

Lola Jane's World

Connecting across cultures in our– vast yet small — modern world

UNLESS... Earth-Friendly Friday: My Watershed – The Salinas River Watershed

Posted on **March 5, 2015**



There are several beaches on the California Central coast named after the Salinas river.

We visit these beaches often, but I did not think about the name, or about the Salinas River or its source, until the blogging challenge for Earth-Friendly Friday on the topic **“Water – What’s Your Watershed?”**.

The challenges this month will focus on WATER — and coincides with water related events during March (International Day of Actions for Rivers and the United Nations World Water Day).

To get started for the first week in March, the challenge is to think about rivers and streams, and to post photos. and take a look at watershed rivers/streams near us — and to tell a little

about them.



- Photo of the Salinas River facing east, by California State Highway 1 by the large Dole shipping facility near the city of Marina

This challenge is interesting because I did not know very much about watersheds — and in participating in this challenge, I learned something new!

The Salinas River Watershed

The watershed for our area is the Salinas river watershed and covers 4,600 square miles. It turns out that the Salinas river originates in San Luis Obispo county (south of Monterey County) before emptying into the Monterey Bay — and merging with the Pacific ocean.

Information from the **Sustainable Conservation website:**

- The Salinas River flows northwesterly through the Salinas valley (the valley lies in the Coast Ranges and is defined to the west by the Sierra de Salinas and east by the Gabilan Range).
- It is 10 miles wide and 155 miles long
- Primary land uses in the Salinas River watershed are row crops, vineyards, pasture and grazing lands, as well as urban areas, military bases and public open space

Problems Facing the Watershed

I've posted several articles on my blog about Monterey County's mild weather, rich soils, and its **multi-billion dollar agricultural industry**. The agricultural industry is a major source of

jobs for many in this county, but is also a source of environmental problems.

Again, from the **Sustainable Conservation website**:

- The intense agricultural production has created a variety of problems for the area's natural resources.
 1. Rainfall and irrigation produce runoff that carries soils and associated pesticides and pollutants into the watercourses and down to the ocean.
 2. Clearing stream banks of vegetation has reduced and degraded habitat for avian and aquatic species.
 3. Erosion has filled the streams and reduced their natural functioning.
 4. The degradation of habitat and water quality has contributed to the steep decline in steelhead (fish) populations, and generally reduces the diversity of species and natural productivity of the area.
- Unabated, this continuing loss of natural functioning contributes to the overall decline of California's native plant and animal species and lowers the quality of life for our communities as well.



- Salinas river flowing towards Pacific Ocean by California State Highway 1, facing west near Dole facility and town of Marina

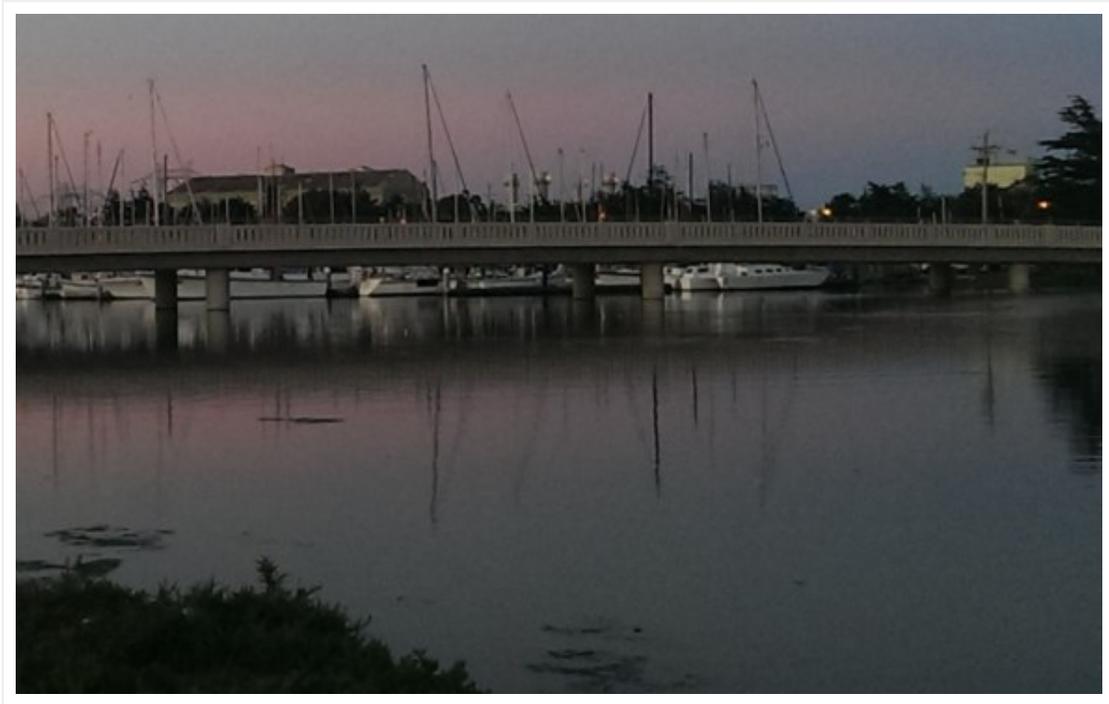
The Salinas River Watershed is the 4th largest watershed in California. Interestingly, the Salinas river is also known as the “The Upside Down River” because unlike most California rivers that flow west or south, **it flows northward and has one of the largest subsurface flows in the nation**. From the **Conservation Consulting website**:

- The river flows into one of the worlds most diverse marine ecosystems, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

- The river is designated by the California State Water Resources Control Board as one of the most critical watersheds in California (more on California water resources, [here](#))

I'm planning on visiting some river areas farther up our county this year and learning more about the Salinas river, including about the 20 wineries along Monterey County's "River Road Wine Trail". I wonder...do these river road wineries follow the Salinas river or its tributaries?

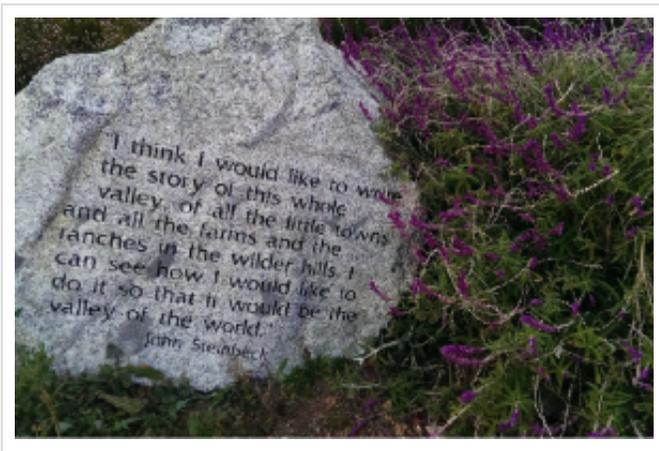
Photo below from another California State Park beach area related to the Salinas river, near the town of Moss Landing, California.



— Photo after sunset near Salinas River State beach at Moss Landing

To take part in this challenge and to see responses.. [click here.](#)

This new blogging event is inspired by prophetic words written in 1971 by Dr. Seuss in his book – *The Lorax ...*” **UNLESS . . . someone like youcares a whole awful lot,nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”**



Related: Oldtown Salinas photos and post [about author John Steinbeck](#) for WordPress Photo Challenge.

The Salinas River is mentioned in many of Steinbeck's novels.

Quote below from his 1952 novel, East of Eden...

"The Salinas was only a part-time river. The summer sun drove it underground. It was not a fine river at all, but it was the only one we had so we boasted about it –how dangerous it was in a wet winter and how dry it was in a dry summer."

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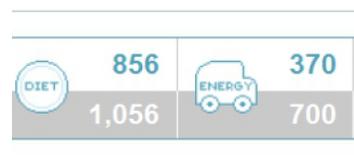
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6 THOUGHTS ON "UNLESS... EARTH-FRIENDLY FRIDAY: MY WATERSHED – THE SALINAS RIVER WATERSHED"



Just Another Nature Enthusiast

on **March 6, 2015 at 7:53 pm** said:

Lola Jane-

"Learning something new." Wouldn't this be a great chain to build between participants in this challenge? One person learning something new- inspiring another person to learn something new- on and on... as we bridge understandings about our ecosystems. What concerns about water issues do we have in common? How are water-related problems approached within various watersheds? When problems are solved, how are solutions created, initiated, and achieved?

Many of the containers of vegetables in my supermarket are from the Salinas Valley, but I haven't thought about the watershed that sustains produce grown in California. Because you learned something new about your watershed, I learned from you; and now I know more about the river that gives life to many of the vegetables that I purchase to feed my family.

Your quest to learn more about the tributaries that flow into the Salinas sounds interesting and worthwhile.

(Also- <3 I love the connections you made with your John Steinbeck post.)

Jane



Lola Jane

on **March 8, 2015 at 8:48 pm** said:

Jane — in addition to learning something new, what stood out right away for me as soon as I started my blog is the instant connection. I posted about ironing a few months after I started — of all topics, right? — and received a comment from a man in France who rented from the couple that took care of our little baby girl when we lived in GERMANY! (see comments at <http://lolako.com/hot-iron-for-your-undies/>) How odd that he even found the post.

Then, I posted a question about a photo from a beach walk when we first moved to the Monterey Peninsula, and right away I received an answer and explanation about the photo, which I recently used for a post on the shore whaling history in Monterey Bay (<http://lolako.com/from-hunting-whales-to-celebrating-whales-in-monterey-bay/>)

And now with your new Earth-Friendly Friday blogging challenge, what stands out — even after just several weeks — is how connected we all are, especially about our natural resources in ways I did not even think about.

Already, as I look into your challenge about water use for this week (<http://justanothernatureenthusiast.org/2015/03/06/unless-earth-friendly-friday-water-whats-your-footprint/>) and the National Geographic link, I'm amazed about my water footprint on issues that I did not think about! That products I buy also have a certain amount of water use...

So, it will only become more amazing as we all begin to see how connected we all are. And a big part of how we will solve our environmental problems is realizing that what we do in our little part of the world can impact everyone else on this beautiful planet we all share.

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