SEPTIC SYSTEM POLLUTION

the ground – and groundwater – by human waste disposal. Septic systems can contribute nitrates to groundwater and threaten the health of humans, plants, and animals. Some areas are now on the verge of permanently spoiling ancient aquifers. While water agencies can de-nitrify some water, farms and homeowners who rely on private wells don't have this capability. *Please see page 5 of this newsletter to see how we are helping the Regional Water Quality Control Board document water quality issues in groundwater basins across Santa Barbara County.*

TARGETED AREAS

Areas still on septic identified with a medium to high problem rating in Santa Barbara County's 2003 Questa Sanitary Survey and cited in the LAMP include: T*oro Canyon, Sycamore Creek, Mission Canyon, Hope Ranch, Veronica Springs, Sunset/Carol, Vista Vallejo, Los Olivos, Ballard, Santa Ynez, Janin Acres,* and others. Some of these areas have engineering studies that sit idle.

Ballard

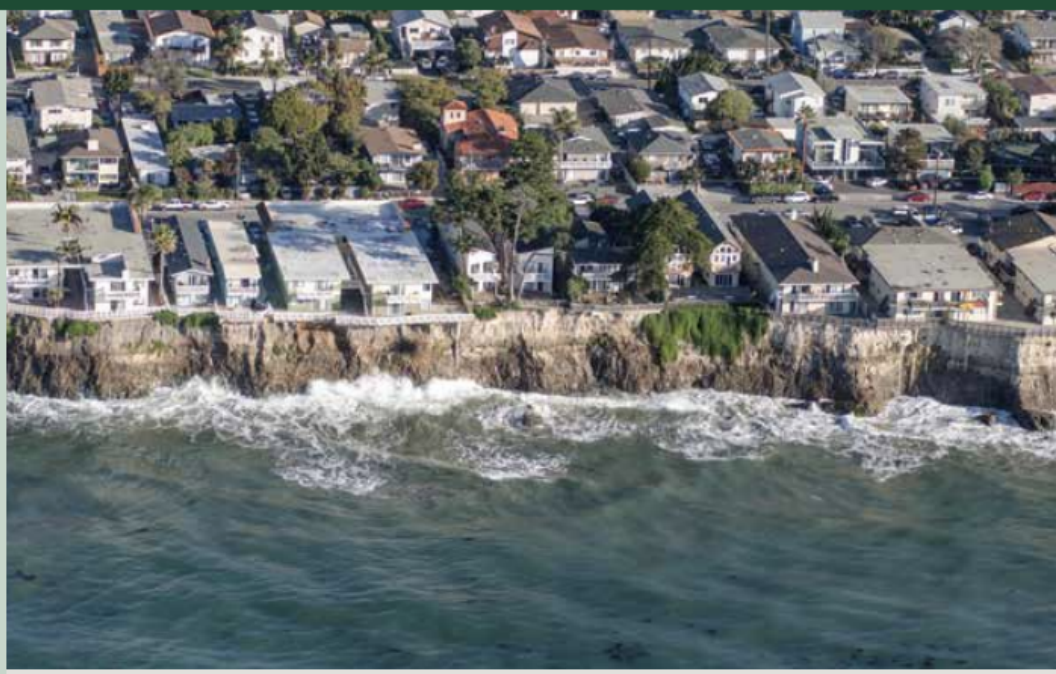
Santa Ynez

Toro Canyon

Cold Spring

Hope Ranch

Buena Vista Creek



Isla Vista Cliffs in a King Tide Photo © Bill Dewey

HIGH TIMES FOR GOLETA

Heal the Ocean has been researching the potential impacts of **sea level rise** (SLR) on wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in Santa Barbara County. In response to the threats to coastal cities due to climate change, the California Coastal Commission (CCC) has directed local governments to update their Local Coastal Plans (LCPs) with provisions that plan accordingly for these widely predicted threats.

The *Draft 2015 City of Goleta Coastal Hazards Vulnerability Assessment and Fiscal Impact Report* is the result of this climate change-sensitive stance by the CCC. At HTO, the talented **Mitchell Bass** worked on this issue during the summer of 2016 in our office, synopsizing for the Goleta Sanitary District what it should prepare for. Mitch crystallized the following steps recommended for GSD infrastructure:

1. Retrofit to flood-proof two lift stations.

2. Seal vulnerable wastewater manhole covers.
2030 (<1 ft of SLR): 14 additional manholes
2060 (~2 ft of SLR): 29 additional manholes
2100 (~5 ft of SLR): 82 additional manholes

3. Relocate ocean outfall cleanout access vault at Goleta Beach
Erosion is the likely leading cause of the potential need to relocate the access vault.

4. Relocate WWTP (Eventually)

Since Mitch finished the summation for HTO, high waves have posed a threat to the Goleta Sanitary District wastewater outfall vault, necessitating an emergency placement of boulders under the structure to keep it in place. After visiting the site with GSD manager Steve Wagner and GSD Management Analyst Laura Romano at the end of January, HTO sent officials Mitch's research on the potential impacts of SLR on wastewater treatment plants, the GSD plant, and we have made inquiries about State financial help to relocate the vault.

The GSD Vault (lower left square metal top), houses the infrastucture connecting wastewater plant and ocean outfall. It sits at the edge of Goleta Beach, which is eroding rapidly. (Hillary Hauser photo)