

**4-130-A Site Summary - Morro Strand State Beach (North)/Willow Creek****4-130-A****County :** San Luis Obispo **ACP Division/Segment :** SL - E - S 001**NOAA Chart :** 18703**Map Book :** 591 C-4**Decimal Degrees** 35.42777 -120.88291**Site Description:**

Morro Strand State Beach is a fine to medium grained sandy beach (from Toro Creek north to Cayucos, approximately 1.5 miles long). Beach day use area and is highly utilized. There is a rocky platform to the north and offshore rocks. Willow Creek mouth and associated marsh is located within the State Beach. There are houses on cliffs behind beach. Tidewater gobies and Western pond turtles may be found in Willow Creek. Western snowy plovers nest on this beach. Shorebirds include brown pelicans, marbled godwits, willets, crewels, whimbrels, sandpipers, and gulls. California grunion may be found on this beach in low concentrations. Southern sea otters, California sea lions and harbor seals can be observed offshore. Leatherback sea turtle critical habitat offshore.

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

10A Salt - and brackish-water marshes

**List of Resources at Risk:**

	Resource Name	Status	Presence
Birds	Western snowy plover	FT	Year-round
Fish	California grunion		Apr - May
Fish	tidewater goby	FE	Year-round
Mammals	Southern sea otter	FT, SP	Year-round
Mammals	California sea lion	FP	Year-round
Mammals	harbor seal	FP	Year-round
Reptiles	leatherback sea turtle	FE	Aug - Nov
Reptiles	western pond turtle	SSC	

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 Archeological Information Center	(805) 893-2474
C	/	Native American Heritage Commission	(916) 373-3710
O	Brian Hatfield/Marine Mammal Expert	US Geological Survey, Biological Division	(805) 927-3893
T	SURCOM (24-hr)/	California State Parks (Dispatch)	(951) 443-2969
T	Justin Viezbicke/Marine Mammal Stranding	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 506-4315
T	Tina Fahy/Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-4023
T	/	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:**

Western snowy plovers nest March - September; 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. California grunion spawn April - May; tidewater gobies peak nesting in estuary sediments, April - July; western pond turtles breed May - August. Marine mammal pupping seasons: Southern sea otters year-round; harbor seals March - June. Leatherback sea turtles most commonly observed August - November.

**Concerns and Advice to Responders:**

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. Minimize disturbance in riparian/wetland areas when possible. Minimize mechanical and human activities in vegetated dune habitat. 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. 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. Southern sea otters (threatened) pup year-round.

**Hazard and Restrictions:**

Morro Strand State Beach.

**Site Strategies:**

**Strategy: 4-130.1 Objective:** No Onsite Options: Consider Offshore Containment/Recovery/ART

**Strategy:** 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.

Table of Response Resources

**Last Page Update**

**Strategy: 4-130.2 Objective:** Other: See Strategy Box

**Strategy:** Consider closing off Willow Creek mouth when open by booming (short-skirted boom/swamp boom), or sediment or sandbag dike. Avoid taking sand from dunes to create protective berm; take sand from active beach face.

Table of Response Resources

Equipment	Sub-Type	Size	Unit	QTY	Unit	Last Page Update
Boom	Swamp			100	feet	
Misc.	Stakes			10		
skimmer				1		
Staff				2		
Vehicle	ATV			1		

**Logistics:**

**Directions:** From the south: Take Hwy 101N to Hwy 1 N, Morro Bay exit in San Luis Obispo, to 24th St. exit (across from cemetery) in Cayucos, veer to the left to parking area, to Morro Strand State Beach. Approx. 5 miles north of Morro Bay. From the north: Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 S (or take Hwy 5 S o Hwy 41 W to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1), to 24th St. exit in Cayucos.

**Land Access:** Vehicle access but dune plants and Snowy Plover's are of concern.

**On-Water Limitations:** Limitations: Depth, obstruction. Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Morro Bay boat launch approx. 5 miles south.

**Facilities, Staging Areas, Command Posts, Available Equipment:** Staging Area: State parking lot. Chevron Estero Bay Marine Terminal is approx. 2 miles south. Command Post: U.S. Coast Guard office in Morro Bay, approx. 5 miles south. CDFW office in San Luis Obispo. Airports: SLO County Airport is approx. 30 miles south. Paso Robles Airport is approx. 30 miles inland.

**Communications Problems:** None.

**Additional Operational Comments:**

