

# FITZGERALD MARINE RESERVE

2023 San Mateo County Pollution Prevention Update



## A TREASURED ECOSYSTEM

Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is one of San Mateo County's most treasured areas. It is a place where marine life thrives and our community can marvel at the diversity of species and the coast's natural beauty. Visit the Reserve tidepools on any given day, and there is a good chance you will see anemones, sea stars, urchins, hermit crabs, harbor seals, and much, much more. The Reserve touts one of the most biodiverse intertidal zones in the entire state. It is home to countless rare and unique species including sea lemons nudibranch, the ochre sea star, and the gumboot chiton (the world's largest chiton)!



The Reserve is designated by the State of California as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) and as an Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). These designations are intended to support the Reserve's unique ecosystem by protecting all animals and plants in the Reserve, and reducing the pollution discharged within the watershed to protect water quality. The County recognizes the importance of clean water for all of its water bodies and the need to take extra effort to protect the Reserve. Read on to see what the County does to reduce pollution in the Reserve's watershed, and what you can do to protect water quality!

## LOCATION & WATERSHED

Located in Moss Beach, ~7 miles north of HMB, the Reserve spans a five mile stretch of shoreline



Three creeks contribute freshwater to the Reserve:

- San Vicente Creek
- Montara Creek
- Dean Creek

[EXPLORE DIGITAL MAP](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/2m7kbsrw>



# COUNTY POLLUTION PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

The County is hard at work in the Reserve watershed to do our part in protecting water quality. We engage in several behind-the-scenes activities that are all geared toward protecting water quality at the Reserve. The Department of Public Works (DPW) and County Parks perform routine operations that are intended to minimize pollutant contribution from the watershed, while multiple departments engage in water quality sampling and inspections.

## Regional Collaboration

- The County is a partner agency to the San Mateo Countywide Pollution Prevention Program (SMCWPPP), which plays a pivotal role in the County's pollution prevention efforts. SMCWPPP leads public outreach events and keeps County staff trained and up to date on the pollution prevention operations. Learn more at the [Flows to Bay website](#).

## Operations and Maintenance Activities

- DPW increased the frequency at which streets are swept and catch basins are cleaned in the neighborhoods surrounding the Reserve. These operations remove sediment and other debris before it can be washed away by stormwater.
- DPW and County Parks maintain structural best management practices (BMPs) in the Reserve's watershed. These structures are designed to capture and treat stormwater runoff to improve water quality delivered downstream and must be routinely maintained to provide the intended benefit.
- Keep an eye out for the bioretention basin located in the Reserve's parking lot at your next visit, this is a County maintained BMP!

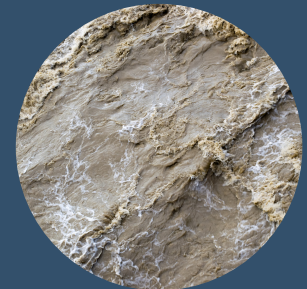


# POLLUTION PREVENTION ROLE

When it rains, stormwater washes over paved and unpaved surfaces in the watershed



Stormwater can pick up pollutants that runoff into local streams and the ocean



The County performs multiple activities to remove pollutants in the watershed to protect water quality





# COUNTY POLLUTION PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

## Water Quality Sampling

- Environmental Health collects and analyzes water samples at the Reserve to detect bacteria levels. All County collected data are posted to the State's [Safe to Swim Database](#).
- The San Mateo Resource Conservation District performs water quality monitoring throughout the watershed that includes DNA testing on samples to identify animal bacteria sources. Data are used to improve implementation actions to reduce bacteria entering the Reserve.

## General Inspections

- DPW inspects storm drain systems for illicit sewage connections to ensure no illicit discharge is delivered to the Reserve.
- Environmental Health inspects all horse ranches and onsite wastewater treatment systems to ensure all systems are working properly to treat bacteria on site.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

There are lots of small pollution prevention activities we all can do to reduce stormwater pollution in our watersheds including these actions:

### Scoop pet poop

- Pet waste that doesn't get picked up ends up in our streams and oceans. Poop contains harmful bacteria that can contaminate water for humans and sea life. [Take a pledge to scoop poop.](#)

### Capture stormwater

- Install a [rain barrel](#) and capture stormwater at your residence to reduce runoff.

### Pack your trash

- Plastics and trash are entering the ocean at an alarming rate. Scientists estimate that there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish (by mass) in 2050. Always properly dispose of trash!

### Report water pollution concerns

- In unincorporated San Mateo County, call (888)-442-2666.
- Reference [this list](#) to report in a different municipality

### Tide pool etiquette

- Never take any plants, animals, or shells from the Reserve
- Do not pick up or overturn rocks in the tidepools
- Avoid stepping too deep in tide pools (ankle deep is too deep!)
- Always keep a safe distance from harbor seals

Simple actions to prevent pollution from your neighborhood

