

Belararox hires South America copper virtuoso

Belararox Ltd has uncovered the initial signs of a large-scale copper deposit typical of Argentina's famed San Juan province at several targets identified by a highly regarded copper specialist.

ASX-listed explorer Belararox appointed Dr Steve Garwin as chief technical advisor in January looking for a fresh perspective at its flagship TMT project in the Central Andes. Garwin is a porphyry, epithermal and Carlin-style exploration specialist, who has advised Hot Chili Ltd and Aurania Resources Ltd and played a key role in the discovery of SolGold Inc's massive Cascabel porphyry project in Ecuador.

He wasted no time picking out a number of promising targets at the TMT project, which sits in the same area as some of the most valuable copper-gold porphyry assets in South America, such as Filo de Sol (Lundin Mining Corp), Josemaria (Lundin), Altar (Aldelbaran Resources Inc) Los Azules (McEwen Mining Inc), El Pachon (Glencore plc) as well as high-sulphidation gold deposits such as Barrick Gold Corp-Shandong Gold Mining Co Ltd's Pascua Lama and Veladero.

Belararox managing director Arvind Misra

"Last year, BHP invited [Belararox exploration director] Jason [Ward] and I to Toronto, where their exploration team is based. We met their geology team and the team that invested \$100 million in Filo de Sol for a 5% interest in the project. They followed up at PDAC and asked us about the progress we're making at TMT. One of these companies has actually been to the Belararox office in San Juan and will be on site for a week in April. The fact they are already interested in visiting the site tells you the project is catching the attention of those big players."

Belararox plans to investigate TMT's Malambo and Toro prospects for signs of a porphyry system and Misra said Garwin and Ward's experience in South America was proving to be invaluable.

Historical surface samples were plotted against hyperspectral data at the Toro North, Central and South prospects which identified the potential for rock chips to uncover evidence of an epithermal system. Misra said zeroing in on an associated porphyry was the Belararox team's endgame.

"From Steve's predictions he based on Aster and Sentinel 2 [hyperspectral] work,



Steve Garwin

where they are exactly located within the stratigraphy. When our geologists do this work, they look at different ratios: copper, gold, zinc, molybdenum. Through analysis, they aim to vector in on the hotspots."

Belararox has taken 1,100 samples so far and will release results over the next few months with the first 200 samples from Toro having been released earlier in the year. The company plans to recommence drilling at TMT after the San Juan winter season which runs from May to July. The field season in San Juan starts in September and Misra expects the initial drilling programme to kick off in October or November.

"It will be all diamond drilling and we are going to drill deeper holes; we're looking at 2,000m holes," he said. "The first-pass campaign will be anywhere between 7,500-10,000m. Because the fieldwork we have done was only on the top five targets – Toro Central, South, North, Malambo and Tambo – we'll be drill testing those targets, putting a few holes into each of them. Some of the mineralisation we're looking for might be deeper and some might be shallower, but we definitely have a very good alteration system and this team – who have discovered porphyries in the past – is very excited about it."

San Juan's mature mining industry has gifted the jurisdiction with a deep pool of well-qualified talent and Misra said Belararox's strategy of hiring local geologists was a perfect fit for TMT.

"All the geologists we have working at TMT have worked at different projects nearby like Filo de Sol, Josemaria and even Veladero," he said.

"Jason, our exploration director, lives in Mendoza, he has been living there for 20 years. He has built the team that is working on TMT and this team has been working together with him for many years on various projects."

– Michael Cameron



Arvind Misra in San Juan

said Garwin's work at TMT may have contributed to "significant" interest from several major mining companies at PDAC, indicating to him and his team the buzz around San Juan's copper mining potential was louder than ever.

"I had visits to my booth from BHP Ltd, Rio Tinto Ltd, Fortescue Metals Group Ltd, Vale SA and Teck Resources Ltd, with many of them returning, one of them returned three times," Misra said.

our people working on the ground have found exactly what he said they would," Misra said. "Our team have done a lot of mapping and sampling work at the Toro targets and Malambo and are now finishing work at Tambo, which is the northernmost prospect at TMT.

"The presence of porphyries is definitely confirmed at some of those projects and now it's a matter of what grade they are and