



Source: Photo Historical Society of Morro Bay.

Snow in Morro Bay

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Hoping for a White Christmas?

You may see snow on the hills FROM Morro Bay, but there are only a few public images of snow IN Morro Bay. While this Morro Bay photograph of Main Street is not dated, snow fell in San Luis Obispo County Tuesday and Wednesday, January 11 and 12, 1949 as noted in the San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune. The still existent Bay Theater is on the right in the photograph along with the soon to be Morley's Café (1955-1962). The truck on the left is a California Motor Express truck.

Snow fell in the higher elevations of San Luis Obispo County in 1885, 1910, 1922, 1944, and 1949. In 1967 chains were required to go from Morro Bay to Atascadero. The higher elevations also got snow in 1988, 1990, 1991, 2006, 2019 and 2023.

The Nipomo Mesa was snow covered until around 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 1949. The last snowfall that Nipomo resident Goodwin Dana (cousin of the famous author of Two Years Before the Mast) could recall was somewhere between 1900 and 1910. The coast guard station at Avila reported a quarter inch of snow from a squall that lasted 45 minutes; the foghorn went into operation. Of course, snow fell on the Cuesta Grade, which isn't rare as is snow in Morro Bay.

Snow has fallen at Hearst Castle, the Caliente Range around the Carrizo Plain, the La Panza Range, and the Santa Margarita Lake area.

January 2004, the San Luis Obispo Downtown Association gave county kids 16 tons of snow. Arroyo Grande had 12 tons of snow for kids in 2022. 2025 brings up to 70 tons of snow to Atascadero December 12. In other words, your best shot at a snowy scene in SLO is if the snow is trucked in.

Snowy or not, we at the Historical Society of Morro Bay wish everyone a Happy Holiday and a Prosperous New Year.