

County: **San Mateo**
 USGS Quad: **Montara Mountain**

Thomas Guide Location

Latitude N

Longitude W

3 7 30

122 30

NOAA Chart: **18645,18680 Gulf of Farallons, Sur-SF**

Last Page Update : 1/1/2000

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Pillar Point Marsh is a 20 acre salt marsh with 50 foot wide inlet to harbor at the east end of its 700' beach front. It is located at the west corner of the outer harbor breakwater. Denniston Creek's 30ft creek mouth enters the harbor just west of the marina. The area is within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Pillar Point Marsh is a saltmarsh wetland on the south side of West Point Avenue and fresh water marsh on the north side. Dune grasses and sand hummocks front the harbor for about 700' with a wide, low sloping, fine-grained beach favored by beach walkers. There is a recess and 50-100' opening though the dune grass barrier at the east end of the beach which has flow only during rainy periods or during very high tides. The saltmarsh portion has pickle weed and other saltmarsh species and standing lagoon inside year around. The freshwater portion is dense with cattails and willows. The marsh is part of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and is managed by their staff.

Denniston Creek is a small urbanized stream running through the town of Princeton into Pillar Point Harbor. The riparian corridor quality tends to improve upstream. The stream gradient from the bridge to the harbor is quite positive, and there is usually a positive outward flow; both making oil threat minimal from harbor. Never the less, the presence of steelhead and San Francisco garter snake have necessitated that this site remain a focus of concern for harbor and upstream spills and collateral response impacts.

SEASONAL and SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN

Marshes are A-priority year around. Steelhead trout run in Denniston Creek November to May.

RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN

The most sensitive aspect of this site are the marsh and the creek, though the entire breakwater enclosure has a multitude of bird, fish and animal life. The saltmarsh-pickleweed marsh, is an uncommon remnant of coastal marshes in this portion of the coastline. Its upper freshwater marsh is also important and uncommon habitat, as is Denniston Creek and its riparian corridor. These habitats provide important habitat refuges for a variety of species including several species and populations which are threatened. The outer breakwater is a favorite roosting site for sea birds.

California brown pelicans as well as cormorants, and gulls favor the breakwater as a roosting site. Grebes, loons, ducks, and cormorants shelter and feed in within the breakwater. In the marshy areas the saltmarsh common yellowthroat nests and lives year round.

Although California sea otters occasionally forage within the breakwater, the main concerns are for the San Francisco garter snakes at Denniston Creek and the freshwater reaches of Pillar Pt. Marsh. Red legged frogs also occur in the freshwater marsh.

Denniston Creek supports a steelhead trout run. Adults spawn from November to May and yearlings are present year round.

There are several commercial abalone rearing facilities within the breakwater.

CULTURAL, HISTORIC, and ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES

There are sensitive cultural sites along coastline to Pillar Point. Contact the California Dept of Parks and Recreation - Office of Historic Preservation (Eric Allison -(916) 653-9125), and the Northwest Information Center, (Bryan Much, Sonoma State College ((707) 332-1117)) for specific information on historic or cultural resources in this area.

KEY CONTACTS: Trustee (T); Entry/Owner/Access (E); Cultural (C); or Other Assistance (O)

Type	Name / Title	Organization	Phone
T	24hr Sanctuary Personnel	Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary	(650) 479-5311
TBELC		James Fitzgerald Marine Reserve	(650) 728-3584
E/T		CA State Parks, Northern Comms Center (Dispatch)	(916) 358-0333
O	Jonathan Bishop Oil Spill Prgm Coord.	CA Coastal Commission	(415) 904-5247
ELT	Dan Temko	Pillar Pt. Harbor	(415) 726-5727

ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:

2-262 -A Site Strategy - Pillar Point Marsh & Denniston Creek

County and Thomas Guide Location

San Mateo

NOAA CHART

18645,18680 Gulf of Farallons, Sur-SF

2-262 -A

Latitude N

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Last Page Update : 7/1/2005

CONCERNS and ADVICE to RESPONDERS:

The primary concern is oil carried into Pillar Pt Marsh and Denniston Creek on high water or aggressive surf occasions. Keeping oil out of the breakwater would reduce threat to sensitive sites and marina, aquaculture, and other creatures as well. There is a strong tidal current though the breakwater entry, but the breakwater is porous and can admit. Damage and disturbance to plants, wildlife, and aquatic life during response is always a concern.

Oiling of willows into marsh hundreds of yards up creek.

HAZARDS and RESTRICTIONS:

SITE STRATEGIES

Strategy 2-262.1 Objective: Exclude oil from marsh by sediment dike across marsh mouth.

Keep oil from being carried into the marsh on high tide by erecting a 100ft long low sand berm. This has been successfully accomplished in the past by scraping local sand with a bulldozer. A culvert may be necessary to permit outflow from marsh. A secondary smaller berm farther back from the beach could be erected using hand labor. (Contact Harbor Master for help) This work must be accomplished before high tide when construction activity will not be possible.

Strategy 2-262.2 Objective: Keep oil out of Denniston Creek

Denniston Creek - 50 ft of harbor or river (swamp) boom across creek mouth. Back with 50ft sorbent and a second layer of curtain boom as necessary.

Strategy 2-262.3 Objective: Divert oil away from marsh opening.

Generally there is a light clockwise current and very light wave action in the harbor. Use this current pattern to deflect oil away from marsh mouth by deploying Hboom from the high beach (grass line) 25' west of the mouth, at a diagonal to a point about 100' out on the pier.

Strategy 2-262.4 Objective: Exclusion/collection to Keep oil from entering harbor though breakwater entry - booming without closing mouth to harbor traffic.

Overlapped cascaded boom at breakwater entry to divert oil to catchment without blocking vessel passage. Deploy a boom at an angle two-thirds of the distance across the channel from just inside of breakwater jetty toward the easterly breakwater. Deploy a second boom halfway across the channel from the easterly breakwater, lapping the other boom but leaving enough room to allow vessels to drive around the booms. Create a collection pocket by extending the boom end and adding a flanking length. Station a skimming vessel to collect oil.

Strategy 2-262.5 Objective: Protection booming of inside of breakwater if heavy oil is likely to pass though the breakwater - line inside breakwater with boom. This will require considerable resources.

Deploy river (swamp) boom along the inside of the breakwater. Make shore collection sites at north and east beachfall lined with sorbents for land collection.

Table of Response Resources

strategy number	harbor boom	swamp boom	Other boom type	sorb boom	Anchoring no	type and gear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No	Type	Special Equipment or comment and kinds	staff deploy	Staff tend
2-262.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		bulldozer (and, as necessary, a culvert)	2	
2-262.2	0	50				stake to keep from catenary sag.						2	
2-262.3	500						1	1				5	
2-262.4	500				9	2/50+ & 7/22 danforths + 20' chains	1	1	1	vessel sk		5	
2-262.5	0	12300		200	13	13/12+/danforths & stakes	2	2				10	

LOGISTICS

DIRECTIONS: to site (by land and/or by water, to nearest launch ramp and are access permits required.)

Hwy 1 north from Hwy. 92 past Half Moon Bay to Capistrano Rd. Turn on Prospect Way. You will cross a bridge over Denniston Creek just after turning left on Broadway. Continue right on Princeton and right on West Point Ave around the marsh to the marsh to parking lot. There is a locked gate (contact harbor master) in the parking lot which permits vehicle access to beach and Pillar Pt.

Denniston Creek - Hwy 1 north from Hwy 92. Left on Capistrano St. Turn left onto Prospect Way. Access via Broadway street next to creek. Pillar Point Marsh is a 20 acre salt marsh with 50 foot wide inlet to harbor at the east end of its 700' beach front. It is located at the west corner of the outer harbor breakwater. Denniston Creek's 30ft creek mouth enters the harbor just west of the marina. The area is within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

LAND ACCESS: Beaches are gated. Most are drivable- 4WD, ATV, or tracked vehicle.

WATER LOGISTICS: Only modestly shallow near shore.

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking There are abundant boat services available.
and Services Available:

FACILITIES, STAGING AREAS, POSSIBLE FIELD POSTS AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:

Best staging, equipment and services are available at Pillar Pt. Harbor and Half Moon Bay Airport. Contact County OES and Harbor Master regarding staging.

COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:

