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# Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and  
Vulnerability Assessment for  
Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
Drinking Water System,  
Sterling, Alaska  
Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
PWSID # 244824.001

May 21, 2003

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM REPORT 536  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

# Source Water Assessment for Higher Ground Baptist Camp Drinking Water System Sterling, Alaska Higher Ground Baptist Camp PWSID# 244824.001

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM REPORT 536

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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp Source of Public Drinking Water, Sterling, Alaska

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## Drinking Water Protection Program Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for Higher Ground Baptist Camp is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of one well. Higher Ground Baptist Camp is located at 39592 Higher Ground Street on Government Lots 3 and 4, Sterling, 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp public drinking water source include: residential septic systems, airports, and logging. 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp received a vulnerability rating of **Low** for bacteria and viruses, **Medium** for nitrates and nitrites, and **High** for volatile organic chemicals.

### HIGHER GROUND BAPTIST CAMP PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

The Higher Ground Baptist Camp public water system (PWS) is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of one well located at 39592 Higher Ground Street, Sterling, Alaska (T05N, R09W, Section 04) (See Map 1 of Appendix A). Sterling 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. Sterling 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp public drinking 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); Freethy 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 obtained from ADEC records for the Higher Ground Baptist Camp PWS, the depth of the well is 155 feet below ground surface (bgs), and is screened in a confined aquifer. The thickness of the confining layer is unknown. The static water level is approximately 108 feet bgs. The well is not located in a floodplain.

The Sanitary Survey (12/03/99) 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 90 non-residents through one service connection.

**HIGHER GROUND BAPTIST CAMP 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp. 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**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Definition</b>
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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp 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 HIGHER GROUND BAPTIST CAMP 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp 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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp.

**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	22	Medium
Volatile Organic Chemicals	50	Very 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:

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

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	40	Medium
Volatile Organic Chemicals	70	High

**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. (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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp. 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 Medium. The risk to this source of public drinking water is primarily attributed to the presence of an airport and logging areas that represent potential and inventoried contaminant sources present in Zones A, B, C and D (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 Higher Ground Baptist Camp well indicates that nitrate concentrations have been reported as non-detect in recent years. 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 0% (0.0 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.

Nitrate levels are often derived from the

decomposition of organic matter in soils. 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 **Medium**.

### **Volatile Organic Chemicals**

The contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals is Very High. The risk is primarily attributed to the presence of an airport located in Zones A and B (See Chart 7 – Contaminant Risks for Volatile Organic Chemicals in Appendix D).

The drinking water Higher Ground Baptist Camp 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 **High**.



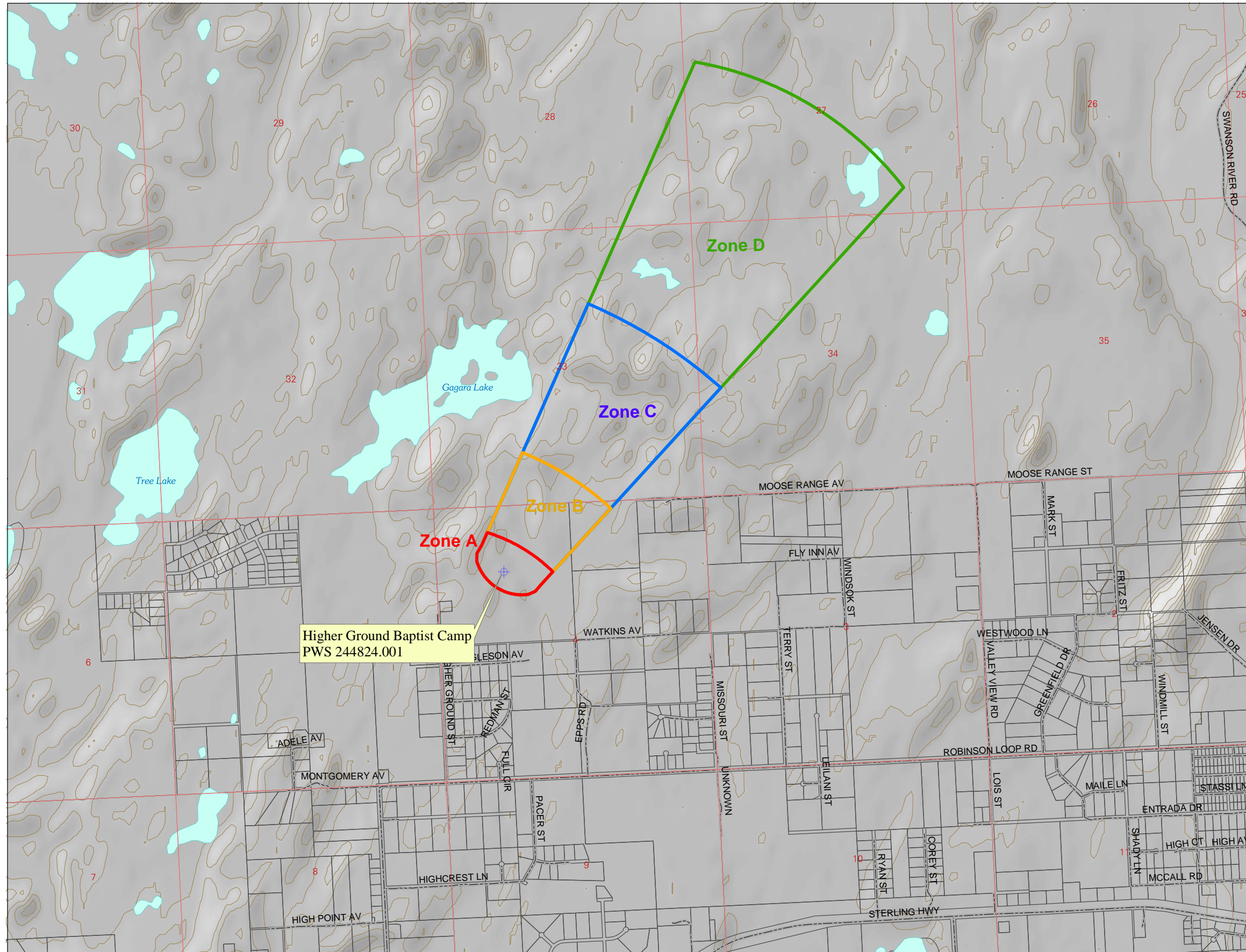
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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Higher Ground Baptist Camp Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map (Map 1)**

# Drinking Water Protection Areas for the Public Water Well System for PWS #244824.001 Higher Ground Baptist Camp



Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
PWS 244824.001

## 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
- Hydrography/Physical**
  - Parcels
  - Stream
  - Lake or Pond
  - Contours (50 ft.)
- Transportation**
  - Roads

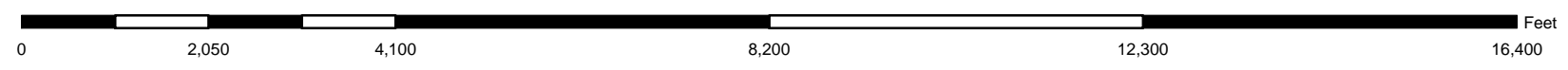
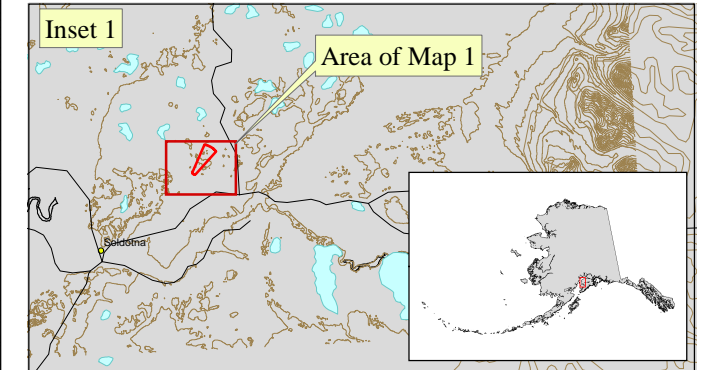
Data Sources:  
Contaminant Sources, Public Water System Wells, Contours  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)

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.



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (Tables 1-4)**

**Table 1**

**Contaminant Source Inventory for  
Higher Ground Baptist Camp**

**PWSID 244824.001**

<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>
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02-01	A	1	8 single-family septic systems in Zone A
Airports	X14	X14-01	A	1	landing strip
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-01	B	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc
Airports	X14	X14-02	B	1	landing strip
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-02	C	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-03	D	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-04	D	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc

**Table 2**

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for  
Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
Sources of Bacteria and Viruses*

**PWSID 244824.001**

<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Risk Ranking for Analysis</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02-01	A	Low	1	8 single-family septic systems in Zone A

Table 3

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for  
Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites*

PWSID 244824.001

<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Risk Ranking for Analysis</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02-01	A	Low	1	8 single-family septic systems in Zone A
Airports	X14	X14-01	A	Low	1	landing strip
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-01	B	Low	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc
Airports	X14	X14-02	B	Low	1	landing strip
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-02	C	Low	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc

**Table 4**

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for  
Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals*

**PWSID 244824.001**

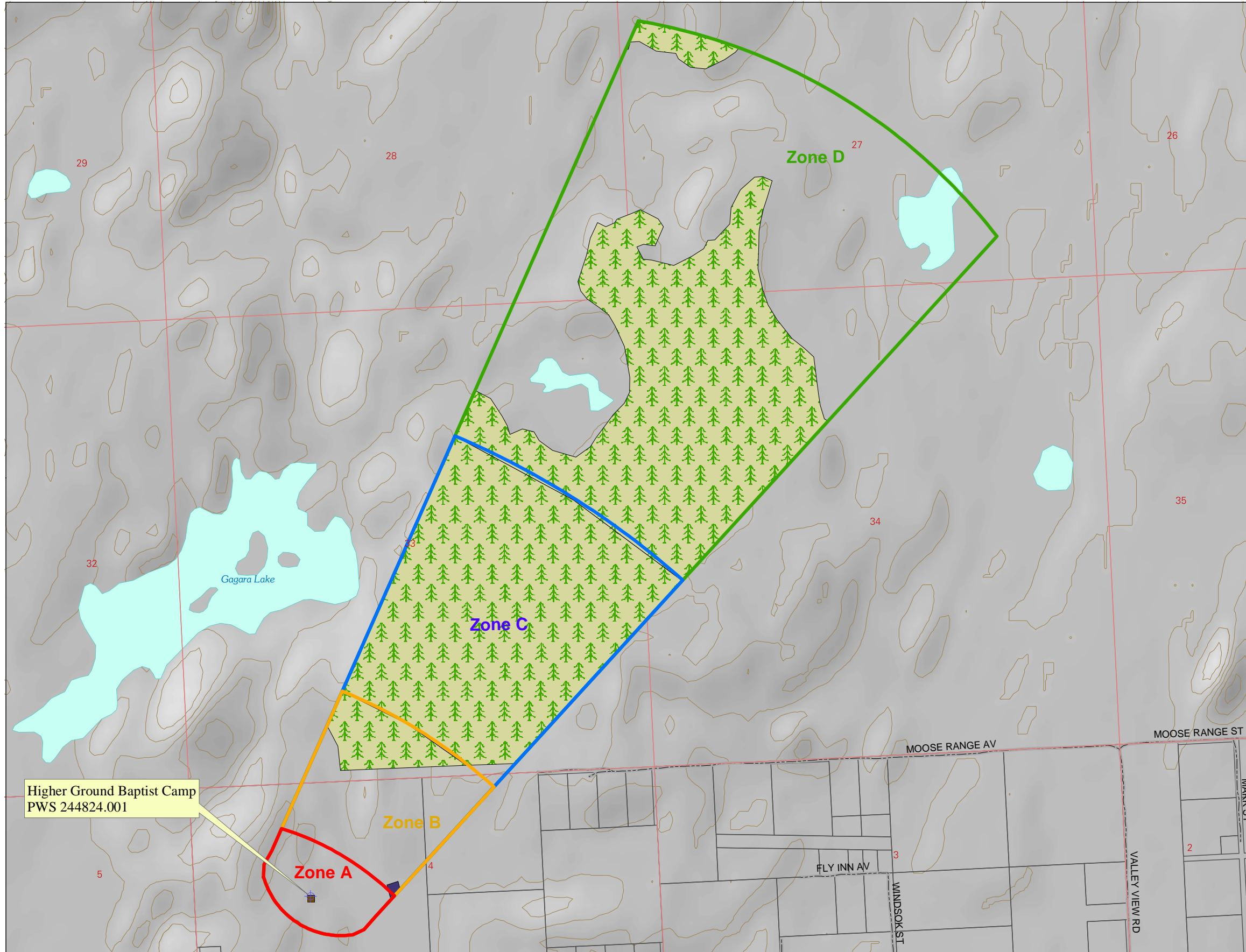
<i>Contaminant Source Type</i>	<i>Contaminant Source ID</i>	<i>CS ID tag</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Risk Ranking for Analysis</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R02-01	A	Low	1	8 single-family septic systems in Zone A
Airports	X14	X14-01	A	High	1	landing strip
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-01	B	Low	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc
Airports	X14	X14-02	B	High	1	landing strip
Logging (inactive)	E02	E02-02	C	Low	1	Kenai Natives Association, Inc



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Higher Ground Baptist Camp Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map 1)**

**Drinking Water Protection Areas for the Public Water Well System for PWS #244824.001 Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
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
- Contaminant Sources**
  - Septic Systems (serves one or more single family homes) (R2)
  - Airports/landing strip (X14)
  - Logging (E2)

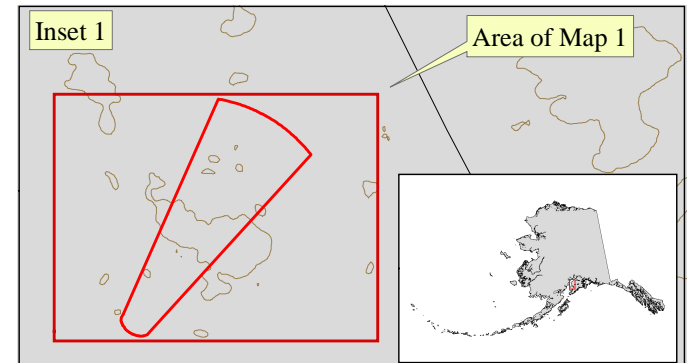
Data Sources:  
 Contaminant Sources, Public Water System Wells, Contours  
 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)

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.



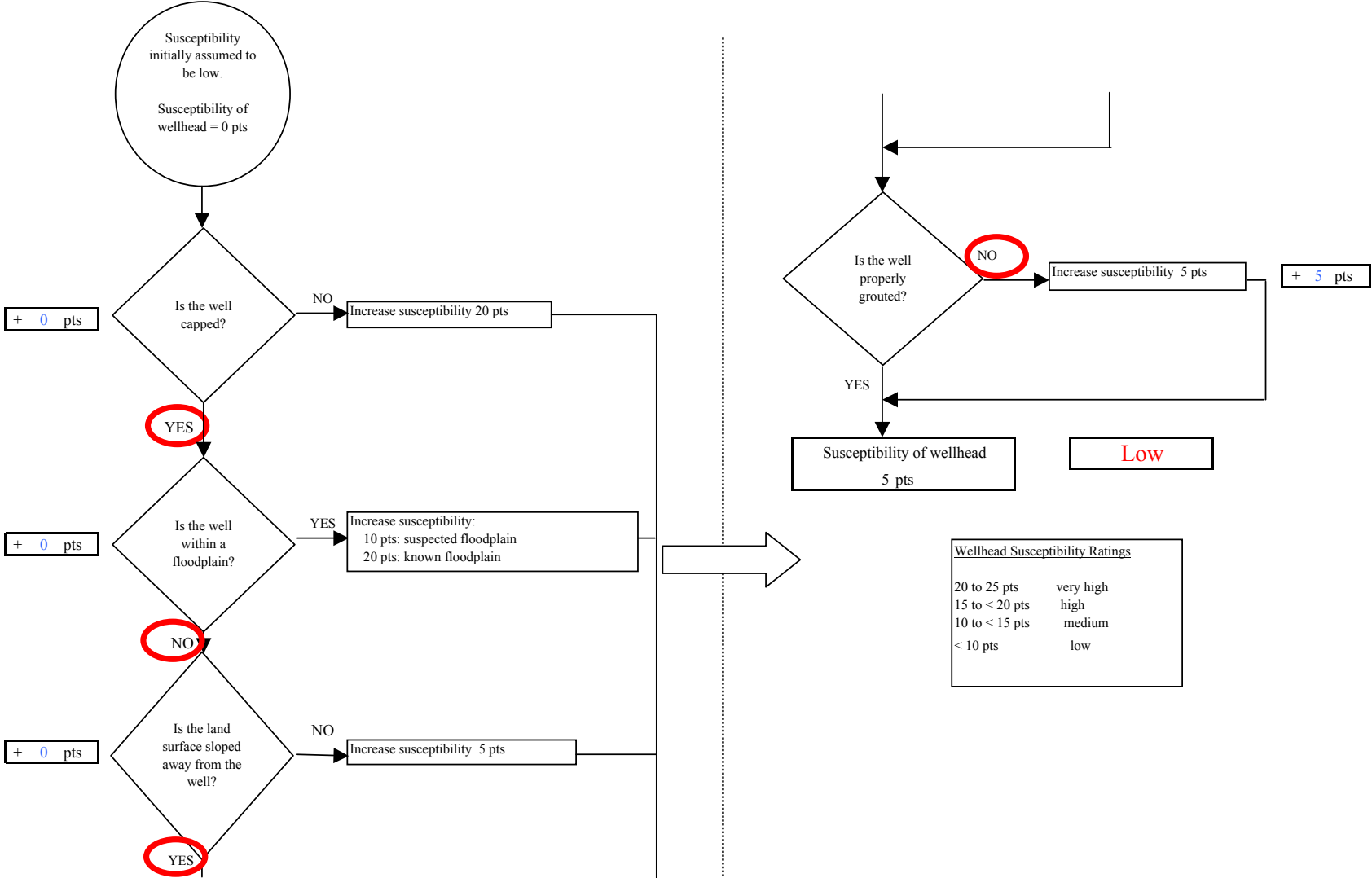
Higher Ground Baptist Camp  
 PWS 244824.001



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Vulnerability Analysis for Higher Ground Baptist Camp Public Drinking Water Source (Charts 1-8)**

**Chart 1. Susceptibility of the wellhead - Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001)**



Wellhead Susceptibility Ratings	
20 to 25 pts	very high
15 to < 20 pts	high
10 to < 15 pts	medium
< 10 pts	low

**Chart 2. Susceptibility of the aquifer - Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001)**

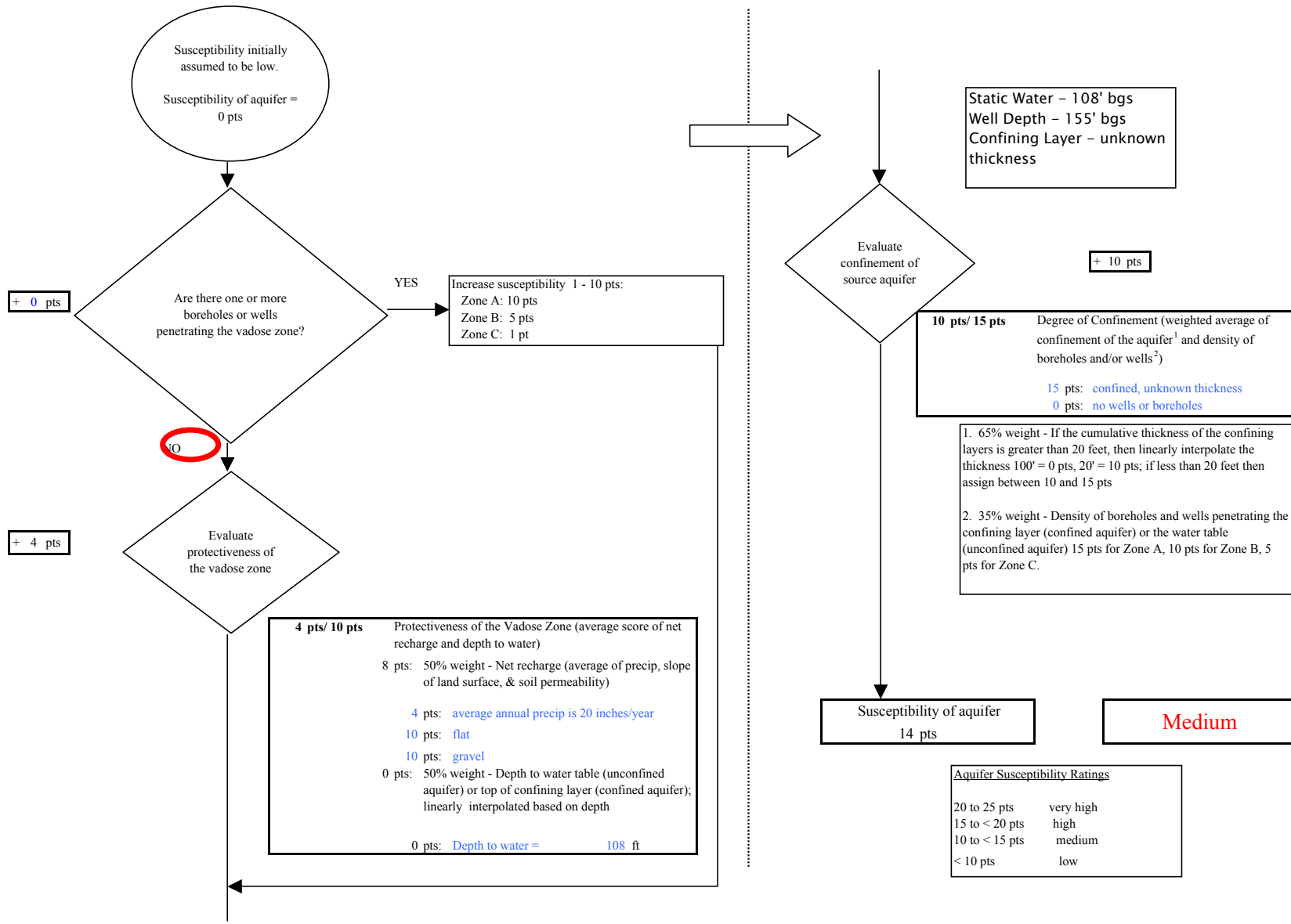


Chart 3. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Bacteria & Viruses

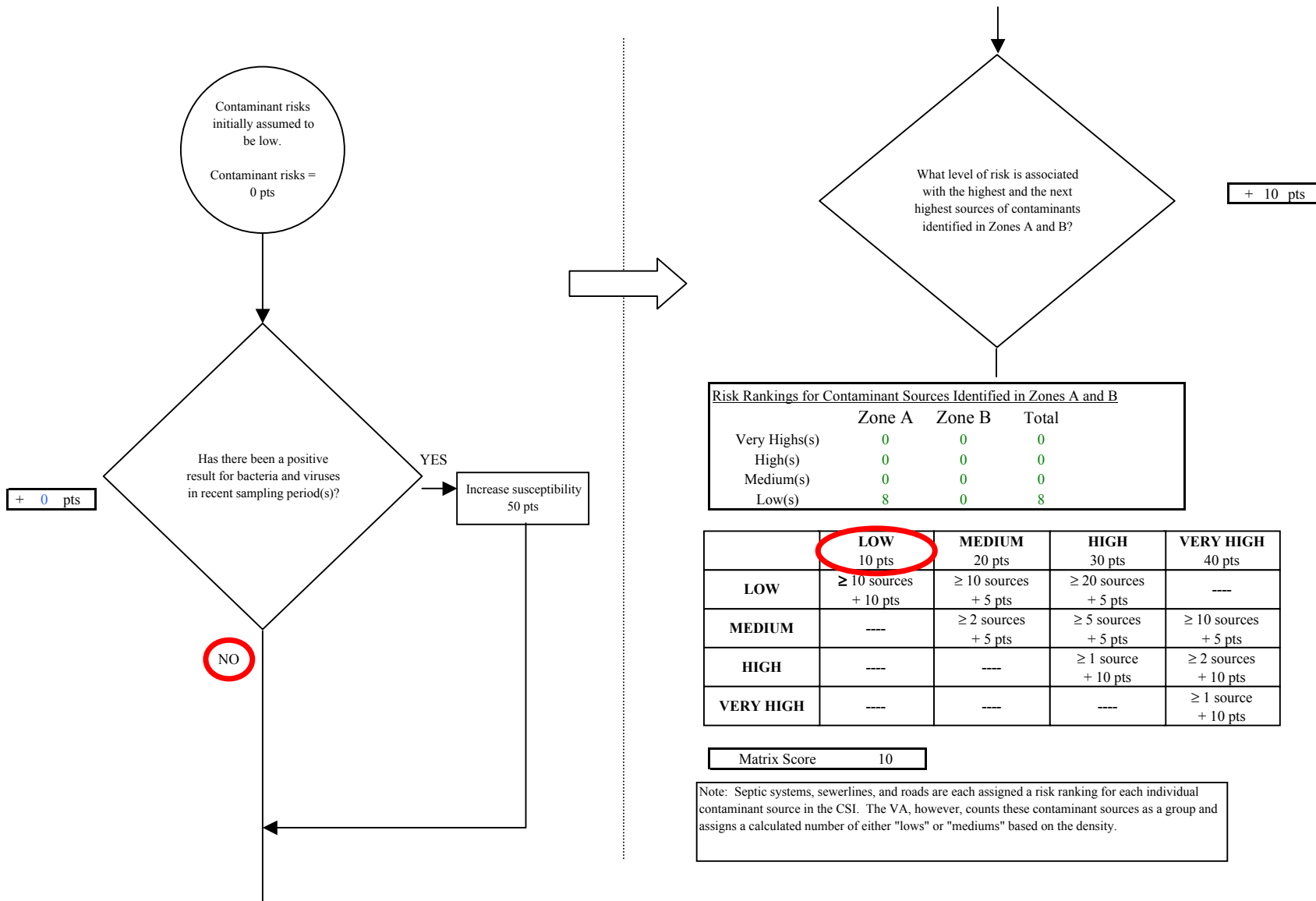
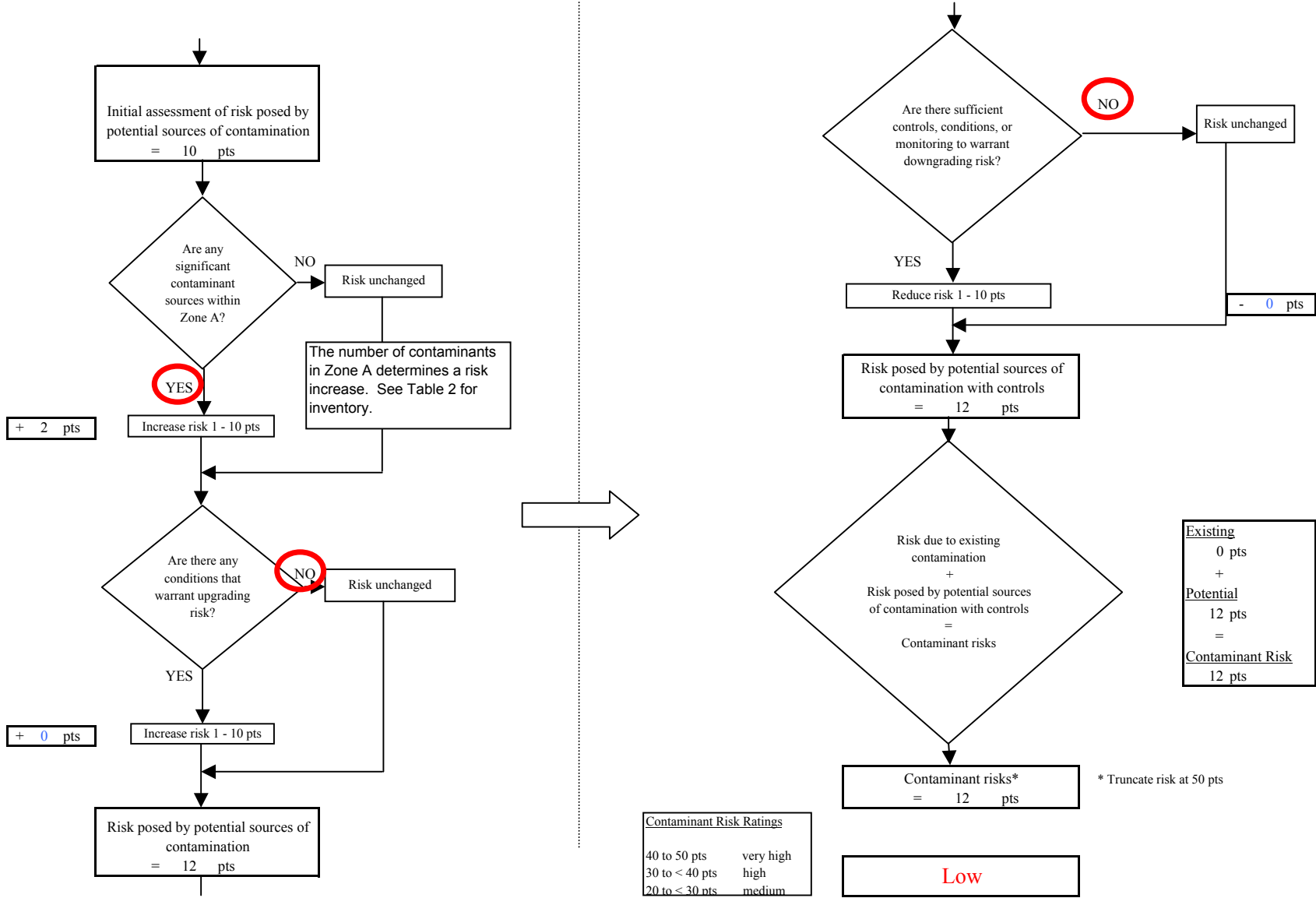
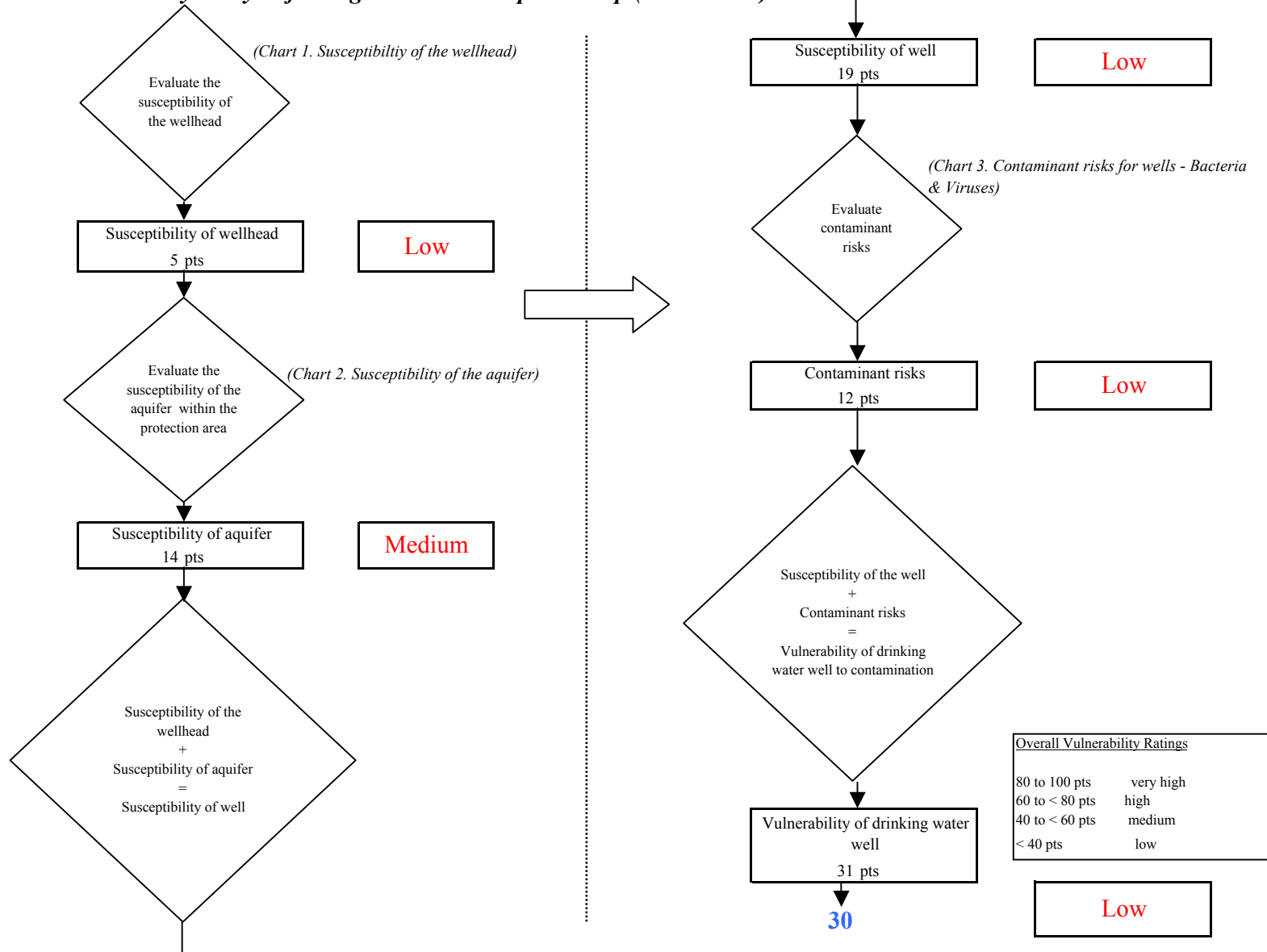


Chart 3. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Bacteria & Viruses



**Chart 4. Vulnerability analysis for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Bacteria & Viruses**





**Chart 5. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites**

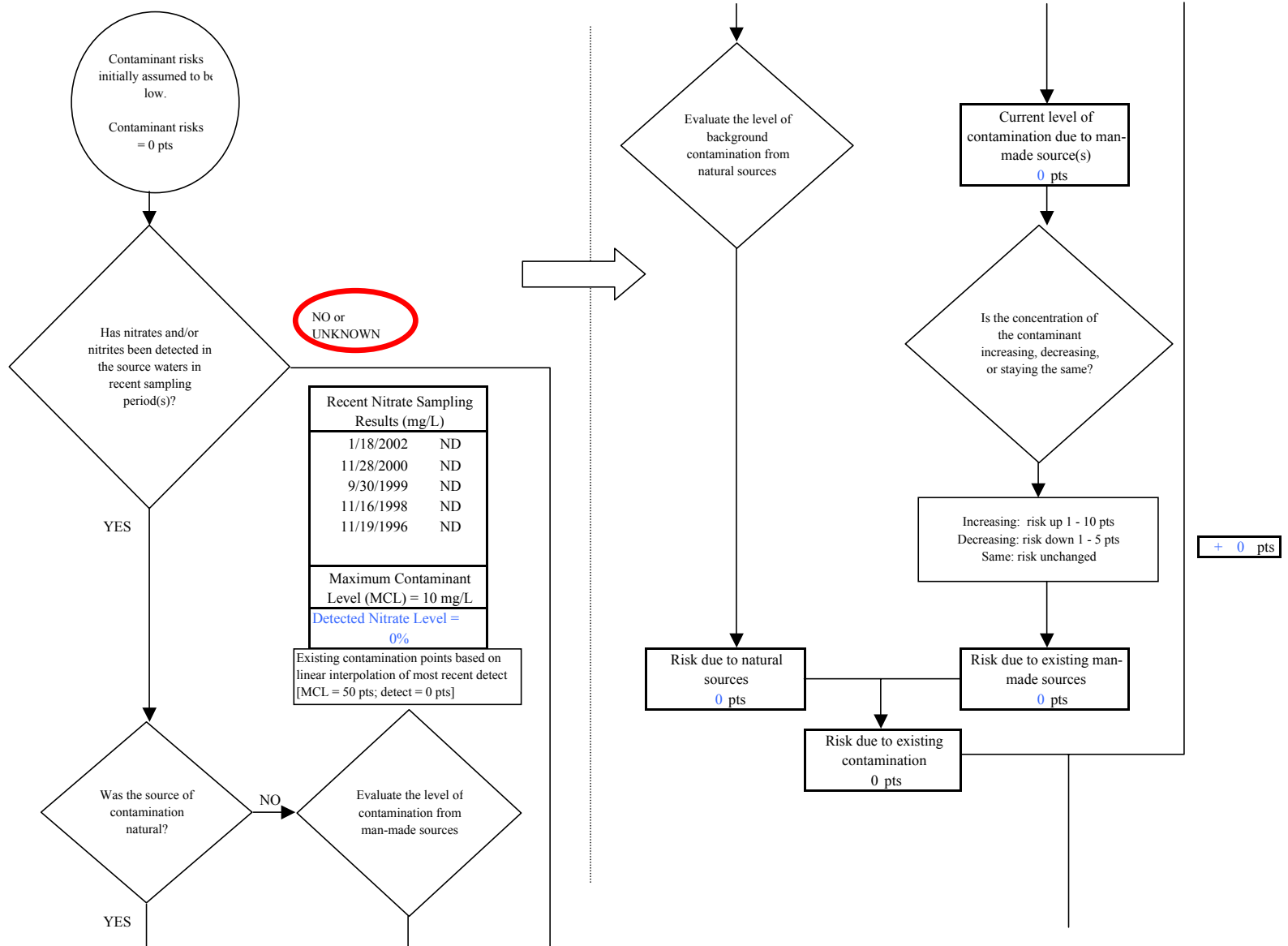
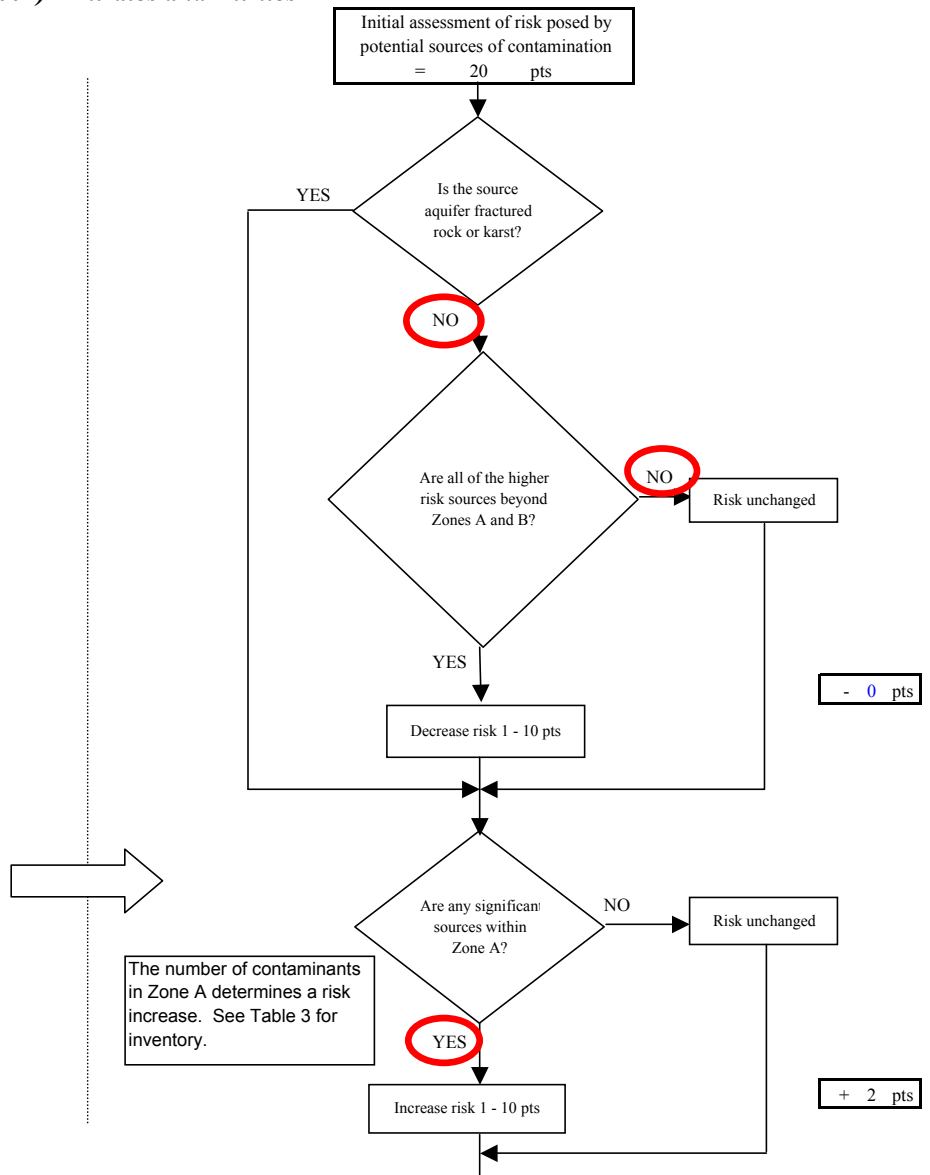
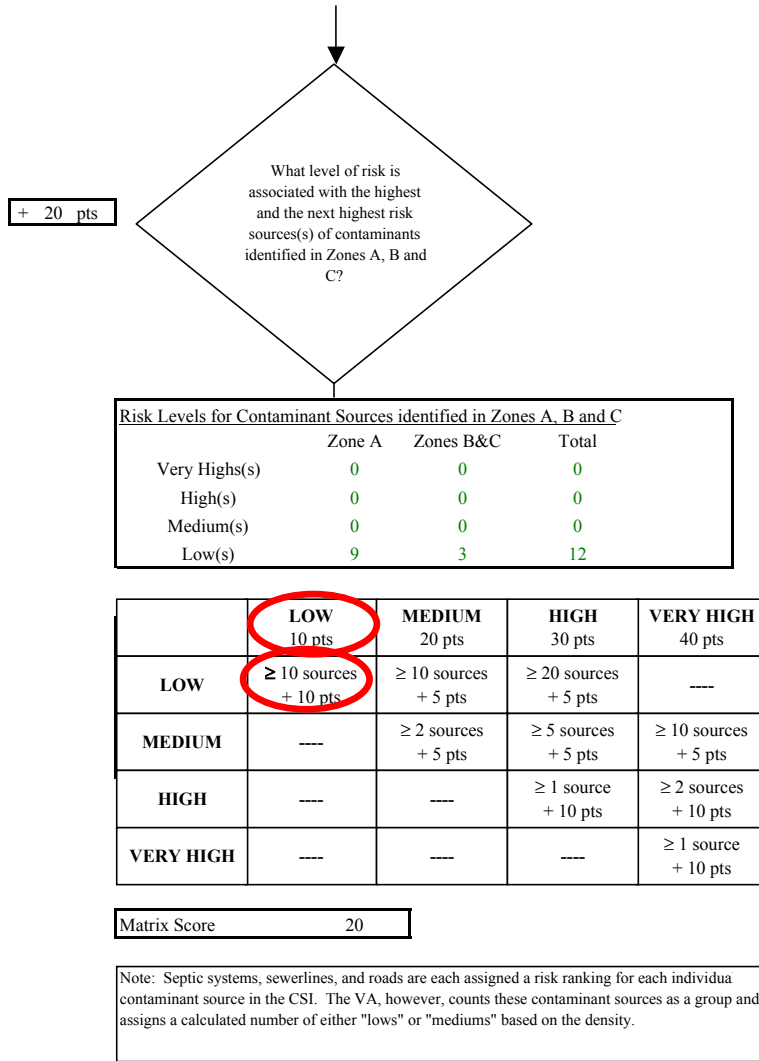
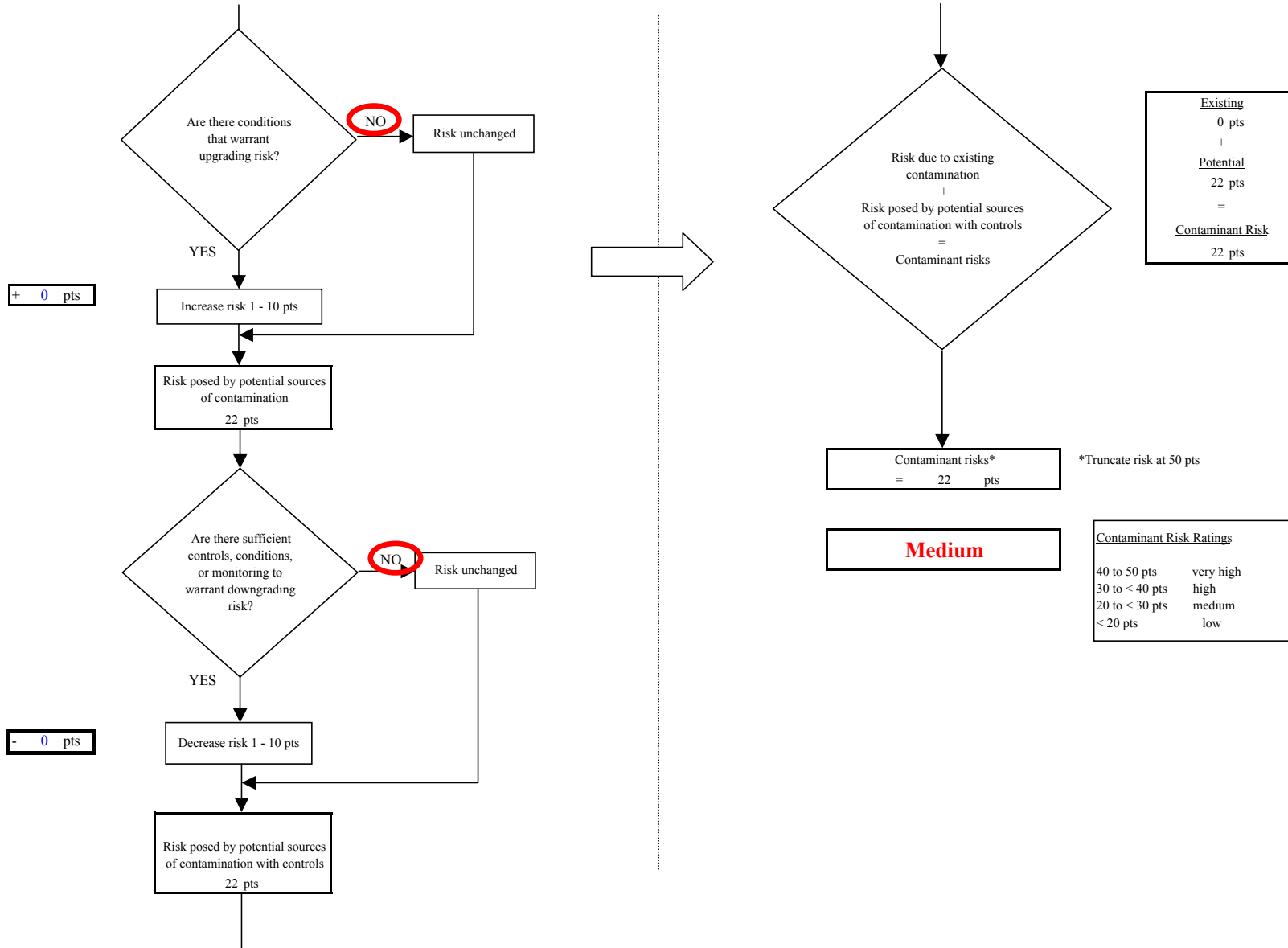


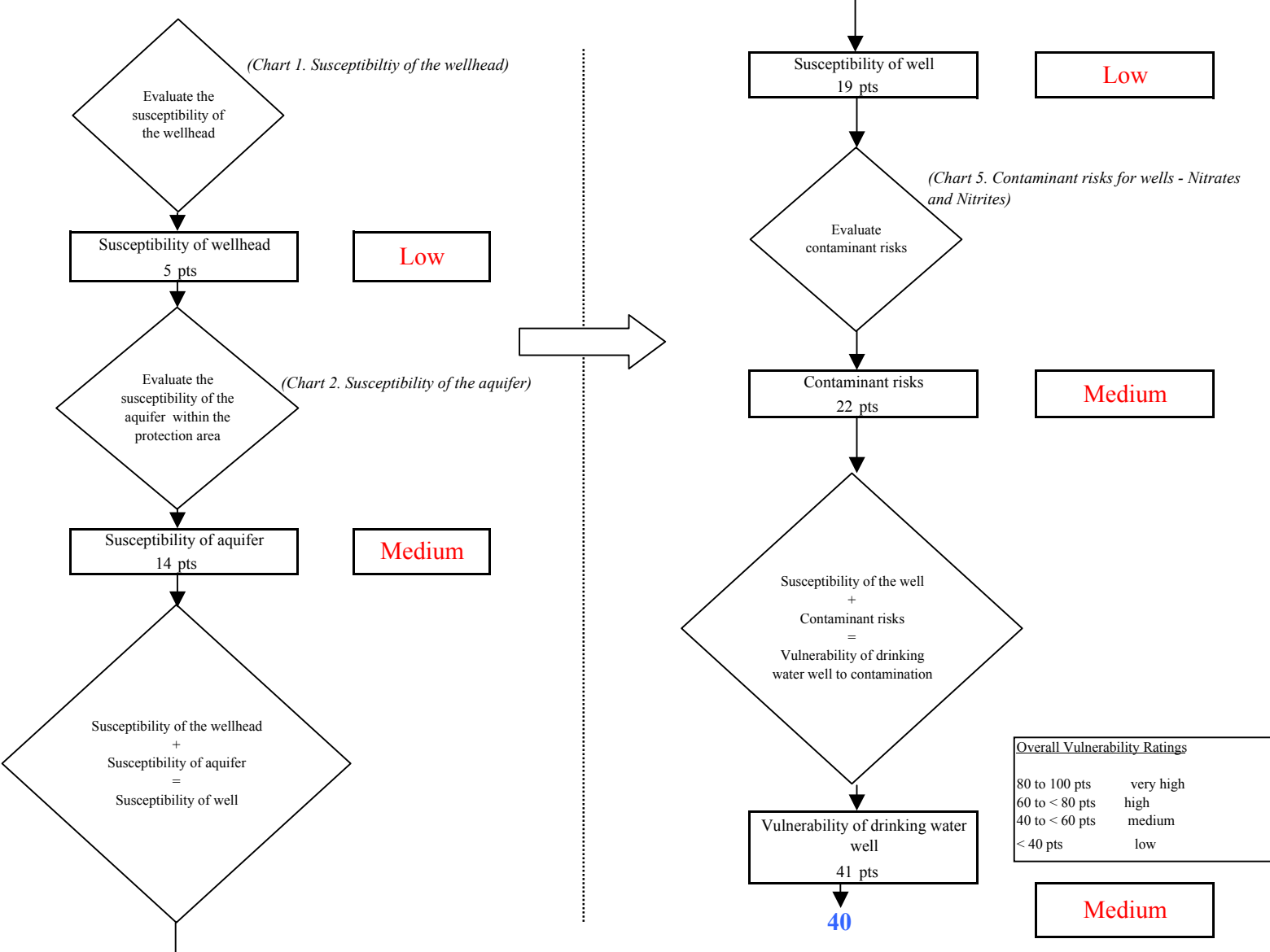
Chart 5. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites



**Chart 5. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites**



**Chart 6. Vulnerability analysis for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Nitrates and Nitrites**



**Chart 7. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals**

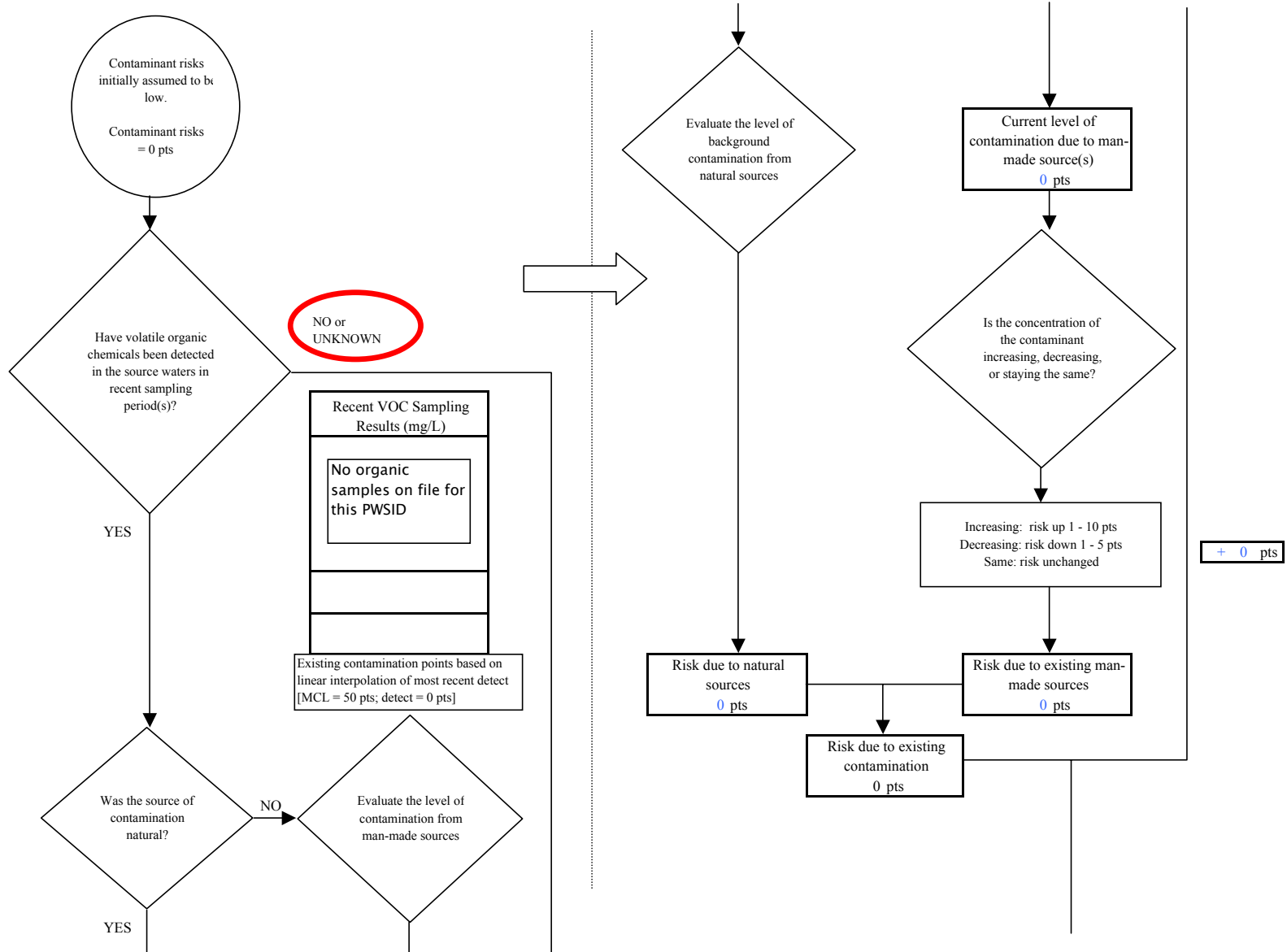
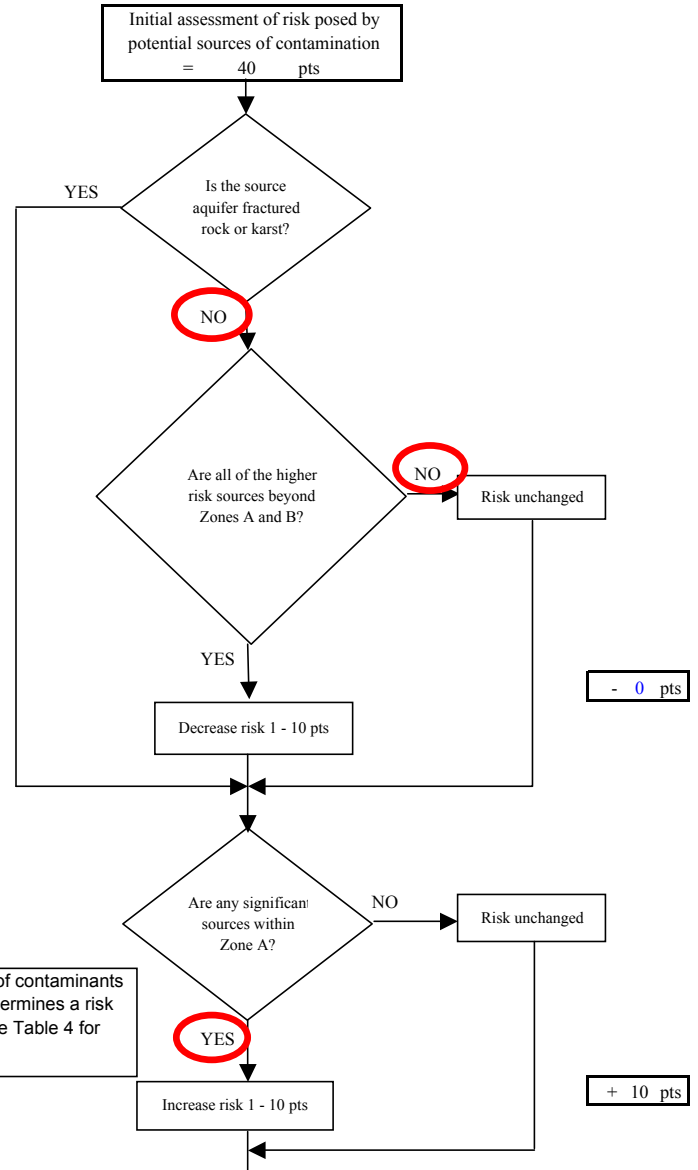
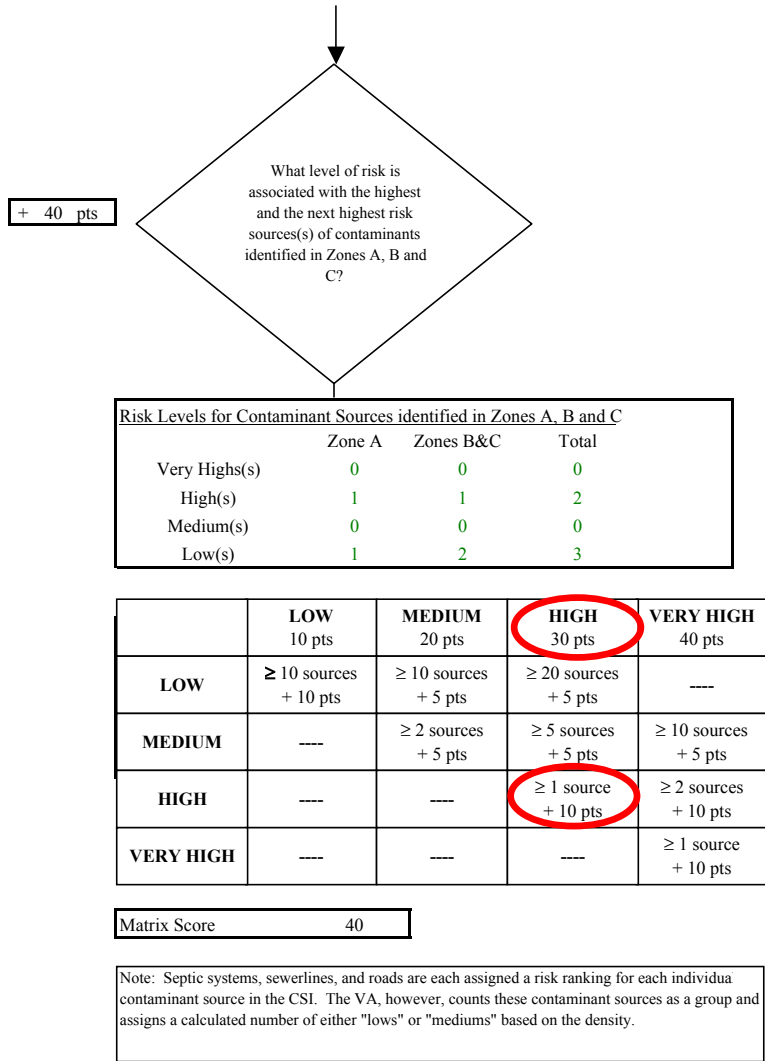
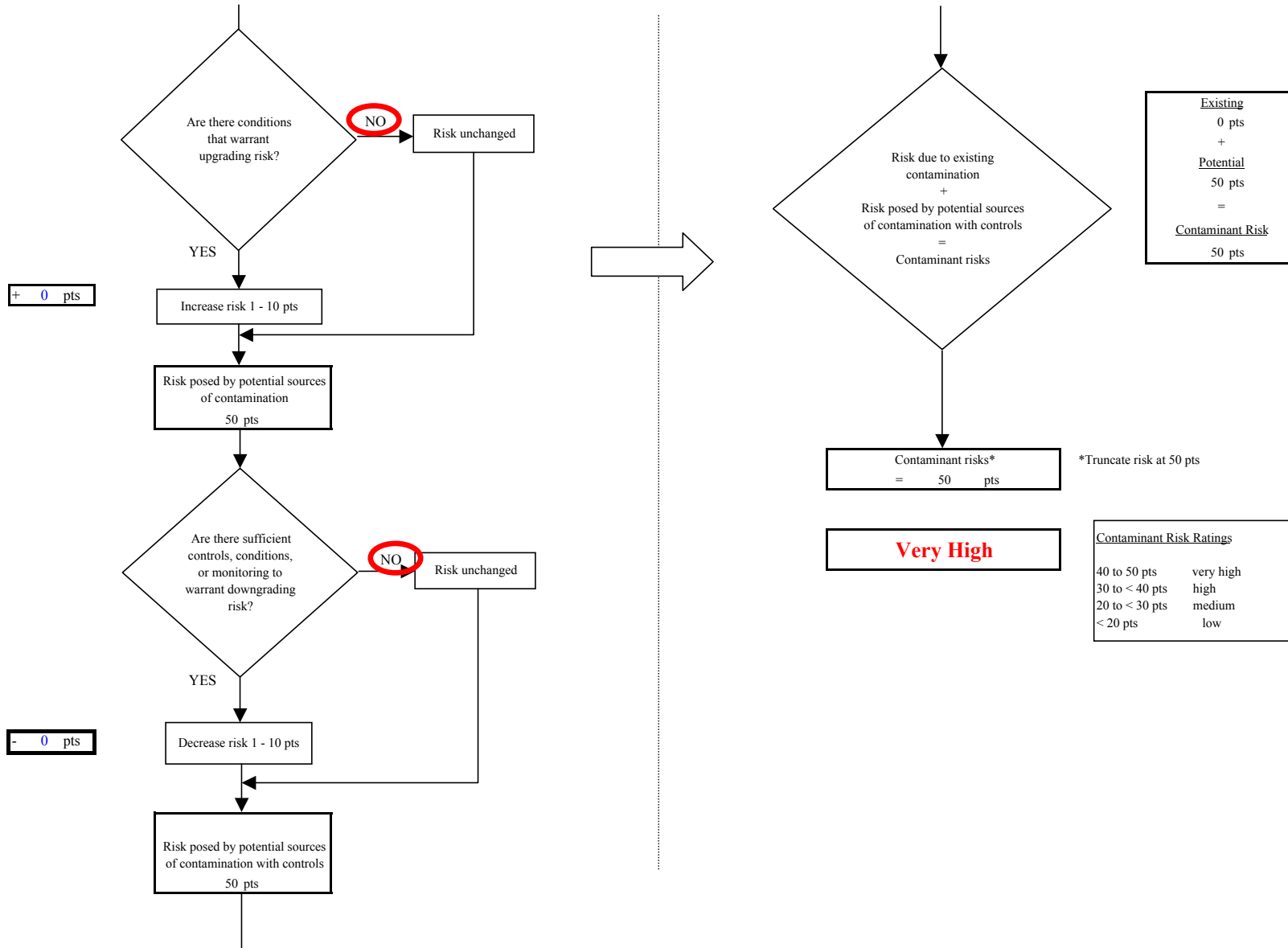


Chart 7. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals



**Chart 7. Contaminant risks for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals**



**Chart 8. Vulnerability analysis for Higher Ground Baptist Camp (244824.001) - Volatile Organic Chemicals**

