

Introduction

This water quality monitoring fact sheet was prepared by the Irrigated Agriculture Program of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) and made available on November 30, 2008. The data were delivered by Central Coast Water Quality Preservation, Inc. (CCWQP) to the Water Board as part of the monitoring and reporting requirements for all dischargers enrolled under *Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharge from Irrigated Lands, Order No. R3-2004-0117*. Monitoring stations were selected to represent water quality in predominantly agricultural areas, but in some cases reflect mixed land uses upstream of the sites.

309ASB Alisal Slough at White Barn

The Cooperative Monitoring Program sampled Alisal Slough at White Barn 37 times (one sample per month) between January 2005 and December 2007, with an additional sample in February 2005.

Summary of Water Quality Data

Notable Measured Analytes for Water Quality Monitoring

Analyte/Parameter	Average	Range	Water Quality Criteria (WQC) or Guideline ¹	Percent Outside WQC or Guideline
Ammonia as N, Unionized	0.009 mg/L	0.001–0.034 mg/L	<0.025 mg/L ⁺	9%
Nitrate/Nitrite as N	38.5 mg/L	0.035–75.8 mg/L	<10.0 mg/L*	93%
Orthophosphate as P	0.48 mg/L	0.004–0.83 mg/L	<0.12 mg/L*	97%
Turbidity (NTU)	93 NTU	4.6–715 NTU	<25 NTU*	84%
Conductivity	3.09mmho/cm	2.17–4.56 mmho/cm	Ranges: * <0.75 No Problem 0.75–3.0 Increasing >3.0 Severe	% in Range: 0% 27% 73%
pH	8.0	7.7–8.6	7.0–8.5*	5%
Annual Median Dissolved Oxygen (% Saturation)	2005: 101% 2006: 74% 2007: 104%	50–155%	>85% annual median ⁺	Std met Std not met Std met
Dissolved Oxygen	9.0 mg/L	5.0–14.1 mg/L	>5.0 mg/L (GEN/WARM) ⁺ >7.0 mg/L (COLD/SPWN) [*]	0% 14%
Chlorophyll a	3.0 µg/L	0.2 –35 µg/L	<40 µg/L*	0%
Water Temperature	17.7°C	9.9–25.2°C	Water Basin Specific	--

+ Indicates standard defined in the Water Quality Control Plan, Central Coast Basin (Basin Plan)

* Indicates guideline not described in the Basin Plan or not specifically stated as applicable to the beneficial uses of the site. Origin of the guideline is described in the individual discussion of the analyte/parameter.

The present and potential beneficial uses for **Alisal Slough** are not specified in the Basin Plan. General Basin Plan water quality objectives will apply. Any analytes not specified under the general objectives in the Basin Plan are compared to a different water quality guideline to create a better understanding of the site's condition.

Unionized Ammonia (as N)

Unionized ammonia (as N) is a calculated value based on water temperature, pH, and total ammonium concentration. Ammonia can be toxic in water. With high water temperature and/or high pH, ammonia becomes unionized and is toxic at

¹ Water Quality Criteria (WQC) are defined in the Water Quality Control Plan, Central Coast Basin (also referred to as the "Basin Plan") to protect beneficial uses such as drinking water, fish habitat, irrigation water, etc. WQC include general water quality standards for some analytes as well as specific criteria based on the defined beneficial uses. Other water quality guidelines were compiled to provide a standard in order to compare sites. Bold indicates beneficial uses that apply to this watershed.

much lower levels. The Basin Plan general water quality objectives state that unionized ammonia shall not exceed 0.025 mg/L. Over time, ammonia should reduce to nitrate, so long-lasting levels of ammonia may indicate continuous discharges of waste. **Three of 35 samples (9%) exceeded the standard. There were no apparent cycles. The average unionized ammonia concentration was 0.009 mg/L.**

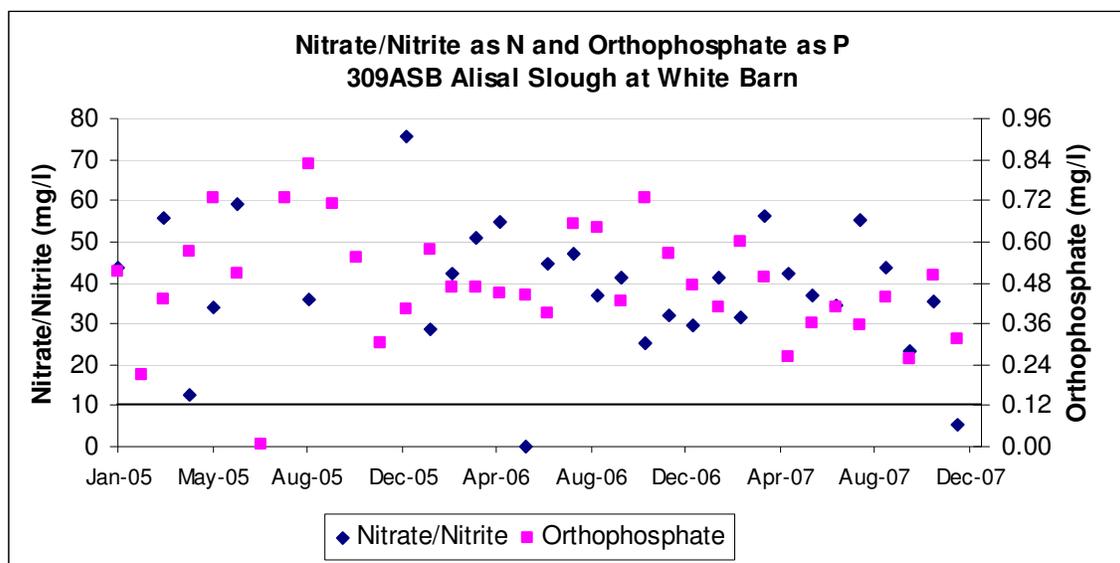
Nitrate/Nitrite as N

The Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) objective states in Table 3-2 of the Basin Plan that nitrate as NO₃ shall not exceed 45 mg/L. This value is equivalent to 10 mg/L of nitrate as N. Nitrite accounts for a small percent of total nitrate/nitrite, and therefore, nitrate as N criterion was used as a guideline for nitrate/nitrite. **Twenty-eight of 30 nitrate/nitrite samples (93%) exceeded the guideline with no apparent cycles or trends. The average concentration was 38.5 mg/L (nearly four times the guideline).**

Orthophosphate as P

The Basin Plan does not contain orthophosphate standards. The Central Coast Ambient Monitoring program (CCAMP) non-regulatory guideline for general water quality objectives states that orthophosphate concentrations shall not exceed 0.12 mg/L. **Orthophosphate concentrations exceeded the guideline in 35 of 36 samples (97%); five samples exceeded by six or more times. The average concentration was 0.48 mg/L.**

The chart below shows the nitrate/nitrite and orthophosphate concentrations throughout the sampling period. The guidelines for nitrate/nitrite as N and orthophosphate as P state that their concentrations shall not exceed 10 mg/L and 0.12 mg/L, respectively, shown by the black horizontal line on the graph.



Turbidity

The Basin Plan states: “Water shall be free of changes in turbidity that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.” Sigler et al.² shows that turbidity levels of 25 NTU or greater caused reduction in juvenile salmonid growth due to interference with their ability to find food. Turbidity is often affected by suspended material in runoff. **Thirty-one of 37 turbidity readings (84%) exceeded the guideline, with a maximum turbidity level during December 2006 measuring 715 NTU. The three highest turbidity levels were measured during or following December 2006. Turbidity levels in Alisal Slough averaged 93 NTU. However, the standard deviation was 126 NTU, indicating a broad range of high and low readings.**

² Sigler, J.W., T.C. Bjornn, & F.H. Everst. (1984). *Effects of chronic turbidity on density and growth of steelhead and coho salmon.* Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. 113:142-150.

Conductivity

Conductivity is measured from a water sample. Based on Table 3-3 of the Basin Plan showing Guidelines for Interpretation of Quality of Water for Irrigation, conductivity below 0.75 mmho/cm causes no problems to irrigation, between 0.75 and 3 mmho/cm causes increasing problems, and conductivity above 3 mmho/cm causes severe problems. The conductivity level can be greatly affected by geologic and biological influences and is not necessarily related to agricultural activities. **Measuring conductivity in Alisal Slough would misrepresent its health. Conductivity and salinity fluctuate daily based on the tides; Alisal Slough is greatly influenced by the ocean and therefore shows greater salinity than a similar water body uninfluenced by the ocean. However, 10 of 37 conductivity samples (27%) indicated increasing problems; and 27 samples (73%) indicated severe problems.**

pH

Multiple beneficial uses have objectives for pH. The Basin Plan general water quality objective for pH is between 7.0 and 8.5; MUN, AGR, REC-1, and REC-2 pH objectives are between 6.5 and 8.3. The standard, therefore, is 7.0-8.3 if one or more of MUN, AGR, REC-1, and REC-2 is defined as a beneficial use. pH above 9 can cause skin irritation to humans and makes water inhospitable to many species. **Eighteen of 37 pH samples (49%) exceeded the MUN, AGR, REC-1, REC-2 standard for pH, and two pH samples (5%) exceeded the GEN standard for pH. High pH can be associated with salinity. Because Alisal Slough is tidally influenced, high pH levels are expected. The pH levels at this site ranged from 7.7 to 8.6.**

Dissolved Oxygen Concentration and Dissolved Oxygen Saturation

The Basin Plan general water quality objectives state annual median dissolved oxygen shall remain above 85% saturation. General and WARM objectives state that the dissolved oxygen concentration must remain above 5.0 mg/L at all times, and SPWN and COLD objectives state that the dissolved oxygen concentration must remain above 7.0 mg/L at all times. **All 37 samples met the general and WARM concentration standard, but five samples (14%) did not meet the COLD and SPWN concentration standard. Dissolved oxygen did not meet the saturation standard during 2006, with a median annual value of 74% saturation. Median annual values for 2005 (101%) and 2007 (104%) met the standard for dissolved oxygen saturation, both exceeding 100% saturation.**

Though no standards have been set in the Basin Plan regarding dissolved oxygen supersaturation (>100%), studies have shown that supersaturation of gases may cause gas bubble trauma in fish. Dissolved gas saturation levels were not collected at this site; however, oxygen levels reached 155% saturation, which may indicate dissolved gas supersaturation.

Chlorophyll a

Healthy and appropriate Chlorophyll a levels are not defined in the Basin Plan. Chlorophyll a indicates phytoplankton growth, a necessary component of healthy water bodies. Because turbidity causes interference for the Chlorophyll a probe, measurements of Chlorophyll a may not be accurate when turbidity is above 1000 NTU. Chlorophyll a levels over 40µg/L are considered problematic by North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC). **No readings exceeded the guideline. The Chlorophyll a readings averaged 3.0 µg/L.**

Temperature

Sullivan et al.³ state that the maximum weekly average temperatures for protection of steelhead or rainbow trout, and coho salmon are 19.6 and 19.7°C, respectively. **The temperature averaged 17.7°C and ranged from 9.9 to 25.2°C. Though weekly averages were not taken, the temperatures taken at this site indicate averages that may regularly exceed the maximum temperatures for fish protection.**

³ Sullivan, K., D.J. Martin, R.D. Cardwell, T.E. Toll, & S. Duke. (2000). *An analysis of the effects of temperature on salmonids of the Pacific Northwest with implications for selecting temperature criteria*. Portland, OR: Sustainable Ecosystems Institute.

Summary of Toxicity Data

Species with Significant Mortality

	Feb-05	Mar-05	Apr-05	Jul-05	Sep-05	Feb-06	May-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Feb-07	Mar-07	Apr-07	Oct-07
Invertebrate (Water Column)	Yes	No*		Yes		No		No*	No*	No	Yes		No
Invertebrate (Sediment)			Yes		No		Yes					No*	
Fish (Water Column)	No	No				No		No	No	No	No*		No*
Algae (Water Column)	Yes	No				No		No	No	No	No		No

*Indicates significant effect on growth or reproduction (even though mortality did not have a significant effect)

Significant effect is determined by statistically significant rates of mortality, growth, or reproduction compared to a control sample and provides an indication that something is affecting plant or animal life in the stream. Invertebrates show significant sensitivity to organophosphates and pesticides. Significant effect to algae often indicates the presence of herbicides and metals such as copper. Fish are less sensitive to organophosphates but can be impacted by other pollutants such as ammonia and pyrethroid pesticides.

Photos of Site



February 2006



July 2006

QAQC

The data in this water quality monitoring fact sheets meet the quality assurance and quality control requirements of the Water Board's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). Additional surface water monitoring data are available at the Water Board's Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program website <http://www.ccamp.org>. Any questions regarding the data or analysis should be directed to either **Peter Meertens** at pmeertens@waterboards.ca.gov (805) 549-3869 or **Amanda Bern** at abern@waterboards.ca.gov (805) 594-6197.

Attachment: Monitoring Data

SiteTag	Alisal Slough at White Barn												
309 ASB	Beneficial Uses: Not Specified												
Date	Ammonia as N, Unionized	Chlorophyll a	Conductivity	Instantaneous Flow	Nitrate/Nitrite as N	N / STD	Orthophosphate as P	OP / STD	Oxygen, Dissolved	Oxygen, Saturation	pH	Turbidity	Water Temp
	mg N/L	µg/L	mmho/cm	CFS	mg/L	none	mg/L	none	mg/L	%		NTU	°C
Jan-05	0.0125	3.05	2.693	2.67	43.8	4.4	0.510	4.3	10.21	107	8.01	156	16.8
Feb-05	0.0125		2.23	13.90					8.99	97	7.87	130.9	18.4
Feb-05		2.02	3.042	4.92			0.211	1.8	8.80	89	7.77	54.7	15.6
Mar-05	0.0125	3.20	3.014	1.50	56	5.6	0.430	3.6	10.57	113	8.53	55.1	18.4
Apr-05	0.0127	1.69	3.155	0.00	12.7	1.3	0.570	4.8	9.90	109	7.68	72	19.7
May-05	0.0125	1.49	3.384	1.60	34	3.4	0.730	6.1	10.52	119	7.84	55.8	20.7
Jun-05	0.0125	1.70	2.962	2.77	59	5.9	0.504	4.2	8.64	101	8.08	39.2	22.7
Jul-05		35.00	3.313	0.96			0.004	0.0	9.80	117	8.38	30	23.7
Aug-05	0.0088	2.17	2.936	1.80			0.726	6.1	9.31	103	7.97	58.2	19.7
Sep-05	0.0187	2.14	3.241	0.96	35.7	3.6	0.828	6.9	8.88	99	8.18	73.8	20.4
Oct-05	0.0325	2.79	3.074	0.58			0.711	5.9	7.99	82	7.90	67.2	16.1
Nov-05	0.0031	1.85	3.39	0.33			0.550	4.6	10.02	98	8.08	143.6	14.0
Dec-05	0.0021	2.18	2.71	0.26			0.300	2.5	10.15	91	8.19	185.3	10.2
Jan-06	0.0025	1.24	2.972	1.74	75.8	7.6	0.400	3.3	10.91	98	7.94	79.2	9.9
Feb-06	0.0045	12.36	3.017	0.72	28.5	2.9	0.575	4.8	7.95	90	8.28	34.5	21.2
Mar-06	0.0083	2.02	3.048	2.89	42.1	4.2	0.464	3.9	8.31	85	8.19	45.7	15.6
Apr-06	0.0089	2.31	2.893	1.53	51	5.1	0.465	3.9	7.95	77	7.87	9.9	13.5
May-06	0.0125	2.05	3.239	0.63	55	5.5	0.450	3.8	8.53	104	8.04	11.3	25.2
Jun-06	0.0037	1.73	2.996	0.86	0.035	0.0	0.443	3.7	6.39	70	7.94	5.9	19.2
Jul-06	0.0029	2.56	3.049	3.80	44.7	4.5	0.388	3.2	5.65	66	7.94	41	21.8
Aug-06	0.0124	3.39	2.876	1.22	47	4.7	0.650	5.4	8.36	95	7.87	10	21.3
Sep-06	0.0048	2.01	3.124	1.05	36.8	3.7	0.640	5.3	5.03	52	7.90	4.6	16.7
Oct-06	0.0023	2.07	3.234	1.08	41.3	4.1	0.423	3.5	5.10	50	7.87	56.3	14.0
Nov-06	0.0027	1.56	2.757	0.83	25.1	2.5	0.727	6.1	6.13	61	7.87	78	15.3
Dec-06	0.0046	2.69	2.167	1.60	32.1	3.2	0.564	4.7	8.06	71	8.09	715	10.3
Jan-07	0.0018	0.22	2.821	0.47	29.8	3.0	0.469	3.9	7.91	72	8.08	63.4	10.6
Feb-07	0.0112	1.24	3.226	0.27	41.3	4.1	0.407	3.4	7.49	80	8.62	38.4	18.9
Mar-07	0.0340	1.88	3.209	3.57	31.3	3.1	0.598	5.0	8.94	93	8.35	22.4	16.7
Apr-07	0.0038	1.07	3.754	0.91	56.1	5.6	0.492	4.1	7.45	79	8.17	337.2	17.4
May-07	0.0285	1.13	3.086	1.22	42.2	4.2	0.264	2.2	10.95	120	8.15	34.6	19.4
Jun-07	0.0016	1.14	3.265	1.30	36.7	3.7	0.362	3.0	7.90	82	7.69	26.7	16.4
Jul-07	0.0012	0.85	3.416	1.07	34.2	3.4	0.408	3.4	10.73	131	8.03	36.6	24.9
Aug-07	0.0113	0.45	3.362	1.16	55.4	5.5	0.356	3.0	9.43	112	8.00	132.4	23.3
Sep-07	0.0010	1.05	2.944	0.77	43.7	4.4	0.437	3.6	11.55	136	7.96	118.4	23.6
Oct-07	0.0043	0.79	2.979	0.37	23.1	2.3	0.258	2.2	14.13	155	8.31	65.2	19.7
Nov-07	0.0016	0.74	3.168	0.17	35.5	3.6	0.499	4.2	11.16	104	7.65	263	12.0
Dec-07	0.0028	1.60	4.557	1.23	5.12	0.5	0.316	2.6	11.53	105	7.83	102.6	10.7
Average	0.009	3.0	3.09	1.7	38.5		0.48		9.0	Below	8.0	93	17.7
St. Dev.	0.009	5.8	0.39	2.3	15.9		0.17		1.9		0.2	126	4.4
Minimum	0.001	0.2	2.17	0	0.035		0.00		5.0	50	7.7	4.6	9.9
Maximum	0.034	35	4.56	13.9	75.8		0.83		14.1	155	8.6	715	25.2
Standard	<0.025	<40	<0.75		<10		<0.12		>5		7-8.5	<25	
%Outside	9%	0%	0%		93%		97%		0%		5%	84%	
Standard 2			>3		Median Annual DO %				>7		7-8.3		
%Outside			73%		Year	Median	Meet Criteria		14%		14%		
					2005	101%	Yes						
					2006	74%	No						
					2007	104%	Yes						

indicates times exceeding standard