

Overview of the U.S. Geological Survey's Assessment of Source Water and Finished Water of Community Water Systems and Related Data for Alabama

In 2002, the U.S. Geological Survey's National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program began a study to characterize the occurrence of anthropogenic organic compounds in source and finished drinking water of community water systems. The study, which is still in progress, collects occurrence data for about 280 organic compounds that are not commonly included in drinking-water monitoring programs. Analytical methods allow for the detection of many of these compounds at concentrations well below human-health benchmarks. Even when there are no human-health concerns, the detection of low-level concentrations of these compounds may help in understanding their origins in the environment and persistence through normal water-treatment processes.

The study has focused on several water treatment facilities nationwide that are supplied by rivers and, thus, represent a variety of water sources, watershed land uses, treatment processes, and treatment volumes. Results from 9 studies conducted during 2002-05 have been summarized in multiple reports. Source and finished water from one treatment facility in Alabama are currently being studied as part of the national-scale study and preliminary results will be compared to the previously published results.

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