



RECLAMATION AND REMEDIATION

Introduction

Reclamation is the process of restoring the surface environment to acceptable pre-existing conditions. Wellsites and facilities must be restored according to regulatory requirements as described under the Certificate of Restoration. Reclamation on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land means returning the land to an equivalent agricultural capability to what existed prior to the oil and gas development.

Certificate of Restoration

All wellsites and processing facilities that are no longer used for oil and gas production must be reclaimed to receive a Certificate of Restoration (CoR) from the Oil and Gas Commission (OGC). The OGC will not process an application for a CoR until the operator has proven to the Commission that there is no risk to the public or the environment with respect to residue from any industrial activities or accidents (spills, etc.) that may have occurred at the site.

The OGC requires that each site is subject to a Preliminary Site Investigation and which includes an established process bound by legislation. In addition to addressing potential contamination issues, the operator must ensure that the land has been returned to an equivalent land use capability. Where disturbances are on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), operators must ensure that surface reclamation meets the certain additional requirements.

Qualified Reclamation Specialists

Operators are required to hire qualified reclamation specialists to verify that the surface reclamation meets all provincial requirements. The OGC issues a Certificate of Restoration only after an operator has met all obligations for the site and this has been verified by a qualified reclamation specialist.

What is the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)?

The ALR is a provincial zone where agriculture is recognized as the priority use and where non-farm uses are regulated and farming is encouraged; agricultural lands are designated under the Agricultural Land Commission Act.

Activities on the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

There are regulations for acceptable conditions on agricultural lands that include the soil, surface water, groundwater or sediment at the site. These resources can not contain any substance with a concentration greater than the corresponding local background concentration of that substance in the soil, surface water, groundwater, or sediment.



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The OGC has been given the responsibility for wellsite and pipeline applications and their decommissioning on ALR land. However, certain activities still require ALC approvals. In situations where oil and gas developments exceed the parameters or thresholds set out in the delegation agreement, applications are submitted via the local government. More information can be obtained on the ALC website (see below).

The ALC and OGC work together to ensure that the soil, topography, and vegetation of surface leases and pipelines are restored to an equivalent condition and capability after wells have been decommissioned and pipelines have been installed. Requirements related to site contamination and the disposal of wastes are directly managed by the OGC.

The boundaries of the Agricultural Land Reserve are based on the agricultural capability of the soil, not on the current use or ownership of the land. The Reserve includes Crown land and there is no differentiation in treatment of Crown land from private land in the ALR. If there is an agricultural lease on the Crown land, landowner consent is required.

Information

Oil and Gas Commission – Guidance Document for Oil and Gas Applications within the Agricultural Land Reserve

<https://www.ogc.gov.bc.ca/documents/forms/wells/OGC%20ALR%20Application%20Guide.doc>

Agricultural Land Commission - <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/>

Appendix 1 http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Delegation/ALC-OGC/Appendix1_Mar2007.pdf

Schedule A http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Delegation/ALC-OGC/ScheduleA_Mar2007.pdf

Schedule B http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Delegation/ALC-OGC/ScheduleB_Mar2007.pdf

Delegation Agreement http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Delegation/ALC-OGC/Delegation_Mar2007.pdf