



INFORMATIONAL NOTICE 06-03

Annual Report Abandonment Fund Reserve Account Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2006

Abandonment Fund Reserve Account

The Abandonment Fund Reserve Account (“the Abandonment Fund”) is established under Section 172 of The Oil and Gas Act (“the Act”). The Abandonment Fund may be used as a source of funds to operate or abandon a well or facility that is non compliant with the Act where the licensee or permittee of the well or facility fails to comply. The Abandonment Fund may also be used to rehabilitate the site of an abandoned well or facility or to address any adverse effect on property caused by a well or facility. Expenditure from the Abandonment Fund on behalf of a licensee or permittee automatically creates a debt of the licensee or permittee to the Crown.

Annual Review of Abandonment Fund

Section 54.1 of the Drilling and Production Regulation (“the Regulation”) under the Act provides as follows:

Account reviewed annually

54.1 The director shall conduct an annual review of the Abandonment Fund Reserve Account and shall make a recommendation as to whether the amount of the non-refundable levy should be changed having regard to the account balance and the anticipated deposits to and expenditures from the account.

This is the Director’s report, as required by the Regulation, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

Opening Balance

The opening balance of the Abandonment Fund on April 1, 2005 was **\$172,472.84**.

Deposits (April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006)

Deposits into the Abandonment Fund are comprised of levies charged on issuance or transfer of certain licences and permits issued under the Act as well as annual levies for inactive wells and batteries. Accrued interest earned by the Abandonment Fund is also deposited. Deposits to the Abandonment Fund may also include recoveries of previous expenditures made from the Abandonment Fund.

Deposits into the Abandonment Fund during the 2005/06 fiscal year totaled **\$185,202.00**.

Levies on Licences and Permits

Levies for deposit in the Abandonment Fund are established by regulation.

The Drilling and Production Regulation provides for levies on well licences issued or transferred, battery operating permits issued and wells and batteries designated by the Director as inactive. The Geophysical Regulation provides for a levy on geophysical licences issued. Table 1 shows the levies charged under these regulations.

Table 1 – Regulatory Levies

Licence/Permit	Levy
Well Licence	\$250
Transfer of Well Licence	\$ 50 *
Battery Operating Permit	\$250
Geophysical Licence	\$ 50

* Subject to a maximum of \$1000 for any single well licence transfer application

In fiscal year 2005/06, the following levies were deposited into the Abandonment Fund:

Well Licences	\$94,000
Well Licence Transfers	\$ 1,200
Battery Operating Permits	\$ 250
Geophysical Licences	<u>\$ 650</u>
Total	\$96,100

Inactive Well and Battery Levies and Penalties

The Regulation provides for an annual levy on each well and battery that is designated by the Director as inactive. The following levies apply:

Class 1	a well that has not been operated for 5 years or less	\$150
Class 2	a well that has not been operated for more than 5 consecutive years but fewer than 10 consecutive years	\$500
Class 3	a well that has not been operated for 10 consecutive years or more	\$1,000
Class 4	an inactive battery	\$500

Prior to April 30 of each year, the Director advises operators of wells and batteries that have been designated as inactive for the previous calendar year including the inactive levy due for each well or battery. The operator is required to pay the inactive levy prior to July 31 of the same year unless the well or battery has been abandoned prior to that date. If the operator fails to pay the inactive levy prior to July 31, a penalty, equal to 25% of the outstanding levy is assessed. Failure to pay the inactive levy and penalty prior to October 31 of the same year results in an additional penalty, equal to 50% of the outstanding levy.

The following inactive well and battery levies and associated penalties were deposited into the Abandonment Fund during the 2004/05 fiscal year:

Inactive Levies	\$89,102
Late payment penalties	<u>\$ 2,025</u>
Total	\$91,127

Accrued Interest

Interest earned on the balance in the Abandonment Fund, at a rate prescribed by the Department of Finance, is deposited into the Abandonment Fund as provided for in the Act.

Accrued Interest 2005/06	\$1,360.64
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Recovery of Expenditures

Under the Act, where an expenditure is made from the Abandonment Fund on behalf of a licensee or permittee, that expenditure creates a debt of the licensee or permittee to the Crown. The Petroleum Branch has been successful in partial recovery of expenditures from the Abandonment Fund through marketing of oil recovered and salvage of equipment under Ministerial Seizure Orders and other collection initiatives. Any monies realized through these activities are deposited into the Abandonment Fund.

During 2006/06, \$0.00 was recovered for deposit into the Abandonment Fund.

Expenditures and Refunds (April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006)

During 2005/06, the Petroleum Branch completed clean up of contaminated waste from the Oilex battery site at 5-26-9-29 WPM. The material was hauled to Hazco's hazardous waste transfer facility by Sparks San & Gravel. This work was funded from the Abandonment Fund.

Expenditures and refunds from the Abandonment Fund in fiscal year 2005/06 totaled **\$5,185.00**.

Oilex Exploration Ltd.

Pursuant to a Ministerial Seizure Order dated September 28, 2001, the Director executed seizure of 11 wells and 2 batteries licensed or permitted to Oilex Exploration Ltd. on November 19, 2001. After attempts to generate interest from other operators in taking over some or all of the wells and batteries were unsuccessful, it was decided to proceed with abandonment. Abandonment operations were commenced in November 2001. As of March 31, 2005, 11 wells and the two batteries had been abandoned and the sites restored. The abandoned well and battery sites are under active rehabilitation.

Abandonment and restoration work was financed initially through a performance deposit of \$30,000 previously filed with the Branch by Oilex and subsequently through expenditures from the Abandonment Fund. Table 2 (attached) details expenditures to date on each well and on the 5-26 battery and salt water disposal site (including expenses not attributable to a specific well).

To date, gross expenditures from the Abandonment Fund under seizure of the Oilex properties is \$455,933.09 (net expenditures after salvage of equipment and marketing of oil recovered totals \$396,700.25).

Fawn Petroleums Ltd.

Pursuant to a Ministerial Seizure Order dated December 19, 2001, the Director executed seizure of three wells and one battery licensed or permitted to Fawn Petroleums Ltd. on March 4, 2002. After attempts to generate interest from other operators in taking over some or all of the wells were unsuccessful, it was decided to proceed with abandonment.

As of March 31, 2004, 3 wells and the battery had been abandoned and the sites restored. The abandoned well and battery sites are under active rehabilitation.

Abandonment and restoration work was financed initially through a performance deposit of \$19,600 previously filed with the Branch by Fawn and subsequently through expenditures from the Abandonment Fund. Table 2 (attached) details expenditures to date on each well and on the battery site.

To date, gross expenditures from the Abandonment Fund under seizure of the Fawn properties are \$72,716.15 (net expenditures after salvage of equipment and marketing of oil recovered totals \$61,909.37).

SE/4 of Section 10-10-28 WPM

Under the authority of the Minister, the Branch excavated and disposed of oil and salt water contaminated soil from an earthen pit on an old abandoned battery site in the SE/4 of Section 10-10-28 WPM. To date total expenditures from the Abandonment Fund for site clean up are \$17,565.75.

Tancam Consulting Ltd.

Pursuant to a Ministerial Seizure Order dated January 31, 2005, the Director executed seizure of 3 wells and 1 battery licensed or permitted to Tancam Consulting Ltd. on June 1, 2005. After attempts to generate interest from other operators in taking over some or all of the wells and batteries were unsuccessful, it was decided to proceed with abandonment in 2006. Abandonment costs are estimated to be \$80,000.00.

Closing Balance

The closing balance of the Abandonment Fund as at March 31, 2006 was **\$355,623.48.**

Forecast of Revenues and Expenditures

The following revenues are forecast for the Abandonment Fund during fiscal year 2006/07:

Well Licences	\$100,000
Transfer of Well Licences	\$ 1,500
Battery Operating Permits	\$ 500
Geophysical Licences	\$ 750
Inactive Well Levies	\$100,000
Interest	<u>\$ 1,500</u>
Total	\$229,250

In 2005/06 expenditures will be required to continue active rehabilitation of the Oilex sites. Pursuant to a Ministerial Seizure Order dated January 31, 2005, the Director executed seizure of three wells and one battery licensed or permitted to Tancam Consulting Ltd. on June 1, 2005. The Branch was not successful in its attempts to generate interest from other operators in taking over some or all of the wells formerly operated by Tancam Consulting; the wells will be abandoned at an estimated cost of \$80,000.

Total expenditures from the Abandonment Fund in fiscal year 2006/07 are estimated at **\$85,000**.

Recommendation

A number of factors have combined to reduce funding pressure on the Abandonment Fund:

- (a) increased oil and gas activity has increased levies deposited into the Abandonment Fund;
- (b) increased oil prices have resulted in the assets of some insolvent operators being sold and the wells reactivated; and
- (c) Bill 21 - The Oil and Gas Amendment and Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act, which is awaiting proclamation, provides for two new funding sources, one statutory and one discretionary, for the Abandonment Fund,
 - i. interest on cash performance deposits held under the Act are to be directed into the Abandonment Fund; and
 - ii. up to 3% of Crown oil royalties may be directed into the Abandonment Fund.

The current Abandonment Fund balance is adequate for the Department to take escalating enforcement action against delinquent operators in a timely manner. Therefore it is recommended that previously proposed levy increases for wells and batteries designated inactive for calendar year 2006, be delayed and reviewed again in FY 2006/07.

Keith Lowdon
Acting Director

Table 2
Abandonment and Rehabilitation Costs

	Performance Deposit Expenditure	Fund Expenditures			Total Expenditures
		2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
A. Oilex Exploration Corporation					
Oilex Daly 5-26-9-29WPM (battery and general)	\$ 979.00	\$ 33,705.84	\$ 25,239.97		\$ 59,924.81
Oilex CNWE et al Daly 15-19-9-29 WPM	\$ -	\$ 17,323.78	\$ -		\$ 17,323.78
Oilex Daly 2-26-9-29 WPM	\$ -	\$ 23,485.47	\$ -		\$ 23,485.47
Oilex Ebor Unit No. 1 3-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 6,935.23	\$ 19,723.54	\$ 92,675.88	\$71,906.34	\$191,240.99
Oilex Ebor Unit No. 1 4-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 12,483.74	\$ 4,982.72	\$ -		\$ 17,466.46
Oilex Ebor Unit No. 1 6-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 162.13	\$ 20,489.95	\$ -		\$ 20,652.08
Oilex Daly Prov. 9-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 162.13	\$ 70,685.76	\$ 429.38		\$ 71,277.27
Oilex Daly Prov. 10-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 162.14	\$ 14,125.99	\$ 429.37		\$ 14,717.50
Oilex Ebor Unit No. 1 11-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 162.13	\$ 17,264.55	\$ -		\$ 17,426.68
Oilex Ebor Unit No. 1 12-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 8,629.23	\$ 762.23	\$ -		\$ 9,391.46
Oilex Daly 13-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 162.13	\$ 20,098.09	\$ -		\$ 20,260.22
Oilex Daly 14A-26-9-29 WPM	\$ 162.14	\$ 22,604.23	\$ -		\$ 22,766.37
Oilex Totals	\$ 30,000.00	\$265,252.15	\$ 118,774.60	\$71,906.34	\$485,933.09
B. Fawn Petroleums Ltd.					
Fawn Lulu Lake Prov. 16-14-1-21 (battery)	\$ 325.00	\$ 8,578.17	\$ 20,867.55		\$ 29,770.72
Fawn Lulu Lake Prov. 15-14-1-21 WPM	\$ 13,998.92	\$ 1,204.84	\$ -		\$ 15,203.76
Fawn Lulu Lake Prov. 16-14MZ-1-21 WPM	\$ -	\$ 30,369.44	\$ -		\$ 30,369.44
Fawn Lulu Lake Prov. 2-23-1-21 WPM	\$ 5,276.08	\$ 11,696.15	\$ -		\$ 16,972.23
Total Costs	\$ 19,600.00	\$ 51,848.60	\$ 20,867.55		\$ 92,316.15
C. SE/4-10-10-28 WPM					
SE/4-10-10-28 WPM	\$ -	\$ 1,429.90	\$ 15,025.85	\$1,110	\$17,565.75
Total Costs	\$ -	\$ 1,429.90	\$ 15,025.85	\$1,110	\$ 17,565.75

