



Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and Vulnerability Assessment for The Park Hotel Public Drinking Water System, Healy, Alaska PWSID # 391820.001

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION REPORT 1837

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

February, 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 toll-free number 1-866-956-7656.

February, 2009

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Source Water Assessment for the Park Hotel Source of Public Drinking Water, Healy, Alaska

Drinking Water Protection Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for Park Hotel is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of one well located near the Parks Highway in Healy, Alaska. The wellhead received a susceptibility rating of **Low** and the aquifer received a susceptibility rating of **Medium**. Combining these two ratings produces a **Low** rating for the natural susceptibility of the well. Identified potential and current sources of contaminants for Park Hotel public drinking water source include: a coal mining area, an assumed septic system, assumed heating oil tanks, and a road. These identified potential and existing sources of contamination are considered as sources of bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals. Overall, the public water sources for Park Hotel received a vulnerability rating of **High** for bacteria and viruses, **Low** for nitrates and nitrites, and **Medium** for volatile organic chemicals. 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 Park Hotel to protect public health.

PARK HOTEL PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Park Hotel public water system is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of one well located near the corner of the Parks Highway and Otto Lake Road in Healy, Alaska (see Map A in Appendix A). The community of Healy (population 1,000) lies at the confluence of Healy Creek and the Nenana River, approximately 78 miles southwest of Fairbanks and several miles north of the entrance to Denali National Park, on the George Parks Highway.

The area is dominated by several steep peaks to the south, including Mount Healy, with somewhat gentler terrain to the north. The town itself has relatively flat topography, and drainage is typically towards the Nenana River or one of its tributaries. The area averages over 15 inches of precipitation per year, with approximately 73 inches of annual snowfall (ADCCED, 2009).

The surficial geology of the Healy area consists mainly of glacial outwash gravel of various ages, together with some recent river terrace gravels. Nenana Gravel, a

poorly-consolidated conglomerate of coarse sandstone interbedded with mudflow deposits and thin claystone and lignite layers, is found in the mountainous terrain northeast of Healy (Wahrhaftig, 1970).

The majority of residents in Healy have private water wells and septic systems; others haul water from a community well source. There are no municipal water or sewage facilities (ADCCED, 2009).

According to the well log, the well extends approximately 336 feet below the ground surface and is completed in an unconfined aquifer. This system operates from June through September and serves ninety-seven non-residents through four service connections.

PARK HOTEL 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 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 Park Hotel was determined using an analytical calculation and includes Zones A and B (see Map A in Appendix A).

INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL AND EXISTING CONTAMINANT SOURCES

DWP has completed an inventory of potential and existing sources of contamination within the Park Hotel 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 PARK HOTEL 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.

Susceptibility of the Wellhead (0-25 Points)

+

Susceptibility of the Aquifer (0-25 Points)

=

Natural Susceptibility of the Well (0-50 Points)

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 Park Hotel received a **Low** susceptibility rating. Well documentation indicates that a sanitary seal is installed on the well, the land surface is sloped away from the well, and the well is grouted

according to DEC regulations. Sanitary seals prevent potential contaminants from entering the well, while sloping of the land surface away from the wellhead provides adequate surface water drainage, and grouting around the wellhead helps to prevent potential contaminants from traveling down the outside of the well casing.

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 depth and thickness of the confining layer.

The Park Hotel system draws water from an unconfined aquifer consisting of sand and gravel. The aquifer received a **Medium** susceptibility rating because of its unconfined status and highly transmissive aquifer material. Because an unconfined aquifer is recharged by surface water and precipitation that migrates downward from the surface, it is susceptible to contamination from outside sources. Highly transmissive aquifer materials allow contaminants to reach the aquifer more easily.

Table 2 summarizes the Susceptibility scores and ratings for the Park Hotel system.

Table 2. Susceptibility

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the Wellhead	0	Low
Susceptibility of the Aquifer	13	Medium
Natural Susceptibility	13	Low

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 Park Hotel system.

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	50	Very High
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	18	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	40	Very High

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

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

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 Park Hotel system. Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	65	High
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	30	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	55	Medium

Bacteria and Viruses

The contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses is **Very High** with a septic system and a road contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

Coliforms (a bacteria) are found naturally in the environment and while not necessarily a direct health

threat, they are an indicator of other potentially harmful bacteria in the water, more specifically fecal coliforms and E. coli. These bacteria only come from human and animal fecal waste and can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, and other symptoms (EPA, 2008).

Samples testing positive for bacteria and viruses increase the overall vulnerability of the drinking water source by indicating that the source is susceptible to bacteria and virus contamination. Only a small number of bacteria and viruses are required to endanger public health. Bacteria and viruses were detected in the water at the Park Hotel on 05/14/2004 and 05/18/2004 (data 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 **High**.

Nitrates and Nitrites

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

The sampling history for Park Hotel well indicates that nitrates have been detected within the last 5 years, with the highest concentration of 1.19 mg/l detected on 5/14/2004 (data 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 **Very High** with a coal mining area, a septic system, heating oil tanks, and a road contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The drinking water at the Park Hotel 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 **Medium**.

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 Park Hotel 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 the Park Hotel drinking water source.

REFERENCES

Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (ADCCED), Accessed 2008 [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.

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Wahrhaftig, C., 1970, Geologic Map of the Healy D-4 Quadrangle, Alaska, Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, Geologic Quadrangle Maps of the United States series, Map GQ-806, Washington, DC.

APPENDIX A

Park Hotel Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map A)

Public Water Well System for PWS #391820.001 Park Hotel



Legend

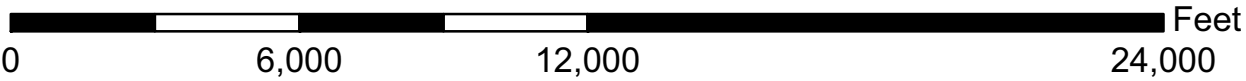
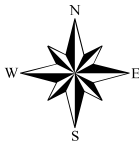
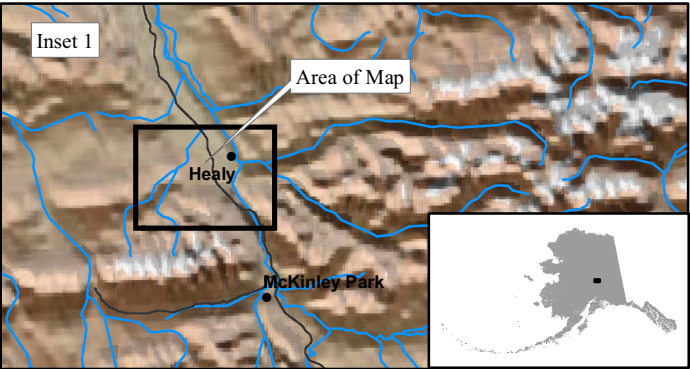
- Class B Public Water System
- Groundwater Protection Zones
 - Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time
 - Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

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

All other data:
Alaska Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI)

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 Park Hotel (Tables 1-4)

Table 1

*Contaminant Source Inventory for
Park Hotel*

PWSID 391820.001

<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Coal mining (active or inactive?)	E01	E01	A	C	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	A	C	1 Road
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	B	C	1 Septic (Assumption)
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	R08	B	C	2 Heating Oil Tanks (assumption)

Table 2

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
Park Hotel
Sources of Bacteria and Viruses*

PWSID 391820.001

<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>
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	A	Low	C	1 Road
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	B	Low	C	1 Septic (Assumption)

Table 3

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
Park Hotel
Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites

PWSID 391820.001

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	A	Low	C	1 Road
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	B	Low	C	1 Septic (Assumption)

Table 4

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
Park Hotel
Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals*

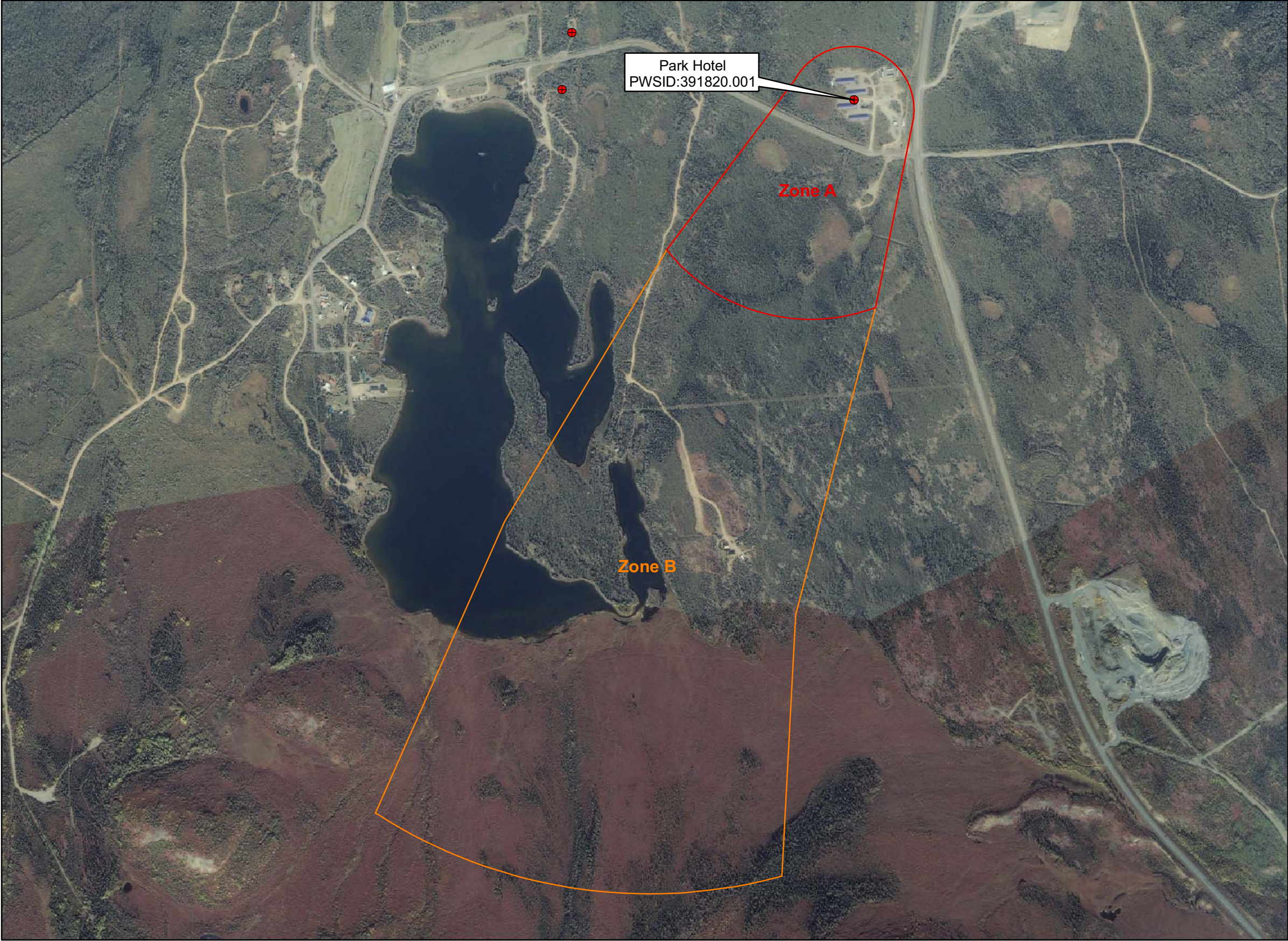
PWSID 391820.001

<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>
Coal mining (active or inactive?)	E01	E01	A	High	C	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	A	Low	C	1 Road
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	B	Low	C	1 Septic (Assumption)
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	R08	B	Medium	C	2 Heating Oil Tanks (assumption)

APPENDIX C

Park Hotel Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map C)

Public Water Well System for PWS #391820.001 Park Hotel
Showing Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination



Legend

● Class B Public Water System

Groundwater Protection Zones

Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time

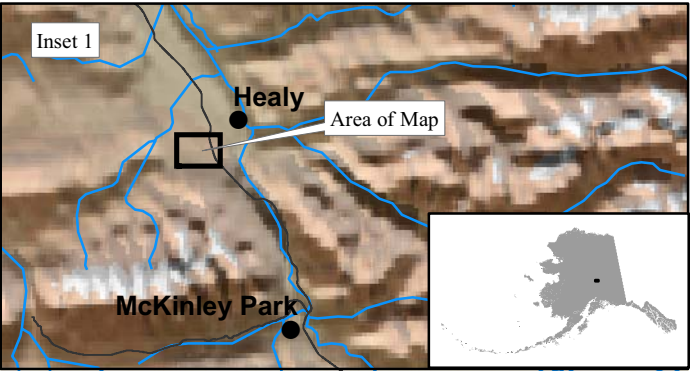
Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

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

All other data:
Alaska Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI)

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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validity of the data provided.



0 1,250 2,500 5,000 Feet

Park Hotel
PWS 391820.001
Appendix C Map C