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High-Impact Exploration Potential of Western Canada - The Big Plays are Still Out There

Recent renewed exploration activity in Western Canada is often ascribed to high commodity prices, low share prices, and geographic position within the American marketplace. It is also happening because the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin still offers excellent exploration opportunities. Large areas remain lightly drilled because of difficult access, environmental sensitivity, and distance from facilities. Many high-impact plays are only now being explored because of improved technologies and commodity prices.

Deformed carbonates of the Foothills host numerous giant gas fields, such as Waterton, Turner Valley, and Bullmoose-Sukunka. Explorers are using structural knowledge of these fields, along with advancing seismic technology, to hunt for gas in deeper and more remote areas, and in different stratigraphic intervals. Many new plays -- Benjamin Creek, Ricinus, Copton-Narraway -- focus on fractured Cretaceous clastics. Others target traditional reservoirs, but in complex structural configurations, far from existing pipelines and facilities.

Devonian carbonates beneath the Plains host giant oil and gas fields discovered up to 55 years ago, such as Leduc, Swan Hills, and Clarke Lake. New discoveries are being made in deeper, more remote, and subtler targets in areas like Berland River, Simonette, and Gold Creek in the deep Plains of west-central Alberta. The hottest play in the WCSB targets Slave Point buildups in the Ladyfern area of northeastern B.C., a western extension of the well-known northern Slave Point basin.

Western Canada will be a hotbed of exploration for many years to come, building on the world's most comprehensive public database of well data, cores and seismic. It is also the stepping-off point for new exploration in the vast undrilled areas of northern Canada.