

Terms of Reference

Reclamation Working Group (RWG)

January 29, 2008

Purpose:

The RWG will produce and maintain guidance documents that provide recommendations and best practices which ensure that reclaimed landscapes within the Athabasca oil sands region meet regulatory requirements, satisfy the needs and values of stakeholders, and are environmentally sustainable. The RWG will provide these guidance documents to the CEMA Board as recommendations to government.

Objectives:

Develop and maintain the following guidance documents for reclamation on oil sands leases in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo:

1. A guidance document for wetland & aquatics establishment;
2. A guidance document for end pit lake establishment;
3. A guidance document to promote appropriate design, construction, reclamation and maintenance of landforms and landscapes;
4. A guidance document that facilitates the evaluation of land capabilities for forest ecosystems on natural and reclaimed lands;
5. A guidance document for forest vegetation (ecosystems) establishment;
6. A guidance document on the process by which reclamation certification will be achieved; and
7. Other reclamation guidance documents as agreed upon by RWG and the CEMA Board.

Context:

RWG focuses on providing guidance to operators and stakeholders to address environmental impacts (reclamation).

The Regional Sustainable Development Strategy (RSDS) identified 72 major issues of

concern in 14 theme areas. RWG's scope of work comes from the RSDS Theme 1 (sustainable ecosystems and land-use) which was split into two separate objectives, one of which is being addressed by RWG: "To define the process and standards needed to return developed land to sustainable ecosystems with desired end land use values." RWG's work applies to surface mineable oil sands and other surface disturbances including *In Situ*.

Operating Guidelines:

The RWG will operate in a manner that is consistent with the [principles](#), rules, [policies](#), and [procedures](#) adopted by CEMA.

The RWG will follow the CEMA [decision making policy](#) and [guideline](#).

The RWG will:

- oversee, coordinate, and integrate the work of technical subgroups that focus on the development of guidelines for specific aspects of reclamation and closure;
- develop greater understanding of all resource development operations and reclamation technologies and government regulations and policy;
- promote a proactive and progressive integration of closure and reclamation planning across all industrial developments and within the regional context;
- make recommendations to CEMA on regional reclamation planning and management, regulation and policy;
- consider additional reclamation research to address knowledge gaps for guidelines. This may result in the formation of subgroups or recommending research related to reclamation; and
- conduct other activities agreed to by the group and CEMA members.

The RWG will consider the need to formally interface with other CEMA working groups and other related groups. These may include, but are not limited to:

- the Canadian Oil Sands Network for Research and Development (CONRAD);
- the CEMA Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK) Standing Committee;
- the Sustainable Ecosystem Working Group (SEWG);
- the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA);
- the NO_x SO₂ Management Working Group (NSMWG);
- the Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program (RAMP); and
- the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI).

Chairpersons are nominated by the membership and are selected by consensus by the RWG. The term for a chairperson is 2 years. The RWG will strive to have 2 chairpersons at a time, with overlapping terms to ensure effective transition. The RWG will also strive to have one chairperson from industry and one chairperson from Government/First Nations/NGO at any given time.

Report to the CEMA Board:

Key deliverables for RWG recommendations to be submitted to the CEMA Board are listed in Table 1.

The RWG will provide a progress report at each CEMA General Meeting.

This ToR will be reviewed and updated every 2 years. This will allow for a review and confirmation of the RWG purpose and objectives by CEMA Members.

Table 1: Key RWG deliverables and their timelines.

Deliverable	Deliverable completion timeline	Group/Subgroup responsible
Guideline for the Establishment of Wetlands on Reclaimed Oil Sands Leases	Updated every five years. Versions include: 1999 & 2007. Next revision expected Q4 2012.	Wetlands & Aquatics (WASG)
End Pit Lake Technical Guidance Document (for mining)	Updated every five years. Interim version: 2007. Next revision expected Q4 2012.	End Pit Lakes (EPLSG)
Landscape Design Guidance Document	Due in Q3 2008. It is expected that this will be a final version.	RWG
Guideline for Reclamation to Forest Vegetation in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region	Updated every five years. Versions include: 1998. Next revision expected Q4 2008.	Soils & Vegetation (SVSG) and Biodiversity & Wildlife (BWSG)
Land Capability Classification System for Forest Ecosystems in the Oil Sands	Updated every five years. Versions include: 1996, 1998, 2006. Next revision expected Q4 2010.	Soils & Vegetation (SVSG)
Reclamation Certification Guidance Document (for mining)	Due in Q4 2008. It is expected that this will be a final version.	Reclamation Certification (RCSG)

Membership:

Any member of CEMA is eligible to join RWG.

The RWG will seek to maintain broad stakeholder representation.

Details of membership responsibilities and chair rotation can be found in CEMA's [membership](#) and [chairing](#) policies and procedures.

An RWG member is expected to:

- be able to attend and participate on a regular, consistent basis;
- be fully informed and up to date about the subjects to be discussed at meetings;
- contribute to meetings; and
- accept and abide by CEMA's decision making policy and guideline.