

From Explorer to Producer: The Most Compelling Mining Window

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Over the past year, gold, silver and other precious metals have maintained a steady upward trajectory, reshaping how investors view the mining landscape. Propelled by persistent inflation, geopolitical instability, central-bank accumulation and constrained supply, today's precious-metals market offers more than traditional portfolio protection; it signals genuine growth potential. As equities remain turbulent and many sectors struggle with long-term challenges, mining companies with exposure to gold and silver are emerging as both attractive and resilient investment plays. Within this environment, the stage at which a mining company advances from exploration to production carries heightened importance. It is during this pivotal phase - when a junior miner evolves into a producer with established assets, a defined processing pathway and imminent cash flow - that value creation often accelerates. At this juncture, exploration risk has largely subsided, and potential is transformed into measurable economics. [LaFleur Minerals Inc.](#) (CSE: LFLR) (OTCQB: LFLRF) (FSE: 3WK0) (Profile) exemplifies this strategic shift. The company owns a fully permitted, recently refurbished gold-processing mill and stands years ahead of many peers still seeking production capabilities, yet trades below its intrinsic asset value. By uniting a near-term production outlook with undervalued holdings, LaFleur aligns itself with other noteworthy operators in the mining space, including [Amex Exploration Inc.](#) (TSX.V: AMX) (OTCQX: AMXEF), Abcourt Mines (TSX.V: ABI) (OTCQB: ABMBF), [Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.](#) (NYSE: AEM) and Newmont Corporation (NYSE: NEM)

- LaFleur Minerals is steadily advancing its shift from explorer to near-term gold producer.
- LaFleur's flagship Swanson Gold Project is an advanced exploration-stage asset underpinned by an extensive historical drill database and strong geological potential.
- A key differentiator for LaFleur is its ownership of the Beacon Gold Mill, a 750 tonne-per-day facility, fully permitted and modernized in 2022.
- The company has mapped a clear plan to restart the Beacon Mill, budgeting C\$5-6 million for upgrades, with launch anticipated in Q4 2025 and ramp-up of operations in early 2026.
- LaFleur is advancing permitting efforts as it prepares to test a ~100,000 mt bulk sample at Swanson, intended for processing at Beacon, and in parallel, is preparing a PEA for an open-pit mining scenario.

[Click here to view the custom infographic of the LaFleur Minerals editorial.](#)

Enduring Strength and the Mining Advantage

Gold and silver are powering through one of the most resilient upswings in years, with the entire precious-metals sector maintaining notable strength. Many investors "have turned to both gold and silver because it may provide a hedge in a potential economic or market downturn, as well as during sustained periods of rising inflation." Platinum and related metals have also joined the rally, reinforcing the renewed investor confidence across the full precious-metals spectrum.

For investors, this sustained performance underscores the continued attraction of the mining industry. Unlike many high-volatility sectors, gold and silver producers provide a buffer against inflation, currency shifts and macroeconomic uncertainty. With capital markets reassessing risk exposure, mining companies linked to precious metals are benefitting from constrained supply, higher extraction costs and increasing investor attention as precious-metals returns have significantly outpaced the wider commodities index in 2025.

Firms with near-term or existing operations, especially those in stable jurisdictions, stand out as particularly compelling. These companies combine tangible asset value, such as a permitted mill or producing mine, with direct exposure to rising metal prices. This approach carries less speculative risk than pure exploration and more scalability than physical bullion ownership. In this context, LaFleur Minerals' integrated model, which involves combining a modernized gold mill and a resource-rich project in a prolific district, stands out.

LaFleur Minerals anchors its growth on two core assets: a fully permitted, upgraded gold-processing mill and an advanced-stage exploration project situated in one of Canada's most productive gold belts, the Abitibi. This dual-asset strategy is uncommon among juniors. While many peers remain in permitting or early-exploration phases, LaFleur's progress toward production positions it ahead of the curve. The shift to production marks a critical turning point, transforming resource potential into cash flow and delivering both growth and operational stability.

Transition Toward Production, PEA in Progress

LaFleur Minerals is steadily advancing its shift from explorer to near-term gold producer. The company's near-term focus centers on restarting the Beacon Gold Mill, a fully permitted processing facility, to be supplied by ore from LaFleur's 100%-owned Swanson Gold Deposit in Québec's Val-d'Or district. A key milestone on the horizon is the Preliminary Economic Assessment (PEA).

The PEA is now underway and led by renowned global mining and consulting firm ERM. The assessment is intended to evaluate an open-pit mining scenario and deliver a robust mining and economic study for the restart of gold production at the Beacon Gold Mill using mineralized material primarily supplied from the company's Swanson Gold Deposit.

The PEA will evaluate mineral resources, mining design, metallurgy, cost models and other essential parameters that determine restart feasibility and economic returns. With the mill's recent operational record (it was last active in 2022) and the Swanson deposit only 60 kilometers away, many of the common uncertainties facing junior miners are minimized. The close proximity of the ore source keeps haulage costs manageable and improves financial reliability, positioning LaFleur as a fully functional and vertically integrated gold mining company on the cusp of producing ounces from its own Swanson Gold Deposit.

The Beacon Gold Mill's recent C\$20 million refurbishment further strengthens the PEA's foundation, supporting more accurate cost projections. The mill is further bolstered by an independent evaluation report by engineering firm Bumigeme Inc., which designates its replacement value at more than C\$70 million. Meanwhile, ore-sorting work by the Saskatchewan Research Council to preconcentrate feed enhances efficiency and reduces processing risks. By advancing the PEA, LaFleur is shifting market perception from speculative exploration toward practical, revenue-oriented operations, an inflection point when valuation reappraisal often begins.

LaFleur's move toward production matters because it connects exploration results directly to cash flow by leveraging an established infrastructure base. Over the coming quarters, the completion of the PEA, subsequent financing and the mill restart will define the company's transformation.

Swanson Gold Project: Expanding Exploration Strength

LaFleur's flagship Swanson Gold Project is an advanced exploration-stage asset underpinned by an extensive historical drill database and strong geological potential. More than 36,000 meters of past drilling have delineated a current Mineral Resource Estimate (MRE) of 123.4 koz Au Indicated and 64.5 koz Au Inferred. Long-term, the company's goal is to expand this toward the million-ounce mark, a target supported by multiple gold-bearing structures, a large contiguous land position and regional-scale mineralization.

Spanning 18,300 hectares across the Val-d'Or-Abitibi region along with 445 claims and a mining lease, the Swanson Project sits in one of the world's premier gold belts. LaFleur has also expressed intent to consolidate nearby land packages, creating a larger operational footprint and future expansion flexibility. This regional consolidation strategy distinguishes LaFleur from early-stage peers.

A 7,500-meter diamond-drill program launched earlier this year is now targeting more than 50 prospects, including Swanson, Bartec, Jolin and Marimac. Early assays have delivered strong intercepts, such as 7.47 g/t Au over 1.35 m (hole SW-25-033), 7.68 g/t Au over 1.00 m (hole SW-25-034) and 17.80 g/t Au over 1.0 m at Bartec (hole SW-25-037). These hits point to both strike extension and potential new mineralization styles beyond the current MRE.

To date, 24 holes have been drilled with six results received, helping refine LaFleur's geological model,

identify high-grade zones and strengthen the mill-feed narrative. The ongoing drilling program has delivered encouraging high-grade assay results that suggest continuity and scale of the mineralized system, as well as potential for further expansion at the Swanson Gold Deposit. With an established mill already available, the timeline from discovery to production could be significantly shortened. In essence, the Swanson Gold Project combines resource growth with operational readiness, creating a foundation for scalable expansion.

Beacon Gold Mill: Cornerstone for Production

A key differentiator for LaFleur is its ownership of the Beacon Gold Mill, a 750 tonne-per-day facility, fully permitted and refurbished in 2022. Situated in Québec's Abitibi Greenstone Belt, one of the world's richest gold-producing regions and surrounded by 100-plus historic and active deposits, the mill was acquired via a CCAA process in 2024 and is primed for restart during a precious metal bull market.

Independent verification from Bumigeme found that restarting the mill would cost approximately C\$5 million compared with a replacement value exceeding C\$71.5 million along with a three- to four-year construction and permitting timeline. The mill is unencumbered, royalty free and supported by a C\$2.4 million reclamation bond as financial backstop. It also benefits from excellent infrastructure, including power, roads and an experienced local workforce.

By processing ore from its own Swanson Gold Deposit and offering toll-milling to other operators, LaFleur transforms the Beacon Gold Mill into a revenue-generating asset rather than a fixed cost. The combination of mill ownership, production readiness and regional advantages positions the company well ahead of peers still navigating permitting and build-out stages.

This integration of infrastructure and resource transforms LaFleur's identity from potential to performance. Owning a near-term, production-ready mill within a tier 1 mining region flush with deposits looking to quickly transform ounces into revenue but lacking the capital and infrastructure to do it, along with ideal targets for toll milling, gives the company scalability, credibility and optionality, a hallmark of successful exploration-to-production transitions.

Mill Restart Strategy, Capital Execution

LaFleur has mapped a clear plan to restart the Beacon Gold Mill, budgeting C\$5-6 million for upgrades, with launch anticipated in Q4 2025 and ramp-up of operations in early 2026. The plan allocates roughly C\$3.8 million for equipment improvements and C\$1.8 million for tailings facility upgrades, an efficient investment relative to asset value.

Situated in the heart of the Abitibi Belt, home to more than 100 historic and operating mines, LaFleur enjoys exceptional infrastructure and multiple toll-milling opportunities. The company's readiness level places it several years ahead of peers still limited to exploration. Transitioning from explorer to producer in a top-tier jurisdiction often triggers a meaningful market revaluation.

Investor engagement is already increasing. LaFleur has retained FMI Securities Inc. in Canada and FM Global Markets Inc. in the United States to arrange a proposed C\$5 million secured-debt financing for the mill restart. The company also announced the completion of a fully subscribed non-brokered private placement totaling C\$2.88 million through a LIFE Offering. With funding initiatives underway, feed sources expanding and a restart timeline defined, LaFleur aligns with key investor criteria for a production-stage mining story.

Bulk Sampling, Permitting Progress & Scalable Production Path

LaFleur has initiated the permitting phase and is assessing a bulk sample of roughly 100,000 tonnes, averaging an estimated grade of 1.89 g/t Au, which is equivalent to about 6,350 ounces of contained gold or approximately 3% of the Swanson Project's current resource. Processing this sample at the Beacon Gold Mill is expected to yield valuable near-term production metrics while simultaneously strengthening the dataset for the upcoming PEA. With gold prices near record levels, the potential returns from this bulk sample carry meaningful economic weight.

Regulatory and closure-plan discussions with Québec authorities are already underway, and LaFleur anticipates that progress on permitting and sampling will translate into actionable mill feed in support of its near-term production strategy. Situated in a district with more than 100 active and historic mines, the company benefits from robust regional infrastructure, an experienced labor pool and well-established supply chains, all key elements that minimize operational risk. With a fully permitted mill and a defined bulk-sampling initiative in motion, LaFleur is well ahead of many peers still dependent on external processing or early-stage regulatory approvals.

The strength of the current precious-metals cycle underscores the renewed investment appeal of mining. Within this landscape, companies capable of bridging exploration and production, particularly those that already possess processing facilities, occupy an enviable position. LaFleur Minerals exemplifies that advantage, uniting strong exploration potential, ownership of a fully operational mill in a premier jurisdiction, and a clear trajectory toward imminent production.

Mining Sector Advances with New Milestones, Strategic Growth

The mining industry continues to demonstrate forward momentum as companies advance exploration, development and production initiatives across key regions. With projects moving from feasibility to production and renewed interest in geological exploration, the industry is positioning itself for sustained growth amid strong demand for precious and base metals.

Amex Exploration Inc. is reporting assay results from a geomechanical drill program conducted on the Champagne Zone as part of its ongoing phase 1 Feasibility Study on the Perron Project. The project is located in northwestern Abitibi, Quebec. The three-hole drill program was designed to conduct rock mass characterization of the main lithological units within the immediate area of the Champagne Zone. While the main purpose of the program was focused on rock mechanics in the areas envisaged for toll mining of the Champagne Zone, the company noted it "is encouraged to see the robustness and continuity of high-grade mineralization that the zone continues to display."

Abcourt Mines has successfully completed the first gold pour at the Sleeping Giant Mine, marking a significant milestone in the company's operations and commitment to sustainable gold production. The pour took place on September 11, 2025, at the Sleeping Giant site, located in the Eeyou Istchee region of Quebec. "We are incredibly proud to announce the first gold pour at the Sleeping Giant Mine, a testament to our hard work and dedication," said Abcourt CEO and president Pascal Hamelin. "This milestone demonstrates our ability to operate efficiently with a first pour two months after we began the development of the project."

Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. has acquired 5,000,000 subscription receipts issued by 1555489 B.C. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of [Fuerte Metals Corp.](#). The investment in Fuerte is consistent with Agnico Eagle's historical practice of strategic equity investments in projects with high geological potential. Agnico Eagle continues to focus on its portfolio of high-quality internal growth projects, and complements its pipeline of projects with a strategy of acquiring strategic positions in prospective opportunities with high geological potential.

Newmont Corporation announced that its Ahafo North project in Afrisipakrom, Ghana, has achieved commercial production, marking the successful completion of one of West Africa's most significant recent mining developments. Ahafo North is expected to produce approximately 50,000 ounces of gold in 2025, with production ramping up through 2026 to achieve full operational capacity. Over the next five years, the operation is positioned to deliver between 275,000 and 325,000 ounces of gold annually over a 13-year mine life, making it a cornerstone asset in Newmont's global portfolio.

These developments signal a confident stride for the global mining landscape, where savvy mining operators are defining a new era of value creation. As the sector continues to evolve, operators committed to evolving and progression will remain central to shaping mining's next chapter of opportunity.

For more information, visit [LaFleur Minerals Inc.](#)

Qualified Person Statement: All scientific and technical information contained in this article has been

reviewed and approved by Louis Martin, P.Geo. (OGQ), Exploration Manager and Technical Advisor of the company and considered a Qualified Person for the purposes of NI 43-101.

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