

ATTACHMENT 2 – IV. Environmental Performance

Past and Current Environmental Performance

The Unimin Corporation, Portage Facility was purchased by Unimin in 1983 but has been in operation since the early twentieth century. Plant personnel take pride in their jobs and make every effort to comply with all applicable regulations and permit conditions. Portage has been and continues to be a model facility that helps make Unimin a model company and industry leader.

The Portage Facility operates under a Synthetic Minor air permit regulating, among other things, annual emissions of criteria pollutants. Over the last five years (2007 through 2011) the facility has averaged approximately 4.5 tons of Carbon Monoxide (CO) emitted into the atmosphere per year, less than 6% of the 79 tons allowed based on permit conditions. Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) emissions averaged 7.4 tons per year, only 9% of the allowable emissions. For the same time period, emissions of total Particulate Matter (PM) and Particulate Matter smaller than 10 microns (PM10), a subset of PM, averages were 16.0 tons per year (20% of the allowable amount) and 8.8 tons per year (11% of the allowable amount), respectively.

Efforts to reduce emissions and energy consumption by upgrading process equipment are ongoing. The plant replaced one gas dryer in 2000 and the other this year, 2012, to more efficient units that utilize less natural gas. An overhaul of the dredge was completed this year that included a whole new electrical system and high efficiency electric powered pumps.

Unimin Corporation is a member of the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), a nonprofit, non-lobbying group of corporations, conservation organizations and individuals dedicated to enhancing and restoring wildlife habitat. WHC encourages its members to exceed what is expected or required, and to establish programs that take advantage of available resources, as well as partner with local conservation groups and state and local agencies.

Through the WHC, the Portage Facility has been “Wildlife at Work” certified since 1998 wherein a dedicated team of ten employee volunteers manages habitat projects. The wildlife team actively manages 50 acres while an additional 325 acres of the site are available for wildlife. Habitat projects focus primarily on returning open field areas to native prairie grasslands and diversifying the amount of trees found on the property.

The wildlife team worked with Pheasants Forever and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to convert the former cropland to fields of native grasses as a prairie restoration project. This project was then refocused to make the areas favorable for pheasant habitat. In developing this project, the team considered wildlife habitat value, soil quality, native plant species, as well as the type of protective cover and food needed to attract pheasants to the area. The fields were prepared by mowing and applying an herbicide to eradicate any non-native or invasive plant species. Native species planted include little bluestem, big bluestem, indiangrass and Canada wild rye. The project won the “Prairies for Tomorrow” award from the WHC in 2009. The award recognizes not only the upland habitat’s value to wildlife but also the corporate team’s commitment to upland habitat stewardship.

In conjunction with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the Wisconsin Audubon Society, bluebird nest boxes were constructed near reclaimed areas. They are regularly monitored for activity and occupancy.

A timber diversification project at the plant continues to achieve recognizable success. Since 1995, more than 12,000 trees have been planted on the property including white pine, red pine, oak, black cherry and blue spruce. The wildlife team monitors growth rates of several stands of the planted trees in order to identify the best time to transplant and thin trees on the property. These trees introduced a new diversity of native species to the area and also provide educational opportunities at the site.

Future Plans

The Portage Facility continues to look for areas to make mining operations more efficient and green. A baseline for which future progress can be measured begins with continuation of the previously established items including maintaining WHC certification, continuing to monitor prairie enhancements,

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bluebird monitoring, timber diversification projects and general continuance of the wildlife team. Continuous monitoring of the aforementioned ongoing projects will provide opportunities to make necessary changes and improvements toward the continued success of each respective project. In addition to ongoing recertification of the “Wildlife at Work” program, research is underway for the possibility of becoming “Corporate Lands for Learning” (CLL) certified, also through the WHC. The CLL program offers a way to provide outreach, education and awareness to neighbors and the general community, especially the youth. Such support from the public can provide a stimulus for the wildlife team members to continue and improve their program.

As mining activities progress, additional acreage will be reclaimed responsibly, increasing the potential for value-added wildlife projects. Eventually, a permanent lake will be available for aquatic wildlife habitat work.

The Portage facility will also remain open to new programs and projects that become available that are consistent with Unimin’s push for sustainability and going green.