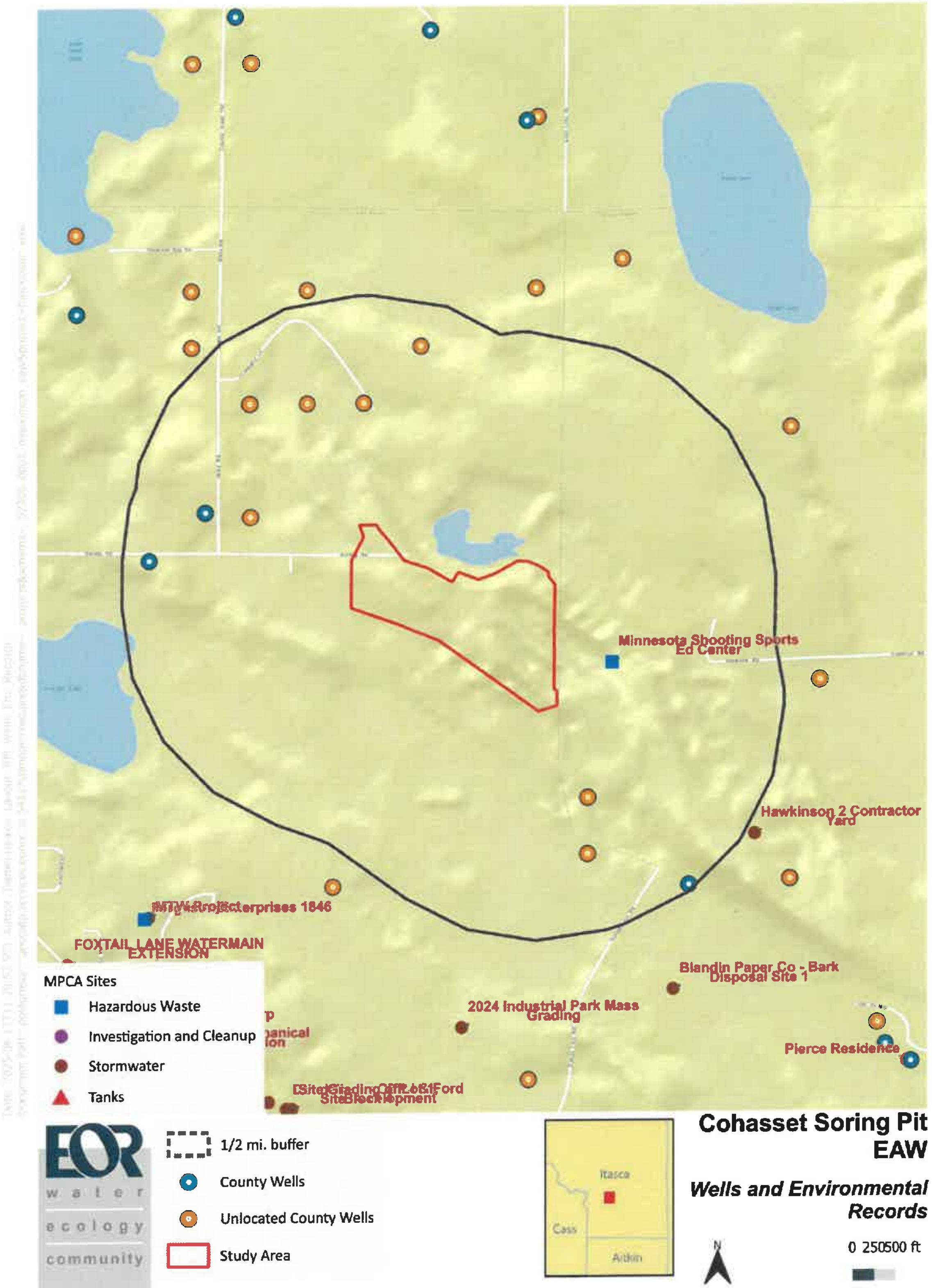


Figure 11. Minnesota Well Index and Nearby Environmental Records.

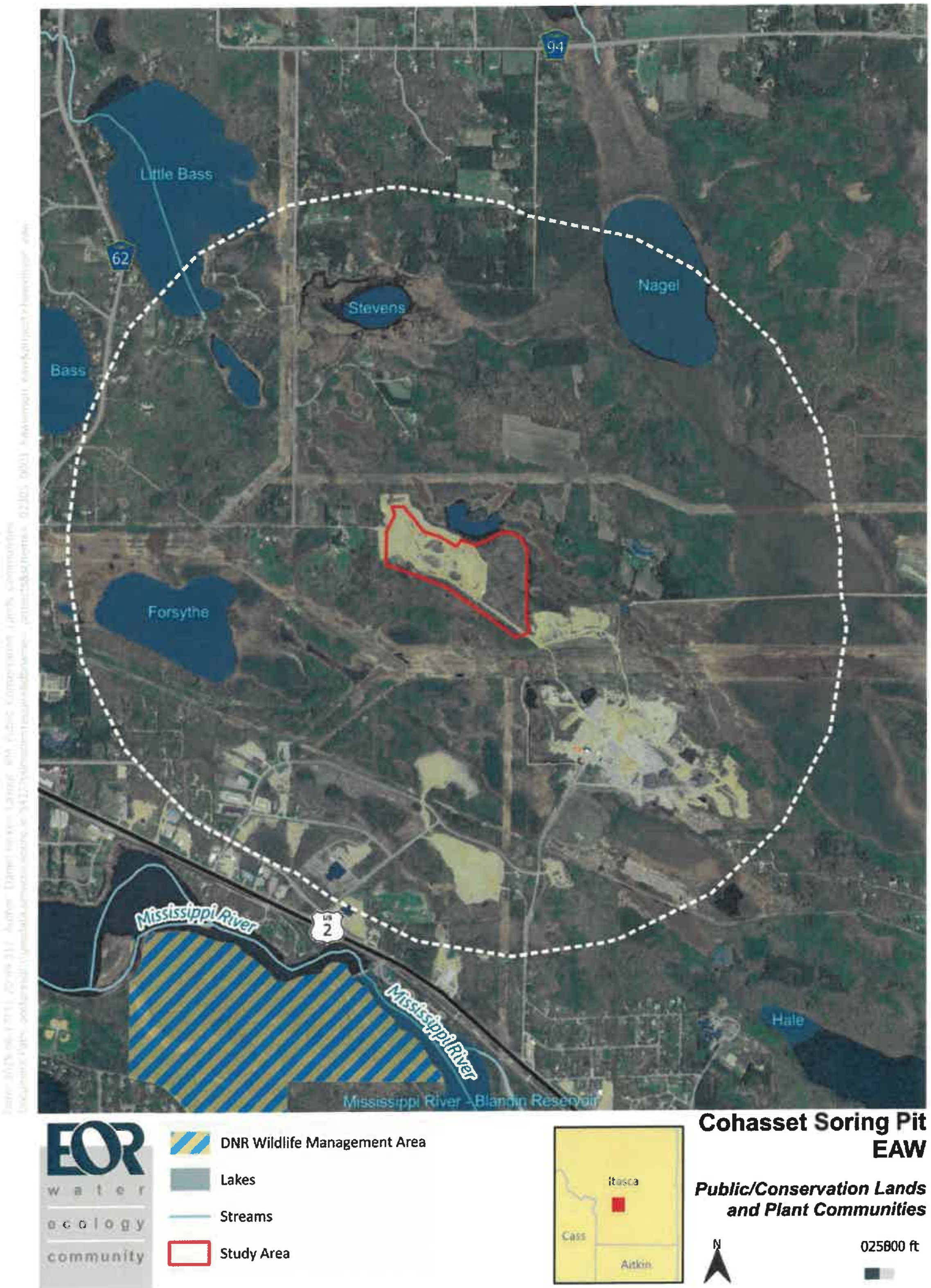


Figure 12. Public and Conservation Land.

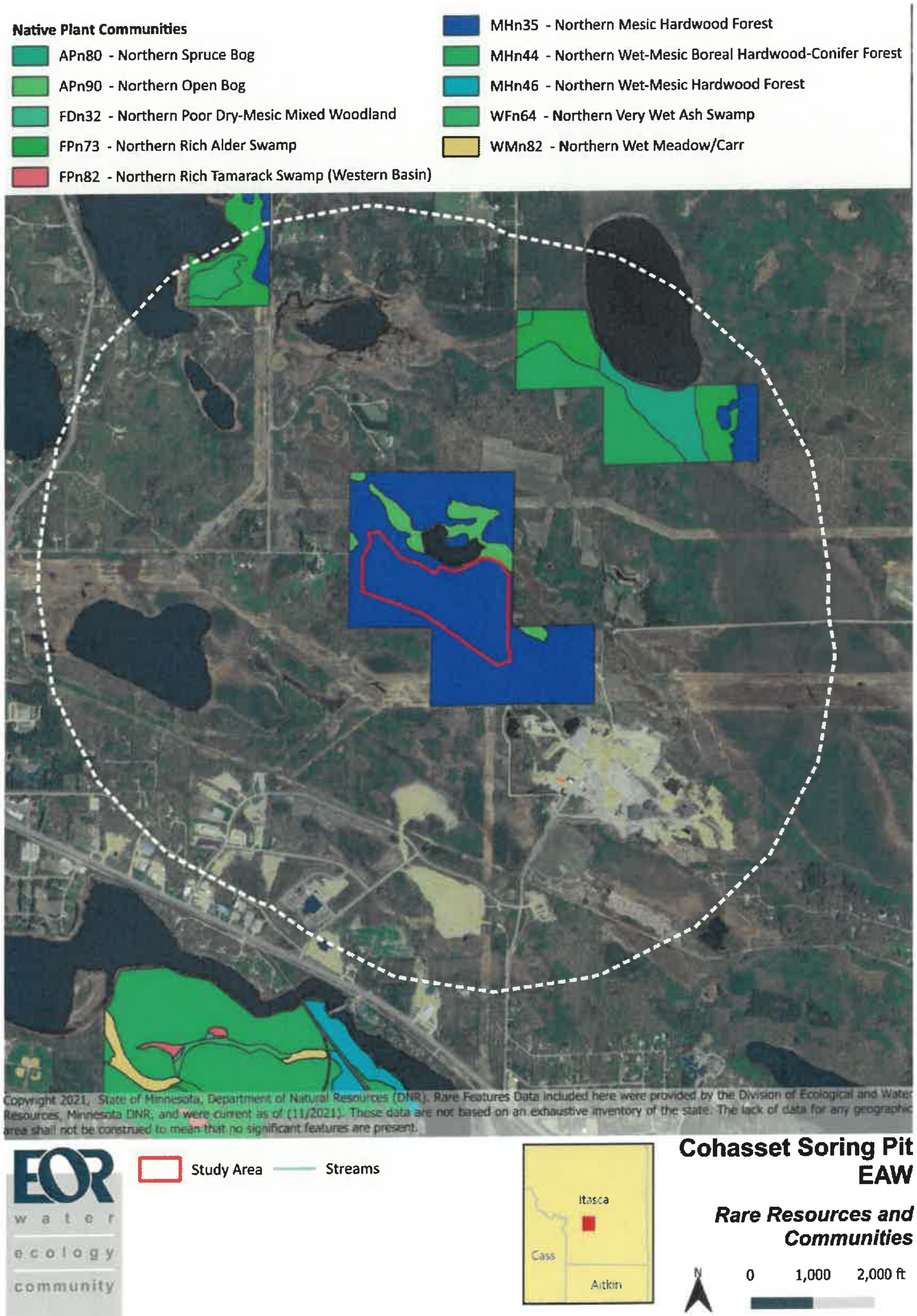


Figure 13. Rare Resources and Communities.

APPENDIX 1 – NATURAL HERITAGE INFORMATION SYSTEM

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Formal Natural Heritage Review - Cover Page

See next page for results of review. A draft watermark means the project details have not been finalized and the results are not official.

Project Name: Hawkinson Soring Pit

Project Proposer: Hawkinson Construction Company

Project Type: Mining, Sand / Gravel / Crushed Stone

Project Type Activities: Grading;Other

TRS: T55 R26 S1, T55 R26 S12

County(s): Itasca

DNR Admin Region(s): Northeast

Reason Requested: Federal Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Assessment, NEPA checklist

Project Description: Hawkinson Construction Company has applied for a lease expansion for its existing Soring Pit at its facility in Cohasset, Minnesota. No change in quarry ...

Existing Land Uses: The site is currently being used in mining operations with access roads and includes some herbaceous undeveloped areas.

Landcover / Habitat Impacted: The current area consists of an access road and undeveloped herbaceous, shrub-scrub vegetation.

Waterbodies Affected: No waterbodies are expected to be impacted by project activities. The wetlands located in the eastern part of the property will be worked around. No official ...

Groundwater Resources Affected: Groundwater is not expected to be impacted.

Previous Natural Heritage Review: Yes, ERDB#: Not Provided

Previous Habitat Assessments / Surveys: No

SUMMARY OF AUTOMATED RESULTS

Category	Results	Response By Category
Project Details	No Comments	No Further Review Required
Ecologically Significant Area	Comments	Potential RNC under WCA NPCs - Recommendations
State-Listed Endangered or Threatened Species	No Comments	No Further Review Required
State-Listed Species of Special Concern	Comments	Recommendations
Federally Listed Species	No Records	Visit IPaC For Federal Review

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological & Water Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

April 21, 2025

Project ID: MCE #2025-00378

Hallie Brychel
Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.
1919 University Avenue West, Suite 300
St. Paul, MN 55104

RE: Automated Natural Heritage Review of the proposed Hawkinson Soring Pit
See Cover Page for location and project details.

Dear Hallie Brychel ,

As requested, the above project has been reviewed for potential effects to rare features. Based on this review, the following rare features may be adversely affected by the proposed project:

Ecologically Significant Area

- One or more DNR Native Plant Communities have been identified within or adjacent to the proposed project (for a list of all the native plant community types, please run a Conservation Planning Report; spatial data can be viewed on the Explore Page). DNR Native Plant Community types and subtypes are given a Conservation Status Rank that reflects the relative rarity and endangerment of the community type in Minnesota. Conservation Status Ranks range from S1 (critically imperiled) to S5 (secure, common, widespread, and abundant).

  Rare Native Plant Communities - One or more rare native plant communities may be impacted by the proposed project. Native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 are considered rare in the state, and the DNR recommends avoidance of these ecologically significant areas. In addition, please note that native plant communities with a Conservation Status Rank of S1 through S3 may qualify as Rare Natural Communities (RNC) under the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). If the proposed project includes a wetland replacement plan under WCA, please contact your DNR Regional Ecologist for further evaluation. Please visit WCA Program Guidance and Information for additional information, including the Rare Natural Communities Technical Guidance.

  Not Rare - One or more native plant communities with Conservation Status Ranks of S4 to S5 may be impacted by the proposed project.

State-Listed Endangered or Threatened Species

No state-listed endangered or threatened species have been documented in the vicinity of the project.

State-Listed Species of Special Concern

Taxonomic Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Water Regime	Habitat	Federal Status
Vertebrate Animal	Least Darter	Etheostoma microperca		Small Rivers and Streams, Littoral Zone of Lake	
Vertebrate Animal	Northern Sunfish	Lepomis peltastes		Littoral Zone of Lake	

- The above table identifies state-listed species of special concern that have been documented in the vicinity of your project. If suitable habitat for any of these species occurs within your project footprint or activity impact area, the project may negatively impact those species. To avoid impacting state-listed species of special concern, the DNR recommends modifying the location of project activities to avoid suitable habitat or modifying the timing of project activities to avoid the presence of the species. Please visit the DNR Rare Species Guide for more information on the habitat use of these species and recommended measures to avoid or minimize impacts. Species-specific comments, if any, appear below.

Federally Listed Species

The Natural Heritage Information System does not contain any records for federally listed species within one mile of the proposed project. Please note, however, that not all federally listed species are tracked within the NHIS. To ensure compliance with federal law, please conduct a federal regulatory review using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's online Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool.

The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that contains information about Minnesota's rare natural features, is maintained by the Division of Ecological and Water Resources, Department of Natural Resources. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. However, the NHIS is not an exhaustive inventory and thus does not represent all of the occurrences of rare features within the state. Therefore, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist within the project area. If additional information becomes available regarding rare features in the vicinity of the project, further review may be necessary.

For environmental review purposes, the results of this Natural Heritage Review are valid for one year; the results are only valid for the project location and the project description provided on the cover page. If project details change or construction has not occurred within one year, please resubmit the project for review before initiating project activities.

The Natural Heritage Review does not constitute project approval by the Department of Natural Resources. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential impacts to these rare features. For information on the environmental review process or other natural resource concerns, you may contact your DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist.

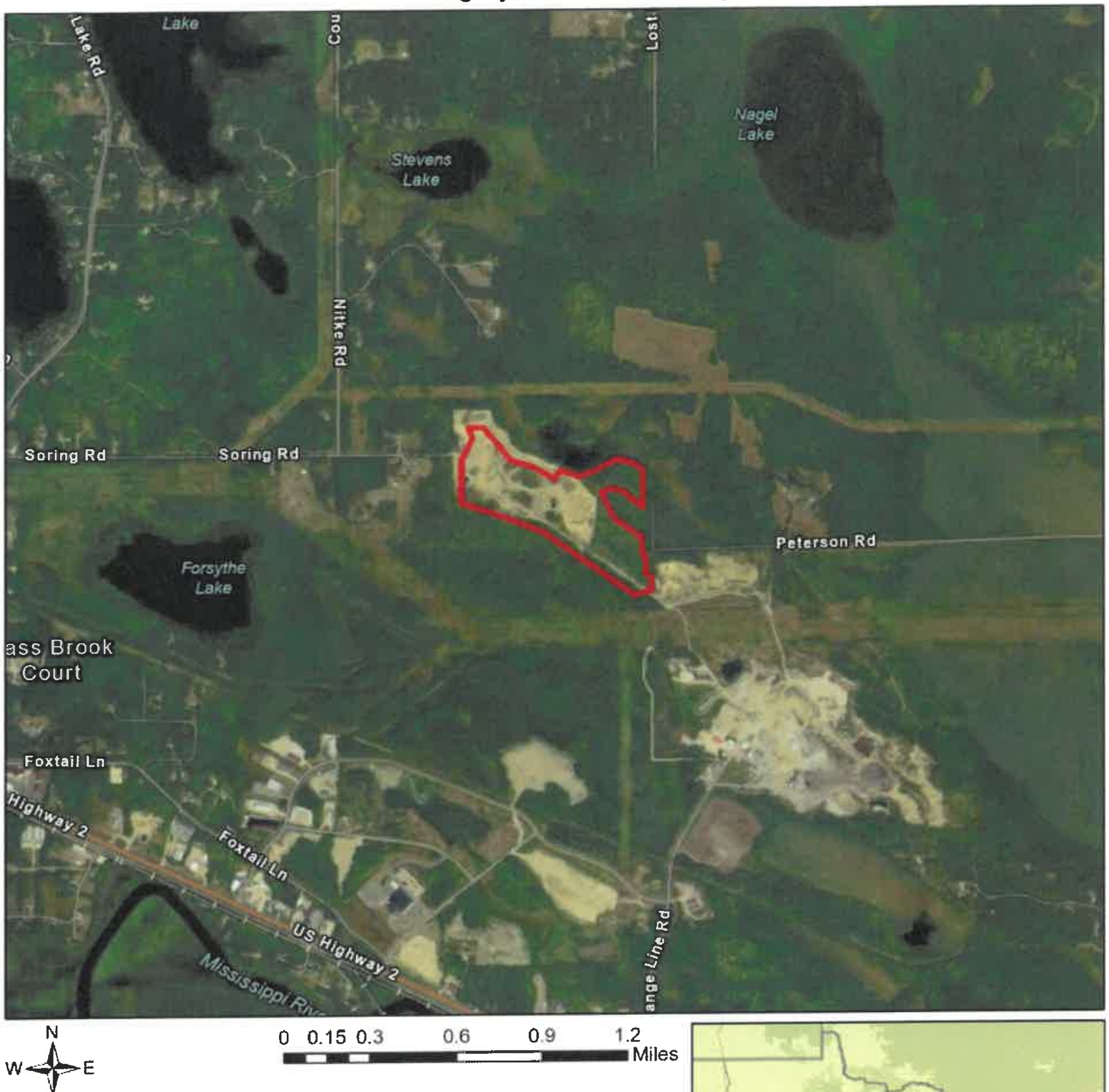
Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

Sincerely, *The Natural Heritage Review Team* Natural Heritage Review Program
Review.NHIS@state.mn.us

Links: USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool
Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool
DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist Contact Info
https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/ereview/erp_regioncontacts.html

Hawkinson Soring Pit

Aerial Imagery With Locator Map



Project Boundary

Project Type: Mining, Sand / Gravel / Crushed Stone

Project Size (acres): 52.34

County(s): Itasca

TRS: T55 R26 S1, T55 R26 S12

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USFWS
Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS,

Hawkinson Soring Pit

USA Topo Basemap With Locator Map

Project Type: Mining, Sand / Gravel / Crushed Stone

Project Size (acres): 52.34

County(s): Itasca

TRS: T55 R26 S1, T55 R26 S12

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USFWS
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS,

APPENDIX 2 – STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

From:	Borchardt, Nicholas (DNR)
To:	Matthew Radermacher
Cc:	Radermacher, Matthew (DNR)
Subject:	RE: LEAR000946 Expansion
Date:	Wednesday, November 20, 2024 8:44:00 AM
Attachments:	image001.png

Good morning,

I'm not sure what happened there.. I had the wrong legal on the map that I created a little while back.. You are correct, it is Section 1, T55N, R26W. I was pretty sure there was a review but we didn't have it in the LRS. Thank you for checking and verifying that it has been complete and there are no issues.

Have a good day!
Nic

From: Matthew Radermacher <matthew.radermacher@mnhs.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2024 8:31 AM
To: Borchardt, Nicholas (DNR) <nicholas.borchardt@state.mn.us>
Cc: Radermacher, Matthew (DNR) <Matthew.Radermacher@state.mn.us>
Subject: Re: LEAR000946 Expansion

Good morning,

Thanks for inquiring about the LEAR000946 lease expansion. Can you confirm the TRS? The map depicts the gravel pit in Section 1 of T55N R26W and this review reflects that location.

Pursuant to the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (Minn. Stat. 138.40), the proposed aggregate extraction leases have been reviewed for potential effects to cultural resources. The review found that no cultural resources have been identified within the proposed lease areas. Furthermore, review of historic imagery, lidar derived elevation models, and the statewide archaeological predictive model suggest that cultural resources are unlikely to be present within the areas to be potentially affected by the lease.

The review concludes that there are no known or suspected cultural resources within the lease areas.

Thanks and let me know if you have any questions.

Matt

On Tue, Nov 19, 2024 at 2:29 PM Borchardt, Nicholas (DNR) <nicholas.borchardt@state.mn.us> wrote:

Good afternoon Matt,

We currently have an active lease with Hawkinson construction in the NWSE, SWSE and SESE forties of Sec. 7 in T. 55, R. 25W. They're planning to increase their footprint in the SESE forty and I was looking for resource review for this one from the past but don't have much. Can you check the SESE forty and let us know if there are cultural resources that we need to be aware of for aggregate extraction.

Thank you!

Nic Borchardt
Aggregate Leasing Specialist|Division of Lands and Minerals

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Rd
St. Paul, MN, 55155
Office: 651-259-5958
Cell: 651-329-1971
Email: nicholas.borchardt@state.mn.us

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Matthew Radermacher I Program Manager
DNR Forestry and Fish & Wildlife Cultural Resources
Minnesota Historical Society I Archaeology Department
345 Kellogg Blvd W I Saint Paul, MN 55102-1906
E: matthew.radermacher@mnhs.org I T: 507-430-4221