

Rick Conte of AME BC presented an overview of issues impacting the BC's mineral exploration sector in 2014.

The mineral tenure holdings in the province are at 11 million hectares and showing a slight increase over 2013, but down from 2011 and 2012. Natural Resources Canada are tracking exploration expenditures in Canada at an estimated \$2.1 billion, down from \$2.3 in 2013 and \$3.9 in 2012. Exploration expenditures in BC are estimated to be in the range of \$350 million down from levels over the previous two years. BC's share of Canadian exploration expenditures is estimated to be 23.9% for 2014, up from 21.6% on 2013 and 18.9% in 2012. Issues impacting investment in BC include a very tight capital market, low levels of citizen confidence in our sector, external pressures on land management from the US and uncertainty over First Nations issues. The state of land planning in BC indicates that approximately 18% of the province is closed and another 35% is subject to some degree of restrictive conditions. On the positive side BC has more modern day treaties than any other province in Canada and the provincial government has over 200 agreements at differing levels with First Nations which add the level of stability and communication between First Nations and the Government. As stated earlier BC's share of Canadian mineral exploration continues to grow indicating that the view of BC from the outside is somewhat positive.

Conte presented a summary of the *Roger William v BC* Supreme Court of Canada decision released in June 2014. The basis of this decision began in 1989 with a case in BC Supreme Court. The final decision confirmed that the Tsilhqot'in Nation has Aboriginal Title over approximately 175,000 hectares of land in the Chilcotin area of British Columbia. This case established three tests to be used when determining Aboriginal Title; the land must have been occupied prior to Sovereignty, the occupation must have been continuous and the occupation of the land must have been exclusive. The Court also established that the provincial and federal government can infringe on Aboriginal Title. The Tsilhqot'in National Government released their draft Mining Policy on [August 1, 2014](#) and announced the Dasiqox Tribal Park on [October 3, 2014](#). The federal and provincial Governments have not publicly responded to either of the Draft Mining Policy or the Tribal Park. To read the full decision, please go to: <http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/2014/2014scc44/2014scc44.html>