



## Blooms and Births of a Laguna Spring

By Kevin Munroe, Executive Director

Spring is here! At least from Nature's point of view, if not our calendars. Wetlands are our most seasonally sensitive and variable ecosystem, so it's hard to find a better place to watch spring arrive. Why? The combination of changing water levels, rich soils and open, sunny country results in plants and wildlife in almost constant change.

There's so much to watch as you explore your Laguna! Vernal pools are coming into full bloom with several state-endangered (and stunning) wildflowers. Our iconic oaks are sending out new leaves and thousands of tiny tree-top flowers. Migrating dragonflies show up as early as April. Thousands of tiny tree frog voices echo through the night. Mayflies, bees, and fuzzy flower flies start to flutter through our wetlands in search of food and mates. Neotropical migrants like Bullock orioles and yellow warblers



Photos: (center) A monarch butterfly rests upon a sunflower; (top) great horned owlets, Howarth Park, Santa Rosa; (bottom) a mallard duck and ducklings, Lake Ralphine, Santa Rosa. (©Marlene Smith Photography)

add color to the wetland landscape, and even red-striped garter snakes add their own spring panache. Otter, mink, muskrat, and beaver are starting families just as our own families begin to spend more time outdoors biking, jogging, and bird watching.

We can all use the Laguna de Santa Rosa wetlands as inspiration to make 2018 a year of resilience, recovery, and new beginnings. As we continue to rebuild, we can look towards nature's example of stepping forward and finding our own spring blooms. The Laguna Foundation is full of life and growth this season – please read on to see how you can bloom with us this year.



Kevin Munroe

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## Memories of a Laguna Springtime – Value, Beauty and Birds!

*By Raini Sugg,  
President, Board of Directors*

For the past 17 years, springtime at the Laguna Foundation has been a very busy time for me. I began volunteering with the Foundation in 1999 when it had no “home” and no paid staff. In those days, Carolyn (CJ) Johnson and I headed up the Docent training all by ourselves. Many positive changes have happened over those years, including establishing a home at Stone Farm in Santa Rosa and, most importantly, adding a wonderful team of staff who run the Docent program (thank goodness)!

CJ and I are still involved, but it’s now the staff who do the “heavy lifting.” We get to enjoy sharing our knowledge and excitement about the wetlands with new Docents who join us each spring. The beauty found in the Laguna this time of year is inspiring. Nothing is better than seeing a spark in new volunteers when we take them to see the egret, double-crested cormorant and great blue heron rookery or to see the beautiful spring flowers in a vernal pool.

I feel lucky that I chose to volunteer with the Laguna Foundation all those years ago. Helping our Sonoma County neighbors understand the value and beauty of the Laguna wetlands has added joy and satisfaction to my life. The field trips each spring remind me of how fortunate we all are to live in the beautiful Laguna watershed.



*The Foundation’s E.D., Kevin Munroe (left), and Board President, Raini Sugg (right) enjoy bird watching in the Laguna year-round.*



*Photo courtesy of Keir Morse.*

## Nature’s Corner: What Are Those Tiny Green Plants?

*By Sarah Gordon  
Conservation Science Program Manager*

Most of us are familiar with duckweed (*Lemna sp.*) that forms a thin sheet of floating green across ponds and other still water bodies. But take another look, because you may be observing a different plant altogether. Water-starwort (*Callitriche sp.*) is another native plant with a size and form similar to duckweed. A close inspection will reveal multiple tiny leaves clustered in a small rosette, barely the size of your fingernail, compared to duckweed that has only two or three “leaf” bodies grouped together. Water-starwort rosettes may be found floating on the surface of wetlands or forming mats on saturated soils and have long thin filamentous stems with tiny paired leaves along the length. Duckweed, in comparison, is commonly found only at the water surface with short dangling roots only a few millimeters long. Water-starworts are blooming now in our vernal pools, but good luck seeing a flower! The minute petal-less flowers are at the intersection of leaf and stem, and while they are no doubt present, are best seen with magnification.



# Spring 2018 Walks, Talks, and Classes!

Join us for exploring and learning about the Laguna de Santa Rosa.  
Pre-registration is required for all events. New events added regularly at [www.LagunaFoundation.org](http://www.LagunaFoundation.org)  
Events take place, or begin at the Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

## **Bear Aware: Understanding the Bear Necessities**

Presentation with Meghan Walla-Murphy  
Thursday, March 8, 7:00-8:30pm, \$12

## **Watershed Perspectives:**

### **North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park**

Hike with Regional Parks and Laguna Foundation Staff  
Sunday, March 11, 9:00am-3:30pm, \$10

## **Spring Birding in the Laguna Series**

Birdwatching and Natural History Walks with Lisa Hug  
Sundays: March 18, April 15, and May 20  
8:30am-1:00pm, \$50 per walk (*Fundraiser for Laguna Fnd.*)

## **Bird Language of the Laguna**

Workshop and field trip with Meghan Walla-Murphy  
Sunday, March 25, 7:00-11:00am. \$30

## **Inside the Earth**

Presentation with geologist, Dr. Jane Nielson  
Thursday, March 29, 7:00-8:30pm, \$12

## **Exploring the Historic Headwaters of the Laguna de Santa Rosa**

Walk with Jenny Blaker, Michael Knappman, Patrick Lei,  
and Kate Symonds  
Sunday, April 8, 10:00am-2:00pm, \$10-50 sliding scale

## **From Earth to Moon and Back Again: Stories from "Lunar Analog Studies"**

Presentation with geologist, Dr. Jane Nielson  
Thursday, April 26, 7:00-8:30pm, \$12

## **Other Spring Events**

- April 29, *Dia del Niño* Open House
- May 5, Eco-Friendly Garden Tour & Native Plant Sale
- May 6, Delta Pond Rookery Walks
- May 13, Laguna Trail Walk with Regional Parks and LF
- June 3, Animal Sign & Bird Language of the Laguna
- June 30, Nina Antze Colored Pencil Workshop

For more information, contact Anita Smith, Public Education Manager:  
(707) 527-9277 xt.110 [anita@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:anita@lagunafoundation.org).

## *Heron Hall Art Exhibits*



### **"Naturally"**

#### **Prints and Paintings by Rik Olson**

*On display through May 1, 2018*

Featuring woodcuts and linocuts centered on the Laguna Watershed.  
(Pictured left: "Nest")

Rik Olson finds inspiration in the natural environment, the colors, the forest, and the ocean coastline. He has lived, studied and exhibited in Italy, Germany, and the U.S.

### **Upcoming Exhibit:**

#### **"Microcosms: A Closer Look at Mushrooms and Lichens"**

#### **Paintings by Lucy Martin**

*Opens May 4, 2018*

*Reception: Saturday, May 12, 2018, 3:00-5:00pm.*

*The Heron Hall Art Gallery is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, but because of the various uses of the Hall, **please call in advance** to ensure the gallery is available for viewing: (707) 527-9277 xt. 107.*

# Coming Soon! New Nursery, New Collaboration, and New Plants

By Wendy Trowbridge, Director of Restoration and Conservation Science Programs

Have you heard the news? We are working hard on upgrading our nursery facility! We currently have an aging nursery where we grow all of the native, locally adapted plants for use in our habitat restoration projects within the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed. Our nursery has housed thousands of trees and shrubs which have been planted on more than 100 acres to restore fish and wildlife habitat and improve water quality. Our current facilities were constructed with second-hand materials and generously donated labor – they’ve served us very well! But, it is time for an upgrade.

While our nursery has enabled us to establish a strong restoration program, there are new plant diseases that represent a substantial threat to our projects. Several species of the genus *Phytophthora*, including Sudden Oak Death, can cause crown and root rot diseases in native herbaceous and woody plants. These diseases are often spread through nursery stock, so it is particularly important that all nurseries implement best management practices to prevent the spread of disease and protect existing wildlife habitat.

We are partnering with the Milo Baker Chapter of the

California Native Plant Society who will supply matching funds and share our new nursery. This will allow the Native Plant Society to provide disease-free native plants to the local community through their plant sales. The CNPS volunteers have extensive expertise building and running native plant nurseries. We’ve raised much of the money we need and have obtained all of our building permits. By spring we should be moving in the benches and raising the structure itself!

Our new nursery, and our partnership with CNPS, will be particularly important to our fire recovery efforts. Since the October fires, we have collected seeds and cuttings from areas around the burned zones and will be utilizing the new nursery to grow out starts. We held an informational meeting on February 24 to gauge interest and will be holding planting events in interested neighborhoods in the fall of 2018. All the plants will be locally collected and free of charge.

*It's not too late to sign up! If you are a landowner and are interested in receiving plants, or hosting a planting event, please contact Wendy Trowbridge at (707) 527-9277 xt. 108 or [wendy@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:wendy@lagunafoundation.org).*



**Current Nursery**

*Our new and improved Nursery will be 40' wide and 80' long! It will be equipped with irrigation and benches that were constructed by local Eagle Scouts.*



**New Nursery Design!**





COMING SUMMER 2018

CAMP TULE

*By Christine Fontaine, Director of Education Programs*

The Laguna Environmental Center (LEC) has become a special locale. The rich history of the site, the stunning viewscape, the beauty of the native plant gardens, plus all the little seeds of delight that have been sprinkled and planted here by thousands of visitors have all mulched together and blossomed into a magical place for fun, exploring and learning about our local environment.

This summer we are excited to take what is special about the LEC and open it up to children by starting a new program that has been on the “dream board” for many years: *Laguna Explorers: Camp Tule*. For the first time we will invite children to come for a week-long day camp experience with some Learning Laguna docents and



*The Laguna Foundation is excited to host our first summer camp program - Camp Tule! One of the many fun activities children will enjoy is making ducks out of cattail leaves.*

Foundation staff. Each day will be filled with our special brand of crafting, nature discovery walks, stories, games, music, and we will even work in some stewardship activities and a little bit of science. We want to foster wonder in children and for every child to delight in the world we live in. Camp Tule will be a place where children grow creatively, look closely, and spend structured and unstructured time exploring and playing in nature. And, my not-so-hidden agenda is for every child to expand their knowledge and experience of the Laguna de Santa Rosa...with a summer camp attitude that is!

The daily themes, schedules, and precise activities are coming together now. We aim to open registration in April for two sessions. You can sign your young explorer up for the week of July 23–27 or August 6–10. You will be welcome to sign-up for both sessions as well, but please know that both weeks will have the same activities that are designed for 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> graders (6 ½ to 9 ½ year old children). We also plan to keep the enrollment cost reasonable so the camp is accessible to a wide-range of families. If you know a young one who would enjoy looking under logs, studying plants, seeking insects, making nature crafts, building tule boats, playing nature games and enjoying some good old summer fun with wonderful, caring, knowledgeable adults, keep your eye on our e-news and website for the opening of registration.

*Laguna Explorers: Camp Tule*

Session 1: July 23–27, 2018

Session 2: August 6–10, 2018

Special 1<sup>st</sup> Year Pricing: \$150 per session

**Scholarships Available!**

Questions? Contact Christine Fontaine  
at [christine@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:christine@lagunafoundation.org)

# Beauty and Balance in Our Native Plant Garden

By Maggie Hart, Outreach Coordinator

In spring, the Laguna Environmental Center landscape displays a rainbow of native wildflowers: red fuchsia, pink wild rose, red-pink clarkia, orange monkey flower, yellow and white yarrow, blue-eyed grass, purple seaside daisy, and more. Our native shrubs also have a dazzling display of blooms, such as flowering currant, California lilac, elderberry, manzanita and willow. Besides being beautiful and well adapted to our climate, these blooms also have incredible habitat value. Since pollinators, such as native bees, birds and butterflies, depend on these flowers for food, what happens in fall and winter when food is not so abundant? Plus, wouldn't it be wonderful to have colorful blooms all year long?



*"May our heart's garden of awakening bloom with hundreds of flowers." ~Thich Nhat Hanh*

In May 2017, we began working with local landscape designer and volunteer, Robert Kourik, to enhance and expand our habitat garden for pollinators. Like all designers, he needed an accurate set of plans to work from first. Our landscape had changed so much from the original plan created in 2009 that Robert had to

redraw the plans. This involved him retaking all the measurements and identifying and tallying all the plants.

For our first improvement to the landscape, Robert proposed a new landscape design for the front of Heron Hall. These plants will be added to the current installation of deer grass to add more color and create year-long habitat: three varieties of buckwheat, fuchsia, salvia, desert grape and manzanita. Many of the plants were donated by our local chapter of the CA Native

Plant Society. Volunteers are working hard to get the soil ready and the drip irrigation installed for planting this March. And volunteers, Ron Dodge and Brett Lane, installed trellises for the vigorous vine to climb up the walls of Heron Hall about ten feet.

Our heartfelt thanks to Robert Kourik and all the volunteers that made this graceful addition to our habitat garden possible. I encourage you to drop by the Center to see what's growing. It is my favorite time of year!



**Moving to June ♡ Save the Date ♡ Sunday, June 24, 2018, 2 P.M.**

**Join us for a celebration of Migration in the Laguna!  
Come stroll Stone Farm's native plant garden, experience  
our interactive exhibits, and enjoy local food and drinks.**

- Tickets go on sale April 1<sup>st</sup> at [www.LagunaFoundation.org](http://www.LagunaFoundation.org)
- For general information or to learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact Bev at (707) 527-9277, ext. 106.



# Notes From the Field: Spring at the Laguna Uplands Preserve

By Brent Reed, Ecological Program Manager

The Laguna Uplands Preserve, located behind the Sonoma West Medical Center in Sebastopol, has undergone a lot of changes since habitat restoration first began at the turn of the millennium. First, the sheep were pulled off the nearly treeless pasture. Then, we removed the fencing that acted as a barrier for terrestrial wildlife. Next, we began planting native trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous plants. Bird nesting boxes and raptor perches were put up. After all, there were no mature trees to perch on or make nests in at that stage. During the very first spring the nesting boxes were quickly utilized by swallows that hunted in the open grassland environment. In following years western bluebirds joined in. Now some of the nesting boxes are shaded by oak trees and we are seeing interest by the oak titmouse. Who will be next as the site becomes more wooded? Chickadees? Acorn woodpeckers and nuthatches? Each spring reveals new activity at the Uplands.

A sunny day in January and February may feel like the beginnings of spring and will reveal the dramatic sounds and sights of the male Anna's hummingbirds' dive display and resultant "chirp" sound. (Fun Fact: The chirp is actually made by the air passing and vibrating the flared tail feathers, similar to how reed instruments make



*Hummingbirds are just one of the many species returning to populate the trees and shrubs at the Laguna Uplands Preserve in Sebastopol. (Photo: ©Marlene Smith)*

music!) Look in the trees and you may see red flashes as he moves his head from side to side and the feathers catch and reflect the light. Soon there may be a mate and a nest, though the tiny nests can be nearly impossible to find. This is just one of the many species we are excited to watch for. Looking out for the next bird who will begin nesting in our trees and shrubs is an exciting part of each spring.

Make sure to visit the Laguna Uplands to see the new life and activity that will awaken this spring!



## Membership Support! The Heartbeat of the Laguna Foundation

At 28 years, The Laguna Foundation is stronger than ever, due in large part to the unwavering support of our members. Even with national and global challenges coming to their attention daily, our generous and committed donors understand the importance of making their contribution on a local level. For that, **we are grateful and thank each and every one of you!**

With your help, we've restored 225 acres with over 60,000 native plants and more than 18,000 children have participated in the *Learning Laguna* classroom program where they learn about the nature that

surrounds them. But there is still so much more to do if our Laguna is to be a viable and sustainable ecosystem for future generations. The 2018 membership drive is now underway. Your membership will fund programs that improve our water quality, preserve local biodiversity, restore wildlife and plant habitat, and support education programs to expand public awareness and inspire local stewardship of our Laguna wetlands.

We ask you to continue your investment in our shared vision with a generous membership gift.

*You can make your 2018 membership donation online at [LagunaFoundation.org](http://LagunaFoundation.org) or use the enclosed envelope. For questions about your membership, contact Sierra Castillo at (707) 527-9277, xt. 109 or [sierra@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:sierra@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 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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American mink ©Thomas Reynolds

