

San Luis Obispo Creek

With headwaters in the Santa Lucia Mountains near the Cuesta Grade, San Luis Obispo Creek flows about 15 miles through the city of San Luis Obispo (SLO) and empties into the Pacific Ocean. 11 tributaries feed the creek. Also discharged into the creek is treated effluent from the SLO city water treatment plant 8 miles upstream. Five native species of fish are found in the creek: Steelhead Trout, Prickly Sculpin, Threespine Stickleback, Speckled Dace, and Pacific Lamprey.

Chumash Indians relied on the creek for water and food. In 1772, Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa was built adjacent to the creek (in San Luis Obispo) to utilize these same resources. It is hard to believe that this creek once functioned as the city's sewer. Through community effort the now pristine stream serves as habitat to southern steelhead trout, a federally-listed threatened species. San Luis Obispo Creek is one of the southernmost habitats for these protected fish.

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