

Unlocking our Potential



JANUARY 2024

**Celebrating
Excellence
in Mining and
Exploration
(MAX) in
Canada's
Northwest
Territories**

**The people and projects
making a difference**

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**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

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Cover photo:
A custom-molded ice sculpture of a padlock, mirroring the MAX Theme of
"Unlocking Our Potential" for the 2023 MAX Awards November 16, 2023
Photo: Bill Braden Photography

HERE ARE THE 'NEW'S

(JANUARY 2024) It's more than a New Year in Canada's Northwest Territories. The territory's new government (elected in December) will soon be getting down to business with some new faces at the helm – including the Hon. Caitlin Cleveland, the new Minister responsible for mining.



Hon. Caitlin Cleveland
Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment
Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment
Government of the Northwest Territories

One of Minister Cleveland's primary tasks will be to bring the NWT's new *Mineral Resources Act* into force. It represents a modern, uniquely-NWT approach to responsible and balanced mineral prospecting, exploration, development, and production - and will pave the way, in time, for new way of staking claims (online).

Our centrefold in this issue features a roadmap to the NWT's new *Mineral Resources Act*.

Meanwhile, the Northwest Territories is experiencing a new mineral cycle and that means new players, new commodities, and a new appreciation for how the government works with industry in the North. You can read about that in our stories: *The Single Best Thing* (p. 18) and *Northern Critical Minerals* (p. 20).

A renewed energy was definitely notable at November's Geoscience Conference in Yellowknife (Check out our cover story on the MAX awards beginning on p.6) where new featured showcase presentations added to the regular fare of science-based presentations and reporting.

In all of this, we are not looking past gold or diamonds or any of the other metals. And we continue to work with each of you to build on the Indigenous partnerships, exploration, proven geoscience and mining success that are enabling us to Unlock Our Potential.

It was the right thing to do!

NWT mining industry provides unflinching and significant contributions in the face of 2023 wildfires.

As wildfires raged through the southern Northwest Territories during the summer of 2023, mines and exploration companies were among the many who put business aside and stepped up to help battle the blazes.

While exploration companies had to abandon their sites and even summer work plans, diamond mines remained open, but experienced staff shortages and supply chain disruptions due to evacuation orders, highway closures and air traffic restrictions.

Still, they freed up resources like helicopters, pumps and safety personnel to supplement fire crews and redeployed staff to man government firefighting efforts.

Their efforts did not go unrecognized.

At the territory's annual awards gala celebrating excellence in northern mining, **Ekati**, **Diavik** and **Gahcho Kué**, along with **Pine Point Mining** and **Gold Terra**, were collectively awarded a MAX Award (MAX is a quasi-acronym for Mining and Exploration) for Environmental and Social Leadership.

They were praised for their unflinching and significant contributions to support emergency efforts during the unprecedented emergency.

"Yellowknife was evacuated in mid-August; that left tons of equipment and nobody to run it," said Kenny Ruptash, president of the territory's chamber of mines, at the awards ceremony.

"Diavik sent in workers to build fire breaks, while smaller companies donated everything from food to helicopter hours."

More than a half a million dollars from Rio Tinto and De Beers also flowed into relief efforts and emergency response.



Above, top: Leonel Menendez, an Operational Technology Specialist at Gahcho Kué mine volunteered his time to provide IT support in Yellowknife during the evacuation and also assisted in garbage collection. Photo courtesy of Debeers Group of Companies

Above: Gahcho Kué mine helped to coordinate food shipments into Fort Resolution and Lutsel K'e, communities cut off from regular food resupply due to the closure of the Yellowknife Airport and the highway due to wildfires. The company chartered aircraft from Air Tindi, picked up food from Yk stores for delivery to the airport and even collected produce grown in Yellowknife to add to the shipment. Photo courtesy of Debeers Group of Companies

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MAX Celebrates the People and Projects Making a Difference

A former NWT premier, a new gas project and the NWT's first diamond mine reclamation project were among 11 recipients of the industry's Mining And Exploration (MAX) awards, November 16, 2023 in Yellowknife.

The evening also featured a keynote address from Paul Gruner, recently appointed the CEO for Tẖcẖq Investment Corporation, and a fund-raising event for Yellowknife's Adopt a Family with auctioneer Wally Schumann. Padlock-shaped ice carvings on the theme "Unlocking Our Potential" decorated each table at the Centre Ice Plaza, artfully transformed into the MAX banquet venue. Ice-encased logos of the principal sponsors anchored the bar.

One noteworthy honour was the one-time Special Achievement Award, presented posthumously to

Don Bubar and accepted by his son, Andrew. It was created to honour Bubar's decade-long development of the Nechalacho Rare Earth Project, his national advocacy for Indigenous inclusion in resource development, and education on mining and minerals for youth.

First staged in 2017, MAX is a joint venture between the NWT/NU Chamber of Mines and the GNWT's Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. It's paired with the annual Yellowknife Geoscience Forum, which marked its 51st year.



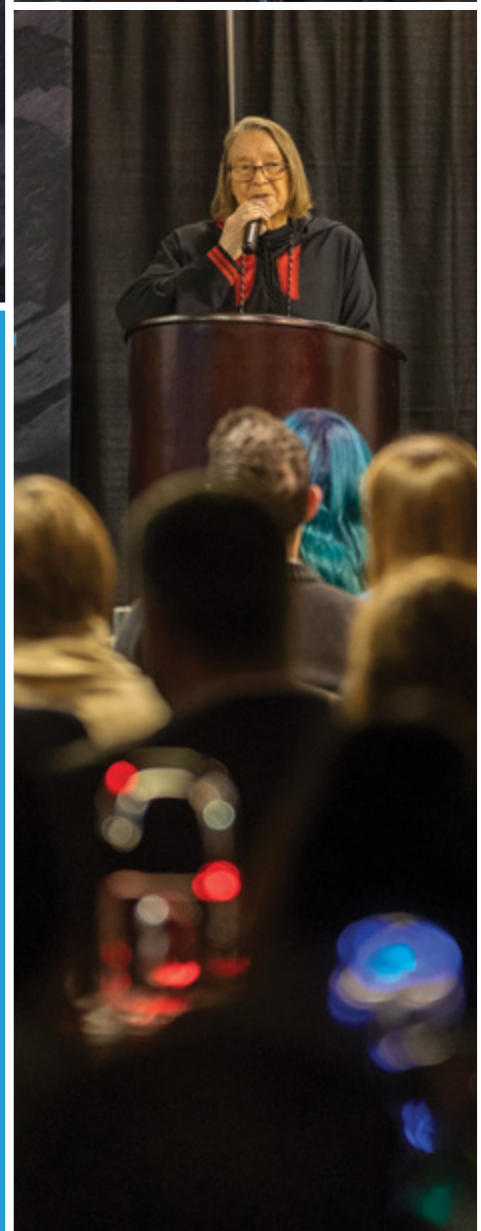
From top: Grace Mackenzie makes her way to the podium to receive the MAX Women in Mining Award.

Above left: The MAX Award for Indigenous Achievement went to the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation for its work to bring into production the M-18 gas well near Tuktoyaktuk. Presented to IPC Chair and CEO Duane Smith by ITI Deputy Minister Pam Strand.

Above right: The MAX Environmental, Social & Governance Award was shared by the Ekati, Diavik and Gahcho Kué diamond mines, Pine Point Mining, & Gold Terra Resources for major contributions to support wildfire control this summer. Presented by Chamber President Kenny Ruptash (far right) to: Mike Lowing (Diavik), Kelly Brenton (Gahcho Kué), Ryan Bachynski (Gold Terra), Andrew Williams (Pine Point) and Sheila Chernys (Ekati).

Photos courtesy NWT/NU Chamber of Mines/billbradenphoto





Top left opposite page: Paul Gruner, CEO of Tychog Investment Corporation, gave a brief and impassioned keynote speech promoting the potential for the resource industry across the North.

Top right opposite page: The MAX Award for Distinguished Service was presented to Nellie Cournoyea, CM, for her lifelong leadership roles among the Inuvialuit and in the NWT Legislature. Presented by former NWT Premier Bob McLeod.

Bottom left opposite page: Auctioneer Wally Schumann cajoled more than \$30,000 from the crowd in a spirited fund-raising auction for Yellowknife's Adopt-a-Family programs. Kelly Brenton shows an Inuit carving provided by De Beers Canada.

Top left: The MAX Special Achievement Award presented posthumously to Don Bubar and accepted by his son, Andrew, presented by past Chamber president Gary Vivian.

Top right: The MAX Award for Economic Leadership presented to the MET/Nuna joint venture for its three-year contract to decommission the Snap Lake Diamond Mine. Presented to Mark Whitford, president of the North Slave Metris Alliance, by Kelly Brenton, Social Performance Manager for De Beers Canada.

Bottom left: The WSCC Safety Award to Sheila Chernys of Burgundy Diamonds' Ekati Mine for her passion and leadership for best safety practice at the territorial and national levels. Presented by WSCC Chief Mining and OHS Inspector, Corey Ingram.

Bottom right: Nellie Cournoyea, CM, speaking at the podium.

Photos courtesy
NWT/NU Chamber of
Mines/billbradenphoto

The NWT's MRA: A road map

The first made-in-the-North approach to governing mineral development in the Northwest Territories was passed in the NWT's Legislative Assembly in 2019.

Today, as the regulations that will bring the NWT's new Mineral Resources Act into force, advance through the territory's unique, collaborative legislative process, we are starting to understand how the NWT's new approach to mining will work.

Gone is the one-size-fits-all framework inherited from the federal government. Instead, the NWT's new way of doing business is characterized, most notably, by elements designed to simplify, promote and standardize the relationship that must exist between

the NWT's Indigenous interests and mining companies and prospectors in order for projects to succeed.

In this sense, the new legislation formalizes many of the NWT's existing and industry-leading approaches.

It is not just that the NWT is "open" for business, but rather that business gets done in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of NWT residents; their business interests, cultures, traditions and priorities.

Yes, hard work and meaningful relationships take more investment upfront. But, they are proven to secure support and acceptance for projects through their full lifecycle.

Additionally, the MRA facilitates increased opportunities for exploration by providing more time on claims before they must transition

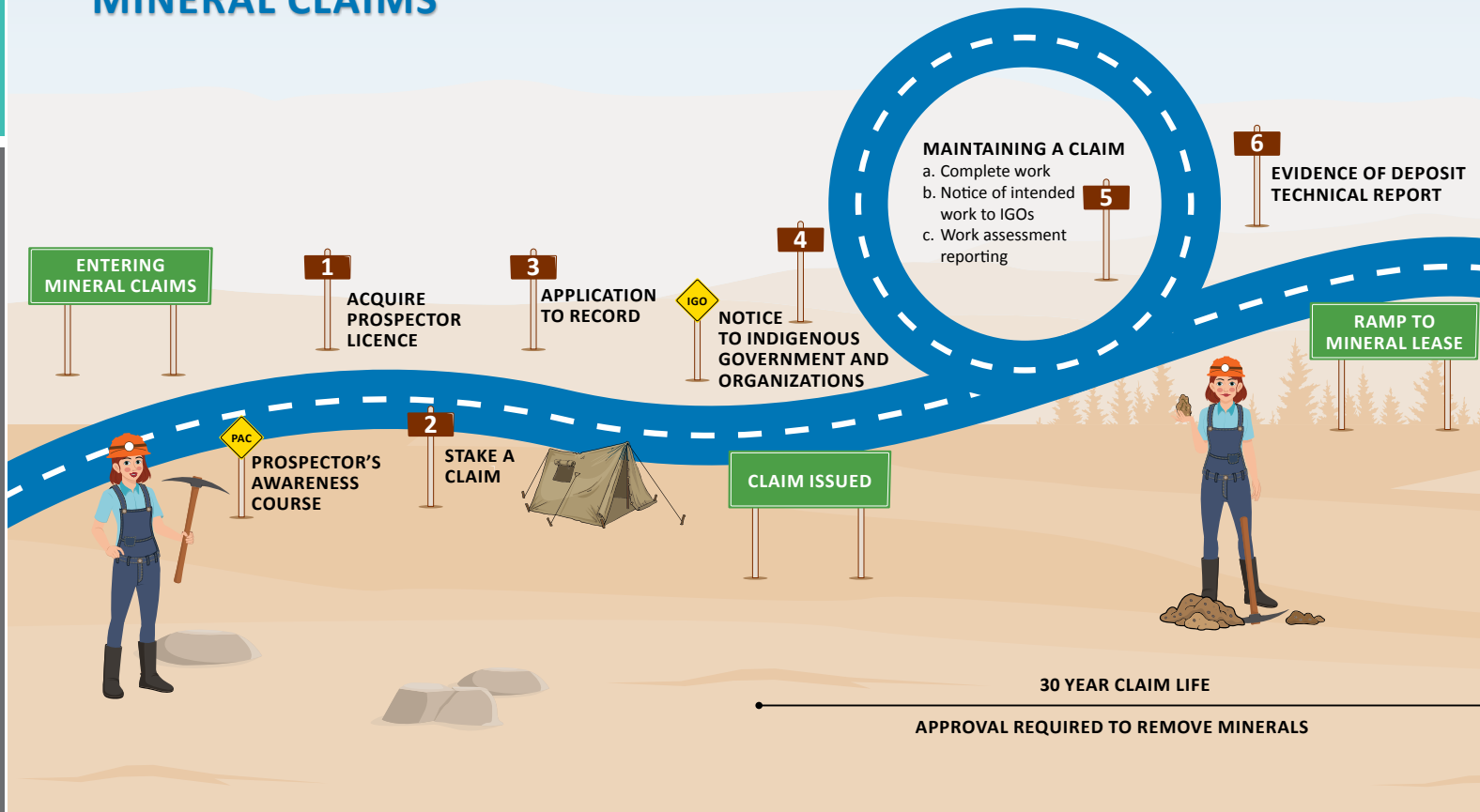
to leases; and the collection of more and higher-quality geoscience to support the greatly-anticipated move to online map staking.

The next three pages depict the journey of a resource project in a road map; from the very beginning of the mining cycle when a claim is staked, through the advanced exploration on a mineral lease, to the development of a mine; extraction, production, and finally remediation.

The road to a successful mining project will never be without its bumps or turns. But the NWT is betting on the fact that early planning and dialogue will make the overall journey much smoother. Turn the page for an early tour.



MINERAL CLAIMS



Prospect to stake and record a claim

The first step for any person or company exploring in the NWT will be to complete the Prospector Awareness Course. This course will introduce new-to-the-NWT prospectors (and re-familiarize existing prospectors) to the NWT regulatory system, the logistical intricacies of working here and the importance of building and respecting relationships with Indigenous Governments, Organizations, and communities.

Completion of the course will be a requirement to obtain a Prospector's Licence (#1); which, by the way, will be valid for five years (as opposed to just one year today). A Prospector's Licence will allow you to prospect in

the NWT i.e. physically stake a claim (#2). (Eventually, physical staking will be replaced by online map staking but that is still a few miles away.)

The next step is to file an Application to Record a Claim with the NWT's Mining Recorders Office (#3).

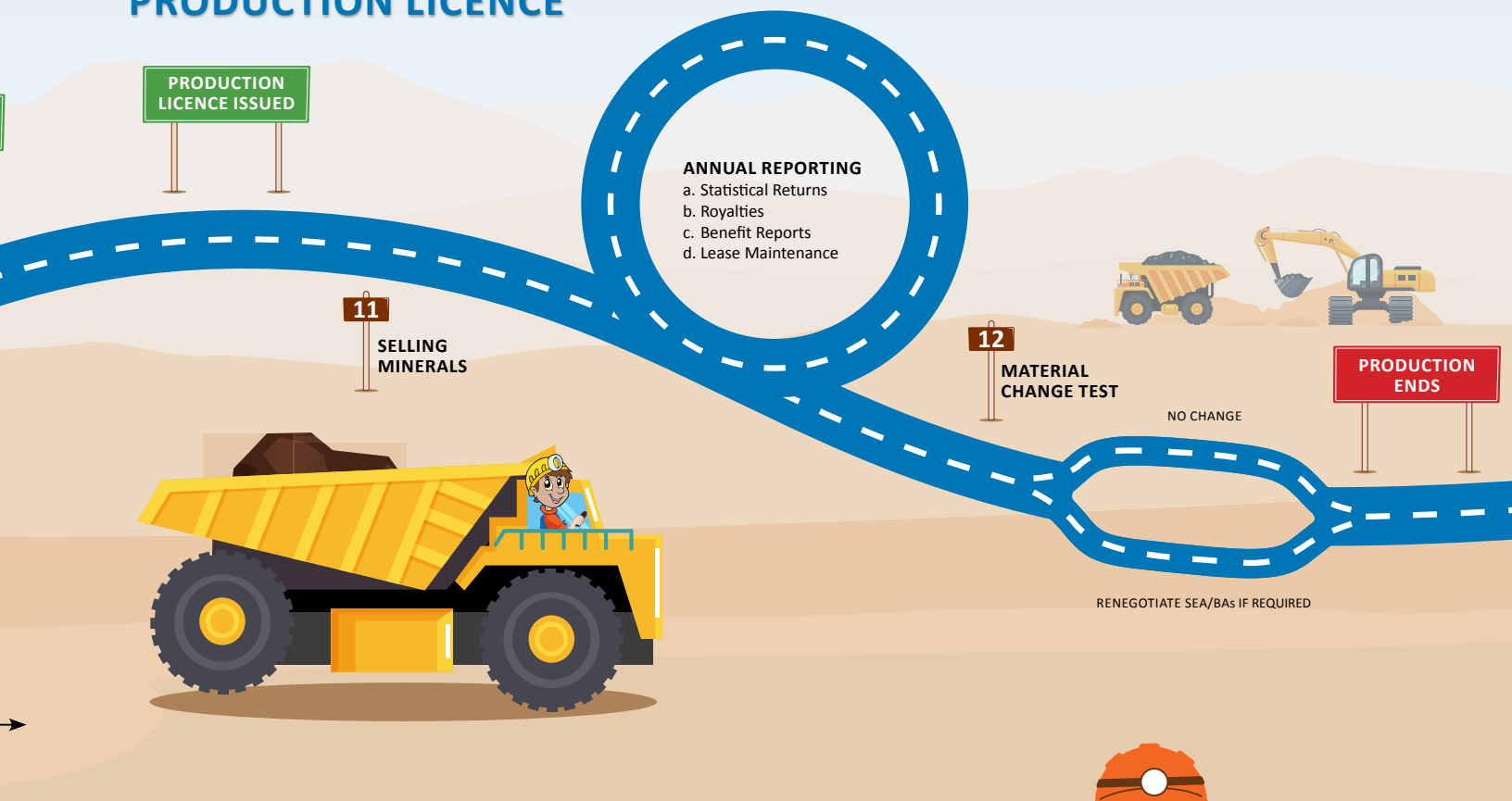
Once all the required information is provided, the Mining Recorder sends a Notice of Application to Record a Claim to the Indigenous Governments and Organizations near the proposed activities (#4). This is the first formal notice of planned activity. It is designed to initiate an early dialogue (30 days) between the prospector/company and the NWT's Indigenous interests; to address early issues, answer questions and start building relationships.

If, for example, concerns are shared with prospectors about culturally sensitive lands, proposed claim boundaries can be adjusted or changed. After the identified 30-Days are up, the claim is recorded. A recorded claim under the new Act will be good for up to 30 years (which is an extension of the current 10-year life today).

Conduct work to maintain a recorded claim

The 'roundabout' on our roadmap highlights that a minimum amount of work (including expenses) must be conducted to maintain a recorded claim (#5). To this end, activities advancing indigenous engagement are eligible.

PRODUCTION LICENCE



Agreements for benefits might be required

A project that is expected to exceed \$75 million in capital expenditures and/or provide more than 150 person years of work must engage and negotiate a Benefit Agreement (#9) with each qualifying Indigenous Government and Organization; and a Socio-Economic Agreement (#10) between the company and the GNWT.

Small-scale projects falling below this threshold can proceed without these agreements.

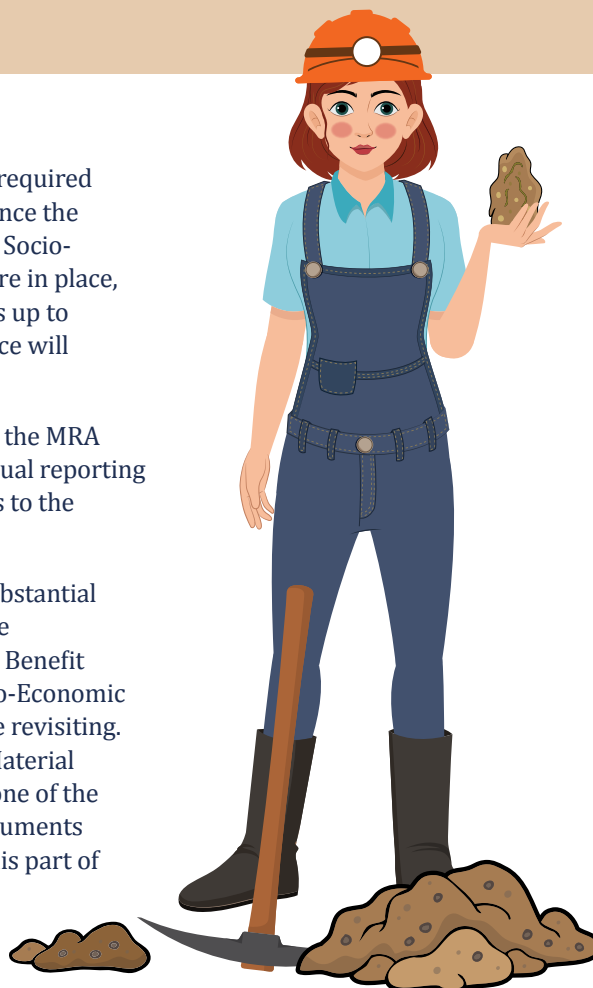
Production Licence

The roadmap gets simpler here because this is when the construction of a mine begins, and the early leg work pays off.

A Production Licence is required (#11) to sell minerals. Once the Benefit Agreements and Socio-Economic Agreements are in place, and all other reporting is up to date, a Production Licence will be awarded.

When minerals are sold, the MRA requires specialized annual reporting and payment of royalties to the GNWT.

Of course, if there is a substantial change in the project, the commitments under the Benefit Agreement and the Socio-Economic Agreements may require revisiting. This is referred to as a Material Change (#12); and it is one of the few new legislative instruments you will encounter on this part of your journey.



BEST READS



For those interested in, or following developments in, the NWT's natural resource development sector, there are five reports, released by the Government of the Northwest Territories last year, which we believe are particularly-worth reading.



1

Priorities for Critical Minerals in the NWT

The Northwest Territories is one of the few regions in Canada that can call itself a critical mineral producer today. In fact, six critical mineral projects are in early mining or advanced exploration phases. But they represent only a fraction of the NWT's potential. This is an overview of the steps the NWT government is taking to align with anticipated demand.

www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/Critical_Minerals_Action_Plan.pdf

2

Mineral Resources Act – Regulation Development

The Mineral Resources Act (MRA), Bill 34, was passed by the Northwest Territories government in 2019, a first step towards a made-in-the-NWT approach to governing mineral development. The territory's two levels of public government are now collaboratively drafting the regulations to bring it into force. As the NWT's legal drafters get to work, this is an update on the unique and extraordinary steps that have been taken to get to this point.

www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/Mineral_Resource_Act_Regulations_Status_Report_2023.pdf

3

2022 Socio-Economic Agreement Report for Mines Operating in the Northwest Territories

Socio Economic Agreements were initiated with diamond mining in the Northwest Territories. Their approach has established the territory as a leader in Environmental, Social, Governance and Indigenous rights (ESG-I) practices. This 2022 report captures the cumulative economic benefits of the NWT's existing mines, highlighting northern and NWT Indigenous employment, procurement spending and training. The numbers are impressive.

www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/1377-SEA-Report-2022-WEB.pdf

4

Mackenzie Delta Liquefied Natural Gas (MDLNG)

In 2021, the Government of the Northwest Territories commissioned a pre-feasibility study to determine if it would be viable to process natural gas from the onshore Mackenzie Delta and transport it for sale to international markets. The results just may surprise you.

www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/1398-ITI-MDLNG-Report_ENG.pdf

5

Northwest Territories Exploration and Mining Overview

This is an annual publication of the Northwest Territories Geological Survey and it's worth perusing every time. While diamonds, gold and base metals have had a long history of exploration and mining in the NWT, the increased demand for critical and strategic metals is also driving mining projects and advanced exploration projects such as Nechalacho, NICO, Pine Point and Prairie Creek as well as various cobalt, rare earth element (REE) and lithium exploration projects.

www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/Exploration_Overview_2022_March2023.pdf

Amazing Grace!

Tłıchq mining advocate Grace Mackenzie receives 2023 Women in Mining award

The applause and words of praise were heartfelt and many following the announcement of Grace Mackenzie as the 2023 recipient of the NWT Women in Mining award during last November's Yellowknife Geoscience Forum.

Women in Mining Canada chair, Melissa Ng, described Grace as “a leader and advocate for mining in the Northwest Territories, and particularly for Indigenous participation in the industry”.

Other testimonies underscored Grace's “decades of experience and commitment to cultural respect and equity”, as well as her “warm and honest approach” that fosters positive working relationships between the territorial government and Indigenous communities.

“Grace's ongoing commitment to improve working relationships between workers and mining leadership cannot be understated,” Tłıchq Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty said. “Her ability to build relationships with a cross-section

of stakeholders is a foundational piece in the continued growth and advancement of Tłıchq people.”

Ms. Mackenzie is a Tłıchq member who has dedicated her career to effective collaboration between the Tłıchq people and the mining industry. Her track record in HR and mining is both rich and varied. It includes services rendered for all three of the NWT's active diamond mines.

It began during the exciting period of mine construction at Diavik where her warm and honest approach was able to partner management and employees to troubleshoot and solve issues and to find and establish workable solutions.

At DeBeers, she added the role of community liaison and was instrumental in creating cultural awareness programs for employees promoting respect and understanding between management and staff and among colleagues. For more than a decade, Grace travelled to schools in the Great Slave Region delivering DeBeers' Canada's Books in Homes program.

Today, as the Tłıchq Mine Liason Coordinator for the Tłıchq Government, Grace ensures Tłıchq residents understand their benefits and receive all that they qualify for.

“As a Tłıchq woman, actively advocating for my Indigenous brothers and sisters in mining is incredibly rewarding,” Grace said on receiving her award.

"AS A TŁIČHQ WOMAN, ACTIVELY ADVOCATING FOR OUR INDIGENOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN MINING IS INCREDIBLY REWARDING".





Grace Mackenzie, Tl̓ch̓q Government's Mining Liaison Coordinator, addresses her colleagues after receiving 2023 MAX Women In Mining Award.

The Single Best Thing



Landon Powell, Outreach Geologist with the Northwest Territories Geological Survey speaks at the Yellowknife Geoscience Forum

Can the Northwest Territories' Competitive Edge for mining be put into words?

As panellists in a government-sponsored "incubator session" during the Yellowknife Geoscience Forum, three geologists gave it a try.

"Anomalous" in Canada's mining industry, they said of the government's Mining Incentive Program. (Ok, they used words like "amazing" and "fantastic" too.)

"It's the single best thing I have ever done," says Drake Hyden about his first MIP-supported exploration foray. The funding he received helped Drake reach a promising, but remote site to map, sample and stake a claim.

Government mining services and programs were compared to boutique shopping experiences where service is elevated by staff with a strong passion about their work.

Landon Powell, an Outreach Geologist with the Northwest Territories Geological Survey, has earned a reputation for going "above and beyond" to help prospectors and companies qualify for exploration funding.

"We're still a small jurisdiction," he notes. "That allows us to assist industry at a higher level."

Caps and restrictions, for example, that prevent small or individual prospecting companies from qualifying for government funding in other jurisdictions are handled differently in the NWT.

Exceptional service standards in the NWT extend, of course, well beyond government funding programs.

They are equalled in the territory's Mining Recorder's Office, resource pathfinding services, regulatory processes and engagement practices.

"If I call someone in the NWT, they know who I am, my project, exactly what's going on and have a genuine care and interest about our success," says Vice President of Operations Stefan Sklepocwiz, who is developing the Olympus property for Golden Planet (goldenplanet.ca).

He also praised the territory's "amazing deposits" alongside the GNWT's "100% institutional support" to mineral exploration.

"The mineral endowment of the North is so extreme, so valuable and relatively untouched," Sklepocwiz says. "It's an absolutely precious resource that is sitting there untapped."

"The territory is the last jurisdiction where you can go out and stake and not have to make a deal for it," Drake adds. "The potential is high. Some people are ignoring that, but that will change eventually. When it does, the change will come like a waterfall, not a trickle. If you aren't ready, next thing you know, it will be too late."

At least on this day, the NWT's competitive edge was defined by its global resource potential and world-class government services.

By the #s

Mining Incentive Program

Administered by the Northwest Territories Geological Survey, the NWT's Mining Incentive Program (MIP) provides funding to prospectors and companies proposing or completing mineral exploration in the NWT.

Since its inception, companies, individuals and projects have employed MIP funds with notable success.

Here's a breakdown of the popular program (2014-2022) by its numbers:

\$1,500,000

was distributed in 2022-23 FY under the Government of the Northwest Territories' **Mining Incentive Program** to NWT prospectors (\$94,000) and companies (\$1.4 Million).



7

out of 17
of the projects that received funding this year were exploring, at least in part, for Lithium (Li). In total, 13 of the 17 were searching for critical minerals.



38.5

Million

is the amount of reciprocal spending (leveraged spending) that has been invested by program recipients.



7

prospectors have sold or optioned properties thanks to their MIP-funded exploration. All have been incorporated into promising exploration projects.



7.4

Million

has been invested by the NWT government in a variety of NWT-based mineral exploration projects since the program's inception in 2014.



Northern Critical Minerals aims to be first NWT-owned REE project



Ryan Bachynski speaks as part of a government-sponsored "incubator session" during the Yellowknife Geoscience Forum

Geologist Ryan Bachynski is determined to develop the first NWT-owned rare earth elements project, Northern Critical Minerals.

Not unlike the diamond play of the 1990's, Canadian juniors and creative geologists, like Ryan, are once again getting out ahead of the majors, staking their own claims and working to advance them to the next level.

But in 2016, Ryan, a newly-minted geologist, was only looking for a little adventure when he bought a used camper van and drove from Saskatchewan to the Northwest Territories.

His journey, to date, is yet another testament to where the NWT's potential can take you.

"The industry was in tough when I graduated, but when I went to conferences and met people from the NWT, their outlook was always positive," he recalls, "I decided to head north."

Ryan's thirst for adventure brought him to Yellowknife where he was able to land a series of jobs as a contractor and project geologist.

Because it is underexplored and largely free of claims, the NWT still has large packages of land open for exploration.

So, when he wasn't employed directly, Ryan headed into the bush to do his own prospecting, eventually even staking his own claims.

For Ryan, the Northwest Territories Geological Survey was an important source of data and information and he was able to build on its historic knowledge and previous mapping work to help target his own exploration.

"Folks may not have been looking for critical minerals in the past," he notes. "But the location of the occurrences or showings they found (and noted) hasn't changed. I was able to go back and take another look."

His work may be paying off. Ryan and a new business partner (Dr. Jared Suchan) are now developing two rare earth properties north of Yellowknife known as Allende and Tharsis.

The Northwest Territories Geological Survey, with its delivery of the NWT's Mining Incentive Program, has also been an important source of funding.

Now known as Northern Critical Minerals, Ryan's new company received \$180,000 from the government's Mining Incentive Program to offset an inaugural drilling campaign that will help to de-risk the deposits.

It's only a portion of what they will need, but Ryan is confident about the deposits and that their hard work will play out.

Resource availability, technology, market demand and global interest continue to come together to create extraordinary opportunities for explorers and investors in the NWT.

Thanks to his hard work and a search for adventure, Ryan Bachynski is hoping to be big part of what is in store.

RESOURCE AVAILABILITY,
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COME TOGETHER TO
CREATE EXTRAORDINARY
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EXPLORERS AND
INVESTORS IN THE NWT.



Northwest Territories Mining Incentive Program

*Need funding to support your
NWT mineral exploration project?*

The Mining Incentive Program (MIP) has a \$1.5 million budget to support prospectors and exploration companies as they carry out mineral exploration in the territory.

Apply for 2024-2025

- Prospectors may apply for up to \$25,000
- Exploration companies may apply for up to 60% of eligible project expenses to a maximum of \$240,000

Application deadline: April 26, 2024

Government of
Northwest Territories

**For more information, contact
Northwest Territories Geological Survey.**

Email: NTGS@gov.nt.ca | Phone: 1-867-767-9211 x63469
WWW.NWTGEOSCIENCE.CA/MIP



Government of
Northwest Territories



<https://qrco.de/UoPPDAC>

We're working to unlock the full potential of Canada's Northwest Territories. Please take our survey!

Tell us how best to connect leading exploration and mining companies like yours to information and data about our world-class mineral deposits.

**Unlocking
our Potential**

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