

Irish Hills Concerned Citizens



Concerns We're Hearing

Petition against the proposed Levy-Norvell Gravel Mine

I, the signer of this document, am opposed to the development of the Levy-Norvell Gravel Pit in Norvell Township by American Aggregates of Michigan/Levy Corp. The company has proposed a gravel mine to be located adjacent to Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve and on Horning and Arnold Roads. Its preferred haul route goes down Hardcastle Rd. to Wampler's Lake Road thru Hayes State Park to US 12. The impacts include:

Damage to state parks: The mine would abut Watkins Lake State Park and the lake itself, refuges for birds and popular places for birders and hikers. Continuous noise, dust plumes, vibration, pollution, gravel trucks right next to it—that portion of the park would be blighted, abandoned by birds and wildlife, birders and hikers. And that's in addition to the traffic snarls the trucks would cause at the entrance of Hayes State Park.

Traffic makes our communities unsafe: The mining company says its haul route would send 18 gravel trucks an hour—9 full, 9 empty—down residential area on Wampler's Lake Road and through Hayes State Park. Bike lanes? Pedestrian traffic? People pulling out of their driveways? All threatened by the huge gravel trucks roaring up to 50 M.P.H every three minutes, 10-13 hours a day, M-F and Saturday mornings, for 20 years.

Property values plummet: Studies of property values near other Michigan gravel mines found reductions in property values up to 30 percent, and 7.5 percent as far as five miles away. Property values along the haul routes were not studied, but is likely to decline somewhere in between those percentages. This mine would degrade the value of our homes and properties.

Master Plan: This proposed gravel pit appears to violate not only the current Norvell Township zoning laws, but also the spirit of the long-term vision of the Township as detailed in the Township Master Plan.

PLEASE RETURN THIS PETITION TO: IHCC, P.O. BOX 72, BROOKLYN, MI 49230

PRINT NAME*

ADDRESS*

SIGNATURE*

DATE*

TOWNSHIP

(*REQUIRED)

NOTES: This petition is not offered, nor intended, as a legal document as defined by the laws governing the initiative process in Michigan, but simply as a formal expression of the opinions of the signers. Signers include Irish Hills residents to be negatively affected by the proposed project, plus local businesses and visitors to both Watkins Lake State Park and Hayes State Park to be severely impacted by the proposed project. *(One signer per document – copy this page for additional signers)* For more information, please visit ihccinfo.org.

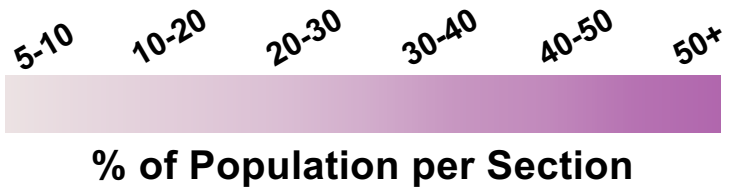


Petition Signatures Collected

by Township Land Section,
as of June 13, 2026

Petition Signatures Indicator Scaled by Count

- Homestead
- Non-Homestead
- Levy-Owned Property



Total Signed Petitions from
Township Property Owners

849

Number of Land Parcels from which
Signatures Were Collected from
Unique Private Property Owners

609

36.1% of Township

Signed Petitions from
Homestead Property Owners

391

36.4% of Homesteads

Sections of Township Opposing Mine
(Based on Received Signatures)

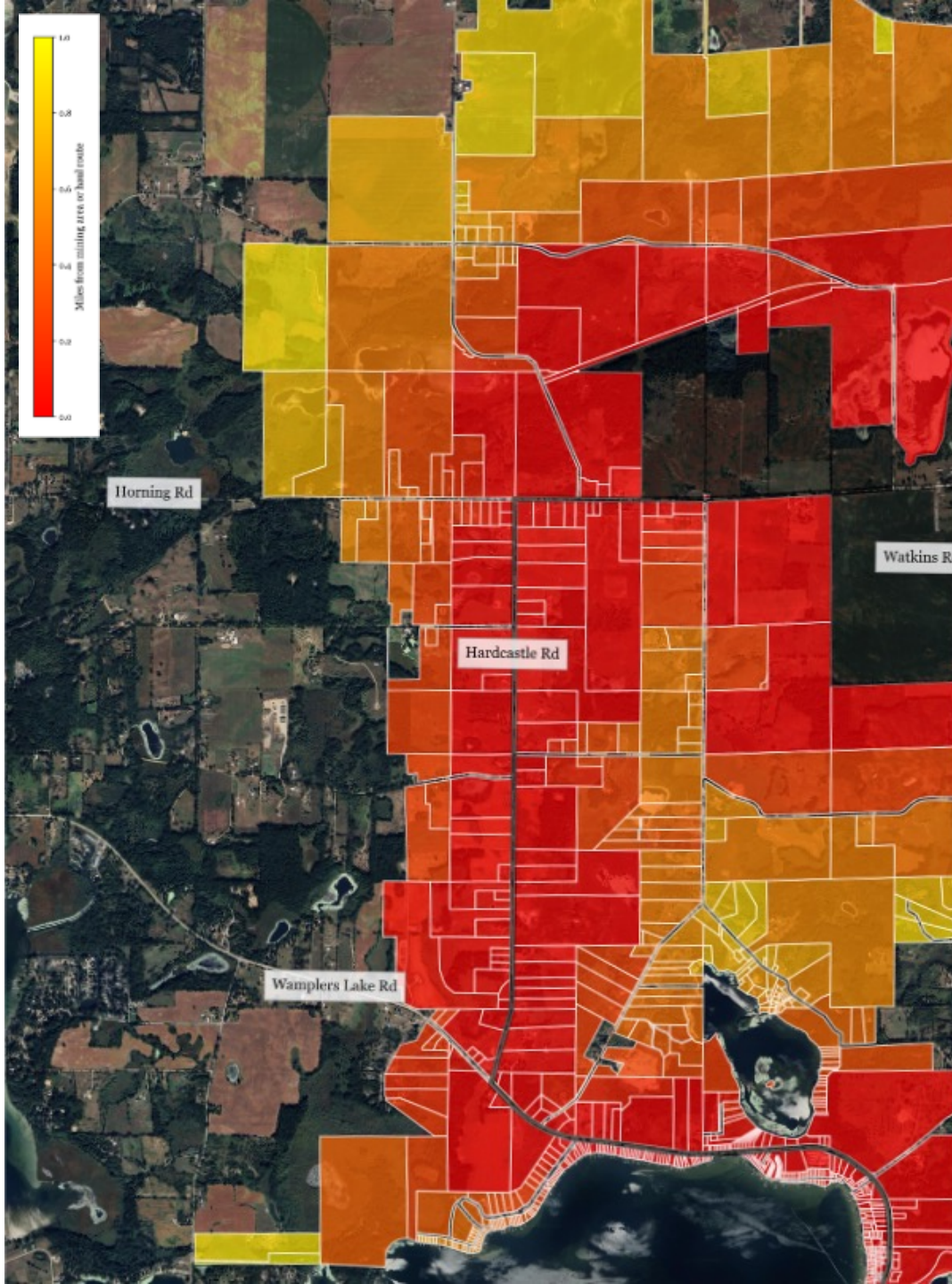
30 of 32

Norvell Township Properties

Most Likely to Experience the Biggest Impacts from the Proposed Mine

Impacts assumed within ¼ mile of haul route or ≤1 mile of proposed mine site.

Lakes ≥100 acres are excluded from distance calculations, due to sound travel.



Total Parcels in Township

2,312

Impacted Parcels

675

29.2% of Township

Total Township Homestead Parcels

1,385

Impacted Homestead Parcels

406

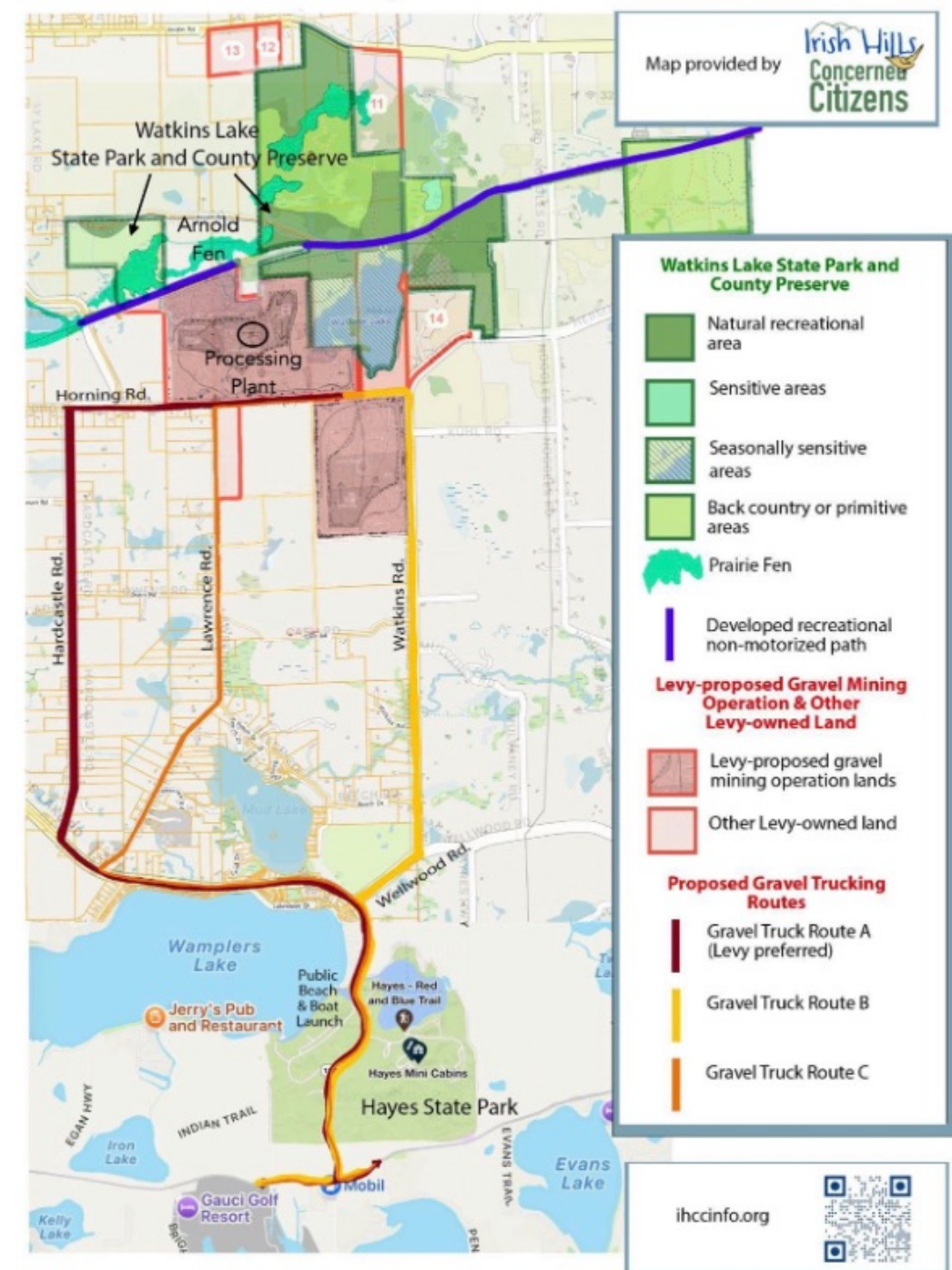
29.3% of Township

Total Impact on Taxable Valued Properties in Norvell Township

\$67,102,059.00

Watkins/Mine Site Overview

- **Mining site:** 625 acres adjacent to Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve
- **North side (north of Horning):** abuts Watkins Lake
- Aggregate processor on north side; conveyor belt from south to north
- Excavation of hills overlooking the lake
- **Concerns:** Water runoff; groundwater depletion or migration; dust, noise and light pollution
- Potential impacts to wetlands, unique prairie fens, birds, wildlife, park users



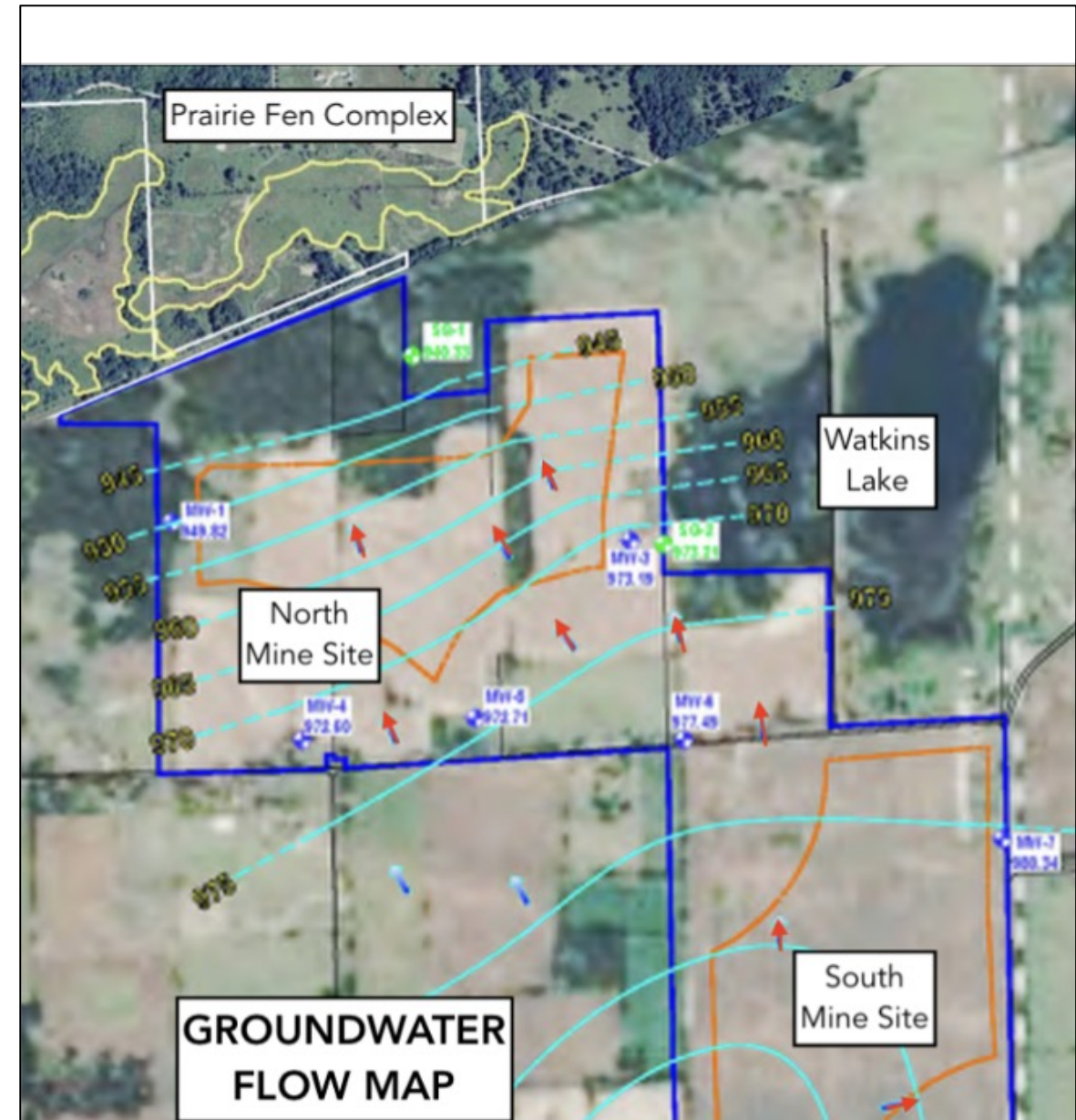
Water at the Mine Site is Critical

- Any runoff from the mine site or changes to groundwater flow will cause off-site impacts to the area's wetlands and fens and Watkins lake.
- Mining application says it will wash the gravel and minimize dust by spraying water— but it doesn't say how much water it will use.
- Mining application says all its process water and stormwater will percolate back into the ground and not run off the site— but with so much soil removed by excavation, little is left to soak up the water.
- Mine application claims mining will stay 5-10 feet above water table—but they haven't fully mapped the where the water table is.
- Mining application is silent on contaminants (arsenic, nitrates) expected in the groundwater they would pull up to use for gravel washing and spraying

Bottom line: Offsite migration of surface water and groundwater is likely, with impacts expected to wetlands, fens, wildlife and lake.

Prairie Fens

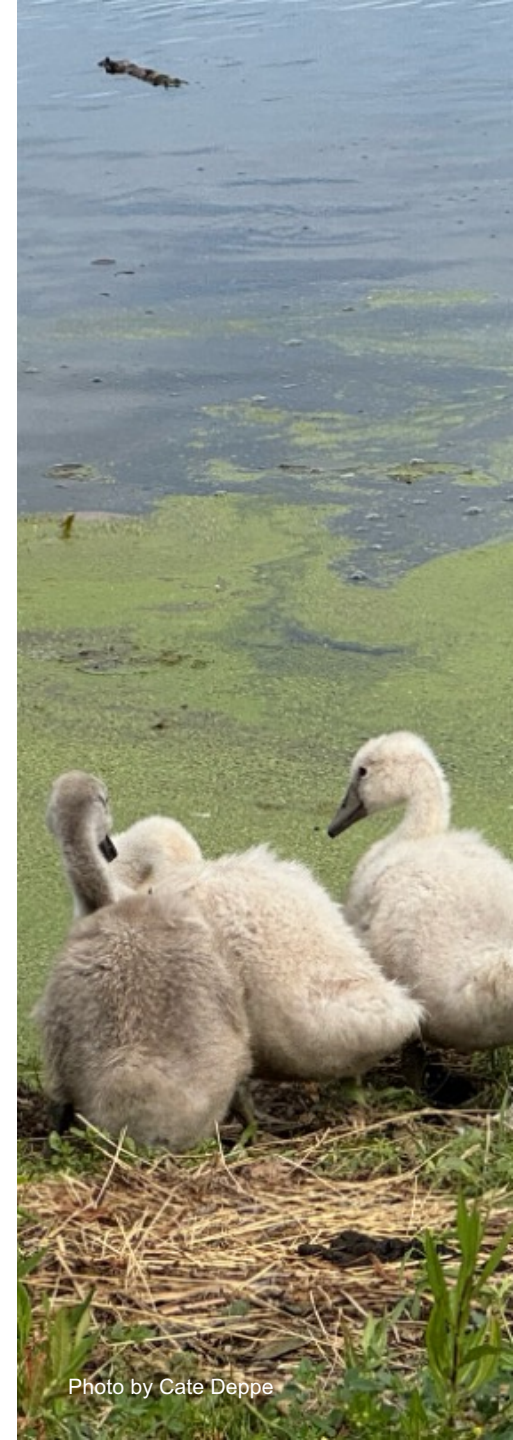
- Prairie fens are **vulnerable ecosystems** that harbor high levels of **biodiversity** and provide potential habitat for numerous rare species. They are sustained by specific **cold, calcareous, groundwater-fed** springs.
- Because they depend on stable groundwater flow and chemistry, changes to groundwater levels or movement in the surrounding landscape can **threaten their long-term health**.
- The **Marsh Brook Prairie Fen Complex** is immediately adjacent to the project boundary.



Source: "Natural community and rare plant element occurrences in and adjacent to Watkins Lake State Park" Figure 9, Natural Features Inventory and Management Recommendations for Watkins Lake State Park, 2017; Overlaid with Groundwater Flow Map - Figure 16, Project Report, American Aggregates of Michigan

Birds & Species

- **Exceptional biodiversity, documented:** MNFI recorded 59 unique bird species in Watkins Lake State Park alone, including the state-endangered Henslow's sparrow — found on AAOM's own property — and a well-documented bald eagle nest.
- **The area is already protected for wildlife sensitivity:** The lake and surrounding land closes twice a year to protect migratory and nesting birds. It's difficult to reconcile that protection with a crushing plant and 90 gravel trucks per day next door.
- **Threatened species beyond birds:** Federally threatened Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes are known to occur in the area and are highly sensitive to vibration and noise — with spring sightings coinciding with peak mating season. Threatened turtles, butterflies, bats, and orchids are also present.
- **These species are here for a reason:** They depend on intact wetlands, stable groundwater, and landscape connectivity. The same conditions that make this place ecologically rich are the same conditions mining would destroy.
- **There is no undoing this:** Once these systems are degraded, they cannot be restored or relocated. That is the definition of a very serious consequence.



Traffic – What's Proposed

- **Relentless truck volume:** At peak, one gravel truck every 3 minutes and 20 seconds — 10 hours a day, 5½ days a week, for 20 years. AAOM's minimum projections are for a truck every 4 minutes.
- **Starting on roads that can't handle it:** All three proposed routes begin on hilly, rural roads with limited sight lines already shared by farm equipment, motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians, and recreational vehicles.
- **Hayes State Park corridor:** Every route funnels through Wamplers Lake Road and Hayes State Park — a stretch with bike lanes, residential driveways, and heavy summer recreation use, which also happens to be peak construction and delivery season.
- **US-12 through populated areas:** 70–80% of trucks head east toward Ann Arbor and Detroit on US-12, passing downtown areas, schools, businesses, and neighborhoods — with no traffic light warranted at the turn, per MDOT.
- **The Township must consider all of it:** State law requires haul route impacts to be weighed under the "very serious consequences" standard. These impacts don't stop at the township line — they extend to residents, visitors, and neighboring communities alike.

Safety

(Pedestrians, Bikes, Vehicles)

- **Driveway and intersection safety:** M-124 is narrow and winding with limited sight lines — pulling out of a driveway or crossing the road could mean coming face-to-face with a fully loaded gravel truck with little time to react.
- **Bike lane encroachment:** 11-axle trucks have a 30-foot swept turning path, meaning rear trailers swing outward and physically into painted bike lanes — the same lanes residents and visitors rely on for safe cycling and walking.
- **Aerodynamic hazard for cyclists:** Passing trucks create a pressure wave followed by a suction effect strong enough to pull a rider sideways — potentially into traffic or under trailer wheels.
- **Road surface degradation:** Gravel shedding from haul trucks can coat bike lanes with loose debris, creating a slick, unpredictable surface that significantly increases crash risk for cyclists.



Truck Noise / Air Quality

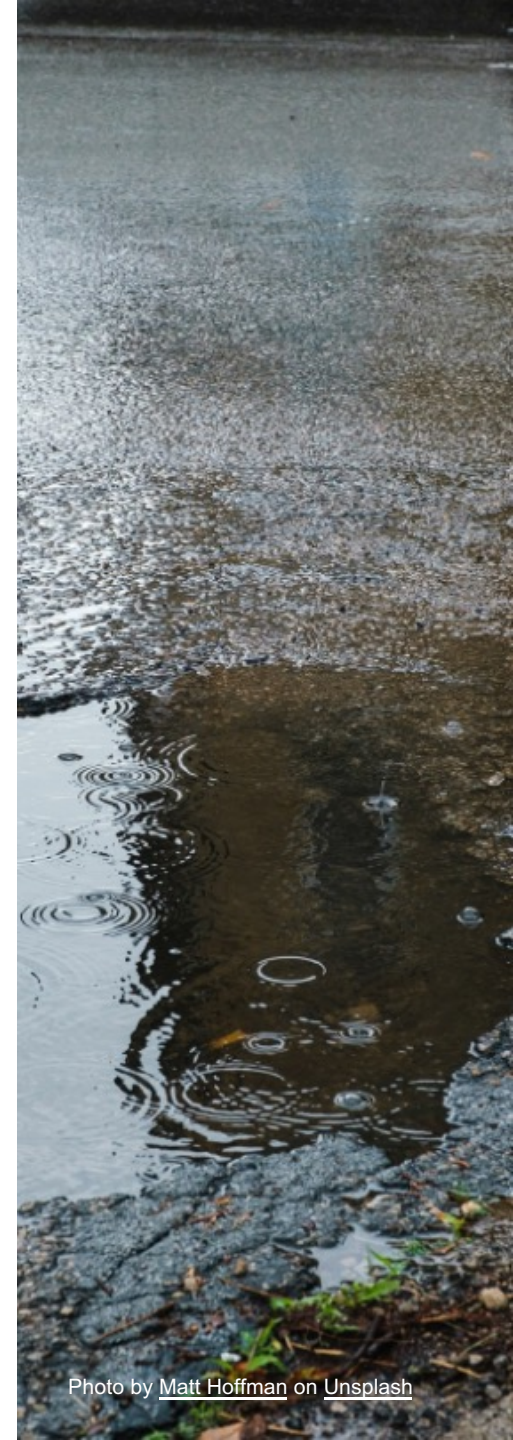
- **Diesel exhaust along every mile of the haul route:** Each truck emits nitrogen dioxide, ozone precursors, and fine particulate matter. Short-term exposure triggers asthma attacks and respiratory infections; long-term exposure is linked to cardiovascular disease, stroke, lung cancer, and premature death.
- **The most vulnerable bear the most risk:** Children, older adults, and people with asthma, COPD, heart disease, or diabetes face the greatest harm — and they live, visit Hayes State Park, and spend time outdoors along these exact routes.
- **Dust travels:** Fine particles from diesel exhaust, road wear, and truck-tracked material don't stay at the roadside. They settle onto homes, playgrounds, and recreation areas, with health effects that build over years.
- **Noise is a health issue, not just a nuisance:** Chronic transportation noise activates the body's stress response. Over time, it's associated with hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and stroke.
- **20 years of daily exposure changes everything:** This isn't a temporary construction project. It's industrial truck traffic 10 hours a day, 5½ days a week, for two decades — affecting whether residents can open their windows, go outside, or use nearby parks without constant exposure to exhaust, dust, and noise.

Hayes State Park

- **Half a million visitors a year — on the proposed haul route:** Hayes State Park is one of Michigan's most visited state parks, with over 500,000 annual visitors entering and exiting directly onto M-124, the same road that would carry up to 18 gravel trucks per hour.
- **Peak congestion meets peak truck traffic:** Friday afternoons already bring lines of RVs and trailers queued on M-124's shoulder waiting to enter. Adding fully loaded gravel trains to that mix creates serious collision risk.
- **The haul route splits the park in two:** The road physically separates the campground from the day-use beach, creating unavoidable pedestrian crossings — crossings that become significantly more dangerous when 50-ton trucks are rounding curves at highway speed.
- **Campers have no protection from exhaust and dust:** Unlike residents who can close windows and run air filtration, tent campers breathe outdoor air throughout their stay — directly exposed to diesel exhaust, road dust, and fine particulate matter for the duration of their visit.
- **The park experience would be fundamentally changed:** People come to Hayes for birdsong, fresh air, and quiet. A truck passing every three minutes throughout peak summer season isn't a minor inconvenience — it's an industrial intrusion into a public space dedicated to nature and recreation, for 20 years.

Road Quality

- **Roads not built for this:** These rural roads are already struggling. Industrial truck traffic won't fix the infrastructure problem AAOM cites — it will accelerate the damage.
- **One gravel truck equals 100,000 cars:** Standard pavement engineering shows road damage increases exponentially with axle weight. At 9 trips per hour, the math is staggering.
- **Twenty years of daily punishment:** This isn't occasional use. The cumulative wear over the mine's lifespan would be equivalent to millions of passenger vehicle trips per hour, every hour, for two decades.
- **The surcharge won't come close:** Township revenue from the mine could be as little as \$34,000 per year. Road reconstruction can exceed \$5 million per mile.
- **No bond, no fees, no recourse:** MDOT cannot require a performance bond or assess fees for damage to M-124. When the roads are gone, taxpayers pay — not AAOM.



Property Values

- **Property value decline is a "very serious consequence"**
 - Number of properties within 1 mile of mine site and ¼ mile of haul route: 675.
 - Their current property value: \$67,102,059.
- Multiple studies by independent experts show property value declines of 5%-30% due to gravel mines in other locations
- AAOM's application uses flawed studies to claim that property values stay the same or rise when a gravel mine is sited. That defies common sense and logic.
- The AAOM studies never compared property values before and after a mine is sited.
- Property value declines of 5-30 percent, depending on the distance from the mine, are a far more reasonable estimate.
- Such property value declines would hurt homeowners, businesses, and Township tax revenues.

Rural Character / Master Plan

- **Residents said it themselves:** When the Township surveyed residents for its Master Plan, 83% cited rural character as what they love most about living here. 45% came specifically for the open space.
- **The Master Plan makes preservation a priority:** It explicitly identifies agricultural land, conservation areas, and recreational resources as the foundation of Norvell Township's character — and calls for development compatible with that vision.
- **This mine is the opposite of compatible:** 625 acres of industrial excavation, heavy equipment, and up to 18 truck trips per hour would replace quiet roads and open landscapes with noise, dust, and industrial activity for 20 years.
- **Residents don't want this kind of development:** 85% said preserving natural features was important or very important. 82% said the same about agricultural land. Only 19% supported light industrial development — let alone heavy industrial mining.
- **The Master Plan exists to guide decisions like this one:** The community's values are on record. This board should weigh them accordingly.

