

# “READING” A BEACH

In the great book of nature, every beach is a fascinating page. Have you discovered what this one has to say?

## Not Simply Sand

Beach materials range in size from large cobbles to sand as fine as sugar.

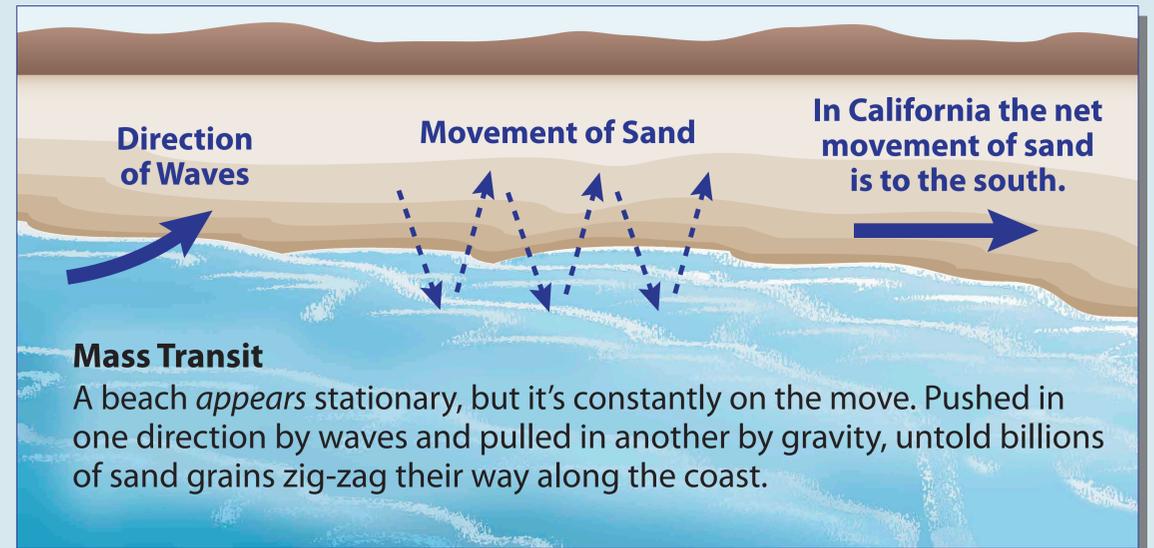


Photo courtesy Wendell Wood, Tolowa Dunes Stewards

Sand varies in composition, giving each part of the coast its own geologic “fingerprint.” Light-colored grains of quartz and feldspar are most common, but darker, heavier minerals may also be present—perhaps magnetic bits of lodestone, or flecks of garnet, zircon and other gems.

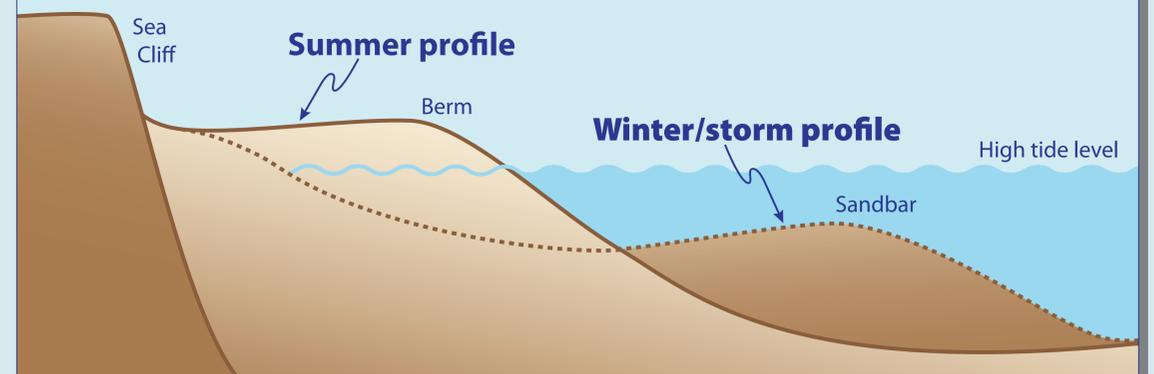


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## A Yearly Pulse

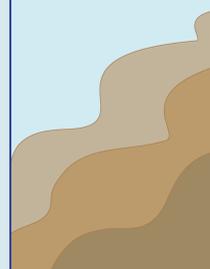
Beaches swell and shrink as the seasons pass. Storm surges wash tons of sand offshore in winter, and gentler summer seas gradually return it.



## Ephemeral Art

Wind and waves endlessly rework the sand into new designs. What patterns are on display today?

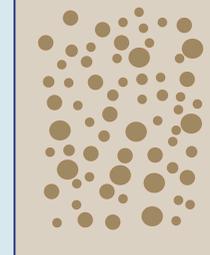
### Swash marks



### Backwash patterns



### Pin holes



### Rill marks

