

County: **Marin & Sonoma**  
 USGS Quad: **Petaluma Point, & River**

Thomas Guide Location  
 NOAA Chart: **18654 San Pablo Bay**

Latitude N  
 3 8 06  
 Longitude W  
 122 29

Last Page Update : 1/1/2000

**SITE DESCRIPTION:**

This site begins at the mouth of the river (high power wire area) and continues upstream to Petaluma and includes all the marshes between the river levees and all tidally exposed marshes including "Carl Wilcox" marsh just north of Hwy 37. Site is under jurisdiction of Marin County Open Space. The Petaluma River has been diked along its length. The river channels are maintained for vessel traffic to the city of Petaluma. There flood plains to the dikes are high marsh with low marsh along the river margins. The marshes extend several miles up the river. There are diked ponds and extensive marshes on either side of Petaluma river. At the mouth, near Hwy 37, there are numerous residences with personal docks and the Sonoma Marina and a public boat ramp at Black Point Park.

**SEASONAL and SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN**

The marshes are an A priority all year. The snowy plover, least tern, and San Pablo song sparrow nest from March through September. The adjacent mudflats and open waters are heavily used by migratory shorebirds and waterfowl from September through April. Several Special Status Species are found here.

**RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN**

Extensive marshes are exposed via the Petaluma River along its length to the City of Petaluma including bordering emergent marsh, flood plain pickleweed marsh, and adjacent wetlands. Numerous small tidal channels provide tidal exchange to the marshes between the Hwy bridge and the mouth, including a barrow channel at the west bank under the power wires which leads back about a 0.6 miles. There are two restored marshes near the mouth: "Carl Wilcox" marsh immediately north of Hwy 37 and Sonoma Acres, southeast of Sonoma Marina.

This is excellent rearing and wintering habitat for marsh bird life including waterfowl and marsh birds. Special Status Species found here include the endangered California clapper rail and the California least tern, the threatened black rail and the snow plover, and species of special concern, the San Pablo song sparrow.

In addition to the normal diversity of marsh mammals found in this habitat, the endangered saltmarsh harvest mouse is found here. Also present is the salt marsh wandering shrew.

The soft tidal flats have rich infauna and are part of the Dungeness nursery area.

The Marin knotweed, and endangered plant, may also occur in these marshes.

**CULTURAL, HISTORIC, and ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES**

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		NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-3232
T	Joy Albertson	US Fish & Wildlife Service, SF Bay (NWR)	(510) 792-0222
O	Richard Bicknell Supervising Ranger	Baylands Nature Preserve	(650) 617-3156
E/T	Chief Ranger Dispatch	Marin, County of, Open Space District	(415) 472-0911
T	Jan Knight	US Fish and Wildlife Service	(916) 414-6702
O	Barbra Salzman	Audubon Society, Marin County Chapter	(415) 924-6057
O	John Takekawa	US Geological Survey, SF Bay Estuary Field Station	(707) 562-2000

**ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:**

## 2-571 -A Site Strategy - Petaluma River Marshes

County and Thomas Guide Location

Marin & Sonoma

NOAA CHART

18654 San Pablo Bay

2-571 -A

Latitude N

Longitude W

3 8 06

122 29

Last Page Update : 2/15/2011

### CONCERNS and ADVICE to RESPONDERS:

There are extensive salt marshes both at the mouth the Petaluma River and upriver, which are sensitive to oil. These strategies are intended to protect those marshes by excluding oil from moving from the bay up the river and into the little tidal channels at the mouth. Avoid trampling vegetation. Be aware that small endangered plants and animals are present. Avoid trampling oil into muds.

### HAZARDS and RESTRICTIONS:

Aircraft beware of high power wires. There are shallows at margins.

### SITE STRATEGIES

Strategy 2-571.1 Objective: Primary exclusion/collection strategy for Petaluma River and NW San Pablo Bay: divert oil to shore collection and boom tidal channels.

a) The collection site is at the public access immediately south of the Black Point launch ramp. Direct oil to this site by running boom from the east bank just bayward (south) of the Railroad trellis to the channel (800'), and then continue boom in cascades (1800' in 800-300' cascades), gradually angling oil out of the channel to the collection pocket. The collection pocket should be lined with 6x6+ boom and parallel the cascaded boom for 400'. (Contact Marin County Parks and Open Space about excavating an improved collection pocket as necessary.) Back collection area with sorbent boom. Line the west shoreline with 6x6+ boom (outside the line of private docks) as far as the railroad bridge. In the cascaded boom, leave an overlap opening for vessel traffic.

b) There are about 14 tidal channels (11 on the east bank and 3 on the west bank) between the railroad bridge and the power lines including an opening just northeast of the Hwy bridge which require 6x6+ chevron exclusion booming.

Strategy 2-571.2 Objective: Collection strategy for controlling oil threats to Petaluma River and NW San Pablo Bay by diverting to onwater skimmer.

Deploy a 2500' diagonal of 9x9+ Hboom from the east side of the mouth of Petaluma River under the power wires (about 150' off shore) to the second dock on the west bank. Use cascading (500') to permit vessel passage. From the west bank run 500' of 9x9+ Hboom to the skimmer. These two boom arms result in a V-collection configuration directing oil across the current to a skimmer positioned just off the second dock.

If the tidal openings have not been closed using the previous strategy: then there are about 15 tidal channels between the railroad bridge and the power lines plus an opening just northeast of the Hwy bridge which require chevron exclusion booming which will require an additional 800' of 6x6+ Hboom and 15 additional anchors and stakes.

Strategy 2-571.3 Objective: Deflection/collection for upstream oil threats or oil past exclusion strategies at the mouth, deploy collection at best possible locale.

Execute strategy as described in strategy .2 at the most favorable locale available. A similar amount of equipment including on-water skimmer will be required.

### Table of Response Resources

strategy number	harbor boom	swamp boom	Other boom type	sorb boom	Anchoring no	Anchoring type and gear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No	Skimmers Type	Special Equipment or comment No and kinds	staff deploy	Staff tend
2-571.1	2600	2800		300	35	14/22+ and 21/15+ danforths w chain	2	0	1	skimmer	40 stakes and 1000' of line	13	
2-571.2	2500	500			12	12/12+/anchors with chain	2	1	1	self-prop	shallow draft bboats	7	
2-571.3	2500	500			12	12/12+/anchors with chain	2	1		SPS	shallow draft bboats	1	

### LOGISTICS

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

The Petaluma River mouth vicinity is accessible by Hwy 37 from either Vallejo or Novato. To Petaluma Point, turn off Hwy 37 at Harbor drive. Follow Harbor drive to Grandview Ave and turn onto Grandview Ave. Turn left on Murphy Lane and right onto Deibe road. Turn right on Norton Ave, turn left on Railroad Ave, and follow it out to the end. To reach the inlet by Channel drive, turn off Hwy 37 at Harbor drive and then turn on Channel drive. Follow it until the end. This site begins at the mouth of the river (high power wire area) and continues upstream to Petaluma and includes all the marshes between the river levees and all tidally exposed marshes including "Carl Wilcox" marsh just north of Hwy 37. Site is under jurisdiction of Marin County Open Space.

**LAND ACCESS:** There is good access at Hwy 37, otherwise by foot only.

**WATER LOGISTICS:** Channel is very navigable. Very shallow mudflats. Underwater pipeline.

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Launching is available on site at public boat ramp at Black Point. Fuel, moorage and some services are available at Sonoma Marina.

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

Sonoma Marina has best suite of facilities for staging, hq, phones, services, and some food. The launch ramp may also be used for staging and parking: no other facilities are present except portapotties.

**COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:** none known

**ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:**

