

*Phase 5: Recommended Regulatory Action*

# **Final Project Report**

**Total Maximum Daily Load for Pathogens in Watsonville  
Slough, Santa Cruz County, California**

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Central Coast Water Board

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# 1. PROJECT DEFINITION

## 1.1. Introduction

Watsonville Slough is located in the southern portion of Santa Cruz County and is the receiving water for approximately 13,000 acres of land under a variety of land uses. Three tributaries flow into Watsonville Slough, including Harkins Slough, Hanson Slough, and Struve Slough. Gallighan Slough is tributary to Harkins Slough Figure 1-1.

Watsonville Slough is listed on the California 303(d) list for non-attainment of water quality standards for pathogens. Based on historic and recent data, pathogen indicator organisms (fecal coliform and *E. coli*) occur in concentrations above Basin Plan objectives for contact recreational uses in multiple locations throughout the Slough system and throughout both wet and dry seasons.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires the State to establish the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for pathogens at a level necessary to attain water quality standards. The State must also incorporate into the TMDL seasonal variations and a margin of safety that takes into account any lack of knowledge concerning the relationship between load limits and water quality.

## 1.2. Listing Basis

The Water Board's basis for listing Watsonville Slough on the 1998 303(d) impaired waters list is not documented. However, based on analysis for bacteria by the County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health Services over the period 1977 to 2000, the waterbody is impaired. The County's data are discussed below.

## 1.3. Beneficial Uses

The beneficial uses for Watsonville Slough and its tributaries identified in the Basin Plan are shown in Table 1-1. Only Watsonville Slough is listed as impaired for pathogens. Nevertheless, all tributary waterbodies are included in this analysis of impairment by pathogens.

Table 1-1 Basin Plan-designated beneficial uses for waterbodies in the Watsonville Slough Watershed.

Waterbody Names	REC1	REC2	WILD	WARM	SPWN	BIOL	RARE	EST	COMM	SHELL
Watsonville Slough	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Harkins Slough	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gallighan Slough	X	X	X	X	X	---	X	X	X	X
Hanson Slough	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Struve Slough	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Regional Water Quality Control Board, Basin Plan 1994, p. II-6.

Water Contact Recreation (REC1): Uses of water for recreational activity involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible.

Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC2): Uses of water for recreation activities involving proximity to water, but not normally involving bodily contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible.

Wildlife Habitat (WILD): Uses of water that support terrestrial ecosystems.

Warm Fresh Water Habitat (WARM): Uses of water that support warm water ecosystems.

Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN): Uses of water that support high quality aquatic habitats suitable for reproduction and early development of fish.

Preservation of Biological Habitats of Special Significance (BIOL): Uses of water that support designated areas of habitats, such as established refuges, parks, sanctuaries, ecological reserves, or Areas of Special Biological Significance.

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE): Uses of water that support habitat necessary, at least in part, for the survival and successful maintenance of plant or animal species established under state or federal law as rare, threatened, or endangered.

Estuarine Habitat (EST): Uses of water that support estuarine ecosystems.

Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM): Uses of water for commercial or recreational collection of fish, shellfish, or other organisms.

Shellfish Harvesting (SHELL): Uses of water that support habitats suitable for the collection of filter feeding shellfish (e.g., clams, oysters, and mussels) for human consumption, commercial, or sport purposes. This includes waters that have in the past, or may in the future, contain significant shellfisheries.

With the exception of the shellfish harvesting beneficial use, staff confirmed the actual or potential occurrence and attainment of these beneficial uses based on current conditions and observed use of Watsonville Slough or its tributaries. For example, the water contact recreation, and commercial and sport fishing designations are evident in Harkins Slough, where during field reconnaissance staff have observed people fishing from the shore. Additionally, the known presence of myriad aquatic and terrestrial organisms attest to the occurrence of the beneficial uses for WARM, SPWN, BIOL, RARE, and EST. Estuarine aquatic habitat is limited to the reach of Watsonville Slough downstream of the Shell Road Pump Station. This reach is a tributary arm of the Pajaro River lagoon and supports water quality conditions and fish populations typical of that larger lagoon environment. Three-spine stickleback, arrow goby, and tidewater goby are resident estuarine species (SH&G, et al, 2003, p. 3-50).

Staff has found no evidence, historical or contemporary, of the shellfish harvesting beneficial use at Watsonville Slough. Commercial clamming occurred at the Pacific Ocean beaches north and south of the Pajaro River in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However the historical accounts do not indicate this activity occurred outside of the high-energy beach environment suited to the clam.

Today, hydraulic modifications to the sloughs have resulted in conditions that all but rule out the possibility of viable populations of shellfish there. The Shell Road Pump Station and tide gate, installed in the early 1940s in close proximity to the mouth of the Slough, permitted cultivation of the fertile lands nearby, and eliminated tidal flushing, creating stagnant conditions upstream of the pump station (SH&G et al., 2003, Table 3-3). The lower lagoon portion of the Slough below the pump station is still subject to tidal influence throughout most of the year, while aquatic habitats upstream of the Shell Road tide gate and pump are freshwater (Ibid., p. 3-51). Seasonal closure of the Pajaro River Lagoon at the mouth of the Pajaro River occurs usually in late summer as flows diminish, and also during early winter periods when storms promote the formation of sandbars that prevent river flow to the ocean at Monterey Bay. The closure ends when winter storms generate enough rainfall runoff to breach the beach berm and sandbars and flow to Monterey Bay. During closure Watsonville Slough Lagoon, which enters the Pajaro Lagoon from the north, is also closed to tidal circulation.

Hydraulic modifications, seasonal lagoon closure to tidal circulation, and lack of evidence of any historical or contemporary shellfish harvesting, have led Water Board staff to propose removing the SHELL beneficial use in Watsonville Slough and its tributaries. Appendix C, Use Attainability Analysis for Watsonville Sloughs, provides the basis for staff's proposal.

## **1.4. Water Quality Objectives**

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The Central Coast Region's Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) contains specific water quality objectives that apply to pathogen indicator organisms (CCRWQCB, 1994, pg. III-3). These objectives are linked to specific beneficial uses and include:

### Shellfish Harvesting (SHELL):

At all areas where shellfish may be harvested for human consumption, the median **total coliform** concentration throughout the water column for any 30-day period shall not exceed 70/100 ml, nor shall more than 10% of the samples collected during any 30-day period exceed 230/100 ml for a five-tube decimal dilution test or 330/100 ml when a three-tube decimal dilution test is used.

### Water Contact Recreation (REC-1):

**Fecal coliform** concentration, based on a minimum of not less than five samples for any 30-day period, shall not exceed a log mean of 200 per 100ml, nor shall more than 10% of total samples during any 30-day period exceed 400 per 100ml.

### Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC-2):

**Fecal coliform** concentration, based on a minimum of not less than five samples for any 30-day period, shall not exceed a log mean of 2000 per 100ml, nor shall more than 10% of samples collected during any 30-day period exceed 4000 per 100ml.

The REC-1 and REC-2 beneficial uses are impaired in the Watsonville Slough System.

## **1.5. Potential Effects of Pathogens on Beneficial Uses**

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### ***Human Health (REC1, REC2, COMM)***

The beneficial uses associated with human health are the principal water quality consideration with respect to pathogens. Bacterial indicator organisms, e.g., fecal coliform, are commonly used for predicting the presence of pathogenic organisms. If a predetermined concentration of indicator bacteria is detected in a sample, pathogenic organisms may also be present. Parts of the Watsonville Sloughs are used for recreational fishing. Elevated levels of fecal coliform are indication that the sloughs may be unsafe for swimming, fishing or other forms of water contact activities.

### ***Aquatic Biota (WILD, WARM, SPWN, BIOL, RARE, EST)***

Feces from pet cats and dogs that defecate near a storm drain or creek may be transported into the Watsonville Slough System and to the marine environment. Feral cats and dogs are also a direct source for pathogenic input into the sloughs. Waste from these animals may carry pathogens that cause human or marine animal health problems. Sea otter mortality *may* be linked with the pathogens found in cat waste. Researchers have found that "nearshore marine contamination through surface runoff would most likely result from transport and nearshore marine deposition of feline feces..." (Miller, et al., 2002, p. 1005).



Water quality criteria for REC1 have been shown to be protective of human health-related beneficial uses. In this assessment of Watsonville Sloughs and in water quality attainment strategies that follow from its findings, staff assumes that these criteria are also protective of aquatic biota beneficial uses.

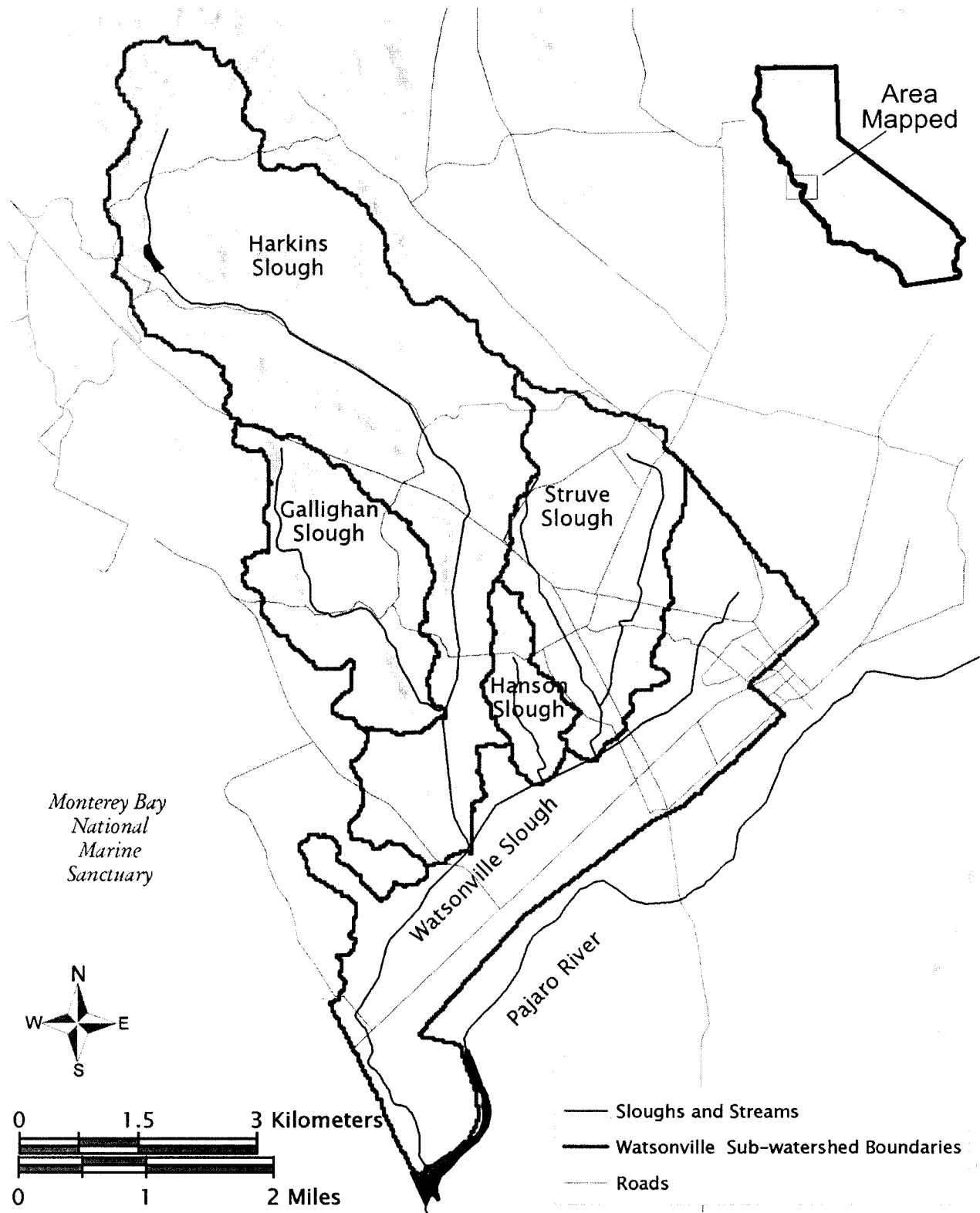


Figure 1-1 Subwatersheds of the Watsonville Sloughs  
 Source: Hager, et al., 2004.

## 2. WATERSHED DESCRIPTION

### 2.1. Land Use

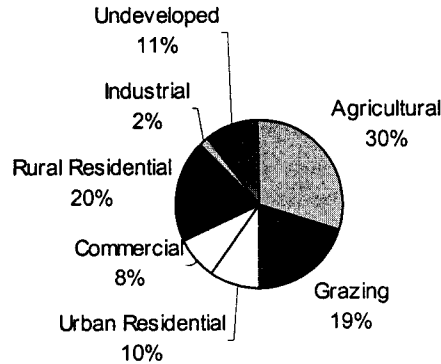
Figure 2-1 illustrates the distribution of land use, based on county Assessor's parcel data, and land cover, based on interpreted satellite imagery. The watersheds are predominantly under agriculture and rural land uses. The following is an excellent overview:

“California State Highway 1 roughly divides the watershed into eastern and western halves and is a major demarcation of land use. To the west, land is generally agricultural with isolated areas of industrial uses (Lee Road) and municipal landfills (Buena Vista Road). To the east, the Sloughs are generally surrounded by urban uses, denser and industrial in the south (City of Watsonville) and rural to the north (Larkin Valley). Land coverage in most areas includes marsh and riparian cover on the valley floors, and agricultural, urban, industrial and rural residential uses or undeveloped land on the hillsides. Land use encroaches into the valley floor wetlands to varying degrees leaving some areas wild and natural and others paved or completely clear of native vegetation. Channelization, diversion, filling of wetlands, damming and placement of culverts, pumps and tide gates have modified all of the streams and wetlands in the watershed from their natural state.

“Several County and City of Watsonville roads provide access and form important landmark crossings over the Sloughs. Harkins Slough Road crosses Watsonville, Struve, West Branch Struve, Hanson and Harkins Sloughs in the mid-area of the watershed. Main Street in the City of Watsonville, which is also State Highway 152, crosses Struve and Watsonville Sloughs. Beach Road occurs on the Pajaro River floodplain and connects downtown Watsonville to Sunset State Beach and the Pajaro Dunes development. Lee Road is a north-south road paralleling Highway 1, crosses Struve Slough, and connects Beach Road to Harkins Slough Road. Buena Vista Road connects the mouth of Larkin Valley to Highway 1, bisects the Gallighan Slough watershed and provides access to the municipal landfill sites before terminating at San Andreas Road at the western edge of the watershed. San Andreas Road connects Pajaro Valley and Beach Road to the terraces that bound the western edges of the lower Harkins and Gallighan Slough watersheds. Larkin Valley Road follows the path of upper Harkins Slough to the northern end of the watershed.

“The Union Pacific Railroad crosses the lower watershed from the southeast corner at Beach Road in Watsonville to the junction of San Andreas and Buena Vista Roads at the western edge of the Gallighan Slough watershed. The railroad grade is mostly on fill with bridge and culvert crossings over Watsonville, Harkins and Gallighan Sloughs.” (SH&G, et al., 2003, pp. 2-1, 2-4, 2-5).

### Land Use Based on Assessor's Parcels



### Land Cover Based on Satellite Imagery

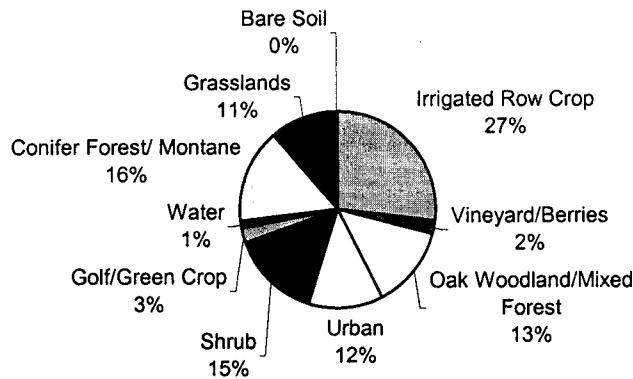


Figure 2-1 Land use and land cover by percentage of total area in Watsonville Sloughs.  
 Source: Land use from SH&G, et al., 2003; land cover from Hager et al., 2004.

## 2.2. Climate

The climate of the Watsonville Sloughs is described as Mediterranean with the moderating influence of the ocean and limited, but variable rainfall. Most of the average annual rainfall of 22.6 inches falls between December and February. SH&G, et al., report that, "year-to-year variability in rainfall is substantial, ranging between only 10.66 inches in calendar year 1976 to 48.35 in 1983. Extended periods of both drought (1976-77 and 1987-1993) and wet weather (1995-98) have occurred recently and the differences in rainfall are dramatic; for example 29.93 inches fell during the three winter months of water year 1998 (Dec., Jan., Feb.) while only 1.55 inches fell in the same months of water year 1976. The maximum daily rainfall recorded was 5.93 inches on February 14, 2000." (2003, p. 2-6).

## 2.3. Hydrology

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Watsonville Slough is the remnant of a once more-extensive wetland and estuarine complex. The system has been historically modified to meet the needs of adjacent land uses such as agriculture and urban development. Many areas of the slough system have been channelized and filled to drain surface water. Two pump stations were also installed to enable the farming of the often-inundated lowlands and to manage flooding. The two pump stations are located at Shell Road and at the confluence of Harkins Slough. The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency currently operates the Harkins Slough pump station, which supports a diversion project to deal with seawater intrusion. Additionally, there has been a history of land subsidence, which may have resulted in shallow groundwater pumping and the decomposition of underlying peat. This subsidence, in addition to road crossings with inadequately sized culverts has led to impoundments of water in these areas and reduced water circulation throughout the slough system (Hager, et al., 2004, p. 2).

Subwatersheds delineated for this study include Harkins Slough, Gallighan Slough, Struve Slough, Hanson Slough, and Watsonville Slough (Figure 1-1). A previous study by SH&G, et al., (2003) further delineated the following subwatersheds (Figure 2-2):

- Larkin Valley
- Harkins Slough Tributary
- Upper Harkins Slough
- Harkins/Watsonville Confluence
- Gallighan Slough
- West Branch Struve Slough
- Struve Slough
- Upper Watsonville Slough
- Mid-Watsonville Slough
- Lower Watsonville Slough
- Lower Beach Road (lagoon)

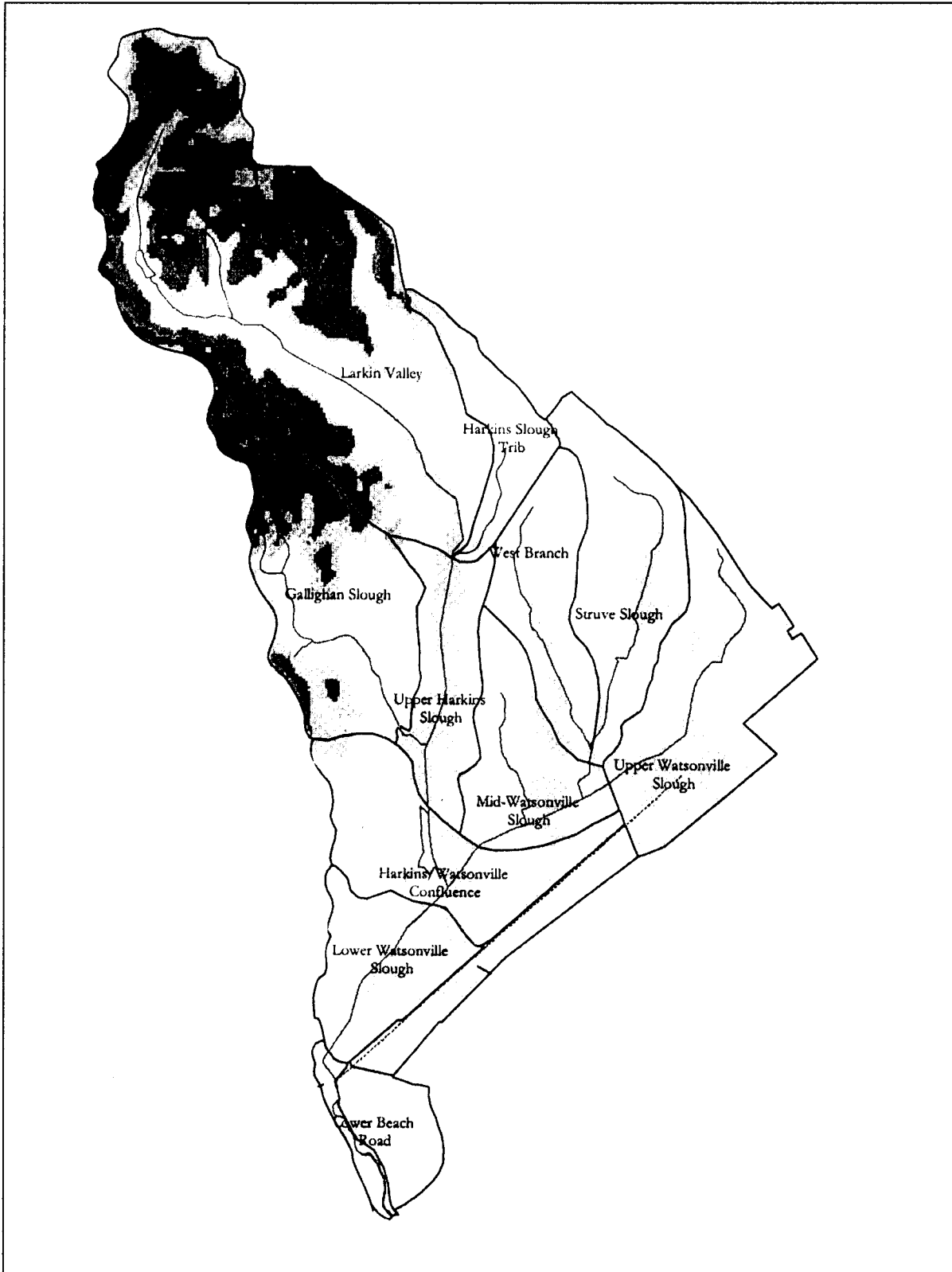


Figure 2-2 Subwatersheds of Watsonville Slough Watershed.  
 Source: SH&G, et al., 2003.

## 3. DATA ANALYSIS

### 3.1. Introduction

Ambient water quality assessments for pathogens rely principally on analysis for the presence of total and fecal coliform bacteria in grab samples. The total coliform group of bacteria is from the family *Enterobacteriaceae*, which includes over 40 genera of bacteria. The total coliform group includes bacteria of both fecal and non-fecal origin. Common habitats for the group include soil, groundwater, surface water, the intestinal tract of animals and humans, the surface of plants, algal-mats in pristine streams, wastes from the wood industry, and biofilms within drinking water distribution systems (Hurst, et al., 2002). The total coliforms can be divided into various groups based on common characteristics. Among these, the fecal coliforms are generally indicative of fecal sources, though not all members of the group are of fecal origin (Hager, et al, 2004, p. 6). The bacteria species, *Escherichia coli*, comprises a large percentage of coliform detected in human and animal feces. Some strains of *E. coli* are pathogenic and some are not.

Analysis of water samples to detect the presence of fecal coliform and *E. coli* is one way to determine the potential presence of pathogens. However, analytical methods for quantifying bacteria lack the precision common to many other laboratory methods for water quality analysis. For example, the Multiple Tube Fermentation method results in an estimate of the most probable number (MPN) of bacteria. This number varies considerably and for a given result of say, 1,600 MPN/100ml, the 95% confidence limit ranges from 600 to 5,300 MPN/100ml. The other common method, Membrane Filtration, also has limitations, particularly with highly turbid samples. In spite of these limitations, testing for *E. coli* is one of the best available methods for indication of potential fecal contamination (Ibid., p. 7). Combined with genetic methods of microbial source tracking, strong indications of the magnitude of impairment and of the animal source of *E. coli* can be ascertained.

Because of the inherent diversity and complexity of coliform bacteria, this approach to using them as “indicator organisms” comes with a variety of problems (discussed more fully in Appendix A). An important characteristic of these bacteria to bear in mind when following this approach is the many adaptations allowing them to persist through variable and harsh environmental conditions. The “combined effects of these survival mechanisms may enable in situ aquatic growth of coliform bacteria. Therefore, a problem of elevated coliform levels for a given waterbody may not solely be addressed by bacteria sources, but rather also by controlling the conditions that promote growth.” (Hager, et al, 2004, p. 8).

### 3.2. Data and Information Evaluated

This report relies heavily on a study conducted for the Water Board by Julie Hager and Fred Watson, PhD of the Watershed Institute, California State University Monterey Bay. Their report, Watsonville Sloughs Pathogen Problems & Sources (Hager, et al., 2004), served to integrate existing data with data collected specifically for development of a TMDL. Appendix A includes the Hager and Watson Report sans appendices. Staff also relied on the Watsonville Sloughs Watershed Resource Conservation & Enhancement Plan prepared for the County of Santa Cruz Planning Department by a team of consultants under the direction of Swanson Hydrology & Geomorphology (SH&G, et al., 2003).

This TMDL report evaluates indicator organism data available from previous assessments, as well as data gathered specifically for development of a TMDL for pathogens. The data gathered specifically for this report includes both fecal and *E. coli* data from analysis of grab samples, and the results of genetic analysis for source identification.

### ***Existing Indicator Organism Data***

While a number of studies have been completed in the area, most lack quantitative information on the extent, severity, and origins of pathogens in Watsonville Sloughs. Hager and Watson reviewed available reports and data on the subject, as did Water Board staff. The studies reviewed included:

- *Pajaro River Watershed Water Quality Management Plan* (Applied Science and Engineering Inc., 1999)
- *Patterns of aquatic toxicity in an agriculturally dominated coastal watershed in California* (Hunt et al., 1999)
- *Water Resources Management Plan for Watsonville Slough System Santa Cruz County* (Questa Engineering Corporation, 1995)
- *State Mussel Watch Program* (State Water Resources Control Board, 1977-2000)
- *Toxic Substances Monitoring Program* (State Water Resources Control Board, 1977-2000)

Additional water quality monitoring has been conducted in the Watsonville Sloughs system by the organizations below. Table 3-1 summarizes the type of data and number of sites sampled in these previous studies.

- Santa Cruz County Environmental Health
- Santa Cruz County Public Works
- City of Watsonville
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
- University of Santa Cruz - Marc Los Huertos
- Watershed Institute (1995-1997) - John Oliver
- Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District
- Coastal Watershed Council
- California Department of Fish and Game



Table 3-1 Summary of Previous Water Quality Studies for Watsonville Sloughs

Project Agency	No. of Sites in Watsonville Sloughs	Fecal Coliform	E. Coli	TSS	Turbidity	pH, cond/salinity temperature	DO	Nutrients	Pesticides	Metals	Oil & Grease	Water Depth	Chloride
Swanson Hydrology and Geomorphology, et al (2003)*	4					X	X					X	
	5											X	
	3 (Above & below each site)					X (no pH)	X	X				X	
Hunt et al. (1999)	4							X					
Questa Engineering Corporation (1995)	10				X	X			X	X	X		
State Mussel Watch (1982 - 1993)	5								X	X			
Toxic Substance Monitoring Program (1980-1992)	7								X	X			
Santa Cruz County Environmental Health	22	X (16 sites)	X (1 site)	X (4 sites)	X (8 sites)	X	X	X	X	X			X
Santa Cruz County Public Works, Buena Vista Landfill NPDES monitoring (1992 to 2002)	4			X		X					X		X
City of Watsonville (1996 to 1998)	6			X	X	X	X	X					X
Watershed Institute-John Oliver (1995-1997)	3				X	X	X	X					
CCRWQCB - Metals, Oil & Grease, Pesticide Study (2002)	11								X	X	X		
PVWMA (1994-present)	5	X (4 sites)		X	X	X	X	X	X (2 sites)	X (2 sites)	X (1 site)	X (3 sites)	
Other	5			X	X	X		X					X
Central Monterey Bay Wetlands Project - Coastal Watershed Council and Santa Cruz & Monterey County Resource Conservation Districts (July 2000 - June 2001)	10				X	X	X	X					
UCSC - Marc Los Huertos et al. (October 2000 - September 2001)	2					X	X	X					

Bold text highlights data that pertain to pathogens  
Source: Hager, et al., 2004, p. 10, Table 5.1.

## **Bacteria Data Collected for TMDL Development**

Researchers designed and implemented a plan for sampling and analyzing water column grab samples to develop this TMDL for pathogens in Watsonville Slough. The plan included wet and dry season sampling for bacteria counts as well as genetic analysis of bacteria to determine their animal host.

### **Wet and Dry Season Sampling**

The goal of the first stage of the monitoring plan was to investigate fecal bacteria levels and to confirm the existence of a potential pathogen problem in the Watsonville Slough system. This involved two monitoring campaigns at 13 sites throughout the watershed for total coliform, fecal coliform, and *E. coli*. Each monitoring campaign consisted of five synoptic sampling runs within a 30-day period. The protocols for sample collection and analysis of indicator organisms are detailed in the quality assurance plan for the project (Hager and Watson 2003). The results of this first stage of monitoring, confirmed that the Watsonville Slough system was in exceedance of the Basin Plan objective for fecal coliform, therefore a preliminary source analysis was needed in order to proceed with TMDL development.

### **Sampling Locations**

The 13 primary sites that were monitored for this project are listed in Table 3-2. The location of these sites is shown in Figure 3-1. Additional sites, sampled less frequently throughout the assessment, are listed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-2 Primary monitoring sites for data collected for TMDL development.

<b>Site Code</b>	<b>Site Description</b>
WAT-PAJ	Watsonville Slough mouth at Pajaro Dunes Colony
WAT-SHE	Watsonville Slough at Shell Road pump station
WAT-AND	Watsonville Slough at San Andreas Road bridge
WAT-LEE	Watsonville Slough at Lee Road bridge
WAT-HAR	Watsonville Slough at Harkins Slough Road crossing
HAR-CON	Harkins Slough confluence with Watsonville Slough (pump station)
HAR-HAR	Harkins Slough at Harkins Slough Road crossing
HAR-RAN	Harkins Slough upstream of Ranport Road crossing
GAL-BUE	Gallighan Slough at Buena Vista Road (near landfill exit)
HAN-HAR	Hanson Slough at Harkins Slough Road crossing
STR-LEE	Struve Slough at Lee Road crossing
STR-HAR	Struve Slough at Harkins Slough Road crossing
STR-CHE	Struve Slough at Cherry Blossom Drive

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, p. 20.

Table 3-3 Secondary monitoring sites for data collected for TMDL development.

<b>Site Code</b>	<b>Site Description</b>
HAR-HIU	Harkins Slough just upstream of Hwy 1 crossing
HAR-BUE	Harkins Slough at Buena Vista Road
HAR-PEA	Harkins Slough at Peaceful Oaks Lane
HAR-916	Harkins Slough upstream of HAR-PEA
STR-CH1	Struve Slough upstream of STR-CHE
STR-CH2	Struve Slough upstream of STR-CH1
STR-CH3	Struve Slough upstream of STR-CH2
STR-CH4	Struve Slough downstream of STR-CHE
STR-CH5	Struve Slough downstream of STR-CH4
STR-TRB	Small tributary to Struve Slough located just upstream of STR-CHE
STR-PIP	Pipe near STR-CHE
STR-AIR	Struve Slough at Airport Blvd.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, p. 20.

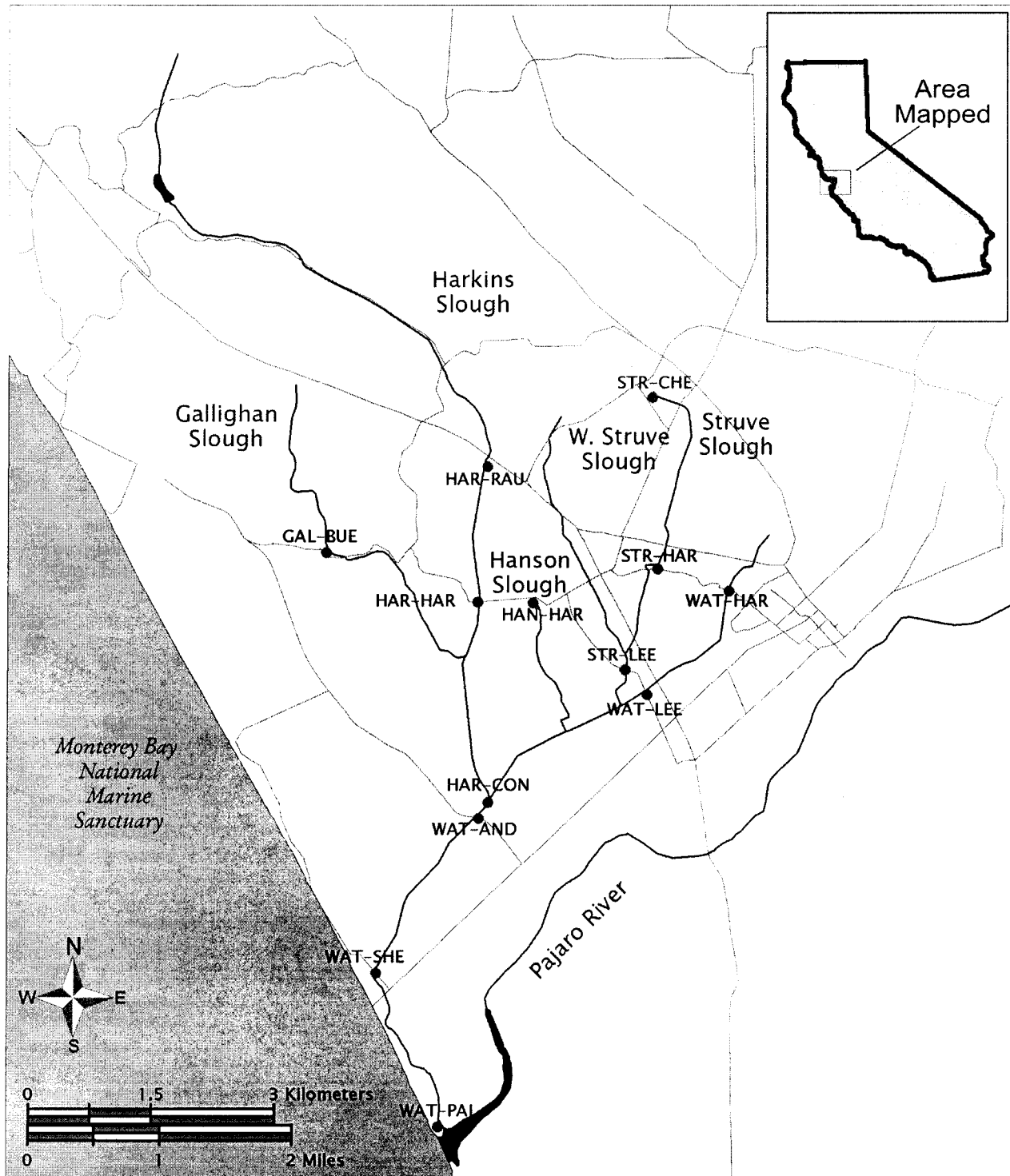


Figure 3-1 Location of sampling stations for Hager, et al., (2004) field sampling. See Table 3-2 for Site Code descriptions. Source: Hager, et al., 2004, Figure 5.1.

## **Genetic Testing**

The second stage of the assessment was a preliminary source analysis of coliform bacteria based on genetic analysis of samples from three sites that were identified as “hot spots” for fecal contamination. These same sites are also representative of dominant land uses throughout the watershed. The laboratory group led by Dr. Betty Olson at the Department of Environmental Analysis and Design at the University of California, Irvine analyzed a total of 16 samples using the Toxin Gene Biomarker method. This method uses polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to identify toxin biomarker genes in *E. coli* (Ibid., p. 18).

Hager, et al. determined the Toxin Gene Biomarker method to be most appropriate for this study by comparing it to other methods of genetic source identification of bacteria, and taking into account budgetary constraints. The Toxin Gene Biomarker screens a large proportion of the entire *E. coli* population of a single water sample and the biomarkers have proved to be geographically stable. The major limitation of this method is that only a limited number of toxin genes have been identified thus far. The biomarkers used in this study included those for human, cow, bird, rabbit, and dog. Sources other than these were not identified in the analysis conducted for this project (Ibid.). The full text of the report prepared by the Olson lab describes the methodology in greater detail (Appendix B).

## **Hydrologic Data**

SH&G, et al. (2003) conducted visual assessments of water circulation within each reach from December 2000 to June 2001. Water circulation was inspected through observation of flow velocity, signs of stagnation (floating debris, flotsam), baseflow and storm response. They also conducted field surveys of hydraulic control structures from winter flood through spring recession in order to assess these structures' influence on circulation. Most of the structures, constructed in early to mid-1900s, are associated with road crossings and drainage control and may cause backwater conditions during flooding and reduce hydraulic capacity. SH&G, et al. rated each structure for its condition, the degree of flow constriction, whether it was clogged or inoperable, and whether the structure appeared adequately sized. Using these field surveys and historical aerial photographs, SH&G, et al. classified the hydrology of individual stream reaches (2003, pp. A-2, A-3).

Hager, et al. (2004) measured flows when possible during sampling events. The largest flows were observed during the March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 13<sup>th</sup> storm events. Stagnant or near stagnant conditions at some stations prevented flow measurement. Additional data on precipitation were retrieved from the California Irrigation Management Information System Watsonville West Station #177 and the Green Valley Station No. 111 (CIMIS, 2003), as well as from the National Climatic Data Center Watsonville Waterworks Station No. 049473 (NCDC, 2003) (Hager, et al., p. 35).

## **Spatial Data**

Spatial data for this report include those required for: preparation of orientation maps; delineation of watershed boundaries; compilation of land use tables; and presentation of hydrologic and transportation networks. The County of Santa Cruz Planning Department provides many of the specific layers such as streams, roads, and municipal boundaries. Other layers are available as part of the Water Analysis Tool for Environmental Review (WATER) dataset, which is distributed via the web by the Central Coast Joint Data Committee. Manipulations of spatial data for delineating watershed boundaries and building land use tables are described below.

## **Watershed Boundaries and Planning Areas**

Watershed boundary maps are used in this project to describe the condition of the watershed and to interpret the relative effects of land use on bacteria levels. Two maps developed by different methods were used, including one produced by the Watershed Institute (Hager, et al. 2004) and one produced by SH&G, et al., (2003). The Watershed Institute produced their map using a Digital Elevation Model

(DEM) based on USGS data, which they developed previously for the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Multiple USGS 30-meter DEMs were mosaicked using Tarsier Software developed by Watson and Rahman (2003). This process is detailed in Newman et al. (2003). From the DEM, sub-watershed boundaries were determined for Watsonville Sloughs (Hager, et al., 2004, p. 16).

SH&G, et al. divided the entire watershed into morphologically similar subwatershed units based on topography, channel morphology, land use coverage, and watershed position. They used USGS topographic maps and aerial photography in conjunction with field reconnaissance to determine drainage boundaries (2003, p. A-2).

### **Land Use and Land Cover**

Two approaches to land use/land cover were available for use in this analysis. Data from both of these methods are included in the discussion, since there are strengths of both and evaluating them provides a means of checking their relative accuracy. SH&G, et al., used Santa Cruz County assessors parcel GIS database and aerial photographs to determine land use coverage (Ibid.). This coverage uses classifications of land use, including: agricultural, grazing, urban residential, commercial, industrial, rural residential, and undeveloped land. Hager, et al. used multi-band imagery, 30-meter resolution Landsat Enhanced Thematic Mapper scenes from 1999 through 2002 to calculate land use/land cover percentages. The resulting classification is more descriptive of land cover than land use and includes classes such as: vineyard/berries, irrigated row crop, shrub, bare soil, water, urban, oak woodland/mixed forest. Details of the entire classification process, including verification techniques are given in Newman, et al., 2003. The construction of tables from the land use/land cover polygons is described in Appendix A.

### ***Municipal Stormwater Management Areas***

The Watershed Institute also prepared a map and accompanying data tables for portions of the watershed under stormwater general municipal permit requirements. Water Board staff provided a pdf format file of the boundary of the census-based urbanized area under city and county stormwater authority. Watershed Institute staff digitized this map and combined it with a GIS vector layer of the Watsonville City boundary and the subwatershed boundary layer prepared earlier. Staff then created in ArcMap, the map, which includes the stormwater management area boundary, City of Watsonville boundary, County boundary, waterbodies, watershed and sub-watershed boundaries, and shaded relief.

## **3.3. Findings from Existing Bacteria Data**

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In this study, the primary use of bacteria data from previous investigations is to identify general levels of indicator organisms and locate potential hot spots. However, the strength of comparison among these data is limited due to different sampling techniques, sampling frequency, analysis, and rainfall patterns between the various years for which samples were taken (Hager, et al., 2004, p. 11).

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Services' data are summarized in main branch of Struve Slough.

Figure 3-2. For screening purposes, Hager, et al. labeled as "hot spots" those sites with geometric means (for all samples from that site) greater than 400 MPN/100ml (p. 12). They also indicated what percentage of a location's samples exceeded 400 MPN/100ml—a violation of the Basin Plan water quality objective for REC-1 where that percentage exceeds ten percent of samples collected in a 30-day period. Both of these measures are indicated in Figure 3-2, along with the total number of samples (N) taken over the indicated time period (e.g., 1992, 1994-97). The site codes for sampling locations are included in Table 3-4. These data reveal hot spots in the area near the confluence of Harkins Slough and Watsonville Slough and in the heavily urbanized areas near the west branch and main branch of Struve Slough.

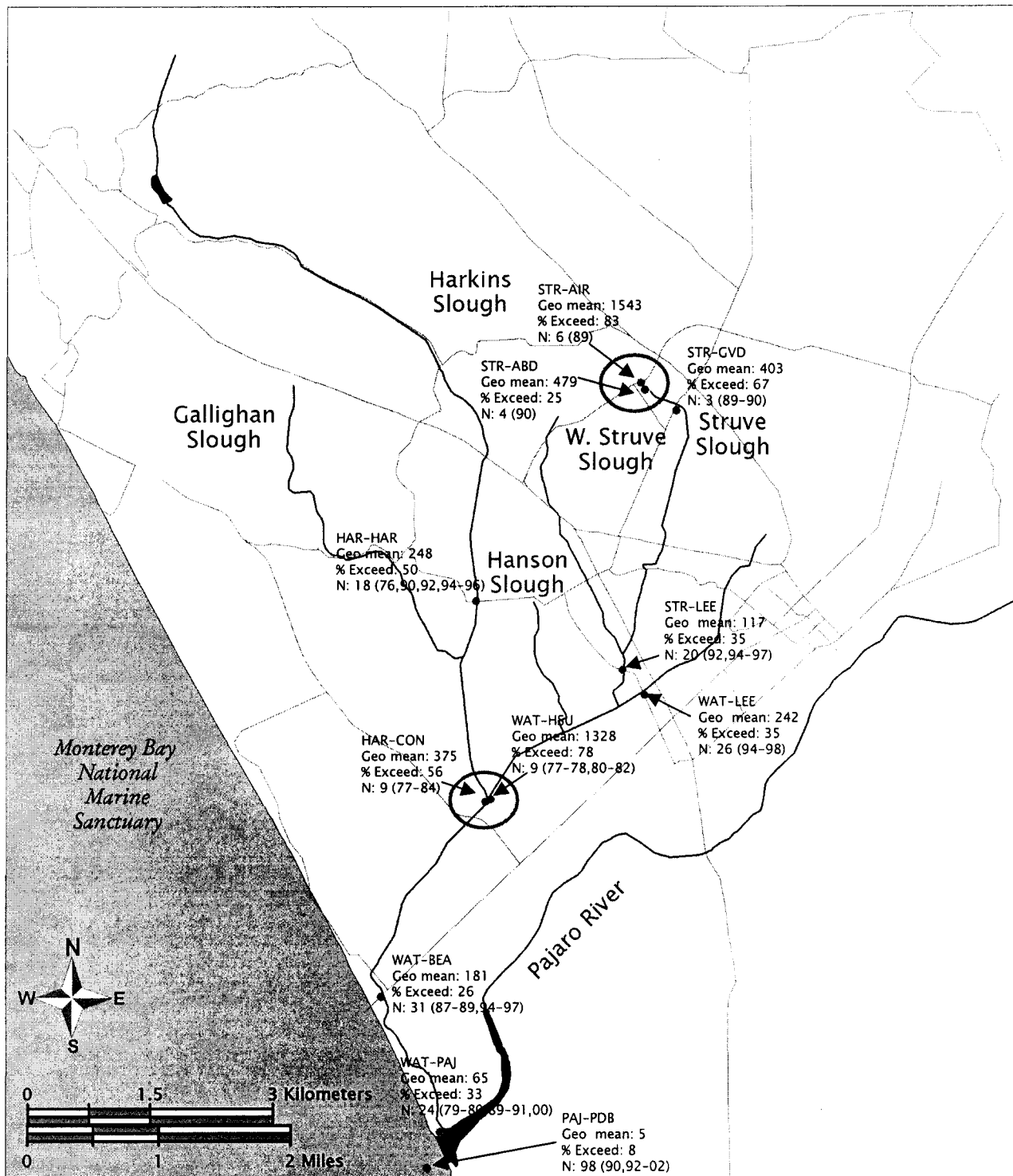


Figure 3-2 Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Services fecal coliform data showing geometric mean, percent exceedance of 400 MPN/100ml, and total number of samples (N) taken over time period in years. Source: Figure 5.1, Hager, et al., 2004.

Table 3-4 Site code indices for previous studies.

Site Code	Location
WAT-PAJ	Watsonville Slough mouth at confluence with Pajaro River Lagoon
WAT-SHE	Watsonville Slough at Shell Rd.
WAT-AND	Watsonville Slough at San Andreas Rd.
WAT-HSD	Watsonville Slough downstream of Harkins Slough confluence
WAT-HAR	Watsonville Slough at Harkins Slough Rd.
WAT-HSU	Watsonville Slough upstream of Harkins Slough confluence
WAT-RWY	Watsonville Slough at railroad crossing
WAT-LEE	Watsonville Slough at Lee Rd.
WAT-WAL	Watsonville Slough at Walker Rd.
BEA-CON	Beach Road Ditch at confluence with Watsonville Slough
BEA-SHE	Beach Road Ditch at Shell Rd.
HAR-INF	Harkins Slough Diversion Project influent
HAR-CON	Harkins Slough confluence with Watsonville Slough
HAR-EFF	Harkins Slough Diversion Project effluent
HAR-HAR	Harkins Slough at Harkins Slough Rd.
GAL-LOW	Lower Gallighan Slough
GAL-HAR	Gallighan Slough near confluence with Harkins Slough
STR-LEE	Struve Slough at Lee Rd.
STR-HAR	Struve Slough at Harkins Slough Rd.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004.

Table 3-5 summarizes the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PVWMA) data. The geometric means for fecal coliform samples at sites WAT-HSD and HAR-CON were greater than 400 MPN/100 ml. Also, all sites exceed the Basin Plan standard, since all have more than ten percent of samples greater than 400 MPN/100 ml. Though limited in geographic scope, these data generally support the hot spots hypothesis developed from Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Services data.

Table 3-5 Summary of fecal coliform data collected by PVWMA in 2002.

Site Code	(MPN/100 ml)					Geometric Mean
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
WAT-HSD	240	<b>1,300</b>	<b>800</b>	110	--	404
WAT-HSU	300	<b>800</b>	300	50	--	245
HAR-CON	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>800</b>	<20	--	585
HAR-EFF	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>2,200</b>	20	33	295

Bold text indicates exceedance of Basin Plan water quality criterion requiring <10% of samples exceeding 400 MPN/100 ml.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, p. 86.

### Regional Fecal Coliform Levels

This section compares fecal coliform levels between the Watsonville Sloughs system and the broader surrounding region in order to determine if potential problems in the Watsonville Sloughs system are unique, or simply typical of the region in general.

Data from the present study are compared with CCAMP data from 1998 to 2001 in Figure 3-3 and Table 3-6. A schematic describing the whisker plots is given in Figure 3-4. The sites in Figure 3-3 are organized according to approximate hydrologic and geographic provinces. Note that the CCAMP data were collected using a different sampling design, typically involving monthly sampling runs.

The Watsonville data are highly variable, but no more variable than sites throughout the region. The highest levels in the regional data set are from the intensely agricultural and urban areas between Castroville and the City of Salinas. The Watsonville data approach these levels, particularly at HAR-HAR and STR-CHE, but they do not exceed the regional maxima. The lowest levels in the regional data set are from the Salinas main stem and its largest tributaries in the Los Padres National Forest, such as Arroyo

Seco and the Nacimiento River. Some of the Watsonville sites approach these low levels, such as the tidal WAT-PAJ site, and at STR-LEE. Overall, the Watsonville data compare most closely with data from the nearby Pajaro River and its many tributaries. This is not surprising, given that the Pajaro watershed has a similar mix of land uses in its more coastal and northern parts (the southern and eastern parts are much drier grasslands and shrublands).

From this comparison, Hager, et al., concluded that the Watsonville Slough system is typical of many watersheds with mixed urban and agricultural uses and sluggish waters near the coast, and less intense uses in their headwaters.



# Regional Fecal Coliform Levels

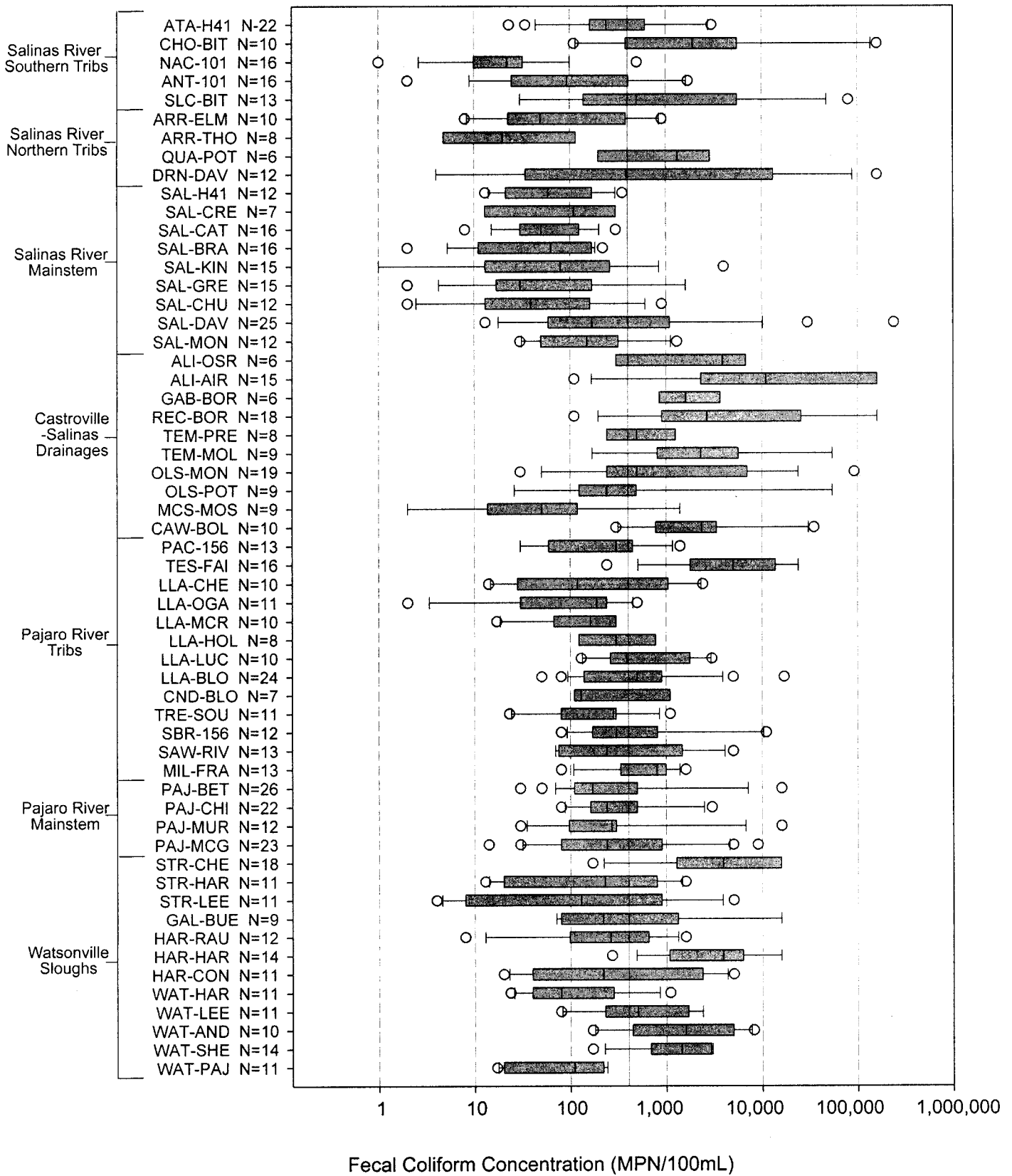


Figure 3-3 Regional fecal coliform levels for comparison with those in Watsonville Sloughs.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004 Figure 8.2.

Figure 3-4 Whisker plots explained

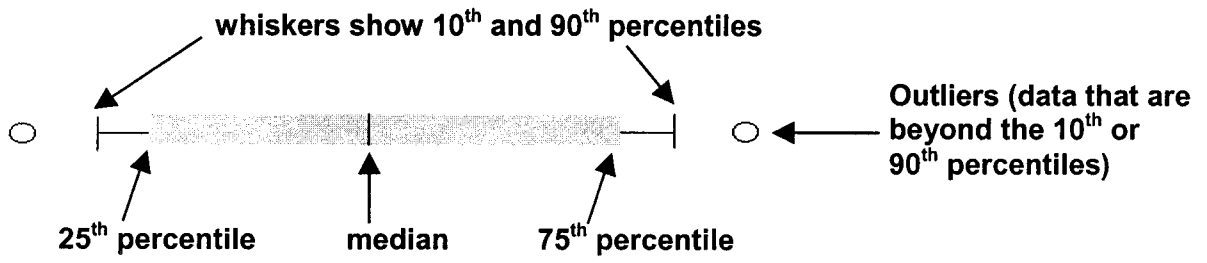


Table 3-6 CCoWS/CCAMP site codes for regional comparison.

CCoWS Site ID	CCAMP Site ID	Waterway	Site Description
PAJ-MCG	305THU	Pajaro River	McGowan Rd/Thurwachter Bridge
PAJ-MUR	305MUR	Pajaro River	Murphy's Creek Rd
PAJ-CHI	305CHI	Pajaro River	Chittenden Rd
PAJ-BET	305PAJ	Pajaro River	Betabel rd
MIL-FRA	305FRA	Miller Canal	Frazier Lake Rd
SAW-RIV	305COR	Salsipuedes Creek	Riverside Rd
SBR-156	305SAN	San Benito River	Hwy 156
TRE-SOU	305TRE	Tres Pinos Creek	Southside Rd
CND-BLO	305UVA	Carnadero Creek	Bloomfield Ave
LLA-BLO	305LLA	Llagas Creek	Bloomfield Ave
LLA-LUC	305LUC	Llagas Creek	Lucchessa Ave
LLA-HOL	305HOL	Llagas Creek	Holsclaw Rd
LLA-MCR	305MON	Llagas Creek	Monterey County Rd
LLA-OGA	305OAK	Llagas Creek	Oak Glen Ave
LLA-CHE	305CHE	Llagas Creek	Chesbro Reservoir
TES-FAI	305TES	Tequisquita Slough	Fairview Rd
PAC-156	305PAC	Pacheco Creek	Hwy 156
CAW-BOL	306CAR	Careros Creek	Blohm Rd
MCS-MOS	306MOS	Moro Cojo Slough	Moss Landing Rd
OLS-POT	309POT	Old Salinas River	Potrero Rd (Tide Gates)
OLS-MON	309OLD	Old Salinas River	Monterey Dunes Colony Rd
TEM-MOL	309TDW	Tembladero Slough	Molera Rd
TEM-PRE	309TEM	Tembladero Slough	Preston Rd
REC-BOR	309ALD	Reclamation Ditch	Boronda Rd
GAB-BOR	309GAB	Gabilan Creek	Boronda Rd
ALI-AIR	309ALU	Alisal Creek	Airport Rd
ALI-OSR	309UAL	Alisal Creek	Old Stage Rd
SAL-MON	309SBR	Salinas River	Del Monte Rd
SAL-DAV	309DAV	Salinas River	Davis Rd
SAL-CHU	309SAC	Salinas River	Chualar River Rd
SALL-GRE	309GRN	Salinas River	Greenfield
SAL-KIN	309KNG	Salinas River	King City
SAL-BRA	309USA	Salinas River	Bradley Rd
SAL-CAT	309DSA	Salinas River	along Cattleman Rd
SAL-CRE	309PSO	Salinas River	Creston Rd
SAL-H41	309SAT	Salinas River	Hwy 41
DRN-DAV	309SDR	Storm Drain	300m upstream from Davis Rd
QUA-POT	309QUA	Quail Creek	Potter Rd
ARR-THO	309SET	Arroyo Seco River	Thorne Rd
ARR-ELM	309SEC	Arroyo Seco River	Elm Rd
SLC-BIT	309LOR	San Lorenzo Creek	along Bitterwater Rd
ANT-101	309SAN	San Antonio River	Hwy 101
NAC-101	309NAC	Nacimiento River	Hwy 101
CHO-BIT	317CHO	Cholame Creek	Bitterwater Rd
ATA-H41	309ATS	Atascadero Creek	Hwy 41

### 3.4. Findings from Grab Samples Collected for TMDL Development

Assuming that fecal coliform and *E. coli* are reliable indicators of pathogenic pollution, the levels of these organisms detected during this study indicate that Watsonville Sloughs has a pathogen problem throughout most of the system. The following discussion addresses where and to what degree the problem occurs. A subsequent section, *Source Analysis*, describes the results of sampling and analysis

aimed at tracking the source of the problem. A more detailed discussion of the data is included in the report (Hager, et al., 2004) that staff used in preparing the following sections (Appendix A).

### **Areas in Exceedance of Basin Plan Objectives**

The initial approach to determining the extent of pathogen problems in Watsonville Sloughs was to sample for total coliform, fecal coliform, and *E. coli* at multiple locations throughout the watershed during both the dry and rainy season. These two “exceedance monitoring” campaigns (summer and winter), each consisting of five sampling runs within a 30-day period, were designed specifically to determine where in the sloughs the Basin Plan’s geometric mean objective of 200 MPN/ 100 ml was exceeded. After exceedance of the objective was confirmed, initial source tracking was undertaken with additional sampling (see Section 5 *Source Analysis*).

The results of the winter and summer exceedance monitoring for coliform showed that with the exception of WAT-PAJ, all 13 sites were in exceedance of the Basin Plan REC-1 objective for fecal coliform during the winter, summer, or both. In most cases, *E. coli* concentrations alone caused exceedance of the fecal coliform objective (Hager, et al., p. 65). Although some sites were consistently higher than others, there was considerable variation in the data. For a given site, there was often a wide range in the level of fecal coliform detected. The ranges of the data in winter and summer were similar, ranging from nine to 2,784 MPN/100 ml *E. coli* in the winter, and 38 to 2,165 MPN/100 ml *E. coli* in summer (Ibid.).

Figure 3-5 and Figure 3-6 illustrate the time of sampling events relative to seasonal rainfall averages and to storms occurring over the sampling period. These figures serve to illustrate that although limited in number, sampling events generally captured representative wet and dry conditions.

Monthly Rainfall for Watsonville Waterworks #049473

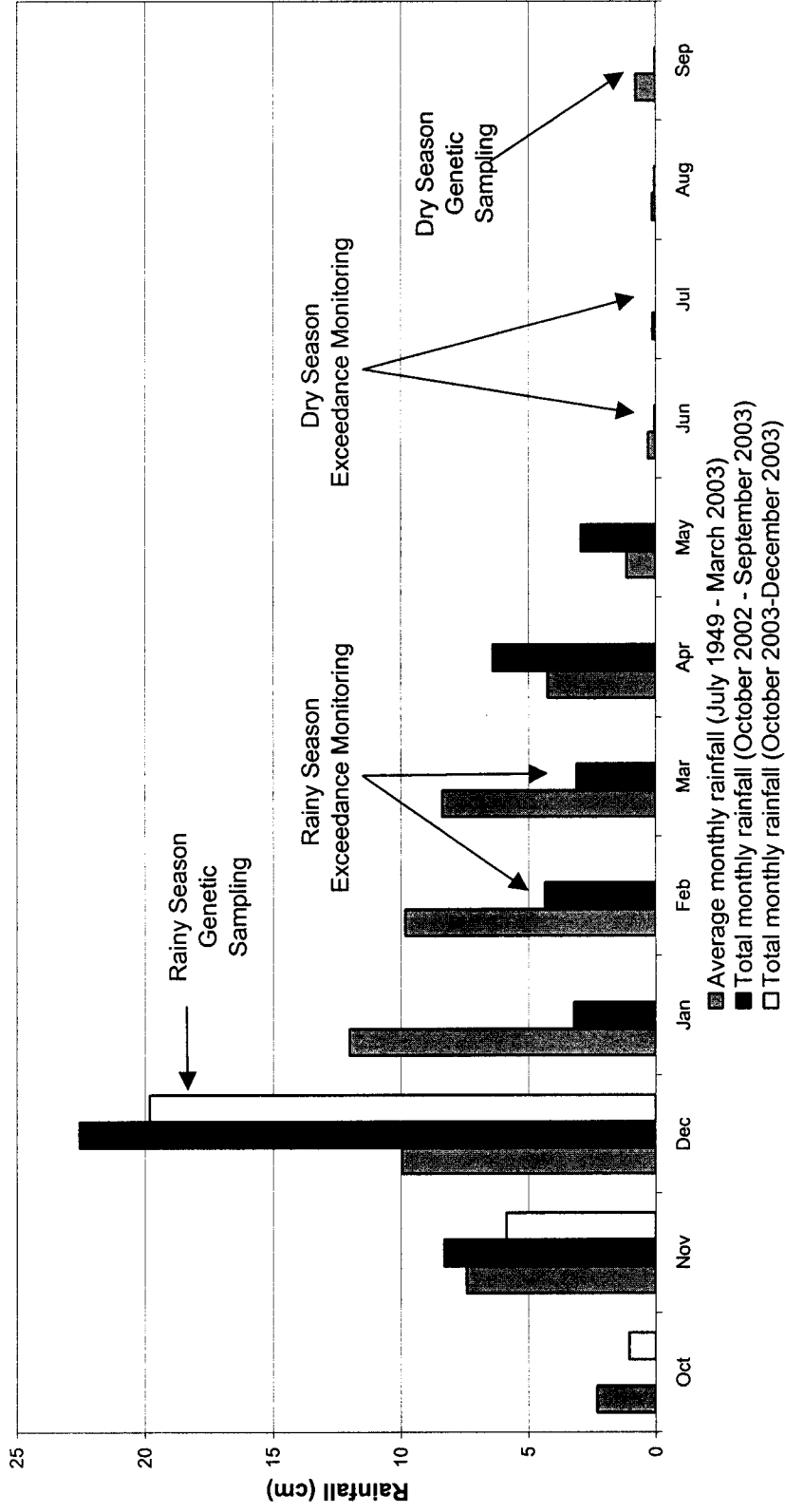


Figure 3-5 Monthly rainfall averages (1948-2003) and sampling event date.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, Figure 7.1

### Watsonville West Daily Precipitation

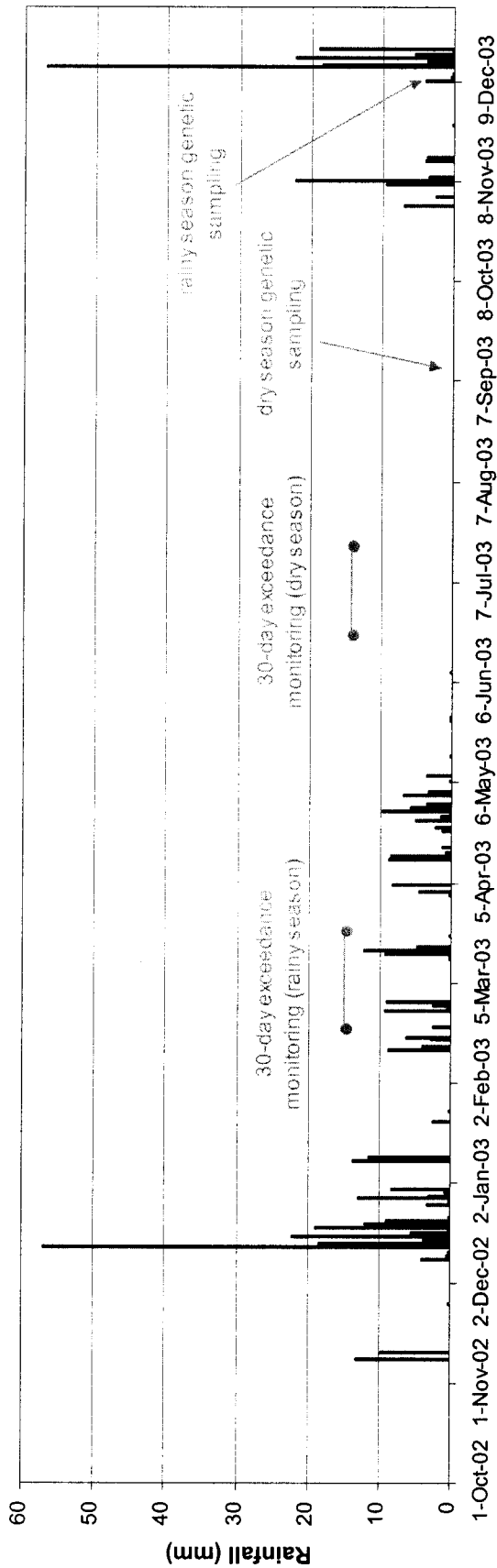


Figure 3-6 Daily precipitation data for CIMIS Watsonville West station. Data from December 20 to 30, 2003 not available.  
 Source: Heger, et al., 2004, Figure 7.2.

## Winter Conditions

Winter exceedance monitoring results appear in Table 3-7 and Table 3-8. The data for *E. coli* reveal temporal variation within sites, as well as relative consistency among some sites (Figure 3-7). For instance, *E. coli* values at STR-CHE ranged from 170 to 16,000 MPN/100 mL, but the geometric mean there was the highest of all sites.

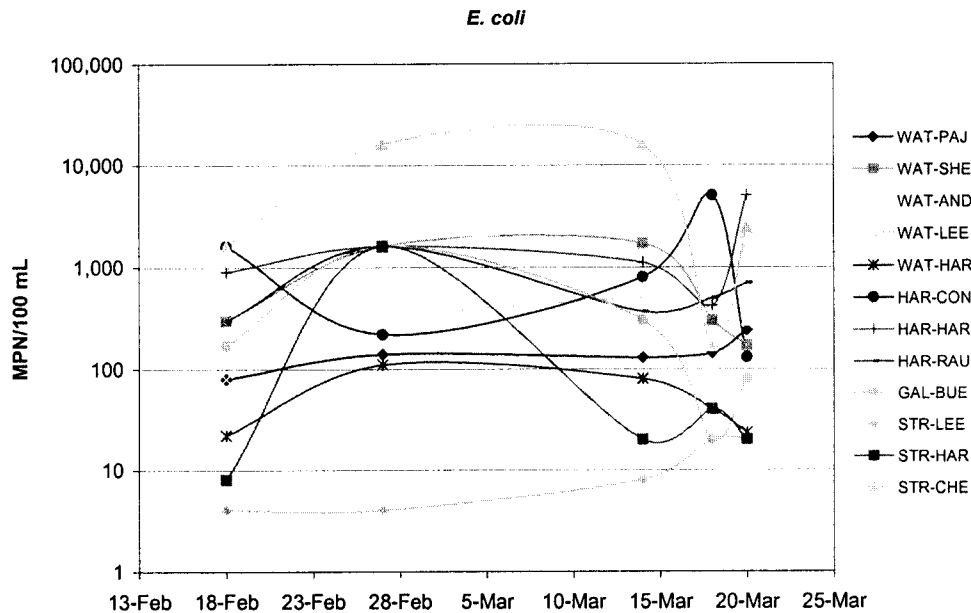


Figure 3-7 Temporal variability in winter *E. coli* data for Watsonville Sloughs.

Source: Hager et al., 2004.

On February 27th, a large increase was observed at most sites and the reasons for this are unknown. One hypothesis is that storm runoff transports bacteria from various sources leading to increases in the receiving waters. However, this hypothesis cannot be directly tested with this data set, since sampling events were not consistently timed to storm flow peaks. Another hypothesis, challenging to test even with a more robust data set, is that the observed responses are a function of environmental conditions that promote growth or decay of bacteria within the waterbodies.

Table 3-7 Watsonville Sloughs winter fecal coliform data.

Date	WAT-PAJ	WAT-SHE	WAT-AND	WAT-LEE	WAT-HAR	HAR-CON	HAR-HAR	HAR-RAN	GAL-BUE	HAN-HAR	STR-LEE	STR-HAR	STR-CHE
18-Feb-03	130	300	1,600	80	37	1,600	900	500	220	no flow	4	13	>=1,600
27-Feb-03	220	1,600	1,600	300	170	220	>=1,600	>=1,600	>=1,600	>=1,600	8	>=1,600	16,000
14-Mar-03	240	1,700	5,000	1,600	80	2,400	1,100	400	300	no flow	8	20	16,000
18-Mar-03	143	500	5,000	95	40	5,000	1,000	500	80	no flow	<20	40	170
20-Mar-03	240	170	300	1,700	23	130	5,000	700	80	no flow	20	20	2,400
Max	240	1,700	5,000	1,700	170	5,000	5,000	1,600	1,600	1,600	20	1,600	16,000
Min	130	170	300	80	23	130	900	400	80	1,600	4	13	170
Geometric mean	188	586	1,806	362	54	887	1,513	645	232	1,600	10	51	2,784
% Exceedance	0	60	80	40	0	60	100	80	20	100	0	20	80

Shaded regions show exceedance of Basin Plan fecal coliform REC-1 objective: geometric mean >200 MPN/100 mL, or more than 10% of samples exceeded 400 MPN/100 mL

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, p. 47.

Table 3-8 Watsonville Sloughs winter *E. coli* data.

Date	WAT-PAJ	WAT-SHE	WAT-AND	WAT-LEE	WAT-HAR	HAR-CON	HAR-HAR	HAR-RAN	GAL-BUE	HAN-HAR	STR-LEE	STR-HAR	STR-CHE
18-Feb-03	80	300	1,600	80	22	1,600	900	300	170	no flow	4	8	>=1,600
27-Feb-03	140	1,600	1,600	300	110	220	>=1600	>=1,600	>=1,600	>=1,600	4	1,600	16,000
14-Mar-03	130	1,700	3,000	500	80	800	1,100	367	300	no flow	8	20	16,000
18-Mar-03	143	300	3,000	390	40	5,000	420	500	20	no flow	<20	40	170
20-Mar-03	240	170	300	1,700	23	130	5,000	700	80	no flow	20	20	2,400
Max	240	1,700	3,000	1,700	110	5,000	5,000	1,600	1,600	1,600	20	1,600	16,000
Min	80	170	300	80	22	130	420	300	20	1,600	4	8	170
Geometric mean	138	529	1,472	380	45	712	1,272	573	167	1,600	9	46	2,784
% Exceedance	0	40	80	40	0	60	100	60	20	100	0	20	80

Shaded regions show *E. coli* alone causes exceedance of Basin Plan fecal coliform REC-1 objectives.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, p. 47.



A map summarizing the fecal coliform data from the 30-day period of mid-February through mid-March is presented in Figure 3-8. Hot spots—sites with a geometric mean greater than 1,000 MPN/100 ml—are circled and include WAT-AND, HAR-HAR, and STR-CHE.

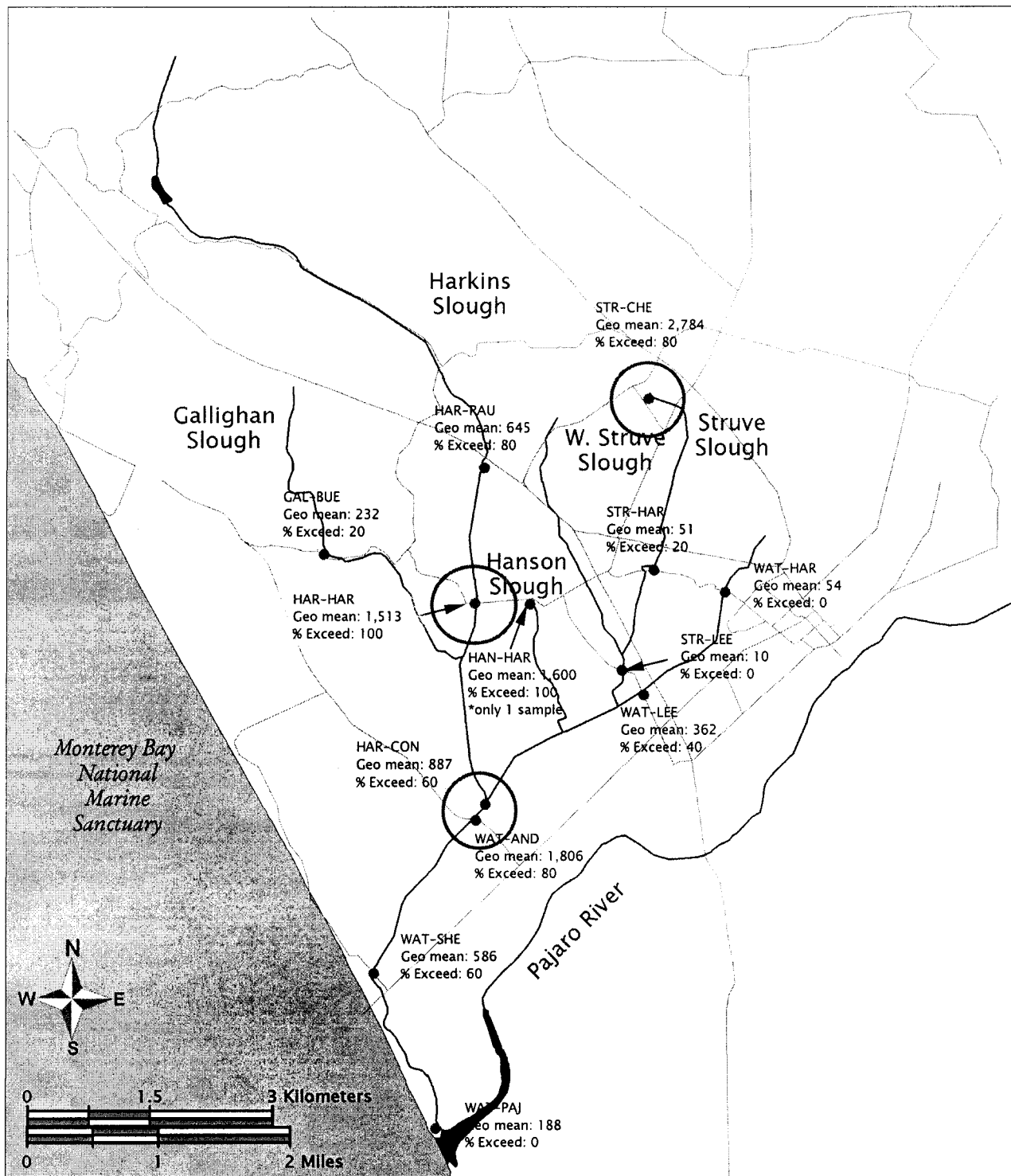


Figure 3-8 Winter fecal coliform data from February and March, 2003, showing geometric mean and percent exceedance of 400 MPN/100ml. Circles indicate hot spots with geometric means greater than 1,000 MPN/100ml.  
 Source: Hager, et al., 2004.

**Summer Conditions**

Summer exceedance monitoring results appear in Table 3-9 and Table 3-10. Hanson Slough was dry during the summer monitoring period so it does not appear in these tables. Eleven of the twelve primary monitoring sites were in exceedance of the fecal coliform objective for contact recreation with more than

ten percent of the samples exceeding 400 MPN/100 ml. The only primary monitoring site that was not in exceedance of the Basin Plan for fecal coliform was WAT-PAJ.

Eight of the 12 primary sites were in exceedance of the fecal coliform geometric mean objective of 200 MPN/100 ml. Although WAT-AND and GAL-BUE were in exceedance only four samples were taken at WAT-AND due to a field error, and only three samples were taken at GAL-BUE, due to lack of water. Gallighan Slough at GAL-BUE did not flow during the last two weeks of the summer monitoring campaign.

A map summarizing the fecal coliform data is presented in Figure 3-10. Hot spots (geometric mean greater than 1,000 MPN/100 ml) are circled in and include WAT-SHE, HAR-HAR, and STR-CHE. Sites STR-CHE and HAR-HAR were also identified as hot spots during the winter exceedance monitoring.

Variation in coliform concentrations between sampling events for a given site was pronounced (Figure 3-9). For example, *E. coli* values at STR-CHE ranged from below 400 MPN/100 ml on one event to 8,135 MPN/100 ml on another. For any single sampling event, some sites had increases in concentrations from the previous run, while others had decreases.

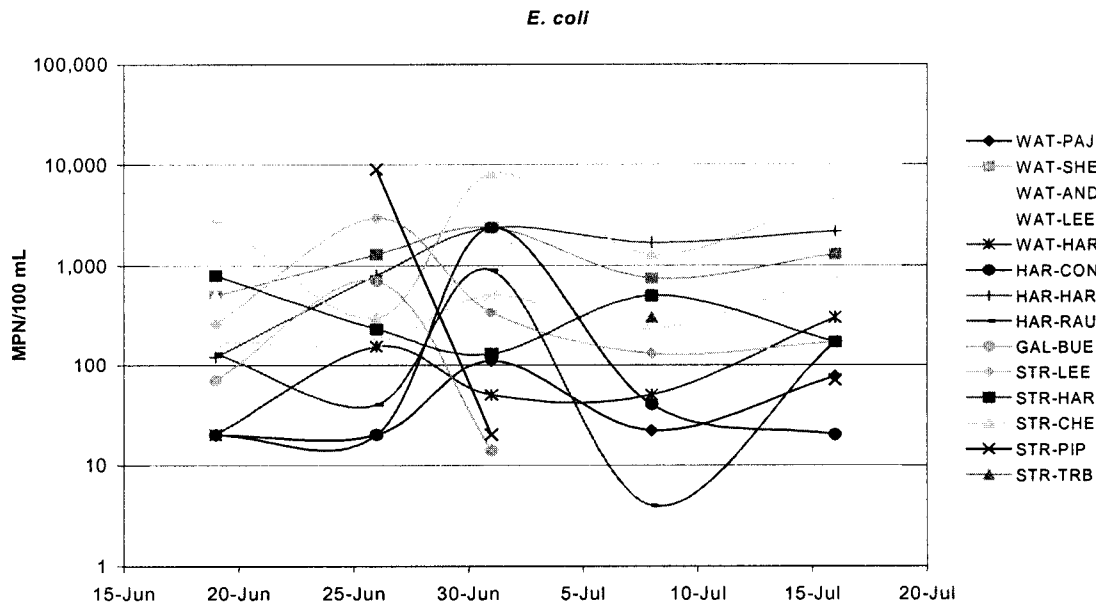


Figure 3-9 Temporal variation in summer *E. coli* data in Watsonville Sloughs.  
Source: Hager, et al., 2004.

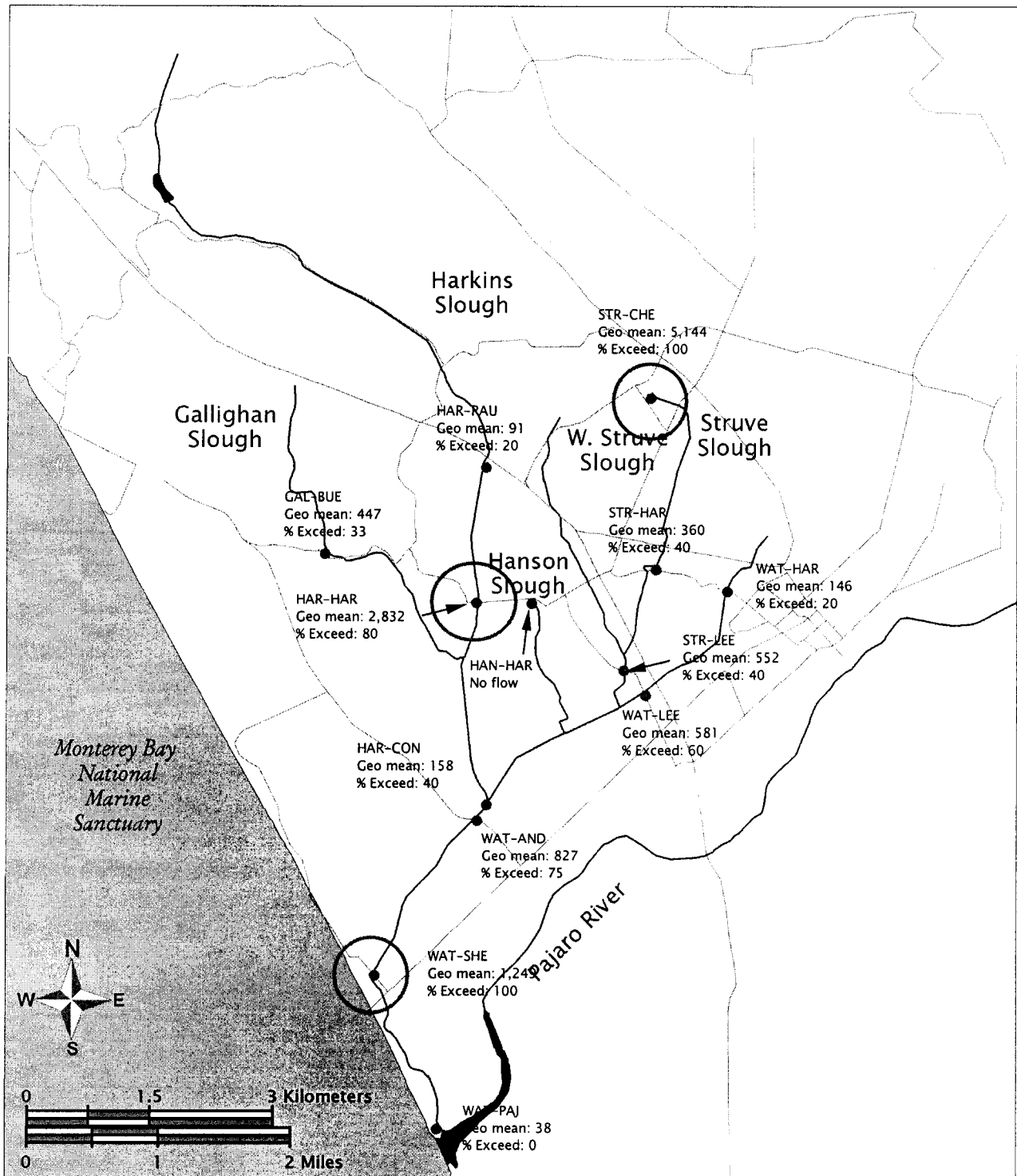


Figure 3-10 Summer fecal coliform data from June and July, 2003, showing geometric mean and percent exceedance of 400 MPN/100ml. Circles indicate hot spots with geometric means greater than 1,000 MPN/100ml.

Source: Hager, et al., 2004

Table 3-9 Watsonville Sloughs summer fecal coliform data.

Date	WAT-PAJ	WAT-SHE	WAT-AND	WAT-LEE	WAT-HAR	HAR-CON	HAR-HAR	HAR-RAN	GAL-BUE	STR-LEE	STR-HAR	STR-CHE	STR-PIP	STR-TRB
19-Jun-03	<20	800	500	300	80	40	270	130	70	1,367	800	3,000	x	x
26-Jun-03	20	1,300	8,150	2,400	1,10	1,300	5,000	40	16,000	5,000	230	5,000	>=16,000	x
01-Jul-03	110	3,000	675	500	50	2,400	3,000	900	80	340	300	16,000	<20	x
08-Jul-03	22	750	170	230	50	40	5,000	8	no flow	130	500	3,000	x	300
16-Jul-03	77	1,300	x	800	300	20	9,000	170	no flow	170	220	5,000	300	x
Max	110	3,000	8,150	2,400	1,10	2,400	9,000	900	16,000	5,000	800	16,000	16,000	300
Min	20	750	170	230	50	20	270	8	70	130	220	3,000	20	300
Geometric Mean	38	1,249	827	581	146	158	2,832	91	447	552	360	5,144	458	300
% Exceedance	0	100	75	60	20	40	80	20	33	40	40	100	33	0

x No sample collected

Shaded regions show exceedance of Basin Plan fecal coliform REC-1 objective: geo mean >200 MPN/100 mL, or more than 10% of samples exceed 400MPN/100 mL

Table 3-10 Watsonville Sloughs summer *E. coli* data.

Date	WAT-PAJ	WAT-SHE	WAT-AND	WAT-LEE	WAT-HAR	HAR-CON	HAR-HAR	HAR-RAN	GAL-BUE	STR-LEE	STR-HAR	STR-CHE	STR-PIP	STR-TRB
19-Jun-03	<20	500	500	170	20	20	120	130	70	260	800	3,000	x	x
26-Jun-03	20	1,300	400	170	153	20	800	40	700	3,000	230	300	9,000	x
01-Jul-03	110	2,400	675	500	50	2,400	2,400	900	14	340	130	8,135	<20	x
08-Jul-03	22	750	170	230	50	40	1,700	4	no flow	130	500	1,300	x	300
16-Jul-03	77	1,300	x	800	300	20	2,200	170	no flow	170	170	5,000	70	x
Max	110	2,400	675	800	300	2,400	2,400	900	700	3,000	800	8,135	9,000	300
Min	20	500	170	170	20	20	120	4	14	130	130	300	20	300
Geometric Mean	38	1,087	389	305	74	60	971	80	88	358	289	2,165	233	300
% Exceedance	0	100	50	40	0	20	80	20	33	20	40	80	33	0

x No sample collected

Shaded region show *E. coli* cause alone causes exceedance of Basin Plan fecal coliform REC-1 objective.

### **3.5. Findings on Impairment**

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Water quality objectives for protection of the REC1 beneficial use are routinely exceeded in several of the locations sampled in Watsonville Sloughs. REC2 water quality objectives allow for higher concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria and these objectives are more often met in the Sloughs. Staff is proposing de-designation of Watsonville Sloughs for the SHELL beneficial use. Therefore, staff attempted no determination of whether the Sloughs meet the SHELL water quality objectives in this analysis.

Water quality criteria for REC1 have been shown to be protective of human health-related beneficial uses. In this assessment, and in water quality attainment strategies that follow from its findings, staff assumes that these criteria are also protective of aquatic biota beneficial uses.

## 4. NUMERIC TARGETS

### 4.1. Targets

The numeric targets for Watsonville Sloughs, including Gallighan, Harkin, Hanson, and Struve Sloughs, will be based on Basin Plan water contact recreation standards, as they are the appropriate standard. (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Numeric targets for Watsonville Sloughs.

Fecal Coliform	
Geometric Mean	Maximum
200 MPN/100 ml <sup>a</sup>	400 MPN/100 ml <sup>b</sup>

a: Geometric mean of not less than five samples over a period of 30 days

b: Not more than 10% of total samples during a period of 30 days exceed

Source: Regional Water Quality Control Board, Basin Plan 1994.

Currently applicable Basin Plan standards are the basis for the numeric target. Water Board staff has initiated the process of updating the standards per USEPA 1986 guidelines but adoption of the new criteria will not occur soon enough to include in this TMDL. Staff intends to revise the numeric targets when we amend the Basin Plan to incorporate the USEPA guidelines. In the interim, staff is confident that the effectiveness of implementation efforts can be measured through monitoring for fecal coliform parameter and application of the existing water quality objective for the REC-1 beneficial use.

## 5. SOURCE ANALYSIS

This section of the report evaluates additional bacteria data in an attempt to identify the sources of elevated levels of coliform bacteria in Watsonville Sloughs. The purpose of the Source Analysis is to identify sources and assist in allocating appropriate responsibility for actions needed to reduce these sources. This source analysis does this by:

- Examining initial source tracking efforts to isolate specific causes of high bacteria loads
- Looking for relationships between hydrologic conditions and bacteria levels
- Seeking connections between land use and bacteria counts, and
- Looking for correlation of land use and genetic source.

### 5.1. Initial Source Tracking

Following initial exceedance monitoring efforts and the discovery that Watsonville, Harkins, and Struve Sloughs each had at least one hotspot location (fecal coliform geometric means > 1,000 MPN/100 ml, (see Section 3)), Hager, et al. conducted additional monitoring to identify and isolate the source of bacteria affecting these sites.

#### **Watsonville and Harkins Sloughs**

The winter exceedance monitoring showed that fecal coliform levels were elevated in Watsonville Slough at WAT-AND, but were not as high at WAT-LEE (see Figure 3-1 for sampling locations). Since all sites on Harkins Slough were in exceedance of the objective, researchers hypothesized that high levels at WAT-AND were a result of inputs from Harkins Slough, which enters Watsonville Slough just above WAT-AND. They then conducted additional sampling in Harkins Slough to investigate the potential sources.

Researchers added four new sampling sites upstream of HAR-RAN and collected grab samples from these as well as HAR-RAN in an attempt to isolate locations in middle and upper Harkins Slough where very high levels and potential sources may exist. The results from two sampling events on April 17<sup>th</sup> and May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003, included 20 analyses for total or fecal coliform, or *E. coli*, but failed to isolate a source or any apparent pattern of high concentrations (Hager, et al., pp. 49-53).

#### **Struve Slough**

To evaluate the high bacteria concentrations at STR-CHE, samples were initially collected at STR-CHE and at two other upstream locations: STR-CH1, located approximately 20 meters upstream of STR-CHE, and STR-AIR located upstream of STR-CH1 and immediately downstream of the Airport Boulevard crossing.

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, sites STR-CH1 and STR-AIR had lower fecal coliform levels than site STR-CHE. On May 6<sup>th</sup> this pattern was reversed for two of the sites; *E. coli* levels were slightly higher at STR-CH1 than at STR-CHE (laboratory results from May 6<sup>th</sup> at STR-AIR were discarded due to a possible laboratory error). During both sampling runs, bacteria concentrations for STR-CHE were lower in relation to the geometric mean observed during winter exceedance monitoring.

Since *E. coli* levels at STR-CHE remained high during the summer exceedance monitoring, additional efforts were made, in collaboration with the City of Watsonville, to determine the extent and source of the problem in the Cherry Blossom Drive area. Due to the small drainage area above this site, with only



residential and a small municipal airport as the primary land uses, Hager, et al. hypothesized that human contamination was the source. The City of Watsonville manages the sewage collection system, which receives sewage from the neighboring houses of the Cherry Blossom/Loma Prieta Avenue area. City staff took a lead role in investigating the possible bacteria sources in upper Struve Slough.

On August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the main sewer lines in the Cherry Blossom Drive area were dye tested. After several hours of close observation, City staff observed no traces of dye in the surrounding drainage area. The City then dye tested many of the neighboring houses to confirm their connection to the main sewer line. These dye tests, performed on August 26<sup>th</sup> and September 3<sup>rd</sup> verified that all of the tested houses were connected to the main sewer lines.

Samples for fecal coliform and/or *E. coli* were collected in an effort to isolate the location of the source by detecting differences and increases between sites. Nine sites in the Cherry Blossom Drive area were sampled throughout August and early September, including six upstream, and two downstream of STR-CHE (Hager, et al., p. 58). Combining these results with those produced in the more limited effort in April and May, a total of 58 data points were generated in the investigation of this site on upper Struve Slough (see Appendix A for a more detailed presentation of results). Despite this focused sampling, the dye testing, and extensive reconnaissance of the area, the outcomes are inconclusive relative to the main objective of identifying the source of high bacteria counts observed during the exceedance monitoring phase. Nevertheless, Hager, et al., (p. 59) did draw the following conclusions from the investigation:

- 1) There may be a localized source of fecal coliform downstream of STR-CH3
- 2) Since fecal coliform levels at individual sites vary from very low to very high, there may either be:
  - a) An intermittent source, or
  - b) Variability in the factors that govern the processes linking the source to the sampling site (e.g. hydrology and connectivity) and/or factors that govern the growth and death of coliform bacteria such as temperature, light, and nutrients (Gerba, 2000)
- 3) It is no simple matter to isolate sources even at such small watershed scales using conventional methods such as multiple tube fermentation.

### **Conclusions on Initial Source Tracking**

The primary conclusion to be drawn from these initial source tracking exercises is that the bacteria levels throughout Watsonville Sloughs are too variable to permit a simple source analysis based on limited sampling at multiple sites. No single site had much higher levels than other sites on either occasions, and data are too sparse to show a statistical difference between sites. Although there appeared to be differences between sites on a given day, these could be due to variation in the laboratory method. For instance, on April 17<sup>th</sup> values detected at two sites in upper Struve Slough were 654 and 300 MPN/100 ml using multiple tube fermentation. For this method, the 95% confidence limits for 300 MPN/100 ml range from 100 to 1,300 MPN/100 ml. Therefore, the difference between these two sites on that day could potentially be attributed to limitations of the analytical method rather than real differences in concentration (p. 50).

Furthermore, any and all landuses and activities must be considered potential sources until the actual sources can be identified. For example, in the portions of the Sloughs and their tributaries through which sewage collection system lines run, there exists the potential for leakage and overflows into surface waterbodies.

## 5.2. Findings from Genetic Analysis

Hager, et al., selected sampling sites WAT-SHE, HAR-HAR, and STR-CHE (See Figure 3-1 for sampling locations) for genetic source tracking based on the representativeness of surrounding land uses, and on high bacteria concentrations detected during the exceedance monitoring. These three sites had the highest geometric means for both fecal coliform and *E. coli* during the first phase of the study. Hager collected the first samples for genetic analysis on September 9, 2003 following the dry season exceedance monitoring, and the second samples on December 9, 2003, to capture wet season conditions. All samples were analyzed again for total coliform, fecal coliform, and *E. coli* to confirm that the hot spots identified earlier were persistent.

The genetic analysis was undertaken by the laboratory group led by Dr. Betty Olson at the University of California at Irvine. They analyzed 16 samples using the Toxin Gene Biomarker method. This method involves extracting DNA from *E. coli* colonies grown on agar plates from water in grab samples. The DNA is then analyzed for the presence or absence of toxin genes specific to a host animal. In this study, toxin genes searched for included those for rabbit, human, dog, bird, and cow. Sources other than these five may have been present in samples but would not have been detected using the Toxin Biomarker method. Other potential sources that may be present in Watsonville Sloughs include: cat, horse, sheep, goat, pig, rodents, and other small mammals such as fox, raccoon, skunk, and opossum. The Toxin Gene Biomarker method is described in detail in Appendix B.

Clear differences are apparent in the occurrence or frequency of the different biomarkers at most locations. Dog, bird, and cow are the most prevalent of the five animal sources in samples from Watsonville Sloughs (Table 5-1). Since the total number of *E. coli* increased between dry and wet seasons, the percent of a particular source in the population can change while the MPN value can stay the same (Figure 5-1).

*E. coli* from bird sources alone exceed 400 MPN/100ml in all samples. Thus, Basin Plan water quality objectives for contact recreational use of these waterbodies are not met due to natural sources (assuming bird sources do not include chickens, emus, or other domesticated bird species). During the wet season, *E. coli* from dog and cow sources individually lead to an exceedance in all samples. *E. coli* from human sources exceeds 400 MPN/100ml only during the rainy season at STR-CHE (two of three replicate samples). *E. coli* from rabbit sources is well below 400 MPN/100 ml.

Table 5-1 Summary of biomarker PCR analysis (*E. coli* MPN/100ml).

PCR Summary	Rabbits		Humans		Dogs		Birds		Cows	
	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet
STR-CHE A	0		9.3	93	43	1,500	2,400	4,600	0.36	4,600
STR-CHE B		0.3		430		2,400		4,600		4,600
STR-CHE C		0.74		430		2,400		2,400		2,400
<b>Avg</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>3,867</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,867</b>
WAT-SHE A	0	9.2	1.5	7.4	43	2,400	2,400	2,400	0.92	2,400
WAT-SHE B	0	7.4	0.74	7.4	43	1,500	2,400	1,100	0.36	11,000
WAT-SHE C	0	3.6	3	15	240	4,600	430	2,400	3.6	2,400
<b>Avg</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>2,833</b>	<b>1,743</b>	<b>1,967</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5,267</b>
HAR-HAR A	0	74	23	200	430	1,100	930	1,100	3	11,000
HAR-HAR B	0	23	15	280	930	1,100	930	4,600	9.2	11,000
HAR-HAR C	0	3.6	3	280	2,400	1,100	2,400	1,100	3.6	4,600
<b>Avg</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>2,267</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8,867</b>

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, Table 10.1.

## Struve Slough near Cherry Blossom Drive

Although the watershed area above the STR-CHE sampling location is small, the major land uses are purely residential and urban, including a portion of the Watsonville Municipal Airport. The most prevalent detectable source of *E. coli* during the dry season was birds with an occurrence of 2,400 MPN/100ml in a single sample. Replicates were not taken during the dry season visit to this site. Approximately 98 percent of the five sources tested were attributed to bird sources, two percent to dog sources, and less than one percent to human and cow sources.

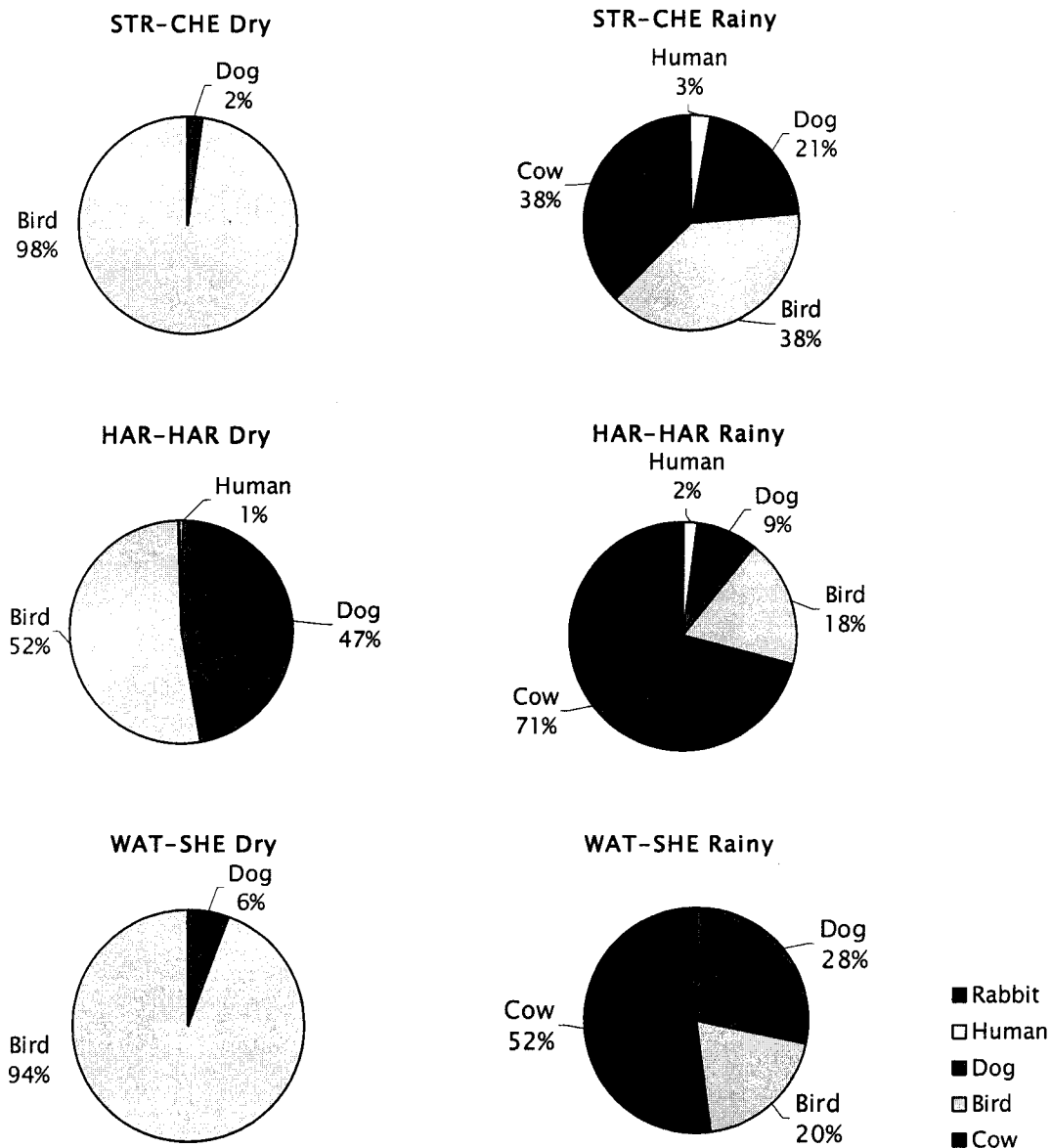


Figure 5-1 Percent composition of five *E. coli* biomarkers in water samples from three sites in Watsonville Sloughs. Note: other *E. coli* sources may have been present in sample; these charts only show percent composition for the five biomarkers that were screened.

During the rainy season, the most prevalent detectable sources of *E. coli* were cows and birds, both with an average concentration of 3,867 MPN/100ml. *E. coli* sources from dogs were also considerably high with an average occurrence of 2,100 MPN/100ml. *E. coli* attributed to humans increased considerably from the dry season to the wet season to an average 318 MPN/100ml for three replicate samples. Rabbit sources were less than 1 MPN/100ml for the rainy season. Thirty eight percent of the five sources tested were attributed to cows, 38 percent to bird, 21 percent to dog, and 3 percent to human (Figure 5-1).

### **Watsonville Slough at Shell Road**

WAT-SHE has a large watershed area with multiple land uses/sources that are representative of the entire Watsonville Sloughs system (rural residential, urban, industrial, natural/recreation lands, grazing, and row crop agriculture). WAT-SHE is located at the bottom of the Watsonville Sloughs watershed and theoretically receives all inputs from upstream tributaries and all land uses under normal flow conditions.

At WAT-SHE the most prevalent detectable source of *E. coli* during the dry season was birds. The next most abundant detectable source of *E. coli* was dogs with an average of 109 MPN/100ml for three replicate samples. *E. coli* attributed to human and cow sources had occurrences less than 5 MPN/100ml for the dry season. About 94 percent of the five sources tested were attributed to bird sources and six percent to dog sources (Figure 5-1)

During the rainy season, the most prevalent detectable source of *E. coli* was cows (i.e. cattle) with an average of occurrence of 5,267 MPN/100ml. *E. coli* sources from dogs and birds were also considerably high. *E. coli* attributed to human and rabbit sources were less than 10 MPN/100ml for the rainy season. Cows accounted for 52 percent of the five sources tested, dog 28 percent, and birds 20 percent (Figure 5-1).

### **Harkins Slough at Harkins Slough Road**

HAR-HAR is located in the middle portion of Harkins Slough and comprises almost half of the total area for the Watsonville Sloughs system. This site captures the effects of rural residential, grazing, and row cropland uses.

At HAR-HAR the most prevalent detectable source of *E. coli* during the dry season was birds. As was the case for WAT-SHE, the next most abundant detectable source of *E. coli* was dogs. *E. coli* attributed to human and cow sources had occurrences less than 25 MPN/100mL for the dry season. Approximately 52 percent of the five sources tested were attributed to birds sources, 47 percent to dog sources, one percent to human sources, and less than one percent to cow sources (Figure 5-1).

During the rainy season, the most prevalent detectable source of *E. coli* was cows with an average of occurrence of 8,867 MPN/100mL. *E. coli* sources from birds and dog were also considerably high with an average occurrence of 2,267 MPN/100ml for bird and 1,100 MPN/100ml for dog. *E. coli* attributed to humans increased to an average 253 MPN/100ml for three replicate samples, and rabbit sources increased to an average 34 MPN/100ml for the rainy season. 71 percent of the five sources tested were attributed to cows, 18% to bird, 9% to dog, and 2% to human (Figure 5-1).

### **Conclusions on Genetic Source Tracking**

The major conclusions from the genetic source tracking are that coliform sources and magnitudes vary widely between seasons; that exceedances of Basin Plan objectives for REC-1 can be caused solely by natural sources (birds); and that runoff from land during the wet season plausibly explains the more diverse genetic sources of bacteria, including controllable human, cow, and dog sources, compared to those in the dry season.

### 5.3. Potential Influence of Circulation on Bacteria Concentrations

#### Hydrologic Modification

Human alteration of the hydrology of the Watsonville Sloughs has been significant. The overlay of drainage, transportation, and water transfer infrastructure on this lowland/wetland environment, combined with extensive groundwater pumping, has created areas plagued by persistent inundation and limited circulation. For example, significant and prolonged inundation occurred in the upper reaches of the slough system during the winter of 2001 — surface water persisted in upper Harkins and Struve Sloughs in mid June 2001. This occurred in spite of the fact that 2001 was a below average winter with respect to rainfall with just 40 cm of rainfall, as compared to the average of 60 cm (SH&G, et al., 2003, p. A-24).

Rainstorms in December of 2003 produced flooding in lower Watsonville Slough and reverse flow toward tributary sloughs Harkins and Struve. Floodwaters inundated the lower Pajaro River and potentially contributed to flooding the lower Watsonville Sloughs. Floodwaters flowed up Watsonville Slough, around the pump station at the confluence of Watsonville and Harkins Sloughs and into Harkins. Also, floodwaters from middle Watsonville Slough overtopped the levee-banks and flowed across agricultural fields into Harkins Slough above the pump station (Hager, et al., 2004, p. 36).

Non-flood flow is generally sluggish in areas outside of Larkin Valley and the headwater of Struve Slough. Hager, et al. found limited measurable discharge throughout their sampling campaigns. But what they did find corresponds well with the SH&G, et al. findings on circulation (Table 5-2). Even in reaches with relatively high circulation ratings, typified by HAR-RAN and STR-CHE, flow rates were generally low and often too low to obtain an accurate measurement.

Table 5-2 Discharge measurements during exceedance monitoring campaign (cubic meters/second).

Date	GAL-BUE	HAN-HAR	HAR-RAN	STR-CHE	WAT-LEE
Circulation Rating	High-Moderate	Low	High	High	Low
18-Feb-03	0.004	no flow	-	0.001	0.052
27-Feb-03	0.016	0.003	0.103	0.004	0.113
13-Mar-03	0.006	x	0.019	x	x
14-Mar-03	0.015	no flow	0.019	0.001	0.011
15-Mar-03	0.066	0.010	1.432	0.064	0.197
18-Mar-03	x	no flow	0.009	0.003	0.055
20-Mar-03	0.010	no flow	0.021	0.001	0.043
13-Apr-03	0.018	0.004	0.037	0.045	0.291
13-Apr-03	0.038	0.003	0.030	0.014	0.142
19-Jun-03	0.001	no flow	-	0.006	0.002
26-Jun-03	0.000	no flow	-	-	0.001
01-Jul-03	0.001	no flow	-	0.002	0.003
08-Jul-03	no flow	no flow	-	0.003	0.004
13-Jul-03	no flow	no flow	-	0.001	x
16-Jul-03	no flow	no flow	-	0.001	0.002

- Not enough flow for discharge measurement.

x Site not visited or no measurement taken.

Source: Derived from Hager, et al., 2004, p. 43, and SH&G, et al., 2003, Table A-2.

These observations of flood flows, persistent inundation, and poor circulation lead to the hypothesis that the lack of drainage in these areas results from the acceleration of land subsidence due to historic shallow groundwater removal and decomposition of organic soil, potentially exacerbated by the sustained weight of water atop these areas. "It is difficult to predict whether or not the land surface is now at steady state, or if subsidence may continue to increase during upcoming winters." (SH&G, et al., 2003, p. A-24).

## Relating Circulation to Bacteria Levels

The significance of this alteration of hydraulic function to the delivery, transport, and reproduction of bacteria is a complex issue. Addressing the issue first requires a characterization of waterbody segments, or, reaches. SH&G, et al (2003) provide such a characterization—one describing the circulation rating (high, moderate, low, or stagnant), and the type of flow that dominates each reach (Figure 5-2):

- 1) *Perennial*: Flow all year with seasonal baseflow maximum occurring late winter/early spring; peak flows in winter rainfall
- 2) *Winter Inundation* (i.e., Seasonal Lake): Areas of open water during winter and spring
- 3) *Agricultural Drainage*: streams dominated by runoff from agricultural lands and tile drain/sump discharge; includes main agricultural ditches
- 4) *Intermittent*: Baseflow expended between late winter and fall, peak flows
- 5) *Ephemeral*: Only flows during winter rainfall events
- 6) *Urban Drainage*: Drains or watercourses dominated by urban runoff during rainfall events (2003, pp. A-2, A-3).

Staff attempted to associate available bacteria concentration data with this broad characterization of waterbody circulation to explore the possibility of a relationship between circulation and high bacteria counts (Table 5-3). The data are insufficient to show either way, whether a strong correlation (or any correlation at all) exists or not. *E. coli* concentrations in exceedance of water quality objectives occur in waterbodies of all circulation ratings except moderate. Similarly, levels below the objective are found in waterbodies of all circulation ratings.

Table 5-3 Comparing *E. coli* concentrations with circulation ratings in Watsonville Sloughs (2003).

Reach ID	Waterbody	Circulation Rating	Winter <i>E. coli</i> Geo. Mean (MPN/100ml)	Summer <i>E. coli</i> Geo. Mean	Closest Sampling Site
A	Upper Larkin Valley	High	-	-	No match
B	Lower Larkin Valley	High	<b>573</b>	80	HAR-RAN
C	Harkins Slough Trib	High	<b>573</b>	80	HAR-RAN
D	Upper Gallighan Slough	High	167	88	GAL-BUE
E	Lower Gallighan Slough	Moderate	-	-	No match
F	Upper Harkins Slough	Stagnant	<b>1,272</b>	<b>971</b>	HAR-HAR
G	Upper W Branch Struve	High	-	-	No match
H	Lower W Branch Struve	Low	9	<b>358</b>	STR-LEE
I	Upper Struve Slough	High	<b>2,784</b>	<b>2,165</b>	STR-CHE
J	Lower Struve Slough	Stagnant	46	<b>289</b>	STR-HAR
K	Watsonville Slough Headwaters	Moderate	45	74	WAT-HAR
L	Watsonville Slough Marsh	Stagnant	45	74	WAT-HAR
M	Watsonville Slough N of Hwy 1	Low	<b>380</b>	<b>305</b>	WAT-LEE
N	Hanson Slough	Low	<b>1,600</b>	NA	HAN-HAR
O	Mid Watsonville Slough	Low	-	-	No match
P	Lower Harkins Slough	Stagnant	<b>712</b>	60	HAR-CON
Q	Mid Watsonville Slough	Low	<b>1,472</b>	<b>389</b>	WAT-AND
R	Beach Rd North Ditch	Low	-	-	No match
S	Lower Watsonville Slough	Low	<b>529</b>	<b>1,087</b>	WAT-SHE
T	Beach Rd South Ditch	Stagnant	-	-	No match
V	Watsonville Slough Estuary	Moderate	138	38	WAT-PAJ

See Figure 5-2 for location of waterbody reach location.

Bold text indicates *E. coli* fraction alone exceeds Basin Plan fecal coliform objective of geometric mean >200 MPN/100ml.






Source: Data from Hager, et al, pp. 47, 55; SH&G, et al., 2003, Table A-3.

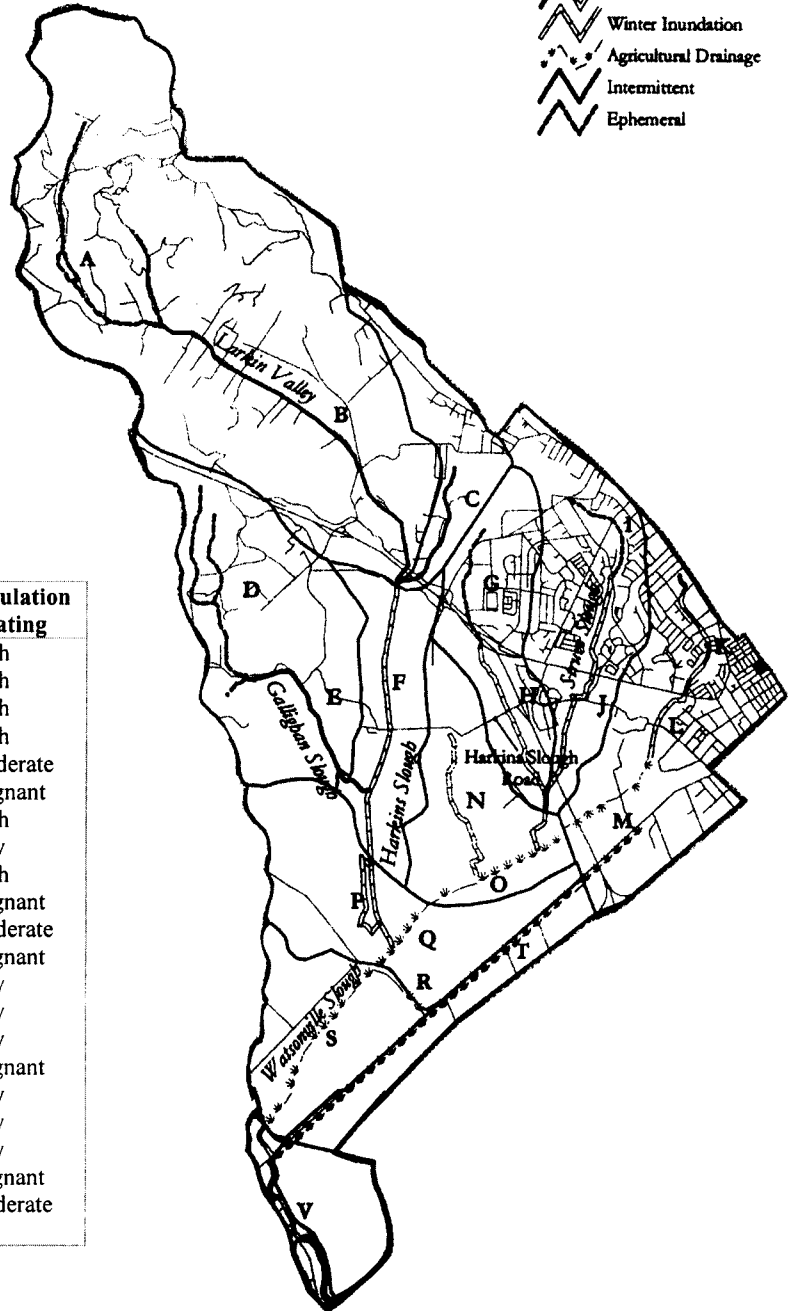
## Summary

From this analysis we conclude that any assumptions about a relationship between the occurrence of bacteria and circulation in this extensively modified system, is unsupported with existing data. Stated

another way, there is no evidence in this analysis that increasing circulation in the sloughs would result in lower concentrations of bacteria or permit the attainment of water quality objectives. Nevertheless, these results do not rule out the possibility that stagnant waterbodies capture, retain, and reproduce bacteria in a manner that explains high concentrations.

**Legend**

- Hydrologic Character**
-  Perennial
  -  Winter Inundation
  -  Agricultural Drainage
  -  Intermittent
  -  Ephemeral



Reach ID	Waterbody	Circulation Rating
A	Upper Larkin Valley	High
B	Lower Larkin Valley	High
C	Harkins Slough Tributary	High
D	Upper Gallighan Slough	High
E	Lower Gallighan Slough	Moderate
F	Upper Harkins Slough	Stagnant
G	Upper W Branch Struve	High
H	Lower W Branch Struve	Low
I	Upper Struve Slough	High
J	Lower Struve Slough	Stagnant
K	Watsonville Slough Headwaters	Moderate
L	Watsonville Slough Marsh	Stagnant
M	Watsonville Slough N of Hwy 1	Low
N	Hanson Slough	Low
O	Mid Watsonville Slough	Low
P	Lower Harkins Slough	Stagnant
Q	Mid Watsonville Slough	Low
R	Beach Rd North Ditch	Low
S	Lower Watsonville Slough	Low
T	Beach Rd South Ditch	Stagnant
V	Watsonville Slough Estuary	Moderate

**Figure 5-2 Stream reaches and circulation ratings in Watsonville Sloughs**  
 Source: based on SH&G, et al., 2003.



Another important conclusion from this analysis of hydro-modification derives from the observation of a set of critical conditions, including:

- Limited to non-existent flow in many parts of the system throughout most of the year
- Reversal of flow during flood stage and the potential introduction of extra-basin source water (from the Pajaro River)
- Prolonged inundation and stagnation

The conclusion is that these conditions would seriously complicate any attempt to identify load-based limits (i.e., mass, or, numbers of organisms allowable over specified period of time) for bacteria. Partitioning flow in these waterbodies—the first step in converting concentrations to loads—would require far more intensive discharge and bacteria monitoring than has been conducted to date. Under these conditions the effort to develop load-based limits would not likely produce meaningful results. The alternative, to use concentrations limits in lieu of load-based limits, is the approach we have taken in establishing this TMDL and is discussed in Section 8 TMDL Calculation and Allocations.

## **5.4. Potential Influence of Land Use on Bacteria Source**

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### ***Land Use Distribution***

Table 5-4 displays land uses throughout the Watsonville Sloughs watershed. Agriculture remains the largest land use despite continued development pressure on farmlands from population growth throughout the Monterey Bay Region. More than half of the greater watershed's row crop agriculture occurs in the Watsonville Slough subwatershed (Hager et al., 2004b).

Pathogen sources in agriculture may include land-applied manure or other incompletely composted organic materials applied as fertilizer or soil amendment. Farmers in the Struve Slough subwatershed apply manure to their lands (Bradford, 2005). Agricultural field workers are also a potential source of human pathogens where they do not avail themselves of portable toilets now required for workers during field operations.

Grazing and rural residential land uses share the rank of second most dominant land use throughout the watershed, with approximately 2,273 and 2,378 acres in each use, respectively. The great majority of these acres fall within the boundaries of the Larkin Valley, Harkins Slough, and Gallighan Slough subwatersheds (Table 5-4). Seventy-four acres of grazing also occur in the Middle Watsonville/Hanson subwatershed. Cattle grazing operations in the Hanson Slough subwatershed were discontinued during development of this TMDL. This is an example of the dynamic nature of land use change in the watershed and it serves to emphasize that land use acreages reported here are estimates only.

Rural residential land uses are potential sources of fecal coliform, which can originate from septic systems for residences. These land uses also may include small livestock operations such as those for horses or chickens and small farm animals. Manure from these livestock operations and from pets is a potential source of pathogens as well.

Urban residential, commercial, and industrial uses are concentrated in Upper Watsonville and Struve Slough subwatersheds, though Harkins Slough has some urban uses where the City of Watsonville spills into this subwatershed. Upper Harkins Slough is largely undeveloped according to assessor's parcel data (Table 5-4).

Urban populations of homeless people also represent a potential source of human pathogens in the surface waters running through urban environments. However, this potential source is not limited to urban environments, since homeless encampments are found throughout the County including more rural areas.

Pets are a source typically associated with urban landuses where the highest concentrations of pets are found. Pet waste enters waterways through conveyance by stormwater from where the waste is deposited—places such as trails frequented by pet owners and residences adjacent to waterways.

Table 5-4 Land use by subwatershed in acres.

Subwatershed (From SH&G, et al., 2003)	TOTAL AREA	Agricultural	Grazing	Urban Residential	Commercial	Rural Residential	Industrial	Undeveloped
	Acres							
Upper Watsonville	1,252	313	0	626	313	0	0	0
Middle Watsonville/Hanson	738	664	74	0	0	0	0	0
Harkins/Watsonville Confluence	978	929	0	0	0	49	0	0
Lower Watsonville	659	560	0	0	0	0	0	99
Harkins Slough Tributary	442	0	0	0	0	309	88	44
Larkin Valley	3,877	78	1,939	0	0	1,551	0	310
Upper Harkins Slough	627	31	125	0	0	63	0	408
Gallighan	1,353	474	135	0	0	406	68	271
Struve Slough	992	99	0	446	446	0	0	0
West Branch Struve	715	143	0	107	250	0	72	143
Lower Beach Road	343	343	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,976</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>1,274</b>
		30%	19%	10%	8%	20%	2%	11%

Acreage figures were back calculated from percentages and total area of subwatershed.

Source: SH&G, et al., 2003, Table A-2.

### Comparing Exceedances with Land use Data

Examining the association of dominant land use in subwatersheds with exceedances of water quality objectives, it is evident that exceedances may occur in summer and/or winter in waterbodies regardless of dominant land use (Table 5-5). Stated another way: all land uses are associated with exceedances of water quality objectives.

Table 5-5 Dominant land uses surrounding locations and results of grab sampling for exceedance monitoring in Watsonville Sloughs, 2003.

Reach ID	Waterbody Reach	Subwatershed	Dominant Land Use (= or > 10% of Sub'shed)	Winter	Summer	Closest Sampling Location
				<i>E. coli</i> (Geometric Mean in MPN/100ml)		
A	Upper Larkin Valley	Larkin Valley	-	-	-	No match
B	Lower Larkin Valley	Larkin Valley	Graz/RurRes	<b>573</b>	80	HAR-RAN
C	Harkins Slough Trib	Harkins Slough Trib	RurRes/Ind/Undev	<b>573</b>	80	HAR-RAN
D	Upper Gallighan Slough	Gallighan Slough	Ag/RurRes/Undev/Graz	167	88	GAL-BUE
E	Lower Gallighan Slough	Gallighan Slough	-	-	-	No match
F	Upper Harkins Slough	Upper Harkins Slough	Undev/Graz/RurRes	<b>1,272</b>	<b>971</b>	HAR-HAR
G	Upper W Branch Struve	West Branch Struve	-	-	-	No match
H	Lower W Branch Struve	West Branch Struve	Com/Ag/Undev/Urb/Ind	9	<b>358</b>	STR-LEE
I	Upper Struve Slough	Struve Slough	Urb/Com/Ag	<b>2,784</b>	<b>2,165</b>	STR-CHE
J	Lower Struve Slough	Struve Slough	Urb/Com/Ag	46	<b>289</b>	STR-HAR
K	Watsonville Slough Headwaters	U. Watsonville Slough	Urb/Com/Ag	45	74	WAT-HAR
L	Watsonville Slough Marsh	U. Watsonville Slough	Urb/Com/Ag	45	74	WAT-HAR
M	Watsonville Slough N of Hwy 1	U. Watsonville Slough	Urb/Com/Ag	<b>380</b>	<b>305</b>	WAT-LEE
N	Hanson Slough	Mid Watsonville Slough	Ag/Graz	<b>1,600</b>	NA	HAN-HAR
O	Mid Watsonville Slough	Mid Watsonville Slough	-	-	-	No match
P	Lower Harkins Slough	Harkins/Watsonville Conflue.	Ag	<b>712</b>	60	HAR-CON
Q	Mid Watsonville Slough	Harkins/Watsonville Conflue.	Ag	<b>1,472</b>	<b>389</b>	WAT-AND
R	Beach Rd North Ditch	Harkins/Watsonville Conflue.	-	-	-	No match
S	Lower Watsonville Slough	Lower Watsonville Slough	Ag/Undev	<b>529</b>	<b>1,087</b>	WAT-SHE
T	Beach Rd South Ditch	Upper Beach Road	-	-	-	No match
V	Watsonville Slough Estuary	Lower Beach Road	Ag	138	38	WAT-PAJ

See Figure 5-2 for location of waterbody reach location.

Bold text indicates *E. coli* alone exceeds Basin Plan objective of geometric mean >200 MPN/100ml.

Source: Data from Hager, et al, pp. 47, 55; SH&G, et al., 2003, Table A-3.

### Comparing Genetic Data with Land Uses

Similar to the results from the comparison of exceedances to land uses, a parallel examination of genetic source data relative to land use at the subwatershed scale yields inconclusive results. The expected correlation between grazing land use and the presence of cow *E. coli* is confirmed in Upper Harkins Slough, but not in Struve or Lower Watsonville (Table 5-6). However, the agricultural practice of land-applying manure is also practiced in the Harkins Slough subwatershed, so grazing is not the only potential source of the cow biomarker.

Human coliform might be expected in rural residential land uses, since septic sewage disposal is a common practice and often these systems operate inefficiently. But, human biomarkers are seen both where rural residential uses exist and where they do not exist. For example the human source in Upper Struve Slough (STR-CHE) may derive indirectly from the surrounding suburban area, or from the sewage collection system that has laterals routed through the Slough itself.

Additionally direct discharge of human waste to areas adjacent to waterbodies is known to occur in Santa Cruz County. For example, encampments of homeless individuals are found throughout the County in urban areas as well as in semi-rural areas. There also exists the possibility that in some circumstances, agricultural field workers do not avail themselves of the portable toilets now provided during field operations.

Another important feature of the comparison of genetic data with land use information is the consistent depression of the bird component with wet conditions. It is reasonable to infer, as in the case of Struve Slough, that winter runoff introduced additional pathogenic material from non-bird sources, reducing the proportion of bird bacteria from 98 to 38 percent. While this confirms an influence from terrestrial sources, these data do not offer evidence that the influence is land use driven. Stated another way, terrestrial sources (dog, cow, human) are not well correlated with available land use data.

Table 5-6 Land uses surrounding sampling locations for genetic source tracking and results of genetic analysis for wet and dry seasons in Watsonville Sloughs, 2003.

Land use (Percent of subwatershed)		Rabbits		Humans		Dogs		Birds		Cows	
		Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet
<b>Struve Slough (STR-CHE)</b>		Percent of Sample									
Urban	45%	0	0	0	3	2	21	98	38	0	38
Commercial	45%										
Agricultural	10%										
<b>Lower Watsonville Slough (WAT-SHE)</b>		0	0	0	0	6	28	94	20	0	52
Agricultural	85%										
Undeveloped	15%										
<b>Upper Harkins Slough (HAR-HAR)</b>		0	0	1	2	47	9	52	18	0	71
Undeveloped	65%										
Grazing	20%										
Rural Residential	10%										
Agricultural	5%										

Source: Hager, et al., 2004, and SH&G, et al., 2003.

### **Land Uses Subject to Discharge Permits**

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has issued wastewater and stormwater discharge permits for several facilities, the City of Watsonville, and Santa Cruz County (Table 5-7). Two of the facilities are permitted for discharge of treated septic system effluent to leachfields and/or ponds that percolate to groundwater, two sewage collection systems deliver raw sewage to the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment facility, and another facility discharges cooling system condensate directly to Watsonville Slough.

The County (Freedom Sanitation District) and the City both operate collection systems tributary to the City of Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility. The operators have Waste Discharge Requirements and are required to prevent overflows and to insure their collection systems, as well as the receiving sewage system, is protected and utilized properly. Also, the County and City both operate landfills under waste discharge requirements from the Water Board.

The City of Watsonville and Santa Cruz County are enrolled under the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Stormwater Separate Storm Sewer Systems. Both the City and the County have areas within their permit coverage areas that are in the Watsonville Sloughs Watershed. Seven other facilities are enrolled under the general industrial stormwater permit.

The General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater is a type of federal permit known as National Pollution Discharge Elimination Permits (NPDES), which require the dischargers to develop and implement a Storm Water Management Plan/Program with the goal of reducing the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). MEP is the performance standard specified in Section 402(p) of the Clean Water Act. The management programs specify what best management practices (BMPs) will be used to address certain program areas. The program areas include public education and outreach; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction and post-construction; and good housekeeping for municipal operations.

## **Facilities**

None of the facilities are expected to be sources of pathogens entering the Watsonville Slough System. However, the two facilities with septic leachfields and ponds, and the two collection systems tributary to the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility, pose a potential risk in the event that their effluent stream is diverted to surface waters. Recent history at one of these facilities, described below, demonstrates the importance of maintaining the performance standards established in the permit.

In November 1994 septic tank effluent from the Buena Vista Migrant Labor Camp entered a culvert leading to Gallighan Slough, but there was no confirmation of the amount, if any, that entered the Slough (Pohle, 1994). In late February 1998, for four days, pond failure associated with heavy rains resulted in approximately one million gallons of treated wastewater being discharged to Gallighan Slough. Sampling conducted by the County prior to discharging the contents of the failing pond into the Slough to facilitate emergency repairs, showed *E. coli* in the discharge and in Gallighan Slough at concentrations of 17 and 140 MPN/100 ml, respectively. These data indicated no significant difference between the contents of the pond and the waters of the Slough relative to *E. coli* (Peterson, 1998). During the late 1990s, the facility occasionally exceeded permitted flow limits due to groundwater infiltration from heavy rains (Pohle, 1998; Fantham, 1997). As with most pond-based systems, the risk of upset at this facility exists and must be reduced or eliminated through management activities and improvements. The County Housing Authority proposed to complete operational improvements at the facility in July 2004 (Hoge, 2003).

## **Municipalities**

Twenty six percent of the entire Watsonville Sloughs watershed is within stormwater management areas under County or City jurisdiction (Table 5-8). The great majority of this area is in urbanized portions of Watsonville and Struve Sloughs, where a combined estimated 2,696 acres, or 36% and 80%, respectively, are subject to the general permit for the discharge of stormwater (Figure 5-3). The Watsonville Airport, operated by the City of Watsonville, is also subject to a general industrial stormwater permit.

Stormwater runoff entraining potentially pathogenic material (e.g., organic debris, animal feces) is routed from land to adjacent waterbodies through stormdrains and related conveyances managed by the City and County. The County and the City both recently enrolled under the general municipal stormwater permit (2004) and are required to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff.

Table 5-7 Facilities and entities under permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board in the Watsonville Slough watershed.

	Operation	Permit	Type of Discharge	Discharge Location
<b>Facilities</b>				
Freedom Sanitation District	Sewage Collection System	Waste Discharge Requirements	Domestic Wastewater	System components are located in or adjacent to portions of Upper Struve Slough and the eastern tributary to Upper Harkins Slough
City of Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility	Sewage Collection System	Waste Discharge Requirements	Domestic Wastewater	System components are located in or adjacent to portions of Watsonville and Struve Sloughs
Apple Growers Ice & Cold Storage 850 West Beach St.	Cold storage for fresh, raw produce (mostly fruit).	General NPDES for Discharges with Low Threat to Water Quality	Discharge of condensate from cooling facilities and wash water Maximum: 42,000 GPD	Watsonville Slough approximately ½ mile upstream of WAT-LEE
Buena Vista Migrant Labor Camp 113 Tierra Alta Drive	Housing for farmworkers.	Waste Discharge Requirements	Discharge of sewage to onsite septic tank, percolation/evaporation ponds and leachfields. Maximum: 56,000 GPD	To groundwater adjacent to Harkins and Gallighan Sloughs downstream of GAL-BUE
Santa Cruz County Medium Security Jail,	96-bed medium security jail.	General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges to Land by Small Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems.	Discharge of sewage to septic tanks and leachfields. Average: 9,600 GPD	To groundwater adjacent to Gallighan Slough, immediately east of ponds for labor camp and downstream of GAL-BUE.
<b>Stormwater Entities</b>				
City of Watsonville	Municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4)	Municipal Stormwater NPDES	Stormwater	
Santa Cruz County	MS4	Municipal Stormwater NPDES	Stormwater	
Various (7)	Landfills, airport, auto wreckers, food preparation, energy generation	Industrial Stormwater NPDES	Stormwater	Various, including: Gallighan, Harkins, Watsonville, and Struve Sloughs
California Department of Transportation	Highway 1		Stormwater	

<sup>1</sup> The County's Buena Vista Landfill is operated in such a manner as to prevent the runoff of landfill materials into adjacent surface waters. However, birds attracted to landfills may increase pathogen loading in stormwater runoff from the landfill site.

Table 5-8 Municipal stormwater management area by subwatershed.

Subwatershed	Watershed Area		Municipal Stormwater Management Area	
	Acres		Percent of Total	Percent of Subwatershed
Watsonville	3,493	1,263	10%	36%
Harkins	5,282	534	4%	10%
Gallighan	1,452	0	0%	0%
Hanson	399	0	0%	0%
Struve	1,798	1,433	12%	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,423</b>	<b>3,230</b>	<b>26%</b>	

The above analysis of land use influence on bacteria concentrations in the Watsonville Sloughs indicates that urban land uses are commonly associated with concentrations of *E. coli* in excess of water quality objectives. Furthermore, the analysis of genetic sources relative to land uses (Table 5-6) reveals that urban uses are implicated as sources of controllable fecal material from dogs and humans.

### **Landfill Stormwater**

The County's Buena Vista Landfill is operated in such a manner as to prevent the runoff of landfill materials into adjacent surface waters. However, birds attracted to landfills may increase pathogen loading in stormwater runoff from the landfill site. The landfill is covered under both a General NPDES Industrial Stormwater Permit (Order No. 97-03-DWQ) and Waste Discharge Requirements. NPDES General Permit for Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities.

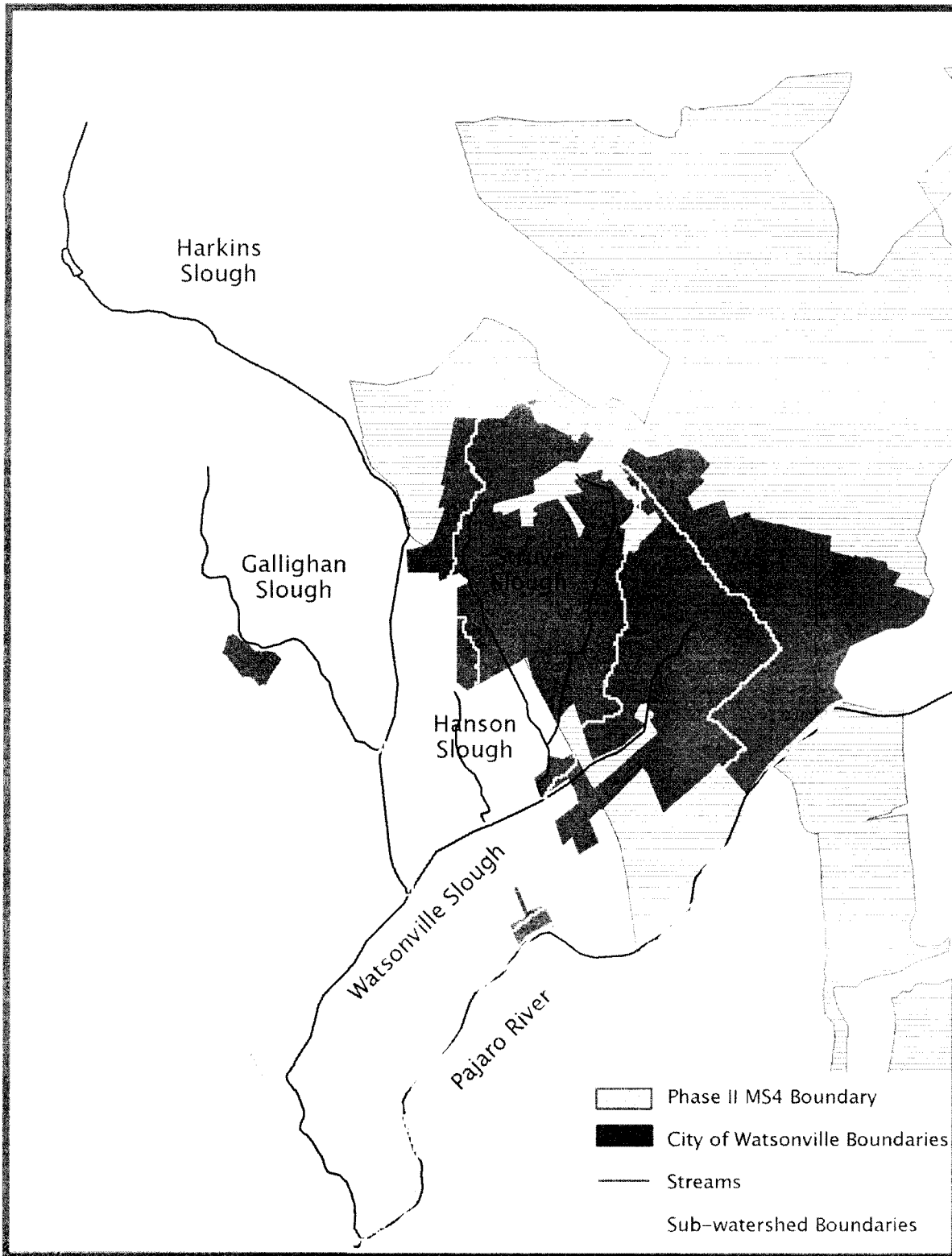


Figure 5-3 Stormwater management area boundaries.  
 Source: Hager, 2004



## 5.5. Source Analysis Conclusions

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The objectives of this source analysis were only partly achieved and substantially more research is needed to definitively isolate sources of pathogens entering Watsonville Slough. The work to date supports the conclusion that several factors potentially explain high concentrations of bacteria. The impairment for pathogens may result from:

- Discrete, possibly intermittent sources (e.g. upper Struve Slough)
- Uncontrollable bird sources alone in the summer and winter
- Controllable dog and cow sources alone in the winter
- Human sources alone in at least one location (STR-CHE)
- Hydromodification resulting in poor circulation that may promote the capture, retention and reproduction of bacteria (areas throughout Harkins, Struve and Watsonville Sloughs)
- Any of the dominant land uses in the watershed
- Terrestrial inputs in the winter and natural sources (birds) alone in the winter

Bacteria contamination from existing permitted facilities was not documented by this analysis. However, stormwater discharges, the Buena Vista Labor Camp, and the sewage collection systems were not ruled out as possible sources of pathogens contributing to the impairment. Other nonpoint sources associated with agriculture, and with the rural landuses that include livestock grazing and related facilities, are also potential controllable sources of pathogens. Staff concludes that the factors listed above support the categorization of pathogen sources as follows:

- Humans
- Pets
- Livestock
- Land-applied Manure in Irrigation Agriculture

Another significant finding of the source analysis determined staff's approach to establishing TMDL allocations: bacteria concentration-based limits and allocations will be used in this TMDL in lieu of load-based limits (i.e., mass, or, numbers of organisms per time). Load-based limits are not practical to establish in this system due to both the natural hydrologic functioning of the sloughs and to their extensive alteration.

Additionally, because of the potential for regrowth and die-off of bacteria in these waterbodies, definition and control of bacteria levels on a mass basis is impractical.

## 6. CRITICAL CONDITIONS AND SEASONAL VARIATION

This section considers factors affecting impairment of Watsonville Sloughs by pathogens (critical conditions), and whether seasonal variation in conditions there affect the impairment. The discussion is taken from Hager, et al. (2004, pp. 74, 75).

### 6.1. Critical Conditions

The critical conditions (Moe, 2002) or requirements for impairment by waterborne pathogenic organisms to occur, include:

- 1) Source (e.g. human waste)
- 2) Transmission through water (e.g. streamflow)
- 3) Survival and possibly growth of the infectious agent
- 4) Infectious dose (i.e. virulence)
- 5) Host susceptibility.

In the present study, transmission is assured by streamflow and stormwater runoff. We exclude issues of dose and susceptibility from our discussion. Thus, the conditions that are necessary for pathogen impairment in Watsonville Sloughs *may* include one or more of the following:

- Significant sources of human fecal matter
  - Despite lower indicator levels than for other biomarkers, human fecal matter is the most commonly cited source of waterborne infection (Moe, 2002)
- Significant sources of cow fecal matter
  - High indicator levels were measured, and cow fecal matter is known to contain the pathogenic *E. coli* strain O157:H7 (Rosen, 2000)
- Significant sources of dog fecal matter
  - Less likely, given lower indicator levels, and infrequently cited infection risk (Rosen, 2000)
- Significant sources of bird fecal matter
  - Unlikely. Although there were high indicator levels, bird feces is less commonly cited as a source of infection (Rusin et al., 2000)
- Growth-promoting waterbody conditions (see Gerba, 2000)
  - Sluggish, relatively deep water
  - High nutrient levels
  - High turbidity / suspended sediments (low light)
  - Warm temperatures
  - Few predators (invertebrates etc)

### 6.2. Seasonal Variation

The exceedance data and the genetic data differ with respect to indications of seasonal variation. Based on the exceedance monitoring data, there is no clear pattern of seasonal variation. Between summer and winter sampling periods, several sites increased and several decreased in fecal coliform levels – and these differences did not follow any clear spatial pattern. Looking at the *E. coli* data, there is a slight suggestion that levels were lower in winter at urban sites, and higher at other sites. However, two sites contradict this apparent trend (WAT-SHE and STR-CHE).

The genetic data follow a clearer temporal pattern. Mean biomarker MPNs increased from summer to winter in almost all cases. Based on these data, a preliminary conclusion may be reached that impairment is more likely during winter. The highest indications of human and cow fecal matter were obtained from the winter genetic samples. The processes leading to these observations may include entrainment of transient human waste, cattle waste, and inadequately composted manure within surface runoff; as well as entrainment of sewer or septic system leakage in surface and shallow sub-surface runoff.

The broader conclusion, however, is that coliform data exhibit so much spatial, temporal, and genetic variability that further study would be required to explain it. This is despite having results from several previous studies, and the endeavors of the present study, which involved 21 sampling sites; 163 exceedance samples and 32 exploratory samples analyzed for fecal coliform and *E. coli* MPN; and 18 genetic samples analyzed for five biomarkers each.

## **Conclusion**

Though several conditions potentially account for the documented impairment, no critical conditions were confirmed, so load allocations and numeric targets were not adjusted. While the genetic analysis supports a preliminary conclusion that impairment is more likely during winter, exceedance data provide no clear pattern of seasonal variation. Therefore, load allocations and numeric targets were not adjusted for seasonal variation and the numeric targets in Table 4-1 will be applicable during periods of wet and dry weather.

## 7. LINKAGE ANALYSIS

The goal of the linkage analysis is to describe the process for establishing a link between pollutant loads and water quality. This, in turn, supports the determination that the loading capacity specified in the TMDL will result in attaining the numeric target. For this TMDL, this link is established because the numeric targets are the TMDL. The numeric targets are protective of all the beneficial uses.

## 8. TMDL CALCULATION AND ALLOCATIONS

A TMDL is the loading capacity of a pollutant that a water body can accept while protecting beneficial uses. Usually, TMDLs are expressed as loads (mass of pollutant calculated from concentration multiplied by the volumetric flow rate), but in the case of indicator organisms, it is more logical for the TMDL to be based only on concentration. TMDLs can be expressed in terms of either mass per time, toxicity or other appropriate measure [40 CFR §130.2(I)]. A concentration based TMDL makes more sense in this situation because the public health risks associated with recreating in contaminated waters scales with organism concentration, and pathogens are not readily controlled on a mass basis. Therefore, we are establishing a concentration-based TMDL for pathogens in Watsonville Sloughs. The TMDL is the same set of concentrations as were proposed in the numeric targets section (Table 8-1).

Table 8-1 TMDL for Watsonville Sloughs

<b>Fecal Coliform</b>	
<b>Geometric Mean</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
200 MPN/100 ml <sup>a</sup>	400 MPN/100 ml <sup>b</sup>

a: Geometric mean of not less than five samples over a period of 30 days

b: Not more than 10% of total samples during a period of 30 days exceed

### 8.1. Proposed Load Allocations

The load allocations for all non-natural (controllable) sources will be equal to the TMDL concentration. These sources shall not discharge or release a “load” of bacteria that will increase the load above the assimilative capacity of the water body. All areas of the tributaries and sloughs will be held to these load allocations. Should all control measures be in place and fecal coliform levels remain high, investigation will take place to determine if the high level of fecal coliform is due to natural sources.

#### ALLOCATIONS AND RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

WASTE LOAD ALLOCATIONS		Receiving Water Fecal Coliform (MPN/100mL) <sup>1</sup>
Waterbody	Responsible Party	
Watsonville, Struve, Harkins Sloughs	Santa Cruz County (Urban Stormwater)	≤ 200
Watsonville, Struve, Harkins, Gallighan, Hanson Sloughs	City of Watsonville (Urban Stormwater)	≤ 200
Harkins Slough	Santa Cruz Co. Freedom Sanitation District (Sanitary Sewer Collection System)	≤ 200
Watsonville & Struve Sloughs	City of Watsonville (Sanitary Sewer Collection System)	≤ 200
Gallighan Slough	Santa Cruz Count (Landfill Stormwater)	≤ 200
LOAD ALLOCATIONS		Receiving Water Fecal Coliform (MPN/100mL) <sup>1</sup>
Watsonville & Harkins Sloughs	Operators or owners of irrigated lands who land-apply manure	≤ 200
Watsonville & Harkins Sloughs	Operators or owners of livestock facilities and animals	≤ 200
<sup>1</sup> As log mean of five (5) samples taken in a 30-day period occurring within each season.		

## 8.2. Margin of Safety

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The margin of safety is a required component of the TMDL that accounts for the uncertainty about the relationship between the pollutant loads and the quality of the receiving water (CWA 303(d)(1)(C)). For pathogens in Watsonville Sloughs, a margin of safety has been established implicitly through the use of protective numeric targets, which are in this case the water quality objectives for the beneficial uses of the Sloughs.

The pathogen TMDL for Watsonville Sloughs is the water quality objective for REC-1. The Central Coast Region Water Quality Control Plan states that, "Controllable water quality shall conform to the water quality objectives... When other conditions cause degradation of water quality beyond the levels or limits established as water quality objectives, controllable conditions shall not cause further degradation of water quality." (CCRWQCB, p. III-2). Because the allocation for controllable sources is set at the water quality objective, if achieved these allocations will by definition achieve the water quality objectives. Thus, in this TMDL there is no uncertainty relative to the effect of loads from controlled sources on water quality.

However, in certain locations there is a distinct possibility that non-controllable, or, natural sources will themselves occur at levels exceeding water quality objectives. And while it is controllable water quality conditions ("actions or circumstances resulting from man's activities," (CCRWQCB, Basin Plan, p. III-2)) that must conform to water quality objectives, receiving water quality will contain discharge from both controllable and natural sources.

The ability to differentiate the controlled from the natural sources is the chief uncertainty in this TMDL. Monitoring of both discharges to the Sloughs, and Slough water itself, will indicate whether the allocations from controllable sources are met, thereby minimizing any uncertainty about the impacts of loads on the water quality.

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 9.1. Introduction

The purpose of the Implementation Plan (Plan) is to describe the steps necessary to reduce loads of pathogens and achieve the TMDL. The Plan identifies: the actions that staff expects would reduce pathogen loading; the parties responsible for taking these actions; the regulatory mechanism by which the Water Board will assure these actions are taken; reporting and evaluation requirements that will indicate progress toward completing the actions; a timeline for completion of implementation actions; and an estimate of the cost of implementation. A monitoring plan designed to measure progress toward water quality goals is included in the section that follows this Plan.

### 9.2. Implementation Actions

Staff identified implementation actions that address specific categories of controllable pathogen sources, which include humans, pets, livestock, and manure application on agricultural land. Table 9-1 presents the actions and identifies the parties responsible for implementing them.

#### ***Human Sources***

##### **Public Participation and Outreach (Action 1A)**

The City of Watsonville (City) and County of Santa Cruz (County) will be required to educate the public regarding the sources of fecal coliform and its associated health risks in surface waters, including identification of specific actions that individuals can take to reduce pathogen loading. They should target specific populations, including the homeless and agricultural field workers. The City and County must revise their Stormwater Management Plans to indicate how and when they will conduct public participation and outreach.

##### **Human Source Elimination and Prevention (Action 1B)**

Sanitary sewer collection systems, operated by the City and the County (Freedom Sanitation District), are potential sources of pathogen loading to Watsonville Slough tributaries due to their capacity to leak and/or overflow. These collection systems are operated under Water Board permits that require the dischargers to develop a Sewer System Management Plan that incorporate Sanitary Sewer Overflow Prevention and Response, and Infiltration/Inflow and Spill Prevention Program Requirements.

The City and County are required to prioritize maintenance of the sewage collection system, including identification, correction, and prevention of sewage leaks, in portions of the collection system that run through, or adjacent to, tributaries to Watsonville Slough. They must revise their Sewer System Management Plans to indicate how and when they will conduct improved system maintenance in portions of the system most likely to affect the Sloughs.

Table 9-1 Implementation Actions to be performed by Dischargers and Responsible Parties

Responsible Party	Source Category	Management Measure	Action
County of Santa Cruz and City of Watsonville	1A Human	Public Participation and Outreach	Educate the public, including the homeless, regarding sources of fecal coliform and associated health risks of fecal coliform in surface waters of the Watsonville Slough Watershed. Educate the public regarding actions that individuals can take to reduce pathogen loading in the Watershed. Revise Stormwater Management Plan and submit to Water Board for approval, monitor, and report.
	1B Human	Human Source Elimination and Prevention	Maintain the sewage collection system, including identification, correction, and prevention of sewage leaks into tributaries to Watsonville Slough. Revise Sewer System Management Plan and submit to Water Board for approval, monitor, and report.
	1C Pets	Pet Waste Management	Develop and implement enforceable means (e.g., an ordinance) of reducing/eliminating fecal coliform loading from pet waste. Educate the public regarding actions that individuals can take to reduce loading in the Watershed. Revise Stormwater Management Plan and submit to Water Board for approval, monitor, and report.
Operators or owners of livestock facilities and animals	2A Livestock	Farm Animal and Livestock Facilities Management	Develop and implement strategies to reduce/eliminate fecal coliform loading from farm animal and livestock facilities (e.g., pens, corrals, barns) into surface waters of the Watsonville Slough Watershed. Submit <i>Nonpoint Source Control Implementation Program</i> to the Executive Officer of the Water Board and monitor and report, or, document and report to the Water Board that no discharge is occurring from animal facilities.
	2B Livestock	Grazing Management	Protect sensitive areas (including streambanks, sloughs, wetlands, and riparian zones) by reducing direct loadings of animal wastes from grazing areas into surface waters of the Watsonville Slough Watershed. Submit <i>Nonpoint Source Control Implementation Program</i> to the Executive Officer of the Water Board and monitor and report, or, document and report to the Water Board that no discharge is occurring from grazing activities.
Operators or owners of irrigated lands who land-apply manure	3 Land-Applied Manure on Irrigated lands	Irrigated Land Management	Develop, implement and report on measures to reduce/eliminate fecal coliform loading from land-applied manure into surface waters of the Watsonville Slough Watershed. Document and report to the Water Board that measures are in place and monitor to demonstrate effectiveness.

## Pet Waste

### Pet Waste Management (Action 1C)

Pet waste management measures include developing and implementing enforceable means (e.g. an ordinance) of reducing and/or eliminating fecal coliform loading from pet waste into Watsonville Slough and its tributaries. Cities and counties throughout the United States have adopted ordinances requiring pet owners to pick up their pet litter and dispose of it appropriately. While these are commonly enforced in public places, pet waste on a pet owner's property or residence may also be at risk of entering waterways (e.g. backyards contiguous with, or, abutting waterways) if not disposed of properly. Therefore, the City and County should undertake additional measures to educate residents and homeowners whose properties abut riparian areas and waterways regarding the vulnerability of these areas to pollution from domestic cat, dog, and other pet waste.



The City of Watsonville's *Wetlands of Watsonville* program includes examples of this kind of public education strategy. Storm Water Management Plans for the City and the County also include public participation and outreach goals that translate into education about specific sources of storm water pollution. The appropriate departments or agencies within the City and the County must implement pet waste management measures. The City and County must revise their Stormwater Management Plans to identify how and when they will educate the public about pet waste management and develop and implement enforceable means of reducing fecal coliform loading from pet waste.

## **Livestock**

The Watsonville Slough Watershed supports cattle, horse, emu, goat and other livestock operations. The Implementation Actions to reduce pathogen loading from cattle and other livestock, include management of both grazing areas and livestock facilities, such as corrals, barns, holding pens, riding rings, and paddocks. To control them, these nonpoint sources require operators and owners of cattle and other livestock to undertake considerable planning and implementation efforts.

The Nonpoint Source Implementation and Enforcement Policy, adopted as state law in August 2004, requires the Regional Water Boards to regulate all nonpoint sources of pollution using the administrative permitting authorities provided by the Porter-Cologne Act. Dischargers must comply with Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), waivers of WDRs, or Basin Plan Prohibitions, by participating in the development and implementation of *Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Programs*, either individually or collectively as participants in third-party coalitions. The "third-party" *Programs* are restricted to entities that are not actual discharges under Regional Water Board permitting and enforcement jurisdiction. These may include Non Governmental Organizations, citizen groups, industry groups, watershed coalitions, government agencies, or any mix of the above. All *Programs* must meet the requirements of the following (Five) Key Elements described in the NPS Implementation and Enforcement Policy. Each *Program* must be endorsed or approved by the Regional Water Board.

- Key Element 1:** A *Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Program's* ultimate purpose must be explicitly stated and at a minimum address NPS pollution control in a manner that achieves and maintains water quality objectives.
- Key Element 2:** The *Program* shall include a description of the management practices (MPs) and other program elements dischargers expect to implement, along with an evaluation program that ensures proper implementation and verification.
- Key Element 3:** The *Program* shall include a time schedule and quantifiable milestones, should the Regional Water Board require these.
- Key Element 4:** The *Program* shall include sufficient feedback mechanisms so that the Regional Water Board, dischargers, and the public can determine if the implementation program is achieving its stated purpose(s), or whether additional or different MPs or other actions are required (See Section 10, Monitoring Program).
- Key Element 5:** Each Regional Water Board shall make clear, in advance, the potential consequences for failure to achieve a *Program's* objectives, emphasizing that it is the responsibility of individual dischargers to take all necessary implementation actions to meet water quality requirements (SWRCB, 2004a).

Within six months following approval of this TMDL by the Office of Administrative Law, the Executive Officer of the Water Board will issue a letter requiring operators and/or owners of livestock facilities and animals to submit within six months, either: 1) an approvable Nonpoint Source Pollution Implementation Control Program (Program) consistent with the State's Policy for Implementation and Enforcement of the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program; or 2) documentation that their activities do not cause livestock animal waste to pass into waters of the state within the Watsonville Slough Watershed

(documentation). Alternatively, dischargers may immediately cease all discharges in violation of the Watsonville Slough Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition (described below).

The Executive Officer will review and approve or request modification of the Program or documentation within six months. Should the Program or documentation require modification, or, should a party fail to submit a Program or documentation, the Executive Officer may impose civil liability pursuant to section 13268 of the CWC, or recommend or initiate enforcement action for violation of the prohibition. Alternatively, the Water Board can issue individual or general waste discharge requirements to assure compliance with the prohibition provided that the dischargers in question submit the necessary Program or documentation.

### **Farm Animal and Livestock Facilities Management (Action 2A)**

Operators and/or owners of livestock facilities and animals must develop and implement strategies to reduce and/or eliminate fecal coliform loading. They will be required to assess their contribution to pathogen loading and describe steps they are taking to insure any pathogen loading is minimized or eliminated, through preparation and submittal to the Water Board, of a *Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Program*.

County of Santa Cruz zoning regulations state that the use of stables, paddocks, or corrals must be accompanied by an erosion control plan prepared pursuant to Section 16.22.060 of County Planning and Zoning Regulations. Because rainfall runoff transports sediment and manure similarly, compliance with these County regulations could result in at least partial completion of this TMDL Implementation Action. However, additional measures are required for facilities that allow manure to come into contact with rainwater and enter surface waters through runoff. Through preparation of a *Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Program* operators or owners of such facilities could identify manure management measures, such as:

- Runoff management, including diversion of clean water from contact with holding pens, animals, and manure storage facilities through the use of berms, diversions, roofs, or enclosures
- Grass waterways
- Critical plantings
- Filter strips
- Composting manure
- Daily clean up

### **Grazing Management (Action 2B)**

Owners and operators of grazing operations for cattle and other livestock must develop and implement strategies to reduce and/or eliminate fecal coliform loading. They will be required to assess their contribution to pathogen loading and describe steps they are taking to insure any pathogen loading is minimized or eliminated, through preparation and submittal to the Water Board, of a *Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Program*.

The California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), California Coastal Commission (CCC), and other state agencies have identified "grazing management" as one of seven management measures to address agricultural nonpoint source (NPS) pollution of State waters. The management measures consist of a suite of plans, practices, technologies, operating methods, or other alternatives that may be used in combination to control NPS pollution. Associated with each management measure are management practices that are designed to reduce the quantities of pollutants entering receiving waters. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California approved many of these practices for use.

The California Management Measures for Agriculture (SWRCB, 2004b, p. 2-1) defines the seven agriculture management measures as follows:

- Erosion and Sediment Control
- Facility Wastewater and Runoff from Confined Animal Facilities that are not Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations
- Nutrient Management
- Pesticide Management
- Grazing Management
- Irrigation Water Management
- Education/Outreach

While all of these measures if implemented throughout the agricultural areas of the watershed would potentially result in reduced pathogen loading, the management measure for grazing is of primary relevance to pathogen loading in the Larkin Valley, Harkins Slough, and Lower Watsonville Slough subwatersheds.

Owners and operators of grazing operations for cattle and other livestock must implement the nonpoint source “grazing management measure” to address pathogen loading in the Watsonville Slough Watershed. This measure is “intended to protect sensitive areas (including streambanks, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, and riparian zones) by reducing direct loadings of animal wastes and sediment. This may include restricting or rotationally grazing livestock in sensitive areas by providing fencing and livestock stream crossings, and by locating salt, shade, and alternative drinking sources away from sensitive areas.”

Measures that address upland erosion can be effective in reducing animal waste loads as well. Among other methods, these “include: (1) maintaining the land consistent with the *California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan*, (1995) or Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service activity plans, or (2) applying the range and pasture components of a Resource Management System (USDA NRCS *Field Office Technical Guide*). This may include prescribed grazing, seeding, gully erosion control such as grade stabilization structures, and other critical area treatment,” (SWRCB, 2004, pp. 2-2, 2-3).

## ***Land-Applied Manure on Irrigated Lands***

### **Irrigated Land Management (Action 3)**

Owners and operators of irrigated agricultural lands that apply manure to their land must develop and implement strategies to reduce/eliminate fecal coliform loading to Watsonville Slough and its tributaries from land-applied manure. Staff expects these reductions or elimination will be achieved through management practices that farmers are currently, or will be, implementing pursuant to the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands (“Ag Waiver”; Order No. R3-2004-0117). The Ag Waiver requires completion of a Farm Water Quality Management Plan (Farm Plan) that describes, at a minimum, practices to address irrigation management, nutrient management and erosion control to protect water quality. The Ag Waiver monitoring and reporting program is designed to assess water quality in agricultural areas, identify problems with agricultural activities, provide feedback to growers in problem areas, and track changes in water quality over time.

Livestock animal waste is not specifically regulated under the Ag Waiver, nor does the Ag Waiver authorize the discharge of livestock animal waste. For this reason, the Regional Water Board will require owners and operators of irrigated agricultural lands that apply animal waste (manure) to their land in Watsonville Slough Watershed to identify the practices they employ to reduce or eliminate manure loading to receiving waters in the Watershed. Additionally, manure applicators must present water quality

monitoring data, or other evidence, that gives the Regional Water Board reasonable assurance that manure application is not resulting in pathogen loading to Watsonville Slough and its tributaries.

Within six months following approval of the TMDL by the Office of Administrative Law, the Executive Officer will issue a letter, requiring operators or owners of irrigated lands who land-apply manure to comply with requirements of the proposed Watsonville Slough Watershed Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition. The letter will require operators and owners to comply by submitting, within six months, documentation that either: 1) demonstrates their manure application does not cause livestock waste to pass into waters of the state within the Watsonville Slough Watershed, or 2) describes measures to be taken to prevent manure application from resulting in a pathogen discharge, and provides sufficient feedback mechanisms so that the Regional Water Board, dischargers, and the public can determine if the measures are achieving the stated purpose(s). Alternatively, dischargers may comply by immediately ceasing all discharges in violation of the Prohibition.

The Executive Officer will review and approve or request modification of the documentation within six months. Should the documentation require modification or if a party fails to submit documentation, the Executive Officer may impose civil liability pursuant to section 13268 of the CWC, or recommend or initiate enforcement action for violation of the prohibition. Alternatively, the Water Board can issue individual or general waste discharge requirements to assure compliance with the prohibition provided that the dischargers in question submit the necessary documentation.

### **9.3. Regulatory Mechanism and Reporting Requirement**

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Implementation Actions in this Plan, as well as monitoring requirements discussed below, are required through existing or proposed regulatory mechanisms, including:

- 1) Proposed Watsonville Sloughs Watershed Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition,
- 2) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (Small MS4 Permit) for the City of Watsonville and the County of Santa Cruz,
- 3) Waste Discharge Requirements for Sewering Agencies Tributary to the City of Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility (Order No. R3-2003-0041),
- 4) Waste Discharge Requirements for the City of Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility (Order No. R3-2003-0040), and
- 5) Waste Discharge Requirements for Buena Vista Landfill

*Proposed Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition.* At the same time that staff submits this TMDL to the Water Board for consideration of its adoption, staff will also propose adoption of the Watsonville Slough Watershed Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition. The prohibition will prohibit the controllable discharge of livestock animal waste (from grazing operations, farm animal and livestock facilities including, paddocks, pens, corrals, barns, sheds, or other activities of whatever nature) into waters of the Watsonville Slough Watershed. The prohibition provides an alternative regulatory option to adoption of WDRs, or a waiver of WDRs for all dischargers. This Discharge Prohibition takes effect two years following approval by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

This prohibition will include specific conditions under which application or enforcement of the prohibition may be waived. When a facility or operation meets these conditions, it would be consistent with Implementation Actions 2A, 2B, and 3. The prohibition does not apply to any farm animal or livestock facility and/or any facility where manure is applied if the owner or operator:

1. Submits a Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Program, consistent with the *Policy for Implementation and Enforcement of the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program*, that is approved by the Executive Officer, or
2. Demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Executive Officer that its activities do not cause livestock waste to pass into waters of the state within the Watsonville Slough Watershed, or
3. Is regulated under Waster Discharge Requirements or an NPDES permit, or a conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements that explicitly addresses compliance with the Watsonville Slough TMDL for Pathogens.

Operators or owners of irrigated lands who land-apply manure must comply with the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands to implement their load allocations. However, compliance with the ag waiver does not meet all requirements of the proposed Watsonville Slough Watershed Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition, since the ag waiver does not include any regulation or monitoring of pathogen discharges. Therefore, operators or owners of irrigated lands who land-apply manure must also submit reports that demonstrate how pathogen discharges are being addressed.

Staff proposes that the Water Board begin application of the prohibition one year after approval by the California Office of Administrative Law to allow dischargers an opportunity to develop plans and activities demonstrating that their activities are not loading Watsonville Slough and its tributaries with pathogens.

*NPDES Permit.* This TMDL Implementation Plan requires amendments to Stormwater Management Plans developed pursuant to the Small MS4 Permit. These amendments will indicate how the City and County plan to achieve Implementation Actions 1A and 1C. Additionally, the Water Board Executive Officer will amend monitoring and reporting requirements for dischargers covered by the Small MS4 Permits to insure that stormwater outfall and receiving water monitoring is conducted according to the monitoring plan described below. Reporting to the Water Board will occur through the dischargers' submittal of the annual reports required of Small MS4 Permit enrollees.

*WDRs for Sewering Agencies.* Regional Water Board staff will evaluate Sewer Management System Plans developed by the City and County pursuant to their respective WDRs for the sewage collection system to verify completion of Implementation Action 1B. The Water Board Executive Officer may also amend Monitoring and Reporting Programs for these WDRs to require receiving water quality monitoring, depending on the final configuration and degree of cooperation in the Monitoring Plan for this TMDL. The first annual report submitted by the dischargers following adoption of this TMDL and Implementation Plan by the California Office of Administrative Law, should describe what actions the dischargers have taken to comply with this Plan.

*WDRs for Buena Vista Landfill (County).* Within six months following adoption of this TMDL by the Office of Administrative law, the Regional Board Executive Officer will issue a letter to the County, requesting that the County include monitoring for fecal coliform and *E. coli* in their monitoring and reporting program for the Buena Vista Landfill Waste Discharge Requirements (Order No. 94-29).

## **Enforcement Provisions**

The Water Board will define and identify violations of the prohibition, NPDES permits, and WDRs through: the triennial review of TMDL implementation, scheduled inspections of permitted facilities, reconnaissance, review of information presented in response to 13267 letters, and through response to complaints. "Individual dischargers, including both landowners and operators, continue to bear ultimate

responsibility for complying with a Water Board's water quality requirements and orders. All Water Board enforcement actions taken will be taken against non-compliant individual dischargers, not third-party representatives. All enforcement actions taken shall be consistent with the SWRCB [State Water Board] Enforcement Policy (SWRCB 2002)," (SWRCB, 2004a).

Within one year of TMDL approval by the Office of Administrative Law, the Executive Officer will issue a letter, requiring owners or operators of livestock facilities and operators or owners of irrigated lands who land-apply manure and to comply with requirements of the proposed Watsonville Slough Watershed Livestock Waste Discharge Prohibition. Should a party fail to submit a Program or documentation, the Executive Officer may impose civil liability pursuant to section 13268 of the CWC, or alternatively, issue individual or general waste discharge requirements to assure compliance with the proposed prohibition on livestock animal waste discharge in Watsonville Slough.

#### **9.4. Evaluation of Implementation Progress**

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Water Board staff will conduct a review of implementation every three years beginning three years after the Office of Administrative Law approves the TMDL. Water Board staff will use annual reports, *NPS Pollution Control Implementation Programs*, as well as other available information, to review water quality data and implementation efforts as well as overall progress towards achieving the allocations and the numeric target.

Regional Water Board staff may conclude that ongoing implementation efforts are insufficient to ultimately achieve the allocations and numeric target. If staff were to make this determination, staff would recommend that additional reporting, monitoring, or implementation efforts be required either through approval by the Executive Officer (e.g. pursuant to Section 13267 or Section 13383 of the California Water Code) or by the Water Board (e.g. through revisions of existing permits and/or a Basin Plan Amendment). Staff may conclude that at the time of review, they expect implementation efforts to result in achieving the allocations and numeric target. In that case, existing and anticipated implementation efforts should continue. Three-year reviews will continue until the TMDL is achieved.

Responsible parties will monitor according to the proposed monitoring plan (see below) for at least three years, at which time Regional Water Board staff will determine the need for continuing or otherwise modifying the monitoring requirements. If it were demonstrated that controllable sources of pathogens were not contributing to exceedance of water quality objectives in receiving waters, staff would consider modifying numeric targets and/or allocations. This may result, for example, in staff establishing a site-specific objective for Sloughs. The site-specific objective would be based on evidence that natural, or "background" sources alone were the cause of exceedances of the Basin Plan water quality objective for fecal coliform.

#### **9.5. Timeline for Implementation**

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Water Board staff anticipates that the allocations, and therefore the TMDL, will be achieved ten years from the date of approval of the TMDL. This estimation is based on the cost and on the difficulty inherent in identifying fecal coliform sources. It is also based on the uncertainty of the time required for the various management practices and management measures to result in measurable water quality improvements. The Small MS4 Permit outlines a five-year schedule for full implementation of best management practices and activities. In general, these stormwater practices are designed to achieve compliance with water quality standards to the maximum extent practicable through an iterative process. Staff anticipates that the full positive effects of implementation on receiving water quality would be realized gradually, and after full implementation of management measures and practices. The Water

Board could consider additional requirements if they were to determine that full implementation was not resulting in adequate water quality improvement.

## **9.6. Estimating the Cost of Implementation**

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The Water Boards must comply with the California Environmental Quality Control Act (CEQA) when they amend their Basin Plans. CEQA requires that the Boards analyze the reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance with proposed performance standards and treatment requirements, and that this analysis include economic factors. TMDL numeric targets together with allocations may be considered a performance standard. Water Board staff identified a variety of costs associated with implementation of this TMDL, including costs associated with stormwater management, management practices for livestock facilities and grazing, and costs of monitoring.

Cost estimates are challenging to prepare because of the fact that some implementation actions are necessitated by other regulatory requirements (e.g., Phase II Stormwater, sewage collection system management, irrigated agriculture requirements), or are anticipated regardless of TMDL adoption (e.g., Watsonville Slough Enhancement Plan). Therefore assigning all of these costs to TMDL implementation would be inaccurate. Therefore, we provide example costs for implementation that addresses different sources and for monitoring.

### ***Costs of Stormwater Management***

Phase II Stormwater program implementation could cost an estimated \$33,750 for Watsonville based on estimates developed in 2000 by staff of the Water Board and the City of Watsonville. These programs include many components that address potential stormwater pollutants other than pathogens. However, those components that would address pathogens include: public education and outreach, development and implementation of a stormwater ordinance, and good housekeeping (erosion control, storm drain maintenance, and agency staff training for municipal facilities) (Table 9-2).

City of Watsonville Stormwater program staff provided the cost information presented here in the early stages of developing the City's stormwater pollution prevention plan. Water Board staff were not able to secure more recent cost estimates for Watsonville's costs, but compared to other cities' costs, the estimates presented in the TMDL appear to significantly underestimate the costs of stormwater program implementation. For example, stormwater costs range from \$18 to \$46 per household in a 2003-survey of 16 California cities (Cal State Sacramento, p. 50). Assuming 11,381 households (www.census.gov) in Watsonville, the per-household-cost of the stormwater program would be about three dollars, based on the earlier estimates provided by the City.

Costs for stormwater management are also incurred by the County of Santa Cruz, which is also required by permit to implement management measures addressing the broad range of stormwater pollutants. The County's per household costs could be expected to be within range of a city's per household costs, however, more accurate estimates are not available at this time.

Table 9-2 Annual cost estimate of implementing City of Watsonville Stormwater Management measures

Control Measure	Activities	Total Cost
Public Education and Outreach	Brochures, advertising through media and businesses	\$16,000
Public Participation	Stormdrain stenciling, community clean-ups	\$3,750
Stormwater Ordinance	Draft to approval	\$2,100
Illicit discharge and detection	Program development, mapping, determining sources, correction	\$3,750
Pollution prevention/Good-Housekeeping	Training, clean-up activities	\$1,900
Construction site runoff control	Education and training	\$2,400
Post-construction runoff control	Education and training	\$2,400
Permitting and reporting requirements	Development of good-housekeeping procedures	\$700
<b>Estimated Annual Program Costs</b>		<b>\$33,750/year</b>
Per-capita program annual costs		\$0.89/person
Street sweeping annual cost per-capita		\$3.42
Total per-capita annual cost		\$4.31

Source: Personal communication, Jennifer Bitting, RWQCB, September 2003.

### **Cost of Management Practices for Livestock Facilities and Grazing**

While there is a range of discrete (unit) costs associated with implementing management practices for livestock facilities and grazing, several factors deterred staff from attempting to provide and estimate of total costs. The most significant factor is the uncertainty surrounding the number of facilities and/or the size of areas that will require treatment (e.g., acres or linear feet). Example annual costs of management practices reveal a range of options and expenses (Table 9-3).

### **NPS Pollution Control Implementation Program Development Costs**

Each discharger must develop, individually or collectively, a *Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Implementation Program*. Plans can be developed during ranch water quality short courses. Costs of ranch water quality short courses are approximately \$40. Water Board staff will develop guidance for developing the *NPS Pollution Control Implementation Programs* as documents distinct from Ranch Plans. Ranch Plans, while containing similar information to the *Programs*, go beyond the issue of animal waste management, and the Water Board would not require landowners to submit Ranch Plans.



Table 9-3 Example annual costs for on-site management practices in rangelands and livestock facilities

Practices	Actual Cost (Maximum)	Practices	Actual Cost (Maximum)
Access Road (repair)	\$5/ft.	Riparian Buffer Strip	\$600/ac.
Brush Mgt.	\$10/ac.	Roads*	
Channel Vegetation	\$600/ac.	Culverts and Water Bars	\$150/mile
Clearing and Snagging	\$10/ft.	Road Repairs	\$1,500/mile
Conservation Tillage	\$20/ac.	Spring Development	\$1,000/ea.
Cover/Green Manure Crop:		Streambank Protection:	
Native species	\$250/ac.	mechanical	\$100/ft.
Introduced species	\$100/ac.	Vegetative	\$12.50/ft.
Critical Area Planting	\$1,000/ac.	Tank	\$2,500 ea.
Fence (upland)	\$2/ft.	Tree Planting w/ irrigation	\$600/ac.
Fence (riparian)	\$2/ft.	Tree Planting w/o irrigation	\$300/ac.
Fence, Electric (upland)	\$1.25/ft.	Trough (w/ concrete pad)	\$1,000 ea.
Fence, Electric (riparian)	\$1.25/ft.	Trough (w/o concrete pad)	\$800/ea.
Grade Stabilizer	\$20,000 ea.	Trough (small wildlife)	\$500/ea.
Grassed Waterways	\$20/ft.		
Pipeline	\$1.25/ft.	Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgt.	\$400/ac.
Pond (repair)	\$10,000 ea.	Vegetative Buffer Strip:	
Range Seeding:		Native Species	\$200/ac.
Native species	\$250/ac.	Introduced Species.	\$75/ac.
Introduced species	\$100/ac.	Wildlife Watering Facility	\$4,000/ea.

Source: Templeton Service Center Environmental Quality Improvement Program Practices Information.

\* Estimate provided by Cal Poly for Chumash Creek Watershed road improvements.

### **Costs of Implementation Addressing Land-Applied Manure**

Implementation of management practices pursuant to the Waiver of WDRs for Discharges from Irrigated Lands are expected to effectively reduce loading of pathogens from this source. Compliance with waiver water quality requirements will add to growers' costs. The waiver program was structured to keep costs as low as possible by building on existing programs such as University of California Cooperative Extension's Farm Water Quality short courses, and by allowing flexibility in choice and timing of management practice implementation. These costs were considered in the development and ultimate adoption of the waiver and this TMDL implementation plan is not expected to add substantially to those costs. Potential costs include those associated with responding to the Water Board's request for documentation about practices that prevent the transport of pathogens from lands with applied manure, and those associated with monitoring.

### **Costs of Monitoring**

Responsible dischargers would incur monitoring costs for the collection and analysis of water samples for fecal coliform. They would collect samples in receiving waters and in a limited number of stormdrain outfalls. As an example of these costs, Santa Cruz County estimates their costs for sample collection and fecal coliform analysis are \$60/sample for multiple samples and \$85 for a single sample. Collaboration among those responsible for monitoring could result in cost savings.

## 10. MONITORING PLAN

### 10.1. Introduction

The Monitoring Plan (Plan) outlines the monitoring sites, frequency of monitoring, and parties responsible for monitoring. Monitoring will begin in the first full sampling season following adoption of the TMDL by the Office of Administrative Law. The monitoring proposed below for TMDL compliance and evaluation is the minimum staff believes is necessary. However, if a change in these requirements is warranted after the TMDL is approved, the Executive Officer and/or the Water Board will require such changes. All parties have the option of individual monitoring of their discharge, or participating in monitoring receiving waterbodies as indicated below. A discharger may change their monitoring option at any time by notifying the Water Board and providing a proposed monitoring and reporting plan.

#### **Locations**

Staff identified eight receiving water monitoring locations that would allow them to evaluate attainment of the TMDL and allocations (Table 10-1, Figure 3-1). Staff expects samples collected from each of these locations would represent actual pathogen loading from the various potential sources identified in this assessment through land use, grab sample, and genetic analyses.

In addition to the receiving water locations, the City of Watsonville and the County of Santa Cruz will identify the locations of stormwater outfalls where they will collect samples for analysis of indicator organisms. Among these stormwater sampling locations are sites at the Buena Vista Landfill where the County (landfill operator) will monitor storm flows from the landfill to Gallighan Slough. The County and the City will identify which of their urban stormwater outfalls they will monitor, based on the outfalls' representativeness and relative discharge (loading potential), among other factors. Water Board staff will review and recommend approval of the final monitoring plan to the Executive Officer, or request modifications if necessary.

As shown in Table 10-1, most waterbodies have more than one responsible party indicated for monitoring. This reflects the fact that multiple parties are known, or, potential sources of pathogens and thus share responsibility for monitoring. For example, both livestock and land-applied manure are suspected sources from lands adjacent to Harkins Slough near Harkins Slough Road crossing (HAR-HAR). Therefore both livestock operators and manure applicators could collaborate in monitoring at this location (as well as at two stations in Watsonville Slough, WAT-AND and WAT-SHE).

Table 10-1 Possible Monitoring locations for determining attainment of TMDL

Responsible Party	Source	Receiving Water Locations								Stormwater Outfall Locations <sup>1</sup>
		Struve Slough		Harkins Slough		Watsonville Slough				
		STR-LEE	STR-CHE	HAR-RAU	HAR-HAR	WAT-LEE	WAT-HAR	WAT-AND	WAT-SHE	
City of Watsonville	Stormwater	✓	✓			✓				✓
	Collection System		✓			✓	✓			
County of Santa Cruz	Stormwater			✓		✓				✓
	Collection System			✓						
	Landfill <sup>2</sup> Stormwater									✓
Livestock Operators	Livestock			✓	✓			✓	✓	
Manure Applicators	Applied Manure				✓			✓	✓	

<sup>1</sup> To be determined by the City and County and approved by the Executive Officer of the Central Coast Water Board.

<sup>2</sup> Buena Vista Landfill.

Site Code	Site Description	Site Code	Site Description
STR-LEE	Struve Slough at Lee Road crossing	WAT-LEE	Watsonville Slough at Lee Road Bridge
STR-CHE	Struve Slough at Cherry Blossom Drive	WAT-HAR	Watsonville Slough at Harkins Slough Road crossing
HAR-RAU	Harkins Slough upstream of Ranport Road crossing	WAT-AND	Watsonville Slough at San Andreas Road Bridge
HAR-HAR	Harkins Slough at Harkins Slough Road crossing	WAT-SHE	Watsonville Slough at Shell Road pump station

### Analysis

Grab samples will be analyzed for fecal coliform concentration and compared to the numeric target, which is the Basin Plan water quality objective:

Fecal coliform concentration, based on a minimum of not less than five samples for any 30-day period, shall not exceed a log mean of 200 MPN/100ml, nor shall more than ten percent of the total samples during any 30-day period exceed 400 MPN/100ml.

Because the water quality objective is also the allocation, monitoring results will allow the Water Board and others to evaluate whether the allocations are achieved.

### Frequency

The monitoring frequency at all sites satisfies the minimum number of samples needed to evaluate compliance with the Basin Plan water quality objective for indicator organisms in REC-1 waters (five samples must be drawn in a 30-day period). Responsible parties will monitor receiving waters and/or storm water outfalls according to the following schedule:

Receiving Waters – Five samples from each of eight monitoring sites (Table 10-1) collected consecutively over a 30-day period in each of the three seasons:

- ✓ Early Wet Season: October 15 – January 31
- ✓ Late Wet Season: February 1 – April 30
- ✓ Dry Season: May 1 – October 14

Stormwater Outfalls – Five samples from multiple stormwater outfalls collected consecutively over a 30-day period in each of the two seasons:

- ✓ Wet Season: October 15 – April 30
- ✓ Dry Season: May 1 – October 14

Responsible parties will continue monitoring according to this plan for at least three years, at which time Water Board staff will determine the need for continuing or otherwise modifying the monitoring requirements. If parties to this implementation plan demonstrate that controllable sources of pathogens are not contributing to exceedance of water quality objectives in receiving waters, staff would consider the need for establishing a site-specific objective for these waters. The site-specific objective would be based on evidence that natural, or “background” sources alone were the cause of exceedances of the Basin Plan water quality objective for fecal coliform.

## **10.2. Reporting**

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The parties responsible for implementation and monitoring will incorporate the results of monitoring efforts in annual reports filed pursuant to the Small MS4 Stormwater Permit, Waste Discharge Requirements, the conditional prohibition, or in other correspondence as requested by the Water Board pursuant to California Water Code Section 13267. If reporting changes were to become necessary based on staff’s assessment of the TMDL implementation progress, the Executive Officer or the Water Board will require such changes.

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## **Appendix A: Watsonville Sloughs Pathogen Problems and Sources**

## Appendix B: Genetic Source Identification Report



## **Appendix C: Draft Use Attainability Analysis for Watsonville Sloughs**