

Partner Perspectives

Energy players value
the power of partnership



Oil & Gas Partners

TALISMAN ENERGY INC.

"We . . . see it as the ultimate in integrated land management, where all parties work together to reduce the human footprint on the landscape."

Rob Gibb, RPFT
*Government & Industry Relations,
Talisman Energy Inc.*

SEPTEMBER, 2009 – Five energy companies have signed on as core sponsoring partners with Foothills Research Institute: Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., ConocoPhillips Canada, EnCana Corporation, Petro-Canada (now Suncor) and Talisman Energy Inc. Their major five-year commitment to the Hinton-based institute gives them a seat at the table when research directions are planned.

The Challenge

As one of the more dominant and visible activities on a forested landscape that's treasured by Albertans and visitors alike, the oil and gas sector has to be very conscious of the "social licence" to operate – the consent of public and politicians to continue operations.

The sector's products will be in demand for a long time to come, but the regulatory cost of doing business is directly related to how well they demonstrate a determination to meet society's demands for appropriate environmental, cultural and economic stewardship on the landscape.

"We are very conscious of community concerns," says Rob Gibb, a Foothills Research Institute board member, a registered professional forest technologist and a staffer with Talisman Energy in government and industry relations.

The Solution

Gibb says the institute's core study area is rich in common issues and benefits for those interested in pursuing sustainability in natural resource development.

"For us, the main benefit of sponsoring Foothills Research Institute is from the stewardship point of view," says Gibb. "It's important that Talisman be invested in the issues of sustainable development. We want to support research and science linked to the development of new land management tools and policies.

Darcy Janko, environment group lead with EnCana Corporation's Canadian foothills division, says that the institute's integrated approach to research and land management provides a unique and effective means of doing research that will deliver solutions.

"These are things we absolutely have to know to operate on the landscape," he says. "Energy and forestry both operate under very strict stewardship guidelines and expectations."

The Results

Gibb cites the institute's grizzly bear research, which identifies priority habitat right down to which bears use which areas and at what time of the year, and for what purpose, as one example of the management tools his company needs. "This kind of information really helps us plan our activities to minimize impacts on bears."

Scott Grindal, senior environmental coordinator for environmental stewardship with ConocoPhillips Canada, agrees that corporate decisions on sustainable development have to be based on good science.

"Our decisions on sustainable development have to be based on good science. Foothills Research Institute delivers very credible, reliable, reputable science that is world-renowned, with the grizzly bear program as just one good example. It has direct application to what we in industry do on the landscape."

EnCana's Janko adds: "A key element for me is the way Foothills Research Institute provides a way for all sides to understand each other."