

## Geology – A Gem of a Job

By Elaine Schiman

### Yukon geologists pursue triple passions for rocks, science and the outdoors

Mike Burke's affinity for rocks is obvious the instant you walk into his office. The Yukon Geological Survey geologist has rocks everywhere – lining the shelves along the wall and taking up most of the available space on his desk. "Some people think my desk is a mess," Burke admits. "But most think it's beautiful."

Burke himself falls into the latter category. "I love rocks, I like being with them," he says, as he shows off the rich greens and yellows in some of his rock samples. But there is also a practical reason for their presence in his office. Many of them are samples from mineral finds across the Yukon. When he shows them to prospectors, students, or other visitors, they can see what kind of rock formation a certain mineral was found in. If they're exploring for minerals themselves, the samples give them an idea of what they should be looking for.



Burke's main role is to liaise with exploration companies working in the Yukon. He tries to visit as many exploration sites as he can every summer, to monitor what the companies are looking for, where, and what they're finding. He also offers assistance and advice. This is a natural fit for Burke. Before joining the Survey, he worked for Canamax Resources and was with the company for the discovery, construction and eventual closure of the Ketz River gold mine. He was even fortunate enough to find significant zinc mineralization at the Sa Dena Hes property during his very first summer on the job.

"It was awesome to make that find," says Burke. "That's what's so exciting about the work. You never know what you might discover. Now, as I work with exploration companies, I still get to experience the thrill of discovery and of being part of the team when

companies have found something with potential."