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# Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and  
Vulnerability Assessment for  
USFWS Swanson River Campground  
Drinking Water System,  
Soldotna, Alaska

USFWS Swanson River Campground  
PWSID # 241208.001

June 23, 2003

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM REPORT 486  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

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DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM REPORT 486

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 USFWS Swanson River Campground Source of Public Drinking Water, Soldotna, Alaska

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## Drinking Water Protection Program Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for the USFWS Swanson River Campground is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of one well. USFWS Swanson River Campground is located seventeen miles north of the Sterling Highway on Swanson River Road, Soldotna, Alaska. The wellhead received a susceptibility rating of **Low** and the aquifer received a susceptibility rating of **Medium**. Combining these two ratings produces a **Low** rating for the natural susceptibility of the well. Identified potential and current sources of contaminants for the USFWS Swanson River Campground public drinking water source include: pit toilets, RV dump stations, campgrounds and RV parks, and highways and roads. These identified potential and existing sources of contamination are considered as sources of bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals. Overall, the public water source for the USFWS Swanson River Campground received a vulnerability rating of **Low** for bacteria and viruses, a vulnerability rating of **Low** for nitrates and nitrites, and a vulnerability of **Low** for volatile organic compounds.

### USFWS SWANSON RIVER CAMPGROUND PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

The USFWS Swanson River Campground public water system (PWS) is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of one well located seventeen miles north of the Sterling Highway on Swanson River Road, Soldotna, Alaska (T08N, R09W, Section 01) (See Map 1 of Appendix A). Soldotna is part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough, which is located directly south of the city of Anchorage (Please see the inset of Map 1 in Appendix A for location). The borough encompasses 25,600 square miles, of which only 15,700 square miles is land.

The Kenai Peninsula is broken into two distinct geographic areas; the Kenai Mountains and the Kenai Lowlands. Soldotna and its surrounding communities are located in the Kenai Lowlands.

Communities located within the Kenai Lowlands include Sterling, Soldotna, Kenai, Nikiski, Clam Gulch, Ninilchik, and Homer.

The Kenai Peninsula area topography varies from about 3,000 feet to 5,000 feet above sea level in the Kenai Mountains, the highest point being about 6,400 feet above sea level. The Kenai Peninsula is dotted with many lakes and small streams, including three large lakes (Kenai Lake, Skilak Lake, and Tustumena Lake) and two substantial rivers (Kenai River, and Kasilof River) (USGS 1915).

The USFWS Swanson River Campground water system is located within the Kenai Lowlands, which is a sub-province of the Cook Inlet-Susitna Lowland physiographic region. The Kenai Lowland is a glaciated coastal shelf situated west of the northeast-trending Kenai Mountains. Approximately 100 miles long, the coastal shelf is bordered on the west by Cook Inlet, on the east by Kenai Mountains, on the north by Turnagain Arm, and on the south by the Caribou Hills and Kachemak Bay. The following summary of regional geology and hydrogeology is based on studies by Bailey and Hogan (1995); Freethey and Scully (1980); Glass (1996); Hartman, et al. (1972); and Karlstrom (1964).

The Kenai Lowland is underlain by bedrock. Tertiary sedimentary bedrock is more than 500 feet below the city of Kenai airport, but is exposed along beach cliffs and road cuts near the southwest end of the lowland. Unconsolidated surficial deposits of Quaternary age include coastal deposits, glaciolacustrine deposits, glaciofluvial deposits, glacial moraine deposits, and periglacial wind deposits. Unconsolidated Quaternary cover on the lowlands generally thickens from south to North being thin or absent in the Homer area, and over 750 feet thick near Nikiski.

The most significant groundwater resources of the Kenai Lowlands are contained in Quaternary coarse-grained sands and gravels. Flood plain, river terrace and other alluvial deposits are common aquifer materials in the area, and are characterized by high rates of recharge, and large saturated thicknesses.

Other favorable materials include proglacial lake and associated river deposits and glacial outwash deposits consisting of meltwater sorted sand and gravel material. Unsorted glacial moraine and drift deposits generally have poor groundwater yields, as do discontinuous layers of confining clays and silt that are common throughout the unconsolidated materials. The relatively thicker sequence of unconsolidated sediments in the northern portions of the Kenai Lowlands locally hosts thicker, more extensive clay aquitards and multiple aquifers.

The Kenai Peninsula area has a central water system, however, many homes and businesses in the area rely on individual wells for their water supply. Most of these wells are deep with depths between 50 and 200 feet. Static water levels in many of these wells are between 10 and 30 feet below the surface. Although groundwater quality can vary significantly in short distance, groundwater supplies are abundant in the area.

According to information supplied by ADEC, the depth of the the USFWS Swanson River Campground PWS is 75 feet below ground surface (bgs), and is screened in a confined aquifer based on available well construction details. The thickness of the confining layer (clay) is approximately 19 feet. The well is screened in glacial outwash primarily composed of clay, and the static water level is approximately 7 feet bgs. The well is not located in a floodplain.

The Sanitary Survey (06/21/99) for the water system indicated that the land is sloped away from the well providing adequate surface water drainage. The well is not grouted according to ADEC regulations. Proper grouting provides added protection against contaminants traveling down the annulus along the well casing and into source waters.

This system operates year round and serves up to 30 non-residents through one service connection.

**USFWS SWANSON RIVER CAMPGROUND DRINKING WATER PROTECTION AREA**

In order to evaluate whether a drinking water source is at risk, we must first evaluate what are the most likely pathways for surface contamination to reach the groundwater. 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 recharge area. This area is designated as the drinking water protection area (DWPA). Because releases of contaminants within the protection area are most likely to impact the drinking water well, this area will serve as the focus for voluntary protection efforts.

An analytical calculation was used to determine the size and shape of the DWPA for the USFWS Swanson River Campground. The input parameters describing the attributes of the aquifer in this calculation were adopted from Groundwater (*Freeze and Cherry 1979*). Available geology and groundwater contours were also considered to take into account any uncertainties in groundwater flow and aquifer characteristics to arrive at a meaningful protection area.

The protection areas established for wells by the ADEC are usually separated into four zones, limited by the watershed. These zones correspond to differences in the time-of-travel (TOT) of the water moving through the aquifer to the well (Please refer to the Guidance Manual for Class B Public Water Systems for additional information).

The time of travel for contaminants within the water varies and is dependent on the physical and chemical characteristics of each contaminant. The following is a summary of the four protection area zones for wells and the calculated time-of-travel for each:

**Table 1. Definition of Zones**

Zone	Definition
A	¼ the distance for the 2-yr. time-of-travel
B	Less than the 2 year time-of-travel
C	Less Than the 5 year time-of-travel
D	Less than the 10 year time-of-travel

The DWPA for the USFWS Swanson River Campground was determined using an analytical calculation and includes Zone A, B, C, and D (See Map 1 of Appendix A).

**INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL AND EXISTING CONTAMINANT SOURCES**

The Drinking Water Protection Program has completed an inventory of potential and existing sources of contamination within the USFWS Swanson River Campground DWPA. This inventory was completed through a search of agency records and other publicly available information. Potential sources of contamination to the drinking water aquifer include a wide range of categories and types. 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;
- Volatile organic chemicals

The sources are displayed on Map 1 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 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 function of toxicity and volumes of specific contaminants associated with that source. Rankings include:

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

The time-of-travel for contaminants within the water varies and is dependent on the physical and chemical characteristics of each contaminant. 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 potential and existing sources of contamination with respect to bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals.

**VULNERABILITY OF THE USFWS SWANSON RIVER CAMPGROUND 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 naturally occurring attributes of the water source and influences on the groundwater system that might lead to contamination. 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 contamination that has or may have occurred, but has not arrived or been detected at the well. Lastly, Chart 4 contains the ‘Vulnerability Analysis for Bacteria and Viruses’. Charts 5 through 8 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 well for USFWS Swanson River Campground is completed in a confined aquifer. Confined aquifers are less susceptible to potential groundwater quality impacts posed by the migration of surface water contaminants downward from the surface. Table 2 shows the Susceptibility scores and ratings for USFWS Swanson River Campground.

**Table 2. Susceptibility**

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the Wellhead	5	Low
Susceptibility of the Aquifer	14	Medium
Natural Susceptibility	19	Low

Contaminant risks to a drinking water source depend on the type, number or density, and distribution of contaminant sources. This score has been derived from an examination of existing and historical contamination that has been detected at the drinking water source through routine sampling. It also evaluates potential sources of contamination. 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	12	Low
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	16	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	10	Low

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

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Natural Susceptibility (0 – 50 points)} \\
 + \\
 \text{Contaminant Risks (0 – 50 points)} \\
 = \\
 \text{Vulnerability of the} \\
 \text{Drinking Water Source to Contamination (0 – 100)}.
 \end{array}$$

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 three categories of drinking water contaminants. Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

**Table 4. Overall Vulnerability**

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	30	Low
Nitrates and Nitrites	35	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	30	Low

#### Bacteria and Viruses

The contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses is Low. The risk is primarily attributed to the lack of potential and inventoried contaminant sources present in Zones A and B, representing the risk to the drinking water well (See Chart 3 – Contaminant Risks for Bacteria and Viruses in Appendix D).

Only a small amount of bacteria and viruses are required to endanger public health. Bacteria and viruses have not been detected during recent water sampling of the system at USFWS Swanson River Campground. 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 contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites is Low. The risk to this source of public drinking water is attributed to the lack of potential and inventoried contaminant sources present in Zones A, B, C and D, and reported nitrate concentrations from recent sampling events (See Chart 5 - Contaminant Risks for Nitrates and/or Nitrites in Appendix D). Nitrates are very mobile, moving at approximately the same rate as water.

Sampling history for the USFWS Swanson River Campground well indicates that a nitrate concentration of 1.2 milligrams per liter (mg/L) was

detected in 1996. The reported nitrate concentration suggests that the nitrate concentration is attributed to natural sources. Nitrate concentrations in uncontaminated groundwater are typically less than 2 mg/L, therefore, nitrate concentrations above 2 mg/L may be indicative of man-made sources. The nitrate concentration from the most recent sampling event is 12% (1.2 mg/L) of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 10 mg/L. The MCL is the maximum level of contaminant that is allowed to exist in drinking water and still be consumed by humans without harmful health effects. Though existing nitrate contamination was detected at the site, recent data indicates that nitrate concentrations are safe with respect to human health.

Nitrate levels are often derived from the decomposition of organic matter in soils. Although the nitrate source is unknown, and recent sampling data indicates that no bacteria are present, such occurrences may be attributed to septic systems or other sources. After combining the contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to nitrate and nitrite contamination is **Low**.

### **Volatile Organic Chemicals**

The contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals is Low. The risk is primarily attributed to the lack of potential and inventoried contaminant sources present in Zones A, B, C and D (See Chart 7 – Contaminant Risks for Volatile Organic Chemicals in Appendix D).

The drinking water at USFWS Swanson River Campground has not been sampled for volatile organic chemicals. 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 **Low**.



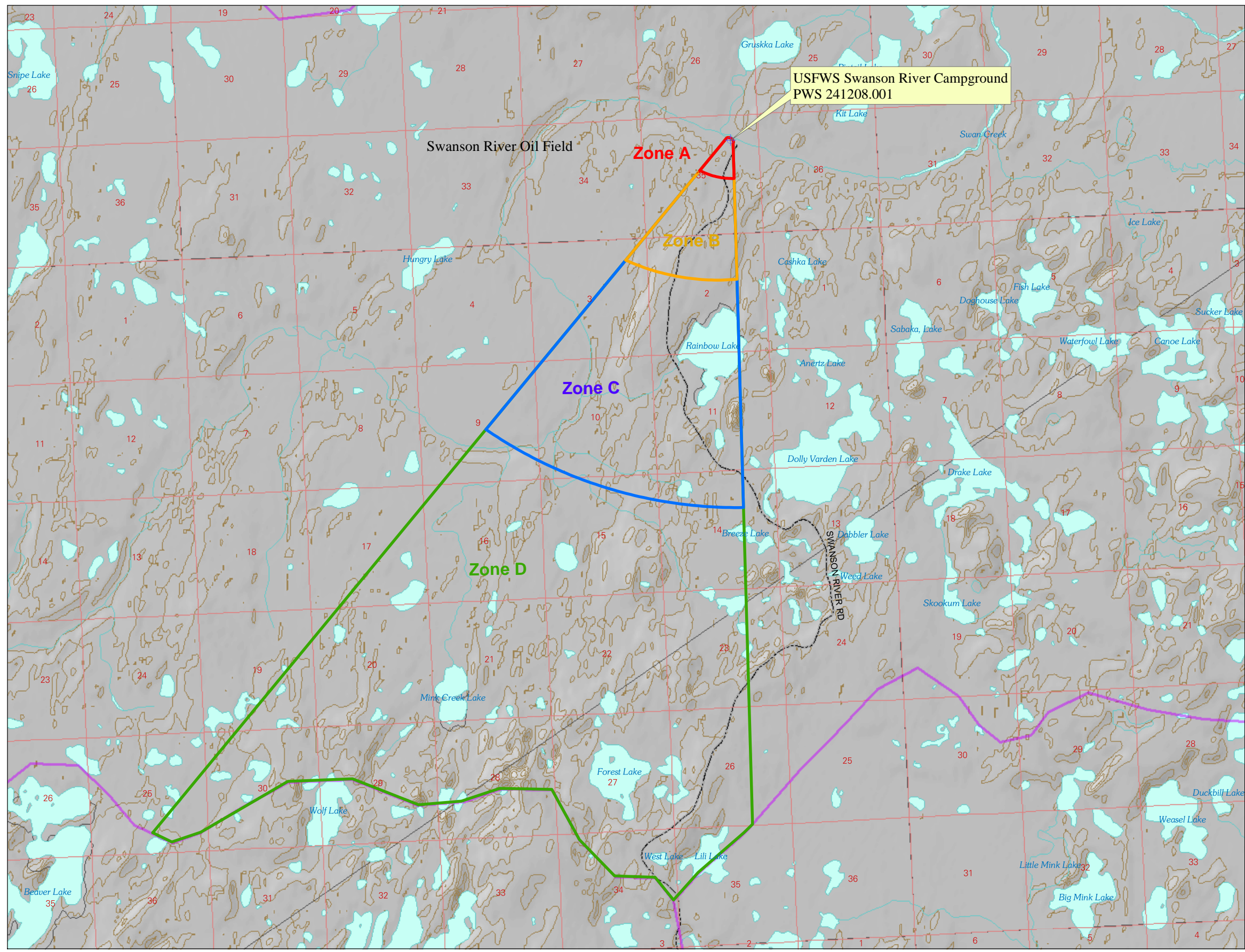
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## **APPENDIX A**

### **USFWS Swanson River Campground Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map 1)**

# Drinking Water Protection Areas for the Public Water Well System for PWS #241208.001 USFWS Swanson River Campground



## LEGEND

- Public Water System Well
- Groundwater Protection Zones**
  - Zone A – Several Months Travel Time
  - Zone B – Less Than 2 Years Travel Time
  - Zone C – Less Than 5 Years Travel Time
  - Zone D – Less Than 10 Years Travel Time
  - Watershed Boundary
- Hydrography/Physical**
  - Parcels
  - Stream
  - Lake or Pond
  - Contours (50 ft.)
- Transportation**
  - Roads

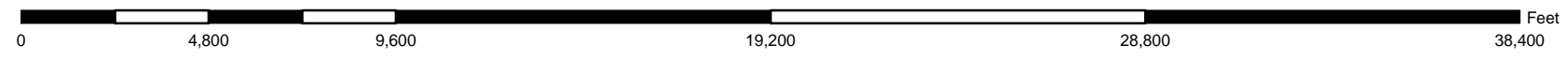
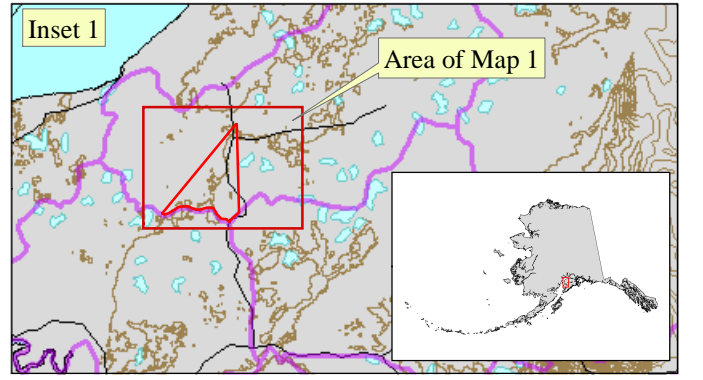
Data Sources:  
 Contaminant Sources, Public Water System Wells, Contours  
 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)

Parcels  
 Kenai Peninsula Borough

All other data  
 United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Drinking Water Protection Areas based on ADEC  
 Calculation Spreadsheet.

URS Corporation does not guarantee the accuracy or validity of the data provided.



USFWS Swanson River Campground PWS 241208.001

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for USFWS Swanson River Campground (Tables 1-4)**

**Table 1**

**Contaminant Source Inventory for  
USFWS Swanson River CG**

**PWSID 241208.001**

<b>Contaminant Source Type</b>	<b>Contaminant Source ID</b>	<b>CS ID tag</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Map Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Pit toilets (vaulted) nonresidential (one or more)	D17	D17-01	A	1	
RV dump stations	D18	D18-01	A	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-01	A	1	Swanson River Road
Campgrounds and RV Parks	X35	X35-01	A	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-02	B	1	Swanson River Road
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-03	C	1	Swanson River Road
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-04	D	1	Swanson River Road

**Table 2**

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for  
USFWS Swanson River CG  
Sources of Bacteria and Viruses*

**PWSID 241208.001**

<b>Contaminant Source Type</b>	<b>Contaminant Source ID</b>	<b>CS ID tag</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Risk Ranking for Analysis</b>	<b>Map Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Pit toilets (vaulted) nonresidential (one or more)	D17	D17-01	A	Low	1	
RV dump stations	D18	D18-01	A	Low	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-01	A	Low	1	Swanson River Road
Campgrounds and RV Parks	X35	X35-01	A	Low	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-02	B	Low	1	Swanson River Road

**Table 3**

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for  
USFWS Swanson River CG  
Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites*

**PWSID 241208.001**

<b>Contaminant Source Type</b>	<b>Contaminant Source ID</b>	<b>CS ID tag</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Risk Ranking for Analysis</b>	<b>Map Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Pit toilets (vaulted) nonresidential (one or more)	D17	D17-01	A	Low	1	
RV dump stations	D18	D18-01	A	Low	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-01	A	Low	1	Swanson River Road
Campgrounds and RV Parks	X35	X35-01	A	Low	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-02	B	Low	1	Swanson River Road
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-03	C	Low	1	Swanson River Road

**Table 4**

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for  
USFWS Swanson River CG  
Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals*

**PWSID 241208.001**

<b>Contaminant Source Type</b>	<b>Contaminant Source ID</b>	<b>CS ID tag</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Risk Ranking for Analysis</b>	<b>Map Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
RV dump stations	D18	D18-01	A	Low	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-01	A	Low	1	Swanson River Road
Campgrounds and RV Parks	X35	X35-01	A	Low	1	
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-02	B	Low	1	Swanson River Road
Highways and roads, paved (cement or asphalt)	X20	X20-03	C	Low	1	Swanson River Road

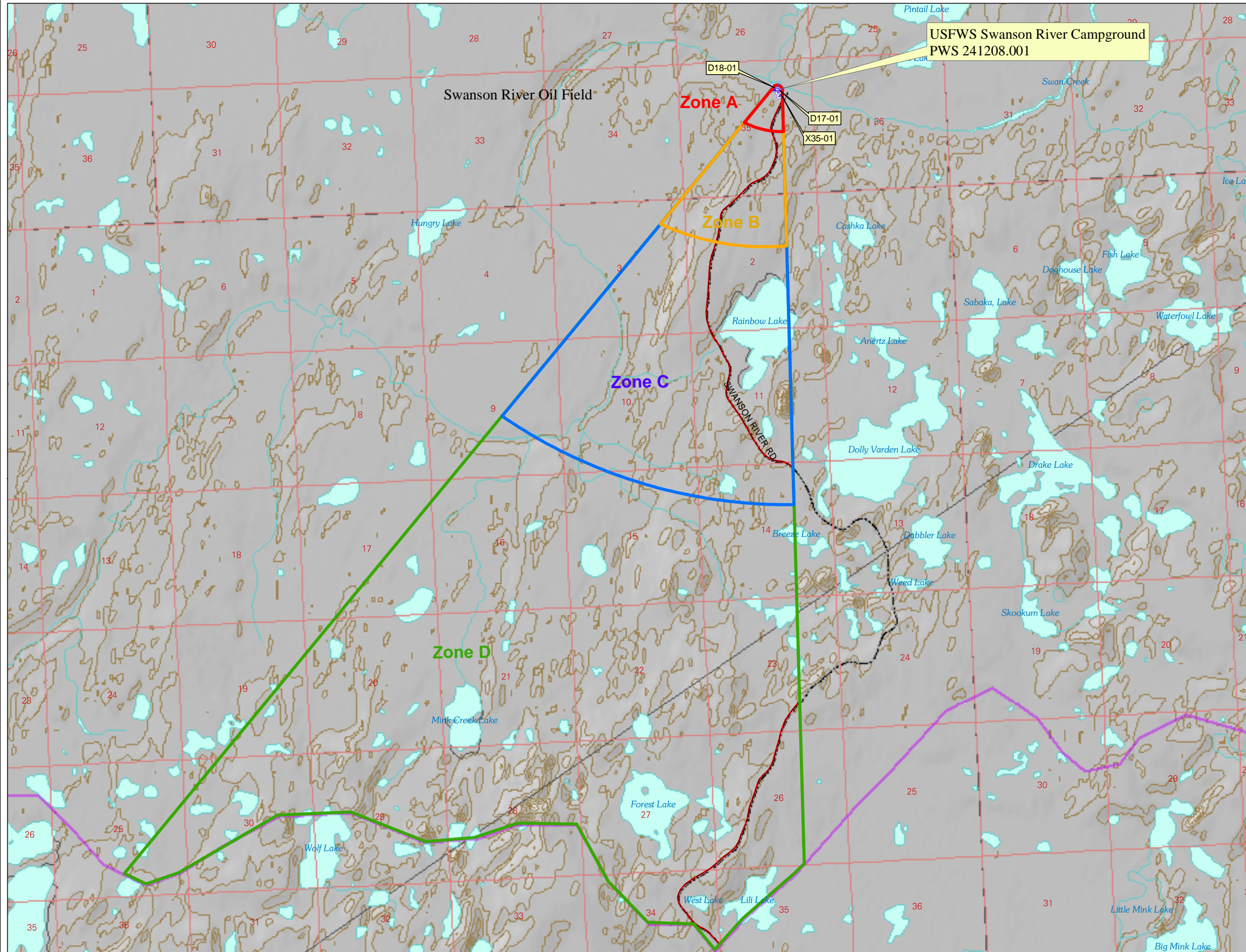


## **APPENDIX C**

### **USFWS Swanson River Campground Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map 1)**

# Drinking Water Protection Areas for the Public Water Well System for PWS #241208.001 USFWS Swanson River Campground

## Showing Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination



### LEGEND

- Public Water System Well

#### Groundwater Protection Zones

- Zone A – Several Months Travel Time
- Zone B – Less Than 2 Years Travel Time
- Zone C – Less Than 5 Years Travel Time
- Zone D – Less Than 10 Years Travel Time
- Watershed Boundary

#### Contaminant Sources

- Pit toilets (vaulted) nonresidential (one or more) (D17)
- RV Dump Station (D18)
- Campgrounds and RV Parks (X35)
- Highways and roads, paved (X20)

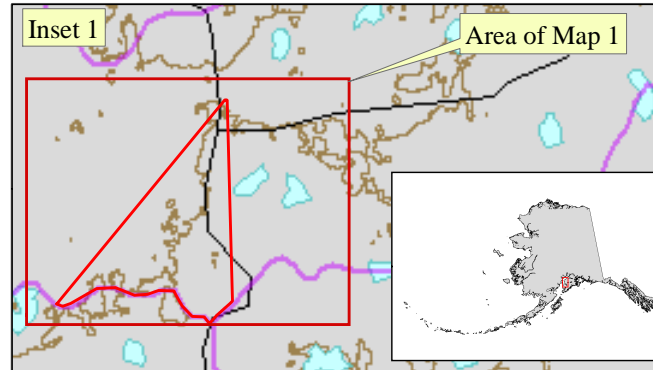
Data Sources:  
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Parcels  
 Kenai Peninsula Borough

All other data  
 United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Drinking Water Protection Areas based on ADEC  
 Calculation Spreadsheet.

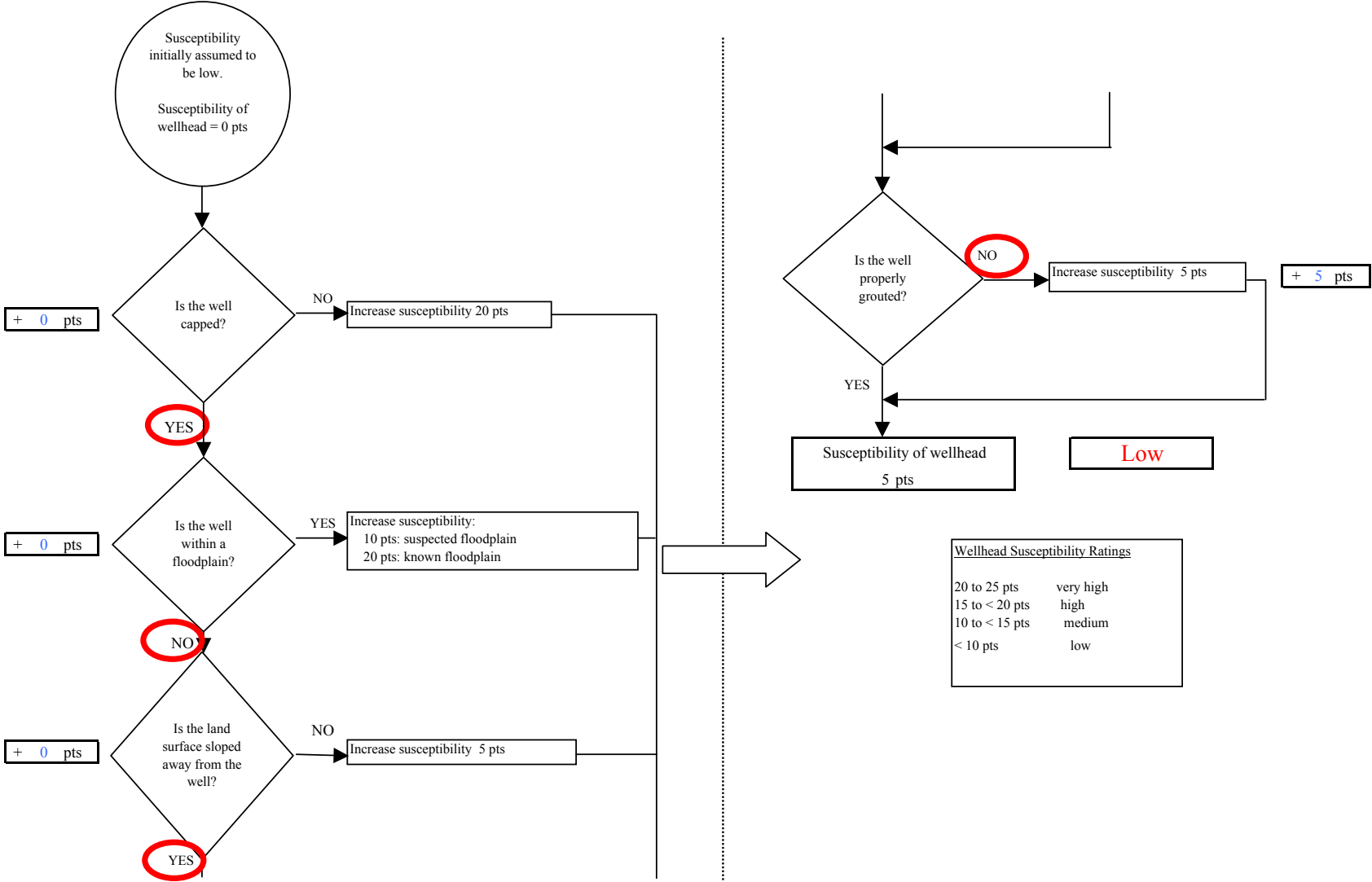
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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Vulnerability Analysis for USFWS Swanson River Campground Public Drinking Water Source (Charts 1-8)**

**Chart 1. Susceptibility of the wellhead - USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001)**



**Chart 2. Susceptibility of the aquifer - USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001)**

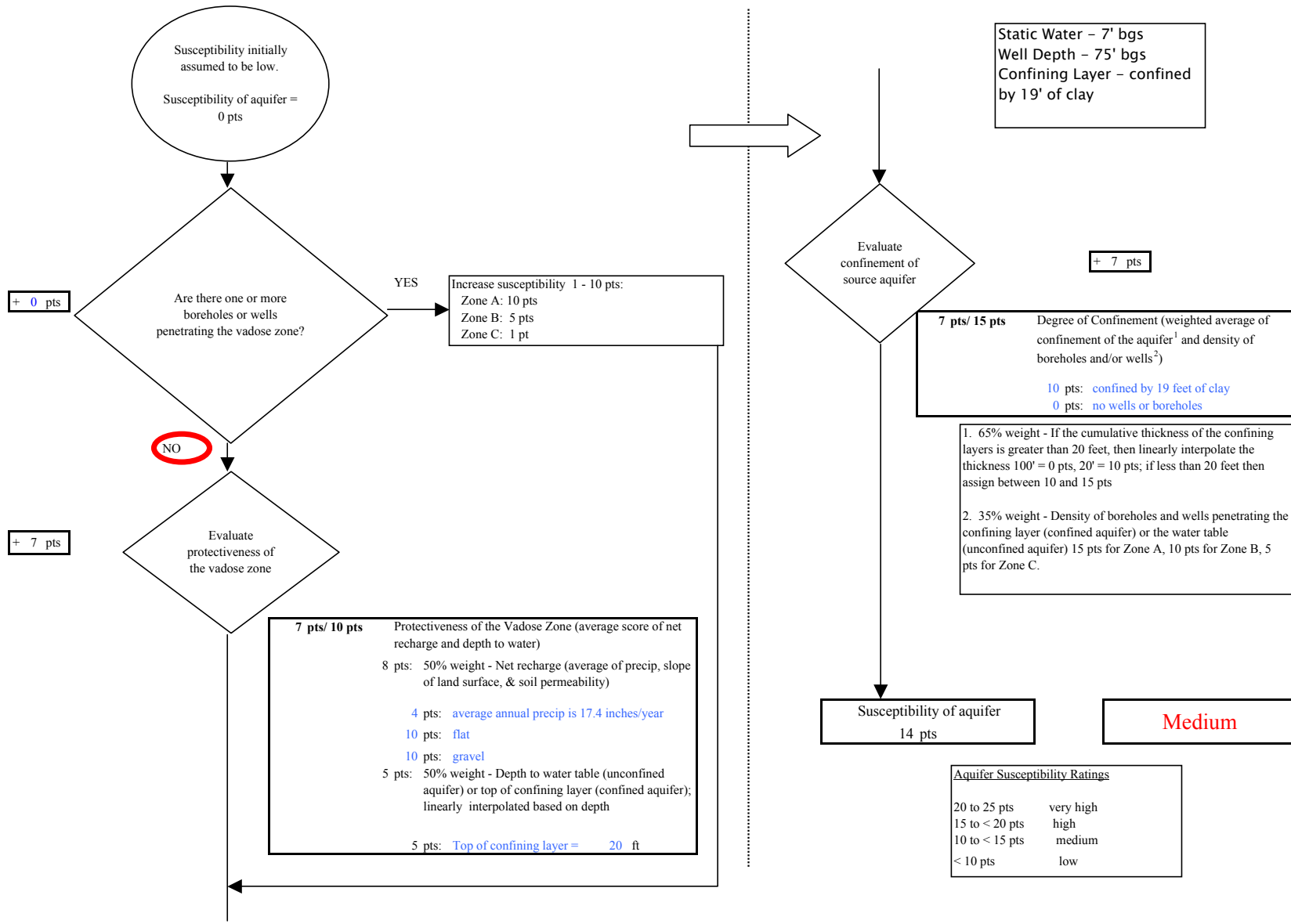


Chart 3. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Bacteria & Viruses

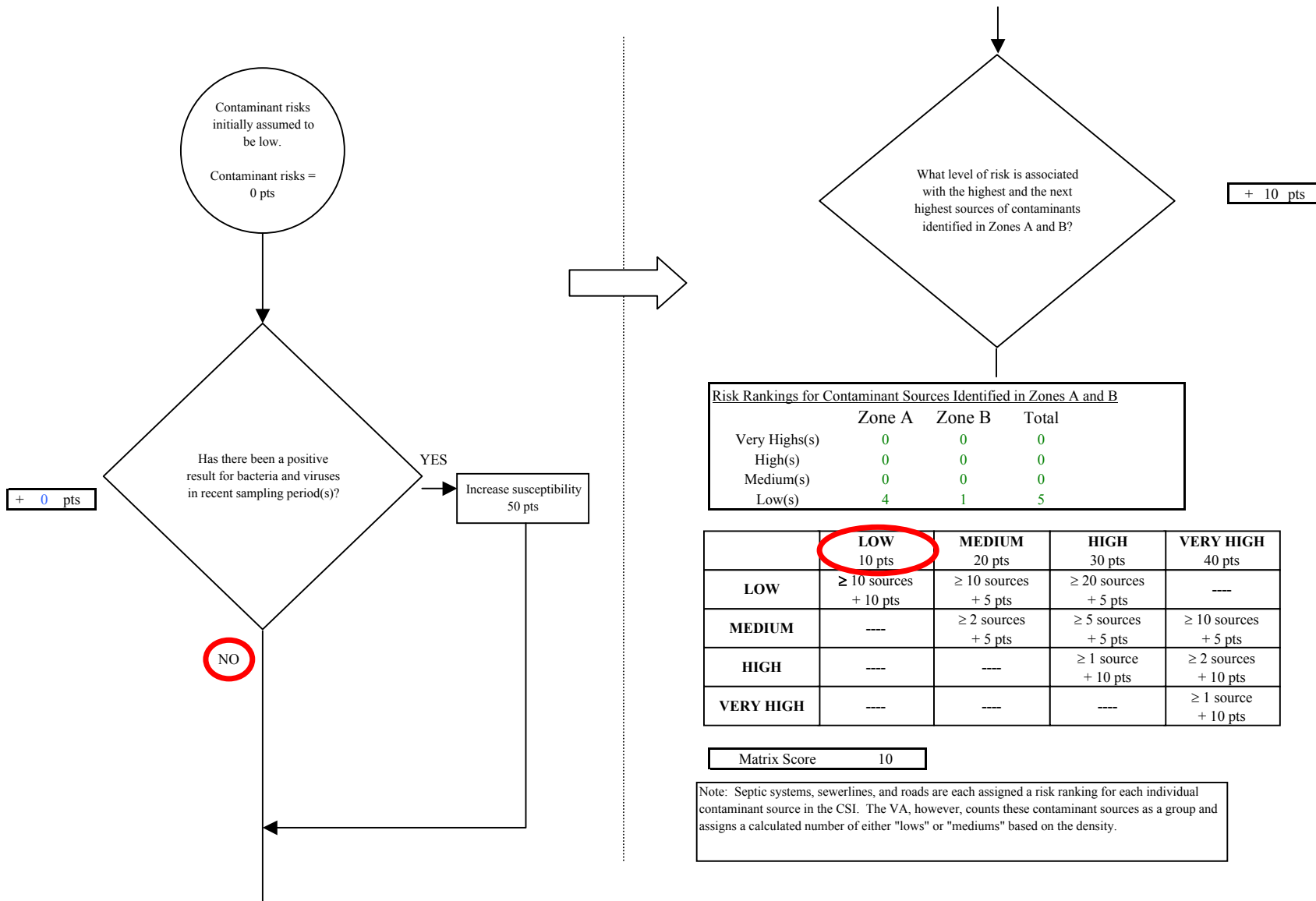
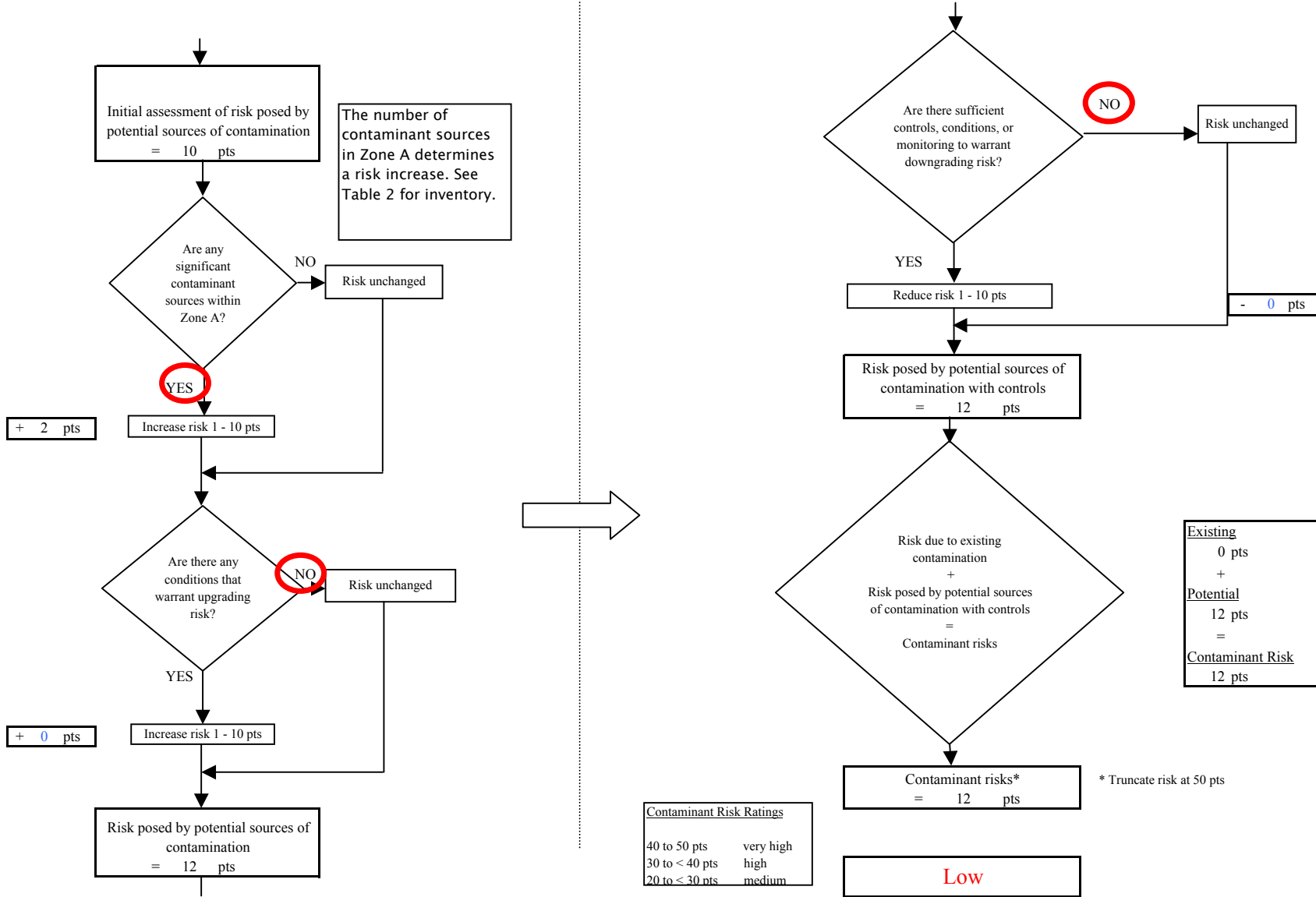


Chart 3. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Bacteria & Viruses



**Chart 4. Vulnerability analysis for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Bacteria & Viruses**

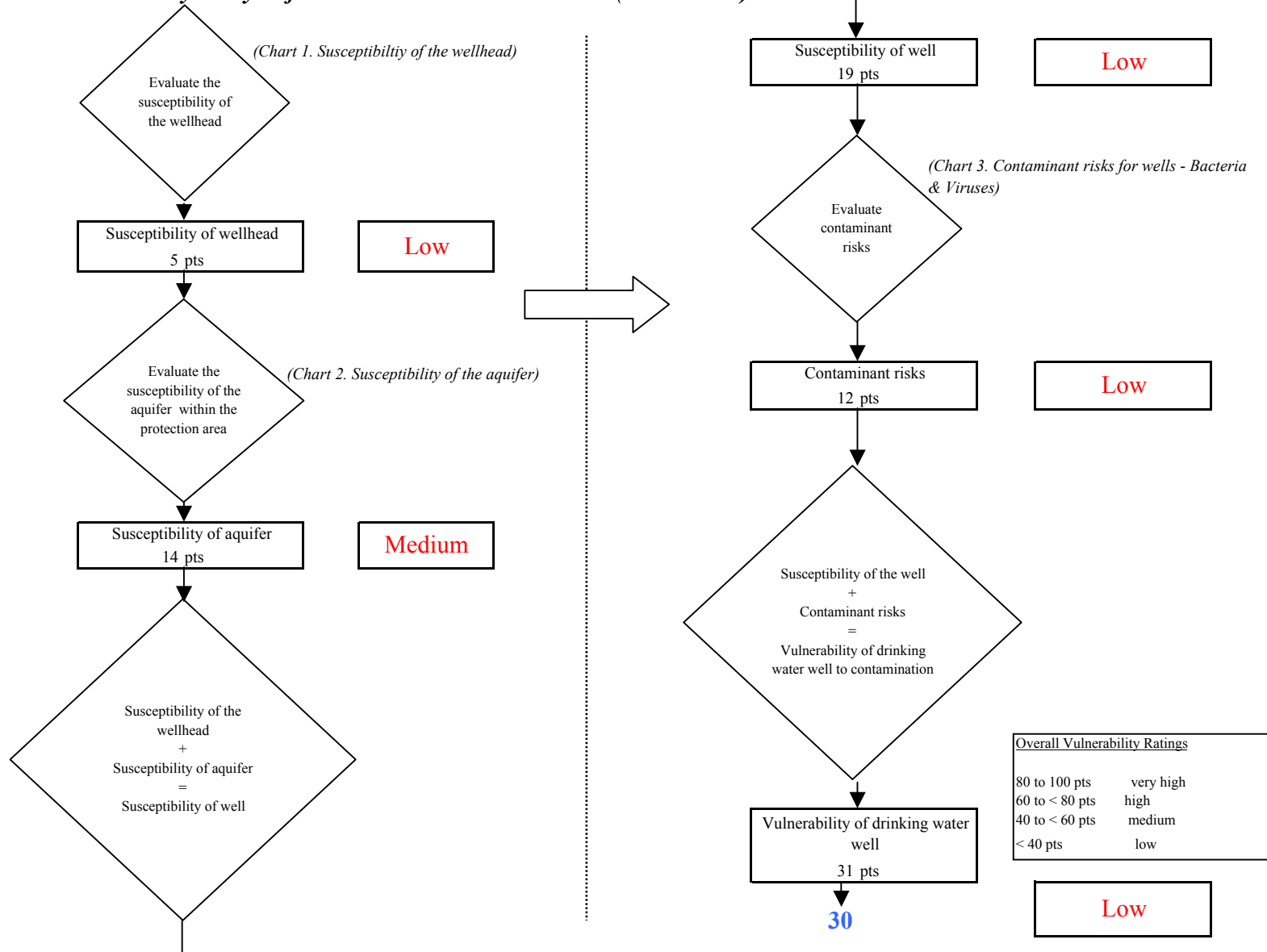




Chart 5. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites

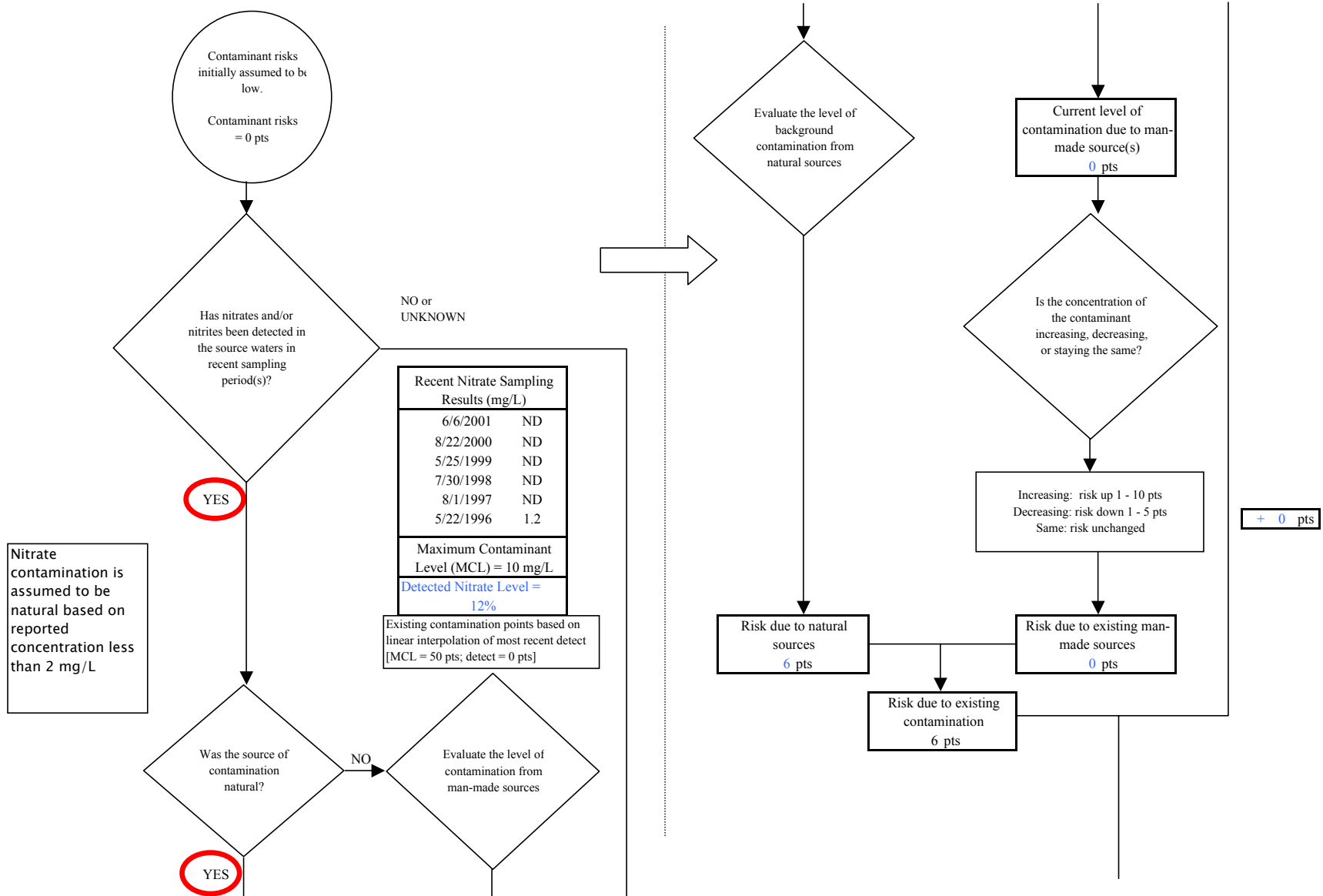


Chart 5. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites

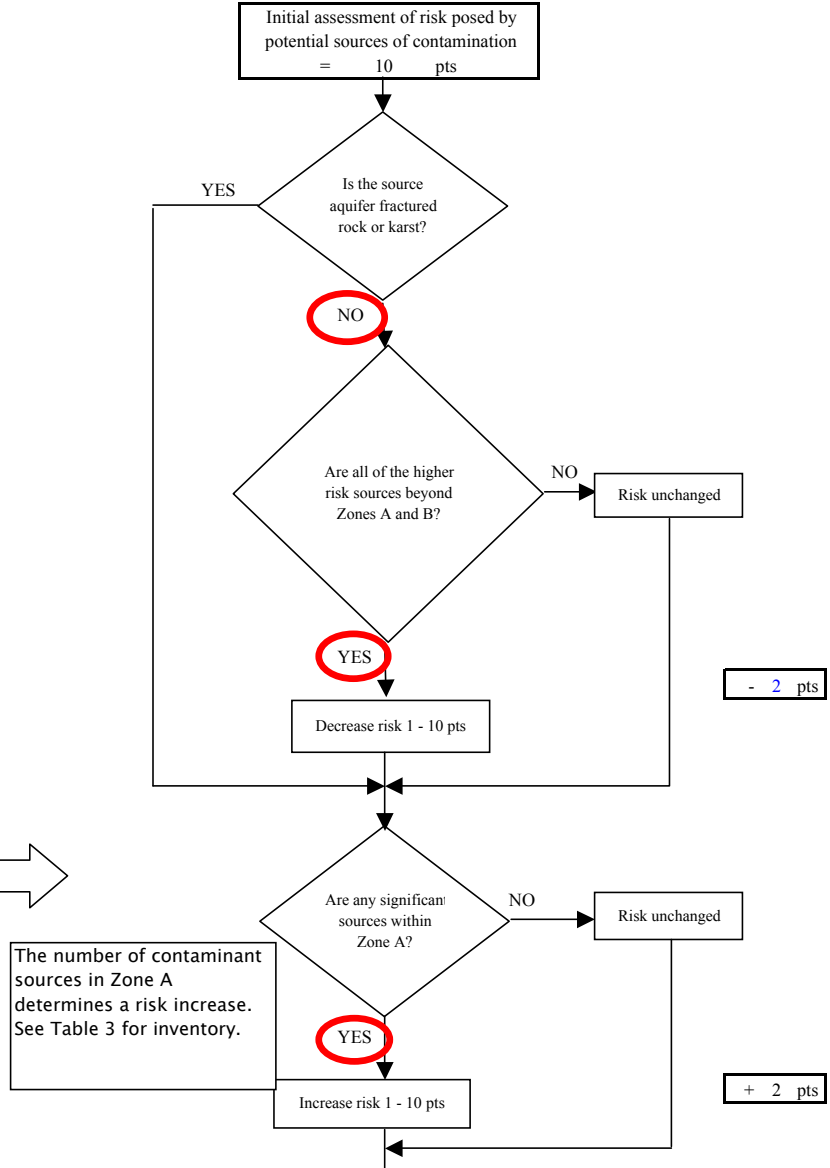
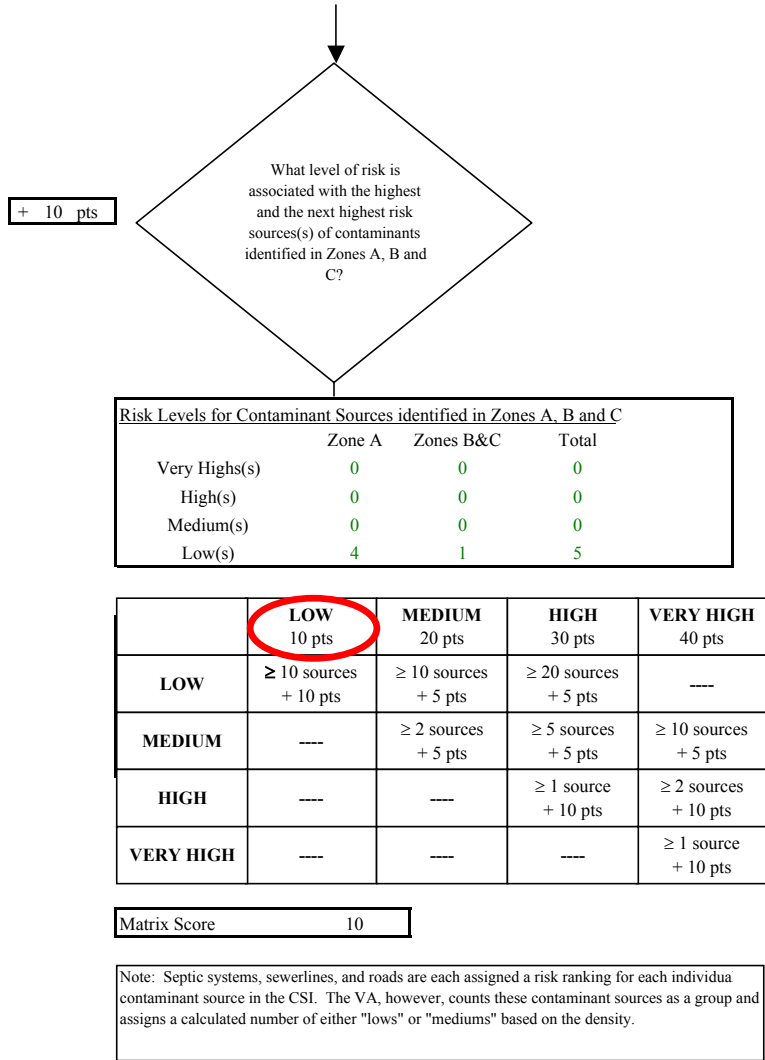
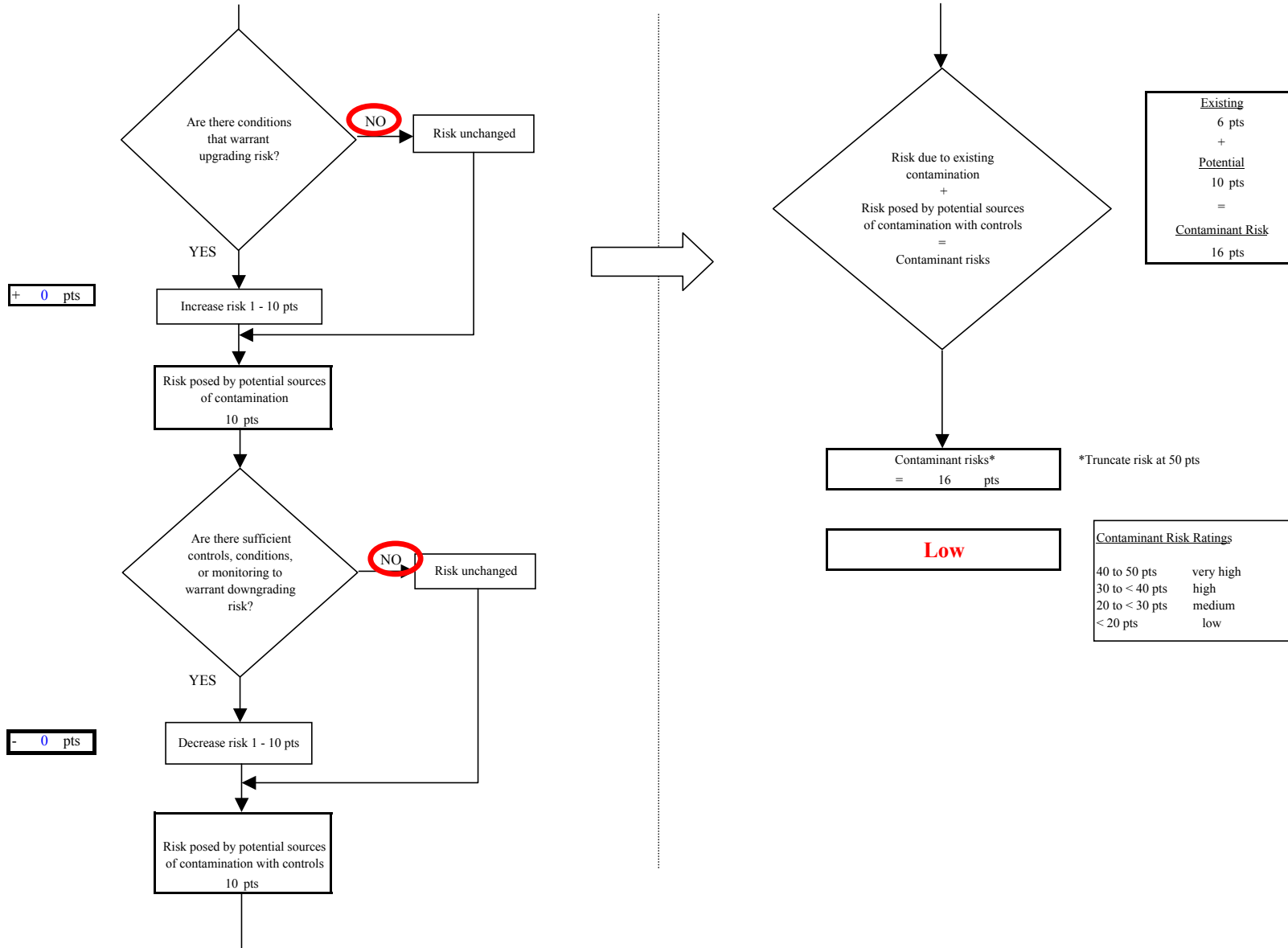


Chart 5. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites



**Chart 6. Vulnerability analysis for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites**

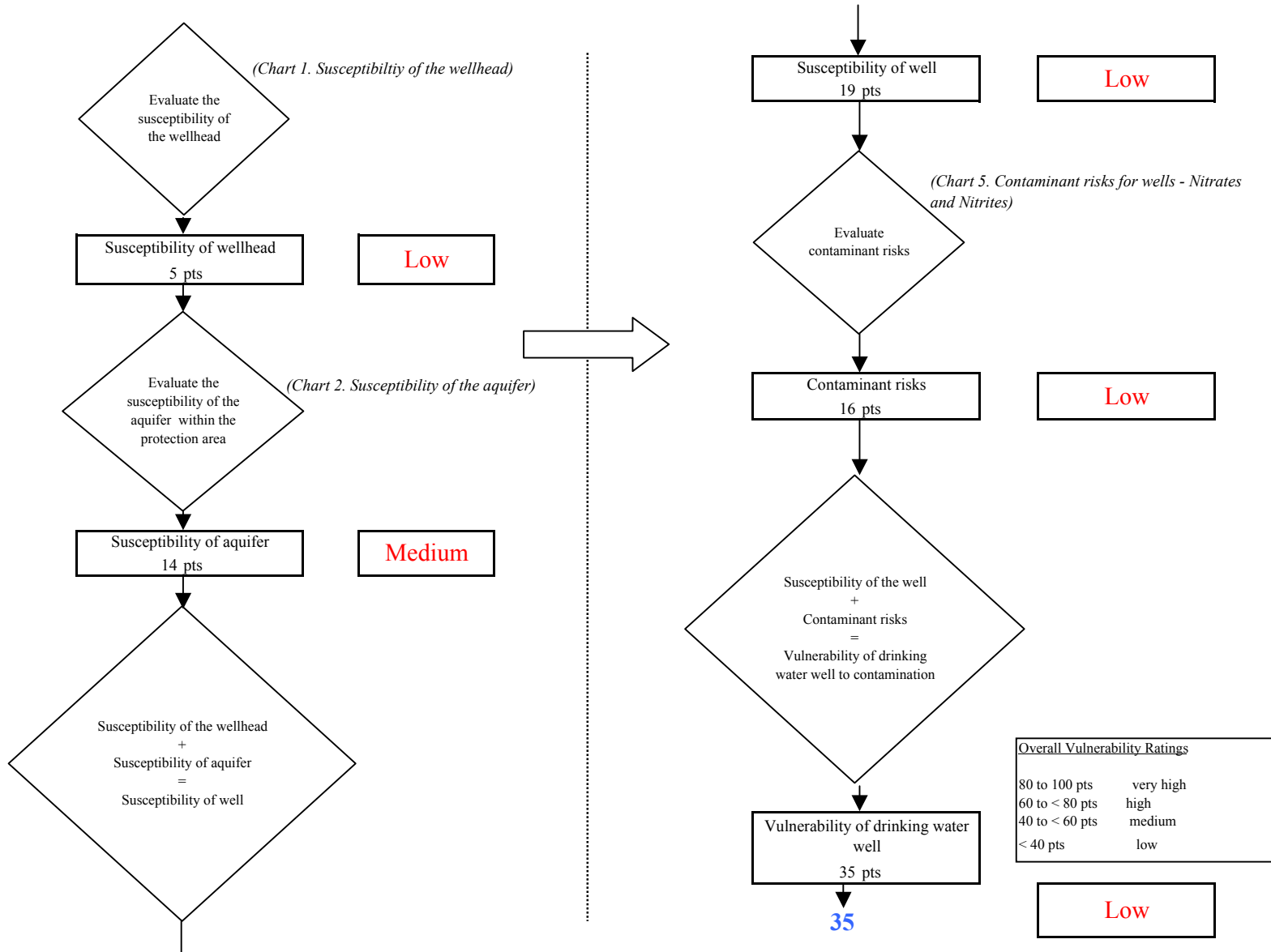


Chart 7. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals

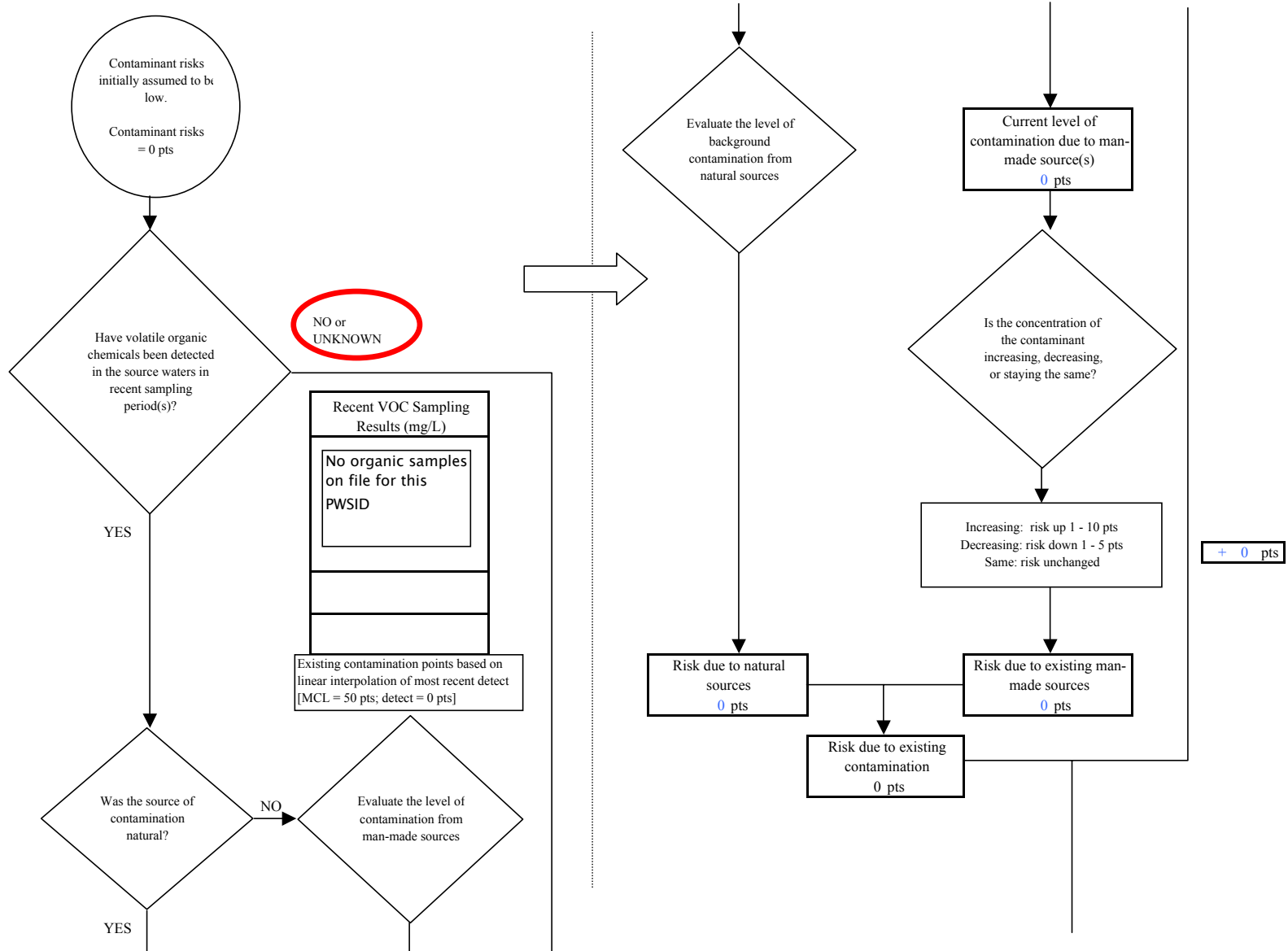
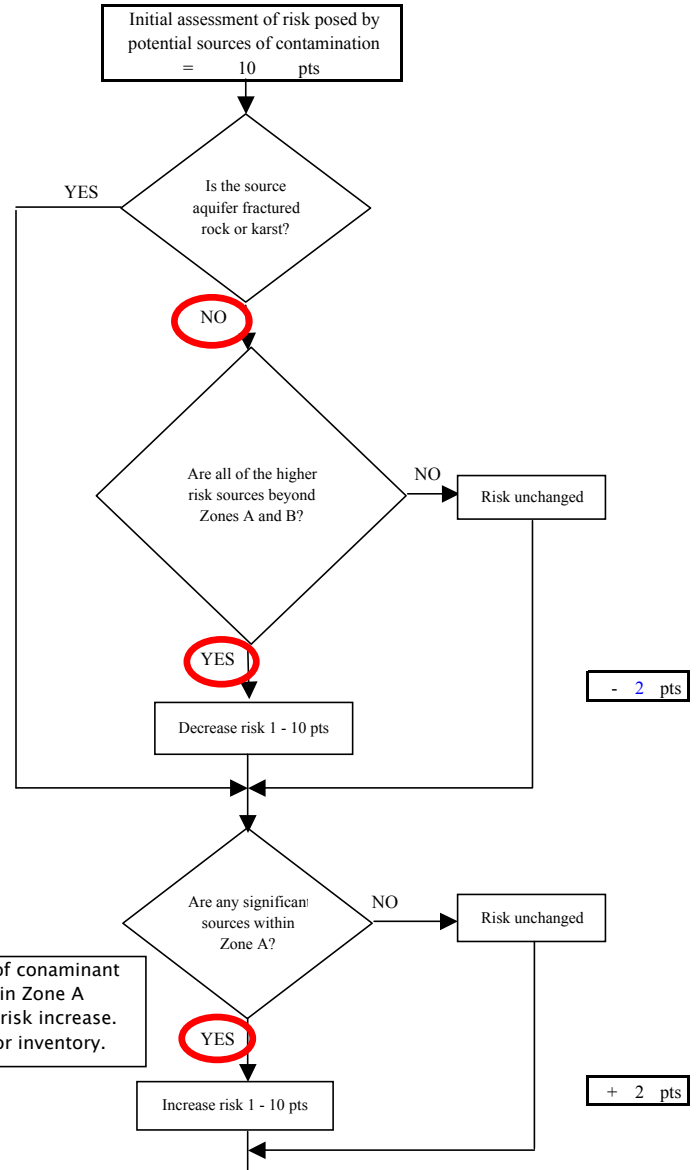
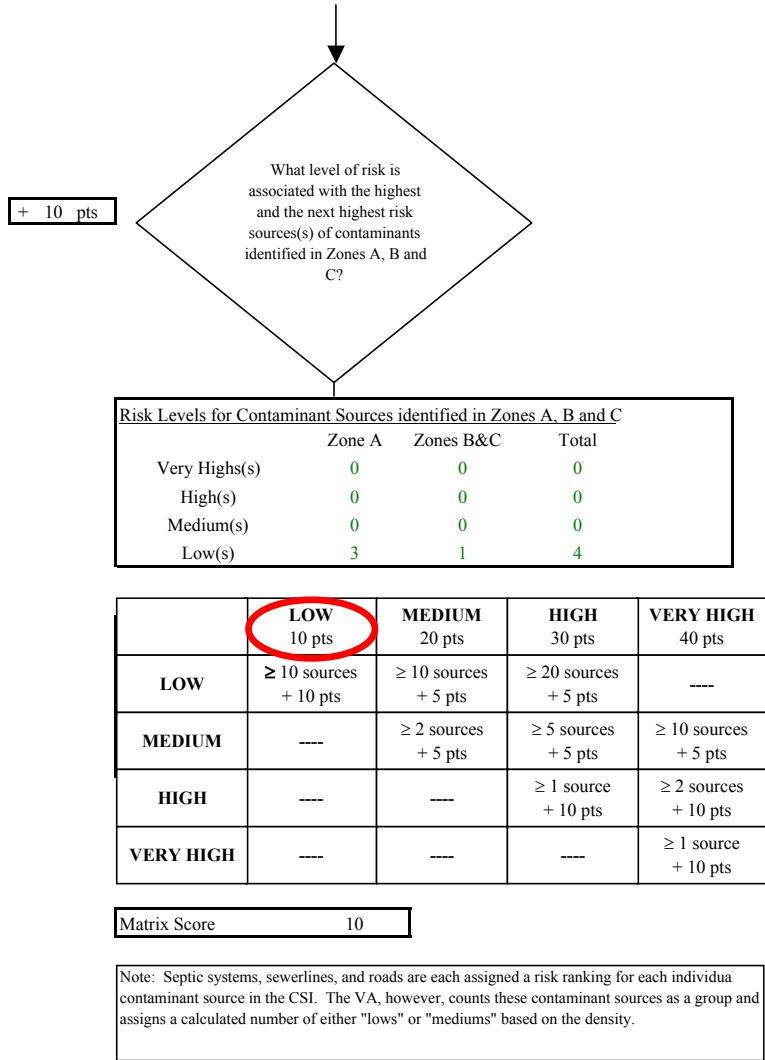
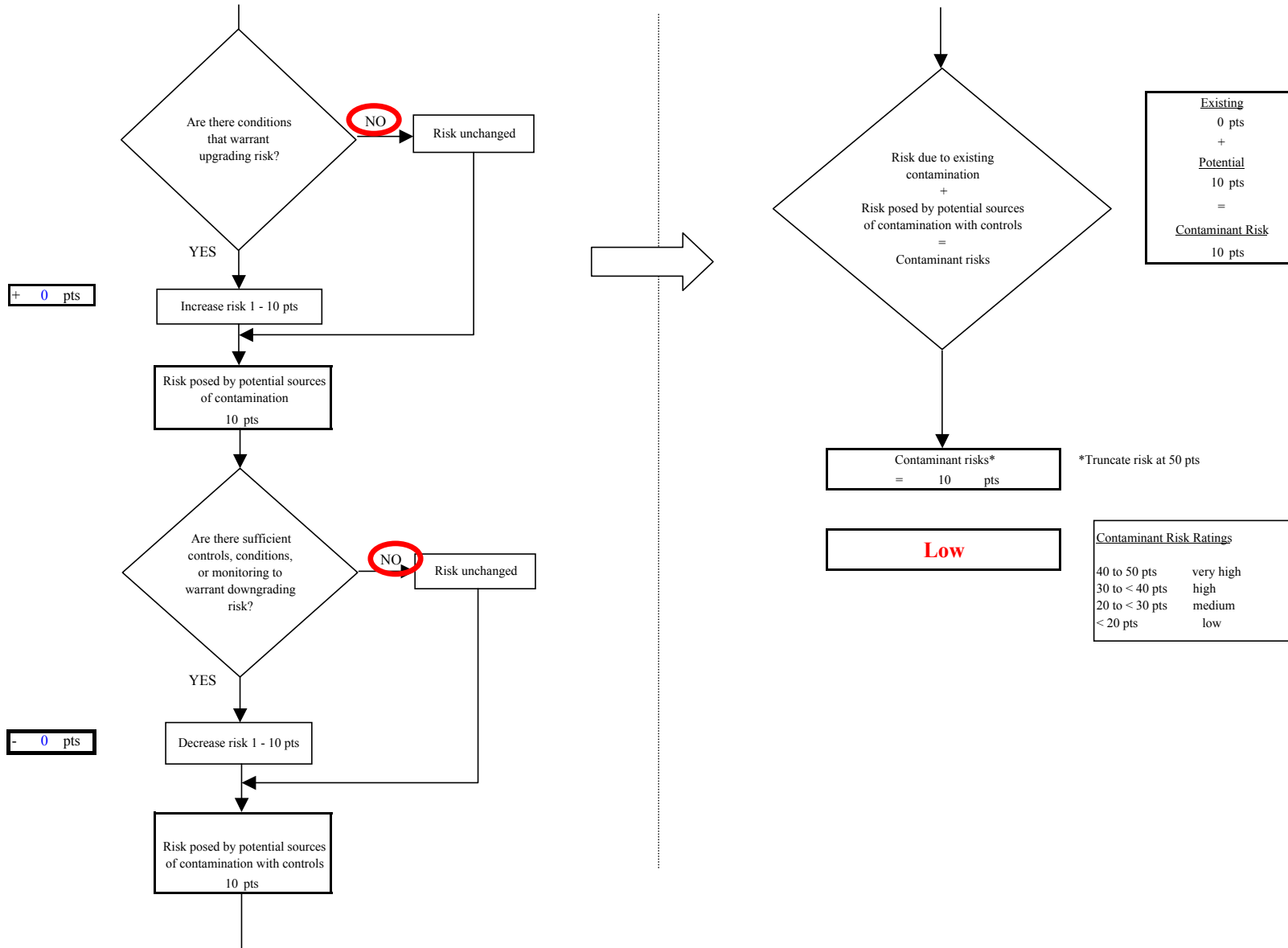


Chart 7. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals



**Chart 7. Contaminant risks for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals**



**Chart 8. Vulnerability analysis for USFWS Swanson River CG (241208.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals**

