

Exploring the FUTURE

MINING AND MINERAL EXPLORATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The British Columbia government works with mining companies to support responsible environmental stewardship during exploration, operation and when mines are closing. The *Mines Act* sets out specific requirements for reclamation and closure. These requirements help to ensure that the industry and the environment will be viable and sustainable for the long term.

RECLAMATION AND CLOSURE

Mine Closure and Reclamation

To operate in British Columbia, mining companies must obtain a permit under the *Mines Act*. Companies are also required to post a security bond to ensure they:

- salvage and store soils, and make provision for replacing them after mining;
- provide the means to meet environmental protection and quality control standards through all stages of reclamation, including predicting, preventing, treating and controlling any drainage leaving a mine and managing trace element release under neutral and alkaline drainage;
- take steps to prevent or minimize erosion during construction and throughout the life of the mine, demonstrating how any detached sediment will be contained within the mine site; and,
- undertake reclamation when or before the mine closes.

Reclamation of a mine site generally includes returning the land to an acceptable state of use, with land

productivity at least as high as what existed prior to mining. Other key aspects of reclamation include:

- revegetating land to a self-sustaining state that satisfies land use, productivity and water quality objectives;
- removing buildings, equipment and machinery;
- ensuring waste dumps are stable and erosion is controlled;
- stabilizing and revegetating tailings ponds and impoundment structures to an approved standard of land use;
- properly closing pits and underground workings;
- returning watercourses to their original condition, or to a stable configuration that ensures water quality;
- decommissioning roads as needed;
- monitoring trace elements in soils and uptake in vegetation;
- properly disposing of toxic chemicals; and,
- monitoring the site after the closure to demonstrate that reclamation objectives are met, including those affecting land use, productivity, water quality and site stability.

For more information, contact:

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