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Press Release

Contact: Dennis Long, Executive Director (MBSF)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phone: (831) 644-9600

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Point Lobos Foundation: Anna Patterson, anna@pointlobos.org

Elkhorn Slough Foundation: Lorili Toth, lorili@elkhornslough.org

*Central Coast Foundations Collaborate to Celebrate Statewide Underwater Parks Day,
Saturday, January 19, 2013*

Join us in celebrating the fifth annual Underwater Parks Day, honoring the implementation of a statewide network of [marine protected areas](#) (known as MPAs). With roots in southern California, **this is the first year that central coast organizations will participate by offering special events to the public.**

Just as our country's parks, forests and wilderness areas protect special places on land, California's MPAs protect unique areas in the ocean for future generations to enjoy. Point Lobos State Natural Reserve and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are two of the state's best examples of protected areas.

Funded locally by the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation, Underwater Parks Day allows us the opportunity to see special displays at both locations on Saturday, January 19, 2013.

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At Point Lobos State Natural Reserve on the 19th, divers will be setting up an exhibit for visitors to view some of the amazing underwater wildlife from 10:30 until noon. These tanks will be set up in the Whalers Cove parking area where guests can touch, feel and learn about amazing local invertebrates. From 1:30 – 3:00pm, visitors can enjoy presentations by outstanding marine environmentalists and filmmakers including Michael Allen, Chuck Davis, Kip Evans and Alberto Nava. Underwater photographs will be on display all day at the Whaling Station. There is a \$10 fee to enter Point Lobos State Reserve, once inside exhibits and presentations are free.

At Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Visitor Center will feature information on the marine mammals that thrive in the Elkhorn Slough Marine Protected Area. These include the Southern sea otter, a threaten species that is critical to the health of kelp forest environments. The Elkhorn Slough currently hosts the largest concentration of Southern sea otters on the coast of California. In addition to exhibits at the Elkhorn Slough Reserve, a presentation on marine mammals in the Elkhorn Slough will be held on Saturday, Jan 19th, from 11am to noon in the Reserve's conference room.

California is leading the nation in creating a statewide network of marine protected areas. As of December 2012 the coastal network has been completed, establishing over 120 protected places from the Oregon border to Mexico. On the central coast, as part of the initiative, we have expanded the protection offered at places like Elkhorn Slough and Point Lobos. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation is working with other ocean and coastal resource organizations to communicate the importance and significance of the network, a legacy for future generations. For more information go to www.CaliforniaMPAs.org.

POINT LOBOS

Deriving its name from the offshore rocks at Punta de los Lobos Marinos, Point of the Sea Wolves, where the sound of the sea lions carries inland, the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve has often been called "the crown jewel of the State Park System." In addition to its spectacular beauty, nearly every aspect of its resources is of scientific interest. There are rare plant

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communities, archeological sites, unique geological formations, and incredibly rich flora and fauna of both land and sea. Point Lobos hosts two Marine Protected Areas, the Point Lobos State Marine Conservation Area and the State Marine Reserve.

The Point Lobos Foundation is a charitable non-profit association formed in 1978 to support interpretive and educational programs at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve and to assist California State Parks in preserving Point Lobos. Our mission is to advance visitors' enjoyment and understanding of Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, to protect its natural environment for future generations and to strengthen the Monterey County network of coastal California State Parks. Learn more at www.pointlobos.org.

ELKHORN SLOUGH

Elkhorn Slough (pronounced "slew") is the largest tract of tidal salt marsh in California outside of San Francisco. This ecological treasure at the center of the Monterey Bay coastline provides much-needed habitat for hundreds of species of plants, animals and birds. The seven-mile slough has been designated a marine protected area.

The Elkhorn Slough Reserve is 1,700 acres of land managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, with additional funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and is open to the public Wednesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm. The Reserve partners with the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, which protects nearly 4,000 acres in the watershed, for the conservation and restoration of the slough. Learn more at www.elkhornslough.org.

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