



# Laguna Explorers: Camp Tule

## *Parent/Guardian Handbook* *2023*

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## Welcome to Laguna Explorers: Camp Tule!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for choosing to send your child to the Laguna Foundation's Camp Tule! I warmly welcome you and your family to Camp Tule and look forward to getting to know your child and sharing the wonders of the Laguna and the natural world with your special young one.

You may wonder about the name of this camp. Tule (too-lee) (*Schoenoplectus acutus*) is a plant native to the Laguna de Santa Rosa and freshwater marshes throughout North America.. So, it seemed fitting to identify our camp by this iconic wetland plant; a name that keeps wetlands forefront in our minds. (Plus, we think it is cute and fun to say!)

We believe that building personal connections to nature will serve your child for a lifetime. Our camp days together will be filled with fun and dynamic nature games, science learning, sensory awareness activities, nature walks, community building and lots of nature crafting. There will also be some unstructured time each day for exploration and quiet enjoyment of our surroundings.

Please know that your child will be well taken care of during the week and that we take our responsibility for your child's well-being seriously. Thus, we will provide a safe, nurturing atmosphere and will strive to meet your child's needs throughout each day. We want your child to thrive, have fun, feel joyful and peaceful, stretch, learn and grow while making new friends with other children, camp staff, and the plants and animals of the Laguna.

I hope this handbook answers your questions about Camp Tule. And, I am available to talk with you at any time should you have special concerns or more questions.

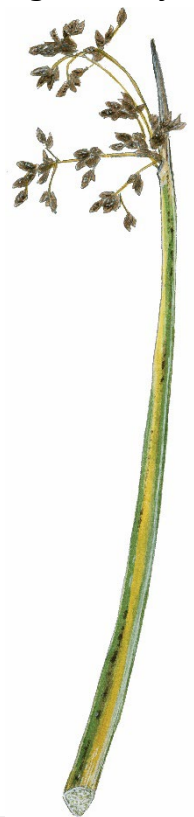
Sincerely,

**Christine Fontaine**



Laguna Foundation Education Director & Camp Tule Director

(707) 527-9277 ext. 102  Christine@LagunaFoundation.org



Tule (*Schoenoplectus acutus*)  
Illustration by John Muir Laws

## Section 1: Getting to Know Us

### Our Mission

The Laguna Foundation is a non-profit organization working to restore and conserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to inspire appreciation of this Sonoma County Wetland of International Importance. As a camp, our mission is to foster children's personal connections to nature and the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to inspire children to care about, nurture and protect this land we all call home.

### History

The Laguna Foundation was formed in 1989 following the convening of the State of the Laguna conference, which brought together individuals plus private and public agencies with a stake in the Laguna's condition and future. The following year, the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation was incorporated as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit that remained an all-volunteer group until 2002 when the first staff member was hired. Today, the Foundation's mission is accomplished by the work of a Board of Directors, staff, and hundreds of community volunteers. We take on large restoration and conservation science projects, educate 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade children in our *Learning Laguna* school program, and share the wonders of the Laguna with the broad community through a year-round selection of educational walks, talks, and workshops that explore the natural wonders of the Laguna and inspire creative expression. Camp Tule began in 2018 as a natural extension of our Learning Laguna program.

### Our Site



The Laguna Environmental Center and the Laguna Foundation office occupy 4 acres of the 112-acre property called Stone Farm that is owned by the City of Santa Rosa. We renovated the historic farm house and moved our offices onsite in 2009. The development of the native plant landscape, children's playscape and the construction of Heron Hall followed and the site was officially opened in 2012. Since then, the Laguna Environmental Center has blossomed into a wonderful home for Camp Tule. We have all the necessary comforts, plus Irwin Creek and the Laguna itself are both within walking distance.

Surrounding the Laguna Environmental Center lay fields of grazing cows, crops, and acreage along Irwin Creek that are under active restoration.

**Please note:**

- The property is a working farm. We will take every possible step to ensure that all aspects of Camp and the Laguna Environmental Center run according to plan. However, there may be a rare instance in which we need to modify our daily schedules with short notice due to circumstances outside our control. If this is the case, we will contact you as soon as possible. If circumstances require us to cancel camp days, we will refund your tuition for the day.
- Since the Laguna Environmental Center is also a wildlife area, please leave pets at home for their safety and the protection of the wildlife that depend on the resources here. Please do not leave animals in vehicles during your visit. Service animals are exempt.

**Camp Tule Staff**

In addition to Laguna Foundation staff members, including the Education Director and Environmental Educators, the Camp Tule staff includes counselors that are qualified high school students with a focused interest in environmental education, and college students who are working on completing degrees in teaching or environmental science. We also hire naturalists and environmental educators or other specialist teachers to round out our programming.

Each Laguna Foundation staff member is an experienced environmental education specialist who is trained in working with children, and is either certified in Wilderness First Aid and/or CPR/First Aid to ensure that your child is in the best care regarding their education, enjoyment and safety.

Additionally, every person over 18 who is working at camp has successfully completed a background check. Permanent Laguna Foundation staff have all been fingerprinted and are Child Abuse Mandated Reporters.

Our staff looks forward to getting to know both you and your children during this fun week together!



## Section 2: The Camp Program

### Typical Daily Schedule

Each day of camp will differ slightly, but here is a general overview.



- 🌸 Arrival begins at 8:50am
- 🌸 Camp begins at 9:00am
- 🌸 Whole group morning circle 9:00~9:30
- 🌸 Nature walks to Irwin Creek & the Laguna, games, art & science: 9:30~12:00
- 🌸 Munch & play & field journaling 12:00 ~1:00
- 🌸 Mosey back to the LEC 1:00-2:00
- 🌸 More activities & crafts 2:00-2:45
- 🌸 Closing Circle 2:45-3:00
- 🌸 Pick-up at 3:00 pm



## Camp Groups

Camp enrollment is limited to 24 children each session. Children will spend quality time with all our staff who will help each child gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for our watershed and surrounding environment. We will also work with children in small groups of 6-8 where they will have time with their buddies, including opportunities to make new friends.

## Behavioral Policy

Ensuring that every child under our care is safe and respected is our number one priority at the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation.

On the first day of camp we build our agreements with the campers. Staff will communicate clear expectations while striving to be the best possible role models for all campers. Our staff will treat every child with respect while maintaining set boundaries that ensure the physical, mental, and emotional safety of every child in our care. In turn, children are expected to show kindness and respect to peers, staff and the natural world at all times.



If a child has difficulty maintaining the agreements and expectations, staff will work with the child to solve underlying feelings and issues, involving the parents as necessary. If a child continues to be disrespectful, this may lead to the child's dismissal from the camp program without a registration refund.

## Section 3: Preparing for Camp

We all want a sickness-free summer! Please follow:

- Keep your campers at home if your child or any members of your household have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Of course, please also keep your child at home if they, or anyone in your household is sick or displays any of these symptoms:
  - Fever at or above: 100.4
  - Coughing or sneezing or congestion
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - Sore throat or fatigue, or headache or muscle pain
  - Nausea or vomiting or diarrhea
  - New loss of taste or smell
- Additionally, children and camp staff will be monitored throughout the day for the above symptoms. Anyone exhibiting symptoms will be immediately removed from the group and will wait in an isolation area until they can be picked up by parent/guardian or another person on their emergency contact list.

### How to Dress & Items to Bring

Our summer day camp is focused on connecting children to the natural world. Therefore, we spend the entire day outside. Below is a list of items to wear and/or bring to ensure that your child is fully prepared for a comfortable, fun and educational day at camp.

- **Clothing:** Campers should wear variable weather, layered clothing. It may be cool and foggy in the morning, then warm up precipitously in the afternoon.
  - **Please send your child in clothes and shoes that you do not mind getting dirty.**
  - While shorts are not prohibited, long pants may be most comfortable as we do spend time sitting on logs, picnic benches & directly on the ground (ticks, dirt, dry grasses, etc.).
- **Closed-toed shoes.** Campers should wear comfortable boots or sturdy sneakers to camp each day to ensure that their feet are protected on uneven trails and surfaces. Closed toe shoes are required at all times. NO SANDALS.
- **Water bottle:** A filled, reusable water bottle with your child's name written on it. Preferably not single-use plastic. We have stainless steel loaner bottles if needed.
- **Sun hat** for personal shade.
- **Sunscreen:** Please apply sunscreen before your camper arrives each day. If you would like, send a bottle of sunscreen in the backpack so your child can re-apply throughout the day.

- **Backpack** to carry water bottle, hat, sunscreen, etc. & to stow jackets/sweaters. We have loaner backpacks if needed.
- **Food:** A healthy **lunch and snacks**. Please pack nutritious snacks and an ample lunch for your child.
  - For the safety of all campers, please do not send peanuts, peanut butter or peanut products
  - Please pack the lunch in a sturdy lunch container.
  - Lunch should be filled with items that do not need to be heated in a microwave or oven.
  - We ask that you please **write your child's name on their lunch box as well as any containers in their lunch box**, to ensure that your child leaves with the items they arrived with.

**\*\*\*\*All items brought to camp should be clearly labeled with the child's name. There will be a lost in found box that will contain any personal items left behind.\*\*\*\***

### **A NOTE ABOUT TICKS**

**Ticks** are present in the grassy areas where we explore. They are small, 8-legged members of the arachnid family that are natural part of the Laguna ecosystem. We treat them as interesting and worthy of respect, and we avoid instilling fear of ticks by teaching personal (and collective) responsible behavior when in tick habitat. It is important to take precautions to avoid tick bites because they can transmit disease. Know that we all conduct regular "tick checks" throughout each camp day. We pause often to check our hairline, behind the ears, pant legs and exposed skin, then brush off any ticks that might be crawling on any of us. If we find an embedded tick on any child during camp, our trained staff will immediately and properly remove the tick.

The majority of ticks we find are the American dog tick which are not as likely to transmit Lyme Disease as other species. There are several precautions you can take before and after the camp day to reduce the chance of ticks becoming embedded. **REPEL:** Bind long hair into braids, pony tails or buns. Dress in light colored, long sleeve shirts and long pants. Tuck pant legs into socks. Generally, we do not recommend using pesticides. However, applying insect repellent with DEET or Permethrin to your child's clothing, including socks and shoes before coming to camp will reduce the likelihood of tick bites.

**REMOVE & SHOWER:** Please check your child for ticks at the end of each camp day. After you come indoors, put the clothes they were wearing in the dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill any ticks that may be on the clothes. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. We also recommend a shower and a thorough body scan each day.



If you find an embedded tick, remove it right away using tweezers or a tick removal tool. Thoroughly clean the area and monitor for redness, swelling and rash. Most tick-borne diseases begin with flu-like symptoms and/or a rash that usually develop 2 to 14 days after being bitten. Seek medical attention if any of these symptoms develop.

For more information, visit the [California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Imz/Pages/tick-borne-diseases.aspx), tick-borne diseases webpage. Also, Sonoma-Marín Vector Control has free tick-removal tools and packets: <https://www.msmosquito.org/request-a-tick-package>.

### Items Not to Bring to Camp

We ask that **all electronics (including mobile phones), toys, books, and money be left at home**. Know that if any of these items do come to camp, we will collect them and the child will not have access to the items until pick up time.

## Section 4: Drop Off/Pick-up Procedures

### The First Day of Camp

The first day of camp is fun-filled and exciting. To get us off to a great start, please plan to stay with your child for 10-15 minutes (or as needed) on the first morning to help them get comfortable at the Laguna Environmental Center and with the other children & staff. After check-in, please walk your child over to the playscape where our counselors and naturalists will warmly greet them and make introductions to the other campers.

### Arrival & Check-in:

The check-in process begins at 8:50 AM. Please park in the first parking bays or along the driveway **before the palm trees** and walk your child over to the sign-in area, located at the “entry kiosk” to the Laguna Environmental Center. **Look for the large Heron head on top of the kiosk**. Please know that children must be signed in and out of camp each day on the daily attendance sheet.



## Late Arrivals and Absences

We ask that all children arrive at camp between 8:50-8:55 AM each morning. If you arrive after we have started morning circle, please go to the check-in table, sign in, and walk your child to the morning circle before leaving. Morning circle usually takes place behind Great Blue Heron Hall. If you cannot arrive before 9:30, please make prior arrangements with the **Camp Director, Christine Fontaine via email:**

**Christine@lagunafoundation or via mobile phone/text: 707-978-8217.**



If your child will be **absent** from camp on a specific day, please text Camp Director and state your name and your child's name in the message.

## Releasing Children

Camp ends at 3:00 PM each day. We will do our best to close our circle and have the children to the playscape by that time. Check-out occurs at the same place as check-in: under the Heron at the kiosk.

**Parents/Guardians must sign their child out on the daily attendance sheet.**

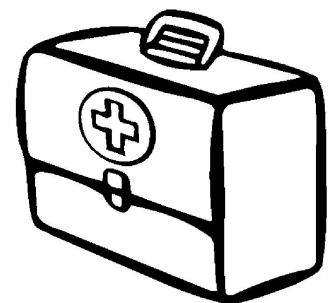
**Children will only be released to the parents/guardians and individuals that are named on the child's Health Form as approved for pick-up.**

If a parent or guardian would like to add an approved adult to pick up their child, they may do so by making prior arrangements with the Camp Director, Christine Fontaine at Christine@lagunafoundation.org

## Section 5: Health Care

### Medication

Parents and guardians with children that require medication administration at camp must fill out the “**Release for Administration of Medication**” section of the registration form. Written permission from the parent or guardian requesting the camp administer the medication to their child must be on file prior to medication administration. (Using our form, either via the registration packet materials or at the camp check-in desk.) Medications will be kept in a locked medical box that will only be opened by the Health Supervisor or the Camp Director.



### Over-the-Counter Medication Policy:

- We are not requiring a prescription for over-the-counter allergy medicines that are given daily.
- Medications MUST be sent in their original bottle, whether prescription or not.
- Do not send vitamins to be administered.
- Please do not send liquid medications if your child can swallow a pill.
- Some over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol and Benadryl are kept in stock and given as needed.

### Prescription Medication Policy:

- All medications must be sent to camp in their original pill bottle, with the original prescription from the pharmacy printed on them. If the instructions on the bottle are NOT how the camper takes the medication (i.e. the pill bottle says take 1 pill, but camper takes 2), we will be unable to administer.
- If the camper takes any medications "As Needed," make sure this is noted on the bottle and in your camper's medical forms. Talk with your camper before camp about seeing the medical staff if they need this medication.

### Allergies

Keep in mind that being outside all day at Camp Tule may intensify your child's grass, pollen or other seasonal allergies.

Food allergies are always an important topic for child care. We ask that parents help us to ensure all camp participants have a safe and fun time by **leaving peanut butter products at home.**

- If your child has a food allergy, please make sure to state all allergies on the Health Form.
- If your child has an EpiPen, or takes any medication for allergies, please list all medications on the "Release for Administration of Medication" form. *(See above.)*



### Accident/Illness Emergency Treatment

All staff is trained on how to address minor incidents and recognize significant incidents. In the event that a minor incident does occur, staff will immediately notify the Camp Director and the appropriate care, action, and monitoring will take place. Parents will be informed of minor incidents at pick-up.

For minor incidents that escalate and for significant incidents, parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

For your reference, here is the liability release that is required as part of the camp registration process:

I grant my authorization and consent for the staff of Camp Tule (“Designated Adult”), a program of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, to administer general first aid treatment for any minor injuries or illnesses experienced by the Minor. If the injury or illness is life-threatening or in need of emergency treatment, I authorize the Designated Adult to summon any and all professional emergency personnel to attend, transport, and treat the minor and to issue consent for any X-ray, anesthetic, blood transfusion, medication, or other medical diagnoses, treatment, or hospital care deemed advisable by, and to be rendered under the general supervision of, any licensed physician, surgeon, dentist, hospital, or other medical professional or institution duly licensed to practice in the state in which such treatment is to occur. I agree to assume financial responsibility for all expenses of such care. It is understood that this authorization is given in advance of any such medical treatment, but is given to provide authority and power on the part of the Designated Adult in the exercise of his or her best judgment upon the advice of any such medical or emergency personnel.

Please contact us if you have any additional questions.

### **Known Illness**

To help prevent the spread of illness, children with fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or a start of a cold, should not attend camp. We ask that you keep your child home for 24 hours after symptoms have disappeared before you send your child back to camp. Any child that comes to camp with an illness will be sent home immediately without refund.

## **Section 6: Fees & Media**

### **Refund Policy**

You may cancel participation 30 days in advance of camp for a refund minus \$25.00 processing fee.

If you need to cancel within 7-30 days of the first day of camp, a 50% refund will be issued.

Unfortunately, we cannot issue refunds for cancellations made less than 7 days in advance.

### **Media**

We will be taking photographs and video to capture camp in action. For your reference, here is the media release form that was part of the registration process:

\_\_\_ I do hereby state that I have legal custody of the registered Camp Tule Minor. I grant my authorization and consent for the staff of Camp Tule (“Program”), a program of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, to photograph and video/audio record (“Record”) the Minor and use or distribute any photographs, audio or video recording (“Materials”) related to Program activities that my child is depicted in for program promotion or educational purposes. I grant my authorization and consent the use of these Materials for publication in any Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation promotional material, including print or digital platforms.

\_\_\_ I do hereby state that I have legal custody of the registered Camp Tule Minor. I do not authorize the staff of Camp Tule (“Program”), a program of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, to photograph and video/audio record (“Record”) the Minor during the Program.

If you decide to change your authorization from the statement you signed during registration, change requests must be put in writing, submitted, and verified by Laguna Foundation staff at least one week prior to your child’s attendance at camp.

## **Section 7: Emergency Action Plan**

Laguna Foundation staff members are first aid and CPR certified. Additionally, Camp staff is trained in preventative measures and site safety. First Aid & Safety kits go out into the field with each group leader. And, we recognize that there is always a possibility that an emergency could occur. Our staff is trained to administer the best possible care to your child in case of an emergency. Our Emergency Action Plan outlines what staff and children are to do in case of any possible emergency that could occur on site. If you would like to obtain a copy of the Emergency Action Plan, please contact the Camp Director.

**Please also know the Laguna Environmental Center  
is closed to drop-in visitors during each week of camp.**

## **Section 8: Directions to Camp**

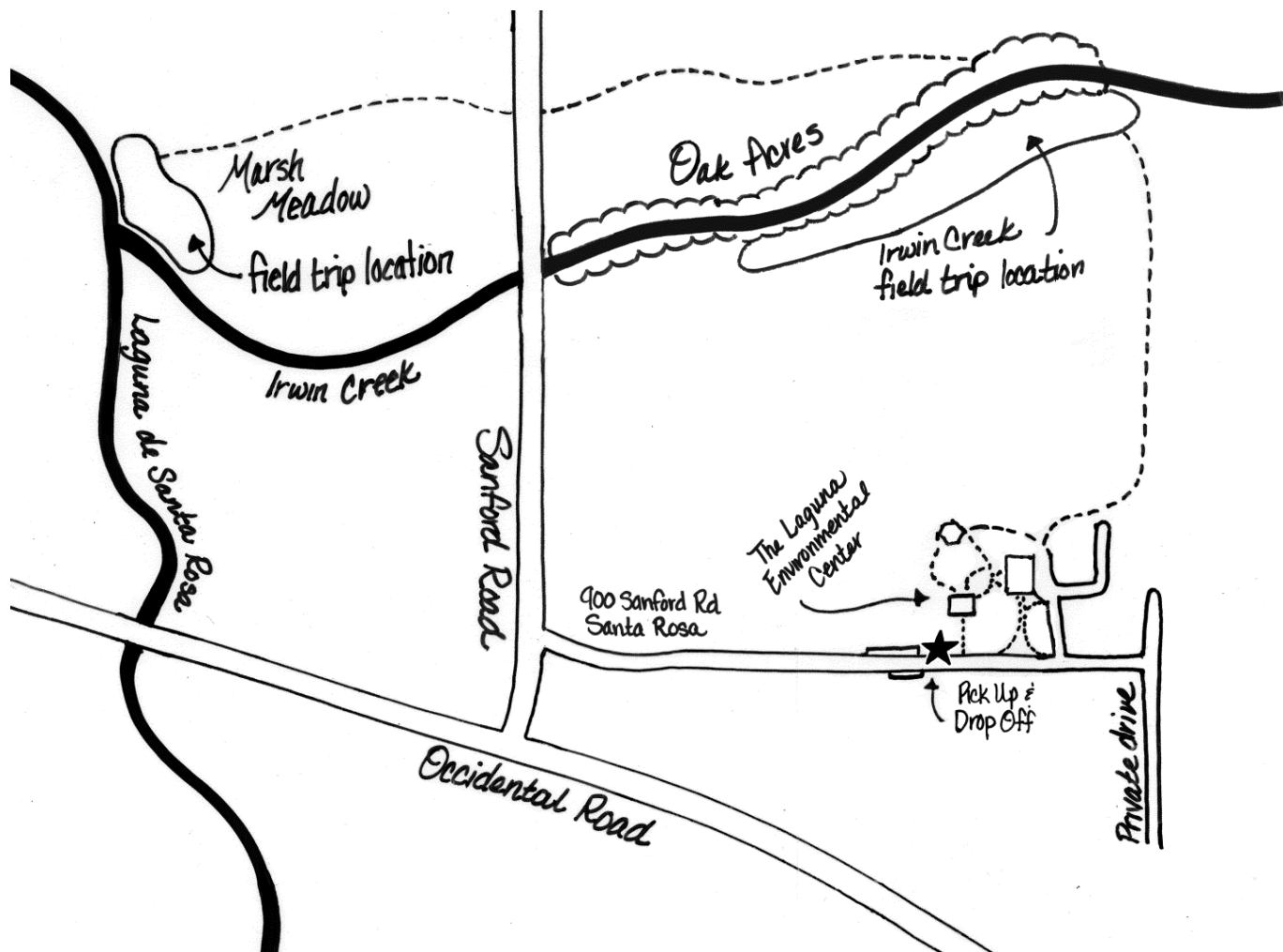
**Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation: 900 Sanford Rd, Santa Rosa**

**Note: The only way to access our site is from Sanford Rd.**

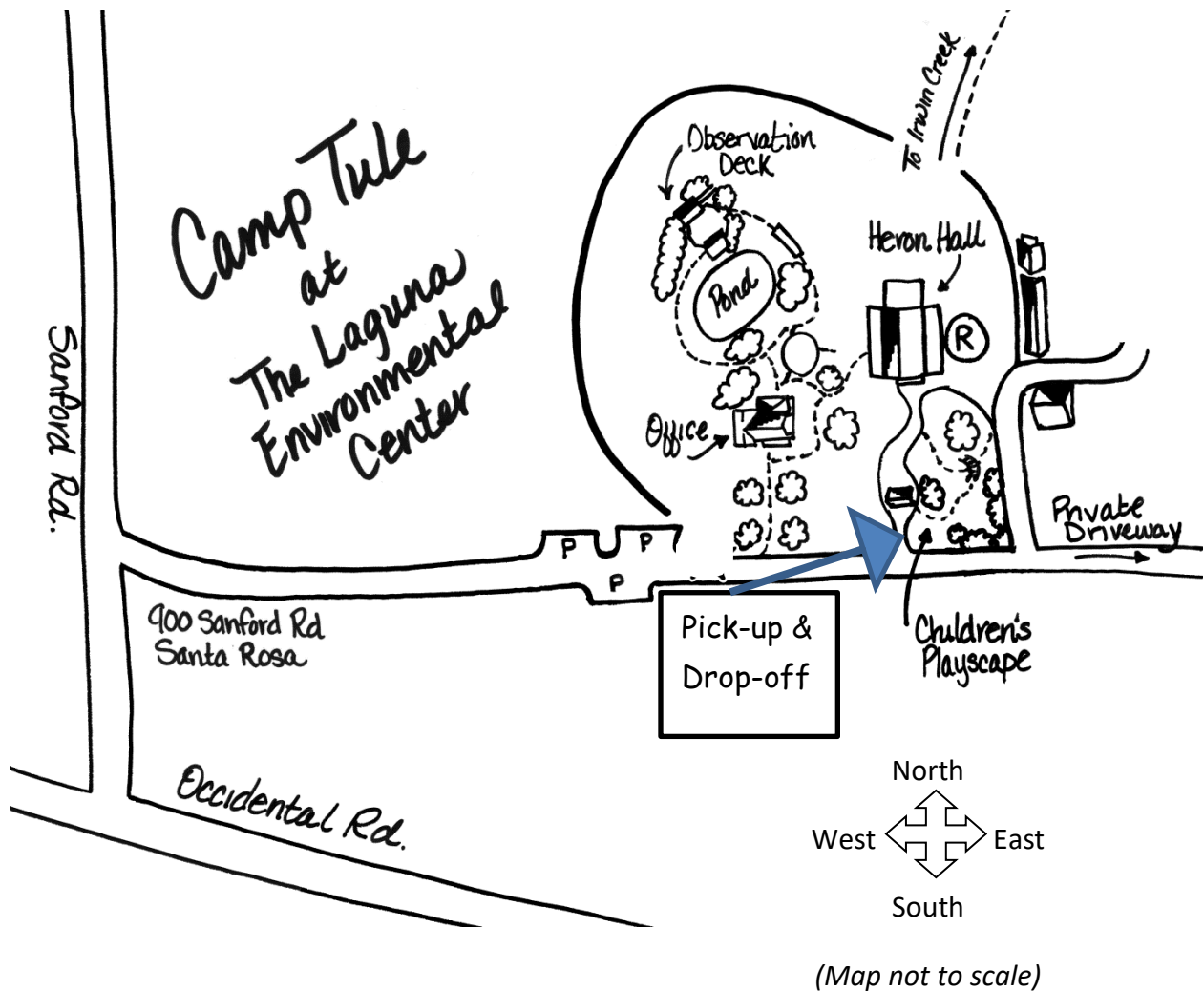
**From Hwy 101**, take Hwy 12 West towards Sebastopol (3.4 miles West). At the first traffic signal, turn right onto Fulton Road. Immediately merge into the left lane and take the first left onto Occidental Road. Travel 3.2 miles West on Occidental Road. Turn right on Sanford Rd. Our driveway is the first on the right.



## Map of Camp Tule



## Map of Laguna Environmental Center



***Thank you for choosing Laguna Explorers: Camp Tule!***

If you have questions regarding any of our policies or plans for the week, please feel free to contact Camp Director: Christine Fontaine:

[Christine@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:Christine@lagunafoundation.org) or 707-527-9277 x 102

