

CCA #32 Pescadero & Butano Creeks Critical Coastal Area

DESCRIPTION

With an extensively wooded upper watershed, willow-alder riparian corridors, and a large estuarine marsh, this 80-square mile watershed in San Mateo County supports one of the largest remaining runs of steelhead within the San Francisco Bay region. It also supported a large coho salmon run as recently as the late 1960s, although few, if any, coho have returned to spawn in recent years. Pescadero Marsh is the largest wetland habitat between San Francisco Bay and Elkhorn Slough.

The Pescadero-Butano Creek Critical Coastal Area (CCA) watershed is impaired by accelerated rates of erosion and sedimentation believed to result from natural geologic and climatic processes, augmented by human land use practices. The largest anthropogenic sources of sediment are believed to be active and abandoned roads on unstable slopes near stream channels; and hillside gullies on agricultural and range lands in the lower watershed, formed primarily as a result of hillside row-cropping in the 1930s. Rapid and severe channel aggradation in Lower Butano Creek has caused frequent and severe flooding in and around the Town of Pescadero.

Waterbodies in this CCA that are listed as impaired on the current (2016) Clean Water Act 303(d) list in this CCA are **Pescadero Creek** (impaired by sedimentation/siltation); and **Butano Creek** (also impaired by sedimentation/siltation). Potential sources of this pollutant are listed as **Source Unknown**.



Mouth of Pescadero Creek

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

CRITERIA FOR CCA IDENTIFICATION

The Pescadero and Butano Creeks [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 (Pescadero Creek, and Butano Creek) flows into a state Marine Managed Area (Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve).

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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