

## Developing a Vibrant Laguna Community

*Christine Fontaine, Director of Education Programs*

There is little likelihood of a thriving and self-sustaining Laguna de Santa Rosa ecosystem unless we see ourselves as stakeholders in a healthy environment. Fritjof Capra, the renowned systems philosopher states: "Nature sustains life by creating and nurturing communities." Turning to nature for wisdom and direction, one approach we take to sustaining Laguna life is by creating and nurturing community through our public education Walks, Talks and Classes program.

What began with a couple of summertime Laguna walks and borrowed meeting rooms in the late 1990s has blossomed into a program of year-round opportunities designed to appeal to diverse members of the community with a variety of experiences and topics, attracting thousands of people each year. The opening of the Laguna Trail in 2012 (by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and the Sonoma County Regional Parks), plus the opening of the Laguna Environmental Center in 2013 (by the Laguna Foundation, in partnership with the City of Santa Rosa and the California Coastal Conservancy) have both contributed to increased Laguna literacy rates throughout the watershed. Yet, our goals are lofty! We aspire to reach *all* Sonoma County residents, to raise our collective ecological and Laguna intelligence. Through wise actions in our daily lives at home, at work, and at play, recognizing that we are part of the ecosystem, not separate, and that our very existence is dependent on thriving natural systems and natural communities we can all be "for the Laguna watershed."

Our Public Education Program aims to spark curiosity, encourage exploration, deepen observation, start conversations, and create learning through "doing"

experiences. Through these personal relationships that we develop with the natural world and the learning communities created, we experience the wonders of nature and foster understanding about the interrelationships between land, water, plants, animals, the cycles of life, and our own lives. Appreciation for the Laguna grows!

The classes, walks, talks, and workshops we offer in collaboration with the Laguna education team volunteers, the hired instructors (some donate their honorarium!),

our land partners like the Cities of Santa Rosa & Sebastopol, the Ag and Open Space District, and our non-profit partners LandPaths, Bird Rescue Center and many others have countless benefits as they are pathways to the Laguna and the Laguna Foundation for all. We have a public education program for you, for the Laguna now and for the future. So, by signing up and participating, not only are you financially supporting the program, you are voting



*Exploring together along the Southern Laguna Discovery Trail.*

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## **The Power of Partnerships**

The Laguna Foundation doesn't own the Laguna or its adjoining streams, and with the exception of one small upland parcel in Sebastopol, the Foundation doesn't own any property. Nor is the Laguna a single parcel or park. This means the 30,000 acres that make up the Laguna wetland complex and its surrounding 254 square-mile watershed are made up of hundreds of separate parcels with just as many property owners and land managers. They consist of a dizzying combination of non-profits, county, state and federal agencies, and many private landowners. This also means our projects and programs are only as successful as our partnerships, and it's why one of the five central goals in our Strategic Plan is *Partnerships*.

Every Laguna Foundation research effort, restoration project and educational outing is a result of a partnership. We couldn't plant a tree, survey a vernal pool, or take a class for a walk without first developing relationships with the various landowners involved. We have learned over the years this is a precious strength, rather than a weakness. The various issues facing the Laguna watershed can only be addressed and solved by teams – systemic problems require systemic solutions. Tackling every issue and endeavor with a team-building approach helps the Laguna Foundation be a part of long-term projects with sustainable results. This wetland complex and its watershed face many challenges, but still possess incredible biodiversity and the capacity to both heal and thrive as a functioning ecosystem. The potential for a restored Laguna is inspiring and can only be fully realized through the power of partnerships.

For the Laguna,



Kevin Munroe  
*Executive Director*

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## **Nature's Corner: Insect Predators – Partners in Pest Control**

*Kevin Munroe, Executive Director*



I'm referring to the army of insects that spend their lives eating OTHER bugs. Studies around the country show at least 85% of insects in your yard are in fact beneficial! Of those, more than half are these "insect assassins." The following are a few six-legged hunters, along with fun facts to get you hooked. Dragonflies zip around at 40 mph, flap their wings 50 times per second, and fly upside down and backwards in pursuit of insect prey. Tiger Beetles are considered the fastest land animal on the planet (relative to their size) and spend their lives munching on other insects.

Backswimmers hunt and swim through wetlands upside-down, and so have the reverse coloring of most aquatic creatures – white backs and dark bellies. Lacewings, tiny and fragile-looking green sprites of the night, spend their larval and adult lives eating aphids. And lastly, Lady Beetles are so valued the world-over for predatory prowess that their name in Iran means "good news" and in Switzerland "God's little fatty." Colorful and fascinating natural pest control – what's not to love!

# Restoration Planning in the Lower Laguna de Santa Rosa

Dr. Wendy Trowbridge, Director of Restoration and Conservation Science Programs

The Laguna Foundation is developing a new project in the Lower Laguna and we wanted to give you a sneak preview!

The complex, interrelated problems of the Lower Laguna have defied solution for years. Some of the major issues include (see map):

1. The confluence of Mark West Creek has been moved impeding salmon migration.
2. Sediments and nutrients deposited in the channel increase flooding and reduce water quality.
3. Summer flooding leads to loss of farm land.

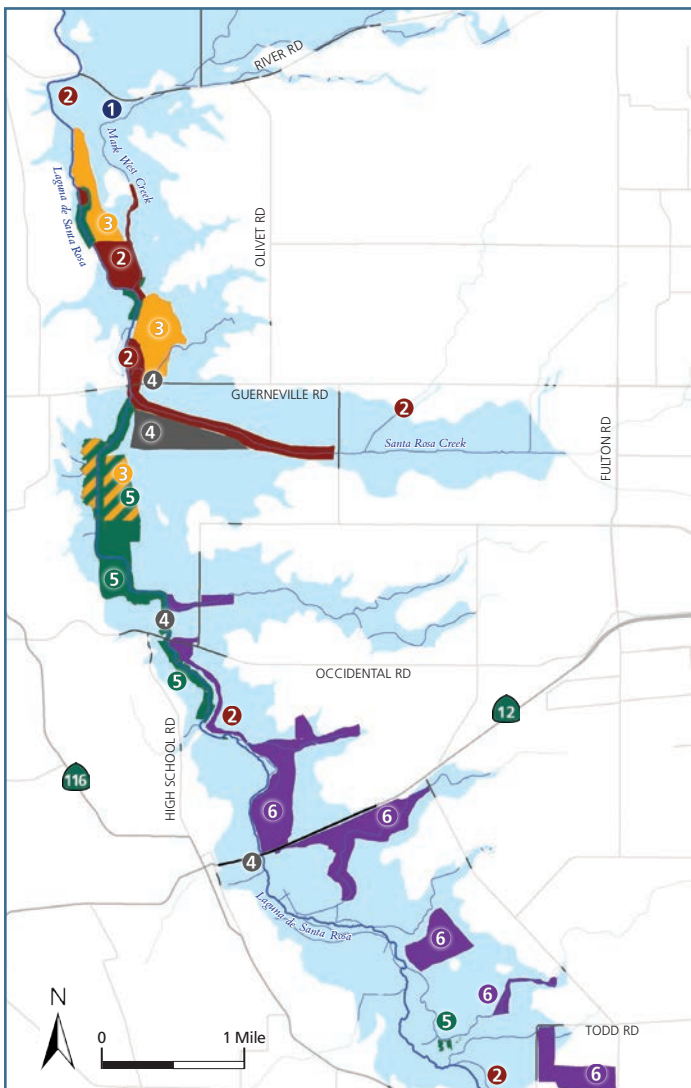
4. Constrictions caused by bridges and levees further exacerbate the flooding problem.

5. Invasive Ludwigia thrives in the high nutrient, warm-water environment created by sediment and nutrient deposition leading to more sediment deposition and low dissolved oxygen levels.

6. Loss of riparian habitat leads to warmer water and decreased water quality.

The Laguna Foundation has been working on many of these problems for years, particularly #6, but a comprehensive solution to the problems facing this part of the Laguna will require collaboration.

## Lower Laguna Problem Areas



Map ID: 842-B ©2015. Data Sources: FEMA, Laguna Foundation, Sonoma County ISD. Cartography: Hattie Brown

We are bringing together private landowners and the Public Agencies to create a comprehensive restoration plan for this area that will involve removing legacy sediments, redesigning the way water flows through this area to favor native species over Ludwigia, and restoring the wetlands that once thrived here so that they can once again support healthy native fish and wildlife populations.

This will be a long-term project involving funding from a variety of sources, but we are taking the first steps. We have already secured funding to continue our trash removal project just downstream of Guerneville Road and are working with the Sonoma County Water Agency and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to apply for a restoration planning grant.

Stay tuned in the coming months for more development on this exciting long-range restoration project.

## Community

Continued from page 1

for the value of program and community! You are our partners in the program. Spend quality time with friends; build Laguna community and enrich your life by joining us for exciting, joyous education events. There really is something extraordinary about spending time with curious soon-to-be-friends eager to learn and receptive to inspiration.

“Ultimately what we have to be talking about is not what we are against but what we are for...” ~ Wendell Berry

# Environmental Education Collaborative: Working Together for Greater Impact

Christine Fontaine, Director of Education Programs

The Laguna Foundation depends on collaborative approaches for wildlife, land, and water-based positive action. In the education department, we collaborate with the Learning Laguna docents, classroom teachers, Laguna guides, public education program teachers, land owners, agencies, and other non-profit partners to meet our goals of a Laguna-engaged community. Fortunately, we also have SEEC: the Sonoma (County)



Environmental Education Collaborative. This group is made up of environmental education professionals from organizations, agencies, networks, and school districts. Together we are working to create vibrant, innovative collaborations that increase

environmental literacy in Sonoma County citizens. SEEC undertakes its mission by identifying and addressing regional needs for environmental education beyond the scope of individual organizations. We learn from each

other through networking sessions, sharing best practices and organizing professional development for members, including special workshops on the Next Generation Science Standards currently being implemented in Sonoma County Schools. Additionally, the Collaborative is partnering with three schools to pilot an environmental learning pathways program that deepens student learning by linking our individual school programs more closely and working with the classroom teachers to extend their curriculum. SEEC recently hosted a county-wide family day, Dia de los Niños/Day of the Child, that got kids and their families outside, exploring together. SEEC is tied to the larger Bay Area movement of similar collectives supported by Lawrence Hall of Science and ChangeScale.

SEEC meets monthly in Heron Hall. Our Education Director, Christine Fontaine serves on the steering committee and learning pathway committee, contributing to the collective and magnifying the Laguna Foundation's impact... a mutually beneficial relationship for a greater good!

*Learn more at [sonomacountyee.org](http://sonomacountyee.org).*

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## Thank You and Good Luck!

After ten and a half years of managing our weekly finances and orchestrating our annual budget, Larry Campbell, our Finance Manager, is retiring and leaving our staff. His knowledge and dedication has helped the organization create a strong financial future; he will be missed!

Raini Sugg, our President of the Board, had this to say: "Keeping track of a non-profit's finances is not glamorous nor an easy task. Luckily, for the last 10 years the Laguna Foundation has had Larry's watchful eye on our financial health! He brought with him a wealth of non-profit financial experience that has been essential to the Foundation's success. Both the staff and board members, past and present, have appreciated his ability to explain and help us understand the intricacies of grants, contracts, cash flow and budgets. We wish him the very best in his retirement!"

Dr. Wendy Trowbridge, our Director of Restoration and Conservation Science Programs works with Larry on often complicated contracts and added, "Larry is always



*Larry Campbell has been with the Laguna Foundation since 2005!*

patient, working with me on all our many different accounts and contract issues, and always quick with a solution. He's a good egg!"

Maggie Hart, our Outreach Coordinator (and previously Administrative Director), has worked with Larry since he was hired. "Over the past 10 years, Larry was not only a joy to work with, but a steadfast friend. He truly cared about the Foundation and the employees. I can't imagine the office without him, especially his sense of humor! But I am sure he will enjoy retirement, taking care of his farm and traveling to fascinating destinations."

From the entire staff and Board here at the Laguna Foundation, we wish to thank Larry for his many years with us and wish him the very best in his retirement. Enjoy your travels, and don't forget to visit!

# Summer Public Education Events

All programs listed below take place (or at least begin) in Heron Hall at the Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa.



## All About Owls! Special Open House

With our friends and live owls from The Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County  
Saturday, July 9, Noon-2:00pm  
Free, donations greatly appreciated. No RSVP necessary.

## Owls Rule the Night

Presentation with Suzanne Mirviss and Star Dewar of the Hungry Owl Project  
Saturday, July 9, 3:00-4:30pm  
\$10. Pre-registration required.

## Irwin Creek and Lower Stone Farm Explorations

Natural History Walk with Laguna Foundation Staff and Docents  
Saturday, August 20, 8:30am-Noon  
\$10. Pre-registration required.



## Drawing Summer's Fruits: Colored Pencil Techniques

Workshop with Nina Antze  
Saturday, August 27  
10:00am-3:00pm  
\$75. Pre-registration required.

## From Earth to Art: Making Art Supplies from Natural Materials

Workshop with Ane Carla Rovetta  
Saturday, July 16, 10:00am-4:00pm  
\$85. Pre-registration required.



## Coiled Willow Basket Workshop

With Charlie Kennard  
Sunday, August 14  
9:30am-3:30pm  
\$80. Pre-registration required.

## More Upcoming Programs:

- September 10, Creative Photography Workshop with Dianne Monroe
- September 17, Trash Clean-Up Day Along the Laguna
- September 22, The Laguna Watershed Report with Laguna Foundation's Dr. Wendy Trowbridge
- October 8, Joan Humberstone Memorial Photography Exhibit Opening Reception
- October 15, Full-Moon Irwin Creek and Lower Stone Farm Walk
- TBD, Bats Day! Special Open House and Presentation
- And much more!

To register or for more information, please visit our website at [www.LagunaFoundation.org](http://www.LagunaFoundation.org) or, contact Anita Smith, Public Education Manager at (707) 527-9277, ext. 110 or [anita@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:anita@lagunafoundation.org).

"The Pond" by Ellindale Wells



## Now Showing in Heron Hall Natural Inspirations: The Russian River Watershed in Fabric

Fabric Arts by the Pointless Sisters Art Quilt Group on display through September 13, 2016.

The Laguna Environmental Center is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm. Because of the variety of hall uses during the week, please call ahead to make sure Heron Hall is open for you to view the exhibit at (707) 527-9277, ext.110.

# Laguna Keepers 2015/2016 Season Wrap-up

Brent Reed, Restoration Projects Manager



*This season, our team of volunteers helped break ground on a new restoration project along Gravenstein Creek on Brown Farm in Santa Rosa!*

The 2015/2016 Laguna Keepers volunteers recently celebrated the end of another successful season of stewardship in the Laguna. This year, we selected the dates in advance but did not determine which site we would be working at until a couple of weeks before the date. We had to work with the unpredictable weather during this El Niño year. A proposed project site could temporarily go underwater at any time! Our goal is always to make workdays a rewarding and productive experience. And, thanks to our hardworking volunteers, we were able to accomplish a lot this season! Here are a few highlights:

- A new restoration project broke ground along Gravenstein Creek at Brown Farm in Santa Rosa!
- Restoration work continued in the Laguna Uplands and along Irwin Creek.
- A few older restoration projects “graduated”

including Meadowlark Field at the Sebastopol Wetlands Preserve and a portion of the Southern Laguna Restoration Project.

- Native plants were propagated in our native plant nursery for future restoration projects.
- The Laguna Environmental Center native plant demonstration landscape received a helping hand – which is teeming with wildlife and thriving right now!

## A New Name on the Way!

The 2016/2017 season will start in September and will have a new name – **The Laguna Stewards**. After celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, we are excited to take our long-standing volunteer restoration efforts to the next level. The name change from *Keepers* to *Stewards* helps further our central goal of promoting the vital concept of stewardship as we enter our next 25 years. Laguna Foundation does not own the Laguna, so the future of this wetland complex and its surrounding watershed depends on each of us taking stewardship of this unique and internationally recognized wetland area.

The new name also serves the purpose of supporting our close and valuable partners, the Russian River Keepers, by avoiding the confusion of both organizations using the term “Keepers.” The Russian River Keepers and the Laguna Foundation look forward to talking more about community stewardship, and working together with all our supporters to better conserve Sonoma County’s wetlands and waterways.

Stay tuned for information on the 2016/2017 schedule!

## Thank You To Our 2015/2016 Season Sponsors!



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## Rincon Foundation and Laguna Supporters Make a Great Team!

Thanks to our generous supporters, we were able to raise \$25,000 to secure an additional \$25,000 matching grant offered by the Rincon Foundation, a local family foundation. These donations and this grant will provide **a total of \$50,000** to help develop and fund key benchmark projects:



- Lead a multi-year, multi-million dollar project in partnership with landowners and public agencies to reduce and manage *Ludwigia*, and improve water quality by removing tons of sediment and pollutants.
- Create hands-on, docent-led trail side interpretative stations at several Laguna Watershed parks, and build programs for high school age groups to educate and inspire new audiences about the Laguna.
- Increase our Citizen Science component by purchasing additional wildlife cameras and participating in regional camera surveys and research to increase our understanding of wildlife movements.
- Expand our Adopt a Vernal Pool program to study managed grazing techniques in vernal pool ecosystems, engage high-school students in long-term monitoring and continue the recovery of endangered species. This program is the longest running, most comprehensive endangered plant monitoring project in Sonoma County.

Donations provide 50% of our annual budget and leverage vital public funding since most government grants require a substantial matching component from private donations. City, County, and State agencies such as the California Coastal Conservancy, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and the Sonoma County Water Agency are looking to the Laguna Foundation to take a significantly larger leadership role in restoring and managing the Laguna Watershed. Private donations and grants allow us to bring more funding to the table when we're asked to lead ecosystem-scale

conservation projects, including several multi-million dollar, multi-partner, and multi-year projects currently in development.

The Laguna must be a "forever resource" – all of us will forever need its healthy soil, clean water, and intact plant and wildlife communities. Together, we will transform the Laguna into a restored wetland complex with living rivers

and creeks teeming with wildlife and plant communities, conserve new critical areas to improve the health and function of the entire 254 square-mile Laguna watershed, and actively engage more people in watershed and wetland stewardship.

We are grateful to the Rincon Foundation and every Laguna Foundation donor. Your generosity helps us continue to provide the leadership and expertise vital to conserving **YOUR** Laguna.

### Join the Legacy Society and Ensure a Healthy Laguna for Future Generations



Help ensure the Laguna is a healthy part of our community forever. Please join in providing lasting support for the Laguna Foundation by remembering us in your will or estate plan.

*"Leave a true legacy for your children and future generations. One sure way is to include the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation in your estate plans. I invite you to join me." ~ Chris Engel, Society Member*

To join the Legacy Society or to find out more about planned gifts, contact Bev Scotland, at (707) 527-9277 ext. 106 or email [Bev@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:Bev@lagunafoundation.org).



Founded in 1989, the Laguna Foundation is a place-based organization focused on the Laguna de Santa Rosa. 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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## Rent Heron Hall!

Looking for a special place for your next educational event, retreat, training, or workshop?

Hold your event at lovely Heron Hall at the Laguna Environmental Center. Our 1,540 square foot event space overlooking the natural beauty of the Laguna wetlands is a perfect location for your next event!

Visit our website for details at [www.LagunaFoundation.org](http://www.LagunaFoundation.org)



## Learning Laguna Celebrates its 17<sup>th</sup> Year!

This school year nearly 1,500 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders learned about wetlands, bird migration, plants and animals in the classroom, then held crayfish, tadpoles, grasshoppers and caterpillars in their own hands, plus, watched swooping swallows and soaring hawks during their field trip to the Laguna. Huge thanks to the amazing team of Learning Laguna docents who worked with 57 classes throughout the watershed, contributing more than 1,360 hours of science learning and hands-on discovery for the students. We know those children will grow up with a love of the Laguna and a sense of connectedness to our amazing Sonoma County landscape!