



News Release

2023 Mining & Exploration (MAX) Awards Presented

Yellowknife, NT (November 21, 2023) The 2023 Mining and Exploration (MAX) awards were presented to recipients at a banquet on November 16, held during the annual Yellowknife Geoscience Forum. The awards and recipients are below, with additional details in the Backgrounder, appended.

Award	Presented to the following recipients for ...
Economic Leadership	MET/Nuna for their work to reclaim the former Snap Lake diamond mine site, the first diamond mine in the NWT to go through remediation, with active closure work scheduled to be completed during 2024.
Indigenous Achievement	Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation for their work to advance development of the M-18 gas well in order to secure supply of local natural gas to the region for decades to come, providing many good, permanent jobs for residents and cost savings in heating and fuel, and reduce GHGs by thousands of tonnes each year, while imposing no significant impacts on the environment.
Women in Mining	Grace Mackenzie , a Tlicho member for her work in, and with, the minerals industry to passionately share her experience, knowledge and commitment to cultural respect and equity, and provide informed guidance to mining industry professionals and their employees across the Northwest Territories.
Distinguished Service	Nellie Cournoyea for her vision, hard work and determination, to see Indigenous northerners and the regions benefit from non-renewable resource development; and for showing us that you can achieve anything if you are determined and willing to put the work into it.
Special Achievement (posthumously)	Don Bubar for his strong exploration expertise, his vision for strong Indigenous participation in the mining sector, and his commitment to environmental sustainability even at the early exploration stage. Also for his work to advance the Nechalacho/Thor Lake rare earth elements project south of Yellowknife through the environmental approvals process.
Environmental, Social & Governance	Ekati, Diavik and Gahcho Kué Diamond mines, Pine Point Mining and Gold Terra Resources for their unflinching and significant contributions to support emergency efforts during the unprecedented wildfire emergency the NWT experienced. Whether it was major cash donations to emergency relief organizations, devoting staff to assist with wildfire support, or pitching in to ensure shelves didn't go empty in communities, the recipients demonstrated their commitment to NWT residents and communities.
WSCC Safety	Sheila Chernys of Burgundy Diamonds' Ekati Mine went above and beyond in her dedication to safety, demonstrated leadership, and impacted and influenced the northern safety culture. Her efforts included taking on the role of chair of the Northern Mine Health and Safety Forum, participating on the Mines Safety Round Table for the mining industry in Canada, and helping organize the 2023 Northern Mine Rescue Competition.



- Row 1: Marc Whitford of MET/Nuna receives Economic Leadership Award from De Beers' Kelly Brenton
 Duane Smith receives Indigenous Award from GNWT's Pamela Strand
 Nellie Cournoyea receives Distinguished Service Award from Bob McLeod
- Row 2: Grace Mackenzie receives Women in Mining Award from Melissa Ng, National Chair of WIMC
 Sheila Chernys receives WSCC Safety Award from WSCC's Cary Ingram
 The late Don Bubar's son, Andrew accepts the Special Achievement Award from Gary Vivian
- Row 3: Diavik, Gahcho Kué, Gold Terra, Pine Point and Ekati mine representatives receive the Environmental, Social & Governance award from the Chamber of Mines' President Kenny Ruptash.

Background Details

Economic Leadership Award – MET/Nuna

In December 2021, MET/Nuna Joint Venture (MNJV)—a partnership between the North Slave Métis Alliance company Métcor Inc. and Inuit-owned Nuna Logistics—was awarded the 3-year contract to decommission and reclaim the Snap Lake underground diamond mine site, owned by De Beers Canada. As Prime Contractor, the MNJV is managing the closure, demolition, and rehabilitation of the site of the former mining operation.

With closure work at Snap Lake employing up to 120 people at a time, the MET/Nuna Joint Venture contract marks many significant milestones, including:

- This is the first diamond mine in the NWT to go through remediation, with active closure work scheduled to be completed during 2024.
- The project also ensures that money stays in the North: MET/Nuna—in its leadership role as prime contractor—works with other northern suppliers and subcontractors to complete the work.
- And for the North Slave Métis Alliance, the contract is a major opportunity to build business capacity, to provide employment and training to North Slave Métis people, and to ensure the future prosperity of its members.

Indigenous Achievement – Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation

The Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation (IPC) is advancing a bold project, to develop the M-18 gas well. Construction is currently underway on a project that will provide Energy Security for the Region!

The “Inuvialuit Energy Security Project” will bring three major regional benefits including:

- ENERGY SECURITY: The Project will result in a secure supply of local natural gas to the region for decades to come.
- ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: The Project will result in good, permanent jobs for residents and cost savings in heating and fuel.
- ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS: The Project will reduce GHGs by thousands of tonnes each year, while imposing no significant impacts on the environment.

Fossil fuel projects are not easy to get off the ground, and advancing this new Project is a testament to the strong determination and the fortitude of the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation and its leadership. Construction on the project is underway.

Women in Mining Award – Grace Mackenzie

Grace Mackenzie is a Tłıchǫ member who has dedicated her career to effective collaboration between Tłıchǫ people and those in the minerals industry.

Grace began her mining career in 1998, working in Human Resources for Diavik. There, she partnered with management and employees to trouble-shoot and problem-solve issues, converting them into workable solutions. This was during the very exciting period of mine construction at Diavik. Subsequently, she went to gain additional Human Resources experience at the Ekati mine.

Later, with De Beers, Grace’s skills were expanded to include Community Liaison, and she was instrumental in creating regular Cultural Awareness programs for employees, promoting respect and understanding between management and staff, and between colleagues.

For more than a decade, Grace travelled to schools in the Great Slave Region, delivering De Beers Canada's Books in Homes program. This gave her an opportunity to become very familiar with the communities and people located across the 39-thousand square kilometres of Tłıchq territory

Grace then joined her Tłıchq Government to work on their Impact Benefit Agreements with the three big mines. In her role today as Mine Liaison Coordinator, she continues to listen, answer questions and support Tłıchq citizens to ensure they fully understand their benefits, and receive all that they qualify for.

Remaining passionate about her culture and people, Grace represents the Indigenous perspective, and she currently sits on the Socio-Economic Review Panel and further provides her expertise on the Weghàà Ełeyatıts'eedı Guidelines.

Grace's decades of experience and commitment to cultural respect and equity, along with her knowledge and professionalism, provide informed guidance to mining industry professionals and their employees across the Northwest Territories. Grace's warm and honest approach also encourages positive working relationships between the territorial government, and Indigenous communities.

Distinguished Service – Nellie Cournoyea

Nellie Cournoyea was a key player in the negotiation and signing of our first land claim agreement for the Inuvialuit, in 1984. She subsequently served in a number of other leadership roles with Inuvialuit organizations, including the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation and the Inuvialuit Development Corporation.

Nellie was the first Indigenous woman to lead a Canadian jurisdiction when she became Premier of the NWT in 1991. During her term, she signed the Nunavut Final Land Claim Agreement, alongside Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut President Paul Quassa, putting into motion the creation of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut. The land claim made Nunavummiut the largest private landowners in the world, and of mineral resources that now are the biggest economic driver in Nunavut.

Nellie recognized the importance of resource development for the benefits it would bring to the North and to Indigenous northerners. Some of us will remember her visionary work to create the first ever Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources in the early 1990s. That was in anticipation of devolution, which Nellie and her fellow politicians were working to achieve way back then.

Perhaps a good measure of Nellie's thinking and character is found using Google:

- From a 1992 Maclean's Magazine quote: "The less government you have involved with your life, the better off you are."
- In the Los Angeles Times in 1994: Cournoyea is trying to sell the Slave Geological Province Road project to Ottawa as a moneymaker. Quote: "There is no doubt that opening access to the region will stimulate further exploration and development work." In that story, she estimates the net increase in the Canadian GDP from new mines at \$13.5 billion, new employment at more than 210,000 person-years, new income taxes at \$1.2 billion and exports at \$11.25 billion. Above all, from her standpoint, much of that new money would remain in the North.
- Then in 2000 in the New York Times: As chairperson of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation: "If these [environmentalists] want to be useful, they should start cleaning up the south, stop the pollution that is damaging to the Arctic wildlife and environment." In other words, leave the north to northerners.
- Nellie headed up the visionary Aboriginal Pipeline Group, the first such Indigenous group to sign a deal with industry to own one-third equity in a pipeline that would run between the

Mackenzie Delta and Alberta. And back then she pushed Ottawa for support with federal loan guarantees, something still being sought today by Indigenous groups.

- From an interview in the Globe & Mail in 2006 these words: Ms. Cournoyea's dream is of self-sufficiency for her people. Money from oil and gas, money from diamond mines, money from jobs and tourism, all mean money for infrastructure. "We have problems," she says, "and we have to solve them... The fact is, we have got to find solutions, and not having activity is not the solution."
- And in No Second Chances, a podcast series, Nellie offered words of encouragement for young women thinking about getting involved in politics. "It's important to find a meaning – a real meaning. That will give you strength. I've learned a lot by being a part of this great country we live in. I know we're trying to make our country better. The value that women bring to the table is so important at this time."

Nellie has received many accolades, including

- a member of the Order of Canada, and the Order of the Northwest Territories;
- an Inspire Award Winner;
- several honorary law degrees;
- And earlier this year, she was even honoured on a postage stamp.

Nellie continues to support Indigenous rights, land claims and economic development in the North, and still sets an example for not just all Indigenous women and girls but all of us. She shows us that you can achieve anything if you are determined and willing to put the work into it.

Special Achievement – Don Bubar (posthumously)

Don Bubar was known to many for his work to advance the Nechalacho/Thor Lake rare earth elements project south of Yellowknife through the environmental approvals process. Don brought not only strong exploration expertise, but a vision for strong Indigenous participation to the NWT mining sector, along with a commitment to environmental sustainability even at the early exploration stage.

Don chaired the very first national Aboriginal Affairs Committee of our Chamber's sister organization, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada. He also appointed former Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Phil Fontaine to Avalon's Board. Don arranged for the renaming of the Thor Lake project to Nechalacho, laying the groundwork for subsequent strong Indigenous participation in the project. In 2010, Don accepted PDAC's Environmental & Social Responsibility Award in recognition of Avalon's Indigenous community engagement efforts in the NWT.

At Nechalacho, solar panels were one signal of the connection of the rare earth project to clean energy production. But Don pushed environmental responsibility further and made Avalon a leader in the junior exploration sector, by filing an annual sustainability report to increase social license confidence in his investors. This was unusual, something only full-blown mines were producing at the time. For several years, Avalon was in the ranks of the Corporate Knights' Future 40 Responsible Corporate Leaders in Canada. Not bad for a junior exploration company.

Don was an ardent believer in getting more geoscience into the school science curriculum, and he became an active supporter of Mining Matters, a national charitable organization dedicated to educating young people to develop knowledge and awareness of Earth sciences, the minerals industry, and the vital roles metals and minerals play in society.

In 2019, Don accepted PDAC's Distinguished Service Award for his contribution to building awareness of Indigenous issues among PDAC members, his support of geoscience education in Canada, and his exploration success.

For many years Don was also an active Director on the Board of the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines. Don passed away in his home on July 30th, 2023.

Environmental, Social & Governance award – Ekati, Diavik and Gahcho Kué Diamond mines, and Pine Point Mining & Gold Terra Resources

Our award recipients this year are the three diamond mines: Ekati, Diavik and Gahcho Kue. And two of our advancing project proponents: Pine Point Mining Ltd. and Gold Terra Resource Corp.

All five recipients shared in the Environmental & Social Responsibility Award for their unflinching and significant contributions to support emergency efforts during the unprecedented wildfire emergency the NWT experienced.

Whether it was major cash donations to emergency relief organizations, devoting staff to assist with wildfire support, or pitching in to ensure shelves didn't go empty in communities, the recipients demonstrated their commitment to NWT residents and communities.

WSCC Safety Award – Sheila Chernys, Burgundy Diamonds Ekati Mine

This award recognizes safety leaders in the northern mining and exploration industry for their commitment, leadership, and innovation. Sheila Chernys from Ekati diamond mine is an individual who has gone above and beyond in her dedication to safety, has demonstrated leadership, and has had an impact and influence on the northern safety culture. Sheila stepped up and took on the role of chair of the Northern Mine Health and Safety Forum, they participate on the Mines Safety Round Table for the mining industry in Canada, and they helped organize the 2023 Northern Mine Rescue Competition. Her work as a community safety liaison for the Mining industry in the NWT showcases her passion for safety. She is a strong supporter of driving safety forward in the Mining Industry, and Sheila is a leader in her role, in her company, and in this industry.

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