

# Surging Gold Prices Fuel Junior Miner's Push to Production

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Gold's dramatic climb past \$3,300 per ounce in 2025 (all figures in U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted) has proven to be more than a short-term rally-it signals growing investor unease with the global financial landscape. As inflation remains persistently high and trust in fiat currencies continues to erode, gold has reemerged as a dependable hedge against economic instability. This renewed confidence has spurred a surge of capital into Canadian gold projects, particularly in the Abitibi Greenstone Belt, the country's most prolific gold-producing region. Capitalizing on this trend, [LaFleur Minerals Inc.](#) (CSE:8239;LFLR) (OTCQB:8239;LFLRF) (Profile) is accelerating its transition from exploration focused to production ready. LaFleur joins an impressive group of savvy mining companies - including [Amex Exploration Inc.](#) (TSXV:AMX) (OTC: AMXEF), [Troilus Gold](#) (TSX: TLG) (OTC: CHXMF), [West Red Lake Gold Mines Ltd.](#) (TSXV: WRLG) (OTCQB: WRLGF) and [Ascot Resources Ltd.](#) (TSX:AOT) (OTCQX: AOTVF) - committed to making a difference in the mining space.

- Investors are increasingly turning to the precious metal as a reliable hedge against rising inflation, ballooning sovereign debt and global political uncertainty.
- With an advanced exploration-stage property and a fully permitted processing facility, LaFleur Minerals is strategically positioned to benefit from strong market conditions and supportive regional mining policies.
- At the core of LaFleur's growth strategy is its flagship Swanson Gold Project, located in the heart of the prolific Abitibi Greenstone Belt.
- LaFleur Minerals is unlocking new value at its fully permitted Beacon Gold Mill, transforming the historic asset into a strategic processing center for the Abitibi region.

## Rally Gains Momentum Amid Uncertainty

Gold's climb beyond \$3,300 per ounce has signaled a transformation in market sentiment, evolving from a short-term rally into a broader strategic reallocation. Investors are increasingly turning to the precious metal as a reliable hedge against rising inflation, ballooning sovereign debt and global political uncertainty. Analysts at major institutions, including JPMorgan, now predict that gold could reach as high as \$4,000 per ounce by 2026. According to JPMorgan's gold price outlook, this target is driven largely by ongoing economic instability and inflationary pressure.

Central banks worldwide have been accelerating their accumulation of gold, pushing global demand to historic highs. Net central bank gold purchases hit a record in 2023 and remained elevated through 2024. According to the World Gold Council, this buying trend is being led by central banks in emerging markets, particularly across Asia and the Middle East, as these nations seek to safeguard against fluctuations in the U.S. dollar. This wave of sovereign demand has contributed significantly to tightening global gold supply and driving prices higher.

Central banks have continued to add to their gold reserves at an impressive pace, maintaining net annual purchases above 1,000 tonnes through 2024 and into early 2025. The World Gold Council reports that 95% of central bank reserve managers anticipate an increase in global official gold holdings in the coming year, with 43% intending to grow their own banks' reserves. This trend, dominated by institutions in emerging economies, underscores the strategic role gold plays as a safeguard against currency volatility and shifting global power dynamics. As sovereign buying absorbs more of the available supply, upward pressure on gold prices has intensified.

These dynamics are reverberating throughout the mining sector, with Canadian gold companies benefiting significantly. In the first half of 2024 alone, mining firms listed on the TSX and TSXV raised a combined \$6.8 billion in equity financing, up 62% from the \$4.2 billion raised in the same period in 2023. This surge represents the largest capital inflow in over 10 years and reflects growing investor enthusiasm for gold amid ongoing economic uncertainty.

Canada continues to rank among the world's top gold-producing nations, with output increasing by approximately 3% in 2024 to roughly 200 tonnes. This accounts for about 6.7% of global gold production, securing Canada a position within the top five global producers. Beyond its rich mineral reserves, Canada is recognized for its stable political environment and supportive regulatory landscape. New legislation introduced by Prime Minister Mark Carney aims to streamline permitting for large-scale natural resource projects. The initiative adopts a "one project, one review" approach, targeting a two-year approval process for nationally significant developments.

Canada's strong legal framework and investor protections provide a favorable climate for mining investment. Its exchanges-particularly the TSX and TSXV - remain vital centers for global mining finance, offering essential capital access for both juniors and established producers. This combination of geological potential, political stability, and financial infrastructure ensures Canada's continued importance in the global gold market.

Amid this backdrop, investor interest in gold equities is climbing, especially among institutional players seeking timely exposure to rising production. Junior mining firms with promising assets and the ability to transition efficiently from exploration to production are particularly well-positioned to capitalize. As gold maintains its upward trajectory in response to macroeconomic pressures, Canadian miners-supported by robust domestic infrastructure and investor confidence - are poised to play an increasingly central role in meeting global demand.

### Targeting Production at Expanded Gold Project

LaFleur Minerals Inc. is making swift progress toward joining the ranks of Quebec's emerging gold producers. With an advanced exploration-stage property and a fully permitted processing facility, the company is strategically positioned to benefit from strong market conditions and supportive regional mining policies.

At the core of LaFleur's growth strategy is its flagship Swanson Gold Project, located in the heart of the prolific Abitibi Greenstone Belt, an area that has yielded over 200 million ounces of gold historically. The Swanson Project now covers approximately 15,290 hectares, a threefold expansion from the initial parcel acquired from Monarch Mining. This enlarged footprint builds on more than \$5 million in prior exploration spending, dramatically enhancing the project's development potential and reinforcing its standing as a significant exploration opportunity within the region.

The property is underpinned by extensive historical exploration, including over 950 drill holes, with 447 situated directly within the Swanson Property. Past drilling efforts have revealed broad gold-bearing zones, with mineralized intervals reaching widths of up to 40 meters in some areas. Additionally, the site hosts prior underground infrastructure, including a ramp descending to 80 meters, which was constructed for bulk sampling purposes. Monarch Mining's limited drilling beyond the main resource zone further hints at promising expansion opportunities, reinforcing confidence in the project's exploration upside.

LaFleur is currently in the midst of an ambitious drill campaign totaling more than 5,000 meters. The program is designed to evaluate over 50 individual targets, including high-priority zones such as Bartec, Marimac and Jolin. Notably, surface sampling at the Jolin target returned assay results of up to 11.7 grams per tonne (g/t) gold, pointing to the potential for high-grade mineralization. The company is also conducting step-out drilling aimed at testing the lateral continuity of known gold zones, with the goal of expanding the project's open-pit resource potential.

In September 2024, LaFleur published an updated NI 43-101 compliant resource estimate that showed meaningful gains in both grade and tonnage compared to the previous 2021 report. The current mineralized zone spans approximately 475 meters by 425 meters by 500 meters and remains open along strike and at depth, offering substantial room for growth. The company has secured all regulatory permits required to advance its drill program, including the Authorization to Intervene (ATI) and Forestry Intervention approvals, paving the way for uninterrupted progress.

The next major development milestone will be the execution of a planned 100,000-tonne bulk sample, which contains an estimated average grade of 1.8 g/t Au. The extracted material will be processed at LaFleur's nearby Beacon Mill, a fully permitted facility ready to handle onsite ore, providing the company with a key

logistical and economic advantage as it moves toward potential near-term production.

### Reviving Mill as Central Processing Hub

LaFleur Minerals is unlocking new value at its fully permitted Beacon Gold Mill, transforming the historic asset into a strategic processing center for the Abitibi region. Acquired from Monarch Mining in 2024, the mill lies just 50 kilometers from the company's flagship Swanson Gold Project and has the potential to become a cornerstone of LaFleur's production strategy.

Originally refurbished with approximately C\$20 million in capital improvements, the Beacon Mill has a nameplate capacity of 750 tonnes per day. While it was placed on care and maintenance in early 2023, LaFleur is working to bring the facility back online with scalable output. The mill's processing rate could be increased to 1,100 tonnes per day, and it is backed by a Quebec-issued certificate of authorization that allows the processing of up to 1.8 million tonnes of tailings-equivalent to roughly nine years of full-capacity operations.

Following a thorough site inspection and cost assessment, LaFleur estimates that recommissioning the mill will require between C\$5 million and C\$6 million. This budget includes targeted equipment upgrades and necessary improvements to the tailings storage facility. To further validate the strategic value of the site, the company engaged Bumigeme Inc. for an independent appraisal. The valuation concluded that constructing a comparable mill today would cost approximately C\$49.5 million. That estimate excludes the tailings facility, which would add another C\$12 million, as well as environmental and permitting expenses projected at around C\$10 million.

LaFleur plans to complete the restart and ramp-up process in time for full-scale operations to begin by early 2026. In addition, a smaller-scale production launch is expected to start before the end of this year. With the Beacon Gold Mill valued at more than 17x its estimated rehabilitation and recommissioning costs, LaFleur Minerals holds a unique, fully permitted processing facility within a major gold mining jurisdiction. The mill's revival gives LaFleur a near-term route to gold production while creating potential for regional toll-milling partnerships and custom-processing arrangements.

The site's existing infrastructure adds to its value. Beacon is connected to key utilities and logistics networks, including road, rail and hydroelectric power. The mill employs a proven cyanidation and Merrill-Crowe flowsheet, making it well-suited for treating high-grade, free-milling ore. Beyond the main mill, the complex features legacy infrastructure from historical underground operations, including a 486-meter-deep shaft, as well as a network of containment ponds and water-management systems.

Beacon's location in the Val-d'Or mining hub further enhances its strategic importance. The region is home to over 100 historic and active mines, many of which lack their own processing capacity. That shortfall creates strong demand for third-party milling solutions. With ore from projects such as Beaufor already stockpiled at the site, LaFleur is positioned to generate immediate mill throughput once operations resume.

### Veteran Leadership, Market Tailwinds

Execution at LaFleur is led by CEO Paul Ténrière, a geologist with more than 25 years of mining experience across exploration, feasibility and production. His background includes NI 43-101 and S-K 1300 compliance, giving the company a strong governance foundation as it ramps toward producer status. Chair Kal Malhi, who oversees LaFleur's strategic partnerships, has raised more than \$300 million for early-stage companies across the mining, oil and gas, biomedical, agriculture and technology sectors. In addition, mining executive Peter Espig has joined the company as an advisor to help shape tolling and financing structures around the Beacon restart and bulk sample programs.

LaFleur is also positioning itself for institutional support, with a valuation strategy designed to reflect not only resource upside but infrastructure replacement value. The company's capital structure is tightly held with more than 30% insider ownership. LaFleur is also advancing a scoping study that will evaluate open-pit mining rates, development timelines and potential production profiles.

The market is increasingly rewarding juniors that can move quickly from exploration to production. With a

permitted mill, advanced-stage resource and accelerated timeline to cash flow, LaFleur is years ahead of most early-stage explorers in the Abitibi. The combination of infrastructure, geology and timing may enable the company to generate early revenue while expanding its long-term resource base.

For investors, LaFleur represents a rare combination of fully permitted infrastructure, significant exploration upside and near-term cash flow potential. Its dual-asset model accelerates the path to production and offers leverage to rising gold prices without the buildout risk typical of greenfield projects - yet trades at a valuation more typical of early-stage exploration companies. That disconnect presents a compelling opportunity for investors ahead of a potential rerating as the mill restart advances and drilling delivers results.

#### Strategic Moves to Meet Global Needs

As demand for gold accelerates, established public companies are making strategic moves to scale innovation and meet global needs. LaFleur Minerals' progress reflects this same drive to capitalize on historic gold prices, operational readiness and regional trends.

Amex Exploration Inc. (TSXV:AMX) (OTC: AMXEF) has filed a National Instrument 43-101 Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects Updated Mineral Resource Estimate ("MRE") Technical Report for its wholly owned Perron Gold Project in Quebec, Canada. (<https://ibn.fm/WFqvZ>). The company has made significant high-grade gold discoveries, along with copper-rich volcanogenic massive sulphide (VMS) zones, at Perron. The project comprises 117 contiguous claims and hosts both bulk-tonnage and high-grade gold mineralization styles.

Troilus Gold (TSX: TLG) (OTC: CHXMF) recently provided an update on the progress of basic and detailed engineering at its copper-gold Troilus Project, led by engineering partner BBA Inc. (<https://ibn.fm/5xEou>). Since being awarded the mandate earlier this year, a dedicated team of approximately 45 full-time engineers and specialists has been advancing key workstreams on schedule as the project moves forward on the path to construction readiness. Highlights of engineering progress to date include the finalization of the process sheet and completion of a 12-week initiation program.

West Red Lake Gold Mines Ltd. (TSXV: WRLG) (OTCQB: WRLGF) has announced the positive results of a Preliminary Economic Assessment prepared in accordance with National Instrument 43-101 - Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects for a toll milling mine operation at its wholly owned Rowan project in the Red Lake Gold District of northwestern Ontario, Canada (<https://ibn.fm/mJIP8>). "Rowan is a high grade, relatively wide, nearly vertical deposit that starts at surface and this PEA captures how such designed-for-mining characteristics lead to strong economics," said CEO and president Shane Williams, President and CEO.

Ascot Resources Ltd (TSX:AOT) (OTCQX: AOTVF) is a Canadian mining company focused on commissioning its wholly owned Premier Gold Mine, which poured first gold in April 2024 and is located on Nisga'a Nation Treaty Lands, in the prolific Golden Triangle of northwestern British Columbia (<https://ibn.fm/LZ54j>). In addition, the company continues to explore its properties for additional high-grade gold mineralization. Ascot is committed to the safe and responsible operation of the Premier Gold Mine in collaboration with Nisga'a Nation and the local communities of Stewart, British Columbia, and Hyder, Alaska.

Collectively, these companies illustrate a changing trend in gold investment, where readiness for production, prudent capital management and critical infrastructure have become defining advantages. Amid ongoing inflation and growing skepticism toward fiat currencies, LaFleur Minerals stands out as a distinct contender positioned to generate near-term outcomes. Backed by a permitted mill, high-grade resources and a direct route to production, the company presents a ground-floor opportunity that aligns with the evolving priorities of today's gold market.

For more information, visit [LaFleur Minerals Inc.](https://www.lafleurminerals.com)

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