

## DESCRIPTION

This Critical Coastal Area (CCA) watershed, which covers approximately 130 square miles, is one of the two largest watersheds in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area in Los Angeles County. Ballona Creek is a 9-mile long flood control channel that drains this watershed; it formerly drained into a large wetland complex, but now it has no direct connection to the few wetlands remaining in the area.

However, Ballona Creek often affects the nearby wetlands due to pollutants such as trash, suspended material, and dissolved contaminants moving from the ocean to the nearby Ballona Wetlands and Marina del Rey Harbor. Pollutants found in this CCA watershed include several metals (such as copper, lead, zinc, cadmium, and silver) and pesticides of historical origin (such as DDT, dieldrin, and chlordane), among other pollutants.

Waterbodies in this CCA that are listed as impaired on the current (2016) Clean Water Act 303(d) list are **Ballona Creek Estuary** (impaired by toxicity, copper, lead, zinc, cadmium, silver, PCBs, DDT, chlordane, PAHs, and indicator bacteria); **Ballona Creek Wetlands** (impaired by trash, habitat alterations, exotic vegetation, and reduced tidal flushing); **Dockweiler Beach** (impaired by indicator bacteria); and **Marina del Rey Harbor Back Basins** (impaired by dissolved oxygen, indicator bacteria, toxicity, dieldrin, DDT, chlordane, PCBs, copper, zinc, and lead). Potential sources of these pollutants, organized by **Source Categories**, are listed as **Unspecified Nonpoint Source**; **Unspecified Point Source**; and **Source Unknown**.



**Ballona Creek and Marina del Rey Channel**

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

## CRITERIA FOR CCA IDENTIFICATION

The Ballona 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 (Ballona Creek and Ballona Creek Estuary) flows into a federal Marine Managed Area (Santa Monica Bay National Estuary).

## 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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