



Note: A photo from the meeting is available [here](#).

Contact: Heidi Larson  
651-214-2369  
Heidi@goffpublic.com

**For immediate release:**

June 8, 2017

## **Iron Range Community Gathers to Discuss Impacts of Wild Rice Water Quality Standard**

*MPCA expected to release draft rule soon*

**Mountain Iron, Minn.** – As the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) prepares to present new rules on Minnesota’s sulfate wild rice water quality standard, about 70 Iron Range community leaders and local officials gathered Wednesday to receive updates. Meeting attendees learned about available research and the MPCA’s rulemaking timeline. The meeting was hosted by the Iron Ore Alliance, the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools, and the Iron Mining Association.

Minnesota has a 44-year-old rule limiting how much sulfate can be discharged into wild rice waters. The current standard of 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L), enacted in 1973 based on observational data from the 1940s, is not consistently enforced, and there has been significant discussion and research showing that the current standard is not scientifically supported. Minnesota is the only state with a wild rice sulfate standard.

At Wednesday’s meeting, presenters provided an update about research that started in 2012. According to information presented at the meeting, installing and operating new treatment technologies to achieve the MPCA’s current water quality standard could cost Iron Range municipalities millions of dollars and could require individual households to pay hundreds of dollars per year in new wastewater treatment fees. Research shows that the current standard should be eliminated and that a new standard should be established that protects wild rice and allows our cities and industry to avoid wasting millions of dollars on unnecessary treatment.

“We hope the MPCA will put forth rules that are effective and based on current science and available research so that our communities and environment can thrive,” said John Rebrovich of the United Steelworkers Union and co-chair of the Iron Ore Alliance.

Meeting attendees appreciated the opportunity to come together to learn more about the issue and work toward a science-based solution.

“This issue is critical to our future – both as residents of Minnesota who treasure the outdoors and as employees of businesses that operate in a competitive global mining industry,” said Larry Sutherland, general manager of Minnesota ore operations for U. S. Steel Company. “Using science-based information, we can both protect the environment and have a strong mining industry in Minnesota.”

### **About the Iron Ore Alliance**

The Iron Ore Alliance is a joint initiative of the United States Steel Corporation and the United Steelworkers to help educate Minnesotans about the importance of U. S. Steel’s iron ore business. Located in northeastern Minnesota, U. S. Steel’s Minnesota Ore Operations is the state’s largest iron ore producer and a critical part of U. S. Steel’s North American operations. Minntac, located in Mountain Iron, is the single largest iron ore pelletizing operation in the United States. For more information, visit [www.ironorealliance.com](http://www.ironorealliance.com).

###