

TOM REIERSON

MPCA Should Move Quickly to Determine Sulfate Load Reductions and Regulate Mining Pollution to Restore Wild Rice Waters. Sulfate discharge from mining pollution is the sole or predominant cause of about half of the wild rice waters sulfate impairments listed by MPCA. The most efficient and common sense way to restore these waters is to set and enforce sulfate discharge limits in mining National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to reduce sulfate and achieve compliance with Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard.

MPCA Should Admit that Sulfate Exacerbates Mercury Contamination. Peer-reviewed science establishes that sulfate pollution and alteration of wetland hydrology exacerbates the effects of air deposition of mercury. TMDL studies and plans to restore mercury impaired waters must all consider the effects of sulfate pollution and other aggravating factors that increase mercury release from wetlands and sediments and mercury methylation.

I believe current regulations do not address the issues that arise from sulfide mining techniques and practices. I also believe that current regulations are not enforced to protect water quality either in surface or underground from either pollution or misuse by mining companies in particular. Our personal water supply from a well at our farm could potentially be adversely affected by nearby mining operations and I do not feel that the state regulatory agencies have done due diligence in allowing them to proceed without better research on the effects of mining on underground aquifers and surface wetlands in the immediate area.