

## DESCRIPTION

The Aptos Creek watershed, including Valencia Creek, is located in Santa Cruz County approximately 8.5 miles south of the City of Santa Cruz. The watershed encompasses approximately 24.5 square miles, and approximately sixty percent of the watershed (the main stem of Aptos Creek) is within the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park.

The remaining 40% of the watershed is primarily privately owned, and includes timber harvesting and rural residential development, with the exception of Aptos Village Park (owned by the County of Santa Cruz) and Aptos Creek State Beach (owned by the State). In this Critical Coastal Area (CCA) watershed, sedimentation resulting from these activities is affecting fish habitat and other beneficial uses in the streams.

Waterbodies in this CCA that are listed as impaired on the current (2016) Clean Water Act 303(d) list are **Aptos Creek** (impaired by indicator bacteria and sedimentation/siltation); **Valencia Creek** (impaired by E. coli and fecal coliform bacteria); and the **Pacific Ocean at Rio Del Mar, Aptos Creek Mouth** (impaired by total coliform bacteria). Potential sources of these pollutants, organized by **Source Categories**, are listed as **Urban Runoff** (urban runoff/storm sewers, and other urban runoff); **Municipal Wastewater** (collection system failure); **Miscellaneous** (domestic animals/livestock); **Natural Sources**; and **Source Unknown**.



### Aptos Creek

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For more photos, see the [California Coastal Records Project](#).

## CRITERIA FOR CCA IDENTIFICATION

The Aptos Creek [Critical Coastal Area](#) (CCA) was identified in 2002 based on the criterion of a coastal watershed where an impaired waterbody on the 2002 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list (Aptos Creek) flows into a federal Marine Managed Area (Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary).

This CCA also met the 2014 CCA identification criterion of a coastal watershed where an impaired waterbody on the 2010 303(d) list (Aptos Creek) flows into a state-identified Principal Bay or Estuary (Monterey Bay). See California Department of Fish and Wildlife's "[California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report](#)" (2001) and associated [map of the Principal Bays and Estuaries of California](#).

## ADDRESSING POLLUTANTS

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to make a [list of impaired waters](#) that are not attaining water quality standards, and to develop a [Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) or similar approach to account for all sources of the pollutants that caused the water to be listed as impaired. TMDLs include allocations to both point and nonpoint sources (NPS) of the listed pollutants. The current (2016) 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies includes pollutants, potential pollutant sources, and year a TMDL was approved or is expected.

To address NPS pollutants, see [California's Nonpoint Source Management Measures](#) for guidance on selecting appropriate Management Measures, which consist of a suite of plans, practices, technologies, operating methods, or other measures that may be used to control NPS pollution.

Information for this factsheet was originally compiled by members of California's Critical Coastal Areas Statewide Committee in 2006. The factsheet was revised and updated in 2019 by the California Coastal Commission's Water Quality Program staff.

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