

EQUITAS aims to solve mystery with geophysics near Voisey's Bay

by Jennifer S. Getsinger, PhD, PGeo

Remember the excitement of the 1993 staking rush around Robert Friedland's huge Voisey's Bay discovery in Labrador – now Vale's nickel-copper-cobalt mine? These types of massive magmatic sulphide deposits often occur in clusters. Geologists reckoned there would be more and set off to find them. Unfortunately, the expected cluster of mineral deposits has been elusive; however, this geological mystery may soon be solved.

Equitas Resources Corp. [EQT-TSXV; EQTRF-OTC] has solved at least some of the mystery using innovative geophysical techniques, outlining several targets hidden beneath a cap of granitoid rock at its Garland nickel-copper sulphide property, about 30 km southeast of Vale's mine. "We are following a story that started over 20 years ago, hopefully writing the next chapter," said Kyler Hardy, Equitas President and CEO, in a recent telephone interview.

The main property of interest is the Garland Project in the Voisey's Bay area of Newfoundland and Labrador, acquired in 2014 (more than 25,000 ha). The company also retains the Day copper-gold porphyry exploration project in the Toadoggon region of northern British Columbia, near the Kemess Mine, as well as a handful of minor gold exploration properties, also in Canada.

Previously, work on the Equitas Garland property, indicated a 70-metre thick sheet of Proterozoic granitic rock that masked geophysical signals from the underlying Archean rocks (during the Voisey's Bay rush, airborne EM could only penetrate the top 50 to 75 m of rock). However, advanced deeper-sensing techniques such as VTEM-Plus (Versatile Time-domain ElectroMagnetic surveys, using a helicopter-borne transmitter and receiver loop, to 350 m depth), have led to the current discovery of new geophysical anomalies. Deep VTEM techniques are capable of peering further below the surface to reveal signatures of possible nickel-copper sulphide deposits in mafic gabbro-norites and troctolite intrusives. These sulphides were formed by magmatic differentiation processes rather than by meteorite impact (Sudbury type). Similar deposits of this type may host platinum group elements, but they have not yet been discovered in this area.

Several exploration companies (including Vale) previously researched the area around the Garland property, having done some geological mapping, as well as gravity and IP geophysical surveys, and one diamond drill hole.

To follow up on promising results, ground-based TDEM surveys (large-loop electromagnetics with cable on the ground) will



Everett Makela, VP of Exploration, left, and Sean Kingsley, Manager of Corporate Communications, at the Garland Project exploration camp near Voisey's Bay, Labrador. Photo courtesy Equitas Resources Corp.

be conducted by Equitas to provide better definition of targets suggested by VTEM.

Diamond drilling is now under way on the Garland property, with 4,000 metres planned for the 2015 field season (~12 holes of 250 m each). In addition to geophysicists, prospectors and geologists are out on the ground at Garland, investigating some of the most promising anomalies while studying geology and tectonic structures such as east-west fault trends.

"What we're trying to do here," said Hardy, "is make a discovery which will then become a resource with more definition. The next piece of the puzzle is evaluating the project from a grass-roots point of view." He said that the VP of exploration at Equitas, Everett Makela, is experienced in the geology of the Voisey's Bay region, and that their geophysicist, Alan King, was formerly employed at Vale-Inco, so they are well suited to looking around for other possibilities as well as advancing the Garland Project to the next level.

Kyler Hardy has worked up from drill contractor to running a large management group. "My whole life I've run cash-flowing businesses with revenue." He is more excited about looking for nickel and copper than precious metals. "There is significant opportunity in nickel right now," he said.

Hardy worked as a contractor on First Point's Decar nickel project in BC where he became familiar with the nickel sector. Because people are excited about the possibility of more nickel around Voisey's Bay (Vale's mine supplies about a third of Canada's mined nickel), Equitas has been able to source funding for financing the project. Now that Vale has established the Long Harbour Processing Plant 100 km west of St. John's, Newfoundland, they might welcome extra mill feed from the area. The Garland Project, only 30 km from the Voisey's Bay Mine, is closer to the remote coastal community of Nain (Nunatsiavut). Local people (Inuit and Innu) are expected to participate on the project (the Inuit have negotiated agreements with Vale regarding Voisey's Bay, and further agreements are pending). Air and sea infrastructure services at Voisey's Bay are accessible to the nearby Garland property. ■