First Nations people use technology to their advantage

Since people have started to find mines in Canada, the First Nation people were associated with many discoveries. First Nation people prospected and found many mines for small and large exploration companies.

Again, the First Nation people are the first to use a new technology called the Beep Mat, introduced by Instrumentation GDD Inc. of Sainte-Foy, Quebec. But this time, First Nation People such as Sam Bosum, president of Native Exploration Services and now chief of Oudje-Bougoumou, have started to prospect for themselves and their community in the summer and now, in the winter, using this new technology. During a few weeks of work in January-March 1998 and March 1999, the crews of Native Exploration Services found and trenched close to 60 conductors berried under a few feet of overburden or snow. The Beep Mat was used to find conductors like a fish finder would do on a lake to find fish. Finding and sampling conductors have become relatively easy. As shown on the pictures, some communities like the Eastmain, Oudje-Bougoumou and Wemindji Bands have started prospecting in the summer, and now in the winter, with this new technology and are hoping to find the big motherload (a big mine like Voisey's Bay, only 10 km from Nain, Labrador).

Some of the pictures show Cree prospectors in action during a summer and winter course given by Instrumentation GDD Inc. that took place in October 1998 and January 1999 respectively in Eastmain and Wemindji, in the James Bay area. The Wemindji Cree prospectors worked in collaboration with the Tawich Development Corporation of Wemindji, Quebec. Within the duration of the two courses (1 and 2 weeks), each group have found and sampled more than 10 different conductors one of them 60 km from the Wemindji village.

Finally, you will find below an article published in the newspaper L'Echo de Val d’0r on April 21, 1999. It was translated with the permission of the author, Sylvain Paradis.

The article below relates the experience of a 10-day winter prospecting campaign by a crew of SOQUEM Inc. in the north of Quebec where they were able to sample several conductors at a very low cost. Now that it is proven that the Beep Mat works in the summer and winter, First Nation People should take the lead and try to find mines for themselves.

SOQUEM explores with snowmobiles

In March 1999, SOQUEM realized a unique project in order to successfully complete a prospecting campaign north-east of Matagami where Nuinsco had announced a nickel discovery. SOQUEM used snowmobiles equipped with a detection equipment called the Beep Mat BM4+ to test targets in locations that are hard to access.

The improved Beep Mat has been updated by Instrumentation GDD Inc., located in Sainte-Foy, Quebec. It includes a new software and a probe allowing the detection of conductors up to 4.5 meters deep in the ground, compared to three meters with the former model. The equipment is pulled by a snowmobile at a speed of 20 km per hour.

This new prospecting method helped SOQUEM save important sums of money. With the snowmobile, it is easy to access almost any remote location, at low costs. SOQUEM's crew was able to prospect tens of kilometers away from the base camp.

Low costs

"We made a compilation of the sector, giving priority to specific targets. Since these targets were located too far away, they would not have been accessible in the summer, except by helicopter, which implies important costs", explains Guy Cuerrier, geologist and project manager at SOQUEM.

Mr. Cuerrier talks of costs of $ 700 an hour for a helicopter. Moreover, helicopter companies require a minimum of three hours of flight. The whole project cost about $ 15.000, that is one fifth of the usual costs.

Anomalies

Mr. Cuerrier underlines an additional advantage of the Beep Mat. It allowed his crew to detect anomalies three meters deep in the ground, which would have been impossible to do with the standard model. Five sites of semi-massive or massive sulphides were found, then sampled by blasting. The results remain confidential, however.

SOQEM intends to repeat the experience for sites that are hard to access in the summertime. According to Mr. Cuerrier, the method is hopeful for detecting surface outcrops in locations otherwise very hard to access.

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