

Anne Hurlburt

From: James Wm Johnson [jas.wm.johnson@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2012 11:15 AM
To: a.hurlburt@ci.scandia.mn.us
Subject: Tiller/Zavoral gravel mine and acoustics and faulty BRKW assessment

Dear City of Scandia

As a one-time resident of Marine on St. Croix for over forty years (and its former mayor) and, as a former Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Commissioner and, the former owner Of AMADOR Corporation which tests (now as TUV Product Service) and certifies wave propagation, I feel I can speak with some authority on the EIS.

A most flagrant (in its ineptitude) aspect of this EIS would be the Bettendorf letter and BRKW File #6631 regarding property values. **In that assessment, the impact of acoustic noise is virtually ignored vis-a-vis adjoining property values.**

1. My late wife, whose family bought land in 1910 essentially joining the Tiller/Zavoral gravel mine property, used to recall to me that when she worked in the mid-1950's at Camp Courage (Camp Kiwanis) immediately south of Marine that after work, she and the other counselors would go up and lie down and stretch out on the hot pavement of Highway 95. There were ZERO cars and trucks traveling to disturb this peaceful scene.
2. We moved to Marine in 1969 when Highway 95 was still a country road and quiet. That has changed. It is not so peaceful. Here's why. Simple acoustic facts!
3. The St. Croix River itself acts as an acoustic reflector and bounces or reflects the noise from the highway (and from any commercial operation such as the proposed mine, chain saw noise, etc.). [From the website <http://www.acousticreflections.com/> "Flat Surfaces: A flat surface is effective in distributing sound. If the surface is large enough and positioned correctly, a flat surface can project sound."]
4. The flat surface of the river reflects the sound (of the mine, of the trucks) over to the Wisconsin shore ... whereupon the relatively flat surface of the bluffs reflects the sound BACK to the Minnesota side! The Minnesota bluff reflects the sound back to the St. Croix, to the Wisconsin side, etc. In other words the sound from the pit, from the trucks is greatly magnified. Anyone who now lives on the St. Croix in this region can tell you about the noise coming from a simple 10 hp outboard motor. Acoustic reflection!
5. Think about the increased truck sound; think about the increased heavy equipment sound from this proposed operation.
6. Persons will buy and have bought this land in this area for the tranquility of the scene. Reflected noise off the St. Croix, off its bluffs, from a gravel pit and the adjoining truck traffic is not tranquil. Believe me, property values will plunge, not to mention the tranquility of the valley.

The BRKW File #6631 claiming the **impact of the proposed commercial operation is 1/4 mile is absurd** and should be re-done taking into consideration the acoustical impact of the Zavoral operation.

The impact of this pit to property owners and users of the National Scenic Riverway is inestimable. One man's retirement project (viz., James Herman Zavoral, MD) should not so impact others who now enjoy a relatively noise-free peaceful home and the use of the St. Croix.

I was there when the late Mr. Plowman, whose home adjoined the mining property, single-handily stopped the last St. Croix-polluting mining operation here. Out of respect for his memory, and respect for the National Scenic Riverway, this land should retain its "highest and best use" and that is NOT a mine!

Respectively submitted,

James Wm Johnson