

To: Environmental Quality Board, St. Paul, MN

Subject: Request for Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the Nisbit Frac Sand Mine Proposal, Winona County Proposal

Date: August 26, 2012

This is a request for completion of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet by the Winona County Board on the Nisbit Frac Sand Mine proposal.

I understand that the proposed facility will impact remnant biological communities and water resources associated with St. Peter Sandstone bearing outcrops in southwestern Winona County. Further review of this site is needed to determine the full extent of vulnerable resources identified by the MDNR County Biological Survey, and to assess the severity of impacts and the likelihood of achieving actual restoration of rare species and water quality impaired by mining and associated activities. If anticipated damages are irreversible, the proposal is unacceptable.

Background:

I retired last year as Watershed Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, assisting cooperative, citizen-led partnerships throughout the Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River. My service in that capacity extended over about 25 years of a 33-year federal career. I also served 10 years as Regional Naturalist with the MN DNR, during which time I was involved with the establishment and management of Scientific and Natural Areas.

Thank you for considering this request. I hope that you will also consider cumulative impact potential from multiple proposals such as this one across the region and the need for a generic EIS to assess the potential for long-term, irreversible harm to the environment and communities.

Sincerely,

Arthur S. Hawkins Jr.  
Watershed Biologist (retired)  
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Aug 27, 2012