

Apex Drills 23.1 m of 3.47% REO Within Broader Zone of 137.2 m at 2.01% REO, Extending Mineralization 180 m in Western Step-Out at the Rift Rare Earth Project

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Highlights:

- RIFT26-005A, a ~180 m western step-out from RIFT26-003 (80.0 m at 2.29% REO, including 23.7 m at 4.02% REO - See News Release Dated April 28, 2026) expanding the upper high-grade REO horizon (herein termed "Trinity Zone")
 - 137.2 m at 2.01% REO⁽¹⁾ from 252.6 m depth
 - Including 80.0 m at 2.51%, or 23.1 m at 3.47%, or 11.0 m at 4.39% REO
 - Numerous samples within the 137.2 m interval grading >4.00% REO, to a maximum of 6.59% REO m (See Image 1)
- RIFT26-006
 - 43.8 m of 2.75% REO including 34.1 m of 3.05% REO within a broader mineralized envelope (210.0 m at 1.33% REO)
- Trinity Zone is interpreted to dip shallowly to the west and remains strongly associated with hematite alteration observed within the carbonatite
- Trinity Zone is now defined over an approximate 300 m strike length and ~180 m down-dip. Successive step-out drillholes continue to demonstrate strong continuity of high-grade REO mineralization, with RIFT26-005A returning the strongest width x grade intercept of the 2026 program to date.
- The high-grade Trinity Zone remains open in all directions.

Sean Charland, CEO of Apex Critical Metals, commented: "The results from these three step-out drillholes, including our best grade x width results to-date, continues to demonstrate the extension and expansion potential of the upper high-grade REO horizon (Trinity Zone). The growing mineralized footprint and consistency observed from assay results to-date increases confidence in the shallow west-dipping Trinity Zone and future targeting, with mineralization remaining open in all directions. With a significant volume of assays still pending and two rigs still actively turning, we are well positioned to delineate mineralization well beyond the early successes from our 2026 drill campaign."

VANCOUVER, May 15, 2026 - [Apex Critical Metals Corp.](#) (CSE:APXC)(OTCQX:APXCF)(FWB:KL9) ("Apex" or the "Company"), a mineral exploration company focused on advancing its strategic 100%-controlled Rift Rare Earth Project within the Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in southeastern Nebraska, U.S.A., is pleased to report the assay results from drillholes RIFT26-004, RIFT26-005A and partial results from RIFT26-006 (162.2 to 500.8 m).

Key Observations and Takeaways

Assay results from RIFT26-004, RIFT26-005A and RIFT26-006 confirm continuity of the upper high-grade

REO horizon at depth, herein termed the Trinity Zone. The Trinity Zone is now interpreted to dip shallowly to the west and remains strongly associated with hematite alteration within the host carbonatite, consistent with observations across all previously reported drillholes (See News Releases Dated April 7, 2026 and April 28, 2026).

RIFT26-005A was designed as an approximately 180 m western step-out of RIFT26-003, which returned 80.0 m at 2.29% REO including 23.7 m at 4.02% REO in the Trinity Zone See News Release Dated April 28, 2026). Drillhole RIFT26-005A successfully intersected the Trinity Zone at depth returning an even broader interval at >2% REO (137.2 m at 2.01% REO from 252.6 m depth), including 23.1 m at 3.47% REO from 290.5 m or 11.8 m at 4.23% REO from 301.7 m (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

RIFT26-004 and RIFT26-006 were drilled from the same drill pad at different orientations, targeting the western extension of the Trinity Zone previously intersected in RIFT26-001A (45.0 m at 2.07% REO, including 24.9 m at 2.40% REO (See News Release Dated April 28, 2026) and historical drillhole NEC11-004 (See News Release Dated October 1, 2025). RIFT26-006 intersected a broad, continuous interval of 210.0 m at 1.33% REO from 191.8 m depth, with two distinct higher-grade zones of 43.2 m at 1.61% REO and 43.8 m at 2.75% REO including 34.1 m at 3.05% REO (Table 2). RIFT26-004 intersected the Trinity Zone over two discrete intervals: 15.6 m at 2.10% REO from 216.5 m, and a second interval of 18.8 m at 2.01% REO from 320.6 m depth (Table 2).

Results from these three drillholes, together with historical and previously reported results from RIFT26-002 (81.6 m at 2.02% REO including 50.9 m at 2.40% REO - See News Release Dated April 7, 2026), RIFT26-001A and RIFT26-003, demonstrate that the Trinity Zone maintains grade and continuity over an approximate 300 m strike length within the greater 700 m mineralized corridor. Coupled with the elevated NdPr⁽²⁾ distributions previously reported from the underlying Neo Zone (See News Release Dated May 6, 2026), these results reinforce the potential for a significant multi-horizon rare earth mineralized system at the Rift Project.

Figure 1. 2026 Phase I drill plan at the Rift Project showing the location and assay results of drillhole RIFT26-004, RIFT26-005A and partial assay results for RIFT26-006 (reported herein), along with active and completed drillholes, selected planned drillholes, and historical drillhole locations.

Figure 2. RIFT26-005A & RIFT26-003 assay results at the Rift Project highlighting the Trinity Zone

Table 1: Drillhole Location and Attributes

Hole ID	Depth (m)	Azimuth ^(b) (°)	Dip ^(b) (°)	Easting ^(a)	Northing ^(a)	Elevation
RIFT26-004	710.16	80	-60	741888	4460786.8	332.22
RIFT26-005A	806.23	80	-60	741877	4460557.9	333.14
RIFT26-006	870	80	-70	741888	4460786.8	332.22

^(a)Coordinates are presented in NAD83 UTMZ14 ^(b) Azimuth and Dip are planned and may vary downhole

Table 2: RIFT26-004, RIFT26-005A and RIFT26-006 (partial) Assay Summary

^(a) All reported intervals are downhole core lengths, and do not represent true widths, which remain unknown until further confirmation assay results are received and interpreted.

Image 1. RIFT26-005A interval of 3.25 m from 309.5 m to 312.75 m (red box) averaging 4.61% REO, including samples RIFT005A-207 (4.46% REO over 0.98 m), RIFT005A-208 (6.59% REO over 0.52 m), RIFT005A-209 (3.26% REO over 0.96 m) and RIFT005A-211 (5.12% REO over 0.79 m)

Program Status and Next Steps

The Company has completed additional drillholes designed to further test the extent of mineralization along strike and at depth with assay results pending. Ongoing refinement of the 3D geological model, including integration of assay results as received, will support improved understanding of the mineralized system and help prioritize future drill targeting. The 2026 drill program remains ongoing, with a total of fifteen (15) drillholes completed to date for approximately 11,000 m, with assays currently pending for nine (9) drillholes.

Quality Assurance / Quality Control

All drilling was completed using one truck and one track mounted diamond drill rigs with HQ size core and all drill core samples have been or will be shipped to Activation Laboratories Ltd. (Actlabs) preparation facility in Ancaster, Ontario, for standard sample preparation (code RX1) which includes drying, crush (< 7 kg) up to 80% passing 2 mm, riffle split (250 g) and pulverize (mild steel) to 95% passing 105 µm. The samples were subsequently analyzed using Code 8 by XRF Nb₂O₅, ZrO₂ and Ta₂O₅ (0.003%), Code 8 - REE Assay (lithium metaborate/tetraborate fusion with subsequent analysis by ICP and ICP/MS). Drill core was saw-cut with half-core sent for geochemical analysis and half-core remaining in the box onsite.

A Quality Assurance/Quality Control protocol was incorporated into the program and included the insertion of certified reference material and silica blanks at a rate of approximately 5% and 5%, respectively. Additional analysis of pulp-split and reject-split sample duplicates was also completed at a rate of approximately 5% and 2.5%, respectively, to assess analytical precision at different stages. Actlabs Canada is independent of the Company.

Management cautions that the interception of carbonatite and associated hematite alteration is not necessarily indicative of mineralization. Assay results are required to confirm the presence, grade, and significance of any mineralization. All intercepts reported in this news release represent core length (apparent width). True widths have not yet been determined.

(1) REO (Rare Earth Oxide) is defined as the sum of Ce₂O₃, La₂O₃, Pr₂O₃, Nd₂O₃, Eu₂O₃, Sm₂O₃, Gd₂O₃, Tb₂O₃, Dy₂O₃, Ho₂O₃, Er₂O₃, Tm₂O₃, Yb₂O₃, Lu₂O₃, and Y₂O₃.

(2) NdPr distribution calculated as $(Nd_2O_3 + Pr_2O_3) / REO \times 100$

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.

Mr. Schmidt has verified all scientific and technical data disclosed in this news release including the sampling and QA/QC results, and certified analytical data underlying the technical information disclosed. Mr. Schmidt noted no errors or omissions during the data verification process. The Company and Mr. Schmidt do not recognize any factors of sampling or recovery that could materially affect the accuracy or reliability of the assay data disclosed in this news release.

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. Phase I step out drill holes at Rift have expanded the footprint of the high-grade mineralization over approximately 275.0 m from the historical drill holes with 23.7 m of 4.02% REO and multiple broad intervals of >2.00% REO. Additionally, Phase I drilling has delineated a new zone of strongly elevated NdPr beneath the high-grade material that extends for approximately 390 m with 13.5 m of 1.08%

REO at 31.7 % NdPr and 10.9m of 0.99% REO and 30.1 % NdPr within a broader zone of 22.7 m of 0.79% REO at 32.8% NdPr.

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

APEX CRITICAL METALS CORP.,

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CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION:

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.

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