



Cartography by Jessica Siegel

## Put-In Sites

### Occidental Road near its intersection with Sanford Rd, Santa Rosa

Property owned by County of Sonoma and trail maintained by Regional Parks Department

You can paddle either north or south from this spot. If going south you may need to put in south of the *Ludwigia* that clogs the channel. If going north, follow the path at the base of the road west to the channel. **How to Get There:** There is a small gravel parking lot (6-8 cars max) on the south side of Occidental Road, to the east of the Laguna Bridge. **Access:** Depending on water levels, you may be able to put in right at the parking lot or you may be walking your boat to the water's edge, wherever that may be.

### Santa Rosa Creek at Willowside Road, Santa Rosa

Property owned by City of Santa Rosa

If water levels are high enough you can kayak west in Santa Rosa Creek to the confluence with the Laguna, then turn south and follow the Laguna. **How to Get There:** The entrance to the trail is on Willowside Road, 0.5 miles south of Guerneville Road and 0.5 miles north of Hall Road. Park on the wide shoulders along Willowside Road near the trail. **Access:** On the south and east side of the Willowside Road bridge is a trail. There is a wide cleared area of bank that slopes gently down to the creek.

### Laguna confluence with the Russian River in Forestville (not shown on map)

The Laguna joins the Russian River at Mirabel Trailer Park and Campground, 8400 River Road, Forestville. There is an easy put in area just behind the campground office. Mirabel Park rents kayaks and canoes, or you can bring your own. There is a small fee to park and launch your own boat. Check in at the office. From there you can go quite a ways upstream; you'll be heading east then eventually south. This is an area not often visited by boaters and it has a quite different "feel" from the open, floodplain areas of the Laguna. It is more creek like with a heavy riparian canopy and steep banks on either side.

### **Paddling in the Laguna – Basics**

Kayaking and canoeing in the Laguna is possible only in winter and only when rainfall has been significant within the previous one to two weeks. This is true in part because in many places the Laguna is a shallow floodplain environment and there needs to be enough water under the boat to allow navigation. High water levels are important also because of an invasive aquatic plant called *Ludwigia* in the system. When water levels are low paddling through the dense, tangled mats of plant material is not possible.

When water levels are high you may notice that you are kayaking over fences and you may see “No Trespassing” signs. The Laguna is a waterway of the United States so as long as you are on the water, you can go wherever you want, including places where you would be trespassing if on land. It is rare to experience any significant current so this is a good area for novice kayakers.

### **Wildlife Habitat**

The Laguna’s 22-mile channel extends from Cotati to its confluence with the Russian River at Forestville, but the Laguna is far more than its main channel. It is a unique ecological system comprised of a mosaic of creeks, open water, perennial marshes, seasonal wetlands, riparian forests, oak woodlands and grasslands. The Laguna is an important stopover for thousands of birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway and is home to a wide variety of life: more than 200 species of birds ranging from bald eagles to hummingbirds, steelhead, salamanders, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, mink, badger, and river otter.

### **CAUTIONS**

Waterfowl hunting is allowed in the Laguna each winter from approximately the second Saturday in October to the end of January. Care is warranted. Use common sense; if you hear shots from an area, steer clear of that area.

There are unforeseen hazards in the area. Please paddle with a buddy and always wear a personal flotation device.

### **The Laguna de Santa Rosa is a Wetland of International Importance**

The largest tributary of the Russian River, the Laguna drains a 254-square-mile watershed. The Laguna and surrounding Santa Rosa Plain Wetland Complex are of particular international importance due to the rare and endangered plant and animal species found here, the biodiversity of our region – one of the world’s few diverse “hotspots,” and our unique vernal pool environments. We live in a special place – one recognized not just locally, but internationally.

Since 1971, wetlands all over the world have been designated by the Ramsar Convention to highlight the importance of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide. The Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Complex is the 30th site in the nation to receive this unique distinction.

### **The Laguna de Santa Rosa Watershed**

In addition to the habitat it provides for wildlife, the Laguna is used for agricultural, recreational and educational purposes. It serves as a natural holding basin during our wet season and as an overflow area for the Russian River during floods, slowing and capturing floodwaters and easing their impact on lower Russian River communities. As the receiving water of a watershed where most of the county’s human population lives, it is a landscape feature of critical importance to Sonoma County’s water quality, flood control, and biodiversity.

**Support the Laguna Foundation’s restoration, education and conservation science programs; become a member today!**

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# **Paddling the Laguna de Santa Rosa**

*Explore the Laguna from an amazing vantage point... on the water!*

