

Orphan Site Restoration Fund's Landowner Open House

Question-and-Answer session summary

March 1st, 2023

Pomeroy Conference Centre, Fort St John, B.C.

Q: When the Orphan Restoration Group removed soils and brought in new clean fill, are there records of what is brought in? There is a limit on the amount of soil that can be brought into a farm as per the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

A: Yes, there are records, and we can provide them to the landowner. If you would like them, please contact us.

Q: Is it true that restoration is considered complete at 80% productivity? Can we see the legislation that states this is acceptable?

A: It is true. The regulation comes from the ALC Delegation Agreement, and can be found here: [alcogcdelegationagreement2017update.pdf \(bc-er.ca\)](#). On page 29 of the document you will find the Vegetation Reclamation Standards. The Orphan Restoration team wants to do good work and will make reasonable attempts to reach productivity higher than the 80% minimum standard.

Q: Where is the best place for farmers to have a voice in restoration?

A: There is no group currently in place to discuss restoration protocols across the board. The Orphan Restoration team do not want a one-size-fits-all approach, we would like to work on a site-by-site basis as each site has different needs. We do want your input and it is required in the restoration phase. Our team, or our contractors, will be in touch to discuss your site and its reclamation needs after the investigation phase is complete.

Q: You mentioned that the goal is to have restoration complete within 10 years. Is that per site or for the entire program?

A: The 10-year goal is per site and begins from the date of the site's official designation as an Orphan.

Q: Are Orphan Pipelines also part of the Orphan Restoration Program?

A: Roads, pipelines, facilities, campsites, and wells are all part of the program. Anything that is permitted as an oil and gas activity and designated as an Orphan are included. If there is erosion or sinking as a result of an Orphan pipeline, we will look at it. Contact us if there is an Orphan site you have concerns about.

Q: Do you just leave the pipelines in place? Does this interfere with agricultural activities?

A: Pipes are left in place once decommissioned. They should be deep enough to not impact any agricultural activity. If there is the need to remove a segment of a pipeline, for a foundation for example, there are procedures and policies that permit this.

Q: How deep are wells capped?

A: Wells are cut and capped at 2 meters below surface.

Q: Can another company take over and turn on an old pipeline after it has been decommissioned?

A: Yes, this may happen. It would be an entire new application with a consultation and notification process. It would not just be activated without you knowing or having the ability to comment.

Q: Why doesn't the BCER make companies take up already disturbed land instead of making the farmer give up more land?

A: Many companies do redrill their existing sites and add more wells years later, but they are hesitant to take over sites that are from other companies. There is a new push for a reduced footprint in the industry.

Q: Why is there no requirement to map the soil that is stored on leases and to update these maps when soil is moved around? Many times, companies are unsure which pile is which when it comes time to restore the site.

A: The restoration plan should include much of that information to help return the site to agricultural productivity. They are required to have a plan for all the soils.

Q: Why doesn't the BCER mandate that all sites be constructed using temporary matting to reduce impacts to the surface?

A: Some sites in winter access only areas are like that. The issue is if the area around the site is in crop and access is needed for maintenance, inspection, or emergency. Winter access only sites are often accessed using helicopter for summer maintenance or inspection and this is not ideal for cropped lands.

The Orphan Restoration Team can be contacted at Orphanrestoration@bc-er.ca