

Passion and Partnerships – Preserving Quality of Life in the Laguna

By Raini Sugg, President, Board of Directors



Partnerships are key to our achieving our restoration and education objectives now and in the future.

Sonoma County is home to roughly 2,900 registered non-profit organizations whose missions range from youth advocacy, to the preservation of visual art and more. Have you ever wondered why there are so many? I believe it is because we care so much about the health of our community, both the people who live here and the environment that supports us. Sonoma County has a long history of people coming together to make our county the best place it can possibly be. One of the many examples of our county's historic commitment was recently highlighted at a *California Coastwalk* event honoring three women: Lucy Kortum, Doris Sloan and Gaye LeBaron. Many years ago, these brave women stood up to block the construction of a nuclear power plant on Bodega Head.

I want to thank another group of brave, caring community leaders that came together during the 1980s to change the degraded state of the Laguna wetlands. They wanted to stop sewage from being dumped in the Laguna and highlight the desperate need for ecological restoration. They organized, and started building strong, effective partnerships. Here are some of those individuals who served as members of our Board in the early years and have continued to support the Laguna Foundation's work over the last three decades: Richard Nichols, Catherine Sharp on behalf of her father (Robert), Miles Ferris,

Una Glass (her husband Michael was on the Board), Kim Cordell, Bob Evans, Tom Lambert, Jim Shelton, Dan Smith, Susan and Ken Churchill, and Carolyn Johnson.

Twenty-nine years of passion and partnerships have accomplished so much! We no longer have sewage flowing into our Laguna – the otters, kingfishers and mayflies are back; we've gone from no access to several beautiful public trails; we've restored many of our denuded creeks to acres of lush riparian habitat, providing cleaner water flowing to the Russian River and our Pacific coast. Today, the Laguna Foundation's community and partners continue the vital work these dedicated and caring individuals founded.

We are very lucky to live in a county where so many individuals and organizations are working together and care about the quality of life for all. *Thank you!*



Thomas Reynolds

Message From the E.D. Collaboration = Healthy Wetlands

By Kevin Munroe, Executive Director

As an organization, we don't own the Laguna, and except for the small (but very special) Uplands property behind Sonoma West Hospital, we don't own any property. Yet, it is our mission to restore and conserve this unique wetland area that spans 254-square-miles and whose tributaries travel through six cities in Sonoma County. Given the vastness of the Laguna, every project and program we do must be based on partnerships. We're honored that agencies and community leaders continue to seek us out when looking for knowledge, passion and collaboration. Any time you hear about one of our ecological restoration projects, environmental education programs or conservation science research, know that it comes from working together – it's how we get things done. It also makes our work more fun and most importantly, more sustainable.

Healthy ecosystems are built on numerous partnerships and sustainable relationships within the natural world – we hope to learn from these examples as we continue restoring this diverse watershed. Please join us this summer as we work with our community members to restore and enjoy our unique Laguna de Santa Rosa.

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The symbiotic partnership of a mining bee and Sonoma sunshine. Photo courtesy of Kandis Gilmore.

Nature's Corner: Picky Eaters and a True Partnership

By Sarah Gordon, *Conservation Science Program Manager*

Ever think that kids these days are picky eaters? Well, kids are nothing compared to the larvae of vernal pool mining bees that only consume pollen from a single type of plant.

California native solitary bees (*Andrena blennospermatis*) don't form hive

colonies. In an underground chamber excavated by this tiny bee, the female lays a single egg atop a dough-like ball of pollen that she has carefully collected from *Blennosperma* flowers. After hatching, the larva consumes this tasty meal and then waits until the next vernal pool flowering season when it emerges from the ground as an adult bee, to mate, collect pollen and complete it's own life cycle.

Sonoma sunshine (*Blennosperma bakeri*) is a predominately outcrossing plant requiring insect pollinators to reproduce (unlike some plants which can effectively pollinate their own flowers or make use of wind to move pollen.) Without busy insects to move pollen, these endangered annual plants would not be able to produce adequate seed for the next season; without Sonoma sunshine, mining bees within the Laguna watershed would have no food source. This bee and plant arrangement reflects one of Nature's true partnerships.

Partnerships-Strengthened Community Education

Our *Walks, Talks, and Classes* offerings to the public continue to expand and reach a larger, more diverse audience. This is in part due to our valued partnerships with dozens of local groups like LandPaths, Audubon Canyon Ranch, So.Co. Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Water Agency, the cities and county, and Regional Parks. Together, we're inspiring appreciation for, and deepening people's connection to, the Laguna de Santa Rosa wetlands and watershed.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pre-registration is required for all events. New events added regularly at www.LagunaFoundation.org
Events take place, or begin at the Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

Lichens and Beyond: Botanical Painting with Gouache

Workshop with Lucy Martin
Saturday, August 11, 10:00am – 3:00pm, \$95.

Vamos Afuera: Laguna Walk and Picnic (en Español)

In collaboration with LandPaths
Sunday, August 12, 5:30pm – 8:30pm. Free.

Early Birds: Santa Rosa Creek

Walk and birding adventure with Regional Parks
Saturday, August 18, 7:30am – 10:30am. \$10.

Film Screening: ALBATROSS

Thursday, August 23, 7:00 – 9:00pm. Free.

Full-Moon Walk of Irwin Creek and Stone Farm

In collaboration with LandPaths
Sunday, August 26, 5:30pm – 9:00pm. Free.

Dragons in Our Watershed:

A Field Survey of Laguna Dragonflies

With our Executive Director, Kevin Munroe
Sunday, Sept. 9, 9:30am – 4:30pm. \$25-\$50 sliding scale.

Santa Rosa Plain Vernal Pools

Presentation with Sarah Gordon
Thursday, September 27, 7:00 – 8:30pm. \$12.

Drawing Autumn Colors: Colored Pencil Techniques

Workshop with Nina Antze
Saturday, September 29, 10:00am – 3:00pm. \$95.

For information on these or any of our events, contact:

Anita Smith, Public Education Manager
(707) 527-9277 xt. 110 or anita@lagunafoundation.org

HERON HALL ART GALLERY



CURRENT EXHIBIT:

"Microcosms: A Closer Look at Mushrooms and Lichens" Gouache Paintings and Prints by Lucy Martin

On display through Aug 29, 2018

Lucy Martin's paintings reflect her lifelong connection with nature and her devotion to close observation. Lucy focuses on the mysterious beauty of mushrooms and lichens found in the forests in all seasons. She paints from life whenever possible. Her hope is to awaken in the viewer an awareness of the myriad tiny worlds to be discovered right at our feet. Largely self-taught, Lucy exhibits her artwork locally and internationally.

Visit her online at: LucyMartinArt.com



UPCOMING EXHIBIT:

"Impressions of Nature" - Photography by Brenda Tharp

September 4 – December 21, 2018

Opening reception: Saturday, September 8, 2018, 3:00–5:00pm

The Heron Hall Art Gallery is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9am – 5pm. Because of the various uses of the hall, **please call in advance** to ensure the exhibit is available for public viewing of the art, 707-527-9277, ext. 107. The Heron Hall Art Gallery exhibits multiple shows per year of nature-themed art. Art sales support conservation and education in the Laguna Watershed.

Vernal Pool Conservation with Earle Baum Center

By Wendy Trowbridge, Director of Restoration and Conservation Science Programs



SRJC students helped remove dead grass from the vernal pools as part of a collaborative project between the Earl Baum Center of the Blind and the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation.

The Laguna Foundation and the Earle Baum Center of the Blind (EBC) in Santa Rosa worked together to apply for, and were excited to receive a two-year grant from the Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust to collaborate on vernal pool conservation and public education.

The EBC serves people with sight-loss in Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino Counties, and is just down Occidental Road from the Laguna Foundation. It's located on the historic Baum family farm, which supports a 17-

acre intact vernal pool wetland complex with endangered Sebastopol meadowfoam and other native vernal pool plants.

This exciting two year project will fund development of a targeted management plan to improve habitat within the EBC's wetland complex for sensitive native plant species. Ambitiously, it also includes a public education program to increase awareness and appreciation about the importance of these local, highly specialized wetland systems. The conservation plan will help EBC time their mowing schedule to prevent annual grasses from taking over the pools and pushing out the native

flowers that used to grow there. We started removing built-up thatch (dead grass) last fall with an energetic class from Santa Rosa Junior College - already this spring the meadowfoam is coming back strong!

As we continue our work over the coming years you should be able to see the results as you drive down Occidental Road. We are excited to continue this unique, long-time collaboration between our two organizations, which began in 2008 with the first year of vernal pool monitoring.

GET INVOLVED! VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Native Plant Garden Volunteer Days

First Friday of the Month, 9am – Noon

Upcoming Dates: (Break July – August) September 7, October 5, 2018

Location: Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA

Laguna Stewardship Days

Once a month on a Saturday, 9am – Noon

Upcoming Dates: (Break June – August) September 15, October TBD, 2018

Details and location announced 1-2 weeks in advance of the workday.

Help care for the Laguna and restore critical wildlife habitat! Tasks vary depending on the season and include removing old irrigation hardware from successful restoration projects, sewing seeds, planting native plants and trees, and weeding. No experience necessary.

Increasing Environmental Literacy with SEEC

By Christine Fontaine, Director of Education Programs

About ten years ago, the challenging economic climate of Sonoma County pushed many of our local non-profits to uncover opportunities within those challenges. SEEC, the Sonoma (County) Environmental Education Collaborative was one of the golden outcomes of that turbulent time. Up until then, regional environmental educators had been carrying out their great work mostly in isolation, with little collaboration between organizations. Today, with what started as a kernel of a vision of turning *toward* each other, we have grown into an important community of practice with far-reaching benefits. Educators from County agencies such as Regional

Parks and the Water Agency, non-profits like the Laguna Foundation, LandPaths, Sonoma Ecology Center, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, Westminster Woods, the Sonoma County Children's Museum, and Sonoma Resource Conservation District, among others, now come together every month at the Laguna Environmental Center (LEC). Under the guidance of Chairperson Sandi Funke, Parks Program Manager at the Sonoma County Regional Parks, and a steering committee comprised of Education Directors from the Laguna Foundation, Pepperwood Foundation, Sonoma County Water Agency, CREEC network, Center for Climate Protection, and



The California Native Plant Society (Milo Baker Chapter) shared the wonders of seeds with our guests during the 2018 Day of the Child. Photo courtesy of David Berman.

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, we all work in partnership for professional development, creating learning pathways, exchanging creative ideas and networking, toward the goal of cultivating environmental literacy in Sonoma County citizens.

One of our initiatives is the Day of the Child—Día del Niño, a day for families to engage with the natural world. Multiple sites throughout the county open on the same day each April for free activities including nature crafts, visits with animals, bug catching, family nature walks, bird watching and so much more. This year on April 29, more than 150 people came to the LEC where we were joined by the Bodega Marine Lab, Sonoma County Water Agency, California Native Plant Society Milo Baker Chapter, and the Eco2School program. More than a thousand people participated at eleven sites county-wide. Not only is the event fun and bonding for the families, all the participating SEEC organizations were able to highlight the work they do throughout Sonoma County.

SEEC is founded on the assumption that a more integrated, mutually supportive approach will reduce overload for organizations, and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of our shared goals. Collaboration helps us all reach further for the benefit of Sonoma County residents and our shared environment!



The So. Co. Water Agency offered young scientists a close look at the tiny organisms found in the Laguna during Day of the Child.

Connecting with Our Community at Local Events

By Maggie Hart, Outreach Coordinator



Tonia Seidita, Carroll Hirsch, and Maggie Hart at DeLoach Vineyards on April 22, 2018.

Over the past four months, trained volunteers hosted our outreach booth at 11 local events including farmers markets, festivals, wineries, open houses, and schools. At these local events, our enthusiastic volunteers introduced hundreds of people to the wonders of the Laguna de Santa Rosa and the work of the Foundation.

This community engagement resulted in recruiting new volunteers and donors as well as new attendees to our educational events. It was especially rewarding in developing new partnerships with event hosts, such as 421 Group, DeLoach Vineyards, Earle Baum Center, Hanna Winery, Harmony Farm Supply, and multiple schools. We greatly appreciate the invitation to have a booth at their fun events!

We could not have done this important service without our volunteers' valuable time and expertise. These volunteers are wonderful representatives of the Laguna Foundation who care deeply about our watershed and want to inspire community support for the Laguna.

We look forward to hosting more outreach booths this summer at music concerts, science fairs, plant sales, plus more farmers markets and open houses. If you see our booth at one of these events, please stop by to say hi and learn more about your watershed!

Field Notes: Re-Oak North Bay

By Brent Reed, Ecological Programs Manager

Every restoration project the Laguna Foundation has been involved with has at least one partner that helps make it happen. Volunteers, funding agencies and the property owning entity (public or private) are typical partners in any restoration project. While most of these partnerships are focused on a single site (such as a six-acre riparian planting along Irwin Creek), one of our recent partnerships involves multiple sites and additional secondary partnerships.

The recent fires in Sonoma County brought together many local agencies. One of our immediate connections was with the Sonoma Resource Conservation District (SRCD). The SRCD works primarily with private agricultural property owners on programs to encourage Best Management Practices (BMP's) that conserve natural resources such as soil, water, and habitat corridors. Immediately after the fires, the SRCD began reaching out to landowners, in search of private properties where post-fire erosion control and habitat restoration would be possible. At the same time, the Laguna Foundation's team of staff and volunteers began collecting native grass and oak seeds, cataloging their origin location, and growing



Duke Creek Ravine. A burned hillside and potential restoration site on private property bordering a seasonal tributary of Mark West Creek.

plants for these potential projects.

We'll be working closely with the SRCD to find more opportunities and funding for habitat restoration on private lands in our watershed. We're just getting rolling. Imagine now, that each property owner is yet another partner! That's pretty exciting to us. We are envisioning a long term partnership, extending beyond the burn areas. *Re-Oak North Bay* is the working title. Stay tuned for more as this inspiring partnership develops!

2nd Annual Wings, Wine and Wetlands was a Tremendous Success!

By Bev Scotland, Director of Major Gifts



Guests enjoyed the lively event supporting the Laguna Foundation's important projects. L-R: Carroll Hirsch, John Hirsch, Peter Schurch, Catherine Sharp, and Ellindale Wells.

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to our event sponsors, wine and brew partners, food purveyors, volunteers, live auction contributors, and you, our generous supporters. This year's event focused on *Migration in the Laguna* with fun, interactive exhibits about fish, birds, and insects. Our exhibit partners included the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, Point Blue Conservation Science, California Native Plant Society, and two local artists, Dana Vallarino and Mikaela Sheldt.

We especially want to thank everyone who donated to this year's *Fund-A-Need: Fire Recovery and Planting for Long-Term Resilience*. The project aids in our efforts to rebuild our ecologically rich landscapes and wildlife habitat.

All of the proceeds from Wings, Wine and Wetlands support our restoration and education programs to ensure the Laguna is a viable and sustainable ecosystem for future generations. Thank you to all and see you next year at Wings, Wine and Wetlands. 2019 date announced soon!



It was all smiles at the annual fundraiser! L-R: Stuart Schroeder, Raini Sugg, Denise Cadman, Wendy Krupnick. Photos courtesy of Anne Stephens.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SPONSORSHIP!

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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 organization 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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Panorama of the Laguna de Santa Rosa ©Gary Morgret

