

# information

BULLETIN

## ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

*The Minerals and Metals Sector of Natural Resources Canada promotes the sustainable development of Canada's natural resources and encourages Aboriginal participation in minerals and metals activities.*

Industry and governments are committed to ensuring that mineral development in Canada is conducted in an environmentally and socially responsible way at all stages of the mining sequence.

- Mining practices in Canada have advanced considerably over the last decades. Laws at the provincial, territorial and federal levels ensure that the natural environment and public health and safety are protected. Mining companies have to meet all regulated standards and are developing environmental management plans, including monitoring programs, follow-up plans, and rehabilitation plans for mine closure.
- Environmental impacts during mineral exploration are usually low, especially during grassroots exploration. Companies have to follow the conditions of any permits or licences granted to conduct exploration and are also adopting voluntary measures to minimize and monitor possible environmental impacts at this early stage.
- With a wealth of local knowledge, input from Aboriginal communities can help identify potential environmental issues. The use of traditional knowledge, as well as scientific knowledge, can assist in making informed decisions regarding the protection of the environment.
- When a project is moving to development, agreements between Aboriginal communities and industries, such as Impact and Benefit Agreements, are important tools in addressing impacts on traditional Aboriginal territories, water, wildlife, communities, cultures, and ways of life. Through these agreements, Aboriginal communities can be directly involved during operations, in reclamation activities, and at the closure of mines.
- While some of its activities are regulated, the Canadian mining industry has also adopted voluntary measures to ensure a safe and healthy environment. For example, the Environmental Excellence in Exploration (e3) initiative of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada offers practical guidelines on exploration activities, community engagement, and environmental practices ([www.e3mining.com](http://www.e3mining.com)). A second initiative, Toward Sustainable Mining (TSM), is supported by all members of The Mining Association of Canada (MAC). Members subscribe to Guiding Principles and measure and report against a range of key environmental and social indicators. The initiative is guided by a 14-member Community of Interest Advisory Panel, 6 members of which represent Aboriginal organizations and communities. MAC members recently endorsed a policy framework on Aboriginal relations and mining ([www.mining.ca/www/Towards\\_Sustaining\\_Mining/Performance\\_Indicators/Performance\\_Elements\\_Under\\_Review/Aboriginal.php](http://www.mining.ca/www/Towards_Sustaining_Mining/Performance_Indicators/Performance_Elements_Under_Review/Aboriginal.php)).
- Consultation is an important part of the environmental assessment process of mining projects. Through the review of project studies and documents, Aboriginal communities can express concerns, provide input, and develop shared solutions.



Photo: Novagold Canada Inc.

Many opportunities exist for Aboriginals to participate in decisions and activities that mining companies undertake to protect the environment. Although work remains to be done, industry and Aboriginal communities are increasingly working as partners in protecting the environment at all stages of mineral development from exploration to development, operation, and beyond closure:

- As part of its Raglan South nickel project exploration and development activities (Nunavik, northern Quebec), **Canadian Royalties** evaluates the environmental aspects of its activities and guides its employees and contractors towards minimizing environmental impacts. The company is committed to building good relationships with local Inuit communities through consultation at the community level. It also provides appropriate training for active participation in environmental baseline studies.



Photo: Canadian Royalties

- NovaGold Canada Inc.** and the **Tahltan Nation** have signed an agreement for the development of the Galore Creek project in British Columbia. The agreement ensures mutual cooperation in completing an efficient environmental review and permitting process and a commitment to mitigate any adverse environmental or social effects caused by the mining activities.

- Bathurst caribou near **Diavik's** Lac de Gras diamond mine are monitored on an annual basis with the assistance of Aboriginal elders from local communities. Also, with a portion of the caribou herd passing through the Lac de Gras region during spring and fall migrations, advisory signs posted on all haul roads ensure that caribou and other wildlife are given the right of way over traffic.



Photo by Jiri Hermann, courtesy of Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.

- In cooperation with the **Fort McKay First Nation**, **Syncrude** has successfully developed wood bison habitats near Fort McMurray, Alberta. More than 300 wood bison now graze on land reclaimed from mining and tailings operations. The quality of the herd continues to be recognized; at the 2005 Wild Rose Classic bison show, awards were won by each of the Syncrude bison entered, including the top prize of Reserve Grand Champion.

For more information on the environmental practices of **Canadian Royalties**, please visit [www.canadianroyalties.com](http://www.canadianroyalties.com) or e-mail [info@canadianroyalties.com](mailto:info@canadianroyalties.com); for **NovaGold Canada Inc.**, visit [www.novagold.net](http://www.novagold.net) or e-mail [info@novagold.net](mailto:info@novagold.net); for **Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.**, visit [www.diavik.ca](http://www.diavik.ca) or e-mail [diavik@diavik.com](mailto:diavik@diavik.com); and for **Syncrude Canada Ltd.**, visit [www.syncrude.ca](http://www.syncrude.ca) or e-mail [info@syncrude.com](mailto:info@syncrude.com).

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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)



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