



SURFACE STRIPPING, PITTING AND TRENCHING

Proponents frequently strip an area of land on their claims of vegetation and then dig a pit or a trench to obtain a sample of rock from an outcrop or deposit that is near the surface. This is done to get a larger sample of material for analysis when compared to preliminary surface sampling, or to complement info obtained from drilling operations in the same area.

Heavy machinery is frequently used to dig the pits and trenches (e.g. backhoes, excavators). Typical pits and trenches are less than 4m deep, and less than 2m wide. Most trenches are less than 4m long. Multiple pits or trenches may be dug on a given claim.

Surface stripping, pitting, and trenching occurs during the EX-3 to EX-5 stages of exploration (see the [diagram](#)).



The environmental impacts associated with these activities (e.g. loss of topsoil, erosion) can be mitigated for if suitable equipment is used, and if pits and trenches are refilled and revegetated after use.

Only valid claim holders may dig pits and trenches. A permit of the MERN is required if the collected material exceeds 50 metric tonnes. The refilling of pits and trenches is a norm once works are complete.