



Annual Report 2016 | 2017



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Nurturing a Healthy Laguna



Dear Friends of the Laguna,

Many of our family members, co-workers and friends have experienced immense loss from the wildfires, and our thoughts are with those who are impacted. As we move forward, let us also acknowledge the restorative power of the Laguna, its wildlife and its vast wetlands. Wetland ecosystems act as powerful buffers against natural

disasters like fire, drought and flood. Their ability to absorb weather extremes helps create a safer and more resilient landscape.

This report summarizes the Foundation's current and future restoration, conservation and education programs. It also acknowledges the many partnerships and collaborations we have with residents, landowners, the agricultural and business community, government agencies and other non-profits. Thank you to everyone whose name is listed in this report. You make all the work possible and we believe it is important to acknowledge everyone who sustains our ongoing efforts. Donations of every size enable us to work at a scale large enough to address the urgent issues facing the Laguna Watershed.

For nearly 30 years, the Laguna Foundation has been the steward of the Laguna wetlands, its streams, and habitats. We've restored 225 acres with over 60,000 native plants, and more than 18,000 children have participated in the Learning Laguna program where they learn about the nature that surrounds them.

The Laguna is still listed by the EPA as impaired and over 30 species of plants and animals are endangered or threatened. But these threats can be contained with innovative restoration and education initiatives, and as we approach 2018, we rededicate ourselves to:

- Focus on projects to improve water quality and wildlife habitat
- Inspire our youth to become watershed stewards through education and volunteerism
- Return the waters of the Laguna to a clean, swimmable, and fishable condition

Our shared goals are only possible through multiple partnerships and your engaged support. Together, we will create a restored, conserved and fully valued Laguna ecosystem, for us, our children and future generations.

For the Laguna,

Kevin Munroe
Executive Director

Dr. Dianne Smith
President, Board of Directors

Year at a Glance: Restoration and Conservation Science Program

Water Quality

- Wetlands act as important filters buffering the water quality of the Laguna. This spring we finished planting a 100 foot riparian buffer on 9.6. acres along Gravenstein Creek on the City of Santa Rosa's Brown Farm.
- We worked with the Sonoma County Water Agency to apply for and receive a \$500,000 prop 1 grant from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to create a watershed plan to restore the lower Laguna.
- In partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency, we removed 6 tons of trash and 150 tires from our lower Laguna site and Zimpher Creek preventing this material from washing downstream and polluting the Russian River.
- We began a collaboration with the Sonoma State University Maker Program to develop a prototype "trash robot" to remove trash from the tributary creeks before it reaches the Laguna.

Invasive Species

- We were awarded a \$75,000 grant to remove invasive Himalayan blackberry from the confluence of Zimpher Creek and the Laguna in the Sebastopol Laguna Wetlands Preserve. This project will also lead to recreational opportunities with increased trail connectivity in partnership with the City of Sebastopol.
- We enhanced stewardship and improved habitat in the Laguna Uplands and Sebastopol Laguna Wetlands Preserve. We removed invasive hemlock, pepperweed and fennel and replaced them with native sedges and grasses and created new interpretive signage for the Uplands.
- We began the removal and conversion of 5 acres of invasive Himalayan blackberry understory on Hessel Creek.

Endangered Species

- We collected data for the Adopt a Vernal Pool program by visiting 31 vernal pool properties. We are developing a program to work with interested landowners to provide information, resources and expertise to help them manage their properties to support vernal pool habitat and native and rare plants. We are working with the City of Santa Rosa to identify funding to restore an extirpated population of Sebastopol meadowfoam to lower Stone Farm.
- Collaborating with California Trout, Sonoma County



Milkweed is essential to the survival of Monarch butterflies. These native perennials are often used in our restoration work such as the Discovery Trail in Santa Rosa (shown above).

Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration we are researching how Coho salmon use the Laguna floodplain.

- Collaborating with Santa Rosa Junior College on vernal pool restoration projects we are removing thatch from vernal pools at the Earle Baum Center. In spring 2018, we will evaluate the effects of the thatch removal within the pools.

Water Quantity

- As a member of the Groundwater Management Technical Advisory Committee, we are working to sustainably manage our groundwater.
- We are partnering with the Russian River Watershed Alliance to create a stormwater management plan for the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Education: Inspiring Appreciation and Stewardship

Learning Laguna

Learning Laguna is a robust wetland education program for 2-4th grade students that remains in high-demand with classroom teachers because the Laguna provides a real-life context for curriculum learning and the docents are skilled, fun, enthusiastic tutors. More than 18,000 children have participated in the program to date. In the 2016-17 school year alone, *Learning Laguna* docents worked with 51 classes at 19 schools throughout the watershed. More than 1350 students engaged in the classroom visit and field trip this year and experienced the wonders of the Laguna for themselves while deepening their connections to their home environment.

We gratefully acknowledge and praise the work of the *Learning Laguna* docents who contributed more than 1,400 hours of direct teaching time to the program this year. That figure does not even include all the time spent in communication, preparation, continuing education, and materials management! Additionally, we welcomed twelve new volunteers who graduated from the 10-week docent training program in the spring. Autumn 2017 marks the beginning of their service to the schools and we know they will be excellent education team members for many years to come!

Community Education

Our year-round selection of walks, talks, classes, and workshops provides myriad opportunities for community members to get to know Laguna wildlife, express and develop their creativity, and discover the wonders of the Laguna trails and preserves. The activities are led by Laguna Foundation staff and



A group of novice and professional photographers gather at sunrise to apply lessons taught by Susan and Neil Silverman during a winter workshop.

our education team volunteers plus other regional experts, and many events are offered collaboratively with our non-profit and agency partners.

Laguna Guides, the public education volunteers, made more than 40 offerings possible. From basket making workshops to talks about local geomorphology, groundwater, mountain lions and badgers, to birding adventures and discovery walks, each volunteer helped us in the classroom and on the trail to ensure that nearly 2,000 participants had pleasant and enriching learning experiences. We are grateful for the time, knowledge and heartfelt dedication they contribute.

New Education Initiatives

This year we began work on new programs and classes to meet the goals outlined in our 2017-2021 Strategic Plan including increasing our service to schools and engaging more community members throughout the watershed. In *The Dynamic Laguna Ecosystem* program, middle-school students will build an understanding of interdependent relationships in the Laguna and the importance of biodiversity. *Storm Water Solutions* is designed to engage high-school students in solving water pollution issues on their campuses. And, the *Laguna Watershed Perspectives* series of outings for the community takes us to Laguna tributaries so participants can explore and get to know their neighborhood creeks. Watch for developments in these three new initiatives in the coming years!



Learning Laguna Docent, Angela Sturr, shows Rohnert Park students a variety of nests and nest materials at the "Bird Investigation Station" during a classroom visit.

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During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, **496 volunteers contributed 4,835 hours** in our restoration, education, administrative and development departments. To all our Student Interns, Learning Laguna Docents, Laguna Guides, Laguna Stewards, Garden Volunteers, Native Plant Nursery Volunteers, Office Management Support Volunteers, and Facilities Management Support Volunteers:

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Barrie Mason
Bev Scotland
Mike and Barbara Shepherd
Dr. Dianne Smith
Raini Sugg and Steve Vallarino
Arlene Ulmer

Statement of Activities
For the Year Ended June 30, 2017

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
REVENUES AND SUPPORT				
Government Grants & Contracts	\$359,605	\$7,471		\$367,076
Contributions	434,350	147,750		582,100
Program & miscellaneous income	154,632			154,632
Net assets released from restrictions	24,568	(24,568)		0
Total revenues and support	\$973,155	\$130,653	\$0	\$1,103,808
EXPENSES				
Program services				
Restoration & Conservation Science	\$438,162			\$438,162
Education	239,896			239,896
Heron Hall Comm. Programs & Rentals	59,829			59,829
Total Program Services	\$737,887	\$0	\$0	\$737,887
Supporting services				
Administration	\$169,236			169,236
Fund Raising and Outreach	162,892			162,892
Total supporting services	332,128			332,128
Depreciation	62,820			62,820
Total Expenses	\$1,132,835	\$0	\$0	\$1,132,835
Change in net assets	(\$159,680)	\$130,653	\$0	(\$29,027)
Net assets, beginning of period	2,304,891	9,853	10,000	2,324,744
NET ASSETS, END OF PERIOD	<u>\$2,145,211</u>	<u>\$140,506</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$2,295,717</u>

These statements are unaudited.

Statement of Financial Position As of June 30, 2017

ASSETS

Current assets

Cash and equivalents	\$167,128
Accounts receivable	109,938
Prepays	<u>12,931</u>
Total current assets	289,997

Fixed assets

Land ¹	150,000
Building and property improvements	2,004,209
Furniture & equipment	116,419
Vehicles	14,093
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(385,236)</u>
Total fixed assets	1,899,485

Other assets

Lease gift in kind less value discount	170,588
Endowment fund	<u>9,156</u>
Total other assets	179,744

Total assets **2,369,226**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities

Accounts payable	\$24,242
Accrued vacation	15,827
Accrued wages	17,069
Payroll liabilities	13,025
Other payables	<u>3,346</u>

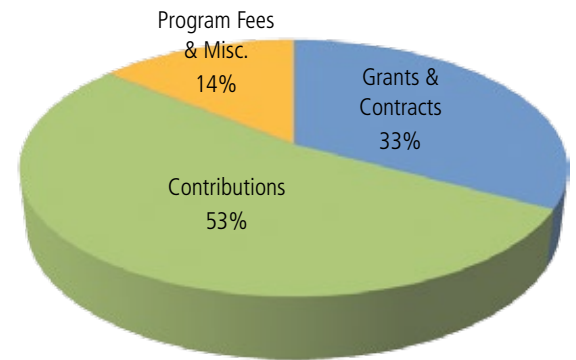
Total current liabilities **73,509**

Net assets

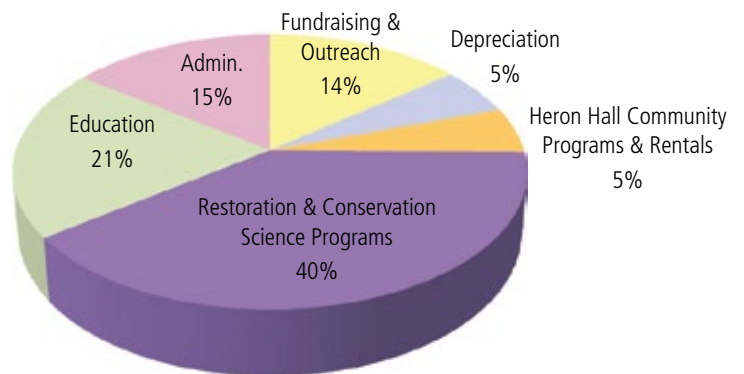
Unrestricted	2,145,211
Temporarily restricted	140,506
Permanently restricted	<u>10,000</u>
Total net assets	2,295,717

Total liabilities and net assets **\$2,369,226**

Income by Source



Expense by Activity



Grant & Contract Partners

- California Environmental Protection Agency
- California Native Plant Society
- City of Santa Rosa
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Fledgling Fund
- Prunuske Chatham, Inc.
- San Francisco Estuary Institute
- Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
- Sonoma County Airport
- Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Sonoma County Health Services Department
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Sonoma Wine Country Weekend

*Note 1 - Land is shown at current appraised value.
The property is encumbered by a conservation easement.*

THE LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA FOUNDATION

Restore, Conserve & Inspire: Nurturing A Healthy Laguna

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation works to restore and conserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to inspire public appreciation for Sonoma County's Wetland of International Importance.

The Foundation is the steward of the Laguna wetlands, its streams and habitats. Our work focuses on the health and well-being of the environment and its connection to the surrounding community and economy. We do this through restoration, conservation, and education.

Nearly 30 years of success through partner-building and community stewardship has taken us a long way. However, there is still so much more to do if our Laguna is to be a viable and sustainable ecosystem for future generations — one with clean water, healthy soil, restored plant and wildlife communities, and active, inspired children.

Working together, we will create a thriving and beautiful Laguna, where the waters are swimmable and fishable, and wildlife plentiful.

We all depend on a healthy watershed — not just to live, but to live well.



Find us on social media and stay connected with daily photos and announcements!

900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 | Ph. (707) 527-9277 | Fx. (707) 527-5075 | www.LagunaFoundation.org

Cover Photo: The Laguna de Santa Rosa, by Brent Reed