

3-290 -A Site Summary- Pajaro River Inlet**3-290 -A****County:** Santa Cruz and Monterey**Thomas Guide Location****Latitude N****Longitude W****USGS Quad:** Moss Landing

1035

36° 50.0'

121° 48.9'

NOAA Chart:**Last Page Update:** 6/30/2014**SITE DESCRIPTION:**

Pajaro River marks the demarcation between Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The rivermouth is located at the NW edge of Zmudowski State Beach. Sunset/Palm beach lie to the north of Pajaro River. Freshwater flows and sand accretions determine waterway and may change seasonally. Site includes adjacent beach area approx 3/4 mile in width. Extensive salt marsh habitat in Watsonville Slough north of the river, and along the banks of the Pajaro River. The inlet is adjacent to Zmudowski State Beach, which runs downcoast from the inlet. River mouth may or may not be breached, which determines how much area behind the beach is lagooned. When river is not flowing, the pocket lagoon is mostly filled in, with established vegetation at lagoon edge. Mid-lagoon is a slightly elevated mud island, which may not be present when the river is flowing; when it is present, birds use it as a resting area. The configurations of river, lagoon, beach face and river outlet are all highly seasonally variable.

SEASONAL AND SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN

Year round for birds and steelhead. Rivermouth will naturally berm off during summer to fall months until breached by significant outflow.

RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN

All beach area is critical habitat for the western snowy plover (FT). Use caution when conducting any beach response and especially in the dunes. Nesting occurs Feb to Sept and site serves as rookery all year long.

Western Snowy Plover (FT): present year-round, nesting March-September (major nesting site). Many waterbirds use the lagoon. Bank swallows (ST) are known to occur near the river mouth.

The black legless lizard (CA Species of Special Concern) uses the vegetated dune habitat in this area. The globose dune beetle uses the habitat between the ocean and margins of the dunes. While not a significant gathering site, Southern Sea Otters (FT) are common throughout Santa Cruz and Monterey counties and may be present near-shore year round.

Steelhead trout (FT) could occur year round. Tidewater goby (FE) are found in the river mouth lagoon and adjacent slough.

Pismo clams are located along intertidal zone.

Monterey spineflower (FT) occurs in the dunes south of the river mouth.

CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES

Contact the California Dept of Parks and Recreation - Office of Historic Preservation (Eric Allison: 916-445-7044), and the Northwest Information Center (Bryan Much, Sonoma State College: 707-588-8455) 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/E/C		Santa Cruz District	CA Department of Parks & Recreation	(831) 335-6390
O			Pajaro Dunes Association	(831) 761-6293
T/E/C		Northern Communications	CA Department of Parks & Recreation	(916) 358-0333
T	Scott Kathey	Emergency Response Coord.	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	(831) 647-4251

ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:

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Steelhead trout (FT) are also present. Tidewater gobies (FE) are found in the river mouth lagoon and adjacent slough. Bank swallows (ST) are reported from the river mouth. Monterey-spineflower (FT) occurs in the dunes south of the river mouth. A State Park Natural Preserve, a sub-unit of Zmudowski State Beach, encompasses the river mouth and the adjacent beach to the south. The black legless lizard (CA Species of Special Concern) uses the vegetated dune habitat. The globose dune beetle uses the habitat at the ocean margin of the dunes.

HAZARDS AND RESTRICTIONS:**SITE STRATEGIES**

Western snowy plover nesting at this site can restrict response activity at this site. Critical area is usually roped off, but get a determination about plover presence from IC/UC environmental scientist before disturbing site.

Strategy 3-290.1 Objective: Exclude oil by berming, should the berm fail, or conditions not allow berm construction, use delective booming to deflect and collect surface contaminants.

River flow may be sufficient to prevent oil from traveling up the river channel. If necessary when the river is flowing, berm outlet using native sands. If there is outflow, underflow pipes will be necessary to allow outflow. If the river is not flowing, reinforce natural berm with native sand to prevent oil washover from surge. Back berm with additional swampboom and sorbent boom to prevent high surf washover.

Strategy 3-290.2 Objective: Exclusion by booming

Using diagonal booming inside the lagoon as backup to sediment dike or when less disturbing acitons are appropriate. Stranding oil on the seawall/rip-rap at the east end of the Pajaro Dunes Colony development. Collection point will vary based on seasonal channel configuration. Use 6" PVC piping to allow underflow discharge if neccessary. Beach access available to either side of channel.

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
3-290.1		1400		1400	18 12 Stakes & 6 Danforth, as needed			0	6" PVC pipe & fittings, dozer or equivalent berming equipment	10	
3-290.2	0	1400		300	18 12 Stakes & 6 Danforth, as needed		1	0	1200' 6" PVC, dozer or equivalent to build sand berm	10	

LOGISTICS

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

Access to the State Park coastal parking area, which gives ready access to the beach, is off Highway 1 at Struve Road via Gilbertson Road. Access to the Pajaro Inlet is by way of a locked gate at the upcoast end of the parking lot. During an oil spill emergency, this gate will be open. Follow the unpaved road to the end. At that point is the designated 4WD access to the beach.

Additional access to the upcoast end of the inlet is available through the Pajaro Dunes Colony [2661 Beach Road, Watsonville]; permission to access Colony residential roads may be arranged by calling Pajaro Dunes front office phone (831-722-4671). Equipment access is available upcoast of the Pajaro River via Palm Beach (which fronts the Pajaro Dunes Colony) and/or Sunset State Beach, off San Andreas Road. Pajaro River marks the demarcation between Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The rivermouth is located at the NW edge of Zmudowski State Beach. Sunset/Palm beach lie to the north of Pajaro River. Freshwater flows and sand accretions determine waterway and may change seasonally. Site includes adjacent beach area approx 3/4 mile in width.

LAND ACCESS

Contact State Parks for vehicle access.

WATER LOGISTICS:

Limitations: depth, obstruction
Launching, Loading, Docking
and Services Available:

Santa Cruz harbor or beach launch.

FACILITIES, STAGING AREAS, POSSIBLE FIELD POSTS AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:**COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:****ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:**

