Central Coast Hydrologic Region

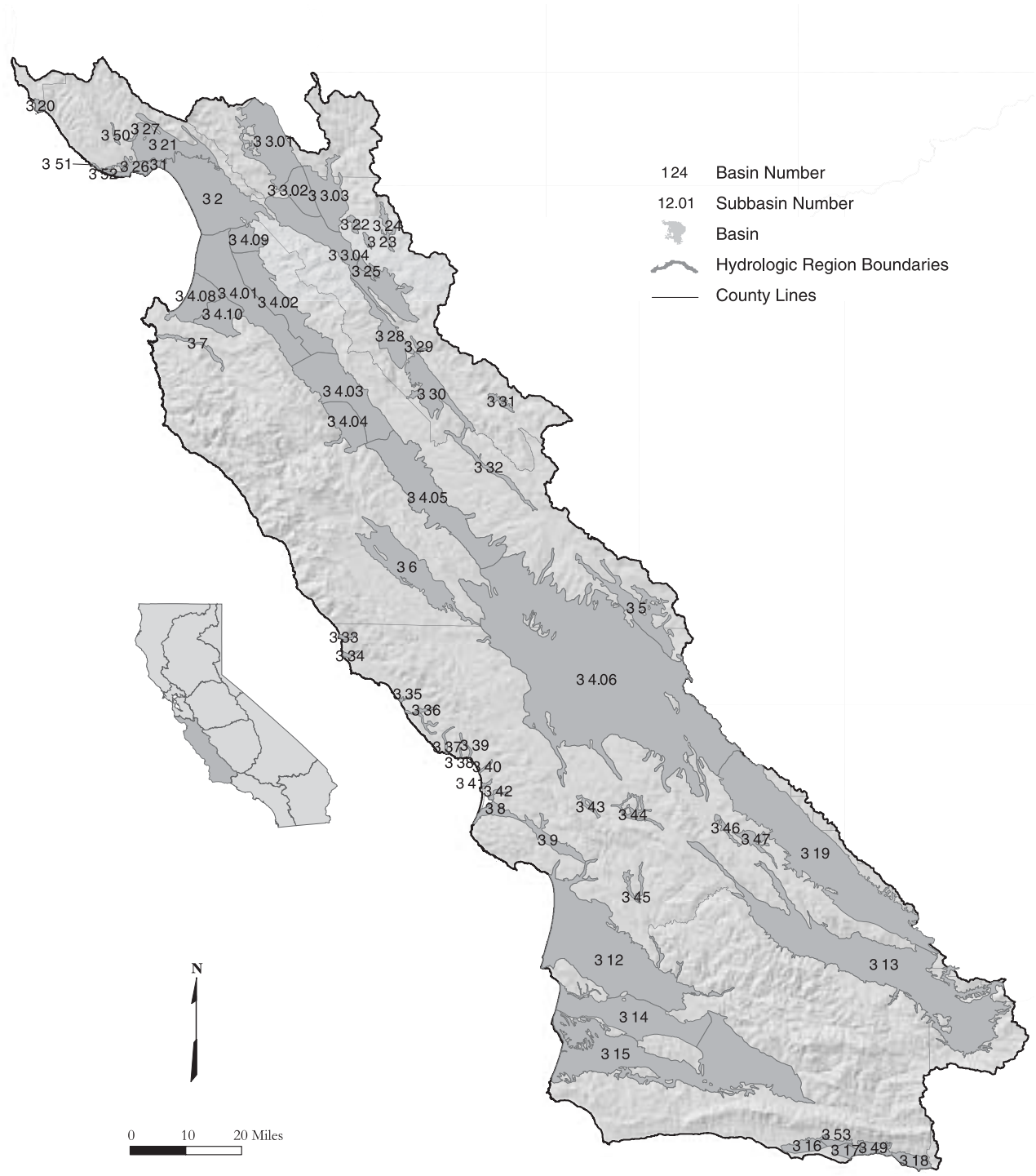

Figure 29 Central Coast Hydrologic Region

Basins and Subbasins of Central Coast Hydrologic Region

RegionBasin/ subbasin	Basin name
3-1	Soquel Valley
3-2	Pajaro Valley
3-3	Gilroy-Hollister Valley
3-3.01	Llagas Area
3-3.02	Bolsa Area
3-3.03	Hollister Area
3-3.04	San Juan Bautista Area
3-4	Salinas Valley
3-4.01	180/400 Foot Aquifer
3-4.02	East Side Aquifer
3-4.04	Forebay Aquifer
3-4.05	Upper Valley Aquifer
3-4.06	Paso Robles Area
3-4.08	Seaside Area
3-4.09	Langley Area
3-4.10	Corral de Tierra Area
3-5	Cholame Valley
3-6	Lockwood Valley
3-7	Carmel Valley
3-8	Los Osos Valley
3-9	San Luis Obispo Valley
3-12	Santa Maria River Valley
3-13	Cuyama Valley
3-14	San Antonio Creek Valley
3-15	Santa Ynez River Valley
3-16	Goleta
3-17	Santa Barbara
3-18	Carpinteria
3-19	Carrizo Plain
3-20	Ano Nuevo Area
3-21	Santa Cruz Purisima Formation
3-22	Santa Ana Valley
3-23	Upper Santa Ana Valley
3-24	Quien Sabe Valley
3-25	Tres Pinos Valley
3-26	West Santa Cruz Terrace
3-27	Scotts Valley
3-28	San Benito River Valley
3-29	Dry Lake Valley
3-30	Bitter Water Valley
3-31	Hernandez Valley
3-32	Peach Tree Valley
3-33	San Carpoforo Valley
3-34	Arroyo de la Cruz Valley
3-35	San Simeon Valley
3-36	Santa Rosa Valley
3-37	Villa Valley
3-38	Cayucos Valley
3-39	Old Valley
3-40	Toro Valley
3-41	Morro Valley
3-42	Chorro Valley
3-43	Rinconada Valley
3-44	Pozo Valley
3-45	Huasna Valley
3-46	Rafael Valley
3-47	Big Spring Area
3-49	Montecito
3-50	Felton Area
3-51	Majors Creek
3-52	Needle Rock Point
3-53	Foothill

Description of the Region

The Central Coast HR covers approximately 7.22 million acres (11,300 square miles) in central California (Figure 29). This HR includes all of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties, most of San Benito County, and parts of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura counties. Significant geographic features include the Pajaro, Salinas, Carmel, Santa Maria, Santa Ynez, and Cuyama valleys; the coastal plain of Santa Barbara; and the Coast Range. Major drainages in the region include the Salinas, Cuyama, Santa Ynez, Santa Maria, San Antonio, San Lorenzo, San Benito, Pajaro, Nacimiento, Carmel, and Big Sur Rivers.

Population data from the 2000 Census suggest that about 1.4 million people or about 4 percent of the population of the State live in this HR. Major population centers include Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo, Gilroy, Hollister, Morgan Hill, Salinas, and Monterey.

The Central Coast HR has 50 delineated groundwater basins. Within this region, the Gilroy-Hollister Valley and Salinas Valley groundwater basins are divided into four and eight subbasins, respectively. Groundwater basins in this HR underlie about 2.390 million acres (3,740 square miles) or about one-third of the HR.

Groundwater Development

Locally, groundwater is an extremely important source of water supply. Within the region, groundwater accounted for 83 percent of the annual supply used for agricultural and urban purposes in 1995. For an average year, groundwater in the region accounts for about 8.4 percent of the statewide groundwater supply and about 1.3 percent of the total state water supply for agricultural and urban needs. In drought years, groundwater in this region is expected to account for about 7.2 percent of the statewide groundwater supply and about 1.9 percent of the total State water supply for agricultural and urban needs (DWR 1998).

Aquifers are varied and range from large extensive alluvial valleys with thick multilayered aquifers and aquitards to small inland valleys and coastal terraces. Several of the larger basins provide a dependable and drought-resistant water supply to coastal cities and farms.

Conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater is a long-standing practice in the region. Several reservoirs including Hernandez, Twitchell, Lake San Antonio, and Lake Nacimiento are operated primarily for the purpose of groundwater recharge. The concept is to maintain streamflow over a longer period than would occur without surface water storage and thus provide for increased recharge of groundwater. Seawater intrusion is a major problem throughout much of the region. In the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, seawater intrusion was first documented in the 1930s and has been observed more than 5 miles inland.

Groundwater Quality

Much of the groundwater in the region is characterized by calcium sulfate to calcium sodium bicarbonate sulfate water types because of marine sedimentary rock in the watersheds. Aquifers intruded by seawater are typically characterized by sodium chloride to calcium chloride, and have chloride concentrations greater than 500 mg/L. In several areas, groundwater exceeds the MCL for nitrate.

Water Quality in Public Supply Wells

From 1994 through 2000, 711 public supply water wells were sampled in 38 of the 60 basins and subbasins in the Central Coast HR. Analyzed samples indicate that 587 wells, or 83 percent, met the state primary MCLs for drinking water. One-hundred-twenty-four wells, or 17 percent, have constituents that exceed one or more MCL. Figure 30 shows the percentages of each contaminant group that exceeded MCLs in the 124 wells.

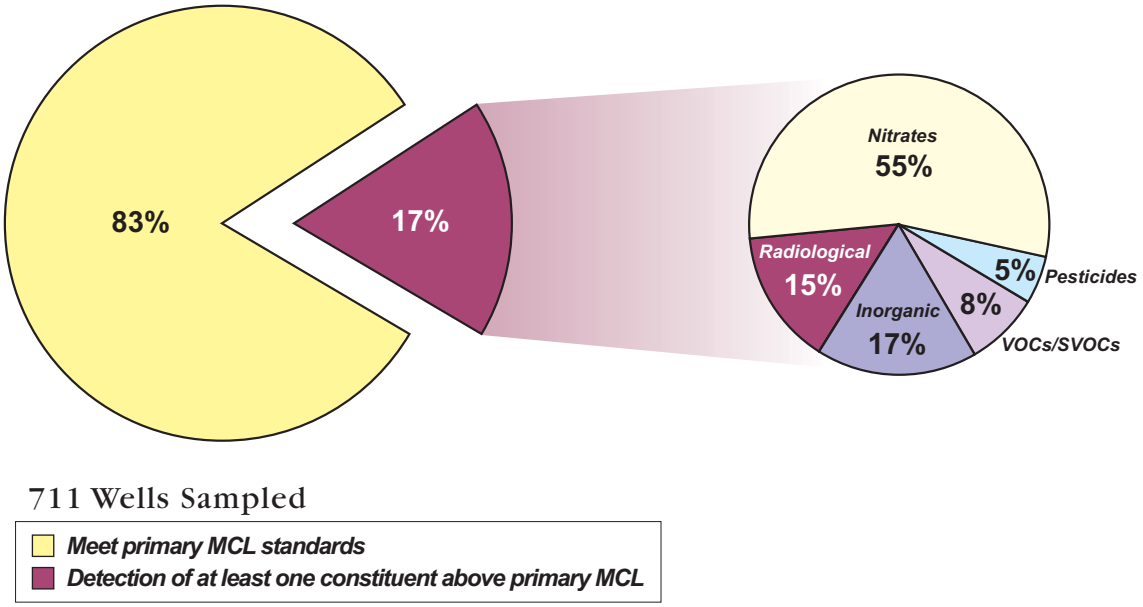

Figure 30 MCL exceedances in public supply wells in the Central Coast Hydrologic Region

Table 19 lists the three most frequently occurring contaminants in each of the six contaminant groups and shows the number of wells in the HR that exceeded the MCL for those contaminants.

Table 19 Most frequently occurring contaminants by contaminant group in the Central Coast Hydrologic Region

Contaminant group	Contaminant - # of wells	Contaminant - # of wells	Contaminant - # of wells
Inorganics – Primary	Antimony – 6	Aluminum – 4	Chromium (Total) – 4
Inorganics – Secondary	Iron – 145	Manganese – 135	TDS – 11
Radiological	Gross Alpha – 15	Radium 226 – 3	Uranium – 3
Nitrates	Nitrate (as NO_3) – 69	Nitrate + Nitrite – 24	
Pesticides	Heptachlor – 4	Di (2-Ethylhexyl) phthalate – 2	
VOCs/SVOCs	TCE – 3	3 are tied at 2 exceedances	

TCE = Trichloroethylene
VOC = Volatile Organic Compound
SVOC= Semivolatile Organic Compound

Changes from Bulletin 118-80

Four new basins have been defined since Bulletin 118-80. They are Felton Area, Majors Creek, Needle Rock Point, and Foothill groundwater basins. Additionally, new subbasins have been broken out in both the Gilroy-Hollister Valley Groundwater Basin (3-3) and the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (3-4) (Table 20).

Table 20 Modifications since Bulletin 118-80 of groundwater basins and subbasins in Central Coast Hydrologic Region

Subbasin name	New number	Old number
Llagas Area	3-3.01	3-3
Bolsa Area	3-3.02	3-3
Hollister Area	3-3.03	3-3
San Juan Bautista Area	3-3.04	3-3
180/400 Foot Aquifer	3-4.01	3-4
East Side Aquifer	3-4.02	3-4
Upper Forebay Aquifer	3-4.04	3-4
Upper Valley Aquifer	3-4.05	3-4
Pismo Creek Valley Basin	3-12	3-10
Arroyo Grande Creek Basin	3-12	3-11
Careaga Sand Highlands Basin	3-12 and 3-14	3-48
Felton Area	3-50	
Majors Creek	3-51	
Needle Rock Point	3-52	
Foothill	3-53	

Pismo Creek Valley Basin (3-10) and Arroyo Grande Creek Basin (3-11) have been merged into the Santa Maria River Valley Basin (3-12). Careaga Sand Highlands Basin (3-48) has been merged into the Santa Maria River Valley Basin (3-12) and San Antonio Creek Valley Basin (3-14).

Table 21 Central Coast Hydrologic Region groundwater data

Basin/Subbasin	Basin Name	Area (acres)	Groundwater Budget Type	Well Yields (gpm)		Types of Monitoring			TDS (mg/L)	
				Maximum	Average	Levels	Quality	Title 22	Average	Range
3-1	SOQUEL VALLEY	2,500	C	1,421	665	6	6	16	482	270-990
3-2	PAJARO VALLEY	76,800	A	2,000	500	185	185	149	580-910	300-30,000
3-3	GILROY-HOLLISTER VALLEY									
3-3.01	LLAGAS AREA	55,600	C	-	-	-	-	95	-	-
3-3.02	BOLSA AREA	21,000	A	-	400	11	<11	3	-	400-1800
3-3.03	HOLLISTER AREA	32,700	A	-	400	42	<42	35	-	400-1600
3-3.04	SAN JUAN BAUTISTA AREA	74,300	A	-	400	37	<37	40	-	460-1700
3-4	SALINAS VALLEY									
3-4.01	180/400 FOOT AQUIFER	84,400	A	-	-	166	218	82	478	223-1,013
3-4.02	EAST SIDE AQUIFER	57,500	A	-	-	74	67	53	450	168-977
3-4.04	FOREBAY AQUIFER	94,100	A	-	-	89	91	35	624	300-1,100
3-4.05	UPPER VALLEY AQUIFER	98,200	A	4,000	-	36	37	17	443	140-3,700
3-4.06	PASO ROBLES AREA	597,000	A	3,300	-	183	-	58	614	165-3,868
3-4.08	SEASIDE AREA	25,900	B	3,500	1,000		7	24	400	200-900
3-4.09	LANGLEY AREA	15,400	B	1,570	450	-	-	52	-	52-348
3-4.10	CORRAL DE TIERRA AREA	22,300	C	948	450	-	3	26	-	355-679
3-5	CHOLAME VALLEY	39,800	C	3,000	1,000	1	-	1	-	-
3-6	LOCKWOOD VALLEY	59,900	C	1,500	100	-	-	9	-	-
3-7	CARMEL VALLEY	5,160	C	1,000	600	50	23	12	260-670	220-1,200
3-8	LOS OSOS VALLEY	6,990	A	700	230	-	-	10	354	78-33,700
3-9	SAN LUIS OBISPO VALLEY	12,700	A	600	300	-	-	11	583	278-1,949
3-12	SANTA MARIA RIVER VALLEY	184,000	A	2,500	1,000	286	10	108	598	139-1,200
3-13	CUYAMA VALLEY	147,000	A	4,400	1,100	17	2	8	-	206-3,905
3-14	SAN ANTONIO CREEK VALLEY	81,800	A	-	400	30	-	9	415	129-8,040
3-15	SANTA YNEZ RIVER VALLEY	204,000	A	1,300	750	163	21	76	507	400-700
3-16	GOLETA	9,210	A	800	500	49	11	17	755	617-929
3-17	SANTA BARBARA	6,160	A	625	560	75	36	5	-	217-385
3-18	CARPINTERIA	8,120	A	500	300	41	41	4	557	317-1,780
3-19	CARRIZO PLAIN	173,000	C	1,000	500	-	-	1	-	-
3-20	ANO NUEVO AREA	2,032	C	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
3-21	SANTA CRUZ PURISIMA FORMATION	40,200	C	200	20	-	-	39	440	380-560
3-22	SANTA ANA VALLEY	2,720	C	130	-	-	-	-	-	-
3-23	UPPER SANTA ANA VALLEY	1,430	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3-24	QUIEN SABE VALLEY	4,710	C	122	122	-	-	-	-	-
3-25	TRES PINOS VALLEY	3,390	C	1,225	-	-	-	3	-	-
3-26	WEST SANTA CRUZ TERRACE	7,870	C	550	200	-	-	7	480	378-684
3-27	SCOTTS VALLEY	774	C	410	100-900	26	7	7	360	100-980
3-28	SAN BENITO RIVER VALLEY	24,200	C	2,000	-	-	-	3	-	-
3-29	DRY LAKE VALLEY	1,420	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3-30	BITTER WATER VALLEY	32,200	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3-31	HERNANDEZ VALLEY	2,860	C	160	58	-	-	-	-	-

Table 21 Central Coast Hydrologic Region groundwater data (continued)

Basin/Subbasin	Basin Name	Area (acres)	Groundwater Budget Type	Well Yields (gpm)		Types of Monitoring			TDS (mg/L)	
				Maximum	Average	Levels	Quality	Title 22	Average	Range
3-32	PEACH TREE VALLEY	9,790	C	117	84	-	-	-	-	-
3-33	SAN CARPOFORO VALLEY	200	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	217-385
3-34	ARROYO DE LA CRUZ VALLEY	750	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	211-381
3-35	SAN SIMEON VALLEY	620	A	170	100	-	-	4	413	46-2,210
3-36	SANTA ROSA VALLEY	4,480	A	708	400	-	-	2	-	298-2,637
3-37	VILLA VALLEY	980	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	260-1,635
3-38	CAYUCOS VALLEY	530	C	166	100	-	-	-	-	815-916
3-39	OLD VALLEY	750	C	335	200	-	-	-	-	346-2,462
3-40	TORO VALLEY	721	C	500	0	-	-	-	-	458-732
3-41	MORRO VALLEY	1,200	C	442	300	-	-	6	1150	469-5,100
3-42	CHORRO VALLEY	3,200	C	700	200	-	-	6	656	60-3,606
3-43	RINCONADA VALLEY	2,580	C	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
3-44	POZO VALLEY	6,840	C	230	100	-	-	5	-	287-676
3-45	HUASNA VALLEY	4,700	C	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
3-46	RAFAEL VALLEY	2,990	C	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
3-47	BIG SPRING AREA	7,320	C	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
3-49	MONTECITO	6,270	A	1,000	750	88	2	4	700	600-1,100
3-50	FELTON AREA	1,160	C	825	244	6	-	2	-	69-400
3-51	MAJORS CREEK	364	C	50	38	-	-	-	-	-
3-52	NEEDLE ROCK POINT	480	C	450	320	-	-	-	-	-
3-53	FOOTHILL	3,120	A	-	-	-	8	7	828	554-1,118

gpm - gallons per minute
mg/L - milligram per liter
TDS -total dissolved solids