2026 BC-Alaska Transboundary Waters Newsletter

Protecting the environment near the British Columbian and Alaska border

IN THIS ISSUE

TULSEQUAH CHIEF MINE UPDATE

Background on the Tulsequah Chief Mine

Background information on the Tulsequah Chief Mine including its location, the cultural significance of the area, and the history of mine ownership, can be found in the 2024-2025 Transboundary Waters Newsletter. The 2024-2025 newsletter also provides a summary of remediation planning activities completed over the 2024 field season. For additional details on the history of Tulsequah Chief Mine and the steps taken by the Province of British Columbia (BC), Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN), and Teck Resources Limited (Teck) to support environmental management and remediation, please see the Tulsequah Chief Mine Clean Up webpage.

Teck's 2025 Field Season

During Teck's 2025 field season, efforts were focused on continuing work initiated during the 2024 field season. This involved establishing safe and reliable site access, drone surveying of and ensuring safe access to underground works, and water and sediment sampling. Additional work included sediment and waste management, contaminated site assessment, climate change studies, and bat monitoring.

Notable work on site during the 2025 field season includes:

View of 5400 Level entrance before and after replacement of the timber support, showing the new door and new timber throughout the portal. This work enabled safe access to the 5400 Level entry.

2026 BC-Alaska Transboundary Waters Newsletter

- Infrastructure upgrades including stabilization of the airstrip, replacement of two bridge decks, and general field camp facilities
- Completed drone surveys of 970 meters of underground works on four levels
- Ground control on two underground levels ahead of further geotechnical investigations
- Continued water and sediment sampling in accordance with previous plans

Image obtained from drone in 5200 Level showing the survey data on the left and the video footage on the right.

- Removal of a portion of hazardous legacy waste left on site by previous operators (253 fuel drums, 106 vehicle batteries, 28 garbage bags of bottles and cans), as well as the removal of all waste generated during the 2025 field season

Teck's summary of 2025 field work completed is available on the Tulsequah Chief Mine Clean Up webpage.

Water quality sampling on the Taaltsuxéi Héen.

Public and Community Engagement

Teck, TRTFN and the Province of BC hosted community engagement sessions for TRT Citizens in Atlin on May 3 and November 8, 2025. These community meetings were open to the public and advertised on the Tulsequah Chief Mine Clean Up webpage. The spring session focussed on the 2025 workplan and the fall session provided an overview of work completed during the 2025 field season.

On December 3, 2025, Teck and TRTFN hosted a public webinar outlining the collaborative work underway between Teck and TRTFN on the Tulsequah Chief remediation plan, including recent progress and next steps. This public webinar was attended by 68 participants including interested individuals, organizations, and government representatives from both the Province of BC and the State of Alaska. Following the presentation, a question-and-answer period was held with the participants. Feedback received by Teck, TRTFN and the Province of BC from the public and interested parties continues to inform future work planning and engagement.

Next Steps: Preparing for the 2026 Field Season

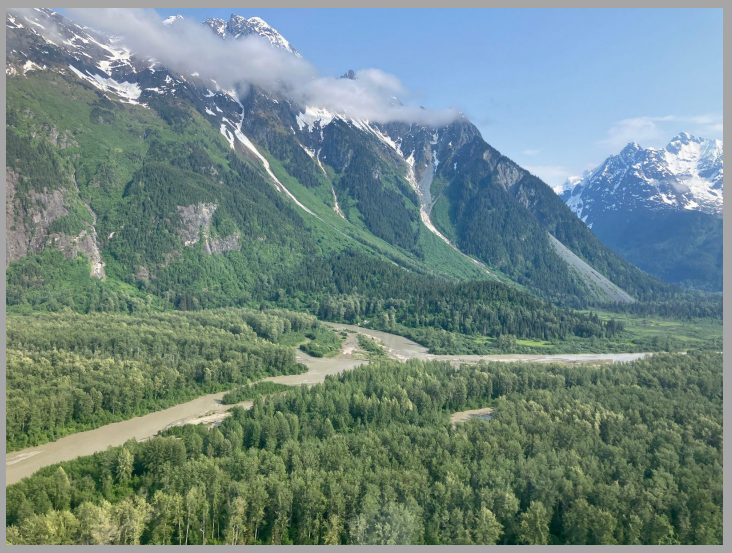
Collaborative planning for the 2026 field season is underway by Teck and TRTFN. These plans will be presented at a community engagement session, planned for spring 2026. Onsite technical investigation activities and data collection continue to inform the development of the final remediation plan. Teck is targeting completion of a draft remediation plan by the end of 2026.

To receive future updates on the work being done on the Tulsequah Chief Mine Clean Up, subscribe to the Tulsequah Chief Mine Clean Up webpage.

2026 BC-Alaska Transboundary Waters Newsletter

ALASKA'S WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS - WHAT'S INSIDE THE "BLACK BOX"

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) conducts statewide water quality assessments to determine whether Alaskan waters attain (i.e., meet) water quality standards.[1] This process is referred to as the *Integrated Report* and includes Transboundary waters.[2] British Columbia does not have this type of single, comprehensive counterpart to the Integrated Report but provides similar information through various reports, trends and indicators in the Canada-B.C. mapping website, and its databases including the BC Environmental Monitoring System.



The Integrated Report process begins with a public data call, during which DEC notifies parties that collect water quality data that submissions are being accepted for analysis in the upcoming report cycle.[3] Participating organizations have included federal agencies, universities, Tribes, and environmental organizations. They may submit their data directly to DEC but are encouraged to submit water quality data through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Quality Portal (Portal). All data must adhere to minimum scientific data collection and assessment protocols. The USGS is the only entity other than DEC that has provided transboundary datasets found to be retrievable in the Portal; this accessibility is a key requirement for inclusion in the Department's transparent assessment process.

Data retrieved from the Portal undergoes an automated quality control review that utilizes both custom-built code and R[4] packages developed by EPA to clean Portal data. The analysis applies defined assessment methodologies,[5] removes duplicate entries, filters out data with laboratory qualifiers indicating errors, standardizes terminology, and flags questionable values for manual review. The water quality data and automation codes are publicly available, which helps ensure the transparency of DEC's decision-making process.

The automated analysis results are then reviewed by a team of DEC staff for quality control purposes. All data excluded from the original submission due to quality control issues are documented. The number of results per waterbody are then counted to ensure enough data points are available to meet statistical confidence thresholds. Results that do not meet minimum confidence thresholds do not move forward with further analysis.

2026 BC-Alaska Transboundary Waters Newsletter

Data indicating an exceedance— meaning a value falls outside the protective threshold for a specific pollutant —undergoes a deeper evaluation by DEC. Scientists determine whether the results stem from human activity, such as mining, or are influenced by natural conditions like high mineral concentrations or low oxygen levels found in wetlands. These findings are then shared with the public and regulatory agencies for comment.

[1] Alaska's water quality standards (WQS) are referenced at 18 AAC 70. WQS are the metrics, both numeric and narrative used to determine if a water is meeting certain goals (e.g., public water supply, sustain aquatic life.) They are comparable to B.C. water quality guidelines.
[2] For additional information about the IR process see 2024-2025 Transboundary Newsletter.
[3] A typical report cycle occurs every two years. The assessment of data for individual waters can occur on a rolling basis using the same process outlined in this article.
[4] R is a statistical programming language used in different software packages. It is useful for visualizing, transforming, and modeling data.
[5] The Alaska Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM) and other pollutant-specific listing methodologies can be retrieved at https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/integrated-report/.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OFFICE REGULATORY PROCESSES FOR NORTHWESTERN B.C. MINING PROJECTS AS OF WINTER 2026

Eskay Creek Revitalization Project (Environmental Assessment Certificate granted)

- Provincial environmental assessment Certificate issued on January 26, 2026. Provincial announcement is available here:
  - https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/60f078d3332ebd0022a39224/certificates
  - https://news.gov.bc.ca/33277
- Positive federal environmental assessment decision statement also issued on January 26, 2026, with the announcement posted here:
  - https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/164690?culture=en-CA

Red Chris Porphyry Copper-Gold Mine (Operating)

- In amendment Effects Assessment phase. Scheduled for referral to provincial decision-makers in Spring 2026. More information available here:
  - https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/588510c4aaecd9001b8155e3/project-details

New Polaris Gold Mine (Proposed)

- The Environmental Assessment Office expects to receive Canagold Resources Ltd.'s Application for an environmental assessment Certificate in Spring 2026. More information available here:
  - https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/63fe919f30ceae0022e0ca28/project-details

Learn more about these and all other projects being reviewed by the Environmental Assessment Office: https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/

2026 BC-Alaska Transboundary Waters Newsletter

ONLINE RESOURCES - LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW BC AND ALASKA ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS KEY ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS RELATED TO OUR SHARED BORDER AND WATERWAYS

There are many resources available online that provide information on how BC and Alaska work together in the transboundary region and how responsible mining is carried out in BC. Below is a list of links to help you learn more.

Learn more about how BC and Alaska work together, access meeting summaries from Bilateral Working Group meetings, and read past BC-Alaska Transboundary Waters Newsletters:

- BC's Protecting the environment near the BC and Alaska border webpage
- Alaska's Protecting SE Alaska Transboundary Waters webpage
- U.S. Geologic Survey Transboundary River Monitoring in Southeast Alaska webpage

Learn more about responsible mining and the regulatory process in BC:

- Responsible Mining in BC webpage
- Regulatory Framework for Mining poster

Learn more about changes to mining in BC and the Province of BC's commitment to continuous improvement:

- Changes to Mining in BC webpage
- Mining Regulatory Improvements Since Mt Polley poster
- Tailings Storage Facility Revisions of the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code poster

Learn more about reclamation security in BC:

- Mine Reclamations Securities webpage
- Reclamation Security poster

Learn more about the Environmental Assessment process in BC:

- Environmental Assessment Office webpage
- Environmental Assessment Process poster
- Environmental Assessments in BC poster

Learn more about projects being reviewed by the Environmental Assessment Office:

- Environmental Assessment Office Project Information Centre (EPIC)

Learn more about compliance and enforcement for mines in BC:

- Mining Compliance and Enforcement webpage
- Coordinated Compliance and Enforcement of Major Mines in BC poster

BRITISH COLUMBIA