

NOVAGOLD Resources Inc. First Quarter 2026 Financial Results Conference Call Transcript

Date: April 1st, 2026

Time: 8:00 AM PT

Speakers: **Melanie Hennessey**
Vice President Corporate Communications

Gregory Lang
President and Chief Executive Officer

Peter Adamek
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Thomas Kaplan
Chairman of the Board

Operator:

Welcome to the NOVAGOLD First Quarter 2026 Financial Results 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. You'll hear a tone acknowledging your request. Should you need assistance during the conference call, you may reach 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 Melanie Hennessey, Vice President, Corporate Communications. Please go ahead.

Melanie Hennessey:

Thank you, Gaylene. Good morning everyone. We are pleased that you have joined us for NOVAGOLD's 2026 First 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 NOVAGOLD's Vice President and CFO, Peter Adamek. At the end of the webcast, we will take questions by phone. Additionally, we will respond to questions received via email in the webcast.

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 NOVAGOLD's President and CEO, Greg Lang. Greg?

Greg Lang:

Thank you, Melanie.

On Slide 5, we highlight the key attributes that make the Donlin project unique in the gold industry. Donlin has a combination of scale, grade, long life, low operating costs, and significant upside potential in the exploration areas, and we are in a safe jurisdiction.

With about 40 million ounces of reserves and resources at 2.25 grams, Donlin has got grade better than twice the industry average. Our known resource occupies only 5% of our total land holdings, and there is considerable

potential to increase this strong reserve base. We are also fortunate to have long-term committed shareholders who understand the value in an asset like Donlin.

Moving on to Slide 6, this chart illustrates the value of Donlin at a variety of gold prices. With today's gold price approaching the upper end of this chart, the project has a net present value of almost \$24 billion at a 5% discount rate. This underscores the leverage and significant economic potential of Donlin in the current gold price environment.

As highlighted on Slide 7, Donlin will be a big mine. It will average over a million ounces a year during its 30-year mine life and about 1.3 million ounces the first 10 years. This asset production makes it really unique and stands out in the gold space.

Grade is one of the most important attributes of a mining project. At 2.25 grams, Donlin is twice the industry average. It is this high grade that contributes to Donlin's very low operating costs at less than \$1,000 an ounce.

This slide really highlights the significant exploration potential at Donlin. Our known resources reside in the ECMA and Lewis areas as shown on slide number 9. These areas represent only 3 kilometres of an 8-kilometre gold-bearing system. When the time is right, we will continue to explore both along strike and at depth. There's tremendous potential right in our own backyard.

Turning to Slide 10, this slide is a summary of the status of our permitting. We've completed the federal permitting process and we're wrapping up the state permitting. We've worked well with the federal and state agencies over the years and our permits are in good standing. The only remaining permit in Alaska is for the dam safety certificates and the design packages have been submitted to the State and we anticipate approval well in advance of needing this permit.

Slide 11 highlights a recent statement from Governor Mike Dunleavy up in Alaska. Governor Dunleavy, as well as the other elected officials in Alaska, have long been staunch advocates for the Donlin project and the importance of what it can mean to the state of Alaska and the YK region.

On Slide 12, we highlight our long-standing engagement with our Native Alaskan partners. Calista owns the mineral rights and TKC owns the surface rights. We've got life-of-mine agreements in place with both of these entities and it's really important to remember that this is private land that was designated for mining activities. Both Calista and TKC have an owner's interest in seeing this project go forward.

Moving on to Slide 13, we are starting to fill out the Donlin Gold feasibility team. Frank Arcese is our project manager. He's been around the industry for almost 40 years and he's very well seasoned with big projects in remote locations.

We've hired Fluor, one of the industry's leading engineering firms, to lead the bankable feasibility study. Underneath Fluor, we have three specialty firms. Worley, who is responsible for the pipeline, Hatch, who is a leader in pressure oxidation and oxygen plants, and WSP, a firm that specializes in, among other things, power plants. These are all industry-leading firms that will help us with the bankable feasibility study and taking the project forward into construction and ultimately operation.

I will now turn the call over to NOVAGOLD's Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Peter Adamek. Peter?

Peter Adamek:

Thank you, Greg.

Turning to our operating performance on Slide 15, NOVAGOLD reported a fiscal 2026 first quarter net loss of \$15.4 million. This represents an increase of \$6.3 million from the comparable prior year period, primarily due to higher expenditures at Donlin Gold following the commencement of the bankable feasibility study related activities, including hiring for key roles on the Donlin Gold project team and higher G&A expenses at NOVAGOLD.

The Company's share of Donlin Gold expenses in the first quarter of 2026 was \$3.9 million higher than the comparative prior year period due to camp remaining open this winter and increased project activities following Fluor being awarded the lead engineering role for the Donlin Gold bankable feasibility study in early February 2026. Unlike the comparative prior year period, the Company's first quarter results also reflect NOVAGOLD's 60% interest in Donlin Gold.

NOVAGOLD's G&A expenses increased in the first quarter of 2026 by \$3.9 million from the comparable prior year period, primarily due to higher professional fees and share based compensation. Professional fees were elevated during the first quarter, but remained in line with quarterly cadence expectations and are expected to decline from first quarter levels during the remainder of the year and remain within previously issued 2026 guidance.

On Slide 16, our treasury increased by \$277.4 million to \$392.5 million at the end of the first quarter, primarily due to closing of a private placement of approximately (audio gap 10:00). NOVAGOLD intends to use the net proceeds from the private placement for expenditures associated with Donlin Gold activities, exercise of the

Company's prepayment option on the Barrick promissory note, and general corporate purposes. Excluding the financing, corporate G&A costs during the first quarter increased by \$3 million and our share of Donlin Gold funding increased by \$11.9 million compared to the prior year.

Moving to Slide 17, our treasury at the end of the first quarter sits at a robust \$392.5 million. NOVAGOLD is well funded, enabling it to complete the Donlin Gold bankable feasibility study in 2027 and exercise its option to prepay the Barrick promissory note later this year. Our operating cash expenditures in the first quarter of fiscal 2026 remained in line with our 2026 budget and guidance.

With that, I will now turn the presentation back over to Greg to discuss first quarter highlights.

Greg Lang:

Thank you, Peter.

Slide 18 highlights our continuing engagement with the communities in and around Alaska. We work closely with Calista and TKC on all of these programs, as well as preparing them and the local people for ultimate employment at the mine. All of these programs are a testament to our commitment to total engagement with the local communities and ultimately preparing a workforce for the Donlin project.

Turning to Slide 19, during the first quarter, we announced the advancement of the Donlin Gold bankable feasibility study, as well as additional engineering firms have been engaged for very specialized components of this study. This integrated approach leverages the deep technical expertise that all of these firms bring to the bankable feasibility study.

On Slide 20, another development we follow with a lot of interest is the proposal to bring gas down from the North Slope into the Cook Inlet, ultimately tying into the header that will feed the Donlin project. We've got a non-binding letter of intent with Glenfarne to evaluate natural gas supply from this proposed pipeline. This pipeline has the potential to be a real game-changer for Donlin, giving us access to cheap, reliable, and long-term natural gas. We will continue to advance discussions with Glenfarne as the project moves forward and where they might potentially fit in supporting the infrastructure for the Donlin project.

Last year was really a transformational year for the Company. Post the Barrick transaction, we've steadily made meaningful progress to advance the Donlin Gold project through a bankable feasibility study. We're building up the team with expertise to do this, and all while we will continue to engage with our local communities.

Turning to Slide 22, this highlights our top shareholders.

We have always valued their long-term commitment to the project and to the company. I think it's important to note that Paulson, who is now our 40% partner with Donlin, has been a major shareholder in NOVAGOLD for over 15 years. This slide also highlights the coverage that NOVAGOLD has from various banks.

NOVAGOLD is focused on delivering on every single commitment we've made, advancing the Donlin Gold project through a bankable feasibility study, and achieving all of these milestones.

Operator, we are now prepared to open the line for questions.

Operator:

Thank you. We will now begin the question-and-answer session. To join the question queue, you may press star, then one on your telephone keypad. You'll hear a tone acknowledging your request. If you're 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 through the text box in the lower right corner of the webcast frame.

Our first question is from Francisco Costanzo with Scotiabank. Please go ahead.

Francisco Costanzo:

Hi. Good morning everyone. Thanks a lot for taking my question. I'll just start with the BFS. I appreciate that you'll be giving a more fulsome update on the BFS timeline around mid-year, but given that you've now awarded the engineering contracts for the project, can we consider that the clock on the 12 to 18-month timeline to complete the BFS has now started?

Greg Lang:

I would say yes. Certainly, we have got all of the firms in place to do the bankable feasibility study. Fluor hit the ground running. They're obviously the key driver in this. From where we're sitting today, I'd say give or take a year, we will have it wrapped up.

Francisco Costanzo:

That's great. Thanks, Greg.

My second question is just going to move to project financing. Just this week, we saw Perpetua Resources announce the approval of a \$2.7 billion loan from EXIM. Although the projects are obviously different, I'm wondering if you see any read-throughs on the potential debt financing availability for a project that offers significant domestic investment in the U.S., such as Donlin?

Dr. Thomas Kaplan:

Shall I take that one, Greg?

Greg Lang:

Oh, sure. Go right ahead. Go ahead, Tom.

Dr. Thomas Kaplan:

I think that it's very fair to say that when you're building the biggest gold mine in the United States, you're going to have multiple sources of financing that come to the fore. If I had to hazard a guess, I would say that governments will be a very large component in that. There is, of course, EXIM. I believe that EXIM is very well aware of our project, and for many reasons that you've cited, the domestic component of this story, not only being the largest gold mine in the United States, but being located in a place where it becomes a nexus for the energy story in Alaska which is of extraordinary importance to this administration, yes, I think it is fair to say that we should expect that the U.S. government has a serious interest in this story.

But equally, I would point out that at least two Asia-Pacific countries, Japan and South Korea, have made very substantial commitments to investment in the United States; \$550 billion in the case of Japan, \$350 billion in the case of Korea and both of those have advanced in terms of execution over the last several months.

I think that it is fair to say that one of the things that we do expect them to be interested in is being able to make quite a statement with Donlin as the biggest, but also as enjoying the fruits of location, location, location. If you're on the Pacific coast of Alaska, you have an opportunity to really develop relationships that are natural in terms of meshing together. The Japanese are very large buyers of gold and the South Korean central bank several months ago announced that it was going to go back into the market to add to its reserves. The timing was actually quite good. The prospect for us to be able to utilize the example of offtake agreements of 1.3-1.4 million ounces a year clearly make us a bit of a unicorn in terms of the ability to attract financing. And I'm not even talking about the other traditional sources. I hope that helps.

Francisco Costanzo:

That's great. Thanks a lot for your response, Tom. That's it for my question. Thanks a lot, team.

Operator:

The next question is from Soundarya Iyer with B. Riley Securities. Please go ahead.

Soundarya Iyer:

Hi, team. Congratulations on the quarterly update.

My question is on the exploration work. As you mentioned in your opening remarks, the current resource is just 5% of the land package. Have you planned any 2026 exploration drill program or budget to test further targets or is that a priority after the bankable feasibility study?

Greg Lang:

I'll start with that one. We're putting together an exploration plan. More I would describe it as general reconnaissance work throughout our land holdings and the area in and around Donlin. So, I think that's getting started. But you have to remember, I think there's a lot of snow left on the ground in Alaska so it would be another month or two before we really can get on the ground.

But it's more general recon. We've been studying Donlin. We believe the next Donlin is at Donlin and we're in a modest program starting to evaluate that.

Dr. Thomas Kaplan:

If I may add just a few words on that because the drill bit has been my best friend over the last three decades.

If I may echo Greg's comment—and this is obviously a very forward-looking statement, but being that for reasons belonging to Barrick's ultimate belief that this would fall into their lap one day or the other, the 95% of the property that's been unexplored is all prime real estate. And we believe that in addition to what we see as low-hanging fruit to add tens of millions of ounces within the 8-kilometre belt, 5 kilometres of which just simply have been drilled, shown mineralization, but there was never any follow-up because the deposit was already so big that it was thought you leave that for later. But in addition to the 45 million ounces of resources that we already see, it's low-hanging fruit to add, in our view, tens of millions of more ounces.

But we are looking for that other Donlin. In a bear market, people really don't care about exploration results, and so I'm very glad that you asked that question, because in a bull market, great drill results can cause a stock price to double or more. And we do expect to be adding a lot more ounces in the immediate vicinity of the property as we go from the 3 kilometres to the 8 kilometre mineralization.

But at the same time, what Greg is referencing is that we are undertaking a project or property-wide analysis in order to identify the best drill targets that are extrinsic of the 8 kilometres. Because in our view, the odds that this occurrence is alone, well, Mother Nature is very fickle. We know that the odds are very long in exploration. But I've been in this movie before, and I've found that in the case of precious metals and in the case of hydrocarbons, where we made our biggest killing at Electrum, wildcatting is something that can take a 10x opportunity to 100x. Fortunately, we have a partner who doesn't see exploration success as being a challenge. John Paulson and his team completely have aligned with us on understanding that good news through the drill

bit is a multiple expander. And if this turns out to be what we hope it is—and it's a hope—this is really the next Carlin and the partners are aligned in being able to identify that.

So when you think of the relatively low cost of exploration versus the high reward, I think you can understand that the partners in Donlin are very keenly aware that we may just be scratching the surface in this story. It remains one of the greatest exploration stories in the world and that will unfold for the market.

Soundarya Iyer:

Thank you. I totally agree with that. My question was on that front, that exploration work could gain more value in a bull market. Thanks for that.

Just one more on the state permitting. Can you walk us through what's left there? As a full state permitting checklist, what is in hand? What remains outstanding? How do we expect the receipt of those permits going forward?

Greg Lang:

Sure, I'll take that one.

The only outstanding state permit is for the tailings dam and other water retention structures. Our federal permits, which are all in hand, authorize us to do this work. However, in Alaska, these structures are administered by the State, and they require final engineering drawings before they grant approval. We've submitted the design packages to the State. We'd already completed the geotechnical work. And we expect approval of these permits about the time we're wrapping up the bankable feasibility study. So they're not on the critical path, but the work to get these permits is well in hand. All of our other remaining state permits are in good standing, as is our federal permits.

Soundarya Iyer:

Thank you, team. Thank you.

Melanie Hennessey:

Thank you. I do have a few questions from the webcast that I wanted to read out. The first is from Eric.

Will the BFS include a closure and reclamation estimate, including long-term water treatment and post-closure monitoring assumptions?

Greg Lang:

I'll start with that one. Yes, it does. Part of the feasibility study, and actually the permitting, requires you to have approved closure plans that have to be vetted by the State and our Native partners. These plans, reclamation and closure, water treatment, they are all part of the commitments in our existing permits. Once the mine is in operation, it will cash fund these permits through a trust. So the procedure is well-defined, and the approvals are all in place for the subsequent reclamation and restoration of the Donlin site post-mining.

Melanie Hennessey:

Great. Thank you, Greg. The next question comes from Gene.

Given the recent share price volatility, and now with the feasibility team in place, which upcoming milestone in this study do you believe will be most important in helping the market recognize the project's underlying progress and value?

Greg Lang:

The important piece of this obviously is to finish the feasibility study. Along the way, we're advancing many different avenues. I think of particular interest is we will be evaluating third-party participation in our gas pipeline and other components of the infrastructure that we could logically bring in a third party to handle. So that will be one of the catalysts coming up as we advance the feasibility study.

There will be other milestones along the way as different components of the study are completed, and we will update the marketplace as this work unfolds. But the real key item is finishing the study, and we anticipate it will certainly demonstrate robust economics in this price environment.

Melanie Hennessey:

Great. Thank you. I have a further question that's come through the line from Matt.

Dr. Kaplan, at the last quarter's update you mentioned that your decisions toward NOVAGOLD and Donlin were family-influenced. I have been following NOVAGOLD for over 15 years and now have many family members investing in the story. I just wanted to say that I appreciate yours and NOVAGOLD's integrity over the years. A big thank you. Could you comment on the recent movement in gold and how that relates to NOVAGOLD?

Dr. Thomas Kaplan:

Well, that's very kind. While I'm going to ask our team, could you please call up the chart that references the long-term bull market and the Dow and just let me know when it's up there?

Melanie Hennessey:

Yes, the slide is up.

Dr. Thomas Kaplan:

Okay. Before that, let me get to the best part of the questioner's remarks. First of all, I find it very gratifying—we all do—that you're able to make this comment about our integrity and your family's investment in NOVAGOLD. Needless to say, Electrum is the largest shareholder of the Company and as the largest shareholder of Electrum is my family, I take it very much to heart that I have a responsibility to my family, but all the other shareholders, and in your case, your own family, to do the best possible thing that we can.

I would say that the thing that Greg and I are most proud of since having come into the story together in 2011—we are celebrating 15 years of joyful monogamy, and one of the things that we are most proud of is that any promises that we made, we kept.

To the extent that we disappointed, I think 100% of our shareholders understood it was for reasons beyond our control. And we had all the tailwinds that I think, and John Paulson thinks, will take us to \$100 per share. But we had one headwind, and when you think that a year ago our stock was at \$2 and change and reached \$14, and I've no doubt that we will vastly surpass that and multiply past \$14, you understand that we took it to heart as much as any shareholder that we were being held back. Once that was relieved approximately a year ago, we knew that we would be on our way to \$10, to \$15, to \$30, and we think well beyond that. For all of the reasons that have become so clear to everyone, that whether people realize it or not—and I'm not saying we're going back to a gold standard, because we'll never see that kind of discipline ever again in human economics,—but we are seeing the remonetization of gold. We are seeing that central banks have shown through their purchases that gold is the asset that they hold because it doesn't represent someone else's liability.

When central banks hold gold, when central banks buy gold, they're making a statement. To the extent that some central banks need to lay off some gold, as Turkey is said to have, that proves, proves to all of the rest of them that gold is the asset that you want to own. Because gold traditionally in a crisis gets hit because if it's in a bull market, it may be one of the only things in which people have a profit.

So the ability to not just buy, but the ability to sell something if you need to take some chips off the table, because I don't know, you have missiles that are flying into your territory and need to be taken out with patriots, that's a good thing not to be concerned about.

This is one of the things that I enjoy most in the time that I've been bullish on gold and publicly, so since gold was at \$500 in 2007. When I said my first equilibrium for gold would be between \$3,000 and \$5,000, people

thought I was nuts. Similarly, when I said that silver would go to triple digits, people thought I was nuts. But that's my stock in trade. I don't know how to build a mine. Greg Lang knows how to build a mine. Richard Williams knows how to build a mine. They know how to do it on budget and on schedule. I can't figure out how to make Chrome work over Safari, but I don't need to. You surround yourself with the very best people. My job is to protect my family's wealth and by extension, all of the families that depend on me, including our management team and including our shareholders.

So with that, let me go back to a chart that I spoke to on our last conference call because I wanted to give people a heads up as to what might happen. It wasn't required, but it might happen.

In fact, what I would call the 1987 correction started three days later. I'm not going to say that I was predicting it. I was going to say that it should be expected. For that reason, whereas people who predict a downdraft are seen as Cassandras, I wasn't actually being a Cassandra in this case. I have been a Cassandra in different cases like on the Middle East, but in this instance, I was presenting people with my belief that we could have a 1987. Nineteen eighty-seven is not so much remembered for how you felt when you thought the world was caving in in October of '87. It is and should be remembered as the blip that created the best buying opportunity of the bull market in stocks. The best because we'd already seen the stock market go to 2750 and when it pulled back to 1650—you have to fade these numbers a bit, I'm sorry. That was actually the cream of the opportunity to be able to build a position if you didn't have one or to add on weakness in a bull market that has all the structural factors going forward.

If anything, we can see that the world is a very different place. I hope that it's going to turn out to be a much safer place, but without getting into politics, the reality is that we're in uncharted waters economically and the debt burden will never be repaid.

Just for all these reasons, if you didn't own gold on the way up, taking advantage of a pullback was what I was trying to express. While some people were a little bit upset that I said that there could be such a pullback, the reality is we're looking at it.

So, look at this chart again, because this is the exact same chart as I issued. I'll just repeat the sentence that I repeated three months ago.

As a curiosity, I want you to go back and look back at the mid-1980s. The blip, which barely is noticeable, is the crash of '87 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 45,000, up to 50-some-odd-thousand, plus leap in value

over the decades. A few days later, '87 began. Then it was compounded by the need for people to be able to have some liquidity due to the war with Iran.

Once again, then, let me reiterate in the words of Ray Dalio, one of our greatest contemporary applied historians, 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 '70s or '80s. In both of those cases, fiat currencies around the world all went down together and all went down in relationship to hard currencies like gold. If events today follow a similar pattern, that makes hard currencies an attractive asset to hold.

For all of you who've known me or listened to me over the years, when I was asked which currencies to own, I said, if you have to own a paper currency, own the dollar. But the real currency is gold.

Now, I don't really know what paper currencies are going to thrive the most, but I will repeat something which I've said now over the last couple of years. Regardless of your view on currencies, against gold, the dollar is actually collapsing. Every once in a while, you'll have a pullback, but the long-term trend on gold, to my mind, is going to be very similar, and indeed price-wise, it actually looks it, but that's a coincidence—very similar to what we saw in the Dow Jones.

If you haven't taken advantage of the pullback, my strong recommendation is that you do. I can only say that what my family does, we are long-term holders in our flagship gold asset, Donlin, and will absolutely remain so because to our mind, if we sell it, we can't go into something at least as good, and we really think impossible to go into anything better.

So, thank you for being a long-term shareholder. Thank you for your support. I can tell you, it means a lot to us. The last conference call, for those who managed to stay through it, one of the callers actually said that he and his wife had an argument over NOVAGOLD during the tough times, but that the revival of NOVAGOLD actually saved his marriage. And we regarded that as probably not only the funniest, but the most heartwarming piece of news we'd had all year.

So, with that, I thank you and all of the shareholders who have kept the faith. All I can do is promise you that I, the entire management team is devoted to being able to unlock the fullest value of what we consider to be the greatest gold development story in the world and what will be the largest single gold mine in the best jurisdiction on the planet. Thank you.

Operator:

I'd now like to hand the call back over to Greg Lang for concluding remarks.

Greg Lang:

Well, I just want to thank everybody for taking the time to get an update on NOVAGOLD and our chairman's thoughts on gold prices and markets. So, everybody, thank you. We'll be in touch.

Operator:

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