



BOREAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

May 7, 2015

To: AASHE STARS Committee

Dear STARS Committee Members:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of NAIT's STARS Innovation Credit for the NAIT ***Peatland Restoration Program***.

The boreal forest comprises 82% of Canada's forest area and is one of the world's largest ecosystems. The boreal forest provides habitat for wildlife and is essential in sustaining water and carbon cycles. The mandate of NAIT Boreal Research Institute (NBRI) is to promote the wise use of Canada's boreal forest resources through innovation, applied research, and knowledge exchange. As such, NBRI provides industry with practical and game-changing technologies in peatland management.

The ***Peatland Restoration Program*** was initiated in 2010 and expanded in 2013 with the appointment of Dr. Bin Xu as NAIT's first NSERC Industrial Chair for Colleges. The program is broadly comprised of three major themes:

1. The contouring of well sites with the goal of restoring a natural flow of water.
2. The transfer of 'donor' mosses onto well sites.
3. The further selection and propagation of boreal mosses, forbs, shrubs, and trees.

The ***Peatland Restoration Program*** is making a positive environmental impact on restoration of in situ well sites, resource roads, seismic lines, and utility corridors. There are thousands of abandoned well sites in Alberta, all of which remain 'on the books' for industry until sites are certified. Although individual well sites are a smaller footprint than open pit mining, they are associated with a network of access roads, pipelines and utility corridors. It is critical to reclaim these sites in order to prevent the further fragmentation of the boreal forest.

Dr. Xu's research includes front-end planning and techniques that lessen the environmental footprint of industrial activity. Further, Dr. Xu mentors college, polytechnic, and university students who, in turn, apply reclamation concepts in the field. This research program is truly innovative as it is yielding cost-effective solutions for industry to improve environmental performance in sensitive peatland settings.

Sincerely

Hugh Seaton
Director, NAIT Boreal Research Institute