

INSIDE ENERPLUS: Geologists on the hunt for elusive and hard-to-reach oil and gas reserves

by **ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON**

To make Enerplus work effectively, it requires the development of an integrated team of professionals. Everyone brings something to the table.



It takes the latest and best technologies as well as talent and teamwork to overcome the complex challenges of accessing hard-to-reach oil and gas reserves. At Enerplus, geologists not only have the technology of a big organization but also the feeling that each individual on the team is impacting the process and is helping to drive the company's success.

"I came to Enerplus knowing they have a great respect for people and for their technical and business abilities," says Chief geologist Brian Zaitlin who joined Enerplus this year and has been in the industry since 1981.

"Also, they were expanding into new growth areas and I thought this would be an excellent chance to become immersed in the spectrum of different opportunities both in Canada and the U.S."

From shallow gas to deep tight gas to tight oil and waterfloods, Enerplus relies on geologists to help locate and develop resource plays and identify and resolve the technical challenges that need to be overcome to get at them.

While resource plays do not have the high risk nature of conventional oil and gas exploration, understanding the rock and being able to identify the "sweet spots" in the reservoir and work

with engineering to unlock the value of these plays is a critical part of the geologic work at Enerplus. With its growth, the company is looking for more talented individuals to augment its team.

"One of my areas is Tommy Lakes in northern B.C. — this area is extremely remote; you wouldn't want to get lost there," says senior geologist Christopher Collom. Collom joined Enerplus Resources earlier this year when they grew by acquiring Focus Energy.

"Enerplus provides opportunities for you to really leave your fingerprint on a project," Collom says. "For me, and from the perspective of my project, they've given me a lot of latitude to carry on (at Tommy Lakes)."

In addition to working at Enerplus, Collom also teaches his craft at the University of Calgary and says the hope is budding geologists can enter the field directly from graduation — although hopefully with some summer-student experience under their belts. A strength at Enerplus, he says, is the company belief in mentorship.

"You want to come into the industry (via) a company that's willing to mentor you and lead you along at a pace that allows you to develop rather than dying of sticker shock," Collom says. "That's when you're thrown onto a project cold and left to flounder. It doesn't help you and it doesn't help the company."

Enerplus is committed to career development, says Zaitlin.

"We'll take our people on field trips, do in-house courses — we try to make sure

they see the full spectrum of the industry," he says. "That's the full life cycle, from conceptualization of the play, to the acquisition of the land, to the testing of the play,



CHRISTOPHER COLLOM

to development, to optimization. There are different skill sets and training needed at each part."

"Enerplus has reached critical mass," Zaitlin continues, "meaning someone in 'G and G' (geology and geophysics), is exposed to almost all the major plays being pursued both in Western Canada, and throughout North America; with tight oil from the

Bakken in the Dakotas and Montana to deep gas in Utah, and from pool optimization in Manitoba to Deep Basin in B.C."

"We expect to significantly expand our technical staff including the G and G area in the next two to three years."

Achieving both technical and business success requires the development of an integrated team of professionals, explains Zaitlin. "Everyone brings something to the table.

"A company like Enerplus makes a difference and gives you the opportunity to do meaningful work," he adds. "As we grow, the options for new hires and the ability of people to be exposed to variety in their career environment goes up exponentially as well."

Collom says he values the quality and camaraderie of the people he works with at Enerplus.

"It makes you get up in the morning and come downtown and look forward to doing the work," he says.



NAME: Chris Coolican
YEARS AT ENERPLUS: 2
PROFESSION: Geologist, Peace River Arch Team

Our Resources

Why did you join Enerplus?

I knew some people who worked here and I liked how they described the corporate culture.

Do you think Enerplus provides career growth potential?

Enerplus has a large land base so I have the opportunity to work on many different plays in different parts of the basin.

What do you like best about Enerplus?

I'm part of a technically strong team of people that are also fun to work with.

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