

3-310 -A Site Summary- Elkhorn Slough**3-310 -A****County:** Monterey**Thomas Guide Location****Latitude N****Longitude W****USGS Quad:** Moss Landing

1055

36° 48.5'

121° 47.7'

NOAA Chart:**Last Page Update:** 6/30/2014**SITE DESCRIPTION:**

Elkhorn Slough is over seven miles long, roughly shaped like the letter "S" extending east from State Highway 1 which crosses the slough near its entrance, effectively dividing the Slough from Moss Landing Harbor. Union Pacific Railway lies on eastern shoreline has two trestles crossing sloughs and averages one train per hour. Site is within the following State Marine Protected Area(s): Elkhorn Slough State Marine Conservation Area and Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve. Controlling agencies include Elkhorn Slough National Research Reserve (owned/managed by NOAA and CDFW), Elkhorn Slough Wildlife Area (owned/managed by CDFW), and the Moss Landing Harbor District. Extensive marshes and tidal flats (2,500 acres). Elkhorn Slough is a salt-water estuary with seasonal freshwater input from winter storms, but twice-daily tides cause almost all of the water exchange in Elkhorn Slough. It joins Monterey Bay through the entrance to Moss Landing Harbor, a rip-rapped channel. Although narrow, the main channel carries large volumes of water which flood large marshes and mudflats on either side of the channel's full length. As a result, currents are fairly fast. Currents are particularly swift as they pass through restrictions at Highway 1 and the entrance channel at Parson's Slough, and have scoured deep channels.

SEASONAL AND SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN

Year round for species and habitats listed below.

RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN

Elkhorn Slough is an extensive marsh system and a key location for migratory birds. It is vulnerable year round, but particularly during spring and fall migrations. Extensive mudflats are vulnerable, and would be difficult for responders to work effectively without further damaging their habitat values. Small patches of Eelgrass in the slough are especially vulnerable to contamination at low tides. Caution to responders to avoid trampling of native vegetation underfoot and with heavy equipment.

Elkhorn Slough supports 260 species of birds including snowy plovers (FT). Perigrine falcons (CA Fully Protected Species) are known to occur throughout the slough.

Significant numbers of Southern sea otters (FT) are commonly present year round. Sea lions and harbor seals frequent slough.

Tidewater goby (FE) are known to utilize estuary. Common within slough: English Sole, Bat rays, Jacksmelt, northern Anchovies, CA Halibut.

Over 400 species of invertebrates including gaper clams, Washington clams, and littleneck clams occur within the sloughs boundaries.

Small patches of Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) appear in seasonal variations throughout slough.

Within the salt ponds is the mimic *Tryonia* plant species.

CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES

There are cultural sensitivities in this area. Contact the California Dept of Parks and Recreation - Office of Historic Preservation (Eric Allison: 916-445-7044), and the Northwest Information Center (Bryan Much, Sonoma State College: 707-588-8455) for specific information on historic or cultural resources in this area.

KEY CONTACTS: Trustee (T); Entry/Owner/Access (E); Cultural (C); or Other Assistance (O)

Type	Name	Title	Organization	Phone
		Manager	CDFW - Elkhorn Slough Nat'l Est. Rsrch Rsrv	(831) 728-2822
		Director	Elkhorn Slough Foundation	(831) 728-5939
		Response Mgt Response Ctr	Union Pacific Railroad	(888) 877-7267
T	Scott Kathey	Emergency Response Coord.	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	(831) 647-4251
T	Becky Ota	Marine Conservation Mgr	CDFW Marine Protected Areas Program	(650) 631-6789
T	Steve Wertz	Senior Env. Scientist	CDFW Marine Protected Areas Program	(562) 342-7184

ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Elkhorn slough has an active educational outreach program. It is known to bird watchers from all over the world.

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NOAA Chart:**Last Page Update:** 6/30/2014**CONCERNS AND ADVICE TO RESPONDERS:**

Elkhorn Slough supports 260 species of birds including brown pelicans and snowy plovers (FT). Harbor seals haul out and pup spring-summer. Sea otters (FT) have used the area for several years. There are over 400 species of invertebrates including gaper clams, Washington clams, and littleneck clams. Tidewater goby (FE) live here. Within the salt ponds is the mimic Tryonia plant species. The Monterey Indian paint brush is found at Moss Landing State Beach.

HAZARDS AND RESTRICTIONS:

Railway on eastern shoreline with frequent train traffic. Crossing at Kirby Park has no flashing lights or crossarms.

SITE STRATEGIES

There is no specific protection strategy within the slough. Protection from off-shore spills is provided by implementation of Strategy 3-305 (Moss Landing Inlet).

Table of Response Resources

strategy number	harbor boom	swamp boom	Other boom type	sorb boom	Anchoring no type and gear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No Type	Special Equipment or No and kinds	comment	staff deploy	Staff tend
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LOGISTICS**DIRECTIONS: to site (by land and/or by water, to nearest launch ramp and are access permits required.)**

Elkhorn Slough is surrounded by roads, almost all of which are two-lane. However, direct road access to water's edge is extremely limited. Union Pacific's tracks provide the best access for heavy machinery and response equipment; however, access is still limited. Elkhorn Slough is over seven miles long, roughly shaped like the letter "S" extending east from State Highway 1 which crosses the slough near its entrance, effectively dividing the Slough from Moss Landing Harbor. Union Pacific Railway lies on eastern shoreline has two trestles crossing sloughs and averages one train per hour. Site is within the following State Marine Protected Area(s): Elkhorn Slough State Marine Conservation Area and Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve. Controlling agencies include Elkhorn Slough National Research Reserve (owned/managed by NOAA and CDFG), Elkhorn Slough Wildlife Area (owned/managed by CDFG), and the Moss Landing Harbor District. Extensive marshes and tidal flats (2,500 acres).

LAND ACCESS

large trucks within harbor; otherwise 2WD at Kirby Park.

WATER LOGISTICS:

Access mostly by water but limited to channels.

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking
and Services Available:

Boat launch at Moss Landing Harbor; skiff launch at Kirby park limited by tide stage.
Wide mudflats accessible by airboat.

FACILITIES, STAGING AREAS, POSSIBLE FIELD POSTS AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:

If made available, Moss Landing Power Plant has an excellent room for a command post. The building stands by itself and is adjacent to state highway 1. Moss Landing Harbor and Elkhorn Slough NEER have good sites for mobile command posts. Moss Landing Harbor parking lot is a good staging site there are other areas in the harbor where equipment could be staged on a dock or nearby.

COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS: See Geographic Response Plan for Elkhorn Slough (hard copy).

