

MINING



Sherry Swain looks over some samples on property she staked in Gowganda, adjacent to a former silver camp.

(PHOTO SUPPLIED)

Midas touch

Prospector find opens silver camp to gold

By **LIZ COWAN**
Northern Ontario Business

Sherry Swain didn't heed the advice she was given over the years to remain a "housewife" and not become a prospector. If she had, a junior mining company wouldn't be searching for gold in an area of northeastern Ontario that is historically renowned for silver.

Swain obtained her prospecting licence in 1985 and began exploring and staking claims in the Dorset, Ont. area. When the Temagami land caution was lifted in the Gowganda area, the Sudbury native staked claims there.

Gowganda is 100 kilometres west of New Liskeard and 125 kilometres south of Timmins.

"I do a lot of research before I do my staking and exploration so I did some research on the Gowganda area," she said. "The area right next to where I staked was an old silver camp and I looked at the geological structure and I thought we should be looking for gold here as well."

After "poking around," Swain said she came across a large carbonate zone in an area staked in 2004. She found some gold values there and more claims were staked.

In 2007, she came across an interesting silicified rock that was well mineralized and assay results indicated 15 grams of gold.

"That was a shocker and pretty high. You don't usually get that kind of result from one sample," she said.

The area was stripped and further sampling indicated gold values. She also discovered a green carbonate zone that also contained gold values.

"That rock was a real different type that no one had seen before in the area," Swain said. "It was totally unique in the area."

"So I was finding gold in all these different environments that no one had looked before. It was unusual in where it was, in the Gowganda silver camp. It was kind of surprising."

Nobody locally believed her about the gold and different companies she had talked to about the property also didn't believe her.

"I had a really hard time getting someone in-

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Gold in Gowganda

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terested in going in and doing the work," she said.

Last year, she attended an Ontario Prospectors Association symposium in Sault Ste. Marie to see if any company would be interested in optioning her claims.

Transition Metals was interested and later took a look at the property.

"The silver in Gowganda is associated with younger rocks, a series of rocks you will find all the way from Haileybury, through Elk Lake to Gowganda," said Greg Collins, chief operating officer with Transition Metals.

"Those younger rocks overlie the older (archean) rocks, sit up on ridges and are kind of flat and any silver miner knew these were the environments where you will need to persevere to find the silver."

Swain, he said, started searching where there were older archean rocks and found indications of gold.

"It was a silver camp and it was very unusual in some respects, but we had an open mind and looked and thought she had something," he said.

Sudbury's Transition Metals did mechanical stripping and geological mapping of the area and exposed a new occurrence of gold, a showing the company has referred to as Annie's Ladder.

"So we have been endeavouring to further define the extent of mineralization and basically it has been going quite well," Collins said.

Swain, who has struggled in the industry over her 25-year prospecting career, is hoping this discovery will "amount to

something with an economic interest."

"Back in the 1980s, there was prejudice against women and there weren't many female prospectors then. A lot of that has gone away but it was hard to make people believe that I was believable," she said.

"Now a lot of government geologists have come to see the property and there is a lot of interest in that since gold is not supposed to be in this area."

"I had a really hard time getting someone interested in going in and doing the work."

PROSPECTOR SHERRY SWAIN

Transition Metals doesn't know how big its Haultain project is, if it is economically viable and no resource has yet been established.

"What we do have is the early stages of discovery," Collins said. "But there is an interesting angle since it is a silver camp and less than a kilometre away from where that silver was mined for almost 100 years, you find gold."

"Sherry is a woman and there had been thousands of men who have walked over that area but she had the wherewithal to put it together." ■

www.transitionmetalscorp.com

AROUND THE NORTH

Gold project on track

The Detour Lake project is currently 40 per cent complete and remains on schedule for gold production in the first quarter of 2013.

Detour Gold commenced construction of the mine in November, 2010. As of October 31, 2011, \$1 billion has been committed towards project expenditures, including \$547 million which has been incurred.

Procurement for equipment has been completed and more than 90 per cent of major contracts have been awarded. The operations senior management team and the first two mine operating teams are in place. The delivery and assembly of mining equipment is ahead of schedule.

The company anticipates that pre-production capital costs for Detour Lake will reach \$1.45 billion (includes approximately \$50 million in contingency). The revised guidance is based on cost escalation since the June, 2011 project control estimate driven mainly by higher key consumable input and labour costs, updated infrastructure requirements and increased expenditures to maintain the production schedule.

The process plant building is expected to be enclosed by the end

of November. During the winter months, Detour Gold will focus on installing most of the mill equipment, including the SAG and ball mills and gyratory crusher, which are scheduled to start arriving at site prior to year-end. Installation of the 20 leach tanks is nearly complete.

The company has started the construction of the haul road to access the open pit and is planning to start pre-stripping activities later this month. Six of the initial hauling trucks (CAT 795F) are fully assembled. The first hydraulic shovel (RH340) is assembled and one electric shovel is at site. Training of the first two operating crews is well underway.

"The increased pressure on capital costs for projects has been a challenge for all of us building mines," said Gerald Panneton, president and CEO of Detour Gold, in a press release. "Our team has done an exceptional job in controlling costs in this inflationary environment and, as such, most of the equipment purchases are in line with the feasibility study. Detour Lake remains on track to produce gold in early 2013."

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