



FOR RELEASE

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## **Yukon Forum focuses on designation of Class 1 areas**

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon, the Council of Yukon First Nations and 10 First Nation leaders held a successful Yukon Forum today in Whitehorse.

Today's discussion focused on the implementation of Class 1 notification areas across Yukon. Forum participants agreed today to work together on implementing this process.

Class 1 exploration is defined as "grassroots" exploration with low potential to cause adverse environmental effects; assessment under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio Economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) is not required.

The work ahead reflects the recognition by Yukon government and Yukon First Nations of the social and economic importance of mining to the territory and the need to respect treaty rights.

"As leaders in Yukon and in our communities we're working together to develop clear regulations that ensure the prosperity of the territory," Premier Darrell Pasloski said. "The approach we agreed on respects First Nation treaty rights and is a workable solution for the mining sector. I would like to thank all of the chiefs here today for a good discussion."

The phased approach will see significant areas of Yukon designated as Class 1 notification areas effective July 1 of this year. A proposed second and final phase, which would see all remaining Crown lands in Yukon designated as Class 1 notification areas, was determined to be a mutual priority. A senior advisory committee will be established soon to guide this process.

"We support the Yukon Forum's opportunity for dialogue between governments in order to achieve mutual understanding on key issues, such as Class 1 notification and thresholds, that affect all Yukoners," Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Ruth Massie said.

The Yukon Forum is an opportunity for leaders to discuss issues of mutual interest and to identify opportunities and common priorities for collaboration. Since its inception in 2005, the forum has delivered a number of successful initiatives including implementing the Northern Strategy Trust fund.

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