

# Benchmark Metals Advances Environmental Baseline Studies Towards Environmental Assessment and Mine Permitting

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Edmonton, April 11, 2023 - [Benchmark Metals Inc.](#) (TSXV: BNCH) (OTCQX: BNCHF) (WKN: A2JM2X) (the "Company" or "Benchmark") - is pleased to provide an update for the Lawyers Gold-Silver Project ("Lawyers" or the "Project"). This press release serves as an update from the Company on the Environmental Baseline Study work currently in progress. Benchmark is in the final year of a 2-Year Environmental Baseline Program which includes aquatics, terrestrial, and geochemical data collection. This Program will serve as the basis for an effects assessment to support an upcoming Environmental Assessment (EA) application. Benchmark's flagship Lawyers Gold-Silver Project (the "Project") is located within a road accessible region of the prolific Golden Horseshoe area of north-central British Columbia, Canada.

Environmental Baseline Studies are a comprehensive assessment of the environmental conditions in a specific area prior to the construction of a proposed project. They are designed to document the existing environmental conditions of the area, including air, water, soil, and biotic resources, and serve to establish a baseline that can be used to assess the potential impact of a proposed project. Environmental Baseline Studies are an essential part of the EA process and help to ensure that mining companies operate in a conscientious and sustainable manner.

John Williamson, President & Director, commented, "As a responsible mineral exploration company, we understand the importance of protecting the environment and the communities in which we operate. The baseline studies will provide important information that will inform our decision-making and help us to minimize our impact on the environment. We are committed to working closely with our First Nations, local communities, government agencies, and environmental groups to ensure that our operations are carried out in a sustainable and responsible manner. The Studies, along with the ongoing post-PEA optimization efforts, will result in a more robust mine plan that is acceptable to mine permitting regulators."

The 2023 Environmental Baseline Program builds upon the programs initiated in June 2021, in addition to the baseline work completed throughout 2022. The baseline efforts to date have highlighted some of the Project's major strengths, including road access to site with potential for year-round access, local airstrip immediately south of site (Sturdee Airstrip), brownfield site with majority of proposed infrastructure located in previously disturbed areas, very compact site layout with the majority of infrastructure and mining located above the tree line, skilled local workforce and positive relations with First Nations.

The 2023 Program will be split into terrestrial, aquatics and geochemical programs. The following sections outline the major objectives of the 2023 Programs.

## Aquatic Baselines

Aquatics data collection is led by Chu Cho Environmental, in partnership with Palmer Environmental Consulting Group and includes ongoing sampling of:

- Surface Water Quality;
- Surface Water Quantity;
- Groundwater;
- Aquatic Resources, and;
- Fish and Fish Habitat.

The Aquatic Baseline Program for 2023 aims to achieve the following:

- Complete analysis and presentation of existing conditions to guide project planning and development; thus, providing opportunities to minimize impacts to the environment.
- Provide support in planning for all phases of mine life (characterization of historical and existing environment, EA and permitting, construction, operation and closure); and

- Maximize Project benefits to Tsay Keh Dene Nation, Kwadacha Nation, Takla Nation, and Tahltan Nation members through training and capacity building.

Since the project is currently in the exploration phase, data collected in 2021, 2022 and 2023 will be used to characterize existing aquatic conditions. The aquatic baseline program was developed to meet the requirements of the Water and Air Baseline Monitoring Guidance Document for Mine Proponents and Operators (BC MOE 2016). The baseline conditions will be used to inform mine planning and development to avoid or minimize environmental effects, where possible. In addition, the existing conditions documented in the aquatic baseline program will provide the basis for the environmental effects assessment of the mine plan.

Figure #1 - Aquatic Data Collection Sampling Crew  
[https://images.newsfilecorp.com/files/6169/161864\\_figure1.jpg](https://images.newsfilecorp.com/files/6169/161864_figure1.jpg)

## **Terrestrial Baselines**

Terrestrial data collection is led by Chu Cho Environmental, in partnership with EcoLogic Consultants Ltd. and includes characterization of:

- Terrain and Soils;
- Ecosystems and Vegetation;
- Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat;
- Air Quality and Noise, and;
- Meteorology.

The Terrestrial Baseline Program for 2023 aims to achieve the following:

- Complete analysis and presentation of existing conditions to guide project planning and development; thus, providing opportunities to minimize impacts to the environment;
- Provide support in planning for all phases of mine life (characterization of historical and existing environment, EA and permitting, construction, operation and closure), and;
- Maximize Project benefits to Tsay Keh Dene Nation, Kwadacha Nation, Takla Nation, and Tahltan Nation members through training and capacity building.

The Studies have been developed consistent with requirements of the metal mining technical guidance for Environmental Effects Monitoring (Environment Canada 2012) to assess potential future effects to the receiving environment. The environmental baseline program will document biophysical conditions prior to mine construction for comparison with post-development conditions as part of the mine's environmental effects monitoring plan to support Environmental Assessment process required for developing the project.

## **Geochemistry**

Geochemical data is being collected by pHase Geochemistry and includes static testwork (completed in 2022) and ongoing kinetic testwork (humidity cells initiated in Q4 2022).

The objective of the static testwork geochemical characterization program is to develop a baseline geochemical understanding of the potential for metal leaching and acid rock drainage (ML/ARD) from all of the Project's potential waste rock sources. Furthermore, the results will comprise the environmental baseline studies and the FS level understanding to support design and ultimately permitting of the project. To-date, the static testwork results show low acid-generation potential for all tested materials.

The kinetic testwork program is considered the second stage of the geochemical characterization and provides baseline information on the kinetic characteristics of samples exposed to lab-based weathering conditions. This includes sulphide oxidation rates, neutralization potential depletion and metal release rates from waste rock. Kinetic test results are a requirement of permitting for any project and are necessary inputs for the development of water quality predictions and waste management planning. The implemented kinetic testing program consists of a laboratory-based humidity cell test program. Preliminary results indicate Lawyers waste rock material will be classified as "non-PAG" (i.e., "non-potentially acid-generating").

## **About Benchmark Metals**

[Benchmark Metals Inc.](#) is a Canadian based gold and silver company advancing its 100% owned Lawyer's Gold-Silver Project located in the prolific Golden Horseshoe of northern British Columbia, Canada. The Project consists of three mineralized deposits that remain open for expansion, in addition to +20 new target areas along the 20 kilometer trend. The Company trades on the TSX Venture Exchange in Canada, the OTCQX Best Market in the United States, and the Tradegate Exchange in Europe. Benchmark is managed by proven resource sector professionals, who have a track record of advancing exploration projects from grassroots scenarios through to production.

#### ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

s/ "John Williamson"  
John Williamson, Chief Executive Officer

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