



The Tidal Wetland Project and the Proposed Parsons Slough Restoration Project at the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Tidal Wetland Project

The Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Project is a collaborative effort to develop and implement conservation and restoration strategies for estuarine habitats in the Elkhorn Slough watershed. This collaboration, initiated in 2004, involves over 100 coastal resource managers, scientific experts, representatives from key regulatory and jurisdictional entities, leaders of conservation organizations, and community members.

The main goals of the Tidal Wetland Project are to conserve existing high quality estuarine habitats, restore and enhance degraded estuarine habitats, and restore the physical processes that support and sustain estuarine habitats. Currently the Tidal Wetland Project is implementing a project to achieve all of the above goals, the Parsons Slough Restoration Project.

Parsons Slough Restoration Project

The Parsons Slough complex is 460 acres of wetland in the Elkhorn Slough, and is one of the largest management areas in the Elkhorn Slough Reserve. Historic human modifications have contributed to bank erosion and marsh dieback in these areas.



After considering several management options to address the erosion, the Tidal Wetland Project staff and advisors have proposed the construction of a structure, similar to a tidal barrier or an underwater retaining wall, at the entrance to the Parsons Complex. The structure, which is being called a Low Sill, will mute the tidal action in the slough to reduce scour.

The primary objectives of the proposed Parsons Slough project are to reduce the tidal prism in Elkhorn Slough to minimize tidal marsh loss and habitat degradation as a result of tidal erosion and flooding, while maintaining sufficient tidal exchange and flushing to provide acceptable water quality. A secondary objective is to increase habitat diversity in Parsons Slough so that it better represents historic conditions.

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