

# RM OF WILLOW BUNCH COAL EXPLORATION DRILLING

## Spring 2026

### OVERVIEW

SaskPower is developing a coal life-extension plan to continue operating approximately 1,500 megawatts (MW) of coal-fired generation beyond 2030 as a bridge to nuclear power. To prepare to extend coal operations, we're studying land near Poplar River Power Station. Our goal is to identify areas suitable for future coal exploration and possible mining.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING

Our first step is to complete exploration drilling. In January 2026, we took samples at 24 sites in the Coronach area. Now we're preparing for more drilling in the Rural Municipality (RM) of Willow Bunch. We expect work to begin in spring 2026 and to take up to three months to complete.

We've selected 54 drill sites within the RM of Willow Bunch. The sites were selected to fill gaps and connect with data collected in the 1980's. See the map for locations.

### WHY DRILLING IS NEEDED

SaskPower's current mining plan ends in 2030 and needs to be extended. Since some land hasn't been drilled in more than 40 years, we need to get samples to update our data. The samples collected will help us determine:

- Tonnage – how much coal is in the ground
- Strip ratio – how much dirt and rock needs to be removed compared to the amount of coal available
- Coal quality – if the coal is good enough to use and meets industry standards

### WHAT TO EXPECT

We'll hire contractors to do the drilling. Crews will be working in 12-hour shifts as they take samples of each site.

A few weeks before drilling starts, crews will mark the drill locations. They'll survey a 30-metre (m) area around each site and mark any utilities or structures so the drilling avoids them. We'll request utility locates through Click Before You Dig to ensure all lines and rights-of-way are identified.

Each hole will be up to 50 m deep. The deeper the hole, the longer contractors will need to be at a location.

### DRILLING EQUIPMENT

Depending on crew and equipment availability, two different types of drilling rigs could be used—rotary or sonic.

- Rotary rigs have simpler, faster setup and disturb a smaller area. They drill two holes at each location. The first is to reach the coal zone, and the second is to take the sample. Drilling a 50-m hole takes up to six hours. Crews using this equipment usually drill all the first holes at each site, then return later to drill the second holes needed for sampling.
- Sonic rigs are connected to three main pieces of truck equipment. They need a larger drilling space and longer setup time. The advantage with sonic rigs is they can drill one continuous core. This means if drilling goes smoothly, only one hole will be drilled. A 50-m hole can be completed in a day.

## FOR LANDOWNERS

Landowners will be compensated for the drilling and access to their land as well as any damage to their crops resulting from the drilling activity. Crews will be required to remove all drilling debris from the site during the drilling process. They'll also need to remove all flags and survey stakes after drilling is complete so that each location is left clean and restored.

## ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

What we do today impacts our future. We're always working hard to reduce our impact on the environment.

We'll have a permit with the Ministry of Environment for drilling. During drilling, contractors will be required to follow specific environmental management practices outlined by SaskPower. These include guidelines to prevent rutting, protect wildlife, manage weeds and avoid spills.

## CONTACT US

For questions about this drilling work and impacts to your property, contact Lee Williams in our Land Department at 306-566-3018 or [LWILLIAMS@saskpower.com](mailto:LWILLIAMS@saskpower.com).

