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## **FLAMBEAU MINING COMPANY ASKING FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION FOR RECLAIMED SITE**

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LADYSMITH, Wis. - Flambeau Mining Company today said it will ask the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to grant a Certificate of Completion (COC) for the reclamation of its Flambeau Mine. The COC is the next WDNR procedure to acknowledge that the reclamation of the Flambeau Mine is complete. The formal petition is expected to be filed by the end of the year.

“We are eager to show the WDNR, the State of Wisconsin and the local community that the promises we made to reclaim the site were kept,” said Jana Murphy, environmental manager for the Flambeau Mining Company. “Today, the site is flourishing and provides valuable habitat for wildlife and is a recreational asset for the community.”

In 2001, the Flambeau Mining Company sent the WDNR a Notice of Completion (NOC) for the site’s reclamation. Based on WDNR site inspections and a review of the Flambeau Mining Company’s 2001 Annual Reclamation Report, the WDNR approved that completion notice. That began a minimum four-year period to observe the site to ensure that the reclamation efforts were a success and that vegetation continued to develop. The COC is the next administrative step in that reclamation process.

“It now has been nearly five years since the WDNR approved the reclamation, and we are looking forward to the next step,” said Murphy.

The Flambeau Mining Company spent more than \$20 million to successfully reclaim the mine site following active mining, which ended in 1997. That reclamation effort resulted in the establishment of the 150-acre recreation and nature area that is open to the public for events, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding, river fishing and more. In 2006, there were several hundred visits to the site for recreational purposes. Specifically, recent events held at the site included the 2006 Bird Watch sponsored by the Hunt Hill Nature Center – Audubon Society and the WDNR; the 2006 Rusk County Conference in the Garden held in conjunction with the UW-Extension; this year’s Healthy Lifestyles for Rusk County annual community walk; the 2006 Leaf It to Rusk events; and more.

Today, the reclaimed site features more than 250 native plant species, including prairie grasses, wetland plants and wildflowers. In addition, abundant wildlife call the reclaimed site home, including more than 45 species of birds, 20 species of butterflies, several amphibian species, deer and other wildlife. Additional features of the reclaimed site include educational signs on the walking trails to share the history and significance of the site and five miles of horseback riding trails along the Flambeau River.

“We have fulfilled our promise to return the Flambeau Mine site back to a natural state, a promise we made prior to beginning the mining and reclamation process,” said Murphy. “We are proud to say it is a promise kept.”

The WDNR will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the reclamation and completion of the project as part of the COC process. Upon granting the COC, the State of Wisconsin may then release up to 80 percent of the \$11 million reclamation bond. The Flambeau Mining Company began posting the reclamation bond prior to construction. However, the law requires that even if the WDNR finds the reclamation 100 percent complete, at least 20 percent of the reclamation bond must be kept in place for 20 years.

In addition to those retained funds, the Flambeau Mining Company also has a separate \$1 million bond in place as an additional guarantee for the long-term care of the site, which will continue for decades.

“We anticipate that the public will be interested in the COC process, and we welcome their involvement and encourage them to visit and tour the reclaimed site to see the results firsthand,” said Murphy. “The COC process will also allow us to inform the community on the recreational resource the site has become, as well as share how long-term care and monitoring is ensuring that the site and surrounding area remains protected for decades to come.

“Receiving the COC is also a significant milestone in Wisconsin’s metallic mine regulations, which are the most stringent in the United States. With those regulations and because the citizens of Rusk County were active and involved early in the mine’s permitting process, the Flambeau project was successful in protecting the environment and bringing prosperity to our local communities,” added Murphy.

The Flambeau Mine operated from 1993 to 1997 and produced more than 181,000 tons of copper as well as gold and silver. The mine met or surpassed all environmental regulations and permit conditions, provided more than 70 safe and family-supporting jobs for local residents, and supported long-term economic development. In addition, it protected the environment and the Flambeau River, and enhanced community and educational resources through a \$500,000 contribution to build the Rusk County Community Library. The Flambeau Mining and Reclamation project was the first and only effort to date to be approved and operated under Wisconsin’s stringent mining standards. Those standards were established under the State’s Comprehensive Mining Law and additional regulations.