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News Release

NovaCopper Reports Significant Near-Surface Drilling Results from the Ruby Creek Zone of the Bornite Copper Deposit

RC13-221 intersects 124 meters grading 1.23% copper in five intervals

Drilling demonstrates continuity and resource expansion of a near-surface, potentially open-pittable copper resource at the Ruby Creek zone

October 22, 2013 - Vancouver, British Columbia - NovaCopper Inc. (TSX, NYSE-MKT: NCQ) ("NovaCopper" or "the Company") is pleased to announce additional assay results from exploration diamond drilling at its Bornite Project, which is part of the Upper Kobuk Mineral Projects ("UKMP") located in the Ambler mining district of Northwest Alaska.

This is the second set of drilling results, comprising 10 holes out of a total of 17, which total approximately 8,140 meters drilled during the 2013 exploration program at Bornite. Remaining drill results are anticipated to be released over the next several weeks as they become available. The 2013 drilling campaign was designed to expand mineralization on two discrete targets: 1) near-surface, moderate-grade (~1% copper) and potentially open-pit mineable mineralization at the Ruby Creek zone; and 2) deeper, high-grade and potentially underground exploitable copper mineralization at both the South Reef and Ruby Creek zones.

Nine out of ten drill holes intersected significant intervals of copper mineralization:

At a cutoff grade of 0.5% copper selected results are as follows:

- RC13-221 intersected five mineralized intervals, starting at 138.9 meters and ending at 367.7 meters (228.8 meter interval), for a combined 123.8 meter composite interval with a weighted average grade of 1.23% copper and comprised of:
 - 10.0 meters at a grade of 0.85% copper;
 - 12.5 meters at a grade of 0.98% copper;
 - 25.8 meters at a grade of 1.18% copper;
 - 16.8 meters at a grade of 1.13% copper; and
 - 58.8 meters at a grade of 1.39% copper.
- RC13-219 intersected one mineralized interval, starting at 425.9 meters and ending at 468.5 meters for a 42.5 meter composite interval with a weighted average grade of 1.44% copper.
- RC13-218 intersected three mineralized intervals, starting at 29.5 meters and ending at 340.2 meters (310.7 meter interval), for a combined 73.8 meter composite interval with a weighted average grade of 1.20% copper and comprised of:
 - 14.1 meters at a grade of 0.84% copper;
 - 23.5 meters at a grade of 0.94% copper; and
 - 36.2 meters at a grade of 1.51% copper.

- RC13-217 intersected four mineralized intervals, starting at 159.2 meters and ending at 293.3 meters (134.1 meter interval), for a combined 63.3 meter composite interval with a weighted average grade of 0.99% copper and comprised of:
 - 18.8 meters at a grade of 1.23% copper;
 - 8.6 meters at a grade of 1.08% copper;
 - 5.2 meters at a grade of 0.59% copper; and
 - 30.8 meters at a grade of 0.90% copper.

"We are pleased with the results from the near-surface portion of our 2013 drilling program at the Ruby Creek zone (Bornite deposit). Following on our recent exploration drilling success at the high-grade South Reef zone, this near surface drilling program targeted existing shallow resources at the Ruby Creek zone which management believes could potentially be open-pittable. In addition to the 10 holes drilled in the Ruby Creek zone, this year's program also included extensive re-logging and re-assaying of 32 previously drilled core holes which had been only partially assayed by Kennecott. These are encouraging results which we expect to yield significant expansion of the defined 800-meter by 1200-meter near-surface mineralization at Bornite," said Rick Van Nieuwenhuyse, NovaCopper's President and Chief Executive Officer.

This press release reports on drilling conducted at the near-surface, potentially open-pit mineable copper mineralization of the Ruby Creek zone. The 2013 exploration program was focused on converting previously classified waste material into mineral resources and identifying extensions of known copper mineralization at the Ruby Creek zone which were previously reported in the NI 43-101 technical report titled "Technical Report for the Bornite Deposit," dated January 31, 2013 and filed on SEDAR and EDGAR on February 8, 2013 (the "Bornite Technical Report"). The technical report estimated near surface Indicated Resources of 6.8 million tonnes at 1.19% Cu containing 178.7 million pounds of copper, and Inferred Resources of 47.7 million tonnes of 0.84% Cu containing 883.2 million pounds of copper using a 0.5% copper cutoff grade.

Results are presented in **Table 1** at a cutoff grade of 0.5% copper so as to be comparable with previous drill results released by NovaCopper in 2011 and 2012.

Table 1. Latest Drilling Results from the Ruby Creek Zone – Bornite Deposit

	<i>from</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>thickness meters</i>	<i>thickness feet</i>	<i>Cu %</i>	<i>Cu % meters</i>
DDH RC13-0217	159.2	178.0	18.8	61.7	1.23	23
	200.9	209.4	8.6	28.1	1.08	9
	239.3	244.5	5.2	17.0	0.59	3
	262.5	293.3	30.8	101.0	0.90	28
4 intervals			63.3	207.8	0.99	63
DDH RC13-0218	29.5	43.6	14.1	46.3	0.84	12
	263.5	287.0	23.5	77.1	0.94	22
	304.0	340.2	36.2	118.8	1.51	55
3 intervals			73.8	242.1	1.20	89
DDH RC13-0219	425.9	468.5	42.5	139.6	1.44	61
1 intervals			42.5	139.6	1.44	61
DDH RC13-0221	138.9	148.9	10.0	32.8	0.85	9
	163.5	176.0	12.5	40.8	0.98	12
	181.7	207.5	25.8	84.6	1.18	31
	217.5	234.2	16.8	55.0	1.13	19
	309.0	367.7	58.8	192.8	1.39	82
5 intervals			123.8	406.0	1.23	152
DDH RC13-0222	276.9	284.3	7.5	24.5	0.71	5
	362.3	370.3	8.0	26.1	0.52	4
2 intervals			15.4	50.7	0.61	9
DDH RC13-0223	318.6	325.0	6.4	20.9	0.71	5
	421.9	431.0	9.1	29.9	1.00	9
	452.5	470.0	17.5	57.4	1.74	30
2 intervals			33.0	108.2	1.34	44
DDH RC13-0225	71.6	77.2	5.6	18.4	0.82	5
1 intervals			5.6	18.4	1.90	5
DDH RC13-0226	<i>no significant intervals</i>					
DDH RC13-0228	150.7	159.4	8.7	28.5	0.93	8
	165.4	178.5	13.2	43.2	1.01	13
2 intervals			21.9	71.8	0.98	21
DDH RC13-0229	54.0	88.8	34.7	113.9	1.12	39
			34.7	113.9	1.12	39

Footnotes to Drill Interval Tables:

- 1) Significant open-pit interval defined as a minimum 5 % x meter Cu interval
- 2) Cutoff grade of 0.5 % Cu
- 3) Internal dilution up to 5 continuous meters of <0.5% Cu
- 4) Some rounding errors may occur
- 5) Though mineralization is tabular and shallowly dipping - no true thicknesses are implied
- 6) DDH RC13- 227, 231 and 233 target high-grade underground resources and will be reported in additional press releases
- 7) DDH RC13-230 and 232 are metallurgical holes from the Ruby Creek zone and will also be reported on at a later date

Exploration drilling at Bornite during 2013 was designed to further define and advance both the shallow, approximately 1% grades encountered at the near-surface Ruby Creek zone, and the high-grade and potentially underground mineable resources further down-dip of the Ruby Creek zone and the adjoining South Reef zone. The open-pit target covers the shallow surface projection of the historically drilled Lower Reef and the smaller but higher grade horizon in the Upper Reef, which is located stratigraphically higher in the carbonate stratigraphy. These two horizons of mineralization define a NNE-trending zone called the Ruby Creek zone which management believes may have the potential to support a future open-pit mining operation. Grades in this zone are in the order of 0.8% to 1.2% copper as reported in the Bornite Technical Report.

Down-dip and lateral exploration at the Lower Reef in 2011 and 2012 led to the discovery of the South Reef zone, a parallel NNE-trending zone of high-grade copper mineralization as reported in the Bornite Technical Report. This year's drilling appears to link the two NNE-trending mineralized zones in the Lower Reef at depth into one continuous horseshoe-shaped mineralized zone. The four most northerly holes exploring the Lower Reef (the first two of which are reported in an October 3, 2013 press release) suggest a high-grade continuous zone of strata-bound copper mineralization over a kilometer in width with thicknesses exceeding 100 meters. **Figure 1** shows the spatial relationships between the open-pit and underground resource areas as well as the collar locations of historic and 2013 drilling.

Figure 1: Bornite Open Pit Drill Hole Location and Grade x Thickness Map for Drill Holes Containing Near-Surface Mineralization

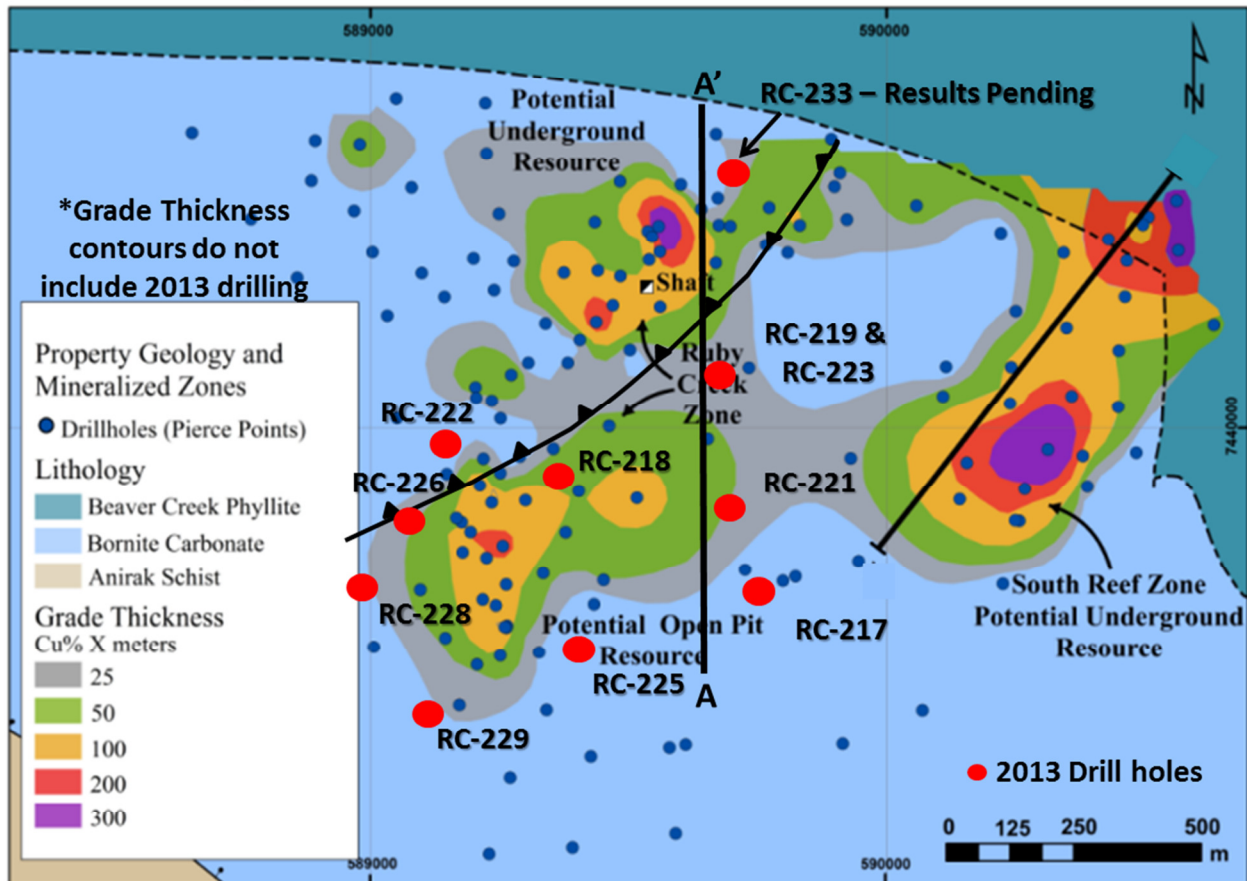
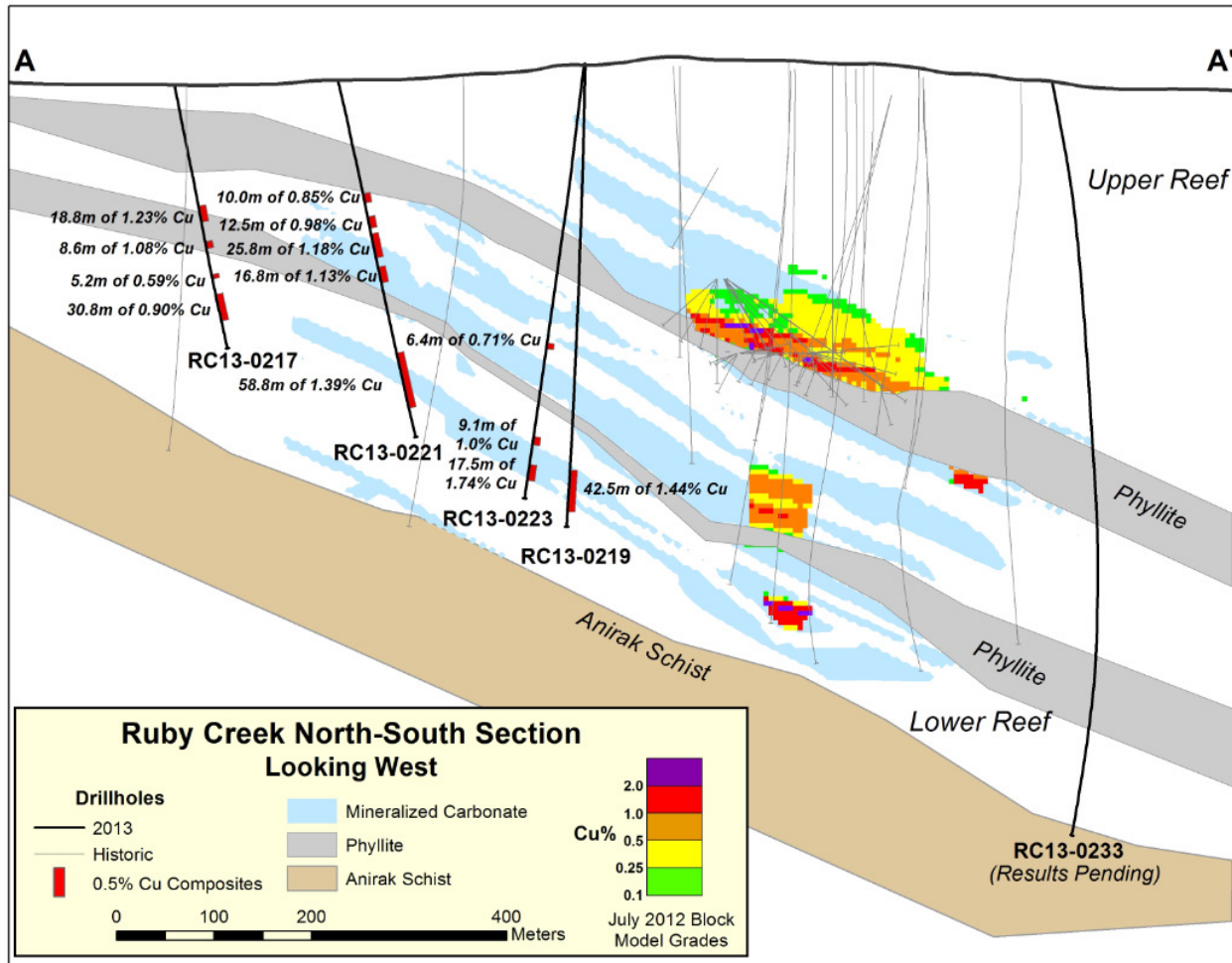


Figure 2 shows a NNE- trending section down the axis of the Ruby Creek zone showing historical drilling and 2013 drilling reported herein.

Figure 2: NNE Cross-section through the Ruby Creek Zone



Current resources at Bornite (before the 2013 drilling) are estimated in the Bornite Technical Report, for the near surface mineralization, as containing Indicated Resources of 6.8 million tonnes at 1.19% Cu for 178.7 million pounds of contained copper and Inferred Resources of 47.7 million tonnes of 0.84% Cu for 883.2 million pounds of contained copper at a 0.5% copper cutoff grade.

Resources for the potentially underground exploitable South Reef zone, as estimated in the Bornite Technical Report, contain Inferred Resources of 43.1 million tonnes at 2.54% Cu for 2,409 million pounds of contained copper at a 1.0% copper cutoff grade. An updated resource estimate and NI 43-101 technical report for the Bornite Project incorporating the 2013 drill results is anticipated to be completed during the first quarter of 2014.

Copper mineralization at the Ruby Creek and South Reef zones is hosted within broad dolomitized limestones within the Devonian-age Bornite Carbonate Sequence. Mineralization is selectively developed in massive dolostones and associated with both sedimentary and hydrothermal breccias. The mineralized system is strongly zoned with a distal zinc-rich pyrite

halo surrounding progressively more proximal chalcopyrite stockworks and disseminations, bornite stockworks and disseminations, and finally, local semi-massive sulphide zones of chalcocite, bornite, and chalcopyrite.

Quality Control

The drill program and sampling protocol were managed by qualified persons employed by NovaCopper. The diamond drill holes were typically collared at HQ diameter drill core and reduced to NQ diameter as drilling progressed down-hole. Samples were collected using a 0.5-meter minimum length, three-meter maximum length with most samples measuring 1.5-meters in sample length. Drill core recovery averaged 90%. Three quality control samples (one blank, one standard and one duplicate) were inserted into each batch of 20 samples. The drill core was sawn, with half sent to ALS Chemex in Fairbanks for sample preparation and the sample pulps forwarded to ALS's North Vancouver facility for analysis. ALS Minerals in North Vancouver, B.C., Canada, is a facility certified as ISO 9001:2008 and accredited to ISO / IEC 17025:2005 from the Standards Council of Canada. NovaCopper will also be submitting 5% of the assay intervals from prospective lithologies to an independent check assay lab for further QAQC control.

Qualified Person

Scott Petsel, P.Geo, UKMP Project Manager for NovaCopper, and a Qualified Person as defined by NI 43-101, has reviewed the results of the drill program and confirmed that all procedures, protocols and methodologies used in the drill program conform to industry standards. Mr. Petsel has approved the contents of this press release.

About NovaCopper

NovaCopper Inc. is a base metals exploration company focused on exploring and developing the Ambler mining district in Alaska. It is one of the richest and most-prospective known copper-dominant districts located in one of the safest geopolitical jurisdictions in the world. It hosts world-class polymetallic VMS deposits that contain copper, zinc, lead, gold and silver, and carbonate replacement deposits which have been found to host high-grade copper mineralization. Exploration efforts have been focused on two deposits in the Ambler district – the Arctic VMS deposit and the Bornite carbonate replacement deposit. A National Instrument 43-101-compliant Preliminary Economic Assessment for the Arctic Deposit titled "Preliminary Economic Assessment Report on the Arctic Project, Ambler Mining District, Northwest Alaska" dated September 12, 2013 (the "Preliminary Economic Assessment"), identified a polymetallic open-pit project with the Net Present Value of \$930 and \$535 million on a pre-tax and after-tax basis, respectively using an 8% discount rate and long-term metal prices of \$2.90/lb copper, \$0.85/lb zinc, \$0.90/lb lead, \$22.70/oz silver and \$1,300/oz gold. This Preliminary Economic Assessment is preliminary in nature and includes inferred mineral resources that are considered too speculative geologically to have the economic considerations applied to them that would enable them to be categorized as reserves. There is no certainty the Preliminary Economic Assessment will be realized. Both deposits are located within NovaCopper's land package that spans approximately 143,000 hectares. NovaCopper has an agreement with NANA Regional Corporation, Inc. ("NANA"), an Alaskan Native Corporation that provides a framework for the exploration and potential development of the Ambler mining district in cooperation with the local communities. NovaCopper's vision is to develop the Ambler mining district into a premier North American copper producer.

NovaCopper Contact:

Patrick Donnelly
Vice President, Corporate Communications
patrick.donnelly@novacopper.com

604-638-8088 or 1-855-638-8088

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Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This press release includes certain "forward-looking information" and "forward-looking statements" (collectively "forward-looking statements") within the meaning of applicable Canadian and United States securities legislation including the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. All statements, other than statements of historical fact, included herein, without limitation, statements relating to the potential to mine resources in the future and statements relating to future operating or financial performance of NovaCopper and the Bornite or Arctic Projects are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are frequently, but not always, identified by words such as "expects", "anticipates", "believes", "intends", "estimates", "potential", "possible", and similar expressions, or statements that events, conditions, or results "will", "may", "could", or "should" occur or be achieved. These forward-looking statements may include statements regarding perceived merit of properties; exploration results and budgets; mineral reserves and resource estimates; work programs; capital or operating expenditures; timelines; market prices for precious and base metals; or other statements that are not statements of fact. Forward-looking statements involve various risks and uncertainties. There can be no assurance that such statements will prove to be accurate, and actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from NovaCopper's expectations include the uncertainties involving the need for additional financing to explore and develop properties and availability of financing in the debt and capital markets; uncertainties involved in the interpretation of drilling results and geological tests and the estimation of reserves and resources; the need for cooperation of government agencies and native groups in the development and operation of properties; the need to obtain permits and governmental approvals; risks of construction and mining projects such as accidents, equipment breakdowns, bad weather, non-compliance with environmental and permit requirements, unanticipated variation in geological structures, ore grades or recovery rates; unexpected cost increases, which could include significant increases in estimated capital and operating costs; fluctuations in metal prices and currency exchange rates; and other risk and uncertainties disclosed in NovaCopper Inc.'s Annual Report on Form 10-K dated February 12, 2013, filed with the Canadian securities regulatory authorities, the United States Securities and Exchange Commission and in other NovaCopper reports and documents filed with applicable securities regulatory authorities from time to time. NovaCopper's forward-looking statements reflect the beliefs, opinions and projections on the date the statements are made. NovaCopper assumes no obligation to update the forward-looking statements or beliefs, opinions, projections, or other factors, should they change, except as required by law.

Cautionary Note to United States Investors

The PEA has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the securities laws in effect in Canada, which differ from the requirements of U.S. securities laws. Unless otherwise indicated, all resource and reserve estimates included in the PEA have been prepared in accordance with National Instrument 43-101 Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects ("NI 43-101") and the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy, and Petroleum Definition Standards on Mineral Resources and Mineral Reserves. NI 43-101 is a rule developed by the Canadian Securities Administrators which establishes standards for all public disclosure an issuer makes of scientific and technical information concerning mineral projects. Canadian standards, including NI 43-101, differ significantly from the requirements of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"), and resource and reserve information contained therein may not be comparable to similar information disclosed by U.S. companies. In particular, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the term "resource" does not equate to the term "reserves". Under U.S. standards, mineralization may not be classified as a "reserve" unless the determination has been made that the mineralization could be economically and legally produced or extracted at the time the reserve determination is made. The SEC's disclosure standards normally do not permit the inclusion of information concerning "measured mineral resources", "indicated mineral resources" or "inferred mineral resources" or other descriptions of the amount of mineralization in mineral deposits that do not constitute "reserves" by U.S. standards in documents filed with the SEC. Investors are cautioned not to assume that any part or all of mineral deposits in these categories will ever be converted into reserves. U.S. investors should also understand that "inferred mineral resources" have a great amount of uncertainty as to their existence and great uncertainty as to their economic and legal feasibility. It cannot be assumed that all or any part of an "inferred

mineral resource" will ever be upgraded to a higher category. Under Canadian rules, estimated "inferred mineral resources" may not form the basis of feasibility or pre-feasibility studies except in rare cases. Investors are cautioned not to assume that all or any part of an "inferred mineral resource" exists or is economically or legally mineable. Disclosure of "contained ounces" in a resource is permitted disclosure under Canadian regulations; however, the SEC normally only permits issuers to report mineralization that does not constitute "reserves" by SEC standards as in-place tonnage and grade without reference to unit measures. The requirements of NI 43-101 for identification of "reserves" are also not the same as those of the SEC, and reserves reported by the Company in compliance with NI 43-101 may not qualify as "reserves" under SEC standards. Accordingly, information concerning mineral deposits set forth in the PEA may not be comparable with information made public by companies that report in accordance with U.S. standards.