



The Environment Agency of England and Wales (EA) is monitoring water levels at an abandoned mine near Baldhu, Cornwall amid fears that overflow from the site could impact groundwater supplies in the area.

Site operator Veolia has alerted the EA to the issue at the Wheal Jane mine, with water levels continuing to rise in the main mineshaft. This poses the risk of water contamination from the structure into the nearby Carnon River and Fal Estuary.

Designated a marine Special Area of Conservation, the estuary is one of only a handful of places in the UK featuring sensitive coral maerl and eel grass beds, meaning any overflow from the mine could damage this fragile ecosystem.

"We are doing all we can to monitor the shaft water levels to understand if or when any spill might occur into the Carnon River," Mark Pilcher of the EA commented. "The water is currently rising at a rate which is faster than the pumps can manage. With the ground saturated after this week's rain, there is a risk that mine groundwater will continue to rise over the next week."

He added that the bulk of the mine's water is being pumped successfully, but experts are presently on site to assess what damage may be caused by the escape of excess flood waters, should this occur.

The scare comes amid significant levels of rainfall that have hit the UK in recent weeks, with hundreds of flood warnings being announced by the EA in the past few days.

## **Abandoned mine water levels being monitored**

Friday, 30 November 2012 14:06

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Paul Mustow, head of flood incident management at the organisation, stated earlier this week that flooding can have a devastating impact on people's lives and therefore anyone residing in an at-risk area should keep up to date with the latest information by signing up to the free flood warnings programme.