



NOVAGOLD Resources Inc. Third Quarter 2025 Financial Results Conference Call and Webcast Transcript

Date: October 1st, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM PT

Speakers: **Mélanie Hennessey**
Vice President, Corporate Communications

Dr. Thomas Kaplan
Chairman of the Board

Peter Adamek
Chief Financial Officer

Gregory Lang
President & Chief Executive Officer

Operator:

Welcome to the NOVAGOLD 2025 Third Quarter Report and Donlin Gold Update Conference Call and Webcast.

As a reminder, all participants are in listen-only mode, and the conference is being recorded. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. To join the question queue, you may press star, then one on your telephone keypad. Should you need assistance during the conference call, you may signal an Operator by pressing star, then zero. Webcast viewers may submit questions through the text box in the lower right corner of the webcast frame.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Mélanie Hennessey, Vice President, Corporate Communications. Please go ahead.

Mélanie Hennessey:

Thank you, Ashiya.

Good morning, everyone. We are pleased that you have joined us for NOVAGOLD's 2025 Third Quarter Webcast and Conference Call and for an update on the Donlin Gold Project.

On today's call, we have NOVAGOLD's Chairman, Dr. Thomas Kaplan, President and CEO Greg Lang; and Peter Adamek, NOVAGOLD's Vice President and CFO. At the end of the webcast, we will take questions by phone. Additionally, we will respond to questions received by email.

I would like to remind you, as stated on Slide 3, any statements made today may contain forward-looking information such as projections and goals, which are likely to involve risks detailed in our various EDGAR and SEDAR filings and forward-looking disclaimers included in this presentation.

With that, I will now turn the presentation over to Dr. Thomas Kaplan.

Thomas Kaplan:

Thank you very much, Mélanie, and thank you to all of those who are joining our call today.

Obviously, we have quite a bit to discuss with you, but I'm happy to say that it's really all very, very good news, and what I expect will be the beginning of a consistent pattern of progress that is going to amply (audio interference 2:09) and our stakeholders.

As you can see, we are building the path to what will be quite literally the largest single gold mine in the United States. This comes at a time when we're not only in the foothills of a historic gold bull market, but also comes at a time when both the concept of money as well as jurisdictional safety are more important than ever before.

Many years ago, when I spoke about jurisdictional safety, people thought I was being a little bit alarmist, but they couldn't avoid the fact that I had standing in South Africa, in Zimbabwe and Congo. I knew whereof I spoke before I went into the energy business in the United States and ultimately went back into gold and silver mining, building what will be America's largest gold mine makes it a strategic asset with potential sources of funding from nations that is really the best that we've ever seen in our lifetimes.

Let me take you now to Slide 5. We refer to this as the catalytic transaction, and the reason for that is, as many of you know, since 2021, when we announced to the world with our partner Barrick that we were going to feasibility, to put it simply, we were held back. If we had managed to proceed as pledged, we'd already be through the feasibility, through financing and very possibly breaking ground on construction, so we have some time to catch up. But very importantly, we also have the opportunity to catch up with our share price.

Earlier this year, we touched a low of \$2 and change. We are now close to double digits, and when I said that I do believe that the stock would go from \$3 or \$3.50 back to the \$12 to \$15 area just as our first stop—in fact, essentially going back to where we were before we were paused in our progress—it may have come across as rather bold. What you can see here—and this chart is clearly out of date because it should extend up on the right-hand side considerably more over the last few days. What you see is that a fire was ignited when we swapped a partner with whom we were not aligned with a partner with whom we are perfectly aligned.

Essentially, what you're seeing is a revaluation of NOVAGOLD. For those of you who have been with us for a very long time, all I can say is I wish this had happened earlier, but it really was outside of our control. But I can assure you, the first opportunity that we had to put it back into our control we took it, and as we can see from this price chart, our investors haven't really had to look back. As far as we can see, this is just the beginning.

On Slide 6, you see it come about. Just getting where we were in 2021, (audio interference 06:10) to the \$12 to \$15 area, and I believe that from there, we double again. Historically, we outperformed the GDXJ. In fact, we've always been, until the last few years, one of the go-to stocks in the gold development space because when an investor—if there were any investors interested in that space—would ask the question of a broker, “Where can we get access to a great asset that's well managed, responsibly managed, but also in a jurisdiction where we might actually want to visit?” We were able to get some of that flow. I think that, that flow, which is now turning into a torrent is going to benefit NOVAGOLD as much as, if not more than any other large-scale development story for reasons which I will be explaining very shortly.

But with this chart, you see two things. Number one, our historic outperformance versus the GDXJ, but also—I don't want to be distortive. If you look at where we went from peak to trough earlier this year, that was entirely the product of not having the right partner with us in this story. The reversal, the beginning of the reversal—Phase 1 to take us back to the \$12 to \$15 area—is because we have a perfectly aligned partner with gold at our backs.

Slide 7. When we talk about that Phase 2, which takes us from \$12 to \$15 to \$30—which in full transparency is the target price that both John Paulson and I have set for where the stock really should be now and would have been if we weren't set back over the last few years—this is classic. We are now on the path to re-rating across the development phases of our progress to America's largest gold mine. This isn't actually rocket science. If anything, the gold price and the revaluation and reappreciation of gold as a monetary asset that you want to own—and if it's in the ground you want to own it in a place where the rule of law is not a novelty—has only grown in our favour.

This advantage has been, as you can see on Slide 8, by having the Paulson team with us. John is someone that I've known, worked with and loved as a partner and as a friend for well over 15 years. He is the archetype, a paradigm of a mensch, of somebody whose word is their bond, and we've had nothing but a great business experience. In fact, the negotiation of this deal reflected that. He always put himself into the other side's shoes in order to be able to make the deal a true win-win.

I don't have to say much about John Paulson other than if there's anyone who is famous for identifying the big trade and finding the vehicle with which he can get that trade to multiply his and his shareholders' money, it's John Paulson. He did so very famously during the subprime crisis, but he's also done that in a way that is maybe even unique among big generalist investors in the gold space with specific stocks that he has served as a catalyst for being able to recharge them and remultiply their value.

If you look at Slide 9, you have a great case study with the turnaround of Detour Gold, where it was the nomination and the putting in of John's Director slate that led to the optimization of the mine plan. Ultimately Detour acquiring Kirkland Lake and Agnico acquiring Detour, and anybody who has stayed in over that time is probably up about 500% during a period that we know is not characterized by such outsized wins.

If you look at Slide 10, more recently you have a case study of what the Paulson team has done to be able to take Perpetua from what was a year or so ago, a \$3 stock now well into the 20s on the back of its gold and it's being a critical mineral provider for the United States. When you look at the different tranches along the way, you

can clearly see a thoughtful as well as a successfully impactful value creation model for both Detour and Perpetua.

Now for something a little bit different. If we go to Slide 11, this is not as egotistical as it seems. It's in order to be able to underscore certain points which I would like to make to shareholders of NOVAGOLD, many of whom over the years have become very close personal friends. There are a few things that really aren't spoken about as much at this time as I think perhaps should be. Fortunately, they are, for better or worse, all pointing to NOVAGOLD as being the Holy Grail in the gold space.

For many, many years—and this is just simply to validate the statement I have argued, going back to \$550 gold—that the first equilibrium price for gold would be between \$3,000 and \$5,000. Why \$3,000 to \$5,000, I was asked, and I said because I easily see it when it breaks out going to \$5,000 and as things get more volatile, perhaps correcting the \$3,000 before it goes to another area.

In some of the interviews I gave to David Rubenstein, some in writing, I made mention of my view that \$3,000 to \$5,000 was a first equilibrium level based on the fundamentals that I saw at the time. I must pause to say that this is before the global financial crisis. I knew when this happened that, that forecast would be superseded by another one. But as gold was staying in a trading range, I saw no reason to ruin whatever credibility I'd lost by saying publicly when gold was \$550 that I saw it multiplying tenfold to just basically keep my mouth shut and maybe allude to it.

I'd like to take you to Slide 12 and revisit some of the important fundamentals for gold. Gold is in a major, major, major bull market. For years, I have said when asked what can go wrong in my thesis, the one thing that has made me nervous is that I couldn't find a reason. This goes back now to 2007/2008. If anything, everything that has transpired since then has only affirmed in my mind that there's a reason why the prudent man rule was devised in order to measure the risk of all assets against what was viewed as the safest asset, gold.

Now, gold is definitely money. People have definitions of what money is, what a currency is, but the reality is that nothing has had a longer pedigree as a historic safe haven. Certainly, those who said that that no longer exists, have missed out on the early stages, the early innings of what I see as gold being in a much bigger bull market than what we've seen. It's proven to be a fabulous asset diversifier. It's been a protection against deflation. It's been a protection against inflation. The emerging market demand has been exquisite. I've said for so many years, whenever you see the Indians and the Chinese competing over who can be the biggest buyer of a scarce asset, you just want to own some of it. Every Indian, every Chinese since the dawn of mankind who has placed faith in gold is making a killing. We call that in psychology positive reinforcement.

More importantly, every investment banker who had the guts to say we shouldn't sell our gold or even was willing to bet a body part that they should be buying gold has probably been issued the Order of the Fatherland for their prescience. They have seen the revaluation of gold which is so critical for central banks.

Meanwhile, on the demand side, you've got all of these tailwinds, but look at what you have on the supply side. Discoveries in gold are so few and far between; anything of size is rarer than a hen's tooth. The fact is, to be able to take a mine, well, to be able to take a prospect to what ultimately is a producing mine has been variously estimated at between 1,000 to 10,000 to 1 against the explorer.

Meanwhile, if you are lucky enough, on average, it takes 20 years-plus to be able to take that project from a discovery through to a mine. In other words, in terms of supply coming out into the market from gold companies, number one, the horse has already left the barn. Number two, we won't have to see the results of that for 20 years; and unlike hydrocarbons, you have no large, trapped spaces where you have the hydrocarbons, but you have to figure out how to get it out. It just doesn't exist in gold. In other words, depending on your point of view, it's either the perfect alignment of stars or it's the perfect storm.

One way or the other, I have no doubt that every portfolio manager is going to end up having an allocation to gold. Do I think they're going to go back to 10% to 15%, as was the norm through the 1970s? If we even approached a few percent; gold will already probably be five digits. Let's discuss what a real bull market looks like and why someone who does have standing can explain his view—I could be completely wrong. It's a forward-looking statement. Probably should say, you know, don't listen to what I'm saying—but let's look at the next slide. Let's look at Slide 13.

Slide 13 is the Dow Jones since the 1970s. What you see in that bull market is almost imperceptibly the Dow breaking out of what was a 30-year trading range between 800 and 1,000. Breaking above 1,000. Now, the old-timers who knew that you go short when that happens, we're blown away by the young people with red braces or suspenders who thought, "This time is different." Here's the thing about this time is different. A lot of us will say, "Yes, when you hear that you think of people drinking Kool-Aid," except for one simple fact: every reversal is characterized by that time indeed being different. That's what happened to the Dow in the 1980s.

As a curiosity, I want you to go back and look towards the mid-1980s. Maybe you need glasses, but look at that blip. That blip, which barely is noticeable, that is the crash of 1987 that a lot of us thought was going to be the harbinger of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. You can't even see it as the Dow marched from 1,000 to a 45 plus leap in value over the decades.

Now, I don't think this is a spoiler alert. It's entirely possible that we will see something similar happening in gold. I think it was announced yesterday that for the first time the gold in Fort Knox is worth over a trillion dollars. That's interesting. But what's fascinating is that gold has now surpassed the euro as the second largest global reserve asset. Now many of you will say, "That's because of the price appreciation," and my answer to that would be, "Yeah, no kidding." However, we really do have to understand that this is a major, major statement about the reappraisal of gold as a monetary asset at a time when we are in the world in uncharted waters. Not just in terms of the financial markets and debt, trade and, of course, geopolitical trends which are unlike anything that we've seen since the end of the Second World War.

I'd like to quote Ray Dalio, who I think is really probably the best applied historian of those who are in the financial world. Gold is now the second largest reserve currency behind the U.S. dollar. To understand why, you need to look at the history of fiat currencies like the dollar and hard currencies like gold. The way I see it, we're currently facing a classic currency devaluation similar to what we saw in the 1970s or in the 1930s. In both of those cases, fiat currencies around the world all went down together and also went down in relationship to hard currencies like gold. Now, what does that mean?

Years ago, when gold still sported a \$1,000 handle, Ray Dalio said that anyone who doesn't own gold either doesn't understand economics or the history of gold. Not wanting to be cast as a gold bug, he put it in a very sober way and just said, "You should own some gold," which, of course, was echoing things that I said, and of course, other great proponents of gold as well. We were hardly unique, but we probably could have fit into a relatively small restaurant or a dining table.

But in any event, what we're seeing now is an epic, epic reversal in the same way as the Dow going to 3,000 and having a correction that took it down. Anyone who held and just basically said, "That's a correction," some had the perspicacity to say, "I'm going to buy more." But those who understood that this is the natural cycle and held it have had one of the great generational trades in world history.

I believe that the same is taking place in gold itself now. I don't believe that we're in nosebleed territory. Of course, we can have a correction. We will at some point along the continuum, and I would argue people should keep some powder dry and when that correction comes, have the guts—don't freak out. Have the guts to add to that position because the next wave up is going to be very, very sweet. This is going to be a very, very long wave in gold. I own it. I've thought about that for years, alluded to it. I didn't want to say it until I thought, "At least I have the credibility for my first phase," to be in place.

Now, what does that mean for NOVAGOLD shareholders? The great news is that it has the potential to give NOVAGOLD and the very, very few large-scale, well-managed, high-grade, high-volume assets to be able to get

by far the premium rating in the space. I do believe that we will see U.S. assets be valued. If they have exploration potential, for sure with 0% discount rates because of jurisdictional safety.

The flip side of that as one who did really well in Latin America and Africa, is that I do believe that in most countries—certainly those where the rule of law is more of a novelty like in West Africa, which we're seeing, but it's also happening in other places. Gold mines are going to be nationalized, and this would be extremely sad. There is nothing worse than all of you who are bullish on gold, may even have bought into a great asset—I'm not saying that there aren't really excellent assets in unsafe jurisdictions. But then have it taken away from you because they were great assets in places where the governments basically said, "Wait a minute. You're minting money. You're really minting money. It's not a slogan. We want that. It's force majeure. It's a choice between your shareholders and our shareholders, which is our population." I tell you there won't be any governments which will have any sway with these governments when they pull off that trip. We've seen it, and no matter what your relationships are in that country, it won't mean anything.

Mark Bristow did more to put Mali on the map than any other human. They rewarded him with his fidelity and his charisma by basically stealing the asset. Mongolia tried to do the same with Bob Friedland. We saw what's happened to companies with assets in Panama, in Guatemala. This is a contagion. It's a disease. Because when governments, whether they're autocrats or democracies, see someone else being able to get a better deal, they have to be able to respond by giving at least as good a deal to their own shareholders or have the risk of being accused of being in the mining company's pocket, or simply not attending to the needs of their people.

Again, this is a public service announcement from someone who's been there and seen what these countries are like and managed to get out with 100x returns in silver in Latin America, in platinum and palladium in Africa, and gold. I sold Kibali to Mark Bristow, a wonderful mine. I hope and wish for the best for Barrick in Congo. Also, in Pakistan.

These are different philosophies, but my attitude is I have adopted Woody Allen's famous line, "I'm not afraid of death. I just don't want to be there when it happens." Why would I want to when for all the reasons that Greg Lang is going to be laying out, you have everything that you could possibly want for a high-octane, high-volume high-grade, low-cost producer in the safest jurisdiction in the world or as we'll see on the next slide, Slide 14, what we call maximum leverage to gold, but in a jurisdiction that will allow you to keep the fruits of that leverage.

Now, what you see here is with gold at \$3,500, you have a 0% discount rate, \$50 billion, and that makes no allowance for the extraordinary inevitable exploration upside that we have at Donlin. So much so that I contend that it's entirely possible—forward-looking statement; disregard everything I'm about to say—that the next Donlin will be found at Donlin. Only 5% of that district has been explored. Only three kilometres of an eight-kilometre

mineralized belt, the 5% has the 40-plus million ounces of gold that we already believe can add tens of millions of ounces.

When you think that 95% is unexplored, now you understand, between that and being based in the United States in one of the safest jurisdictions, you can see why I do believe a 0% discount rate will be justified. But even so, we're nearly \$20 billion at an NPV 5 for Donlin. The \$12 to \$15 target that we set as Phase 1 for the doubling of NOVAGOLD is not unreasonable by any stretch. I hope it will prove to be cautious.

One thing that I would say is for us, as investors in this space for over 30 years, you want to seek great assets, in great places, with management that knows how to build things, and shareholders, I must say, who are aligned. You have all of that in NOVAGOLD.

Before Greg goes more granular, this is why you're going to see what we hope to be a steady stream of good news that will more than make up for lost time that take us on the path to building America's largest gold mine. We are already working with top-tier firms to be able to position us for the bankable feasibility study. The bankable feasibility study will be coinciding with advanced engineering. We hope to begin construction in 2027; 2030 being our target for production.

I also have to point out that in the first 10 years we'll be producing roughly 1.4 million ounces a year. That's why we'll be the largest in the country. But it's entirely possible that we would be able to sustain that production. We start with a 28-year mine life.

For all of the reasons that you see, we are very, very comfortable that this project will be able to be financed, sovereign wealth funds. It's entirely possible that governments closer to home may take a very great interest in this strategic asset. They're offtake providers, and of course, we believe that the equity will be a multiple of where it is today when we have the construction decision and that we will be comfortably positioned to be able to pull the trigger and really enjoy the fruits of what we and our Native Corporation partners and Alaska have been waiting for so long.

With that, I will pass the baton to my brother-in-arms, Greg Lang.

Gregory Lang:

All right. Thank you, Tom.

Next, I'd like to introduce Peter Adamek, our Chief Financial Officer, to cover the third quarter highlights.

Peter Adamek:

Thank you, Greg.

Turning to our operating performance on Slide 17, NOVAGOLD reported a net loss of \$15.6 million in the third quarter of 2025. This represents an increase of \$4.9 million from the comparable prior-year period primarily due to higher field expenses at Donlin Gold and higher general and administrative expenses. NOVAGOLD's third quarter results reflect the Company's 60% interest in Donlin Gold following the closing of the acquisition of an additional 10% of Donlin Gold at the beginning of the quarter on June 3, 2025.

Donlin Gold expenses in the third quarter and the first nine months of 2025 were higher with increased site activity in 2025 compared to the prior year when field activities were minimal. General and administrative expenses increased in the third quarter from the comparable prior year, primarily due to higher share-based compensation, partially offset by lower professional fees.

Turning to Slide 18, our treasury decreased by \$193.5 million to \$125.2 million at the end of the third quarter, primarily due to the closing of the acquisition of an additional 10% of Donlin Gold. This was partially offset by the exercise of an over-allotment option from our May equity offering providing an additional \$25.5 million to the Company in the third quarter. Consideration paid and transaction costs incurred totalling \$210.1 million for the 10% acquisition of Donlin Gold were capitalized to the Company's investment in Donlin Gold.

Excluding the Donlin acquisition and over-allotment exercise, corporate G&A costs during the third quarter declined by \$0.3 million, and our share of Donlin Gold funding increased by \$5.2 million due to the Company's increased Donlin Gold funding obligation and increased site activity in 2025.

Moving to Slide 19, as discussed on the previous slide, our treasury decreased to \$125 million at the end of the third quarter. Following the acquisition of an additional 10% of Donlin Gold on June 3, a re-examination of the Donlin Gold budget was completed by the current owners of the project. Some activities that were originally planned for 2025 were redirected to support work on the bankable feasibility study with no material impact expected on Donlin Gold's previously announced \$43 million budget for 2025. As such, NOVAGOLD's pro rata share of Donlin Gold's \$43 million budget has increased to \$24 million in light of the Company's incremental 10% funding obligation starting in the third quarter.

Our share of funding for Donlin Gold in the first nine months of 2025 was \$18.5 million, which is in line with the revised 2025 guidance.

Also, as a result of the closing of the Donlin Gold transaction, we expect to incur higher professional fees for the year, resulting in an increase of NOVAGOLD's 2025 corporate G&A costs to \$18 million from our previous guidance of \$16 million.

I will now turn the presentation over to Greg to discuss third quarter highlights.

Gregory Lang:

It was a very active quarter for NOVAGOLD and Donlin. In September, we completed the 18,000-plus metre drill program. This program employed over 80 people, including locals from 22 villages in the region that supported drilling, logistics, environmental monitoring and other site activities.

We hosted numerous visits during the quarter. We had five separate visits. These included tours with investors and analysts. We had an owner's tour with our partners Calista and TKC, and we met with people that can provide infrastructure support to advance the project. In addition, Donlin welcomed the Crooked Creek Traditional Tribal Council to visit the site. This is the closest community to the project. Other tours included representatives from the State of Alaska, a Congressional delegation, as well as representatives from Senator Murkowski, Sullivan and Senator Begich offices.

Additionally, we finalized more shared value statements with communities in the region, increasing this total to 19.

We continue to build on the progress in our aquatic habitat restoration project and improved access for the local resident fish areas impacted by historic placer mining.

Lastly, Donlin continued to be active in a variety of community events that celebrated cultural preservation, strengthened stakeholder relationships, and promoted the economic and social well-being of the people in the region.

Turning to Slide 22, the completion of the drill program, which was expanded to support the new resource model and advancement of the bankable feasibility study, reinforces our project's long-term development strategy. This year's program with initial results confirming consistent mineralization across multiple zones including the top five intervals with grades ranging from about 4 grams up to 23 grams per tonne.

The drilling focused on three principal activities: grid drilling, to further assist the mine planning efforts; in-pit exploration drilling focused on enhancing the geologic modelling and supporting resource conversion. Finally,

geotechnical drilling for pit wall stability and mine design material sites for the access road from the port to the Donlin Gold segment. Reclamation of all of the excavations from this program have been completed.

Turning to permitting and litigation-related activities, we have submitted the preliminary design package to the state agencies and the process is underway. This will complete the submission for the tailings dam and related water retention structures.

In the state litigation, we continued to support the agencies in defending their issuance of the Donlin water rights, pipeline and the 401 certification. The cases challenging these aspects of the project have been fully briefed and argued before the Alaska Supreme Court, with decisions anticipated in 2026.

In the federal litigation, the District Court issued an order on remedy, denying the request to vacate the permits and remanding the case to the agencies to supplement the NEPA analysis. The court retained jurisdiction over the case during this remand and ordered the agencies to file updates within the Court. We understand the regulatory aspect: Donlin Gold and its partners are committed to supporting the state and federal agencies in the defense of our permits.

My next few slides really touch on the highlights of Donlin Gold and its key attributes that make the project unique. Turning to Slide 25, Donlin will be a big mine. It will average over a million ounces a year throughout its 27-year mine life with cash costs well below industry averages. Not only is it big, but it's great grade at 2.25 grams; it's one of the highest grade undeveloped open pit deposits in the industry. As our chairman articulated, we have tremendous exploration potential – both at depth, along strike and within a district which is substantially underexplored.

Alaska is a great place to do business. It's a state that understands and supports a well-established tradition of responsible mining. Our project is on private land owned by two Alaska Native Corporations. We have life-of-mine agreements in place with both of them. Our federal permits are in hand and state permitting, what little remains, is well on track. We're committed to environmental stewardship and the well-being of our people and our communities. We've long enjoyed strong support from our dedicated, long-term institutional investors.

Donlin's a strategic asset. As envisioned today it would be America's largest gold mine. Of all the development projects out in the industry, none have a production profile approaching that of Donlin. Its first 10 years it will average 1.4 million ounces a year, followed by many decades over a million ounces per year.

Turning to the next slide, grade really separates Donlin from the other development gold projects. At grades of 2.25 grams, it's better than double the global industry average grade, which is just barely over 1 gram. It's this high grade that contributes to the low cash cost.

This slide depicts the mineralized trend at Donlin. The 40 million ounces are contained in and around the ACMA Lewis ore bodies. The remaining five kilometres of the eight kilometre trend has gold-bearing intercepts already in place. When the time is right, we will resume drilling along trend, and we will continue to explore the remaining areas of the property.

Alaska is a great place to do business. While we were up in Alaska with the new owners, the Paulson team, we met with the governor, and he reiterated the importance of Donlin to the State of Alaska. Alaska is already the second largest gold-producing state in the U.S. with a well-supported and well-served mining industry. It's one of the top jurisdictions globally where it ranks third out of over 80 jurisdictions.

The Donlin project is on private land which is owned by two Alaska Native Corporations. Calista owns the mineral rights and TKC owns the surface rights. This land was transferred to the Native Corporations for their economic self-determination, and it was designated for mining-related activities. In essence, they have a treaty with the U.S. government that permits mining to occur on what is now their land.

Permitting is an arduous process in the United States; one we know very well. Our key federal permits are in hand and the final state permits related to the tailings dam and water retention structures are well advanced, and we anticipate receiving these remaining permits well in advance of completing the bankable feasibility study.

Our environmental, social and governance track record is impeccable. We have a well-diversified Board. The Donlin site has worked over a decade without a lost time accident. We value our people, and we value the environment, and that's reflected in all of our activities.

NOVAGOLD has always enjoyed strong institutional shareholder support, and this is true to this day. Over 60% of our shares are held within the top 10, and you can see on the list very well-informed, well-seasoned gold investors who understand the depth of the opportunity that NOVAGOLD brings to our shareholders.

Upcoming catalysts for the Company, now that we have the new ownership structure in place and the project's future is in focus, we are building on this momentum as we enter the next phase of development to maximize the value proposition of Donlin Gold and the exceptional leverage we bring. Our near-term catalysts include awarding a contract for the bankable feasibility study by year-end. The selection process for this is well advanced. We also anticipate releasing the drill results that remain from the program we completed in

September. We are gearing up discussions to evaluate potential financing sources. To support these activities, we are building out the project team for Donlin.

Finally, we continue to support the state and federal agencies as they defend the permits they issue following a very rigorous process. We continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the state of Alaska, and we remain committed to being transparent in addressing the issues that are important to them.

Thank you. We will now open the lines for questions.

Operator:

Thank you. To join the question queue, you may press star, then one on your telephone keypad. You will hear a tone acknowledging your request. If you are using a speakerphone, please pick up your handset before pressing any keys. To withdraw your question, please press star, then two. Webcast viewers may submit questions to the text box in the lower right corner of the webcast frame. We will pause a moment as callers join the queue.

The first question comes from Soundarya Iyer with B. Riley Securities. Please go ahead.

Soundarya Iyer:

Hi team. Congratulations on the quarter. I'm Soundarya on behalf of Nick Giles from B. Riley Securities. Just touching on the exploration drill results, all of the top five drill results are impressive and about the current resource grade with high-grade intervals up to 23 grams a tonne. Could you provide more colour on how these results compare to your resource model expectations and the continuity of the ore body?

Gregory Lang:

Sure. Yes, thank you for joining the call this morning. We were very pleased with the results. A couple of things to point out with them. We were drilling under-explored areas of the pit, and we encountered mineralization in areas that were previously modelled as waste. It demonstrates the potential still exists in and around in known ore bodies. The best place to look for gold is in a gold mine, and we're certainly demonstrating that.

The other important aspect to point out about the drilling is one of the analysts took all of the intercepts and added them up and averaged them and they came out just under four grams. I think when you look at that random sampling of four grams over 18,000 metres and you compare that to the average grade of Donlin at 2.25 grams, just random drill results really demonstrate that there's still upside potential at the Donlin ore bodies and that with further drilling, which we anticipate doing over time, we expect to continue to increase and enhance our knowledge of the ore body. Thank you.

Soundarya Iyer:

Thank you for that. Just a follow on that one. Are we planning to update the resource and incorporate these drill results before we put out a bankable feasibility study?

Gregory Lang:

We've released the results of about half of the assays from this year's drill program and probably within the next month, as the assays come in, we will release the balance of them. The results from this year's drill program will be incorporated into the geologic model that we use to support the bankable feasibility study.

Soundarya Iyer:

Got it. I appreciate the colour. I'll hand it back. Thank you.

Gregory Lang:

Thank you.

Operator:

The next question comes from David Lazinski with Accurate. Please go ahead.

David Lazinski:

My question is to Tom Kaplan. To me, it seems like common sense that if I was a royalty company that I would approach NOVAGOLD prematurely to get the best deal. I guess my question is, can you elaborate on the interest in royalty companies as far as financing the project?

Thomas Kaplan:

First of all, thank you for the question. Typically speaking, I would cite Voltaire who said that common sense is not so common. However, the royalty companies do possess common sense, and I think it's very fair to say that should we wish to enter into a royalty or a stream or any other instrument of that kind, we are pretty assured that that would be forthcoming. Royalty companies do exhibit common sense; it's part of their business model.

David Lasinski:

The second question is, have you contemplated these mini nuclear reactors instead of natural gas for power for Donlin? Have you explored that?

Gregory Lang:

Sure. When we've looked at powering the Donlin project site we've considered all options. Nuclear reactors, that's curiosity, but I think it's still many, many years out into the future. Natural gas remains really the best way of powering the Donlin site.

There's a development that we're following with great interest up in Alaska. That's the President has a keen interest in seeing a pipeline built to deliver natural gas from the North Slope into the Cook Inlet. The Cook Inlet is where Donlin plans to import their natural gas. This pipeline, if built, could certainly be very beneficial to the project to have a cheap Alaska-based source of natural gas. We're following that very closely and we will continue to monitor developments with the small-scale reactors, but like I said, I think that's many, many years away.

David Lazinski:

Okay. Thank you and congratulations on all the work you guys have been doing. Really appreciate it.

Gregory Lang:

Thank you.

Mélanie Hennessey:

Go ahead.

Operator:

Go ahead, Mélanie.

Mélanie Hennessey:

We have some questions coming in from the line, from the webcast. The first coming in from Matt Kovack. I am so happy that John Paulson has joined. I know that this will accelerate the process. Is there any new projected date for construction to take place?

Gregory Lang:

I think as outlined in our presentation today, our immediate focus is getting the bankable feasibility study contract awarded and kicking that work off in 2026. We will complete that work in about 18 to 24 months, positioning us to make a construction decision. Once that decision is made, it would take about four years construction to build the site, so that puts commercial production somewhere around the year 2031.

Mélanie Hennessey:

We have a few questions coming in from Chris Gates. Any updates on the tailings dam permit? Do you expect any opposition?

Gregory Lang:

The tailings dam permit, just for background, that's the last remaining state permit. The federal permit authorizes us to disturb land and that includes the tailings dam. But in Alaska, structures like that are administered by the State and require final engineered drawings before the state will issue the permits for operation. We always knew it was an expensive permit to obtain because the geotechnical drilling and the engineering to support the design, so we waited until that was later in the project life.

Several years ago, we completed the geotechnical drilling, and we've submitted the preliminary design packages to the State and they're under review. We anticipate we'll have these permits in hand well before the bankable feasibility study is done. The State is very familiar with large-scale mining operations, and we expect these permits will be in hand in the normal course of the process.

Mélanie Hennessey:

Then the final question also from the line of Chris Gates. Any updates on the Alaska Supreme Court decision?

Gregory Lang:

No. The cases before the Supreme Court are fully briefed and we are awaiting decisions. We are optimistic that we will continue to prevail in the courts as we have every step of the way. But we are awaiting the decisions that could come at any time, or it could be six, eight months into the future. We're just anxiously awaiting that.

I think that concludes our webcast for the third quarter. Thank you for taking the time to join us.

Thomas Kaplan:

Thank you, everyone.

Gregory Lang:

Take care.

Operator:

This concludes today's conference call. You may disconnect your lines. Thank you for participating and have a pleasant day.