

ASTUTE GEARS UP FOR MAIDEN DRILLING CAMPAIGN AT RED MOUNTAIN LITHIUM PROJECT, USA

Drill permitting complete, drill rig secured, drilling to commence in May



Key Highlights

- **Permitting of drill sites complete with BLM approval received and bond in place.**
- **Drill rig secured with estimated commencement in early May 2024.**
- **Drilling to test a coherent lithium soil anomaly over 80ppm Li, reinforced by high-grade claystone rock chip sample assays of up to 2,190ppm Li.**
- **1,500m maiden drill campaign to kick-start the Company's 2024 Nevada field season at this highly-prospective project.**

Astute Metals NL (ASX: ASE) ("ASE", "Astute" or "the Company") is pleased to advise that preparations are well advanced ahead of its maiden drilling campaign at the recently staked 100%-owned Red Mountain Lithium Project in Nevada, USA.

The Company has recently received approval from the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for its Notice of intent to conduct exploration and has a bond in place, allowing it to advance drilling preparations.

A total of 10 drill sites have been permitted, with the Company intending to drill a planned 1,500m (approx. 5,000ft) subject to ground conditions encountered and rock types intersected during initial drilling.

Drill contractor Harris Exploration has been awarded the contract to undertake the maiden drilling campaign, having drilled for Astute previously at the Altair Project, also in Nevada.

The Red Mountain Project is highly prospective for clay-hosted lithium deposits, which form some of the largest lithium deposits in North America. Examples in Nevada include the 16.1Mt Lithium Carbonate Equivalent (LCE) Thacker Pass deposit², the owner Lithium Americas (NYSE: LAC) being the recent recipient of a conditional US\$2.26 billion loan to finance the construction of processing facilities from the United States Department of Energy under the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program³.

The above demonstrates the significant commitment that the Federal US Government has made to establishing a domestic lithium battery supply chain and, when combined with the natural lithium endowment in the State, shows why Nevada is the world's premier jurisdiction for lithium exploration.

Astute Chairman, Tony Leibowitz, said:

"With permitting now complete and a drill contractor secured, Astute is advancing its final preparations for drilling at the exciting Red Mountain Project – and is one step closer to confirming the Board's view that a discovery beneath recently reported strong surface lithium anomalism and high-grade lithium mineralization in claystone rock chips is possible.

"Recent strategic developments in the US with funding of the Thacker Pass Project reinforce the fundamental reason that we are pursuing lithium exploration in Nevada, which continues to emerge as a premier jurisdiction for lithium exploration globally."

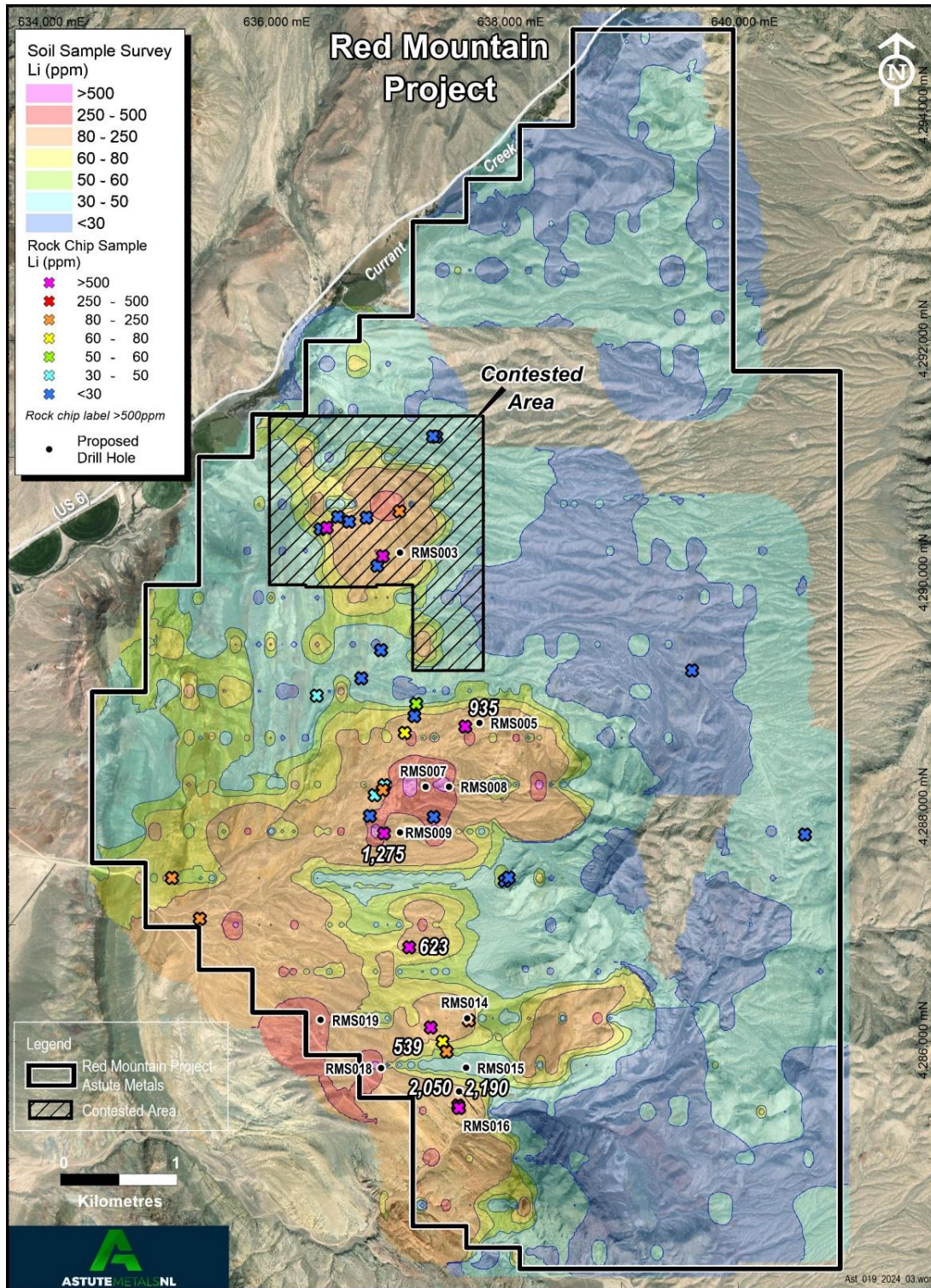


Figure 1. Permitted drill hole locations, gridded lithium soil geochemistry and rock chip samples at Red Mountain.

Background

Located in central eastern Nevada, the Red Mountain Project was staked in August 2023 following a desktop project generation exercise and subsequent on-ground reconnaissance conducted in May 2023.

The Project area has broad mapped tertiary lacustrine (lake) sedimentary rocks known locally as the Horse Camp Formation, and regionally as part of the Ts3. Elsewhere in the state of Nevada, the Ts3 hosts large lithium deposits such as Lithium Americas (NYSE: LAC) 16.1Mt LCE Thacker Pass Project, the American Battery Technology Corporation (OTCMKTS: ABML) 15.8Mt LCE Tonopah Flats deposit⁵ and the American Lithium (TSX.V: LI) 9.79Mt LCE TLC Lithium Project⁴.

After staking was completed, Astute completed an 819-point soil sampling campaign that revealed strong lithium anomalism in soils, with grades of up to 1,110ppm lithium and a coherent 50ppm+ anomaly that stretched over 8km strike and up to 2.8km width¹.

Following completion of the soil sampling campaign, the Company embarked on a rock-chip campaign at Red Mountain designed to test for lithium at strategic locations and across a range of outcropping and shallowly sub-cropping rock types.

The results of the rock chip sampling reveal the presence of strongly mineralised claystone, with 10 claystones grading on average 1,102ppm lithium, ranging from 132–2,190ppm lithium⁶. As a relatively soft rock type, the claystones at Red Mountain are ‘recessive’, or lie beneath a typically thin veneer of alluvium.

This recessive nature of the claystone means that more claystone may be present than is immediately apparent, with the harder rock types presenting as outcrop and the claystone being hidden.

Other attractive Project characteristics include outcropping claystone host-rocks and close proximity to infrastructure, including the Project being immediately adjacent to the Grand Army of the Republic Highway (Route 6), which links the regional cities of Ely with Tonopah, close to the Company’s other Polaris and Altair Projects.

Maiden Drill Campaign

The Company has recently received approval from the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for its Notice of intent to conduct exploration and has a bond in place, allowing the Company to advance preparations for drilling.

A total of 10 drill sites have been permitted as part of the maiden drill campaign at Red Mountain. The Company intends to drill approximately 1,500m/5,000ft initially, which will be subject to ground conditions encountered and rock types intersected during initial drilling.

A second phase of drilling has been tentatively planned, with a view to moving quickly to permit these holes once successful intersection of lithium is confirmed in the initial holes.

Drill contractor Harris Exploration has been awarded the contract to undertake the maiden drilling campaign, having drilled for Astute previously as part of its most recent drilling campaign at the Altair Project, also in Nevada. Harris is in the process of undertaking a full rebuild of the rig allocated for the Red Mountain campaign, which will assist in ensuring an efficient maiden drill campaign at the Project.

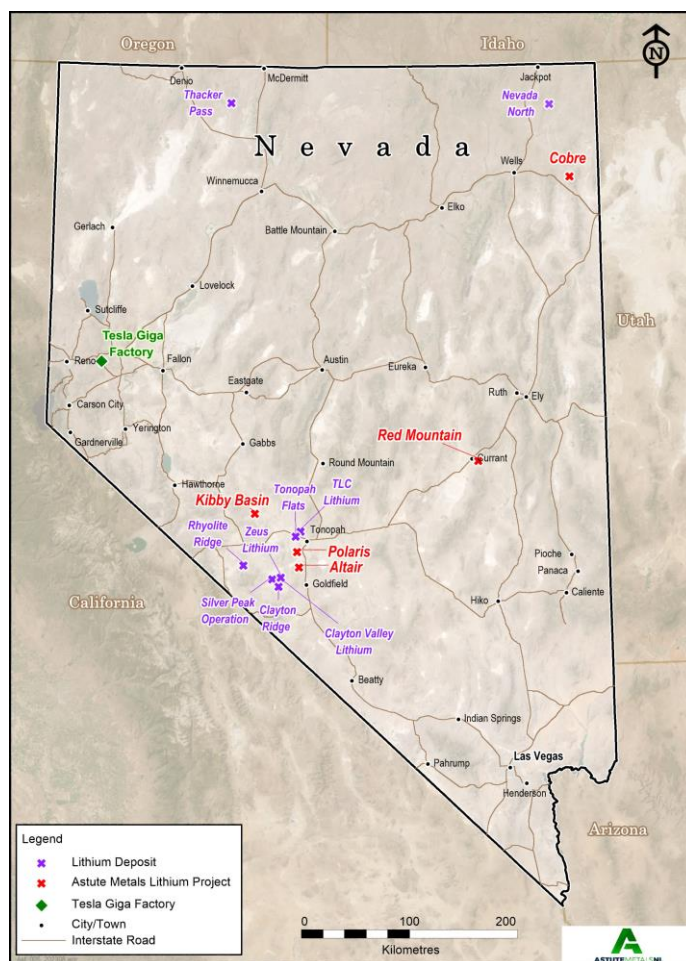


Figure 2. Location of Astute Lithium Projects and Nevada lithium deposits.

Update on the Contested Area

As previously advised¹, the Company considers that it has the title to the “Contested Area” as depicted in Figure 1. The Company has initiated proceedings against the Competitor who has claimed the rights to the “Contested Area” with the view of seeking ownership of that area. The Company is currently engaged in a preliminary dispute with the counter party. Further updates on material changes will be advised when they come to hand.

¹ ASX: ASE 20 November 2023 ‘Large Lithium soil anomalies discovered at Red Mountain’

² NYSE: LAC 2 November 2022 ‘Feasibility Study NI 43-101 Technical Report for the Thacker Pass Project’

³ NYSE: LAC 14 March 2024 ‘Lithium Americas Receives Conditional Commitment for \$2.26 Billion ATVM Loan from the U.S. DOE for Construction of Thacker Pass’

⁴ TSX.V: LI 17 March 2023 ‘Tonopah Lithium Claims project NI 43-101 technical report – Preliminary Economic Assessment’

⁵ OTCMKTS: ABML 26 February 2023 ‘Technical Report Summary For The Tonopah Flats Lithium Project, Esmeralda’

⁶ ASX: ASE 27 November 2023 ‘Outstanding Rock-Chip Assays at Red Mountain Project’

Authorisation

This announcement has been authorised for release by the Board of Astute.

More Information

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Competent Persons

The information in this report is based on information compiled by Mr Matthew Healy, a Competent Person who is a Member of The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM Member number 303597). Mr Healy is a full-time employee of Astute Metals NL and is eligible to participate in a Loan Funded Share incentive plan of the Company. Mr Healy has sufficient experience that is relevant to the style of mineralisation and type of deposit under consideration and to the activity being undertaken to qualify as a Competent Person as defined in the 2012 Edition of the ‘Australasian Code for Reporting of Exploration Results, Mineral Resources and Ore Reserves’. Mr Healy consents to the inclusion in the report of the matters based on his information in the form and context in which it appears.