



# NWT Mining Heritage Society

## Our Story

When it was announced in late 1999 that Giant Mine would be coming to a close due to the bankruptcy of the Royal Oak company, a small group of Yellowknifer's got together to hash out a plan for preserving the history of the mine.



**An era of production ended at Giant in 1999 (*Ryan Silke photo*)**

Through the help of government departments, new Giant Mine owner Miramar Mining, and advocacy groups such as Spirit YK, the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines, and various individuals, the **Giant Mine Heritage Working Group** was created in February 2000. Its objective was the saving of artifacts and equipment from Giant Mine before they were lost or thrown away. A comprehensive inventory of the property was compiled during the summer of 2000 by Ryan Silke and a wide variety of mining memorabilia, documents, photos, equipment, and rock samples were authorized for donation to the Group and its members.

In 2001, the group renamed itself the **NWT Mining Heritage Group** to better reflect its new objective. Now that it had collected a variety of material from Giant Mine, the plan was to reunite local interest in establishing a mining museum and interpretive centre to celebrate the accomplishments of the mineral industry in the Northwest Territories. There were a number of historic buildings at Giant Mine townsite that could be used for this purpose, so the group began a concerted lobby effort to save buildings in this area for future tourism use.

During 2001-2002 work proceeded in preparation for acquiring and renovating buildings at Giant Mine townsite and A-shaft area. Five buildings were acquired under a deal with Miramar Mining in 2001, the Giant Mine recreation hall, the commissary, and the A-shaft headframe, hoist room, and powerhouse. A cost assessment report by Ann Peters was completed early in 2001. This

gave us an idea of how much it would cost to rehabilitate the structures for public access. The next step was getting an engineer to study the structures and figure out what would be involved to do so. Phil Nolan of Structural All Limited completed this work in summer 2002. Through this work, it was determined that the old Giant Mine recreation hall complex, built in the mid 1950s, was the most favourable building for the main interpretive centre, while the A-shaft buildings could be maintained as outdoor exhibits and storage.



**The A-Shaft area of Giant Mine is the envisioned site for the 'NWT Mining Heritage Center' (Ryan Silke photo)**

To build a museum you need a good variety of memorabilia, photographs, documents, mining equipment, and other artifacts. Collection and acquisition efforts expanded by soliciting donations from individuals and mining companies, and through a concerted effort to visit and document old abandoned mine sites across the NWT.

In July 2002, the group formed a registered society to gain momentum towards its goals. The name of the society is the **NWT Mining Heritage Society**. Its first annual general meeting was held September 25, 2002, and the first Board of Directors was elected. This marked a period of formalizing the Society's plans and strategizing its long term goals. A draft business plan was completed in the summer of 2004 and has been updated periodically. In 2005, the Society initiated discussion with the City of Yellowknife for a sub-lease of the portion of land occupied by the Giant Mine recreation hall.

Progress on construction and fundraising has been hampered by uncertainty concerning the completion of a cleanup and remediation plan for the Giant Mine. The remediation project itself is currently (2010) under environmental review and this has stalled planning since it is difficult to attract investors and complete land acquisition with the entire site in bureaucratic limbo. Nonetheless, the Society continues to promote its goals, solicit local support and membership, collect artifacts, construct outdoor displays, and maintain its buildings at the Giant Mine townsite. In 2005, it completed emergency repairs to the A-shaft headframe. In the summer of 2007 it raised the capital necessary to rebuild the roof of the recreation hall. Development of its outdoor display at the nearby boat launch parking lot has been ongoing since 2005. Plans and drawings for the renovations of the recreation hall and landscaping for its future parking lot have also been partially completed.

The Society is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors, many of whom have been with the group since day one in 2000. Day to day operations are run by a part-time coordinator. The Society organizes member functions and in 2009 it organized a Beer Barge BBQ Bash party in celebration of Yellowknife's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, and plans have been made to make this an annual event.

Please support the NWT Mining Heritage Society!

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