

PROJECT REPORT

Environmental Affairs



REPUBLIC WETLANDS PRESERVE

WETLAND MITIGATION BANK

The Republic Wetlands Preserve (RWP) is located at the site of the closed Republic Mine in Western Marquette County, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

REPUBLIC MINE TIMELINE

- 1871** Mining begins at Republic
- 1914** The Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company (now Cliffs Natural Resources) acquired the mine.
- 1926** Mine closes.
- 1960s** Cliffs begins mine expansion at Republic.
- 1964** Expansion Completed
- 1964-81** Republic produces 45 million tons iron ore
- 1981** Operations at Republic were suspended
- 1996** Republic was closed permanently

At the time of permanent closure of the Republic Mine, a reclamation plan, under the Reclamation of Mining Lands regulations, was developed. Implementation of this reclamation plan would have resulted in simply satisfying the requirements of the reclamation regulations. Instead Cliffs began development of the Republic Wetlands Preserve (RWP), which went beyond the reclamation requirements. The purpose of the RWP is to provide wetland mitigation acres, or credits, to replace those wetlands that will be unavoidably impacted at the other Cliffs mining operations in Marquette County.

SEQUENTIAL LAND USE

The Republic Wetlands Preserve is an excellent example of sequential land use. What, for years, was part of an economically beneficial mining operation providing the steelmaking industry with its chief raw material and offering high-quality job opportunities for local residents, has now become a flourishing wetlands, which sustains new plant life and has become home to a diverse population of birds, reptiles and mammals. Today the RWP is open to the public for non-motorized recreation.



*Left: Republic Mine "A" Basin in 1998, pre-implementation
Right: Republic Mine "A" Basin post-implementation*

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

- 2,300 Acres placed in Conservation Easement*
- ~700 Acres of new wetlands created
- 400 Acres of wetlands seeded
- 60,000 Wetland plants planted
- 225,000 Wetland trees planted
- Banking agreement** between Cliffs and Michigan governing preserve and credits

** With the conservation easement agreement this wetlands will continue to be a part of the Marquette County natural environment for future generations to enjoy.*

***The banking agreement includes a monitoring plan to measure the ongoing progress in the wetland development. Monitoring has shown the RWP has met the performance standards for vegetation, hydrology, soils, wildlife and water quality.*

