

# Frac Sand Sentinel

...keeping watch on the industry

ISSUE 4

NOVEMBER 2, 2012

Photos and article from Jody McIlrath's visit to Wisconsin



DEMONSTRATION BLASTING IN LARKIN VALLEY,  
TOWN OF PRESTON, TREMPPEALEAU COUNTY



## Township Official: U of M Frac Sand Mining Conference Anything but Neutral

Jody McIlrath · October 8, 2012

I am a Planning Commissioner in Florence Township, which is in southeast Minnesota's Goodhue County. I am also chair of the *Save-The-Bluffs* Citizen's group and a new member of the *Land Stewardship Project*. I have been heavily involved in the silica frac sand issue here in Goodhue County since May 2011.

I was retired once, happy as a clam, with my own personal life. I learned of the intended mining land purchases in my community by mere happenstance. I have since become self-educated via endless research and by tapping information resources, expertise and experience from western Wisconsin, where there gargantuan and rapid expansion of silica frac sand mining is taking place.

On Oct. 1-3, I attended the University of Minnesota-organized conference, "Silica Sand Resources of Minnesota and Wisconsin." I was one of only a few non-industry attendees. Although a conference organizer claimed it was to be a neutral conference and not promoting, the word "propaganda" kept creeping into my mind.

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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

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#### From Jerry Gallagher of WQOW...

#### [Frac sand company in talks with business in Eau Claire](#)

Read the story to learn more:

\* Buffalo County just approved a mine site for Glacier Sands in the Town of Mondovi.

\* Glacier says 150 trucks carrying frac sand will come to Eau Claire using Hwy 37.

\* Glacier says they are "talking with a potential partner" but won't say where the destination site is located.

#### **ARE EAU CLAIRE COUNTY AND THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE READY FOR THIS INFLUX OF SEMI-TRUCK TRAFFIC?**

Leader Telegram reports on SEP 26:

#### [Natural Resources Board hears concerns about sand mining](#)

At least 15 citizens spoke, representing the concerns of many who were unable to attend.

### FIVE STAR TELECOM FILES RECLAMATION PLAN WITH EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FOR 140 ACRE FRAC SAND MINE IN the TOWN OF BRIDGE CREEK

The Public Notice was first published on October 19th. A nearby landowner must request a Public Hearing within 30 days of this date. Stay alert for announcements of dates should a Public Hearing be scheduled.

Surrounding properties include many residences, the Eau Claire County Forest, The Augusta Area Sportsman Club land, American Legion Post 291 land, and the Augusta Landfill.

This mine will be located southeast of the Eau Claire River, at Hwy 27, between Fall Creek and Augusta. Harstad Park, an Eau Claire County park, is also nearby.

The sale of these Plum Creek Timberlands parcels to Five Star Telecom Properties, LLC was registered in April 2012.

Five Star plans to haul the sand to an **UNDISCLOSED** processing plant near Oakdale in Monroe County, and return the waste products to the Eau Claire site. The post-mining land use is supposed to be a lake.

You may access document for this reclamation plan at the [Eau Claire County Department of Planning and Development](#) website. Links are also provided here:

#### RECLAMATION DOCUMENTS

- [Public Hearing Notice](#)
- Application Materials
  - [Site Plans](#)
  - [Reclamation Plan Narrative](#)
  - [Reclamation Plan Appendices](#)

**What are the risks to the Eau Claire River? to Bridge Creek? Is there added concern because this mine site is next to a landfill? Are there contamination risks with what will be returned to the mine site from distant places?**

**What is the mining experience of Five Star Telecom Properties? of Morey Family Farms and Excavating, the listed operator?**

**Many questions need to be raised and answered. This reclamation plan and its execution must be as stringent and sound as possible to protect the Eau Claire River, the surrounding natural resources, the public park, private properties, and the health of any families living nearby.**

**"Because we don't think about future generations, they will never forget us." – Henrik Tikkanen**

# NATURAL GAS PIPELINE - Tomah to Eau Claire - TO SERVE FRAC SAND INDUSTRY in WISCONSIN!

Wisconsin Energy eyes gas service to frac sand mines - The Business Journal, NOV 1, 2012, Rich Kirchen

- **The sudden emergence of west-central Wisconsin as prime territory for frac-sand mining is one reason Wisconsin Energy Corp. is planning to spend \$150 million to \$200 million for a new natural-gas distribution network in the region.**
- Wisconsin Energy plans to seek approval from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in 2013
- "We're in conversations with 12 or more frac-sand mining operations in the western part of the state who've asked us to take a hard look at providing them service," Klappa said.

Wisconsin Energy earnings jump 20% - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, OCT 31, 2012, by Thomas Content

- During an investor conference call, Klappa said the utility was considering a \$150 million project to expand its natural gas distribution network in the western part of Wisconsin.
- The project would boost reliability but is largely driven by the development of frac sand mines in western Wisconsin. These mines extract and the process the sand that's found in Wisconsin and used in the hydraulic fracturing process that has boosted U.S. production of natural gas.
- **The expansion, if approved by state regulators, would extend from the Tomah area to Eau Claire, Klappa said. We Energies will file an application for the project next year, Klappa said.**

Eau Claire County property owners concerned about gas pipeline - Leader Telegram, OCT 19, 2012, Chuck Rupnow

- Mike Torud, acting Eau Claire County parks and forest director, said We Energies will provide more information at Tuesday's Parks and Forest Committee meeting about a proposal to run a line along county forest rights of way from the town of Wilson to the Augusta and Fairchild areas in eastern Eau Claire County.
- He said the company will host public information sessions for those areas under consideration for gas line installation.

## \$ \$\$\$\$ ECONOMIC IMPACTS \$

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2012 News Release From: Environment Minnesota Research & Policy Center**  
 - a state-based, citizen-supported, environmental advocacy organization -  
**The Cost of Fracking and Frac Sand Mining**

Environment Minnesota released their report, [The Cost of Fracking](#), which details the costs imposed by the fracking industry. About this release, the advocacy group said:

"We know the environmental damage from the fracking industry across the country is serious, **but it turns out that this dirty energy industry imposes heavy dollar and cents costs as well,**" said Chadwick. The report covers the fracking industry as a whole, **but speakers today linked the industry to risks from the frac sand mining industry here in Minnesota.** "This is the kind of information we need on the frac sand industry, way before it explodes here in Minnesota. We need to know all the costs of this industry, what it's going to mean for our environment, health and quality of life. We need to make sure Minnesota is protected from the dangers of frac sand mining."

Be sure to read, "**WHO PAYS THE COST OF FRACKING?**" in, [The Cost of Fracking](#) (p 32)

**Is it the same for Frac Sand Mining?**

- Failure of companies to meet financial obligations
- Delayed appearance of harm to environment and human health.
- Diffuse Regional Impacts
- Inability of citizens to access legal remedies.

\$

**Externalized Costs**

"Health or environmental costs that are placed on society instead of the responsible party."

*Definition from the Wisconsin Sierra Club*

\$

**\$\$\$ TWO LETTERS ON ROAD COSTS \$\$\$ Who Pays for the Roads?**

**OCT 26,2012 - Marshfield News Herald: Letter by Ken Schmitt, Colfax, WI**

**Citizens shouldn't pay for road upgrades**

Until 2004, I lived east of Neillsville. I now live in Chippewa County. From 2010 to 2012, I sat on the county board.

Chippewa County has collected nearly \$10 million from the sand companies to upgrade and rebuild roads for them in 2012-13. Our county levy is about \$16 million for 2013. If the taxpayers had to foot this, they would be looking at a 30 percent increase in the county portion of their property tax for two years plus continuing costs.

This is the ultimate insult — to subsidize this industry and put up with its intrusion. The companies cry foul, yet it is more unfair for citizens to pay these costs.

EOG has about 1,000 truck trips a day. Marshfield residents, remember you also pay county taxes. Let your elected officials know that it would not be right that you be forced to subsidize this highly profitable, intrusive industry.

In the January issue of UPSTREAM, EOG projected that it would save \$400 million (later lowered to \$300 million) during 2012 with its sand operations in Wisconsin, which means two mines and one processing plant in Chippewa County.

Electors in the 69th District must ask why is Scott Suder so adamant about curtailing local control when it comes to sand mining and feels the taxpayers need to subsidize this industry by building and upgrading their haul routes. He reportedly has said on different occasions that local government is restraining this industry. This a blatant falsehood.

Last summer, the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism reported about 40 mines operating, in development or proposed in Wisconsin. This summer it was 107. Does this seem like an industry being restrained? Ask Scott Suder why he prefers Big Oil interests over those of Wisconsin citizens.

**Do the Math**

**LETTER: Cost of frac sand mining to our roads** , by Bets Reedy of Houston, MN, 5/15/2012 in the Spring Grove Herald

At the meeting of the Houston County Frac Sand Study Committee May 3, there seemed to be some confusion about the implications of the \$0.219-per-ton per-mile fee recently enacted on frac sand trucks by Winona County.

Several people seemed to think that fee was too high.

Let's look at it using the information provided at the Houston County Public Hearing March 19 by Dr. James Wilde. According to Dr. Wilde, the cost of road repair runs from \$250,000 to \$600,000 per mile.

If, as Dr. Wilde indicated, the frac sand mine produces 270,000 tons of sand per year and is charged \$0.219 per ton per mile, the fee will generate \$59,130 per mile of road (that totals \$295,650 at five years).

That same 270,000 tons of sand per year translates to 11,739 trucks per year on the roads (270,000 tons divided by 23 tons per truck = 11,739).

Since a typical road in Houston County is designed for 50,000 trucks over an intended lifetime of 20 years, Dr. Wilde stated that the road would be thus "consumed" in less than five years.

continued on next page.....

If, that is, 11,739 trucks per year travel the roadway for five years ( $11.739 \times 5 = 58,695$ ), those trucks will exceed the design life of the road in less than five years.

Dr. Wilde's example looks ONLY at trucks carrying frac sand. If the ONLY traffic on the road is the 11,739 frac sand trucks, the road will be consumed in less than five years.

Including in the calculation the ordinary truck and car traffic carried daily on the county roads will obviously shorten the lifetime of the roads noticeably faster than his calculation.

After five years, a fee of \$0.219 per-ton per-mile would generate \$295,650 per mile for road repairs caused by the trucks from one frac sand mine. Remember, repairing a road costs from \$250,000 to \$600,000 per mile.

If, when normal vehicle traffic is included in the calculation, the cost is \$600,000 per mile to repair the roads, who will pay for the additional \$304,350? The taxpayers?

## NEWS ROUND UP

**Important connections: how does our frac sand affect others in our nation?** Here is a letter I received recently from a North Dakota man, who was later featured in a *WQOW-TV* special report.

Hi Pat-

You don't know me, obviously, but Jerry Gallagher from WQOW-tv called me about their doing a story on this end of the oil well/sand frack debacle a few days ago. They are, in fact, on their way West as I write and I just spoke with Jerry a half-hour ago. He told me about Save the Hills, Inc. and about you...so we need to talk soon.

I was barely aware of where the frack sand used out here originated, and am quite shocked at what Jerry told me and what your website shows- sickening really. I will eventually appear on WQOW says Jerry but the more I know about your end of the equation before our interview tomorrow morning, the better.

**What you and your group and everyone else needs to know back there is that most western North Dakotans HATE what's going with oil & fracking out here- we'd just as soon run them all the HELL out of here 'cause they are destroying our environment, too.** I suspect that the oil slicks fear we and you getting together on both ends of this disaster to foment some real opposition to the entire mess. So, we need to talk ASAP about this...you can call me at \_\_\_\_\_ or send me your phone #- I'm much better with telephones than with computers. I am, after all, a National Park Wilderness Ranger and natural beef rancher in the Dakota badlands very near where Teddy Roosevelt used to roam. Good luck back there...John A. Heiser, Grassy Butte, ND

**WQOW has been a leader in covering frac sand mining issues. If you missed Jerry Gallagher's excellent reports from the Williston Basin in North Dakota, please view them here:**

- **The Bakken Boom:** <http://www.wqow.com/story/19937817/sandstorm-of-business-the-bakken-boom>
- **Badgers in the Bakken:** <http://www.wqow.com/story/19948292/sandstorm-of-business-badgers-in-the-bakken>
- **Sandstorm of Business: An Incomplete Picture:** <http://www.wqow.com/story/19959326/sandstorm-of-business-an-incomplete-picture>

**WQOW Sand Mining Page with many videos and articles related to Frac Sand Mining:**  
[http://www.wqow.com/category/231332/sand-mines\\_](http://www.wqow.com/category/231332/sand-mines_)



## CHIPPEWA FALLS: Minutes of the Chippewa County Board, OCTOBER 9, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISHING TO BE HEARD

**Patricia Popple** spoke in regard to sand mines (copy on file). Popple expressed concern that Chippewa County only lists three standards in their zoning code that address non-metallic mining, compared to Calumet County, which has 18 standards. With Chippewa County having as many sand mines as we do, she feels there should be more standards listed in the code.

The report Ms. Popple based her comments on is from the Center For Land Use Education, *Evaluating Non-Metallic Mining: County Zoning Ordinances*: [http://wcvrpc.org/Frac\\_Sand/Planning\\_and\\_Regs/CountyZoningFracSand3.pdf](http://wcvrpc.org/Frac_Sand/Planning_and_Regs/CountyZoningFracSand3.pdf)

- see page 2 of the report for a quick view of the number of standards your County has for regulating non-metallic mining.
- **PLEASE CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL LICENSING ORDINANCES AND LOCAL ZONING OPTIONS !! Your County zoning may not be protecting you!**

**RICE LAKE: [Frac sand zoning will go to trial in May](#)** , Rice Lake Chronotype, OCT 3, 2012

- "A trial in a lawsuit against Barron County and Canadian Sand & Proppant was set for May 13 by Barron County Circuit Court Judge Timothy Doyle."
- "The lawsuit, filed by Citizens for Responsible Land Use and Town of Sumner residents Dale and Carole Crisler, concerns a new frac sand mine east of Cameron just south of Hwy. 8 in the Town of Sumner. The mine is currently under construction."
- "The plaintiffs contend the mine is not in keeping with the county or Town of Sumner master plans. Master plans are primarily focused on land use."

**[Land use suit one of first](#)** , Rice Lake Chronotype, OCT 3, 2012

- Master, or Comprehensive Plans, have been adopted by communities across Wisconsin, to direct land use decisions. This lawsuit is one of the first to challenge a decision of government officials as being "not in keeping" with the comprehensive plan.

**EAU CLAIRE:** On OCT 9, the City Council voted against entering into a Development Agreement with Muskie Proppants, LLC (formerly Muskie Property Holdings, LLC) for the expansion of a City owned rail spur in an Industrial park on the North side of the City, at Anderson Drive. Many citizens spoke against the project. Read about it:

- Jerry Gallagher, WQOW: [City council rejects frac sand transfer facility in Eau Claire](#)
- Leader Telegram: [Eau Claire City Council rejects sand-loading site](#)

**LADYSMITH:** from WQOW, [Rail crews hit a gas line in Ladysmith](#) , NOV 1, 2012 -

"A utility company was needed Thursday afternoon after railroad crews struck a gas line. It happened in Ladysmith before 5:00 p.m. We Energies says the railroad company struck a service line that runs underneath the tracks. No one was hurt and there were no evacuations. The repairs were made around 5:30 p.m. **Improvements are being made to the rail line in Ladysmith because of the demand for frac sand**"

## **TREMPEALEAU COUNTY, town of Chimney Rock: [Trempealeau County denies a mining permit for the first time](#)**

Star Tribune, OCT 12, 2012, by Tony Kennedy.

- "No other county in Minnesota or Wisconsin has permitted as many frac sand facilities as Trempealeau County, which borders the Mississippi River near Winona."
- "After approving 21 facilities over the past three years, the county's busy Environment and Land Use Committee denied its first application this week for a site in Chimney Rock Township just south of Elewa and southwest of Strum."
- The facility was to be operated by Sand Tech, LLC of Watertown, MN

Read the full story, and the rest of Tony Kennedy's excellent reporting on frac sand mining issues at:

[http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/blogs/sandstorm.html?page=2&numtoshow=5&vi\\_adid=W](http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/blogs/sandstorm.html?page=2&numtoshow=5&vi_adid=W)

## **WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO: [FRAC SAND MINING FACES MORE RESISTANCE](#) OCT 16, 2012, by Rich Kremer**

use the link to access the audio of this program

**WABASHA, MN: *Superior Sand Systems*** (associated with White Buffalo Sand and Paramount Sand) in conjunction with Canadian Nation rail carrier plans to build a frac sand trans-loading facility on the railroad right of way in Wabasha. Trucks would haul sand from the recently approved SSS mine in the Town of Mondovi, coming through Nelson, WI. Sand might arrive from other locations as well, with truck traffic as high as 700 trips per day.

Public Hearings for the Conditional Use Permit needed by Superior Sand Systems began on OCT 30 and were extended to NOV 1 due to such strong public turnout. Read about it:

- **Winona Daily News:** November 01, 2012 [Public hearing for Wabasha frac sand facility overwhelms officials, will continue today](#) (ALSO, SEE PAGE 8 for the wide spread effects this facility will have)

### **Word on the Street in Chippewa Falls.....**

- More rail lines are appearing north of county highway S. Have you seen them?
- Borings for sand are being seen taken in the Towns of Howard, Tilden, Woodmohr, and Cooks Valley.
- There is curiosity about the church/junk yard area in the Village of Lake Hallie. Some have heard that residents on one side of the road are being offered fair market value for their homes.
  - Could a transload station be in the planning stages at this site?
  - The west wells for the City of Chippewa Falls are not far away. Should anyone be concerned?

### **Your Right To Know**

Does your group have the need to retrieve information? Under the Freedom of Information Act, every citizen has the right to retrieve public records including agendas, minutes, and other governmental records. You may need these to understand how frac sand mining came to your community, town, county, or state and to learn how the processes, ordinances, and procedures in your community could be improved. You have something to offer. Step Up !

### **ATTEND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS!**

**This is the best way to participate and learn what is happening where you live.**

## When Water Runs Short.....

**Drought strains Minnesota's water resources** reported at WKBT La Crosse, News 8000

- Drought conditions are straining water supplies.
- Officials are urging everyone to cut back on their use of water.
- Some companies are turning to "alternative supplies."

**Dry weather leads to lower water level on Big Chip** Sawyer County Record, NOV 2, 2012

- "The drier summer season has resulted in lower inflows into the reservoir as well as decreased discharge from the dam during the summer season,"
- "... the Chippewa Flowage reservoir, which is controlled by Xcel Energy's Winter Dam on the Chippewa River....has received... about one-half of what was received during the same period in 2010."

+++++  
+++++ **RAIL TROUBLES?** +++++  
+++++ +++++

### Surface Transportation Board – regulatory agency for Railroads and Rail Carriers

From the FAQ page: <http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/faqs.html>

#### Consumer Assistance

**How do I file an informal complaint rail the STB to address a rail consumer problem?**

**Answer.** The STB has established a Rail Consumer Assistance Program which provides the general public with access to informal assistance with any type of rail-related transportation problem and is administered by the STB's Office of Compliance and Enforcement (OCE). The program is nationwide in scope, allowing anyone with a problem involving a railroad subject to the STB's jurisdiction to reach us

- by toll-free telephone (1-866-254-1792), by direct E-mail ([railconsumer@stb.dot.gov](mailto:railconsumer@stb.dot.gov)),
- by using a "[Rail Consumer](#)" button on our Web page, or by fax (202-245-0462).

All complaints and inquiries received by OCE through this program are handled directly with the involved railroad, usually within two hours of receipt, thus the program benefits every complainant by placing their concerns immediately before the involved railroad, which facilitates a prompt response to the complainant and provides the opportunity for a private sector resolution. Being informal, this process is less burdensome for either party than a formal proceeding, conserves the STB's resources, and provides the parties the opportunity to resolve their issues in an environment that will produce the most satisfactory, timely, and cost-effective result.

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**Everything Red Wing (MN):** <http://www.everythingredwing.com/nosand/>

Extensive lists of articles under "Literature."

**BUFFALO COUNTY AND BEYOND:** <http://fracsandfrisbee.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Wabasha-hub.pdf>

**By Mike O' Connor: WABASHA (SAND) LOADING FACILITY, a VIEW FROM BUFFALO COUNTY**

**Please look at this very well done document, showing how all the trucking and rail traffic is affecting one community after another. The Wabasha Sand Loading facility will affect communities on both sides of the river.**

**This is an eye opener.**



**A Matter That Should Concern Us All - Think of what is at risk!**

**CRAWFORD COUNTY: The frac sand mining situation in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway is dire.**

The board is getting a great deal of political pressure to approve the proposed 200 acre Bridgeport Township frac sand mine, half the land within the LWSR. Without **overwhelming** public opposition and inclusion of legislators, they are likely to cave to the pressure. **Please send them comments by Nov. 7, if possible**, as they meet on Nov. 8. Short, simple. **A short letter to the editor is sorely needed as well, as few know this is even an issue.** We can send you the email addresses for the papers.

The LWSR is a major and extensive resource, a most valuable asset to wildlife habitat and a tourism destination, stretching from the confluence with the Mississippi River into Sauk County.

At the next LWSR Board meeting, **Thurs., Nov. 8, 5:00 pm at the Spring Green Public Library, 230 East Monroe St., the sand mining proposal is again on their agenda. The board can choose to postpone or act on the proposal. Please help....Kathy and I cannot keep up here....**Edie Ehlert, CSP Co-coordinator.

Concerns and questions for the board include:

- Setting a precedence of mining within the Riverway. If this goes through, we are likely to see frac sand mines all along and within the LWSR.
- How does industrial frac sand mining support the mission of the LWSR board?
- Intense truck traffic all along the River.
- Compromised scenic beauty and natural values, to include intense noise, all night extreme lighting, and fugitive dust.
- Rights of ALL landowners within the Riverway, not just those profiting from mining.
- Wildlife habitat lost. Where do wildlife go when their homes are just completely wiped out? How does major wildlife habitat destruction fit into the mission of LWSR Board?
- We've not yet seen the archeological report done for Pattison Sand, and have concerns at this site and all along the Riverway concerning archeological sites.
- Go to [lwr.state.wi.us](http://lwr.state.wi.us) to learn about the laws, projects and board members of the LWSR.

**Photo gallery of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway:**

[http://www.wisconsinpaddleguide.com/gallery\\_lower\\_wisconsin.html](http://www.wisconsinpaddleguide.com/gallery_lower_wisconsin.html)



**Watch Video and Read More**

[Pattison Mine - Lower Wisconsin River State Waterway](#)

By Sandy Collins - Wauzeka, WI A final citizen concern noted was how the fast and furious sand frac industry, fueled by the big energy industry, is permanently altering Wisconsin's natural environment, ...forever ...to the great detriment of all future generations.

**GLOBAL VIEW**

**INDUSTRIAL MINERALS IS WATCHING US!** Industry site gathering intelligence on frac sand and other minerals. [http://www.indmin.com/SearchResults.aspx?Keywords=frac%20sand&RequiredFields=PUBLICATION\\_ID%3A696](http://www.indmin.com/SearchResults.aspx?Keywords=frac%20sand&RequiredFields=PUBLICATION_ID%3A696)

A subscription is required to read full articles, but this link should let you read the headlines. **Your community is probably mentioned!**

SEP 2012: *US Frac Sand Slows Amid Chinese Imports*, [18% quarter on quarter drop in spot price of Frac Sand !](#)

**After the Boom in Natural Gas** - Rex W. Tillerson, CEO of Exxon Mobil: "We are all losing our shirts today," Mr. Tillerson said. "We're making no money. It's all in the red."

continued from page 1

It was full of grand PowerPoint presentations were made about the “efficiencies” of the mining processes.

The “granddaddy” of presentations was on the glories of mine reclamation—full screen colored photos of golf courses, walking trails, ball fields, lakes, parks and happy people. No one mentioned that it’s only a 20-30 year wait while our bluffs are destroyed, air and water is polluted, roads clogged with truck traffic, and farms displaced.

One presentation was on the economic benefits of sand mining that began with the “neutral” statement that local people with concerns are “totally misinformed” about frac sand mining and are spreading erroneous information. The presenter gave no example of this so-called misinformation.

This is where I took personal offense. What I and my neighbors had learned over 18 months—after hours of research on the health, environmental and economic issues; attending and facilitating countless meetings; and interviewing experts in Wisconsin—was completely dismissed by this one presenter. How can we believe the frac sand industry's promises to be a good neighbor when at this conference they simply dismissed local residents' concerns out-of-hand?

The final day of the conference was an all-day tour of mines and processing centers in Wisconsin. The tour was delayed by an hour while a group of seven brave “fractivists” climbed atop one of the tour buses and wouldn’t get down until the fire trucks appeared and the police arrested (and released) them. I was thankful that these protesters, along with ones that had been present at the beginning of the conference, made it clear to the media and those attending that many in southeast Minnesota are aware of the environmental and economic harm that this industry will do to our communities.

On the road between mine visits, I was mentally timing the 20-ton “belly loader” trucks passing us both ways every two minutes on the narrow Wisconsin roads. I also noticed the sand dunes in some of the ditches.

The tour's *crème de la crème* was the stop at the Preferred Sands Blair mine. The place was set up with a (dusty) blue and white tent in the bottom of a 440-acre sandstone pit, personalized name tags for tour groups, and bottled water with complimentary logo cooler cups.

After a brief intro by a very personable spokesman, mine officials staged a real live “blast” for us and photos were encouraged. All the geologists/engineers were salivating. I have to say, I was interested as well, never before witnessing a real live explosion. We walked about 200 yards from the tent, the warning signal was given, and a huge blast occurred (see photo; for a short video of the blast [click here](#)).

We were standing about 1,000 feet from the blast and the ground shook under our feet. The sand shot over 100 feet in the air, and then a huge plume of orange smoke followed. "Wow," I’m thinking to myself. "Our Goodhue County ordinance property setbacks just got increased to 1,000 feet from mines... and now I’m convinced it’s still way... too... close."

It was clear from this tour that silica frac sand mining processing and transport is an INDUSTRIAL business, and if allowed at all belongs in an INDUSTRIAL zone. It is not an agricultural operation in any sense—as frac sand mining industry representatives in Goodhue County have claimed. All the professionals on the tour I spoke with agreed with my assessment.

I am deeply disappointed that the University of Minnesota would hold such a one-sided conference. No one even mildly critical of the industry or a single person that would be personally affected by frac sand mining spoke at this “neutral” conference.

However, I’m glad I attended and I learned a great deal. It clearly confirmed my quest to keep this industry away from our communities.

## You will enjoy reading the full story....

.....a thoughtful and educational piece, exploring how certain assumptions and values are reflected in the rhetoric used by industry supporters at a recent frac sand mining conference. Are we all talking past each other?

## How to Dismantle Frac Sand Industry Rhetoric: Notes on the Resource Exploitation Framework

By Thomas W. Pearson, University of Wisconsin-Stout

"A controversial issue such as frac sand mining is commonly seen as something "under debate," with at least two sides facing off and the truth lying somewhere in the middle. However, the two sides often talk past each other. In fact, I would even go so far as to suggest that at least two very different conversations are taking place (if not more). Each conversation represents a unique set of taken-for-granted assumptions and values, a conceptual or normative "framework" through which people view the world.

One such normative framework was on display at the [Conference on Silica Sand Resources of Minnesota and Wisconsin](#). I'll call this framework, which is represented by the frac sand industry and its supporters, the *resource exploitation framework*. Held October 1-3 at the Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Park, MN, the conference was organized by the Precambrian Research Center of the University of Minnesota-Duluth and the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration, and sponsored by dozens of private corporations that operate in the mining and energy sectors."

**Read Full Story at Dr. Pearson's blog:**

<http://wisconsinfracsand.blogspot.com/2012/10/how-to-dismantle-frac-sand-industry.html#more>

***Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. - Aldo Leopold***

***Welcome to the Frac Sand Sentinel, a newsletter highlighting resource links, news media accounts, blog posts, correspondence, observations and opinions gathered regarding local actions on, and impacts of, the developing frac sand mining and processing industries.***

*The content of this newsletter is for informational purposes only. The editor of the Frac Sand Times does not accept any responsibility or liability for the use or misuse of the content of this newsletter or reliance by any persons on the newsletters contents.*

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