

# High School Youth Geoscience Retreat Program of Natural Resources Canada's Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals

## Context

Two youth geoscience retreats were held at NRCan's Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals Program (GEM) Cumberland Peninsula (Nunavut) geoscience camp in 2010 to offer northern youth the opportunity to visit a remote science camp and participate in an educational geoscience-based retreat. A series of interesting and educational workshops exposed the students to research taking place on Baffin Island and to career opportunities associated with northern research activities.



**Lead:** Government (GoC)

**Step of the Mineral Development Sequence:**  
Pre-exploration

**Key Finding:** GEM's Youth Geoscience Retreat program is a good practice in community engagement and readiness as it helps build trust and confidence with community members early on in the mineral development sequence and provides local youth with a glimpse of the career opportunities related to the minerals and metals sector.

Two groups of students were brought by helicopter to the GEM geoscience camp at the head of Paddle Fiord, located about 75 kilometres (km) south of Qikiqtarjuaq and about 100 km east of Pangnirtung.

## Description of Measures Implemented

The students participated in several educational programs, including:

- An introductory course on rocks and minerals;
- A two-hour field trip with geologists;
- An introduction to global positioning systems (GPS) through a geocaching<sup>1</sup> scavenger hunt;
- Kimberlite indicator minerals and gold prospecting;
- A trip to a traditional hunting ground near Ikirashajuit;
- Food preparation; and
- Camp design and maintenance.



Students' involvement in an operational research field camp gave them exposure to numerous career paths through interactions with geologists, a helicopter pilot, an engineer, a camp manager, a professional chef and his assistant, wildlife monitors, a geographic information system specialist, a youth worker, and an administrative assistant with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

## Results

High-school students were introduced to what government geologists do when working in the field through hands-on experience in their own territory. They learned what geology is and what it may mean for their community. Participants also saw that a career in geoscience or related fields was an attainable goal for them.

<sup>1</sup> Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure-hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location (Source: [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com)).

The program was a success in that northern youth were given an opportunity to be part of northern research activities. Participants were rewarded with an adventurous, inspirational, educational, and recreational program whose objectives were achieved in a safe and fun environment. The participants gained positive insight into opportunities open to them in the North.

### **Lessons Learned**

It is important to engage with every generation of a community, including the youth. GEM's Youth Geoscience Retreat program is a good practice in community engagement and readiness as it helps build trust and confidence with community members early on in the mineral development sequence (i.e. the pre-exploration phase) and provides local youth with a glimpse of the career opportunities available in the minerals and metals sector.

### **For more information:**

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