

**IMPORTANT  
CALENDAR YEAR 2017 TAX RETURN GUIDE**

**MESABI TRUST**

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**To Registered Holders of Certificates of Beneficial  
Interest in Mesabi Trust:**

This Tax Return Guide (the "Guide") and related supplemental schedule and attachment are intended to assist you in the preparation of your income tax returns in connection with units of beneficial interest (the "units") in Mesabi Trust (the "Trust") held during calendar year 2017. This information was prepared by the Trust's accountants and is presented for guidance only. It is not intended to be all-inclusive or to render specific professional tax advice to any holder. Since special circumstances may affect individual holders, holders should consult their own tax advisors as to any questions which they may have.

**You should have received or will receive shortly the 2017 calendar year Forms 1099-INT and 1099-MISC which will report your share of interest and gross royalty income. If you have not yet received these forms, please contact us at 1-800-735-7777, option#3.** The remainder of the Guide is intended to provide information regarding tax reporting requirements. The attached Statement of Income, Expenses, and Beneficiary's Share of Income, Deductions and Credits is intended to provide additional information that is not contained in the Form 1099-INT and Form 1099-MISC issued to registered holders.

**SUMMARY**

For income tax reporting purposes, each holder of units in the Trust is considered to be a grantor or substitute grantor as well as a beneficiary of the Trust, which means that Mesabi Trust is a pass-through entity similar to a partnership. As such, in lieu of the Trust paying income taxes, the unit holders report their pro rata share of the various items of Trust income and deductions on their income tax returns. This reporting is required whether or not the earnings of the Trust are distributed to the unit holders. **Trust distributions should not be included in income tax returns as "dividend income" and are not eligible for the dividends received deduction for corporations or for the lower marginal tax rates available for certain qualified dividends paid to individuals.**

The following pages of this Guide provide assistance to properly report the income and deductions of the Trust. You should be aware of the following general provisions:

1. Income, deductions and depletion generated by the Trust **before** you have held your units for more than a one-year period result in ordinary income and deductions, reportable by individuals on Schedule E of Form 1040. Refer to pages 3 to 6 of this Guide for directions on how to determine the amounts to be reported on Schedule E.

2. Income, deductions and depletion generated by the Trust **after** you have held your units for more than a one-year period result in long-term capital gain or offsets thereto reportable in Part I of Form 4797 as Section 1231 gains. Refer to pages 3 to 6 of this Guide for directions on how to determine the amounts to be reported on Form 4797.

3. All unit holders may claim a deduction for depletion, a method of recovering the cost of their investment in a natural resource property. Cost depletion may be claimed by all unit holders. The excess of percentage depletion over cost depletion may be claimed by non-corporate taxpayers before they have held their units for a one-year period and by Subchapter C corporations at any time. Refer to pages 5 to 6 of this Guide for directions on how to determine your depletion allowance.

4. Unit holders must maintain a record of their adjusted tax basis for purposes of determining cost depletion and gain or loss on the disposition of their units. Your adjusted tax basis equals the amount paid for your units plus interest and royalty income recognized, less expenses and depletion claimed and cash distributions received. Refer to pages 6 to 7 of this Guide for an illustrative example of how to calculate your adjusted tax basis.

5. Gain or loss on the disposition of your units is equal to the sales price minus your adjusted tax basis at the time of sale. Depending on the length of time your units were held, you will recognize short-term or long-term capital gain or loss. Refer to page 7 to 8 of this Guide for a description of the capital gains rates and an illustrative example.

## **SCHEDULE OF INCOME AND EXPENSES**

If you held units for the period from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, you will be considered to have received and expended, on a cash basis, the respective totals shown below for each unit. On the other hand, if you held units during only a portion of the period, then the schedule shows the amounts of income and deductible expenses reportable by you for each unit held at the end of the respective months.

	<b>Royalty Income Per Unit</b>	<b>Interest Income Per Unit</b>	<b>Expenses Per Unit</b>
January 2017	\$ 0.746297	\$ 0.000136	\$ 0.005721
February	-	0.000031	0.005518
March	-	0.000095	0.011822
April	0.027960	0.000192	0.005671
May	-	0.000215	0.010133
June	-	0.000215	0.001093
July	0.636946	0.000259	0.016877
August	-	0.000142	0.005234
September	-	0.000066	0.001980
October	1.185057	0.001874	0.004574
November	-	0.000432	0.005272
December	-	0.000007	0.001700
Total 2017	\$ 2.596260	\$ 0.003664	\$ 0.075595

## **FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES AND REPORTING**

### **Form 1099-MISC, Form 1099-INT and Tax Return Guide**

Forms 1099-MISC and 1099-INT have been provided to the Internal Revenue Service for each registered unit holder who held certificates of beneficial interest at one or more month ends during calendar year 2017. Unit holders of record at the end of each month have been allocated a share of the Trust's income and expenses for the month. This Guide summarizes and provides monthly detail of the amount of U.S. government interest income, royalty income and trust expenses which must be reported for calendar year 2017.

### **Interest Income**

“Interest Income per Unit” represents U.S. government interest income and should be reported on Schedule B, line 1, Form 1040. Taxpayers who were unit holders for all of calendar year 2017 would report \$0.003664 per unit. The total interest income to report is reflected on your Form 1099-INT.

## **Backup Withholding Tax**

If applicable, any backup withholding tax is presented on your Form 1099-MISC and is not included with this Guide.

## **Trust Expenses**

"Expenses per Unit" should be reported on Schedule E, Part I, line 19, Form 1040. Taxpayers who were unit holders for all of calendar year 2017 would report \$0.075595 per unit.

## **Royalty Income**

Royalty income received by the Trust before you have held your units for more than a one-year period is ordinary income and should be reported on Schedule E, Part I, line 4, Form 1040. Royalty income received by the Trust after you have held your units for more than a one-year period qualifies as income from the sale or exchange of property used in a trade or business and should be reported in column (d) of line 2, Part I, Form 4797. Your Form 1099-MISC reflects the total amount of 2017 royalty income that you earned from the Trust.

In order to reconcile the royalty income reported on Form 1099-MISC to the figures reported on Schedule E and Form 4797 in your tax return, we suggest you complete the Supplemental Schedule included at page 10 of this Guide (or a similar reconciliation) and attach it to your income tax return.

During calendar year 2017 the Trust received royalty income on the following dates; January 30, 2017, April 28, 2017, July 28, 2017, and October 30, 2017. The following chart may be useful in determining where to report such calendar year 2017 royalty income depending on when you purchased your units:

<b>If you purchased your units:</b>	<b>Report royalty income for the following months on:</b>	
	<b>Schedule E, Form 1040</b>	<b>Form 4797</b>
On or before January 29, 2016	None	All months
From January 30, 2016 through April 27, 2016	January	April, July, and October
From April 28, 2016 through July 27, 2016	January and April	July and October
From July 28, 2016 through October 29, 2016	January, April, and July	October
On or after October 30, 2016	All months	None

## **Depletion**

Depletion is a method of claiming a tax deduction for the recovery of the cost of a natural resource investment over the life of the property. Taxpayers generally may claim either cost or percentage depletion in connection with an investment in certain natural resource businesses. As discussed below, when an investment has been held for one year or less, all taxpayers may use either cost or percentage depletion. Once an investment has been held for more than a one-year period, non-corporate taxpayers are limited to cost depletion, while corporations may also claim the excess of percentage depletion over cost depletion.

Cost depletion or percentage depletion attributable to royalty income received by the Trust before you have held your units for more than a one-year period should be reported on Schedule E, Part I, line 18, Form 1040, as an ordinary deduction.

Cost depletion attributable to royalty income received by the Trust after you have held your units for more than a one-year period should be reported in column (f) of line 2, Part I, Form 4797, as a reduction of gain from the sale or exchange of property used in a trade or business. Cost depletion is calculated by multiplying the adjusted tax basis of your units by the sum of the cost depletion percentages (set forth in the table on page 6 below) for the months during which you owned units during 2017.

After you have held your units for more than one year, unit holders that are Subchapter C corporations (but not other unit holders) may also deduct the excess of percentage depletion attributable to royalty income received by the Trust over cost depletion attributable to such royalty income.

The following is a schedule of "percentage depletion dollar value per unit" and the "cost depletion percentage" for each month. Please note that the percentage depletion has not been reduced as required by Internal Revenue Code Section 291 for corporate taxpayers. Moreover, unit holders should discuss with their tax advisors the ability to claim depletion for alternative minimum tax purposes.

	<b>Percentage Depletion Dollar Value Per Unit</b>	<b>Cost Depletion Percentage</b>
January 2017	\$ 0.111945	0.1591%
February	-	0.1466%
March	-	0.1868%
April	0.004194	0.1922%
May	-	0.1023%
June	-	0.1713%
July	0.095542	0.1259%
August	-	0.1183%
September	-	0.1216%
October	0.177758	0.1259%
November	-	0.1634%
December	-	0.1693%
Total 2017	\$ 0.389439	1.7827%

### **Tax Basis and Adjustments**

It is important for unit holders to keep track of the tax basis of their units. Your tax basis determines your reportable gain or loss upon the disposition of your units and is used to calculate allowable cost depletion each year (as described above). Due to the differences in treatment of royalty income and depletion before and after you have held your units for a one-year period, the tax basis of units purchased at different times should be calculated separately.

Your initial tax basis is the purchase price of your units. The initial tax basis of your units is adjusted each year. The beginning tax basis each year is (i) reduced by all cash distributions received during the year, (ii) increased by all interest income and royalty income reported, and (iii) decreased by all expenses and depletion (cost and/or percentage) claimed, resulting in your adjusted tax basis at the end of the year. This adjusted tax basis will be your beginning tax basis for the subsequent year.

Example:

If you purchased 10,000 units on January 2, 2017 for \$200,000, that amount would represent your initial tax basis. During calendar year 2017, you would have received distributions of \$14,900, you would report interest income of \$37, royalty income of \$25,963 and expenses of \$756; for regular income tax purposes you would be allowed to claim either cost depletion of \$3,565 (\$200,000 times 1.7827%) or percentage depletion of \$3,894 (10,000 units times \$0.389439). Your adjusted tax basis at the end of the year would be calculated as follows:

Initial Tax Basis	\$200,000
Less: Cash Distributions	(14,900)
Add: Interest Income	37
Royalty Income	25,963
Less: Expenses	(756)
Depletion (cost)	<u>(3,565)</u>
Adjusted Tax Basis	<u>\$206,779</u>

Your beginning tax basis for calendar year 2018 for your 10,000 units would be \$206,779. If you sold these units on January 4, 2018, the difference between the net proceeds you received and the \$206,779 basis amount would represent your reportable gain or loss on the disposition. If you continued to hold these units, your cost depletion for calendar year 2018 would be calculated on this adjusted tax basis. As noted in the depletion section, once an investment has been held for more than a one-year period, non-corporate taxpayers are limited to cost depletion. In addition, in future years, you would continue to adjust your tax basis by subsequent distributions, income, expenses and depletion.

**Tax Rates on Capital Gains for Non-Corporate Taxpayers**

Any sale of units during calendar year 2017 that were held as a capital asset by non-corporate taxpayers for more than twelve months are subject to a maximum 20 percent long-term capital gains federal income tax rate, plus potential NII Tax (described below), and other than depletion recapture (described below), which is subject to ordinary rates.

For example, assume you purchased 10,000 units on January 3, 2016 and sold all 10,000 units on January 5, 2017 for \$200,000. Further assume that your adjusted tax basis in these units at the time of sale was \$150,000. Your taxable gain is \$50,000 (\$200,000 less \$150,000). The portion of the gain relating to previously deducted depletion expenses will be subject to ordinary tax rates due to Section 1254 recapture rules. Since you had held your units for more than 12 months at the time of sale, the remainder of the \$50,000 gain would be eligible for long-term capital gain treatment and subject to a maximum federal income tax rate of 20%, plus NII Tax for certain investors. If you had purchased your units on or after January 5, 2016, your reportable capital gain would not be subject to the reduced rates since the units would not have been held for more than one year. It is important that you keep track of the cumulative depletion expenses that are deducted during the period that you own your units in the Trust. If you sell your units at a gain, the cumulative depletion

deductions taken by you are recaptured as ordinary income under Section 1254 of the Internal Revenue Code up to the extent of the gain.

The tax rates on long-term capital gains may also apply to royalty income after you have held your units for more than a one-year period, since such income, less the related depletion and expenses reportable on Form 4797, may result in capital gains.

Application of the maximum capital gains tax rates may be further complicated in certain situations, including unit holders who are subject to the 3.8% Medicare Surtax on “net investment income” (“NII Tax”) and/or the alternative minimum tax (although the same reduced rates apply to long-term capital gains under the alternative minimum tax rules). Due to the technical and taxpayer-specific nature of these rules, including various income thresholds before the NII Tax applies, holders should consult their own tax advisors to determine the proper treatment in their special circumstances.

In addition, tax legislation under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that was signed into law on December 22, 2017, makes numerous changes to the current tax rules and regulations. These changes apply to tax years beginning after December 31, 2017, and accordingly, are not reflected in this Tax Return Guide.

## **MINNESOTA INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES**

Minnesota residents are subject to Minnesota tax on all of their net income regardless of the source of such income. "Net income" is based on Federal taxable income with certain modifications for Minnesota purposes (e.g., a reduction for U.S. government interest income for individuals).

Nonresident individuals and corporations are subject to Minnesota tax to the extent that they have received income from Minnesota sources. Holders of a beneficial interest in a trust must report their share of Minnesota source gross income received by the trust. Expenses, losses, and other deductions are allocated to Minnesota along with the gross income to which such items are related. During calendar year 2017, the royalty income received by Mesabi Trust is considered Minnesota source income and the expenses and depletion are considered Minnesota source expenses and deductions. Interest income was from sources outside Minnesota.

Nonresident individual unit holders with little Minnesota gross income will not be required to file Minnesota income tax returns. Returns are only required from a nonresident individual if such individual received gross income from Minnesota sources of \$10,400 or more. Returns are required from any corporation doing business in Minnesota, owning property in Minnesota, or carrying on business in Minnesota consisting of foreign commerce or interstate commerce. Minnesota also requires any partnership, Subchapter S corporation or limited liability company receiving Minnesota source income to file an informational return with the Minnesota Department of Revenue.



Forms and information may be obtained by telephoning Minnesota Revenue at (651) 296-3781 or 1-800-652-9094 or via the Internet at <http://www.revenue.state.mn.us>.

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**----- IRS CIRCULAR 230 NOTICE -----**

**Any tax advice expressed in this communication (including any attachments) is not intended to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of avoiding penalties imposed on the taxpayer by any governmental taxing authority or agency. In addition, if any such tax advice is made available to any person or party other than the party to whom the advice was originally directed, then such advice, under IRS Circular 230, is to be considered as being delivered to support the promotion or marketing of the transaction or matter discussed or referenced. Thus, each taxpayer should seek specific tax advice based on the taxpayer's particular circumstances from an independent tax advisor.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Supplemental Schedule  
Reconciling Mesabi Trust Form 1099-MISC to  
2017 Individual Income Tax Return

Where found on Form 1040

Royalty Income (ordinary)	+ _____	Sch. E, Part I, Line 4
Proceeds from Sale of Iron Ore, Sect. 1231	+ _____	Form 4797, Part I, Line 2, Col. d
EQUALS: Royalty Income, Per Form 1099-MISC	= _____	

STATEMENT OF INCOME, EXPENSES AND BENEFICIARY'S  
SHARE OF INCOME, DEDUCTIONS AND CREDITS

INCOME	Amount	Per Unit
Royalties Received from		
Northshore Mining Company	\$ 33,534,941.87	\$ 2.556015
Distributions Received from Land Trust	528,009.21	0.040245
	34,062,951.08	2.596260
Interest Income Received	48,077.26	0.003664
	\$ 34,111,028.34	\$ 2.599924
EXPENSES		
<p>EXPENSES INCURRED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRUST THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INCURRED HAD THE PROPERTY NOT BEEN HELD IN TRUST- - - ALLOWABLE IN ARRIVING AT ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME.</p>		
Trustees' Fees and Compensation	\$ 251,289.10	\$ 0.019153
Agents and Consultants	170,488.06	0.012995
Legal and Accounting	466,783.57	0.035578
Transfer and Registrar	7,130.48	0.000543
Trustees' Expenses	22,533.74	0.001718
New York Stock Exchange Listing Fee	59,500.00	0.004535
Miscellaneous	14,082.50	0.001073
	\$ 991,807.45	\$ 0.075595
TOTAL EXPENSES		
	\$ 33,119,220.89	\$ 2.524329
TAXABLE INCOME (NOTE 1)		
	\$ 19,548,814.90	\$ 1.490000
CASH DISTRIBUTIONS (NON-TAXABLE)		

THE TRUST DOES NOT DEDUCT DEPLETION. SEE TAX RETURN GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

NOTE 1

The above figures are shown as total for the Trust and also on a "per unit" basis. The beneficiaries of the Trust are the holders of an aggregate of 13,120,010 units represented by certificates of beneficial interest. The Trust's status as a grantor trust was confirmed by a letter ruling dated March 10, 1961 addressed to the Mesabi Iron Company.

To determine the amount of taxable income to include on tax returns, holders should multiply the number of units held throughout the year by the per unit detail above.