



# Media Release

**Date:** March 3, 2021

For immediate release

## Edgewood Public Water Use from Standpipes or Yard Hydrants

Nelson, BC: The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is not responsible for the public water access points recently turned off within the Edgewood water system. Residents throughout the Edgewood area have voiced their concerns to the RDCK; however, the cause may be due to the equipment being frozen based on unsuitable equipment and incorrect use, as standpipes and non-draining yard hydrants are not intended for year round use. The RDCK is not aware of potentially permitted public access to stand-pipes or yard hydrants by the former water system owner (BC Hydro), nor has it ever designated water standpipes or yard hydrants for public use.

“We need to understand the extent of the problem and gauge the interest from the public outside the water system boundary, then determine what type of solution is required and feasible,” said Uli Wolf, General Manager of Environmental Services.

In the summer of 2020, concerns were brought to the RDCK by Edgewood water system users that people not residing within the system boundaries were using Edgewood water system infrastructure to secure potable water, at times in large quantities, for their residences. A letter was sent to Edgewood residents in June 2020 indicating public operation of the water system is not permitted.

Unauthorized drawing of water from standpipes could lead to a potential cross-connection health hazard and damage to the standpipe, which would result in repair costs (e.g. labour and excavation for one 2” buried valve costs \$1,500 - \$2,000 to repair). Furthermore, standpipes not properly and frequently flushed can pose a health risk from accumulated organics within the standpipes.

Standpipes are also utilized by the Edgewood Volunteer Fire Department and any unknown damage could impact standpipe functionality during fire emergency events. Economic losses to the water system occur with the associated additional pumping and energy costs, staff time and costs for public correspondence, enforcement, maintenance, repairs, and potentially locking standpipes, if required. In accordance with Local Government Act legislation, all costs incurred by a RDCK service must be paid for by that service, meaning existing Edgewood customers would have to pay for any damages or other economic losses.

Providing water to others outside of the service boundary is not permitted under the Edgewood Water System Water Licence issued by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD). **The RDCK is not concerned about small quantities of water being taken from the water system, particularly if emergency access to water is required by area residents;** however, the RDCK does require any water taken by the public be done at a private or commercially owned water tap.

Since there is an apparent need for public access to water from Edgewood area residents, the RDCK will be reviewing the feasibility of providing a public water filling station. Any costs for installing and operating a filling station cannot be borne by the existing Edgewood water customers. **For those area residents outside of the Edgewood water system boundary that are interested in a commercial type pay-per-use filling station,** please contact: Alexandra Divlakovski, Environmental Coordinator for Utility Services, at (250) 352-8192 or email to [adivlakovski@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:adivlakovski@rdck.bc.ca).

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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