

## **AGENDA: BC/AK Bilateral Working Group**

Monday March 10, 2025 | 2:30-4pm (BC) / 1:30-3pm (AK)

Meeting location: Virtual–teleconference via Teams

### **Attendees**

\* Indicates member of BWG but unable to attend 3/10 meeting:

#### **British Columbia:**

- Nathaniel Amann-Blake, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals (MCM)
- Kevin Jardine, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Parks (ENV)
- Alex MacLennan, Associate Deputy Minister & Chief Executive Assessment Officer, Environmental Assessment Office (EAO)
- Chris Trumpy, Assistant Deputy Minister, EAO
- Tania Demchuk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Responsible Mining and Competitiveness Division (RMCD), MCM \*
- George Warnock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Mines Health, Safety and Enforcement Division (MHSE), MCM
- Amy Avila, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Services and Indigenous Partnerships Division (SSIPD), ENV \*
- Andrew Rollo, Executive Director, Tulsequah Reclamation, MHSE, MCM
- David Grace, Project Assessment Director, Metal Mining, EAO
- Brennan Hutchison, Director, Priorities Advancement, RMCD, MCM
- Lisa Paquin, Intergovernmental Relations, ENV
- Michel Ryan-Aylward, Director, Intergovernmental Relations, SSPID, ENV
- Kira Stevenson, Senior Policy Advisor, Intergovernmental Relations, SSPID, ENV
- Emily Thwaites, Policy Analyst, RMCD, MCM
- Chelsea Garside, Project Assessment Officer, EAO

#### **Alaska:**

- Christina Carpenter, Acting Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
- Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
- John Boyle, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)\*
- Brock Tabor, Special Projects Coordinator, DEC
- Jessalynn Rintala, Environmental Program Specialist IV, DEC
- Kate Kanouse, Habitat Regional Supervisor, DFG
- Stephen Buckley, Mining Section Head, DNR \*

#### **Teck:**

- Scott Maloney, Vice President Environment, Teck Resources Staff
- Victoria Sterritt, Director, Legacy Properties, Teck
- Stephanie Tan, Manager, Government and Regulatory Affairs, Teck
- Deborah Read, Tulsequah Chief Project Manager, Teck

#### **Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN):**

- Rodger Thorlakson, Lands and Resources Manager and Government to Government Co-Chair

## Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Acting Commissioner Christina Carpenter welcomed the group and the efforts by staff to prepare the agenda and information for today's meeting
- Agenda was adopted with no edits or amendments

## B.C. Updates

- Following the October 2024 B.C. Provincial election, there have been several organizational changes relevant to the Bilateral Working Group, including the restructuring of ministries and new leadership appointments:
  - The new Ministry of Environment and Parks (previously the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy) will be led by Minister Tamara Davidson
    - Minister Davidson has a background in public service, Parks, and is the first Indigenous woman to lead the ministry
  - The new stand-alone Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals (previously Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation) is being led by Minister Jagrup Brar
  - There is a new Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions
- Following the October 2024 election, the B.C. Provincial government has issued mandate letters which provide each minister and parliamentary secretary with specific directions to make progress on during the government's tenure:
  - The mandate letter for the Ministry of Environment and Parks can be found [here](#)
  - The mandate letter for the Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals can be found [here](#)
- Updates to B.C.'s bonding framework were discussed:
  - B.C. provided a [link](#) to the reclamation securities for mines in B.C website.
  - MCM staff provided additional information by email to Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang with cc to all meeting participants on March 13
  - B.C. staff provided Alaska with additional details on changes/amendments to B.C.'s bonding requirements on March 24
- Tulsequah Mine Update
  - In September 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between the B.C. Government, Teck, and Taku River Tlingit First Nations (TRTFN) to establish a robust closure plan for Tulsequah Mine reclamation
  - B.C is committed to keeping the Tulsequah reclamation website up to date with the most current information
  - TRTFN have always been stewards of the land and continue to be committed to cleaning up the Tulsequah mine site
  - TRTFN and Teck have been developing a robust relationship via bi-weekly/monthly meetings
  - Teck Resources:
    - Pleased to confirm that Teck has a diverse team with a great deal of experience working on this project

Summary of Discussion  
Transboundary Bilateral Workgroup Meeting  
3/11/25

- Teck provided a short presentation on 2024 work completed and plans for 2025-2026
  - 2024 work was focused on assessment of existing treatment works infrastructure and safe mine access
    - Improvements to airstrip, installation of weather station and camera
    - Helicopter access
    - Temporary work camp and supporting infrastructure
    - Aquatic monitoring
    - Underground drone work
    - Dedicated mine safety team
  - 2025-2026
    - Focus on assessment of underground works and identification of adits for plugs/closure
    - Continuation of water quality monitoring at select locations
    - Potential to address sedimentation issues previously identified
      - The existing treatment works facility has been determined to be not operational and would need extensive repairs/remediation to become so
  - Paraphrased Question: When will Alaska have assurances that the flow of contaminated water will be controlled? When will we have a timeline for actions?
  - Response: Access to site and the resources needed to begin work are in place. Anticipate it will take 2-5 years to get through the initial implementation phase. Engineering and placement of plugs to control the interaction between air and water is a priority.
  - Response: Alaska is appreciative of Teck's work to date, but a formal timeline will be informative.
- Project Updates
  - New Polaris Gold Mine
    - Environmental assessment scope has been set through the Process Order issued by the EAO
      - Concerns raised by TRTFN, and comments from Alaska agencies and members of the Alaska public led to important changes by the proponent - applicant now proposing to fly out concentrate rather than barge it down the Taku
      - Any potential downstream effects from the project which could affect Alaska will be considered as part of the environmental assessment
    - Applicant is in the process of developing its Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate, which is expected in July 2025 (*note: this has since been revised to September 2025*)
  - Eskay Creek Revitalization

Summary of Discussion  
Transboundary Bilateral Workgroup Meeting  
3/11/25

- B.C. has issued a request for additional information for the environmental assessment and the technical review portion is expected to conclude in April 2025.
- The EA is expected to be referred for decision in late 2025.
- The Mines Act and Environmental Management Act applications are expected to be submitted in April 2025 and referral for decisions is expected in late 2025.
- Red Chris Mine
  - Project has an Environmental Assessment Certificate, currently undergoing an amendment application process; proponent requesting to move from open-pit mining to underground block-cave mining
  - EAO is currently requesting public comments on the proposed changes.
  - The EA amendment process is anticipated to be completed and referral for decisions are expected by the end of 2025.
- Brucejack Mine
  - Project has an Environmental Assessment Certificate and operating permits.
  - Anticipate amendments to permits, including mining plan and operations to be issued in April 2025.
  - Project is also undergoing an Environmental Assessment Certificate amendment application process for changes to the access road; amendment currently paused at proponent's request.
- Galore Creek
  - Environmental Assessment Certificate previously issued.
  - Mine planning / optimization underway, which would require changes to the Environmental Assessment Certificate.
  - Anticipate amendment request(s) in 2026 with a revised project description.
- KSM
  - Environmental Assessment Certificate issued.
  - Has certain pre-construction permits in hand but needs additional ones to address construction of a tunnel and other infrastructure (e.g., water quality mitigation).
  - Mine is seeking additional investment to move forward.
- Premier Mine
  - The mine is expected to re-start operations in Q2 2025.
  - Question: Were there potential pH issues at this mine?
    - B.C. Environment and Parks provided the Ministry's November 2024 inspection report and three orders to Premier Mine.
  - Question: What requirements does B.C. have for sampling at the B.C./US border?
    - Response: Downstream monitoring is required of all projects as well as baseline studies before a project begins operation. Reporting occurs online. There are no border-specific requirements.

- Response: USGS is already conducting monitoring at the border via existing gauges and grab sampling on the five transboundary rivers so that does provide information on what water quality looks like since that effort started.

## Alaska Updates

- ADEC Updates
  - DEC finalized the 2024 Integrated Report and submitted the document to EPA per federal regulations. DEC reviewed over 21,000 data points collected by the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) from the following transboundary rivers: Alsek, Salmon, Stikine, Taku, and Unuk. All transboundary rivers are attaining Alaska's water quality standards for most metals and non-metals, pH, total dissolved gases, and dissolved solids. Minimal excursions were observed for turbidity, alkalinity, mercury, and chromium and attributed to natural conditions (high mineral content in glacial waters, naturally mineralized groundwater). The report indicated that while some minerals were high in water due to existing mineralization, no downstream effects from B.C. mining operations were detected.
  - DEC issued a call for data and supporting information for the 2026 IR between 12/03/24 and 2/28/25. DEC will provide updates on this process to the BWG as warranted.
  - U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) continues to receive federal funding for monitoring and evaluation of the Southeast Alaska transboundary region. A retrospective report is in development and anticipated for release in 2025. The report will document all of the Transboundary-related documents that have been published to date and what activities are currently taking place (e.g., Super gages). DEC has asked for additional information regarding its publication, but nothing has been shared with DEC.
  - USGS has expressed an intent to complete a report analyzing current conditions and a geologic assessment of mineralization potential in the Transboundary region. DEC has asked for additional information regarding its publication, but nothing has been shared with DEC.
- ADF&G
  - In January 2025, ADF&G Habitat applied for an U.S. EPA grant for \$320K over four years to continue fish sampling on four applicable transboundary rivers (the Unuk, Stikine, Taku, and Salmon Rivers). The project will also collect sediment, algae, and aquatic insect samples to expand the data sets for these rivers and produce a technical report documenting the findings and comparing the data among the glacial river data sets. EPA has not provided any information on when an award announcement will be made.
  - Alaska agencies mentioned an email information request from Salmon Beyond Borders that had been sent on 3/7 and the need for agency response. Noted that a definitive timeline on the Tulsequah reclamation effort would assist with that response.

Summary of Discussion  
Transboundary Bilateral Workgroup Meeting  
3/11/25

- ADEC
  - The Alaska congressional delegation had written a letter to the Biden Administration in August 2024 expressing concerns about potential impacts to transboundary waters from Canadian mines. The letter called for (1) cleanup of Tulsequah and (2) establishment of an “international framework” under the International Joint Commissioner and Boundary Waters Treaty.
  - State agencies noted that they were not consulted on the delegation’s letter, nor has any action occurred on the part of state agencies in response to the delegation’s letter. Alaska will share any information if the current congressional delegation or Alaska Governor’s Office provides additional information/directives.

## Action Items

- Approval to post the 2024 Transboundary Newsletter
  - No objections from the group.
  - Agencies will post the version previously shared with the BWG in advance of this meeting.

## Conclusion

- General appreciation of the Workgroup
- Request that the 3/12 Transboundary staff meeting be cancelled as this meeting was able to address all current issues.
  - No objections from the group
- Will coordinate on the next BWG agenda via the monthly Transboundary staff meetings.
- Meeting adjourned (2:54 pm (Alaska))