

Wollastonite project waits for mine permit approval

The Interior News

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A Vancouver-based firm wants to develop a wollastonite mine it says will create jobs for workers in Northwestern B.C.

If the project goes through, Whitegold Resources Corp. will unearth the material from land it owns south of the Iskut River, about 340 kilometres northwest of Smithers.

Wollastonite is used in the production of ceramics, plastics, and for casting steel. Worldwide, 664,000 tonnes of the ore was produced in 1996.

Whitegold has filed a prospectus with the ministry, and if the company is awarded a permit the mining area will be in operation by July 1998, says Cary Martin, Whitegold's vice-president of corporate development.

A ministry committee will decide this fall whether to grant approval for the mine.

He says the mine will create 20 full-time and many indirect jobs. Employees will be hired locally rather than transporting workers from other areas, he added.

The project would mine 24,000 tonnes of wollastonite annually, over a 90-day production period. The company will drill and blast the earth to loosen the material, and a crusher on site will separate the ore from other material. The wollastonite would then be trucked to a processing plant in either the United States or Canada for refining. Whitegold says it has not yet determined which plant to use.

The mine will be accessed by road, according to Martin, and Whitegold is negotiating a financing partnership with another company to build it, although a route hasn't been chosen.

Mining of wollastonite would have a "minimal" impact on wildlife and timber supply in the area, the prospectus states. Concerns about First Nations in the area was also addressed in the document. As the proposed project site lies within the traditional territory of the Tahltan Nation, company officials are to meet with the Iskut Band to discuss any concerns over the mine.

Open houses and meetings with other residents in that area will also be held this summer.

The Ministry of Employment and Investment invited public comment on the project but had only received responses from two government agencies by the July 15 deadline, said Sylvia Van Zalingen, inspector of mines with the ministry's Energy and Minerals Division. The responses were both positive, she added.

The ministry had sought input from the communities of Smithers, Terrace, Stewart, Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake, and Iskut.

A copy of the prospectus is available at the Smithers Public Library.

EXPLORATION ROUNDUP

→ Iskutt
Woll.

Archangel Diamond Corp. has improved results from Pipe 441 of its Verkhotina Project in northwestern Russia. Hole 49 has shown grades of 251 ct/100 mt in the diatreme and 73 ct/100 mt in the crater facies. Hole 48 yielded grades of 159 ct/100 mt and 75 ct/100 mt respectively. Based upon the holes drilled to date, the crater facies is intersected at 73 m and the diatreme at 190 m. The average grade of the diatreme is 190 ct/100 mt, while the crater facies' grade averages 30 ct/100 mt. So the overall grade is 94 ct/100 mt. Drilling on Hole 46 has stopped in kimberlite at 301 m; the pipe remains open to the west—indicating a pipe area of >8 ha. Hole 41 intersected crater facies at 62 m but failed to intersect the diatreme—instead it entered country rock at 186 m. The crater facies remains open in all directions excepting one hole, No. 51, which failed to intersect it.

At its wholly owned Nevin Hill, Butte Highlands, Montana, **Orvana Minerals Corp.** reported a wide zone of intrusive-hosted gold mineralization potentially amenable to bulk underground mining methods. Furthermore, widespread gold values in altered intrusives indicates potential for additional large targets. The highest grade hole reported assayed at 0.24 oz/st gold over an interval of 11 ft at a depth of 1,222 ft. The largest intercept was 25.5 ft at a depth of 754 ft that graded 0.16 oz/st gold. Two core and two RC drills are continuing drilling. About one-third of the planned 35K ft drilling has been completed to date. It will test the high-grade Nevin Hill core; peripheral down- and up-dip projections, as well as strike projections; the Ballarat area; the area south of Nevin Hill with unexplored fault blocks; and the west of Nevin Hill within a projected offset portion on the Nevin Hill block.

Super Twins Resources Ltd. announced the completion of its 1996 field program at its Isk Wollastonite project in British Columbia. The work is aimed at underpinning a full feasibility study. Results include the definition of the Brill deposit being the most suitable for mine

development. The orebody is >300 x 100 m and five trenches, totaling 130 m, have been mapped and sampled. All trenches contained wollastonite grading 40-80%. Six holes, aggregating 492 m, were drilled, 89% of the holes intersected wollastonite. Rescan Engineering Ltd.'s proposal has been accepted. The firm will develop a mine/mill design, bankable feasibility report, and provide project management. An 18 km pipeline to transport ore to market is envisaged to extend from the mine to a location near **Homestake Mining's** Snip mine on the shore of the Isk River. Prior plans for a route to the Stikine River have been abandoned. The line is to be constructed in 1997. Plans have been made for transportation of a 10-25K mt bulk-sample during the 1997 field season. And slurry testing is being conducted by the Saskatchewan Research Council. Long term planning has 33-km road access being provided from the existing road at the Eskay Creek mine.

Jack Sauers reports a successful summer of gold exploration in the Williams Creek area of Washington's Swauk Creek Mining District. Principal efforts were along the Liberty overthrust that dips 40-45° and has been intruded by a massive middle-Eocene Teanaway volcanic-dike system. Nuggets up to 6-8 oz were found. The overthrust is similar to that mined in the Wenatchee area by **Asamera** and **Breakwater Mining**. Mark Jones, president of **Gold Placers**, who had prior involvement with the Curlew and Crown Jewel mines, is leading the efforts. In the Liberty area, southwest of Wenatchee, the overthrust follows the east/west trace of the Table Mountain anticline that is intruded by the Teanaway basalt-dike system. It has a strong silicified reef-zone hundreds of feet wide and is highly altered. Gold is found as a volume-for-volume replacement of carbonaceous fossil material. Actual plant roots seem to produce wiring-appearing masses several inches long. Similar effects are seen with plant leaves and stems. And a carp's scales, fins, and eyes are similarly gilt. ■

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TGS → Iskut
Wollastonite

Positive Results For Iskut

by Vivian J. Hartnett

The feasibility study at Super Twins Resources Ltd.'s, Iskut Wollastonite Deposit in north-western British Columbia is expected to be completed by the end of 1996. Continuing exploration and development this year are designed to use the study for production which is scheduled to begin in 1997.

Super Twins Resources owns 100 per cent interest in 202 claims totalling 5,050 hectares. They enclose the Iskut wollastonite deposit located 13 km from the Homestake/Prime Resources Snip gold mine (which the company recently acquired from Cominco), in northwestern British Columbia.

In a July, 1996, Investment Letter, *Ground Floor* stated that Super Twins owns 100 per cent of what is probably the largest and purest known deposit of wollastonite in the world. *Ground Floor* also reported that one hole had already been drilled during the summer and that the company hoped to establish a proven reserve of 20 million tons with another 30 million tons in the probable category.

"That seems realistic based on our own study of the geologists' reports. There may well be even more wollastonite there," the investment letter said.

A company report said that since the identification and subsequent staking of the Iskut wollastonite deposit in 1994, the project had advanced to the point where Super Twins had confirmed four deposits and identified a probable fifth.

"From current market information, the size and grade of Super Twins' wollastonite deposit could exceed all known deposits in the world, with the exception of India, which services only its own domestic market," the report said.

Super Twins President, Allen Achilles, explains that the deposit is well exposed and thus readily mineable. "The deposit is located eight miles from Cominco's Snip gold mine. It is on a tidewater and therefore has ready access to transportation. As we are the only company with a wollastonite deposit on the west coast of North America, we have both the strategic advantage of serving the Pacific Rim by low-cost ship transport and the competitive advantage of an exceptionally high purity requiring minimal beneficiation," Achilles says.

He says the total cost of mine development; plus pipeline transport route to a tidewater barging facility; and an off-site beneficiation facility is estimated to be under \$10 million for an annual capacity of up to 100,000 tonnes.

"The company is well structured with just 7.5 million shares outstanding, 40 per cent of which is held by senior management. We are funded and have almost completed our feasibility and marketing studies, which will further assist the company in making a production decision. The success of this project comes as a pleasant surprise, as normally it would require two or three years of field work to get to the stage that this project has already

achieved," Achilles says.

The nearly completed 1996 field program, with a budget of \$1.5 million, was designed to describe the continuity of reserve potential in terms of tonnage and purity. Further, work will begin to investigate the infrastructure and environmental baselines in anticipation of a bulk sampling for trial market testing in 1997.

A company report explains that wollastonite is an emerging industrial mineral, highly prized for its engineering and reinforcing properties in the plastics and fibre cement industries. It says that industry experts are enthusiastic about the future of the mineral, that it is steadily increasing in usage (about eight per cent a year), and it conservatively predicts that worldwide production will reach about 750,000 tonnes by the year 2000.

Wollastonite is used as an additive in ceramics, enamels and paints. It is also used to add strength in plastics and rubber, and can be used as a substitute for asbestos. When ground in suitable mills, it has the unique property of breaking into needle crystals. The length-to-width ratio of crystals is known as the 'aspect ratio' and material with ratios greater than 15:1 are classified as high aspect.

"High aspect ratio wollastonite is being used increasingly for short fibre asbestos replacement and functional fillers in many plastics for both consumer and industrial products. High aspect material sells at a premium price and is the high end of the market," Achilles says. ■

Silvertip Mining Corporation' Silvertip Project application to EA has been accepted. Formal reviews, project committee selection expected to start in the near future.

B.C. Chrysotile Corp. now called Cassiar Mining, have been working on wet mill process refinements. Markets have been established for project. Twist to this project involves Magnesium extraction as well as asbestos. Magnesium makes up 21% of pile and management feels an extraction process similiar to Noranda's Magnolia project may be feasible. This would involve a much larger project than which exists now.

Cusac Gold Mine remains on a care and maintenance basis. Gold price and reserves major factors here.

Table Mtn.

International Taurus Resources property still closed. Company is severely behind on closure plan submission and mill clean-up. Reagents found on site during inspection in July may involve some enforcement action if company not cooperative in removing same from property.

Golden Bear Mine has started leaching Kodiak "A" ore. Company has deferred completing Ursa heap leach pad for this year. They will do some of the mining and lining of the events pond but recovery plant [Totem Facility] will not be installed this season. Kodiak "A" pit will be mined out by end of month-early September. All systems appear to be operating well. Tonnage on Fleece Bowl pad was increased to 623,000 tonnes.

Isk Woilastinite Project appears to have stalled. No word from company on start-up of 1998 field season.

Telkwa Coal drilling 6 inch core. Recoveries are excellant. Coal recovered from this drilling used for testing purposes.

Staff:

Wally and Bryan on annual leave until August 11.

Paul and Daryl in Atlin

Flynn, Aug. 7/98

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Smithers