

Protecting Coastal Waters: State of California 2002 Critical Coastal Areas Draft Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

The State of California has a magnificent and varied coastline stretching over 1,100 miles from Oregon to Mexico. The landscapes of the coast vary from forested areas, dramatic cliffs, sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, ocean-side communities, and wilderness areas. Common to all these diverse landscapes is the importance of excellent water quality, as the environment, the citizens, and the economy of California ultimately rely upon this precious resource. The California Coastal Commission (Coastal Commission), along with its partner the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), is committed to protecting the water quality of California through the statewide water quality protection plan, entitled the *Plan for California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program* (NPS Plan).

Nonpoint source pollution, also known as polluted runoff, is the leading cause of water quality impairments in California and nationwide. Nonpoint sources, including natural sources, are the major contributors of pollution to streams, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, marine waters, and ground water basins in California, and are important contributors of pollution to harbors and bays. Unlike pollution from distinct, identifiable point sources (e.g., industrial or wastewater treatment plant discharge pipes), nonpoint source pollution comes from many diffuse sources. Rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation water that moves over and through the ground picks up and carries away natural and human-made contaminants. Nonpoint source pollution occurs when those contaminants are discharged to lakes, rivers, wetlands, groundwater, other inland waters and ultimately, to coastal waters. Polluted runoff threatens coastal resources and often causes beach closures, resulting in risks to public health and significant impacts to local economies.

Finding solutions to nonpoint source pollution poses unique challenges. For example, more than 25 California state agencies have authorities, programs, or responsibilities relating to the control of such pollution, and there are a myriad of local and regional interest groups. Coordinating and focusing such a large number of entities to produce an effective pollution prevention program in a state as large and geomorphologically diverse as California poses unique and difficult challenges. To address these challenges in protecting coastal waters, the NPS Plan provides a program to identify "Critical Coastal Areas". Critical Coastal Areas (CCAs) are specially designated land areas of the California coast where state, federal and local government agencies and other stakeholders have agreed to improve degraded water quality or protect exceptional coastal water quality from the impact or threat of nonpoint source pollution, by coordinating expertise and resources.

This report describes the Critical Coastal Areas program of the NPS Plan and the progress made to date by the Coastal Commission -- the lead agency for the CCAs program -- the State Board, and other partners. It is an exciting opportunity to focus much-needed attention on special areas of California's spectacular coastline to ensure that, during this time of limited resources, we are protecting coastal water quality as effectively and efficiently as possible. We want to report on our progress, and invite the participation of the public, interest groups and other agencies in helping to accomplish our goals.

The goals of the CCA program are:

- To ensure that the Management Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) of the NPS Plan are fully implemented in select areas of the coast identified as CCAs¹;
- To provide a mechanism to develop and apply additional Management Measures as needed to achieve or maintain high quality water in CCAs; and
- To develop Action Plans for each CCA to improve degraded water quality or protect exceptional water quality.

HISTORY OF THE CRITICAL COASTAL AREAS PROGRAM

In 1990 Congress identified nonpoint source pollution as a significant factor contributing to coastal water degradation, noting the link between coastal water quality and land use activities. In response, Congress amended the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) by passing the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990 (CZARA). Section 6217 of CZARA requires each state's coastal zone management agency -- in the case of California, the Coastal Commission -- to develop and submit a coastal nonpoint source pollution control program. The statute also requires that a state's coastal nonpoint source pollution control program contain a continuing process for identifying "critical coastal areas" adjacent to coastal waters where there is a failure to attain or maintain applicable water quality standards, and for those coastal waters that are threatened by reasonably foreseeable increases in pollution loadings from new or expanding sources. Moreover, the statute requires developing "Management Measures" beyond those already identified in the general federal guidance if such measures are necessary to protect against current and anticipated nonpoint source pollution problems.

In 1995, the Coastal Commission submitted a program to meet these requirements. As part of that 1995 NPS Plan submittal, the Coastal Commission identified 25 areas of the coast as CCAs -- defined as the coastal zone portions of watersheds which drained into impaired and threatened bays and estuaries

¹ Management Measures are defined in CZARA section 6217(g)(5) as "economically achievable measures for the control of the addition of pollutants from existing and new categories and classes of nonpoint sources of pollution, which reflect the greatest degree of pollutant reduction achievable through the application of the best available nonpoint pollution control practices, technologies, processes, siting criteria, operating methods, or other alternatives."

listed on the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) list². This list of 25 CCAs was adopted by the state through a public process. Each CCA extended inland to the coastal zone boundary (as defined by the Coastal Act), but planning efforts were targeted throughout the watershed. The 1995 NPS Plan suggested that a watershed plan would benefit both the resources and the citizens of that watershed by finding common priorities, pooling agency resources, and possibly streamlining any permitting issues. In addition, the CCA program identified the importance of respect for the interests of the community and the integration of a stewardship ethic.

1995 CCA Program – A Success Story

One of the successes to arise from the 1995 CCA Program was the designation of Morro Bay as a component of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program (NEP). The Coastal Commission staff worked to support the creation of the Morro Bay watershed plan; in 2001, the federal and state governments approved the *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Morro Bay*, necessary for the National Estuary designation. While the Coastal Commission and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) staffs worked to ensure that Morro Bay would develop a watershed plan, the primary impetus for the completion of the plan and acceptance into the NEP was the long-term grass-roots efforts of the local citizens and the special status designation by the State: California's first "State Estuary." Presently, numerous state, federal and local agencies, local groups (such as watershed groups) and interest organizations (such as non-profit environmental groups) are working together to implement Morro Bay's Management Plan. The plan is unique in addressing numerous water quality problems, integrating all current watershed programs, identifying multiple agencies and organizations responsible for various implementation measures, and linking the various actions back to the state's NPS Plan Management Measures.

The Coastal Commission staff reviewed water quality and land use issues within each CCA, including a review of the sixteen Local Coastal Programs (LCPs)³ governing the Coastal Zone Management Program for the 25 CCAs. The review analyzed the comprehensive nature of the LCPs in addressing polluted runoff. The final report consisted of a summary of the water quality, watershed projects,

² CWA Section 303(d) requires states to list surface waters not attaining (or not expected to attain) water quality standards after the application of technology-based effluent limits. For those pollutants that cause waters to be placed on the CWA Section 303(d) list, the states must perform Water Quality Assessments and develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).

³ Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) are the basic planning tools used to carry out the partnership between the state and local government as stewards of California's coastal resources. Working with local government, the Coastal Commission helps shape, and then formally reviews, LCPs for consistency with the goals and policies of the California Coastal Act. LCPs that are found to be consistent with the Coastal Act are certified by the Coastal Commission, and the local government then assumes most planning and permitting responsibilities.

and LCP information for each CCA⁴. This information was designed to assist future coordination between the Coastal Commission and the local governments to strengthen and update their LCPs. The final report further suggests, "The result of this report will facilitate the development of an important new area of planning and interagency cooperation -- watershed management."

In 1996, the Coastal Commission selected the Elkhorn Slough CCA as a high priority for watershed planning efforts. The Commission completed a comprehensive report outlining the water quality issues and potential solutions for this watershed⁵. Information from this report helped guide numerous improvements to coastal water quality planning efforts in Monterey County. Specific solutions included coordination with landowners, local governments and technical experts to develop a streamlined permitting program. This led to a watershed-wide permit coordination effort for ten resource conservation practices designed to reduce the high levels of pesticides found in the Elkhorn Slough watershed. From 1998-2001, 39 permits were issued for erosion control, stream channel stabilization, and other necessary actions within the watershed, and currently several other coastal permit coordination efforts are underway to emulate the success of this pilot project.

In January 2000, the Coastal Commission and State Board submitted a joint NPS Plan to update both California's nonpoint source pollution control program established under CWA section 319 and the coastal nonpoint program required under CZARA section 6217. In July 2000, the 2000 NPS Plan was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the lead federal agencies that administer the CWA and the CZMA respectively.

The Coastal Commission is committed to protecting the coast from impacts of increased pollutant loading from new or expanding sources. These efforts include the commitment to update every coastal community's LCP to incorporate water quality policies that are designed to minimize or eliminate nonpoint source pollution. As part of the Coastal Commission's efforts to update each LCP, Coastal Commission staff is preparing LCP guidance materials that outline a comprehensive water quality program to achieve protection of coastal resources from the impacts of new development. For those coastal communities that don't have an LCP, Coastal Commission staff will continue to review each Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for potential impacts to water quality and require specific Management Measures or BMPs to mitigate these impacts. Through these efforts, the entire coast will receive special attention regarding the impacts of nonpoint source pollution on water quality.

⁴ Allayaud et al. 1996, *Local planning and watershed management in Critical Coastal Areas*, California Coastal Commission.

⁵ Oggins, et al. 1996, *A pilot methodology for assessing cumulative impacts of activities that generate polluted runoff in the Elkhorn Slough watershed, Monterey County*, California Coastal Commission.

CALIFORNIA'S CRITICAL COASTAL AREA STRATEGY

The Coastal Commission formed the CCA Committee⁶, as required by the NPS Plan, to design a process for identifying critical areas of the California coast where water quality is threatened by new or expanding land uses, and to create a list of these areas. The California NPS Plan identified the need for a statewide CCA Committee because of limited progress made to protect CCAs identified in the 1995 CCA list. The NPS Plan emphasized the need for agency and stakeholder coordination, and identified CCAs as a program that should be redesigned and re-energized.

The CCA Committee was therefore convened in 2000 to develop a strategy for protecting specific areas of the coast from nonpoint source pollution, and using the lessons learned for application throughout the California coast. The Committee developed goals for the CCA program in 2000, agreed upon a method to identify a list of CCAs, and developed a strategy to determine actions to be taken at CCAs. The Goals are listed in the Introduction of this document; the Identification Process and CCA Action Plans are described below.

Identification Process

The CCA Committee recognized the entire coast of California as being a special resource and in need of protection from the threat of nonpoint source pollution. Although some members suggested listing the entire coast as California's CCA, many members felt that listing the entire coast would dilute the limited resources available to this program. Ultimately, the CCA Committee agreed the entire coast would not be identified as a CCA, but rather specific CCAs would be identified in each of four regions for the State. The CCA Committee discussed several different methods of identifying CCAs along the California coast. The goal, as indicated in the NPS Plan, was to identify areas of the coast that are adjacent to coastal water bodies impacted by nonpoint source pollution, or adjacent to high quality waters threatened but not yet impacted by nonpoint source pollution. The process described below combines the preferred aspects of several of the methods that the Committee evaluated.

One method would use the CCAs identified in 1995, which are the coastal zone portions of watersheds that drain into impaired and threatened coastal waters listed on the 303(d) list. The CCA Committee agreed that the 1995 CCA list includes areas that should still be identified as CCAs and that to do so would make use of previous efforts to identify water quality issues in these areas.

A second method evaluated by the Committee would identify impaired waters by using the more recent 1998 303(d) list. In order to narrow the list, the Committee decided to first focus on areas with known coastal resource values (*i.e.*,

⁶ Participants in the CCA Committee are listed in Appendix A and a summary of the meetings can be found in Appendix B.

California Marine Managed Areas [MMAs])⁷. Consequently, the second component of the 2002 CCA identification process was to add areas of the coast adjacent to 303(d) listed waters that flow into MMAs.

The CCA Committee was not able to do an independent search for high quality waters along the California coast that are threatened by nonpoint source pollution. Consequently, the CCA Committee decided to use the list of State Water Quality Protection Areas (SWQPAs), formerly known as Areas of Special Biological Significance⁸, identified in the California Ocean Plan as a surrogate for high quality coastal waters not yet impacted by nonpoint source pollution. As a result, coastal areas adjacent to these SWQPAs were also added to the list of CCAs.

The final component of the identification process was to select CCAs within San Francisco Bay. Because MMAs and SWQPAs are not identified within San Francisco Bay, the CCA committee needed analogous areas to the listing criteria used for the rest of the coast. The CCA committee used existing designations specified in the San Francisco Bay Plan. As a result, shoreline areas adjacent to wildlife refuges, waterfront parks, and beaches receiving impaired waters on the 1998 303(d) list were identified as CCAs.

The result of these efforts was the creation of the 2002 CCA list that includes 101 locations along California's coast, including the San Francisco Bay shoreline.

2002 CCA List includes:

- 1995 CCA list: coastal areas adjacent to impaired coastal waters on the 303(d) list
- Coastal areas adjacent to impaired waters on the 1998 303(d) list that flow into MMAs
- Coastal areas adjacent to SWQPAs
- Shoreline areas within San Francisco Bay adjacent to impaired waters on the 1998 303(d) list that flow into wildlife refuges or waterfront parks or beaches

⁷ Marine Managed Areas (MMAs) are specially designated areas of the coast and include National Marine Sanctuaries, State Water Quality Protection Areas (formerly called Areas of Special Biological Significance), Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs), Marine Parks and National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs). In San Francisco Bay, these specially designated areas include Wildlife Refuges, Waterfront Parks or Waterfront Beaches as specified in the San Francisco Bay Plan.

⁸ Effective January 1, 2003, per Sections 36700 (f) and 36750 of the Public Resources Code, Areas of Special Biological Significance have been re-classified as State Water Quality Protection Areas (SWQPAs).

Revising the CCA List

The ability to update the CCA list based on changes in water quality or the land uses that threaten water quality is essential. The statewide CCA Committee, with input from regional committees (see Regional CCA Implementation Committees, below) and the public, will update the CCA list, adding new areas that are threatened or degraded and removing areas which no longer meet the criteria for listing (*i.e.*, those with improved water quality). The CCA list will be revised periodically to include areas adjacent to any newly designated SWQPAs, or newly listed 303(d) waters flowing into MMAs. The next revision to the CCA list is currently scheduled for 2004.

CCAs will be removed from the list once water quality protection is achieved or water quality has improved. The CCA Committee seeks public input to identify both a process and criteria for removing CCAs from the list. Possible criteria include: successful completion of a “CCA Action Plan⁹” (described in the next section); achievement of the goals of the CCA program by other water quality protection programs, such as Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)¹⁰ and watershed restoration programs; and when new information suggests that CCA listing is no longer appropriate. The statewide CCA Committee will continue to take input on this process through meetings of Regional Committees, and intends to finalize this process in 2004, to coincide with the next planned update of the list.

Critical Coastal Area Action Plans

Geographic Regions

The CCA Committee agreed to use the 1995 CCA approach of dividing the Coast into four geographic regions for CCA implementation consistent with appropriate Regional Board boundaries. Therefore the approximate boundaries of these geographic regions are: the North Coast (Oregon Border to the mouth of Tomales Bay); San Francisco Bay (within San Francisco Bay as far inland and including Suisun Bay and the coast from Tomales Bay to the San Mateo/Santa Cruz County line); Central Coast (San Mateo/Santa Cruz County line to the Santa Barbara/Ventura County line); and Southern California Bight (Santa Barbara/Ventura County line to the Mexico Border). These geographic regions allow for stratified implementation of projects and the coordination of resources. Geographic differences in land use issues and habitats among these areas are

⁹ “CCA Action Plan” is a long-term strategy for implementing Management Measures to address specific land use or water quality concerns.

¹⁰ A “total maximum daily load” (TMDL) is a water quality-based approach for protecting water quality that relies on evaluating the condition of surface waters and then setting limitations on the amount of pollution that the water can be exposed to without adversely affecting the beneficial uses of those waters. CWA Section 303(d) requires that the states make a list of waters that are not attaining standards after technology-based limits are put into place. For waters on the 303(d) list, states are to develop TMDLs. A TMDL must account for all sources of the pollutants that caused the water to be listed, and account for contributions from point sources and nonpoint sources.

likewise recognized by a regionalization scheme. Accordingly, the 2002 CCA list includes 21 CCAs located in the North Coast region, 33 CCAs in the San Francisco Bay Region (of which 21 CCAs are located within San Francisco Bay), 22 CCAs located in the Central Coast Region, and 25 CCAs located in the Southern California Bight Region.

Regional CCA Implementation Committees Initially, the Coastal Commission and State Board, in conjunction with the appropriate Regional Boards, will coordinate Regional CCA Implementation Committees (Regional Committees), and will ask for participation from regional staff of each agency and organization which has participated in the statewide CCA Committee. Local and regional municipalities, regional organizations and local stakeholders, including interest groups and landowners, will be invited to participate as members of the Regional Committees.

The benefits for local stakeholders of participating in the Regional Committees are exemplified in the success stories from previous efforts such as Morro Bay (discussed above). The ability to restore and protect water quality will be enhanced through the coordination of interested parties working together to achieve a common goal.

The tasks for the Regional Committees include:

- Presentation of the CCA program and receipt of comments at workshops;
- Nomination of one of the region's CCAs for pilot project implementation (discussed below);
- Establishment of full committee membership comprised of agency staff, municipalities, regional organizations and local stakeholders, including interest groups and landowners
- Evaluation of water quality concerns for the CCA pilot projects, and potential land uses contributing to these concerns;
- Identification of the boundaries of the CCA pilot project, and possibly the CCA Watershed Planning Area where portions of the watershed inland from the CCA may have a significant impact on water quality in the coastal zone;
- Identification of available agency and interest group resources; and
- Development of a CCA Action Plan designed to protect and improve water quality in the CCA by implementing appropriate Management Measures.

Selection of CCA Pilot Projects

To effectively use limited resources, the CCA Committee must identify areas of the coast where water quality will benefit most from CCA Action Plan implementation. Therefore, the Regional Committees will hold public workshops to gather information on listed CCAs, and the public will have the opportunity to nominate specific CCAs from which each Regional Committee will select one CCA as a pilot project. Workshops will be held in each of the four regions to

present CCA program objectives, receive comments, and answer questions from the public. Specifically, the Regional Committee will request information necessary to identify one pilot project for their region that will receive the focused attention of state agency staff in completing their CCA Action Plan. The CCA Committee discussed several criteria as the basis for selecting the best pilot project locations, including:

- Potential for measurable water quality improvement or protection;
- Evidence of existing water quality impairment, or evidence of high quality water that is threatened by nonpoint source pollution;
- Degree of agency and public support for protection, such as established watershed groups in the area;
- Identified impact(s) to coastal resources, such as environmentally sensitive habitat; and
- Areas where nonpoint source pollution is identified as the dominant source of impairment.

To begin the discussion with the public and local interest groups, the statewide CCA Committee plans to recommend three CCAs for each region as the top candidates for consideration as pilot projects. These CCAs will be presented as recommendations to the four Regional Committees. The workshops will encourage public participation in selecting CCA pilot projects and give the public the opportunity to suggest areas they would like to have considered for future CCA listing.

Currently, many watershed protection programs already exist at the local level. Most of these programs have included an evaluation of nonpoint source pollution issues for the watershed, including sources and solutions. In order to build on existing programs, the CCA Committee plans to distribute a CCA survey to local interest groups. This "State of the CCA" survey will be designed to assess water quality problems associated with the CCA, describe past and current efforts to address these problems, identify local interest groups, and learn other relevant information about the CCA.

Based on the comments from the workshops and CCA surveys, the Regional Committees will select the CCA pilot projects for Action Plan implementation. The statewide CCA committee will review the comments provided through the regional workshops, and will then adopt a list of pilot CCAs for Action Plan development. The Regional Committees will then begin the planning and implementation process for these pilot projects, as discussed below. Once pilot CCAs are selected, a regional entity will be identified for management of the pilot project implementation.

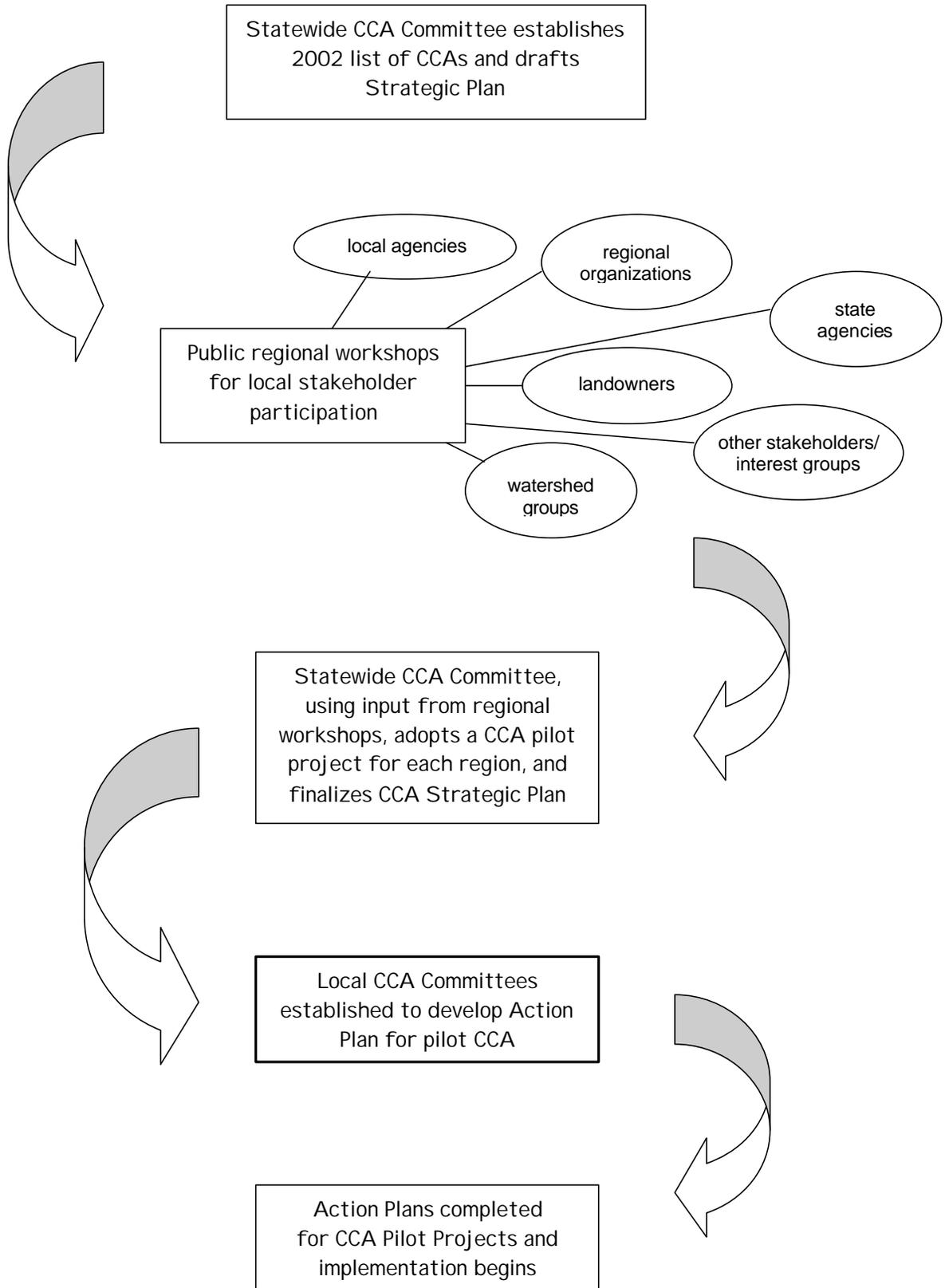


Figure 1. CCA Implementation Strategy

Planning and Implementation for CCA Pilot Projects

Evaluation of Pilot CCAs

Each Regional Committee will need to evaluate the status of water quality in their selected pilot CCA. This evaluation includes identifying water quality impairments in the waters adjacent to the CCA and potential sources of these impairments. Land use, topography, and hydrology will all be assessed as part of this evaluation. In addition, the Regional Committee will verify efforts that are already underway to address water quality in the CCA, initiating a collaborative process with local interest groups. The "State of the CCA" surveys will be instrumental in providing much of this valuable information, thereby initiating the CCA implementation process.

CCA Boundary Definition

The statewide CCA Committee discussed various ways to delineate the boundaries of CCAs after they had been generally identified. Since the CCAs are defined as areas of land that impact coastal waters, the seaward boundary will be the mean high tide line. The inland boundary will be the Coastal Zone, as it is defined in the Coastal Act. This boundary was intended to reflect local jurisdictions and coastal conditions. It also is the jurisdictional boundary of the Coastal Commission. The boundaries along the shoreline will be set on a case-by-case basis taking into account the evidence of water quality threat or impairment, watershed boundaries, local political boundaries, and the activities of watershed groups.

CCA Watershed Planning Areas

The CCA Committee discussed the need for evaluating impacts to water quality from the inland portions of watersheds containing CCAs. In cases where it is determined that significant sources of water pollution affecting the CCA lie further inland than the Coastal Zone, a CCA Watershed Planning Area may be identified for that specific CCA. In such cases, the Regional Committee may recommend accelerated implementation of Management Measures, promote the use of BMPs, and other coordinated actions within that CCA Watershed Planning Area as necessary to effectively mitigate the water quality problems affecting the CCA and adjacent coastal waters. The extent of the CCA Watershed Planning Area will be determined from site-specific assessment of the particular CCA, and will be of appropriate size to address the problems affecting that CCA.

Providing Resources

The statewide CCA Committee seeks to direct program and agency resources to CCAs to ensure Management Measure implementation and water quality protection. The CCA Committee will promote the selection, funding, and implementation of pilot projects that can achieve measurable

water quality improvements within watershed planning areas of CCAs. Agencies and groups serving on the Regional Committees will be asked to identify available resources that will help to implement the identified Management Measures and the CCA Action Plan. Such resource coordination will be facilitated through agency agreements and requests for future additional funding, grant coordination, and possible federal assistance.

Additional Management Measures

The federal CZARA Section 6217 requires that “additional” Management Measures be implemented within CCAs. The term “additional”, however, is not well defined. The CCA Committee concurs with the statement in the NPS Plan that one of the missing elements in the 1995 CCA program was a structure for State and local agencies to work together to protect coastal resources. Thus, a significant additional Management Measure that will help achieve or maintain high quality water is the development of CCA Action Plans by local groups comprised of agency staff and local stakeholders. The CCA Committee finds that if such Action Plans are developed and implemented the ability of interested parties to protect and restore coastal water quality will be enhanced.

CCA Action Plans

Following the identification of the CCA boundaries, potential threats to water quality, available resources, and additional Management Measures, the Regional Committees will develop CCA Action Plans. These Action Plans will include a watershed assessment of ongoing and potential impacts to coastal waters. In addition, activities of watershed groups and existing watershed plans will be reviewed and used in the development of the CCA Action Plan. The Regional Committee will also develop a strategy and schedule to implement appropriate Management Measures, and identify the role of local and state agencies and other authorities in implementing these Management Measures. An initial activity in development of CCA Action Plans should be the identification of relevant water quality protection programs operating within the identified CCA boundaries. Such programs may include the nonpoint source grant program, Clean Beach Initiative grants, efforts to deal with waters on the state’s CWA Section 303(d) list, and efforts of the Joint Taskforce on California Watershed Management.

The CCA Action Plan development will identify sources of funding that can be used to protect or restore coastal water quality impacted by CCAs. The CCA Action Plan can also be used to support the acquisition of new funds as they become available by identifying the high priority actions to protect the CCA. If needed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be generated to identify the responsibilities of each committee member in developing the CCA Action Plan. The result will be a multi-agency, multi-stakeholder CCA Action Plan, completed within one to two years, that outlines the steps all participants will take in improving the water quality of the CCA.

The CCA Action Plans will be developed as guidance. It is not the intent of the CCA program to create new regulations or other enforcement mechanisms for activities within CCAs; rather, the program is a planning tool. The CCA Committee will convene quarterly to review the development of pilot project CCA Action Plans.

FUTURE ACTIONS OF THE CCA COMMITTEE

The CCA Committee will convene quarterly (beginning in 2003) to review progress on CCA Action Plans, implementation of Management Measures in CCA pilot projects, and application of lessons learned in CCA pilot projects to other areas of the coast. We anticipate that each agency and group currently participating in the CCA Committee will continue to do so at the quarterly meetings to review the overall progress of CCA development as outlined above. In addition, member agencies will assign staff to participate in CCA Action Plan development for the CCA pilot projects. In this way, we hope to benefit from the continuing overview at the state level, while ensuring that specific staff members are working at the local level to effectively facilitate the Action Plans.

Funding

The CCA Committee recognizes the essential need to fund the implementation of this program. It is expected that the CCA Committee members will continue to promote the use of agency resources to staff Regional Committees, to help create CCA Action Plans, and to integrate CCA Action Plan implementation into agency funding programs, where appropriate. In addition, as part of the CCA Action Plan development, Regional Committees need to identify sources of funding that can be used to protect or restore coastal water quality in CCAs. The CCA Action Plan can also be used to identify funding shortfalls and target new funds as they become available for water quality protection. Funding for CCA Action Plan implementation may come from grant or bond funds, or from requests for federal assistance. In addition, resource limitations identified by Regional Committees will be presented to the Interagency Coordinating Committee (IACC) for the California NPS Plan. The IACC was established to provide a forum for all state agencies working to reduce water pollution to collaborate on nonpoint source issues. Recommendations from this interagency group could be used to support the implementation of CCA Action Plans.

Integration with Other Watershed Programs

CCA Committee members recognize that coordination with existing water quality protection programs is a key element for CCA success. CCA Action Plans should take full advantage of the state's programs such as the nonpoint source grant program, Clean Beach Initiative grants, efforts to deal with waters on the state's CWA Section 303(d) list, and efforts of the Joint Taskforce on California Watershed Management. To this end, identification of relevant programs presently operating within the identified CCA boundaries needs to be an initial activity in development of CCA Action Plans. It is expected that identification of

these programs will be one of the many benefits that can be accomplished through the "State of the CCA" surveys.

The State Board and Regional Boards, in partnership with the USEPA, have developed an integrated planning process to more effectively and efficiently direct the limited state and federal funds to the highest priority activities. These priorities and the planning process are described in the Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) Integrated Plan.

Unique strategies that consider the local conditions and pollution sources have been developed for each priority watershed. These strategies are contained in each Regional Board's Chapter of the WMI Integrated Plan. The current Integrated Plan is dated December 2001 and it is reviewed and updated periodically. The Chapters identify watershed issues, Regional Board work priorities and where the Board plans to spend its baseline resources, as well as where it needs additional resources. The statewide CCA Committee is working with the State Board and Regional Boards to integrate CCAs into future updates of these WMI Chapters.

The CCA Committee will be coordinating with efforts by the State Board and Regional Boards in their development of TMDLs for 303(d) listed waters. In this way, CCA planning will be complementary to TMDL development. Joint meetings may be held for CCAs and TMDLs in the same areas, and implementation plans may be developed in concert. It is important to note that TMDL development and CCA planning will likely have different schedules, with CCA implementation in some cases preceding that of TMDLs. In addition, the scope of CCA implementation is broader than that for TMDLs, because it is based on reducing all nonpoint source pollutants, while TMDLs are typically focused on specific pollutants. In addition, an important asset of the CCA process is the coordination among numerous agencies. CCA implementation will not specify load allocations, as do TMDLs, but will incorporate policies and actions to reduce a broad range of nonpoint source pollutants. Therefore, the CCA and TMDL processes should be coordinated and are not expected to be duplicative.

Tracking and Assessment

As with all components of the California NPS Plan, the CCA program will be assessed in a biennial progress report that will be made available to the federal government and the public in 2004. Potential modifications to this CCA Strategic Plan and updates to the 2002 CCA list will be addressed at that time. The Coastal Commission and the State Board will track the completion of CCA Action Plans and document the progress towards implementation of those plans. Public comment will be solicited as to the effectiveness of the CCA program in developing community-based management of critical areas of the coast that are threatened or impacted by nonpoint source pollution.

Lessons Learned

Previous experience in Elkhorn Slough and Morro Bay has demonstrated that through coordinated, multi-agency/stakeholder watershed planning, water quality protection can be achieved and water quality can be improved. Several elements, however, are required for success. First, success is dependent on stakeholder commitment to protect a specific area of the coast. Second, state and local agencies need to support the process through the provision of staff resources and the experience those staff members bring to the work. Third, an Action Plan must be developed, defining the site specific threats to water quality, the resources available, a schedule for implementation, and those responsible for specific implementing actions. And finally, funding needs to be identified to support the development and implementation of the Action Plan. The CCA Committee has demonstrated the commitment of agencies to the process, now the Regional Committees must make the next step to involve local stakeholders in identifying CCA pilot projects and following through with development and implementation of CCA Action Plans.

CONCLUSIONS

The Coastal Commission staff has prepared this CCA Draft Strategic Plan in conjunction with the CCA Committee. The CCA Committee has agreed upon the CCA identification process, the 2002 list of CCAs, and a plan to set up Regional Committees for selection of CCA pilot projects. The next steps for the CCA Committee are to organize workshops to introduce the CCA Draft Strategic Plan to interested stakeholders, and to create Regional Committees. Once the Regional Committees each select a pilot project, they can begin to develop a workplan for creation of the CCA Action Plan. By working together on implementation of the CCA Action Plans, we can begin to achieve the desired result of improving water quality and eliminating the threat of impairment to water quality along California's spectacular coast.

APPENDICES

**Appendix A CCA Committee Participating Agencies and
Representatives**

Appendix B Summary of CCA Committee Meetings

Appendix C 2002 Critical Coastal Areas List

Appendix D 2002 CCA Maps

Appendix A

CCA Participating Agencies and Representatives

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Appendix B

Summary of CCA Committee Meetings

The Commission held four CCA Committee meetings in the winter of 2000-2001 to identify a list of CCAs and design a program to improve water quality in these areas. Participants represented eight state agencies, five regional water boards, two federal agencies and one non-governmental organization representing several stakeholder groups. CCA Committee members reviewed information on the history of the NPS Plan and the previous CCA list, the success of efforts in Morro Bay and the limited results throughout the remaining 24 previously designated areas. The CCA Committee discussed a new identification process to achieve the federal directives while providing a value to the state and the coast.

Topics of discussion included: possible new approach to CCAs, federal perspective and other state approaches, funding opportunities, possible identification scenarios, individual agency needs, and CCA Committee member objectives. Coastal Commission staff conducted a phone survey to better understand the individual needs and responsibilities and results were presented to the CCA Committee. Reoccurring comments included the need to build from previous efforts, streamline and coordinate in-place resources, and ensure the protection of pristine waters, as well as restore degraded areas.

The CCA Committee generated a list of identification and selection criteria that were aimed at identifying the types of issues that were important to the CCA Committee when determining if a CCA program should be implemented. The criteria included 303(d) listing, watershed characteristics, potential for improvement, other in-place programs, monitoring information, and special status listings.

As discussions continued regarding the optimal procedure for identifying CCAs, many points of agreement were met. The Coastal Commission staff outlined these areas of consensus for the CCA Committee to clarify which areas were agreed upon and which were still undecided. By the fourth meeting, the CCA Committee agreed that most of the information and ideas had been discussed and that several identification scenario options had been outlined. The next step was to use the survey results, consensus points and individual comments to design several scenarios from which to direct future discussions.

The CCA Committee requested Coastal Commission staff to compile the information that had been presented and discussed at the four Committee meetings and to develop a Draft Identification and Implementation Strategy (Strategy). That Draft Strategy, which outlined three CCA identification scenarios based on the federal guidance, the objectives outlined in the NPS Plan, and the input of the CCA Committee members regarding useful identification criteria, was completed and sent out to the CCA Committee for review and comments in October 2001. The CCA Committee members then selected their preferred identification strategy, and the

Coastal Commission staff reviewed and compiled the information that was submitted. This resulted in an identification strategy based on a combination of the ideas that received the greatest support and the inclusion of suggested changes to improve the scenarios. This revised identification strategy was detailed in a revised Draft Strategy and given to the CCA Committee members for review and discussion at the January 2002 meeting. This meeting included further deliberation about the identification strategy and CCA list that would eventually be adopted, and resulted in an agreed upon identification strategy, which is detailed in the CCA Draft Strategic Plan.

The next meeting of the CCA Committee was held in March 2002, where the 2002 CCA list was presented and discussed. This list was based on the identification process that was agreed upon. Other items of discussion included regional divisions of the coast, a regional pilot project selection strategy, CCA Action Plans, and watershed planning areas.

Another CCA Committee meeting was held in April 2002. A major goal of this meeting was to agree on the draft selection process for CCA pilot projects within each region. The Committee agreed to regional divisions of the coast, along with a draft strategy for selecting CCAs within each of these regions. The need for a communication plan for presenting the idea of CCAs to regional and local communities was identified, as well as potential funding opportunities for CCA implementation.

Currently, Coastal Commission staff is developing a communication plan for outreach efforts to local stakeholders and finalizing the 2002 CCA maps. A Watershed Implementation Plan Subcommittee has been formed to develop an outline of the elements that could be part of a typical CCA Action Plan. The next steps for the CCA Committee are to form the Regional CCA Implementation Committees and identify three CCAs to be recommended for consideration by the Regional Committees as pilot projects for each region. Regional workshops will then be organized to introduce the CCA Draft Strategic Plan to interested groups and set up a process for selection of regional CCA pilot projects.

Appendix C

2002 Critical Coastal Area List

List includes CCA# (north to south), CCA name, and method of classification: 1) 303(d) listed waterbodies flowing into MMAs, 2) SWQPAs, and 3) 1995 initial list

CCA #	CCA Name	303(d) listed waterbodies adjacent to MMAs	SWQPA	1995 list	Notes (list additional designations)
1	Klamath River	x	x	x	
2	Redwood Creek	x	x	x	
3	Redwood National Park		x		Park includes Klamath and Redwood CCAs within borders
4	Kelpbeds at Trinidad Head		x		
5	Mad River			x	
6	Eel River			x	
7	Mattole River	x		x	
8	King Range National Conservation Area		x		
9	Pudding Creek	x			
10	Noyo River			x	
11	Pygmy Forest Ecological staircase		x		
12	Big River			x	
13	Albion River			x	
14	Navarro River			x	
15	Garcia River	x		x	
16	Kelpbeds at Saunders Reef		x		
17	Del Mar Landing Ecological Reserve		x		
18	Gerstle Cove		x		
19	Bodega Marine Life Refuge		x		
20	Estero Americano	x		x	
21	Estero de San Antonio	x		x	
22	Walker Creek	x			
23	Tomales Bay	x		x	
24	Lagunitas Creek	x			
25	Bird Rock		x		

CCA #	CCA Name	303(d) listed waterbodies adjacent to MMAs	SWQPA	1995 list	Notes (list additional designations)
26	Point Reyes Headlands Reserve and Extension		x		
27	Double Point		x		
28	Duxbury Reef Reserve and Extension		x		
29	James V. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve		x		
30	San Gregorio Creek	x			
31	Pescadero Creek	x			
32	Butano Creek	x			
33	Ano Nuevo Point and Island		x		
34	San Lorenzo River			x	
35	Aptos Creek	x			
36	Soquel Lagoon			x	
37	Watsonville Slough			x	
38	Pajaro River	x			
39	Elkhorn Slough			x	NERR
40	Old Salinas River Est.	x			
41	Salinas River			x	
42	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens Fish Refuge	x	x		
43	Hopkins Marine Life Refuge	x	x		
44	Carmel Bay		x		
45	Point Lobos Ecological Reserve		x		
46	Julia Pfeiffer Burns Underwater Park		x		
47	Ocean Surrounding the Mouth of Salmon Creek		x		
48	Morro Bay	x		x	State Estuary; NEP
49	Chorro Creek	x			
50	Los Osos Creek	x			
51	San Luis Obispo Creek			x	

CCA #	CCA Name	303(d) listed waterbodies adjacent to MMAs	SWQPA	1995 list	Notes (list additional designations)
52	Santa Ynez River			x	
53	Goleta Slough			x	
54	Carpinteria Marsh			x	
55	San Miguel Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands		x		
56	Santa Barbara Island and Anacapa Island		x		
57	San Nicolas Island and Begg rock		x		
58	Mugu Lagoon/Revelon Slough	x		x	
59	Mugu Lagoon to Latigo Point		x		
60	Malibu Creek	x			
61	Topanga Canyon Creek	x			
62	Santa Monica Canyon	x			
63	Santa Catalina Island sub-area 1		x		
64	Santa Catalina Island sub-area 2		x		
65	Santa Catalina Island sub-area 3		x		
66	Santa Catalina Island sub-area 4		x		
67	San Clemente Island		x		
68	Ballona Creek	x			
69	Upper Newport Bay	x			
70	Newport Beach Marine Life Refuge	x	x		
71	Irvine Coast Marine Life Refuge		x		
72	Heisler Park Ecological Reserve	x	x		
73	Aliso Creek	x			
74	San Juan Creek	x			
75	Batiquitos Lagoon			x	
76	San Elijo Lagoon	x			

CCA #	CCA Name	303(d) listed waterbodies adjacent to MMAs	SWQPA	1995 list	Notes (list additional designations)
77	Los Penasquitos Lagoon	x			
78	San Diego-La Jolla Ecological Reserve		x		
79	San Diego Marine Life Refuge		x		
80	Tijuana River Estuary	x			NERR

2002 Critical Coastal Area List for San Francisco Bay

List includes CCA#, CCA name, and method of classification: 1998 303(d) listed waterbodies flowing into 1) Wildlife Refuge [state or federal listed refuge or ecological reserve], or 2) Waterfront Park or Beach

CCA #	CCA Name	303(d) listed waterbodies adjacent to Wildlife Refuge	303(d) listed waterbodies adjacent to Waterfront Park or Beach
81	Alameda Creek and Flood Control Channel	x	
82	Calabazas Creek	x	
83	Corte Madera Creek	x	
84	Coyote Creek (Santa Clara Co.)	x	
85	Gallinas Creek	x	x
86	Guadalupe River	x	
87	Lake Merritt	x	x
88	Matadero Creek		x
89	Miller Creek	x	x
90	Napa River	x	
91	Novato Creek	x	
92	Petaluma River	x	
93	San Francisquito Creek	x	
94	San Leandro Creek		x
95	San Lorenzo Creek		x
96	San Mateo Creek		x
97	San Pablo Creek		x
98	San Rafael Creek	x	
99	Sonoma Creek	x	
100	Suisun Slough	x	
101	Wildcat Creek		x

Appendix D
2002 CCA Maps