

*County:* San Luis Obispo **ACP Division/Segment:** SL - E - S003*NOAA Chart:* 18703*Map Book:* 611 D-3*Decimal Degrees:* 35.39217 -120.86611**Site Description:**

Morro Strand Beach is a fine to medium grained sandy beach. Designated critical habitat for western snowy plovers from Toro Creek south to Morro Rock is approximately 2.8 miles long. At the southern end of this site is Morro Creek, designated critical habitat for steelhead trout. There is a small rocky platform at north end of beach that is highly utilized for recreational purposes (surfing, fishing, etc.). There is a State Beach Campground off Yerba Buena Street. Private residences behind beach. The southern portion of this beach, from Morro Rock north to Morro Creek, Morro Rock City Beach, is owned and managed by the City of Morro Bay. North of Morro Creek beach is owned and managed by the State Dept. of Parks and Recreation. Shorebirds and Pismo clams are present year-round. Other birds include brown pelicans, willets, sandpipers, gulls, and marbled godwits. Southern sea otters are common offshore. Designated critical habitat for leatherback sea turtles 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	Sensitivity
Birds	Western snowy plover	FT, SSC	Year-round	
Fish	California grunion		Mar - Jun	
Fish	steelhead - Central/Northern California	FT	Year-round	
Fish	tidewater goby	FE, SSC	Year-round	
Invertebrates	Pismo clam		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
O	Brian Owens/Senior Environmental Scientist	California Department of Fish & Wildlife, SLO	(562) 370-4770
O	Ted Schiafone/Harbor Manager	Morro Bay Harbor Department	(805) 772-6255
T	Kyle Evans/Steelhead	California Department of Fish & Wildlife	(805) 794-9547
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	/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:**

Western snowy plovers nest in foredunes 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; southern sea otters pup year-round; leatherback sea turtles most commonly observed August - November.

**Concerns and Advice to Responders:**

Western snowy plovers nest March-September and overwinter rest of year on this beach; 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. April-May spawning season for California Grunion on the beach. Morro Creek steelhead (threatened) designated critical habitat, peak spawning March - July. Western pond turtles (species of special concern) are also in Morro Creek. Minimize disturbance in Morro Creek estuary when possible; restrict 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.

**Hazard and Restrictions:**

State Park property. Residential neighborhood and high recreational use of beach.

**Site Strategies:**

**Site Validation Level: II**

**Strategy: 4-140.1 Objective:** No Onsite Options: Consider Offshore Containment/Recovery/ART  
*Strategy:* Offshore containment and recovery (OCR) are the preferred option for offshore Morro Strand Beach (additional strategies for Morro Creek), 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

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**Strategy: 4-140.2 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
Boom	Swamp Boom			100	feet
Stakes				10	
Misc.	Stake Driver			1	
Staff				4	

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**Strategy: 4-140.3 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
Fence	Construction Fencing			100	feet
Misc.	Oil Snare (pom-pom)				
Stakes				10	
Stake driver				1	
Staff				4	
Vehicle	ATV			1	

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**Strategy: 4-140.4 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. To create protective berm,

**4-140-A Site Strategy - Morro Strand State Beach (South)/Morro Creek****4-140-A**

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

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Sub-Type</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Last Page Update</b>
Vehicle	ATV			1		
Sandbags						
Piping						
Staff				6		

**Logistics:**

*Directions:* From the south: Take Hwy 101 N to Hwy 1 N, Morro Bay exit in San Luis Obispo, to Yerba Buena St. (mile marker 31.98) to Morro Strand State Beach Campground. From the north: Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 S (or Hwy 5 S to Hwy 41 W to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1), to Yerba Buena St. follow directions as above.

*Land Access:* Vehicle access available, but dune plants and Plover nesting concerns; consult with trustee agencies for vehicle access.

*On-Water Limitations:* Limitations: Depth, obstruction. Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Morro Bay boat launch (approx. 2 miles south)

*Facilities, Staging Areas, Command Posts, Available Equipment:* Staging Area: State Beach Campground parking lot. Command Post: U.S. Coast Guard office in Morro Bay approx. 2 miles south. Airports: SLO County Airport, approx. 30 min. south. Paso Robles Airport approx. 30 min. inland.

*Communications Problems:* None.

*Additional Operational Comments:*



CDFW - OSPR & USCG Site: 4-140 Name: Morro Strand Beach (South)

A. Caputo (OSPR) & J. Gold (OSPR) Date: 10/30/2023

- Filter Fence
- Dike or Berm
- Swamp Boom