

DESCRIPTION

This Critical Coastal Area (CCA) watershed flows into the Julia Pfeiffer Burns “Area of Special Biological Significance” (ASBS), an ocean area monitored and maintained for water quality by the State Water Resources Control Board. The Julia Pfeiffer Burns ASBS borders 3.7 miles of coastline, and protects 1,743 acres of marine habitat. This ASBS is entirely within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and also contains the Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Marine Conservation Area.

Located in Monterey County on the Big Sur coast, cliffs along this stretch of coastline are rugged and steep, greatly limiting access to the waterline. Inland from the ASBS in the CCA watershed is Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, which has a small campground and parking area near McWay Falls.

Most drainage into coastal waters is runoff from rural and wilderness watersheds, but [a survey of the ASBS in 2006](#) documented 25 discharge locations from Highway 1. After a large landslide triggered by heavy rains during the winter of 1982-83, Caltrans road-clearing operations on Highway 1 resulted in the deposition of massive amounts of sediment into the ASBS, completely filling McWay Cove. The cove had been populated by diverse intertidal and subtidal marine life; now McWay Falls flows onto a sandy beach. As a result, sediment erosion and downstream deposition into the ASBS is a continuing concern, as deposition of sand, and scour associated with the currents transporting that sand, are known to impact marine life there.

There are no waterbodies in this CCA that are listed as impaired on the current (2016) Clean Water Act 303(d) list.

CRITERIA FOR CCA IDENTIFICATION

The Julia Pfeiffer Burns [Critical Coastal Area](#) (CCA) was identified in 2002 using the criterion of a coastal watershed that flows into an [Area of Special Biological Significance](#) (Julia Pfeiffer Burns ASBS), which is also a State Water Quality Protection Area.

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.



Coastline of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Marine Conservation Area

(Photo courtesy of the State Water Resources Control Board).

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

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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