



Institute promotes advances in reclamation

The Boreal Reclamation Program is a notable example of how the novaNAIT Boreal Research Institute actively promotes understanding of forest land reclamation.

One initiative is a Wetland Symposium happening March 25 – 27 in Edmonton. The symposium will review reclamation and restoration of boreal peatland and forest ecosystems, with a focus on a sustainable future.

Governments, industry and NGOs are starting to bring forest and peatland reclamation into sharp focus. This is happening just as techniques for reclaiming these areas from the impacts of agriculture, urbanization and oil & gas are progressing rapidly, says Leonie Nadeau, one of the conference organizers and research scientist with the novaNAIT Boreal Reclamation Program.

How this research and management

is affected by climatic change will be an important 21st century concern.

“My understanding is that water levels in wetlands in northern Alberta will be changing over the next decades, and that the southern boundary of permafrost will continue to move north,” says Nadeau.

Emerging new techniques need to be incorporated into peatland and boreal forest regulation and management, she says. “Over the last 10 years, significant advances in reclamation approaches have been obtained through intensive research.”

The conference is cosponsored by the University of Alberta, NAIT, Natural Resources Canada, Université Laval, Oil Sands Research Information Network, Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association, Society of Wetland Scientists and the Peatland Ecosystem Analysis and Training Network (PeatNet).

Organizers expect a strong showing from energy and forest companies, peat harvesting firms, and government agencies responsible for managing boreal ecosystems. It is also a good forum for linking researchers to companies and government agencies in the boreal reclamation sector.

For more information on the Wetland Symposium, go to http://www.peatnet.siu.edu/form_edmonton.

The Boreal Research Institute also had a booth and was a gold sponsor at the Canadian Land Reclamation Association’s AGM and conference, held February 24 in Red Deer. The conference focused on perceptions and the validity of those perceptions in the reclamation sector, considering the reality that reclamation is a relatively young industry in Alberta.

The event examined questions such as technical measurement standards, whether they are meeting land use objectives, and how the Alberta Land Use Framework is changing reclamation tools in order to tackle ground operations.

At the conference, Brian McDonald, research coordinator with the Boreal Reclamation Program, made a presentation on opportunities to meet public and government expectations in boreal reclamation, utilizing the knowledge, practices and successes of the forestry industry.

Leonie Nadeau also presented information at the annual two-day conference organized by the environmental and reclamation research group of the Canadian Oilsands Network for Research and Development (CONRAD). The symposium showcased environmental and reclamation research in the oil sands region, giving attendees a chance to get research updates, network, and share ideas.



Dr. Leonie Nadeau assists Dave Larsen with a soil sample in a wetland fen at Carmon Creek, northeast of Peace River, September 2009

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<http://www.nait.ca/47683.htm>