

2009 State of the Laguna Conference & Science Symposium

Christina Sloop, Science Program Director

Meeting the Challenge: Strategies for Adapting Watershed Ecosystems to Climate Change

From October 14-16, 2009 the Laguna Foundation hosted 150 participants at the Sonoma Mountain Village in Rohnert Park to address climate change adaptation at the watershed scale. Bay Area scientists, land managers (agency, private and agriculture), watershed stakeholders, and policy makers came together to exchange ideas and develop a series of climate change adaptation strategies for watersheds in the region.

Climate change 'adaptation' is closely linked to climate change 'mitigation.' 'Adaptation' addresses the actions humans can take to minimize the effects of a changing climate (e.g. minimizing stressors to natural and human systems or incorporating future climate predictions into land management, conservation planning and restoration decisions.) 'Mitigation' addresses the actions humans can take to minimize the underlying causes of climate change (e.g. reducing greenhouse gas emissions or utilizing sustainable energy). Future climate scenarios (low, medium, high impact) are directly determined by our collective mitigation actions, and will dictate the severity of needed adaptation actions.

The conference focused mainly on how land managers in conservation, restoration, and agriculture can prepare for changes ahead. By first learning about the state of available science and technology, and by developing a list of the likely impacts on watersheds due to a changing Bay Area climate regime, we successfully demystified the climate change 'elephant in the room.'

After developing a series of watershed climate change adaptation strategies to tackle the long list of expected climate change impacts, conference participants organized themselves into three ongoing working groups that will develop tools, fine-tune and help implement actions.

The North Bay Watershed Climate Change Adaptation Initiative is one outcome of the conference. The Initiative is based on the goals of three new working groups aimed at the implementation of eight climate change adaptation strategies identified by conference participants.



Photo: Hattie Brown

Participants engaged in discussion of needed climate change adaptation actions.

The working groups are:

1. Stream & Riparian Stewardship
2. Science, Technology & Land Management Nexus
3. Policy and Funding Development

These working groups will address the needed actions towards implementation of specific climate change adaptation strategies. Each working group has a dedicated section on this site, where members can participate in discussions, learn about in-person meetings, and share supporting materials and documents.

For more information please go to:
<http://www.climatechangeadaptationinitiative.org:8080/>

The Laguna Foundation was selected as the leader in organizing and pushing these groups forward in order to set an example and develop a model of climate change adaptation for the region, the state and the perhaps the nation. As participants left late Friday afternoon the energy and enthusiasm was high, and the main thought in everyone's mind seemed to be: "Onward together! We can tackle this elephant yet!"

Practically, this means that Laguna Foundation program directors now have the ear of the local and Bay Area scientific, land management, and policy communities to help move forward initiatives that will directly benefit the Laguna, its wildlife, as well as its human residents in the face of climate change. "Onward, indeed!"

Executive Director Report - *David Bannister*

As I write this I am looking out the window from our new headquarters watching Audubon's warblers scouring the ground around dropped walnuts from the California black walnut tree at the back of the building. This reminder of our transition from fall to winter makes me look forward to the next seasonal transition—the one where the beautiful Laguna fills with water and seasonal avian visitors! Kayak time is coming!

These transitions also remind me that the Foundation has made several transitions since the last Meanderings. First, as I mentioned, we are now in the renamed Churchill Farmhouse which is our new headquarters. The name is to honor the generous donation of time, energy and money made by Board members Ken and Susan Churchill. We moved in at the end of July and like any move like this, it was challenging. Hassles with our internet connection, hassles with the plumbing, and all around getting settled in while at the same time trying not to miss a beat in our jobs were all challenges. Those challenges are mostly behind us now and we LOVE being at the new location at 900 Sanford Road. We think that being located adjacent to the main body of the resource that our whole mission is dedicated to is just great. It also helps us with that mission in many ways. Thanks go out to all the Laguna Learning Center contributors, whether they were cash donors, contractor and labor and material "community" donors, or volunteers who have contributed so much.

Yet another transition is my own into the position of Executive Director of the Foundation. I have been on the Board for the last five plus years and Board President for the last two years. In July the Board asked whether I would take over the open position of Executive Director. Because I had the time, because I care deeply about the Foundation and its mission, because we have a superb staff team, and because I believe that I have the skills to do the job, I accepted the challenge. During the month of August I worked side-by-side with Acting Executive Director Mark Green to achieve a smooth transition. Mark's prior position of Associate Executive Director was eliminated as we downsized to reflect the challenging economic conditions we face today. Many thanks go out to Mark not only for his assistance in the transition but also for his six years with the Foundation.

We also wish Julian Meisler best wishes in his new position with Sonoma Land Trust. Catherine Cumberland, who has worked in our Restoration Department with Julian for three years is transitioning marvelously into her new role as Manager of the Department. Be sure to read the article about our exciting end-of-year tree planting and fundraising event, the Tree-A-Thon and say hello to Catherine on January 9th, 2010 as she leads a group of over 100 tree planting volunteers!

A New Nursery to Accompany the New Office at Stone Farm

Catherine Cumberland, Restoration Program Manager

In restoration plantings, genetic diversity is important. For example, if all the acorns in a planting come from the same tree, all the oaks in that planting will be similarly susceptible to pathogens, drought, flooding, frost, and other stressors. With diversity, some individuals will make it and some won't, but only rarely would we lose an entire species.

This is why the Foundation partners with the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma State University (SSU), and local schools to include as much genetic diversity into our plantings as possible. We collect early-, mid-, and late-ripening seeds from multiple individuals of each species, and strive to maximize geographic variation. Plants that survive low in the floodplain have different tolerances than those in the uplands. We don't know which will be more advantageous under coming climate changes, but having both is an insurance plan.

Once the seeds are collected, the plants need to be propagated. SSU has been enormously helpful in this regard, as have some local nurseries. But as our projects got bigger, it became clear that there just aren't enough plants from Laguna genetic stock available. From this realization came the new nursery at Stone Farm. Funded largely by the City of Santa Rosa, this collaboration between the City and the Foundation will provide plant material for projects led by both



Photo: Alicia Barker

Marcia Johnson, Catherine Cumberland, Karen Tillinghast, Chris Engel and Rachel Zeist making native blackberry cuttings.

organizations. We are also grateful to members of the Santa Rosa Sunrise Rotary, who spent many hours assembling the infrastructure to get the nursery up and running.

Today we have over 2,000 plants in the nursery, from oaks to grasses. Taking care of these requires time, and fortunately a great group of volunteers came forward on this important task. If you're interested in being a nursery volunteer, please call us.

Docents are the Life in Learning Laguna

Christine Fontaine, Education Program Director

Volunteers are essential to the work of the Laguna Foundation. Laguna Keepers get their hands in the soil and put native plants in the ground; Adopt a Vernal Pool volunteers monitor endangered species and collect data; interns help us organize data; bird monitors help establish baseline numbers of individuals and species diversity; office volunteers help us with the daily operations of the Foundation; and Laguna docents educate children and adults about the Laguna. No matter the task, volunteers share a passion for the Laguna and a desire to make a contribution.

There are myriad tasks associated with each volunteer position but listing the duties doesn't tell the whole story. You probably know that to become a Laguna docent volunteers first participate in the 10-week training course. Upon graduation they lead classroom activities for elementary students that include: the slide show introducing the Laguna, Animal Tracks, Migration game, Wetland Model, Bird Investigation Station, and a reasoning game called "Who Am I?" all about Laguna animals. Docents also skillfully lead investigative field trips to the Laguna for the students and for adults.

Each person makes a unique contribution to the program and those contributions go beyond the tasks and engaging participants in program activities. Docents are teachers, mentors and coaches. They provide hope and caring and bring enthusiasm, knowledge, and their own inquisitiveness. They give of themselves and their time and set a positive example. They are prepared yet they think on their feet and remain flexible. Learning Laguna docents are skilled questioners, creative problem solvers, and each person helps to continually



Photo: Paula Reid

Learning Laguna students and docent Janet Anderson kettling like Turkey Vultures.

improve programs by sharing observations and experiences. Docents love the Laguna and they themselves keep learning and growing, having fun and making friends along the way.

The 53 people who are docents are the heart and soul of Learning Laguna, animating every classroom visit and field trip. Each year they contribute roughly 1300 hours of direct teaching time, not to mention planning, preparation, drive-time, setting up and cleaning up. **Almost 6,000 students have experienced the program since its inception in 1999.** Because our docents bring so much of themselves to each classroom visit and fieldtrip, the children are experiencing more than the Laguna ecosystem and learning more than ecology and natural history, they see that adults in their community care about them, their experiences and their lives.

Thank you Docents!

Barnee Alexander, Janet Anderson, Jeannette Anglin, Connie Ayers, Chris Beck, Dana Blake, Sandra Bodley, Bob Caricato, John Condon, Jim Dempsey, Frank Dono, Jeanette Doyel, Christine Engel, Kelly Felciano, Andy Fleming, Victoria Fullerton, Kathy Gilliam, Joany Goodwin, Ramona Haller, Sheila Handley, Linda Hanes, Beth haylock, Carroll Hirsch, Sandy Hobart, Lisa Hug, Kathi Jacobs, Marcia Johnson, Pam Jorgensen, Mat Keller, Adriene Malley, Richard Mayer, Gretchen McIndoe, Franny Miniverni-Zick, Bob Murnane, Jeff Muse, Laura Neumann, Patty Newland, Tom Pringle, Ray Rapp, Mary Reed, Tom Reed, Paula Reid, Betsy Sanville, Larry Shapiro, Erin Sheffield, Minnie Silman, Tom Silman, Anne Stephens, Heidi Stewart, Ellen Swenson, Deborah Thayer, Raini Sugg Vallarino, Chris Woodward

Laguna Docent Training

Will you help us foster connectedness to nature and educate school children about the Laguna? Please consider training to become a docent. We teach you about the natural and cultural history of the Laguna and how to run the dynamic classroom and field activities and you read, observe, engage, ask questions and have fun!

Applications are available on our website and orientation events will take place from 6:30-8:00 PM on Tuesday, **February 23** at the Sebastopol Library and on Monday, **March 1** at the Central Santa Rosa Library. Training classes occur on Mondays from 9:30-2:30 from March through May (with a break on April 5).

Visit our website for details: www.lagunafoundation.org

Foundation Launches New Fundraising Campaign

Ken Churchill, Resource Development Committee Chair

Have you ever heard of a **Tree-A-Thon**? Probably not, because we just invented it! A Tree-A-Thon works like a Walk-A-Thon, but instead of walking, we are going to do something wonderful for the environment- planting trees!

On January 9th, over 100 volunteers are going to plant 750 valley oaks and other native species in the Meadowlark Field area of the Laguna to restore a riparian forest and raise funds for the Foundation's restoration, education and research programs.

This project is one of the many restoration projects the Foundation has completed in the past few years in our efforts to enhance habitat along the Laguna. The money raised in the Tree-A-Thon will help the Foundation implement additional habitat restoration projects; conduct research to help protect the Laguna and inform restoration activities; and provide hundreds of school children each year with the opportunity to experience the wonders of the Laguna.

Would you consider sponsoring one of the volunteers listed at right? It's easy:

- For credit card donations, go to: [www.firstgiving.com /32164](http://www.firstgiving.com/32164) where you can find all of the volunteer's individual donation pages.
- Fill out the pledge card below and use the remit envelope to mail a check to the Foundation.

Whatever you can afford is greatly appreciated. With all of our great volunteers, every donation goes a long way in helping us do amazing things for Sonoma County's ecological treasure, the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Tree-A-Thon Participants

Tess Abts, Gary Alexander, Stephanie Alton, David and Maripat Bannister, Marshall Behling, Oron Benary, Joseph Bisgiglia, Tony Black, Tod Brilliant, Renata Brillinger, Hattie Brown, Denise Cadman, Bob Caricato, Sierra Castillo, Tony Chappelle, Caroline Christian, George Christie, Ken and Susan Churchill, Citizen Scientists, Cameron Colson, Al Couture, Leslene Della Madre, Frank Dono, Jeanette Doyel, Michelle Early, Molly Eckler, Darth Elledge, Doug Emery, Chris Engel, Judith Enochs, Christine Fontaine, Nancy Fortner, Matthew Gerhart, Kathy Gilliam, Kandis Gilmore, Rahadra Glessner, William Hart, Vicky Hill, Carroll Hirsch, Dave Hopping, Junko Hoshi, Gerry Humes, Lawrence Jaffe, Julie Jehly, Arlene Kallen, Michael Kelly, Mary Killian, Ari Kinnear, Wendy Krupnick, Sara Lahman, Tom Lambert, Rebecca Lawton, Stevie Lazo, Karin Lease, Tiaga Liner, Amy Little, Eric Litvin, Ashlee Llewellyn, Jan Lochner, Barrie Mason, Kari May, Sandy Mays, Stephan McMahan, Winifred Medin, Julian Meisler, Franny Minervini-Zick, Maya Missakian, Addie Mullennix, Alex Needleman, William O'Keeffe, Jacob Paradise, Carole Peccorini, Christopher Peck, Tom Pringle, Raymond Rapp, Mary and Tom Reed, Lindee Reese, Tina Renouf, Angela Rizzo, Kristal Roach, Rose Roberts, Tom Robinson, Lilith Rogers, Judith Rousseau, Laura Saunders, Lou Ann Seaman, Sara Shakinah, Erin Sheffield, Cindy Sherwood, Kathryn Sloan, Guy Smith, Craig Stainbrook, Alex Stanley, Avi Starr-Glass, Clay Stephens, Heidi Stewart, David Suchard, Deborah Thayer, Bud Thompson, Norm Vachon, Steve Vallarino, Lucia Varella, Andrea Williamson, Kathleen and Rich Woolfe, Rose Zoia



900 Sanford Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
(707) 527-9277

Tree-A-Thon Pledge Card

I would like to support

_____ on their effort to plant 750 oak trees and help them raise money for the Foundation's restoration, research and education programs.

The Foundation is a nonprofit organization supported by contributions and grants. IRS ID #94-3155180. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Clip this coupon and mail with your check. **THANK YOU for supporting the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation!**

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Tax deductible donation enclosed of \$ _____

I am interested in volunteering. Please call me for opportunities in docent training, restoration projects, and/or research projects (circle preferences).

Partnerships Prove Successful for Public Education

Over the summer, Laguna docents hosted two outings for the Sebastopol Walks! program. We welcomed 80 participants to the July walk that explored Meadowlark Field, including recent restoration work and the Balletto Easement (with special permission). The second walk in August attracted 40 people who met at the Sebastopol Plaza, proceeded on the Rodota Trail then onto Brown Farm (again, with special permission) where we were treated to views of the "back" of Sebastopol and up-close encounters with the natural treasures on the farm. We also discussed some of the management challenges on this City of Santa Rosa property.

Both walks created a special opportunity to experience and learn about lands that are not open to the public and served as a great partnership for us because we were able to reach farther with Laguna messages. Additionally, the outings benefited the Walks! program by providing new and exciting outings for their regular walkers. The participants shared their enthusiasm for the experience and we've been invited back for the 2010 schedule.

We look forward to an expanded offering of public Laguna walks in 2010. In addition to our annual Delta Pond Rookery walk in early May, and a Sebastopol Walks! outing in the summer, we are also entering into a new partnership with LandPaths and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space district for guided walks on Laguna properties with Open Space easements. Keep an eye on our e-calendar for spring opportunities to investigate, learn and deepen your connection to the Laguna.



Laguna walk participants passing through a swale.

Photo: Christine Fontaine

LagunaKeepers

Volunteers Restoring the Laguna

LagunaKeepers are the Foundation's habitat restoration volunteers. Each month, in partnership with the City of Santa Rosa, we meet to give the Laguna a little hands-on love! Volunteer season runs September through May with a break during the summer.

Be sure to wear shoes & clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Only heavy rain cancels. Snacks are on us, but do bring gloves, water & friends!



2010 CALENDAR

Saturday, January 9

Rain date: January 16

Tree-a-Thon

We've planted 1500 trees and shrubs here already, but 750 more can't hurt. Join us for this exciting community event! Meet at the Chevron station just east of the Laguna at 5740 Hwy 12.

Saturday, February 20

Laguna Uplands

Last year, we met on Valentine's Day and ate cupcakes. This year, why skip the cupcakes? Meet at the end of Palm Ave. in Sebastopol, just south of Palm Drive Hospital.

Saturday, March 27

Irwin Creek

Continuing the expansion of the Irwin Creek riparian corridor, and a chance to revisit last year's plantings. Meet at Stone Farm (900 Sanford Rd.) & we'll caravan to the site.

Saturday, April 17

Native Plant Demonstration Garden

Phase three of the installation of the new garden, plus planting grasses and sedges at the Joint Wetlands area. Meet at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, 4300 Llano Rd.; follow signs to the "Administration" building.

Saturday, May 8

Balletto Easement

This planting has reached three years old, and it's time for it to fly solo. We'll remove restoration hardware and drip tubing, and wish the plants a good long life! Meet at Kelly Farm, 5344 Occidental Rd.

For more information, or to receive a monthly email reminder of LagunaKeepers workdates, please contact Catherine Cumberland at (707) 527-9277 x108 or email: catherine@lagunafoundation.org

6th Annual Art & Garden Gala: Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head!

David Bannister, Executive Director

The Foundation's 6th annual garden party fundraiser took place at the beautiful Vine Hill House on September 13th; not a time of year that is considered to be Sonoma County's rainy season. Yet, rain it did—from the event's start at 3:00 until its finish at 6:00! This definitely put a damper on the day and on people's enthusiasm for bidding on the many great art and event items in the silent and live auctions. Too bad, as we had great food presented by Trends catering, paired premium local wines, a truly amazing silent auction of donated original artworks and special wine lots, and fascinating entertainment by performers of the Might Chiplings and Ken Garr, of Santa Rosa's The Magic Shop, and the star of the show: a view across the Laguna and the Santa Rosa Plain that has to be seen to be believed.

Live auctioneer David Katz worked up the crowd for live auction of adventurous experiences in the Laguna, Lake Tahoe and Sea Ranch, raising much-needed funding for the Foundation's work to protect, restore, and build public appreciation for our most important local wildlife area.

The Foundation is grateful to the Gala's generous sponsors, to the many artists who donated their work for auction, donors of the exciting live auction "adventure packages", to caterer Susan Borowicz of Trends, David Katz and the donors of the exquisite wines enjoyed onsite and auctioned, and the volunteers who made the Gala possible. Please see below for a complete list of those who helped the Art and Garden Gala to be such a wonderful day.

PLEASE NOTE:

This event will have a new focus for 2010. Stay tuned for exciting changes and put September 10, 2010 on your calendar: it's less than a year away!

Thank you to our sponsors!

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The Foundation extends our deepest deepest thanks to...

Dan and Jan O'Connell of Vine Hill House, Susan Borowicz and her crew at Trends Catering, Denise Cadman and the Cookie Corps

...and our wonderful Art & Garden Gala Committee

Nina Arrabit, Susan Churchill, Yvonne Giambone-Martin, Deanne Marbach, Sandy Mays, Jan O'Connell, Pat O'Connell, and Susan Sohl



Photo: Bill Hewitt

Board member Guy Smith holds an umbrella for Orrin Thiessen.

Contributing Artists

Barnee Alexander, Warren Arnold, Gerald Arrington, Jocelyn Audette, Susan Ball, Jennifer Balletto, Abby Bard, Genevieve Barnhart, Phyllis Beals, Warren Bellows, Joel Bennett, D.A. Bishop, Tony Black, Margaret Bolt, 3-D Eddy, Paula Brent, Cheryl Costantini, Tamsen Donner, Ryan Douglas, Leticia Duenas, Louisa King Fraser, Mary Fuller, Yvonne Giambone-Martin, Green Greenwald, Glen Halverson, Branka Harris, Michael Hayden, Drew Jackson, Mary Neuer Lee, Kristina Lucas, Mikio Matsumoto, Jerry Meshulam, James Millikan, Rick Mohar, Marge Mount, Sheila O'Brien, Pat O'Connell, Hanya Popova Parker, Valerie Randall, Nancy Ricciardi, Jean Salatino, Carla Sarvis, Micah Schwaberow, Paula Smith, Susan Sohl, Maria-Esther Sund, Allis Teegarden, Amanda Ward, Gary Weiner, Gen Zorich

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Poured Wine

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...and, of course, all our donors,
volunteers, and you.



The **Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation**, founded in 1989, works to preserve, restore, and inspire greater understanding and appreciation of the Laguna de Santa Rosa wetland complex, which is the largest tributary of the Russian River and Sonoma County's richest wildlife area. The Foundation conducts educational programs, implements preservation and restoration projects, conducts scientific research, 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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At Long Last! Publication of the Field Guide to the Laguna

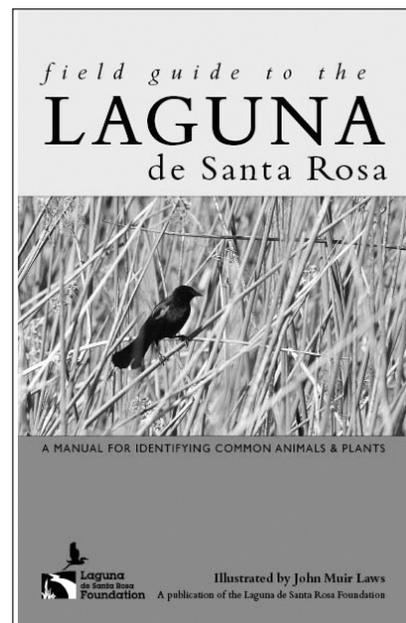
Catherine Cumberland, Restoration Program Manager

We are pleased to announce the release of our *Field Guide to the Laguna de Santa Rosa*, a manual for identifying common animals and plants. This 80-page guide is a reference to 150 different species of the Laguna, and is a user-friendly resource for exploring this precious natural area. It includes descriptions of representative mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates and plants, all illustrated in color. An introductory section provides overviews of the Laguna's geology, soils, climate, hydrology, human history, historical ecology, and five major community types.

You may recognize the work of our illustrator, John "Jack" Muir Laws, from his "Naturalist's Notebook" feature in Bay Nature magazine. Jack is a naturalist, educator, artist, and the author of *The Laws Guide to the Sierra Nevada* and *Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide*. He teaches classes in natural history, conservation biology, scientific illustration, and field sketching, and is an associate at the California Academy of Sciences. Jack's artistic talent, combined with his training in wildlife biology, give him the unique ability to create beautiful illustrations with details critical for identification.

Assistance on the *Field Guide*, which has been a years-long endeavor, came from numerous volunteers and fiscal sponsors. Foundation interns Marion Parker, Kelly Dabney, and Sierra Castillo researched and compiled the annotations and provided editorial assistance. Ralph Johnson volunteered many hours placing and sizing illustrations.

Shay Pickton donated the gorgeous photograph – red wing blackbird perched in a stand of tule – for the front cover. Development and production was achieved through the support of private donors and the City of Santa Rosa, and the Sebastopol Rotary Club provided a grant to help cover printing expenses.



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Proceeds from the sale of the field guide go to research, education, and restoration efforts on behalf of the Laguna de Santa Rosa.