



CORE STORAGE IN NORTHEASTERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By G. V. White

A core recovery program in the Peace River Coalfield commenced in May 1976. Responsibility for recovery, transport, and storage of diamond-drill core in northeastern British Columbia was assigned to the Applied Geology Section of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. The main priority of the core recovery program was to collect and transport core that was left in the field to a central core depot located at Charlie Lake.

Coal exploration companies have extensively drilled the Cretaceous sedimentary rocks of northeastern British Columbia (Fig. 31) attempting to intersect economically significant coal seams. After drilling, however, the diamond-drill core was often improperly stored and much was destroyed by the weather. This was especially true if the company had decided to abandon the coal property.

Steps were taken to preserve the core because drilling is expensive and lost core was virtually irreplaceable. By collecting and storing it at a central location, a permanent core library has been assembled. The value of the stored and catalogued core becomes increasingly significant as more coal properties are drilled and more stratigraphic information is compiled. A single exploration company has information on their own coal property; information on each of the coal properties within the Peace River Coalfield is gathered at the Charlie Lake storage facility. This facility is now enabling detailed studies on the entire coalfield. Examples of research being conducted include environmental interpretations, coal rank studies, coal quality investigations, and stratigraphic correlation projects.

Since the core storage program was initiated, considerable interest has resulted. Industry, universities, and governments have all made use of the facilities at Charlie Lake, which include a well-lighted, heated room and five examination tables. Examination fees are currently twenty dollars (\$20.00) per day and fifty cents (\$ 0.50) for every core box examined.

Recent changes to the *Coal Act* reclassified all 1973 and older core as open file and any interested person or company may now examine this core. According to the Act, by 1983 all core and relevant files more than three years old will also be reclassified as open file. Presently, core drilled after 1973 cannot be examined without written permission from the company who initiated the drilling.

The storage program has ensured the preservation of core from the coal properties of northeastern British Columbia. In the past, a significant amount of diamond-drill core was destroyed by the weather and improper storage. Now there is more than 135 000 metres of core in storage at Charlie Lake. Used as a library, the core provides information and the opportunity for research into Cretaceous sedimentation in the Peace River Coalfield.