North American Niobium and Critical Minerals Corp. Launches its C$2.69 Million District-Scale Fully-Funded Comprehensive

01.12.2025 | GlobeNewswire

2026 Quebec Exploration Program Focused on Niobium and Rare Earth Elements Discoveries

North America Niobium and Critical Minerals Corp. (CSE: NIOB) (FSE: IOR) (OTCQB: NIOMF) ("North American Niobium" or the "Company") is pleased to announce its fully-funded comprehensive 2026 exploration program across its district-scale land package of 29,936-hectare niobium and rare earth elements focused land position in Quebec's prolific Grenville Province. The work program is designed to confirm, expand, and advance multiple niobium and rare earth elements targets hosted within carbonatite, syenite, and niobium, yttrium, and fluorine-type (NYF) pegmatite systems - geological environments known to host major critical element deposits.

Within its broader portfolio, four properties will be the focus for 2026, each hosting mineral occurrences of rare earth elements and niobium within pegmatites and syenites, with historic highlight assays including:

- 2.7% Total Rare Earth Elements - Blanchette pegmatite
- 0.68% Total Rare Earth Elements - Bardy pegmatite
- 0.21% Total Rare Earth Elements - Sabot syenite
- 0.4 % Total Rare Earth Elements + 0.3% niobium - Seigneurie pegmatite

When benchmarked against global rare earth elements and niobium producers, North American Niobium's historical assays compare favorably. For rare earths, advanced hard-rock deposits (carbonatites) such as Mount Weld (Lynas, Australia) and Bayan Obo (China) typically report grades in the 1.0%–6.0% total rare earth oxides range, with many North American development-stage projects including Bear Lodge (USA) and Wicheeda (Canada) averaging approximately 0.4%–1.2% total rare earth oxides. In this context, the company's historic assays of 2.7% total rare earth oxides at Blanchette and 0.68% total rare earth oxides at Bardy fall squarely within the grade profile of established global producers and top-tier development projects.

For niobium, Brazil's Araxá (CBMM) and Québec's Niobec, the world's primary niobium suppliers, mine ore with grades generally ranging from 0.4% to 2.5% Nb_2O_5. Early-stage exploration values above 1,000 ppm Nb (~0.1% Nb) are considered highly encouraging; thus, North American Niobium's 0.32% Niobium grab sample at Seigneurie represents a strong early-stage indicator consistent with the grade envelopes observed in proven niobium-bearing intrusive systems.

Even though these results are only indicative and no grades over length have yet been reported, they show that the Company's emerging rare earth and niobium targets fall within globally competitive grade ranges seen at major mines and leading development projects.

The 2026 exploration strategy is engineered to quickly advance the top targets toward drilling and build an exploration model that maximizes the potential for rare earth and niobium discoveries.

2025 Exploration Program Overview

In 2025, North American Niobium successfully completed its first-pass prospecting program across the Quebec portfolio, including reconnaissance mapping, initial sampling, verification of historic SOQUEM airborne radiometric anomalies at key targets. This work allowed the company to refine priority zones at Blanchette, Bardy, Sabot, and Seigneurie. The 2025 program also included the full consolidation of the 29,936-hectares land package and the compilation of historical geological, geochemical and geophysical datasets needed to design the 2026 exploration campaign. To date, expenditures have primarily covered early-stage prospecting (C$200,000), sampling, and property acquisition costs, representing the initial investment phase prior to the larger upcoming allocations for geophysics, surface geochemistry, bedrock sampling, and drilling planned for 2026.

2026 Exploration Program Overview

North American Niobium's exploration program is structured in four stages; geophysics (ground or airborne), surface geochemistry, bedrock sampling below till, and drilling. The Company has allocated a total 2026 exploration budget of approximately $2.69 million. Contingent on successful drilling results, initiate first mineral resource estimate and first-pass mineralogical and metallurgical work, defining key rare earth elements mineral species, assessing thorium-rare earth element relationships, and generating the datasets required to evaluate future processing and recovery pathways.

https://portal.executivebusinessservices.com/i/8fe0ef9b-6450-4d1b-51bb-08de30863b7b

Surface Geochemistry Surveys - C$80,000

Two options are currently assessed by the Company across all of its properties: soil gas surveys (radon and helium) and fluorine-hydrogeochemistry surveys. Fluorine is a strong pathfinder element for both carbonatite and rare earth elements-bearing NYF-pegmatite systems, while radon and helium are elements produced by the decays of uranium and thorium- elements typically associated with these deposits.

Detecting these key pathfinder elements through these surveys provide quasi-instant readings, potentially identifying anomalous drainage catchments and areas in record time and helping narrow down potentially mineralized areas and complement magnetic and radiometric anomalies.

These methods are, however, sensitive to soil conditions and are currently being assessed.

Geophysical Surveys - C$250,000 (To be Completed End of Q1'26)

Airborne magnetics and radiometrics, drone or helicopter based, will be completed across a portion or all of the Blanchette, Bardy, and Seigneure properties. These datasets are essential for:

- Mapping structural corridors and intrusive centers

- Identifying radiometric anomalies associated with rare earth elements deposits

- These surveys have been successfully deployed by SOQUEM in the 1970s in the La Haute Cote Nord area.

Overburden-Penetrating Bedrock Sampling - C$200,000 (To be Completed End of Q1'26)

Bedrock sampling, when inaccessible, will be performed using non-hydraulic force gas-powered drills. This program will enable sampling the bedrock below the till cover. The till cover is considered minimal on all four properties in focus, with a maximum estimated depth of 4m.

- Validate geophysical and geochemical anomalies

- Confirm bedrock geology

- Sample till sand nearest bedrock

Diamond Drilling - C$1,900,000 (To be Completed End of Q3'26)

North American Niobium plans to execute a 6,000-metre drill program focused on the highest-ranked multi-dataset targets. The drilling will be distributed as follows:

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Property          Planned Meterage          Deposit Type
Seigneurie          3,000m          Rare earth elements –niobium pegmatite & carbonatite t
Bardy         2,000m          REE-bearing pegmatite corridor
Blanchette          1,000m          Carbonatite-associated and Pegmatite-associated rare e
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Drilling costs, including geological support and assays, are estimated at $1,900,000, representing the Company's largest budget allocation for 2026. The primary objectives of the drilling program are to:

- Confirm and extend historic rare earth elements–niobium zones

- Model the 3-dimensional geometry of these mineralized intrusive bodies

- Test high-priority radiometric and magnetic anomalies

- Generate datasets required for the Company's inaugural mineral resource estimate

Our 2026 drilling campaign is designed to confirm the subsurface continuity, scale, and grade of the rare earth elements–niobium mineralized systems identified across the portfolio.

Advancing Toward First Technical Milestones

Contingent on successful results, North American Niobium intends to initiate:

- Mineralogical characterization

- Baseline metallurgical testing for rare earth elements and niobium recovery

- Additional technical studies, which may include further mineral processing and metallurgical evaluations, and a maiden mineral resource estimate

These programs will support the progression of one or more deposits toward potentially future scoping studies.

Importance of Niobium & National Security

Niobium is designated as a critical mineral by both Canada and the United States and is explicitly listed on the U.S. Department of Defense's Critical Minerals List, because of its essential applications in high-strength steel, clean-energy technologies, aerospace alloys, superconducting materials, and advanced defense systems. Today, more than ~90% of global niobium supply originates from a single jurisdiction, creating a major dependency risk for North American industries. This concentration of supply has elevated niobium to a national security priority, as secure access is required for infrastructure, electric vehicles, microreactors, jet engines, missile systems, and emerging quantum technologies. Establishing a reliable domestic source of niobium is therefore vital for strengthening North America's supply chain resilience and reducing reliance on foreign-controlled critical mineral markets.

The Quebec & Grenville Province Opportunity

Québec is one of the world's premier jurisdictions for critical mineral exploration and development, offering a unique combination of geological potential, infrastructure, and government support. The Grenville Province hosts some of North America's most significant rare earth and niobium deposits, including the Niobec mine, and remains vastly underexplored. Québec provides year-round road access, abundant low-cost hydropower, and a highly skilled mining workforce, significantly reducing exploration and future development risk. The provincial and federal governments have also identified critical minerals as a strategic priority, offering financial incentives, permitting stability, and strong institutional backing for domestic supply chain development. This combination of geology, infrastructure, and supportive policy makes Québec one of the most advantageous locations globally for advancing new rare earth elements –niobium discoveries.

"We are drilling across the company's entire portfolio in 2026 to maximize our chances of making a significant critical element discovery," said Murray Nye, CEO of North American Niobium and Critical Minerals Corp. "This work program positions North American Niobium to systematically advance multiple rare earth elements-niobium targets in one of the world's most prospective geological belts for critical minerals. With clear milestones, strong de-risking strategies, that includes combining geophysics, surface geochemistry and bedrock sampling, we expect 2026 to be a transformational year for North American Niobium. By establishing a clear exploration roadmap today, we ensure continuity and clarity for shareholders as we release results throughout the year."

ABOUT NORTH AMERICAN NIOBIUM AND CRITICAL MINERALS CORP.

North American Niobium and Critical Minerals Corp. is a North American mineral exploration company focused on the acquisition and development of precious, base, and critical mineral assets. Its portfolio includes the Silver Lake property in British Columbia's Omineca Mining Division and a recently acquired land package in Quebec's Grenville Province. The Quebec properties add exposure to rare earth elements (REE),

niobium (Nb), and nickel-copper (Ni-Cu) occurrences, expanding the Company's footprint into critical minerals that are strategically important for energy and defense applications.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Murray Nye
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FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS

This news release contains "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of applicable Canadian securities legislation. All statements in this release, other than statements of historical fact, that address events, results, outcomes or developments that the Company expects, anticipates or intends to occur in the future, or that otherwise reflect management's expectations or beliefs about future events, are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are generally, but not always, identified by the use of words and phrases such as "expects," "plans," "anticipates," "believes," "intends," "estimates," "projects," "potential," "opportunity," "strategy," "target," "forecast" and similar expressions, or statements that events, conditions or results "will," "would," "may," "could," or "should" occur or be achieved.

Forward-looking statements in this release include, but are not limited to: (i) statements regarding the Properties and their mineral prospectivity; (ii) the Company's planned exploration, development and evaluation activities on the Properties; (iii) the anticipated benefits of the Acquisition, including the expansion of the Company's exploration portfolio, increased exposure to critical mineral targets, and the potential to enhance long-term shareholder value; and (iv) the potential for the Grenville Province to host significant rare earth element, niobium, nickel-copper or other critical mineral deposits. Such forward-looking statements are based on the Company's current plans, intentions, expectations and beliefs and are subject to certain assumptions, including, without limitation, assumptions that required regulatory approvals will be obtained in a timely manner, that financing will be available on reasonable terms, and that exploration results will continue to support the prospectivity of the Properties.

Although the Company believes the expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements are reasonable, such statements are not guarantees of future performance or outcomes and actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those anticipated include, but are not limited to: the timing and receipt of required regulatory approvals; changes in commodity prices and market conditions; the availability of capital and financing on acceptable terms; general economic, business and political conditions; risks inherent in mineral exploration and development, including operational risks, geological uncertainties, environmental risks and accidents; changes in government regulation or policy; and the speculative nature of mineral exploration and development. Additional information regarding risks and uncertainties faced by the Company is available in the Company's public disclosure record on SEDAR+ (www.sedarplus.ca).

Readers are cautioned that forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and undue reliance should not be placed on them. The forward-looking statements contained in this release are made as of the date hereof and are based on information currently available and management's beliefs, estimates, expectations and opinions at that time. Except as required by applicable securities laws, the Company undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Qualified Person

The scientific and technical information contained in this news release has been prepared in accordance with National Instrument 43-101 – Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects ("NI 43-101"). Clyde McMillan, P.Geo., a consultant to the Company and a Qualified Person as defined under NI 43-101, has reviewed and approved the technical information contained herein.

The Canadian Securities Exchange does not accept responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release and has neither approved nor disapproved the contents of this press release