



# information

BULLETIN

## EXPLORATION AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

MARCH 2006

*The Minerals and Metals Sector of Natural Resources Canada promotes the participation of Aboriginal peoples and communities in minerals and metals activities, including exploration.*

A number of potential benefits and opportunities, including employment and business opportunities, are available to Aboriginal peoples and communities across Canada due to growth in the mineral exploration sector.

- Favourable prices for many of the mineral commodities produced in Canada have contributed to booming exploration activity across the country. Over the past four years, an estimated \$3.7 billion has been spent on exploration and deposit appraisal in rural and northern areas of Canada.
- Canada is well positioned to benefit from the growing global demand for minerals and metals. However, over the past quarter century, Canadian ore reserves of base metals and gold have been declining. In order to reverse this trend, the discovery of new deposits is vital and will require a substantial mineral exploration effort, often in previously unexplored territories. Mineral exploration projects can vary in scope and duration depending on a number of factors, and very few will result in a new mine.
- The current context surrounding the exploration sector in Canada presents a window of opportunity for Aboriginal communities. Approximately 1200 Aboriginal communities are located within 200 km of 2100 exploration properties across Canada.
- Early community engagement in mineral exploration and meaningful dialogue between Aboriginal

communities and exploration companies are key to successful working relationships and partnerships, and help ensure that the activities take place in a manner that is sensitive to the environment.

- The Canadian mineral exploration industry has signaled its commitment to improving the performance of its activities through responsible environmental, health and safety, and social practices, and through consideration of traditional

knowledge. While some of these activities are regulated, many are guided by voluntary measures, such as the industry's adoption of the *Environmental Excellence in Exploration (E3)* guidelines. E3 is an industry-funded Internet resource, managed by the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC), that provides worldwide access to environmental management techniques and practical guidelines for community engagement ([www.e3mining.com](http://www.e3mining.com)).





✂ **Yukon Zinc Corporation** and the **Kaska Nation** reached a Socio-Economic Participation Agreement, through the Ross River Dena Council, for the Kaska to participate in the exploration and development of the Wolverine deposit in south-central Yukon. The agreement provides a basis for the review of environmental, social and economic matters, close involvement in the environmental assessment and permitting of the project, and opportunities for employment, training, and economic development initiatives ([www.yukonzinc.com](http://www.yukonzinc.com)).

● Mineral exploration has the potential to provide many employment opportunities to Aboriginal peoples, including youth. These range from field assistants to camp workers, line cutters and prospectors. Opportunities also exist for Aboriginal businesses to be involved in the services aspect of mineral exploration from the provision of catering and accommodation to claim staking and equipment supply. Increased Aboriginal participation in mineral exploration can lead to economic growth for many Aboriginal communities.

● Aboriginal communities, corporations and joint ventures throughout Canada are already active in the exploration sector and are securing benefits:

✂ **Nova Gold Canada Inc.** and the **Tahltan Nation** have an agreement to explore and develop mineral resources in the Galore Creek Valley in northwestern British Columbia. The agreement allows for employment and business opportunities and establishes procedures to fully engage the Tahltan in all aspects of environmental protection ([www.novagold.net](http://www.novagold.net)).

✂ **Virginia Gold Mines** and **Cree Gold Exploration**, through the Mistissini Strategic Alliance, are jointly exploring for gold and base-metal deposits in the Mistissini region in central-north Quebec. Virginia has developed a communication system with the Cree to ensure the community is informed of any related activities ([www.virginia.qc.ca](http://www.virginia.qc.ca)).

✂ In Northern Ontario, the **Kasabonika Lake First Nation** created the Kasabonika Prospectors Alliance and is developing its own mineral strategy. To prepare for heightened exploration activity in the area, the community is planning to renovate and expand existing accommodations. Members of the community are now becoming independent prospectors and many youth are becoming experienced at line cutting and claim staking. For further details, contact Mitch Diabo, General Manager, Kasabonika Community Development Corporation, by telephone at (807) 535-2547, ext. 230, or Deputy Chief Eno Anderson at (807) 535-2547, ext. 240.



**For more information on Aboriginal communities and mining,  
please visit [www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms) or send an e-mail to [info-mms@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:info-mms@nrcan.gc.ca)**