ATHENA GOLD COMPLETES MAIDEN DRILL PROGRAM AT LAIRD LAKE PROJECT IN ONTARIO'S RED LAKE GOLD DISTRICT

White Rock, BC --- Newsfile Corp. --- July 2, 2026 --- **Athena Gold Corporation (CSE: ATHA) (OTCQB: AHNRF)** ("Athena" or the "Company") is pleased to provide an exploration update from its flagship Laird Lake Project ("Laird Lake" or the "Project") in Ontario's Red Lake Gold District.

The Company has successfully completed its maiden drill program at the Project, which comprised a total of 5,134 metres across nine diamond drill holes (Figure 1/Table 1). The Company expects to receive all pending assays by early August. Crews have now commenced demobilization, with site clean-up activities underway.

"We are pleased to have safely and successfully completed our maiden drill program at Laird Lake, the culmination of years of hard work modernizing historical geophysical data through 3D inversions and completing an extensive +2,000 sample geochemical program. We extend our sincere thanks to Wabauskang First Nation and the Cameron family for their partnership and support throughout the program. We look forward to receiving all pending assay results and providing further updates to shareholders," said Koby Kushner, CEO of Athena.

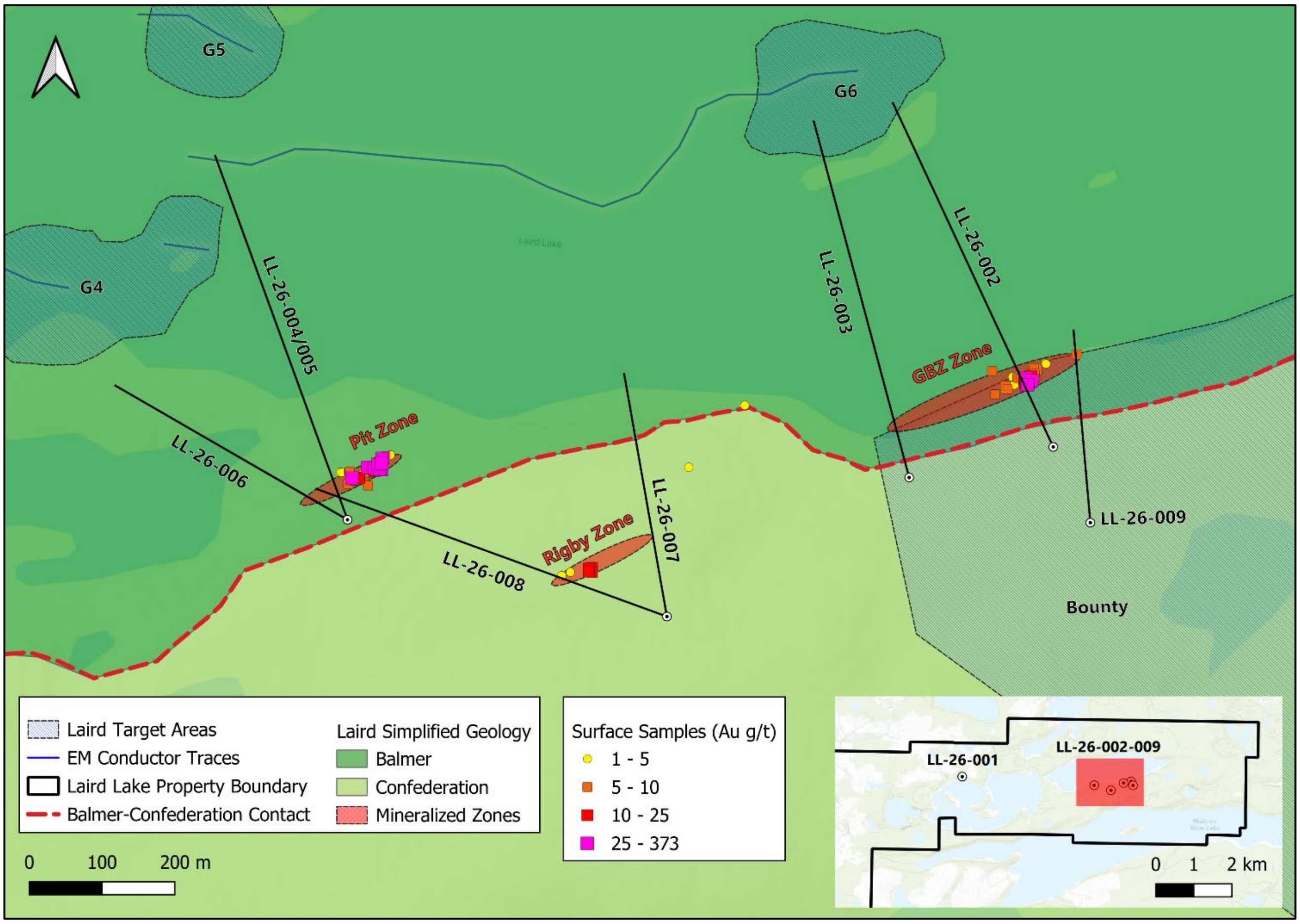

Figure 1: Map of Laird Lake, showing completed diamond drill holes.

Hole ID	Easting (UTM)	Northing (UTM)	Drilled Depth (m)	Azimuth (degrees)	Dip
LL-26-001	416707	5643849	323	340	45
LL-26-002	421146	5643723	737	335	45
LL-26-003	420948	5643681	26	345	45
LL-26-003A	420948	5643681	716	345	45
LL-26-004	420175	5643625	521	300	45
LL-26-005	420175	5643625	311	300	65
LL-26-006	420175	5643625	14	340	45
LL-26-006A	420175	5643625	752	340	45

LL-26-007	420615	5643490	479	350	45
LL-26-008	420615	5643490	725	290	45
LL-26-009	421197	5643619	530	355	60
			5134		

Table 1: Laird Lake diamond drill hole locations, depths and orientations.

Qualified Persons Statement

The technical information presented in this news release has been reviewed and approved by Benjamin Kuzmich, P.Geo., Vice President of Exploration for Athena Gold Corporation, and the Qualified Person as defined by NI 43-101 "Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects".

About Athena Gold Corporation

Athena is engaged in the business of mineral exploration and the acquisition of mineral property assets. Its objective is to locate and develop economic precious and base metal properties of merit and to conduct additional exploration drilling and studies on its projects across North America. Athena's Laird Lake project is situated in the Red Lake Gold District of Ontario, covering more than 7,000 hectares along more than 10 km of the Balmer-Confederation Assemblage contact, where recent surface sampling results returned up to 373 g/t Au. This underexplored area is road-accessible, located about 10 km west of West Red Lake Gold's Madsen mine and 34 km northwest of Kinross Gold's Great Bear project. Also in northwestern Ontario is Athena's Forester project, a 4,900-hectare land package located less than 30 km southeast of Orla Mining's Musselwhite Gold Mine, with historical drill intercepts showing strong potential for both high-grade, narrow-vein and low-grade, bulk-tonnage gold mineralization. Meanwhile, Athena's Excelsior Springs project is located in the prolific Walker Lane Trend in Nevada, where it is currently under an earn-in option with Mammoth Minerals Limited (formerly Firetail Resources Limited). The Excelsior Springs project spans more than 2,500 hectares and includes at least three historic mines. For further information about Athena Gold Corporation, please visit www.athenagoldcorp.com.

On Behalf of the Board of Directors
Koby Kushner
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Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements and forward-looking information (collectively, "forward-looking statements") within the meaning of applicable Canadian and U.S. securities laws. All statements, other than statements of historical facts, included herein, including, without limitation, statements regarding future exploration plans, future results from exploration, and the anticipated business plans and timing of future activities of the Company, are forward-looking statements. Although the Company believes that such statements are reasonable, it can give no assurance that such expectations will prove to be correct. Forward-looking statements are typically identified by words such as: "believes", "will", "expects", "anticipates", "intends", "estimates", "plans", "may", "should", ''potential", "scheduled", or variations of such words and phrases and similar expressions, which, by their nature, refer to future events or results that may, could, would, might or will occur or be taken or achieved. In making the forward-looking statements in this press release, the Company has applied several material assumptions, including without limitation, that there will be investor interest in future financings, market fundamentals will result in sustained precious metals demand and prices, the receipt of any necessary permits, licenses and regulatory approvals in connection with the future exploration and development of the Company's projects in a timely manner.

The Company cautions investors that any forward-looking statements by the Company are not guarantees of future results or performance, and that actual results may differ materially from those in forward-looking statements.

Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. The Company undertakes no obligation to update any of the forward-looking statements in this press release or incorporated by reference herein, except as otherwise stated.