

# Public Notification Regarding Potable Water Use in the Elk Valley

March 2023

Teck has four steelmaking coal operations and one mine in care and maintenance in the Elk Valley. The company works with regulators, stakeholders, and communities to address water quality challenges related to the history of mine activities in the Elk River watershed.

Surface water and shallow groundwater users along the Michel Creek, Fording and Elk Rivers and associated mine-influenced tributaries should be aware that concentrations of some mine-related constituents in drinking water may be higher at certain times of the year. In 2014, Teck initiated the *Regional Drinking Water Monitoring Program* (RDWMP), which monitors private and municipal drinking water quality across the Elk Valley. The RDWMP also allows residents whose water source has the potential to be influenced by mine-related constituents to have their water sampled upon request. Based on historical water quality results, usage, or user/owner request, Teck sampled 57 drinking water wells for mine-related constituents in 2022.

Drinking water quality was assessed by comparing water quality data for the wells to the applicable *British Columbia Source Drinking Water Quality Guidelines* (BCSDWQG; BC MoE, 2020). This comparison focuses on mine-related constituents in groundwater as determined through the 2020 Regional Groundwater Monitoring Program Update. If the results were above the BCSDWQG for mine-related constituents, residents were notified, and an appropriate mitigation (alternate source of water or water treatment) was implemented.

The results of the 2022 RDWMP indicated that 11 wells were above the BCSDWQG for selenium and three of these 11 wells also had sulphate concentrations above the BCSDWQG's aesthetic objective. No other mine-related constituents were above the BCSDWQG during this period. Seasonally elevated concentrations of mine-related constituents in these wells typically occurred during low-flow periods (October to April) when surface water concentrations can interact with groundwater aquifers.

Through the ongoing implementation of the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan (EVWQP), Teck continues to address potential impacts of mine-related constituents and is making significant progress. Teck's water treatment

facilities are achieving approximately 95% removal of selenium and nitrate from treated water. Teck continues to increase water treatment capacity and currently has constructed capacity to treat up to 77.5 million litres of water per day, a four-fold increase from its treatment capacity in 2020. By 2026, our continued investment in water treatment will further increase our constructed treatment capacity to 120 million litres of water per day. Teck also implements nitrogen source control strategies to manage nitrate loading into the Fording and Elk Rivers, and is also continually researching and developing new technology with the end goal of reducing long-term reliance on active water treatment. As treatment capacity increases, Teck is expecting to achieve one of the primary objectives of the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan: stabilizing and reducing the selenium trend in the Elk Valley.

The Ministry of Health advises that all private domestic well owners should check their drinking water systems to ensure they are in good condition, be treated if shallow or vulnerable to contamination (i.e., surface water intake) and be tested regularly to ensure it is safe prior to drinking. Additional information on groundwater wells can be found at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/groundwater-wells-aquifers/groundwater-wells>

For further information regarding health-related drinking water concerns, please visit Interior Health's Drinking Water webpage at:

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/environmental-health-and-hazards/drinking-water>

For more information regarding Teck's RDWMP, or to request Teck sample your well(s) for mine-related constituents, please contact the Teck's toll-free Feedback Line at 1-855-806-6854 and leave a message, or email [feedbackteckcoal@teck.com](mailto:feedbackteckcoal@teck.com) and a Teck representative will respond. Information about Teck's EVWQP is available online at [www.teck.com/elkvalley](http://www.teck.com/elkvalley). For non-mine-related constituents such as bacteria or other pathogens please contact Interior Health.

The Teck logo is displayed in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font in the bottom right corner of the page.