# Text Oregon Coast Marine Science Educator Alliance logo 2020-21

# Key Vocabulary

## Muddy Waters: A Tale of Two Sloughs

**ECOSYSTEMS:**

**Ecosystem**: The living community (plants, animals) and its non-living environment (sediment, water).

**Estuary**: A semi-enclosed body of water where ocean water and freshwater mix. Includes bays, sloughs, marshes, mudflats, and tidal creeks.

**Bay**: A small body of water on the side of a larger water body.

**Slough**: A shallow, calm backwater that connects to a larger body of water.

**Marsh**: Soft, wet land usually characterized by grasses.

**Mudflat**: A muddy zone exposed at low tide.

**Tidal creek**: A freshwater creek that is affected by the ebb and flow of ocean tides.

**Riparian zone**: The land and vegetation bordering a stream, river, lake, or pond.

**WATER QUALITY:**

**pH**: A scale used to specify the acidity of a liquid.

**Turbidity**: The cloudiness of water caused by many small particles suspended in the water.

**Salinity**: The saltiness of water.

**Dissolved solids**: The amount of solids (minerals, salts, etc.) dissolved in water

**Sediment**: Small particles of rock and organic material. Includes sand, silt, and mud.

**Runoff**: Precipitation that drains off of the land surface and into a water body.

**TIDES:**

**Tidal cycle**: One high tide plus the following low tide

**Semi-diurnal tide**: Two tidal cycles per day (as occurs on the Oregon coast).

**Tidal exchange**: The movement of water in and out of an estuary during a tidal cycle.