EXPLORATION 1987

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In northern Idaho, Cominco examined three properties in the St. Joe area, including drilling programs at the Crescent Peak-Blackdome property that was looked at year, but the company is maintaining its claims. Cominco drilled a single hole of Lightening Creek north of Clark Fork. More work is planned for this year.

Merrin Mines extended the drill at Cedar Mountain, south end of the Pend Oreille district, from 150 to 365 m (500 to 1,200 ft). A vein was cross cut at 305 m (1,000 ft) and some lead-silver mineralization was discovered. The vein will be explored by a drill next season.

Shoshone Silver Mining drove a 150-m (500 ft) tunnel at the Idaho Lakesview claims. It was looking for a mineralized target found by drilling.

The No. 3 crosscut at the Iron Mask mine was extended to the 2000 station. A 70-m (200 ft) high raise had 50 m (170 ft) to go intersect a drill target that assayed 897 g/t (25 oz per ton) of silver. The work is being done by Iron Mask Mining.

The Elk City area was also active. Some companies began feasibility testing of 1986’s exploration projects.

Alotta Resources, an affiliate of Tundra Gold Mines, drilled about 75 reverse circulation holes near the Colonel Sellers mine north of Elk City. Late in the year, Billiton Minerals joint ventured the Tundra holdings. Drilling continued late in the year. The Mineral Zone project has combined estimated reserves of 1.8 Mt at 1.9 g/t (2 million oz per ton) of gold. Billiton also has a claim block extending south from Orurograde to the headwaters of Crooked River.

Pegasus acquired a claim block in the Buffalo Hump district. Some drill holes went down last year in the vicinity of the Big Buffalo mine.

Silver Crystal Mines explored its newly acquired claims located at the Umballa mine west of Orurograde. The property is being developed for gold and platinum that was supposedly discovered in 1980. Silver Crystal is working with Idaho Mining and Development and Idaho Platinum Resources to build a pilot wet chemical extraction plant.

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Idaho

E.F. Bennett and V.E. Mitchell, Idaho Geological Survey

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The Boise Basin district, the largest gold producing district in Idaho, received considerable attention in 1987. Goldpost Resources obtained an option on the Gold Hill mine, northwest of Idaho City. The property is being evaluated as an open pit mine. A drilling program is scheduled to start next year. Billiton Exploration drilled a target in the Illinois shear zone in the Lemhi District near Glenshire in Idaho County. A drilling program was conducted during the year. Continental Resources obtained an option on Porphyry Ridge south of Idaho City. Frontino continued its exploration program at the Ophir mine near Idaho City. Roads were built and drill pads cleared for a drilling program scheduled for this year.

Tundra Gold drilled a target on Miller Mountain north of Lowman. The old Lincoln mine in the Boar-Horseshoe Bend District was leased by Union-Belco Resources from Western Centennial. The company is negotiating with Morrison-Knudsen for a preliminary feasibility study.

The Yellow Pine-Stoutene area had considerable exploration activity. Amselco Minerals (now BP Minerals America) expanded its claim block at the Golden Gate tungsten mine to include Anthony camp and more of Anthony Ridge. The property is located in the south of Yellow Pine. The company drilled 44 holes on a mineralized shear zone looking for precious metals. Meridian Minerals is a joint venture partner with Amselco.

High Country mining drilled the KT and DC claims on Quartz Creek, at the Golden cut near Elk Summit, north of Yellow Pine. At least 10 programs were underway near the townships of Gibbonsville, Shoup, LCross, and Cold Hill.

Metron Resources shipped 4.2 kilo-tonnes of ore to Clayton Silver for milling testing. The mine is located on Parphyry Ridge south of the Black Bird mine in Lemhi County. A drilling program was conducted during the year. Metron is part of the Vancouver Development Group and is developing the Parphyry Ridge property with McConnell-Peck Resources.

Canyon Resources drilled a new property located 5 km (3 miles) north of Lowman. The company will continue to evaluate the site next year. Amselco explored the area near the Rainier mine on Arnett Creek, west of Lowman. FMG is still drilling at Ditch Creek south of Gibbonsville and in 1987 expanded its claim block.

Noranda Exploration obtained the Black Pine property in Cassia County from Permian Exploration. The Tellman open pit mine in the district produced 470 kg (15,000 oz) of gold from a vat leach plant in the 1950s. Noranda reported reserves of 5 Ml of 1.7 g/t (0.8 million oz of 0.05 oz per t) gold in mid-1987. The company will build a heap leach operation this year.

Antilles Resources (Esmerco) drilled four holes in Robber's Gulch. A total of eight holes have been drilled so far. Each is about 110 to 120 m (350 to 400 ft) deep. The target is gold bearing quartz veins and jasperoids along extensive northwest-trending fault zones in Permian and Pennsylvania sediments (Oquirrh formation). American Copper and Nickel drilled 10 holes on its extensive claim block south of Antilles Resources in Cassia County.

Meridian Minerals continued its program at Middle Mountain, south of Oakley, drilling about 11 holes. There are two areas of interest, the Gold Creek zone in the Idaho Volcanics and the Blue Hill zone that contains a fossil sinter. Both zones are on a northwest-trending structure.

Meridian did more drilling at the Mink Creek-South Mountain discovery, south of Pocatello, that was found last year. The target is jasperoids in Paleozoic rocks. Results of the drill program are being evaluated.

Freeport Minerals drilled an epithermal target near Malad Summit. Freeport also staked the claims at Carlin Mountain in Bonneville County. The property will be evaluated this year.

Oglebalt, new owners of the Oneida Perlite operation at Malad, drilled east of the perlite deposit on the west side of Elk Horn Mountain for base and precious metals.

There was considerable activity in the Lava Creek District. Checkered five or six holes on claims north of Craters of the Moon National Monument. This is the property drilled by Marville in 1984. Checkered has taken over Manville's claims in Idaho and elsewhere.

Cominco explored in Long Canyon north of Checkered where a different property. The company is considering a drilling program this year.

Clamash Gold acquired the champagne mine lease from Goldfields. Goldfields drilled 20
holes in 1986 with sporadic values reportedly as high as 8.6 g/t (0.25 oz per st) gold.

The old mercury occurrences north of Weiser are of interest as low grade bulk mineable gold deposits. Ican Minerals drilled 36 holes for a total of 540 holes at the Almaden mercury mine near Weiser. The company has about 22.6 Mt of 1 to 1.1 g/t (25 million st of 0.029 to 0.03 oz per st) gold blocked out.

Chevron Resources drilled nine holes early in the year, at the Thirsty Mountain prospect, north of Weiser. This is a low grade gold deposit that shows similar to the Almaden mine.

Yanke Machine extended the drift at the Haystack mine from 300 to 430 m (1007 to 1410 ft). Three compartment raise was started on a new ore shoot discovered at the end of the drift. The Haystack mine will be upgraded next year and more drilling is planned.

Shama Minerals, Chemical, and Oil increased its claim block in Idaho from 1700 claims in 1986 to more than 4200 last year. The company has operated a fluorospar mine and mill near Challis on and off since 1974.

An inclined shaft was being driven by J and D Lode Placer at the Competence mine in the Neal district in Elmore County. The company is looking for an extension of mineralized shear zone mined early in the century.

Yanke Machine purchased the Golden Rule mine, located south of the J and D mine on Black's Creek. It drilled the property last winter. The mine has a history of gold production.

Grizzly Resources explored its nine claims in the Packer John Group. The company raised $200,000 in 1986 to buy the claims and finance exploration.

Richweld Resources completed a diamond drilling program at the Blackstone mine in Elmore County. A number of mineralized zones were found outside the old open pit at the mine site. Drilling was planned for this fall. The company is considering building a mill at Fairfield.

Atlanta Hill continued a drilling and feasibility study at Atlanta Hill. Tentative plans call for an open pit mine and a flotation mill at the gold property. More deep drilling is planned for this year to explore below old mine workings. The company filed a draft environmental impact statement in March.

Galli Exploration resumed drilling at Rocky Bar. Last year, about 20 holes were drilled in a mineralized shear zone in Hard- scrabble Gulch. Gallie was spun off from Royal Apex Silver as a separate company and is now called Gexa Gold.

Precious Metals Technology completed construction of a 90-tdh (100-tsp) mill at the Princess Blue Ribbon mine. More than 900 mt (1 million st) of ore are stockpiled at the mine site. The precious metals deposit, originally mined by underground methods, will be developed by an open pit. Production is scheduled for this year.

Atlantic Mining continued development at the Atlantic mine in Colorado Gulch near Bellevue. The company completed 15 holes at 245 m (700 to 800 ft) of underground development, including three raises and two stopes. The target is a series of veins carrying gold and other metals in the Magdalena vein system. Atlantic is considering building its own 1.1 million mill near Bellevue.

An exploration program at the Vienna mine was successful and Rothechill's will begin mining this year. The ore from the mine will be processed in Rothechill's mill on Warm Springs road near Kelchum.

Homesteake Mining obtained a lease on the Barlett Point property, west of Chilly Buttes. A drilling program was underway at the end of the year.

The War Eagle Mining Co. drilled nine reverse circulation holes at a large land holding on War Eagle Mountain near Silver City in Owyhee County. Drilling followed a geochronical survey and some geophysics completed in 1986.

New rules governing the use of cyanide in mining operations were enacted by the State of Idaho in December. A task force composed of industry, state government, and environmental groups hammered out the proposed regulations. Many other states are expected to use Idaho's rules as a model for their own laws. The new regulations are tough and are designed to safeguard against accidents when using cyanide, especially in heap leach operations.

Exploration for nonfuel minerals in Illinois continued at a slow pace throughout 1987. The major fluorospar producer, Ozark-Mahoning Co., operated two diamond drill core units, primarily in connection with further development of its Annabel Lee ore body 11 km (7 miles) north of Cave in Rock, Hardin County.

Tammsco and Illinois Minerals Co. continued to drill in the Southern Illinois tracts of Alexander County in the extreme southwestern portion of the state. Illinois Minerals Co. is seeking required permits to explore 24 km (14.9 miles) within the Shawnee National Forest.

Under a new 10-year Land and Resource Management plan being implemented in the Shawnee National Forest, mineral activities are held to be compatible for 70.9% of the forest. Special stipulations are applied to leasing, exploration, development, and mining in forest lands identified as areas for special recreational or research uses; as land of unique scientific, educational, or natural value; or as National Register Sites and National Historic Landmarks.

Similarly, special stipulations are applied to provide interim management of areas recommended for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System or for wilderness study. The Shawnee plan is being applied by environmental and other interest groups.

There was some exploration interest for common minerals, such as limestone and dolomite, sand and gravel, and clay, particularly for construction aggregate and high calcium limestone in central Illinois. The latter is used in the gas desulfurization and fluidized bed combustion technologies.

The precipitous decline in exploratory and developmental drilling for coal, which began in the early 1980's, continued during 1987. Ten companies filed 888 plugging affidavits with the Illinois Department of Mines and Minerals. This compared to about 1400 in 1986, 1900 in 1985, 1500 in 1984, and 3000 in 1983.