

**Progress Report: Government of Canada Response to the Jackpine Mine Expansion Project Panel Recommendations**

At the time the Minister of Environment issued the decision statement for the Jackpine Mine Expansion Project under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency posted the document “Jackpine Mine Expansion Project: Government of Canada Response to Panel Recommendations” on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry. The Introduction to that document, includes the following statement:

With a view to strengthening environmental protection in the oil sands region and promoting positive and long-term relationships with Aboriginal groups, the Government of Canada commits to undertake, continue or support a number of initiatives that will deepen our understanding of environmental effects in the oil sands region and the effects of those changes on Aboriginal traditional land use as well as Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Many of these current and future initiatives are collaborative in nature and involve partnerships with the Government of Alberta, Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders.

The following table sets out the progress to June 2016 with respect to those commitments.

Canada’s commitment	Lead Federal Department	Progress to date (June 2016)
<p><b>Monitor the regional hydro-climatology and ecology of the Peace Athabasca Delta and the effects changes in climate might have on its productivity and biodiversity, in collaboration with local Aboriginal groups, and governmental or non-governmental organizations</b></p>	<p>Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) (with support from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO))</p>	<p>ECCC monitoring contributes data to the status and trends of water quality, water quantity, aquatic ecosystem health (fish and invertebrates), and contaminants in wildlife in the oil sands region downstream to the Peace Athabasca Delta (PAD). ECCC has conducted research to learn more about the hydro-climatology and ecology of the PAD and the effects that changes in climate might have on its productivity and biodiversity. This research was conducted as part of the Peace Athabasca Delta Environmental Monitoring Program (PADEMP), an integrated program that monitors the state of the ecosystem, which is led by the Parks Canada Agency. Data related to the above studies can be accessed on the Canada-Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Monitoring Information Portal <a href="http://www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca">www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca</a>, the AEMERA website <a href="http://www.aemera.org">www.aemera.org</a>, and the PADEMP website <a href="http://www.pademp.com">www.pademp.com</a>.</p> <p>DFO also participates along with Federal/Provincial/Territorial Governments and Aboriginal Stakeholders in PADEMP. DFO, as a member of the Steering Committee provides both financial and in-kind technical support.</p>

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<p><b>Finalize recovery documents (Recovery Strategies, Management Plans, Action Plans) on a priority basis for species at risk known to occur in the oil sands region as required under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i>, including but not necessarily limited to Wood Bison, Canada Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Common Nighthawk and Rusty Blackbird</b></p>	<p>ECCC</p>	<p>A recovery strategy is a planning document that identifies what needs to be done to arrest or reverse the decline of a species. It sets goals and objectives and identifies activities to be undertaken. A management plan differs from a recovery strategy and action plan, as it sets goals and objectives for maintaining sustainable population levels of one or more species that are particularly sensitive to environmental factors, but which are not in danger of becoming extinct. Information on Recovery Strategies and Management Plans can be accessed on the Species at Risk (SARA) Public Registry at <a href="http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca">www.sararegistry.gc.ca</a>.</p> <p>The following Recovery Strategies and Management Plans for species at risk known to occur in the oil sands region have been completed or are under development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Recovery Strategy for Olive-sided Flycatcher (<i>Contopus cooperi</i>) in Canada [Final Version] was posted on the SARA Public Registry on March 8, 2016. –</li> <li>• The Recovery Strategy for Canada Warbler (<i>Cardellina canadensis</i>) in Canada [Final Version] was posted on the SARA Public Registry on March 8, 2016. –</li> <li>• The Recovery Strategy for Common Nighthawk (<i>Chordeiles minor</i>) in Canada [Final Version] was posted on the SARA Public Registry on March 8, 2016. –</li> <li>• The Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison (<i>Bison bison athabasca</i>) in Canada [Proposed] was posted on the SARA Public Registry on May 6, 2016.</li> <li>• The Management Plan for the Rusty Blackbird (<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>) in Canada [Final version] was posted on the SARA Public Registry on July 31, 2015.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maintain or achieve self-sustaining local populations in all boreal caribou ranges throughout Canada</b></p>	<p>ECCC</p>	<p>ECCC published the final Caribou Recovery Strategy in 2012 <a href="http://sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2253">http://sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2253</a>.</p> <p>The goal of this recovery strategy is to achieve self-sustaining local populations in all boreal caribou ranges throughout Canada.</p>

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<p><b>Deliver effective monitoring mechanisms of downstream fish habitat</b></p>	<p>DFO</p>	<p>DFO did provide technical support to the fish component of the Environment Canada (now ECCC) led Joint Federal-Provincial Oil Sands Monitoring Program (JOSMP) which was taken over by the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluating, and Reporting Agency (AEMERA). As AEMERA is now being taken into the Province of Alberta's Jurisdiction, DFO will maintain participation as appropriate.</p> <p>ECCC continues to collect data relevant to fish habitat on the status and trends of water quality and water quantity in the oil sands region. Data and information on monitoring activities can be accessed on the Canada-Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Monitoring Information Portal <a href="http://www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca">www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca</a> and the AEMERA website <a href="http://www.aemera.org">www.aemera.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>Conduct research and monitoring on the long-term effect on migratory bird reproductive success as a result of exposure to tailings ponds</b></p>	<p>ECCC</p>	<p>ECCC continues to conduct research on the potential sub-lethal effects to migratory birds from exposure to tailings pond contaminants. In 2014, ECCC conducted the study Dead and Moribund Bird Contaminants and Toxicology which is described in the Joint Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring: Results Report 2013-2014. ECCC scientists are conducting toxicological assessments on birds retrieved from tailings ponds. ECCC has continuously monitored contaminant burdens in gull and tern eggs in northern Alberta since 2009.</p> <p>Data and information on monitoring activities can be accessed on the Canada-Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Monitoring Information Portal <a href="http://www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca">www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca</a> and the AEMERA website <a href="http://www.aemera.org">www.aemera.org</a>.</p>

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<p><b>Fully engage in the Joint Canada/Alberta Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring</b></p>	<p>ECCC and DFO</p>	<p>Oil sands monitoring in Alberta is primarily accomplished through the work of the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency (AEMERA) (formerly the 2012-2015 Joint Canada-Alberta Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring (Implementation Plan)). In April 2016, The Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) announced steps to strengthen environmental monitoring by moving the work of AEMERA under a new Monitoring and Science Division within the Ministry. ECCC will continue to collaborate with Alberta on environmental monitoring.</p> <p>The Implementation Plan for Oil Sands Monitoring resulted in major enhancements to the monitoring of air, water, land and wildlife in the oil sands region. Information related to the Implementation Plan, including maps of the monitoring region, details of the monitoring sites, the most up-to-date data collected by scientists in the field, and scientific analysis and interpretation of the data and results can be accessed on the Canada-Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Monitoring Information Portal <a href="http://www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca">www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca</a> and on the AEMERA website <a href="http://www.aemera.org">www.aemera.org</a>.</p> <p>DFO did provide technical support to the fish component of the Joint Oil Sands Monitoring Program (JOSMP) which was taken over by AEMERA. As AEMERA is now being taken into the Province of Alberta's Jurisdiction, DFO will maintain participation as appropriate.</p>

**Canada will work cooperatively with Alberta:**

Commitment	Lead Federal Department	Progress to date (June 2016)
<p><b>On a community baseline health study in collaboration with Aboriginal groups</b></p>	<p>Health Canada (HC)</p>	<p>A full baseline health study for the affected communities has yet to be completed. Health Canada has been working with the Province of Alberta and First Nations communities to support a comprehensive baseline study for communities near the oil sands since 2007. Effective partnerships take time to develop and achieving consensus on the direction for a community baseline health study requires extensive engagement with participating First Nations communities so that the study can provide an effective base for addressing the short- and long-term health needs identified by all participants.</p> <p>Health Canada remains committed to working with Alberta Health and the affected communities to advance the project and continues to support other health studies in the area that are led by academia and community groups.</p>
<p><b>On the Water Quality Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River under its Lower Athabasca Regional Plan</b></p>	<p>ECCC</p>	<p>ECCC provided information that was integrated into the Government of Canada’s input into the Alberta Draft Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) in June, 2011, including scientific advice on the Surface Water Quality Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River. ECCC’s comments outlined some scientific concerns with the management frameworks. These concerns can be found in the Government of Canada Response to Alberta’s Draft Lower Athabasca Regional Plan. The final version of LARP was announced on August 22, 2012. ECCC oil sands monitoring informs LARP and the Surface Water Quality Framework for the Lower Athabasca River.</p>
<p><b>On water withdrawals from the Athabasca River</b></p>	<p>DFO</p>	<p>DFO, as a condition of any future authorization issued for this Project, will require the proponent to adhere to the <i>Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River</i>, February 2015.</p>

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<p><b>On the Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River under its Lower Athabasca Regional Plan</b></p>	<p>DFO and ECCC</p>	<p>DFO provided technical support to the development of the <i>Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River</i>, released in February 2015. DFO supports the implementation of the Framework, and will require adherence to the Framework in any future <i>Fisheries Act</i> authorization issued for the Project.</p> <p>ECCC provided information that was integrated into the Government of Canada’s input into the Draft Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) in June 2011, including scientific advice on the Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River. ECCC’s comments outlined some scientific concerns with the management frameworks. These concerns can be found in the Government of Canada Response to Alberta’s Draft Lower Athabasca Regional Plan.</p>
<p><b>To monitor the impact of oil sands development on the regional environment through monitoring of: substances of concern in air and water; fish and bird health; and biodiversity, including some species at risk and migratory birds</b></p>	<p>ECCC and DFO</p>	<p>ECCC will continue to collaborate with Alberta on environmental monitoring in the region. The Implementation Plan has led to increased monitoring that has improved the ability to detect cumulative environmental impacts of oil sands development through wider geographic coverage and for more compounds with increased sensitivity. Monitoring data, maps, and information are available at <a href="http://www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca">www.jointoilsandsmonitoring.ca</a> and <a href="http://www.aemera.org">www.aemera.org</a>.</p> <p>DFO provided technical support to the fish component of the Environment Canada (now ECCC) led Joint Federal-Provincial Oil Sands Monitoring Program (JOSMP) which was taken over by the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluating, and Reporting Agency (AEMERA). As AEMERA is now being taken into the Province of Alberta's jurisdiction, DFO will maintain participation as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>To contribute input as requested on conservation offsets in the context of Alberta's land use planning policies</b></p>	<p>ECCC</p>	<p>Alberta’s policy on conservation offsets (also known as Conservation Allowances) is under development. ECCC will provide input into this policy as requested.</p>

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<p><b>To contribute technical advice for the development by Alberta of a caribou range plan for the Richardson herd and other herds in the province</b></p>	<p>ECCCC</p>	<p>ECCC published the final Caribou Recovery Strategy in 2012 <a href="http://sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2253">http://sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2253</a>.</p> <p>The goal of this recovery strategy is to achieve self-sustaining local populations in all boreal caribou ranges throughout Canada. Day-to-day management of boreal caribou herds in Alberta falls within the jurisdiction of the Government of Alberta. Alberta is in the process of developing range plans for its herds. ECCC provides technical advice to the Government of Alberta as requested.</p>
<p><b>To contribute technical or policy knowledge or expertise to improve reclamation and re-colonization of wildlife habitat in the oil sands region</b></p>	<p>ECCC</p>	<p>ECCC continues to provide technical expertise on migratory birds and species at risk to improve reclamation and recolonization of wildlife habitat in the oil sands region through a number of activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing technical and policy advice as requested by the Province on wildlife management activities (e.g. day-to-day management of boreal caribou herds, policy development on conservation allowances).</li> <li>- participating in oil sands monitoring activities.</li> <li>- conducting research on the environmental impacts of oil sands projects on migratory birds and wildlife.</li> <li>- providing expert information and knowledge to ongoing environmental assessment processes in the region.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>On the incorporation of Aboriginal traditional land use in regional planning and management activities in the Lower Athabasca region</b></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>On regional planning, stewardship of traditional resources and natural resource management in collaboration with Aboriginal groups</b></p>		<p>In response to applications for review of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) received from six First Nations, in June 2014 the Government of Alberta Minister responsible for the LARP appointed a review panel to examine the issues raised in each of the applications. The review panel report was made public in February 2016 and sets out a wide range of conclusions and recommendations with respect to whether each Applicant is “directly and adversely affected” by either a specific provision , or provisions, in the LARP. In addition to its recommendations on each application, the review panel also made a number of broader suggestions on the implementation of LARP. One of those suggestions was that a Traditional Land Use Management Framework be developed and included as an important component of the LARP. Our understanding is that the Government of Alberta is considering the panel report and has committed to work with the six First Nations, under the recently signed Protocol between Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta and the Province of Alberta to Discuss Issues of Mutual Concern, to address their concerns and update the LARP. Canada will seek to respond to any requests by the Government of Alberta for information in support of any work to be undertaken in this regard.</p> <p>The Ministry of Alberta Environment and Parks has proposed the development of a multi-stakeholder forum to implement the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan. ECCC and other federal government departments met with provincial representatives in March 2016 to discuss interests in Alberta’s multi-stakeholder forum. The Government of Canada has committed to further discussions with Alberta on this issue.</p> <p>DFO consults Provincial Officials and Aboriginal Stakeholders on project specific aquatic impacts and offsetting Projects.</p>