

**4-015 -A Site Summary- Arroyo De La Cruz Inlet and Beach****4-015 -A**

County: **San Luis Obispo**  
USGS Quad: **Piedras Blancas**

Thomas Guide Location  
**324 E-4**  
NOAA Chart: **Pt. Sur to Pt. Conception 18700**

Latitude N  
**35.70897**  
Longitude W  
**121.30393**

Last Page Update : 5/1/2014

**SITE DESCRIPTION:**

See Division A map. Arroyo De La Cruz inlet has a well developed freshwater marsh fronted by medium to coarse grained sandy beach. Within Hearst San Simeon State Park property, and within Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Sea Otter Game Refuge. Site is also within Pierdas Blancas State Marine Reserve MPA, and is governed by special protections established by the DFW Marine Region. Sandy beach just south of creek is a snowy plover nesting beach.

**SEASONAL and SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN**

In creek steelhead trout (threatened, designated critical habitat) peak spawning March-July; western pond turtles (species of special concern).

Western snowy plovers (threatened) nest March-September and overwinter rest of year on this beach.

Throughout Division A, black abalone (endangered) may be present in rocky intertidal habitat (critical habitat); Designated critical habitat for leatherback sea turtles (endangered), most commonly observed Aug. – Nov; sea otters (pup Jan. - March) are common offshore.

**RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN**

Western snowy plovers nest on this beach. Snowy plovers may have active nests, or chicks may be actively moving about the area. Care should be given to minimize disturbance and avoid injury to either nests, or chicks. Snowy plovers are small, white and tan colored shore birds. Beach Bird-Nesting sites are shallow depressions scratched out from the sand surface on sandy beaches above the highest tide line. The nest sites are typically very well disguised and difficult to see, even for trained eyes. Nest sites may contain either eggs, or chicks which are potentially vulnerable to trampling by vehicles or foot traffic. Snowy plover adults and chicks are known to move between the nest sites and the active water line. Over-wintering snowy plover adults may be foraging throughout the response area.

Shorebirds include western gulls, willets, sandpipers, black oyster catchers (on rocky intertidal); sea birds include brown pelicans, pelagic cormorants, grebes, loons, scoters, common murres.

Kelp beds and sea otters common offshore.

Steelhead trout (threatened), and Southwestern pond turtles (candidate species) are found in the creek.

Compact cobweb thistle, arroyo de la cruz mariposa lily, and dwarf goldenstar (sensitive species) can be found on the coastal bluffs.

**CULTURAL, HISTORIC, and ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES**

Contact SHPO and Native American Heritage Commission.

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

Type	Name / Title	Organization	Phone
E/T	District Office	State Dept. Parks and Rec. SLO Coast District	(805) 927-2065
T	Melissa Boggs Environmental Scientist	CDFW-OSPR	(805) 558-1005
C	Lynn Gamble Historic Info Center	SHPO/UCSB	(805) 893-7341
T	Mike Harris Sea otter expert	CDFW-OSPR	(805) 772-1135
O	Brian Hatfield Marine mammal expert	Bio Res Div. USGS	(805) 927-3893
T	Scott Kathey Regulatory Coordinator	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	(831) 647-4251
T	Jenny Marrek Biologist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	(805) 644-1766
C	Larry Meyer	Native American Heritage Commission	(916) 373-3712
T	Becky Ota	CDFW for MPAs	(650) 631-6789
T	Elizabeth Petras Biologist	National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-3238
C	SHPO	State Office of Historic Preservation	(916) 445-7000
T	Carolyn Skinder Biologist	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	(805) 927-2145
E/T	Dispatch State Parks	State Dept. Parks and Recreation	(951) 443-2969
T	Steve Wertz	CDFW for MPAs	(562) 342-7184

**ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:**

## 4-015 -A Site Strategy - Arroyo De La Cruz Inlet and Beach

County and Thomas Guide Location

324 E-4 San Luis Obispo

NOAA CHART

Pt. Sur to Pt. Conception 18700

## 4-015 -A

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### CONCERNS and ADVICE to RESPONDERS:

Wetland/riparian Habitat – Mud flats, marshlands, and creeks contain fragile habitat subject to damage from human activities such as walking and vehicle use. Oil can be trampled into sediments by responders where it will not be recoverable. Avoid walking in mudflats, marshy areas, and riparian habitat/waterways whenever possible. When crews must walk in soft bottom wetland areas to access cleanup sites, restrict the number and size of pathways. Mark authorized pathways with flagging or tape. Place temporary ramps (e.g. plywood sheets) in sensitive marshy areas where heavy use is expected.

PRIMARY PLOVER PROTECTION STRATEGY: During nesting season March - September, to aid in avoiding damage to nests, consider delineation of nesting areas and designate responder "pathways" with flagging or tape. Nests and critical habitat protection areas will require oversight by natural resource specialist prior to response effort execution. All responders should be briefed on procedures for avoiding birds and nest sites. Oil spill response and cleanup activity should be limited to locations below high tide line unless otherwise authorized by trustee agency specialist, or designee (biological monitor). The area to be protected will be monitored by an assigned biological monitor. Oil removal should be conducted by hand crews unless other methods are recommended by the biological monitor. Pre-clean the beach and stockpile kelp and surfgrass rack in designated areas for re-distribution after response efforts are completed. A staging area will be determined as most suitable for response and natural resource protection. Travel on beach should be restricted to the wet sand as much as possible; Vehicle traffic should be operated at slow enough speeds to avoid/minimize impacts to wildlife (15 MPH); if possible avoid driving over wrack.

SECONDARY PLOVER PROTECTION STRATEGY: At the discretion of the biological monitor, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, snowy plover or least tern eggs may be removed from nest's by authorized and qualified personnel to an approved facility to avoid injury. This determination will be made on-site utilizing oil trajectory and oil impact timing information.

### OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

Fish Disturbance - Steelhead (critical habitat) peak spawning March - July.

Black abalone (endangered) may be present on nearby rocky intertidal habitat.

Sensitive Biota - Nearshore waters, within a mile of the shoreline include sensitive rafting areas for birds, sea otters, and other marine mammals. Try to remain at least 100 yards away from marine mammals and sea turtles and if approached closely by a marine mammal or turtle while motoring, reduce speed and shift to neutral; do not engage props until the animals are observed at the surface, clear of the vessel. To protect seabirds, limit spill response activities within 1,000 feet of nesting seabirds.

SHORELINE PRE-CLEANING may be warranted before oil reaches the beach when the shoreline is covered with kelp, driftwood, etc which could become oiled and create more oiled waste. Consult with trustees prior to engaging in activities on shoreline. Move un-oiled vegetation, driftwood, etc. above the high tide line. When the shoreline is narrow, un-oiled debris may need to be stockpiled elsewhere. It is suggested that photos be taken to document distribution of beach debris prior to collection so that it can be replaced to its pre-spill distribution when spill cleanup is complete. Pre-cleaning of shorelines should be conducted by hand crews to the greatest practical extent to minimize disturbance to wildlife and their habitats.

### HAZARDS and RESTRICTIONS:

Poison oak along path to beach.

State Park property, site is within Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary and Sea Otter Game refuge. This site falls within MPA, and is governed by special protections established by the DFW Marine Region.

### SITE STRATEGIES

Strategy 4-015.1 Objective: Exclude oil from getting into creek/estuary with berming or sandbags

.When creek mouth is open, under low flow conditions block entrance with sediment berm or sandbag berm (fine to medium grained sand), and install flow through pipes as necessary to prevent flooding. To create protective berm take sand from active unvegetated beach face to prevent damage to dune habitat. When erosion from waves or overflows could erode berm, armor berm and banks by covering with plastic sheeting anchored by sandbags. When overflow could occur due to accumulation of water behind the containment berm install underflow piping and/or a spillway in the berm. When overwash could bring oil into inlet over berm back exclusion/containment berm with containment and/or sorbent booms and/or snare. Regular monitoring and maintenance will be necessary (2 staff twice daily). Check for berm effectiveness and integrity, overwash, and leakage problems, boom position and security, and sorbent replacement as necessary.

#### Strategy 4-015.2 Objective: Exclude oil from getting into creek/estuary with containment boom.

When creek mouth is open block entrance with a short skirted containment boom (swamp boom) at appropriate angle for swift currents and changing tidal influences. When suitable berm materials are unavailable and/or when tidal flows, waterflows, or water depths are too great for berming, install exclusion booms near mouth of Inlet/lagoon using short skirted boom. Install boom in a configuration/angle which blocks channel and diverts oil to a collection point. If needed, line river/stream bank, rip-rap, side channels, and sandy beaches within lagoon, seaward of the exclusion/containment booms to restrict oil to open water area of main channel to protect vegetated banks and sensitive areas within the inlet/estuary. Use swamp boom backed by sorbent booms, if waters are shallower, and use harbor boom backed by sorbent booms, when water depths are greater. Check/maintain boom for effectiveness and integrity, overwash, and leakage problems, boom positioning and security, and sorbent replacement as necessary.

#### Strategy 4-015.3 Objective: Exclude oil from getting into creek/estuary with fencing.

When creek mouth is closed install excelsior fencing along top of natural berm to capture oil when there is a potential for high tidal washover.

When creek mouth is open, use a filter barrier for exclusion/containment – Use this method when the cross-section of the watercourse does not exceed 20 feet in width, water flow volume is low, the channel bottom is capable of receiving and holding metal stakes, the spill consists of heavy petroleum, and berming or booming methods are not feasible due to lack of materials or accessibility. Construct a filter barrier across the channel using two parallel rows of metal stakes, upon which construction fencing is fastened. Place permeable sorbent materials such as snare or excelsior, between the two lines of fencing to capture oil. Re-adjust sorbent materials as necessary minimize entrainment and/or leakage and to accommodate flow, tidal, oceanic, and meteorological changes. Replace sorbent materials as necessary to maintain sorbent quality.

#### Strategy 4-015.4 Objective: Exclude or deflect oil from beach

Offshore containment and recovery (OCR) is 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.

strategy number	harbor boom	swamp boom	Other boom type	sorb boom	Anchoring no	tvpe and dear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No	Type	Special Equipment or comment No and kinds	staff deploy	Staff tend
4-015.1								1	SSS		Backhoe or sand bags, piping, plastic sheeting	4-6	
4-015.2		100			2			1	SSS			2-4	
4-015.3			100 FF					1	SSS		Excelsior fencing; metal stakes	2-4	
4-015.4		0		0	0			0		0	Offshore containment & recovery		

## LOGISTICS

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

From the south: Take Hwy 101 N to Hwy 1, Morro Bay exit in San Luis Obispo. Take Hwy 1 N approx. 4 miles north of Piedras Blancas Lighthouse. Mile marker 66.9.

From the north: Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 N (or Hwy 5 S to Hwy 41 W to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 N). Continue as above.

**LAND ACCESS:** Foot path, and ATV access from vista turnout .2 mi. S. of creek.

### **WATER LOGISTICS:**

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking Morro Bay boat launch facility approx. 40 miles south.  
and Services Available:

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

Staging and Command Post: US Geologic Survey research facility is located at the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse, approx. 4 miles south on Hwy 1. Staging, parking, water and phones available. Hotels in San Simeon; State Parks office at Hearst Castle.

Airports: San Luis Obispo County Airport, approx. 1 hour south. Paso Robles Airport approx. 45 min inland. There is a private landing strip for small planes north of Hearst Castle Visitor's Center, approx. 15 min. south.

### **COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:**

### **ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:**

