Byron King's Top 5 "Outstanding" Yukon Gold (and Silver) Mining Names

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There are mining districts, and then there are mining districts. Speak with anyone even remotely knowledgeable about the mining space and certain names instantly elicit a smile.

For example, say "Quebec" and a person smart about mining will grin at the thought of all that gold over the decades. Same thing when you say "Nevada."

Or say "Peru" or "Chile" and a mining-savvy person will nod at the thought of copper, silver and much more.

Today let's discuss the sweet sound of "Yukon," because the most northwesterly province of Canada certainly brings mineralogical happiness to my soul. Indeed, I'm so positive about Yukon as a mining mecca that I'd like to list five of the top plays in the jurisdiction and explain why I like them. That is, allow me to share with you some ideas with upside, upside and more upside.

But only five! Because I could list ten, or fifteen, and maybe twenty. Yes, that's how promising is the mineral endowment of Yukon. For now, let's stick to five names in terms of descending levels of development.

We'll look at a newly built, producing mine and then work through other production, development and exploration names. Just five companies, though… And I apologize to the great plays *not* discussed here today, although your time will come as well.

Victoria Gold Corp. (TSX: VGCX)

Currently an up-and-running gold producer, I followed this one from the time it was a brown stain on a hillside to the buildout of a brand new, working mine. It's on track to produce 200,000 ounces of gold per year, with a mine life of 10 years and likely much more based on the results-oriented exploration of adjacent land. Every step of the way, Victoria was a model of excellent technical effort coupled with crisp execution. On paper, it's profitable at $750 gold. And with gold now at $1,750, the economics are superb. Aside from making money for its own account, Victoria is an obvious takeover play for any intermediate or senior gold miner that needs instant, profitable ounces.

Alexco Resource Corp. (NYSE American: AXU | TSX: AXU)

This is a reboot of a century-old lead-silver mining play in the Keno Hill area of Yukon. Now, the assets are again up and running with a modern mill and eye-popping new discoveries over the past five years. The old mine and mill were long abandoned and designated as a superfund cleanup site when the environmental services side of Alexco came along with an appointment from the government of Canada to begin a cleanup. But after not too long, management realized that remediation in connection with renewed mining could not just benefit the environment, but deliver world-class levels of lead and zinc, along with bonanza-grade quantities of silver. The operation pays for itself with the base metal output, and silver is icing on the top. As silver prices rise over time, Alexco is a rocket shot.

Western Copper and Gold Corporation (NYSE American: WRN | TSX: WRN)

Western controls the Casino ore body in southwest Yukon, a massive copper-gold-bearing porphyry that's best characterized

as advanced-stage exploration and early-stage development. The resource numbers are simply eye-watering, with over 10 billion pounds of copper and over 14 million ounces of gold (using the term, “measured, indicated and inferred”). Mine life is estimated at “over 47 years,” which is an amusing understatement among mining-savvy observers. Heck, this is a 100-year play if it lasts a day. The deposit will require a deep-pocketed operator to build it out, and Western has partnered with Rio Tinto to advance the effort. It’s worth noting that massive projects must await their moment in time. But based on price and demand trends for copper and the constant attractiveness of big-ounce gold plays, Western’s day in the sun is coming sooner rather than later.

Banyan Gold Corp. (TSXV: BYN)

Banyan is a gold play located on a massive geological trend that connects the above-mentioned Victoria Gold and Alexco. Drilling to date has been remarkably successful at finding mineable, commercial levels of gold in almost every hole. Obviously, as per the drilling, there is precious metal in the ground and now the challenge is to figure out how much; although my informed hunch is likely “a heck of a lot” as these things go. And as if the gods of the earth could not be more favorable to Banyan, much of the land package is located along a road system, with an adjacent airfield and power lines. It makes logistics far less expensive and lowers finding costs by extending the bang for every drilling buck. Currently, the idea is to drill and identify more of that gold. Next comes the resource estimation, and that’s when, where and why Banyan’s share price has skyrocket potential.

Metallic Minerals Corp. (TSXV: MMG | OTCQB: MMNGF)

Metallic is an early-stage exploration play located on a land

package directly adjacent to the above-mentioned Alexco. Many of the same geologic trends that underlie Alexco continue onto the Metallic land package. In that sense, Metallic has focused its early-stage drilling on finding similar rocks, structures and chemical trends. Another way of looking at it is that the Keno Hill silver district began with outcroppings of veins and mineral resources that old-time prospectors spotted over a century ago. But those geological clues are more deeply buried on the Metallic land package, and not evident to the casual eyeball. This time around, finding the ore zones will require modern exploration techniques to figure it all out. Still, Metallic is in the right place with the right geology, and a solid, well-run program focused on finding what “ought” to be there. Give it time, and here’s a play with excellent potential and upside.

That’s all for now… Thank you for reading.