

Jughandle Cove

AREA OF SPECIAL BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

LOW LEVEL OF HIGH THREAT DISCHARGE

Area of Special Biological Significance = Zero Pollution Discharge

In the 1970s, to preserve biologically unique and sensitive marine ecosystems for future generations, California designated 34 regions along the coast as Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). These areas support an unusual variety of aquatic life, and are important building blocks for a sustainable, resilient coastal environment and economy. Although the State Water Board's Ocean Plan prohibits all waste discharges into these areas, pollution continues to damage these important habitats.

With YOUR help, California Coastkeeper Alliance is working to ensure important marine ecosystems are protected from pollution.



Jug Handle State Reserve features a 2.5-mile self-guided nature trail called The Ecological Staircase which explores five wave-cut terraces formed by glacier, sea and tectonic activity that built the coast range. Plants on each terrace represent a more advanced stage in succession, indicating what the previous, next lower terrace may look like in 100,000 years. The lowest terrace consists of prairie; the second is covered with pines; the third supports a unique pygmy forest with knee-high trees possibly several decades old.

Jughandle Cove, located between Fort Bragg and Mendocino, is an ecological treasure. The 1.5 mile stretch of coastline at the mouth of Jughandle Creek includes Jughandle State Reserve, managed by the CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation, and the Pygmy Forest Ecological Staircase trail. The “ecological staircase” is composed of five terraces sculpted by ocean waves pounding the sandstone cliffs, each about 100,000 years older and about 100 feet higher than the one below it. This amazing geological exhibit attracts scientists and nature lovers from all over the world. The entire Jughandle Cove area teems with wildlife including giant green sea anemones, red abalone, and Cabazon.



Jughandle Cove is located on the Mendocino coast.

Pollution

The State Water Board has determined that despite protection under California law, Jughandle Cove is contaminated with metals, sediment, bacteria and pathogens from sources including highway runoff, road runoff, septic tank leakage, and historic logging and mining operations.

One Threat and Solution: Polluted Highway Runoff

Jughandle Cove is threatened by polluted stormwater runoff from State Highway 1, which crosses Jughandle Creek upstream of where the Creek enters the Cove. Rainwater washing off road surfaces carries a highly poisonous mixture of heavy metals (e.g., copper and zinc), hydrocarbons (gas, grease, and oil), asbestos (from brakes), and other toxic substances released by cars and trucks. When polluted stormwater flows into natural waterways it poisons aquatic plants and animals. Stormwater also picks up sediment and dust, which darken and smother waterways.

To ensure highway safety during storms, CalTrans grades highways so stormwater flows quickly off of the road. This stormwater is often channeled directly into a natural waterway. Polluted runoff from Highway 1 flows directly into Jughandle Creek and then into Jughandle Cove. The solution is to divert this water into stormwater collection devices that filter toxins, naturally cleaning stormwater. For example, CalTrans can redirect storm drains into grassed swales or vegetated buffer strips, which are structures that slow the flow of runoff, reduce concentrations of pollutants, and infiltrate water into the ground.

Learn More

<http://www.cacoastkeeper.org/programs/clean-abundant/stormwater-runoff>

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs_map.shtml

Pollution Threats At A Glance

- **Number of High Threat Discharges:** 1
- **State Board Identified Contaminants:** Metals, Sediment, Bacteria and Pathogens
- **Pollution Sources:** Highway runoff, road runoff, septic tank leakage, legacy mining and logging operations