



Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and Vulnerability Assessment for Wood Creek Plaza Drinking Water System, North Pole, Alaska PWSID 311728

December 2003

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM REPORT Report 1273
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

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The Drinking Water Protection Program (DWPP) is producing Source Water Assessments in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996. Each assessment includes a delineation of the source water area, an inventory of potential and existing contaminant sources that may impact the water, a risk ranking for each of these contaminants, and an evaluation of the potential vulnerability of these drinking water sources.

These assessments are intended to provide public water systems owners/operators, communities, and local governments with the best available information that may be used to protect the quality of their drinking water. The assessments combine information obtained from various sources, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), public water system owners/operators, and other public information sources. The results of this assessment are subject to change if additional data becomes available. It is anticipated this assessment will be updated every five years to reflect any changes in the vulnerability and/or susceptibility of public drinking water source. If you have any additional information that may affect the results of this assessment, please contact the Program Coordinator of DWPP, (907) 269-7521.

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Source Water Assessment for Wood Creek Plaza Source of Public Drinking Water, North Pole, Alaska

Drinking Water Protection Program Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This source water assessment provides an evaluation of the vulnerability of the public water system serving the Wood Creek Plaza to potential contamination. This Class B (non-community) water system consists of one well on the corner of Badger Road and the New Richardson Highway in North Pole, Alaska. The well received a natural susceptibility rating of Medium. This rating is a combination of a susceptibility rating of Low for the actual wellhead and a High rating for the aquifer in which the well is drawing water from. Identified potential and current sources of contamination for the Wood Creek Plaza public water system include: septic systems, residential areas, fuel storage tanks, roads and closed Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites. These are considered as sources of bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals. Combining the natural susceptibility of the well with the contaminant risk, the public water system for Wood Creek Plaza received an overall vulnerability rating of **Medium** for volatile organic chemicals, and a Low for bacteria and viruses and nitrates and nitrites.

WOOD CREEK PLAZA PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Wood Creek Plaza public water system is a Class A (community) water system. The system consists of one well on the corner of Badger Road and the New Richardson Highway in North Pole, Alaska (T2S, R2E, Section 9) (See Map 1 of Appendix A). North Pole is located southeast of the town of Fairbanks which is located in the Fairbanks North Star Borough near the center of Alaska (Please see the inset of Map 1 in Appendix A for location). The Borough's current population is 82,840 making it the second-largest population center in the state (ADCED, 2002). Communities located within the Borough include: College, Eielson Air Force Base, Ester, Fairbanks, Fox, Harding Lake, Moose Creek, North Pole, Pleasant Valley, Salcha, and Two Rivers.

North Pole Utilities provides piped water and sewer collection to part of North Pole, other areas use individual wells and septic systems. Electricity for the city is provided by Golden Valley Electric Association. The majority of residents use heating oil (typically

stored in both above and below ground 275 to 500-gallon tanks) to heat homes and buildings. Garbage collection services are proved by the city, and refuse is transported to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Class I Landfill on South Cushman Street.

The Fairbanks area includes two distinct topographic areas: the alluvial plain between the Tanana River and the Chena River, and the uplands north of this alluvial plain. The Wood Creek Plaza water system is located in the alluvial plain at an elevation of approximately 475 feet above sea level.

According to 6/19/92 Sanitary Survey for this water system, the depth of the well is 60 feet below the ground surface. Most wells in this area are screened in sand and gravel and it is assumed this one is also. The alluvial plain consists of alternating layers of silt, sand and gravel up to over 500 feet thick, in some locations overlain by 1 to 10 feet of silt or sandy silt or a few feet of peat (Glass and others, 1996). Discontinuous permafrost (perennially frozen areas) is also common in the alluvial plain. The depth to permafrost in these areas ranges between 2 and 45 feet below the ground surface with the thickness of the permafrost ranging between 5 and 265 feet (Pewe, T.L. 1958. Geology of the Fairbanks (D-2) Quadrangle, Alaska. USGS). Areas with discontinuous permafrost may locally affect the ground water flow directions.

Primarily the Tanana River, but also the Chena River contribute water to this alluvial aquifer. The Chena River typically only contributes water when its stage is high and the Tanana is low (Nelson, 1978). The Tanana River gets approximately 85% of its water from snowmelt of the Alaska Range and 15% from the Yukon-Tanana uplands (Anderson, 1970).

This system serves less than 100 non-residents through four service connections.

WOOD CREEK PLAZA DRINKING WATER PROTECTION AREA

The pathways most likely for surface contamination to reach the groundwater are identified as the first step in determining a drinking water system's risk. These areas are determined by looking at the characteristics of the soil, groundwater, aquifer, and well.

The most probable area for contamination to reach the drinking water well is the area that contributes water to

the well, the groundwater capture zone. The groundwater capture zone is located in the area circling the well (the area influenced by pumping) and also the area of the water table upgradient of the well, usually forming a parabola shape.

There are many different ways of calculating the size of capture zones. This assessment uses a combination of two simple groundwater flow equations, the Thiem and uniform flow equations for all groundwater wells screened in unconsolidated material. The orientation of the capture zone is then drawn using a water table elevation map (if available) or a land surface elevation map of the area. The capture zone calculated in this assessment is only a best guess using the information and resources available to us, and may differ slightly from the actual capture zone.

The parameters used to calculate the shape of this capture zone are general for the whole alluvial plain and were obtained from various United State Geological Survey (USGS) reports, well logs in the area, and the Groundwater textbook by Freeze and Cherry (Freeze and Cherry, 1979).

The water table in the area of the Wood Creek Plaza, the area between the Tanana and the Chena Rivers, is primarily influenced by the level of water flow in each river. The capture zones were drawn based on three separate configurations of the water table during various stages of the rivers: a period of high stage in the Chena River (October 14-17, 1986), high stage in the Tanana River (July 16-17, 1987), and low stages in both rivers (March 30-April 3, 1988) (Glass and others, 1996). High water levels in the Chena usually occur in the spring due to runoff from the uplands and in late summer due to rainstorms (Nelson, 1978). The Tanana usually experiences high flow during the hot, dry periods of mid-summer when maximum snowmelt from the Alaska Range occurs (Nelson, 1978). Groundwater in this area generally flows toward the northwest, from the Tanana River to the Chena River, however flow is reversed very near the Chena River during its high stage periods (Glass and others, 1996). These flow reversals are of short duration (i.e. days versus months) and of limited extent, generally within 1000 feet of the river (Nakanishi, et all, 1998).

Because of uncertainties and changing site conditions, a factor of safety is added to the groundwater capture zone to form the drinking water protection area for the well.

The protection areas established for wells are usually separated into four zones, limited by the watershed. These zones correspond to times-of-travel (TOT) of the water moving through the aquifer to the well (plus the factor of safety).

The following is a summary of the four zones for wells and the calculated time-of-travel for each:

Table 1. Definition of Zones

Zone	Definition								
A	¹ / ₄ the distance for the 2-yr. time-of-travel								
В	Less than 2 years time-of-travel								
C	Less than 5 years time-of-travel								
D	Less than 10 years time-of-travel								

The time of travel for contaminants within the water varies with their unique physical and chemical characteristics.

The drinking water protection area outlined for the Wood Creek Plaza on Map 1 of Appendix A will serve as the focus for voluntary protection efforts.

INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL AND EXISTING CONTAMINANT SOURCES

The Drinking Water Protection Program (DWPP) has completed an inventory of potential and existing sources of contamination within the Wood Creek Plaza protection area. This inventory was completed through a search of agency records and other publicly available information. Potential drinking water contaminants are found within agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial areas, but can also occur within areas that have little or no development.

For the basis of all Class B public water system assessments, three categories of drinking water contaminants were inventoried. They include:

- Bacteria and viruses;
- Nitrates and/or nitrites; and
- Volatile organic chemicals;

The sources are displayed on Map 2 of Appendix C and summarized in Table 1 of Appendix B.

RANKING OF CONTAMINANT RISKS

Once the potential and existing sources of contamination have been identified, they are each assigned a ranking according to what type and level of risk they represent. Ranking of contaminant risks for a "potential" or "existing" source of contamination is a combination of toxicity and volume associated with that source. Rankings include:

- Low;
- Medium;
- High; and
- Very High.

Bacteria and Viruses are only inventoried in Zones A and B because of their short life span. Only "Very High" and "High" rankings are inventoried within the outer Zone D due to the probability of contaminant dilution by the time the contaminants get to the well.

Tables 2 through 4 in Appendix B contain the ranking of inventoried potential and existing sources of contamination with respect to the six contaminant categories.

VULNERABILITY OF WOOD CREEK PLAZA DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Vulnerability of a drinking water source to contamination is a combination of two factors:

- Natural susceptibility; and
- Contaminant risks.

Appendix D contains eight charts, which together form the 'Vulnerability Analysis' for a source water assessment for a public drinking water source. Chart 1 analyzes the 'Susceptibility of the Wellhead' to contamination by looking at the construction of the well and its surrounding area. Chart 2 analyzes the 'Susceptibility of the Aquifer' to contamination by looking at the properties of the aquifer and the presence of other wells or boreholes in the area. Chart 3 analyzes 'Contaminant Risks' for the drinking water source with respect to Bacteria and Viruses. The 'Contaminant Risks' portion of the analysis considers potential sources of contaminants as well as a review of the water system's contaminant sample results. Lastly, Chart 4 combines the results of the first three charts to produce the 'Vulnerability Analysis for Bacteria and Viruses'. Charts 5 through 7 contain the Contaminant Risks and Vulnerability Analyses for nitrates and nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals, respectively.

A score for the Natural Susceptibility is reached by considering the properties of the well and the aquifer.

Susceptibility of the Wellhead (0 – 25 Points) (Chart 1 of Appendix D)

+

Susceptibility of the Aquifer (0-25 Points)(Chart 2 of Appendix D)

=

Natural Susceptibility (Susceptibility of the Well) (0-50 Points)

A ranking is assigned for the Natural Susceptibility according to the point score:

Natural Susceptibility Ratings							
40 to 50 pts	Very High						
30 to < 40 pts	High						
20 to < 30 pts	Medium						
< 20 pts	Low						

The wellhead for the Wood Creek Plaza received a Low Susceptibility rating. The 10/4/99 Sanitary Survey indicates the well is capped with a sanitary seal, the land surface is sloped away from the well; however, the well is not grouted. A sanitary seal prevents potential contaminants from entering the well from the inside while sloping the land surface away from the well and grouting help to prevent potential contaminants from traveling down the outside of the well casing.

The aquifer in the area the Wood Creek Plaza well is completed in received a High Susceptibility rating. The highly transmissive aquifer material (sand and gravel) in the area allows contaminants to travel downward from the surface with the precipitation and surface water runoff. The shallow water table allows potential contaminants to come into contact with the water table with little natural filtering where they can disperse quickly. Additionally, wells in the area can provide a quick pathway for contaminants to reach the aquifer. Table 2 summarizes the Susceptibility scores and ratings for Wood Creek Plaza.

Table 2. Susceptibility

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the	5	Low
Wellhead		
Susceptibility of the	18	High
Aquifer		
Natural Susceptibility	23	Medium

The Contaminant Risk has been derived from an evaluation of the routine sampling results of the water system and the presence of potential sources of contamination. Contaminant risks to a drinking water source depend on the type and distribution of contaminant sources. Flow charts are used to assign a point score, and ratings are assigned in the same way as for the natural susceptibility:

Contaminant Risk Ratings							
40 to 50 pts	Very High						
30 to < 40 pts	High						
20 to < 30 pts	Medium						
< 20 pts	Low						

Table 3 summarizes the Contaminant Risks for each category of drinking water contaminants.

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	11	Low
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	11	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	30	High

Finally, an overall vulnerability score is assigned for each water system by combining each of the contaminant risk scores with the natural susceptibility score:

Vulnerability of the Drinking Water Source to Contamination (0 - 100).

Again, rankings are assigned according to a point score:

Overall Vulnerability Ratings								
80 to 100 pts	Very High							
60 to < 80 pts	High							
40 to < 60 pts	Medium							
< 40 pts	Low							

Table 4 contains the overall vulnerability scores (0 – 100) and ratings for each of the six categories of drinking water contaminants. Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	35	Low
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	35	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	55	Medium

Bacteria and Viruses

The residential septic systems in Zone A represent the greatest risk of Bacteria and Viruses to this water system.

Only a small amount of bacteria and viruses are required to endanger public health. Coli forms are found naturally in the environment and although they aren't necessarily a health threat, it is an indicator of other potentially harmful bacteria in the water, more specifically, fecal coli forms and E. coli which only come from human and animal fecal waste (EPA, 2002). Harmful bacteria can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms (EPA, 2002). Routine sampling detected coli forms in the water on 6/11/01 (verified on 6/26/01). Fecal coliforms and E. Coli have not been detected.

After combining the contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is low.

Nitrates and Nitrites

The residential septic systems in Zone A also represent the greatest risk to to nitrates and nitrites for this source of public drinking water.

Nitrates are very mobile, moving at approximately the same rate as water. Nitrates have not been detected in recent sampling history for the Wood Creek Plaza well.

After combining the contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is low.

Volatile Organic Chemicals

The residential heating oil tanks represent the greatest risk for volatile organic chemical contamination to the well.

Both underground and above ground heating oil storage tanks are the standard way of heating homes and businesses in the area surrounding Fairbanks. The most common causes of fuel leaks of these heating oil systems are overfilling the tank, ruptured fuel lines, leaking storage tanks, damaged or faulty valves and vandalism. Regular system maintenance can help prevent many of these harmful fuel leaks.

There are also two Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites (File Number 100.26.031) that are now closed, one in 1992 and the other in 1994.

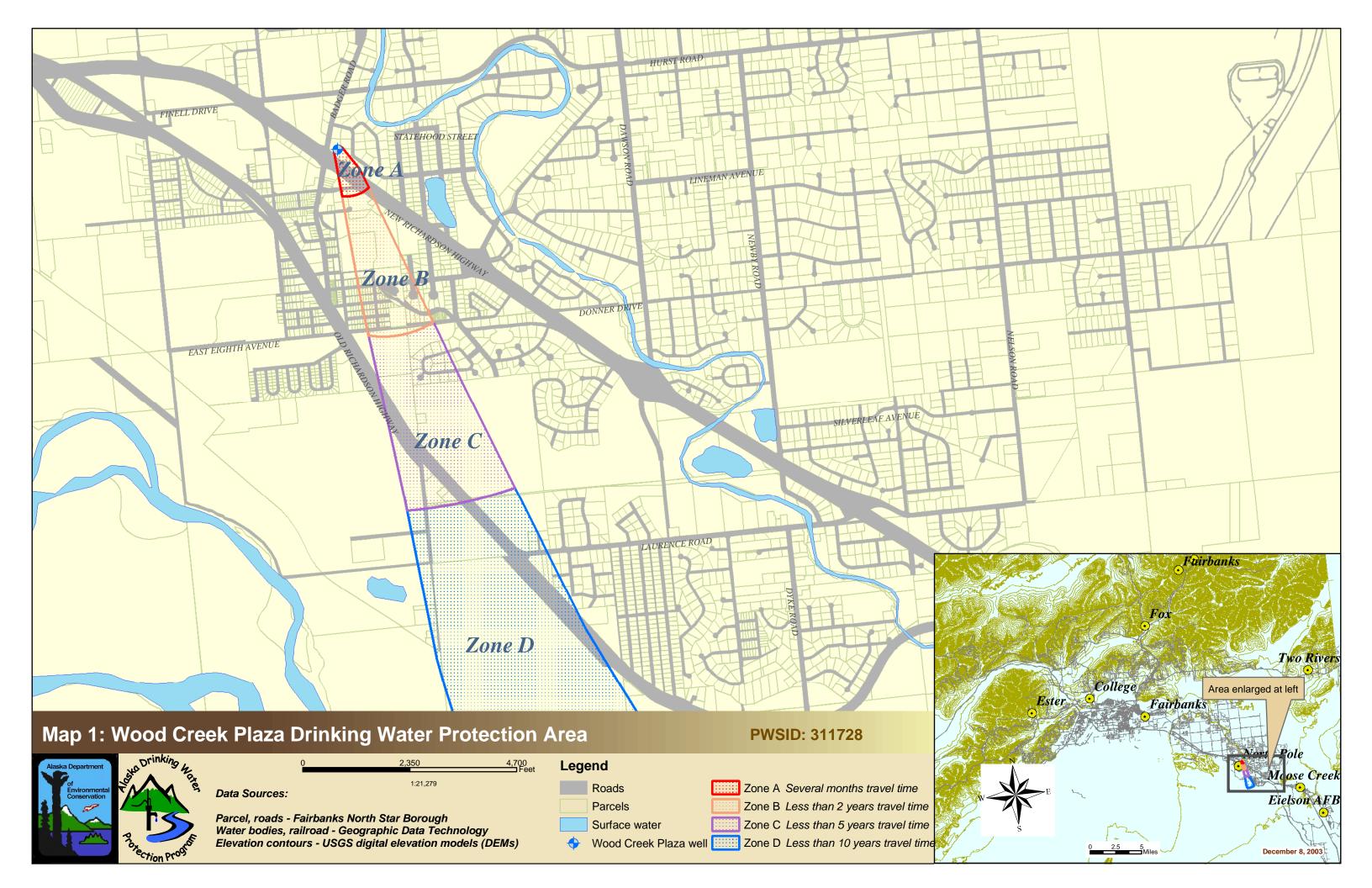
Volatile Organic Chemicals have not been sampled for in this water system. After combining the contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is medium.

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- Nelson, Gordon L., 1978, Hydrologic Information for Land-Use Planning, Fairbanks Vicinity, Alaska. US Department of the Interior Geological Survey Open File Report 78-959, 47p.
- Pewe, T. L., 1958, Geologic map of the Fairbanks D-2 quadrangle, Alaska: U.S. Geol. Survey Geol. Quad. Map GQ-110, scale 1:63,360.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2002 [WWW document]. URL http://www.epa.gov/safewater/mcl.html.

APPENDIX A

Wood Creek Plaza Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map 1)



APPENDIX B

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Wood Creek Plaza (Tables 1-4)

Contaminant Source Inventory for Wood Creek Plaza / 7-11

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Map Number	Comments
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		A	2	Assumed 2 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08	<u> </u>	A	2	Assumed 2 tanks based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		A	2	New Richardson Hwy; Park Way
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		В	2	Assumed 33 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08		В	2	Assumed 33 tanks based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		В	2	5 roads in Zone B
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		С	2	Assumed 14 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08		С	2	Assumed 14 tanks based on number of parcels designated as residential
Closed Leaking Underground Fuel Storage Tank (LUST) Sites	U08	U08-1	С	2	306 E 8th Ave; FNSB North Pole Middle School; File Number 100.26.080
Closed Leaking Underground Fuel Storage Tank (LUST) Sites	U08	U08-2	С	2	300 E 8th Ave; FNSB - Wescott Pool
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		C	2	3 roads in Zone C

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Wood Creek Plaza / 7-11 Sources of Bacteria and Viruses

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		A	Low	2	New Richardson Hwy; Park Way
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		A	Low	2	Assumed 2 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		В	Low	2	5 roads in Zone B
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		В	Low	2	Assumed 33 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		С	Low	2	Assumed 14 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		C	Low	2	3 roads in Zone C

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Wood Creek Plaza / 7-11 Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites

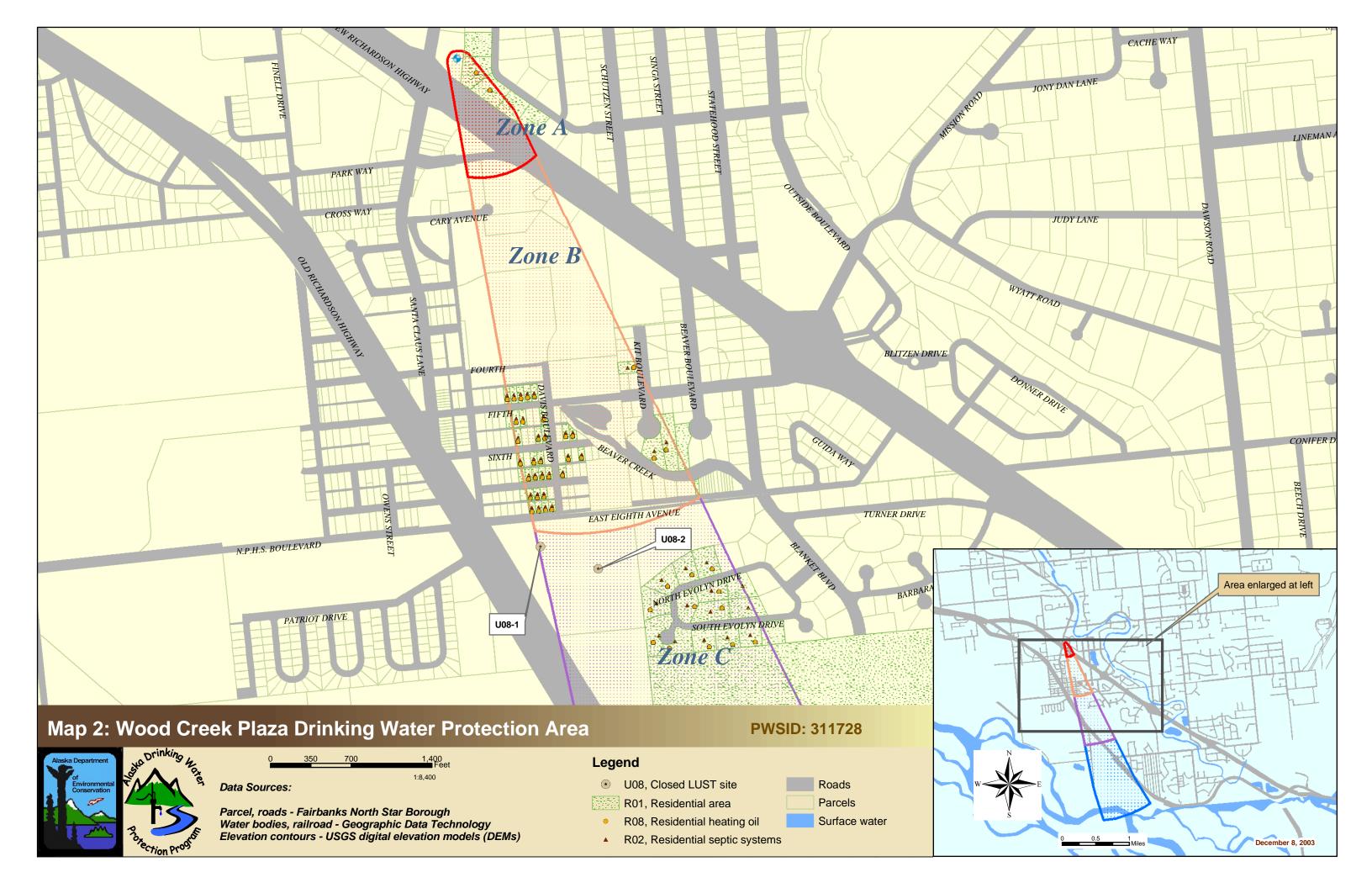
Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		A	Low	2	Assumed 2 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		A	Low	2	New Richardson Hwy; Park Way
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		В	Low	2	5 roads in Zone B
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		В	Low	2	Assumed 33 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		C	Low	2	Assumed 14 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		C	Low	2	3 roads in Zone C

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Wood Creek Plaza / 7-11 Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Risk Ranking for Analysis	Map Number	Comments
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08		A	Medium	2	Assumed 2 tanks based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		A	Low	2	New Richardson Hwy; Park Way
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		A	Low	2	Assumed 2 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		В	Low	2	5 roads in Zone B
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08		В	Medium	2	Assumed 33 tanks based on number of parcels designated as residential
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		В	Low	2	Assumed 33 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20		С	Low	2	3 roads in Zone C
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02		С	Low	2	Assumed 14 septics based on number of parcels designated as residential
Tanks, heating oil, residential (above ground)	R08		С	Medium	2	Assumed 14 tanks based on number of parcels designated as residential

APPENDIX C

Wood Creek Plaza
Drinking Water Protection Area
and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources
(Map 2)



APPENDIX D

Vulnerability Analysis for Wood Creek Plaza Public Drinking Water Source (Charts 1-8)

Chart 1. Susceptibility of the wellhead - Wood Creek Plaza

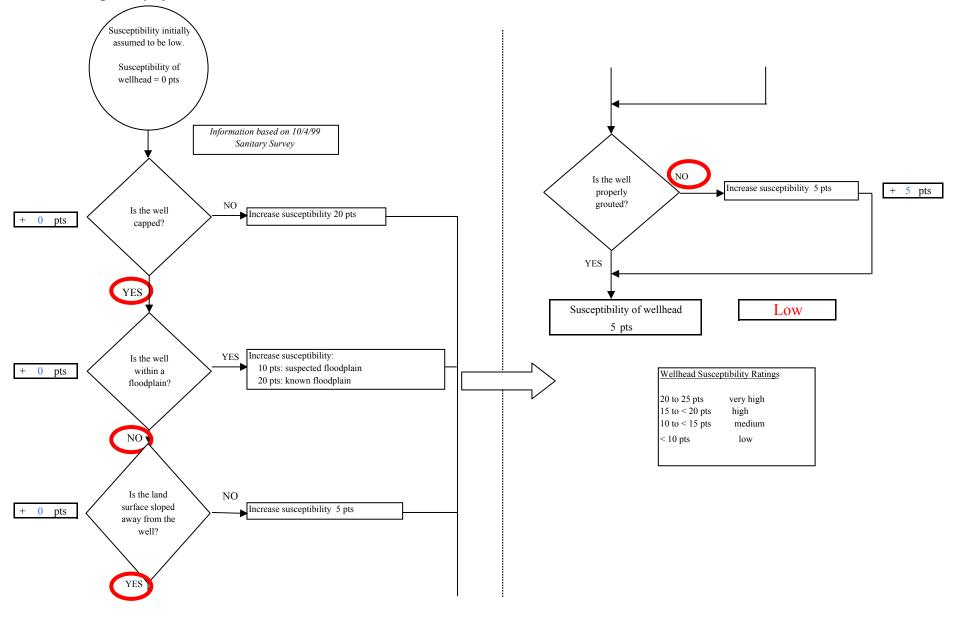


Chart 2. Susceptibility of the aquifer - Wood Creek Plaza

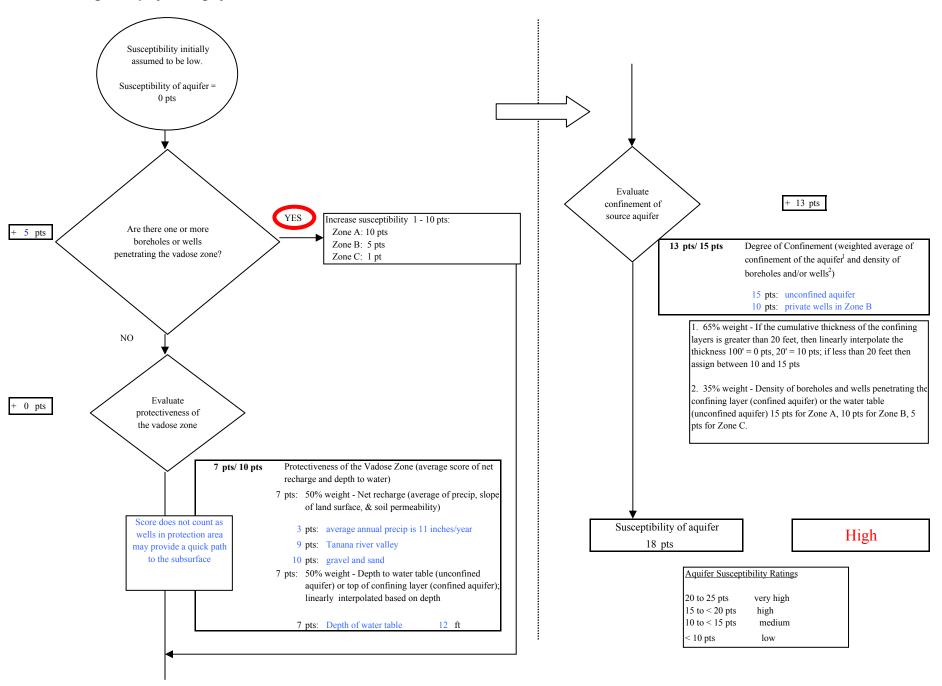
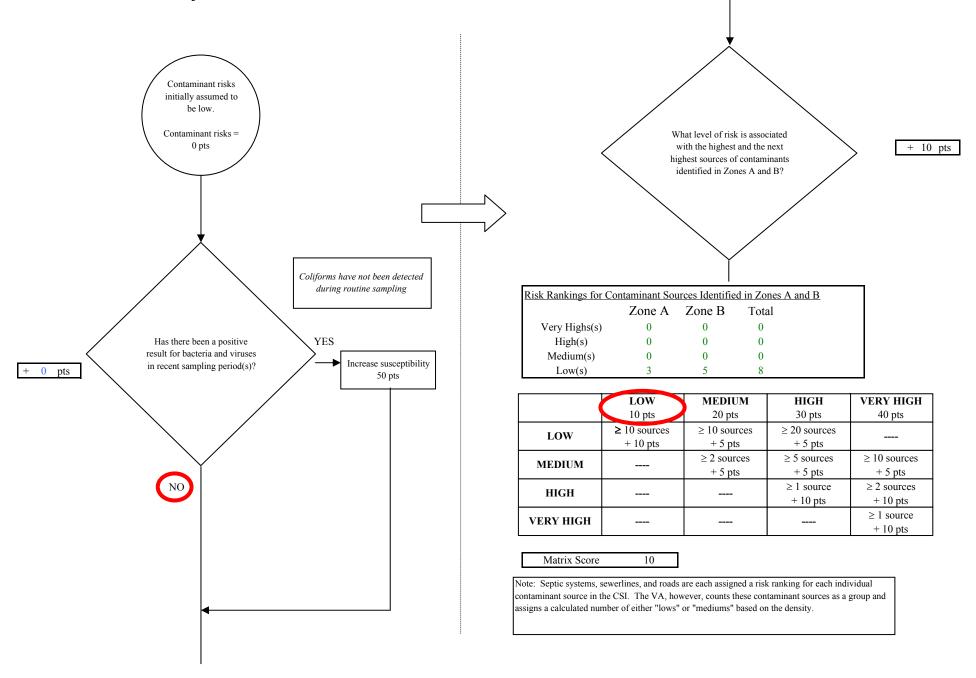
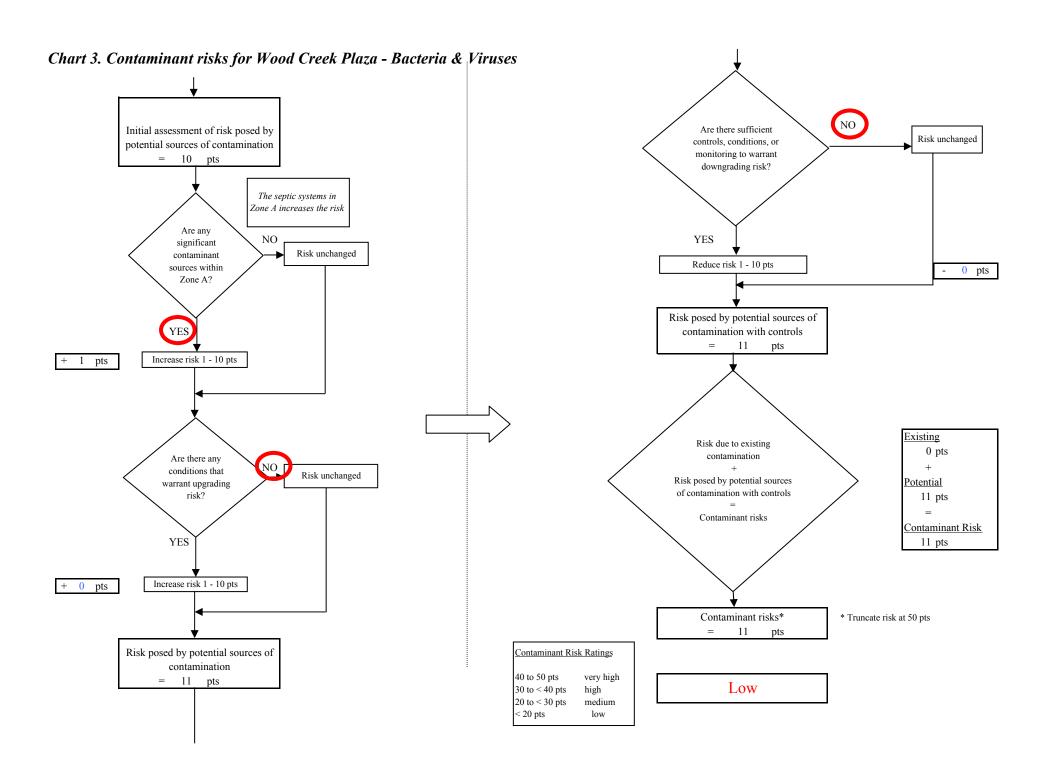
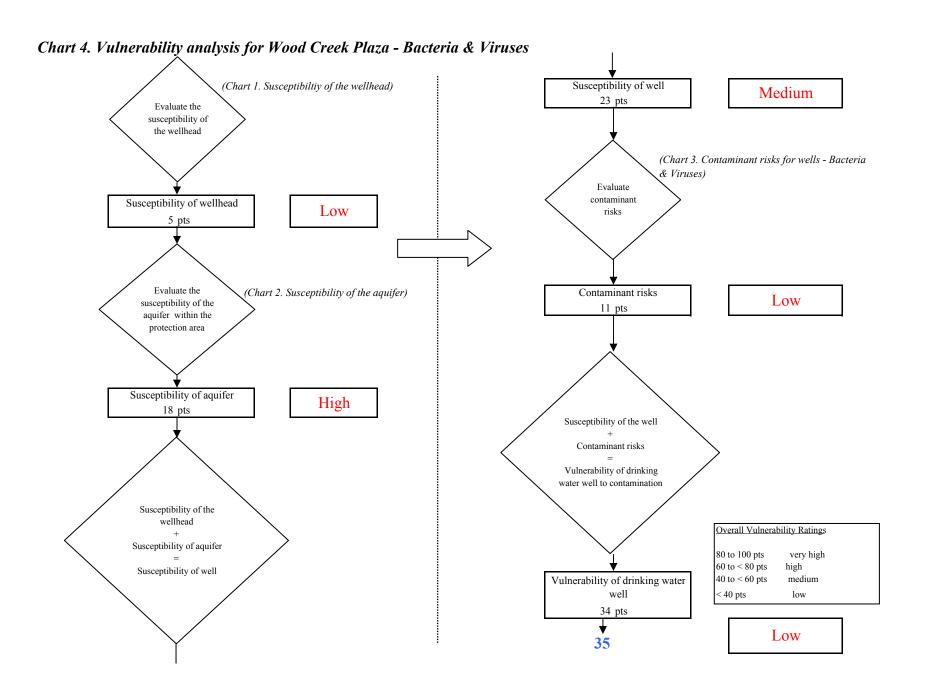


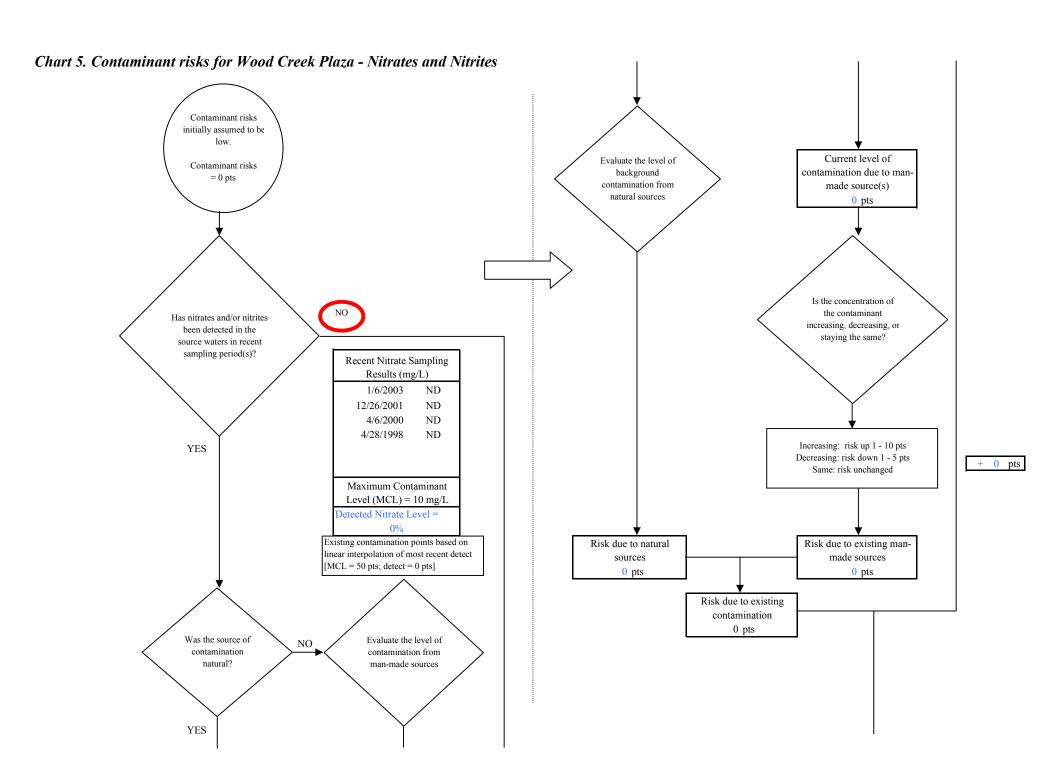
Chart 3. Contaminant risks for Wood Creek Plaza - Bacteria & Viruses





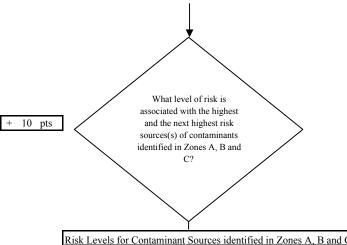
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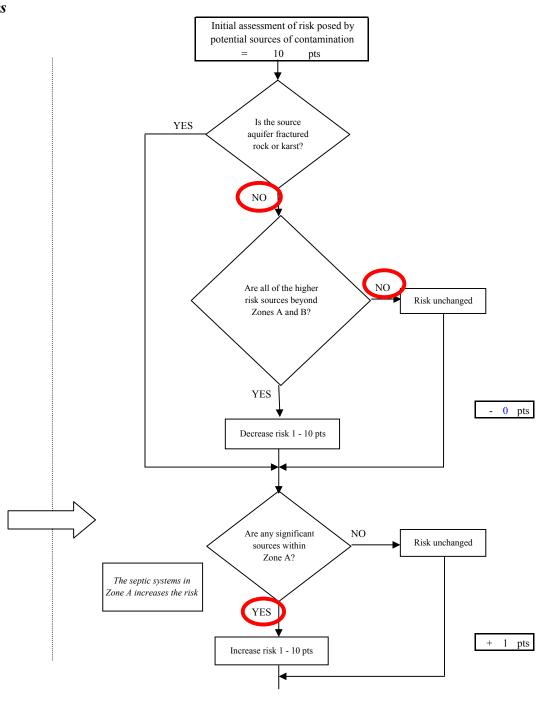
Chart 5. Contaminant risks for Wood Creek Plaza - Nitrates and Nitrites

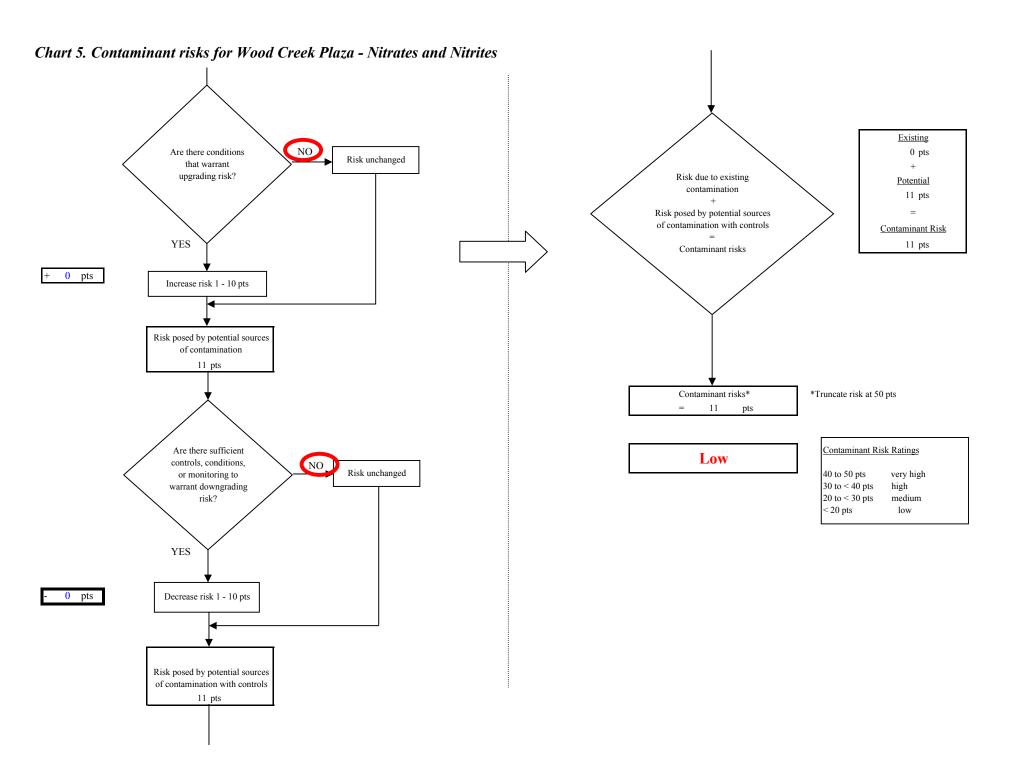


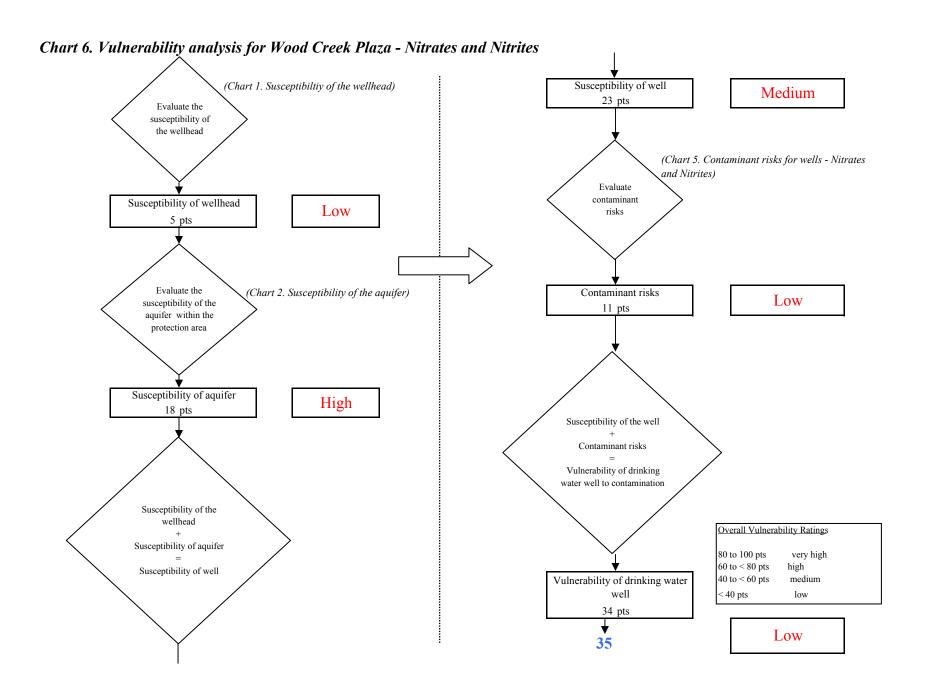
isk Levels for Contami	Levels for Contaminant Sources identified in Zones A, B and C			
	Zone A	Zones B&C	Total	
Very Highs(s)	0	0	0	
High(s)	0	0	0	
Medium(s)	0	0	0	
Low(s)	3	6	9	

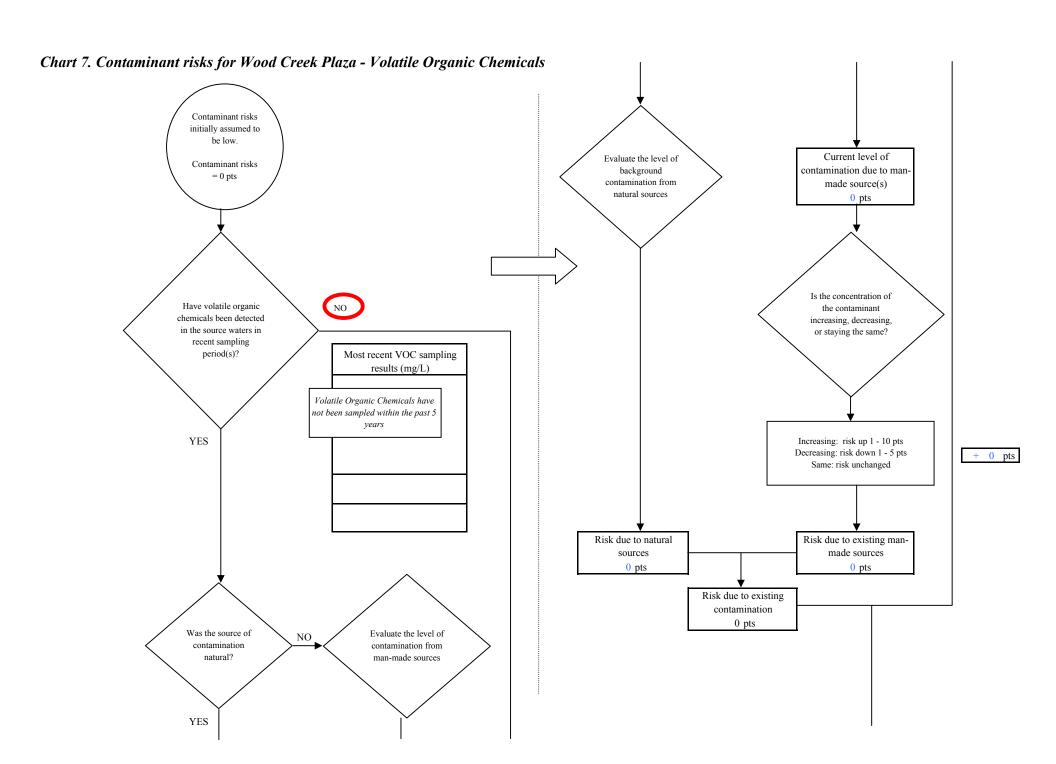
	LOW 10 pts	MEDIUM 20 pts	HIGH 30 pts	VERY HIGH 40 pts
LOW	≥ 10 sources + 10 pts	≥ 10 sources + 5 pts	≥ 20 sources + 5 pts	
MEDIUM		≥ 2 sources + 5 pts	≥ 5 sources + 5 pts	≥ 10 sources + 5 pts
HIGH			≥ 1 source + 10 pts	≥ 2 sources + 10 pts
VERY HIGH				≥ 1 source + 10 pts

Note: Septic systems, sewerlines, and roads are each assigned a risk ranking for each individual contaminant source in the CSI. The VA, however, counts these contaminant sources as a group and assigns a calculated number of either "lows" or "mediums" based on the density.



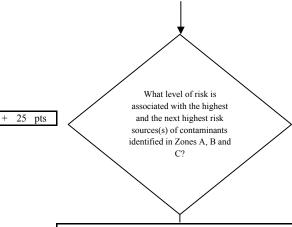






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Chart 7. Contaminant risks for Wood Creek Plaza - Volatile Organic Chemicals

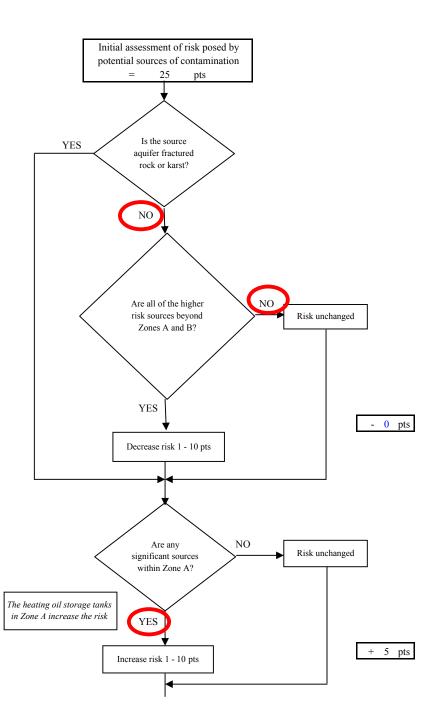


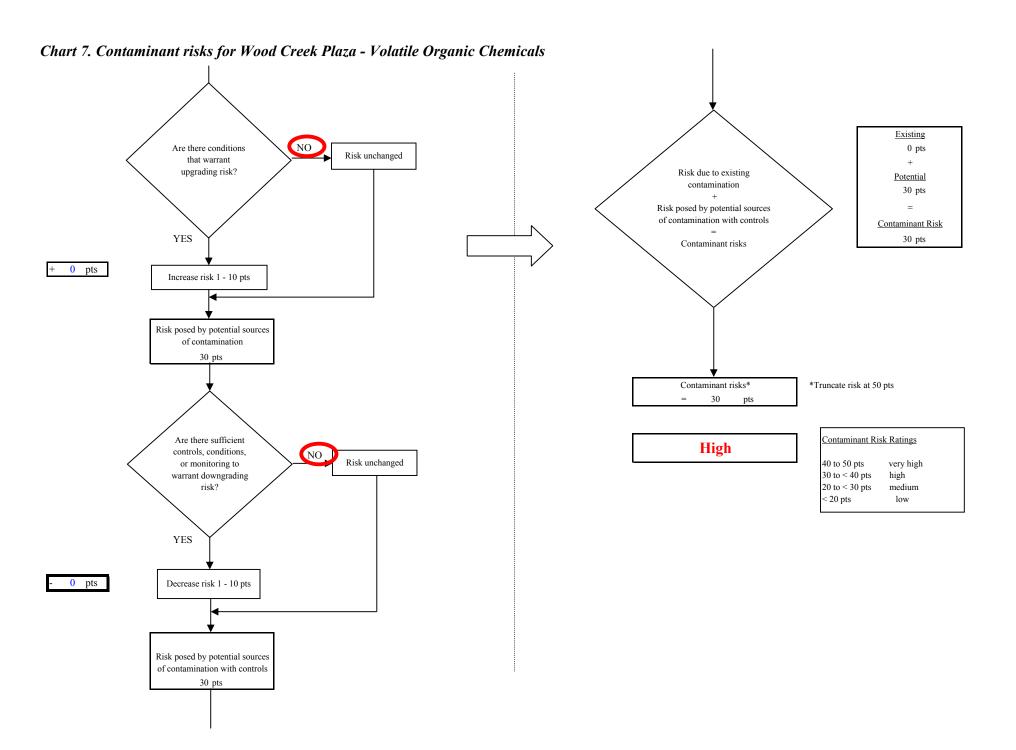
Risk Levels for Contaminant Sources identified in Zones A, B and C				
	Zone A	Zones B&C	Total	
Very Highs(s)	0	0	0	
High(s)	0	0	0	
Medium(s)	3	49	52	
Low(s)	2	2	4	

	LOW 10 pts	MEDIUM 20 pts	HIGH 30 pts	VERY HIGH 40 pts
LOW	≥ 10 sources + 10 pts	≥ 10 sources + 5 pts	≥ 20 sources + 5 pts	
MEDIUM		≥ 2 sources + 5 pts	≥ 5 sources + 5 pts	≥ 10 sources + 5 pts
HIGH			≥ 1 source + 10 pts	≥ 2 sources + 10 pts
VERY HIGH				≥ 1 source + 10 pts

Matrix Score	25
	Matrix Score

Note: Septic systems, sewerlines, and roads are each assigned a risk ranking for each individual contaminant source in the CSI. The VA, however, counts these contaminant sources as a group and assigns a calculated number of either "lows" or "mediums" based on the density.





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