

Water Quality Report Card

Regional Water Board: Central Coast, Region 3

Beneficial Uses Affected: Warm Freshwater Habitat, Municipal & Domestic Supply, Groundwater Recharge, Agricultural Supply

Implemented Through: Agricultural Order

Effective Date: 5/22/2014

Attainment Date: 5/22/2034

Nitrate in Oso Flaco Creek

STATUS

Improvement Needed

Pollutant Type:

Nonpoint Source

Pollutant Source:

Irrigated crop production

Grazing

Naturally occurring

Water Quality Improvement Strategy

Oso Flaco Creek is in the Oso Flaco Lake sub-watershed of the Santa Maria River Watershed (about 15 square miles) in San Luis Obispo County. Oso Flaco Creek and its tributaries are on the US EPA Clean Water Act 303(d) list of impaired waters for exceedances of the Basin Plan water quality objectives for nitrate (nitrate as N), including the narrative water quality objective for biostimulatory substances, and numeric objectives for the protection of agricultural supply, municipal and domestic supply, and groundwater recharge. The [Santa Maria Watershed Nutrients Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) was adopted by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) in 2013 and identifies irrigated crop production as the primary source of nitrate in the watershed. The TMDL establishes a target equal to the Basin Plan water quality objective of 10 mg/L N for municipal and groundwater uses, and a year-round watershed specific numeric target of 5.7 mg/L N for the protection of aquatic life beneficial uses. The TMDL is implemented through the [Agricultural Order](#).

TMDL Load Allocations¹

Site ID	Nitrate as N (mg/L) Aquatic Habitat	Nitrate as N (mg/L) Human Health
312OFC	5.7	10

Oso Flaco Creek and Santa Maria Watershed Map

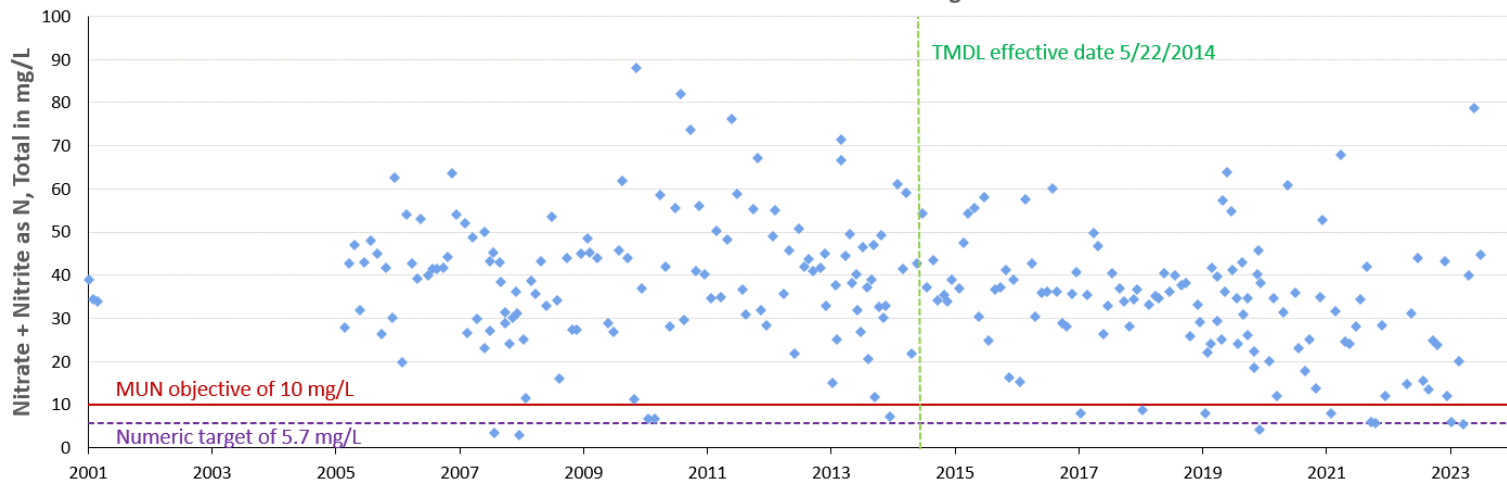


Water Quality Outcomes

- *RCDs, NRCS, landowners, California State Parks, and numerous partners have implemented management measures for over two decades.*
- *Since the TMDL effective date in 2014, there has been a slight downward trend in nitrate concentrations, but improvement is needed.*
- *Outcomes have been achieved through non-regulatory actions.*

Water Quality²

Nitrate Concentrations in Oso Flaco Creek at Monitoring Station 312OFC



¹ Table information summarized from Table 6-7 in the Santa Maria Watershed Nutrients TMDL [Project Report](#)

² More data available at the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program's (CCAMP) online [Data Navigator](#)