



PRESS ADVISORY

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CONTACT: Chelsea Tu, Monterey Waterkeeper
(831) 204-1381, chelsea@montereywaterkeeper.org

Monterey Waterkeeper Launches Central Coast Water Leaders Program with Water Quality Education Trips to Elkhorn Slough and Monterey Bay

Elkhorn Slough, Calif. – On Saturday, November 5, youth from disadvantaged communities in the southern Salinas Valley will visit Elkhorn Slough to explore this unique ecosystem and learn about the importance of protecting it. Youth will begin the day with a boat tour of Elkhorn Slough on an electric catamaran (leaves 10932 Clam Way, Moss Landing at 9:45 to 10am), followed by an afternoon discussing pollution threats and conservation efforts in the watershed.

Elkhorn Slough is the largest tidal salt marsh in California outside of San Francisco Bay. It provides rich habitat for aquatic species, migratory birds, and marine mammals such as the Southern sea otter. Elkhorn Slough and the nearby Moro Cojo Slough are state marine protected areas.

This Saturday's education trip is part of Monterey Waterkeeper's Central Coast Water Leaders Program, which aims to inspire the next generation of leaders in this region to explore and understand the immense value of, threats to, and solutions for protecting coastal and water resources.

"Everyone, including families with the least means, deserves to enjoy the beautiful Central Coast," said Chelsea Tu, Executive Director of Monterey Waterkeeper. "My hope is that when young people see how the well-being of people and ecosystems depend on the health of our rivers, groundwater, and ocean, they will be inspired to protect these precious resources."

Monterey Waterkeeper's Central Coast Water Leaders Program launched at Casa Verde Beach in Monterey on October 1, 2022, in partnership with the Wahine Project. Youth collected trash on the beach and learned about different types of pollution, from plastic waste to urban and agricultural runoff. Monterey Waterkeeper aims to inspire 220 youth water leaders by spring 2024. This program is funded by the California Coastal Commission's *WHALE TAIL*® Grant Program.

Monterey Waterkeeper protects and restores drinkable, fishable, and swimmable waters within the Monterey Region and along California's Central Coast for all to enjoy. We believe that a strategic combination of science, legal and policy advocacy, education, and community engagement is the most effective way to address existing and emerging water quality issues.

The Wahine Project is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate the barriers that prevent a diversity of youth from a relationship with the ocean and with one another.