

**ELKHORN SLOUGH NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE**  
1700 Elkhorn Road • Watsonville, CA 95076 • (831) 728-2822



Terri Nevins  
Regional Manager, Central Coast  
State Coastal Conservancy  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1330 Broadway  
Oakland, California 94612

May 14, 2008

Dear Ms. Nevins,

I am writing to request that the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) receive a federal award on behalf of the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR) which is owned and managed by the California Department of Fish and Game. This is an annual grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that is awarded to each of the National Estuarine Research Reserves to support research, stewardship, education, and operations. Beginning in fiscal year 03/04, the SCC has received a portion of this award on our behalf (the education portion) and has served as an administrative liaison between NOAA, CDFG and the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (ESF). At the behest of NOAA, I am now requesting that, beginning in fiscal year 09/10, the SCC receive the entire NOAA award and administer it in the same fashion as is currently being done with the education portion.

The reason for this request is that the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) by which ESNERR was dedicated in 1979, requires that a state agency be the recipient of the ESNERR grant funds. A variety of administrative roadblocks have made it impossible for CDFG to effectively administer the funds, and so we have partnered with ESF and SCC to receive the bulk of them. The partnership with ESF is strong and enthusiastically supported by NOAA and CDFG, but there are legal constraints for NOAA to continue allowing a non-profit organization to be the direct recipient of these federal funds.

Over the years, with the capable and talented help of Trish Chapman, we have developed and refined our partnership between SCC, NOAA, ESF, and CDFG, to administer the grant. The SCC receives the NOAA funds and contracts them to ESF, while CDFG maintains programmatic oversight and supervision of the work. The trail for the process has already been blazed, and it is now working very smoothly. This proposal is to simply expand the size of the award, keeping the existing roles in place. Currently, the size of the entire NOAA award for ESNERR is \$555,000. This number changes with each year's federal budget appropriation, but will likely stay within a range of \$100,000 of that for some years.



*The Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve is managed by the California Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*



If this plan is amenable to you, we will then create a Memorandum of Understanding that will articulate our various roles. This is important so that it is clear that, although the SCC is acting as the state's fiscal administrator for the award, the CDFG is still fulfilling its obligation as the primary state partner in the NERR and is responsible for the quality and appropriateness of the programs and products funded by the grant. This will also ensure that the workload for the SCC is related only to fund administration and not to other programmatic duties such as staff oversight, planning, meetings, and evaluation. We'll do the day-to-day work, if you'll receive the funds.

I will be frank in saying that we are hoping very much that this request is amenable to you. Without this mechanism for funds to come to the state, we are in jeopardy of losing our ability to support the many critical programs and staff at ESNERR. The SCC is uniquely poised to serve in this function due to its established role as an administrator of funds for other state agencies, as well as its flexibility and long history of working with our partners and ESNERR.

We are extremely grateful for the wisdom and support we have enjoyed from the SCC over many years and hope this proposal will serve to strengthen our connections further. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Trish Chapman is directly knowledgeable about the partnership on this grant (and others) that we have implemented thus far. I will contact you in the next couple of weeks as a follow-up to this written request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Suarez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Becky Suarez

Manager, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve