

History of the BC OGRIS

The B.C. Government created the BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) in 1998 to streamline applications and approval processes for the oil and gas industry. The Commission assumed responsibility formerly held by three ministries to regulate the oil and gas industry in the province. Industry agreed to fund a new “Environment Fund” and allocated \$5 million industry funds over five years to support studies concerning practical ways of addressing environmental issues related to oil and gas exploration and development in Northeast British Columbia.

In 2002, CAPP and EPAC (renamed from the Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada—SEPAAC) restated their support the Environment Fund. However, it was agreed to refocus and rename the Fund the Science Community and Environmental Knowledge (SCEK) Fund. The Steering Committee changed the fund from a purely researched-based, environment fund to a broader based fund which incorporates science and community environmental knowledge. SCEK would be funded by industry through directing a portion of fees and levies.

In July 2011 CAPP and EPAC entered in to a 5-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the B.C. Government to direct funds to support the implementation of the B.C. Government Boreal Caribou Management Plan. Industry agreed to pay up to \$2,000,000 per year for 5 years (total of \$10,000,000). Industry contributions were collected through fees and levies as with the SCEK Fund and SCEK provided financial and contracting services to support the implementation of the MOU. The expenditure of ‘Caribou funds’ are approved by the “MOU Strategic Lead Team” (MSLT) with technical advice and support provided by the “Research and Effectiveness Monitoring Board” (REMB) as outlined in the July 2011 MOU.

As planned, the SCEK Fund was superseded by the B.C. Oil and Gas Research and Innovation Society (OGRIS). OGRIS came into existence under the BC Societies Act on April 1, 2015 and assumed all the roles and responsibilities of the SCEK Fund. The change was required as the SCEK Fund did not previously exist as a legal entity. The SCEK Fund’s status created liability exposure for directors and fiscal and contractual challenges when partnering with government agencies and third parties. The creation of OGRIS as an entity under the Societies Act permits directors to be protected with Directors Liability Insurance and enables the fund to accept financial contributions from government entities and other third parties.