



FALL/WINTER 2021

“One foot in front of the other ... It’s how you walk a mile.”

Christ ne Fontaine, Education Director (adapted from a Chinese proverb ascribed to Lao Tzu)

This was the year of planning to reemerge, only to have plans change. And it was the year we made two team pacts: Follow momentum. Stay focused on the long game.

We embraced our pandemic-induced state of flux with the mantra, *a healthy environment begins at home*, spreading the message to thousands of people virtually and through direct engagement. We also practiced the mantra ourselves through habitat restoration for climate mitigation and ecosystem recovery in our home, the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed.

There’s no denying that climate change is impacting us all. Much of California is experiencing “*Exceptional Drought*” —the worst possible condition—resulting in water shortages in reservoirs, streams and wells, and creating water emergencies. In Sonoma County, these extremes stress the water flows in the Laguna’s creeks and seasonal wetlands, impacting the diverse web of life from aquatic insects to fish, bats, and birds. This may not be a temporary condition but a new era of extremes: droughts, floods, wildfires, and record-breaking temperatures. It’s hard to wrap our heads around these unwelcome yet real possibilities.



“I grew up on the Russian River and after seeing my home degraded and polluted, I was driven to do anything I could to take care of and steward it. The Laguna Foundation does meaningful environmental work, and I want to be a part of that.”

Asa Voight, Restoration Field Supervisor

What is welcome and genuine is the unwavering dedication and commitment of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, sustaining its 30+ year legacy of restoring imperiled habitats and inspiring generations to learn how to care for our unique wetland ecosystem. As we tackle the negative impacts created in the Laguna by activities in the past, we are also developing strategies that address the future needs of wildlife and their habitat in a changing climate. Each one of us has a role to play in the restoration of the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

It’s challenging to our hearts and minds to focus on the problems, but we find strength in knowing that we have already come a long way. Since our founding, our work has been about putting one foot in front of the other, often in the form of planting one tree at a time. Our efforts are making a difference. The Laguna Foundation has transformed more than *200 acres* throughout the watershed from barren streambanks and fields to diverse riparian forests and lush wildflower meadows. Many of these areas now serve as corridors for wildlife and enrich our outdoor experiences. Bald eagles, a species near extinction in the 1970s, are again nesting in the Laguna watershed. River otters have returned to swim in its creeks. These are heartening sights and two powerful indicators of a recovering ecosystem.

While restoration staff works hands-on with the land, our educators spark the minds of young and old, inspiring students of all ages to care for the unique and diverse watershed in which they live, work, and play. To date, we have shared the wonders of the Laguna with more than *20,000 children* and tens of thousands of adult learners and families.



“My first experience in conservation was working as an intern and our main focus was invasive species removal. Working with this mindset allowed me to appreciate the fresh water that comes from the tap because that is how preserving biodiversity and protecting our community’s watershed immediately affects us.”

Kira Rowan, Restoration Field Technician

These achievements are not possible without you. Today, we invite you to join us in the

next mile of our journey towards a restored and healthy Laguna. Please consider taking the step of a financial gift. Perhaps it is your first step or one of many you have made. Either way, your step today will move us farther along that mile, ensuring the strength and future of our Laguna de Santa Rosa—the beating heart of a healthy Sonoma County.

Today, when you make a gift to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, it will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000 thanks to the generosity of community leaders.

There will come a time when it is too late to help our environment. We are not at that time. Together we can make a difference. Double your impact today by joining our \$100,000 match with a gift to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. Throughout history, it has sometimes been too late, but it has never been too soon.

Sincerely,

Anne Morkill
Executive Director

P.S. Connie Coddling, Gordon Dow, Anisya and Lynn Fritz, and Karen and Vic Trione have been inspired to create this \$100,000 matching gift fund. They hope to inspire you to join them. Please give generously.



“Sonoma County holds in its arms the habitat for nearly the entire Earth’s population of three endangered plants. The Laguna Foundation is the only entity proactively working to protect these beautiful species from going extinct in the wild forever ... My greatest hope is to stabilize these fragile populations and build a scaffold of support to keep them going into the future.”

Sarah Gordon, Conservation Science Program Manager

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*Learn more about our mission by visiting our website at LagunaFoundation.org.
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