

**Inspection of
Smythe Ratcliffe LLP
(Headquartered in Vancouver, Canada)**

**Issued by the
Public Company Accounting Oversight Board
May 26, 2011**

**THIS IS A PUBLIC VERSION OF A PCAOB INSPECTION REPORT
PORTIONS OF THE COMPLETE REPORT ARE OMITTED
FROM THIS DOCUMENT IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH
SECTIONS 104(g)(2) AND 105(b)(5)(A)
OF THE SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002**



Notes Concerning this Report

1. Portions of this report may describe deficiencies or potential deficiencies in the systems, policies, procedures, practices, or conduct of the firm that is the subject of this report. The express inclusion of certain deficiencies and potential deficiencies, however, should not be construed to support any negative inference that any other aspect of the firm's systems, policies, procedures, practices, or conduct is approved or condoned by the Board or judged by the Board to comply with laws, rules, and professional standards.
2. Any references in this report to violations or potential violations of law, rules, or professional standards should be understood in the supervisory context in which this report was prepared. Any such references are not a result of an adversarial adjudicative process and do not constitute conclusive findings of fact or of violations for purposes of imposing legal liability. Similarly, any description herein of a firm's cooperation in addressing issues constructively should not be construed, and is not construed by the Board, as an admission, for purposes of potential legal liability, of any violation.
3. Board inspections encompass, among other things, whether the firm has failed to identify financial statement misstatements, including failures to comply with Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC" or "Commission") disclosure requirements, in its audits of financial statements. This report's descriptions of any such auditing failures necessarily involve descriptions of the apparent misstatements or disclosure departures. The Board, however, has no authority to prescribe the form or content of an issuer's financial statements. That authority, and the authority to make binding determinations concerning whether an issuer's financial statements are misstated or fail to comply with Commission disclosure requirements, rests with the Commission. Any description, in this report, of financial statement misstatements or failures to comply with Commission disclosure requirements should not be understood as an indication that the Commission has considered or made any determination regarding these issues unless otherwise expressly stated.

INSPECTION OF SMYTHE RATCLIFFE LLP

The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB" or "the Board") has conducted an inspection of the registered public accounting firm Smythe Ratcliffe LLP ("the Firm"). The Board is issuing this report of that inspection in accordance with the requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 ("the Act").

The Board is making portions of the report publicly available. Specifically, the Board is releasing to the public Part I of the report and portions of Part IV of the report. Part IV of the report consists of the Firm's comments, if any, on a draft of the report.^{1/}

The Board has elsewhere described in detail its approach to making inspection-related information publicly available consistent with legal restrictions.^{2/} A substantial portion of the Board's criticisms of a firm (specifically criticisms of the firm's quality control system), and the Board's dialogue with the firm about those criticisms, occurs out of public view, unless the firm fails to make progress to the Board's satisfaction in addressing those criticisms. In addition, the Board generally does not disclose otherwise nonpublic information, learned through inspections, about the firm or its clients. Accordingly, information in those categories generally does not appear in the publicly available portion of an inspection report.

^{1/} The Board does not make public any of a firm's comments that address a nonpublic portion of the report unless a firm specifically requests otherwise. In addition, pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(b), if a firm requests, and the Board grants, confidential treatment for any of the firm's comments on a draft report, the Board does not include those comments in the final report at all. The Board routinely grants confidential treatment, if requested, for any portion of a firm's response that addresses any point in the draft that the Board omits from, or any inaccurate statement in the draft that the Board corrects in, the final report.

^{2/} See Statement Concerning the Issuance of Inspection Reports, PCAOB Release No. 104-2004-001 (August 26, 2004).

PART I

INSPECTION PROCEDURES AND CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS

Members of the Board's inspection staff ("the inspection team") conducted primary procedures for the inspection from November 16, 2009 to November 20, 2009.^{3/} These procedures were tailored to the nature of the Firm, certain aspects of which the inspection team understood at the outset of the inspection to be as follows:

Number of offices	4 (Nanaimo, North Vancouver, Vancouver, and Victoria, Canada)
Ownership structure	Limited liability partnership
Number of partners	12
Number of professional staff ^{4/}	86
Number of issuer audit clients ^{5/}	18

^{3/} The Board's inspection was conducted in cooperation with the Canadian Public Accountability Board.

^{4/} "Professional staff" includes all personnel of the Firm, except partners or shareholders and administrative support personnel. The number of partners and professional staff is provided here as an indication of the size of the Firm, and does not necessarily represent the number of the Firm's professionals who participate in audits of issuers or are "associated persons" (as defined in the Act) of the Firm.

^{5/} The number of issuer audit clients shown here is based on the Firm's self-reporting and the inspection team's review of certain information for inspection planning purposes. It does not reflect any Board determination concerning which, or how many, of the Firm's audit clients are "issuers" as defined in the Act. In some circumstances, a Board inspection may include a review of a firm's audit of financial statements of an issuer that ceased to be an audit client before the inspection, and any such former clients are not included in the number shown here.

Board inspections are designed to identify and address weaknesses and deficiencies related to how a firm conducts audits.^{6/} To achieve that goal, Board inspections include reviews of certain aspects of selected audits performed by the firm and reviews of other matters related to the firm's quality control system.

In the course of reviewing aspects of selected audits, an inspection may identify ways in which a particular audit is deficient, including failures by the firm to identify, or to address appropriately, respects in which an issuer's financial statements do not present fairly the financial position, results of operations, or cash flows of the issuer in conformity with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP"), or, as applicable, International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ("IFRS").^{7/} It is not the purpose of an inspection, however, to review all of a firm's audits or to identify every respect in which a reviewed audit is deficient. Accordingly, a Board inspection report should not be understood to provide any assurance that the firm's audits, or its issuer clients' financial statements, are free of any deficiencies not specifically described in an inspection report.

A. Review of Audit Engagements

The inspection procedures included a review of aspects of the Firm's auditing of financial statements of four issuers. The scope of this review was determined according to the Board's criteria, and the Firm was not allowed an opportunity to limit or influence the scope.

The inspection team identified what it considered to be audit deficiencies.^{8/} The deficiencies identified in all of the audits reviewed included deficiencies of such

^{6/} This focus necessarily carries through to reports on inspections and, accordingly, Board inspection reports are not intended to serve as balanced report cards or overall rating tools.

^{7/} When it comes to the Board's attention that an issuer's financial statements appear not to present fairly, in a material respect, the financial position, results of operations, or cash flows of the issuer in conformity with GAAP or IFRS, the Board's practice is to report that information to the SEC, which has jurisdiction to determine proper accounting in issuers' financial statements.

^{8/} PCAOB standards require a firm to take appropriate actions to assess the importance of audit deficiencies identified after the date of the audit report to the firm's

significance that it appeared to the inspection team that the Firm did not obtain sufficient competent evidential matter to support its opinion on the issuer's financial statements.^{9/} Those deficiencies were –

- (1) the Firm's failure to identify, or address appropriately, a departure from GAAP that related to a potentially material misstatement in the audited financial statements concerning the issuer's accounting for stock warrants;
- (2) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to evaluate the issuer's accounting for related and affiliated entities in consolidation;
- (3) the failure, in two audits, to perform sufficient procedures to test for potential asset retirement obligations;
- (4) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test net advances due from related parties;
- (5) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test long-lived assets for impairment;

present ability to support its previously expressed opinions. *See* AU 390, *Consideration of Omitted Procedures After the Report Date*, and AU 561, *Subsequent Discovery of Facts Existing at the Date of the Auditor's Report* (both included among the PCAOB's interim auditing standards, pursuant to PCAOB Rule 3200T). Failure to comply with these PCAOB standards could be a basis for Board disciplinary sanctions.

^{9/} In some cases, an inspection team's observation that a firm failed to perform a procedure may be based on the absence of documentation and the absence of persuasive other evidence, even if a firm claims to have performed the procedure. PCAOB Auditing Standard No. 3, *Audit Documentation* ("AS No. 3"), provides that, in various circumstances including PCAOB inspections, a firm that has not adequately documented that it performed a procedure, obtained evidence, or reached an appropriate conclusion must demonstrate with persuasive other evidence that it did so, and that oral assertions and explanations alone do not constitute persuasive other evidence. *See* AS No. 3, paragraph 9; Appendix A to AS No. 3, paragraph A28. For purposes of the inspection, an observation that the Firm did not perform a procedure, obtain evidence, or reach an appropriate conclusion may be based on the absence of such documentation and the absence of persuasive other evidence.

- (6) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the work of others in the audit of the issuer's internal control over financial reporting;
- (7) the failure to perform procedures to test stock-based compensation related to options issued for services and the modification of the terms of warrants; and
- (8) the failure to perform procedures to determine whether the U.S. GAAP reconciliation disclosure was complete and accurate.

One of the deficiencies described above related to auditing an aspect of an issuer's financial statements that the issuer revised in a restatement during the performance of the primary inspection procedures.^{10/}

B. Review of Quality Control System

In addition to evaluating the quality of the audit work performed on specific audits, the inspection included review of certain of the Firm's, practices, policies, and procedures related to audit quality. This review addressed practices, policies, and procedures concerning audit performance, training, compliance with independence standards, client acceptance and retention, and the establishment of policies and procedures. Any defects in, or criticisms of, the Firm's quality control system are discussed in the nonpublic portion of this report and will remain nonpublic unless the Firm fails to address them to the Board's satisfaction within 12 months of the date of this report.

END OF PART I

^{10/} The Board inspection process did not include review of any additional audit work related to the restatement.

PORTIONS OF THE REST OF THIS REPORT ARE NONPUBLIC AND ARE OMITTED
FROM THIS PUBLIC DOCUMENT

PART II

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B. Issues Related to Quality Controls

The inspection of the Firm included consideration of aspects of the Firm's system of quality control. Assessment of a firm's quality control system rests both on review of a firm's stated quality control policies and procedures and on inferences that can be drawn from respects in which a firm's system has failed to assure quality in the actual performance of engagements.^{11/} On the basis of the information reported by the inspection team, the Board has the following concerns about aspects of the Firm's system of quality control.

* * * *

Audit Performance

A firm's system of quality control should provide reasonable assurance that the work performed on an audit engagement will meet applicable professional standards and regulatory requirements. On the basis of the information reported by the inspection team, including the audit performance deficiencies described in Part II.A (and summarized in Part I.A) and any other deficiencies identified below, the Board has concerns that the Firm's system of quality control fails to provide such reasonable assurance in at least the following respects * * * *—

Testing Appropriate to the Audit

The Firm's system of quality control appears not to provide sufficient assurance that the Firm will conduct all testing appropriate to a particular audit, specifically with respect to the following issues:

* * * *

^{11/} A firm's failure to comply with the requirements of PCAOB standards when performing an audit may be an indication of a potentially significant defect in a firm's quality control system even if that failure did not result in an insufficiently supported audit opinion.

Impairment of Long-Lived Assets

As discussed above, in one of the audits reviewed, the inspection team identified a significant deficiency related to the Firm's failure to test the mineral properties written off during the year and the issuer's estimate of fair value of its remaining mineral properties at year-end. This information provides cause for concern regarding the Firm's quality control policies and procedures related to the auditing of long-lived assets. [Issuer C]

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PART IV

RESPONSE OF THE FIRM TO DRAFT INSPECTION REPORT

Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(a), the Firm provided a written response to a draft of this report. Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act and PCAOB Rule 4007(b), the Firm's response, minus any portion granted confidential treatment, is attached hereto and made part of this final inspection report.^{12/}

^{12/} In any version of an inspection report that the Board makes publicly available, any portions of a firm's response that address nonpublic portions of the report are omitted. In some cases, the result may be that none of a firm's response is made publicly available.



March 28, 2011

Mr. George Diacont
Director
Division of Registration and Inspections
Public Company Accounting Oversight Board
1666 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Sir:

Re: Response to Draft Report on 2009 Inspection of Smythe Ratcliffe LLP

We are pleased to provide our response to your draft report, dated February 25, 2011, on the inspection of Smythe Ratcliffe LLP (the "Draft Report") conducted by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB").

We are in full support of the PCAOB's objective to protect investors and the public interest by promoting high quality independent audits by establishing auditing, quality control and ethics standards to be used by accounting firms registered with the PCAOB. To this end, we take the PCAOB's comments and findings very seriously as we strive to continue to make improvements to our engagement execution, audit methodologies and quality control processes in continuing to conduct high quality audits. The PCAOB's inspection has assisted us in identifying certain areas where we can continue to improve. We appreciate the PCAOB bringing certain matters to our attention and the constructive discussions we had with the PCAOB inspection team.

Part I of your report includes observations that indicate insufficient audit work was performed in the evaluation of asset retirement obligations. As indicated in the Firm's response on these comments, the exploration activities consisted of activities that had little or no environmental impact and, accordingly, it was appropriate not to record any asset retirement obligations. In considering AU 390, there were no additional procedures necessary, and there were no implications for AU 561.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide our response to the Draft Report. We are dedicated to working together with the PCAOB in the future in our commitment to audit quality.

Yours very truly,

Smythe Ratcliffe LLP

Chartered Accountants

Smythe Ratcliffe LLP is a member firm of both the PKF International Limited network and PKF North America, which are, respectively, a network and an association of legally independent firms and does not accept any responsibility or liability for the actions or inactions on the part of any other individual member firm or firms.

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