

Alaska State Legislature

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UAA Review of Sand Lake Gravel Pit

On October 6, 2004, the University of Alaska Anchorage released its [third-party review](#) of the existing hydrologic reports prepared by the developer, the Municipality of Anchorage and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) for the Proposed Kincaid Estates Subdivision (i.e. Sand Lake gravel pit). The Review states: "Many findings and conclusions of our study are not consistent with the 'Findings of Fact and Decision' that The Municipality of Anchorage Platting Board has listed."

The Review has raised serious questions about the conclusions of the ADEC report, a report that the municipality relied on when making its decisions regarding development of the gravel pit. The review states, "...arguments for concluding that various protective measures exist at the site of the proposed development to ensure groundwater resource protection are not substantiated by site specific knowledge. The uncertainty associated with the aspects of geology, groundwater flow, and chemical contamination is too great in order to arrive at that overall conclusion." The University concluded that there was insufficient scientific evidence that the community's water aquifer would be protected by the development of the gravel pit.

The Review makes the following recommendations: 1) the aquifers cannot be fully characterized until more fieldwork and analysis are performed (the Review goes on to list methodologies for characterizing the aquifers); 2) surface and ground water should be monitored for bacteria and nitrates to track water quality; and 3) the composition and physical characteristics of the proposed topsoil should be specified.

In light of the review's conclusions, the Mayor and Anchorage Assembly need to re-examine the whole gravel pit project. They also need to evaluate the standards set for any subdivision development as it might effect area water aquifers. It is important to note that recent grading and other operations in the Sand Lake gravel pit has caused some contamination of area well waters.

On Monday night, October 11 at 7:00 p.m., the University will make a formal presentation to the citizens of the Sand Lake at the Sand Lake Community Council meeting. The meeting will be held at the Calvary Church, corner of Jewel Lake & 80th. It is the duty of the Mayor and the Assembly to see to it that the conclusions and recommendations of the Review are implemented to protect the water quality of Sand Lake residents.

The Executive Summary, Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations are attached.