

DESCRIPTION

The 103-square mile Lagunitas Creek watershed is the largest watershed in Marin County. Primary tributaries are San Geronimo, Devil's Gulch, Nicasio Creek, and Olema Creek. A large part of the watershed is within State and Federal parklands; the largest landowner is the National Park Service. The second largest landowner is Marin Municipal Water District, and Marin County Open Space District holds about 2,000 acres in the watershed. There are a number of small towns along the San Geronimo Creek tributary.

This Critical Coastal Areas (CCA) watershed is of statewide significance for coho salmon and California freshwater shrimp, as well as steelhead. The Marin Municipal Water District dams the creek in its upper reaches for municipal drinking water. Lagunitas Creek and its tributaries are impaired by nutrients, sediments, and pathogens. Nonpoint source pollution inputs include failing septic systems, urban runoff, and agricultural runoff. Urban uses and old logging roads also contribute sediment to the watershed.

Waterbodies in this CCA that are listed as impaired on the current (2016) Clean Water Act 303(d) list in this CCA are **Lagunitas Creek** (impaired by sedimentation/ siltation, nutrients, and pathogens); and **Tomaes Bay** (impaired by mercury, nutrients, sedimentation/siltation, and pathogens). Potential sources of these pollutants are all listed as **Source Unknown**.

CRITERIA FOR CCA IDENTIFICATION

The Lagunitas 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 (Lagunitas Creek) flows into a federal Marine Managed Area (Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, expanded and renamed in 2015 to Greater Farallones 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 (Lagunitas Creek) flows into a state-identified Principal Bay or Estuary (Tomaes 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.



Lagunitas Creek

(Photo courtesy of the Marin Municipal Water District).

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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