

Nickel company and First Nation set the ground rules for exploration

Class 1 Nickel and Matachewan First Nation ink memorandum of understanding

4 h By: Northern Ontario Business Staff



Alexo open-pit mine, east of Timmins, in 2005.

A Toronto junior miner looking to put a former mine property back into production near Timmins has struck an agreement with a neighbouring First Nation community.

[Class 1 Nickel and Technologies](#) and [Matachewan First Nation](#) (MFN) signed of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to advance exploration for nickel, copper and cobalt at the company's Alexo-Dundonald Nickel Sulphide Project, 45 kilometres east of the city.

A MOU is a first stage agreement usually signed between an exploration company and a First Nation that establishes ground rules for how exploration will be carried out a community's traditional land.

It also provides a formal line of communication as activity progresses and also opens the door for a First Nation to participate in the project.

If a mine is established, the two parties will work toward signing an impact benefit agreement potentially offering opportunities for Indigenous-owned service and supply companies, mining jobs and training, and financial compensation.

“Class 1 Nickel proactively reached out to (Matachewan) as a traditional land holder in the Alexo-Dundonald Property area and engaged them in early dialogue on how the Project and associated infrastructure will be responsibly explored and developed,” said company president Ben Cooper in a March 11 news release.

“We are very pleased for the signed MOU with MFN and welcome their constructive consultation and strong support as Class 1 Nickel plans to commence its Phase 1 drill program on the Project.”

The First Nation community is 30 kilometres southeast of the town of Matachewan and 60 kilometres west of Kirkland Lake.

Chief Jason Batisse commends the company on its decision to undertake early engagement and consultation activities.

“It’s always a pleasure to work with mineral development companies on our traditional territory who respect and acknowledge not only our way of life but also the importance of building a meaningful relationship within the community,” he said.

“We are confident that Class 1 Nickel will operate using sound environmental practices and that the exploration activities will provide ongoing benefit to the community. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Class 1 Nickel and advancing the Alexo-Dundonald Nickel Sulphide Project.”

The company has \$8 million budgeted this year to do extensive exploration and diamond drilling on its four nickel sulphide deposits at the property.

Plans are to start a preliminary economic assessment by the fourth quarter.

The 20-square-kilometre property contains a former open-pit mine that was closed in 2005 due to low nickel prices.

There's also a historical resource of copper, cobalt, platinum and palladium. The drilling program at the Alexo Mine was in 2011.

The company maintains that a significant portion of the property remains unexplored by modern techniques.