



## NEWS RELEASE

### Mineral Exploration and Caribou Protection Are Compatible

**Vancouver, BC – June 25, 2010** – Low impact mineral exploration activities and caribou protection are compatible, stated the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia (AME BC) today. On June 23, environmental groups questioned a small company's proposed mineral exploration program in mountain caribou habitat in southern BC. "In reality, over the last three years, mineral explorers have worked extensively with government, First Nations, and non-governmental organizations to develop reasonable policies that address credible threats to mountain caribou," said Gavin C. Dirom, President & CEO of AME BC.

"We have strived to be supportive and collaborative partners with other stakeholders in the area, and we firmly believe that early-stage mineral exploration can be conducted with minimal impact on caribou habitat," added Dirom. "Mineral explorers must follow stringent government policies, regulations and permit conditions in critical mountain caribou habitat. Although large scale forestry and extensive road building may not be compatible with caribou, small-scale site clearing, and access route construction for a temporary mineral exploration program can co-exist. In the extremely rare event that an economically viable mineral deposit is discovered, a comprehensive public environmental assessment would be required to fully evaluate the net effect of the proposed mine on all aspects of the environment, surrounding First Nations, and communities prior to any approval to mine. The reality is that the likelihood of an exploration project becoming an operating mine is quite low, but the potential benefits to the public can be very high indeed and need to be properly considered along with other societal values, including the caribou."

AME BC also addressed environmentalists' primary concern that the provincial Mineral Tenure Act has caused conflict regarding mountain caribou and the Flathead Valley in southeastern BC. "The Mineral Tenure Act has indeed changed over the years, based on evolving policy, science, and societal needs," said Dirom. "But it is not in need of drastic reform. What is required to reduce conflict in BC is an inclusive land use planning process where the interests of the public, mineral explorers and First Nations can be effectively considered, balanced and respected."

In today's modern world, acquiring mineral tenure is not an automatic license to build a mine. Furthermore, mineral exploration and the actual act of mining are vastly different activities. BC has one of the most stringent environmental regulatory regimes in the world. Authorization to undertake exploratory drilling or the right to proceed to mine development is not granted by simply acquiring mineral tenure. Anyone wishing to explore for minerals and potentially develop a mine must acquire permits for specific activities related to exploration, project development, and mining. Environmental and First Nations review is required before these activities are allowed in BC.

#### **About AME BC:**

AME BC is the predominant voice of mineral exploration in British Columbia. Established in 1912, AME BC represents thousands of members including geoscientists, prospectors, engineers, entrepreneurs, exploration companies, suppliers, mineral producers, and associations who are engaged in mineral exploration in BC and throughout the world. Through leadership, advocacy, and partnerships, AME BC promotes a healthy environment and business climate for the mineral exploration industry.

#### **AME BC Land Access and Use home page:**

<http://www.amebc.ca/policy/land-access-and-use/land-access.aspx>.

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