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SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON WATER AND
WATER RIGHTS IN ALASKA

By

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Alaska Division of
Geological and Geophysical Surveys

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This report is intended to provide interested parties with the names and addresses of the state and federal agencies involved in water-data collection and water management in Alaska. These agencies have information on water rights, surface-water and ground-water availability, and water quality.

WATER RIGHTS

All surface and subsurface waters of Alaska are reserved to the people for common use and are subject to appropriation pursuant to the Alaska Water Use Act. A water right is a property right for the use of those public waters. A water right allows diversion, impoundment, or withdrawal of a specified amount of water from a particular water source for a specified use. This right, when granted, becomes appurtenant (attached) to the land where the water is used and continues in effect for as long as the water is used. If the land is sold, the water right passes to the new owner unless it is specifically severed from the land with the approval of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

A person may also apply to reserve sufficient water to maintain a critical level or 'instream flow' of water at a specified point on a stream or body of water, or in a specified stream reach, throughout the year or for certain periods of time. Instream flow may be reserved for protection of

fish and wildlife habitat, recreational or navigational purposes, or water-quality considerations.

In Alaska, there are no inherent rights to water by virtue of ownership of adjoining or surrounding land. Use of water without a water permit or certificate of appropriation does not vest the user with any right to water, no matter how long the water use continues. (A water permit allows a person to proceed with the construction necessary to develop a water source. A certificate of appropriation is the legal document that conveys water rights once water is being beneficially used.) Alaska Statute 46.15.180 states, in part, that a person who either constructs works for an appropriation or uses a significant amount of water without a permit is guilty of a misdemeanor.

The DNR 'State of Alaska Water User's Handbook' and 'State of Alaska Instream Flow Handbook', published by the Division of Land and Water Management, contain further information on water rights and instream flow reservations. The DLWM also has application forms for water permits, certificates of appropriation, and instream flow reservations at their district offices, listed below. To obtain water rights in Alaska, the completed applications must be submitted to:

ALASKA DIVISION OF LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Southcentral Regional Office
3601 C St., 10th Floor
P.O. Box 7005
Anchorage, AK 99510
(907) 762-2251

Northern Regional Office
4420 Airport Way
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 479-2243

Southeast Regional Office
400 Willoughby Center
Pouch MA
Juneau, AK 99811
(907) 465-3400

Mat-Su Area Office
Century Plaza, Suite 202
P.O. Box 874008
Wasilla, AK 99687
(907) 376-4595

SURFACE-WATER INFORMATION

Surface water is that which occurs on the land surface and is visible as lakes, rivers, ponds, swamps, creeks, glaciers, etc. Surface-water information might include lake levels, stream and spring discharges, flood hazards, irrigation, soil and bank erosion, and snowpack accumulation. Agencies with information on surface water are:

ALASKA DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS
WATER RESOURCES SECTION
Fish Hatchery Road
P.O. Box 772116
Eagle River, AK 99577
(907) 688-3555

- Hydrological reconnaissance reports on major ungaged river basins; short-term flow investigations and snow data collection; water-supply investigations; general information on Alaska lakes and streams.

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
MATERIALS SECTION
P.O. Box 6900
Anchorage, AK 99502-6900
(907) 338-4200

- Streamflow data; computer access to nationwide water data base.

ALASKA DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES
P.O. Box 898 NPAEN-PL-FP
Anchorage, AK 99506-0898
(907) 753-2612

- Flood plain maps and flood hazard information for Alaska communities.

ALASKA DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
REGULATORY FUNCTIONS BRANCH
P.O. Box 898
Anchorage, AK 99506-0898
(800) 478-2712

- Consultation on proposed wetland or waterway development; issuance of permits for structures or fill in wetlands and navigable waters; determination of wetland areas.

ALASKA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
P.O. Box 949
Palmer, AK 99645
(907) 745-7200

- Soil erosion and irrigation information.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
RIVER FORECAST CENTER
701 C St.
Box 23
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 271-3477

- Daily stage records and 3-day forecasts of stage for major rivers
in Alaska.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
ARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION AND DATA CENTER
707 A St.
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 279-4523

- Information referral; library resources and reference service.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
INSTITUTE OF WATER RESOURCES
Duckering Building
306 Tanana Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 474-7775

- Research projects in surface-water analysis; published reports.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
201 E. 9th Avenue, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99501-3687
(907) 261-2424

- Snowfall records from a statewide data-collection network; flood hazard,
irrigation, soil and bank erosion information; basin studies; published
reports.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
701 C. St.
P.O. Box 19
Anchorage, AK 99513
(907) 271-5083

- Site-specific studies; computer access to nation-wide water data base.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION

Alaska District Office
4230 University Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508-4667
(907) 271-4138

Anchorage Subdistrict Office
1209 Orca St.
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 271-4153

Fairbanks Subdistrict Office
101 12th Avenue, Room 168
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 456-0214

Juneau Subdistrict Office
710 W. 9th St., Room 441
Juneau, AK 99802
(907) 586-7216

- Continuous stage and discharge records from a statewide network of gaging stations; surface-water data collected and analyzed throughout the state; published reports on many aspects of Alaska surface water; computerized water information data base.

WATER-QUALITY INFORMATION

This category pertains primarily to the purity of natural waters. Water-quality information might include studies on the chemical composition of surface and subsurface waters, contamination of water supplies, limnological (lake) data, or water treatment processes. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation manages the protection of Alaskan waters through many regulations and processes. Agencies with information on water quality are:

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Southcentral Region
437 E St., Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 274-2533

Southeast Region
9000 Old Glacier Highway
P.O. Box 2420
Juneau, AK 99803
(907) 789-3151

Northern Region
675 7th Ave.
Pouch 1601
Fairbanks, AK 99707
(907) 452-1714

- Information on procedures for testing of water supplies; interpretation of drinking water analyses and test results; recommendations for water-quality problems; information on minimum requirements for water purity.

ALASKA DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS
WATER RESOURCES SECTION
(p. 3)

- surface and subsurface water-quality investigations; limnological studies; wetlands evaluation; water-quality data reports.

ALASKA DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY
527 E. 4th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 274-1602

- Public health hazard evaluation and information.

ALASKA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
(p. 4)

- Water-quality problems and considerations relating to agriculture.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
INSTITUTE OF WATER RESOURCES
(p. 4)

- Research projects in water-quality analysis; published reports.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
(p. 5)

- Site-specific studies on streams, lakes and coastal areas; published reports.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
(p. 5)

- Water-quality records from a statewide network of data-collection sites; miscellaneous data collected and analyzed throughout the state; published reports on many aspects of water quality in Alaska; computerized water information data base.

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BRANCH
701 C St.
Pouch 65
Anchorage, AK 99513
(907) 271-4700

- Information on village water quality in Alaska.

GROUND-WATER INFORMATION

Ground or subsurface water is that which occurs beneath the land surface. Ground-water information might include water-well logs, ground-water movement, water-table levels, water-well discharges, and public water supplies. Agencies with information on ground water are:

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
(p. 6)

- Procedures for developing ground-water supplies; siting and yield requirements for water wells; information on approved water systems.

ALASKA DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS
WATER RESOURCES SECTION
(p. 3)

- Statewide file of well logs and computerized indices of available well-log information; ground-water investigations and reports; general and site-specific information on Alaska ground water.

ALASKA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
(p. 4)

- Ground-water monitoring information for agricultural areas.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
INSTITUTE OF WATER RESOURCES
(p. 4)

- Research projects in ground-water analysis; published reports.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
(p. 5)

- Ground-water level data from a basic network of observation wells; miscellaneous data collected and analyzed throughout the state; published reports on many aspects of Alaska ground water; computerized water information data base.

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BRANCH
(p. 7)

- Information on ground water and village water supplies in Alaska.