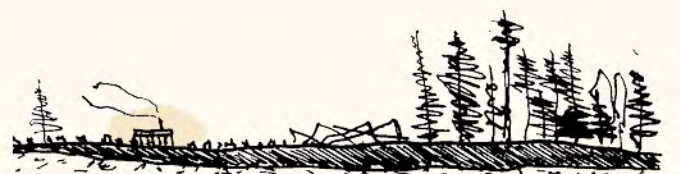


# OVER BURDEN

## THE CHURNING OF THE LAND



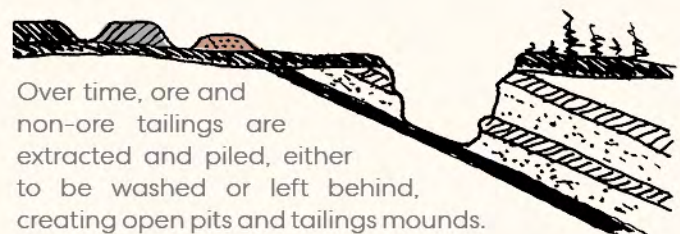
Before the 19th century, the Mesabi range was pristine wilderness, altered only by first nations. What followed fueled the growth of a new nation in vast ways.



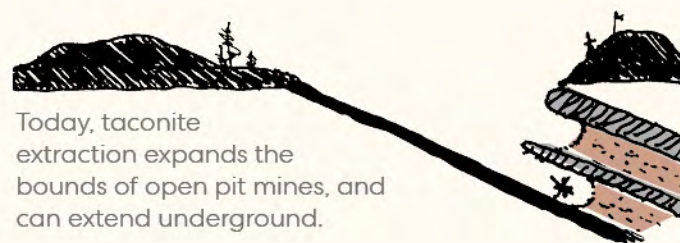
Logging and sawmills leveled the old growth forests of Minnesota starting in the mid 1800's. Rivers became highways, lumberjacks moved quickly across the land.



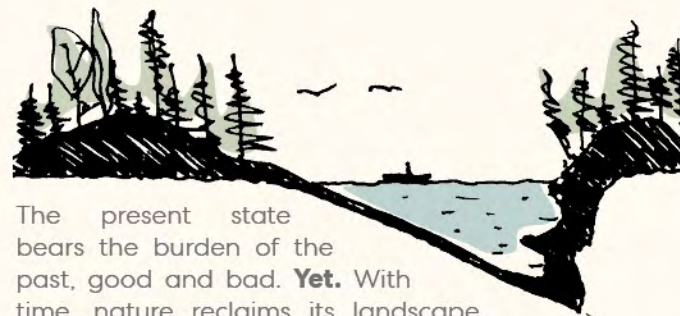
The first iron ore test pit near Babbitt in 1871 revealed natural iron ore near the surface, sparking the mining boom.



Over time, ore and non-ore tailings are extracted and piled, either to be washed or left behind, creating open pits and tailings mounds.



Today, taconite extraction expands the bounds of open pit mines, and can extend underground.



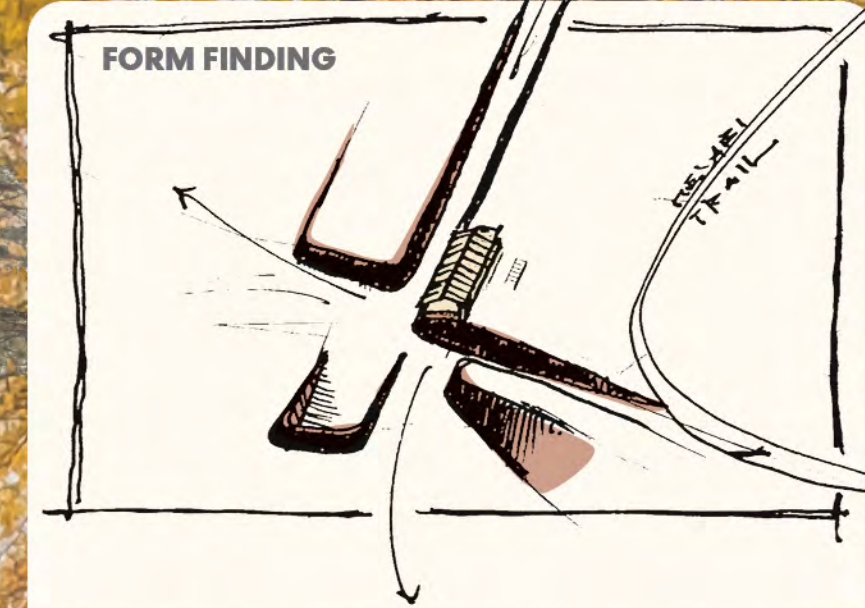
The present state bears the burden of the past, good and bad. Yet. With time, nature reclaims its landscape. It can even appear indistinguishable from natural. While the under-bearings have been altered, the overburden yields new landscape to be discovered again.

The lands of northern Minnesota have been simultaneously enjoyed and exploited for hundreds of years. At the crossroads of culture, industry, and recreation lies the Mesabi range. This vast wilderness can be wildly inspiring and oddly jarring in the same moment.

Humanity's interaction with the land is complex, a story not easily told. Who was here before us? What did this look like? Where did it go? How is this being used?

Today, the Mesabi Trail links together this vast iron range of Minnesota, enjoyed by over 200,000 visitors annually with increased growth. It is host to activities like biking, walking, skiing, snowmobiling, and backpacking, with the trail serving as a conduit to further outdoor recreation. Amongst this cherished recreation, the mines of the Mesabi produce 80% of the United States' iron ore every year, providing vital resources and jobs for the community and country.

For the stories of the past and the growth of activity today, this Mesabi Trail Visitor Center should endeavor to offer more than a brief stop. It is the opportunity to create a destination that remains viable through the test of time. It is a place to ponder, a scene for recreation, and an ever-new landscape to explore.



The visitor center is comprised of two main forms. The wooden shelter is a brief rest stop or gathering place along the trail. The gabion cage base is an established indoor interpretive center. The use of gabion cages embraces the fact that architecture will effect the immediate landscape, but in time will allow nature to reclaim its form, taking inspiration from tailings mounds of the past. These broad sweeping walls properly orient the building to the site arrival by trail or car, leveraging existing topography for placement.



## NORTH SECTION

The journey of descent causes one to pause and ask the question "How have I arrived here?", a cautious journey **forwards**. Looking **back** creates an **understanding** of the journey behind. This rest stop is meant to ponder the past, explore the present, and consider the future. This process is necessary for a visitor to appreciate the greater Mesabi range and its resources that transcend generations.

Logging barracks and mining beneficiation developments are **utilitarian**. Some barracks were dismantled after a few months of use. The rest stop shelter conveys this sense of utility in its light stance on the land, serving transitory visitors. Its simple form is reminiscent of these buildings of industry, a shelter for a brief time.

