

Water Quality Report Card	
Regional Water Board:	Central Coast, Region 3
Beneficial Uses Affected:	MUN, COLD, WARM
Implemented Through:	Non-regulatory Action
Effective Date:	June 21, 2004 (TMDL)
Attainment Date:	2016 (2014 Integrated Report Cycle)

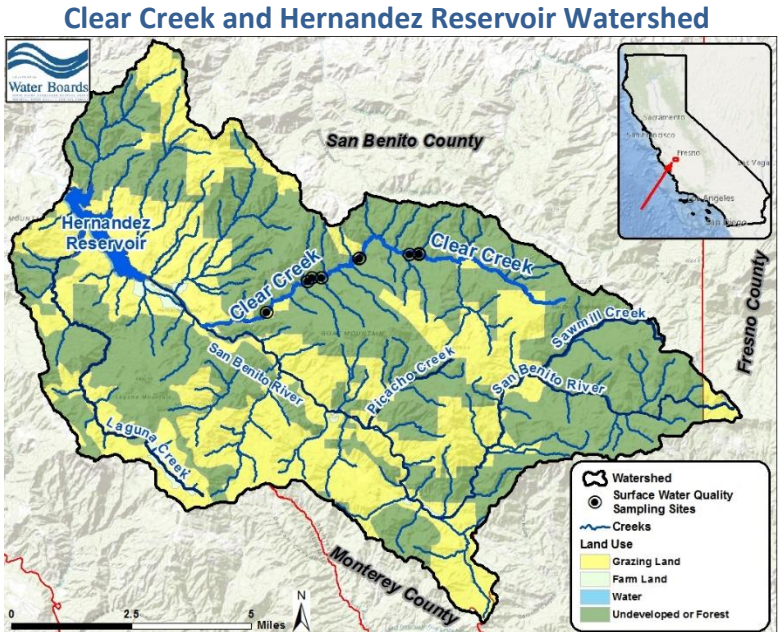
Mercury in Clear Creek	
STATUS	<input type="checkbox"/> Conditions Improving <input type="checkbox"/> Data Inconclusive <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement Needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targets Achieved/Water Body Delisted
	<input type="checkbox"/> Point Source <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonpoint Source <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legacy
Pollutant Type:	Abandoned Mines
Pollutant Source:	Erosion/Siltation

### Water Quality Improvement Strategy

Clear Creek and Hernandez Reservoir are on California's 2012 Clean Water Act section 303(d) List as impaired due to levels of mercury. Elevated levels of mercury in the water column exceed water quality objectives for the municipal (MUN) beneficial use designation. Fish tissue from Hernandez Reservoir contains mercury at levels considered unsafe for consumption. The primary source of the mercury loading is abandoned mines managed by the United States Bureau of Land Management (USBLM). In order to address the impairment, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board), developed the [Clear Creek and Hernandez Reservoir Mercury TMDL](#) (approved by USEPA, June 2004). The TMDL is implemented through non-regulatory measures by USBLM. USBLM has implemented erosion control and other measures to reduce mercury loading from the abandoned mine sites. USBLM actions include:

- Removal and/or entombment of mining wastes;
- Capping of residual material with clean, native (non-mercury ore) soil;
- Re-vegetation of disturbed areas; and
- Restricted Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) access.

This report card specifically addresses water column mercury in Clear Creek.



### Water Quality Outcomes

- Clear Creek has been recommended for removal from the 2014 [Clean Water Act section 303\(d\) List](#) for water column mercury concentrations ([Summary Report for the 2014 Integrated Report](#)).
- Additional water quality samples collected in 2011 and 2013 provided the adequate number of samples ( $n=28$ ) to demonstrate compliance with the water column numeric target, thus supporting the decision to delist Clear Creek.
- Hernandez Reservoir is currently meeting water column objectives for mercury. However, fish tissue sampled from the reservoir (2008) exceeds the TMDL numeric target of 0.3 mg/kg methylmercury in trophic level 4 species; therefore Hernandez Reservoir remains listed for mercury.

