PROs for Upstream Oil and Gas Reclamation Certification

Chris Powter
Enviro Q&A Services
What’s the problem?

• Legislation required *onsite field inspection* (inquiry) of site by government before certification
What’s the problem?

- But Alberta has this thing called winter so …

Certification lagged applications creating a *backlog*
What’s the solution?

- 2003 – Legislation change – Remove the requirement for inquiries for upstream oil and gas sites
  - Followed successful piloting of process from 1996 in Green Area (forested public land)
- 2004 – multi-stakeholder OGRRAC Recommendations regarding the competencies of individuals in the remediation and reclamation of oil and gas sites
- 2006 – Gov/PRO Competencies for Remediation and Reclamation Advisory Committee Recommendations Report
- 2007 – PROs – Professional Responsibilities in Completion and Assurance of Reclamation and Remediation Work in Alberta: Joint Practice Standard
- 2008 – Gov policy – Require professional signoff
What is sign-off?

- The application of the professional member’s stamp or seal or membership/registration number, signature, and date to a plan, report, map, or any other form of document indicating that: the professional member has supervised and/or reviewed the reclamation or remediation of the property, that the property has been reclaimed or remediated to an acceptable standard as per the regulators’ requirements and that the regulators may rely upon the professional member for reporting and issue a reclamation or remediation certificate for the property.
Three key decisions leading to PRO

1. Need someone the public can trust to sign-off on reclamation and remediation work
   - Has a mandate to protect the public
Three key decisions leading to PRO

2. Government does not want to be involved in selecting or certifying individual professionals
Three key decisions leading to PRO

3. … BUT government still wants some control so …

A regulated organization
Desired attributes of a PRO

1. Has entry requirements for education and experience (screening)
Desired attributes of a PRO

2. Requires continuing professional development
Desired attributes of a PRO

3. Requires adherence to a Code of Ethics/Conduct
   - Sets professional practice standards
Desired attributes of a PRO

4. Has and uses a transparent disciplinary program
Which professional organizations?

- As of 2012 there are seven PROs
  - Alberta Institute of Agrologists (AIA)
  - Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (ASPB)
  - College of Alberta Professional Foresters (CAPF)
  - Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA)
  - Association of the Chemical Profession of Alberta (ACPA)
  - Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals in Alberta (ASET)*
  - College of Alberta Professional Forest Technologists (CAPFT)

* ASET was not on the original list of PROs in 2008
So, what could go wrong?

- Grandfathering of members in new PROs
  - Think SER or CLRA being added to list
So, what could go wrong?

- Public confusion due to multiple PRO sign-offs
  - Phase 1 environmental site assessments
  - Compliance Option Checklists for Drilling Waste Disposal
  - Phase 2 environmental site assessments
  - Remediation and confirmatory sampling
  - Reclamation detailed site assessments
So, what could go wrong?

- Do government inspectors also have to be members of a PRO to be able to judge a PRO’s work?
So, what could go wrong?

- Who is going to complain to trigger the disciplinary process
  - Landowner
  - Government
  - Industry
My take on the Panel question

- Like reclamation, restoration is a multidisciplinary effort therefore *no individual is qualified to practice restoration!*
My take on the Panel question

- A fancy title or set of initials or a stamp doesn’t make you a professional – it is your attitude and approach to the way you do business that does.
My take on the Panel question

- Review your member’s existing professional designations before rushing to create another one
  - PROs are expensive to run and be members of!
Questions?