

Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and
Vulnerability Assessment for
Denali - C-Camp Campground
Drinking Water System,
Denali National Park, Alaska
PWSID # 390659

Source Water Assessment for Denali - C-Camp Campground Drinking Water System, Denali National Park, Alaska PWSID # 390659

By Ecology & Environment, Inc.

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM REPORT # 271

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The Drinking Water Protection Program 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. 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 Denali - C-Camp Campground Source of Public Drinking Water, Denali National Park, Alaska

By Ecology & Environment, Inc.

Drinking Water Protection Program Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Denali - C-Camp Campground is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system consisting of one well in Denali National Park, Alaska. Identified potential and current sources of contaminants for Denali - C-Camp Campground public drinking water source include: a motor vehicle repair shop, heating oil and diesel fuel tanks, glycol disposal and storage, a gravel road and a septic system. These identified potential and existing sources of contamination are considered sources of bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals. Overall, the public water sources for Denali - C-Camp Campground received a vulnerability rating of **Medium** for bacteria and viruses, **Medium** for nitrates and nitrites, and **Medium** for volatile organic chemicals.

INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) is completing source water assessments for all public drinking water sources in the State of Alaska. The purpose of this assessment is to provide owners and/or operators, communities, and local governments with information they can use to preserve the quality of Alaska's public drinking water supplies. The results of this source water assessment can be used to decide where voluntary protection efforts are needed and feasible, and also what efforts will be most effective in reducing contaminant risks to your water system. Ecology and Environment, Inc. has been contracted to perform these assessments under the supervision of ADEC.

This source water assessment combines a review of the natural conditions at the site and the potential and existing contaminant risks. These are combined to determine the overall vulnerability of the drinking water source to contamination.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DENALI NATIONAL PARK AREA

Location

The entrance to Denali National Park is located 237 miles north of Anchorage and 120 miles south of Fairbanks, along the George Parks Highway. The park is accessed via the 89-mile Denali Park Road. Private vehicle access is restricted past mile 15. The road dead-ends in the Kantishna area (Figure 1).

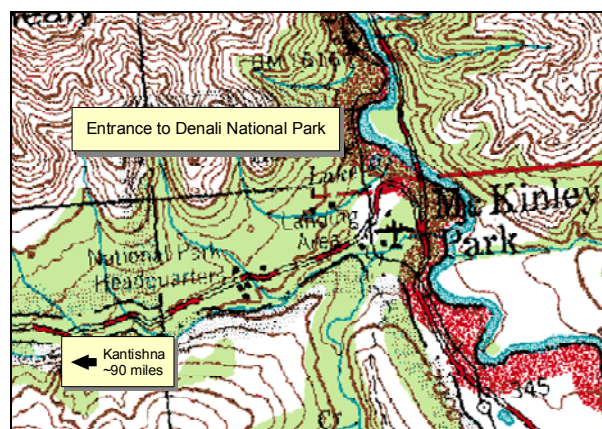


Figure 1

Precipitation

The Denali National Park area averages approximately 15 inches of precipitation per year, with approximately 81 inches of annual snowfall (ACRC 2002).

Topography and Drainage

The topography of Denali National Park is dominated by the high peaks of the Alaska Range. Drainage is typically off the mountains and alpine glaciers south of the road into the Savage, Sanctuary, Teklanika, and Toklat Rivers, among others, which flow generally north.

Groundwater Use

There are no permanent residences in the Park. Lodging establishments in the Kantishna area obtain their water from surface water sources or springs. Campgrounds within the Park obtain potable water from wells (ADCED 2002).

Geology and Soils

The surficial geology along the road is mainly composed of alluvial sand and gravel, with some glacial deposits. Mountainous terrain in the vicinity of the Kantishna Hills and Mounts Healy, Margaret, and Wright is typically composed of metamorphic quartzite and mica schist, with quartz schist and marble. Volcanic basalts and rhyolites, together with sandstone, shale and conglomerate of the Cantwell Formation, also are present in some areas along the road (Gilbert 1979).

DENALI - C-CAMP CAMPGROUND PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Denali - C-Camp Campground is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system consists of one well near the entrance to Denali National Park, at McKinley Park Road milepost 2.

According to the well log, the well was drilled in approximately October 1975 to a total depth of 76 feet below ground surface. The boring was originally drilled to 123 feet, but was backfilled with gravel from 76 to 123 feet. According to the most recent Sanitary Survey (6/18/99), the integrity of the well cap has been compromised by a hole in the top of the junction box on the cap, preventing it from serving as a sanitary seal. A properly installed sanitary seal may provide protection against contaminants from entering the source waters at the well casing. The land surface is appropriately sloped away from the well providing adequate surface water drainage. The well apparently was not grouted according to ADEC regulations (grouting was not required prior to 1993). Proper grouting provides added protection against contaminants travelling along the well casing and into source waters. The aquifer is assumed to be unconfined based on the water level and apparently lithologies encountered during drilling.

This system operates year-round and serves approximately 60 non-residents.

DENALI - C-CAMP 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. Some areas are more likely to allow contamination to reach the well than others. 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 a release of contaminants within the DWPA 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. The input parameters describing the attributes of the aquifer in this calculation were adopted from the U.S. Geological Survey (*Patrick et al. 1989*). Additional methods were also used to take into account any uncertainties in groundwater flow and aquifer characteristics to arrive at a meaningful DWPA (Please refer to the Guidance Manual for Class B Water Systems for additional information).

The DWPAs established for wells by the ADEC are separated into four zones. These zones correspond to differences in the time-of-travel (TOT) of the water moving through the aquifer to the well. 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 DWPA zones and the calculated time-of-travel for each:

Table 1. Definition of Zones

Zone	Definition
A	¼ the distance to the 2-year TOT
B	Less than the 2-year TOT
C	Less than the 5-year TOT
D	Less than the 10 year TOT

As an example, water moving through the aquifer in Zone B will most likely reach the well in less than 2 years from the time it crosses the outer limit of Zone B.

Zone A also incorporates the area downgradient from the well to take into account the area of the aquifer that is influenced by pumping of the well. Water within the

aquifer in Zone A will reach the well in several hours to several months.

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 Denali - C-Camp 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 water system assessments, three categories of drinking water contaminants were inventoried. They include:

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

Inventoried potential sources of contamination within Zones A through Zone D were associated with residential and light industrial type activities. The sources are summarized in the tables in Appendix B of the Guidance Manual.

RANKING OF CONTAMINANT RISKS

Once the potential and existing sources of contamination have been identified, they are sorted and ranked 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. Further, contaminant risks are a function of the number and density of those types of contaminant sources as well as the proximity of those sources to the well.

VULNERABILITY OF DENALI - C-CAMP CAMPGROUND DRINKING WATER SOURCE

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

- Natural susceptibility; and
- Contaminant risks.

Each of the three categories of drinking water contaminants has been analyzed and an overall vulnerability score of 0 to 100 is ultimately assigned:

Natural Susceptibility (0 – 50 points)

+

Contaminant Risks (0 – 50 points)

=

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

A score for the Natural Susceptibility is achieved by analyzing the properties of the well and the aquifer.

Susceptibility of the Wellhead (0 – 25 Points)

+

Susceptibility of the Aquifer (0 – 25 Points)

=

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

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.

Table 2 shows the Overall Susceptibility score and rating for Denali - C-Camp Campground (see Charts 1 and 2).

Table 2. Natural Susceptibility - Susceptibility of the Wellhead and Aquifer to Contamination

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the Wellhead	20	Very High
Susceptibility of the Aquifer	14	Medium
Natural Susceptibility	34	High

Contaminant risks to a drinking water source depend on the type, number or density, and distribution of contaminant sources. This data has been derived from an examination of existing or historical contamination that has been detected at the drinking water source through routine sampling. It also evaluates potential sources of contamination. Table 3 summarizes the Contaminant Risks for each category of drinking water contaminants (see Charts 3, 5, and 7).

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	12	Low
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	16	Low
Volatile Organic Chemicals	25	Medium

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 (see Charts 4, 6, and 8).

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability of Denali - C-Camp Campground to Contamination by Category

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	45	Medium
Nitrates and Nitrites	50	Medium
Volatile Organic Chemicals	55	Medium

Tables 2 through 4 in Appendix B contain a list of potential and existing sources of contamination with respect to bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals.

Only a small amount of bacteria and viruses are required to endanger public health. If bacteria and viruses have been detected during recent water sampling of the system at Denali - C-Camp Campground, the result is a maximum score on Chart 3.

The sampling history for the Denali - C-Camp Campground well indicates that nitrates and/or nitrites

are found in natural background concentration at this site, as elsewhere throughout Alaska. Nitrate concentrations in uncontaminated groundwater are typically less than 2 milligrams per liter (mg/L) and are derived primarily from the decomposition of organic matter in soils [Wang, Strelakos, Jokela, 2000]. Existing nitrate concentration in the Denali - C-Camp Campground well is approximately 0.7 mg/L or 7% of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 10mg/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. Due to the high solubility and weak retention by soil, nitrates are very mobile, moving at approximately the same rate as water. Though existing nitrate contamination was detected at the site, concentrations remain at safe levels with respect to human health (See Chart 5 - Contaminant Risks for Nitrates and/or Nitrites in Appendix D).

Class B Public Water systems are not required to test for volatile organic chemicals (VOCs); therefore, no score for pre-existing contamination has been assigned. The vulnerability score for VOCs reflects the potential for contamination from the sources indicated on Table 4 in Appendix B.

SUMMARY

A *Source Water Assessment* has been completed for the sources of public drinking water serving Denali - C-Camp Campground. The overall vulnerability of this source to contamination is **Medium** for bacteria and viruses, **Medium** for nitrates and nitrites, and **Medium** for volatile organic chemicals. This assessment of contaminant risks can be used as a foundation for local voluntary protection efforts as well as a basis for the continuous efforts on the part of Denali - C-Camp Campground to protect public health. It is anticipated that *Source Water Assessments* will be updated every five years to reflect any changes in the vulnerability and/or susceptibility of Denali - C-Camp Campground public drinking water source.

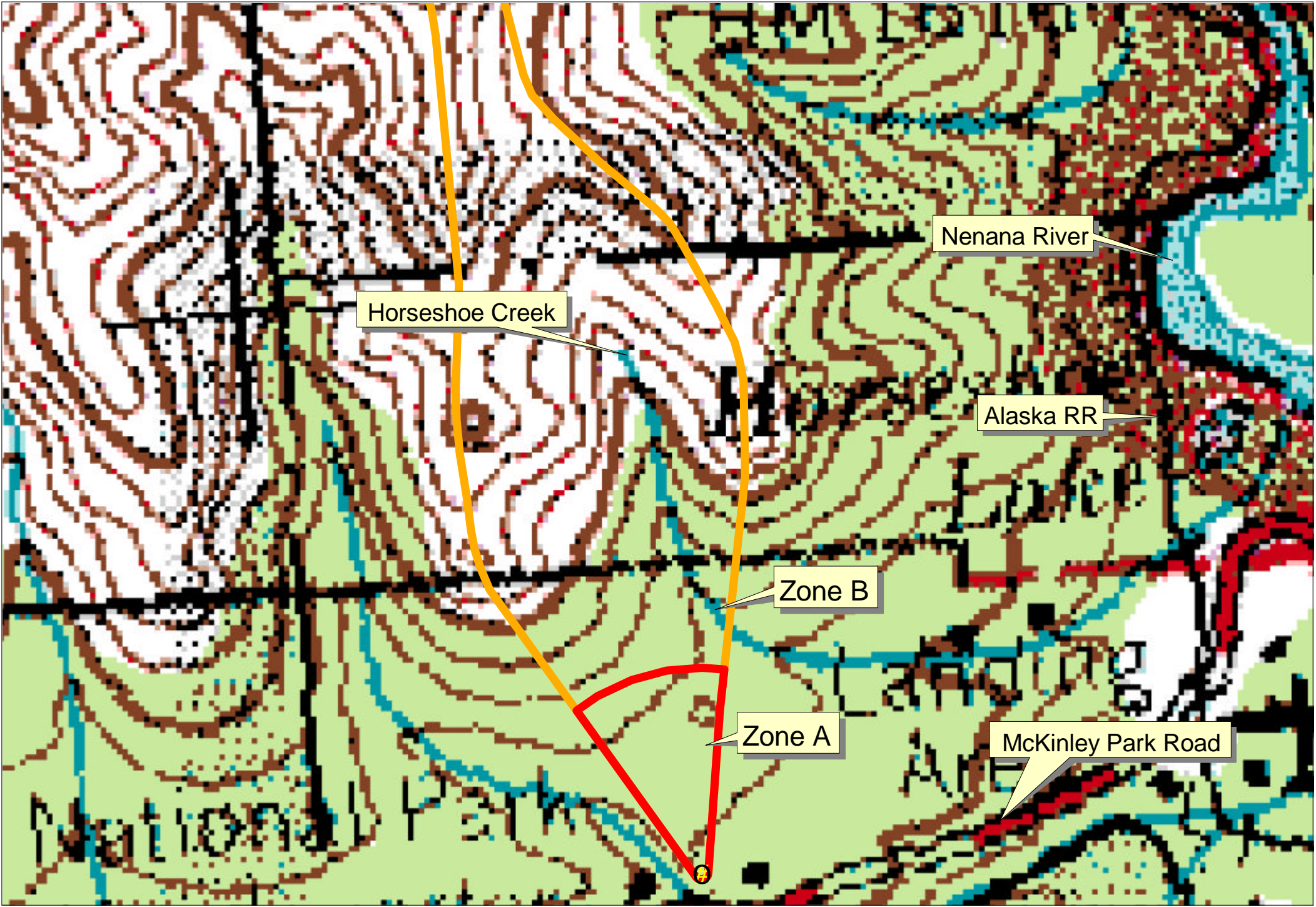
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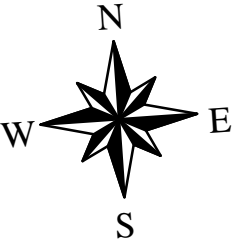
APPENDIX A

Denali - C-Camp Campground Drinking Water Protection Area (Map 1)

Drinking Water Protection Area for Denali C-Camp



- Denali-C-Camp Well
- Zone A (Few Months Travel Time)
- Zone B (Less Than 2 Months Travel Time)



APPENDIX B

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Denali - C-Camp Campground (Tables 1-4)

Table 1**Contaminant Source Inventory for
Denali - C-Camp Campground****PWSID 390659.001**

Contaminant Source Type	Contaminant Source ID	CS ID tag	Zone	Location	Map Number	Comments
Motor /motor vehicle repair shops	C31	C31-1	A	Denali C-Camp	2	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R2-1	A	Denali C-Camp	2	
Tanks, heating oil, nonresidential (aboveground)	T14	T14-1	A	Denali C-Camp	2	
Tanks, diesel (above ground)	T06	T6-1	A	Denali C-Camp	2	
Highways and roads, dirt/gravel	X24	X24-1	A	Unnamed Driveway	2	
Glycol (disposal or storage)	X7	X7-1	A	Denali C-Camp	2	

Table 2

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
Denali - C-Camp Campground
Sources of Bacteria and Viruses*

PWSID 390659.001

<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>Location</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R2-1	A	Low	Denali C-Camp	2	
Highways and roads, dirt/gravel	X24	X24-1	A	Low	Unnamed Driveway	2	

Table 3

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
Denali - C-Camp Campground
Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites*

PWSID 390659.001

<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>Location</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R2-1	A	Low	Denali C-Camp	2	
Highways and roads, dirt/gravel	X24	X24-1	A	Low	Unnamed Driveway	2	

Table 4

*Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for
Denali - C-Camp Campground
Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals*

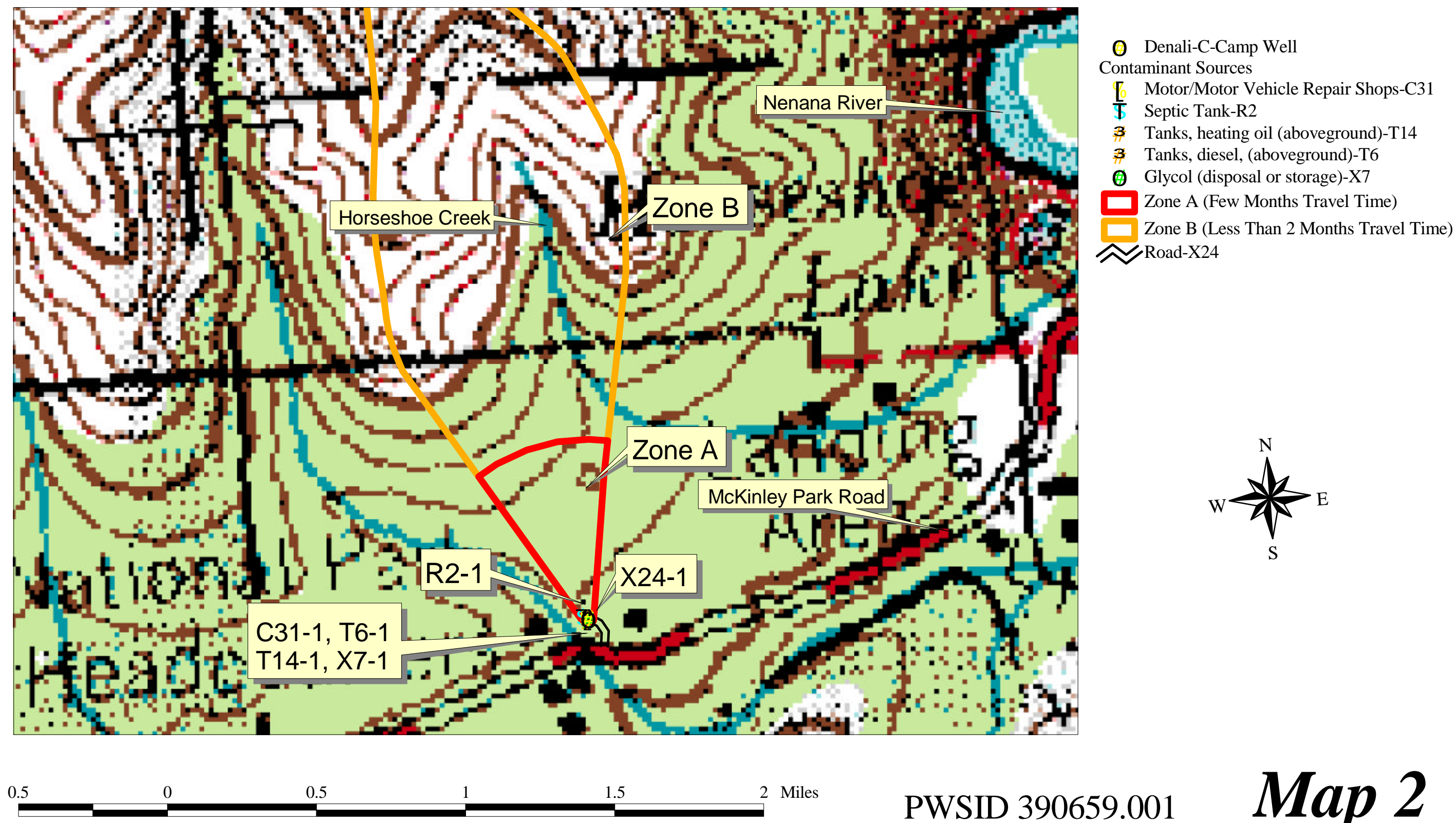
PWSID 390659.001

<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>Location</i>	<i>Map Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Motor /motor vehicle repair shops	C31	C31-1	A	Medium	Denali C-Camp	2	
Septic systems (serves one single-family home)	R02	R2-1	A	Low	Denali C-Camp	2	
Tanks, heating oil, nonresidential (aboveground)	T14	T14-1	A	Low	Denali C-Camp	2	
Tanks, diesel (above ground)	T06	T6-1	A	Medium	Denali C-Camp	2	
Highways and roads, dirt/gravel	X24	X24-1	A	Low	Unnamed Driveway	2	

APPENDIX C

Denali - C-Camp Campground Drinking Water Protection Area and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources (Map 2)

Drinking Water Protection Area for Denali C-Camp and Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination



APPENDIX D

Vulnerability Analysis for Denali - C-Camp Campground Public Drinking Water Source (Charts 1-8)

Chart 1. Susceptibility of the wellhead - Denali C-Camp

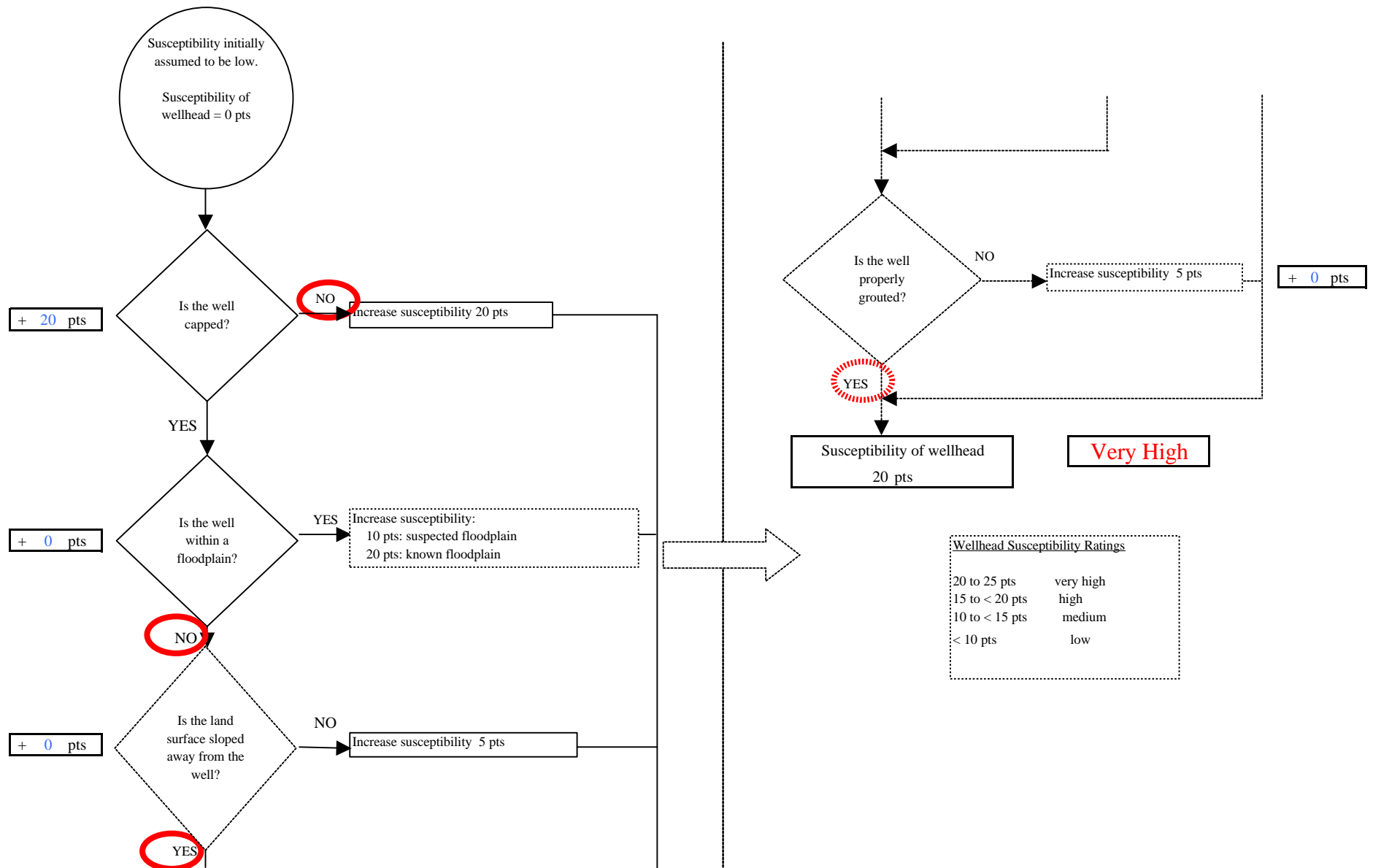


Chart 2. Susceptibility of the aquifer - Denali C-Camp

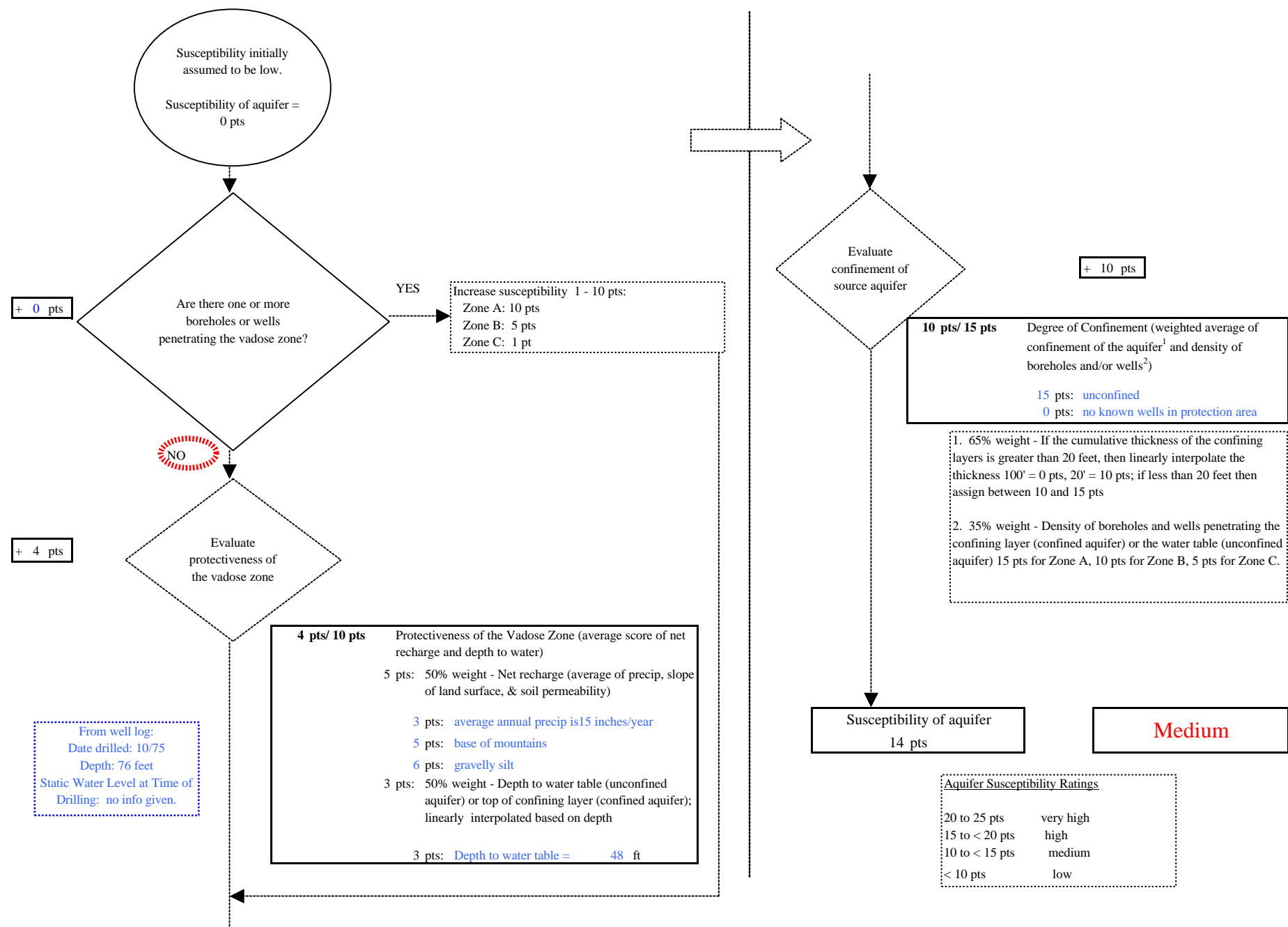


Chart 3. Contaminant risks for *Denali C-Camp - Bacteria & Viruses*

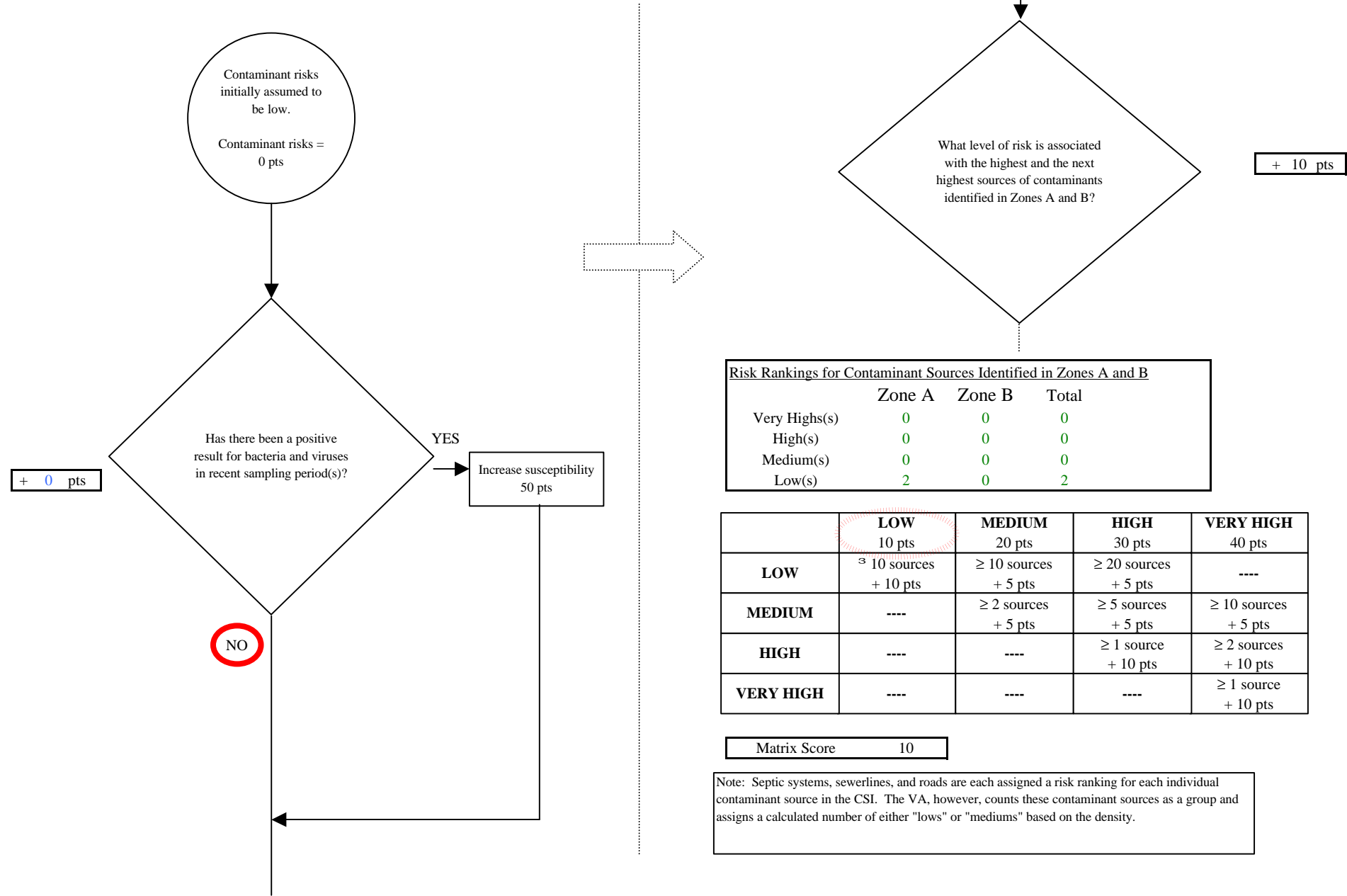


Chart 3. Contaminant risks for Denali C-Camp - Bacteria & Viruses

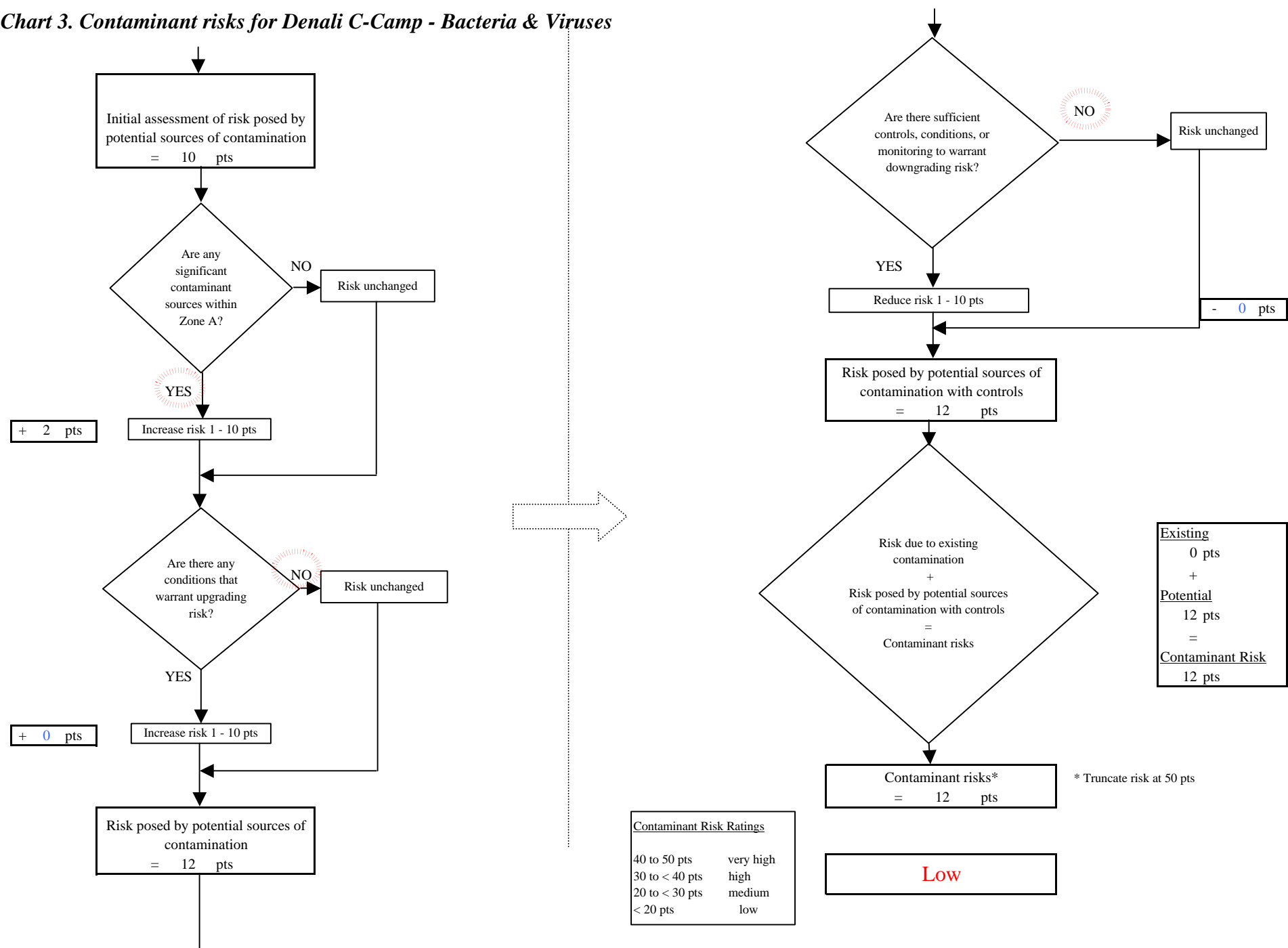


Chart 4. Vulnerability analysis for *Denali C-Camp* - Bacteria & Viruses

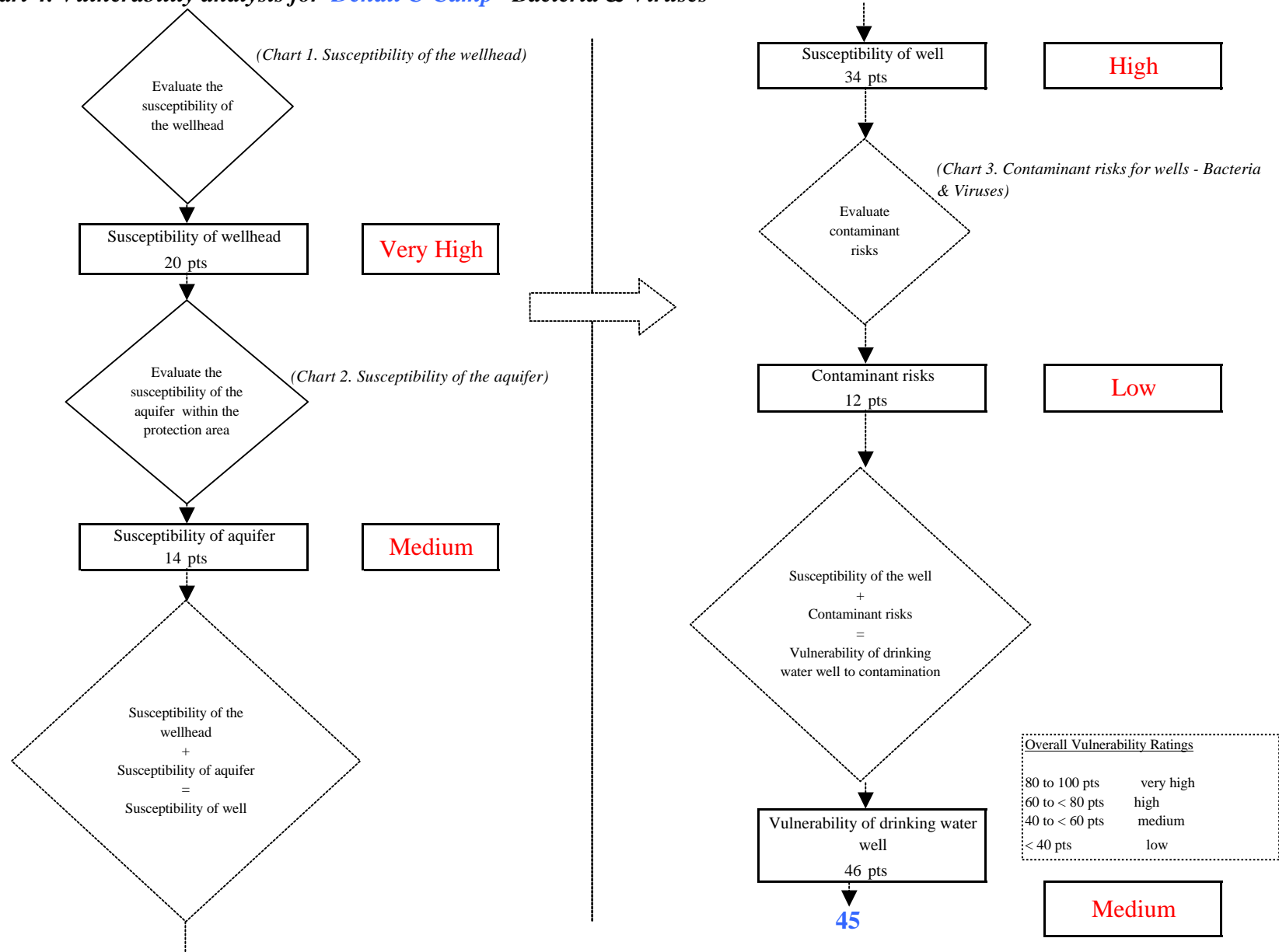


Chart 5. Contaminant risks for *Denali C-Camp* - Nitrates and Nitrites

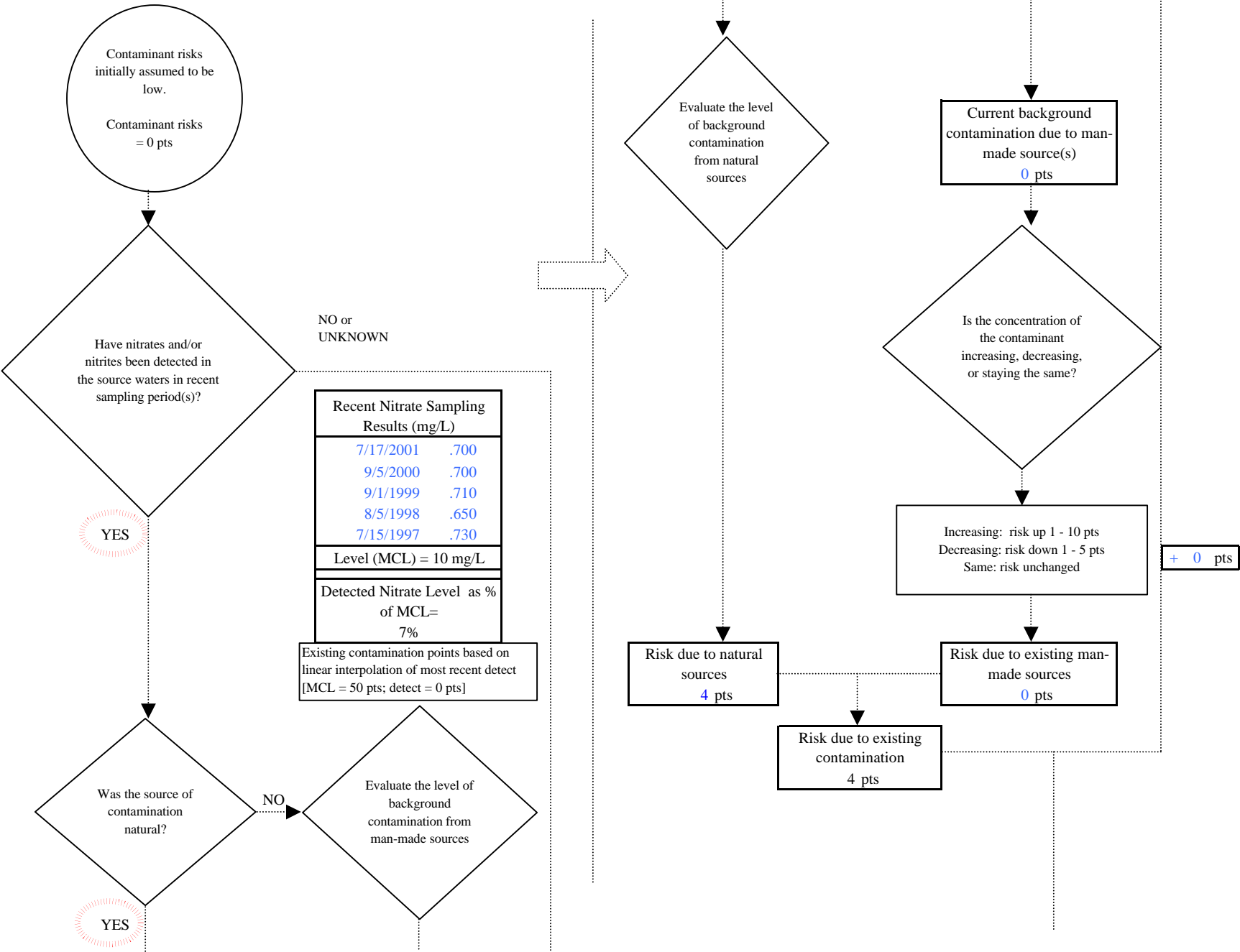


Chart 5. Contaminant risks for Denali C-Camp - Nitrates and Nitrites

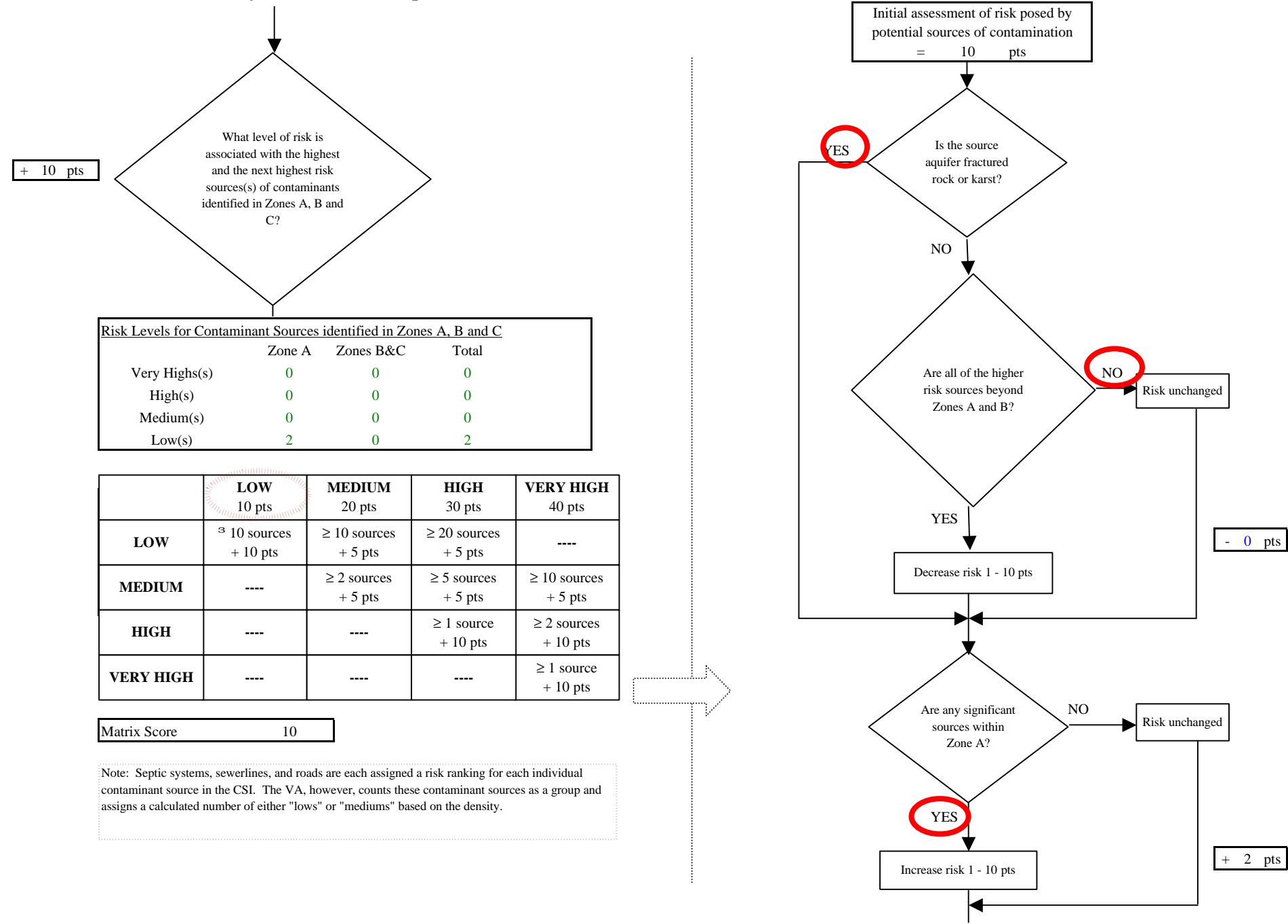


Chart 5. Contaminant risks for Denali C-Camp - Nitrates and Nitrites

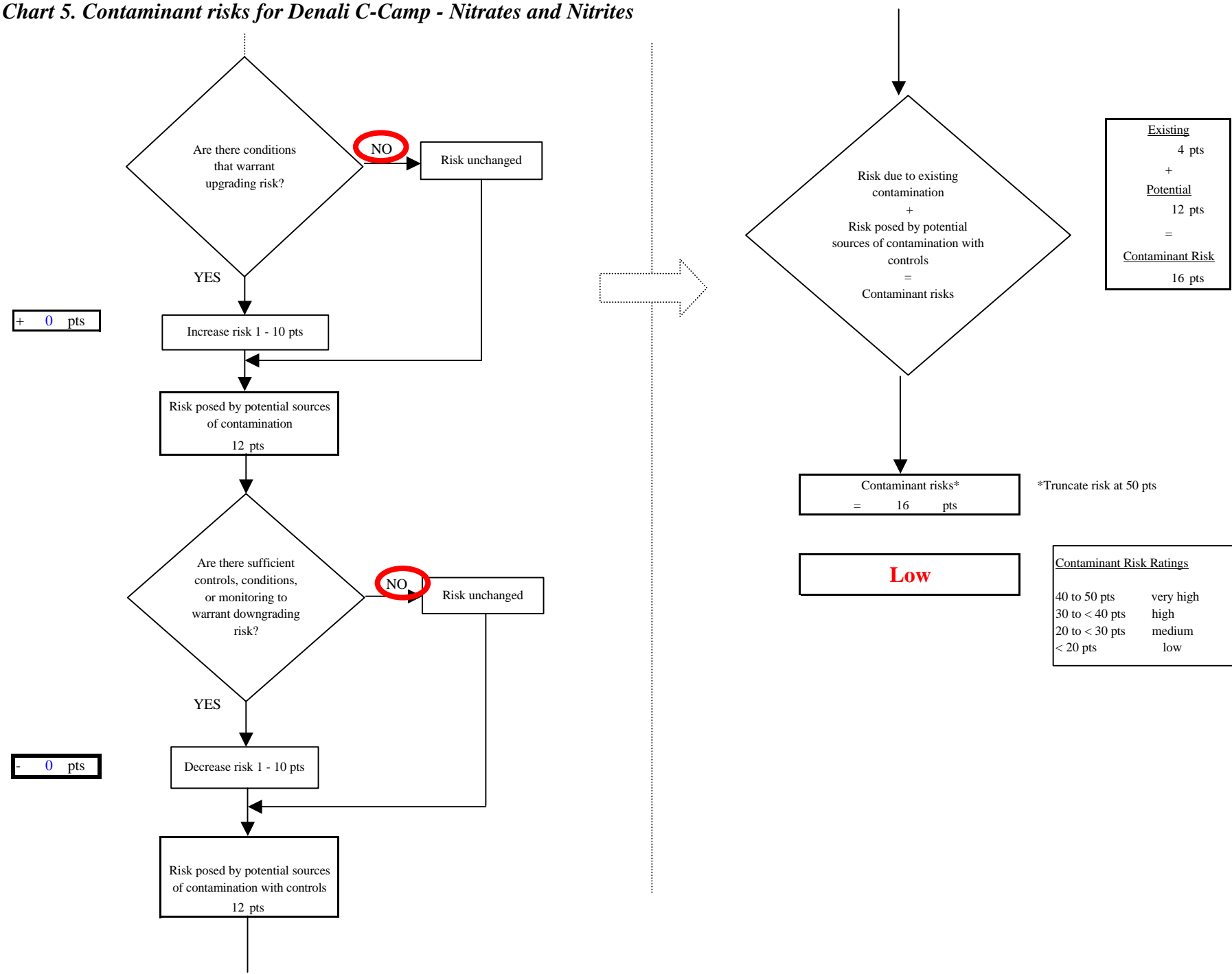


Chart 6. Vulnerability analysis for *Denali C-Camp* - Nitrates and Nitrites

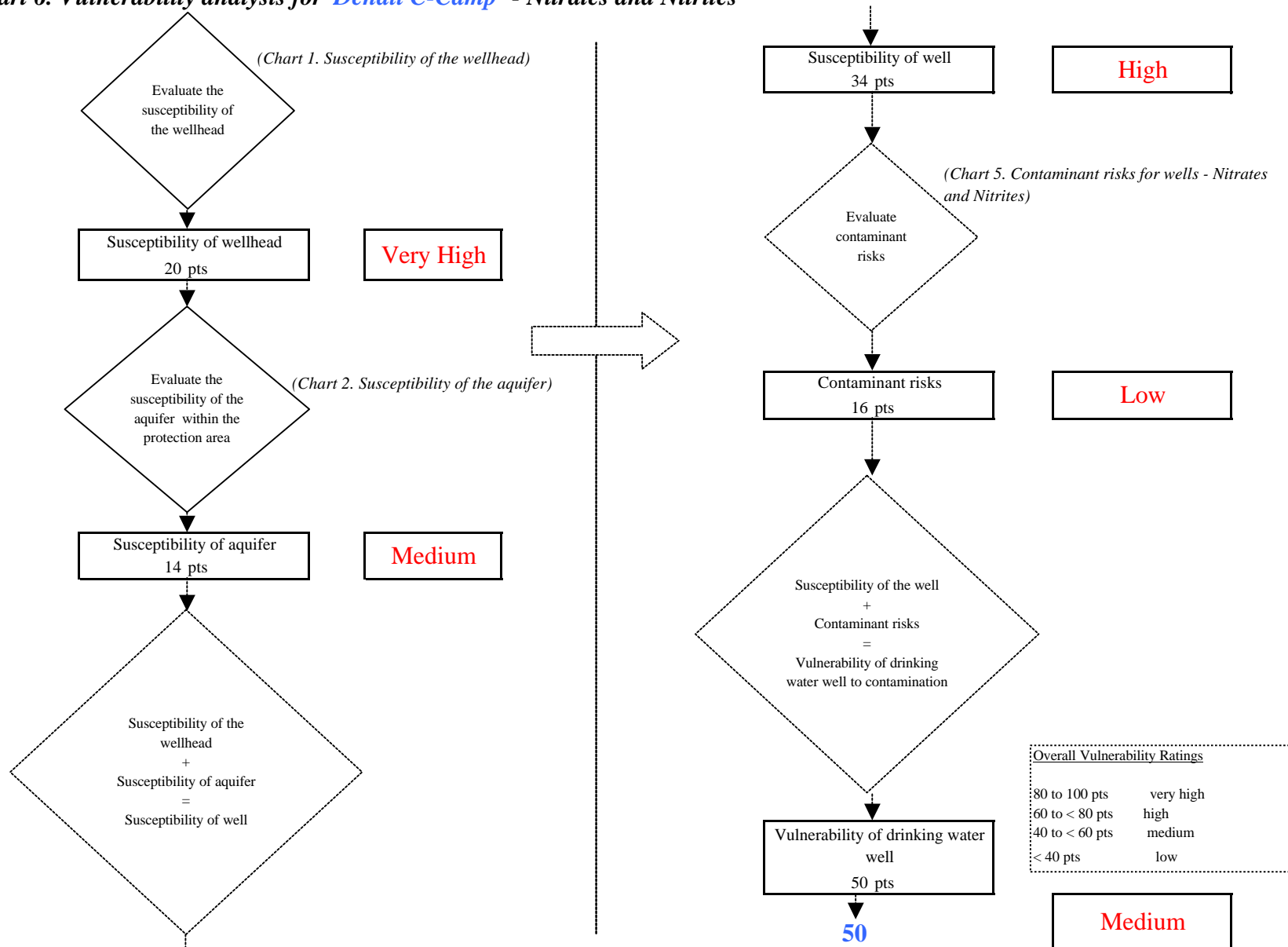


Chart 7. Contaminant risks for *Denali C-Camp* - Volatile Organic Chemicals

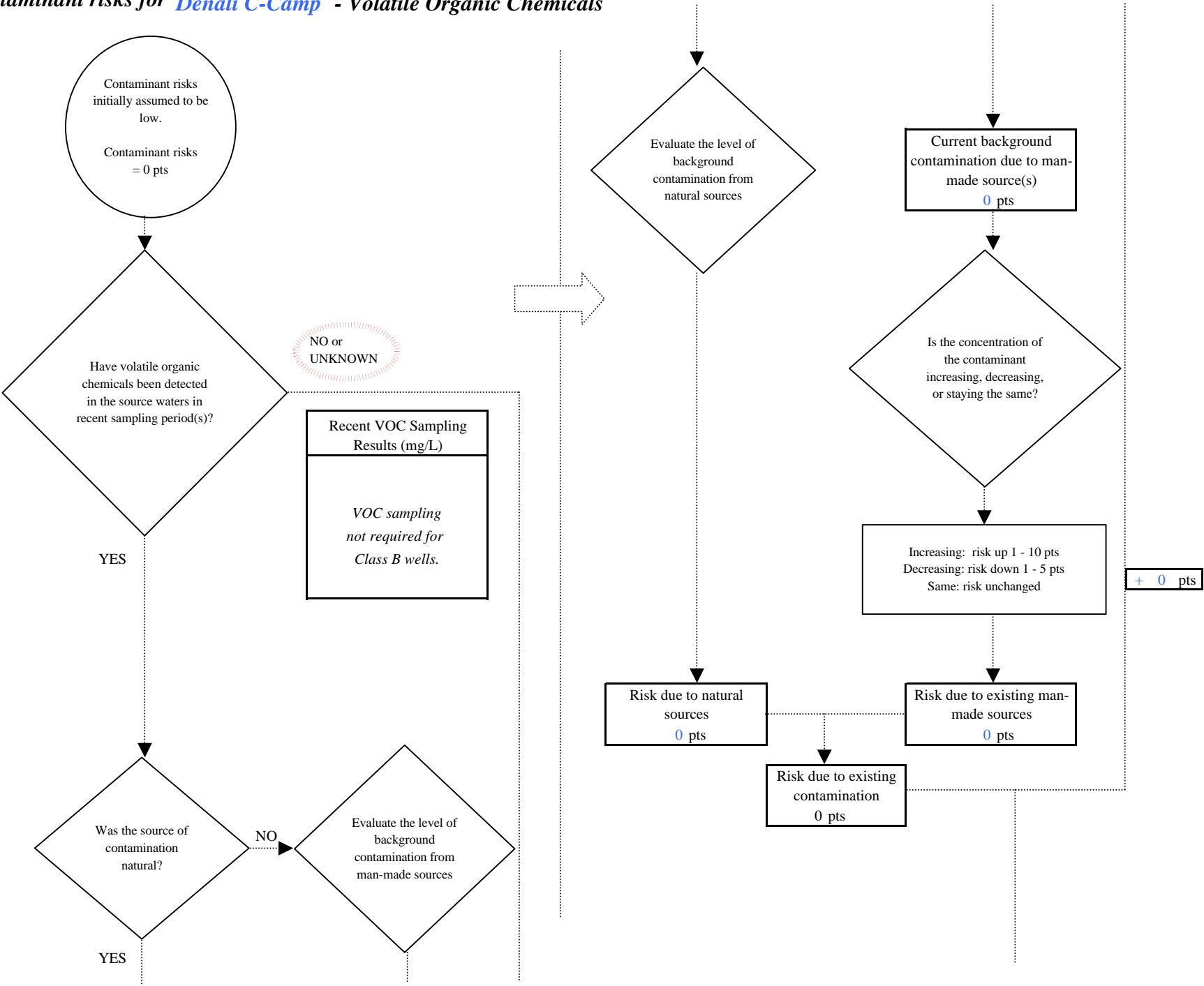


Chart 7. Contaminant risks for Denali C-Camp - Volatile Organic Chemicals

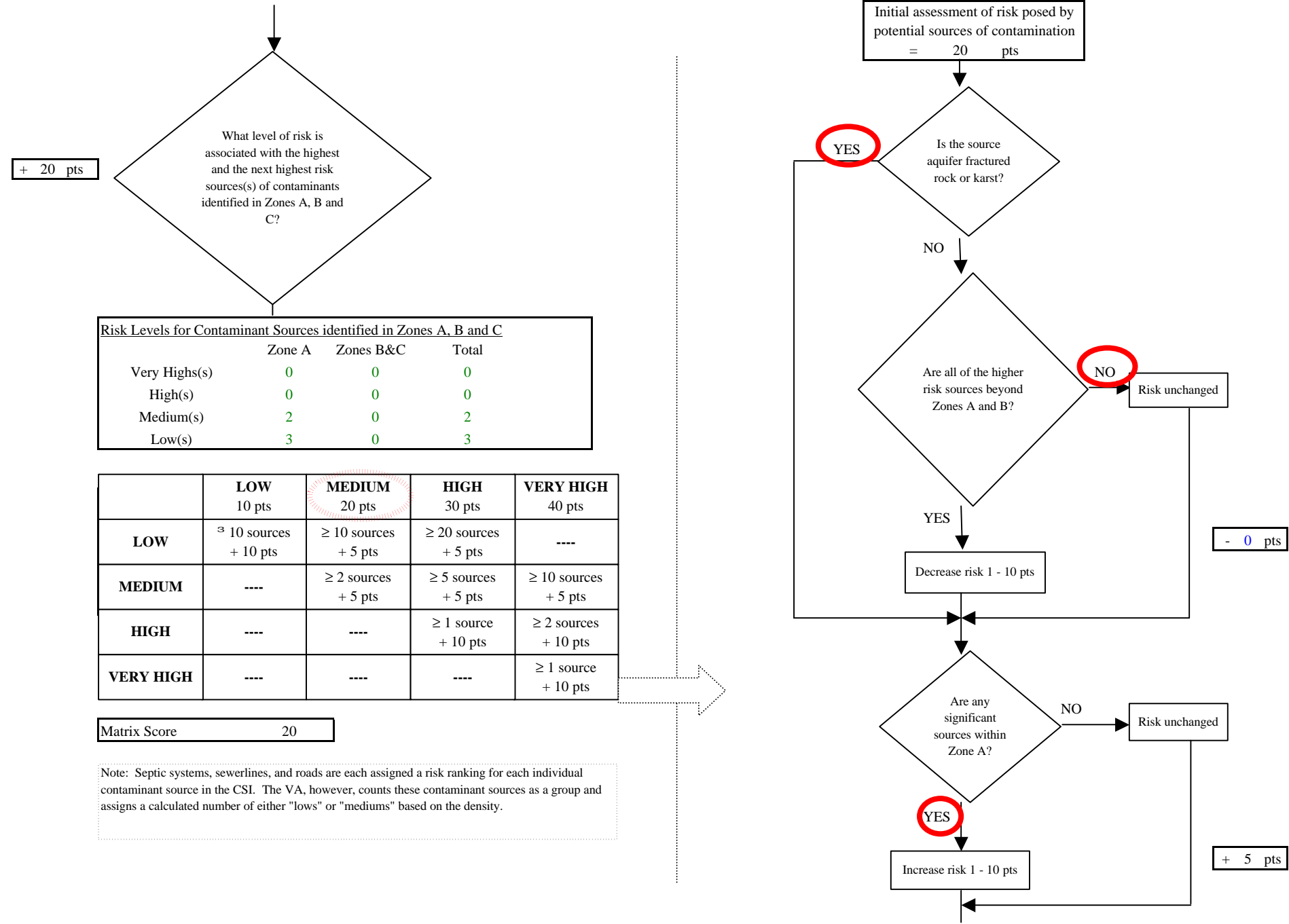


Chart 7. Contaminant risks for Denali C-Camp - Volatile Organic Chemicals

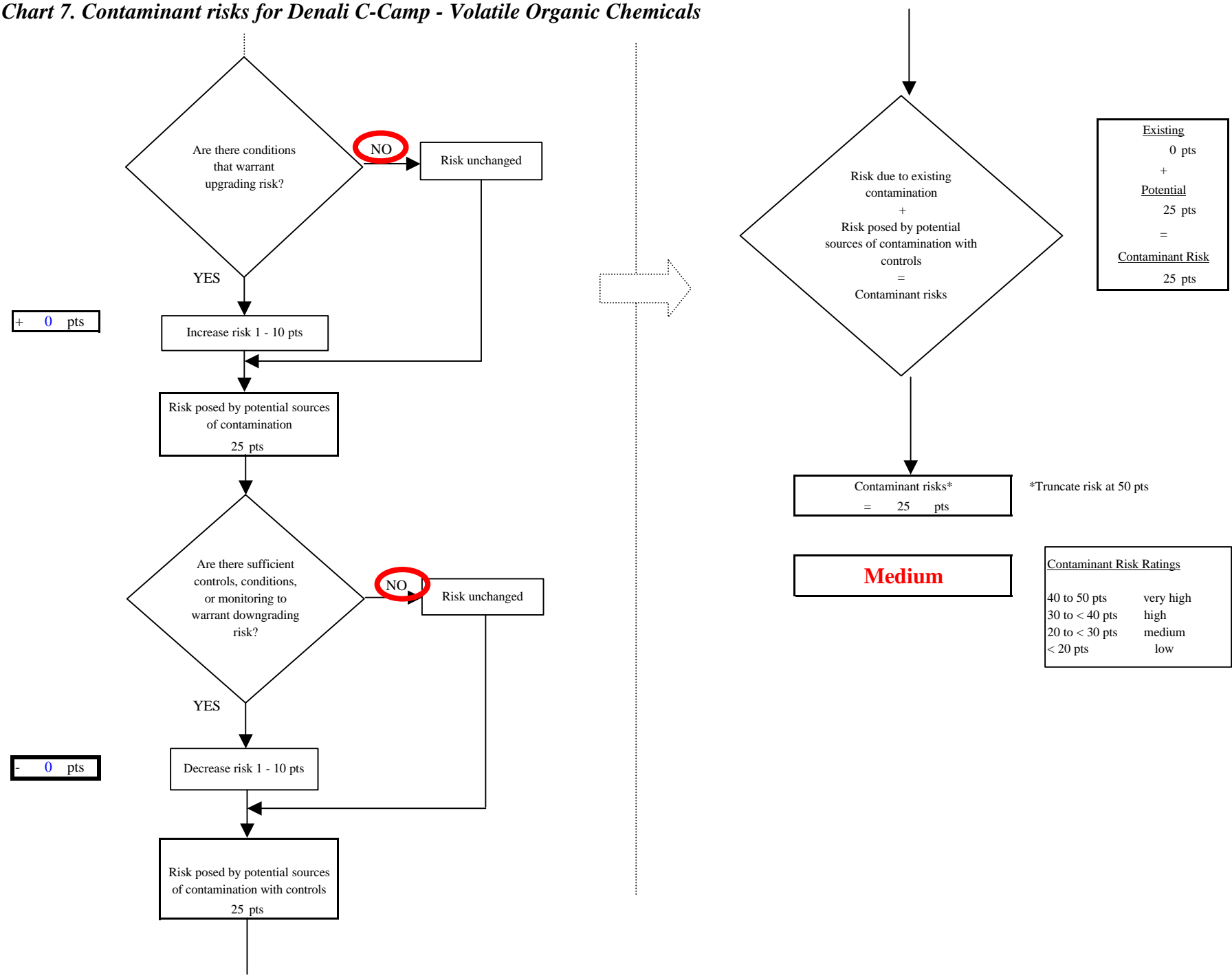


Chart 8. Vulnerability analysis for *Denali C-Camp* - Volatile Organic Chemicals

