

# Exploration and mining in British Columbia, 2022

#### Overview

British Columbia is Canada's largest exporter of coal, leading producer of copper, and only producer of molybdenum. Also produced are significant amounts of gold, silver, lead, and zinc, and more than 30 industrial minerals including gypsum, magnesite, limestone, and dimension stone. Numerous quarries produce sand and gravel or crushed aggregate.

Flanked by the Pacific Ocean, British Columbia offers easy access to global markets. Mine operations benefit from tax incentives and a well-developed infrastructure, including low-cost electricity, an integrated road and rail network, and large deep-water ports. Exploration benefits from an extensive geoscience database and a web-based mineral tenure system.

Although Covid continued to cause minor interruptions, 2022 did not have the significant forest fire and flooding disruptions of 2021. Provincial mining production reached a new high due to continued high coal prices. The year started with significant exploration financing in place and exploration expenditures improved for the third year in a row, reaching a new record level. The forecasted value of total provincial mining production reached an all-time high of \$18.2 billion, and total exploration expenditures reached a record of \$740.4 million.

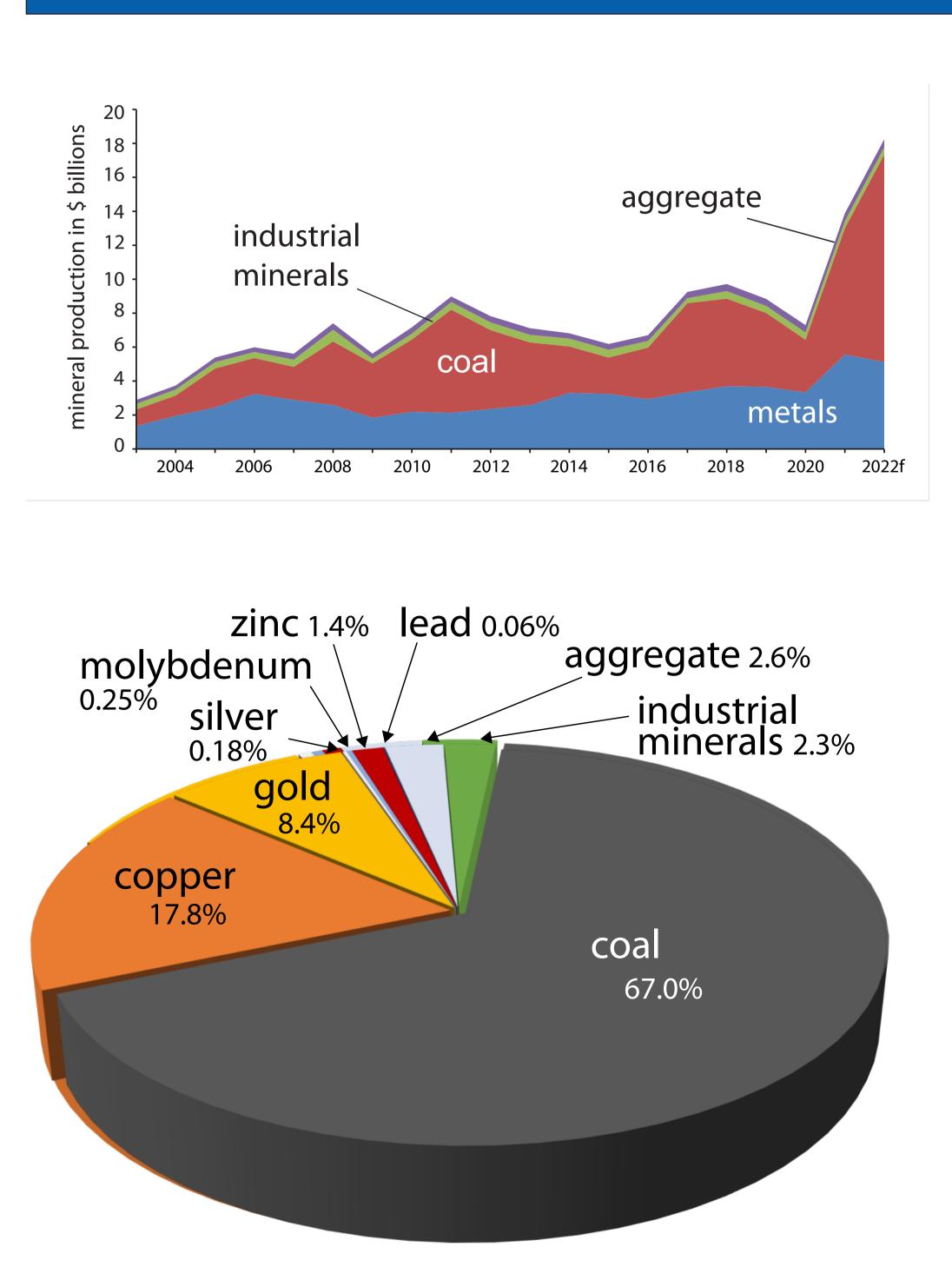
#### Regional Geologists

The Regional Geologists monitor exploration and mining activities and provide information about exploration trends, possible investment opportunities, land use processes, First Nation capacity building, and public outreach. In 2020, the Regional Geologists were repatriated to the British Columbia Geological Survey as part of the Mineral Development Office.





#### Mine production

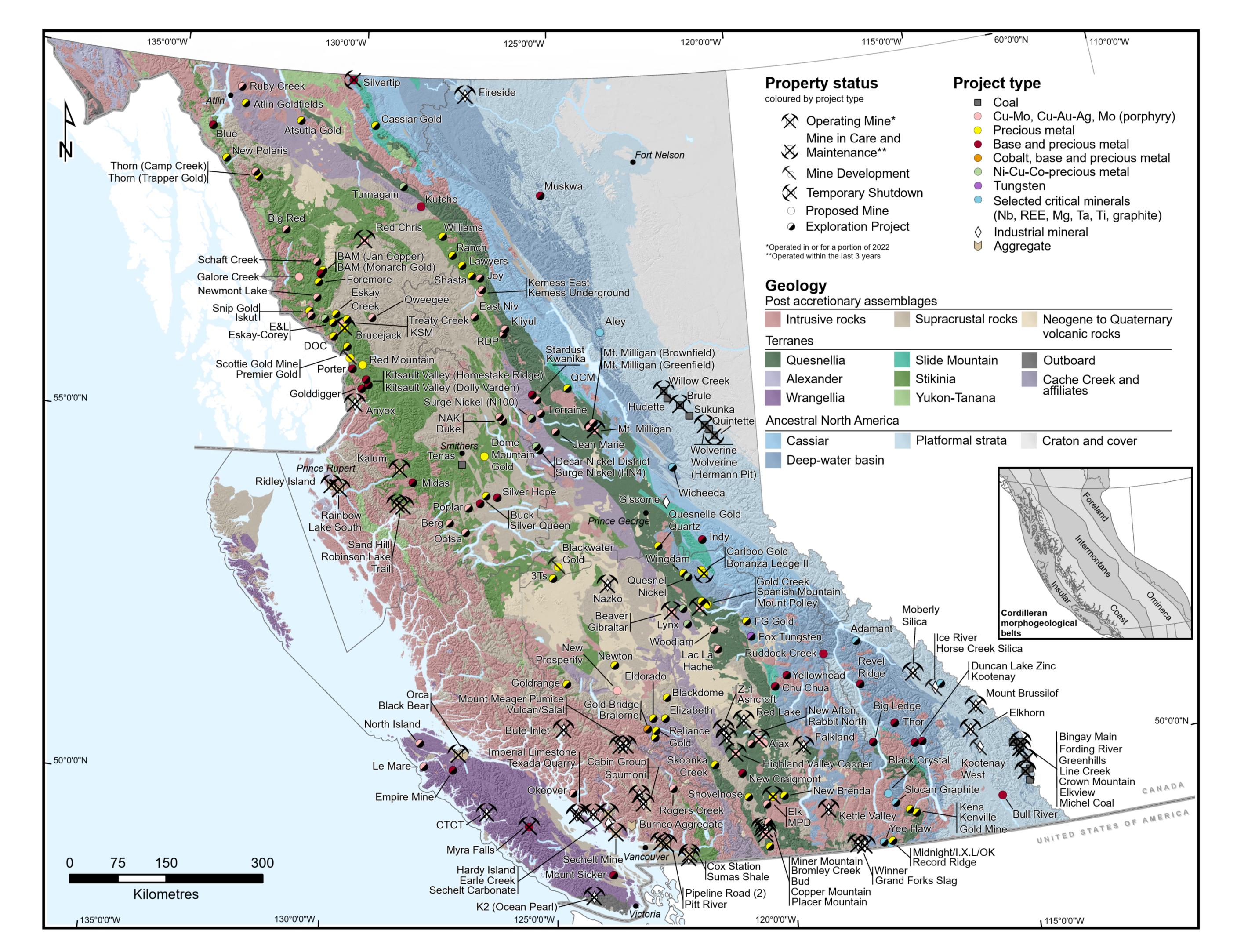


In 2022, 11 metal mines operated during at least part of the year. Metallurgical coal was produced at four large open-pit operations in the southeastern part of the province and three open-pit operations in the northeastern part. About 30 industrial mineral mines and more than 1000 aggregate mines and quarries were in operation.

The forecast total value of mine production for 2022 is \$18.2 billion, an all-time high, and \$4.3 billion greater than the preliminary estimate for 2021. The forecast value is commonly higher than the preliminary estimate, thus the \$18.2 billion figure may change as new data come in after January 2022.

Coal accounted for 67.0%, followed by copper at 17.8% and gold at 8.4%.

## Mines, mine development, selected proposed mines, and selected exploration projects



### Some highlights

- Newcrest Mining Limited completed its purchase of Pretium Resources Inc. for \$3.5 billion.
- Conuma Resources Limited purchased the closed Quintette mine from Teck Resources Limited for \$120 million.
- Skeena Resources Limited acquired Questex Gold & Copper Ltd., for approx. \$48.6 million and signed a concurrent deal with Newmont Corporation whereby Skeena in turn sold certain Questex properties to Newmont for approximately \$26 million.
- Brixton Metals Corporation announced a \$13.6 million strategic investment by BHP Group Limited to advance their Thorn project.
- Freeport-McMoRan Mineral Properties Canada Inc. continued to earn in at Amarc Resources Ltd.'s Joy project by spending approximately \$14 million. Amarc also announced an earn in agreement with Boliden Mineral Canada Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of the Boliden Group, on its Duke project. Boliden may earn up to 70% by making staged exploration and development investments totalling \$90 million.
- The Tobacco Plains Indian Band, Pacific Road Capital and North Coal Limited signed a letter of intent centred around the principles of co-ownership, co-management, and co-governance for the Michel Coal project.



• Westhaven Gold Corp. announced a financing arrangement with Franco Nevada Corporation whereby Franco purchased a 2% NSR for \$US6 million, another royalty for US\$750,000 and subscribed to a CAD\$ 1 million share purchase for Westhaven's Spences Bridge Gold Belt projects.

• Dolly Varden Silver Corp. acquired Fury Gold Mines Ltd.'s wholly owned subsidiary Homestake Resource Corporation consolidating adjacent tenure to form the new Kitsault Valley project.

• Giga Metals Corporation announced a joint venture with Mitsubishi Corporation who acquired a 15% equity for \$8 million in the Turnagain Nickel project.

• Ascot Resources Ltd. began construction for its Premier Gold Mine. Target for commercial production is mid-2024.

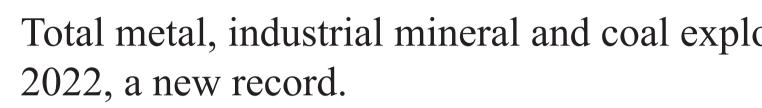
• Artemis Gold Inc. started earthworks for its Blackwater Gold Mine. Target for commercial production is mid to late 2024.

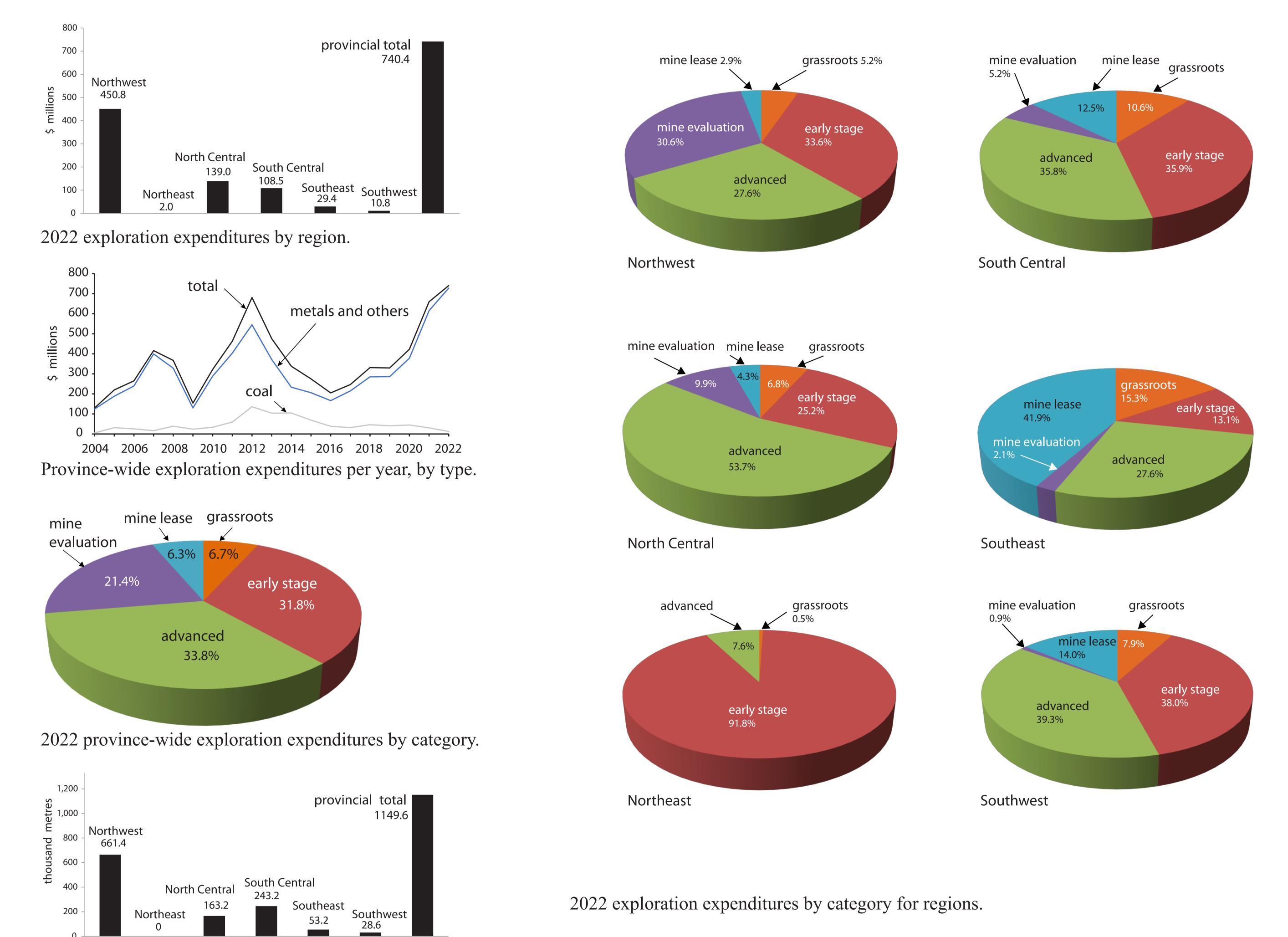
• Pacific Ridge Exploration Ltd. reported good results for their Kliyul and RDP projects; Kliyul included 527.8 m grading 0.19% Cu, 0.30 g/t Au, and 1.35 g/t Ag; RDP included 497.2 m grading 0.37% Cu, 0.40 g/t Au, and 1.6 g/t Ag.

• Kodiak Copper Corp. continued to report good results for their MPD project including 735.4 m grading 0.24% Cu, 0.14 g/t Au and 0.71 g/t Ag.

• Coeur Mining Inc. continued with a large drilling program (61,000 m) at the shut down Silvertip mine to assess the economics of a potential future expanded restart. New results included 12 m grading 459.6 g/t Ag, 15.1% Zn, and 8.7% Pb.

#### Expeditures





2022 exploration drilling by region.

#### Further information

Clarke, G., Northcote, B., Corcoran, N.L., and Hancock, K., 2023. Exploration and Mining in British Columbia, 2022: A summary. In: Provincial Overview of Exploration and Mining in British Columbia, 2022. British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, British Columbia Geological Survey, Information Circular 2023-01, pp. 1-48.

EY LLP, 2023. British Columbia Mineral and Coal Exploration Survey 2022 Report.

Recommended citation

Clarke, G., Northcote, B., Corcoran, N.L., and Hancock, K., 2023. Exploration and mining in British Columbia, 2022. British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation British Columbia Geological Survey GeoFile 2023-01 (poster).

Mineral Development Office, British Columbia Geological Survey, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, 300-865 Hornby Street, Vancouver, BC, V6Z 2G3 Gordon.Clarke@gov.bc.ca



Ministry of BRITISH COLUMBIA Low Carbon Innovation

#### Total metal, industrial mineral and coal exploration expenditures are estimated at \$740.4 million for

