Alset’s salars show high potential for battery grade lithium

Producing lithium from hard rock sources has always been problematic since concentrations high enough for economical operations are rarely found. The risk this creates for a mining junior is phenomenal, as no proof of composition can be had before large sums have already been invested. Comparatively, salar brines, are much cheaper to process so that lithium concentrations of only a few hundred parts per million (ppm) are perfectly reasonable to extract. To this end, Alset Minerals Corp. (TSXV:ION) (“Alset”) has not only proven the presence of lithium at 1,860ppm under their flagship La Salada salar in Mexico, but has also acquired a further five Mexican salars, bringing the company’s total to twelve of the precious salt flats.

Salars are expansive dry lake beds, and since the water has long ago evaporated, all that remains is a desert environment composed entirely of a concentrated layer of the previously dissolved salts. Beneath these antarctic-like stretches of land are often briney reservoirs which contain higher-than-average concentrations of materials such as lithium, potassium and sodium. Each of these elements is desirable to one market or another, but lithium is one of the most sought-after metals in the world today since it is essential to the manufacture of batteries which power electric vehicles.

The ever-increasing demand for lithium fuelled by an ever increasing need for batteries has even created a market in which hard rock lithium mining is now possible, but the edge still goes to those who can evaporate a brine to arrive at a decent concentrate. Since these salars often exist at altitude and are frequently featureless, establishing evaporation ponds

and letting the sun take care of the rest is an extremely effective method of extraction, although the standard drilling and assaying are still required to ensure that the good stuff/bad stuff ratio is sufficient to proceed.

The recent brine results at La Salada show high potassium, high sulphate, low calcium and low magnesium concentrations, suggesting the possibility of producing potassium salts at La Salada using solar evaporation. Potassium production is great opportunity for Mexico since the country struggles to source affordable fertilizers for its extensive agricultural industry, and so domestic production would almost certainly be successful. It seems that La Salada is an outstanding salar that is showing considerable potential for significant resources of not only lithium but also potassium and other essential minerals used in agriculture.

Based on these results, Alset are now ready to move forward with metallurgical work to understand the leaching characteristics of the soils and to further explore for brine and aquifer potential at depth. In addition to the work completed at La Salada, a first pass auger sampling program has been completed over the company's Santa Clara, Saldivar, Caliguey, Colorada, Chapalla salars and some of the more recently acquired salars. Those sample results are currently pending and should be reported in the next few weeks.

Alset's five newest acquisitions amount to a major land position in a new province of highly prospective salars that were identified in the 1980s by the Servicio Geologico Mexicana (SGM) when they declared the region as having the highest priority for lithium. These new salars complement the company's current portfolio and, once regulatory approval is received, will give Alset a 100% interest in a group of salars that cover an entire province. Whether the end game be battery-grade lithium or agricultural supplies, the low-cost nature of these salt flats will be what protects Alset from the price fluctuations that have sunk so many hard rock miners

in the past; I’d call this one a safe bet.