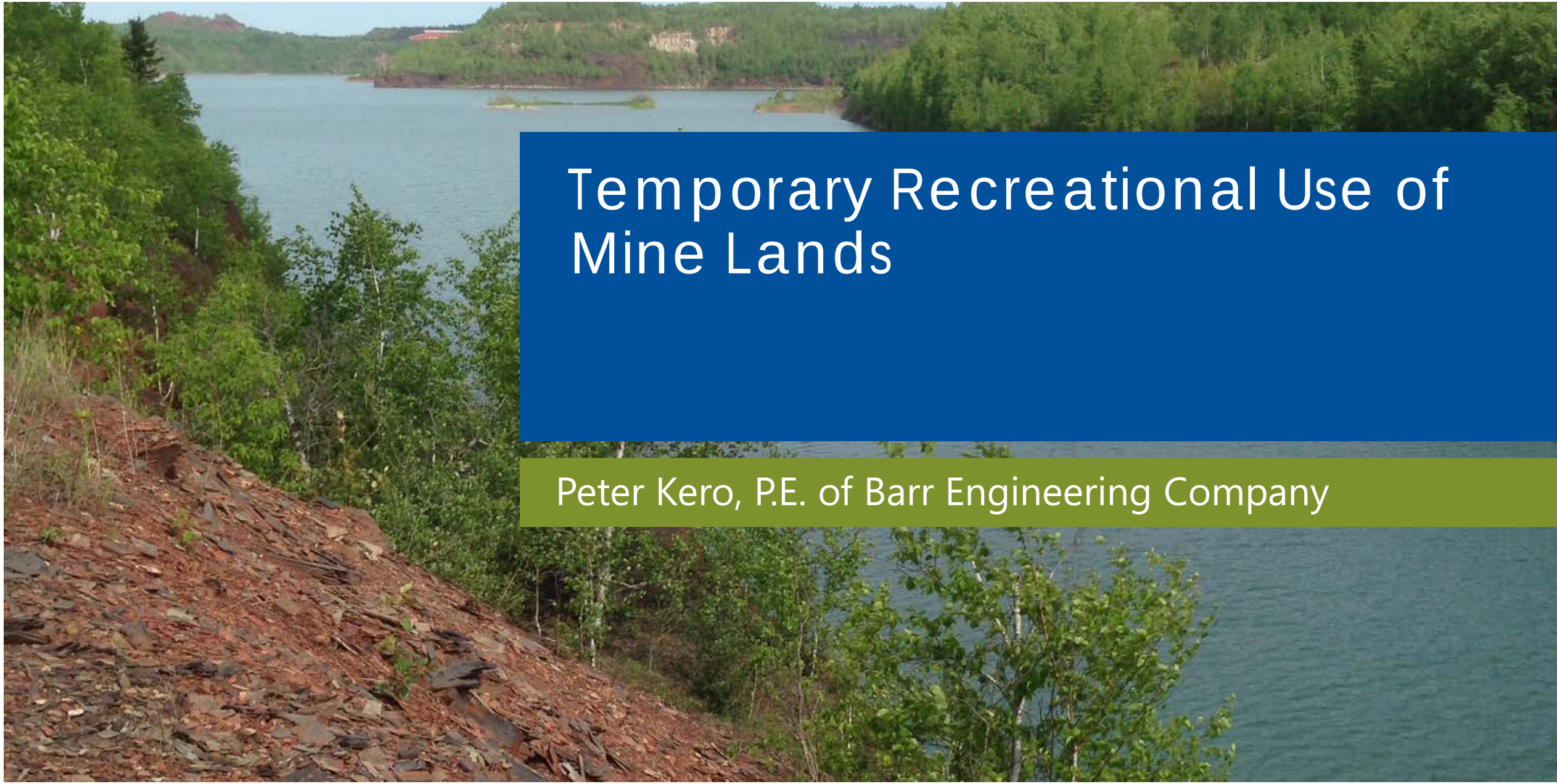


Temporary Recreational Use of Mine Lands

Peter Kero, P.E. of Barr Engineering Company

Iron mining has been conducted in Minnesota for over 130 years.

Photo from Minnesota Historical Society, mnhs.org

In recent years, Minnesota mining has had an unprecedented level of public interest.

Yet, mines are responsible for creating some spectacular places.

Benefits of mine repurposing

- Develop secondary source of income (Steffens, 2003).
- Source of community pride (Dean, 2011).
- Attract and retain talent and businesses by improving community quality of life.
- At scale, become a tourist destination.

Point 1

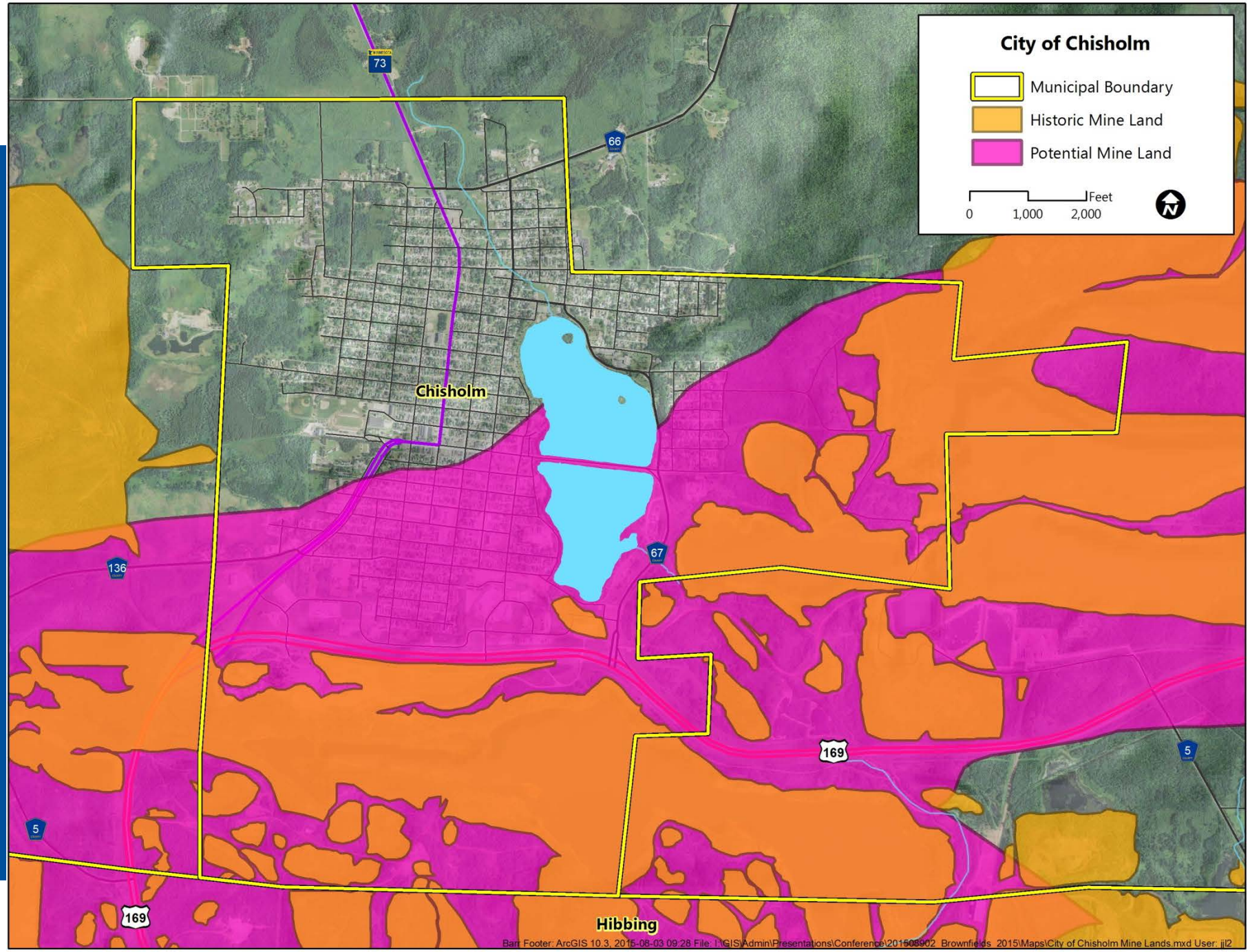
Some mining companies are promoting recreational development and mine repurposing to build public support.

Where do stand with respect to mine repurposing on Minnesota's Iron Range?

Point 2

Most mine repurposing projects require a long-term commitment, which has not been a good fit for most of Minnesota's mined lands.

City of Chisholm



That is what brings us to the "temporary use" concept.

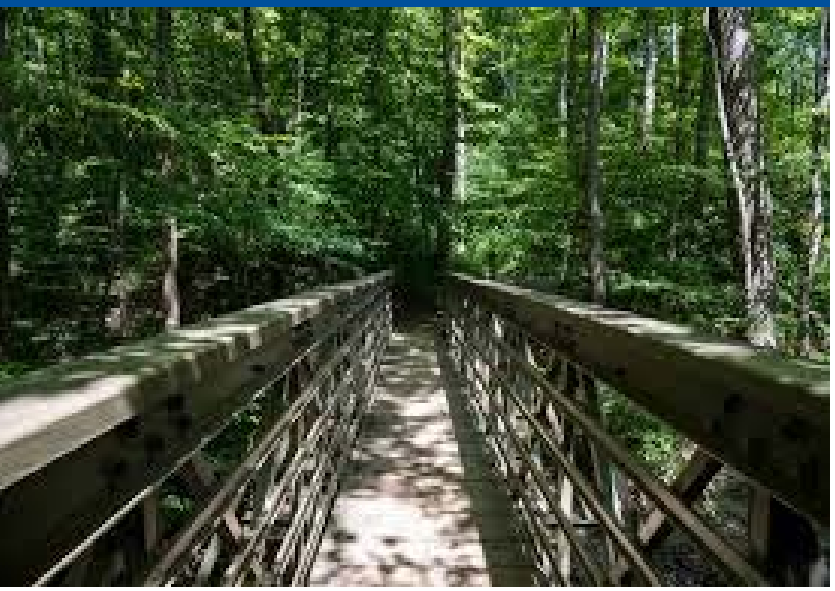
The tenets of temporary recreational use:

- Not a permanent encumbrance on the future mining of the land.
- Risk/liability management for owners and operators.
- Consensus that use is "temporary."
- Positive potential return on investment over the temporary use period.

Tenet #1: No long-term encumbrance

- Key is high public interest, low impact on future development of mining.
- Site should be selected based on fit for recreational purpose, access to the public and supporting amenities.
- Sources of funding may be limited. Many DNR and Federal grants require a 20-year commitment.

Tenet #2: Risk/liability management for owners & operators



- Risk management plan
- Liability protections for owner, operator, landowner
- Protections against unauthorized use and trespass
- Legal considerations
- Cost considerations for removal or relocation, if applicable

Tenet #3: Consensus that use is temporary

- Agreement to temporary use could be part of a use permit.
- Pop-up stores, food trucks, temporary art – temporary is a new social movement. From a marketing perspective, could even create a "scarcity mentality."
- Will allow the offerings to remain fresh and up-to-date, as long as it is supported by …

Tenet #4
Positive ROI over temporary use period

- Estimate the minimum period of temporary use.
- Determine the capital, operating and removal costs.
- Gather data on the potential economic benefit.
- If the costs will be outweighed by the benefits over the temporary use period, it is a positive ROI.

Point 3

By following the tenets of temporary recreational use, it may be possible to reap the **social license** and **economic benefits** of mine repurposing, while **protecting future mining opportunities** and **managing risk and liability**.

Case Study:

Wieliczka Salt Mine

Case Study:

Parys Mountain

Case Studies:

Iron Range

Photo Source: Minnesota Historical Society, mndigital.org

Any questions?

Thank you!