



Press Release

Dec. 2, 2014

CEMA releases third Wetlands Guide for Reclaimed Oil Sands Leases

Fort McMurray, Alberta – The Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) is pleased to announce it has released the report [Guidelines for Wetland Establishment on Reclaimed Oil Sands Leases, 3rd Edition](#) (*the Wetlands Guide*).

Since 2012, CEMA’s Reclamation Working Group (RWG) has undertaken nearly \$1 million in this tremendous endeavour that involved a multi-disciplinary team of more than 20 experts from Canada and the United States. After extensive manuscript reviews, the Wetland Guide was approved by the RWG in July 2014 and subsequently approved by CEMA’s Board of Directors in September 2014.

“This guide is a definitive resource for planners, landform design teams, regulators, stakeholders and Aboriginal peoples with respect to the creation of wetlands through reclamation activities in the oil sands region,” says Stephen Tuttle, RWG co-chair. “Following mining, wetlands development forms a very important part of each oil sands mine operation’s reclamation and closure plans.”

The Wetland Guide has been provided to the Government of Alberta for review and consideration. CEMA is recommending that the Government of Alberta encourage all oil sands mine operators to refer to the guide when developing closure and reclamation plans as well as wetland research and monitoring plans and programs.

The Wetland Guide and its appendices are now available on the CEMA website, cemaonline.ca.

The guide describes significant advancements in the science of wetland reclamation including a watershed-scale approach to wetland design to ensure reclaimed wetlands are hydrologically sustainable; significant knowledge on the suitability of various substrates and water quality including information on the impacts of oil sands process-affected waters on reclaimed wetlands; significant advances on how to establish various wetland vegetation communities; and how to monitor and assess wetland reclamation performance. It also includes wetland research needs.

Data for the Wetland Guide was taken from current wetland reclamation knowledge on reclaimed oil sands leases, including lessons learned from fen and marsh reclamation projects currently underway as well as other marsh reclamation projects that have occurred over the past 30 years. Similar

information from wetland reclamation and restoration projects in other jurisdictions and landscapes was also used.

CEMA is a multi-stakeholder society that is a key advisor to Government and is committed to respectful, inclusive dialogue in the development of recommendations to manage the cumulative environmental effects of regional development on air, land, water and biodiversity.

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