Memorandum of Understanding between Elkhorn Slough Foundation and North Monterey County Unified School District – After School Education and Safety Program (ASES)

The Elkhorn Slough Reserve Education staff will implement an *Estuary Explorers Club* after-school program in order to expand the knowledge and appreciation of Elkhorn Elementary School ASES students in the Elkhorn Slough Reserve watershed and the neighboring coastal environments. Children will explore the wonders of the Reserve with environmental experts while learning how to ask questions and observe the world around them. The *Estuary Explorers Club* will provide an opportunity for these students to address pressing marine and coastal issues through participation in activities that utilize art, music and story-telling. *Celebrating Our Slough* will also involve a bi-lingual *Get to Know Your Slough* evening for the *Estuary Explorers Club* participants and their families providing the students an opportunity to share their knowledge.

Estuary Explorers Club

The *Estuary Explorers Club* (2-5 grade) will take place in the afternoon for 3 hours, one day a week, for 9 months, between September 7, 2016 and May 17, 2017 (respective of school calendar holidays). Estuary Explorers Club Stewards (6th grade)

ESNERR Education Programs Coordinator, Virginia Guhin will coordinate the *Estuary Explorers Club* with the After-School Specialist, Ariel Hunter, and bi-lingual assistance from a college intern.

The *Estuary Explorers Club* will consist of children in grades 2-6, all content and activities will take the differing levels of knowledge and abilities into consideration. ESNERR – Ed staff will work closely with Elkhorn Elementary ASES staff to familiarize them with the activities prior to visits and engage them in the learning experience.

Students (2-5th grade) will arrive by bus each Wednesday at 2:10 p.m. with two supervising aides. A typical *Estuary Explorers Club* day will consist of: arrival and snack time, free talk and guided discussion about the day's topics with interactive games or art, and then outdoor activities to apply or expand the discussion. At the end of each day, ESNERR – Ed staff will engage students in a debrief discussion of lessons learned, art or hands-on activities, and time to write or

draw in their journals. All activities will be designed to inspire exploration, critical thinking and a passion for the environment.

Students (6th grade) will visit the Reserve once during the year with one supervising aid. These students will participate in a restoration project on the Reserve and they will be guided by stewardship staff and volunteers.

Elkhorn Elementary School

ESNERR – Ed staff will work closely with the Director of Student and Family Services, Noemy Loveless to insure that the *Estuary Explorers Club* meets the District requirements for an after school program. ESNERR – Ed staff will consult with staff in the after-school program to guarantee the content of the activities is engaging, culturally relevant and complements their current after school program. Elkhorn Elementary School ASES program will provide two bi-lingual after-school teachers to assist ESNERR – Ed staff with hands-on activities and general supervision of students.

North Monterey County Unified School District

ESNERR – Ed staff will coordinate with the NMCUSD Student and Family Services, After-School Director to insure that the needs of all children are being met in a safe manner. NMCUSD After-School Director will assist in coordinating transportation for children during the school year and assist ESNERR – Ed staff in complying with the district standards for after school programs. ESNERR – ED staff will arrange payment directly to the school district for the cost of transportation for students each Wednesday between September 7, 2016 and May 17, 2017 to Elkhorn Slough Reserve at 2:10 and return students to Elkhorn Elementary School at 5:10pm.

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Mark Silberstein,   Kari Yeater,
Executive Director, Elkhorn Slough Foundation   Superintendent, NMCUSD

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Date   Date