

1 **4.3.9 Cultural Resources**

2 **4.3.9.1 Federal Lands**

3 **4.3.9.1.1 Land Exchange Proposed Action**

4 The federal lands within the Land Exchange Proposed Action area is similar to the Mine Site  
5 portion of the NorthMet Project area previously discussed, but extends further north and west  
6 and excludes the privately-owned land bordering Dunka Road to the south of the Mine Site. The  
7 Land Exchange Proposed Action APE for both direct and indirect effects consists of the entire  
8 land exchange boundary. Section 4.2.9 provides further discussion of the existing conditions on  
9 the Mine Site and associated federal lands. Cultural resources identified within the Land  
10 Exchange Proposed Action area consisted of archaeological sites and; properties and natural  
11 resources of religious and cultural significance to the Bands, ~~and 1854 Treaty resources.~~

12 As a result of Phase I cultural resources surveys and consultation with the Bands and the SHPO  
13 concerning the results of identification efforts for properties of religious and cultural significance  
14 to the Bands, three cultural resources have been identified within the Land Exchange Proposed  
15 Action: the Lake Vermillion to Beaver Bay Trail, NorthMet Archaeological Site, and Knot  
16 Logging Camp. For detailed property descriptions and discussions of eligibilities, please see  
17 Section 4.2.9. Overland trail systems, such as the 75-mile-long Beaver Bay to Lake Vermillion  
18 Trail, were frequently referenced during late 19<sup>th</sup>-century GLO surveys in the Western Superior  
19 Basin (Trygg 1966). Despite mention in the historic record, the trails themselves, and the role  
20 they played as transportation systems prior to development of railroad transportation in the  
21 region, are underrepresented in the literature. The available literature would suggest, however,  
22 that overland trails played a prominent role within a regional transportation system that included  
23 interior waterways, short haul portages, and overland portages leading from Lake Superior to  
24 points inland. While the vast majority of the transportation networks in the Western Superior  
25 Basin are recognized as routes that maximized waterborne transportation, the Beaver Bay to  
26 Lake Vermillion Trail represents one of the few overland trail corridors where lakes and rivers  
27 were not utilized. Within this context, it would appear that the route functioned as a winter  
28 transportation corridor, or perhaps an expedient summer route from the Lake Superior Watershed  
29 into Lake Vermilion. Support for the Beaver Bay to Lake Vermillion Trail's function as a winter  
30 route comes from several sources, both primary and anecdotal in nature. Christian Wieland, who  
31 conducted the GLO survey of T59N, R13W in the winter of 1872 noted crossing the "Trail from  
32 Beaver Bay to Lake Vermillion" at three locations while conducting the survey (GLO 1873).

33 Historic records also suggest that overland trails were utilized by both local Ojibwe and mineral  
34 prospectors from at least the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century through the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century (Skillings,  
35 Lancaster, etc.). Historic overland trails are best viewed as a component of an interrelated  
36 transportation system where trails and water routes interconnect to form a large and intricate  
37 system of communication and transportation (Burns 1985: 1-2). The southeastern head of the  
38 overland trail is situated at Beaver Bay, which had a significant Ojibwe population from at least  
39 1854-1930 (Davis 1968; Skillings 1972; Lancaster 2009). Beaver Bay provided access from a  
40 mid-point on Lake Superior, Beaver Bay, which is located about halfway between Grand Portage  
41 and Fond du Lac, the two primary, historic ingress points to the interior portions of Northeastern  
42 Minnesota.

43 ~~The significance of the Beaver Bay to Lake Vermilion Trail to the Ojibwe of Northeastern~~  
44 ~~Minnesota is perhaps more nuanced than the significance ascribed by archaeologists, whose~~  
45 ~~focus remains on attaching significance to physical manifestations of historic events.~~  
46 ~~Consultation with the Bands elicited the importance of both how the trails connected past Ojibwe~~  
47 ~~community in a physical sense and the ability for trails to also connect communities in a~~  
48 ~~contemporary sense. Statements of significance were predicated on the fact that in the late 19<sup>th</sup>~~  
49 ~~century Ojibwe residence in the newly ceded territory were highly mobile, and families enrolled~~  
50 ~~at locations they happened to be when the rolls were being populated. “In a sense, Ojibwe from~~  
51 ~~scattered locations throughout the ceded territory may have enrolled at a location that was far~~  
52 ~~away from their place of primary residence ... at the time, social organization was very fluid, and~~  
53 ~~marriages, disagreements, and the opportunities for wage labor caused folks to move around a~~  
54 ~~lot. There is a general agreement among tribal consultation partners that the trails, or in the case~~  
55 ~~of some, the trail corridors themselves, function as physical manifestations of the social fluidity~~  
56 ~~that existed among northeastern Minnesota’s Ojibwe communities at that time. Consulting~~  
57 ~~partners stated that the trails are like a lifeline that permeates all aspects of history. That the~~  
58 ~~overland trails are something entirely different than functional trails that are present today, trails~~  
59 ~~that some would refer to as coming and going trails, in that you use them for a purpose and then~~  
60 ~~you return home. The Beaver Bay to Lake Vermilion Trail is viewed as something different...it~~  
61 ~~is viewed as a trail that connects you to who you are, in that they are important signature of~~  
62 ~~cultural identity and reconnection to past ways” (Berens and Rasky 2012).~~

63 ~~Although barely discernible in some cases, a few well-defined trail segments of the Vermilion to~~  
64 ~~Beaver Bay Trail and two other unnamed trail segments represent the trail corridors that cross~~  
65 ~~the Land Exchange Proposed Action area. Although interrupted by Euro American agriculture,~~  
66 ~~logging, and mining, as well as road and townsite development, the trails remain an important~~  
67 ~~cultural and spiritual connection for the Bands. Recent oral histories by Band elders substantiate~~  
68 ~~this significance. These segments are potentially part of a once-extensive system of overland~~  
69 ~~trails that were in use during hundreds of years of Ojibwe occupation. Therefore, the BBLV Trail~~  
70 ~~Segment #1 (USFS #01-569) is significant for the role it played in the broad patterns of Ojibwe~~  
71 ~~land use and early mineral exploration. It is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under Criteria for~~  
72 ~~Evaluation A and D. (INSERT SUMMARY PARAGRAPH REGARDING TRAIL SEGMENT,~~  
73 ~~KNOT CAMP, AND NORTHMET SITE AND REFER READER TO SECTION 4.2.9.3.4)~~

74 ~~The NorthMet Archaeological Site (21SL pending) is located in the Land Exchange Proposed~~  
75 ~~Action area. The site was identified through subsurface testing and consisted of pre-contact lithic~~  
76 ~~artifacts. Due to the sparse nature of the artifacts and lack of features, it was believed that the site~~  
77 ~~was unlikely to yield any further information significant to the understanding of past cultural~~  
78 ~~history, and therefore was determined to be not eligible under Criterion D. As a result, the site~~  
79 ~~was determined to be not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.~~

80 ~~The Knot Logging Camp (21SLmn) is located in the Land Exchange Proposed Action area. The~~  
81 ~~historic site was originally identified by USFS staff through historic aerial photography analysis.~~  
82 ~~Field investigations at the site identified pit features and historic debris typical of a logging~~  
83 ~~camp, including stove parts, cans, and other metal materials. The site had been reported to be~~  
84 ~~severely impacted by recent and historic logging activities. No obvious remnants of previously~~  
85 ~~identified berms were evident. Historic research failed to uncover anything regarding the~~  
86 ~~individual camp itself other than its affiliation with a brief period in the logging industry in~~  
87 ~~northeastern Minnesota. Thus, the site was determined to be not eligible under Criterion A. Due~~

88 ~~to the sparse nature of the artifacts and lack of significant features, it was believed that the site~~  
89 ~~was unlikely to yield any further information significant to the understanding of past cultural~~  
90 ~~history, and therefore was determined to be not eligible under Criterion D. As a result, the site~~  
91 ~~was determined to be not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.~~

92 The federal Co-lead Agencies continue consultation with the Bands and the Minnesota SHPO as  
93 determinations are made concerning NRHP eligibility of identified resources, NorthMet Project  
94 Proposed Action effects on historic properties, and resolution of any adverse effects.

95 The investigations completed to date in the Land Exchange Proposed Action area have identified  
96 cultural resources as summarized in Table 4.3.9-1 below.

97 **Table 4.3.9-1 Cultural Resources Identified in the Land Exchange Proposed Action Area**

Resource ID	Resource Name	Resource Type	NRHP Determination by Co-lead Agencies	SHPO Concurrence with Co-leads Agencies' Findings
SL-HLC-pending	Lake Vermilion to Beaver Bay Trail <sup>1</sup>	Archaeological Site	Eligible	Pending
21SL pending	NorthMet Archaeological Site	Archaeological site	Not Eligible	Pending
21SLmn	Knot Logging Camp	Archaeological site	Not Eligible	Concur

98 <sup>1</sup> ~~USFS designation BBLV Trail Segment #1 (USFS #01-569).~~

99  
100 The 1854 Treaty resources located within the Land Exchange Proposed Action would be similar  
101 to the Mine Site portion of the NorthMet Project area previously discussed in Section 4.2.9.  
102 Section 4.2.9 provides further discussion of the existing conditions on the Mine Site and  
103 associated federal lands.

104 ~~An analysis of whether any particular property associated with the Bands' exercise of their~~  
105 ~~usufructuary rights may be considered a TCP is limited by lack of available information~~  
106 ~~regarding Band members' traditional exercise of those rights. An analysis of effects to 1854~~  
107 ~~Treaty resources, as described and discussed in Section 4.2.9, is limited by the lack of available~~  
108 ~~information concerning the use of such resources.~~ Determining how the Bands have traditionally  
109 conducted their usufructuary rights on or near the Land Exchange Proposed Action area would  
110 only be available through a detailed ethnographic study of individual Band members and their  
111 families. The cultural resources investigations included Band member interviews with Bois  
112 Forte, Fond du Lac, and Grand Portage, although only Bois Forte's results were made available.  
113 The results of the interviews and the cultural resources investigation did not find any natural  
114 resources that would be considered a TCP or other traditional cultural place.

#### 115 4.3.9.1.2 Land Exchange Alternative B

116 All of the cultural resources and 1854 Treaty resources identified and discussed in Section  
117 4.3.9.1.1 are located within the Land Exchange Alternative B.

#### 118 4.3.9.2 Non-federal Lands

119 The non-federal lands that would be going into federal ownership would not be of primary  
120 concern for cultural resources since future management of these lands would be as per the Forest  
121 Plan direction for cultural resources. As such, any cultural resources that may occur on these  
122 lands would receive greater protection under NHPA than they are currently receiving.

123 The Land Exchange Alternative B represents an exchange of private and federal land, but it is  
124 | also represents an exchange of access to natural resources expressed in treaties made between  
125 the United States and Bands of Ojibwe Indians in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Due to the nature of a land  
126 exchange, therefore, the 1854 Treaty resources would be available for resource gathering and  
127 subsistence use by the Bands and would receive greater protection under federal law than they  
128 are currently receiving.

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