

**4-075-A Site Summary - Pico Creek and Beach****4-075-A****County:** San Luis Obispo **ACP Division/Segment:** SL - B - S06**NOAA Chart:** 18700**Map Book:** Thomas Guide 324 **Decimal Degrees:** 35.61557 -121.14913  
G-6**Site Description:**

Pico creek Inlet is an intermittent creek with a well-developed salt-water marsh. The creek is fronted by a mixed sand and gravel beach. Contact State Parks and Hearst Corporation for access issues. This site is within Hearst San Simeon State Park and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Sea Otter Game Refuge. The beach fronting creek is a snowy plover nesting beach. Offshore is the Cambria State Marine Conservation Area MPA (extends from Pico Creek south 6 miles and 1 mile offshore) and is governed by special fisheries protections established by the DFW Marine Region. Species of concern are present year-round. Tidewater gobies, sculpins, steelhead, starry flounder, California red-legged frogs, and western pond turtles utilize this creek. Harbor seals and sea otters are common. Designated critical habitat for leatherback sea turtles and black abalone. Shore birds and sea birds are present year-round including sandpipers, yellowlegs, grebes, whimbrels, brown pelicans, coots, herons, killdeers, gulls, western snowy plovers and ducks.

Saltwater marsh with pickle weed, saltgrass, sedges and cattails.

**Resources at Risk:****ESI and Habitat:** 4 Coarse-grained sand beaches

10A Salt - and brackish-water marshes

**List of Resources at Risk:**

	Resource Name	Status	Presence	Sensitivity
Amphibians	California red-legged frog	FT, SSC	Year-round	
Birds	Western snowy plover	FT, SSC	Year-round	
Fish	tidewater goby	FE, SSC	Year-round	
Fish	steelhead - Central/Northern California	FT	Year-round	
Invertebrates	black abalone	FE	Year-round	
Mammals	harbor seal	FP	Year-round	
Mammals	Southern sea otter	FT, SP	Year-round	
Reptiles	leatherback sea turtle	FE	Aug - Nov	
Reptiles	Western pond turtle	SSC	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	/	Central Coast Information Center	(805) 682-4711
C	/Coordinator	Native American Heritage Commission	(916) 373-3710
T	Steve Wertz/Senior Env. Scientist Supervisor	California Department of Fish and Wildlife, MPAs	(562) 343-3808
T	Kyle Evans/Steelhead	California Department of Fish & Wildlife	(805) 794-9547
T	SURCOM (24-hr)/	California State Parks (Dispatch)	(951) 443-2969
T	/Emergency Responder, 24-hr	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	(831) 236-6797
T	Justin Viezbicke/Marine Mammal Stranding	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 506-4315
T	Melissa Neuman/Marine Biologist	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 481-4594
T	Tina Fahy/Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-4023
T	/Spill Response Coordinator	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal T&E Species	(805) 644-1766

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

**Additional Site Summary Comments:**

Tidewater gobies nest in estuary sediments April - July; steelhead peak spawning March - July; California red-legged frogs breed November - March. Marine mammal pupping season: Harbor seals March - June; southern sea otters pup year-round. Leatherback sea turtles are most commonly observed August - November. Western snowy plover nesting season March - November; refer to Typical Sandy Beach Site Summary and Strategy pages (Site 4-000-A) for information on response operations when dealing with snowy plovers and least terns.

**Concerns and Advice to Responders:**

Minimize disturbance in riparian/wetland areas when possible. When crews must walk in soft bottom wetland/riparian areas, restrict the number and size of pathways and avoid trampling oil into sediments. If creek conditions allow, boom/fencing deployment and recovery to be done by only having one person slowly walk across creek to position the boom/fencing to reduce disturbance. Avoid disturbing bottom lagoon sediments to protect tidewater gobies (endangered) especially April-July, goby nesting season. Steelhead (threatened, critical habitat upstream) peak spawning March - July. Equipment and foot traffic entering wetted areas should be avoided to the maximum extent practical to prevent crushing tidewater gobies, their burrows, and eggs. If supplemental water is used to flush recommend gradually increasing the intensity/volume during the flush for gobies. Refer to Typical Sandy Beach Site Summary and Strategy pages (Site 4-000-A) for information on response operations when dealing with snowy plovers and least terns. Southern sea otters (threatened) pup year-round.

**Hazard and Restrictions:**

State Park property.

**Site Strategies:**

**Site Validation Level: II**

**Strategy: 4-075.1 Objective:** Deploy Containment Boom

**Strategy:** When creek mouth is open block entrance with short skirted containment boom (swamp boom) at appropriate angle for swift currents and changing tidal influences; place above high tide line. If creek conditions allow, boom deployment and recovery to be done by only having one person slowly walk across the creek to position the boom (and fence posts or anchors on the bank) to reduce disturbance. Install boom in a configuration/angle which blocks channel and diverts oil to a collection point. Consider booming shorelines of inlet to prevent oiling. Maintenance/monitoring necessary; check boom for effectiveness.

Table of Response Resources

Equipment	Sub-Type	Size	Unit	QTY	Unit	Last Page Update
Boom	Swamp			200	feet	
Anchor				2		
skimmer				1		
Staff				4		
Vehicle	ATV					

**Strategy: 4-075.2 Objective:** Erect Filter Fence

**Strategy:** When creek mouth is closed install excelsior fencing along top of natural berm to capture oil when there is a potential for high tidal wash over. When creek mouth is open use a filter fence barrier for exclusion/containment. Use this method when the cross-section of the watercourse does not exceed 30 feet in width, water flow volume is low, the channel bottom is capable of receiving and holding metal stakes, and the spill consists of heavy oil. If creek conditions allow, filter fence deployment and recovery to be done by only having one person slowly walk across the creek to position fencing (and fence posts) to reduce disturbance. Maintenance/monitoring of filter fencing necessary.

Table of Response Resources

Equipment	Sub-Type	Size	Unit	QTY	Unit	Last Page Update
Fence	Construction Fencing			200	feet	
stakes				20		
skimmer				1		
Staff				4		
Misc.	Oil Snare (pom-pom)					
Misc.	Stake Driver			1		
Vehicle	ATV			1		

**Strategy: 4-075.3 Objective:** Build Berm

**Strategy:** When creek mouth is open, under low flow conditions block creek entrance with sediment berm or sandbag berm and install flow through pipes as necessary to prevent flooding. Cover berm with plastic sheeting to minimize erosion; and consider backing berm with 10" swamp boom and/or sorbent boom. To create protective berm, take sand from active unvegetated beach face to prevent damage to dune habitat. Manual building of berm preferred over heavy equipment even when heavy equipment can access site. Maintenance/monitoring necessary; check for berm effectiveness.

Table of Response Resources

Equipment	Sub-Type	Size	Unit	QTY	Unit	Last Page Update
Heavy Equip	Backhoe			1		
Sandbags						
skimmer				1		
Staff				6		
Piping						
Vehicle	ATV			1		

**Strategy: 4-075.4 Objective:** No Onsite Options: Consider Offshore Containment/Recovery/ART

**Strategy:** Offshore containment and recovery (OCR) are the preferred option although heavy surf may hinder these operations. No specific response equipment listed due to the many variables associated with each spill regarding OCR. Early consideration should be given to the use of applied response technologies.

Table of Response Resources

Last Page Update

**Logistics:**

**Directions:** From the north: Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 N (or take Hwy 5 S to Hwy 41 W to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 N), to just north of the town of San Simeon, turn left on Pico Ave. Follow to parking lot and access beach to right side of parking lot (post mile marker is 54.75). From the south: Take Hwy 101 N to Morro Bay exit in San Luis Obispo, continue as above.

**Land Access:** ATV or 4-wheel drive vehicles off Pico Ave.

**On-Water Limitations:** Limitations: Depth, obstruction. Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Morro Bay boat ramp approx. 25 miles south.

**Facilities, Staging Areas, Command Posts, Available Equipment:** Staging Area: Along Pico Avenue. Command Post: State Dept. Parks and Recreation office at Hearst Castle or hotels in San Simeon. Airports: SLO County Airport is located 1 hour south. Paso Robles Airport is located 45 min. inland. The private strip is located 2 miles north, north of the Hearst Castle visitor's center.

**Communications Problems:** None.

**Additional Operational Comments:**



