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Author Biography:

J.M. (Murray) Duke graduated from McGill University (B.Sc. 1968, M.Sc. 1971) and the University of Connecticut (Ph.D. 1974). He joined GSC in Ottawa in June 1976 following postdoctoral studies at the University of Toronto. As a member of Economic Geology Subdivision, he undertook research on the origin of magmatic deposits of nickel, platinum metals and chromite. He became Director of Mineral Resources Division in 1989 and Director General of the Minerals and Regional Geoscience Branch in 1995. At the time of his retirement in 2006, he was Director General, GSC Central and Northern Canada. He served as Secretary (1977-84), Vice President (1987-88) and President (1989-90) of the Mineralogical Association of Canada, and was awarded the Association's Leonard G. Berry Medal in 1996.

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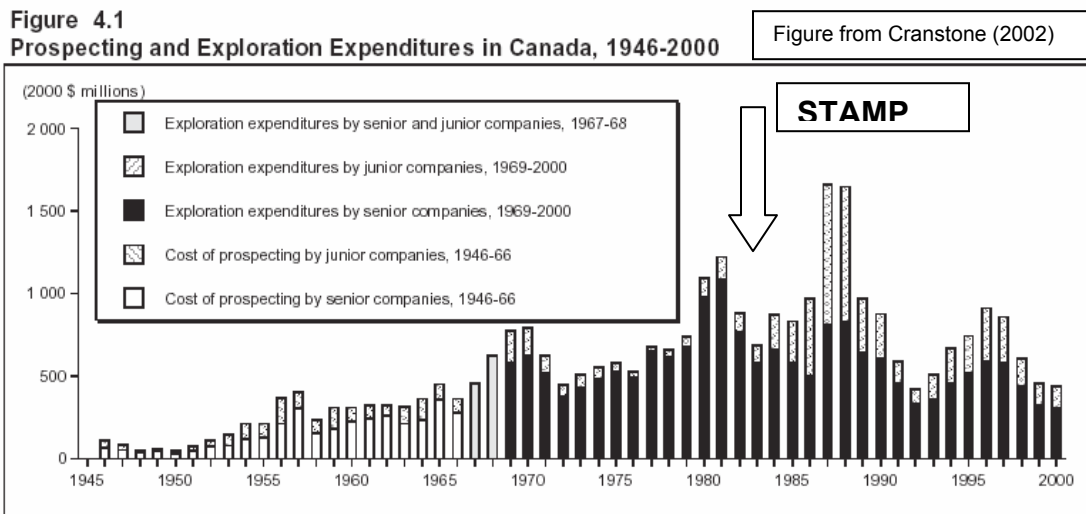
By Murray Duke, March 2007

Introduction

The Sudbury Timmins Algoma Minerals Program (STAMP) was an employment creation initiative undertaken by the GSC in 1983-84, at the direction of the Honorable Judy Erola, Minister of State for Mines. STAMP was successfully implemented despite a number of technical and administrative challenges. Not only did STAMP achieve its goals in terms of job creation and capacity building in the region, but it also enhanced the credibility of the GSC in the senior bureaucratic and political circles, and indirectly contributed to increases in the Survey's budget. A detailed account of STAMP is provided in the attached memorandum from which following summary is drawn [[GSCHIS-B004.pdf](#)]. In addition, I have provided some personal perspectives.

Origins of the STAMP Program

Mineral exploration expenditures in Canada, which had increased gradually through the 1970s, doubled between 1979 and 1981. This reflected an increase in commodity prices and, in particular, the price of gold, which reached an all time high in January 1981 (US\$850, equivalent to about \$2000 in 2007). The protracted boom had lured many people to the exploration business. In fact, EMR (as NRCan was then called) had run an advertising campaign to promote geology as a career choice. However, a cyclical downturn in exploration, beginning in 1982, meant that numerous geologists were looking for work.



Sources: Natural Resources Canada; Statistics Canada.

Note: Exploration expenditures from 1975 to 1981 are overstated by an average of about 17% relative to earlier and later years because of changes to the methodology used by Statistics Canada over the years.

In June 1982, Roy MacLaren, MP for Etobicoke North, received a suggestion from a constituent proposing a joint federal-provincial “make work” program for the estimated 400 unemployed geologists in Ontario. Mr. MacLaren passed this suggestion on to the Honorable Judy Erola, Minister of State for Mines. This led in turn to discussions between officials of EMR and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources about initiating a job creation initiative under the Canada/Ontario Special Employment Program. In November 1982, INCO Ltd. submitted a proposal for a job creation program to be jointly funded by the federal and provincial governments. While technically sound, it was decided that the proposal could not be accepted because it would favor a single company to the detriment of others.

D.C. Findlay, Director of the Economic Geology Division, GSC revived internal discussions in December 1982, and further discussions were held between GSC and the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) in February and March 1983, with the goal of developing a joint program in the Sudbury area. In the end, OGS indicated that while it remained interested in collaborative geoscience programs with GSC, it was reluctant to proceed with one predicated on job creation. In June 1983, federal-provincial negotiations broke down at the political level, and Minister Erola directed the Department to proceed with a stand-alone federal program in the Sudbury, Timmins and Sault Ste. Marie areas. An outline for Northern Ontario Geological Survey (NOGS) was prepared by GSC and submitted to the Minister on July 6th and a week later she gave instructions to proceed with the program. In the meantime, the Algoma riding had been added to the mix and NOGS became STAMP.

Program Implementation

Program planning and implementation began in earnest on July 15th. There were a number of complicating factors:

- Funding for the program would come from the Employment Initiatives Reserve, administered by Employment and Immigration Canada (CEIC), pursuant to Section 38 of the Unemployment Insurance Act. This meant that STAMP could not be run directly by EMR: a not-for-profit organization, external to government, would have to be identified to act as “sponsor” and manage the program.
- Neither the amount of funding available nor the geographic boundaries of the program were known with certainty.
- The challenge from the technical standpoint was to design a program that could employ a significant number of people during the fall and winter months when geological field activities are severely limited by weather. Also, because the sponsor had yet to be identified, we did not know what facilities and equipment would be available.

- Individuals employed by STAMP were to be hired off the unemployment insurance roles in the program area. This meant that program design had to anticipate the kinds of skills that would be available.
- All of these issues had to be resolved before a submission to Treasury Board, which in turn was required before any funds could be spent.

In the early stages, Bill Hutchison, Assistant Deputy Minister of Earth Sciences Sector, chaired weekly meetings of the STAMP team. In addition to GSC staff, key members included Bob Keyes of EMR Mineral Policy Sector, who handled negotiations with CEIC, Cyril Bowstead, Sector Financial Advisor, who oversaw contractual negotiations with CEIC and the sponsor, as well as preparation of the TB submission, and Justyna Kurylłowicz, of the Minister's staff¹.

Identification of a suitable sponsor to manage the program was a priority. In the event, the solution came from the Minister herself. On July 29th, Justyna Kurylłowicz advised us that Laurentian University, in discussions between Professor Tony Beswick and the Minister's Office, had expressed an interest in assuming the sponsorship role. Negotiations with the university proceeded rapidly and agreement in principle was reached on August 12th. The final proposal included a number of provisions to support the university. This included incorporation of an additional project proposed by Tony Beswick, a decision to have geochemical analyses done in the university labs rather than contracted out to commercial labs, and the payment of rent for space in lieu of overhead. We did not regard these as concessions but rather as legitimate steps to build capacity at Laurentian.

Most of the technical and administrative details had been worked out by the end of August, final approvals were given by TB and CEIC on September 15th and 16th, respectively, and Minister Erola announced the program in a press release on September 17th. The one step remaining before people could be hired and put to work was execution of the five enabling contracts (one for each project) between EMR, CEIC and Laurentian University. Members of the STAMP team physically transported the contract documents between Ottawa, Sudbury and Toronto for signature on September 26-27, employment interviews were held on September 29th, and the first "STAMPERS" (as we called them) began work on October 3rd. At this point management of STAMP effectively passed to Laurentian University, with EMR assuming a contract-monitoring role.

Program Results and Benefits

The goal of STAMP was to provide meaningful, short-term employment (~6 months) to a significant number of geologists and other technical specialists and, at the

¹ Bob Keyes would go on to become Senior-Vice President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce while Justyna Kurylłowicz (later Laurie-Lean) would subsequently be appointed a division director in CANMET and later Vice President of the Mining Association of Canada.

same time, to generate geoscience data that would be useful in private sector exploration efforts going forward. These objectives were achieved:

- STAMP provided 1792 person weeks of employment to 82 different individuals. This represents about 90% of the target set out in the proposal.
- Individuals employed in STAMP were successful in finding follow-on employment, either permanent or term.
- The technical program produced five reports that were published by the GSC (Open Files 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091). The appended letters of support indicate the potential utility of these data in supporting exploration. Unfortunately, no retrospective impact study was undertaken to document actual use of the results.

STAMP also yielded indirect benefits. Laurentian University was able to use STAMP to strengthen the capacity of its Geology Department and, in particular, to upgrade its geochemical laboratories.

Finally, STAMP benefited the GSC by raising its profile with its political masters in a positive sense. I became aware of one tangible benefit of this increased profile during a brief conversation with ADM Bill Hutchison. This occurred on the evening of the public lecture at the annual GSC Forum (probably in January 1984). Bill told me that the federal Cabinet had just given its approval to the Frontier Geoscience Program (FGP), which would provide significant incremental funding to the GSC². He quoted one of the Ministers as saying “if the GSC can succeed with STAMP, it can deliver the FGP” (or words to that effect).

Conclusion – A Personal Perspective

Regardless of the significance (or insignificance) of STAMP in the larger context, there is no question that it had a formative impact on my career. It was probably my role in STAMP that pointed me towards management (some would say “condemned” is a more appropriate verb). During my seven years in the GSC up until that time, I had been afforded the luxury of spending virtually all of my time on my own research. I had been sent on a management course in the fall of 1982 as a last minute replacement for Jim Franklin, but I had not yet gained any practical experience.

I became involved in STAMP in July 1983, almost by accident. I had not been part of the discussions that had gone on over the previous winter and spring. However, as the summer began, it became apparent that I would be one of the few staff who was not scheduled to be away for significant periods during the field season. This was because my wife and I were expecting the birth of our daughter at any time (as it turned out, Jennifer arrived on July 20th).

² My recollection is that FGP was initially funded at a level of \$6 million/year for 5 years and then, in 1989, it was folded into the GSC Abase budget.

One of the eye-opening aspects of STAMP for me was the GSC's political context of which I had theretofore been largely oblivious. The program was implemented in direct response to a ministerial directive. Moreover, half of the funding came from the Special Employment Reserve, which required support of the Members of Parliament of the targeted ridings, all four of whom happened to belong to the governing Liberals.

I well remember the morning of August 3, 1983 when I accompanied Bill Hutchison to Minister Erola's Parliament Hill office to brief her on the program³. To the best of my recollection, this is the first time that I had ever met a Minister of the Crown. I remember having difficulty in keeping a straight face when I heard myself saying the words "Yes, Minister", sounding like Sir Humphrey Appleby in the popular British television series. I remember spreading a large geological map of northern Ontario on the floor of the Minister's office. We had superimposed the electoral boundaries on the geology to demonstrate that the proposed work would indeed take place within the specified ridings. (Who says that geology doesn't stop at political boundaries!)

Of course, STAMP by itself was too small to be expected to have any impact on the electoral fortunes of its political proponents. However, for what it is worth, two of the four MPs who had supported STAMP were returned in the election of September 1984 – Maurice Foster, MP for Algoma and Doug Frith, MP for Sudbury. Minister Erola was defeated in Sudbury-Nickel Belt, as was the Liberal candidate in Timmins-Chapleau (Ray Chenier, the Liberal incumbent did not run for re-election in 1984).

I also learned something about the politics of federal-provincial relations in geoscience. Considerable effort had gone into developing a joint program with GSC's sister agencies in Ontario. OMNR and OGS had proposed SEAP (Sudbury Area Exploration Assistance) and SAGS (Sudbury Area Geological Survey), respectively. GSC countered with NOGS (Northern Ontario Geoscience Survey) and, finally, STAMP. It is clear from the records that these bilateral discussions were constructive and I believe that the fundamental reason that the decision not to proceed jointly was made at the political level in Ontario. Ironically, in November 1983, Minister Pope of Ontario would announce his own exploration assistance program focused on the Sudbury-Temiskaming-Nipissing region with the objective of creating 1833 person weeks of employment (see newspaper story in Appendix 4 of attachment).

Although politics prevented our provincial colleagues from officially supporting STAMP, behind the scenes at the management level, and at the working level, they were very helpful. I remember visiting Sandy Colvine, who was then a senior OGS manager in Toronto, to seek his support for STAMP. Sandy observed that in his position he could not go on record as endorsing the program, but if I did not ask for his support, he would not express any opposition to it. In other words, some questions are better left unasked.

³ Nine days later, Minister Erola was promoted to the post of Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Hon. Roger Simmons replaced her as Minister of State for Mines, but he resigned just 10 days later. The post was vacant until the appointment of the Hon. William Romkey in January 1984. I had no interaction with either of Minister Erola's successors.

Glossary

CEIC – Canadian Unemployment Insurance Commission
EMR – Energy, Mines and Resources
FGP – Frontier Geoscience Program
NOGS – Northern Ontario Geological Survey
OGS – Ontario Geological Survey
OMNR – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
SAGS – Sudbury Area Geological Survey
SEAP – Sudbury Area Exploration Program
STAMP – Sudbury Timmins Algoma Mineral Program
TB – Treasury Board

Biographical Statement

J.M. (Murray) Duke graduated of McGill University (B.Sc. 1968, M.Sc. 1971) and the University of Connecticut (Ph.D. 1974). He joined GSC in Ottawa in June 1976 following postdoctoral studies at the University of Toronto. As a member of Economic Geology Subdivision, he undertook research on the origin of magmatic deposits of nickel, platinum metals and chromite. He became Director of Mineral Resources Division in 1989 and Director General of the Minerals and Regional Geoscience Branch in 1995. At the time of his retirement in 2006, he was Director General, GSC Central and Northern Canada. He served as Secretary (1977-84), Vice President (1987-88) and President (1989-90) of the Mineralogical Association of Canada, and was awarded the Association's Leonard G. Berry Medal in 1996.

Reference Documents

GSCHIS-B004: Approximately 120 assorted documents pertaining to STAMP, including reports on meetings with Ontario officials, minutes of STAMP Ad Hoc and Technical Advisory Committee meetings, detailed project proposals, draft Minister's speech to Sudbury Prospectors and Developers Association, press clippings, etc.