

DEVELOPING THE GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING CONSERVATION AND RECLAMATION REPORTS FOR IN SITU OIL SANDS OPERATIONS

Matrix was contracted by Alberta Environment Northern Region (AENV) to develop guidelines for the completion and submission of annual Conservation and Reclamation (C&R) Reports, which are required for oil sands projects holding approvals under the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA). Previously, direction for producing annual C&R reports was presented in the 1991 Alberta Land Conservation and Reclamation Council document Guide to the Preparation of Applications and Reports for Coal and Oil Sands Operations.



The Challenge

The content and format of annual C&R reports have varied greatly since the 1991 Guide was released, reducing the consistency of soils, vegetation and reclamation accounting information. The challenge for Matrix was to develop a standardized reporting format that would effectively capture the many activities that occur during the construction, operation and reclamation stages of an in situ project, while also providing AENV with the necessary data to audit compliance with C&R related conditions of the EPEA approval.

The Matrix Solution

Matrix assembled a team of professionals that have experience in the development of environmental impact assessments, pre-disturbance assessments (PDA/C&R Plans), annual C&R reports, and construction and reclamation supervision to the completion of this project. We recognized the importance of establishing clear guidelines for industry practitioners and consulting firms to ensure the annual C&R report content requirements would be easily and consistently met. Matrix also considered the potential future use of annual C&R report data as part of a broader cumulative environmental management system.

Following a review of previous submissions, Matrix:

- conducted a workshop with AENV personnel responsible for reviewing annual C&R reports, to develop a clear understanding of how AENV uses the report data to administer the EPEA;
- evaluated soils data collection methods from the initial pre-disturbance assessment through to final placement; and
- Based on the outcome of the above steps, Matrix identified the minimum information requirements and format needed to standardized submissions.



The Result

Matrix prepared an annual C&R report template, along with a description of each component of the template and a glossary of terms, to be used by all in situ operators. A checklist was developed to guide development of each report and to ensure that all the necessary information is included and presented in the appropriate format. The manual was designed to not only help streamline Alberta Environment's review process, but also to help industry complete annual C&R reports more quickly and cost effectively.

Matrix provides conservation and reclamation services to clients throughout the lifecycle of the project including:

- In situ oil sands integrated applications;
- Detailed C&R Plan;
- PDA/C&R Plans;
- Construction supervision;
- Annual C&R reports;
- Reclamation supervision.