

Public Notification Regarding Potable Water Use in the Elk Valley

Teck has four steelmaking coal operations in the Elk Valley and one site that went into care and maintenance in 2019, and has been working with regulators and communities to address water quality challenges related to mining activities in the Elk River watershed. In recent years, levels of selenium, nitrate, sulphate and/or cadmium have become elevated in the Elk River as well as some Elk River tributaries and groundwater locations. These elevated concentrations have the potential to affect select drinking water wells.

Surface and shallow groundwater well water users along the Michel Creek, Fording and Elk Rivers and associated mine-influenced tributaries should be aware that concentrations of some mining-related constituents may be elevated in their well. Teck initiated an ongoing drinking water monitoring program in the Elk Valley in 2014, which regularly monitors private and municipal drinking water quality across the Elk Valley. Teck's ongoing Elk Valley Drinking Water Monitoring Program also allows residents whose water source has the potential to be influenced by mining-related constituents to have their water sampled upon request. In 2020, Teck sampled 28 drinking water wells for mining-related constituents. Of the 28 wells, six wells did not require follow-up monitoring based on water quality conditions. The remaining 22 drinking water wells were monitored on a quarterly or semi-annual basis as per usage or the water quality conditions.

Drinking water quality was assessed by comparing water quality data for the wells to the applicable British Columbia Approved Drinking Water Quality Guidelines (BCWQG; BC MoE, 2017). The comparison is not a complete screen for all constituents that may affect water quality but instead is limited to mining-related constituents that are the focus of the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan (selenium, nitrate, sulphate and cadmium). If the results were above the BCWQG for these mining-related constituents, an alternate source of water was made available to the residents.

The results of the 2020 sampling program indicated that seven wells were above the BCWQG for selenium. Two of the seven wells also showed sulphate concentrations above the BCWQG aesthetic objective. In all instances, water quality results were provided to well users and an alternate source of water and/or additional treatment of water was made available to residents. Elevated selenium concentrations in these wells typically occurred during low-flow periods where surface water concentrations are elevated and can interact with groundwater aquifers. Through the implementation of the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan, Teck continues to address potential impacts of mining-related constituents.

In accordance with the Ministry of Health's 1995 Safe Water Supply Vital to Your Health publication, private well owners are advised to regularly check their drinking water systems to confirm they are in good condition, as well as test water for all water quality parameters (both mining-related and non-mining-related), to identify if treatment is required prior to use. In addition, water users are advised to support regulators and monitoring programs in the protection of drinking water by registering their well with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy: <https://apps.nrs.gov.bc.ca/gwells/groundwaterinformation>

For further information regarding general drinking water concerns, please visit Interior Health's Drinking Water web page: www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/DrinkingWater

For more information regarding Teck's Drinking Water Monitoring Program, or to request for your well(s) to be sampled, please contact Teck's Social Responsibility Team at 1-855-806-6854. Teck's Elk Valley Water Quality Plan can be found on our web page at: <https://www.teck.com/responsibility/sustainabilitytopics/water/water-quality-in-the-elk-valley/>, questions or feedback can be sent to: feedbackteckcoal@teck.com.

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