Glossary and Acronyms

Many terms are explained in the Guide to the Data Layers (pages 7-11) and the County Overview (pages 13-28). Additional terms used throughout the Atlas are described here.

Alluvial: Relating to deposits made by flowing water. An alluvial fan is a geologic feature characterized be a fan shaped, flat/gently sloping area below a steep drainage and composed of rocks and other materials deposited by that drainage.

Anadromous: Describes fish that live in the ocean and return to fresh water to spawn.

Concrete Channel: See Page 11.

Constructed Earth Channel: See Page 11.

DEM (Digital Elevation Model): See Page 7.

Drop Structure: A drop structure is a constructed feature designed to dissipate the energy of a stream in a controlled manner to prevent undesirable erosion. Drop structures can take the form of a long slough with a drop or "waterfall" and constructed pool at the downstream end. It can also be just be a drop without other elements.

GIS: Geographic Information System is a general term used to describe a type of database. It may be colloquially explained as a computerized mapping system. GIS and related software are designed to store, manipulate and analyze geographic data. There are different types of software that can be used. The most common way to view GIS data is in map form.

GPS: Geographic Positioning System is a term used to describe the network of orbiting satellites that provide time and positional information. Historically, 24 satellites operated by the U.S. Department of Defense have been available to communicate with GPS units.

GPS Unit: The GPS unit is a device that receives signals from satellites and can use the signals to determine coordinates on Earth (latitude, longitude and altitude).

Hydrograph: A chart that plots the rate of water runoff against time. Additional information is provided on Page 24.

Hydrology: The science of the properties, distribution and impact of water.

Invasive plants: Plant species that crowd out other plant species. Invasive plants often spread rapidly and can dramatically change the ecosystem and habitat. Frequently, invasive plants are not native to the area and therefore thrive due to a lack of predators.

Natural Channel: See Page 11.

Orographic Rain: Refers to precipitation that occurs as a result of moist air traveling over increased elevation and cooler temperatures. As moist air rises on the windward side of a mountain, it cools. If the temperature drops to the dew point, condensation occurs, clouds form, and moisture is released.

Orthographic: Is used in the Atlas to qualify the aerial photographs (also called ortho-photos). It refers to the adjustment of photos to correct for the curvature of the earth. Both the color and the black and white photos used in this publication were orthographically corrected.

Parcel: Units of land that may be bought and sold.

Perennial: Used in the Atlas to refer to the type of water flow in a creek. A perennial creek normally flows year round. Most small creeks in Contra Costa County are seasonal, and have consistent flow only in the rainy season.

Projection: A mathematical model that transforms the locations of features on the earth's curved surface to locations on a two-dimensional surface. It can be visualized as a transparent globe with a light bulb at its center casting lines of latitude and longitude onto a sheet of paper. Every map projection distorts distance, area, shape, direction, or some combination thereof. All maps in this Atlas are projected using NAD 83 California State Plane III, Feet.

Rainshadow Effect: The phenomenon of more rain falling on the windward side of a hill or mountain and less falling on the leeward side. The leeward side is in the rainshadow.

Rancho: Ranch. A Large farm that includes grazing for livestock.

Raster: A GIS data structure that represents geographic features with a grid: rows and columns of square cells. Each cell contains an attribute value and location coordinates.

Riparian: Refers to the riverside environment. Riparian areas provide a link between the aquatic and terrestrial habitats and often have distinctly different vegetation than adjacent areas.

Riprap: See page 11.

Runoff: Water that is not absorbed into the ground and flows overland to a drainage.

Shapefile: A file format used to store geographic and attribute data in a Geographic Information System (GIS).

Sphere of Influence: See Page 15.

Substrate: Describes the material that composes the streambed (e.g. sand, gravel, cobble).

TIN (Triangulated Irregular Network): A technique for representing topography in a GIS. The land surface is represented with a series of contiguous, non-overlapping triangles. The vertices of each triangle are data points with x, y, and z values; elevation values at these points are interpolated to create a continuous surface.

Topography: The graphic representation of the surface features of a region on a map, indicating their relative positions and elevations.

Underground Channel: See Page 11.

Urban Limit Line (ULL): See Page 15

Vector: A data structure that uses points. lines and polygons to represent geographic features. Attributes are associated with each feature (as opposed to a raster data structure, which associates attributes with grid cells).

Watershed: The simplest definition of a watershed is an area of land that drains precipitated waters to a given reference point, typically a confluence with another major creek or large water body.

Acronyms

ACOE - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CA DFG - California Department of Fish and Game
CCC - Contra Costa County
CCRCD - Contra Costa Resource Conservation District
CCWD - Contra Costa Water District
CCWF - Contra Costa Watershed Forum
CEMAR - Center for Ecosystem Management and Research
EBMUD - East Bay Municipal Utility District
EBRPD - East Bay Regional Park District
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency
HCP – East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan
MHLT – Muir Heritage Land Trust
SWRQCB – State Water Resources Quality Control Board
U.S. EPA - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
UCC – Urban Creeks Council
USGS - U.S. Geological Survey

Watershed Size in Acres

93,556	Walnut Creek
60,066	Marsh Creek
56,223	East County Delta Drainages
32,915	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
27,640	San Pablo Creek
26,390	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
24,422	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
23,846	Mount Diablo Creek
20,863	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
18,525	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
17,238	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
16,063	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
13,059	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
11,021	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
10,735	Alhambra Creek
10,132	Kirker Creek
9,705	Pinole Creek
8,357	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
8,182	West Antioch Creek
7,261	East Antioch Creek
6,848	Wildcat Creek
6,657	Rodeo Creek
6,575	Carquinez Area Drainages
5,530	Baxter Creek
4,976	West Richmond Drainages
4,395	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
3,914	Peyton Slough
3,850	Garrity Creek
3,116	Refugio Creek
1,790	Rheem Creek
1,322	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)

Total Channel Length Within Watershed in Miles

309.75	Walnut Creek
167.18	Marsh Creek
136.73	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
108.60	San Pablo Creek
100.99	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
79.95	Mount Diablo Creek
67.64	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
64.10	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
59.96	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
53.81	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
48.08	Alhambra Creek
46.64	Pinole Creek
45.94	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
44.78	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
43.65	Kirker Creek
31.64	Rodeo Creek
26.95	Carquinez Area Drainages
26.53	West Antioch Creek
26.24	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
25.41	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
22.22	Wildcat Creek
14.44	Baxter Creek
14.14	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
9.17	Refugio Creek
8.70	East Antioch Creek
8.11	Peyton Slough
5.82	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
4.10	Garrity Creek
3.36	Rheem Creek
1,350	Countywide

Miles of Underground Channel (not including storm drains)

36.05	Walnut Creek
20.14	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
9.93	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
8.15	Baxter Creek
7.80	San Pablo Creek
7.49	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
7.30	Kirker Creek
6.70	Mount Diablo Creek
5.35	West Antioch Creek
4.61	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
4.56	Carquinez Area Drainages
4.32	Alhambra Creek
3.26	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
3.16	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
3.12	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
2.67	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
1.93	Pinole Creek
1.39	Peyton Slough
1.36	Marsh Creek
1.33	Refugio Creek
1.24	Garrity Creek
1.14	East Antioch Creek
1.07	Rheem Creek
0.88	Rodeo Creek
0.52	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
0.28	Wildcat Creek
0.14	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
0.12	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
0.00	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
112.56	Countywide

Length of Longest Branch of Creek in Miles

34.57	Marsh Creek
28.74	Walnut Creek
25.34	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
19.65	San Pablo Creek
18.89	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
17.24	Mount Diablo Creek
13.43	Wildcat Creek
12.65	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
12.46	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
12.37	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
10.95	Pinole Creek
10.27	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
9.43	Kirker Creek
8.87	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
8.35	Rodeo Creek
7.99	Alhambra Creek
7.87	East Antioch Creek
6.24	West Antioch Creek
6.16	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
4.76	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
4.67	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
4.52	Refugio Creek
3.67	Garrity Creek
3.64	Peyton Slough
3.44	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
3.36	Rheem Creek
2.87	Baxter Creek
2.86	Carquinez Area Drainages
2.44	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)

Average Annual Rainfall in Inches

28	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
27	San Pablo Creek
26	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
24	Wildcat Creek
23	Pinole Creek
22	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
22	Alhambra Creek
22	Baxter Creek
22	Rheem Creek
21	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
21	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
21	Rodeo Creek
21	Walnut Creek
20	West Richmond Drainages
20	Garrity Creek
20	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
20	Carquinez Area Drainages
19	Refugio Creek
19	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
18	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
18	Mount Diablo Creek
17	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
17	Peyton Slough
17	Marsh Creek
16	Kirker Creek
16	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
15	West Antioch Creek
14	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
13	East Antioch Creek
13	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
11	East County Delta Drainages
18	Countywide average

Estimated Mean Daily Flow at Mouth in cfs

81.4	Walnut Creek
32.1	San Pablo Creek
28.3	Marsh Creek
27.1	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
23.4	East County Delta Drainages
16.5	Mount Diablo Creek
15.4	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
14.8	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
11.2	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
10.6	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
10.4	Pinole Creek
8.2	Baxter Creek
7.9	Carquinez Area Drainages
7.7	Wildcat Creek
7.2	Alhambra Creek
7.0	Rodeo Creek
6.8	West Richmond Drainages
6.5	Kirker Creek
6.5	East Antioch Creek
5.4	Garrity Creek
5.2	West Antioch Creek
4.2	Refugio Creek
3.7	Peyton Slough

Estimated 100-Year Flood Flow in cfs

25,600	Walnut Creek (downstream of confluence w/ Grayson)
13,100	San Ramon Creek (near Rudgear Road)
10,000	Pine / Galindo Creek (at confluence with Walnut Creek)
5,740	Marsh Creek (above Marsh Creek Reservoir)
5,110	Alhambra Creek (at Escobar)
4,170	Pinole Creek (at mouth)
2,280	Wildcat Creek (at 23rd Street)
1,060	Rheem Creek (at BNSF railroad tracks)

Estimated Population by Watershed	
339,100	Walnut Creek
78,900	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
72,400	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
58,900	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
58,800	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
58,400	Baxter Creek
47,100	San Pablo Creek
46,000	East Antioch Creek
42,300	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
38,500	Marsh Creek
35,500	West Antioch Creek
35,100	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
33,100	East County Delta Drainages
29,900	West Richmond Drainages
24,400	Mount Diablo Creek
24,000	Wildcat Creek
23,900	Garrity Creek
22,900	Kirker Creek
18,300	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
15,700	Pinole Creek
15,400	Refugio Creek
14,800	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
14,200	Alhambra Creek
13,900	Rheem Creek
13,300	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
9,500	Peyton Slough
8,900	Rodeo Creek
5,100	Carquinez Area Drainages
1,400	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
900	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
100	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
948,816	Population of Contra Costa County

Estimated Percent Impervious	
65%	Baxter Creek
65%	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
60%	East Antioch Creek
60%	Garrity Creek
60%	West Richmond Drainages
<55%	Peyton Slough
50%	Refugio Creek
50%	Rheem Creek
45%	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
35%	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
35%	West Antioch Creek
30%	Kirker Creek
30%	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
30%	Walnut Creek
25%	Carquinez Area Drainages
25%	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
25%	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
20%	Mount Diablo Creek
20%	Rodeo Creek
20%	San Pablo Creek
20%	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
20%	Wildcat Creek
15%	Alhambra Creek
15%	Marsh Creek
15%	Pinole Creek
15%	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
10%	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
10%	East County Delta Drainages
5%	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
<5%	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
<5%	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
35%	Countywide average

Percent of Watershed on Urban Side of Urban Limit Line	
100.0%	East Antioch Creek
100.0%	Baxter Creek
100.0%	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
99.6%	West Richmond Drainages
98.3%	Refugio Creek
93.8%	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
90.6%	Garrity Creek
85.4%	Rheem Creek
79.4%	Peyton Slough
77.6%	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
75.5%	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
71.1%	Walnut Creek
68.0%	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
59.8%	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
55.4%	West Antioch Creek
47.9%	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
46.5%	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
44.5%	Kirker Creek
41.1%	San Pablo Creek
39.1%	Carquinez Area Drainages
37.3%	Rodeo Creek
33.2%	Wildcat Creek
30.9%	Mount Diablo Creek
29.5%	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
28.9%	Pinole Creek
28.3%	East County Delta Drainages
28.1%	Alhambra Creek
27.4%	Marsh Creek
8.0%	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
1.0%	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
0.0%	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
43.4%	Countywide ave. (not including tidal areas & Delta islands)

Percent of Watershed Planned for Parks and Open Space (including Public Watershed)	
71.6%	Kellogg Creek (CCC portion only)
67.0%	Wildcat Creek
56.9%	San Pablo Creek
52.4%	San Leandro / Moraga Creek (CCC portion only)
49.3%	Pinole Creek
47.6%	West Antioch Creek
40.8%	Pine / Galindo Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
37.8%	San Ramon Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
36.4%	Carquinez Area Drainages
36.2%	Mount Diablo Creek
33.3%	Marsh Creek
33.0%	Alhambra Creek
31.5%	Alamo/Tassajara Creek (CCC portion only)
30.6%	South San Ramon Creek (CCC portion only)
29.3%	Walnut Creek
28.7%	Refugio Creek
27.5%	Willow Creek and Coastal Drainages
24.4%	Peyton Slough
22.2%	Rheem Creek
22.0%	Las Trampas Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
19.3%	Grayson / Murderers Creek (tributary to Walnut Creek)
19.2%	Garrity Creek
19.0%	West Richmond Drainages
18.5%	Rodeo Creek
16.8%	Kirker Creek
13.1%	East Antioch Creek
9.8%	Baxter Creek
8.9%	Cerrito Creek (CCC portion only)
8.1%	Brushy Creek (CCC portion only)
6.3%	East County Delta Drainages
4.6%	Cayetano Creek (CCC portion only)
30.6%	Countywide average

303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies with Associated Pollutants of Concern (POC) (2002 SWRCB).

Waterbody Name	Pollutant/Stressor
San Pablo Reservoir	Mercury
Mt. Diablo Creek	Diazinon
Pinole Creek	Diazinon
Pine Creek	Diazinon
Rodeo Creek	Diazinon
San Pablo Creek	Diazinon
Wildcat Creek	Diazinon
Walnut Creek	Diazinon
Marsh Creek Reservoir	Mercury
Dunn Creek	Mercury & Metals
Marsh Creek- Dunn Creek to Reservoir	Metals
Marsh Creek- Reservoir to San Joaquin River	Mercury & Metals

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