

Apex Receives Exploration Permit for Rift REE Project, Nebraska; Drill Program Preparation Underway

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VANCOUVER, January 5, 2026 - [Apex Critical Metals Corp.](#) (CSE:APXC)(OTCQX:APXCF)(FWB:KL9) ("Apex" or the "Company"), a Canadian mineral exploration company focused on the identification and development of critical and strategic metals, is pleased to announce that it has received approval from the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment ("NDEE") for its mineral exploration permit ("drill permit") at the Company's flagship Rift Rare Earth Project, located within the Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in southeastern Nebraska, U.S.A.

Apex CEO, Sean Charland, stated: "We have been very active expanding and consolidating our property position and completing historical re-logging, re-assaying and 3D modelling work in preparation for our inaugural drill campaign at the Rift Rare Earth Project. We are very pleased to receive our drill permit, which marks a significant step forward as we transition from planning and preparation to drill program execution. We are eager to begin verifying and expanding upon the excellent historical results, which we believe can rapidly position the Rift Project as one of the premier rare earth projects in North America."

The Rift Project now covers approximately 3,500 acres across the Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex-an area with extensive historical drilling by previous operators, including Molycorp (1973-1986) and Quantum Rare Earth Developments (2010-2011). Historical programs reported broad, high-grade REE mineralized intervals, including:

- 155.5 metres ("m") of 2.70% REO⁽¹⁾, including 54.9 m at 3.30% REO (EC-93).
- 236.2 m of 2.10% REO, including 68.2 m of 3.32% REO (NEC11-004).

Drill Program Preparations

With a permit now in hand, Apex has begun advancing all pre-drilling activities, with drilling expected to commence during the first half of Q1/2026. Ongoing preparations include:

- Finalizing discussions with contractors
- Securing drill mobilization schedules and support services
- Establishing access routes and planned drill pad locations
- Completing logistical planning for core handling, sampling, and onsite operations; and
- Target refinement based on historical data and detailed geological review.

A detailed summary of the drillhole locations and planned meterage will be released as the program commences.

Management cautions that drillhole EC-93 is historical and was originally completed by Molycorp between 1984-1986 with reanalysis performed by Quantum Rare Earth Development Corp. in 2010. The EC-93 results presented herein are from the 2010 reanalysis.

¹Rare earth oxide (REO), includes the sum of Ce₂O₃, La₂O₃, Pr₂O₃, Nd₂O₃, Eu₂O₃, Sm₂O₃, Gd₂O₃, Tb₂O₃,

Dy₂O₃, Ho₂O₃, Er₂O₃, Tm₂O₃, Yb₂O₃, Lu₂O₃, and Y₂O₃

Qualified Person

The technical content of this news release has been reviewed and approved by Nathan Schmidt, P. Geo., a Qualified Person under NI 43-101 on standards of disclosure for mineral projects. Mr. Schmidt is a Geologist with Dahrouge Geological Consulting Ltd., the consulting firm engaged by Apex Critical Metals Corp. to conduct and oversee all of the Company's exploration work, including the 2026 drill program.

References

1. [Molycorp Inc.](#) (1973-1986). Elk Creek Carbonatite Exploration Drill Program Reports. Internal company records, archived at the Nebraska Geological Survey, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA.
2. Daigle, P., P. Geo. (2012).; NI 43-101 Elk Creek NB Project, Nebraska, US - Resource Estimate Update, Prepared for Quantum Rare Earth Development Corp., by Tetra Tech Wardrop, April 23, 2012.
3. Quantum Rare Earth Developments Corp. (2011). "Quantum Announces Significant Rare Earth Results from Elk Creek, Nebraska." News Release, September 20, 2011.

About Apex Critical Metals Corp. (CSE: APXC) (OTCQX: APXCF) (FWB: KL9)

Apex Critical Metals Corp. is a Canadian exploration company focused on advancing rare earth element (REE) and niobium projects that support the growing demand for critical and strategic metals across the United States and Canada. The Company's flagship Rift Project, located within the highly prospective Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in Nebraska, U.S.A., hosts extensive rare earth rights surrounding one of North America's most advanced niobium-REE deposits. Historical drilling across the complex has reported broad intervals of high-grade REE mineralization, including intercepts such as 155.5 m of 2.70% REO and 68.2 m of 3.32% REO.

In Canada, Apex continues to advance its 100%-owned Cap Project, located 85 kilometres northeast of Prince George, British Columbia. The 2025 drill program confirmed a significant niobium discovery with 0.59% Nb₂O₅ over 36 metres, including 1.08% Nb₂O₅ over 10 metres, within a 1.8-kilometre-long niobium trend. The Cap Project continues to demonstrate strong potential for niobium mineralization within a large and previously unrecognized carbonatite system.

With a growing portfolio of critical mineral projects in both Canada and the United States, Apex Critical Metals is strategically positioned to help strengthen domestic supply chains for the minerals essential to advanced technologies, clean energy, and national security. Apex is publicly listed in Canada on the Canadian Securities Exchange (CSE) under the symbol APXC and quoted on the OTCQX market in the United States under the symbol APXCF, and in Germany on the Borse Frankfurt under the symbol KL9 and/or WKN: A40CCQ. Find out more at www.apexcriticalmetals.com and to sign up for free news alerts please go to <https://apexcriticalmetals.com/news/news-alerts/>, or follow us on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook or LinkedIn.

On Behalf of the Board of Directors

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CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION:

This news release may contain "forward-looking statements" under applicable Canadian securities legislation. Forward-looking statements consist of statements that are not purely historical, including any statements regarding beliefs, plans, expectations or intentions regarding the future. Forward-looking statements in this news release include (without limitation) statements regarding the Company's Canadian and US-based prospective assets (more particularly described above), including the potential for additional acquisitions, statements about the potential for the Rift Project's potential as a premier rare earth project in North America and statements regarding the anticipated drilling program on the Rift Project in 2026. Forward-looking statements are subject to various known and unknown risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results, performance or developments to differ materially from those contained in the statements. Risks that could change or prevent these events, activities or developments from coming to fruition include: the Company's properties are at an early stage of development and no current mineral resources or reserves have been identified by the Company thereof, that we may not be able to fully finance any additional exploration on the Company's properties; that even if we are able to raise capital, costs for exploration activities may increase such that we may not have sufficient funds to pay for such exploration or processing activities; the timing and content of any future work programs; geological interpretations based on drilling that may change with more detailed information; potential process methods and mineral recoveries assumptions based on limited test work and by comparison to what are considered analogous deposits that, with further test work, may not be comparable; testing of our process may not prove successful or samples derived from our properties may not yield positive results, and even if such tests are successful or initial sample results are positive, the economic and other outcomes may not be as expected; the anticipated market demand for REE and other minerals may not be as expected; the availability of labour and equipment to undertake future exploration work and testing activities; geopolitical risks which may result in market and economic instability. There can be no assurance that such statements will prove to be accurate, as actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Accordingly, readers should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements herein are made as of the date hereof, and the Company disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.

SOURCE: Apex Critical Metals Corp.

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