

Insider

ISSUE XII, SUMMER 2010

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The New CEMA

The new structure, bylaws and operational mode of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) was approved by its Members at the Annual General Meeting. The key change is the adoption of a sector-based Management Board. CEMA will now have four caucuses: Aboriginal, Industry, Government & Non-Governmental Organizations. Each of these caucuses will have four members, guaranteeing equality in the decision making process. The new balanced board will ensure the Aboriginal and Environmental Nonprofit Groups a fair and equal voting process.

The new CEMA will ensure that the concerns of Métis and First Nations People living in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo are heard and addressed. As CEMA is an "interest based process" not a "rights based process", the First Nation and Métis are involved in CEMA to share the interests of their communities. The improvements will be aided by the formation of an Aboriginal Coordination Committee. This committee will build on the work of the Aboriginal Round Table and the Traditional Environmental Knowledge Advisory Committee to facilitate Aboriginal involvement in all aspects of CEMA's operation.

Members approved a new mission statement: "CEMA is a multi-stakeholder society that is a key advisor to the provincial and federal governments committed to respectful,

inclusive dialogue to make recommendations to manage the cumulative environmental effects of regional development on air, land, water and biodiversity."

Other important improvements include:

- The establishment of a Technical Advisory Pool,
- Strengthening of the CEMA Secretariat,
- Direction to pursue diversified funding sources,
- An Information Forum for plain language,
- The expansion of geographic area addressing environmental issues, if needed.

CEMA formed the Joint Review Committee (JRC) in June 2009, composed of CEMA members and Federal and Provincial Government Regulators. It met several times in facilitated meetings to review background material, debate draft recommendations, and ultimately prepare a final report. The JRC used a process of presenting draft options to the Secretariat, CEMA Members and former Members for feedback to develop the final recommendations. The items for consideration were selected from key areas identified during CEMA's Revitalization Strategy and various independent reviews of CEMA. The association's new goals, structure, and direction will take effect immediately and will be implemented by the Secretariat.

Upcoming Events

- President Reception.

June 8th. 5:30 - 10:00pm at Sawridge, Fort McMurray.

- CEMA Board Meeting

September 22, Fort McMurray.

Thank You

CEMA Communications would like to thank the CEMA Secretariat, Management Committee and Co-Chairs for their help in the production of the new Insider.



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President's Message

Dear Members,

It's an exciting, challenging and fun time for the association as we begin a new chapter for CEMA. We have adopted of a new structure with equal and balanced representation from the four caucus (Industry, Aboriginal, Governments, and Non Government Organizations.) The overwhelming approval of new CEMA bylaws by the Members has started the ball rolling. The secretariat will be very busy as it implements all of the newly adopted recommendations.

We will shortly launch a freshly designed website site www.cemaonline.ca. The new site is easier to navigate and delivers one stop shopping for all CEMA reports and recommendations in a newly designed research library. CEMA's quarterly newsletter, The Insider, is redesigned and in addition to hard copies provided at general meetings and the online edition, we will provide a new electronic copy to all CEMA stakeholders. We have also increased our awareness for social media by joining Facebook and Twitter.

Last week was Canada's 40th Environment Week. CEMA once again was a community leader in Wood Buffalo, by hosting its CEMA Family Fun

Day & BBQ. CEMA teamed up with the Royal Alberta Museum displaying a collection of study skins, mounts of local rodents and mammals that can be found in the local ecosystem.

This provided an educational and fun event for the hundreds of children that attend the June 5th event at the Oilsands Discovery Centre.

Under the new bylaws CEMA will be governed by a Board of Directors. They will be officially in place in September, when the CEMA Management Committee will disband. The current MC's mandate was extended to September to deal with the ongoing operation and improvement of the association. On behalf of all CEMA Members I would like to offer a special vote of thanks to all Members of the MC for their time of service.

Ruth Kleinbub, Helene Walsh, Neil Barker, Simon Geoghegan and I have all been elected to serve once again on the new CEMA Board. Jumbo Fraser and Lisa Schaldmose are standing for election on the Aboriginal Caucus.

Stuart Nadeau, of Imperial Oil Resources, is stepping down as the CEMA representative. Stuart is a much loved member of the CEMA family. His dedication and belief in CEMA has been instrumental to its success. Best wishes to Stuart and his family in the years ahead!

Finally as we celebrate our 10th anniversary, its important to reflect over the past decade. So we have a special event. The first ever President's Reception on June 8th for all CEMA stakeholders. We will let our hair down and party with a live band.

Have a great summer.

Regards,

Rick

UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

NITROGEN WORKING GROUP

Nitrogen Eutrophication Task Group

The Nitrogen Eutrophication Task Group is looking at the issue of the potential for eutrophication/fertilization effects associated with regional nitrogen emissions, principally industrial NOx emissions. The task group recently completed a project on leaf area index (LAI), which is a measure of leaf surface area and an important ecological variable affecting acid and nitrogen deposition levels. Phase 1 of the LAI study was completed in 2008, and involved reviewing and evaluating the methods for determining and reporting LAI. The recommendation from that study was that the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) satellite based LAI data available without cost from NASA be used to obtain regional LAI values. Phase 2 of the LAI project was initiated to compare the MODIS LAI estimates with LAI measurements taken in the field. The study found that MODIS LAI measurement compared favourably with ground-based methods and was a good method of determining regional LAI values on almost a real time basis. The task group will be recommending that MODIS LAI estimates for the region, combined with a correction factor, be used in future acid and nitrogen deposition modeling work conducted in the region.

Another of the task group's projects is related to improving the estimates of regional dry acid and nitrogen deposition using direct measurement techniques. Currently dry deposition is estimated using models which have not been regionally verified. The direct dry deposition measurement technique being employed is called Conditional Time Average Gradient (COTAG) measurement. The technique was developed by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in the UK who are the main contractors for the study. The objective is to measure actual deposition velocities for certain substances over peatland vegetation. These deposition velocities will be used to verify or calibrate model derived deposition velocities. This study is a cost-shared project being lead by WBEA, and the results will help improve acid and nitrogen deposition determinations in the region.

A major recommendation from the CEMA 2008 Interim Nitrogen (Eutrophication) Management Recommendations and Work Plan was to develop regional critical loads for nitrogen. To do this the NSMWG has determined that it would be desirable to conduct nitrogen addition experiments to determine nitrogen critical loads for sensitive regional ecosystems e.g. bogs and Jackpine stands. The first stage in planning for such experiments occurred in 2009 with a request for proposals. A detailed study plan and budget was received from an excellent group of researchers but the Group was not prepared to commit to such a large project without additional information. In 2010 a contract was let with these researchers to select potential study sites and develop a more detailed research plan and budget for the project. Field work occurred in May and June, and two suitable sites for a nitrogen deposition study have been identified. Work on development of the research program will continue throughout the summer, and NSMWG will be meeting with the researchers in the fall to discuss the project and decide on the work to be conducted in 2011 and beyond.

Acid Task Group

The CEMA Acid Deposition Management Framework (ADMF) includes provision for a Stage 2 acid deposition modelling run to check the status of the region relative to the action level criteria in the ADMF. This work was started in 2008 and has included a review of CALMET/CALPUFF model input options and recommendations (done under a contract managed by Alberta Environment). In 2009 a contract was let by the NSMWG which included:

- conducting sensitivity model runs to determine the significance of model selection and input options,
- selection of model inputs/approaches to be used in the Stage 2 modeling, and
- actual model runs of regional acid deposition and impacts on regional soils and surface waters relative to ADMF criteria and allowable aerial exceedence levels.

The emission scenarios run were focused on actual NOx and SO2 emissions in 2006 and projected regional NOx and SO2 emissions under an exiting and approved (as of 2008) project scenario with a sensitivity also run by the contractor. The results of this modeling indicate that the impacts of the current, and likely near future (next 5 year), emissions are well below the allowable effect levels outlined in the ADMF. The group is close to accepting the final report on the project which then be put on the CEMA website.

Stage 3 (the final) and full implementation of the CEMA Acid Deposition Management Framework has been ongoing since 2009. Stage 3 involves application of a time-to-effect model for soil and surface water acidification that will be used to determine the status of region (green, yellow or red) in terms of the soils and surface water criteria in the framework. The 2009 work involved assembling data and identifying data gaps. So far in 2010 there has been a preliminary assessment of lakes in the region, with model simulations using both historical acid deposition values and a scenario with increased deposition. There will be an analysis of soil samples and preliminary model runs as well, to identify issues and finalize approaches for the Stage 3 assessment. A final report on this work will be available at the end of the year.

Ozone Task Group

The Ozone Task Group recently completed a project to fulfill one of the recommendations in the CEMA Ozone Management Framework. This recommendation is that ozone modeling be conducted periodically in the region. The first such modelling was done in 2005/6 by Environment Canada and a 2009 model run was undertaken using consultants. The project involved obtaining necessary 2006 emissions information, evaluating the model performance by comparing predicted PM2.5 and O3 concentrations to actual measured values at air monitoring stations throughout Alberta (includes RMWB) and comparing modelled ambient concentrations and deposition levels to national, provincial and/or regional environmental effects and/or health objectives/criteria. The report was accepted by WG members on June 3rd meeting and after minor revision it will available on the CEMA website.



UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TEKAC)

The Traditional Environmental Knowledge Advisory Committee is looking forward to the implementation of the MC approved Mentorship Program: Mentorship Roles & Responsibilities. The document outlines a mentorship program developed by the TEKAC out of a gap identified in regards to member's introduction and participation on CEMA committees. The purpose of the document is to help working groups offer new members mentoring support in order to facilitate communication and participant involvement in committee discussions. The information includes an outline for members on how to implement this program in their working groups.

The TEKAC has scoped work for the development of Plain Language Documents. These documents will be the initiation of a Plain Language 101 compilation. The compilation will include translation of CEMA technical reports into plain language intended for Aboriginal community members and the general public. Initiation of this project is anticipated for Q2, 2010.

The date for the TEKAC annual Elder's workshop has been set for August 11th. In response to some of the Aboriginal member requests, this year's workshop will be an outdoor on the land event at Maqua Lake, near Fort McMurray. The TEK will utilize CEMA documents as the focus this year for communicating and receiving feedback from community members.

Local 125 and Metis Region 1 are continuing work on the Community Orientation Project. This project will provide a historical overview of the specified region with the intended purpose of providing a regional orientation program. This will be accomplished in part by familiarizing individuals from the RMWB with the history and culture of local Aboriginal communities.

SURFACE WATER WORKING GROUP (SWWG)

The Phase 2 Framework Committee report, the Surface Water Working Group's recommendation for the Phase 2 Water Management Framework, was completed and submitted to both regulators and CEMA in February of this year. The report was voted on by the CEMA Board at the March General Meeting. The decision was non-consensus, but those members not in support of the report documented their viewpoints, and they were submitted to regulators for consideration.

The next steps on the Phase 2 Framework belong to the regulators, and they will seek stakeholder input on the Phase 2 Framework Committee report. The report and stakeholder feedback will be used to develop the draft Phase 2 Framework. Formal stakeholder consultation on the draft Phase 2 Framework will then commence, with a final Phase 2 Framework to be implemented in early 2011. Phase 2 consultation will be coordinated with the overall consultation on the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan during this time.

Monitoring Technical Task Group (MTTG)

The MTTG continues work on a terms of reference for a monitoring program to accompany the Phase 2 Framework. The monitoring program will evaluate the performance of the Phase 2 Framework and determine whether or not the impacts predicted through the Phase 2 process are actually occurring in the river. The results of the program will be used to inform management decisions and identify whether or not revisions to the Phase 2 Framework rules are required due to unforeseen impacts to the aquatic ecosystem or to the traditional and recreational uses of the river. The task group is discussing and exploring issues identified in the Phase 2 Framework Committee report, as well as any other concerns that were raised during the Phase 2 process. Some of the issues being discussed include impacts to navigation, riparian areas, hydrology of the Peace-Athabasca Delta, and response of the aquatic ecosystem to low flows.

The MTTG held a workshop in May during which they identified possible means of addressing some of the monitoring issues, and a second workshop is planned for June. The task group has formally invited the Métis and Aboriginal groups in the region to attend this meeting to discuss how TEK can be incorporated into the monitoring program terms of reference.

Following completion of the monitoring program terms of reference, SWWG will have fulfilled its current mandate. The future role of SWWG has yet to be decided, but it may involve tasks such as resolving some of the knowledge gaps that were identified by the Phase 2 Framework Committee.

CEMA

Environment Week 2010

On June 5th, CEMA held its Family Fun Day and BBQ for residents of Fort McMurray. The day long event at the Oilsands Discovery Centre, was held in partnership with the Royal Alberta Museum. The museum provided a sample of mammals, birds and rocks from the local ecosystem for local residents to see and touch. Over 1100 people came out to explore the display.



Above: Melanie, Heather, Katie, Lynette (top chef) & Ally man the grill.

Top: Glen & Chris share a laugh with guests.

Bottom: A family marvels at the stick bug.

A special thanks to all CEMA, Royal Alberta Museum, and Oilsands Discovery Centre staff who volunteered for Environment Week 2010.

CEMA NEWS

Welcome Melanie & Stephen

Melanie Dubois joined CEMA in May and will be taking over as the SWWG Program Administrator. She is originally from Northern British Columbia. Melanie is a graduate of the University of Victoria and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. She has over 2 years of field work experience with ground and surface water monitoring in Fort McMurray.

Stephen Fewer is a college student enrolled in the CIS (Computer Information Systems) cooperative course at Keyano College. He just finished his first year and is now doing a cooperative term at CEMA. Outside of work Stephen uses computers often and goal is to get his Masters.



Heather has very much enjoyed the opportunity to work with and get to know CEMA members in a multi-stakeholder setting. "The experience has been a very positive one and I'll carry this learning experience with me as I pursue new opportunities. Every good wish to the 'new' CEMA!"

Heather, Stephen & Melanie

Heather Bartlett Departs

Heather Bartlett will be moving on from CEMA to further her education. Since December 2008, Heather has been the PM for the TEKAC, initially SEWG and most recently RWG.

CEMA NEWS

Caucus Updates

Each of the four new Caucuses of CEMA have now had their initial meeting. The main propose of these meetings was the selection of four members from each group for the new CEMA Board. The first caucus to meet was the Aboriginal caucus where the tremendous amount of interest from the Métis and First Nations Communities to serve on the CEMA Board has resulted in the holding of an election at the June GM.

The Industry Caucus met and nominated four of its members for the new CEMA Board. Fred Kuzmic of Shell Canada, Simon Geoghegan of MEG Energy, Hanna Janzen of Imperial Oil Resources and Keith Winderler from Alpac, will join the Board.

The Government Caucus has nominated individuals for 3 of its 4 positions. They include Rick Brown of Alberta Environment, Neil Barker of Alberta Sustainable Resources Development and Brian Mackowecki of the Fisheries and Ocean Canada. The fourth position will be determined at a later date.

The Non Government Organizations caucus, has chosen Ruth Kleinbub of the Fort McMurray Field Naturalists, Helene Walsh of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Northern Alberta Chapter and Ray Makowecki of the Alberta Fish and Game Association. The fourth member of this caucus will be determined before the September Board meeting.



First Aboriginal Caucus John, Bill, Elmer, Glenda, Jumbo, Jimmy & Lawrence.

Buddy Dupuis

The RWG will miss the expertise of Buddy Dupuis, long time co-chair of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Task Group, as he moves on to new opportunities. The Shell Albian Sands member who sat as a multi-stakeholder representative for over 3 years will be taking a new position at Hatfield Consultants here in Fort McMurray. A big thank-you for all his time and energy and all the best in the future!



Top: Lanny Coullson
Bottom: Buddy Dupuis



Thanks Lanny

Lanny Coullson, one of the original CEMA Members representatives has moved on. Lanny is leaving the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to take a position with Service Canada. Best of luck Lanny!

NSMWG NEWS

Kim Eastlick of the ERCB is stepping down as NSMWG Co-Chair in June. He has been a members of the working group since its inception in 1999 and his leadership and commitment contributed significantly to the group's successes in developing management frameworks and plans related to regional SO₂ & NO_x emissions.

The new Co-Chair is Sunny Cho of Alberta Environment who has been a member of the NSMWG for 2 years.

UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

AQUATICS SUB-GROUP (ASG)

ASG: Wetlands Technology Transfer Task Group (TTTG)

As reported in the previous issue of the Insider, Phase 1 of Oil Sands Marsh Technology Transfer Culminated with a workshop at the end of January. Since then, the TTTG has been busy like bees to draft the key messages from Phase I, which focused on the first 2 of the 4 tech transfer questions:

1. What is the threshold concentration of naphthenic acids to allow for "natural" marsh function?
2. How to manage salinity within the context of wetland biological function?

Another milestone was achieved on May 10th & 11th, when a technology session occurred with the premier research hydrologists and landform design specialists in the field of oil sands mine reclamation (Dr. Kevin Devito & Dr. Carl Mendoza, University of Alberta; Dr. Lee Barbour, University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Gord McKenna, BGC Engineering Inc.). These specialists provided feedback on the toxicologist and ecologist Key Messages and generated key messages of their own, related to Question 3 of the 4 tech transfer sessions:

3. Do oil sands operators need to add capping materials to establish viable marshes?

This technical session went very well with over a dozen key messages produced for optimal marsh reclamation design. The next step in the project occurs this summer, when we meet again with ecologists and toxicologists to address Question 4 of 4:

4. What are the 10 parameters that should be measured to demonstrate "equivalent wetland capability" as a process to compare natural and reclaimed marshes?

A Workshop in the Fall will wrap up the work on Questions 3&4 and will aim to achieve consensus on key messages with all participants.



SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS WORKING GROUP (SEWG)

SEWG Tackles Access Management for the Region

One of the major components outlined in the TEMF was the fact that linear disturbance (from cutlines, roads, seismic development etc.) has had the most significant impact when it comes to managing the indicators in the region and maintaining a healthy balance for the environment. The key tool to manage linear disturbance is access management.

Government has indicated to CEMA and SEWG on several occasions that access management planning in the region will be occurring and that they would like CEMA/SEWG to be a part of that planning process as a key advisor. Since then, SEWG has attempted to put together a work plan that will develop recommendations for government on access management. Some of the challenges raised with respect to addressing this issue within the CEMA organization are:

- 1) We do not have all the relevant stakeholders at the table to be able to clearly identify all needs with respect to access management (linear disturbers, recreationalists, hunters/trappers, etc.).

- 2) Concern with respect to the actual political will and intent to address, implement and regulate access management at the regional level have been raised.
- 3) Uncertainty to what aspects of access management are open for CEMA/SEWG to address and provide recommendations on which will have the most utility and most likelihood of being implemented by government.

In spite of these challenges, SEWG has agreed that it is better to attempt to be a part of the process now rather than be informed of the outcome later. It is also clearly recognized that the strength in initiating this work at CEMA/SEWG is that we are already a well established multi-stakeholder group with an excellent awareness of the issue thanks to the development of the TEMF and although all the key stakeholders may not be at the table, we are a good starting point to begin to address this issue. Government has indicated this to us and wants to maintain a strong interface and working relationship during the process to ensure a successful outcome in the end.

UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

AQUATICS SUB-GROUP (ASG)

The objectives of the Program are to:	Milestones will include:
1. Develop a plan to monitor natural wetlands for natural variability including: reference sites of non-impacted wetlands in the region to serve as comparison to potentially impacted sites. Reference sites that are representative of the population of wetland types that may be impacted.	1. Work with contractor to develop a draft plan for a Regional Wetland Monitoring Program, addressing the goal and objectives highlighted above. This work will include a review of current and proposed wetland monitoring program plans in the region;
2. Develop a plan to determine and monitor the potential effects of mine development on wetland communities outside of the proposed affected areas as stated in the relevant mine-specific EIAs.	2. External expert review of draft plan for the Regional Wetland Monitoring Program;
3. Develop recommended corrective measures, where appropriate, to protect affected wetland communities through an adaptive management approach.	3. Work with contractor to incorporate reviewer comments;
The timeline will be for CEMA, through work conducted by the ASG, to deliver a recommended science-based Regional Wetland Monitoring Program Plan to the Director by March 2011. A potential implementation strategy and suggested timelines will be included in this Plan.	4. Identify implementation options and a recommended strategy with suggested timelines;
	5. RWG review and approval of the Program plan; and
	6. CEMA approval and delivery of Program plan to AENV.

ASG: End Pit Lake Guide Task Group (EPLGTG)

Following the review of the previous End Pit Lakes Technical Guidance Document undertaken by CH2MHill and the ASG Strategic Planning Workshop to establish the workplan based on the recommendations outlined in this review, the EPLGTG has now selected West Hawk Associates as the Managing Editor after a competitive bidding process. The role of the Managing Editor will be to coordinate the production of the document as described in the proposed roles and responsibilities and work with the EPGTG in its development. As well, the EPLGTG has undertaken the development and thorough review of its workplan going forward and has recommended proceeding with the development of Chapter 1 of the Guide. This will include a user needs assessment and lessons Learned in non-oil sands EPLs. Through this the EPLGTG will determine the needs of the target audience and make recommendations on guide style & structure. This project will also set the context for the rest of the Guide and include a literature review and synthesis of lessons learned (chemical, biological and physical constraints) from other EPLs and how they apply to oil sands EPLs.

ASG: End Pit Lake Modelling Task Group (EPLMTG)

As reported in the previous issue of the Insider, Golder Associates is continuing with its work on Oil Sand End Pit Lake Physical/Biogeochemical Model Development. There has been an amendment to this contract with the inclusion of a Fluid Fine Tailing (FFT) layer to the model.

Observations from the Syncrude tailings pond have revealed the presence of a Fluid Fine Tailings (FFT) layer between the water layer and the Mature Fine Tailings (MFT) layer. In a water-capped MFT end pit lake, the presence of an FFT layer could affect the movement of chemicals and particles between the MFT and water layers.

Accurate modelling of a pit lake that contains a water-FFT-MFT layering requires the inclusion of these layers in pit lake models, which has never been accomplished. The inclusion of an FFT layer in the model was not a part of the original scope of work as it was unclear if it would affect the stability of the model. Upon further review by the End Pit Lake Modelling Task Group and discussions with the consultant it became clear that it would not affect the stability of the model and Members of the Aquatics Sub-Group approved recommending its addition.

As well, the EPLMTG has initiated a grant with Dr. Christopher Weisener at the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research at the University of Windsor to shed a light on the chemical interactions between mature fine tailings and the cap of water overlying it. This is an important component in understanding how pit lakes that contain mature fine tailings will develop initially and over time.

UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

RECLAMATION WORKING GROUP (RWG)

The RWG had its first meeting of 2010 on February 23rd and 24th and held its strategic planning workshop on April 13th and 14th to review its long term workplan, its critical path for work to be completed in 2010, as well as work on its initial budget submission for the 2011 fiscal year. This important exercise, also occurring with the Terrestrial Sub-Group and the Aquatics Sub-Group, is resulting in the alignment of the workplan with current priorities and ensuring all stakeholders at the RWG table have a complete understanding of the scope of the RWGs work going forward. As well, the RWG is currently working on its comprehensive 2009 Annual Report which will be completed by the end of Q2 2010 prior to being sent to the CEMA Board. The next meeting of the RWG is scheduled for June 22nd and June 23rd in Edmonton.

RWG: Biodiversity and Wildlife Task Group (BWTG)

The BWTG will have completed its mandate with the anticipated completion of two reports: Biodiversity Review for the Guidelines for Reclamation to forest vegetation in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region by Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures (formerly the Alberta Research Council), and Renewing the Health of Our Forests; Biodiversity Traditional Knowledge of the Oil Sands Region by SENES Consultants. The finalization of these reports is anticipated in Q2 2010. With these documents approved, the group will no longer exist in its current form. The RWG has created a new Wildlife Task Group (WTG) that will focus on wildlife issues only and which will work on those wildlife line items specifically outlined in the 2010 budget. Biodiversity issues will be considered and addressed directly by the RWG going forward as it reviews the Alberta Innovates Report and the results of the biodiversity workshop held in fall 2009.

RWG: Reclamation Classification System Task Group (CSTG)

The TSG is responsible for maintaining and updating the Land Capability and Classification System for Forest Ecosystems in the Oil Sands manual (LCCS). To proceed with refining the LCCS, a planning committee under RWG is currently scoping a mandate and workplan for a Reclamation Classification System Task Group (CSTG). The CSTG is proposing to develop a reclamation classification system through a literature review and technology and information synthesis and transfer. Ultimately, the CSTG will deliver a Reclaimed Land Classification system complete with mapable criteria for defining a three dimensional polygon. Through the development of the reclamation classification system and the 3-D polygon tool, the CSTG will identify and define how to revise the LCCS.

RWG: Closure Coordination Task Group (CCTG)

The CCTG met on March 31st, 2010 to follow up on the workshop it hosted on November 19th, 2009 entitled Meeting the Expectation of a Continuous Functional Closure Landscape in the Oil Sands Region. It then met on May 10th, 2010 to finalize its recommended workplan for the remainder of 2010. The workplan in 2010 will include work on the development of a definition for 'integrated boundary' as it relates to closure coordination as well as closure systems mapping which will use an environmental management systems approach to describe how approvals, mine plans, and closure plans interact to achieve closure currently and what improvements can be made to the system in the future.

RWG: Riparian Guide Task Group (RGTG)

A Riparian Guide Task Group has been established by the RWG to administer the process for the review of the Riparian Classification and Reclamation Guide developed by Suncor Energy and Shell Albian Sands. This guide addresses a long standing gap and the RWG has contracted the Forestry Corp to undertake a technical review of the Guide using the same process used in assessing the 'Revegetation Manual.' The technical review is still ongoing and once complete the RGTG will recommend potential options for moving this document forward to the RWG.

UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

RECLAMATION WORKING GROUP (RWG)

RWG: Wildlife Task Group (WTG)

The new WTG met for the second time to carry forward the mandate of the wildlife task group. With two new co-chairs, the group looks forward to finalizing the Early Successional Wildlife Monitoring Program Design. The WTG's mandate is to provide opportunities for oil sands companies and stakeholders to discuss and address recommendations on reclamation techniques for re-establishing wildlife habitat capability and methods of assessments for documenting the re-establishment of wildlife habitat on reclaimed landscapes in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

WTG Photo: Left to right: Sarah McLean, Joanne Hogg, Lorne Gould, Jamie Sullivan, Gillian Donald. Missing from photo: Buddy Dupuis, Glenda McNeilly, John Hornung, Heather Bartlett, Rachel Nobel Pattison



TERRESTRIAL SUB GROUP (TSG)

TSG and its task groups have been busy in this second quarter and are anticipating an equally packed third quarter. To help facilitate the smooth running of the group, members will gather in July for a strategic planning meeting.

Among issues to be visited will be the plot network, gaps in the Revegetation Manual and members will be looking for linkages between recent products from the task groups, such as the Growth and Yield Strategic Plan, to mention a few.

TSG: Best Management Practices Task Group (BMPTG)

The BMPTG is in the 3rd draft stage of finalizing a document describing Best Management Practices (BMPs) Guideline for Soil Salvage and Placement for Oil Sands Mines in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The BMPTG, TSG and RWG completed a review of the 2nd draft in April 2010 and BMPTG is incorporating the reviewer comments into the 3rd draft. The CEMA board members will receive a presentation for information at the June GM. This document will assist members in the development of the annual Soil Salvage and Placement Plans, the Mine Reclamation Plan and the Life of Mine Closure Plan. A finalized recommendation to government is expected in Q3 2010.

TSG: Forest Productivity Task Group (FPTG)

The FPTG is close to achieving one of their objectives of developing a Growth and Yield Strategic Plan for reclaimed lands. A draft version of Strategic Recommendations for a Growth and Yield Program in the Mineable Oil Sands Area has been developed and reviewed in April by the group members. The document contains 22 recommendations on a growth and yield strategic plan and has an anticipated completion date of June. The plan will assist in the development of member's Forest Resource Plan (FRP) in 2011.

UPDATES ON WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS

TERRESTRIAL SUB GROUP (TSG)

TSG: Plot Network Task Group (PNTG)

The PNTG will be finalizing the review of the objectives of the long term monitoring plot network and evaluating the methods and protocols utilized on the network based on input from the recommendations coming out of the Growth and Yield Strategic Plan and Alternative Regeneration Standards data collection field protocols. These discussions will feed into strengthening the long-term soil and vegetation monitoring protocols. The results of the 2009 field work were presented and reviewed at the TSG March meeting and will be provided to RWG for approval. Scoping for the 2010 field season has begun and the field work is anticipated to start in August. The PNTG also began work in March on developing a web-based data management system for the long term monitoring plot data.

TSG: Alternative Regeneration Task Group (ARTG)

The ARTG has met since December 2009 on an aggressive schedule to develop two documents: Alberta Regeneration Standards for the Mineable Oil Sands: First Approximation - Pilot Project Data Collection Field Protocols, and Alberta Regeneration Standards For The Mineable Oil Sands: First Approximation - Pilot Project Data Collection Rationale And Soft Spot Documentation. The documents are in support of forest regeneration standards to be used by oil sands mining operations. This first approximation data collection field protocols will be tested in the fall of 2010 in a pilot project. The results of the pilot project will be used in the development and support of an Alternative Regeneration Standards submission to government in 2011.

AQUATICS SUB-GROUP (ASG)

The ASG has had a very busy first and second quarter in 2010 as it develops its plans for the revision of the Guideline for the Establishment of Wetlands on Reclaimed Oil Sands Leases (Wetlands Manual) and the 'End Pit Lake Technical Guidance Document (for oil sands mining)'. During this process the ASG also established a critical path for work going forward in 2010, reviewed and substantially amended its long term plan including its 2011 planned budget, and worked towards aligning all work with its major priorities of completing the Wetlands Manual and the EPL Technical Guidance Document.

In its major project implemented to date, the ASG selected Opabin Environmental Ltd. as the winning bid for the RFP issued for a process assessment of wetland criteria and indicator frameworks. This work is seen as an extension of the C&I Framework, and will provide the background information necessary to inform the development of specific criteria and indicators for wetland reclamation of the oil sands.

The ASG has also forwarded correspondence to the Management Committee via the RWG outlining its plan to begin work on the development of a regional wetland monitoring program further to its approved budgeted line items. A number of current Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA) approvals require oil sands mining companies to submit a wetland-monitoring program that includes:

- A plan to monitor natural wetlands for natural variability;
- A plan to determine and monitor the potential effect of dewatering and mine development on wetland communities; and
- Corrective measures, where appropriate, to protect affected wetland communities.

Pursuant to these clauses, a number of companies have submitted wetland monitoring program plans. In response, AENV has recommended that those companies "work with AENV and the CEMA Aquatics Subgroup to develop consistent study designs and sampling protocols so that results can be compared regionally". The ASG intends to develop a plan for a Regional Wetland Monitoring Program that considers the above requirements. The Program will ensure that wetland monitoring in the oil sands region share a minimum set of common objectives, study design, indicators, and sampling and reporting protocols so that results can be compared regionally. It is expected that the Program will support the development of criteria and indicators for reclamation certification and could eventually incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge enhancements.