What is Source Water?

Source water is the untreated ground water (aquifers and springs) and surface water (rivers, streams, or lakes) used to supply private, domestic wells and public drinking water systems. A public water system is a drinking water system that supplies water to at least 25 people or has at least 15 service connections.

Where Does My Drinking Water Come From?

Ground water is the source of drinking water for 95% of Idaho citizens. The remaining Idahoans rely on surface water (rivers, streams, or lakes) for their drinking water. Ground water and surface water are often vulnerable to contamination, so protection is important.

What is Source Water Protection?

Source water protection is an effort a community can implement to help prevent contamination of the source water that supplies its public water system. The first step in source water protection is completing a source water assessment.

For More Information

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

State Office
Water Quality Division
1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0502

Regional Offices

Boise
1445 N. Orchard
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0550
toll-free: (888) 800-3480

Lewiston
1118 F Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-4370
toll-free: (877) 541-3304

Coeur d'Alene
2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422
toll-free: (877) 370-0017

Pocatello
444 Hospital Way #300
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160
toll-free: (888) 655-6160

Idaho Falls
900 N. Skyline, Suite B
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 528-2650
toll-free: (800) 232-4635

Twin Falls
650 Addison Ave. W,
Suite 110
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 736-2190
toll-free: (800) 270-1663

DEQ Web Resources

Source Water in Idaho
www.deq.idaho.gov/source-water

DEQ Source Water Assessment Online Application
www.deq.idaho.gov/water/swaOnline/

DEQ Source Water Protection Planning Tool
www.deq.idaho.gov/water/swpp

DEQ's Mission

To protect human health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water.

Printed on recycled paper, DEQ, March 2019, PID 0305, CA 30060. Costs associated with this publication are available from the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality in accordance with Section 60-202, Idaho Code.

Idaho's Source Water Protection Program

Assessing and protecting source water supplying public drinking water systems throughout Idaho

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov

Why Is Source Water Protection Important?

We all need clean and safe water to drink. Preventing contamination through protection can help to:

- Protect public health and the economic viability of the community
- Avoid additional monitoring requirements for public water systems
- Reduce treatment costs
- Increase a community's eligibility for grants and loans for infrastructure upgrades

How Can My Community Protect its Source Water?

Local communities working in cooperation with state agencies can use the information provided in the assessment to create a broader drinking water protection program to address current problems and prevent future threats to the quality of their drinking water. Protection efforts may include:

- Developing and implementing a source water protection plan
- Enacting a county or city source water protection ordinance or overlay district
- Acquiring land in source water assessment areas
- Implementing best management practices

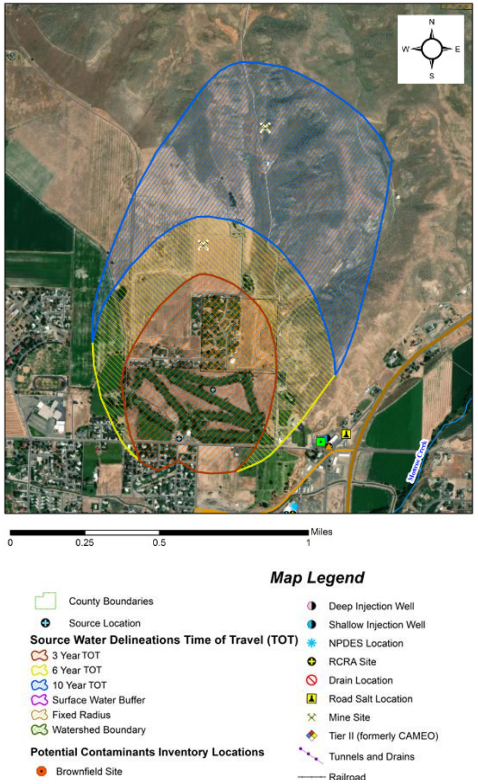
What is a Source Water Assessment?

A source water assessment provides information on the potential contaminant threats to public drinking water sources. Each source water assessment involves three steps:

Step 1: Source Water Assessment Area – Delineate the portion of the watershed or subsurface area contributing water to the surface water intake or well.

Step 2: Potential Contaminant Source Inventory – Identify potential sources of contamination within the source water assessment area.

Step 3: Susceptibility Analysis – Determine vulnerability (high, moderate, or low) of the drinking water source to potential contaminants.



Example of a source water assessment delineation

Do You Need Assistance with Source Water Protection?

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) may be able to provide you with:

- **Information** – Source water assessments provide information on where drinking water comes from (source water assessment area), potential threats to the source (potential contaminant inventory), and how susceptible the source is to potential contamination (susceptibility analysis).
- **Technical Assistance** – DEQ is available to help public water systems identify and track potential contaminants, prioritize threats, and identify ways to mitigate risks. The Source Water Protection Activity Guide is an online tool that presents protection activities that can be implemented to better protection source water from contamination. *http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/source-water/activity-guide/*. DEQ also offers workshops on topics related to source water protection.
- **Planning** – The Source Water Protection Planning Tool is available online to assist public water systems in developing a source water protection plan and contingency plan. *www.deq.idaho.gov/water/swpp*.

Questions?

Amy Williams
Source Water Program Coordinator
amy.williams@deq.idaho.gov
or (208) 373-0115