GLOSSARY

Acre-foot—volume of water required to cover 1 acre of land to a depth of 1 foot; equivalent to 325,851 gallons

Acre-inch—volume of water required to cover 1 acre of land to a depth of 1 inch; equivalent to 27,154 gallons

Action level—Food and Drug Administration's recommended limit for a toxic substance in the edible portion of a fish; if an action level is exceeded, fish are not safe to consume and interstate sales are not allowed

Alluvium—general term for deposits of clay, silt, sand, gravel, or other particulate rock material in a streambed, on a flood plain, or on a delta

Apron—coalesced series of outwash fans

Aquifer—a geologic formation, part of a formation, or a group of formations that contain sufficient saturated permeable material to yield significant quantities of water to wells and springs

Average discharge—the arithmetic average of all complete water years of record, whether consecutive or not

Benthic—sediment and other material at the bottom of an aquatic system

Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)—amount of dissolved oxygen needed for the decomposition of organic matter in water; if the amount of oxygen is high and the organic material is low, the BOD is low, and vice versa

Channel head—uppermost reach of a channel

Climatic normal—average (or mean) conditions over a designated period, usually the most recent 30-year period ending every decade (1941-70, 1951-80, for example)

Climatic year—the 12-month period, April 1 to March 31, designated by the calendar year in which it begins; for example, climatic year 1984 is from April 1, 1984 to March 31, 1985

Confined (aquifer)—an aquifer in which ground water is confined under pressure that is significantly greater than atmospheric pressure

Contributing drainage area—total drainage area minus the area which does not contribute directly to surface runoff as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey annual water data reports

Cubic foot per second—unit of measurement for water discharge representing a volume of 1 cubic foot passing a given point in 1 second; equivalent to 448.8 gallons per minute

Dendritic—a drainage pattern characterized by irregular branching in all directions with the tributaries joining the main stream at all angles

Drawdown—difference between the water level in a well before and during pumping

Drift—rock debris deposited by glaciers or glacial streams

Eutrophication—process by which water becomes enriched with plant nutrients, most commonly phosphorus and nitrogen; generally refers to conditions in lakes or reservoirs

Evapotranspiration—collective term that includes water discharged to the atmosphere as a result of evaporation from the soil and surface-water bodies and by plant transpiration

Fecal coliform—bacteria that occur naturally in the intestines of humans and animals; bacterial counts in waterways are used as indicators of pollution from human and animal wastes

Flow till—debris accumulated downslope of a retreating glacier due to the movement of semi-plastic or near-fluid materials

Hummocky—describes an area of rounded, irregular topography

Hydraulic conductivity—a constant describing the rate at which water moves through a permeable medium

Hydrograph—graph showing stage, flow, velocity, or other properties of water with respect to time

Ice contact—materials in direct contact with glacier ice at the time of deposition

Ice trough—channel cut into glacial ice

Igneous—rocks that solidified from molten or partly molten material

Interlobate—lying between adjacent glacial lobes

Interpolate—to estimate intermediate values of a function between two known points

Kame—a conical hill or short irregular ridge of gravel or sand deposited in contact with glacier ice

Lacustrine—includes areas of wetlands and deepwater habitats greater than 20 acres situated in a topographic depression or dammed river channel, and lacking significant vegetation; also includes smaller areas with a water depth exceeding 6.6 feet at low water

Limnology—refers to characteristics of fresh waters, including biological properties as well as chemical and physical properties

Lithology—rock features such as composition, grain size, color, and kind of bedding

Loam—soil composed of a mixture of clay, silt, sand, and organic matter

Mean—the arithmetic mean (average) of a set of observations

Melt-out till—unsorted debris which has been deposited directly by glacier ice

Moraine—an accumulation of drift deposited by the direct action of glacier ice

Morphometry—in this usage, refers to the structure and form of a lake (for example, surface area, volume, depth)

Nested—wells at the same approximate location which are open to the aquifer at different depths in order to detect the vertical component of flow

Outwash—drift deposited by meltwater streams beyond active glacier ice

Palustrine—includes wetlands dominated by vegetation such as trees, shrubs and persistent emergents; or an area less than 20 acres lacking such vegetation and having a water depth less than 6.6 feet at low water

Per capita money income—total money income of the residents of a given area divided by the resident population of that area; represents the amount of income received before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, etc.; receipts not counted include "lump sum" payments such as capital gains or inheritances

Per capita personal income—total personal income of the residents of a given area divided by the resident population of that area; measured after deduction of personal contributions to old age and survivors insurance, government retirement, and other social insurance programs, but before deduction of income and other personal taxes

Permeability—the capacity of a rock for transmitting a fluid; a measure of the relative ease of fluid flow in a porous medium

Physiography—the origin and evolution of landforms

Piezometric surface—an imaginary surface representing the static head of ground water in tightly cased wells that tap a water-bearing rock unit; in the case of unconfined aquifers, often called the water table

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—a family of chlorinated hydrocarbons toxic to animals and humans

Reach—a specified length of a river or stream channel

Recharge (ground water)—process of entry of water into the zone of saturation

Recurrence interval—the average time interval within which the magnitude of a given event, such as a flood or storm, will be equalled or exceeded

Runoff—the part of precipitation that appears in surface-water bodies; it is the same as stream flow unaffected by artificial manipulations

Sag and swell—a landscape of regularly alternating topographic highs and lows

Salmonid—a family of elongate soft-finned fishes, including salmon and trout

Stratigraphy—the formation, composition, sequence, and correlation of rock strata

Stream regulation—artificial manipulation of the flow of a stream

TCDD—the toxic chemical 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, shown to cause cancer in animals and skin disease in humans

Till—non-sorted, non-stratified sediment carried or deposited by a glacier

Transmissivity—rate at which water is transmitted through a unit width of an aquifer under a unit of hydraulic gradient

Transpiration—process by which water passes through living plants and into the atmosphere

Trophic—in this usage, refers to amount of nutrients in a lake (for example, eutrophic, oligotrophic)

Unconfined (aquifer)—an aquifer whose upper surface is a water table free to fluctuate under atmospheric pressure

Valley train—a long, narrow body of outwash confined within a valley

Volatile organic chemical—a chemical compound composed mostly of carbon and hydrogen, that easily evaporates (for example, trichloroethylene, or TCE)

Water year—the 12-month period, October 1 to September 30, designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, water year 1984 is from October 1, 1983 to September 30, 1984