

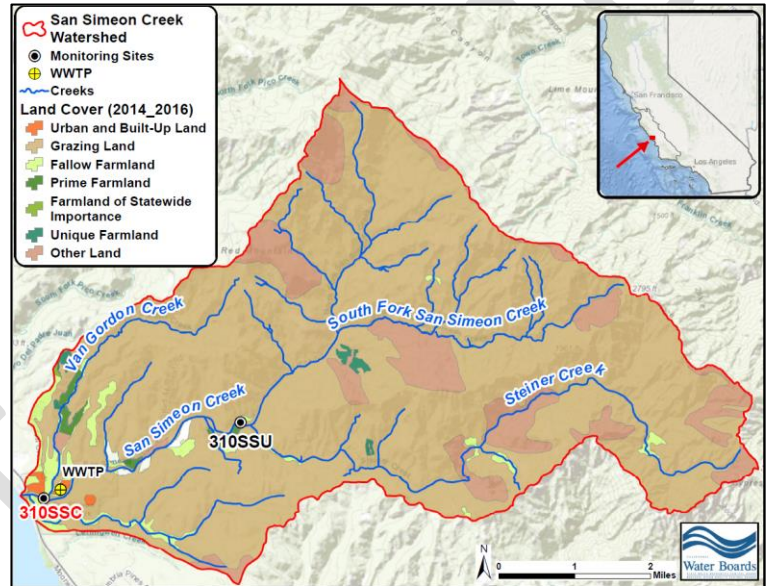
Water Quality Report Card	
Regional Water Board:	Central Coast, Region 3
Beneficial Uses Affected:	COLD, WARM, SPWN, MUN
Implemented Through:	WDRs, Prohibition of Discharge
Effective Date:	NA
Attainment Date:	NA

Nitrates in San Simeon Creek	
STATUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conditions Improving
	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Inconclusive
	<input type="checkbox"/> Improvement Needed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Targets Achieved/Water Body Delisted
Pollutant Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point Source <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonpoint Source <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy
Pollutant Source:	Wastewater Discharges

Water Quality Improvement Strategy

San Simeon Creek watershed is within San Luis Obispo County, northeast of Cambria. The watershed drains approximately 81 square miles, flowing from the western slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains to the Pacific Ocean at San Simeon State Beach. Land uses in the watershed include grazing, row crop agriculture, rural residential, and mining. Additionally, there is a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and campgrounds near the creek mouth. San Simeon Creek is on the [Clean Water Act Section 303\(d\) List](#) of polluted waters for nitrate, chloride, sodium, and low dissolved oxygen. Elevated nitrate in lower San Simeon Creek is likely to pollute shallow groundwater and is problematic for aquatic life in San Simeon Creek and Lagoon. The primary source of nitrate in lower San Simeon Creek is treated wastewater applied to the land through percolation ponds at the WWTP located near San Simeon Creek, and the State Park Campgrounds. Prior to construction of the wastewater ponds in 1999, water quality data showed nitrate concentrations below 1 mg/L in lower San Simeon Creek. Water quality data collected in lower San Simeon Creek (station 310SSC) shows increasing concentrations of nitrate since 2001. These data informed the prioritization of this creek for TMDL development in March of 2015. The draft [TMDL](#) stated that wastewater was percolating into San Simeon Creek at levels that negatively affect designated uses (including human health and aquatic life health) and that revision of the WDR was necessary to implement the TMDL. Water Board staff worked directly with Cambria Community Services District to make appropriate changes to operating procedures at the WWTP.

San Simeon Creek Watershed



Water Quality Outcomes

- Modifications in operations at the treatment plant in 2015 resulted in significant reductions of nitrate concentrations in the discharge applied to land, adjacent to the creek.
- This reduction was also evident in water quality samples taken from the creek. As of October 2015, nitrate concentrations dropped below 1.0 (mg/L NO₃ as N). This trend of reduced nitrate has continued into 2018.
- Continue surface water quality monitoring efforts to track progress in attaining nitrate water quality objectives in the watershed.

Nitrate-N Concentrations at Lower San Simeon Creek Surface Water Quality Monitoring Site 310SSC

