



*.....keeping watch on
the industry*

Issue:#317
Date: February 24, 2020

See next page.....due to formatting problems with jpegs, the messages are below.

Feb 17 2020
Colfax

NOW ONLINE - www

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Volume 124, Issue 7

Colfax, Wisconsin 54

Northern Sands Wisconsin asking for changes to Albertville Valley sand mine reclamation permit

By LeAnn R. Ralph
TOWN OF HOWARD

Northern Sands Wisconsin, the company developing the 1,300-acre Albertville Valley sand mine several miles southeast of Colfax, plans to ask for changes to the reclamation permit Chippewa County issued in 2015.

Robin Koth, representing Northern Sands Wisconsin, spoke to the Howard Town Board at the February 4 meeting about the company's plans to ask for changes to the reclamation permit and gave a brief update about the company's progress on developing the frac sand mine.

Northern Sands Wisconsin is proposing to develop a frac sand mine southeast of Colfax that would stretch north and south along the Chippewa County and Dunn County line directly east of the intersection of county Highway N and county Highway A.

The mine site is expected to include a wet processing plant, a dry processing plant, rail car storage area and a rail loading facility.

The site is located along the Canadian National rail line which runs through Colfax.

The Chippewa County reclamation permit is "many years old" and changes should be made to the reclamation plan, Koth told the Howard Town Board and the approximately 30 people attending the meeting.

Permits

NSW has obtained a high-capacity well permit. The storm-water permit is pending until the final grading plan is completed, and the air permit also is pending

the completion of the final plan, Koth said.

Before a sand mine could operate in the Town of Howard, Northern Sands Wisconsin must obtain a variety of permits and provide copies of those permits to the Town of Howard.

The permits include a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources construction site storm water discharge permit; a fugitive dust control plan as part of the DNR air emission permit; a high capacity well permit from the DNR and a Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System general permit.

Several plans also would be required, including a water conservation plan filed with Chippewa County; a storm water pollution prevention plan; and a spill response plan.

According to the proposed developer's agreement with the Town of Howard, before extraction of sand can begin in any phase of the mining operation, or before the processing of the frac sand begins, Northern Sands Wisconsin must also provide to the Town of Howard plans related to the design and installation of surface water management systems; the design of process flow and sand conveyor systems; the design of berms to screen the operations; and a dust control plan and contingency plan.

Railroad

Canadian National Railroad is working on a conceptual layout of the rail yard, Koth said.

In the Phase I study, CN determined it was better to build a loop track rather than the lad-

der track included in the original plan, Koth said.

Canadian National will be directing when the rail cars are brought in and when they are shipped out, he said.

Sand is at a "low tide" right now because there is a "glut in Texas," Koth said.

The oil drilling companies in Texas are using local sand from Texas sand dunes in their hydraulic fracturing operations rather than sand that has been shipped from Wisconsin.

Northern Sands Wisconsin has been receiving multiple inquiries every month about frac sand, Koth said.

The sand produced by the Albertville Valley sand mine would be shipped out by Canadian National Railroad to markets in Canada and on the East Coast of the United States, he said.

Baseline study

As part of the conditions for the reclamation permit issued in 2015, and as part of the requirements for the mine license issued by the Town of Howard in January of 2019, a baseline hydrologic inventory was required to be completed.

Northern Sands also is required to provide a hydrologic inventory map showing the location of seeps, springs, wetlands and surface water in the mine and on adjacent properties. The map is required to include streams with beds and banks.

Northern Sands Wisconsin missed several deadlines for

Northern Sands
Please see page 2

From the Colfax Messenger, 2-12-2020
by LeAnn Ralph

Northern Sands

02-12-2020
Colfax

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completing the baseline hydro-
logic survey and submitting the
report to Chippewa County.

When parts of the study were
submitted, Chippewa County
Land Conservation responded
with letters detailing the ad-
ditional information needed to
make the report complete on
March 13, 2018, and again on
November 1, 2018.

The Colfax Messenger checked
the Chippewa County Land Con-
servation website to find all of
the documents associated with
the Northern Sands Wisconsin
non-metallic mine, and the last
document uploaded to the web-
site was the November 1, 2018,
response to the baseline follow-
up report.

The Colfax Messenger sent an
e-mail message on February 5 to
Dan Masterpole, director of the
Chippewa County Land Conser-
vation and Forestry Management
Department and county conser-
vationist, to find out if Northern
Sands Wisconsin had completed
the baseline studies as required.

Masterpole replied to the Mes-
senger's e-mail the same after-

noon.
Northern Sands Wisconsin
"has now met all permit condi-
tions and is in full compliance,"
Masterpole wrote.

Koth told the Howard Town
Board at the February 4 meeting
that while doing the surveys, it
was discovered that certain prop-
erty lines and boundary lines
were "off."

The incorrect information
will have to be corrected in the
mining plan and will have to be
changed in the amendment to the
reclamation plan, he said.

Koth did not give any details
about what else — if anything —
would be included in the amend-
ment to the reclamation plan.

Next step

The next step will be to submit
the amended reclamation plan
to Chippewa County and to the
Town of Howard, Koth said.

Northern Sands Wisconsin
plans to hold an open forum for
the public with information about
the mining operation, including
maps, he said.

Koth did not give any indi-
cation of when the open forum
might be scheduled.

On February 4, 2020, Robin Koth, a Northern Sands of Wisconsin investor, gave a brief presentation on the "reclamation plan update" to the Town of Howard Board regarding the Albertville Valley Sand mine to be located several miles southeast of Colfax. The location of the proposed mine, processing plant(wet and dry), and rail load out is in Chippewa Co. Wisconsin. The size of the development is between 1300 and 1500 acres according to reports. Some of the permits are pending or applications have not been received according to a recent WDNR report. An application for a high capacity well permit was approved on 1-31-2019 however.

It seems that the company has been working with the railroad company, Canadian National. They have indicated that a loop track would be the safest and the least noisy of the choices. In addition to the recommended change in the plan for the rail load out system, there appear to be some inconsistencies with the property lines.

These concerns will mean there is a need for an amendment or revision to the reclamation plan that had been approved by Chippewa County. While there is a glut in frac sand production in Texas, there have been inquiries from Canada and hydraulic fracturing industries in the Marcellus Shale area in the Eastern States so the operation plans to continue to get approvals.

Northern Sands of WI was to begin their operations in 2020. It may take months for

new permitting to be obtained according to reports.

The Feb. 12, 2020 edition of the Colfax Messenger written by LeAnn Ralph carried a report of the meeting as shown above.

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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 Sentinel 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.

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE: CCC-WIS.COM and for additional information, [click here](#) for panoramic aerial views of frac sand mines, processing plants, and trans-load facilities. FracTracker.org is also an excellent source of information.

VOTE: NOVEMBER 3, 2020