Mining Company Submits Sampling Plan to Wis. DNR

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A company looking to dig a huge iron mine just south of Lake Superior has filed new papers with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources outlining a bulk sampling plan and notifying the agency it plans to seek a mining permit.

Gogebic Taconite filed the papers Monday. They include a plan that calls for sampling rock from five sites to assess the quality of the iron deposit. Less than 10,000 tons would be removed from the five sites. The largest site would be a little more than an acre.

The work is expected to begin in July and end by November 2014, according to the filings. The company would reseed the sites when the sampling is finished.

The company is looking to run the sampling material through a mill and see how it reacts, DNR hydrogeologist Larry Lynch said.

The papers also include a pre-application notification, which must be filed at least a year before the actual mining permit application.

DNR officials say they'll notify the company within two weeks of approvals it needs to proceed with sampling. They plan a public informational meeting later this summer on the bulk sampling and pre-application notification but haven't scheduled one yet.

The company already has started boring exploratory holes on the site.

The project has sparked an outpouring of complaints from conservationists, who say the mine would devastate the region's natural beauty and contaminate the area's water supply. Authorities say a band of protesters at the site last week slashed tires, damaged equipment, destroyed a geologist's camera and stole her cellphone.

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