



Dear Resident,

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) recently informed the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) of new direction that requires the SCRD to provide a Water Quality Advisory should drinking water be provided to your property in Sandy Hook / Tuwanek from Gray Creek instead of Chapman Creek.

When your water is being supplied from the Gray Creek surface water source, this water is treated with chlorine disinfection but is not treated with a second disinfection method such as Ultraviolet (UV) treatment. In 2024, water will be supplied to the Sandy Hook and Tuwanek area via Gray Creek during Stage 3 and Stage 4 Water Conservation Regulations. There has been no change to the water treatment process from previous years, only changes in VCH notification requirements.

The following is the formal water quality advisory from Vancouver Coastal Health.

Drinking water systems with a surface water source, like the Gray Creek water system are at risk of containing pathogens that can cause illness if untreated. The vast majority of these pathogens, like bacteria and viruses, can be adequately addressed using chlorine disinfection. Some pathogens, such as protozoan parasites, are present in surface water and are not easily disinfected by chlorine. For this reason, a second barrier to disinfection, such as UV treatment, is required for surface water supplies in British Columbia. Given that the SCRD is still confirming the technical and financial feasibility of installing UV treatment at your water system at this time, a Water Quality Advisory is in place when the SCRD start providing Gray Creek water to your home.

Understanding that the language in the water quality advisory above is quite technical, please find answers to some of the more common questions about water quality advisories below.

What does a Water Quality Advisory mean?

A Water Quality Advisory means the risk is low, however some water users are advised take extra precautions when ingesting the water.

Who should take extra precautions?

For individuals with very weak immune systems or pregnant, the increased health risks associated with protozoa parasites can have serious, even life-threatening, implications which makes it imperative to adhere to this Water Quality Advisory.

What should these people do?

Water intended for the following uses should be brought to a full boil for one minute and cooled prior to use:

- Drinking
- Washing fruits and vegetables
- Making beverages or ice
- Brushing teeth

Alternatively, water may be obtained from another source which has been fully treated (e.g. commercially bottled water).

What is being done to improve treatment for Gray Creek water supply?

A project is underway to look at potential upgrades the treatment plant at Gray Creek. In 2022, a three-year study was launched to gather creek flow data, update watershed modelling, and assess the viability of the water source through a climate change lens. The results of this study will be completed in 2025 and presented to the Board for consideration.

Why is this being done now, why has it not been in place before?

All across VCH other water systems in this situation (with surface water and only one form of treatment) have been requested to issue Water Quality Advisories for users on these systems. In recent years, there has been a push from VCH's Regional Water Safety Committee for consistency of application of Water Quality Advisories. This undertaking was done in consultation and review by VCH Medical Health Officers. Issuance of Water Quality Advisories under these circumstances is widely considered a best practice in risk management.

I have questions, who can I reach out to?

SCRD staff and VCH will host an online information session related to this Water Quality Advisory where residents can ask questions. Details on this session can be found below.

Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

A link to join the meeting will be available at www.scrd.ca and at www.scrd.ca/water prior to the meeting taking place.

You can also reach out via email to infrastructure@scrd.ca and/or darren.molder@vch.ca should you have any immediate questions.

Please ensure you stay tuned to www.scrd.ca, local media and look for signage in the community when Stage 3 and Stage 4 Conservation Regulations are in place as your residence will be receiving water from Gray Creek during those periods.

Further information and advice can be found at: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/waterborne-infections-british-columbia

Sunshine Coast Regional District

Remko Rosenboom,

General Manager, Infrastructure Services