

2007-2010 Triennial Review

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FACT SHEET Groundwater Standards

Why are groundwater standards a high priority?

Groundwater standards in Alaska are a patchwork of regulations that make it difficult to determine the appropriate and applicable criteria and points of compliance.

What will DEC be proposing?

DEC will identify procedures to determine transition boundaries where groundwater may influence surface water and aquatic habitat. After determining these procedures, appropriate water quality standards will be determined for groundwater.

Background

Currently, all groundwater is protected for aquaculture use. Some of the criteria applied to protect this use are the same as the criteria for aquatic life (e.g. toxics criteria). In some areas of groundwater, other designated uses, such as drinking water, may be more appropriate. Aquatic life criteria should, at a minimum, continue to apply to groundwater that directly influences surface water. The current water quality standards are also unclear as to whether and how mixing zones may be applied to discharges to groundwater.

Who is affected?

- Wastewater dischargers who discharge to land or groundwater such as septic and sewage lagoons, and industrial injection wells.
- Operators and users of public water supplies using groundwater sources.
- Landowners and affected users of contaminated sites.
- Operators and users of landfills with monitoring requirements for leachate discharges to groundwater.
- Waterbody users such as commercial, subsistence and sport fishing interests.

For more Information

If you have questions or comments see our website at

<http://www.state.ak.us/dec/water/wqsar/wqs/triennialreview> or contact

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