

Guideline for wetland establishment on reclaimed oil sands leases (2007)

FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The *Guideline for Wetland Establishment on Reclaimed Oil Sands Leases* helps oil sands companies create wetlands in areas affected by mineable oil sands development

Wetlands are important for:

- water storage
- groundwater recharge
- flood control
- storm runoff generation
- microclimate regulation
- shoreline stabilization
- water treatment
- carbon storage
- Aboriginal cultural use
- trapping of fur-bearers
- fishing and waterfowl hunting
- recreation
- wildlife habitat

What is the guideline?

The *Guideline for Wetland Establishment on Reclaimed Oil Sands Leases* is used by oil sands mine operators in the research and development of various types of wetlands at oil sands mines. Operators are required to use this Guideline under their *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* approvals.

This updated guideline provides information on ways to create wetlands (e.g. peatlands, marshes and shallow ponds) in areas affected by mineable oil sands development.

Last published in 2000, the guideline has since been improved with up-to-date research on general wetland establishment, establishment of peatlands (muskeg), and includes a new section on water movement (hydrology) and plant growth in wetlands. It describes an integrated approach to the planning, design, construction, monitoring and adaptive management of reclaimed wetlands.

As new information becomes available, the guideline will continue to be updated. The research and monitoring required to support the development of the next version of the document will be undertaken primarily through the Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA).

How was it produced?

Experts in the field of wetland establishment created the guideline with participation and input from industry personnel, government staff and people living in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The Reclamation Working Group (RWG) of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) is responsible for continued updates, as well as providing guidance and recommendations on how to best reclaim areas affected by mineable oil sands development.

How will it be used?

The guideline is used to assist mineable oil sands companies in creating wetlands that:

- are meaningful to people living and working in the region, including First Nation and Métis people;
- are environmentally sustainable; and
- meet government expectations.

The guideline will be used by oil sands mine operators in the development of plans to reclaim wetlands as required by their EPEA approvals. As well, the guideline will be used in the development of plans for wetlands research and monitoring. It will be updated using information gathered through research and monitoring. The next version of the guideline will be developed through CEMA and is expected in about five years.

For more information about the guideline, contact:

Alberta Environment
Northern Region
111 Twin Atria Building
4999 - 98 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2X3
Tel.: 780-427-5296
Fax: 780-427-7824

Copies of the guideline are available from Alberta Environment's Information Centre:

Main floor, 9820 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6
env.infocent@gov.ab.ca

or online at:

<http://environment.gov.ab.ca/info/home.asp>