

# Junior Explorers Challenge

STORY



Bathurst, New Brunswick

## Bathurst: The camp that powered the modern world

Long ago, the forests around Bathurst were known more for logging and fishing than mining. However geologists studying the rocks of northern New Brunswick believed something incredible was hidden underground. Hundreds of millions of years ago, this region had been covered by an ancient ocean where underwater volcanoes released hot, mineral-rich fluids onto the seafloor. Over time, those minerals hardened into valuable deposits filled with zinc, copper, lead and silver.

In the early 1950s, geologists and prospectors headed into the wilderness searching for clues. One eager geologist, Ken Ritchie, spent long days hiking through forests, studying rock outcrops and mapping the land. Prospectors searched creeks and ridges for rusty stains on rocks, which could signal important minerals underground. With only maps, compasses and rock hammers, exploration teams worked through rough terrain hoping to uncover something important.

### The Discovery That Changed Bathurst!

Their hard work paid off! In the early 1950s, drilling crews drilled and pulled up core samples packed with zinc, lead, copper and silver. The discovery became known as Brunswick No. 12, and it would eventually grow into the largest underground zinc mine in the world.

Almost overnight, the region transformed into the famous Bathurst Mining Camp. Geologists, miners, engineers and drill crews arrived from across Canada searching for more deposits. New mines helped turn northern New Brunswick into one of the world's most important base-metal mining districts.



## From Mines to Modern Life

The mines created many different career opportunities. Underground miners operated heavy equipment deep below the surface, while geologists studied rocks to locate new ore deposits. Engineers designed tunnels and ventilation systems to keep workers safe. Mill operators processed ore, and environmental scientists helped protect nearby land and water. Mining depended on teamwork, with every worker playing an important role.

The metals mined at Bathurst helped power the modern world. Zinc protects steel from rust on bridges and buildings. Copper carries electricity through homes, phones and computers. Lead is used in batteries, while silver is important in electronics and solar panels. Modern technology depends on these important metals every day.



## The Next Discovery Awaits!

Brunswick No. 12 operated for nearly 50 years after opening in 1964, becoming one of the economic foundations of northern New Brunswick. But all mines eventually run out of ore. In 2013, the mine closed after producing hundreds of millions of tonnes of ore from deep underground. For many families connected to mining, it marked the end of an important era.

Today, the search continues. Modern geologists use advanced tools like airborne geophysics, computer models and deep drilling to explore beneath the forests around Bathurst. Many experts believe more discoveries may still be hidden underground, waiting for the next generation of explorers to uncover them.

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There are more than 40 metals and rare earth elements, including **zinc**, **copper**, **lead** and **silver**, used to produce a single smartphone!

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