



Long-term water treatment

PolyMet mining systems are designed to protect water during operations and after closure; water modeling was performed to show that it could be accomplished over a long period. These technologies already exist and have been proven in real-world applications. The company is committed to water monitoring and treatment for as long as it takes. What's more, the company is required by law to support a monitoring and treatment program after closure and to provide bankruptcy-proof financial resources to fund it.

Why do some news reports say that water treatment will be required for up to 500 years?

- Information about water models developed for the environmental review is being used incorrectly. The timeframes used in the water models have nothing to do with water treatment and everything to do with ensuring that downstream water resources are protected in the event *untreated* water leaks offsite. *The models were not designed to determine the duration of water treatment.*
- More specifically, the models were designed to determine impacts to water quality at key reference points in the watersheds downstream of the tailings basin (Embarrass River watershed) and downstream of the mine site (Partridge River watershed). Scientists determined the amount of potential leakage to be relatively small (about the flow of a 5/8-inch garden hose) and the rate of travel to be slow (about 3 inches per day) to these respective points, so the extended timeframes (200 years in one case and 500 years in the other) were needed in the models to represent the maximum potential impacts at the reference points.
- To be clear, the models showed that water quality standards were still being met even as far as 500 years out. The modeling years have no correlation to the years that will be required for actual treatment.

For how long will the company need to monitor and treat water?

- It is estimated at this time that active/mechanical treatment will be required for 35-40 years after mining ends. At that time we believe we can transition to passive treatment, which basically mimics Mother Nature's wetlands.
- The actual length of time that will be required for water treatment will be addressed during the permitting phase of the project. Uncertainty is accounted for by financial assurance laws – bankruptcy proof financial provisions ensure that water will be treated using either active or passive systems to meet applicable water quality standards for as long as it takes. (See PolyMet Financial Assurance fact sheet.)
- Because of legacy mining issues, long-term water care is needed at the site regardless of whether the PolyMet project goes forward. Obtaining permits to mine will enable the company to implement a comprehensive treatment program to address those issues in full compliance with state and federal regulations.
- Actual treatment durations will be based on measured, rather than modeled data.
- Long-term water treatment is not new or uncommon for many types of mining in Minnesota and elsewhere. It is often one of the trade-offs for mining in a responsible way the minerals that are necessary to our modern lives.