

Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Strategic Plan

PREFACE

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This report will be posted on the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Project web pages at <http://www.elkhornslough.org/tidalwetlandproject>.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Strategic Plan* is to describe Elkhorn Slough's estuarine habitats, characterize the main human impacts causing loss and degradation of those habitats, and provide broad conservation and restoration recommendations. This document summarizes the results of many technical discussions, scientific evaluations, and resource management decisions made over the past few years by participants in the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Project, a large collaboration led by the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. The geographic scope of this plan includes both historic and current estuarine habitats in the Elkhorn Slough watershed. The *Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Strategic Plan* is only the first critical step towards the conservation and restoration of Elkhorn Slough's estuarine habitats. Our intention is that the collaborative vision and goals within this document will provide guidance and momentum for a variety of restoration projects for many years to come.

PLAN CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 describes the location and watershed of the Elkhorn Slough estuary, relevant past management plans, and the goals of the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Project. Chapter 2 provides a brief introduction to Elkhorn Slough's estuarine habitats including the location, representative species, and key characteristics of each habitat type and selected wetland complex descriptions. Chapter 3 describes observed habitat changes and major human impacts to Elkhorn Slough estuarine habitats. Chapter 4 describes potential actions to conserve and restore Elkhorn Slough's estuarine habitats as recommended by the Tidal Wetland Project teams. Chapter 5 provides a framework to guide estuarine restoration projects in Elkhorn Slough, including relevant regulations and future funding needs to implement restoration projects, conduct priority research and monitoring efforts, and enhance community involvement activities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Past Efforts - We want to acknowledge all the past conservation and restoration planning efforts and scientific studies developed for Elkhorn Slough. These reports have built the necessary foundation for this plan and we hope our efforts can also provide guidance and momentum for future planning projects.

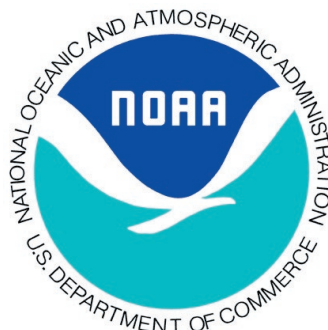
Maps - Although there are numerous methods to characterize estuarine habitats (Cowardin et al. 1979, Ferren et al. 1996), the acreages and maps presented in this plan are largely determined by vegetative cover from GIS interpretations of aerial photographs. Unless otherwise noted, maps have been created or provided by Eric Van Dyke, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Editing - Caryn Hodges and Kris Beall, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, (Draft Document)

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Participants - The *Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Strategic Plan* has been a collaborative effort of hundreds of participants starting in 2004. Strategic Planning Team and Science Panel members contributed numerous hours in the creation of technical summary documents and the discussion of human impacts on tidal marsh loss and habitat degradation in Elkhorn Slough. This restoration planning effort has helped us all gain a better understanding of Elkhorn Slough in order to create sound restoration strategies for these estuarine habitats. The following pages list Strategic Planning Team and Science Panel participants. Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve docents have also contributed many hours to the Tidal Wetland Project by taking and summarizing meeting notes, copying project reports, and assisting with planning activities for wetland trainings. These docents included Jan Shriner, Linda Jordan, John Moir, Shirley Murphy, and Peggy Casper.

Dedication - To all the people who have contributed countless hours working to protect Elkhorn Slough



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Strategic Planning Team

The primary role of the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) is to make decisions regarding the development and implementation of Elkhorn Slough estuarine restoration strategies. The SPT has created restoration goals and objectives, developed restoration strategies in collaboration with the Science Panel and provided input on background materials. The SPT will continue to evaluate and prioritize the development and implementation of restoration strategies.

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Science Panel

The primary role of the Science Panel is to provide technical advice to the SPT about restoration strategies based on the best available science. The Science Panel summarized relevant research studies and jointly developed preliminary restoration strategies with the SPT. The Science Panel will continue to provide technical reviews of restoration strategies, identify adaptive management efforts, and conduct research and monitoring activities.

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