The Conclusions of Nova Scotia’s Surface Coal Mine Reclamation Enhancement Initiative¹

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In order to confirm that today’s leading mine reclamation practices provide the necessary protection to the environment, the Nova Scotia Minister of Natural Resources established the Surface Coal Mine Reclamation Enhancement Initiative to test reclamation practices in the CBRM and to evaluate the results. Reclamation practices were tested on a small scale at three locations: Little Pond, Tobin Road and Toronto Road, and on a larger scale at Pioneer Coal, Point Aconi. This study presents the scientific case for our conclusion that when mining companies plan for and employ best surface coal mine reclamation practices, land in Nova Scotia can be returned to an Acadian forest, or other alternative beneficial land use. The study describes how soil can be made more accessible to native pioneer plants to become established; how to preserve living organisms in the organic soil layer; how to create micro-habitats for seed germination and erosion control; how to encourage biodiversity; and how best to encourage the spread of vegetation on a reclaimed site. Surface coal mining is only a temporary use of the land, the study demonstrates, and can provide opportunities to create desirable landforms with thorough initial planning.