

Robert E. Leckie Award for Outstanding Reclamation Practices

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Mining Lands, Energy Mines and Resources

St. Amand, J., 2005. Robert E. Leckie Awards for Outstanding Reclamation Practices. *In: Yukon Exploration and Geology 2004*, D.S. Emond, L.L. Lewis and G.D. Bradshaw (eds.), Yukon Geological Survey, p. 61-63.

The 2004 Robert E. Leckie Award for outstanding reclamation practices for quartz exploration and mining were presented to **NovaGold Resources Inc.** NovaGold is an international company with interests in Yukon, British Columbia and Alaska. Reclamation work at their McQuesten property in the Mayo mining district has been very commendable.

The company began their reclamation in November 2003. They performed most of the required reclamation, leaving a few outstanding issues that could not be addressed in winter. At that time, they surpassed government expectations in some areas.

In September 2004, they returned to complete the decommissioning of the property. They re-assessed the results of the previous work and felt that more could be done. At that time they put in water control bars and regroomed the whole area. Contouring, brush disposal and drag-bag of vegetative mat was undertaken again. Where there was a scarcity of vegetative mat, the company scarified the ground to enable entrapment of water and airborne seed. They also decommissioned the access roads (Fig. 1).

Redistribution of the organic material over access roads contributes largely to the revegetation success of a disturbed site by providing capture areas for moisture, shade for seedlings, and habitat for small animals. The practice also prevents access by small terrain vehicles and snow machines. It is anticipated that the area will be more pristine than when work began.

This company shows a dedication to reclamation that is exemplary. They are good corporate citizens and are very worthy of this award.



Figure 1. Reclaimed access road to the McQuesten property.

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Figure 2. Martin Knutson (left) and John Alton (right) of Henry Gulch Placer.

The 2004 Robert E. Leckie Award for outstanding reclamation practices in placer mining was presented to Henry Gulch Placers' **Martin Knutson** and **John Alton** (Fig. 2). They have been mining together for 22 years throughout the Klondike area and have consistently maintained high standards of reclamation.

They moved to Last Chance Creek in July, 2000. This site had been severely disturbed since 1896. White channel gravels had sloughed down to the creek and formed a fan up to 18 m deep in areas. These gravels are a poor host for revegetation. Previous mining on the right limit hillside resulted in a slump into Last Chance Creek. Old drains, still in place, posed a safety hazard. The creek was completely destabilized by the onslaught of all these effects, which then contributed to sedimentation of Hunker Creek.

Massive amounts of White Channel gravels were moved to the left limit to form low-relief rolling hills, and covered with overburden to ensure swift natural revegetation. Old mine pits were reclaimed and stabilized. A pond was built



Figure 3. Aerial photo of Henry Gulch property shows reclamation work recently completed on the site.

to catch material from ongoing degradation of old workings above the site, to further protect the creek. The drains have been removed and that area restored. The creek has been stabilized (Fig. 3). A new, safer road system is in place. All areas have been sloped and contoured, and materials conducive to revegetation have been spread. This represents an immense effort to restore old mine works that could not have successfully recovered without the dedication of these two partners. Staff and colleagues can only strive to emulate such a shining example of these community leaders.

Honourable mention was given to **Newmont Exploration of Canada Ltd.** In the fall of 2001 this company completed extensive reclamation of trenches on the Aurex property in the Mayo mining district.

Trenches were backfilled and contoured, and a drag-back technique was used to replace the vegetative mat (Fig. 4). This gave the area a consistent and rough finish of soil, scattered brush and trees, which had been removed at the time of excavation. Redistribution of the organic material over recontoured trenches contributes largely to the revegetation success of a disturbed site.

Newmont Exploration of Canada Ltd. is commended for excellent reclamation in an area of ongoing exploration.



Figure 4. Road reclaimed on the Aurex property using dragback technique, which prohibits access by snowmachines, ATVs and other off-road vehicles.

