

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 20-21, 2023

Prepared on April 4, 2023

ITEM NUMBER: 7

SUBJECT: Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve Programs Update

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KEY INFORMATION

Location: Elkhorn Slough, Monterey County, CA

ACTION: Information/Discussion

SUMMARY

The Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR) is one of 30 National Estuarine Research Reserves established for scientific research and estuarine education.¹ The ESNERR is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Elkhorn Slough Foundation. The ESNERR is a hub of activity and hosts programs that promote education, research, and conservation in Elkhorn Slough.

Rikke Jeppesen and John Haskins with the ESNERR, will provide a brief overview of recent program activities. The presentation will include discussion of water quality trends based on 30 years of monitoring data, data visualization tools (i.e., a [web based water quality report card](#)),² and restoration activities in the watershed. In addition, they will discuss how their work relates to the [TMDL Project](#)³ under development. The TMDL Project will address water quality degradation resulting from nutrient loading and biostimulatory responses such as excessive algal growth and low dissolved oxygen.⁴

¹ <https://www.elkhornslough.org/>

² ESNERR water quality report card website: <https://www.elkhornslough.org/water/>

³ Elkhorn Slough Biostimulatory Substances TMDL Project website: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdl/docs/elkhorn_slough/do/index.html

⁴ In support of the TMDL Project, a Water Board contract funded the development of a conceptual nutrient loading model and a synthesis of the scientific basis for biostimulatory numeric targets. Link to the final report: https://ftp.sccwrp.org/pub/download/DOCUMENTS/TechnicalReports/1259_ElkhornSlough.pdf