TAILINGS AND MINE WASTE 2026

CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

SHORT COURSE

BEYOND SAFE CLOSURE: PRACTICAL PATHWAYS FOR LONG TERM PERFORMANCE

Date: November 8, 2026

Duration: Half-day

Information provided here is subject to change.

Objective:

- The objective of this workshop is to build directly on the 2025 Banff "GISTM Safe Closure: Engaging in Dialogue on Realities and Misconceptions" session by moving the industry from shared understanding toward practical application and accountability. While the 2025 workshop focused on defining Safe Closure, surfacing misconceptions, and identifying unresolved technical and implementation challenges, this 2026 session is designed to translate those discussions into actionable pathways for long-term performance, risk management, and defensible decision-making across active and legacy facilities.

Course Summary:

- This is a half-day, practitioner-focused workshop that builds on shared understanding and supports practical discussion around the application of Safe Closure. Building on the 2025 Banff dialogue, this 2026 session emphasizes long-term performance, risk management, and defensible decision-making for both active and legacy facilities. Participants will explore evolving interpretations of Safe Closure under GISTM, confront persistent misconceptions, and examine what Safe Closure is—and is not—through facilitated discussions, interactive Q&A, and cross-industry case studies.

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Course Description:

- **Introduction and Overview**
  - Opening Remarks & Workshop Objectives
  - Welcome and introduction
  - Why elevate the conversation beyond “Safe Closure” in 2026
  - Overview of workshop flow and expected outcomes
- **Session 1: From Safe Closure to Long Term Performance**
  - Brief recap of 2025 outcomes
  - Evolving interpretations of Safe Closure in industry & GISTM context
  - What’s still unclear? What’s changing?
  - Top challenges based on 2025 practitioners report
- **Session 2: Common Misconceptions About Safe Closure**
  - Identifying and addressing common misconceptions about safe closure
  - Discussion on what safe closure is not: temporary or incomplete fixes, walkaway, good-looking facility, and ignoring environmental & community impacts
  - **Interactive Q&A Session:** Open floor for participants to ask questions and share their experiences with challenges and misconceptions in their own projects.
- **Session 3: Safe Closure in Practice — Case Studies From Across the Industry**
  - **Case Study Presentations:** Presentations of a real-world safe closure case study, highlighting the challenges, strategies, and lessons learned.
  - **Open Discussion:** Participants discuss additional case studies based on their experiences, focusing on key takeaways and lessons learned.
  - **Interactive Q&A Session:** Open floor for participants to ask questions and share their insights related to the case studies discussed.
- **Closing Remarks and Networking**
  - Summary of key takeaways from the workshop
  - Opportunities for further learning and collaboration
- **Networking session**

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Presenters:

Sam Abbaszadeh
Technical Practice Lead, Stantec

Sam Abbaszadeh is a senior civil engineer working in the mining sector, with a primary focus on mine waste and tailings management, supporting responsible, resilient, and sustainable tailings solutions.

Cassandra Hall
Manager, TCLW, Freeport-McMoRan

Cassandra Hall is a manager in the corporate Tailings, Crushed Leach, and Water group at Freeport-McMoRan, where Cassandra Hall has worked for 14 years. In this role, Cassandra Hall is responsible for the management and oversight of tailings and water dam stewardship programs across multiple operations and serves as the Responsible Tailings Facility Engineer (RTFE) for several inactive Tailings facilities.

Mohammad Rashidi
Geotechnical Team Lead, Stantec

Mohammad Rashidi is a geotechnical engineer with over 14 years of experience in tailings and dam engineering, supporting the design, assessment, and governance of tailings storage facilities and water dams. Mohammad Rashidi has served as Engineer of Record and Deputy Engineer of Record for several facilities in Arizona, Nevada, and Washington.

Steven Siemoneit
Chief Engineer, TCLW, Freeport-McMoRan

Steven Siemoneit is a Senior Engineer - Tailings & Water with Freeport-McMoRan Inc. Previous experience includes TSF monitoring and management, environmental management, and surface and underground mining exploration. Current responsibilities include TSF monitoring and management to reduce and mitigate risk in alignment with FCX tailings practices and goals. Steven Siemoneit serves as the Site Tailings Engineer for three sites comprising 15 closed TSF facilities in Arizona and supports several other sites in the Southwest. Steven Siemoneit holds a B.S. in Geological Engineering from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

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Matt Pauly
Geotechnical Team Lead, Stantec

Matt Pauly is a geotechnical engineer at Stantec with nearly a decade of experience across mining projects. Matt Pauly currently serves as the Deputy Engineer of Record for three tailings storage facilities in Arizona, applying multidisciplinary expertise to support project success.

George Afriyie
Principal Tailings and Dam Engineer, Newmont

George Afriyie is a geotechnical engineer with Newmont, supporting governance, technical oversight, and the safe management of tailings storage facilities and water storage facilities across the portfolio.

Allison Brown
Director, Reclamation and Closure, Barrick

Allison Brown is an environmental scientist and Professional Geoscientist with over 20 years of international mining experience, with a focus on integrating and executing sustainable closure projects across the business.