

4-115 -A Site Summary- Villa Creek Inlet and Beach**4-115 -A**

County: **San Luis Obispo**
 USGS Quad: **Cayucos**

Thomas Guide Location
 324 K-9
 NOAA Chart: **Estero Bay 18703**

Latitude N
 35.1750
 Longitude W
 120.71915

Last Page Update : 5/1/2014

SITE DESCRIPTION:

See Division D map. Villa Creek inlet is small in size, is within the Estero Bluffs State Park (State Park goes from Villa Creek south to N. Ocean Blvd. in northern Cayucos), is subject to ephemeral flow conditions, and has a minor marsh behind the beach. Upper Creek area is vegetated with Pickle weed and Saltgrass. It is bordered by rocky platform to the north, and by sandy beach to the south. Upper creek vegetated with Pickle Weed and Saltgrass. Contains rocky intertidal tide pool habitat, and sandy coves with coastal terrace grasslands above. Also, note just north of Villa Creek inlet is the Cayucos Abalone Farm, aquiculture facility economic state of concern. They have a water intake pipeline, 18" in diameter, 100 yards offshore which is three feet below water surface at low tide which operates 24 hours a day.

SEASONAL and SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN

Species of concern are present year round. Peak tidewater goby (critical habitat) nesting in estuary sediments April-July. Steelhead (critical habitat) peak spawning March - July. Snowy plovers nest March-September; beach is plover designated critical habitat. Throughout Division D, black abalone (endangered) may be present in rocky intertidal habitat (designated critical habitat). Area is also designated critical habitat for leatherback sea turtles (endangered), most commonly observed Aug. – Nov.

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.

Shore birds and sea birds including brown pelicans, willets, grebes, loons are present year round.

Tidewater gobies (endangered) can be found from creek mouth to 2 miles upstream and this creek is designated critical habitat for tidewater gobies and steelhead. Southwestern pond turtles (species of special concern) are found in the creek year round.

Southern sea otters can be observed offshore year round.

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 Parks & Recreation Dept.	(805) 927-2065
O	John Alexander	Landowner, abalone farm	(805) 995-1109
T	Melissa Boggs Environmental Scientist	CDFW-OSPR	(805) 558-1005
O	Rey Fields Manager	Abalone Farm	(805) 995-2495
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	Jenny Marrek Biologist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	(805) 644-1766
C	Larry Meyer	Native American Heritage Commission	(916) 373-3712
T	Elizabeth Petras Biologist	National Marine Fisheries Service	(562) 980-3238
C	SHPO	State Office of Historic Preservation	(916) 445-7000
E/T	Dispatch State Parks	State Dept. Parks and Recreation	(951) 443-2969

ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:

4-115 -A Site Strategy - Villa Creek Inlet and Beach

County and Thomas Guide Location
324 K-9 San Luis Obispo

NOAA CHART
Estero Bay 18703

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CONCERNS and ADVICE to RESPONDERS:

Fish Disturbance - Avoid disturbing bottom lagoon sediments to protect tidewater gobies (critical habitat) especially April-July, goby nesting season. Peak steelhead (critical habitat) spawning is March - July. 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 on the bank) to reduce disturbance. Equipment and foot traffic entering wetted areas should be avoided to the maximum extent practical to prevent crushing tidewater gobies, their burrows, and eggs. Any anchors deployed in water should be placed in waters greater than 4 feet deep to avoid crushing tidewater goby burrows. If supplemental water is used to flush recommend gradually increasing the intensity/volume during the flush.

Streamside Vegetation - Minimize disturbance to streamside vegetation.

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 to aid in minimizing damage to nest sites and associated wildlife. 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 will 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:

Wave washover - May carry oil over natural berm into the lagoon during extreme onshore and tidal conditions.

Oil Burial - Wind drift and sand may bury beached oil.

Dune Habitats – Minimize mechanical and human activities in vegetated dune habitat.

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.

Sensitive Biota - Nearshore waters include sensitive rafting areas for birds, sea otters, and other marine mammals. To protect seabirds, limit spill response activities within 1,000 feet of nesting seabirds when possible. 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.

Throughout Division D, black abalone (endangered) may be present in rocky intertidal habitat (designated critical habitat). Designated critical habitat for leatherback sea turtles (endangered), most commonly observed Aug. – Nov.

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 unoiled 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:

Estero Bluffs State Park property. Abalone Farm water intake just north of creek, with water intake at MLW 3' below surface, see contact table on Summary Sheet.

SITE STRATEGIES

Strategy 4-115.1 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.

Divert oil to the beach north of creek mouth for access for oil collection.

Strategy 4-115.2 Objective: Exclude oil from getting into creek/estuary with short skirted containment boom.

When creek mouth is open block entrance with a short skirted containment 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 and snare 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.

Divert oil to the beach north of creek mouth for access for oil collection.

Strategy 4-115.3 Objective: Exclude oil from getting into creek/estuary with fencing.

When creek mouth is closed consider installing 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. Divert oil to the beach north of creek mouth for access for oil collection.

Strategy 4-115.4 Objective: Exclude/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 type and gear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No	Skimmers Type	Special Equipment or comment and kinds	staff deploy	Staff tend
4-115.1								1	SSS	Backhoe or sandbags, piping, plastic sheeting	4-6	
4-115.2		300			2			1	SSS		2-4	
4-115.3			300 FF					1	SSS	Excelsior fencing and metal stakes	2-4	
4-115.4	0	0		0	0		0	0	0			

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 N, Morro Bay exit in San Luis Obispo. 1/2 mile south of Villa Creek is turnout with hiking trail to beach and creek mouth (Villa Creek Bridge post mile marker is 40.29).

From the North: Take Hwy 101 S (or 5 S to Hwy 46 W to Hwy 1 S) to Villa Creek.

LAND ACCESS: Foot access only.

WATER LOGISTICS:

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking Morro Bay boat launch approx. 15 miles south.
and Services Available:

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

Staging area: Turnout 1/2 mile south of creek..

Command Post: Cayucos Veteran's Memorial Building, Cayucos Dr. at North Ocean Ave. (805) 995-1228 (or county OES for alternate number), approx. 5 miles South. U.S. Coast Guard office Morro Bay , approx. 15 miles south. SLO County Airport is approx. 40 min south, Paso Robles airport is approx. 45 min. inland.

COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:

