
Fording River Extension Project

Revised Detailed Project Description Summary

Plain Language and Executive Summary

October 2025



A GLENCORE COMPANY

Report History

Version	Date	Edited by	Comments
Rev0	July 2025	EVR Operations Limited	Original Plain Language Summary for the July 2025 Revised Detailed Project Description submission
Rev1	August 2025	EVR Operations Limited	Updated based on comments received on the July 2025 Revised Detailed Project Description and Plain Language Summary
Rev2	October 2025	EVR Operations Limited	Submission to Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

Preamble

This document is a plain-language and executive summary of the Revised Detailed Project Description (DPD) for the Fording River Extension (FRX) Project. The Revised DPD provides a description of the FRX Project (Project) so that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) and the British Columbia (BC) Environmental Assessment Office (BC EAO) can determine whether an assessment is required, the information or studies necessary for the assessment, and the scope of the required assessment. The Revised DPD incorporates feedback received through early engagement on the provincial and federal Initial Project Description (IPD) documents (Teck 2020a,b), the DPD for the Project submitted in July 2021, the Readiness Decision made by the BC EAO in February 2023, and the engagement with Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) and Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓i 'it and other potentially affected Indigenous Peoples that has occurred since that time.

The Revised DPD, which is summarized in this document, was prepared following IAAC's Guide to Preparing an Initial Project Description and a Detailed Project Description (IAAC 2020) and BC EAO's Early Engagement Policy – Appendix 3 – Detailed Project Description Guidelines (BC EAO 2019) as well as from guidance received from the BC EAO from the Readiness Decision issued in February 2023. A list of references is provided in Section 12.0 and a glossary of technical terms used in this document is provided in Section 13.0.

For the purposes of the assessment of the Project under the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) and the BC *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA), the primary EVR Operations Limited contact person is:

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This document is intended to assist readers in understanding the Project at a more summary level and to fulfill the plain-language summary requirement of the federal IAA process.

Abbreviations and Units of Measure

Abbreviation	Definition
%	percent
BC	British Columbia
BC EAA	BC <i>Environmental Assessment Act</i>
BC EAO	BC Environmental Assessment Office
CEAO	Chief Environmental Assessment Officer
COSEWIC	Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada
DPD	Detailed Project Description
EOC	Evaluation of Cause
EVR	EVR Operations Limited
EVWQP	Elk Valley Water Quality Plan
FRO	Fording River Operations
FRX	Fording River Extension
GHG	greenhouse gas
ha	hectare
HSDA	Health Service Delivery Area
IAA	<i>Impact Assessment Act</i>
IAAC	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
IPD	Initial Project Description
IS/A	Impact Statement/Application
km	kilometre
km ²	square kilometre
KNC	Ktunaxa Nation Council
m ³ /d	cubic metres per day
masl	metres above sea level
mtcc	metric tonnes of clean coal
Mmtcc	million metric tonnes of clean coal
Mmtcc/yr	million metric tonnes of clean coal per year
Project	Fording River Extension Project
RIC	Resources Inventory Committee
SARA	<i>Species at Risk Act</i>
SRF	saturated rock fill
Teck	Teck Coal Limited
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
US	United States
WCT	Westslope Cutthroat Trout

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1.0 Introduction and Project Overview

EVR Operations Limited (EVR), formerly Teck Coal Limited (Teck), is proposing to develop the Fording River Extension Project (FRX Project, or the Project; formerly the “Castle Project”), an extension to the Fording River Operations (FRO). FRO is an existing steelmaking coal mine in the Elk Valley of southeast British Columbia (BC). The FRX Project would use existing infrastructure at FRO while mining new operating areas in the Project footprint, located directly south of FRO (Figure 1 and Figure 2). If approved, the Project would extend the life of FRO from the early 2030s through to the early 2060s. The Project area lies within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, the territory of Ktunaxa Nation¹ and on lands of interest to other Indigenous Peoples.

The Project is being reviewed under the federal *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) and the BC *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA).² While the Project would be below the threshold described in the *Physical Activities Regulations* under the IAA, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) received several requests that the Project be required to undergo a federal impact assessment. Following a review of the requests, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change issued an Order on August 19, 2020, designating the Project pursuant to Section 9(1) of the IAA. The assessment process is being coordinated such that the requirements of both the federal IAA and BC EAA are satisfied. This coordination will include submission of single integrated documents that address the requirements of the federal and provincial assessment processes where possible.

The assessment process will also include a Joint Permitting/Regulatory Coordination Plan to be developed by the IAAC and the BC Environmental Assessment Office (BC EAO). Permits and approvals that may be required for the Project by the federal government include *Fisheries Act* authorization, *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) permits and *Explosives Act* permits.

The Revised Detailed Project Description (DPD) for the FRX Project, which is summarized in this document, was submitted to IAAC and BC EAO in July 2025. It addresses deficiencies identified in the DPD that was submitted in July 2021.

EVR is the sole proponent of the Project. The federal government has not been requested, nor are they providing, any current or future financial support for the Project.

The Project reflects meaningful engagement with Ktunaxa Nation. Recognizing the importance of EVR’s relationship with Ktunaxa, EVR has engaged collaboratively with Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) and Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi ’it. Engagement has included constructive discussions on key topics such as learning from previous work, considering broader interests, the importance of ongoing engagement, including that related to future mine development in Qukin ʔamakʔis. Leadership, technical and community member engagement have provided key insights into what is important to Ktunaxa Nation and Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi ’it, including identifying plausible mitigations to Ktunaxa rights which has also helped improve the proposed FRX Project compatibility with Ktunaxa values, accounting for existing conditions. Technical level engagement with KNC and Yaqit

¹ Note that throughout this Plain Language Summary and the Revised DPD, when references are made to Ktunaxa or Ktunaxa Nation, these are intended to refer to representatives of each of the four Ktunaxa First Nations in BC (Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi ’it [Tobacco Plains Band], ʔaq’am [St. Mary’s Band], yagan nuʔkiy [Lower Kootenay Band], and ʔakisq’nuk First Nation [Columbia Lake Band]) and to all Ktunaxa citizens in Canada.

² Assessment of the Project was initiated under the BC EAA in April 2020 when the BC EAO accepted Teck’s [Initial Project Description \(IPD\)](#) and [Engagement Plan](#) and posted them to the [BC Environmental Assessment Project Information Centre](#).

ʔa·knuq̓i 'it occurred via seven workshops and small group meetings in 2023 through 2025, focusing on addressing the deficiencies identified through the Readiness Decision.

Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓i 'it agree that the proposed mitigation measures for effects on Ktunaxa rights are plausible, recognizing that further work will be required during the assessment to confirm their suitability and/or to evaluate whether other plausible mitigations should be implemented for the Project based on the results of the assessment.

KNC has confirmed that staging the FRX Project is an important mitigation to carry forward and will determine if mitigations are plausible after the Revised DPD is submitted and during the readiness phase. EVR acknowledges that a decision to move to assessment is not a determination by the EAO about the technical and economic feasibility of those measures. Further work will be required during the environmental assessment on plausible mitigations for the Project based on the results of the assessment.

The Project will provide important financial and non-financial benefits. The FRX Project will secure the continuity of economic benefits shared by the regional,³ provincial and national economies and different levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments. The Project has been identified as the most environmentally, socially, technically and economically feasible alternative to assess in support of continued operation of FRO through continuous improvement from learnings and knowledge. The proposed Project will allow for the continued employment of more than 1,500 employees at FRO and will continue to require support from an additional 2,600 direct and 8,000 indirect and induced jobs. Additionally, the Project will provide new and continued contracting opportunities for local and Indigenous businesses.

The following provides an overview of key refinements made to the Project since the prior submission of the DPD in July 2021:

- **Staged mine plan.** To address Ktunaxa Nation concerns about Project mine life and generational decision making, EVR has divided the Project mine plan, on the basis of footprint and schedule, into two stages, both of which will be evaluated if the Project proceeds to the next phases of the assessment process. Considering the full Project provides the opportunity to make regulatory approval decisions based on the projected effects for the entire mine life. Separating the Project into stages provides an opportunity to satisfy stage-related conditions to be included in the Environmental Assessment Certificate (to be established through ongoing engagement with Ktunaxa Nation) before moving on to the next stage and allows time to prove effectiveness in the mitigations planned to manage potential effects. The staged Project approach also helps avoid "project splitting" and promotes transparent engagement with Ktunaxa Nation and other Indigenous groups. This method allows for a comprehensive assessment of the entire potential Project effects upfront, while also preserving a future decision point. The two-staged mine plan is described in the Revised DPD.

³ Including the Elk Valley communities of Elkford, Sparwood, Hosmer, Fernie in BC and Crowsnest Pass, AB, along with surrounding smaller rural communities in these vicinities.

- **Smaller footprint.** Design refinements have resulted in reducing Project footprint disturbances outside of the FRO existing approved boundary (C-3 Permit boundary) by approximately 445 ha compared to the provincial and federal Initial Project Description (IPD) and by approximately 222 ha from the 2021 DPD, including a reduced footprint in the Chauncey Creek drainage and in the previously unaffected area of the Kilmarnock Creek drainage. A smaller pit size is also planned which will result in a smaller Project footprint and a shorter (within 1.5 generations) overall mine life (to the 2060s). The pit depth has been reduced to stay above the proximate elevation of the Fording River to reduce potential interactions between the pit water and the Fording River water table. Refining the mine rock storage areas compared to that in the IPD has also contributed to smaller footprint and supports water quality management planning by prioritizing mine rock placement in-pit and on existing mine rock disturbance and avoiding, minimizing or reducing disturbance of watersheds that currently have no direct mining effects.
- **Restoration plan for sensitive wetlands, grassland and brushland ecosystems and other valued components.** EVR has developed a conceptual restoration plan that aims to restore important habitats affected by the Project - especially those with highest conservation value or greatest importance to land users and land stewards including potentially affected Indigenous Peoples (e.g., high elevation grasslands and brushlands and old and mature forests). This plan recognizes the limits and uncertainties with reclamation in mountain environments and that offsetting may be required. EVR will engage with KNC and Yaqit ?a·knuq̓i 'it, and other potentially affected Indigenous Peoples on the plan, including setting end land use goals. As part of the restoration plan, EVR has committed to conducting studies to reduce reclamation uncertainty with input from KNC and Yaqit ?a·knuq̓i 'it, and other potentially affected Indigenous Peoples. Grassland and brushland ecosystems and bighorn sheep habitat will be prioritized in the restoration plan for the Project, while also integrating forested areas to support habitat for grizzly bears.
- **Extensive water quality improvements.** EVR continues to progress on improving water quality in line with the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan (EVWQP). To date, 77,500 cubic metres per day (m³/d) of treatment capacity from proven technologies have been constructed, removing between 95% and 99% of selenium from treated water through current water treatment facilities. As part of the EVWQP, EVR must meet the requirements in the *Environmental Management Act* Permit 107517, including the construction and operation of treatment facilities on the timelines specified and achievement of water quality limits. The FRX Project's water quality management plan builds on the experience gained from existing Elk Valley operations. It includes mine design, source control, treatment, and research to manage water quality effectively. The plan also allows for new technologies to be added as they become available. The water quality management plan will support meeting the objectives of the EVWQP and allow for improvements in technology to be incorporated as the Project evolves. Water that has come in contact with mining activities will report to existing treatment infrastructure or a new saturated rock fill (SRF). There are currently two locations where a saturated rock fill could be designed and installed into the mine plan, one in each stage. A water reservoir is also planned in the northern part of the site to store mine-influenced water, reducing the need to draw water from other sources. Additional details on water treatment planning and progress are included in the Revised DPD.

- **Protection of additional fish habitat.** Design refinements have been made to avoid impacting fish habitat where possible. The south sediment ponds and the south end of the pit boundary have been moved to avoid affecting fish habitat. Mine rock will not be placed in the Chauncey Creek drainage and there is a reduction of volume of castover expected through improvement of castover management practices, resulting in reduced effects to flows in Chauncey Creek. Where feasible, stream and riparian habitat effects from temporary access or construction will be rehabilitated through road deactivation and reclamation of stream and riparian habitat using native substrate, soil and planting prescriptions. EVR will review the area within the upper Fording River to look at completing activities to improve the habitat for the Westslope Cutthroat Trout (WCT) population, such as fixing culverts or crossings that limit fish movement.
- **Incorporation of specific mitigations to avoid, minimize, restore or offset potential effects to Ktunaxa rights.** The Revised DPD focuses on identifying potential effects of the Project, including cumulative effects, on biophysical components and to Ktunaxa rights that were identified during the dispute resolution process by Ktunaxa Nation and the plausible mitigations considered necessary to address those concerns.
- **The Project will incorporate measurable and time-bound targets for mitigation measures during the assessment.** Some of the key mitigations identified for the Project are well understood and their success has been previously demonstrated, whereas other mitigations are associated with some uncertainty. Where there is uncertainty, the Impact Statement/Application (IS/A) will define clear, measurable, and time-bound targets and will identify reporting to track success and facilitate adaptive management, where needed.

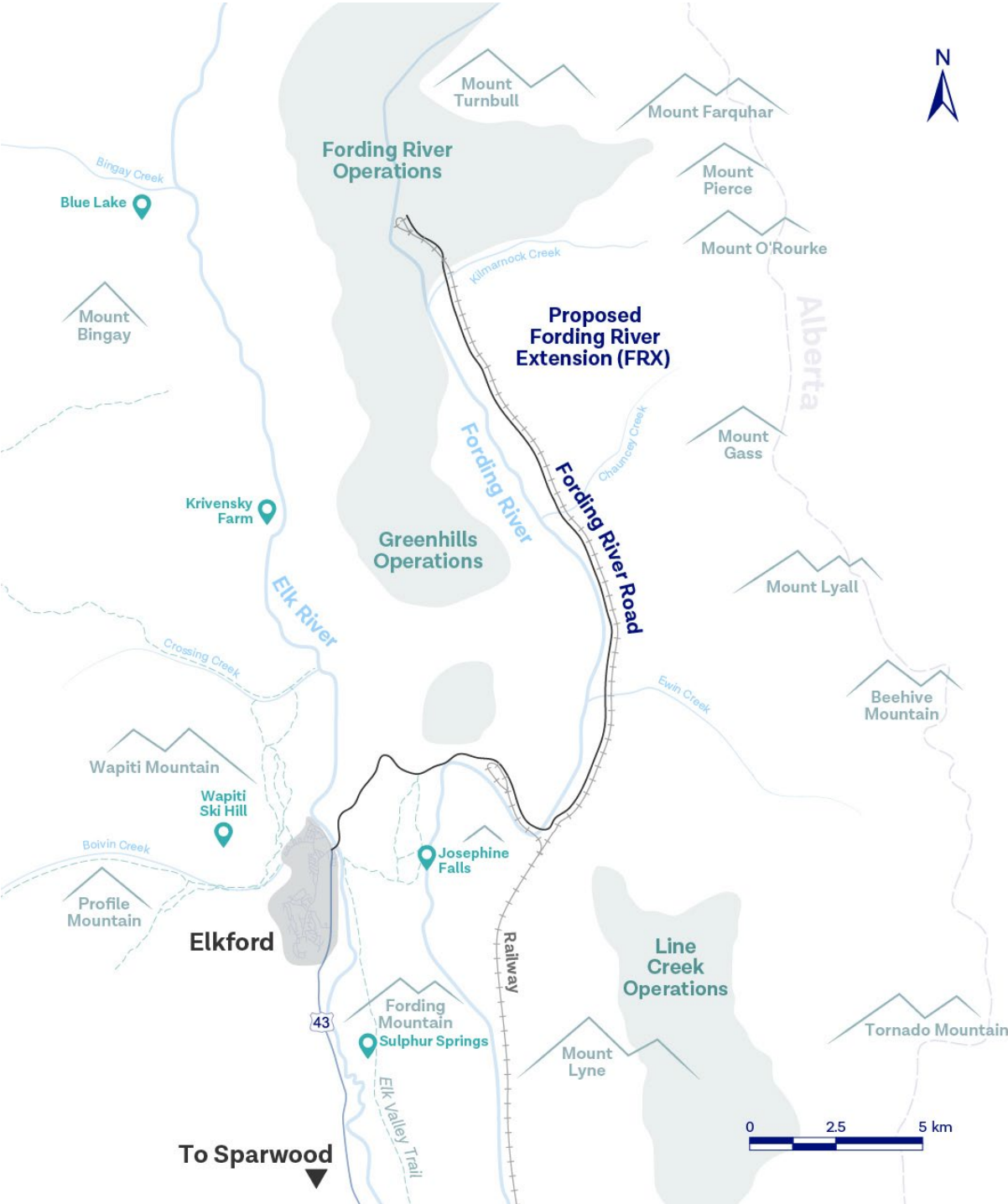


Figure 1: Location of Proposed Fording River Extension

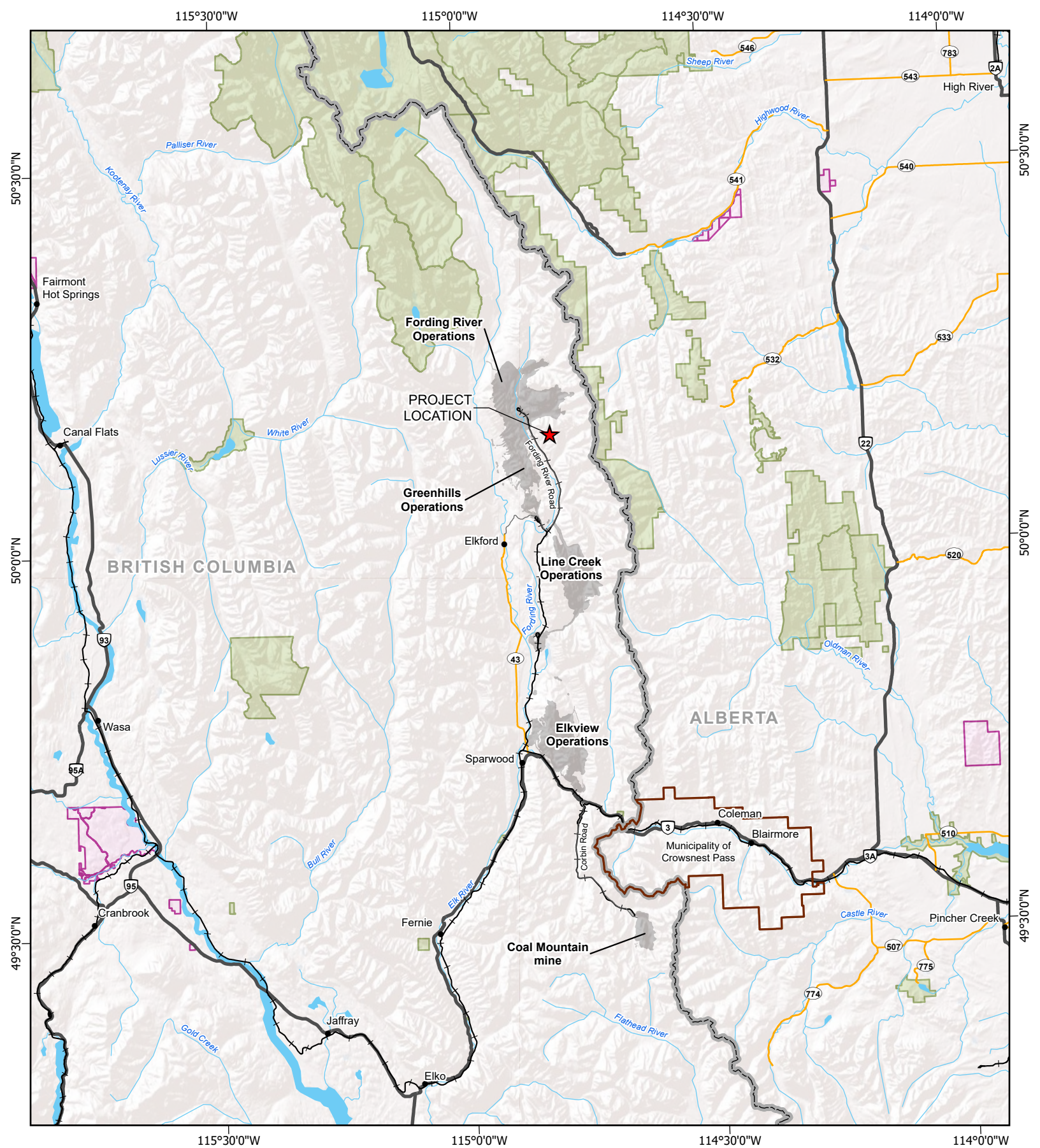
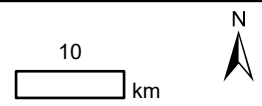


Figure 2: Regional Location of Fording River Operations and the Project (NTS 082G/082J)

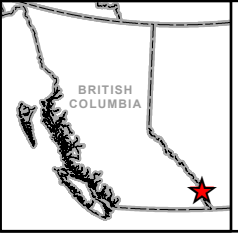
- City / Town / Community
- ★ Project Location
- Primary Highway
- Secondary Highway
- Railway
- Watercourse
- British Columbia - Alberta Boundary
- Coal Mining Operation
- First Nations Reserve
- Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
- Provincial Park / Protected Area
- Waterbody



DATE: 6/2/2025	MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER
SCALE: 1:700,000	COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

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2.0 Project Need and Purpose

Steelmaking coal is an essential material used to produce steel, which has an important role in today's society, including the building of infrastructure such as rail, bridges, hospitals and schools. Steel helps improve the quality of life for people around the world. Global demand for steel is growing due to rising economic development and urbanization, especially in fast-growing regions and developing countries. By 2050, an estimated 2 to 3 billion more people are expected to join the global middle class, increasing the need for housing, transportation, and energy infrastructure.

Steel is also critical to the transition to a low-carbon economy. It is used to build things like wind turbines, energy-efficient buildings, electric vehicles, hybrid buses, and rapid transit systems. As one of the most widely used materials in the world, steel is well-suited for the circular economy because it is highly recyclable and difficult to replace in most of its uses.

EVR's steelmaking coal operations are assisted by access to low-carbon sources of electricity in BC.

The need for the Project comes from EVR's business strategy to continue supplying steelmaking coal to meet the global demand and the fact that currently permitted reserves at FRO will be significantly reduced in the early 2030s. The Project is also important to support the long-term viability of EVR's operations and business in the Elk Valley. FRO alone accounts for one-third portion of the \$4.6 billion in economic contributions generated by EVR's activities in the Elk Valley.

Based on the above needs, the purpose of the Project is to extend the lifespan of FRO to maintain global competitiveness of the Elk Valley operations. This is critical to the communities and residents within the Elk Valley and greater region. EVR's four Elk Valley steelmaking coal operations employ approximately 5,000 employees (Teck 2023). The Project would maintain existing production levels at FRO through to the early 2060s⁴ and sustain jobs for the approximately 1,500 employees already employed at FRO along with the thousands of indirect jobs associated with the Project, securing the continuity of economic benefits shared by the regional⁵, provincial and national economies and different levels of government. The Project has been identified as the most environmentally, socially, technically and economically feasible option to assess to support the continued operation of FRO.

Without an extended mining area, coal production at FRO will begin to decline in the early 2030s, leading to the site's closure. Alternatives to the Project were considered, including mining of different resource areas. These alternatives were rejected because they did not meet the Project need and purpose (i.e., did not offer feasible options to support long-term continued mining at FRO) or because of much higher environmental concerns and other concerns through engagement feedback.

⁴ FRO's annual production rate averages 9 million metric tonnes of clean coal (Mmtcc); EVR's long-term annual average production capacity (all coal operations) is 24 to 26 Mmtcc.

⁵ Including the Elk Valley communities of Elkford, Sparwood, Hosmer, Fernie in BC and Crowsnest Pass, AB, along with surrounding smaller rural communities in these vicinities.

The Project would be the primary source of steelmaking coal for FRO by the late 2030s, maintaining the current average production rate of 9 million metric tonnes of clean coal per year (Mmtcc/yr). The Project would produce an estimated 280 Mmtcc⁶ over its operational life.

3.0 Summary of Engagement and Key Issues

Early, inclusive and meaningful engagement with all interested persons who may be affected by or have an interest in the Project is important to EVR and is an integral component of the process under the IAA and the BC EAA. To date, EVR has engaged with various organizations, groups, and members of the public. Engagement has occurred through a variety of methods, including in-person meetings, teleconferences, letters, emails and via the Project website (<https://www.glencore.ca/en/evr/fording-river-extension>). Groups engaged to date include:

- Indigenous Peoples of Canada including:
 - Ktunaxa Nation
 - Yaq̓it ᑭa·knuq̓i 'it
 - Shuswap Band
 - Stoney Nakoda Nations⁷
 - Piikani Nation
 - Siksika Nation
 - Kainai (Blood Tribe)
 - Tsuut'ina Nation
 - Otipemisiwak Métis Government (previously the Métis Nation of Alberta)
 - Métis Nation of British Columbia
 - Elk Valley Métis Nation
- technical advisors invited to comment on the Project by the federal IAAC and the BC EAO
- members of the potentially affected public, local government agencies and other groups, including:
 - landowners, residents and businesses in the vicinity of the Project
 - community-based organizations
 - environmental groups
 - local government
 - District of Elkford
 - District of Sparwood
 - City of Fernie
 - Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
 - Regional District of East Kootenay
 - EVR employees
 - other interested members of the public

⁶ Reported quantity includes Proven Mineral Reserves, Probable Mineral Reserves, and Inferred Mineral Resources within the constraining volume of the life-of-mine design. Mineral Resources are not Mineral Reserves and do not have demonstrated economic viability. Quantities expressed as clean coal tonnages (mtcc) are for discussion purposes only.

⁷ Includes Bearspaw First Nation, Chiniki First Nation, and Goodstoney First Nation.

In addition, public comments were received by IAAC and the BC EAO through formal public comment periods.

Over the course of engagement to date, EVR has received valuable feedback on the Project. Feedback received from the provincial and federal processes was summarized by the BC EAO and IAAC in the [Summary of Engagement](#) and in the [Summary of Issues](#), respectively. BC EAO identified the following key issues or comment categories through the provincial process:

- Water quality effects (e.g., selenium) that could cause effects to aquatic biophysical resources (e.g., WCT and other aquatic species) and human health.
- Effects to species at risk, including WCT, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, high elevation grasslands, and whitebark pine.
- Cumulative effects on water quality, air quality, soil, plants and wildlife and the transmission of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.
- Importance of mining to the economy.
- Effects to traditional and current land use practices for Indigenous ceremonial, cultural, medicinal, harvesting and subsistence purposes, including those involving plants, wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, and specific sites of archaeological and ceremonial importance.

The IAAC identified the following key issues or comment categories through the federal process:

- Inclusion of federal lands and transboundary environments in the assessment study area (e.g., United States [US] and Alberta) related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water quality, fish and fish habitat, species at risk and their habitats and Indigenous Peoples.
- Consideration of potential for the Project to contribute to cumulative effects on water quality, fish and fish habitat, wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems (e.g., high elevation grasslands, wetlands, old growth and mature forests), species at risk, and migratory birds and their habitat.
- Water quality effects (e.g., selenium) that could cause effects to aquatic biophysical resources (e.g., WCT and other aquatic species) and human health; effectiveness of water quality mitigation technology and interest in evidence-based water treatment measures.
- Concerns regarding potential Project-related and/or cumulative effects to Indigenous Peoples' current use of lands and resources and effects to Indigenous People's Aboriginal and Treaty Rights through changes to access, sensory disturbance, changes to places of spiritual, cultural or traditional importance, loss of opportunities to carry out cultural practices including transmission of traditional knowledge and subsistence practices, effects to harvested resources, changes to food security and health, changes to land and resource stewardship.
- Effects to air quality and climate change from GHG and other emissions from the Project.
- Sustainability and effects on economy, including the need for environmentally sustainable and socially responsible mining projects to meet ongoing global demand for steel and the development of sustainable infrastructure, such as renewable energy infrastructure.
- Effects to human health and well-being on diverse groups of people.
- Concern over reclamation progress and restoration efforts/environmental performance of existing operations and effective regulatory mechanisms for environmental protection.

EVR actively incorporated feedback received on the IPD to prepare the DPD. Following additional engagement in fall 2020, KNC provided feedback on a draft version of the DPD, which was subsequently incorporated and addressed in the final version submitted July 29, 2021 (July 2021 DPD).

In March 2022, the BC EAO issued a draft Readiness Decision Recommendation Report with the preliminary recommendation that the Project proceed to an environmental assessment. Participating Indigenous nations and technical advisors were given the opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft recommendation report. The KNC disagreed with the BC EAO's view that the Project, as proposed, would not result in extraordinarily adverse effects on the environment and/or to Ktunaxa and Ktunaxa rights and a dispute resolution process between the BC EAO and the KNC was initiated. The purpose of the facilitated dispute resolution process was to inform a Readiness Decision, including whether the July 2021 DPD was sufficient to proceed to an environmental assessment.

At the end of dispute resolution, the Chief Environmental Assessment Officer (CEAO) issued a Readiness Decision on February 21, 2023, which directed EVR to submit a Revised DPD for the Project. The CEAO identified the following deficiencies that needed to be addressed in the Revised DPD:

- Clearer identification of alternatives to the Project, with transparent weighting and criteria for assessment of their feasibility including how alternatives are evaluated against the Project purpose.
- Clearer identification of alternative means of carrying out the Project, with transparent weighting and criteria for assessment of their feasibility.
- Ensure that the DPD lists all the potential impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the Project on bio-physical components and to Ktunaxa rights that have been identified as part of the dispute resolution process and identify plausible mitigations to impacts on Ktunaxa and Ktunaxa rights.
- Ensure the DPD includes all plausible measures that mitigate the effects of the Project and cumulative effects in the project area that the Project would contribute to.
- Confirm if Ktunaxa and Yaq̓it ᑭᑎᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ 'it agree that the proposed mitigation measures for effects on Ktunaxa rights are plausible.
- Identify and describe mitigation measures necessary to resolve Ktunaxa and Yaq̓it ᑭᑎᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ 'it assertions of extraordinarily adverse effects.
- Apply the BC Policy for Mitigating Impacts on Environmental Values when identifying plausible mitigation measures with attention to the mitigation hierarchy in order of priority.

In the spirit of collaboration and recognizing the importance of EVR's relationship with Ktunaxa Nation, EVR has engaged with KNC and Yaq̓it ᑭᑎᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ 'it in accordance with the BC EAO Readiness Decision Letter (BC EAO 2023). EVR has had constructive discussions on topics such as learning from previous work, considering broader interests, engagement with Ktunaxa Nation, the role of BC and Canada, the importance of leadership-level discussions and respecting Yaq̓it ᑭᑎᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ 'it's preferred participation. Throughout the course of a series of workshops, key criteria proposed for use in evaluating alternatives to the Project were shared by KNC, Yaq̓it ᑭᑎᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ 'it, and EVR. By the end of the workshops, it was agreed by participants that no areas are more favourable, when the developed criteria are applied, than the Castle Mountain mining area while being able to meet the Project need and purpose. EVR has also made updates to the Project design which includes the refinements summarized in Section 1.0. Additional information on the Project's background and potential effects has also been provided in the Revised DPD in response to feedback from engagement.

Engagement is ongoing with potentially affected Indigenous Peoples to understand and mitigate the Project's potential effects on current land use and effects to the rights of Indigenous Peoples. EVR's proposed engagement with potentially affected Indigenous Peoples includes developing an understanding of how to incorporate traditional and community knowledge and cultural perspectives in the assessment. While this engagement will continue throughout the assessment process, it will be of most value if traditional and community knowledge is available early in the assessment process.

4.0 Project Location

The Project would be located in the Elk Valley in the East Kootenay Region of southeastern BC, with the proposed mining area directly south of and adjacent to the existing FRO at approximately 50.15445, 114.81111 (World Geodetic System 1984). The Project would be located primarily on Crown land coal leases held by EVR, with portions of the Project on fee simple land owned by EVR (Table 1 and Figure 3). Access to the Project is north from Highway 3 via Highway 43 (Elk Valley Highway) from Sparwood to Elkford and then approximately 30 km north on the Fording Mine Road.

The Project would be within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, the territory of the Ktunaxa Nation and within the Ktunaxa district of Qukin ʔamakʔis or Raven's Land. Qukin ʔamakʔis extends from the headwaters of the Elk River downstream to near the Town of Elko, an area of more than 3,500 km². The Ktunaxa Nation is composed of Yaqit ʔa-knuqʔi 'it (Tobacco Plains Band), ʔaq'am (St. Mary's Band), yagan nuʔkiy (Lower Kootenay Band), and ʔakisq'nuk First Nation (Columbia Lake Band). The KNC Society is accountable to the Nasuʔkin and Council of the four Ktunaxa Member Nations. KNC and Yaqit ʔa-knuqʔi 'it have been identified as the appropriate groups for consultation and engagement with respect to the Project by Ktunaxa. Locations important to Ktunaxa Nation have been identified within 1 km of the Project, including locations in the Chauncey Creek watershed. EVR also recognizes that there are two Ktunaxa communities in the US: Kupaʔiʔqnuq (Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes) in Elmo, Montana and ʔaqanqmi (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho) in Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

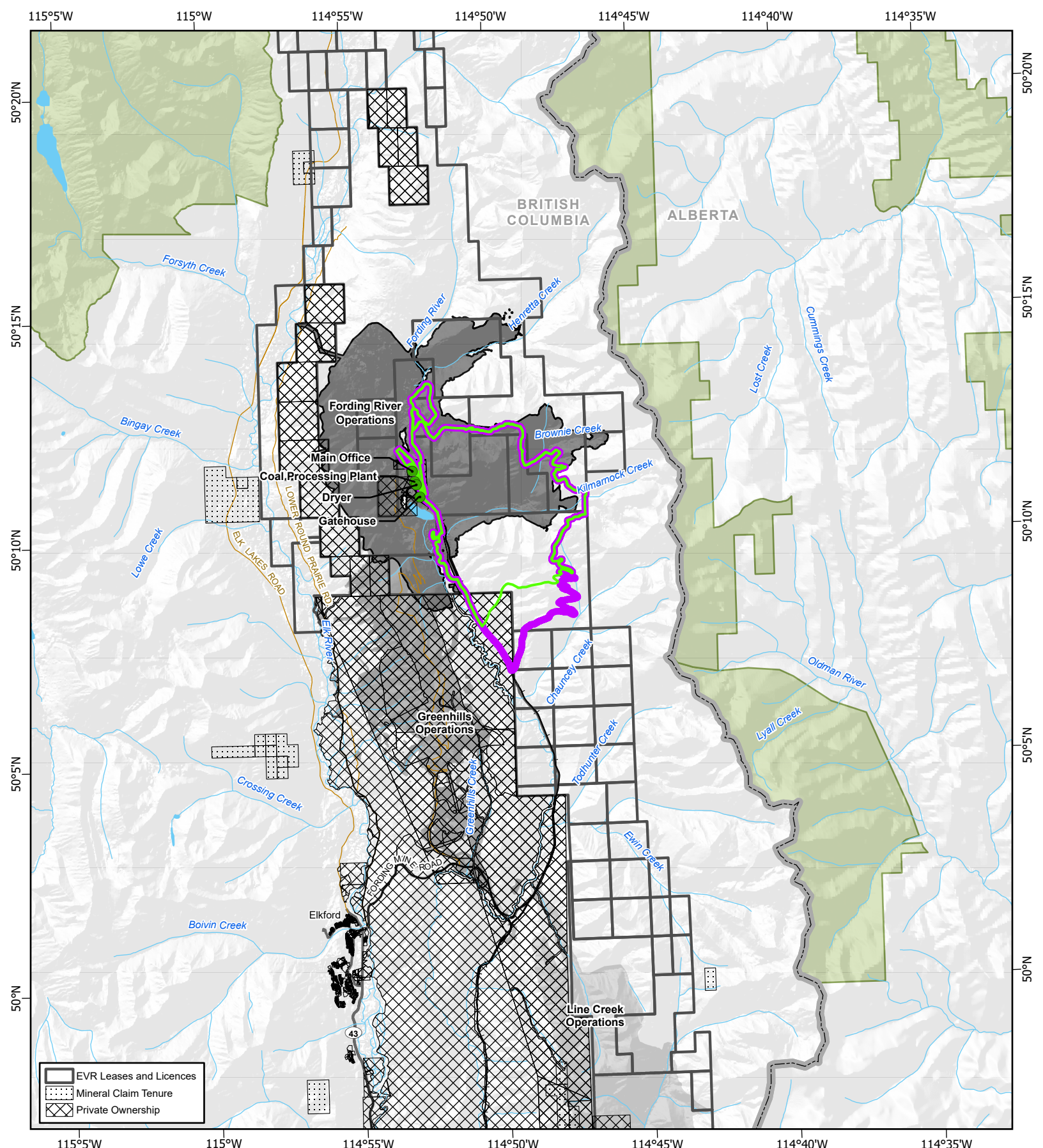
It is acknowledged that the traditional lands of other potentially affected Indigenous Peoples, including Shuswap Band, Stoney Nakoda Nations, Piikani Nation, Siksika Nation, Kainai (Blood Tribe) and Tsuut'ina Nation, also overlap or occur in proximity to the Project. Indigenous reserve lands are located 35 to 130 km from the Project, with the closest Indigenous residential Community of Eden Valley (Stoney Nakoda) located approximately 40 km from the Project. Métis groups, including Métis Nation British Columbia, Elk Valley Métis and Otipemisiwak Métis Government, also have interests in the Elk Valley. Proximity of the Project to Ktunaxa and other potentially affected Indigenous Peoples' reserve lands is shown in Figure 4.

The closest Elk Valley community is Elkford, located approximately 30 km driving distance southwest of the Project (Figure 2). Sparwood is the next nearest community (approximately 60 km driving distance from the Project). Fernie, BC, and Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, are both approximately 100 km away from the Project.

No federal lands would be used for the Project and there will be no direct Project effects on federal lands. The nearest federal lands, referred to as the Dominion Coal Block (Parcels 73 and 82), are located approximately 70 km and 80 km from the Project, respectively (Figure 5).

Table 1: Legal Description of Lands to be Used for the Project

Type	Legal Description
Private lands	Those lands held as an Estate in Fee Simple by EVR Operations Limited: Block A, District Lots 3454 and 16964, Kootenay District; Lot 1, District Lot 4588, Kootenay District, Plan 11279, except Plans RW 572, 12976, NEP70655 and NEP70656.
	Those lands held as an Estate in Fee Simple by Canadian Pacific Limited: That part of District Lot 3373, Kootenay District, included in Plan RW 563; District Lot 3345, Kootenay District, as shown on Plan RW 563.
Provincial lands	Those lands held by The Crown in Right of British Columbia: District Lots 6642, 6710, 6709, 6708, 6646, 6706, 6700, 6701, 6702, 6703, 6698, 6638, 6697, 6696, 6695, 6694, 6637, 6688, 6689, 6690, 6691, 6687, 6686, 6685, 6684, 6728, 6729, 6733, 6732, 6734 and on unsurveyed ground commencing at the southwest corner of Lot 6687; thence due north to the northwest corner of Lot 6687; thence due west to the northeast corner of Lot 6635; thence due south to the southeast corner of Lot 6635; thence due east to the southwest corner of Lot 6687 being the point of commencement.



	EVR Leases and Licences
	Mineral Claim Tenure
	Private Ownership

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Figure 3: EVR Coal Leases in and Around the Project Footprint (NTS 082G/082J)

	City / Town / Community		FRO C-3 Permitted Mine Area
	Existing Facility		GHO C-137 Permitted Mine Area
	Railway		LCO C-129 Permitted Mine Area
	Road - Paved		Project Footprint - Stage 1
	Road - Unpaved		Project Footprint - Stage 1 + Stage 2
	Watercourse		Park/Protected Area
	British Columbia - Alberta Boundary		Waterbody

4 km		N
DATE: 6/2/2025	MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER	
SCALE: 1:200,000	COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N	

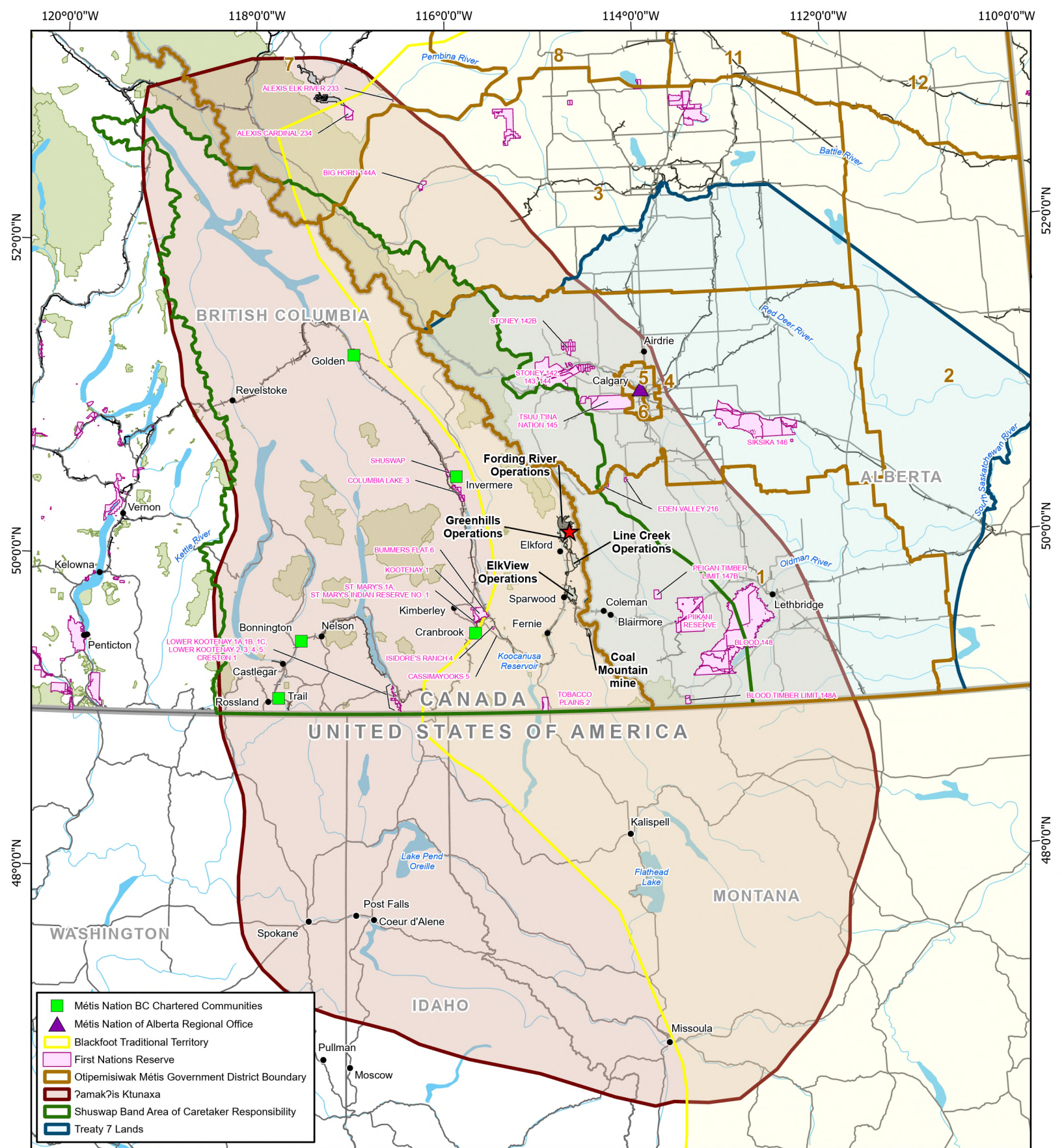
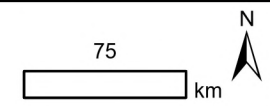


Figure 4: Proximity to Indigenous Reserves, Territories, Treaty Lands and Chartered Communities (NTS 071 L/M, 072 D/E/L/M, 073 D/E, 081 I-P, 082 A-P, 083 A-H)

- City / Town / Community
- ★ Project Location
- Railway
- Primary Highway
- Watercourse
- British Columbia - Alberta Boundary
- Coal Mining Operation
- FRO C-3 Permitted Mine Area
- International Border
- Provincial Park / Protected Area
- State Border
- Waterbody

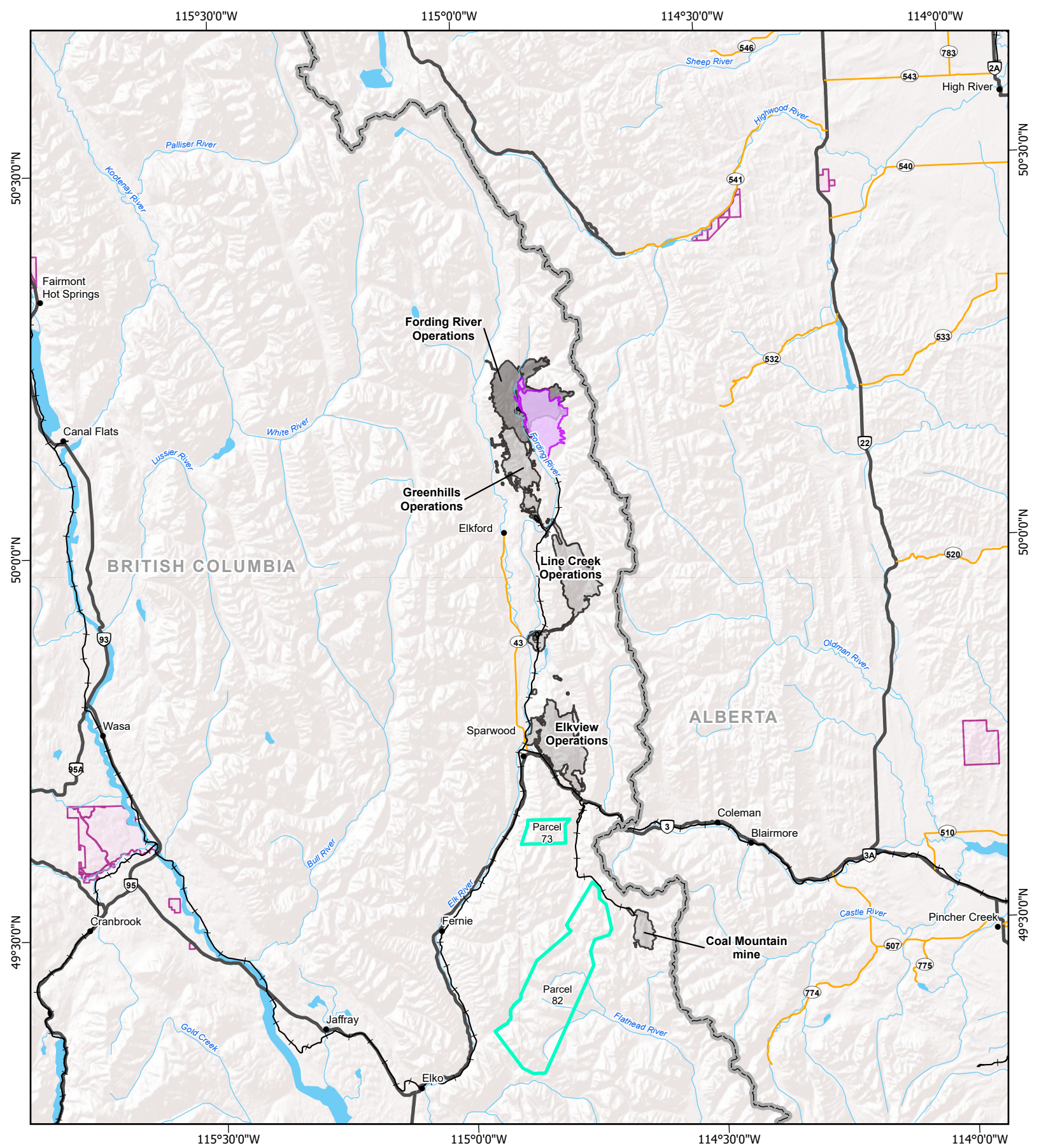


DATE: 8/13/2025	MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER
SCALE: 1:3,500,000	COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

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Figure 5: Proximity to Federal Lands (NTS 082G/082J)

- City / Town / Community
- Primary Highway
- Secondary Highway
- Railway
- Watercourse
- British Columbia - Alberta Boundary
- Coal Mining Operation
- Dominion Coal Block
- FRO C-3 Permitted Mine Area
- First Nations Reserve
- Project Footprint
- Waterbody

10 km

DATE: 6/2/2025

MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER

SCALE: 1:700,000

COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

5.0 Project Components and Schedule

The Project would provide raw steelmaking coal to the existing FRO Coal Processing Plant, which would be processed within the currently approved plant. Existing FRO components that would support the Project include:

- coal processing plant facilities with associated coal stockpiles, tailings handling and storage, water treatment and sewage facilities
- office, warehouses, maintenance facilities
- explosives storage, manufacturing and delivery systems
- access roads (Fording Mine Road), rail spur, power and utilities
- mining equipment including drills, shovels and haul trucks

The main new Project-specific components and activities, for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Project, would be located in the Project footprint (Figure 6) and would include:

- lay-down areas and access roads in the Project mine area
- satellite office(s), warehouses, and maintenance, fuelling and other support facilities (non-potable water for new buildings within the Project footprint could be supplied from a new water well with a new licence)
- linkages to FRO power and utilities (a short extension, transformers and distribution lines would be required to connect Project components to the existing FRO power supply)
- explosives magazine(s) and storage
- mine pit
- mine rock storage areas
- coal stockpile and sorting areas
- coal and mine rock materials handling facilities
- tailings management and storage with the potential to transition to a dewatering system
- water management systems and infrastructure

The configuration of the Project components and activities have been selected for environmental, social, economic, and technical considerations, as well as feedback from early engagement. Key considerations in developing the configuration of the Project components and activities include:

- balancing environmental, safety, geotechnical constraints in determining the maximum extent of the mine pit
- optimizing placement of mine rock within mine pits and in other previously disturbed areas
- incorporating best achievable technology in tailings management
- maximizing use of existing infrastructure

Project components, both new and existing, would be described as part of the IS/A.

Construction for Stage 1 would occur from Q4 2028 through to 2031. Stage 1 mining operations would follow from 2031 through to 2053, with a decline in coal production after 2044 from Stage 1. Construction for Stage 2 would occur from 2044 to 2046, followed by Stage 2 mining operations from 2046 to 2065. The estimate of the working life of the mine is based on the current average annual coal production rate at FRO of approximately 9 Mmtcc/yr, placing approximately 3.1 Bbcm of mine rock in the mine rock storage areas. At the end of the mine life, Project activities would include finishing remaining reclamation and active closure, which is likely to occur over a period of at least five years. The post-closure duration is expected to continue until other uses of the land commence and would include ongoing operation of water management infrastructure for as long as it is needed to support water quantity/quality objectives.

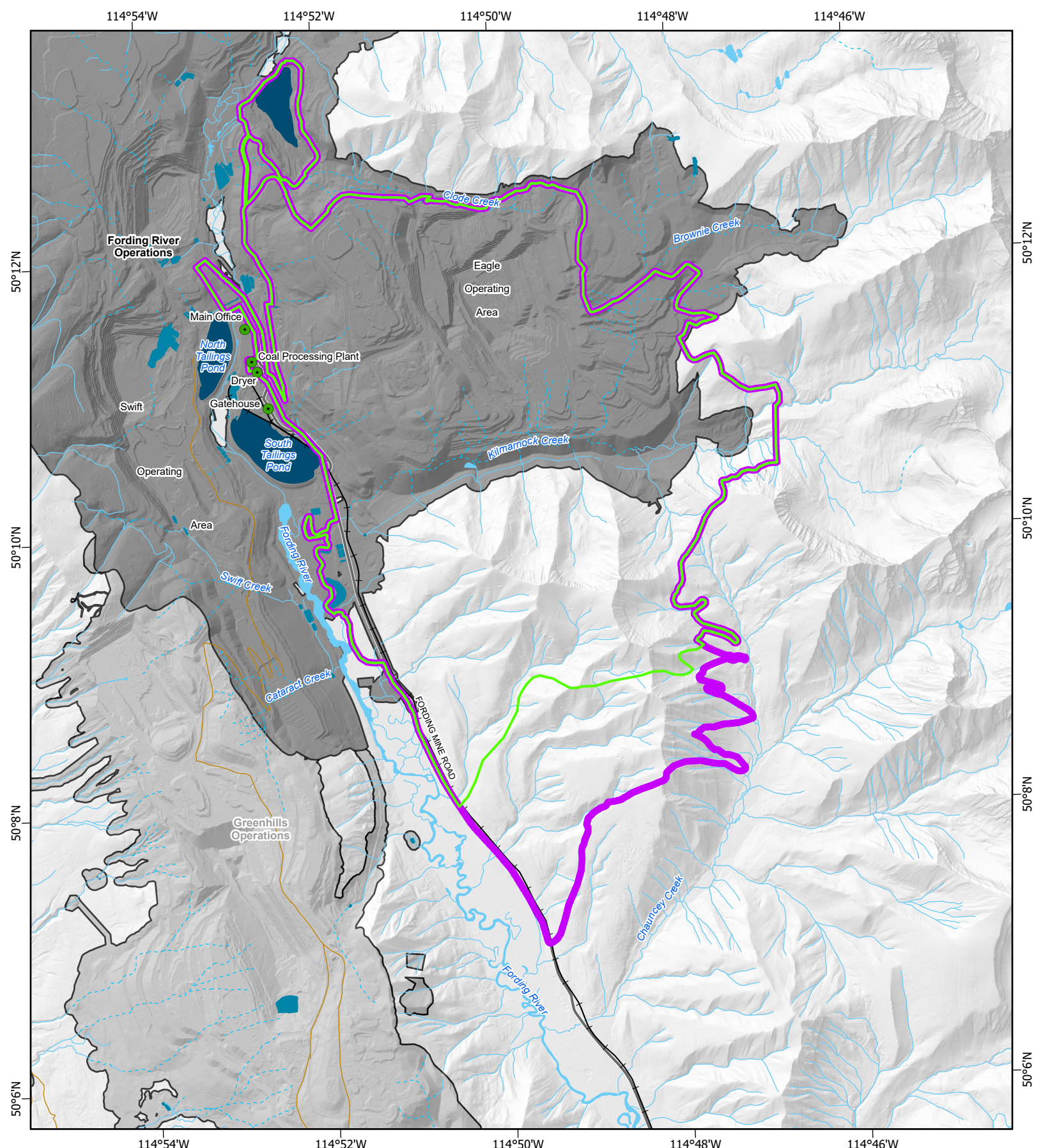
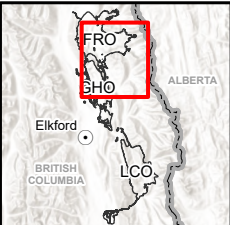


Figure 6: Project Footprint and Existing Fording River Operations (NTS 082J/02)

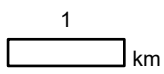

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- Existing Facility
- Railway
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Surface Flow Watercourse
- Subsurface Flow Watercourse

- FRO C-3 Permitted Mine Area
- GHO C-137 Permitted Mine Area
- Project Footprint - Stage 1
- Project Footprint - Stage 1 + Stage 2
- Tailings Pond
- Waste Water/Sediment Pond
- Waterbody

		
DATE: 6/2/2025	MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER	
SCALE: 1:65,000	COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N	

6.0 Project Wastes and Emissions

Waste from the Project will include:

- tailings from the processing of raw coal
- hazardous and non-hazardous waste (e.g., office/domestic waste, vehicle maintenance wastes)
- sewage
- contaminated soil (in the event of spills or leaks)

Waste would be managed similar to existing FRO waste management plans and processes. Where needed, the existing plans and processes would be updated to incorporate the Project's continuous improvement and any new conditions. This includes continuing EVR's recycling program and evaluating supplemental options to no longer put haul truck tires within mine rock storage areas.

EVR's steelmaking coal operations are low GHG intensity producers, which are assisted by low carbon sources of electricity in BC. The sources of Project GHG emissions would be the same as those at the existing FRO, which include the combustion of fossil fuels, the exposure of coal which can release methane gas and the use of electricity acquired from the grid.

Greenhouse gas emissions at FRO in 2023 were approximately 828,329 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, with an emission intensity that is at a lower average compared with industry peers in other countries worldwide (Skarn Associates 2021). Similar to the existing FRO, the Project's GHG emissions would vary from year to year and could increase as different areas of the Project are mined, with estimated average annual GHG emissions over the operations phase of 760,573 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year.

Mine plan updates and equipment upgrades and replacement could reduce the GHG emissions, while the Project continues to evaluate new material handling options. The Project would meet appropriate emissions and GHG regulations and requirements and align with EVR's objective to be net zero across all operations and activities by 2050.

Water emissions would include water that has come in contact with mining areas such as pits and mine rock, as well as water that comes into contact with non-mining areas that are disturbed for related work. Mine-contact water can have higher levels of substances such as selenium, nitrate and sulphate which will be treated. Water that comes into contact with non-mining areas may carry sediment which will be managed before returning to the environment.

The water quality management plan for the Project would follow the regional water quality management plan for EVR's Elk Valley operations, referred to as the EVWQP (Teck 2014). The EVWQP aims to protect aquatic ecosystems, limit certain substances returning to the environment, and safeguard aquatic, terrestrial and human health. The Project would be integrated into the EVWQP Implementation Plan (Teck 2014) and relevant adjustments or amendments following Project approval.

7.0 Applicability of Regional Assessments, Studies or Plans

EVR will provide an assessment of the Project's GHG emissions and its contribution to Canada's ability to meet its commitments with respect to climate change, as outlined in the Government of Canada's Strategic Assessment of Climate Change (Government of Canada 2020) and BC Net Zero Standard. No other federal regional assessments, studies or plans are relevant to the Project.

A number of provincial plans will be used to guide the assessment of the Project. These include, for example, land use plans, the Elk Valley cumulative effects management framework and, as noted above, the EVWQP. The full list of applicable studies and plans will be outlined in EVR's IS/A.

8.0 Biophysical Environment

The Project would overlap portions of FRO's existing permitted operating area and portions of Castle Mountain in the Fording River Valley (Figure 7). The area to be mined as part of the Project consists primarily of forested habitat interspersed with non-forested ecosystems such as grasslands and avalanche paths, with some exploration and forestry disturbance. Castle Mountain is bordered by Kilmarnock Creek and the actively mined Eagle operating area to the north, the Fording River and the Greenhills Range to the west, and Chauncey Creek and the High Rock Range to the east and south.

The region has a continental cold climate, and elevation, slope, aspect and proximity to the Fording River form important influences on temperature, precipitation and wind speed in the Project area. Snow cover in the Fording River Valley is consistent from November through March, whereas rainfall is generally moderate in the summer months. Wind in the region is mainly channelled through the Fording River Valley, with predominant winds from the south-southeast and south (although winds from the northwest also occur).

The upper portions of Castle Mountain are steep, with slopes of approximately 40%. The lower west side of Castle Mountain (facing the Fording River) includes shallower slopes of approximately 10%. Elevations near the Project range from approximately 1,550 metres above sea level (masl) near the Fording River Valley floor to approximately 2,550 masl at the peak of Castle Mountain. A network of relatively small-sized watercourses collect runoff from the surrounding terrain on Castle Mountain and report to larger tributaries of the Fording River, such as Chauncey and Kilmarnock creeks, or directly to the Fording River. The Fording River flows generally south and discharges to the Elk River. The Elk River flows generally southwest and discharges to Kocanusa Reservoir approximately 100 km downstream of the mouth of the Fording River. Kocanusa Reservoir straddles the Canada–US border and is part of the Kootenay (Kootenai) River system.

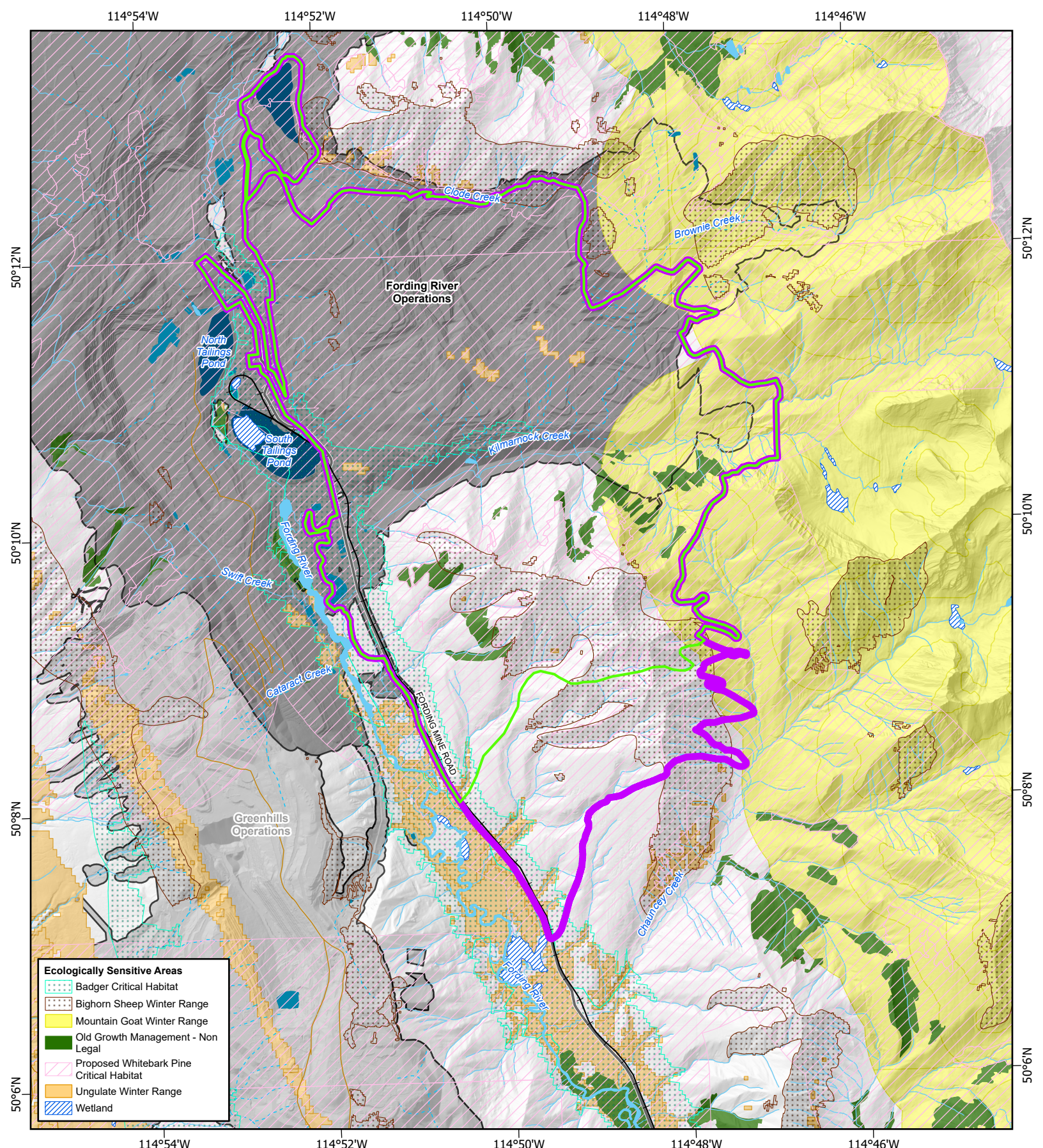
The Project is situated in the Elk Valley Ecoregion and the Rocky Mountain Forest District. There are two main biogeoclimatic zones in the Project area: Engelmann Spruce – Subalpine Fir zone and Montane Spruce zone. Human activities such as forestry, coal mining, and other infrastructure and developments have occurred over the past century and have influenced ecosystems and vegetation in the Elk Valley.

The Elk Valley supports various plant communities including vascular, non-vascular and lichen plant species; some that are considered species of conservation concern. Some of the plant communities at risk, including select grassland communities, are unique to the East Kootenay Region and are of conservation concern due to their apparent limited distribution, potential sensitivity to development, and the habitat they provide for other species of conservation concern. These grassland communities occur predominantly at mid to high elevations in the Elk Valley. Approximately 60 provincially at risk plant species were identified as known to occur or having the potential to occur in the Project footprint. Of these, whitebark pine is listed under Schedule 1 of the federal SARA (Endangered).

The undisturbed portion of the Project footprint provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. For example, the conifer forests, grasslands and whitebark pine stands provide habitat for wildlife such as red squirrel, snowshoe hare, marten, pine siskin and Clark's nutcracker. Stands of lodgepole pine provide summer and fall range, as well as cover, for elk and mule deer. Birds such as the three-toed woodpecker that forage on bark-inhabiting insects are also common in the pine forests. Avalanche tracks that occur within the Project footprint provide summer range for ungulates like deer and moose, and spring and summer habitats for grizzly and black bears. Birds in these habitats include fox sparrow, American robin, dusky grouse, rufous hummingbird and red-tailed hawk. Grasslands provide habitat for a variety of species in the Elk Valley, including overwintering habitat for bighorn sheep and important foraging habitat for other wildlife such as elk, mule deer, moose, black bear and grizzly bear. Columbian ground squirrel is a common small mammal in these habitats; American badger, which preys on this species, may also be present. American dipper, spotted sandpiper, and harlequin duck are known to use streams within the general vicinity of the Project. Amphibians such as Columbia spotted frog, wood frog, western toad and long-toed salamander may also use riparian and wetland habitats in the general vicinity of the Project. Over 70 wildlife species of conservation concern (red- or blue-listed by the province) were identified as having the potential to occur within the Project footprint, including several species of conservation concern in BC. Twenty-six of these species are listed under Schedule 1 of the federal SARA or by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Ten additional species that are provincially yellow-listed (not at risk) or status unknown are listed under Schedule 1 of the federal SARA or by COSEWIC.

Westslope Cutthroat Trout are the only known fish species to occur in the upper Fording River (Figure 7) above Josephine Falls, which acts as a barrier to upstream fish movement. The species is designated as Special Concern by COSEWIC and listed as Special Concern under Schedule 1 of the SARA and is blue-listed in BC. The population in the upper Fording River is genetically isolated from other fish populations. Critical habitat for this species in the upper Fording River is identified as overwintering and tributary habitat. Surveys from the fall of 2019 showed a decline in the numbers of WCT in the upper Fording River. The decline was attributed to severe winter conditions combined with low summer flows and the ongoing effects of development in the upper Fording River (EOC 2021). The population has since rebounded and is approaching pre-decline levels (Poisson 2024).

Several key ecologically sensitive and at risk areas that have been mapped in the Project vicinity or within the broader region are shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8, respectively, including wetlands, mature and old growth forests, ecological communities at risk, bighorn sheep winter range and ungulate winter range.



- Ecologically Sensitive Areas**
- Badger Critical Habitat
 - Bighorn Sheep Winter Range
 - Mountain Goat Winter Range
 - Old Growth Management - Non Legal
 - Proposed Whitebark Pine Critical Habitat
 - Ungulate Winter Range
 - Wetland

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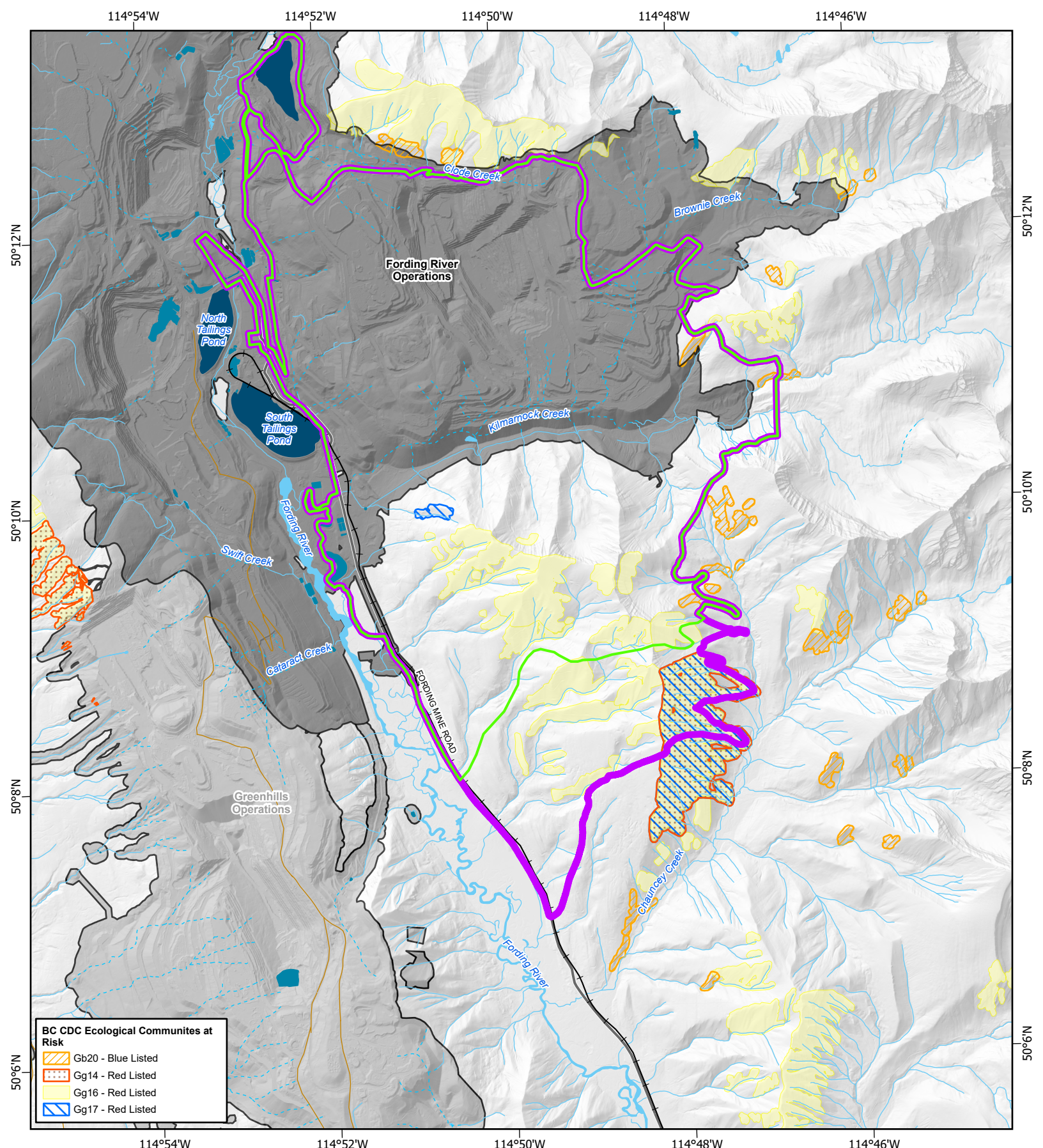
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- Railway
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Surface Flow Watercourse
- Subsurface Flow Watercourse
- GHO C-137 Permitted Mine Area
- FRO C-3 Permitted Mine Area
- Project Footprint - Stage 1
- Project Footprint - Stage + Stage 2
- Tailings Pond
- Waste Water/Sediment Pond
- Waterbody

Figure 7: Ecologically Sensitive Areas in the Project Vicinity (NTS 082J/02)

1 km		N ↑	
DATE: 6/2/2025	MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER		
SCALE: 1:65,000	COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N		



BC CDC Ecological Communities at Risk

	Gb20 - Blue Listed
	Gg14 - Red Listed
	Gg16 - Red Listed
	Gg17 - Red Listed

Figure 8: Ecological Communities at Risk in the Project Vicinity (NTS 082J/02)

<p>The maps and map data are provided 'as is' without any guarantee, representation, condition or warranty of any kind, either express, implied, or statutory. EVR Operations Limited assumes no liability with respect to any reliance the user places in the maps and map data, and the user assumes the entire risk as to the truth, accuracy, currency, or completeness of the information contained in the maps and map data.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railway Road - Paved Road - Unpaved Surface Flow Watercourse Subsurface Flow Watercourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRO C-3 Permitted Mine Area GHO C-137 Permitted Mine Area Project Footprint - Stage 1 Project Footprint - Stage 1 + Stage 2 Tailings Pond Waste Water/Sediment Pond Waterbody 		DATE: 6/2/2025	MINE OPERATION: FORDING RIVER
					SCALE: 1:65,000	COORDINATE SYSTEM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

9.0 Economic, Social and Health Environment

Economic Environment

Coal has been mined in the Elk Valley since the late 1890s, and coal mining has been a major part of the Elk Valley and Regional District of East Kootenay's economies since that time. Mining employs approximately 70% of the male workforce and 25% of the female workforce in Elkford, and 45% of the male workforce and just under 20% of the female workforce in Sparwood. The labour forces of Fernie and Crowsnest Pass are more diverse, with mining employing about a third of the male workforce and under a tenth of the female workforce in each (Statistics Canada 2017). Average incomes in the Elk Valley region and local communities have historically been, and continue to be, among the highest in the province due to the large presence of the mining and forestry sectors, particularly among the male workforce. With heavy dependency on steelmaking coal mining, unemployment rates in the Fernie-Elk Valley area have been tied to the local mines' production levels, which in turn are directly influenced by global market conditions.

Over the construction period, it is estimated that the Project would create several hundred additional construction-related jobs. The existing FRO workforce is planned to remain in place as FRO's focus shifts to the Operational Phase of the Project and away from other completed mining areas at FRO. By sustaining the FRO workforce, local procurement, and EVR's economic, social and environmental initiatives, the Project is expected to continue to support sustainable development of communities in the Elk Valley and the East Kootenays. EVR will continue to support local workers and businesses through programs in place for their existing operations, including working collaboratively with Ktunaxa Nation to identify and implement opportunities for employment and participation by Ktunaxa businesses in the provision of goods and services, consistent with the Impact Management Benefits Agreement established between EVR and Ktunaxa Nation.

Social Environment

The Project is located in the Regional District of East Kootenay (population 65,896 in 2021) and in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, the territory of the Ktunaxa Nation, and the caretaker responsibility area identified by the Shuswap Band. Indigenous land and resource use in the Elk Valley has included habitation, hunting, fishing, harvesting, cultivation and processing, use of the area for cultural practices, and creation and use of trails and travel corridors that connect the valley to other areas. The Elk Valley and surrounding area is subject to ongoing treaty negotiations between Ktunaxa Nation, the Province of BC and the Government of Canada. Other Indigenous Peoples have expressed interest in the Project as outlined in Section 4.0.

The Elk Valley communities of Fernie (population 6,315), Sparwood (population 4,145), and Elkford (population 2,750), BC, and Crowsnest Pass, Alberta (population 5,695), are nearby, with Elkford being the closest. Population projections indicate that between 2021 and 2031, the total population in the Fernie Local Health Area⁸ is expected to grow by approximately 7% (less than 1% annually). Projections indicate an increase in the percentage of the population aged 65 years and over compared to the total population. All other age categories are projected to see a decline in population during this same period.

⁸ Fernie Local Health Area includes the communities of Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford, as well as Tobacco Plains First Nation Reserve, Elko, Hosmer, Jaffray, Baynes Lake, Grasmere and Roosville.

Housing costs and availability in the Elk Valley region are linked to the strength of the mining industry: when the market price for coal is high, demand for labour drives housing costs up, causing variability in housing prices from year to year. While the cost of rental and owned accommodation varies across communities, dwelling values are generally below the provincial average. Several hotels in the local communities offer temporary accommodation for visitors to the Elk Valley and temporary workers alike. Temporary worker accommodation for EVR contractors is also available at EVR's Elk Valley Lodge located in Elkford, BC.

The four local communities each have preschools and elementary and secondary schools operated privately and by the BC Ministry of Education and School District 5. Two colleges⁹ with main campuses in Cranbrook and Lethbridge provide a mix of vocational, trade, technical and academic programs. Each of the communities in the Elk Valley have their own fire department, and there are volunteer search and rescue teams in Elkford and Fernie. Ambulance service in the Elk Valley is provided by the BC Ambulance Service and is based in each of the local BC communities. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police provides municipal police services to the Elk Valley municipalities and unincorporated rural areas. Elkford draws water from six nearby wells to supply water and sewer services to the community. Solid waste disposal services are provided through the Elkford Transfer Station. Highway 3 and Highway 43 are the key commuting routes for those working at EVR's Elk Valley mines.

Lands associated with the Project area are zoned for Rural Resource under the Elk Valley Zoning Bylaw No. 829 of the Regional District of East Kootenay. The Rural Resource designation allows agricultural, rural residential, and rural resource land uses, and also recognizes the use of these lands for public utility use, resource extraction, green space, and outdoor recreation.

Land use is guided by a number of land use plans for the area. Strategic land use planning in the area includes a variety of objectives, including those addressing commercial resource development. Under the Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan (Kootenay Inter-agency Management Committee 1997) and Higher Level Plan (Forest Practices Board 2002), the Project area is within the Coal Enhanced Resource Development Zone, which represents lands with priority management emphasis on coal resources and their exploration, development and production and provides long-term commitment to coal mining exploration and development. EVR is aware that Ktunaxa Nation has established formal and informal planning goals and objectives for the Elk Valley and is working with the KNC to understand these and how they may be incorporated into the Project.

Other land and resource use within and surrounding the Project area include oil and gas exploration, timber harvest, trapping, guided hunting and fishing, and outdoor recreation related activities such as golfing, wildlife viewing, camping, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, all-terrain vehicle riding, bike riding and skiing. An active petroleum and natural gas lease belonging to the Elk Valley Corporation covers the Project area. Given the Elk Valley's regional attraction for outdoor recreation-based tourism, aesthetic quality of the landscape is typically valued as a setting for year-round recreational activities. From a visual perspective, landcover generally consists of coniferous forests in the valley and more irregular, sparse vegetation and exposed rock at higher elevations.

⁹ College of the Rockies with main campus in Cranbrook, BC, and six satellite campuses including one in Fernie; and Lethbridge College in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Public use of the existing FRO area is restricted within the No Shooting/No Unauthorized Entry boundary, established to maintain public safety in the active operating area. Portions of the Project area fall in the Chauncey Todhunter Access Management Area.

Health Environment

Elkford, Sparwood and Fernie are located in the Fernie Local Health Area, within the East Kootenay Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA), which is within the Interior Health Authority. Crowsnest Pass is located within Zone 1 (South) region of Alberta Health Services Administrated Areas. There are a number of medical services and facilities in the area, including primary health care facilities in Sparwood and Elkford and the Elk Valley Hospital and a health centre in Fernie. The East Kootenay Regional Hospital is in Cranbrook and is the main health facility in the region, offering a comprehensive range of health services. The Crowsnest Pass Health Centre offers 24-hour emergency service as well as a range of other health services. There is also a day service medical clinic in Crowsnest Pass.

A number of addiction-related services, mental health associations, support groups for specific illnesses, hospital auxiliaries, and larger organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross are located within the local communities. A variety of community support and safety organizations exist within the local communities, including housing societies, women's centres, youth, children and infant programs, community support societies and the Food Bank. Other safety organizations are also present, such as the Citizens on Patrol and Road Watch in Crowsnest Pass. Social organizations include clubs for children and youth (e.g., Cubs, Girl Guides and Scouts), groups for seniors, veteran's organizations and church-related activity groups.

Arts, cultural, educational, and environmental organizations are prevalent and include arts and historical societies, wildlife associations, music organizations, community garden societies and outdoor educational groups. Sports and recreational organizations are also abundant and include fishing, lacrosse, boxing, running, golf, weightlifting, swimming, flying, skating, soccer, martial arts, hockey, skiing and snowmobiling organizations. There are a variety of recreational facilities spread amongst the local communities, including pools, rinks, outdoor parks and courts, trail networks, fitness centres, community halls, and ski hills.

For certain health categories, including smoking, heavy drinking and body mass index, the East Kootenay HSDA¹⁰ trailed the provincial average for health behaviours. In other health categories including physical activity and having regular healthcare providers, respondents in the East Kootenay HSDA reported better health behaviours than those seen on average across BC. Both in East Kootenay and across the province women typically report better health behaviours than men (Statistics Canada, n.d.).

¹⁰ The HSDA includes other interior communities including Invermere, Golden and Creston.

10.0 Potential Effects of the Project

Overview of Potential Effects and Mitigations

The potential effects of the Project will be assessed through the coordinated process being established under the provincial and federal review processes. As described in the Revised DPD, the Project has the potential to result in changes to the biophysical and human environment, including those identified as concerns in Section 3.0. Potential effects of the Project include the following:

- Changes to geology, soils and terrain resulting from vegetation removal, overburden removal, storage of mine rock and development of the mine pit.
- Changes to the quantity of, and the concentrations of substances in, ground and surface water resulting from changes to topography, from the contact of water with mining operations, and from changes in groundwater-surface water interactions.
- Changes to air quality associated with fugitive dust emissions and vehicle/equipment emissions.
- Changes to noise and vibrations associated with blasting of mine rock, vehicles and other Project activities.
- Changes to terrestrial and aquatic resources resulting from changes to habitat, accidental mortality, disruption of movement corridors, and changes to the health of terrestrial and aquatic resources due to changes in air, water and soil quality.¹¹
- Changes to land use and visual aesthetics due to changes to the landscape or to access to land.
- Changes to economic conditions as a result of Project employment, procurement and tax contributions.¹¹
- Changes to social and community conditions as a result of the interactions between the Project and the biophysical and human environment described above.¹¹
- Changes to health and well being associated with changes to air, water or soil/food quality and/or changes to other indicators of health (e.g., changes in lifestyle), including positive effects associated with socio-economic benefits of the Project.¹¹
- Changes to the physical and cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples, the current use of land and resources for traditional purposes by Indigenous Peoples, and to structures, sites or things of historical, archaeological, paleontological, architectural or cultural importance to Indigenous Peoples. Generally, these potential changes would result from the Project's potential to change the biophysical environment. These could, in combination, potentially affect the exercise of Indigenous rights, traditional land use in and around the Project area; harvesting plants for food for medicinal and ceremonial purposes; and camping and gathering at sites of cultural, spiritual and historical importance.¹¹
- Changes to the health, social or economic conditions (e.g., related to food security, transmission of knowledge, employment and other interactions) of Indigenous Peoples. Generally, these potential changes could result from the Project's potential effects to the biophysical environment and to social and economic factors, including positive effects associated with socio-economic benefits of the Project. These could, in combination, potentially affect legal, spiritual and cultural practices; transmission of traditional culture, knowledge and law; and employment and economic opportunities.¹¹
- Changes to provincial and international transboundary environments related to climate change and the above valued components, including surface water quality and quantity, air quality, and terrestrial wildlife.¹¹

¹¹ Aspects of these potential effects fall under federal jurisdiction.

In the dispute resolution process, Ktunaxa Nation flagged the potential for extraordinarily adverse effects, defined as effects that were anticipated to be significantly adverse and unmitigable. Effects identified as potentially extraordinarily adverse by Ktunaxa Nation were under the following categories:

- effects on the rights of Ktunaxa First Nations as affirmed by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 and recognized and protected by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- effects on the terrestrial environment
- effects on the aquatic environment

In identifying plausible mitigations, EVR, KNC and Yaqit ʔa-knuq̓i 'it considered the application of the BC Policy for Mitigating Impacts on Environmental Values (Government of British Columbia 2014) and EVR's mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimize, rehabilitate, offset), in addition to KNC and Yaqit ʔa-knuq̓i 'it perspectives on culturally appropriate mitigation efforts. This work contributed to the development of proposed Project criteria which influenced the Project design to further avoid and reduce potential adverse effects, and the development of plausible mitigations outlined in the Revised DPD. The Revised DPD includes plausible mitigations to effects on Ktunaxa and Ktunaxa rights, all plausible measures that mitigate the effects of the Project and cumulative effects that the Project would contribute to, and mitigation measures necessary to resolve KNC and Yaqit ʔa-knuq̓i 'it assertions of extraordinarily adverse effects. Some of these mitigations are well understood and their success has been previously demonstrated, whereas other mitigations are associated with some uncertainty. Where mitigation uncertainty is present, the IS/A will define clear, measurable, and time-bound targets and will identify reporting to track success and facilitate adaptive management, where needed.

Potential Changes to the Environment on Lands Outside BC and Canada

The Project is being designed to support the objectives of the EVWQP and the site performance objectives in *Environmental Management Act* Permit 107517. EVR is developing a Project-specific mitigation plan for inclusion in the IS/A. If the Project is approved, EVR will integrate the Project-specific water quality mitigations into a subsequent EVWQP Regional Water Quality Model update and Implementation Plan Adjustment. The geographic extent of potential effects to water quality, including the potential for effects on lands outside of BC and Canada, will be evaluated as part of the assessment of the Project.

The air quality assessment for the Project will evaluate air quality effects at a local and regional scale. Receptor locations will be identified with input from technical advisors identified for the assessment processes under the IAA and BC EAA, and at locations sufficiently afield to evaluate the geographic and temporal extent of Project-related incremental and cumulative effects. The Project will include implementation of an air quality and dust control plan and will be designed to contribute to EVR's commitments to climate action.

Potential effects will be evaluated at geographic and temporal scales relevant to the terrestrial resources (e.g., the area used by a wildlife population) being assessed.

Environmental Assessment Scope and Methods

The scope and methods for the assessment will incorporate federal and provincial environmental assessment guidance and will be established in collaboration with participating Indigenous Peoples, government agencies and other interested groups so that the effects of the Project are understood. The assessment will include consideration of:

- identification and assessment of the components of the physical, biological and human environment that are most important to people within the context of the Project and its potential effects
- mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, rehabilitate or offset potential adverse effects and enhance benefits
- integration with existing FRO and regional permits, plans and programs
- residual incremental and cumulative effects associated with the Project and other past, present and reasonably foreseeable developments

11.0 Closing

The Project area has generational deposits of minable steelmaking coal that would allow continued operation of EVR's FRO, including continuity in the provision of significant economic and employment contributions to the local and regional economy. The Project is being designed to enhance EVR's commitments to sustainability through the incorporation of traditional knowledge and other important values including cultural, environmental, and social, while ensuring ongoing operational efficiency and safety.

Please provide feedback to the BC EAO, the IAAC or directly to EVR:

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13.0 Glossary

Term	Definition
Aquatic resources	Ecosystems, plants and wildlife living in or frequenting water; occurring or situated in or on water.
Bioaccumulation	The process through which chemicals build up in organisms from sources in food and water.
Biogeoclimatic zone	A large geographic area with a relatively uniform climate, named for the dominant vegetation species.
Biophysical resources	Aspects of the environment relating to living things such as plants and animals and to non-living things such as rocks, soils and water.
Clean coal	Raw coal that has been processed at the coal processing plant.
Closure	Actions carried out when a mine ceases operations to bring the site to a safe and stable condition for the long term.
Community (plants and animals)	Plant or animal species living in close association or interacting as a unit.
Crown land	All provincial and federal government lands. Provincial parks and public land are examples of provincial crown land.
Cumulative effects	The combined effects of past, present and reasonably foreseeable activities, over time, on people and the environment.
Disturbance	An event that causes a sudden change from the existing pattern, structure and/or composition in an ecological system or habitat.
Ecosystem	An integrated and stable association of living and non-living resources functioning within a defined physical location. A community of organisms and its environment functioning as an ecological unit. For the purposes of assessment, the ecosystem must be defined according to a particular unit and scale.
Emissions	Gases going into the atmosphere (e.g., vehicle exhaust, chemicals).
Fee simple	Freehold ownership of land; the land is owned completely without limitation or conditions.
Footprint	The proposed development area that directly affects the soil and vegetation components of the landscape.
Groundwater	That part of the subsurface water that occurs beneath the water table, in soils and geologic formations that are fully saturated.
Greenhouse gas (GHG)	Any of various gases, especially carbon dioxide, that contribute to trapping the sun's warmth in the Earth's lower atmosphere.
Habitat	The place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives or occurs.
Hazardous waste	Chemicals or other wastes that are persistent and toxic, with the potential to cause undesirable consequences under certain conditions.
Infrastructure	Basic facilities, such as transportation, communications, power supplies and buildings, which enable an organization, project or community to function.
Material handling	Hauling, conveying, loading and unloading of materials such as coal and mine rock.
Mature forest	Trees established after the last disturbance have matured; a second cycle of shade tolerant trees may have become established; understories become well developed as the canopy opens up; time since disturbance is generally 80–140 years for most biogeoclimatic units in the Project area except the high elevation Parkland units where it is 80–250 years (RIC 1998).
Mine rock	Unprocessed rock materials that are produced as a result of mining operations.
Mitigation	An activity intended to avoid, control or reduce the severity of adverse physical, biological or socio-economic effects of an activity.

Term	Definition
Old growth forest	Old, structurally complex stands composed mainly of shade-tolerant and regenerating tree species, although older seral and long-lived trees from a disturbance such as fire may still dominate the upper canopy; snags and coarse woody debris in all stages of decomposition typical, as are patchy understories; understories may include tree species uncommon in the canopy, due to inherent limitations of these species under the given conditions; time since disturbance generally >140 years for all biogeoclimatic units in the Project area except the high elevation Parkland units where it is >250 years (RIC 1998).
Overburden	The soil, sand, silt or clay that overlies a mineral deposit and must be removed before mining (material below the soil profile and above the bituminous sand).
Raw coal	Unprocessed coal: coal that is produced from mining operation before processing at the coal processing plant.
Receiving environment	The natural aquatic environment that receives the deposit or discharge of waste from the mine.
Reclamation	The restoration of disturbed land or wasteland to a state of useful capability.
Riparian	Terrain, vegetation or a position next to or associated with a stream, floodplain or standing waterbody.
Runoff	The portion of water from rain and snow that flows over land to streams, ponds, or other surface waterbodies. It is the portion of water from precipitation that does not infiltrate into the ground or evaporate.
Soil	The naturally occurring, unconsolidated mineral or organic material at least 10 cm thick that occurs at the Earth's surface and is capable of supporting plant growth.
Species	A group of organisms that actually or potentially interbreed and are reproductively isolated from all other such groups; a taxonomic grouping of genetically and morphologically similar individuals; the category below genus.
Species at risk	Any species known to be "at risk" after formal detailed status assessment and designation as "Endangered," "Threatened" or "of Special Concern" in Canada.
Steelmaking coal	A grade of coal used to produce coke, which is a raw material for steelmaking; also known as metallurgical coal or coking coal.
Tailings	A waste stream from coal processing, consisting of water, fine coal, other clay sized particles, and trace quantities of coal processing chemicals.
Terrestrial resources	Ecosystems, plants, and wildlife that rely on the land base for their life processes.
Traditional Land Use	Activities involving the harvest of traditional resources such as hunting and trapping, fishing, gathering medicinal plants and travelling to engage in these activities. Traditional resources include plants, animals and mineral resources that are traditionally used by Indigenous Peoples.
Ungulate	Belonging to the former order Ungulata, now divided into the orders Perissodactyla and Artiodactyla, and composed of the hoofed mammals such as horses, cattle, deer, swine, and elephants.
Watercourse	Riverine systems such as creeks, brooks, streams, and rivers.
Wetland	Land where the water table is at, near or above the surface or that is saturated for a long enough period to promote such features as wet-altered soils and water tolerant vegetation. Wetlands include organic wetlands or peatlands, and mineral wetlands or mineral soil areas that are influenced by excess water but produce little or no peat.
Wildlife	Under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> , wildlife is defined as a species, subspecies, variety or geographically or genetically distinct population of animal, plant or other organism, other than a bacterium or virus that is wild by nature and is native to Canada or has extended its range into Canada without human intervention and has been present in Canada for at least 50 years.