

Genesee Coal Mine Reclamation

Context

The Genesee mine, operated by Capital Power and Sherritt Coal, is located about 80 km west of Edmonton. It provides 5.5 million tonnes of coal per year for the Genesee Generating Station, which produces electricity for about 500 000 people. Once the coal in a particular mining area has been depleted, reclamation plans are set into action. The Genesee mine's comprehensive land reclamation plan includes the re-establishment of wetlands and natural creek bodies, and the development of wildlife corridors. The primary objective is to reclaim areas and give them multiple end-use capabilities similar to those that existed prior to mining, including self-sustaining and naturally maturing wildlife habitats through reforestation and re-establishing wetlands.

Pre-exploration	Exploration	Development	Operation	Closure	Post-closure
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Lead: Industry (Alta.)

Step of the Mineral Development Sequence: Closure

Key Finding: The Community Advisory Task Group (CATG) is a good practice in community engagement as it helps the mine partners better understand the interests and priorities of neighbours in the Genesee area. Since membership in a CATG is diverse, the process enables more community members to participate in the consultation experience.

Description of Measures Implemented

Capital Power and Sherritt Coal have been working in partnership with the University of Alberta and other industrial partners to conduct aspen seedling research on reclaimed mine land. By planting different types of aspen seedlings in various stages of growth and planting conditions, the companies can use the results of the research to facilitate reforestation efforts in the mine. Another emphasis of reclamation efforts has been on the creation of agricultural lands for cattle grazing, hay, and cultivated crops. The partners have also taken on the challenge of re-creating a diverse boreal forest by using new reforestation practices to create natural treed areas within the agricultural landscape.

Capital Power's relationship with its neighbours is an important focus of its Genesee operations. To encourage rapport, the company expanded its outreach efforts to include a Community Advisory Task Group (CATG). The purpose of a CATG is to bring together small groups of people, representing a variety of viewpoints within a community, typically to work on a specific task. CATG members are selected by Kairos Creative Solutions, an independent company now working with Capital Power. The process is designed to select applicants according to community, distance from the Genesee Station, age categories, gender, background, and interests. In general, CATG participants are asked to provide advice and suggestions on a variety of topics related to the task.



Reclaimed agricultural land at the Genesee mine, Alberta

The Genesee CATG was established to provide Capital Power with advice on future operations at Genesee and to provide input on the following topics, which were identified as important during outreach and dialogue activities:

- Improving Capital Power Genesee Operations' and Sherritt Coal's dialogue; and
- Outreach, community involvement, and responsiveness on a range of operational and community initiatives.

Since 2012, an update from each of the three yearly CATG meetings is provided in the Genesee Connection Newsletter, which is publicly available on the company Web site.

Results

Environmental work at the Genesee mine has returned 600 hectares to productive farm land and wildlife habitat, earning the mine partners the 2009 Alberta Chamber of Resources' (ACR) Major Reclamation Award, which recognizes the mine's reclamation goals and achievements, past and current reclamation research initiatives, and ongoing communication and involvement with the community.

The mine partners have also been leasing reclaimed land and company-owned land not yet used for operations to local farmers, allowing them to bring their cattle to a well-managed grassland operated by professional range managers.

Lessons Learned

The CATG is a good practice in community engagement as it helps the mine partners better understand the interests and priorities of neighbours in the Genesee area. Since membership in a CATG is diverse, the process enables more community members to participate in the consultation experience.

For more information:

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