

**1-255-A Site Summary - Mad River Estuary****1-255-A****County:** Humboldt **ACP Division/Segment:** HM - E - S02 HM - F - S01**NOAA Chart:** 18600**Map Book:** CA Road Atlas**Decimal Degrees:** 40.92785 -124.13468**Site Description:**

Mad River Beach and Mad River County Park Boat Ramp are managed by Humboldt County Parks. Mad River estuary is a medium sized tidal inlet bounded on each side by fine- to medium-grained sand beaches with riprap along north and northeast shoreline facing the ocean to prevent shoreline erosion. The tidal influence extends upstream of the boat ramp in the County Park. The site also includes the inlet of Widow White Creek north of Murray Rd. The river outlet is dynamic and has migrated many miles from the existing outflow near the Clam Beach Vista Point.

Marine mammals, wading birds and shorebirds, waterfowl, and salmonids utilize the estuary for habitat. The river banks of the estuary are sensitive to oiling especially during the summer months when the mouth of the river is open to tidal exchange. Kingfishers (feeding and nesting), raptors including merlin, osprey and peregrine falcon; all (01-12). Bank swallow (ST), California brown pelican (04-11). Western snowy plover (FT)(01-12), FWS Critical Habitat, nesting period (03-09). Nests directly on sand within dunes. Harbor seals and sea lions feed in estuary, harbor seals haulout along the mouth of river. Anadromous salmonids: coho (FT,ST) and chinook (FT) salmon, steelhead (FT) and coastal cutthroat (SSC) trouts: spawning runs (08-06), juveniles/smolts (04-07), green sturgeon (FT,SSC), eulachon (FT,SSC), longfin smelt (ST), Pacific lamprey (SSC), redbelt surfperch on outer beaches, juvenile Dungeness crab nursery. Northern red-legged frog (SSC) in interior marsh and sensitive vegetation on beach and nearby including beach layia and western lily (both FE,SE), and Humboldt Bay owl's-clover, pink sand-verbena, and Wolf's evening primrose (all CNPS 1B).

**Resources at Risk:***ESI and Habitat:* 3A Fine- to medium-grained sand beaches

3B Scarps and steep slopes in sand

10A Salt - and brackish-water marshes

**List of Resources at Risk:**

|            | Resource Name            | Status  | Presence   | Sensitivity |
|------------|--------------------------|---------|------------|-------------|
| Amphibians | Northern red-legged frog | SSC     | Year-round |             |
| Birds      | Western snowy plover     | FT, SSC | Year-round | Mar-Sep     |
| Birds      | common loon              | FP, SSC | Year-round |             |
| Fish       | salmonids                |         | Year-round |             |
| Fish       | eulachon                 | FT      | Year-round |             |
| Fish       | Pacific lamprey          | SSC     | Year-round |             |
| Mammals    | harbor seal              | FP      | Year-round |             |
| Plants     | beach layia              | FE, SE  | Year-round |             |

FT-Federally Threatened, FE-Federally Endangered, FP-Federally Protected, SE-State Endangered, ST-State Threatened, SP -State Protected, SR-State Rare, SSC-Species of Special Concern, BGEPA-Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, SSSP-State Special Status Species

**List of Key Contacts:**

| Type | Name/Title   | Organization                                     | Phone          |
|------|--------------|--|----------------|
| C    | /Coordinator | Native American Heritage Commission              | (916) 373-3710 |
| C    | /Coordinator | Northwest Information Center                     | (707) 588-8455 |
| O    | /            | The Friends of the Dunes                         | (707) 444-1397 |
| T    | /            | Humboldt County Parks                            | (707) 445-7651 |
| T    | /            | NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service-Arcata    | (707) 822-7201 |
| T    | /            | US Fish and Wildlife Service-Arcata Field Office | (707) 822-7201 |

C – Cultural, Historic, Archaeological; E – Entry/Owner/Access; O – Other; S – Safety; T – Trustee; X – Exclusion or Security

**Additional Site Summary Comments:**

For further information about coastal access in this area, please refer to the California Coastal Commission's California Coastal Access Guide. For photos of the coastline in this area, please refer to the California Coastal Records Project ([www.californiacoastline.org](http://www.californiacoastline.org)).

Cultural, Historical, and Archeological sites are known to exist in the area, however, the exact locations of these sites must be ascertained by contacting the Native American Heritage Commission at (916) 373-3710, the State Office of Historical Preservation (916) 445-7000, and/or the Northwest Information Center (707) 588-8455.

**Concerns and Advice to Responders:**

Preventing oil from spreading into the upper end of the estuary on the flood tide is the primary goal of responding at this location. Western snowy plover may be present year-round.

The location of the river mouth may shift from year to year. It may be necessary to adjust recommended site strategy to address conditions at time of response to protect the estuary. An overflight or site visit to determine the location of the mouth and river flow is recommended prior to deploying response personnel.

**Hazard and Restrictions:**

Mad River Road may have closures during heavy rain storms, high river flows, and/or high tide events due to flooding. Check with the county if necessary.

**Site Strategies:****Site Validation Level: II**

**Strategy: 1-255.1 Objective:** During low fresh water flows the Mad River estuary should be boomed to minimize the area of impact.

**Strategy:** Exclude oil using boom and strand incoming oil onto the south spit to minimize oil movement into the riparian areas of the south and eastern regions in this estuary.

Table of Response Resources

| Equipment | Sub-Type        | Size      | Unit | QTY | Unit | Last Page Update |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------|-----|------|------------------|
| Boom      | Swamp           | 1200 feet |      |     |      |                  |
| Anchor    | Danforth        | 25 lb     |      | 4   |      |                  |
| boat      | Skiff           |           |      | 1   |      |                  |
| Staff     | Staff to Deploy |           |      | 6   |      |                  |

**Strategy: 1-255.2 Objective:** During low fresh water flows Widow White Creek's confluence should be boomed to minimize the impact area.

**Strategy:** Boom the outlet of Widow White creek where it joins the Mad River estuary.

Table of Response Resources

| Equipment | Sub-Type        | Size     | Unit | QTY | Unit | Last Page Update |
|-----------|-----------------|----------|------|-----|------|------------------|
| Boom      | Harbor          | 300 feet |      |     |      |                  |
| Anchor    | Danforth        | 25 lb    |      | 2   |      |                  |
| boat      | Skiff           |          |      | 1   |      |                  |
| Staff     | Staff to Deploy |          |      | 6   |      |                  |
| Staff     | Staff to Tend   |          |      | 2   |      |                  |

**Logistics:**

**Directions:** From Eureka, go north on Hwy 101, take Giuntoli Ln James Rd exit 716B. Head west towards Janes Road. Turn right onto Heindon Road. Turn left onto Miller lane. Turn right onto Mad River Road and continue on this road to Mad River County Park at the end. There is a boat ramp at this location. Another unimproved parking area and 4WD access to the beach is just north of the county park area. Access to the north shore is difficult. Caltrans should be contacted to open hwy guard rails near M.P. 94.479 to access riprap area. Foot access is also available from Murray Rd, the Hammond Trail, Hiller Park and Clam Beach.

**Land Access:** Can use 4WD to mouth from Mad River Beach or Clam Beach.

**On-Water Limitations:** Small boat ramp at Mad River Beach County Park.

**Facilities, Staging Areas, Command Posts, Available Equipment:** The parking area near the boat ramp has restrooms and can serve as a staging area for equipment to be used in the general area. There are no concessions or utilities other than the restrooms at this site.

**Communications Problems:**

**Additional Operational Comments:** For Mad River flow gauge info see: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/11481000/#parameterCode=00065&period=P7D>

