



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Morro Bay Estuary Poetry Contest Opens April 1, 2016!**

We're excited to announce the opening of the annual **Morro Bay Estuary Poetry Contest—A National Treasure in Words** on April 1, 2016! This contest asks poets age 12 and up to write haikus that capture the spirit of the estuary, or poems in any form that focus on wildlife native to the estuary.

Writers may submit up to three poems in total. **Entries will be accepted by email until April 29, 2016.** One adult (age 18 & up) and one youth (age 12 to 17) winner will be chosen in each category and then announced on May 13. Winners will receive a prize basket and certificate, and their selected poems will be published in printed Estuary Program materials and online. One adult and one youth runner-up from each category will receive a certificate of participation, and their selected poem will be published online. **A celebratory reading featuring the winners and runners-up will be held at Coalesce Bookstore (845 Main St, Morro Bay, CA 93442) at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 20.** Before entering the contest, poets should read the complete guidelines at [www.mbnep.org/poetry2016](http://www.mbnep.org/poetry2016).

The judging panel includes guest judges Marguerite Costigan, Jerry Douglas Smith, Patti Sullivan, and Estuary Program representative Rachel Pass.

- Marguerite Costigan's poetry reflects her love of art, nature, and the music of language. She has read poetry to San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara audiences for 20 plus years and has been published in *Asylum*, *Café Solo*, and *Pudding Magazine*. She's been the featured reader at the live poetry series *Corners of the Mouth*, and San Luis Obispo's annual *Poetry Festival*. Marguerite is the current Poet Laureate for San Luis Obispo County.

- Jerry Douglas Smith is a Salida, Colorado native. He's been a storyteller all his life. Living at 7000 feet in the heart of the Rockies, he acquired a natural education informed by rivers, raccoons, Native Americans, smart trout and wise old forests. A backpacker and fly-fisherman, he is a naturalist in the old sense—an insatiably curious student of human nature and the universe. For 2013 and 2014 Jerry was Poet Laureate of San Luis Obispo. He's a founding member of 24-year-old Poets on the Edge critique group. For 15 years, he has hosted Second Sunday at Seven, a monthly poetry reading at Coalesce Garden Chapel in Morro Bay.
- Patti Sullivan's books include, *For the Day, Not Fade Away*, and *At The Booth Memorial Home for Unwed Mothers 1966*. Other poems appear in *Solo Novo*, *LummoX*, *ARTLIFE*, and *Lilly Ledbetter: Women Poets Occupy the Workplace*. She assists with the Corners of the Mouth at Linnaea's, Poetry at the Steynberg, and the Annual San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival curated by Kevin Patrick Sullivan. She is also a visual artist with several book covers to her credit and group and solo exhibits.
- Rachel Pass is the Communications & Outreach Coordinator for the Estuary Program. She has edited several collections of poetry.

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a nonprofit organization that brings together citizens, local government, other nonprofits, agencies, and landowners to protect and restore the Morro Bay Estuary for people and wildlife. The Estuary Program has been conducting monitoring and research, restoring natural habitats, and educating residents and visitors on how to keep Morro Bay clean and healthy since 1995.