



Alberta Wilderness Association

## Where are the Approval Conditions for Suncor's Expansion into Alberta's Irreplaceable McClelland Lake Wetland Complex?



An aerial view of McClelland Lake and fen. Photo © C. Wearmouth

Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) learned on November 14, 2022, that the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) approved Suncor's Operational Plan for the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex (MLWC) by Letter of Authorization back on September 9, 2022. However, the AER has not yet made public this authorization letter. Suncor's Fort Hills Oil Sands Project expansion aims to mine roughly half of the exceptionally beautiful and significant McClelland wetlands by applying an Operational Plan that is supposed to guarantee the protection of the unmined portion of the MLWC.

"After two months of correspondence with AER and Suncor, AWA is making

complex,” says Phillip Meintzer, a Conservation Specialist with Alberta Wilderness Association. “It contains important and time-sensitive information on Suncor’s proposed operations there, and our provincial energy regulator should provide access to documents of this type within a reasonable time frame.”

The Operational Plan proposes to build a very large underground wall that will bisect this outstanding groundwater-fed remaining wetland-lake ecosystem at the edge of Alberta’s mineable tar sands region. AWA believes it is essential for the public to be able to review the justifications for authorizing this proposal and any associated approval conditions.

The Operational Plan was submitted by Suncor to AER in December 2021 for their review. At the request of AER, Suncor provided AWA with a copy of the Operational Plan in January 2022. We are asking AER to provide us with a copy of the Letter of Authorization by January 13, 2023.

The MLWC features many significant features including McClelland Lake, a large, patterned fen, and sinkhole lakes. The watershed supports rare plants and provides an important stop-over point and breeding ground for migratory bird species. Further information on the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex, the Fort Hills Oil Sands Project, and Suncor’s Operational Plan is available here:

[https://albertawilderness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/20220300\\_ar\\_wla\\_destruction\\_mcclelland\\_lake\\_wetland\\_pmeintzer.pdf](https://albertawilderness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/20220300_ar_wla_destruction_mcclelland_lake_wetland_pmeintzer.pdf)

For more information, please contact:

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A map showing the location of the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex relative to western Canada. Map © Google Earth (2023)

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