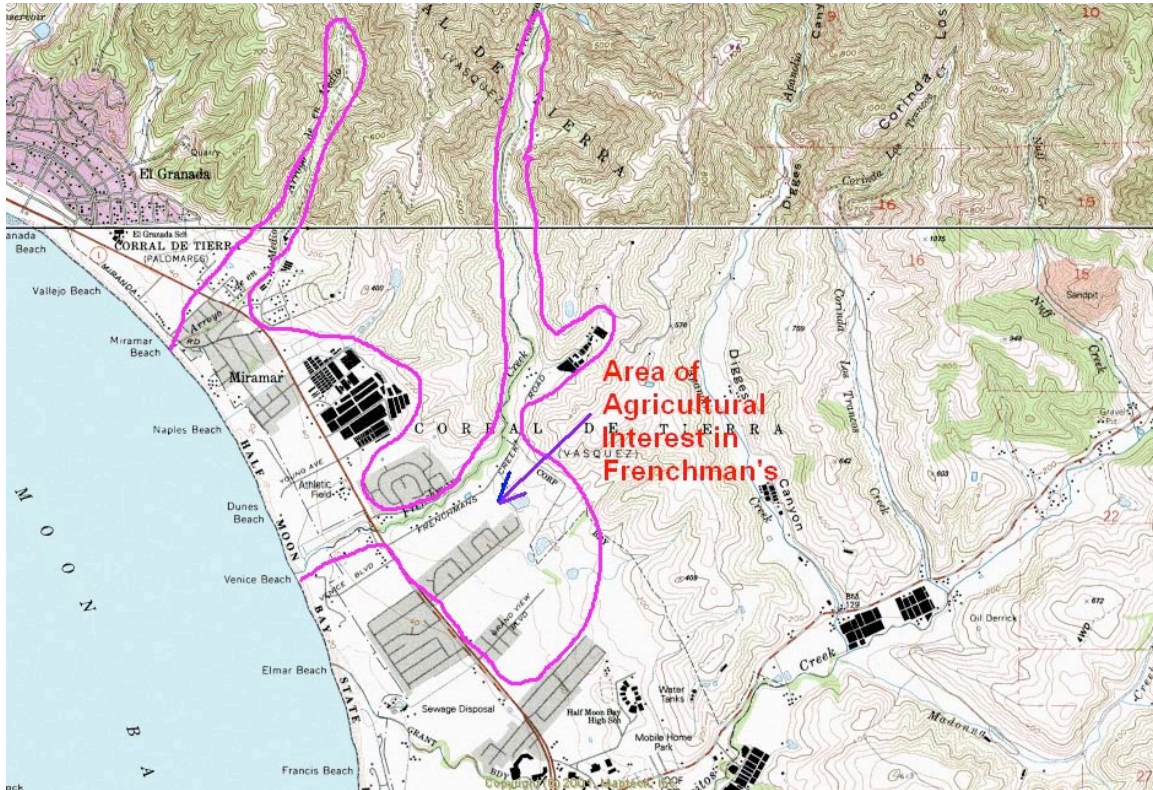


Frenchman's Creek Watershed Working Group San Mateo County

Annual Watershed Report

January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005



Watershed-Level Summary Statistics	
Name of Watershed	Frenchman's Creek
Square miles of land the watershed drains	6
Total acreage of watershed	4079
Total agricultural acreage in watershed	260
Rangeland acres	-
Row crop acres / greenhouses	260
Percent watershed land use in ag production	6%
Number of ag operations in watershed	8
Number of ag operations in Program	7
Percent participation (by operation)	87%
Acres of ag in program	250
Percent participation (by acreage)	96%
# of operations through short course	2
# of operations with completed farm plan	2

Note; Source of watershed acreage is UC Ag Extension Service report dated Jan 1956. Agricultural acreage shown is based on an estimate of this year's production.

Location of Watershed:

The Frenchman's Creek Watershed is located in the central portion of coastal San Mateo County approximately 18 miles south of San Francisco. The watershed is comprised of Frenchman's Creek and its tributary Locke's Creek. This "watershed" for purposes of the Watershed Group, includes the Arroyo de en Medio, a stand alone drainage/creek which lies to the North of the Frenchman's drainage. The Frenchman's Creek empties into the Pacific Ocean at Venice State Beach (part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary). The creek flows through unincorporated areas in the upper watershed and through incorporated City of Half Moon Bay in the lower reaches.

The Frenchman's Creek Watershed is a part of the USGS Cataloging Unit Basin Name; San Francisco Coastal South. The Hydrologic Area Name is San Mateo Coastal. Its Calwater Unit number is 202.210. This watershed is a part of Region 2 of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Description of Watershed:

The Frenchman's Creek watershed (for purposes of this watershed group) includes two distinct drainages, Frenchman's Creek and Arroyo de en Medio. Elevations rise from sea level at the mouth to 1500 feet at the headwaters. The natural plants community types found in the watershed range from coastal strand vegetation near the Pacific Ocean, to Coastal Shrub/Chaparral in the upper watershed. Most of the upland areas of the watershed area are a mosaic of grassland and chaparral typical of the western slope of the Coast Range which includes chamise, coyote brush, manzanita, poison oak and annual Mediterranean grasses. The riparian forest found along the creek corridor is a mix of alders and a variety of willow species. Invasive Eucalyptus, Scotch and French Broom and German Ivy are invader plants seen in the very lower reaches of the creek corridor. The watershed is characterized by steep slopes and canyons in the upper reaches and near level bottomlands. Lands adjacent to the lower reaches have historically been used for agriculture. In recent history, much of the agricultural land in the lower watershed has been converted to urban uses.

The Frenchman's Creek watershed provides habitat for a diverse population of wildlife, including rare, threatened and endangered species such as the red-legged frog, the San Francisco garter snake, snowy plover, the tidewater goby, and the steelhead trout.

The watershed is currently not listed as impaired under Sections 303(D) for impaired water bodies. However, because of human health concerns at the State Beach (mouth of the creek), e coli bacteria is a recognized contaminant in some reaches of the creek.

Precipitation within the watershed areas range from approximately twenty-six inches annually on the coast to 42 inches in the upper reaches. Approximately eighty percent of the total precipitation occurs between November and March.

Ownership of land includes a mosaic of publicly owned land (California State Parks) and privately owned property.

Principal land uses include recreational open space (State Parks - Beach), recreational uses (equestrian rentals), urban areas (City of Half Moon Bay), undisturbed upland slopes and irrigated agriculture.

Agricultural uses are dominated by Floriculture activities, both field flowers and Green House activities.

Watershed Working Group

The Frenchman's Creek Watershed Working Group (WWG) was established in July 2003. At that time, By-Laws were created and adopted and a Mission Statement was agreed upon.

Meetings are held at the Farm Bureau in Half Moon Bay. Dates and times are announced by notice mailed to all cooperators and all growers in the watershed.

This watershed group meets as needed to address local issues or to be updated on continuing efforts.

At this time, a total of 4 cooperators have signed "Notice of Intent" to participate with the working group. This total includes agricultural landowners, managers and operators.

Two of the cooperators have attended the Cooperative Extension Short Course (one in 2001 and one in 2004) and have completed their Farm Plan and Self Assessments.

This year, outreach activities have resulted in participation by a majority of the landowners (absentee) and tenant farmers who own or farm in this watershed area at periodic WWG meetings. It is hoped that their participation will continue. One operation has not yet commenced participation.

Watershed Projects:

1. The WWG is currently working in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service seeking ways to increase summer flows in the Frenchman's Creek. To that end, the WWG has taken a strong stand encouraging the agencies involved with sewer treatment on the coast to look into tertiary treatment of the sewer effluent as a possible substitute source of irrigation water in this watershed.
2. The WWG has actively participated with San Mateo Co. Dept. of Environmental Health on an ongoing effort to monitor and remediate sources of e coli contamination in the watershed.
3. This WWG has worked with Calif. Dept of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries and the San Mateo Co. RCD on in stream fish migration barrier removal projects over the past year.
4. Cover Crop Demonstration Projects
 - a. Two projects (multiple sites) –sponsored thru the FB
5. One of the conventional growers participated with the Nutrient and Irrigation portions of the "Ag Mobile Lab" grant which conducts field work with the growers regarding irrigation efficiency and nutrient management and tracking throughout the growing season.

Conservation Practices currently in use:

1. cover crops are utilized by field flower growers this past winter.
2. crop rotation leaving some fields fallow in rotation
3. Green house operations utilize drip irrigation and tail water recycling to reduce runoff and conserve water
4. Riparian corridors are left intact

All of the cooperators are regularly inspected by the County Ag Commissioner's office for proper storage and application of chemical products (pesticides or herbicides).

Summary of Accomplishments

- This year, the WWG has remained engaged with a variety of local, state and federal agencies on a variety of issues including; alternative water sources, bacteria in the creek and endangered species concerns.

Summary of Annual Goals which had been set in 2004 and activities accomplished during 2005 to achieve those goals:

- Outreach to agricultural land owners, operators and managers in watershed to achieve 100% participation.
 - *Continued outreach has resulted in nearly all of the absentee landowners and tenant farmers participation with this WWG. Additional outreach is needed to achieve 100% participation.*
- Participate in Cooperative Extension Short Course on Agricultural Non Point Source Pollution.
 - *A scheduled Short Course in Half Moon Bay has been scheduled for June 2006*
- Assist individual cooperators in development of "Self Assessments" for Agricultural Non Point Source Pollution and "Farm Action Plans".
 - *Ongoing*
- Report to San Mateo Co. Farm Bureau number of cooperators, area covered by cooperators, number of "Self Assessments" and "Farm Action Plans"
 - *Annually*
- Seek funding to assist in the implementation of beneficial conservation practices

- Farmers in this watershed are participating in grants which help with the costs associated with conservation practices; Cover Crop Program and Mobile Lab Program
- Continue to work cooperatively with the ongoing “e coli” project underway in the watershed
 1. *Over the past two years, San Mateo Co. conducted weekly coliform/e coli monitoring through out the watershed on sites facilitated by the WWG. This weekly monitoring program has been completed. No persistent coliform problems were identified in the reach of agricultural interest. The WWG will continue to work with the County on premeditating noted sources.*
- Conduct Base Line water quality monitoring in Frenchman’s Creek
 - *Planned to commence year 2006 in cooperation with NRCS*

Watershed-Specific Challenges

- Portions of the Frenchman’s Creek WWG lie within the City limits of Half Moon Bay in highly urbanized areas. Conversion of agricultural lands to other land uses is a challenge for the WWG. Late in 2005, a large portion of the irrigated agricultural ground in this watershed was sold and has been converted to irrigated pasture for a horse breeding facility. The loss of production ground will be reflected in the year 2006 summary
- Water supply for irrigation will continue to be a big challenge. Participation in water conservation practices, investigation into recycled water and use of tertiary treated water will offer challenges and opportunities.
- Follow up on the recently completed coliform studies will be a continuing challenge for this watershed.