

Harper summits another West African explorer

by Michael Cameron

Having appointed the man behind some of the ASX's most successful West African mining stories as chair, Many Peaks Minerals Ltd is determined to deliver on the potential of what many consider the region's next premier gold jurisdiction.

Ex-Tietto Minerals chair Francis Harper joined the board of Many Peaks as independent non-executive chair in November, his value clear to a company which has recently acquired two gold exploration projects in Cote d'Ivoire previously under Aussie stewardship.

Harper has helmed several West Africa-focused gold exploration companies including West African Resources Ltd, now one of the region's top producers, and emerging developer Predictive Discovery Ltd.



Auger drilling at Ferke aims to "punch through" ferricrete and pinpoint targets

Travis Schwertfeger, who has reverted to the role of managing director at Many Peaks, said heavy involvement from Harper's equity capital group Blackwood Capital Pty Ltd in a June private placement paved the way to more serious input from the veteran gold executive.

"He's taken a significant interest and is still buying

Many Peaks shares on market," Schwertfeger said.

"After getting an understanding of how interested Francis Harper was in the company, we were quite happy to get a bit more of his advice and input on our direction going forward."

Many Peaks kicked off a comprehensive auger drilling campaign at the Ferke gold project – 500km north of Abidjan – in November with plans to follow up on priority targets with aircore drilling. The company has also budgeted for subsequent RC and diamond drilling as part of a staged exploration campaign through the current drilling season.

Schwertfeger said the company was looking to the project's exploration history for inspiration.

"Predictive did some trenching work over and around some



Many Peaks managing director Travis Schwertfeger and geology intern Mariam Sangaré

artisanal workings and that led them to the Ouarigue South discovery, which has some really high-grade diamond drill intercepts from 2019," he said. "Those intercepts were over only about 300m of strike extent.

"There's very limited step-out drilling beyond that but what we see is that it sits within 10km of soil anomalism, we can see another three very distinct soil anomalies that are on the same tenor as Ouarigue South."

Schwertfeger said the auger programme was an interim step to refining targets at Ferke, the low-cost exploration method offering an effective way to clear hurdles thrown up by the project's geology.

"There is a 2-3m thick horizon of ferricrete and it's a weathering product from when, hundreds of thousands of years ago, it was all rainforest," he said.

"That chemical process of making iron concrete also mobilised the gold so you get depleted gold horizons but not a strong anomaly signature – we want to punch through that. Predictive did it with trenching, although not consistently because sometimes [the ferricrete] can be a little more than 2m in thickness.

"We do 25m spacing at an average 5-6m depth and that gets us a sample of the in-situ weathered clay saprolite. Instead of us doing 400m long lines of trenches and fences of drilling, this will take us into more refined targets."

The Ivorian drilling season runs from November to June and Schwertfeger said Many Peaks aimed to be as "aggressive" as possible when following up on legacy targets left over from the project's previous stewards, including Toro Gold.

Limited modern exploration, combined with newfound political stability, made Cote d'Ivoire an attractive jurisdiction for gold explorers, according to Schwertfeger.

"West Africa is one of the fastest growing gold production regions, but a lot of those numbers are based on the development of mines in Burkina Faso and Mali," he said.

"Guinea will feed that with some more mines coming online in the near future, but I think Cote d'Ivoire is set for a generation of discovery."