

Weekly NEWS

esaa Environmental
Services
Association of
Alberta

An Information Service for Alberta's Environment Industry

The Week Ending July 31st, 2020



Inside this Issue:

- *ESAA To Join the SRP Industry Advisory Committee*
- *ESAA SRP Survey Results*
- *Land Reclamation Industry Concerned with Delays in Alberta's Well Cleanup Program*
- *New ESAA Member*
- *ESAA Member News*
- *Upcoming Events*
- *Industry Position Openings*

The ESAA Weekly News is published weekly by:

**Environmental Services
Association of Alberta
102, 2528 Ellwood
Drive SW
Edmonton, AB T6X 0A9
(P) 780.429.6363
(F) 780.429.4249
info@esaa.org
www.esaa.org**

**Comments & submissions
are welcome!**

Please submit your
announcement
via e-mail to:
weeklynews@esaa.org

ESAA TO JOIN THE SRP INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 27th, 2020 On Friday, July 24th, ESAA's Board of Directors met with a senior representative of Minister Savage's office and a member of the SRP team. Over the past few weeks, ESAA has had a number of meetings with the Alberta Energy team working on the SRP and expressing the concerns of the environment industry sector.

ESAA is pleased to announce that effective immediately, ESAA will be joining the SRP Industry Advisory Committee. The Committee meets bi-weekly and is responsible for providing input on the operation of the SRP, providing feedback for future improvements in the program and providing recommendations to the Government for future SRP increments.

ESAA will be represented on the Committee by ESAA President, Stacy Thygesen, JSK Consulting Ltd. and alternate member, Darren Cherniak, ESAA Director, North Shore Environmental Consultants Inc.

"ESAA would like to thank the Government of Alberta for understanding the important role the Environment Industry will play in Alberta's Site Rehabilitation Program and including our association to represent our members on the SRP's Industry Advisory Committee. ESAA is confident our collaborative approach to managing inactive and abandoned well sites, facilities, pipelines and surface leases in Alberta is the most productive path forward. On behalf of our members and industry, ESAA will continue to work hard to ensure it clearly communicates the concerns and opportunities available at the committee meetings and provide beneficial updates to the program" – Stacy Thygesen, ESAA President, JSK Consulting Ltd.

ESAA has created an information page, where we will post regular updates. The page can be found at: <https://www.esaa.org/srp/>

In addition, ESAA has created an email address for the program, srp.info@esaa.org. We kindly ask that you use this email address for all comments, feedback and suggestions regarding the SRP for the ESAA representatives instead of emailing them directly. Thank you for your continued support of ESAA!

ESAA SURVEY RESULTS - SITE REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Thank you to everyone who completed the ESAA Survey re: the Site Rehabilitation Program (SRP). The results can be found at: <https://www.esaa.org/srp-survey/>

As indicated in the preamble of the survey, these results have been shared with Alberta Energy. (No company information was collected or shared).

ESAA continues to work with Alberta Energy to express the importance of ESAA Member and the environment industry's involvement in the program and in addition is working to get a presentation from Alberta Energy at *RemTech 2020*.

The time for positive impact is now.

The Alberta Site Rehabilitation Program has launched.

With this, comes many opportunities for Alberta's economy and the environment. Tree Time provides support to our clients through all stages of their reclamation projects, maintaining the highest level of health and safety standards, and respect for Alberta's land. Due to the popularity of this program and limited access to funding, we need to move quickly. If you have a reclaimed or restored site that is ready for planting, we have seedlings available and can help you get your reclamation certificate faster.

Find out how we can help at TreeTimeServices.ca/ASRP



LAND RECLAMATION INDUSTRY CONCERNED WITH DELAYS IN ALBERTA'S \$1B WELL CLEANUP PROGRAM

(Source: CBC News) When the Alberta government began accepting applications May 1 for the first phase of its \$1-billion program to clean up old oil and gas wells, Adam Dunn and his colleagues at Earthmaster Environmental Strategies spent more than 500 hours preparing and filling out the paperwork.

The Calgary-based remediation business also began hiring extra staff with the expectation of increased work resulting from the government program.

In total, Dunn and his colleagues submitted 372 applications. But so far, they have received 20 approvals, 340 rejections and a dozen remain outstanding.

The program was designed to provide work for the service sector during the downturn and put a dent in the tens of thousands of inactive oil and gas wells throughout the province.

Still, the process has been tough, said Dunn, because all the effort spent applying for the program is time that was largely wasted.

Many staff at Earthmaster have since had their hours reduced, and unless improvements are made to the program soon, Dunn said there may be layoffs.

"I get the 'back-to-work' aspect of the program, which is the frustrating part. We're three months from Phase 1 opening applications and we're just getting through that process now," he said.

Many other companies in the reclamation and remediation industry are in a similar position and want the provincial government to pay more attention to their sector.

Some complaints by the remediation industry are similar to those by oilfield companies, including the confusing application process, poor communication by the government and long wait times. 3:23

Alberta launched the site rehabilitation program to distribute [the money](#) it received from the federal government as part of Ottawa's \$1.7-billion program to clean up oil and gas wells in Western Canada, which was announced [in April](#).

The program has been [plagued with delays](#) as the government was overwhelmed by the response of industry. It has struggled to process more than 35,000 applications.

Some complaints by the remediation industry are similar to those by [oilfield companies](#), including the confusing application process, poor communication by the government and long wait times.

On average, those in the remediation sector say only 2.7 per cent of their applications were approved, according to a [survey](#) released on Thursday by the Environmental Services Association of Alberta. Many companies aren't sure why some applications were approved and others were denied. Dunn said the same wording was used for all his applications, which doesn't explain the inconsistent results.

"We really don't know why they were rejected because there's no direct response saying specifically what the issue was," said Dunn. "That's a concern for us. We want to make sure that we can get this right."

More than 80 per cent of respondents to the survey also said they have lost work because of the program, since the companies that own the oil and gas wells are holding back on spending their own money on cleanup efforts, as they first try to get a piece of the government funding.

Some concerns are unique to the remediation sector, including the provincial government's decision to include only oilfield industry groups as part of its industry advisory committee for the program. In addition, the government also decided to prioritize any leftover money from the first phase of the program to go toward oilfield companies that do the downhole work required to clean up a well.

The well would still need to be reclaimed, which includes testing the soil and groundwater for contamination and returning the site back into a productive property for farmers and landowners to use once again.

"Our membership does have some concerns," said Kelly Zadko, president of the Alberta chapter of the Canadian Land Reclamation Association. The organization has written letters to the government, including one last week.

"The [government's] industry advisory committee is made up of well servicing companies and companies that specialize in downhole abandonment and we feel that they're missing that professional environmental rehabilitation piece that we can contribute," she said.

About 150 government workers are assigned to help administer the program.

"Abandonment and reclamation work go hand in hand while cleaning up an inactive well — one cannot be done without the other," said Kavi Bal, the spokesperson for Sonya Savage, Alberta's energy minister, in an emailed statement. Bal said the Environmental Services Association of Alberta will be added to the program's industry advisory committee.

In addition, grants for reclamation efforts were awarded in the first phase of the program, he said, and the third phase remains open for new applications.

AER: FACILITY, PIPELINE, AND WELL REPORTS NOW AVAILABLE AS SELF-SERVICE

The following reports, previously available for purchase through the [Products and Services Catalogue](#), can now be downloaded free of charge on our website:

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 - Facility Licence Details by Company
 - Facility Licence Details

- Facility Licence History Report
- [Facility Licence List for all of Alberta](#) [CSV]
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 - Pipeline Licence Details by Company
 - Pipeline Licence Details
 - Pipeline Licence History Report
- [Pipeline Licence List for all of Alberta](#) [CSV]
- [Sulphur Balance Report - Daily](#) [Tableau]
- [Sulphur Balance Report – Monthly](#) [Tableau]
- [Well Licence Report](#) [Tableau] replaces;
 - Well Licence Details by Company
 - Well Licence Details
 - Well Licence History Report
- [Well Licence List for all of Alberta](#) [CSV]
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We are also providing our new [Well Pad ID Report](#) for free.

All reports are updated daily. Refer to the [Products and Services Catalogue](#) for additional details.

For more information, contact InformationRequest@ aer.ca.

UPDATE TO AER PIPELINE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Today, the AER released an updated version of our annual [Pipeline Performance Report](#). The report has been updated to include incident data for 2019.

The report shows that pipeline incidents in Alberta continue to decline, with the number of incidents decreasing by 6 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018.

Overall, the number of pipeline incidents has dropped by 32 per cent over the past 10 years, despite the total length of pipelines having grown by 13 per cent.

The report falls under our [Industry Performance Program](#) which strives to hold companies accountable for their decisions and actions, improve their performance, and share more information with Albertans.

ALBERTA'S SITE REHABILITATION PROGRAM LAUNCHES PERIOD 3

(Source: Bennet Jones LLP) On July 17, 2020, the Government of Alberta opened applications for Period 3 of the Site Rehabilitation Program. As described in our [previous blog post](#), [subsequent update](#) and [discussion of Period 2](#) of the Program, the Program administers grant funding to eligible oil field service contractors completing reclamation and abandonment work in Alberta.



Along with the launch of Period 3, the Government of Alberta has also announced it will review applications for abandonment work that were previously denied in Period 1. As of July 17, 2020, over \$100 million in funds from Periods 1 and 2 remain unallocated (i.e., more than half of the \$200 million available in those Periods), which has prompted the Government of Alberta to reassess prior applications.

Overview of Period 3

Period 3 of the Program will allocate up to \$100 million in funding to eligible applicants. Applications will be accepted until March 31, 2021, or until funding has been completely allocated.

Unlike Periods 1 and 2, in Period 3 the Program has preemptively made up to \$139,000 available to active oil and gas licensees for site closure activities. Projects are eligible for 100% funding, up to the limit of \$139,000. The funding can be used for a single site project or multiple projects up to the \$139,000 limit. A list of eligible licensees is posted [online](#). As in Periods 1 and 2, oil field service contractors must negotiate contracts with licensees to complete closure work and must apply for Program funding once a contract is signed. However, the allocation of funding between licensees is intended to allow licensees and contractors to strategically plan their closure projects and to sequence work appropriately by allowing licensees to budget costs and contractor requests as each stage of work performed.

Licensees are responsible for ensuring that contractor requests do not surpass their grant amounts. In addition, licensees are responsible for organizing all site closure work. Licensees must make sure contractor applications are submitted and approved in the appropriate order, as separate applications are required for each stage of work. Per the Program website, the work sequence begins with abandonment projects, and continues with Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), Phase II ESAs, remediation, and finally, reclamation.

Closure work approved in Period 3 may be 100% grant-funded. Applications from multiple contractors, or multiple applications from one contractor, are allowed for a single site. When the funding limit for a licensee has been reached, all subsequent contractor applications will be denied. It is unclear as to what will happen if the program is undersubscribed.

Changes from Periods 1 and 2

Four notable changes and clarifications were announced in Period 3 of the Program.

Notably, oil field service contracts can include “subject to receipt of grant funding” clauses. In changing these guidelines, the Program noted site closure work should be submitted sequentially. Therefore, subject to clauses relating to abandonment work or Phase 1 ESAs are allowed in Period 3. In addition, contracts which incorporate termination clauses shorter than the minimum 30-day notice period are now eligible for grant funding.

Second, the Program made a point of clarifying that identical closure activities on the same site are ineligible for Program grants. Licensees are unable to request grants for work activities on a site if those activities previously received Program funding.

In addition, the Program noted site closure work completed either prior to or in development before May 1, 2020, will be ineligible for Program funding. However, work performed after this date will be eligible for subsequent Program application periods. Projects completed after May 1, 2020, may qualify for retroactive funding, as long as the work conducted complies with relevant period requirements.

Finally, the Program has updated its invoice reporting and payment process as part of Period 3. All Program work is to be invoiced either on or before December 31, 2022. Interim and final invoice reports may be submitted through the Electronic Transfer System (ETS) Site Rehabilitation Program once this process is established. With regards to payment, contractor applications which are signed and approved will receive an initial 10 percent of the grant amount. Contractors may apply for a second disbursement after incurring 60 percent of project costs. A final payment will occur when the project is complete.

Nominated Sites

Contractors can negotiate with site licensees to cleanup a nominated site. A list of nominated sites is posted on the [Program's website](#), and includes sites nominated by landowners, First Nations reserves and Métis settlements. Contractors can identify licensees in charge of a site by searching a site location for wells and pipelines using the [Alberta Energy Regulator ST37 website](#), or searching for facilities using the [Petrinex report](#).

While a contractor may apply to perform site closure work, the licensee ultimately determines whether work is completed on a site. A nominated site does not guarantee site closure activities will be completed or that a Program grant will be provided. The grant application review process will apply to all sites, although priority may be given to nominated sites if they meet the relevant Program period requirements.

Reassessment Period

As noted above, the Program will also reassess applications previously denied for abandonment work in Period 1. The Site Rehabilitation Program Period 1B (SRP 1B) will not accept new applications. Only existing applications from Period 1 will be examined and those applicants will not be required to reapply for SRP 1B. Prior applicants are not permitted to revise their applications. Reviews will be conducted using original Program submissions.

SRP 1B will first review abandonment applications that were denied for a site where grants were approved for surface work. This will allow abandonment work to take place before remediation and reclamation. Following this review, the Program will review and reassess all other denied abandonment applications from Period 1. The appraisal of previous submissions will be conducted using the [reassessment criteria](#). Applications will be reviewed for particular factors, including whether there was a “subject to receiving SRP grant funding” clause in the oil field service contract, as many applications were denied for this reason. Applications which do not fall within the reassessment criteria are advised to apply to future SRP application periods.

Applicants will be informed whether their submission is denied or approved for a grant by the end of August 2020. Successful applications may receive up to \$30,000 in grant funding.

Conclusion

Period 3 demonstrates a move towards a more coordinated and strategic approach to funding closure activities as the Program approaches its third month of operation. While demand for Program funding continues to be high, the more structured Period 3 may assist Alberta Energy to clear the application backlog.

SUNCOR FACING SEVEN ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGES FROM PROVINCE IN RELATION TO SHERWOOD PARK REFINERY

(Source: Edmonton Journal) The Alberta government has laid seven environmental charges against Suncor Energy related to the release of a substance at its Sherwood Park refinery in July 2018.

The company is charged with releasing a substance into the environment that may cause an adverse effect and failing to report the release in a timely manner, Ministry of Environment and Parks press secretary Jess Sinclair said in a Sunday in a news release. Suncor is also facing five charges for contravening a term or condition of an approval.

Postmedia reported [a hydrogen sulphide leak](#), also known as sour gas, at the plant in July 2018 that sent a handful of workers to hospital after being exposed to the gas.

All of the charges are contraventions under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, the province said, and Suncor is scheduled to appear in court on July 29 in Sherwood Park.

Referred to as the Suncor Edmonton Refinery, the plant is located just to the east of Edmonton on Petroleum Way in Sherwood Park.

LAKE LOUISE SKI RESORT LOSES APPEAL OF \$2M FINE FOR CUTTING ENDANGERED TREES

(Source: Canadian Press) CALGARY — An Alberta judge has upheld a \$2.1 million fine against a world-renowned ski resort for cutting down endangered trees nearly seven years ago.

Lake Louise Ski Resort pleaded guilty in 2017 to taking down a stand of trees, including 38 endangered whitebark pine, along a ski run in 2013.

The fine, which was imposed a year later for charges under the Species at Risk Act and the Canada National Parks Act, amounted to roughly \$55,000 a tree.

Lake Louise’s lawyer argued the fine was ‘grossly disproportional and demonstrably unfit’ as a result of remediation efforts the resort took after the trees were cut down.

He asked for the court to either stay the charges or reduce the penalty to \$200,000.

The resort has taken steps to ensure no other whitebark pine are cut down. Staff are better educated and the 7,000 whitebark pine within the resort area are now marked.

But the Appeal judge rejected the request and said the trial judge did not make an error handing out the fine.

“The penalties imposed by the sentencing judge for these offences were certainly more than a slap on the wrist,” wrote Justice Barbara Romaine in a decision released Wednesday.

“An observer, uninformed of the circumstances of the case, may consider the penalties to be excessively high given that the offence involved flora and not animals,” she said.

But, Romaine said, this was not a case of an “otherwise good environmental citizen making an isolated mistake”.

“A mid-sized corporation operating in a national park failed to train and inform employees, leading to the destruction of a number of individuals of an endangered species whose extinction would have impact throughout the subalpine ecosystem,” she wrote.

The agreed statement of facts in the case said that in 2013 a trail crew, consisting of six employees including a supervisor, began cleaning up, doing fence work and trimming and removing some trees on Ptarmigan Ridge at the ski resort.

The document said that in late September of that year, the workers cut down a number of trees, including the whitebark pine, without a permit.

The five-needle whitebark pine provides food and habitat for animals, as well as helps stabilize steep subalpine slopes.

The trees exist at high elevations in western North America at, or close to, the treeline. They have been growing on the continent for 100,000 years and can grow to be between 500 and 1,000 years old.

This report by The Canadian Press was first published July 22, 2020

PROVINCIAL LAKE MONITORING PROGRAMS ENSURE B.C.'S LAKES STAY HEALTHY

Mike Sokal often takes a moment to admire the clear water of Okanagan Lake whenever he takes another sample for water quality testing.

The lake is an essential part of life in the Okanagan and is home to an abundance of waterfowl and fish species. Local municipalities depend on it for drinking water and on hot summer days, boaters and swimmers flock to it for relief from the heat.

However, 50 years ago, parts of the lake were often covered with large algae blooms caused by municipal wastewater treatment plants and community sewer outfalls pumping excess nutrients into the water. The pollution caused a major public outcry, and the wastewater treatment plants were eventually upgraded with new technology. Now, five decades of data illustrates how the lake and others downstream have turned into a success story.

“People have been monitoring the water quality of the lake and studying it for a long time,” said Sokal, a water quality monitoring limnologist and provincial lead for the Long-Term Lake Trends Program for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. “You can really see with the data how things have improved and where we are at now, which is excellent water quality in an area that’s driven by tourism and recreation.

“Lakes are complex ecosystems that are sensitive to a variety of stressors from human development activities and climate change. If we can understand how things change over time, then we can figure out what the mechanisms are for that change. This is one of the main reasons why we continue to monitor lakes around the province.”

Operated by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, the BC Lake Monitoring Program has been in place since 2014 to better understand and report changes to the water quality of lakes, which helps determine the best way to manage and protect them.

Fifty-three lakes throughout B.C. are currently being monitored through the program, which outlines comprehensive methods for various types of sampling that look at the physical, chemical and biological components of a lake to determine how healthy it is. The sampling is done in the spring and late summer, and is also used to study water quality trends and how things are changing over time. Some lakes have been monitored by stewardship groups and a variety of other organizations for decades, providing an abundance of data for scientists to analyze.

July is Lake Appreciation Month, and Sokal appreciates the hundreds of volunteers who assist with the province's lake monitoring programs. Depending on their commitment, volunteers can take on multiple levels of study. Without their help, Sokal believes some of the smaller lakes wouldn't get sampled.

Marge Sidney is one of the volunteers who is passionate about lakes and is a long-time board member of the BC Lake Stewardship Society, which began informally during the mid 90s with a pair of lake scientists with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. But as more people called the ministry with questions about their lake or what they could do to protect it, an official lake monitoring program was developed to guide the growing number of enthusiastic citizen scientists.

Every summer, Sidney travels to dozens of lakes throughout the province, providing support, advice, encouragement and technical training to stewardship groups and individuals who share her passion for lakes. It's a role she finds incredibly rewarding.

"Lakes are important for aquatic life, our wildlife and for people. If we can work hand-in-hand with the people who live on the lakes and collect data that goes back to the province to add to the database, it's a win-win situation," said Sidney, a retired fisheries biologist. "The BC Lake Stewardship Society can't do everything on a lake, but when you have volunteers who care, that is such a valuable asset. When people take ownership of their lake, it's an awesome feeling."

Quick Facts:

- Algae blooms, including cyanobacteria blooms (also known as blue-green algae) are natural occurrences in many lakes throughout B.C. They are not generally considered a threat to the aquatic environment, but they can be a risk to humans, pets and livestock.
- Of the 53 lakes monitored by the Long-Term Lake Trends Program, the deepest is Adams Lake with a maximum depth of 457 metres, making it the third deepest lake in Canada and the 24th deepest in the world.
- At six kilometres wide and 137 kilometres long, Atlin Lake in the northwest corner of the province is the largest natural lake in B.C.

Learn More:

For more information about lake monitoring programs in B.C., visit: www.gov.bc.ca/lake-monitoring

For more information about the BC Lake Stewardship Society, visit: <https://www.bclss.org/>

NOVA SCOTIA AUDITOR GENERAL'S CLOSER LOOK AT CONTAMINATED SITES UNCOVERS EVEN MORE PROBLEMS

(Source: CBC News) The Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia has once again found serious problems with the way the provincial government detects and tracks contaminated sites in Nova Scotia.

"Throughout this audit we found that departments deal with contaminated sites the province is responsible for differently, and there is no provincial strategy or approach," noted the report presented by acting auditor general Terry Spicer.

"This results in inefficiencies and potential risks that human health and environmental concerns are not addressed."

Auditors were forced to use the term "potentially contaminated" throughout the report because the province has yet to test many of these sites to confirm they are contaminated.

"Without more formal direction, there is a risk that potentially contaminated sites are never tested, and remediation may never happen," noted the report. "It is up to government to better define which sites require testing and the timelines in which it should occur."

The office decided to have a closer look at how the province was dealing with contaminated sites as a result of an audit it conducted last fall that found the Department of Lands and Forestry [hadn't sufficiently investigated potential contamination at many of the province's old mines](#).

This time, audits focused more closely on the work done by Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and Lands and Forestry, the departments overseeing the largest number of contaminated sites.

The Transportation Department manages 82 provincial highway bases across the province, 26 having "potential or known contamination."

Auditors noted "there is no formal process to periodically review the 56 remaining bases for possible contamination."

"This is concerning as we found at least one of the sites had been given a high-risk rating for contamination by an external consultant in 2010," the report said.

Poor record keeping

When it comes to historical environment records, auditors found files were kept by staff at individual bases rather than a central location and that there was no index to the filing system.

"This made finding information and determining what work had been done on a specific site difficult," according to the report.

At Lands and Forestry, auditors noted work underway to evaluate 69 historic mine sites to assess potential risks and to prioritize site assessments, but auditors noted that contaminated site regulations were established in 2013 and guidelines prior to that.

"Lands and Forestry should have taken steps prior to the fall of 2019 to determine if mine sites were in compliance with the Contaminated Sites regulations," said auditors.

Spicer has made four recommendations aimed at improving the situation, including:

- Cabinet assign responsibility to an oversight body to implement a consistent, co-ordinated approach for assessing and managing contaminated sites that the province is responsible for.
- The province should complete an inventory of known and potentially contaminated sites.
- The government prioritize all known and potentially contaminated sites the province is responsible for.
- The Department of Environment should ensure that management provides appropriate oversight of the inspectors.

At his downtown Halifax office Tuesday, Spicer said the office's message to the McNeil government was a straightforward one.

"You need to do a lot more work," he said. "You need to be looking at those sites out there that may potentially be contaminated to know what is the risks to human health and the environment ... because they may be at a high risk from contamination doesn't mean they're contaminated."

Province agrees to recommendations

The province has agreed with all four recommendations and promised to have a closer look at the problems.

"Government will review its current oversight structure, such as a Deputy Minister Committee that would better provide a consistent, coordinated approach for known and potentially contaminated sites," it said in a written statement.

"In addition, to further advance a coordinated approach, government will create an interdepartmental advisory group to report to the oversight structure."

NDP Leader Gary Burrill echoed the message in the report.

"The point that the auditor general is making here is that the public ought to have some concern about the fact that the government does not have complete inventory of contaminated sites in the province, and that therefore the government has no sense of the priority around those sites," he said.

Burrill also suggested the McNeil government has squandered an opportunity to request help from the federal government, which has pledged \$1.7 billion to help clean up old oil and gas wells in Western Canada.

"We would certainly be in a position where we would be able to include that kind of important work in the investment and the stimulus spending that surely is going to be needed to bring us out of the economic contraction that we're in as we look to the coming months," he said.

YOUR USED MASK NEEDS TO MAKE IT TO THE TRASH CAN

(Source: New York Times) They're on beaches, in parking lots and on sidewalks. You probably won't catch the coronavirus from a discarded mask, but the litter poses a risk to the environment.

Helen Lowman looks at litter a lot. It's her job. But while walking her dog in Westport, Conn., in March, she noticed an alarming trend. First she passed some dirty wipes on the ground. Then there were gloves. And finally a mask. Four months later, she said the litter of personal protective gear has only gotten worse.

As more people [wear masks](#) to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, more personal protective equipment, or P.P.E., has been found as litter around the world.

The issue has prompted environmental organizations, including the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), to sound the alarm. Some local governments, like [Suffolk County](#) in New York, have instituted fines for littering involving masks and gloves, and police departments, like the one in [Swampscott, Mass.](#), have warned that improperly discarding P.P.E. is a crime.

"This pandemic is causing the face of litter to change," said Ms. Lowman, chief executive of Keep America Beautiful, a nonprofit group that organizes cleanups. "We're seeing a real shift in what is in the litter stream."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend [that the general public wear reusable cloth face coverings](#), but disposable masks are readily available; a pack of 50 can be purchased for around \$30.

Experts say the risk of catching coronavirus from a discarded mask is minimal, but the litter is causing concern for other reasons: Used masks and gloves, which cannot be recycled, pose a problem for the environment.

P.P.E. litter could mean more trash in the ocean.

Disposable masks and gloves aren't necessarily better or worse than any other kind of litter, according to experts.

Like other waste, a mask could be mistaken for food by wildlife. Or a heavy rain could wash it into a storm drain or a river and eventually the ocean, posing a risk for marine ecosystems.

"It's quite alarming where these are ending up," said Gary Stokes, founder of OceansAsia, a marine conservation group. "It's not just the beaches. We're getting them out in nature, but also downtown; you see them on the streets, in the gutter, on public transport."

In February, on a routine trip to the uninhabited Soko Islands off the coast of Hong Kong, Mr. Stokes collected around 70 masks along roughly 100 yards of beach.

"We've seen it already with whales and turtles with plastic bags, and with masks it's the same thing," he said. "Another piece of trash for the next generation."

Like drinking bottles, fast-food containers and other plastic material that ends up in the ocean, masks collect algae, attracting small fish that in turn attract larger fish, he said. A dolphin or whale could mistake a mask for food, and the mask could get caught in the animal's digestive tract, which could result in death.

Over time, [plastics in the ocean](#) can break down into smaller particles known as microplastics. Those particles become coated in toxic substances and are eaten or absorbed by marine life and could eventually make their way into [human food](#), experts say.

Around eight million metric tons of plastics enter the ocean annually, [according to research](#), and environmentalists fear that P.P.E. litter, as well as more home delivery packaging, will worsen the situation.

A [University College London study](#) found that if everyone in the United Kingdom wore a new disposable mask every day for a year, it would result in 66,000 metric tons of plastic waste, plus 57,000 metric tons of packaging.

After seeing an alarming number of masks washed ashore over the last few months, Dr. Stokes and his team have been advocating for reusable masks: “We’re all starting to realize this virus is here to stay, and we’ve got to start thinking about this in a sustainable way.”

Are those used masks a public health risk?

Though everything a human touches is probably covered with bacteria and viruses, most used masks don’t pose a risk, said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a researcher at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. Masks used by the public are not considered biohazardous, as masks used in a hospital or litter such as bloody bandages or syringes would be.

“This is more of an etiquette issue,” Dr. Adalja said.

It’s not guaranteed that mask litter contains infectious pathogens, said Seema S. Lakdawala, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine whose research focuses on the transmission of influenza viruses. Dr. Lakdawala said she carries a plastic bag in her purse for easy disposal of her mask when she isn’t near a trash can.

The coronavirus can’t survive for long on a surface like a mask, said [Linsey Marr](#), of Virginia Tech, an expert in the transmission of viruses by aerosol. A recent study found that the virus has a [half-life of around seven hours](#) on solid plastic — meaning half of the virus will die in that time — but the survival time would most likely be shorter on a mask because of its porous material, she said.

In order to become infected through a used mask, the person would have to pick up an infected mask minutes after it had been discarded and transfer a substantial amount of the live virus to the eyes, nose or mouth.

The virus is fragile, and if the mask has been exposed to the sun, transmission is highly unlikely, Dr. Marr said, noting that the virus could survive longer if an infected mask was in a shady area or had been dropped at night.

Airborne transmission from a mask dropped as litter would be equally slim. “Once something that size gets onto a surface, it’s not going to come off spontaneously,” Dr. Marr said. “It would take someone shaking it around.”

A coast-to-coast effort to reduce P.P.E. litter.

Shelter-in-place orders put a pause on some regular community cleanups, but groups across the country have begun gathering again, with volunteers wearing masks and collecting trash six feet apart from one another.

Save Our Shores, a group that cleans litter from beaches in Santa Cruz, Calif., takes maximum precautions: Members go alone or in small groups, bring hand sanitizer and wear disposable gloves for safety, even though it creates more plastic waste, said Katherine O’Dea, executive director of the organization.

“The bigger message is, ‘Come on, people; don’t litter that stuff,’” Ms. O’Dea said. “Good for you that you’re following the guidelines and wearing masks and being considerate of others, but you’ve just blown it if you throw it on the ground or leave it in your shopping cart or at the beach.”

Some organizations, including the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, based in New York and Connecticut, have urged grocery stores to put trash cans in parking lots.

On a recent trip to the beach, Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, noticed fewer masks scattered in the sand than she had over the past few months. Efforts to encourage proper disposal have helped, she said, but lots of litter remains.

“The bottom line is we don’t want a public health crisis to add to the plastic pollution crisis,” she said. “The answer is simple and the act is easy: Just throw out your P.P.E.”

ESAA MEMBER NEWS

McCUE ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS CELEBRATE THEIR 20TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND STARTS WORK ON SKEENA RESOURCES LIMITED'S ESKAY CREEK PROJECT

Delta, British Columbia (July 20, 2020) – McCue Engineering Contractors (“McCue”) celebrates 20th anniversary in business by kicking off work on the Water Treatment Portion of Skeena Resources Limited’s Eskay Creek Project.



BROWNFIELDS TO GOLD MINES

McCue will work alongside Ausenco Engineering Canada Inc. (“Ausenco”), SRK Consulting (“SRK”), and AGP Mining Consultants (“AGP”) during the project study and have set a target completion date for summer of 2021.

“We’re looking forward to working on Eskay Creek” said President and Chief Executive Officer, Chris McCue “Skeena is a company with strong corporate values and we’re pleased to have the chance to work with them.”

Many companies faced economic hardship during the coronavirus pandemic. McCue is happy to have continued working with local partners on industry and mine water treatment project, while retaining all staff members. In time for their 20th anniversary, staff celebrate McCue success through a social distancing appropriate digital presentation.

“Mining is a good business when done responsibly” Said Chief Operation Officer, Lynda Smithard “I am proud that McCue has helped local businesses and miners protect the environment and do responsible business.”

McCue will continue to provide water treatment needs to all industries and will plan to expand outside of the natural resources industry. McCue will also be looking to train and hire Indigenous People to support the economic development surrounding upcoming projects through their recently developed Training Indigenous Peoples (“TIPs”) Water Treatment Program.

About McCue Engineering Contractors

Established in 2000, McCue Engineering Contractors is a Canadian, leading edge full-service water treatment and brownfields remediation engineering and construction company. With over 20 years of dedicated experience, McCue continues to provide end-to-end solutions to a multitude of industrial customers including: Mining, Oil and Gas, Manufacturing, Brownfields Remediation, Vapour Mitigation, Drinking Water Treatment and Small Sewage Systems. Learn more about McCue Engineering Contractors at: <http://www.mccuecontracting.com/>
For more information, contact:

HR INSIGHTS SERIES: SHIFTING BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE PRIORITIES AMID A GLOBAL PANDEMIC (PART 3)

The latest installment from ECO Canada’s *HR Insights* series is here! We have been tracking business and HR trends month over month to understand how the environmental workforce has been impacted by COVID-19 and other current events.

While the continued re-opening of Canada’s economy contributed to substantial job gains in June, employers and workers are still dealing with the residual effects of the economic shutdown. Adding to this complexity is the emergence of new workforce opportunities and challenges stemming from return to work measures as well as the delay, suspension or cancellation of environmental protection and monitoring activities [across Canada](#).

Change is the Only Constant

The labour market continued its rebound as more businesses re-opened in June, increasing employment by [nearly one million](#). Unemployment caused by the economic shutdown shifted from 5.5 million by April to 3.1 million by June, reducing the national unemployment rate to 12.3%. Statistics Canada also noted that [employment was closer to pre-shutdown levels](#) for industries with business and workplace settings that can apply physical distancing and men across all age groups.

Employers and workers are adapting once again to their evolving realities. Some Canadians have returned to their place of work where enhanced health and safety measures have been introduced to reduce the potential for virus transmission. Governments, businesses and individuals are also preparing for various economic scenarios — from a full recovery to another forced shutdown caused by a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Impacts on Employers are Waning

A total of **151 employers** responded to ECO Canada's HR Pulse Survey, representing 42,500 workers.

Insights from [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of this series revealed that the majority of companies were negatively impacted to some degree by either COVID-19 or depressed oil and gas markets. Our latest results show that there is still a lingering negative impact on employers, but to a lesser extent than observed over the previous months.

- Employers are now focused on reinvigorating their business activity and staffing levels as provinces and territories continue to re-open in phases, while navigating through economic uncertainty and looser environmental mandates.
- Occupational health and safety is increasingly important and a priority as businesses re-open and on-site work resumes.
- Compensation expectations have emerged as the top hiring challenge for employers surveyed in June.
- Fewer respondents reported using available resources to help sustain their business operations and staff.

For the full results and interactive charts, visit: <https://www.eco.ca/blog/hr-insights-series-shifting-business-and-workforce-priorities-amid-a-global-pandemic-part-3/>

NEW ESAA MEMBER

ESAA's Board of Directors and staff would like to welcome the following new member:

Full Member:

BOREAL

LAND • ENVIRONMENT • REGULATORY

Boreal Land Services Ltd.

205, 37 Athabasca Avenue
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4H3
Phone: (780) 464-9484

Web: <https://borealland.ca/>

Murray Hubscher, General Manager
e-mail: m.hubscher@borealland.ca

Profile

Boreal Land Services Ltd. is a comprehensive regulatory consulting company working primarily in Western Canada's energy sector. We have extensive experience in surface land acquisition, reclamation, remediation, and regulatory compliance. Our team of Licensed Land Agents, Land Administrators, Land Use Specialists, Reclamation Specialists and GIS Specialists will work with your team to effectively facilitate and ensure streamlined approvals and regulatory compliance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

REMTECH 2020 IS GOING VIRTUAL!

Due to the on-going COVID situation, ESAA has decided to take *RemTech 2020* online. The virtual version of *RemTech* will take place on October 14th and 15th and will feature a couple of keynotes, group sessions and breakouts, and a few other surprises. Check out the [draft agenda](#).

ESAA has intentionally kept the registration fees low and are asking everyone to register, and to spread the word about the event and presentations. Approximately 90% of ESAA's revenues come from events, and now more than ever your Association needs your support!



Important Information for Sponsors and Exhibitors

- Sponsors: If you are a current sponsor of *RemTech*, watch your email for additional information and next steps.
- Exhibitors: If you are a current exhibitor of *RemTech*, watch your email for additional information and next steps.

Did You Previously Register for RemTech?

If you are already registered for *RemTech 2020*, you will need to register to attend the virtual version using the link below. ESAA will transfer your existing registration and payment to *RemTech 2021*. If you require a refund, please contact Joe Chowaniec at the ESAA Office.

Virtual RemTech Registration Fees

	Early Bird Rate (until August 28th)	Regular Rate (after August 28th)	
Member	\$69 + GST	\$99 + GST	Register Now
Non-Member	\$89 + GST	\$119 + GST	Register Now
Presenter	n/a	\$39 + GST	

Call for Abstracts

The deadline for the call for abstracts has been extended to July 31st - [Details](#).

We look forward to your support of *RemTech* and ESAA.

ESAA VIRTUAL REGULATORY FORUM September 16th, 2020

Call for Presenters – Submission Deadline July 31st,

ESAA will be hosting a one-day virtual forum in mid-September focusing on Regulatory and Legal Updates

ESAA invites you to submit abstracts focusing on regulatory / legal environmental updates and issues both of a federal and provincial nature. Suggest topics include, but are not limited to:

- Federal Updates: Transportation, Fisheries, GHGs
- Provincial Updates: Not limited to Alberta
- Remediation / Reclamation Updates
- Brownfields
- SRP Program
- Indigenous Relations
- COVID Matters

Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words (not including bio), should include a presenter biography and be submitted as a Word Document by no later than July 31st, 2020.

Send abstract submissions to Joe Chowaniec via email to: info@esaa.org

Notification of acceptance will be given by August 10th, 2020.

Details and registration information - <https://www.esaa.org/events/#id=209&wid=401&cid=153>

ESAA VIRTUAL EMERGING CONTAMINANTS FORUM
September 23rd, 2020

Call for Presenters – Submission Deadline July 31st

ESAA will be hosting a one-day virtual forum in mid-September focusing on Emerging Contaminants

ESAA invites you to submit abstracts focusing on emerging contaminants in the environment. Suggest topics include, but are not limited to:

- Site Investigation and Management
- Regulatory matters - Federal and Provincial
- Contaminants of Concern (not just PFAs and PFOAs)
- Laboratory Testing and Analysis
- Innovative Technologies for Detection and Measurement
- Remediation and Treatment
- Safety Procedures
- The Next Wave of Contaminants

Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words (not including bio), should include a presenter biography and be submitted as a Word Document by no later than July 31st, 2020.

Send abstract submissions to Joe Chowaniec via email to: info@esaa.org

Notification of acceptance will be given by August 10th, 2020.

Details and registration information - <https://www.esaa.org/events/#id=210&wid=401&cid=153>

CANADIAN BROWNFIELDS NETWORK BROWNIE AWARDS

The Brownie Awards are given to recognize excellence in brownfield remediation and reuse. They are presented in six categories for projects/programs and one category for individual achievement. All project/program nominations are eligible for consideration as Best Overall Project and, depending on their size/scope, for either Best Large or Best Small Project. Information on the award categories is available at <https://canadianbrownfieldsnetwork.ca/brownfield-awards/brownies>. There is no charge for your members to submit a nomination, and there is no requirement that anyone involved with the project be a CBN member. Additional information

**Brownie
Awards 2020**

on the nomination and judging process is available on the FAQ page at <https://canadianbrownfieldsnetwork.ca/brownfield-awards/brownies/brownies-faq>.

Starting with last year's Brownies, we introduced a two-stage nomination process. The first stage involves submission of a simplified nomination form. These will be reviewed by our judging panel and finalists in each category will be invited to submit a more detailed nomination. Key dates are:

Nominations open	Now
Short-form nominations due	September 18
Finalists selected	September 25
Detailed nominations due	October 14
Awards Gala	November 24

For ideas on what makes a winning project, please see:

- 2019 Winners: <https://canadianbrownfieldsnetwork.ca/brownfield-awards/brownies/2019-brownies-winners>
- 2018 Winners: <https://canadianbrownfieldsnetwork.ca/brownfield-awards/brownies/2018-brownies-winners>

If you have any questions on the awards process, please contact Grant Walsom, our Past President, by email at admin@canadianbrownfieldsnetwork.ca or by phone at 519-741-5774 ext. 7246.

Thank you for your support of CBN and these awards!

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING EXECUTIVES CONFERENCE (CE3C) – VIRTUAL – OCT. 1, 2020

As a leader in the Canadian environment and engineering community, we invite to join the CE3C 2020 cohort this Fall. If you have attended in the past, you know the value of this exclusive event and we hope you will take advantage of special rates we have offered below. If you are considering joining this unique gathering of senior executives for the first time, here are some [images from last year](#) as well as the [2019 attendee list](#) of your peers to help persuade you to add this to your calendar.



This year's virtual event will take place on October 1st, 2020 from 8:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. PDT and [the program](#) will include:

- Keynote address by renowned pollster Nik Nanos who will share insights on COVID-19 impacts to Canadians from a social, economic and political perspective.
- CE3C Executive Survey Results and Benchmarking presentation – New 2020 data!
- Executive panel discussion on COVID-19 impacts on their Consulting and Engineering operations.
- Expert panel discussion on Mergers & Acquisitions – who's doing what, and why.
- Real-time online polling and Q&A among participants.

For those who register for CE3C 2021 (in-person, Vancouver – Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2021), we are offering complimentary access to this year's virtual CE3C event and various virtual networking events we plan to host leading up to 2021. This offer is based on the Early Bird rate of \$1700 + GST/HST. If you choose to only attend the 2020 virtual event you can [register now](#) for \$299 + GST/HST. We hope you choose the former and take advantage of the extra (2-for-1) benefits and value. If you have any questions, please contact the CE3C team at info@ce3c.ca or call Todd Latham at 416-722-8109.

Industry Positions Openings



As a benefit of ESAA Membership, ESAA Members can now post position openings on our website at no charge. Position opening ads also will appear in the newsletter at no charge. For full details visit: <https://www.esaa.org/news/job-board/>

Note: You must still complete the advertising form. After completing the order form, you will receive an email with a link to post your position.

Non-Members are welcome to advertise as well for a nominal charge. Visit [advertising form](#) to place your order.

Job Title	Organization	Application Deadline	Term	Details
Intermediate Environmental Professional	H3M Enviromental	2020-07-31		more
Intermediate Environmental Professional	H3M Enviromental	2020-07-31	Full-Time	more
Project Manager	H3M Enviromental	2020-07-31	Contract	more
Casual Field Assistant	H3M Enviromental	2020-08-04	Part-Time	more

