

# Robert E. Leckie Awards for Outstanding Reclamation Practices

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The fifth annual Robert E. Leckie Awards for outstanding reclamation practices were presented in Whitehorse, November, 2003. The awards, both for quartz and placer exploration or mining, were first established in November, 1999. The two awards are given for reclamation and site restoration efforts that go well beyond what is required by law, either by reclaiming land for which there is no obligation to reclaim, adding features to the land that have enhanced the area and local community, or returning mined land to a condition that is not only sound but aesthetically pleasing. The award is named after the late Robert (Bob) Leckie, a mining inspector with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, who passed away in November, 1999 (see Yukon Exploration and Geology 1999).

## QUARTZ MINING RECLAMATION

The 2003 Robert E. Leckie Award for Outstanding Reclamation Practices in Quartz Exploration and Mining was presented to Atac Resources Ltd. Atac is a junior exploration company, based in Vancouver, BC. Their commitment to reclamation is “to accomplish as good a job as it is humanly possible to do.”



**Figure 1.** Reclaimed trench at Mechanic Creek.

In 2001, they carried out exploration on the Golden Revenue property at Mechanic Creek. The area was heavily disturbed with many old trenches scarring the landscape. Where the company partially entered these dated trenches, they restored the entire trench. In addition, organic debris was collected throughout the area, and transported to be used for site reclamation. Atac returned what was an unsightly area and a potential fire hazard back to its natural state. The company has been actively removing waste such as scrap metal and plastics from the area, consulting with local placer miners for possible recycling prior to removal.

The reclamation activities undertaken by Atac Resources Ltd. were a huge effort and they are without doubt worthy recipients of this award.

Honourable mention was also given to Viceroy Minerals Corporation for leadership and innovation in their reclamation efforts at Brewery Creek gold mine near Dawson City. Viceroy has carried out progressive reclamation at the site since operations

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**Figure 2.** Kokanee pit at Viceroy's Brewery Creek gold mine.

began in 1996; they won two previous awards for outstanding clean-up practices. Reclamation work has included the following: staging of mine open-pit development for waste rock disposal, reducing surface disturbances; heap detoxification and neutralization with innovative technology – nutrient addition with a contingency biological treatment cell; stockpiling and reuse of organic soils as a growth media for reclamation; and testing of revegetation, seeding with native and non-native species. Most of the waste rock dumps and pits have already been reclaimed and liability of the site has been greatly reduced.

**PLACER MINING RECLAMATION**

The 2003 Robert E. Leckie Award for Outstanding Reclamation Practices in Placer Mining Reclamation was presented to Fox Placer Exploration. Frank and Karen Hawker have been mining the Sixtymile River area near Dawson since 1993. This ground had been previously dredged and mined by bulldozer. Frank and Karen believe that reclamation is part of the mining process and, as a result, have consistently achieved land restoration beyond what was required.

Mining this previously dredged area has brought organic materials, which were buried under coarser material during the dredging process, back to the surface to be redistributed over recontoured tailings piles. Presence of this organic material will now promote natural revegetation. While contouring, the area was scarified to encourage entrapment of water and airborne seeds. The area where the Hawkers have mined supports rapid natural revegetation and has been converted from a



**Figure 3.** Reclaimed Sixtymile River stream channel and banks.

virtually barren landscape of dredge tailings and old abandoned cuts to aesthetic rolling hills.

Honourable mention was also given to Mr. Geoffrey Jacobs of Downunder Joint Mining Ventures. He added to the well-being of the community at large for his outstanding reclamation efforts at both Lousetown and Hunker Creek. At Lousetown, the entire pit face was contoured for stability and safety. Relocated material was used and all wastes removed. The bench at Hunker Creek had been mined by a number of previous operators. Mr. Jacobs cleaned up the site, and removed fuel containers and oil pails, as well as miscellaneous waste materials. The bench was contoured, including the pit wall; then this was covered with an organic soil/root mix to promote revegetation.



**Figure 4.** Natural revegetation at Hunker Creek.