

**PROSPECCIÓN GEOQUÍMICA DEL ÁREA QUEBRADA MALA,
FAJA PLEGADA DE CHOS MALAL, NO NEUQUÉN**

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Abstract

To delineate areas favorable for mineral exploration, geochemical analyses of stream sediments and rock chips were conducted in the Quebrada Mala area, northwest Neuquén. During the reconnaissance phase of the investigation 150 sites were sampled from the drainage basin of a 130x 130 km area. The areal patterns of the geochemical data from samples < 177 .tm (mesh < 80) stream sediment show a series of anomalies for As, Sb and Au at threshold values of 53 ppm, 25 ppm, and 29 ppb, respectively, in the heads of the Cajón Grande and Cajón del Medio creeks. These anomalies occur in sulfide-bearing hornfels and skarn outcrops around diorite satecks, diques and sills. Cu, Pb and Zn anomalies also occur in these areas, and they are more widespread along die creeks. A detail geochemistry survey was carried out in the favorable areas prospective for skarn deposits. Cu, Pb, Zn, As, Sb, Bi, Ag and Au were analyzed in 130 rock cheap samples from previous selected sites. The geochemical results showed low concentration of base metals: only 9 % of Zn, 8 % of Cu and 1,5 % of Pb values were anomalous compared with die anomalous values established for a skarn deposit and their distributions were erratic. In contrast, Bi (up to 44 ppm), Sb (up to 58 ppm) and As (up to ppm) anomalies were detected in skarns, homfels and altered igneous rocks. The high sulfide concentrations with abundance of phyrrotite, low base metal contents and As, Sb and Bi anomalies are characteristics similar to worldwide Au skarn deposits, but gold detection was low (up to 48 ppb).