

Apex Provides Phase I Drilling Update at the Rift Rare Earth Project in Nebraska, U.S.A.

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VANCOUVER, March 18, 2026 - [Apex Critical Metals Corp.](#) (CSE:APXC)(OTCQX:APXCF)(FWB:KL9) ("Apex" or the "Company"), a Canadian mineral exploration company focused on the identification and development of critical and strategic metals, is pleased to provide an update on the Phase 1 drill program at the Company's 100%-controlled Rift Rare Earth Project, located within the Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in southeastern Nebraska, U.S.A.

- Six (6) drill holes completed and an additional two (2) in progress totalling 5,175 metres drilled to-date
 - Over 50% of the originally planned Phase I planned drill meterage has now been completed
- Drilling has consistently intersected the targeted carbonatite host lithology across significant intervals, supporting the current geological model and interpretations for the Project.
- Drill core is being systematically logged and sampled, with portable XRF analysis completed during core logging to assist with lithological characterization, sampling and targeting
- Two sample shipments have been completed to date, with samples submitted to Activation Laboratories for geochemical analysis.
- Select drillholes are undergoing optical and acoustic televiewer (OTV/ATV) surveys conducted by DGI Geoscience, providing detailed structural data to support interpretation of controls on mineralization.
- The Phase I drill program is expected to conclude in April, after which the Company will compile and interpret results to guide the next stage of exploration.

Sean Charland, CEO of Apex Critical Metals, commented: "With drilling now well past the halfway point of our Phase I program at the Rift Project, we are encouraged by the consistency with which the drillholes are intersecting the targeted carbonatite host unit. The program continues to provide valuable geological information that is helping refine our understanding of the scale and structural controls of mineralization at Rift. We look forward to reporting assay results throughout Q2/2026 as we take aim at defining a new domestic rare earth deposit next to NioCorp in the Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in Nebraska."

Figure 1. Apex's Elk Creek Rift Project in Nebraska, USA, with Primary Target Area for Phase I Drilling (red ellipse).

Figure 2. 2026 Phase I drill plan at the Rift Project showing active and completed drillholes, selected planned drillholes, and historical drillhole locations. Carbonatite intersections are shown to illustrate the distribution of the targeted host lithology. Carbonatite intervals include variable fenite and associated lithologies and are simplified for visual clarity.

The Phase I drill program at the Rift Rare Earth Project is designed to test the continuity and extent of carbonatite-hosted rare earth element ("REE") mineralization identified during previous exploration work, while expanding upon significant mineralization intersected in historical drilling. Current drilling is focused on a high-priority area encompassing approximately 850 metres of north-south strike length within the southeastern portion of the Project, with drill targeting guided by an integrated dataset that includes historical drilling, surface geochemistry, and geophysical surveys incorporated into a modern three-dimensional geological model.

Drilling to date has successfully intersected the targeted carbonatite unit in multiple holes (Figure 2 and

Figure 3), providing valuable geological information that will assist in refining the exploration model, improving understanding of structural and lithological controls on mineralization, and guiding future drill targeting. Assay results from the first sample shipments are pending and will be released once received and validated.

Figure 3. Drill core from RIFT26-001A (740.7 to 745.85 m) and RIFT26-003 (833.55 to 839.09 m) showing intersected carbonatite intervals

Management cautions that the interception of carbonatite is not necessarily indicative of mineralization. Assay results are required to confirm the presence, grade, and significance of any mineralization. Drill core was logged, sampled and prepared following industry standard procedures and submitted to Activation Laboratories for geochemical analysis. Analytical results are pending and will be reported once received and validated.

Qualified Person

The technical content of this news release has been reviewed and approved by Nathan Schmidt, P. Geo., a Qualified Person under NI 43-101 on standards of disclosure for mineral projects. Mr. Schmidt is a Geologist with Dahrouge Geological Consulting Ltd., the consulting firm engaged by Apex Critical Metals Corp. to conduct and oversee all of the Company's exploration work, including the 2026 drill program.

About Apex Critical Metals Corp. (CSE:APXC)(OTCQX:APXCF)(FWB:KL9)

Apex Critical Metals Corp. is a Canadian exploration company focused on advancing rare earth element (REE) and niobium projects that support the growing demand for critical and strategic metals across the United States and Canada. The Company's flagship Rift Project, located within the highly prospective Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in Nebraska, U.S.A., hosts extensive rare earth rights surrounding one of North America's most advanced niobium-REE deposits. Historical drilling across the complex has reported broad intervals of high-grade REE mineralization, including intercepts such as 155.5 m of 2.70% REO and 68.2 m of 3.32% REO.

In Canada, Apex continues to advance its 100%-owned Cap Project, located 85 kilometres northeast of Prince George, British Columbia. The 2025 drill program confirmed a significant niobium discovery with 0.59% Nb₂O₅ over 36 metres, including 1.08% Nb₂O₅ over 10 metres, within a 1.8-kilometre-long niobium trend. The Cap Project continues to demonstrate strong potential for niobium mineralization within a large and previously unrecognized carbonatite system.

With a growing portfolio of critical mineral projects in both Canada and the United States, Apex Critical Metals is strategically positioned to help strengthen domestic supply chains for the minerals essential to advanced technologies, clean energy, and national security. Apex is publicly listed in Canada on the Canadian Securities Exchange (CSE) under the symbol APXC and quoted on the OTCQX market in the United States under the symbol APXCF, and in Germany on the Borse Frankfurt under the symbol KL9 and/or WKN: A40CCQ. Find out more at www.apexcriticalmetals.com and watch our videos at <https://apexcriticalmetals.com/apex-critical-metals-corporate-video/> and make sure to stay in touch by signing up for free news alerts at <https://apexcriticalmetals.com/news/news-alerts/>, or by following us on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook or LinkedIn.

On Behalf of the Board of Directors

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policies of the CSE) accepts responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release.

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This news release may contain "forward-looking statements" under applicable Canadian securities legislation. Forward-looking statements consist of statements that are not purely historical, including any statements regarding beliefs, plans, expectations or intentions regarding the future. Forward-looking statements in this news release include (without limitation) statements regarding the Company's planned Phase I drill program and any subsequent drill programs and statements regarding the Company's US-based prospective assets (more particularly described above), including the potential for additional acquisitions and the potential for exploration, and statements regarding the potential for future exploration and drilling to confirm the source of magnetic anomalies. Forward-looking statements are subject to various known and unknown risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results, performance or developments to differ materially from those contained in the statements. Risks that could change or prevent these events, activities or developments from coming to fruition include: the Company's properties are at an early stage of development and no current mineral resources or reserves have been identified by the Company thereof, that we may not be able to fully finance any additional exploration on the Company's properties; that even if we are able to raise capital, costs for exploration activities may increase such that we may not have sufficient funds to pay for such exploration or processing activities; the timing and content of any future work programs; geological interpretations based on drilling that may change with more detailed information; potential process methods and mineral recoveries assumptions based on limited test work and by comparison to what are considered analogous deposits that, with further test work, may not be comparable; testing of our process may not prove successful or samples derived from our properties may not yield positive results, and even if such tests are successful or initial sample results are positive, the economic and other outcomes may not be as expected; the anticipated market demand for REE and other minerals may not be as expected; the availability of labour and equipment to undertake future exploration work and testing activities; geopolitical risks which may result in market and economic instability. There can be no assurance that such statements will prove to be accurate, as actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Accordingly, readers should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements herein are made as of the date hereof, and the Company disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.

SOURCE: Apex Critical Metals Corp.

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