



## 2022 NWT Mineral and Exploration (MAX) Awards presented

Yellowknife, NT (November 21, 2022) The 2022 Mineral and Exploration (MAX) Awards were presented on Thursday evening to close off the first post-COVID, in-person NWT Geoscience Forum. Recipients were:

### ***Special Achievement – Andy McMullen, BearWise***

Andy's passionate and ongoing efforts, that began during the diamond exploration boom of the 1990s, has enabled the minerals industry to show it can successfully co-exist with and protect northern grizzly bears. Andy reached out and found diamond miners and explorers quick converts to bear protection. His approach was not to have the companies manage bears, but rather to manage themselves in bear country. His enthusiasm, humour and use of innovative props helped deliver the message, as did the preventative measures he recommended including electric fences, incinerators, and deterrence training.

### ***Economic Leadership Award – Cheetah Resources/Nechalacho Mine***

Nechalacho is the first rare earth mining project in Canada. Through innovation, they acquired the near surface resources of the of the Nechalacho property, are mining the ore with an Indigenous mining company and workforce that is majority Indigenous, is using innovative ore sorting technology to reduce its environmental footprint and has established a mine-to-manufacturer supply chain that links the Northwest Territories to European green energy that is helping address climate change.

### ***Indigenous Achievement – Tłı̄ch̄o Government***

Under historic Tłı̄ch̄o Chief Jimmy Bruneau's "strong like two people" vision, the Tłı̄ch̄o Government oversees some of the richest mineral potential in the Northwest Territories. By working closely with diamond mine developers, they are capturing not only employment and business benefits, but also investments for the Tłı̄ch̄o people and communities. The Tłı̄ch̄o are active in promoting their region and the NWT at national and international mineral conferences and are active in supporting and seeking infrastructure investment, from hydropower to roads. Through their efforts, the Tłı̄ch̄o Highway to Whatı was officially opened last fall, and this road will now support critical and other mineral development in the Tłı̄ch̄o region.

### ***Distinguished Service – Northwest Territories Geological Survey***

As honest brokers of geoscience information, the NTGS team is dedicated to knowledge dissemination and educational activities. Formed in 2001, the NTGS shares expertise in geophysics, surficial geology, economic, industrial and critical minerals and recently added geothermal energy. They also administer the Mining Incentive Program, which funds prospector and corporate exploration projects, and leverages three times the government investment. The NTGS houses and disseminates an enormous collection of NWT mineral exploration data available for public use.

### ***Women in Mining Award – Gaeleen MacPherson***

This year's inaugural "Women in Mining" Award goes to Gaeleen MacPherson, who began her mining career with Diavik Diamond Mines in the late 1990s. From that foundation, she has progressed through ever increasing levels of responsibility, and at all three NWT diamond mines,

including Vice President of Corporate Affairs at the Ekati diamond mine, the highest position held by an Indigenous woman in the NWT mining industry. Currently, she is the Senior Manager of Human Resources for Rio Tinto Diavik. Gaeleen has made incredible achievements towards developing women, indigenous peoples, and northerners through her decades-long career, and is a tremendous role model for women in the northern mining industry.

***Environmental, Social & Governance award – Ekati, Diavik and Gahcho Kué diamond mines***

The NWT's diamond mines have elevated the territory to the world's third most valuable diamond producer. Importantly, they have led the way been models of ESG since the late 1990s. All have socio-economic agreements with commitments to training, jobs and business. Each has community-based environmental oversight boards. Collectively, they make significant, voluntary contributions to community infrastructure: from arenas to senior centres; and from community facilities to women's shelters. All have received multiple awards recognizing their exemplary efforts for safety, environmental protection and socio-economic contributions.

***Safety Leadership – Diavik Diamond Mine***

The Diavik Diamond Mine played a leadership role during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. They were one of the first companies to implement stringent screening protocols, working with a well-known Medical Director to develop a strong Covid-19 management plan, and then freely shared the information through the Northern Mine Safety Forum. This mine continues to be a leader in maintaining their pandemic safety plan and continued efforts in fighting the virus. The work they put in during the early phases of the pandemic has allowed them to be proactive and prepared for any outbreaks. Their efforts and leadership helped demonstrate to the chief public health officer that mining could continue safely in the face of the pandemic.

Master of Ceremonies Gary Vivian steered the evening along. Guest speaker Jeff Hussey from Osisko Metals provided some history of the Pine Point project, and the context for his company's proposed new mine on the historical mining site. Talented auctioneer Wally Schumann raised an impressive \$53,100 for local charity, Yellowknife's *Adopt-A-Family* support program.

Organizers wish to thank all the MAX Awards presenters, the many volunteers, and to all those who attended and contributed to the event. They wish to particularly thank MC Gary Vivian, auctioneer Wally Schumann, and event planner Kathy Gray from Inukshuk Publishing for her fantastic job at organizing this first-class event (we still marvel at her innovative use of ice!). A big shout out to sponsors: Acasta Helicopters, Arctic Canadian Diamonds, Government of the Northwest Territories, NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines, NWT Power Corporation, WSCC, 62 degrees North, Air Tindi, Polar Eggs, De Beers Canada, Canadian North, Ahmic Air, Cheetah Resources, and Inkit Limited.

For a collage of photos, visit [here](#).

For more information on the NWT and Nunavut mining industries, please visit the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines website at [www.miningnorth.com](http://www.miningnorth.com) or contact Tom Hoefler, Executive Director at Tel: 867-873-5281 or email: [executivedirector@miningnorth.com](mailto:executivedirector@miningnorth.com).