

25 Years of Collaboration & Building Partnerships

For 25 years, the Laguna Foundation has been the voice for Sonoma County's most spectacular land and water asset...The Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Most of Sonoma County's population lives within the 254-square-mile Laguna Watershed and so the health of the Laguna affects everyone, not only those living along the 22-mile waterway. A clean and adequate supply of water for people, wildlife, birds and agriculture is critical to this region and beyond.

Working closely with our partners and collaborators on land, water, and recreational programs, we focus in five areas to:

- Ensure water resources for all.
- Restore lost wildlife habitat.
- Maintain a healthy flyway for birds.
- Ensure the Laguna remains a place for safe and abundant recreation.
- Educate and inspire people of all ages to appreciate the Laguna.

A Look Back at Key Conservation Projects

Brent Reed, Restoration Projects Supervisor

The Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed is a highly altered landscape. Early settlers began clearing land in the Gold Rush era to make way for agriculture and to fuel mining efforts. Draining and alteration of the Laguna's wetlands continued into the mid-20th century. By the 1970's, the public's attitudes toward the environment began to shift. By acknowledging the problems associated with continued degradation of the Laguna, we increased efforts to improve its future.

For the last 25 years, the Laguna Foundation has been working to restore the watershed and to bring back the abundant wildlife that once thrived here. In 2005, the Foundation started to implement restoration projects throughout the Laguna de Santa Rosa floodplain from the headwaters in Cotati to the confluence with Santa Rosa Creek. Today, the Southern Laguna Restoration Project is actively restoring over 1.5-miles of continuous riparian forest between Stony Point and Llano Roads. We also have smaller projects on Irwin and Gravenstein Creeks.

Continued on page 3



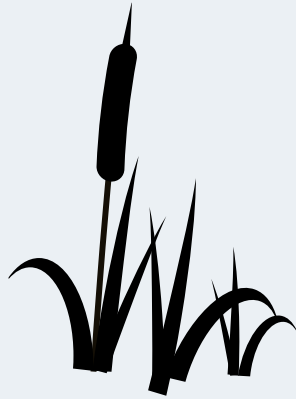
Visitors of all ages come to appreciate and hike the magnificent Laguna Wetland Complex.

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Board of Directors Report



As we celebrate our 25 years of conservation work in the Laguna, we wish to take this opportunity to thank David Bannister who recently left the Laguna Foundation. David served as Executive Director and guided the Foundation for the past five and-a-half years, in addition to serving for six years on its Board of Directors. He leaves behind a strong staff, great community partnerships, and a Laguna that has benefited from the conservation and restoration programs during his tenure.

The Foundation board is commencing a search for a new Executive Director who will lead the Laguna Foundation in its continuing conservation and public education initiatives. With the generous support of our donors, the Foundation will continue to take a lead role with our partners to conserve and monitor land, water and recreational uses in our Laguna Watershed.

I would especially like to thank everyone who helped raise the funds to match the \$100,000 grant offered by our Board of Directors at year-end. Every dollar donated was put to work immediately to support ongoing land conservation projects for the Laguna.

We all have a shared responsibility to nurture a healthy Laguna; the quality of our lives depends on it. The Laguna staff, board of directors and volunteers remain focused on furthering our mission.

For the Laguna,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raini Vallerino Sugg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raini Sugg
Board President

Nature's Corner: California Wild Rose



The California wild rose (*Rosa californica*) is a native to chaparral and woodland areas of Oregon, California, and the northern part of Baja California, Mexico. This hearty plant can survive drought, though it grows most abundantly in moist soils near water sources. Wild rose in the landscape could be considered a "keystone" species, that is, a plant that cements a relationship between the other plants, the animals, birds and insects that inhabit the area. The flowers support many pollinator species including our native bee populations and butterflies. It also provides excellent nesting habitat for songbirds. Its long blooming season will be a compliment to any plant nearby. After blooming, wild rose hips persist on the plant and are an important food source for birds and mammals. A perfect plant for your native garden habitat!



Much of the work done in the Middle Reach is completed with the help of the Laguna Keepers, an all volunteer group that works one Saturday a month on projects around the Laguna wetland complex.

Conservation Projects - Continued from page 1

Our largest project to date, the Laguna de Santa Rosa Middle Reach Restoration Project, began in 2006 and is nearly complete. This project is an amalgamation of different individual projects that form a 2-mile band of restoration projects on the east side of the Laguna, between Highway 12 and Occidental Road. Our *Laguna Keepers* volunteers have performed planting and stewardship at nearly all of these sites. All together, the Laguna Foundation has had a hand in restoring more than 100-acres of degraded habitat.

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Middle Reach Restoration Project is a great example of a success that combines vision, restoration efforts, and partnerships. This project has restored nearly 60-acres of riparian forest, oak savannah, and seasonal wetlands. To assemble this puzzle, the Laguna Foundation partnered with multiple government agencies and property owners including: City of Sebastopol, City of Santa Rosa,

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Community Foundation, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Balletto Vineyards, California State Coastal Conservancy, Habitat Conservation Fund, and the USFWS Wildlife Conservation Board. Hundreds of volunteers have worked on this project, from individuals to school groups and interns from the local colleges.

What's next? The Laguna Foundation continues to work with our project funders and partners and seeks to work with new partners, landowners, and stakeholders as we move along the main Laguna channel and along the tributaries that feed the Laguna. Water flows downstream, and anything we can do to improve watershed function will ultimately help the overall health of the Laguna de Santa Rosa ecosystem. The steps we take today will ensure a lasting and healthy Laguna for tomorrow.

Middle Reach and Southern Laguna Restoration Projects



Map details: 3.5 miles (90 acres) of completed riparian restoration along the main Laguna channel and tributaries. Current restoration includes 10 additional acres in the Middle Reach Project.

Cartography by Hattie Brown

Learning Laguna: Connecting Children with Nature for 16 Years

Christine Fontaine, Director of Education programs



Past Docent and current Board Member, Hugh Helm, encourages these students to explore birds of the Laguna at the Bird Investigation Station.

Back in 1999, a handful of committed volunteers developed curriculum to teach elementary school children about the Laguna. This early curricula evolved into Learning Laguna, a wetlands education program which fulfills California state science and language arts standards for grades 2 through 4. The Foundation has trained 225 volunteers to teach our environmental curriculum.

The program has stood the test of time, including changing curriculum standards, to remain a high-quality, learning-through-experience course for school children. The program remains a valuable asset to classroom teachers who often base whole units of study around Learning Laguna or bring the program in for “real life” context to lessons. The creators of the Learning Laguna classroom and field activities sure knew what they were doing in developing Laguna specific hands-on activities! We have made updates and fine-tuned the activities a bit over time but even today’s busy, screen-focused children have an innate need to understand and connect with nature. Countless studies say the same thing: being in nature stimulates children’s imaginations and creativity, enhances cognitive flexibility, problem-solving ability, and self-discipline.

We can all be proud that the program remains in high-demand with teachers; that children still delight in

their Laguna learning experiences; that grant funders, individual donors and Laguna Foundation members, board members and docents see its value and keep giving and supporting its success! Past and current docents certainly deserve recognition for the countless hours they have devoted and heart they have put into visiting 542 classes and leading 542 field trips in the last 16 years! Over 24% of the children under the age of 18 in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Windsor and Sebastopol have had the Learning Laguna experience! We know those children are growing up with an appreciation for the Laguna and we know they will consider the Laguna in the decisions they make when they become the adult care takers of Sonoma County.

According to the most recent statistics (2013) available on the Sonoma County Office of Education website, and based on the schools that we are working with this school year:

- In the 2014-2015 school year, 54% (649) of students participating in Learning Laguna are classified as Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED)
- For 34% (401) of our students, English is their 2nd language

In the 2015 calendar year, Learning Laguna Docents will serve approximately 1,450 students in 48 classes within 19 schools throughout Rohnert Park, south, southwest, central & east Santa Rosa, Windsor and Sebastopol. What a huge increase from the one classroom that volunteers went to in 1999! Learning Laguna is provided free to the schools and we provide bus transportation scholarships to approximately 65% of classes.



Laguna Keepers Calendar

Laguna Keepers are the Foundation's habitat restoration volunteers. Each month, in partnership with the City of Santa Rosa, we meet to give the Laguna a little hands-on love! All work dates are on Saturday from 9am to noon. Wear sturdy shoes and be prepared to get dirty. Snacks provided, but bring gloves, water, and friends!

Only heavy rain cancels.

April 11 - 6th Annual Laguna Re-Leaf Day!

The Laguna Re-Leaf Day is our annual fundraising event to help support our efforts to secure a bright future for the Laguna. You may be asking "were we not already at Irwin Creek during this Laguna Keepers season?" Yes we were, but we are doing yet ANOTHER restoration project on a new section of Irwin Creek! We just keep expanding the riparian corridor on this tributary to the Laguna. It is absolutely amazing to see what happens in just a couple hours during the Laguna Re-Leaf tree planting event!

May 9 - Laguna Environmental Center

Can you get too much of a good thing? Not when you are talking about having the Laguna Keepers at the Laguna Environmental Center! The seasons change and so do the opportunities for fun stewardship work at the LEC. Plus, you can check in on how November's work is turning out. This Laguna Keepers will dovetail into another Open House at the LEC, so stay tuned to find out what fun presentation, public education event, and/or art exhibit is planned for the Open House after the workday.

Questions? Contact Brent Reed: 527-9277 x101
or brent@lagunafoundation.org

Restoration Ambassadors



Anyone who has served on our Board of Directors, or has gone through the Laguna Docent or Laguna Guides Training, may be interested to know of a new program getting started: **Restoration Ambassadors!** With a grant from the Coastal Conservancy, we are putting together a volunteer training program to teach about restoration ecology and Laguna-specific restoration projects.

We will assume some prior knowledge of the Laguna ecosystem so we can focus on deepening the volunteer's understanding of the importance of restoring and preserving Laguna function. With that enhanced understanding we will guide walks to restoration sites so participants can see some of the amazing work that has been done in partnership with cities, agencies, and with a lot of community support. This new program will enable all of us to watch the plants get established over time, to watch the riparian zone thicken, to see the birds come in, and to be part of a healthier future for the Laguna.

Stay tuned as this new program develops to find out how you can become a Laguna Restoration Ambassador.

Saying Goodbye to a Friend of the Laguna

Denise Cadman, City of Santa Rosa Environmental Specialist and Laguna Keeper Volunteer



Tom Pringle passed away on February 5th, 2015, leaving behind a world that will be less colorful in his absence. Tom was a one-of-a-kind individual with a rich personal history and diverse set of interests. He will be remembered as a loving, generous soul, dedicated to

seeing and creating beauty in the world.

Tom was an early and regular volunteer for the Laguna

Keepers. He loved planting trees as an act of caring for the earth. He also trained as a docent and interacted with children, radiating kindness and a sense of wonder. He gathered an eclectic group of people together to help on special projects known as Team Prunus. This hard working group of volunteers worked and laughed together with Tom who shared philosophy and poetry.

Other circles of community he touched include the Love Choir, the Hubbub Club, Women in Black, Less is More, Sufi dancing and the Tijuana Shovel Project. I know we will all remember his smile.

Laguna Foundation Public Education Calendar

*We host several public education events per month for all ages. We hope you will join us and spread the word!
All events are held in Heron Hall at the Laguna Environmental Center unless otherwise noted.
900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401*

Laguna Environmental Center Open Houses

Second Saturday of the Month, 10:00am-3:00pm
April 11, May 9, June 13, and so on . . .
Free, all ages, no RSVP required

Learn about the natural and cultural history of the Laguna de Santa Rosa and historic Stone Farm by taking a guide-led tour or exploring a variety of hands-on activities. Bring a picnic and take in the beautiful views.

Geology of the Laguna

Presentation with Dr. Jane Nielson
Thursday, April 23, 7:00-8:30pm
FREE. No RSVP required.



Nestward Migration: Docent-led Walks to View the Nesting Colony at Delta Pond

Saturday, May 2, (5 walk times to choose from)
8:00am, 8:15am, 8:30am, 8:45am, or 9:00am
\$15 per person.

All ages welcome. Pre-registration required.
This is an annual fundraiser for the Learning Laguna Bus Scholarship Fund and is a delightful morning event not to be missed! It will sell out, so sign up as soon as possible!

Edible and Medicinal Plants of California

Floristic table displays with Tellur Fenner
Saturday, May 9, 11:00am-2:00pm
FREE. No RSVP required

Edible and Medicinal Plants of California: A Bioregional Exploration, Presentation with Tellur Fenner
Saturday, May 9, 3:00-4:30pm
\$10 at the door. No RSVP required.

Tellur will share many of the more common (and lesser known) native/naturalized plants found growing throughout the state, with a focus on historical and modern uses.

Groundwater of the Santa Rosa Plain

Presentation with Marcus Trotta
Thursday, May 28, 7:00-8:30pm
\$10 at the door. Pre-registration required.

Whole Willow Shoot Twined Basket Workshop

with Charlie Kennard
Saturday, May 30
9:30am-3:30pm
\$75 (\$65 members).
Pre-registration required.



Learn how to make willow shoot baskets at this FUN, hands-on, workshop!

Covered in Birds: A Weekend Celebration of Birds in Poetry and Song

Saturday, June 6.
On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation Take Jack in Concert with Sonoma County Poets. More details coming soon to our website.

Feathered Friends of the Laguna: Bird Watching Field Trip

with Lisa Hug
Sunday, June 7, 8:30am-12:30pm
\$45 (\$35 for members).
Pre-registration required.

Farming For Mother Nature

Presentation with Paul Kaiser, Singing Frogs Farm
Saturday, June 13, 3:00-4:30pm
FREE. No RSVP necessary.

Messengers of Summer: Sonoma County's Dazzling Dragonflies

Workshop with Kathy Biggs
Saturday, June 20, 9:00am-3:30pm
FREE. Pre-registration required through Landpaths.org

We continually add new events. Please visit our website www.lagunafoundation.org/laguna_walks_classes or contact Anita Smith, Public Education Coordinator at (707) 527-9277, ext. 110, anita@lagunafoundation.org.

Thank you to our generous supporters since our last *Meanderings*

(Represents donations received 10/13/14 through 3/20/15).

We are grateful for your support. Thank you for helping to educate and inspire people of all ages to protect the Laguna.

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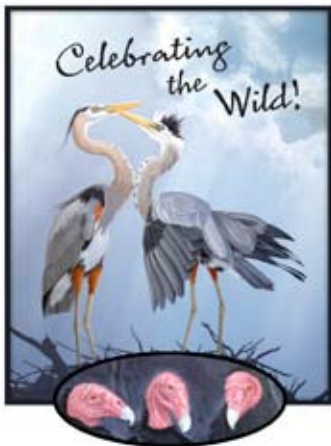
Founded in 1989, the Laguna Foundation is a place-based organization focused on the Laguna de Santa Rosa, a Wetland of International Importance. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit with the mission to restore and conserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to inspire public appreciation of this Wetland of International Importance. The Foundation conducts educational programs, implements conservation science and restoration projects, works with landowners and public agencies to protect and improve Laguna resources, and advocates for appropriately managed opportunities for the public to enjoy the Laguna.

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