

March 14, 2020

I am a retired mine and exploration geologist. I have worked and prospected in the Yukon since the mid-1960s.

In all that time, I have only seen such a harsh, irresponsible, and unnecessary legislation and regulatory regime during the unfortunate mandates of the Penikett/Macdonald NDP governments. Those governments resulted in annual Yukon mineral exploration expenditures falling to \$2 million. The recent Fraser Institute Mineral Investment Attractiveness Survey dropping the Yukon from ninth to 23rd place shows that expenditures are again going in that direction. Having 53% of the territory removed from exploration; the proliferation of other land withdrawals for land use planning, wetland and heritage assessments, and duplication of permitting processes, such as the YESAB and Yukon Water Board procedures, which add cost and time to exasperate the trend.

Requiring prospectors to get permits to do essentially the same things that berry and mushroom pickers, hunters and fishers can do without permits is another disincentive. Officials are blind to the fact that the Yukon mineral industries are in competition with all jurisdictions in the world for investment. Such blindness is responsible for our again seeing investment flee the Yukon to more favourable jurisdictions. Alaska's mineral exploration investments have tripled from \$50 million in 2017 to \$150 million in 2018.

In fact, a member of the Yukon Prospectors Association, who attended the recent Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) annual conference, said the president of a producing Yukon mine said he did not see another mine getting production permitting in the foreseeable future.

At the most recent Yukon Prospectors Association (YPA) meeting (March 10th), several horror stories were given demonstrating the massive incompetence of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Mining Recorder staff.

One instance was the requirement to bury the diamond drill core from the ATAC Resources properties. Burying core is tantamount to sacrilege. I know of two occasions when a second look at diamond drill core or rock samples resulted in the development of a producing mine. One was the former Cantung Mine. A mineral exploration company had drilled core on the site exploring for copper. Years later, a prospector looked at the core and thought it resembled rock from a tungsten mine he had worked at. Shining an ultra-violet lamp on the core revealed the scheelite in the core. The second occasion was the former Wellgreen Nickel Mine. Wellington (Wally) Green and his partners thought they were staking a copper prospect; however, Ted Chisholm, chief geologist for Prospectors Airways, recognized the nickel potential.

A second instance was reported from the Dawson Mining District by a YPA member. He had excavated 18 feet of ice from an ancient shaft to examine the bedrock of a quartz claim he had covering the same area. When he was finished, he securely sealed the shaft. When he went to file the assessment work, the mining recorder insisted that the shaft be filled in. It begs the question, how do you fill a hole with excavated ice which had no doubt melted and flowed away?

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