

# FITZGERALD MARINE RESERVE 2024 SAN MATEO COUNTY POLLUTION PREVENTION UPDATE



Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is a cherished treasure in San Mateo County. It offers a vibrant habitat for marine life, allowing our community to appreciate the diverse array of species and the stunning beauty of the coastline. A trip to the Reserve's tide pools can unveil a fascinating assortment of creatures, including anemones, sea stars, urchins, hermit crabs, harbor seals, and much more. The Reserve boasts one of the most biodiverse intertidal zones in California, hosting numerous rare and unique species, such as the sea lemon nudibranch, the ochre sea star, and the impressive gumboot chiton, which is recognized as the largest chiton in the world!

The Reserve has been designated a Marine Protected Area and recognized as an Area of Special Biological Significance in California. This designation aims to preserve the unique ecosystem and safeguard wildlife habitats while tackling pollution to enhance water quality.

San Mateo County emphasizes ongoing protective measures, including community education and infrastructure improvements like vegetative buffer zones. Residents can help by reducing fertilizer and pesticide use, participating in local clean-ups, and properly disposing of hazardous waste to ensure the Reserve's ecological health for future generations.



Ochre Sea Star



Sea Lemon Nudibranch



Gumboot Chiton



## POLLUTION PREVENTION

The County is diligently focused on safeguarding water quality within the Reserve watershed. We undertake numerous behind-the-scenes efforts aimed at this crucial goal. The Department of Public Works (DPW) and County Parks conduct regular operations designed to reduce pollutant contributions from the watershed. Additionally, various departments participate in water quality sampling and inspections to ensure the health of our water resources.

### Regional Collaboration

- The County collaborates with the San Mateo Countywide Pollution Prevention Program (SMCWPPP), which is essential to the County's pollution prevention initiatives. SMCWPPP organizes public outreach events and ensures that County staff receive ongoing training and updates on pollution prevention practices. For more information, visit the [Flows to Bay website](#).



## WATERSHED & LOCATION

Located in Moss Beach, ~7 miles north of HMB, the Reserve spans a 5 mile stretch of shoreline down the California Coast

The Reserve receives fresh water from 3 different Creeks:

- San Vicente Creek
- Montara Creek
- Dean Creek

[EXPLORE DIGITAL MAP](#)



### Operations and Maintenance Activities

- DPW has increased the frequency of street sweeping and catch basin cleaning in the neighborhoods surrounding the Reserve. These efforts help eliminate sediment and debris before they can be carried away by stormwater.
- DPW and County Parks oversee the maintenance of structural best management practices within the Reserve's watershed. These structures are designed to capture and treat stormwater runoff, enhancing water quality downstream, and require regular upkeep to function effectively.



## POLLUTION PREVENTION ROLE



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



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



## 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.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

Small actions can lead to big outcomes when it comes to protecting our waterways. Here are a few ways to help reduce stormwater pollution in the watershed:

### **Scoop Pet Waste**

- Pet waste can harbor harmful bacteria that can affect both humans and marine life, it can enter our waterways and harm the environment. Do your part to stop pollution by remembering to bag & trash pet waste.
- Pledge to '[Scoop the Poop](#)' here!

### **Capture Stormwater**

- Install a rain barrel at home to collect stormwater. This water can be used to water plants and for other household project. Learn more at [Flows to Bay](#).

### **Properly Dispose of Trash**

- The amount of plastics and waste entering the ocean is staggering. Scientists predict that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, by weight. Always dispose of your trash correctly!

### **Report Water Pollution**

- If you see water pollution in unincorporated San Mateo County, call (888)-442-2666.
- Consult [this list](#) for reporting in other municipalities.

### **Tide Pool Etiquette**

- Never take plants, animals, or shells from the tide pools.
- Avoid picking up or overturning rocks in tide pools.
- Stay out of tide pools deeper than ankle depth.
- Respect and observe Reserve warnings, such as keeping safe distance from harbor seals.



Bag & Trash Pet Waste



Capture Stormwater



Pickup Trash



Report Water Pollution



Respect Wildlife

