

Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and Vulnerability Assessment for Willow Townsite Foodmart Public Drinking Water System, Willow, Alaska PWSID # 225458.001

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION REPORT 1666

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

January, 2009

Source Water Assessment for Willow Townsite Foodmart Public Drinking Water System Willow, Alaska PWSID# 225458.001

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION REPORT 1666

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

CONTENTS

Page	Page 2
Executive Summary1	Ranking of Contaminant Risks2
Willow Townsite Foodmart	Vulnerability of Willow Townsite Foodmart
Public Drinking Water System1	Drinking Water System2
Willow Townsite Foodmart	References5
Drinking Water Protection Area1	Appendix A7
Inventory of Potential and	Appendix B9
Existing Contaminant Sources	Appendix C11

TABLES

Table 1. Definition of Zones	2
Table 2. Susceptibility	
Table 3. Contaminant Risks	
Table 4. Overall Vulnerability	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Willow Townsite Foodmart Drinking Water Protection Area (Map A)

B. Contaminant Source Inventory for Willow Townsite Foodmart (Table 1) Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Willow Townsite Foodmart – Bacteria and Viruses (Table 2) Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Willow Townsite Foodmart – Nitrates/Nitrites (Table 3) Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Willow Townsite Foodmart – Volatile Organic Chemicals (Table 4)

C. Willow Townsite Foodmart Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map C)

Source Water Assessment for Willow Townsite Foodmart Source of Public Drinking Water, Willow, Alaska

Drinking Water Protection Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for Willow Townsite Foodmart is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of one well located on the Parks Highway in Willow, Alaska. The wellhead received a susceptibility rating of Low and the aquifer received a susceptibility rating of Very High. Combining these two ratings produces a **Medium** rating for the natural susceptibility of the well. Identified potential and current sources of contaminants for Willow Townsite Foodmart public drinking water source include: assumed septic systems, assumed heating oil tanks, roads, a large capacity septic system, a coal mining area, diesel tanks, a non-Superfund contaminated site, a closed leaking underground fuel storage tank (LUST) site, an airport, a rail corridor, and a petroleum product bulk station. 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart received a vulnerability rating of **High** 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart to protect public health.

WILLOW TOWNSITE FOODMART PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

The Willow Townsite Foodmart public water system is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of one well located on the Parks Highway in Willow, Alaska (see Map A in Appendix A). Willow lies between miles 60 and 80.7 of the Parks Highway and is part of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Temperatures in January can range from -33 to 33, while in July temperatures can range from 42 to 83. Willow receives between 16 and 27 inches of precipitation per year and up to 150 inches of snowfall. The population of Willow is 2,048 and the population of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough as a whole is 80,088 (ADCCED, 2009).

Most homes in Willow use individual wells and septic tanks, but seasonal homes haul water and use outhouses. Electricity is provided by Matanuska Electric Association and refuse is hauled to a transfer site on Willow-Fishhook Road (ADCCED, 2009).

According to the well log (01/08/1996), the well extends approximately 85 feet below the ground surface and is completed in a semi-confined aquifer. This system operates continuously and serves 520 nonresidents through one service connection.

WILLOW TOWNSITE FOODMART 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
А	Several months time-of-travel
В	Less than the 2 year time-of-travel

The drinking water protection area for Willow Townsite Foodmart 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart 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 WILLOW TOWNSITE FOODMART 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		
40-50 pts 30 to < 40 pts 20 to < 30 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart received a **Low** susceptibility rating. The most recent sanitary survey (02/18/2006) indicates that the well is capped with a sanitary seal, 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 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart system draws water from a semi-confined aquifer overlain by 2 feet of blue clay and 83 feet of gravel and clay. It received a **Very High** susceptibility rating because of its thin confining layer and the presence of other wells that penetrate the vadose zone within the protection area. Other wells penetrating the vadose zone of the protection zone can allow contaminants to travel into the shared aquifer with precipitation and runoff, while thin confining layers provide limited protection against contaminants migrating into the aquifer naturally.

Table 2 summarizes the Susceptibility scores and ratings for the Willow Townsite Foodmart system.

Table 2. Susceptibility

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the	0	Low
Wellhead		
Susceptibility of the	23	Very High
Aquifer		
Natural Susceptibility	23	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 Willow Townsite Foodmart system.

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	50	Very High
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	41	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:

> Natural Susceptibility (0-50 Points) + Contaminant Risks (0-50 Points) =

Vulnerability of the Drinking Water Source to Contamination (0-100 Points)

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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 Willow Townsite Foodmart system. Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	75	High
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	65	High
Volatile Organic Chemicals	75	High

Bacteria and Viruses

The contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses is **Very High** with a large-capacity septic system, residential septic systems, and roads 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 been detected during recent water sampling of the system at Willow Townsite Foodmart, with positive samples on 06/11/2005 and 06/13/2005 (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 **Very High** with a large-capacity septic system, residential septic systems, an airport, and roads contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The sampling history for Willow Townsite Foodmart well indicates that nitrates have been detected in the water within the last 5 years, with the highest concentration of 0.173 mg/l detected on 01/22/2003 (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 **High**.

Volatile Organic Chemicals

The contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals is **Very High** with a large-capacity septic system, a coal mining area, septic systems, heating oil tanks, diesel tanks, an airport, roads, a rail corridor, and a petroleum product bulk station contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

The water system at Willow Townsite Foodmart 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart 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 Willow Townsite Foodmart drinking water source.

REFERENCES

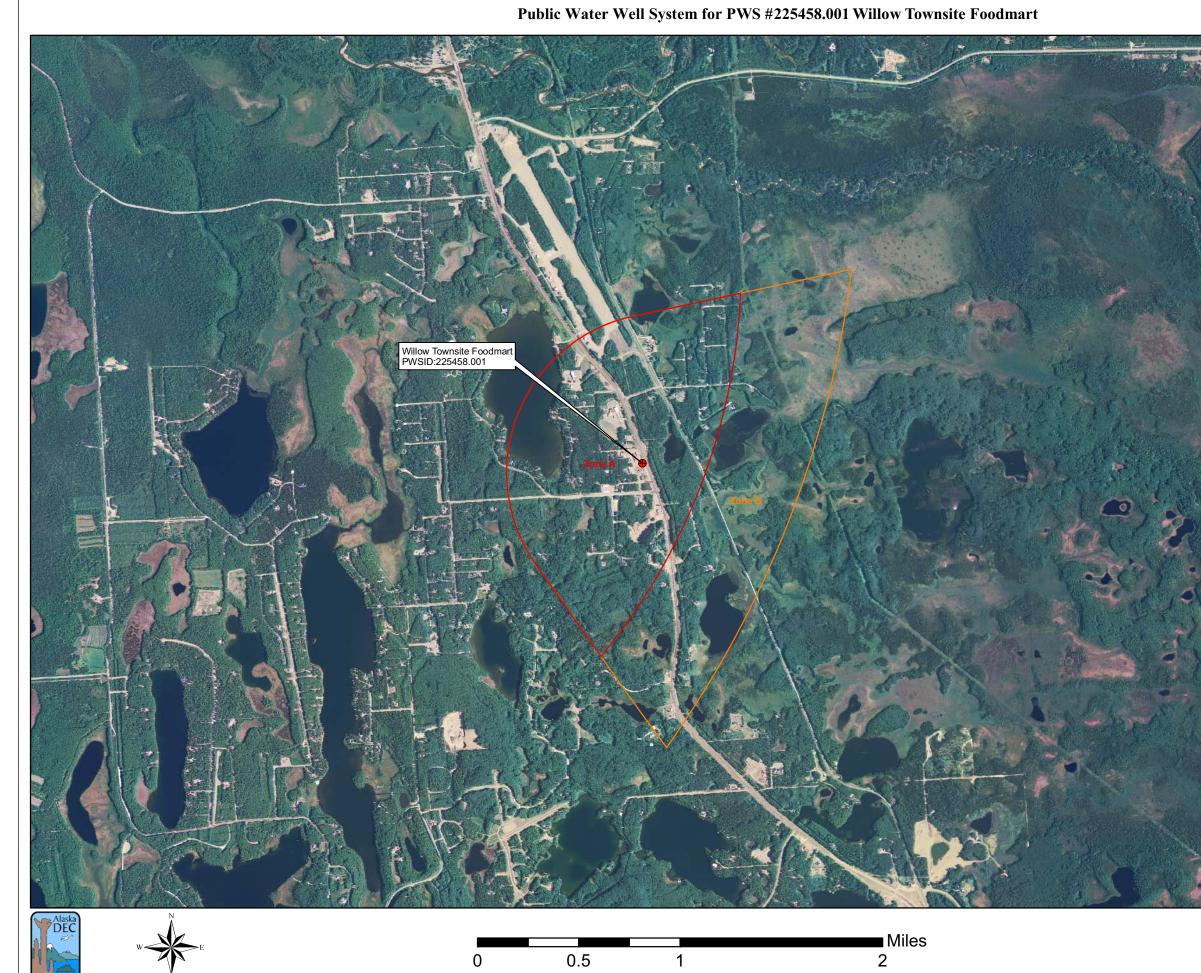
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APPENDIX A

Willow Townsite Foodmart Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map A)



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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.					
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Willow Townsite Foodmart PWS 225458.001

Appendix A Map A

APPENDIX B

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Willow Townsite Foodmart (Tables 1-4)

Contaminant Source Inventory for Willow Townsite Foodmart

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Map Number	Comments
Injection wells (Class V) Large-Capacity Septic System (Drainfield Disposal Method)	D10	D10-01	А	С	
Coal mining (active or inactive?)	E01	E01	А	С	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	А	С	75 assumed septic systems
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	R08	А	С	75 assumed heating oil tanks
Tanks, diesel (above ground)	T06	T06-01	А	С	
Tanks, diesel (underground)	T08	T08-01	А	С	
Tanks, diesel (underground)	T08	T08-02	А	С	
Tanks, diesel (underground)	T08	T08-03	А	С	
Tanks, heating oil, nonresidential (underground)	T16	T16-01	А	С	
Contaminated sites, DEC recognized, non-Superfund, non-RCRA	U04	U04-01	А	С	
Contaminated sites, DEC recognized, non-Superfund, non-RCRA	U04	U04-02	А	С	
Contaminated sites, DEC recognized, non-Superfund, non-RCRA	U04	U04-03	А	С	
Contaminated sites, DEC recognized, non-Superfund, non-RCRA	U04	U04-04	А	С	
Closed Leaking Underground Fuel Storage Tank (LUST) Sites	U08	U08-01	А	С	
Airports	X14	X14	А	С	Willow Station Landing Strip
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	А	С	3 roads
Rail corridors	X30	X30	А	С	1 rail corridor
Coal mining (active or inactive?)	E01	E01	В	С	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	В	С	12 assumed septic systems
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	R08	В	С	12 assumed heating oil tanks
Petroleum product bulk station/terminals	X11	X11-01	В	С	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	В	С	1 road
Rail corridors	X30	X30	В	С	1 rail corridor

Page 1

Table 2

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for

PWSID 225458.001

Willow Townsite Foodmart Sources of Bacteria and Viruses

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Injection wells (Class V) Large-Capacity Septic System (Drainfield Disposal Method)	D10	D10-01	А	High	С	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	А	Low	С	75 assumed septic systems
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	А	Low	С	3 roads
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	В	Low	С	12 assumed septic systems
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	В	Low	С	1 road

Table 3

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for

PWSID 225458.001

Willow Townsite Foodmart Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Injection wells (Class V) Large-Capacity Septic System (Drainfield Disposal Method)	D10	D10-01	А	High	С	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	А	Low	С	75 assumed septic systems
Airports	X14	X14	А	Low	С	Willow Station Landing Strip
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	А	Low	С	3 roads
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	В	Low	С	12 assumed septic systems
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	В	Low	С	1 road

Table 4

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Willow Townsite Foodmart

PWSID 225458.001

Willow Townsite Foodmart Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Injection wells (Class V) Large-Capacity Septic System (Drainfield Disposal Method)	D10	D10-01	А	Low	С	
Coal mining (active or inactive?)	E01	E01	А	High	С	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	А	Low	С	75 assumed septic systems
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	R08	А	Medium	С	75 assumed heating oil tanks
Tanks, diesel (above ground)	T06	T06-01	А	Medium	С	
Tanks, diesel (underground)	T08	T08-01	А	High	С	
Tanks, diesel (underground)	T08	T08-02	А	High	С	
Tanks, diesel (underground)	T08	T08-03	А	High	С	
Tanks, heating oil, nonresidential (underground)	T16	T16-01	А	Low	С	
Airports	X14	X14	А	High	С	Willow Station Landing Strip
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	А	Low	С	3 roads
Rail corridors	X30	X30	А	Medium	С	1 rail corridor
Coal mining (active or inactive?)	E01	E01	В	High	С	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02	В	Low	С	12 assumed septic systems
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	R08	В	Medium	С	12 assumed heating oil tanks
Petroleum product bulk station/terminals	X11	X11-01	В	Very High	С	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20	В	Low	С	1 road
Rail corridors	X30	X30	В	Medium	С	1 rail corridor

APPENDIX C

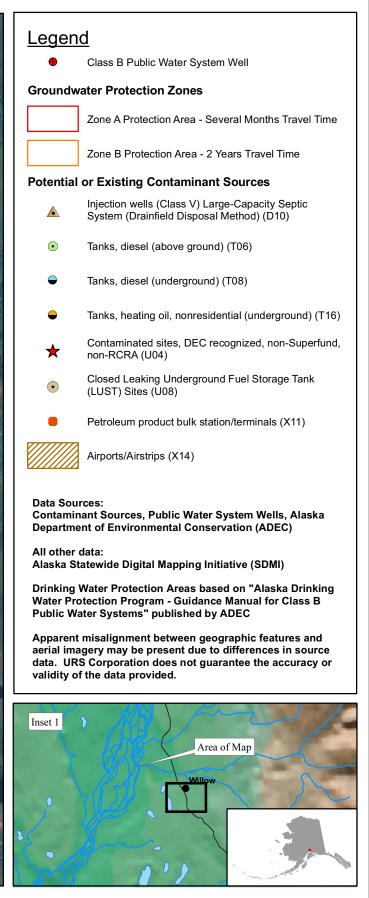
Willow Townsite Foodmart Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map C)

Public Water Well System for PWS # 225458.001 Willow Townsite Foodmart Showing Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination U08-01 T08-0⁷ T16-01 Zone B contains coal mining (active or inactive), 1 road, 1 rail corridor, 12 D10-01 assumed septic systems and 12 assumed heating oil tanks. T06-01 T08-02 T08-03 🖣 . U04-01 Willow Townsite Foodmart PWSID:225458.001 U04-02 U04-03 104-0 Zone A contains 3 roads, coal mining (active or inactive), 1 rail corridor, the Willow Station X11-01 Landing Strip, 75 assumed septic systems and 75 assumed heating oil tanks.

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Willow Townsite Foodmart PWS 225458.001

Appendix C Map C