



Facts on land reclamation in Alberta's oil sands areas

All companies that disturb land in Alberta *must* reclaim it. The minimum reclamation requirement for oil sands mines is equivalent land capability, or assurance the disturbed land supports a range of activities similar to its previous use.

Alberta Environment oversees land reclamation and:

- requires all companies that disturb land to submit a reclamation plan;
- reviews and approves all company plans;
- inserts specific reclamation requirements in the approval for the project;
- reviews each company's reclamation plans and progress annually; and
- works with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to issue reclamation certificates to companies that apply and meet all reclamation requirements.

Providing assurance for Albertans

Oil sands mines *must* provide financial "security" for reclamation. They are required to post security equivalent to the cost of reclamation. The financial security is reassessed and posted annually- it increases with additional land disturbance and decreases as reclamation work is completed.

In 2005, Alberta Environment held approximately \$356 million in security from oil sands companies. Security is reduced as reclamation proceeds and is fully returned to the company when the whole mine site has a reclamation certificate.

In addition, the Government of Alberta recently invested \$2 million towards reclamation research for oil sands projects.

Enhancing reclamation requirements

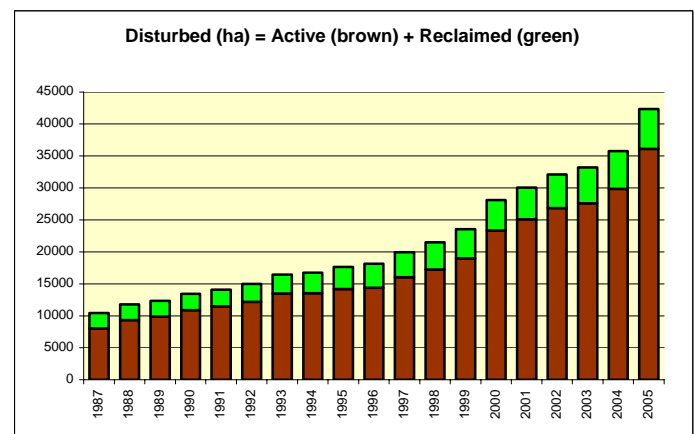
In the Fort McMurray area, the Cumulative Environmental Management Association is working to enhance reclamation practices.

The association has two reclamation-related working groups:

- the Reclamation Working Group provides recommendations to the Government of Alberta to ensure reclamation in the region meets regulatory requirements; and
- the Sustainable Ecosystems Working Group provides recommendations to address the impacts of development on the ecosystem and landscapes in the region.

Reclamation facts

- Reclamation begins when land is no longer used as part of a company's project.
- Reclamation can take several years to complete.
- There are 42,000 hectares of land disturbed as part of oil sands mine operations (not *in situ* sites).
- Several reclamation certificate applications are expected within the next 10 years.



More information

More information is available at www.environment.gov.ab.ca/land or from Alberta Environment's Northern Region at (780) 427-7617.