

02-013

### **Alder Mill area residents to receive bottled water**

**YAKIMA** –About a half a dozen homes in the vicinity of the old Alder Gold and Copper Co. Mill near Twisp will be eligible to receive free bottled water while officials continue investigating mining contamination in the area.

Samples taken from the homes have shown levels of arsenic above the amount allowed under the federal government's **new** drinking water standards. In January 2001, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the standard from 50 parts per billion (ppb), ordering that it fall to 10 ppb by 2006.

“Given new drinking-water standards for arsenic, we felt it was prudent to give folks the opportunity to use bottled water while we continue our investigations,” said Rick Roeder, a site manager with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology).

Ecology, EPA and the Okanogan Health District have been investigating mine-related contamination in the area for some time. Arsenic has been shown to pose significant cancer risk at the levels detected in some of the wells.

“It’s important for residents living in this area to drink water from an alternate source,” explained Dave Hilton, with the Okanogan Health District. “Those affected can set up delivery with just a phone call.”

Letters have been sent to affected residents informing them about the bottled water program. To initiate water delivery, qualified residents may call the health department at 800-222-6410. Bottled water will be available through October while alternate water sources are explored.

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**Contact: Joye Redfield-Wilder, public information manager, (509) 575-2610, or pager (509) 574-0490**  
**For more information:** <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/hi-arsenic.htm>

**Ecology’s Web site** <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>