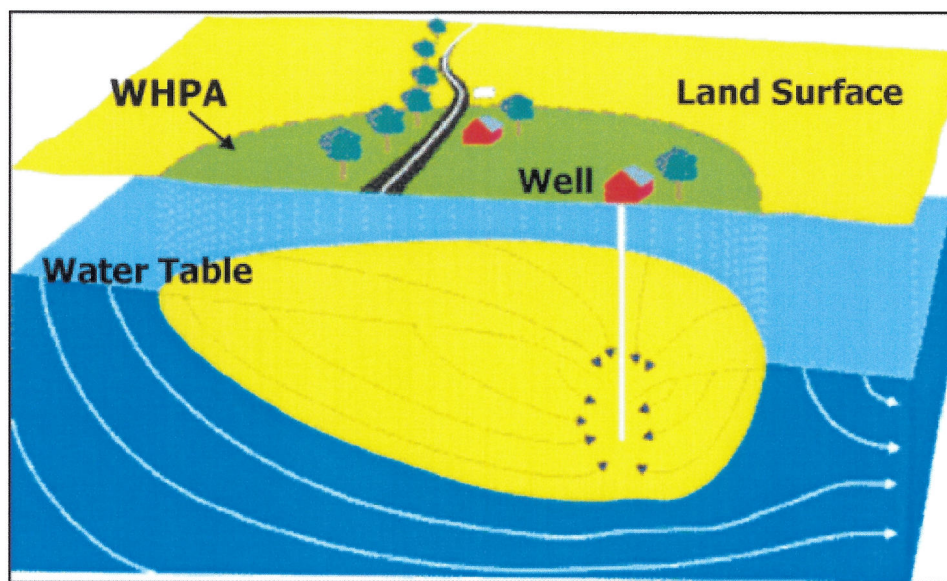


**Source Water Assessment
for the Conococheague Apartments
Water System
Washington County, Maryland**



**Prepared By
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Water Management Administration
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Summary	i.
Introduction.....	1
Well Information.....	1
Hydrogeology	1
Source Water Assessment Area Delineation	1
Potential Sources of Contamination.....	2
Water Quality Data	3
Susceptibility Analysis.....	4
Management of the Source Water Assessment Area.....	7
References.....	9
Sources of Data	9
Tables and Charts.....	
Table 1. Land use summary	2
Table 2. Water quality samples.....	3
Table 3. Susceptibility Analysis summary.....	6
Figures.....	10
Figure 1. Ortho-photo of Conococheague Apartments Area	
Figure 2. Conococheague Apartments Wellhead Protection Area	
Figure 3. Land use map	

SUMMARY

The Maryland Department of the Environment's Water Supply Program (WSP) has conducted a Source Water Assessment for the Conococheague Apartments water system. The required components of this report as described in Maryland's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) are 1) delineation of an area that contributes water to the source, 2) identification of potential sources of contamination, and 3) determination of the susceptibility of the water supply to contamination. Recommendations for protecting the drinking water supply conclude this report.

The source of the Conococheague Apartments' water supply is one well that draws from an unconfined fractured-rock aquifer. The source water assessment area was delineated by the WSP using U.S. EPA approved methods specifically designed for this source type.

Point sources of contamination were investigated within the assessment area from field inspections, contaminant inventory databases, and previous studies. The Maryland Office of Planning's 2000 digital land use map for Washington County was used to identify non-point sources of contamination. Well information and water quality data were also reviewed. An aerial photograph and maps showing land use within the source water assessment area are included in the report.

The susceptibility analysis is based on a review of the existing water quality data for the Conococheague Apartments water system, the presence of potential sources of contamination in the source water assessment area, well integrity, and the inherent vulnerability of the aquifer. It was determined that the Conococheague Apartments water supply is susceptible to nitrate and total coliform bacteria. Radon-222, a naturally occurring contaminant, may pose a risk to the water supply. The water supply is not susceptible to contamination from other inorganic compounds, other radionuclides, volatile organic compounds, synthetic organic compounds, or other microbiological contaminants.

INTRODUCTION

The Water Supply Program has conducted a Source Water Assessment for the Conococheague Apartments water system in Washington County. The Conococheague Apartments is located approximately 6 miles west of Hagerstown in central Washington County. The water system serves a population of 50 and has 17 service connections. The water system is privately owned and operated.

WELL INFORMATION

Well information was investigated from the Water Supply Program's database, site visits, well completion reports, sanitary survey inspection reports, and published reports. The Conococheague Apartments system presently obtains its water supply from one well (Fig. 1). Very little is known about the condition of this well because, despite searching all available information, a well permit number or completion report could not be located. The well casing is in fair condition based on visual inspection. The Conococheague Apartments water system has an appropriation permit to draw water from the Martinsburg Shale formation for an average use of 5,000 gallons per day (gpd) and a maximum of 8,000 gpd in the month of maximum use.

HYDROGEOLOGY

The Conococheague Apartments lies within the Hagerstown Valley physiographic province, which is underlain by a sequence of metasedimentary limestones and shales that have eroded away to form the valley bound by South Mountain and the Bear Pond Mountains west of Clear Spring. The Conococheague Apartments well obtains water from the Martinsburg Shale formation, a sequence of metamorphosed, dark brown and gray fissile shales (Edwards, 1978). The primary porosity and permeability of this aquifer are small due to the dense nature of the metamorphosed rock. Ground water moves principally through secondary porosity (fractures, bedding planes, and joint openings) and is recharged by precipitation percolating through soil and saprolite. Large production wells are not common in this formation unless significant, water-bearing fractures are encountered, due to the low primary porosity.

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT AREA DELINEATION

For ground water systems, a Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) is considered the source water assessment area for the system. The source water assessment area for public water systems with an average appropriation amount of less than 10,000 gpd and drawing from fractured-rock aquifers is a circle with a 1,000-foot radius (MD SWAP,

1999). The area should be modified to account for geological boundaries and ground water divides if appropriate. The WHPA is 72 acres and is illustrated in Figure 2.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION

Potential sources of contamination are classified as either point or non-point sources. Examples of point sources of contamination are leaking underground storage tanks, landfills, discharge permits, large-scale feeding operations, and CERCLA sites. These sites are generally associated with commercial or industrial facilities that use chemical substances that may, if inappropriately handled, contaminate ground water via a discrete point location. Non-point sources of contamination are associated with certain types of land use practices such as use of pesticides, application of fertilizers or animal wastes, or septic systems that may lead to ground water contamination over a larger area.

Point Sources

A review of MDE contaminant databases revealed no potential point sources of contamination within the WHPA.

Non-Point Sources

The Maryland Office of Planning's 2000 digital land use coverage of Washington County was used to determine the predominant types of land use in the WHPA (Fig. 3). The land use summary is given in Table 1. The WHPA is predominantly residential and commercial with some forested and agricultural land.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent of WHPA
Low Density Residential	25	35.0
Commercial	23	32.1
Cropland	14	18.9
Pasture	7	9.1
Forest	4	4.9
Total	72	100

Table 1. Land Use Summary

Residential areas without sewer service may be a source of nitrate from septic systems, or microbiological contaminants if they fail. Additionally, residential areas may be a source of nitrate and SOCs if fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides are not used carefully in lawns and gardens. Agricultural land is commonly associated with nitrate loading of ground water and can also be a source of microbiological pathogens from animal wastes.

The Maryland Office of Planning's 1996 digital sewer map of Washington County shows that entire WHPA is in an area of the county that is not planned for service.

WATER QUALITY DATA

Water Quality data was reviewed from the Water Supply Program's database for Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) contaminants. The State's SWAP defines a threshold for reporting water quality data as 50% of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). If a monitoring result is greater than 50% of an MCL, this assessment will describe the sources of such a contaminant and if possible, locate the specific sources that are the cause of the elevated contaminant level. All data reported is from the finished (treated) water unless otherwise noted. The Conococheague Apartments water system currently uses chlorination for disinfection, pH adjustment for corrosion control, and ion exchange for inorganic removal, and ion exchange and greensand filtration for iron removal.

A review of the monitoring data for the Conococheague Apartments' water system indicates that the water supply meets drinking water standards. Contaminants have not been detected above 50% of an MCL, with the exception of nitrate and thallium. The water quality sampling results are summarized in Table 2.

Contaminant Group	No. of Samples Collected	No. of Samples over 50% of an MCL
Inorganic Compounds (except Nitrate)	61	1
Nitrate	13	1
Radiological Contaminants	4	1*
Volatile Organic Compounds	9	0
Synthetic Organic Compounds	4	0

Table 2. Summary of Water Quality Samples

*Proposed MCL for Radon-222

Inorganic Compounds (IOCs)

A review of the data shows that two inorganic compounds have been detected above the SWAP threshold level. Nitrate was detected in one sample at 5.6 parts per million (ppm). The remaining ten samples ranged from non-detectable to 0.9 ppm of nitrate. The system has ion-exchange treatment, which probably removes any nitrate that is in the source water, and the anomalous level may reflect levels in raw water if the treatment was not in use or working properly at the time of sample collection. Thallium was detected once at 0.003 ppm, but was non-detectable in all other inorganic samples. The MCL for Thallium is 0.002 ppm.

Radionuclides

A review of the data shows that the only radionuclide detected at a level of concern was Radon-222. There is currently no MCL for Radon-222, however EPA has proposed an MCL of 300 pCi/L or an alternate of 4000 pCi/L for community water systems if the State has a program to address the more significant risk from radon in indoor air. The EPA received many comments in response to their proposed rule,

and promulgation may be delayed. Radon-222 was detected at 330 pCi/L in the water supply, which is greater than the lower proposed MCL.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

A review of the data shows that VOCs have not been detected above 50% of an MCL.

Synthetic Organic Compounds (SOCs)

A review of the data shows that VOCs have not been detected above 50% of an MCL.

Microbiological Contaminants

Raw water bacteriological data is available from evaluation for ground water under the direct influence of surface water (GWUDI). The most recent data shows that the wells were free of coliform bacteria. Previous samples collected in 1993 had shown low concentrations of total coliform bacteria (up to 22 colonies/100 ml).

SUSCEPTIBILITY ANALYSIS

The well serving the Conococheague Apartments water supply draws water from an unconfined fractured-rock aquifer. Wells in unconfined aquifers are generally vulnerable to any activity on the land surface that occurs within the wellhead protection area. Therefore, continued monitoring of contaminants is essential in assuring a safe drinking water supply. The *susceptibility* of the source to contamination is determined for each group of contaminants based on the following criteria: 1) the presence of potential contaminant sources within the WHPA, 2) water quality data, 3) well integrity, and 4) the aquifer conditions. Table 3 summarizes the susceptibility of Conococheague Apartments' water supply to each of the groups of contaminants.

In fractured-rock areas, if a well is constructed properly with the casing extended to competent rock and with sufficient grout, the saprolite serves as a natural filter and protective barrier. Properly constructed wells with no potential sources of contamination in their WHPA should be well protected from contamination.

Inorganic Compounds

Nitrate was detected above the SWAP threshold level of 5 ppm in one sample of thirteen collected. Since the system uses treatment for inorganic removal, the finished water samples are probably not reflective of the raw water quality. The MCL for nitrate is 10 ppm. Sources of nitrate can generally be traced back to land use. Fertilization of agricultural fields and residential lawns, and residential septic systems are all common sources of nitrate loading in ground water and are present to some extent in the WHPA. Due to the vulnerability of the aquifer to land activity, and the presence of nitrate sources in the WHPA, the water supply is susceptible to this contaminant.

Thallium was detected in March 1998 above the MCL. A confirmation sample was collected one month later and was non-detect for Thallium. Thallium is a metal found in natural deposits as ores containing other elements. The greatest use of thallium is in specialized electronic research equipment (US EPA, 2002). Thallium is unlikely to be naturally occurring in the aquifer and thus this result was likely due to sampling or analytical error. The water supply is **not** susceptible to other inorganic compounds due to the lack of potential contaminant sources within the WHPA.

Radionuclides

The water supply **may be** susceptible to Radon-222. The source of radionuclides in ground water is the natural occurrence of uranium in rocks. The concentration of constituents such as Radon-222, Radium-226, and Radium-228 can vary considerably in the same aquifer due to many factors such as pH, exposed surface area of minerals, and other natural conditions. The Radon-222 level is higher than the lower proposed MCL of 300 pCi/L. Therefore, the system will be determined susceptible to this contaminant, if the lower MCL is adopted. Based on available data, the water supply is **not** susceptible to other radionuclides.

Volatile Organic Compounds

The water supply is **not** susceptible to volatile organic compounds, based on water quality data and the lack of potential contaminant sources within the WHPA.

Synthetic Organic Compounds

The water supply is **not** susceptible to synthetic organic compounds. SOCs were not detected in the water supply above the SWAP threshold level. Potential sources of SOCs in the WHPA may exist in the form of pesticide or herbicide use in the agricultural or residential areas, but represent a minimal risk.

Microbiological Contaminants

The well did not have fecal coliform bacteria in raw water samples and was determined not under direct influence of surface water. Therefore, the well is **not** susceptible to microbiological contaminants that may be present in surface water, such as *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*. Total coliform bacteria were detected, which are ubiquitous in the environment, and may be indicators of organisms with longer survival rates such as viruses. Without additional data however, it is not possible to determine whether or not the water supply is susceptible to viral contamination. The well **is** susceptible to total coliform.

Contaminant Group	Are Contaminant Sources Present in WHPA?	Are Contaminants Detected Above 50% of MCL?	Is Well Integrity a Factor?	Is the Aquifer Vulnerable?	Is the System Susceptible?
Nitrate	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Inorganic Compounds (except nitrate)	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Radiological Compounds	YES (aquifer material)	YES*	NO	YES	YES*
Volatile Organic Compounds	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Synthetic Organic Compounds	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO
Microbiological Contaminants	YES (Total Coliform only)	YES	NO	NO	YES (Total Coliform Only)

Table 3. Susceptibility Analysis Summary.

*Proposed MCL for Radon-222

MANAGEMENT OF THE SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT AREA

With the information contained in this report the Conococheague Apartments is in a position to protect the Conococheague Apartments water supply by staying aware of the area delineated for source water protection and evaluating future development and land planning. Specific management recommendations for consideration are listed below:

Form a Local Planning Team

- The Conococheague Apartments should contact the County Water and Sewer Department and the County Planning Department to form a local planning team to begin to implement a wellhead protection plan. The team should represent all the interests in the community, such as the water supplier, home association officers, the County Health Department, local business, developers, and property owners, and residents within and near the WHPA. The team should work to reach a consensus on how to protect the water supply.
- A management strategy adopted by the County should be consistent with the level of resources available for implementation. MDE remains available to assist in anyway we can help the process.
- MDE has grant money available for Wellhead Protection projects.

Public Awareness and Outreach

- The Consumer Confidence Report should list that this report is available to the general public through their county library, by contacting the Owner or MDE.
- Conduct educational outreach to residents on potential contaminant sources. Important topics include (a) appropriate use and application of fertilizers and pesticides, and (b) chemical storage and disposal.

Monitoring

- Continue to monitor for all Safe Drinking Water Act contaminants as required by MDE.
- Annual raw water bacteriological samples are a good test for well integrity.

Planning/ New Development

- Review the State's model wellhead protection zoning ordinances for potential adoption. Coordinate with Washington County Department of Planning to adopt a wellhead protection ordinance.

Land Acquisition/Easements

- Loans are available for the purchase of property or easements for protection of the water supply. Eligible property must lie within the designated WHPA. Loans are currently offered at zero percent interest and zero points. Contact the Water Supply Program for more information.

Contingency Plan

- Conococheague Apartments should have a Contingency Plan for its water system. COMAR 26.04.01.22 requires all community water systems to prepare and submit for approval a plan for providing a safe and adequate drinking water supply under emergency conditions.
- Develop a spill response plan in concert with the Fire Department and other emergency response personnel.

Contaminant Source Inventory Updates/ Inspections

- The Conococheague Apartments should conduct their own field survey of the source water assessment area to ensure that there are no additional potential sources of contamination.
- Periodic inspections and a regular maintenance program for the well will ensure their integrity and protect the aquifer from contamination.

Changes in Use

- Conococheague Apartments is required to notify MDE if new wells are to be put into service. Drilling a new well outside the current WHPA would modify the area; therefore the Water Supply Program should be notified if a new well is being proposed.

REFERENCES

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- Edwards, J., 1978, Geologic Map of Washington County, Maryland. Maryland Geological Survey, 1 plate.
- MDE, Water Supply Program, 1999, Maryland's Source Water Assessment Plan, 36 p.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1991, Delineation of Wellhead Protection Areas in Fractured Rocks: Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, EPA/570/9-91-009, 144 pp.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2002, "Consumer Fact Sheet on Thallium" URL: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwh/c-ioc/thallium.html>

OTHER SOURCES OF DATA

Water Appropriation and Use Permit WA1991G030
Public Water Supply Sanitary Survey Inspection Reports
MDE Water Supply Program Oracle® Database
MDE Waste Management Sites Database
Department of Natural Resources Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quadrangles for Mason and Dixon
USGS Topographic 7.5 Minute Quadrangles for Mason and Dixon
Maryland Office of Planning 2000 Washington County Digital Land Use Map
Maryland Office of Planning 1996 Washington County Digital Sewer Map

FIGURES

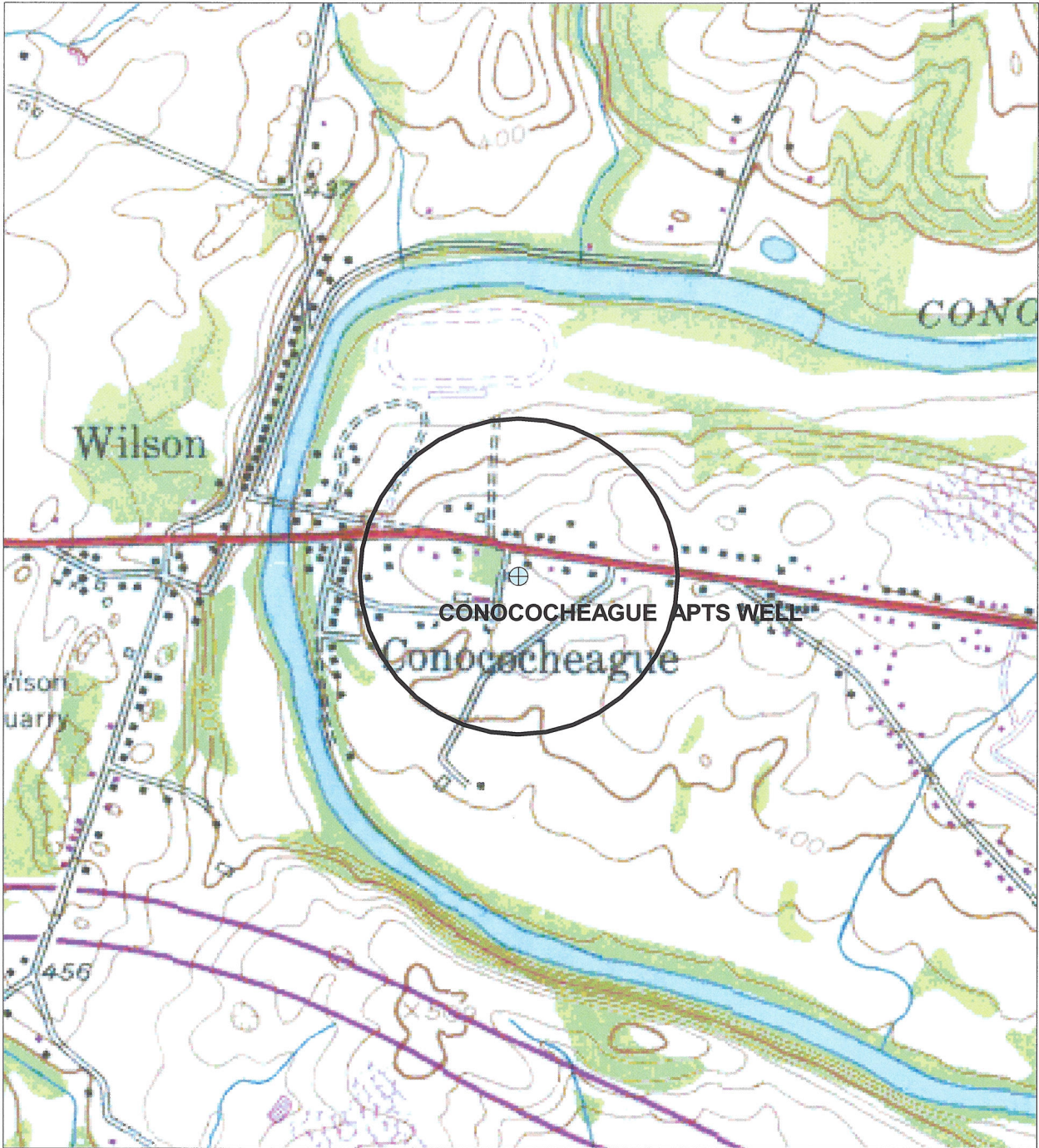
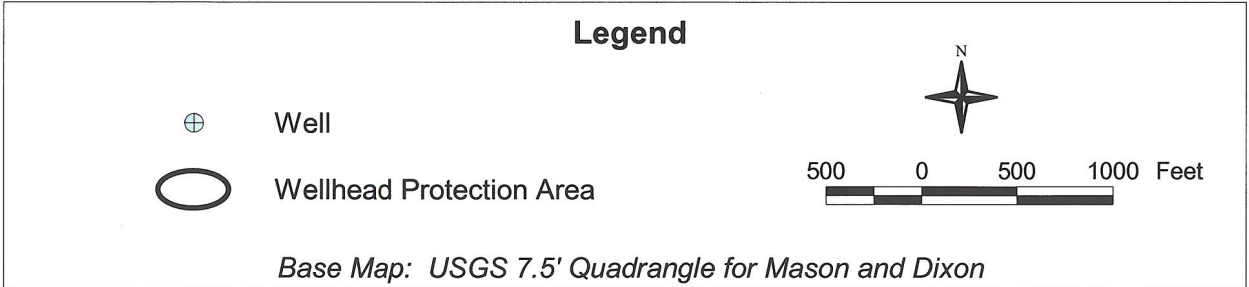


Figure 2. Conococheague Apartments Wellhead Protection Area



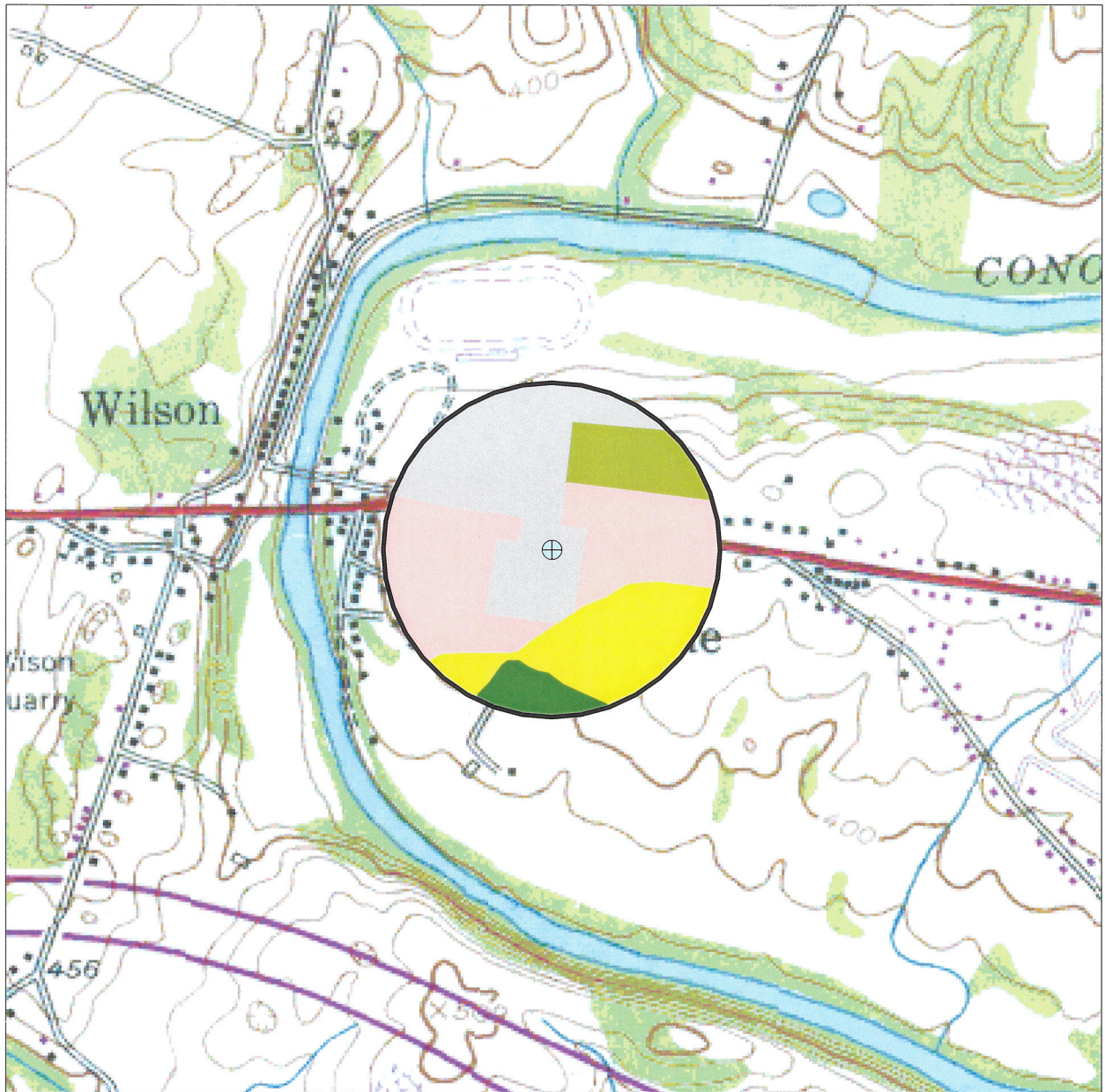


Figure 3. Conococheague Apartments Wellhead Protection Area with Land Use

