

Top 3 best valued lithium juniors, as lithium prices near a bottom

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Following an incredible 2022, the lithium sector has had a horrible 2023; however soon the pain should be over. The China lithium carbonate spot price is down 82.5% in the past year and is now below the marginal cost of production, meaning the lithium price fall should end very soon. This assumes the marginal cost producers continue to stop production and that EV sales continue to grow in 2024.

Market Bullishness on Lithium has eyes on Critical Elements Lithium

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The world is going to need a lot of lithium over the next several years if it wants to come anywhere near the goals being set by most G7 governments. The math is staggering as clearly defined by Jack Lifton in this great [InvestorIntel article](#). So today we are going to look at one of the purest lithium deposits globally, the Rose Lithium-Tantalum project in Quebec. The project is owned and operated by [Critical Elements Lithium Corporation](#) (TSXV: CRE | OTCQX: CRECF).

Rose Lithium-Tantalum Project:

The Rose Lithium-Tantalum property comprises 473 claims spread over a 24,654 ha area located in northern Québec's administrative region, on the territory of Eeyou Istchee James Bay approximately 40 km north of the Cree village of Nemaska. The property is accessible by road via the Route du Nord, usable all year round and is 80 km south of Goldcorp's Éléonore gold mine, 45 km northwest of Nemaska's Whabouchi lithium project and 20 km south of Hydro Québec's Eastmain 1 hydroelectricity generating plant. In essence, excellent access to infrastructure including roads, low-costs (low carbon – 93% hydroelectricity) power and skilled labor.

On November 27, 2017, the Company filed a [National Instrument 43-101 technical report](#) for the feasibility study of the Rose Lithium-Tantalum project.

Highlights are as follows:

- Average annual production of 186,327 tonnes of chemical grade lithium concentrate
- Average annual production of 50,205 tonnes of technical grade lithium concentrate
- Average annual production of 429 tonnes of tantalum concentrate
- Expected life of mine of 17 years
- Average operating costs of \$66.56 per tonne milled, \$458 (US\$344) per tonne of concentrate (all concentrate production combined)
- Estimated initial capital cost \$341.2 million before working capital
- Average gross margin 63.6%
- After-tax NPV of \$726 million (at 8% discount rate), after-tax IRR of 34.9% and price assumption of US\$1,500

per tonne technical grade lithium concentrate, US\$750 per tonne chemical grade lithium concentrate, US\$130 per kg tantalum pentoxide

To summarize, the deposit is a hard rock resource that hosts high purity lithium material with low iron and low mica content with full support and cooperation from the Québec government, First Nations and local communities. The economics and quality of this project have been proven to be very lucrative.

With a market cap of roughly \$305.6 million, based on 183 million shares outstanding at yesterday's three year high close of \$1.67, CRE is not an inexpensive, undiscovered micro-cap. However, you are getting a project that is on track to be fully permitted and start construction in 2021 with first production in 2023. It is located in a politically safe and supportive jurisdiction and with the increasing emphasis on supply chain certainty there is a lot of potential value simply as a result of the location of the Rose project. Not to take anything away from the quality or robust economics surrounding Rose as well.

Looking at the chart, CRE appears to be breaking out from a five month sideways channel ranging from approximately \$1.20 to \$1.55. It has traded above \$1.60 for the last five days on above average volume, closing above the \$1.60 level twice in that span. Whether this is being driven by their recent news that the company had received [UL ECOLOGO® Certification](#) for Mineral Exploration, anticipation of the decision statement on the environmental assessment from the Impact Assessment Agency, which is due imminently, or simply a result of general bullishness surrounding lithium, the chart looks very constructive from a technical perspective.



All in all, Critical Elements Lithium represents a potential

world class lithium mine (and a meaningful rerating opportunity that goes with that) plus speculative upside from the companies [eight other projects](#). Would it have been nice to discover this gem a year ago when it was trading closer to \$0.30 yet still had far less risk than a pure exploration play? Absolutely, and congratulations if you are a long term holder of CRE shares. However, if you are as bullish on lithium as Jack Lifton is you may want to take a closer look at Critical Elements Lithium Corporation.

It's all in the name – Critical Elements Lithium

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There has been a lot of talk about Lithium (Li) over the last several months. We are all familiar with Lithium-Ion batteries in our laptops, cell phones, tablets, power tools and of course electric cars. But have you ever wondered why that is or are you like me (until now) and just took it for granted. Turns out Lithium has the highest electric output per unit weight of any battery material which is why it is the standard material for lithium-ion (high energy-density rechargeable) batteries. It also happens to be the lightest of all metals making for a pretty good one-two punch to be used in battery technology. The point is, until there is a material technological breakthrough, Lithium will be leading the charge towards electrification of our society.

To that end, the demand side for Lithium looks to be skyrocketing over the next several years/decades. Here's some

great information on this courtesy of InvestorIntel's own Jack Lifton in this [article](#). As well there is a whole lot of supply chain questions that have been raised by both the pandemic and Chinese dominance of many of the critical battery materials leading to a noticeable shift towards "home grown" supply. Jack Lifton covers this issue in a video that's also worth a view [here](#), where he discusses how the policy of the US government is to prioritize the production of critical materials either in the United States or in friendly countries that are allied with the US. Additionally, at this year's virtual PDAC [Canada announced](#) its own list of minerals (including Lithium) considered critical for the sustainable economic success of Canada and our allies. Canada's Minister of Natural Resources is quoted as saying "Canada's list signals to investors where Canada will focus and where Canada will lead. Critical minerals will get us to net-zero."

Needless to say, there should be a bit of a premium to North American BEV (battery-powered electric vehicle) manufacturers to have a convenient and stable source of this important material. Perhaps even more importantly, critical minerals and their development has the support of the Federal government. Enter [Critical Elements Lithium Corporation](#) (TSXV: CRE | OTCQX: CRECF). A Quebec based junior mining company with its flagship Rose Lithium-Tantalum project located in James-Bay, Quebec. The company has one of the most advanced Lithium projects in Canada and one of the purest lithium deposits globally. The company recently [announced](#) an update to its draft environmental impact assessment report in which the Committee concludes that the project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects. This moves the Rose project one step closer to obtaining the final authorization and keeping Critical Elements on pace to start mine construction in 2021 and see first production by late 2022/early 2023.

In 2017, Critical Elements completed a feasibility study on Rose Phase 1 for the production of high quality spodumene concentrate with an internal rate of return for the project estimated at 35% after tax, a net present value estimated at C\$726 million (8% discount rate) and a three year payback. Those are some robust numbers but it's going to be expensive to bring this project into production. The initial capital cost is estimated at C\$341 million including all infrastructure with a 10% contingency. Correspondingly, in January 2021, [the company announced](#) it has engaged Cantor Fitzgerald Canada Corporation to pursue, engage and evaluate global strategic partners and investors to advance the Rose Project to production. Given the outlook for Lithium, it's plausible to conceive that Critical Elements will be able to pick and choose the best deal for themselves to get the project financed (has anyone put a call into Elon Musk?).

In addition to the appeal of owning a company that could have a world class Lithium mine in full production by 2023 (and a meaningful rerating opportunity that goes with that), there is still some speculative upside from the companies 8 other projects. Even better, [Critical Elements just announced](#) an option agreement that gives Lomiko the right to acquire up to a 70% interest in the Bourier project. This agreement will allow the Bourier property to be explored in detail for battery minerals discoveries, such as Lithium, Nickel, Copper and Zinc while Critical Elements stays focused on goal #1 – the Rose Lithium-Tantalum project. However, with roughly \$8 million dollars in cash, a financing decision has to be made to continue moving this exciting North American Lithium mine moving forward.

Eric Zaunscherb on Critical Elements Lithium's competitive advantages and the demand driven by energy storage systems

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In a recent InvestorIntel interview, Tracy Weslosky speaks with Eric Zaunscherb, Chairman of [Critical Elements Lithium Corporation](#) (TSXV: CRE | OTCQX: CRECF), about their flagship Rose Lithium-Tantalum project located in James-Bay, Quebec. Eric starts with "Lithium ion batteries are ramping up in terms of demand driven by e-mobility and energy storage systems." And then proceeds to discuss the Critical Elements' vision, which is to be a global leading, responsible supplier of lithium hydroxide to the emerging electric vehicle and energy storage industries. Discussing the value of their First Nations relations, and the advantages relating to management with experience in taking a project to operations, Eric discusses how Critical Elements is well-positioned to play a significant role in the lithium market with one of the highest purity spodumene deposits in the world. Adding that "We aspire to be a large responsible and sustainable provider of lithium to the lithium ion battery industry."

To watch the full interview, [click here](#)

About Critical Elements Lithium Corporation

Critical Elements Lithium Corporation is a junior mining company in advance exploration stage. The company's flagship project is

the Rose Lithium-Tantalum project located in James-Bay, Quebec with a good geographic location, on-site access to infrastructures like: powerline, roads, airport, railway access and camp. Primero Group recently completed the first phase of its Early Contractor Involvement agreement with the Corporation and provided a Guaranteed Maximum Price for the engineering, procurement and construction of the wholly-owned Rose Lithium-Tantalum project on a lump sum turnkey basis that is in line with the Project's feasibility study published November 29, 2017. The project feasibility study is based on price forecasts of US \$750/tonne for chemical-grade lithium concentrate (5% Li₂O), US \$1,500/tonne for technical-grade lithium concentrate (6% Li₂O) and US \$130/kg for Ta₂O₅ in tantalite concentrate, and an exchange rate of US \$0.75/CA \$. The internal rate of return ("IRR") for the Rose Lithium-Tantalum project is estimated at 34.9% after tax, and net present value ("NPV") is estimated at CA \$726 million at an 8% discount rate.

To learn more about Critical Elements Lithium Corporation, [click here](#)

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