

Public Notification Regarding Potable Water Use in the Elk Valley

Environmental Management Act Permit 107517, Section 7.8

Teck operates four steelmaking coal mines in the Elk Valley 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 mine-related constituents may have become elevated in their well. Teck initiated an ongoing drinking water monitoring program in the Elk Valley in 2014, which regularly monitors private and municipal water quality across the Elk Valley. In 2019, Teck sampled 16 wells for mine-related constituents through either quarterly or semi-annual sampling. Ten additional wells were sampled in 2019 and did not require follow-up monitoring based on the criteria outlined below. Private wells with the potential to be influenced by mine-related constituents were also sampled upon request of the user.

Drinking water quality was assessed by comparing water chemistry data from the well sampling program 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 mine-related constituents that are the focus of the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan (selenium, cadmium, nitrate and sulphate). If the results indicated that a drinking water source to be above the BCWQG for selenium, sulphate, cadmium, and/or nitrate, an alternate source of water was made available to the residents.

In 2019, Teck updated the sampling program in response to elevated selenium concentrations in monitored drinking water wells. This update included adjustments to sampling frequency based on water quality results. The results of the 2019 sampling program indicated that ten wells were slightly above the BCWQG for selenium. Two wells were above the aesthetic objective in the BCWQG for sulphate. In all instances, well users were provided the water quality results as well as an alternate source of drinking water.

Elevated selenium concentrations in these wells typically occur during low-flow periods where surface water/groundwater interaction can cause surface water to move into the groundwater aquifers. Through implementation of the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan, Teck continues to address potential impacts of mine-related constituents and work toward protecting watershed health.

As per Ministry of Health (*Safe Water Supply Vital to Your Health*, 1995), private well owners should maintain their well and water delivery system to ensure it is in good condition and regularly test water to identify if treatment is required. In addition, water users can support regulators and monitoring programs in the protection of safe drinking water by registering their well with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/groundwater-wells-aquifers/groundwater-wells/well-records-registration?keyword=registering&keyword=your&keyword=Drinking&keyword=water&keyword=well>

For further information regarding health-related drinking water concerns, please visit Interior Health's Drinking Water Webpage: www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/DrinkingWater

For more information regarding Teck's Drinking Water Sampling Program, or to make a request to have your well sampled under the program, please contact Teck's Social Responsibility office in Sparwood toll-free 1-855-806-6854. In addition, more information on Teck's Elk Valley Water Quality Plan is located at: www.teck.com/elkvalley and any additional questions or feedback can be sent to feedbackteckcoal@teck.com.

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