

Robert E. Leckie Awards for Outstanding Reclamation Practices

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The third annual Robert E. Leckie Awards for outstanding reclamation practices were presented in Whitehorse, November 2001. In addition to the annual awards for the quartz and placer categories, the selection committee presented the first award for Long Time Achievement in Mining Reclamation to Norm Ross of Ross Mining Ltd. This award was created to recognize individuals or companies who have consistently shown long-term commitment and outstanding efforts toward achieving excellence in mining and or exploration reclamation practices. This award is not intended to be presented on an annual basis, but rather, presented occasionally when there is distinct merit.

QUARTZ MINING RECLAMATION

The Robert E. Leckie Award for Outstanding Quartz Mining Reclamation Practices was awarded to NovaGold Resources Inc., Viceroy Resource Corporation, and Newmont Exploration of Canada Ltd. for the joint reclamation program in 2000 on the McQuesten property (formerly the Wayne), located on the Elsa airstrip (Fig. 1). The history of this property includes cumulative bulldozer trenching activities between 1962 and 1971 and the shipment of 5.9 million tonnes of material to



Figure 1. McQuesten property in the summer of 2001 showing all of the historic and modern trenches buried and contoured.

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the Trail Smelter in British Columbia in 1968. Additional trenching was carried out in 1998 by Viceroy Exploration (Canada) Ltd. (Fig. 2), prior to the implementation of new Mining Land Use Regulations in June, 1999. Although Viceroy had transferred its option interest in the property to NovaGold before reclamation work was undertaken in 2000, it participated as a financial partner with NovaGold for its reclamation work. Additionally, Newmont Exploration of Canada optioned some of the claims on this property in 2000 and conducted a concurrent drilling program and reclamation of a portion of the historic trenches.

Approximately 200 000 cubic metres of earth has been backfilled and contoured to the original topography on the McQuesten property, and the airstrip has been restored to a state where re-vegetation of the trenches can occur quickly and effectively. The three companies who

supported this accomplishment are commended for their outstanding reclamation efforts which have enhanced both the safety and aesthetic values in the Elsa area.

PLACER MINING RECLAMATION

Doug Busat of T.D. Oilfield Services Ltd. received the Robert E. Leckie Award for Outstanding Placer Mining Reclamation Practices in recognition of the exceptional restorative work done on his placer mine near the mouth of Hunker Creek. Methodical and progressive reclamation practices have taken place at this site since mining began in 1997. Overburden has been placed over old dredge piles and previously mined areas; old mine cuts and settling ponds have been backfilled by coarse tailings, and topped with finer-grained material in order to encourage natural revegetation.



Figure 2. McQuesten Property in 1999, prior to reclamation.

The post-mining landscape at the minesite, which incorporates wetlands and grasslands, is a much-improved terrain compared to the historic dredge piles and un-reclaimed tailings ponds and tailing piles left by previous operators (Fig. 3). The reclaimed ponds are aesthetically pleasing and provide habitat for waterfowl and wildlife, as well as a recreational area for people. For the many tourists and local people that drive the Klondike Placer Loop road, the property is an excellent example of responsible and thoughtful placer mining practices.

LONG TIME ACHIEVEMENT IN MINING RECLAMATION

This year, special recognition was given to Norm Ross of Ross Mining Ltd. for his long time achievement in mining reclamation. The reclamation practices at Ross Mining consistently exceed what is required by legislation, and

have included noteworthy land-based reclamation activities long before required to do so by the Mining Land Use Regulations.

Annual land-based reclamation has been a part of the company's operation since it began placer mining on Dominion Creek in the early 1980s. Mined-out areas have been reclaimed methodically, resulting in a landscape with vegetated rolling hills, small lakes and stable and productive stream reaches (Fig. 4). The wetlands are favoured by migratory wildlife, and several moose return annually to calve in the willow-rich reclaimed areas.

Over the last two decades Mr. Ross has dedicated much of his time as a spokesperson for the mining industry. In the 1980s he gave frequent presentations to gold miners on ways to plan for and minimize the costs of land reclamation and stream restoration. He has accommodated many local and foreign government



Figure 3. T.D Oilfield Services Ltd. located near the mouth of Hunker Creek. This aesthetically pleasing landscape can be easily viewed from the much travelled Hunker road.

officials and investors on tours of his operation and has shared his knowledge of good mining practices in the Yukon. Mr. Ross has volunteered over many years as Director and President of the Klondike Placer Miners Association and has participated on various committees to help ensure the development of balanced legislation. He

is currently the Vice-President of the Association and is a member of the Yukon Placer Committee which is working on the 2001 Review process of the Yukon Placer Authorization.

Congratulations is extended to all the worthy recipients of the 2001 Robert E. Leckie Reclamation Awards.



Figure 4. Ross Mining Ltd. on Dominion Creek with currently mined areas in the foreground and reclaimed ground in the background.