

Independent Community Environmental Monitoring Program Frequently Asked Questions

Background: The **Marquette County Community Foundation** (MCCF) in cooperation with the **Superior Watershed Partnership** (SWP) are pleased to announce an independent community environmental monitoring program for the controversial nickel and copper mining operation (Eagle Mine) located near the headwaters of the Salmon Trout River. The mine is located in Marquette County, Michigan about 10 miles from Lake Superior.

Q: What is the Community Environmental Monitoring Program?

The Community Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP) is a new, independent, science-based program set up to monitor potential environmental impacts of the Rio Tinto Eagle Mine, Humboldt Mill and along approved truck routes. Monitoring includes but not be limited to; air quality, groundwater, surface water, wildlife, plant life and more.

Q: What organizations are involved?

The Marquette County Community Foundation (MCCF) in cooperation with the Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP) administers and coordinates the independent community monitoring program. Specifically, the MCCF provides oversight and allocates funding while the SWP coordinates and conducts independent environmental monitoring.

Q: How is the program funded?

Rio Tinto provides the MCCF with \$300,000 annually to fund the Community Environmental Monitoring Program. An operating agreement signed by those involved outlines the terms, roles and responsibilities for the CEMP. The MCCF has an independent board to provide oversight and allocate funding. The CEMP board includes members representing the environmental community, mining community and the community-at-large. The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community has also been invited to serve on the oversight board.

Q: Can members of the public provide monitoring input?

Yes! The public is encouraged to provide input regarding the program including suggestions for additional monitoring. There are many ways to provide input including but not limited to public forums, phone (906-228-6095, Ext. 20), website (www.cemponitoring.com), e-mail, etc. A series of community forums will be held in Marquette, Big Bay, Humboldt Township and Michigamme. Please include a brief science-based rationale for requesting the additional monitoring, if possible.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Has this ever been done before?

This program is unprecedented globally in that **Rio Tinto** has provided the MCCF with funding and established an independent monitoring program to scrutinize their operations. The MCCF has also established an independent oversight board to allocate funding while the SWP coordinates and implements the actual monitoring program working with universities, contractors and EPA approved laboratories.

Q: When will it start?

The Superior Watershed Partnership has begun collecting baseline environmental already. Staff has also started air quality monitoring in Powell Township soon to be followed by groundwater monitoring, surface water monitoring, etc. The mine is due to begin production of nickel and copper in early 2014.

Q: Isn't the mine already required to conduct environmental monitoring?

Yes, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality does regulate and requires extensive environmental monitoring and reporting by Rio Tinto. However, the CEMP conducts additional environmental monitoring in addition to replicating some of the monitoring required by DEQ.

Q: How will the information be made available to the community?

The results from the program are reported regularly online through the Superior Watershed Partnership's website www.superiorwatersheds.org, newsletters and public meetings. All data is presented in an easy-to-understand format with detailed monitoring results also available.

Q: Does Rio Tinto have a say in how the monitoring data is presented?

The Superior Watershed Partnership owns any and all of the data collected. The monitoring program is entirely independent however SWP gives Rio Tinto an opportunity to comment on data before it is made public. Superior Watershed Partnership includes commentary from Rio Tinto, along with its own, if there is any disagreement. This process provides the community with full transparency regarding all data.

For additional information please contact the Marquette County Community Foundation (906-226-7666), the Superior Watershed Partnership (906-228-6095) or Rio Tinto Eagle Mine (906-486-1257).