

## CCA #117 San Luis Rey River Estuary Critical Coastal Area

### DESCRIPTION

This Critical Coastal Area (CCA) watershed drains into the San Luis Rey River, which flows into the San Luis Rey River Estuary before entering the ocean in the City of Oceanside in northern San Diego County.

San Luis Rey River has slight meanders and a natural bottom, and terminates in a lagoon most times of year. This CCA watershed includes most of the estuarine portion of the river.

Land uses in the CCA watershed are mainly residential, with a few parks and open space areas adjacent to the river. The river empties onto Oceanside Harbor Beach, separated from the harbor facilities on the north side by a levee and jetty extending into the ocean. To the south of the river outlet are a cluster of vacation accommodations and beach homes. These buildings extend all the way to the water, bisecting the beach via a strip of shoreline protection and forcing the river outlet into a small section of beach between the jetty and the homes.

The estuary is currently crossed by Interstate-5 and a railroad bridge. A small paved road formerly covered the estuary at the beach, only allowing flow through a small culvert. This road has now been moved slightly inland and elevated above the water surface to allow more normal flows to the ocean.

The San Luis Rey River headwaters begin in the hills near Palomar Mountain, collected behind the dam at Lake Henshaw. The river flows through hilly agriculture and low-density residential areas for most of its length. Soon after entering the City of Oceanside, the river becomes channelized to protect the higher-density residential areas from flooding, becoming natural again only near the estuary. Much of the channelized portion is dry except during large rain events.

Waterbodies in this CCA that are listed as impaired on the current (2016) Clean Water Act 303(d) list in this CCA are the **San Luis Rey River, Lower (West of Interstate 15)** (impaired by indicator bacteria, benthic community effects, nitrogen, phosphorus, toxicity, bifenthrin, chloride, and total dissolved solids); and the **Pacific Ocean Shoreline at San Luis Rey River Outlet** (impaired by indicator bacteria). Potential sources of these pollutants, organized by **Source Categories**, are listed as **Unspecified Nonpoint Source** (unknown nonpoint source); **Unspecified Point Source** (unknown point source); and **Source Unknown**.



### San Luis Rey River Estuary

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

## CRITERIA FOR CCA IDENTIFICATION

The San Luis Rey River Estuary [Critical Coastal Area](#) (CCA) was identified in 2014 based on the criterion of a coastal watershed where an impaired waterbody on the 2010 Clean Water Act 303(d) list (San Luis Rey River) flows into a state-identified Principal Bay or Estuary (San Luis Rey River Estuary). 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.

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