



## Driest Part of the Planet

*Copper Mining at 13,000 feet...* Without a drop of rain in 40 years, the Atacama high desert plateau in the Andes mountains in northern Chile is considered the driest part of the planet. It has the appearance similar to the surface of the moon. This area is the reserve of the major source of the world's copper ore. As luck would have it, modern techniques for copper electrowinning require high volumes of ultra pure water. WCA, Inc., as part of the team with several other organizations (Placer Dome, Fluor Daniel, BHP, Minera Escondida and others) are solving these mining production challenges. First, locate saline water in a volcanic aquifer, then pump it 60 kilometers horizontally and a mile straight up to the mountain (a considerable feat). Once at the mine, desalinate it to ultra pure water. The water system must also provide for the potable and sanitary needs of the miners. Add "fast track" scheduling to multi-lingual design, construction and operation. Link the engineering teams from many locations throughout the world over the Internet. Computerize the operation to achieve the necessary efficiency and reliability. Convert your ocean going cargo containers to living quarters at 13,000 feet elevation. That's what it's like at the driest part of the planet!



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