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Alberta issues first-ever oil sands land reclamation certificate

Former oil sands site transformed into forested area

Edmonton... Alberta has designated a rolling forested area with hiking trails and lookout points as the first piece of oil sands land to be reclaimed.

The Alberta government issued a reclamation certificate to Syncrude Canada Ltd. for the 104-hectare parcel of land known as Gateway Hill approximately 35 kilometres north of Fort McMurray.

“To confirm the success of reclamation takes time,” said Environment Minister Rob Renner. “Both operators and government want to ensure that the reclamation is successful before a certificate is granted.”

Under Alberta’s reclamation standards, companies *must* remediate and reclaim Alberta’s land so it can be productive again. Alberta requires reclaimed land to be able to support a range of activities similar to its previous use.

“This is an important first step in restoring land to its more natural state,” said Sustainable Resource Development Minister Ted Morton. “We are continually learning more about the science of land reclamation, and we will apply that learning to ensure we have continuous improvement.”

The site was used for placement of overburden material removed during oil sands mining. By the early 1980s, the area was no longer needed and Syncrude began to replace topsoil and plant trees and shrubs.

Typically oil sands mining requires the use of land for several decades. The reclamation process occurs throughout the life of the project, and the final reclamation certification occurs when the land is no longer in use and has been fully reclaimed.

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Please visit <http://www.syncrude.ca/users/folder.asp?FolderID=5703> for photos of Gateway Hill.

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