



Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and
Vulnerability Assessment for
Nugen's Ranch
Public Drinking Water System,
Wasilla, Alaska
PWSID # 222678.002

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION REPORT 1660

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

January, 2009

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Source Water Assessment for Nugen's Ranch Source of Public Drinking Water, Wasilla, Alaska

Drinking Water Protection Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for Nugen's Ranch is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of two wells located on the East Palmer-Wasilla Highway in Wasilla, Alaska. This report applies only to PWSID 222678.002. The wellhead received a susceptibility rating of **Low** and the aquifer received a susceptibility rating of **Low**. Combining these two ratings produces a **Low** rating for the natural susceptibility of the well. Identified potential and current sources of contaminants for Nugen's Ranch public drinking water source include: assumed septic systems, assumed heating oil tanks, roads, a livestock feedlot, an orchard, gasoline stations, diesel and gasoline tanks, and a government vehicle maintenance facility. 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 Nugen's Ranch received a vulnerability rating of **Medium** for bacteria and viruses, **Medium** for nitrates and nitrites, and **High** 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 Nugen's Ranch to protect public health.

NUGEN'S RANCH PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

The Nugen's Ranch public water system is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of two wells located on the East Palmer-Wasilla Highway in Wasilla, Alaska (see Map A in Appendix A). This report applies only to PWSID 222678.002. Wasilla, with a population of 7,028, lies about 12 miles north of the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet along the George Parks Highway.

The majority of residents in the Wasilla area have individual wells and septic systems, but the city does operate a water and sewer system. Homes are heated by piped natural gas, provided by Enstar. Refuse is transported by a private firm to the Borough landfill (ADCCED, 2009).

Due to the glacial influence in the formation of the Wasilla area, the landforms in Wasilla are made up of ridges of glacial till and flat benches of gravel and sand

out wash (Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 1985). The altitude of the Wasilla area ranges from about 300 feet to 500 feet above sea level, gradually sloping downwards towards Cook Inlet. There are hundreds of small lakes in the area, several larger lakes, and two large streams (Renshaw Consulting Engineers, 1983).

According to the well log (10/26/1990), the well extends approximately 181 feet below the ground surface and is completed in a confined aquifer. This system operates continuously and serves 23 residents and 10 non-residents through one service connection.

NUGEN'S RANCH 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 input parameters describing the attributes of the aquifer in this calculation were adopted from the State of Alaska Department of Water Resources (Jokela *et al.*, 1991).

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 Nugen’s Ranch 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 Nugen’s Ranch 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 NUGEN’S RANCH 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 Nugen’s Ranch received a **Low** susceptibility rating. The sanitary survey indicates a sanitary seal is installed and the land surface is appropriately sloped away from the well. However, the

well is not properly grouted according to DEC regulations. Sanitary seals prevent potential contaminants 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.

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 Nugen’s Ranch system draws water from a confined aquifer overlain by 30 feet of clay. It received a **Low** susceptibility rating because of the deep nature of the aquifer and the thick confining layer. Deeper aquifers are more protected from surface contaminants while thicker confining layers provide greater protection from any contamination that does manage to penetrate to that depth.

Table 2 summarizes the Susceptibility scores and ratings for the Nugen’s Ranch system.

Table 2. Susceptibility

| | Score | Rating |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Susceptibility of the Wellhead | 5 | Low |
| Susceptibility of the Aquifer | 9 | Low |
| Natural Susceptibility | 14 | 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 Nugen’s Ranch system.

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

| Category | Score | Rating |
|----------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Bacteria and Viruses | 40 | Very High |
| Nitrates and/or Nitrites | 40 | Very High |
| Volatile Organic Chemicals | 50 | 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:

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

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 Nugen’s Ranch system.

Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability

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

Bacteria and Viruses

The contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses is **Very High** with septic systems, roads, and a livestock feedlot 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. Positive samples increase the overall vulnerability of the drinking water source, indicating that the source is susceptible to bacteria and virus contamination. Bacteria and viruses have not recently been detected during water sampling of the system at Nugen's Ranch (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 **Medium**.

Nitrates and Nitrites

The contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites is **Very High** with septic systems, roads, a livestock feedlot, and an orchard, contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The sampling history for Nugen's Ranch well indicates that nitrates have not recently been detected in the water (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 **Medium**.

Volatile Organic Chemicals

The contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals is **Very High** with septic systems, heating oil tanks, roads, a livestock feedlot, a gasoline station, diesel and gasoline tanks, and a government vehicle maintenance facility contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The water system at Nugen's Ranch 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 **High**.

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 Nugen's Ranch 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 Nugen's Ranch drinking water source.

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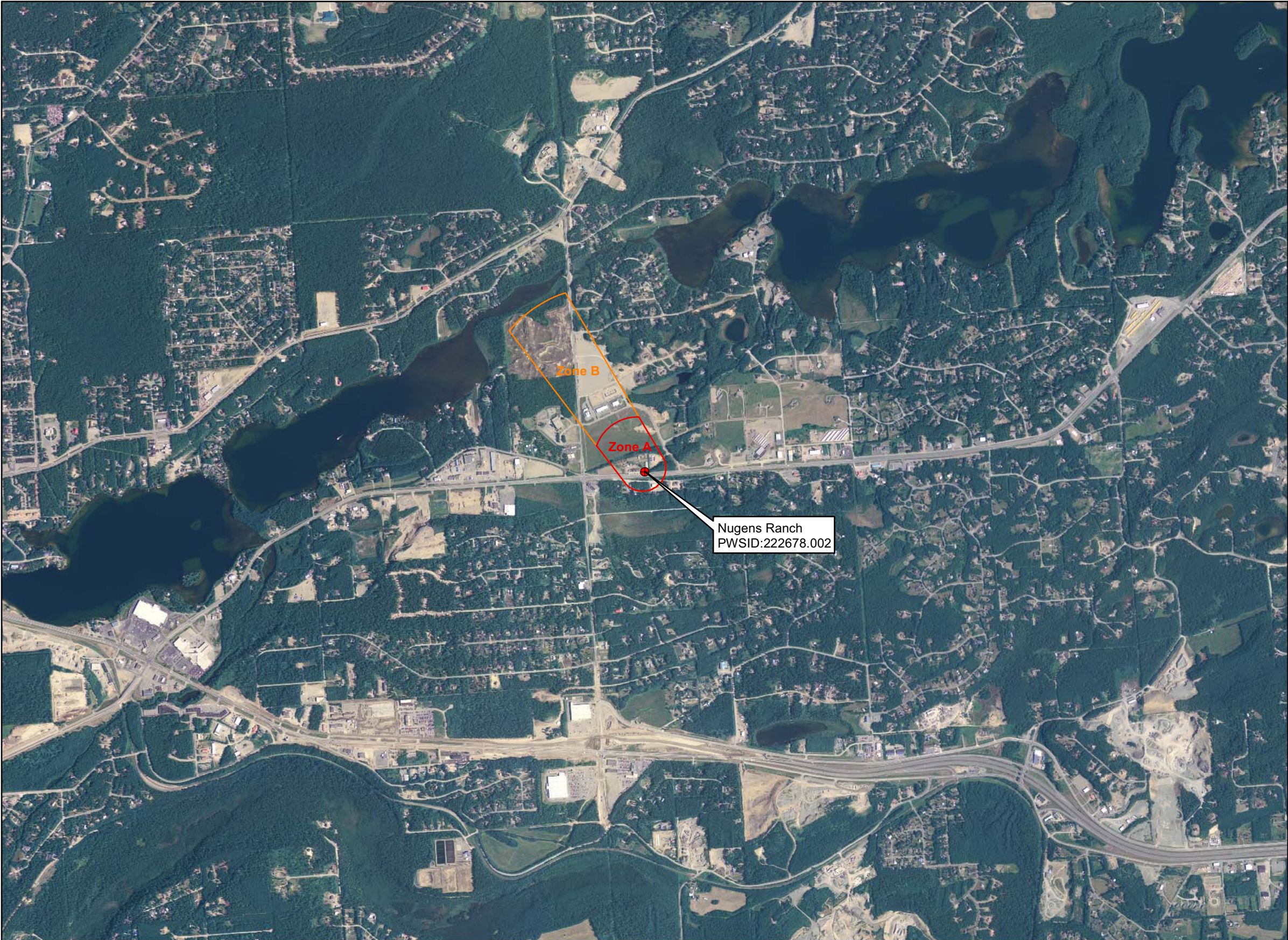
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APPENDIX A

Nugen's Ranch Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map A)

Public Water Well System for PWS #222678.002 Nugens Ranch



Legend

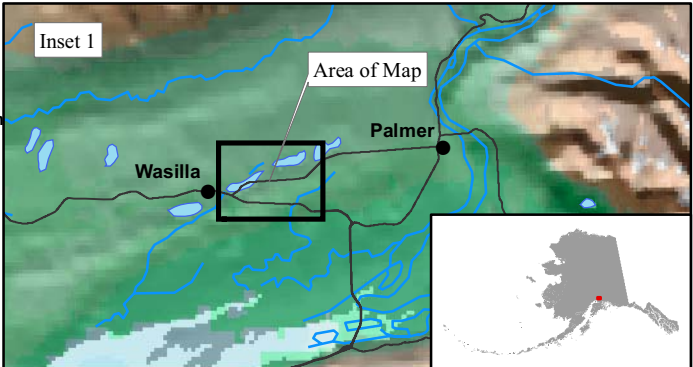
- Class B Public Water System Well
- Groundwater Protection Zones**
- Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time
- Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

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.



Nugens Ranch
PWS 222678.002
Appendix A Map A

APPENDIX B

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Nugen's Ranch (Tables 1-4)

Table 1

**Contaminant Source Inventory for
NUGENS RANCH**

PWSID 222678.002

| Contaminant Source Type | Contaminant Source ID | CS ID tag | Zone | Map Number | Comments |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Livestock feedlots | A06 | A06 | A | C | 1 livestock feedlot |
| Orchards or nurseries | A10 | A10-01 | A | C | |
| Gasoline stations (without repair shop) | C15 | C15-01 | A | C | |
| Stone and clay processing/manufacturing | I43 | I43-01 | A | C | |
| Septic systems (serves one single-family home) | R02 | R02 | A | C | 3 assumed septic systems |
| Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground) | R08 | R08 | A | C | 3 assumed heating oil tanks |
| Tanks, diesel (underground) | T08 | T08-01 | A | C | |
| Tanks, gasoline (underground) | T12 | T12-01 | A | C | |
| Tanks, gasoline (underground) | T12 | T12-02 | 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 | 4 assumed septic systems |
| Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground) | R08 | R08 | B | C | 4 assumed heating oil tanks |
| Government vehicle maintenance facilities | X19 | X19-01 | B | C | |
| Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt) | X20 | X20 | B | C | 2 roads |

Table 2

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
NUGENS RANCH
Sources of Bacteria and Viruses*

PWSID 222678.002

| <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> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Livestock feedlots | A06 | A06 | A | High | C | 1 livestock feedlot |
| Septic systems (serves one single-family home) | R02 | R02 | A | Low | C | 3 assumed septic systems |
| 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 | 4 assumed septic systems |
| Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt) | X20 | X20 | B | Low | C | 2 roads |

Table 3

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
NUGENS RANCH
Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites*

PWSID 222678.002

| <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> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Livestock feedlots | A06 | A06 | A | High | C | 1 livestock feedlot |
| Orchards or nurseries | A10 | A10-01 | A | Medium | C | |
| Septic systems (serves one single-family home) | R02 | R02 | A | Low | C | 3 assumed septic systems |
| 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 | 4 assumed septic systems |
| Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt) | X20 | X20 | B | Low | C | 2 roads |

Table 4

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
NUGENS RANCH
Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals*

PWSID 222678.002

| <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> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Livestock feedlots | A06 | A06 | A | Low | C | 1 livestock feedlot |
| Gasoline stations (without repair shop) | C15 | C15-01 | A | High | C | |
| Septic systems (serves one single-family home) | R02 | R02 | A | Low | C | 3 assumed septic systems |
| Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground) | R08 | R08 | A | Medium | C | 3 assumed heating oil tanks |
| Tanks, diesel (underground) | T08 | T08-01 | A | High | C | |
| Tanks, gasoline (underground) | T12 | T12-01 | A | High | C | |
| Tanks, gasoline (underground) | T12 | T12-02 | 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 | 4 assumed septic systems |
| Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground) | R08 | R08 | B | Medium | C | 4 assumed heating oil tanks |
| Government vehicle maintenance facilities | X19 | X19-01 | B | Medium | C | |
| Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt) | X20 | X20 | B | Low | C | 2 roads |

APPENDIX C

Nugen's Ranch Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map C)

**Public Water Well System for PWS # 222678.002 Nugens Ranch
Showing Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination**



Legend

- Class B Public Water System Well
- Groundwater Protection Zones**
- Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time
- Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time
- Potential or Existing Contaminant Sources**
- 🌳 Orchards or nurseries (A10)
- 🚰 Gasoline stations (without repair shop) (C15)
- Stone and clay processing/manufacturing (I43)
- Tanks, diesel (underground) (T08)
- Tanks, gasoline (underground) (T12)
- ☒ Government vehicle maintenance facilities (X19)
- Livestock feedlots (A06)

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

Apparent misalignment between geographic features and aerial imagery may be present due to differences in source data. URS Corporation does not guarantee the accuracy or validity of the data provided.

