

Water Quality Report Card

Regional Water Board: Central Coast, Region 3

Beneficial Uses Affected: Warm Freshwater Habitat, Cold Freshwater Habitat, Spawning and Reproduction and/or Early Development

Implemented Through: Agricultural Order

Effective Date: 5/7/2014

Attainment Date: 5/7/2044

Nitrate in Blanco Drain

STATUS Improvement Needed

Pollutant Type: Nonpoint Source

Pollutant Source: Irrigated crop production
Grazing
Naturally occurring

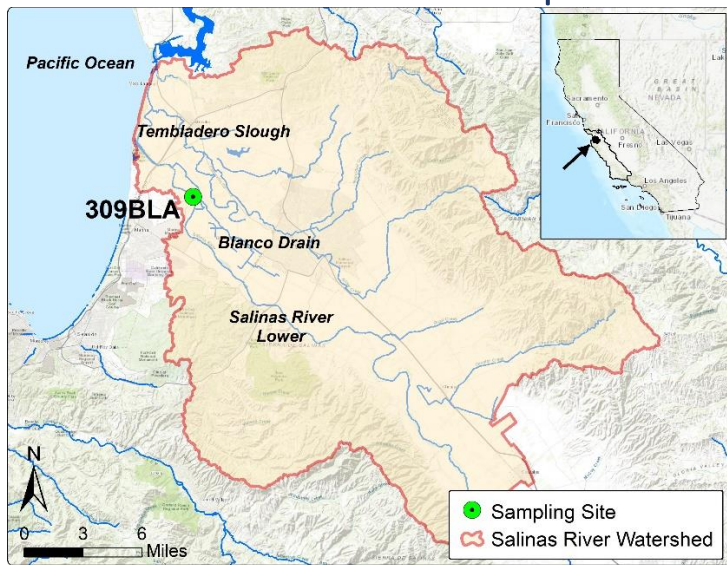
Water Quality Improvement Strategy

The Blanco Drain is a tributary to the Lower Salinas River, in the Lower Salinas River Watershed of northern Monterey County. It flows almost entirely through farmland before draining into the Salinas River lagoon near Monterey Bay. The Blanco Drain is on the US EPA Clean Water Act 303(d) list of impaired waters for exceedances of Basin Plan water quality objectives for nitrate (nitrate as N), including the narrative water quality objective for biostimulatory substances. The [Lower Salinas River Watershed Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) was adopted by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) in 2014 and identifies irrigated crop production as the primary source of nitrate in the watershed. The TMDL establishes a dry season numeric target of 6.4 mg/L N and a wet season numeric target of 8.0 mg/L N for the protection of aquatic life beneficial uses. The TMDL is implemented through the [Agricultural Order](#).

TMDL Waste Load Allocations/Load Allocations

Analyte	Aquatic Habitat – Dry Season	Aquatic Habitat – Wet Season
Nitrate as N (mg/L)	6.4	8.0

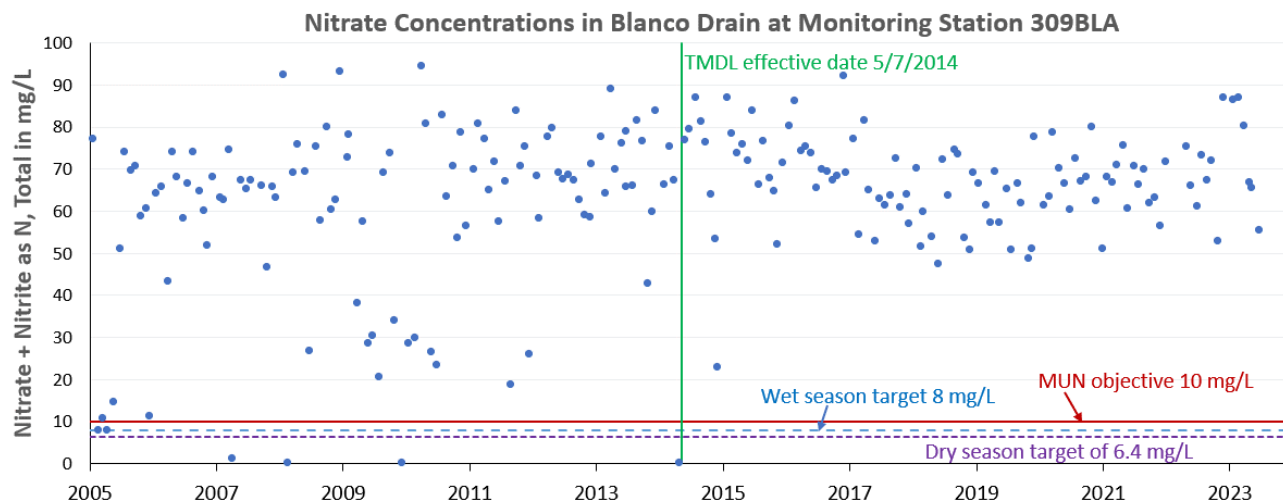
Blanco Drain Watershed Map



Water Quality Outcomes

- The RCD of Monterey County has collaborated with private landowners, local non-profit organizations, and partners to implement management measures during the past decade.
- Since the TMDL effective date in 2014, there has been a slight improvement in water quality, but Nitrate concentrations continue to be much higher than the numeric targets.
- Outcomes have been achieved through non-regulatory actions.

Water Quality



September 2024