



# Media Release

April 18, 2023  
For immediate release

## Limited public access to potable water outside of Edgewood

Nelson, BC: Access to potable water is a historic issue in the Kootenays, and if properties are not in a public water system, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is not legislatively required to provide access. For the community of Edgewood, in Electoral Area K, the RDCK cannot provide a potable water filling station.

The RDCK owns and operates 19 defined water service areas, Edgewood being one of them. These water service areas are all financially independent in that only customers within the defined service area pay for the service. It would not be fair to these customers to pay for provision of the service to others outside of the service area. In addition, the public accessing RDCK owned water standpipes or yard hydrants can and have resulted in maintenance issues and repair costs, as well as, pose a potential health hazard to the water system and the people accessing the yard hydrant. Other 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.

Edgewood standpipes are utilized by the Edgewood Volunteer Fire Department and any unknown damage to these standpipes could impact standpipe functionality during fire emergency events.

The RDCK did address public use from water yard hydrants in Edgewood starting in 2020 after learning that people residing outside of Edgewood, BC were using yard hydrants on public property for hauling water outside of the community. One yard hydrant froze due to use during the winter and required repairs. The two yard hydrants were subsequently locked.

In order for the RDCK to provide public access to potable water, a proper water filling station is required that would address public health risk and customer payment options. To access public need, the RDCK issued a media release ([March 3, 2021](#)) requesting that people contact the RDCK if they were in need of public access to potable water near Edgewood, BC. The RDCK received only one response identifying a handful of people that might need access to potable water in the area.

Most services provided by the RDCK have a defined service area that require public approval of the majority of the people in the service area in order to establish the service. 50 per cent or more people in the Edgewood area would have to vote in favour of a water fill station in order to create the service, and having only a handful of potential customers that might pay per use for the service would make it financially unsustainable. The RDCK Board of Directors directed staff to take no further action on the matter at the June 17, 2021 Board meeting.

The RDCK does not have any concern with people from outside of Edgewood taking small containers of water from the Edgewood water system, but it has to be done from a tap not owned by the water system, for example, from a tap within a local business or residence, if approved by the property or business owner.

*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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