# Excitement revs up at Rambler

BY CRAIG WESTCOTT

The old Rambler copper deposit may be edging closer to a big birthday present on this 100th anniversary of its discovery.

That's because the more Altius Minerals explores the property, the better it looks it terms of its remaining copper potential.

Drilling results released by the St. John's-based junior earlier this month confirmed that another of the historically known mineral bodies extends farther and deeper than previously known.

Consolidated Rambler stopped mining the property in the early 1980s after it had mined as far as its mineral rights boundary line. The company couldn't reach a deal with the adjacent property holder to keep mining. At the time, it estimated remaining reserves from the Ming Footwall zone at some 21 million tons of ore grading one per cent copper with some associated gold.

Altius has since consolidated the properties and has been poking a drill into the earth near the deposit that Consolidated Rambler finished on.

The Ming Footwall zone is a string of mineralized earth lying directly below the Ming massive sulphide deposit, the main ore body mined by Consolidated Rambler. Assay results from deep drilling in 2003 confirmed the presence of copper and gold mineralization comparable in grade and structure thickness to what had been mined in the past.

This year, the plan was to get more aggressive with the drilling and follow up on some exploratory work that Consolidated Rambler had done inside the mine before it closed.

"What excited us was, just before they shut down the Ming mine, they tried a couple of more holes down in its lower zone," said Altius president Brian Dalton. "And in those holes there were much higher grades than what had been seen up above. The problem we had was all the core had been destroyed, and the drill logs were nowhere to be found. We had this report of good mineralization, but no confirmation.

Craig Westcott photo

**Altius Minerals geologist Steve Barrett heads towards a Petro Drilling rig manned by Harold Sacrey and Wilson Pynn at Rambler this past summer. The program yielded positive assay results for Newfoundland's most active junior exploration company.**

"This year we said, 'Look, those kind of grades that we're seeing there are getting pretty exciting, so let's go in and see what this thing actually looks like."

So Altius drilled near one of the holes that the Consolidated Rambler men had drilled, hoping to confirm the higher grades.

"Obviously the hunch we were going on was that this was a big zone that might be picking up in grade as you go deeper," Dalton said. "If that's the case, it could represent a whole other target besides the main one that we basically demonstrated last year."

The drilling plan proved successful. Both holes drilled this past summer found good grades of copper — and significantly farther away from the known ore body.

Again, the target was the Ming Footwall zone. The first hole, designed as a confirmation hole for one of the deeper holes that no core or logs were available for, encountered two sections of copper-bearing rock of higher grade than the stuff that had been found by the former operators.

One section ran over 12 metres grading 2.32 per cent copper. The second section ran over 22 metres grading 2.26 per cent copper.

The second hole was aimed further along strike to the north and a quarter kilometre down dip from the nearest hole drilled by Consolidated Rambler.

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It too turned up interesting numbers, including a 16 metre length of core grading 1.73 per cent copper, 7.35 metres grading nearly two per cent copper, 6.5 metres grading 1.77 per cent copper and a section nearly 29 metres long grading 1.41 per cent copper.

The thick nature of the mineralization suggests it could be bulk-mined fairly affordably.

"The nice thing about that lower zone is that it is the kind of thing you can build tonnage on," said Dalton. "There's a fair bit of exploration to be done. But these are interesting things to start thinking about."

Dalton is planning at least another round of drilling to confirm the continuity of the mineral body. A key decision is whether to drill from the surface, or pump out the flooded mine, install ventilation equipment and roll down a drill to get closer to the Footwall zone.

Having the drill crew work from inside the guts of the mine may be more cost-effective. The drill wouldn't have to cut through as much rock to reach the Footwall zone.

"The other advantage of being down there is that you're down there," Dalton said. "Geologically, it's always nice to see things in that dimension. There's a lot to be said for it. And there are other zones around this mine that are fairly hard to test from the surface with a drill. There are indications of really high-grade gold mineralization. And really the best way to go at it all is to open it all up again and go in there and see what they look like."

This past year's drilling program was mostly financed by a United Kingdom venture capital and mine development group that so far Altius hasn't named. In exchange for putting up the exploration money, the group got an exclusive six month option to negotiate an agreement on the property. All Dalton can say about the arrangement is that negotiations with the group are continuing.

But the obvious goal would be for Altius to prove Rambler is worth mining again.

Dalton acknowledged the best thing going for the project is its location near Baie Verte.

"There's existing infrastructure, you've got docks, you've got knowledgeable miners, all those things that really go a long way," Dalton said. "And probably more than anything else, we've got a deep shaft and a decline access down to the thing, which is a huge advantage. There's no doubt there is huge value in that infrastructure."

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# Work resumes in earnest on Freeport's Hutton garnet property

Freeport Resources has completed the first phase of its 2004 sampling program at its Hutton garnet project in northern Labrador.

Work at Freeport's garnet-titanium beaches resumed after a five-year hiatus. The program was made possible by the successful outcome of negotiations with government and other interested parties that resulted in a redefinition of the boundaries of a proposed park reserve.

Freeport president Brenda Clark said the company's shareholders deserve thanks for their continuing patience and support during the extensive negotiations.

The 2004 fieldwork was done under the direction of Dr. Norm Catto, a highly respected geomorphologist with many years experience in beach formation and glacial processes. Catto visited the beaches as part of a larger sustainable development study. As work was done by hand, test pits were dug to a maximum depth of 1.4 metres.

About 30 sand samples were collected from the South and North Beaches to study the nature of the beach system regimes and to evaluate heavy mineral content and variations in particle size distribution. Further fieldwork this year is weather-dependent and may include split spoon sampling or ground-penetrating radar. Processing based on UBC's Centre for Industrial Minerals Innovations recent study is also planned, along with North American and European market testing.

Eighteen samples were collected from South Beach along one-fifth of its total length of 1.8 km. Previous analyses indicated an average of 65 per cent almandine garnet, with 4.12 per cent TiO2 assayed in a composite sample representing 860 metres of beach length.

Because of significant and uniform garnet content, South Beach is distinctly red in colour, and one of the highest grade alluvial garnet deposits known world-wide. In contrast, the larger North beach deposit is grey, because of a layer of light wind-blown sediments that form a blanket over the dunes and forebeach. Notably, previous sampling was focused along the apron of the dunes, where Catto advises heavy mineral content is typically lowest (25 weight per cent garnet previously reported).

Recent sampling in the central foreshore revealed red sands visually similar to South Beach under a thin grey veneer. Twelve samples were taken along 1.5 km. of North Beach, about two-thirds its total length of 2.2 km. Clark says the samples will be analyzed for heavy mineral content and particle size distribution.