

Reclamation and Closure

What's Next

In 2022, Castle Mountain reached an agreement with the Desert Research Institute to establish a collaborative long-term program to advance and analyze the success of Joshua Tree seedling germination, transplantation and survivorship.

We will increase the number of reporting indicators across the organization to include key performance indicators for biodiversity, such as protected species and critical habitats, and have set a 2022 target to achieve TSM Level A rating for at least 75% of the indicators of the Biodiversity Conservation protocol across all operations. Level A rating requires:

- Demonstrated senior management commitment to achieve identified biodiversity outcomes
- Communication on our commitment to biodiversity conservation to relevant employees, contractors and local stakeholders
- Clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for implementation of the commitment
- Having a plan or management system to manage potential impacts on biodiversity

Equinox Gold is committed to being a responsible steward of the lands on which we operate, not only during operations but also through mine closure. While mining has an inevitable impact on the land, we strive to minimize our impact by performing progressive reclamation activities during the life of mine. When we are finished working in an area we immediately begin reclaiming the land, replanting as appropriate or implementing closure plans that have been established in collaboration with regulators and local communities.

Our closure plans prioritize public safety and environmental protection. They are in place to ensure that local communities, governments and the Company do not face long-term environmental impacts, risk or liabilities. Our goal is to return the land as closely as possible to its original state. That starts with protecting the long-term health and viability of the natural environment surrounding or affected by our activities throughout the mine's operating life. We also research the best techniques to achieve our closure commitments so we can optimize the closure process, sometimes partnering with local universities or other parties to achieve these goals.

As part of the permitting process, all Equinox Gold sites have long-term closure plans that are updated during each stage of development to ensure successful reclamation when operations cease. We study and learn from the international mining community to identify and adopt relevant best practices, which includes conserving seed banks and setting aside reclamation materials such as organics and top soil that we will use for closure. We also maintain a site nursery with plants that are salvaged during the clearing process or grown from locally sourced seed that can be used to replant areas as they are reclaimed. When undertaking reclamation, we set vegetation density and species targets that mirror the surrounding natural area so we can monitor the success of our reclamation activities.

Aurizona Wetland Protection and Seedling Nursery

Our Aurizona Mine is located near wetlands that are part of the Brazilian Amazon biome. These wetlands are host to an extraordinary diversity of plants and animals and are fundamental to the conservation of global biodiversity and protection of the Amazon ecosystem.

We have programs in place to monitor the health and diversity of flora and fauna in the region, including a partnership with the Ecos de Gaia Institute. This partnership includes flora and fauna relocation and rescue programs, monitoring the health of local ecosystems and relocating native plant and animal species to increase diversity in areas that have been reforested.

As part of our commitment to environmental protection and progressive site reclamation, Aurizona rehabilitates areas that have been previously used for exploration or mining activities. To support its reforestation efforts, Aurizona has a seedling nursery for native species with the capacity to produce more than 18,000 seedlings a year from a native seed bank. Since 2018, nearly 9,000 seedlings have been planted in areas surrounding the mine, beginning the reforestation process across more than 118,540 m² of land.

This program has been aided by a committed composting effort by site employees. Every day our employees separate compostable material from other waste streams in our meal rooms. During 2021, almost 39,000 kilograms of food waste was diverted to composting, making useful fertilizer from waste.

Aurizona also donates seedlings to neighbouring communities and its employees, which helps to support reforestation efforts and also provides community education on the importance of biodiversity and environmental protection, to ensure the long-term health of the Brazilian Amazon biome.

Progressive Reclamation at Los Filos

During 2016-2021, progressive reclamation at Los Filos has been carried out to ensure the physical and chemical stability of the waste rock piles. To control erosion, the team reshapes the slopes, constructs water diversion channels and installs mats of biodegradable material. Other work to maintain physical stability includes hydroseeding with grasses and reforestation with species native to the region, with about a 90% success rate. Finally, we incorporate findings from environmental studies to achieve soil restoration efforts and re-establishment of native flora and fauna so the area can revert to its natural ecosystem.

In total 121 hectares of waste rock have been reshaped and 84 hectares have been hydroseeded, reforested and had structures installed to guard against wind and rain erosion. Successful re-establishment of vegetation has resulted in a noticeable increase of biological activity in the reclaimed areas. Our monitoring programs show that many species of insects, birds, mammals and reptiles have established themselves or have used reclaimed areas to move from one habitat to another.



April 2017



May 2021

2021 Performance

During 2021, all Equinox Gold operations carried out progressive reclamation activities at our mine sites, reclaiming a total of 114 hectares of land.

What's Next

In 2022, Equinox Gold operations will carry out progressive reclamation activities and we will continue to align our practices, systems, and standards with the RGMP on Biodiversity, Land Use and Mine Closure. We will also ensure closure plans are reviewed and updated for all sites.