

CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA) SITE VISIT REPORT

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

Purpose

US Steel Keetac Mine Site Visit and Meeting

Facility

US Steel Keetac Mine
1 Old Mine Road
Keewatin, Minnesota 55753

Date of Site Visit

May 28, 2025

Facility Representatives

Eric Williams, US Steel, HQ Manager - Water
Nicole Everson, US Steel, Process Manager
Julius Redd, Beveridge & Diamond PC, Principal
Kendra Jones, US Steel, Assistant General Counsel-Environmental
Tishie Woodwell, US Steel, Vice President - Environmental
Chrissy Bartovich, US Steel, Environmental Director
Tom Moe, US Steel, Environmental Engineer
Vanessa Dittman, US Steel, Corporate Counsel*
Timothy Sullivan, Beveridge & Diamond PC, Of Counsel*

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Representatives

Theresa Haugen, Water and Mining Section, Industrial Division Manager
Colin O'Donovan, Legal Services Unit, Deputy General Counsel*

U.S. EPA Representatives

Jake Berger, U.S. EPA Region 5, Physical Scientist and Clean Water Act Inspector
Taylor Murphy, U.S. EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, Attorney-Advisor
Jolie McLaughlin, U.S. EPA Region 5, Associate Regional Counsel*

U.S. Department of Justice Representatives

Elizabeth Loeb, U.S. Department of Justice, Senior Attorney*
Lauren Grady, U.S. Department of Justice, Trial Attorney*

* Denotes virtual attendance during the compliance meeting; did not attend site visit tour.

Inspector Name & Title:

Jake Berger, Physical Scientist

Water Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Branch

U.S. EPA Region 5 Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division

Berger, Jake

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Jake
Date: 2025.06.05
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Inspector Signature: _____

Approver Name & Title:

Molly Smith, Section 1 Supervisor

Water Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Branch

U.S. EPA Region 5 Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division

**MOLLY
SMITH**

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MOLLY SMITH
Date: 2025.06.10
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Approver Signature _____

INTRODUCTION

On May 28, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) participated in a site visit tour of the US Steel Keetac Mine in Keewatin, Minnesota. Additionally, the EPA, MPCA, and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted a meeting with US Steel staff.

BACKGROUND

The US Steel Keetac Mine has MPCA-issued NPDES permits for its mining operations (NPDES Permit # MN0031879) and its tailings basin (NPDES Permit # MN0055948). Both permits have an Issuance Date of November 15, 2011, and Expiration Date of October 31, 2016. These permits have both been administratively continued and continue to authorize the discharges from the Keetac Mine.

SITE VISIT AND NEGOTIATIONS SUMMARY

Opening Conference:

Jake Berger (EPA), Taylor Murphy (EPA), and Theresa Haugen (MPCA) arrived at the US Steel Keetac Mine at 1 Old Mine Road, Keewatin, Minnesota 55753, at 8:10 a.m. CDT. The EPA and MPCA staff entered the Keetac Mine Administrative Building and met with the US Steel representatives. Jake Berger presented his EPA-issued NPDES inspector credentials and provided an overview of the purpose of the site visit. Jake Berger stated that the main purpose of the site visit tour was to observe the outfall locations, mining pits, tailings basin, and surface waters across the Keetac Mine.

Keetac Mine Tour:

At 8:50 a.m. CDT, US Steel staff led the EPA and MPCA staff on a tour of the Keetac Mine. This included visiting and explaining the following locations:

- Perry Pit and discharge to Outfall SD012 (as described in NPDES Permit # MN0031879)
- East Pit
- Carlz Pit
- Outfall SD002 and Welcome Creek (as described in NPDES Permit # MN0031879)
- Reservoir 2 and Outfall SW001 (as described in NPDES Permit # MN0055948)

Hay Lake was not part of the site visit tour since it is very difficult to access. US Steel stated that Hay Lake is surrounded by privately owned land and has no scheduled maintenance for access. The Keetac Mine tour concluded at 11:20 a.m. CDT and the US Steel, EPA, and MPCA staff returned to the Keetac Mine Administrative Building.

Meeting:

At 12:30 p.m. CDT, the EPA, MPCA, DOJ, and US Steel staff began a meeting to discuss compliance with the Clean Water Act. This meeting concluded at 3:20 p.m. CDT and the EPA and MPCA staff left the Administrative Building.