

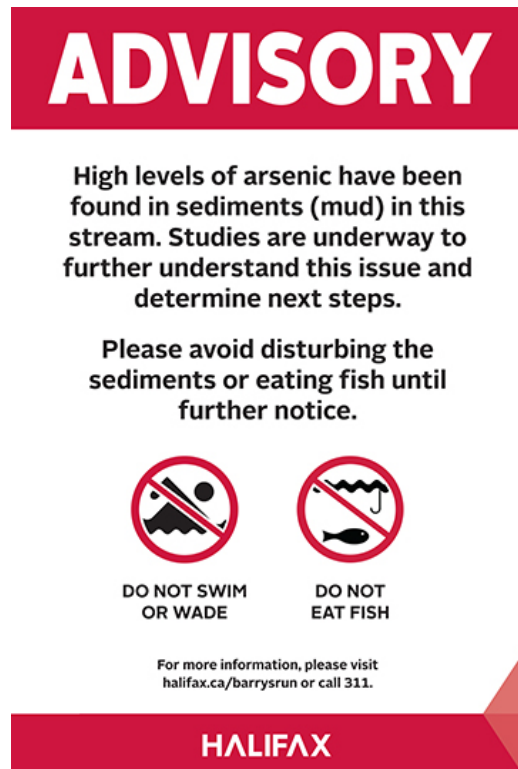
Barry's Run Risk Advisory

The Halifax Regional Municipality recently completed an [environmental site assessment](#) for municipally owned lands located along Barry's Run, Port Wallace.

There is a history of gold mining in the Montague Mines area, and Barry's Run is now confirmed to be contaminated from mine tailings (i.e. waste from mine processing).

An assessment of samples taken from municipally owned lands has found high levels of arsenic in the sediments (mud) that may pose risks to human health if exposed or ingested. The municipality is advising residents about the potential health risks and asking the public to avoid swimming, wading, and consuming fish from the area until the potential health risks are more thoroughly assessed and managed.

[Advisory signs](#) have been placed on the municipally owned lands in the Barry's Run area.



Barry's Run Risk Advisory Sign

Questions & Answers

1. Why is Barry's Run contaminated?

The high levels of arsenic in the stream sediments come from the historic gold mining that occurred upstream. The Montague Gold Mines operated during the late 1800's and early 1900's and extracted gold from local rock that contained naturally occurring arsenic. This rock was crushed and processed to remove the gold and the remaining sand-like substance, known as tailings, was typically dumped into low-lying areas, lakes and streams near the mine. The former mine region is only a few hundred metres upstream of Barry's Run.

2. How is the former Montague Mine site being managed?

The former Montague gold mine site is owned by the province, which is currently in the process of preparing a detailed closure plan for the site. For more information on the mine closure plan, please call the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry at (902) 424-5935.

3. Is Lake Charles contaminated?

While arsenic from mine tailings has been found in deep lake sediments, recent sampling has indicated that these older sediments are now covered with cleaner sediment deposits. There are no known risks to human health associated with swimming or any other lake activities.

In 2010, the province studied the presence of mercury and arsenic in fish found in Lake Charles and other lakes in the area that may have been impacted by old mine tailings. Study results indicated that there is no concern with fish consumption as fish tissue had low arsenic levels in all lakes examined. In fact, Lake Charles exhibited the lowest mercury levels, even lower than those of clean reference lakes located outside historic mine regions.

Further studies by Nova Scotia Lands Inc. will be completed this fall as part of the mine closure project to confirm these findings and gather additional information about current levels of arsenic and mercury in fish, sediments and lake waters.

The study results will be shared with the community.

4. What are the next steps?

The municipality is working closely with the province to undertake the studies needed to understand the potential health risks and to develop detailed management plans. The

studies and management plans may take some time to complete. An update will be provided to residents as more information becomes available.

5. How is the Port Wallace Secondary Planning process impacted, which is proposing a new 9,000 person community on surrounding lands?

A report to Regional Council is being prepared to outline the results of the environmental assessment and discuss the implications to the Port Wallace Secondary Planning process. The report is targeted for September 2019 and more information about the impact to the secondary planning process will be available after the report is published and Regional Council has an opportunity to consider the information and provide direction.

6. What are the potential health risks with using Barry's run?

The primary concern with arsenic contaminated sediment (mud) is from ingestion, such as drinking water with suspended/dissolved arsenic, and through prolonged contact with the skin. In some cases, fish can also accumulate arsenic and mercury in their flesh, which may be a concern for local anglers who regularly catch and eat fish from the area. As we do not yet have information on concentrations in fish or risks from touching sediments (mud), we are asking people not to swim, wade, or consume fish from the area until the potential health risks are more thoroughly assessed and managed.

For general information on gold mine tailings, please visit the following website:
<https://novascotia.ca/nse/contaminatedsites/goldmines.asp>

[Environmental Site Assessment](#) (PDF)

[Barry's Run Risk Advisory Sign](#) (PDF)

ADVISORY

High levels of arsenic have been found in sediments (mud) in this stream. Studies are underway to further understand this issue and determine next steps.

Please avoid disturbing the sediments or eating fish until further notice.



**DO NOT SWIM
OR WADE**



**DO NOT
EAT FISH**

For more information, please visit
halifax.ca/barrysrun or call 311.

HALIFAX