

Joint News Release



RIMFIRE

MINERALS CORPORATION

Stock Symbol: **TSX-V: RFM**

Website: www.rimfireminerals.com



Northgate Minerals Corporation

Stock Symbols: **TSX: NGX, AMEX: NXG**

Website: www.northgateminerals.com

DIAMOND DRILLING INTERSECTS ESKAY-EQUIVALENT STRATIGRAPHY AT RDN PROPERTY \$1 MILLION EXPLORATION BUDGET APPROVED FOR 2006

VANCOUVER, December 15, 2005 – *(All figures in Canadian dollars except where noted)* – Joint Venture partners Rimfire Minerals Corporation (TSX-V: RFM) and Northgate Minerals Corporation (TSX: NGX, AMEX: NXG) today reported results from the 2005 diamond drilling campaign at the RDN Property, located 50 km northwest of the Eskay Creek Mine in northwest British Columbia. Drilling at the Arctic Grid target intersected stratigraphy equivalent in age and geological setting to that hosting the Eskay Creek deposit. Based on the geological similarities to Eskay observed on surface and in drillholes, Northgate has expressed its intent to continue exploring the property for gold-silver rich massive sulphide deposits in 2006. The 2006 program, budgeted at \$1 million, will consist of airborne geophysical surveys, groundwork and diamond drilling at the Arctic Grid.

“We are very pleased with Northgate’s commitment to the RDN Property,” stated David Caulfield, President and CEO of Rimfire Minerals Corporation. *“Our exploration teams work well together, and to capitalize on these synergies we are working towards identifying new exploration opportunities to pursue in conjunction with exploration at the RDN.”*

“We are confident that the Arctic Grid area is prospective for Eskay Creek-style precious metal rich massive sulphide deposits,” states Carl Edmunds, Exploration Manager for Northgate Minerals Corporation. *“Eskay Creek-style deposits have a small footprint and the 5 kilometer long Arctic Grid area represents a target requiring comprehensive drill testing over its extent.”*

In the 2005 program, six drillholes were completed for a total of 1,470 metres in two target areas: Blind Fault and Arctic Grid. Northgate funded the program under the terms of an option agreement whereby Northgate can earn a 51% interest in the RDN by funding exploration expenditures totalling \$5 million by December 31, 2007. An additional 9% can be earned by funding all expenditures up to the completion of a feasibility study.

Arctic Grid

The Arctic Grid was targeted for drilling due to the presence of Eskay Creek-equivalent stratigraphy exposed on surface. 2005 results have shown that rhyolite within this stratigraphy is very similar geochemically and in age (as determined by precision age dating) to rhyolites intimately associated with mineralization at Eskay Creek.

Two stratigraphic drill holes (RDN05-43, 45) were completed on the Arctic grid, approximately 1.5 kilometres apart. Both holes cored interbedded mafic volcanoclastic fragmentals and mudstones occurring above a thick package of sericite-altered rhyolite flows and black matrix breccia. This is a geologic environment conducive to the formation of massive sulphide deposits. Both drill holes exhibit elevated barium at the rhyolite-sediment contact; elevated silver and zinc in the volcanoclastic-sedimentary assemblage; and discontinuous but elevated arsenic within the rhyolite. The prospective rock assemblage extends for at least 5 km through the Arctic Grid area, where the surface geology is partially hidden by glacial overburden.

A third hole (RDN05-44) was drilled approximately 1000 metres east, testing a separate gold target in older rock units and anomalous mercury-arsenic+/-gold geochemistry in soils. This hole sufficiently tested the target, intersecting anomalous mercury-arsenic-gold interpreted to be the source of the anomalous surface geochemistry.

Blind Fault

Three holes in the Blind Fault area targeted a 300 x 50 metre zone of vein and disseminated silver-lead-zinc mineralization in volcanic and sedimentary rocks where native silver was discovered in 2004. Continuous channel sampling in 2005 returned 24.7 metres averaging 24.9 g/t silver. Hole RDN05-42, one of three holes testing this target intersected three silver-bearing intervals, the best of which assayed 30.7 g/t silver over 21 metres.

Diamond Drilling Survey Data

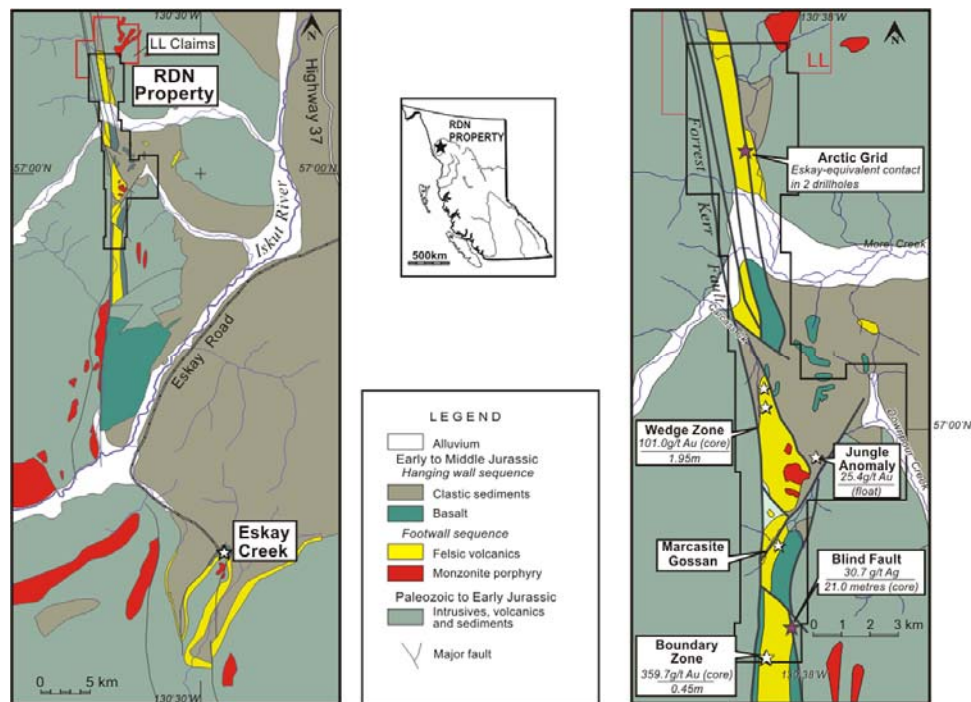
Hole	Area	East (NAD83)	North (NAD83)	Elev	Azimuth	Dip	Total Depth-m
RDN05-40	Blind Fault	400760	6311793	1672	290°	-50°	218.54
RDN05-41	Blind Fault	400669	6311820	1653	105°	-50°	190.80
RDN05-42	Blind Fault	400809	6311964	1732	290°	-50°	297.79
RDN05-43	Arctic Grid	399505	6326680	518	020°	-55°	256.03
RDN05-44	Arctic Grid	399933	6328454	700	270°	-60°	79.25
RDN05-45	Arctic Grid	398874	6328143	630	050°	-65°	309.37
							1351.78

*does not include approximately 119 metres of drilling in holes lost in overburden

The results of the 2005 program have been reviewed, verified and compiled by Rimfire's geological staff (which includes a qualified person, Mark Baknes, P. Geo., VP Exploration, for the purpose of National Instrument 43-101). Rimfire employs a rigorous quality assurance, quality control program described on the Company website at www.rimfireminerals.com. Assays from the current program were completed at ALS Chemex in North Vancouver.

New Acquisition – LL Property

Rimfire and Northgate have acquired a 22 square kilometre claim block, named the LL Property, to be included in the existing RDN option agreement. The LL Property is contiguous with the north eastern boundary of RDN Property and covers the northern extent of favourable rhyolite stratigraphy. The property is host to the Grizzly Creek showing which covers an area approximately 300 x 50 metres in size, consisting of chlorite-sericite-carbonate altered andesite flows and tuffs. Mineralization is hosted in andesites adjacent to syenite porphyry dykes where 14 trenches have returned an average of 0.55% copper and 0.76 g/t gold over 4.8 metres. The best trench returned 5.4 metres of 1.65% copper, 2.46 g/t gold and 10.2 g/t silver. The terms of purchase are \$30,000 cash on signing with a 2% Net Smelter Royalty which can be purchased for \$2,000,000.



Location Map for RDN property

Rimfire-Northgate Exploration Alliance

To capitalize on the strong working relationship between Rimfire and Northgate, the two companies have agreed to pursue exploration opportunities in partnership in 2006. Each company will contribute \$150,000 to the joint venture in 2006, including \$40,000 to identify and research precious metal exploration targets. Specific project details and the terms of the agreement will be announced once the target selection process has been completed.

About Rimfire Minerals Corporation

Rimfire Minerals Corporation is an aggressive, well-financed mineral exploration company with a portfolio of highly prospective gold and silver properties in western North America. Rimfire now includes four gold producers as active partners, including the world's three largest. Currently, Rimfire is partnered with AngloGold (USA) Exploration Inc., Barrick Gold Corporation, Newmont Mining Company, Northgate Minerals Corporation, Cangold Limited and Serengeti Resources Inc.

About Northgate Minerals Corporation

Northgate Minerals Corporation is a gold and copper mining company focused on operations and opportunities in the Americas. The Corporation's principal assets are the 300,000-ounce per year Kemess South mine in north-central British Columbia, the adjacent Kemess North deposit, which contains a Proven and Probable Reserve of 4.1 million ounces of gold and the Young-Davidson property in northern Ontario with a total resource base of 1.5 million ounces of gold. Northgate is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol NGX and on the American Stock Exchange under the symbol NXG.

The TSX Venture Exchange has not reviewed and does not accept responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release.

Forward-Looking Statements

This news release includes certain "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of section 21E of the *United States Securities Exchange Act of 1934*, as amended. These forward-looking statements include estimates, forecasts, and statements as to management's expectations with respect to, among other things, future metal production and production costs, potential mineralization and reserves, exploration results, progress in the development of mineral properties, demand and market outlook for commodities and future plans and objectives of Northgate Minerals Corporation (Northgate). Forward-looking statements generally can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "may," "will," "expect," "intend," "estimate," "anticipate," "believe," or "continue" or the negative thereof or variations thereon or similar terminology. Forward-looking statements are necessarily based upon a number of estimates and assumptions that, while considered reasonable by management are inherently subject to significant business, economic and competitive uncertainties and contingencies. There can be no assurance that such statements will prove to be accurate and actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from Northgate's expectations are disclosed under the heading "Risk and Uncertainties" in Northgate's 2004 Annual Report and under the heading "Risk Factors" in Northgate's 2004 Annual Information Form (AIF) both of which are filed with Canadian regulators on SEDAR (www.sedar.com) and with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (www.sec.gov). Northgate expressly disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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