



Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and
Vulnerability Assessment for
BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1
Public Drinking Water System,
Fairbanks Area, Alaska
PWSID # 314271.001

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION REPORT 1791

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

January, 2009

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The Drinking Water Protection (DWP) section of the Drinking Water Program is producing Source Water Assessments in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996. Each assessment includes a delineation of the source water area, an inventory of potential and existing contaminant sources that may impact the water, a risk ranking for each of these contaminants, and an evaluation of the potential vulnerability of these drinking water sources.

These assessments are intended to provide public water systems owners/operators, communities, and local governments with the best available information that may be used to protect the quality of their drinking water. The assessments combine information obtained from various sources, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), public water system owners/operators, and other public information sources. The results of this assessment are subject to change if additional data becomes available. It is anticipated this assessment will be updated every five years to reflect any changes in the vulnerability and/or susceptibility of public drinking water source. If you have any additional information that may affect the results of this assessment, please contact the DWP staff at the following number: 1-866-956-7656.

January, 2009

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Source Water Assessment for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1

Source of Public Drinking Water, Fairbanks area, Alaska

Drinking Water Protection Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of two wells 6.5 miles north of the Steese Highway approximately 50 miles northeast of Fairbanks, Alaska. This report applies only to PWSID 314271.001. The wellhead received a susceptibility rating of **Medium** and the aquifer received a susceptibility rating of **High**. Combining these two ratings produces a **Medium** rating for the natural susceptibility of the well. The only identified potential source of contaminants for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 public drinking water source is a campground. This identified potential and existing source of contamination is considered a source of bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals. Overall, the public water sources for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 received a vulnerability rating of **Low** for all three contaminant categories. This assessment of contaminant risks can be used as a foundation for local voluntary protection efforts as well as a basis for the continuous efforts on the part of BLM Mt. Prindle Campground to protect public health.

BLM MT. PRINDLE CAMPGROUND WELL 1 PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 public water system is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of two wells (PWSID 314271.001 and 314271.002) 6.5 miles north of the Steese Highway approximately 50 miles northeast of Fairbanks, Alaska (See Map A of Appendix A). This report applies only to PWSID 314271.001. Fairbanks and its surrounding communities are located in the Fairbanks North Star Borough which is near the center of Alaska. The Borough's current population is 96,888 making it the second-largest population center in the state (ADCCED, 2009). Communities located within the Borough include: College, Eielson Air Force Base, Ester, Fairbanks, Fox, Harding Lake, Moose Creek, North Pole, Pleasant Valley, Salcha, and Two Rivers.

The majority of residents in the area around Fairbanks have individual wells and septic systems, and the remainder haul water, although piped water and sewer facilities are available within Fairbanks (ADCCED,

2009). Heating oil (stored in both above and below ground 275 to 500-gallon tanks) is used for heating homes and buildings. Refuse is transported to the Fairbanks North Star Borough landfill.

According to the sanitary survey for this system (06/11/2003), the well extends approximately 40 feet below the ground surface and is completed in bedrock (schist, based on the well log for a nearby well). Bedrock in this area is predominantly a metamorphosed marine mud deposit, called pelitic schist. The schist is locally intruded by granitic rocks – granite and quartz diorite. Groundwater in the bedrock is principally contained in fractures. The water wells in this area with the greatest well recharge appear to be in quartz veins, quartzite, and siliceous schist (Nelson, 1978).

Groundwater in the uplands is recharged by local precipitation. Outflow of ground water in the uplands primarily occurs two ways. In areas under artesian pressure (pressure caused by overlying permafrost), water can flow to the surface through thawed conduits within the permafrost. Otherwise groundwater will flow under the permafrost (if present) and out to the groundwater beneath the adjacent flood plain or creek valley (Nelson, 1978).

This system operates during the summer and serves approximately 25 non-residents through one service connection.

BLM MT. PRINDLE CAMPGROUND WELL 1 DRINKING WATER PROTECTION AREA

In order to evaluate whether a drinking water source is at risk, we must first evaluate what are the most likely pathways for surface contamination to reach the groundwater. These areas are determined by looking at the characteristics of the soil, groundwater, aquifer, and well.

The most probable area for contamination to reach the drinking water well is the drinking water protection area. The drinking water protection area is the area circling the well (the area influenced by pumping) and also the area upgradient of the well, usually forming a parabola shape. Because releases of contaminants within the protection area are most likely to impact the well, this area will serve as the focus for voluntary protection efforts.

There are many different methods for calculating the size of protection areas. Drinking Water Protection (DWP) uses a combination of two simple groundwater flow equations, the Thiem and uniform flow equations for all groundwater wells screened in unconsolidated material. The orientation of the protection zone is then drawn using a water table elevation map (if available) or a land surface elevation map of the area. The protection zone calculated by the DWP is an estimate using the available information and resources, and may differ slightly from the actual capture zone. Because of uncertainties and changing site conditions, a factor of safety is added to the protection zone to form the drinking water protection area for the well.

The parameters used to calculate the shape of this protection zone are general for the whole alluvial plain and were obtained from various United States Geological Survey (USGS) reports, area well logs, and the Groundwater textbook by Freeze and Cherry (Freeze and Cherry, 1979).

The protection areas established for wells by the DEC are usually separated into two zones, limited by the watershed. These zones correspond to differences in the time-of-travel (TOT) of the water moving through the aquifer to the well. An analytical calculation was used to determine the size and shape of the protection area.

The time-of-travel for contaminants within the water varies and is dependent on the physical and chemical characteristics of each contaminant. The following is a summary of the two protection area zones for wells and the calculated time-of-travel for each:

Table 1. Definition of Zones

Zone	Definition
A	Several months time-of-travel
B	Less than the 2 year time-of-travel

The drinking water protection area for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 was determined using an analytical calculation and includes Zones A and B (See Map A of Appendix A).

INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL AND EXISTING CONTAMINANT SOURCES

DWP has completed an inventory of potential and existing sources of contamination within the BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 drinking water protection area. This inventory was completed through a search of agency records and other publicly available information. Potential sources of contamination to the drinking water aquifer include a wide range of

categories and types. Potential drinking water contaminants are found within agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial areas, but can also occur within areas that have little or no development.

For the basis of all Class B public water system assessments, the following three categories of drinking water contaminants were inventoried:

- Bacteria and viruses;
- Nitrates and/or nitrites;
- Volatile organic chemicals

The sources are displayed on Map C of Appendix C and summarized in Table 1 of Appendix B.

RANKING OF CONTAMINANT RISKS

Once the potential and existing sources of contamination have been identified, they are assigned a ranking according to what type and level of risk they represent. Ranking of contaminant risks for a “potential” or “existing” source of contamination is a function of toxicity and volumes of specific contaminants associated with that source. Rankings include:

- Low;
- Medium;
- High; and
- Very High.

Tables 2 through 4 in Appendix B contain the ranking of potential and existing sources of contamination with respect to bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals.

VULNERABILITY OF BLM MT. PRINDLE CAMPGROUND WELL 1 DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Vulnerability of a drinking water source to contamination is a combination of two factors:

- Natural Susceptibility; and
- Contaminant Risks.

A score for the Natural Susceptibility of the well is reached by considering the properties of the well and the aquifer.

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{Susceptibility of the Wellhead (0-25 Points)} \\
 &\quad + \\
 &\text{Susceptibility of the Aquifer (0-25 Points)} \\
 &\quad = \\
 &\text{Natural Susceptibility of the Well (0-50 Points)}
 \end{aligned}$$

A ranking is assigned for the Natural Susceptibility according to the point score:

Natural Susceptibility Ratings	
40-50 pts	Very High
30 to < 40 pts	High
20 to < 30 pts	Medium
< 20 pts	Low

Factors contributing to the susceptibility of the wellhead are: whether the sanitary seal is in place, protection from flooding, and if the well casing is properly grouted.

The wellhead for the BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 received a **Medium** susceptibility rating, due to its location within a suspected floodplain. The most recent sanitary survey (06/11/2003) indicates that the land surface is appropriately sloped away from the well, the well is grouted according to DEC regulations, and a sanitary seal is fixed to the well. A sanitary seal prevents potential contaminant from entering the well while sloping of the land surface and grouting help to prevent potential contaminants from traveling down the outside of the well casing. Additionally, the wellhead lies within a floodplain, which is the main contributing factor to the susceptibility rating for this system.

Factors contributing to the susceptibility of the aquifer are: whether the aquifer is confined or unconfined, whether the well is completed in unconsolidated or fractured bedrock, whether wells and bore holes are penetrating the aquifer and, if applicable, the confining layer.

The BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 system draws water from an unconfined aquifer and consists of schist. It received a **High** susceptibility rating because its unconfined nature and the high water table in the area. Because unconfined aquifers are recharged by surface water and precipitation that migrates downward from the surface, it is susceptible to contamination from outside sources.

Table 2 summarizes the Susceptibility scores and ratings for the BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 system.

Table 2. Susceptibility

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the Wellhead	10	Medium
Susceptibility of the Aquifer	17	High
Natural Susceptibility	27	Medium

Contaminant risks are derived from an evaluation of the routine sampling results of the water system and the presence of potential sources of contamination.

Contaminant risks to a drinking water source depend on the type and distribution of contaminant sources. Flow charts are used to assign a point score, and ratings are assigned in the same way as for the natural susceptibility:

Contaminant Risk Ratings	
40-50 pts	Very High
30 to < 40 pts	High
20 to < 30 pts	Medium
< 20 pts	Low

Table 3 summarizes the Contaminant Risks for each category of drinking water contaminants for the BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 system.

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	12	Low
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	12	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	12	Low

Finally, an overall vulnerability score is assigned for each water system by combining each of the contaminant risk scores with the natural susceptibility score:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{Natural Susceptibility (0-50 Points)} \\
 &\quad + \\
 &\text{Contaminant Risks (0-50 Points)} \\
 &\quad = \\
 &\text{Vulnerability of the Drinking Water Source to} \\
 &\quad \text{Contamination (0-100 Points)}
 \end{aligned}$$

Again, rankings are assigned according to a point score:

Overall Vulnerability Ratings	
80-100 pts	Very High
60 to < 80 pts	High
40 to < 60 pts	Medium
< 40 pts	Low

Table 4 contains the overall vulnerability scores (0-100) and ratings for each of the three categories of drinking water contaminants for the BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 system. Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	35	Low
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	35	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	35	Low

Bacteria and Viruses

The contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses is **Low** with a campground contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

Coliforms (a bacteria) are found naturally in the environment and although they aren't necessarily a health threat, they are an indicator of other potentially harmful bacteria in the water, more specifically, fecal coliforms and E. coli, which only come from human and animal fecal waste. Harmful bacteria can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms (EPA, 2008).

Only a small amount of bacteria and viruses are required to endanger public health. Bacteria and viruses have not been detected in the water within the last 5 years of sampling at BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 (data was reviewed in April, 2008).

After combining the contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is **Low**.

Nitrates and Nitrites

The contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites is **Low** with a campground contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The sampling history for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 well indicates that nitrates have not been detected in the water within the last 5 years of sampling (data was reviewed in April, 2008).

After combining the contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is **Low**.

Volatile Organic Chemicals

The contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals is **Low** with a campground contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The drinking water at BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 has not recently been sampled for volatile organic chemicals (data reviewed in April, 2008).

After combining the contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is **Low**.

Using the Source Water Assessment

This assessment of contaminant risks can be used as a foundation for local voluntary protection efforts as well as a basis for the continuous efforts on the part of BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 to protect public health. It is anticipated that Source Water Assessments will be updated every five years to reflect any changes in the vulnerability and/or susceptibility of BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 drinking water source.

REFERENCES

Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (ADCCED), Accessed 2009 [WWW document]. URL: http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_COMDB.htm

Freeze, R.A. and Cherry, J.A., 1979. Groundwater. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

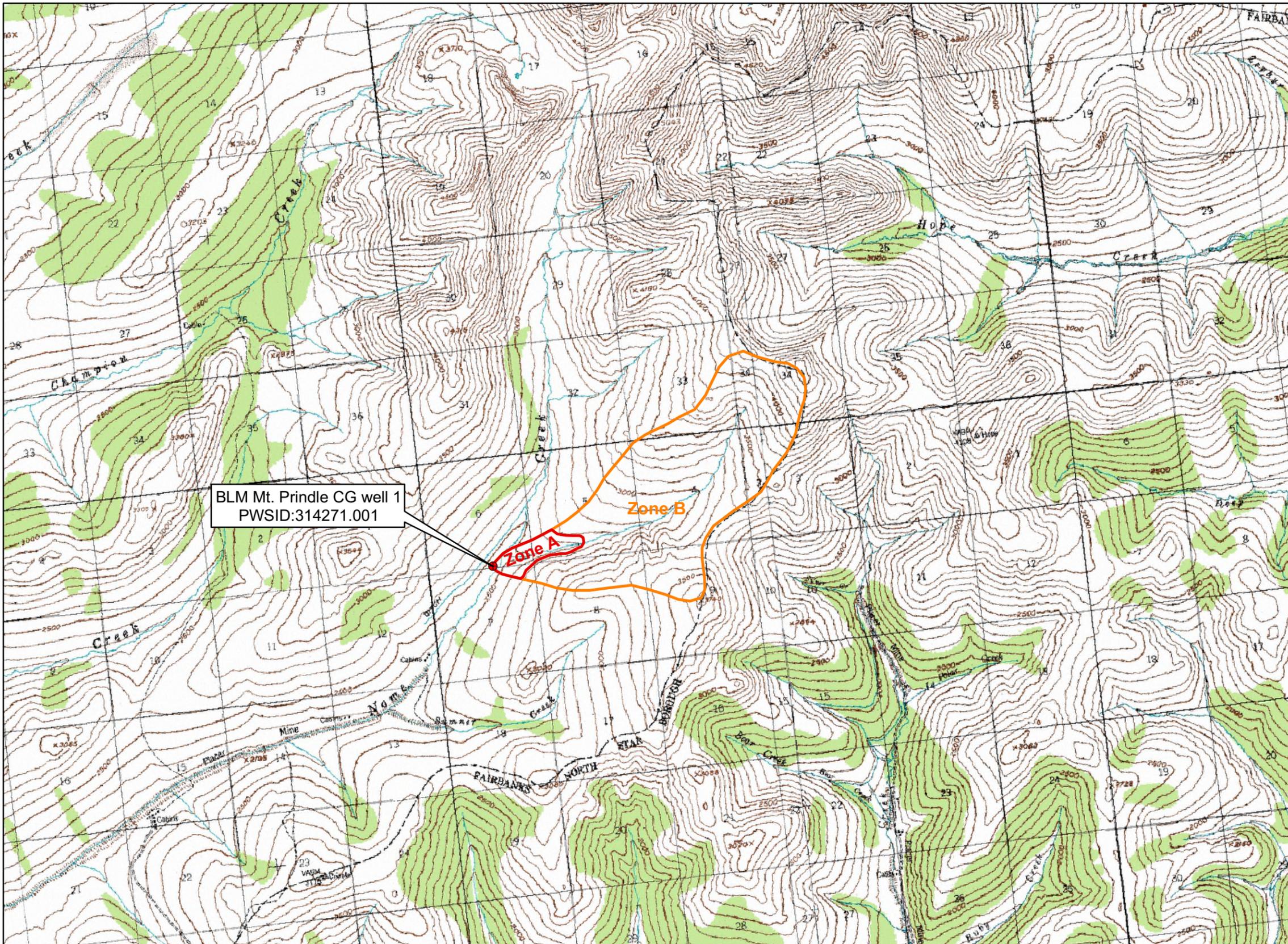
Nelson, Gordon L., 1978, Hydrologic Information for Land-Use Planning, Fairbanks Vicinity, Alaska. US Department of the Interior Geological Survey Open File Report 78-959, 47p.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Accessed 2008 [WWW document]. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/contaminants/index.html>.

APPENDIX A

BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map A)

Public Water Well System for PWS #314271.001 BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1



Legend

- Class B Public Water System

Groundwater Protection Zones

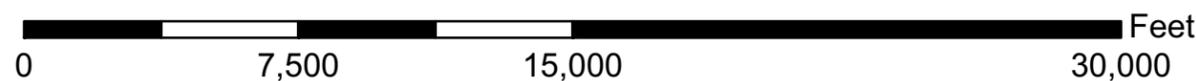
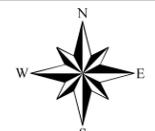
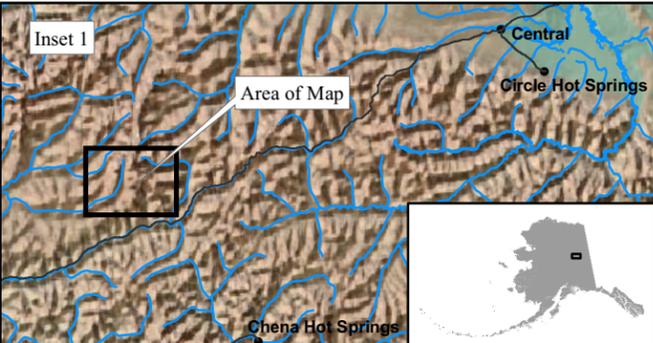
- ▭ Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time
- ▭ Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

Data Sources:
Contaminant Sources, Public Water System Wells, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)

All other data:
United States Geological Survey (USGS) Circle B-5, B-6 1:63,000

Drinking Water Protection Areas based on "Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program - Guidance Manual for Class B Public Water Systems" published by ADEC

URS Corporation does not guarantee the accuracy or validity of the data provided.



APPENDIX B

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 (Tables 1-4)

Table 1

**Contaminant Source Inventory for
BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1**

PWSID 314271.001

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Map Number	Comments
Campground	X35	X35	A	C	

Table 2

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1
Sources of Bacteria and Viruses*

PWSID 314271.001

<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Risk Ranking for Analysis</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Campground	X35	X35	A	Low	C	

Table 3

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1
Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites*

PWSID 314271.001

<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Risk Ranking for Analysis</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Campground	X35	X35	A	Low	C	

Table 4

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1
Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals*

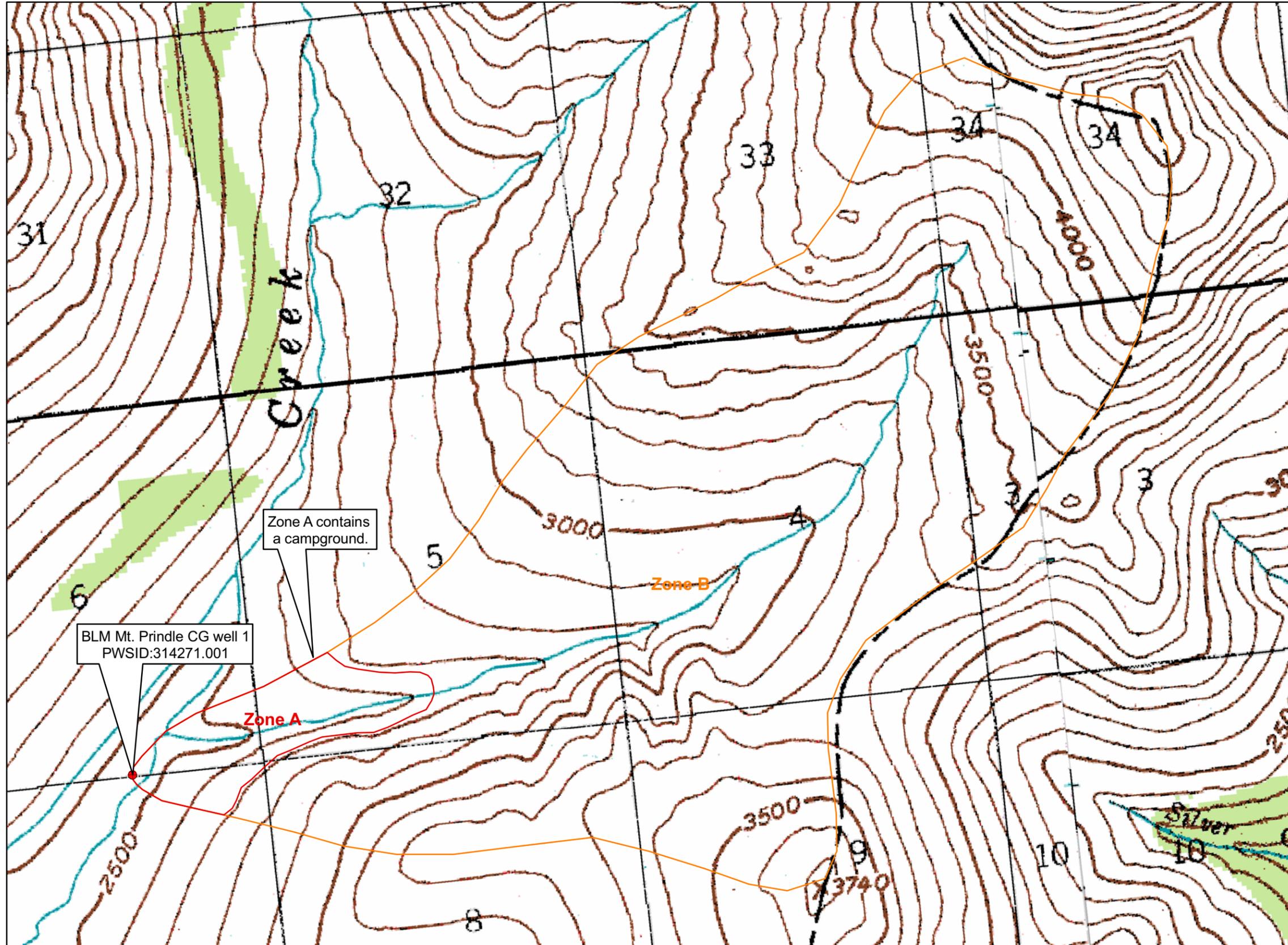
PWSID 314271.001

<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Risk Ranking for Analysis</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Campground	X35	X35	A	Low	C	

APPENDIX C

BLM Mt. Prindle Campground Well 1 Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map C)

**Public Water Well System for PWS #314271.001 BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1
Showing Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination**



Legend

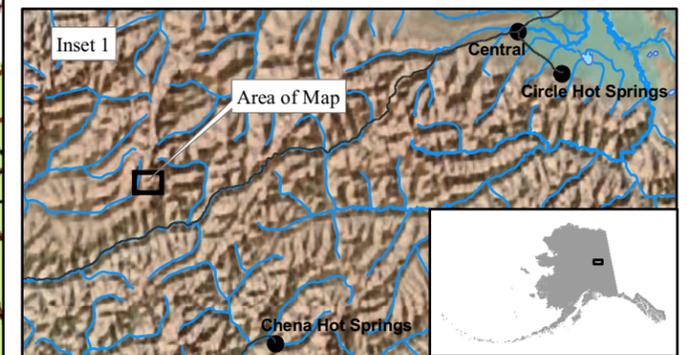
- Class B Public Water System
- Groundwater Protection Zones**
- Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time
- Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

Data Sources:
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All other data:
United States Geological Survey (USGS) Circle B-5, B-6 1:63,000

Drinking Water Protection Areas based on "Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program - Guidance Manual for Class B Public Water Systems" published by ADEC

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BLM Mt. Prindle CG well 1
PWS 314271.001

Appendix C Map C