

## A Warm Welcome to Anne Morkill, Our New Executive Director

*It is with much excitement and great pleasure that the Board of Directors introduces you, in this issue of Meanderings, to the Laguna Foundation's new Executive Director, Anne Morkill. Following a national search, we are honored and delighted to have Anne join our team at the Laguna Foundation. Anne brings 30 years of leadership experience in environmental science and management. She has worked with diverse groups throughout the Bay Area to solve challenging issues and achieve collaborative conservation outcomes. Anne has a thoughtful, confident style and a passion for the environment. Please join me in welcoming her. I will let Anne continue in her own words...*

*Carolyn (CJ) Johnson,  
President, Board of Directors*

I'd like to start with my own story about how I got hooked on nature. I grew up in Miami, Florida. A sprawling suburb surrounding a densely populated city hardly seems like a place where a future wildlife biologist and refuge manager might come from. But I got hooked on nature at the end of a 6-foot fishing pole...at the reel end, of course.

The youngest of three girls, instead of hanging out at the shopping mall or the beach like my older sisters, I preferred to go fishing with Dad. Each Saturday morning, I'd be wakened before dawn to crawl into the car and sleep as Dad drove an hour or more to our favorite fishing spots. In the backwaters and sloughs running through the mangrove islands of the Everglades and Biscayne Bay, we'd spend the day sight-casting for bonefish and sea trout, watching wading birds work the shallows, and snorkeling for seashells. It was those Saturday mornings, along with watching *Wild Kingdom* shows and reading my grandmother's collection of *National Geographic*, that turned me toward a career in wildlife conservation.

After I left home for college and a career, fishing became the common theme for all of our visits - whether back in Florida during my holiday visits or when my mom and dad made



*Anne brings 30 years of leadership experience in environmental science and management to the Laguna Foundation.*

their annual treks to wherever I was living and working: in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, or Alaska. I don't remember the names of all the rivers, or the types of fishing flies we used, or even the species of fish we caught. What is indelible in my memory is the smile on Dad's face every time he caught a fish. That was his fix, what we might call today his nature prescription, his eco-therapy, his forest bathing. And it was that special connection that we had, being outdoors and fishing together, that formed a strong social bond between us that lasted his entire life.

You may be wondering what this has to do with my new role as Executive Director at the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. It is an example of one of the types of ecosystem services, more specifically the cultural benefits that nature provides to people. The different kinds of cultural benefits that people obtain from healthy ecosystems include spiritual enrichment, increased knowledge, inspiration for art

*Continued on page 7: Executive Director*



*Brown Stem Dogwood (Cornus glabrata), Western honey bee (Apis mellifera). Photo ©Ellen Olah.*

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Allison Titus, *Community Education Manager*

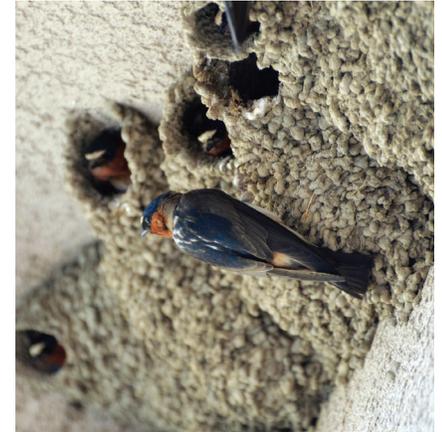
Asa Voight, *Restoration Field Supervisor*

## **A Spotlight on Nature: Cliff Swallows**

*By Allison Titus, Community Education Manager*

A small, dark blue, swooping flash past the Farmhouse to the eaves of Heron Hall signals the return of our landmark springtime residents: the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*). These graceful and acrobatic birds make the long journey from Central and South America to North America starting in March to mate and raise their young. Some fly from as far away as Argentina, completing a stunning migration of 14,000 miles.

Cliff Swallows are a unique species because their range has actually expanded along with human development. Once restricted to nesting on natural cliffs and rocky ledges in the mountains, they now take advantage of overpasses, bridges, and buildings, as we see on our own Heron Hall. They are social and can have up to 6,000 active mud nests at one site. Their nests are a labor of love, constructed by mud pellets they collect in their beaks, with each nest requiring over 1,000 pellets of mud to build. We watch them gather mud from puddles along our driveway, making trip after trip until the water evaporates.



Cliff Swallows spend most of their daylight hours flying and foraging for insects; we have them to thank for our natural mosquito and fly control at the Laguna Environmental Center. They can capture thousands of insects per day with their wide, gaping mouths to feed their young. The swallow breeding season lasts March through August, and parents may raise two clutches, 3-4 eggs each, during that time period before returning south for winter.

We welcome you to visit our local colony on Heron Hall this spring and summer to observe these beautiful, fascinating birds up close, no binoculars needed.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **Native Plant Garden Volunteer Days**

First Friday of the month, 9am – Noon  
Upcoming Dates: March 6, April 10 (2nd Friday), May 1, June 5  
Laguna Environmental Center  
900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA

### **Laguna Stewardship Days**

Once a month on a Saturday, 9am – Noon  
Upcoming Dates: March 14, April 11,  
May 9 (Break June – August)  
Details and location announced 1-2  
weeks in advance of the workday.

**All ages and abilities welcome.** No experience or commitment required. Training and tools provided, plus abundant and hearty snacks! Only heavy rain cancels. For more details, contact [volunteer@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:volunteer@lagunafoundation.org).

# Spring 2020 Walks, Talks, and Classes!

The Laguna Foundation is proud to collaborate with local biologists, artists, educators, and partner organizations to offer a range of natural and cultural history workshops, walks, and presentations all year long. There's something for everyone, from family-friendly events to fine art classes, all of which establish deep, lasting connections to the Laguna and the natural world.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Pre-registration is required for all events unless otherwise noted.

Events take place, or begin at the Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

### Breaking Into Birdwatching

Presentation with Teresa & Miles Tuffli  
Thursday, March 12, 6:00-7:30pm. \$14

### Beginners Birding Walk at the Laguna de Santa Rosa

Guided Walk with Teresa & Miles Tuffli  
Saturday, March 14, 8:30am-12:30pm. \$35  
Location: Laguna de Santa Rosa Trailhead on Highway 12.

### Biology of the Laguna de Santa Rosa

Presentation by Denise Cadman  
Thursday, March 26, 6:00pm-8:30pm. \$14

### Watershed Perspectives: Bike Copeland Creek

Workshop with Charlie Kennard  
Saturday, April 4, 10:00am-1:30pm. FREE.  
Meeting Location: John Reed Elementary School

### Birds of the Laguna de Santa Rosa

Presentation by Denise Cadman  
Thursday, April 9, 6:00pm-8:30pm. \$14

### The Art of Spoon Carving

Workshop with Raleigh Campbell of the Hearth Folk School  
Saturday, April 11, 9:00am-3:00pm. \$95

### Creative Landscape Photography Two Day Workshop with Jerry Dodrill

Friday, April 17, 1:00pm-8:30pm  
& Saturday, April 18, 6:00am-3:30pm  
Workshop includes offsite field trips. \$250

### Vernal Pool Botany

Field Trip with Allison Titus  
Saturday, April 25, 9:30am-1:00pm. \$30

### Eco-Friendly Garden Tour, CNPS Milo Baker Native Plant Sale, and Laguna Foundation Open House

Saturday, May 2, 10:00am-4:00pm. FREE  
*Plant sale ends at 1:00pm.*

*Please visit our website for more details on these and other upcoming events!*

## HERON HALL GALLERY & GIFT SHOP



### CURRENT EXHIBIT:

#### "Sonoma County Wild" Photography by Jerry Dodrill

On display through May 5, 2020  
Jerry Dodrill is a professional landscape and adventure photographer based in Bodega, CA. In addition to leading photo workshops across the Western United States and around the world, he is an accomplished fine art photographer whose images have been widely published in books and magazines to support conservation efforts, document mountain adventures, and for commercial clients. Visit him online at: [www.jerrydodrill.com](http://www.jerrydodrill.com)

### UPCOMING EXHIBIT:

#### "Protecting the Environment That Sustains Us"

**Fabric Quilts by the Pointless Sisters Art Quilt Group of Sonoma County**  
On display May 7 – August 28, 2020  
Opening reception: Sunday, May 17, 2020, 3:00–5:00pm

The Heron Hall Gallery & Gift Shop is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9am – 5pm. Because of the various uses of the hall, **please call our office in advance** to confirm availability. All sales support our mission and programs.

# Restoring Roseland Creek

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

Roseland Creek is an undiscovered jewel in the heart of Roseland, in southwest Santa Rosa. It flows 7 miles from the train tracks through Roseland, past the vernal pools at the old Santa Rosa Naval Air Station, to its confluence with the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Near the headwaters in Roseland, the creek flows through a beautiful, 20 acre patch of oak woodland, riparian forest and native grassland, locally known as the *Neighborwood*. This former orchard has become a much loved neighborhood resource. It has an informal trail network and is used by local school kids, hikers, and birdwatchers as a refuge in the middle of this urban area. The City of Santa Rosa owns this patch and is planning to turn it into a community park. The City is currently in the process of planning and applying for regulatory approval for the development of the Roseland Creek Community Park. For more information, please visit: [srcity.org/2448/Park-Projects](http://srcity.org/2448/Park-Projects).

Right downstream, next to Roseland Creek Elementary School, the Laguna Foundation has just started a new restoration project, funded by the Sonoma County Water Agency. We are working with the local community and the students at Roseland Creek Elementary to open up the understory of the existing riparian forest, clearing out the

tangle of blackberry, poison oak, and trash, to turn what has become a magnet for illegal camping into an outdoor classroom where the students can learn about Roseland Creek and help us restore native biodiversity. We held our first Laguna Stewards day in December where volunteers helped us clean up trash and plant native understory plants. In late February, we had our first planting day with the elementary school students.



Staff and volunteers working towards restoring native biodiversity along Roseland Creek in Santa Rosa.

Our hope is that this small project (2 acres) will get us more involved in Roseland and allow us to collaborate with the local community, the City of Santa Rosa, the Sonoma County Water Agency, and the Sonoma County Ag + Open Space to preserve and expand the Neighborwood and the riparian forest along Roseland Creek.

Riparian forests are particularly important in urban areas like Roseland where pavement and

houses can trap heat, making cities up to 20 degrees hotter than the surrounding rural areas. Trees offset this heat by providing shade and through evaporation from their leaves. They also keep the water cool and protect the banks from erosion.

Come out and enjoy the 5-mile (round-trip) hike from McMinn Ave, through the Neighborwood, past our restoration site, and down to view the vernal pools. Early spring is the best time to catch the vernal pools in bloom,

but this is a lovely stroll any time of year. You might even spot local river otters playing in the creek or looking for fish, or maybe the endangered Sebastopol meadowfoam in the vernal pools.

If you are interested in helping us with this or other restoration projects, please visit our website for more information on our Laguna Stewardship Days.



(Left) Roseland Creek in 1942 surrounded by orchards and hay fields and (Right) in 2018 showing the location of our restoration site, and the Neighborwood, in Santa Rosa's new community park.

Photos: San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), Sonoma Ag + Open Space, Sonoma County Water Agency, Pictometry International and County of Sonoma CA, 2018 Accuplus Project

# Summer Camp is Significant – Join Us at Camp Tule!

By Christine Fontaine, Director of Education



Children need a connection to the natural world to help them thrive in all aspects of their lives. Camp Tule exists to provide joyful learning explorations in nature, community building, meaningful jobs for teens and young adults, plus screen-free, good old summer fun for kids. By working with, caring for, and nurturing the children each week, our camp staff have the privilege of witnessing the children learn, expand, and thrill in discovery.

After camp, the anecdotes we hear from the camper families point to the significance of their time spent with us. A few examples... At the end of a 2019 camp week, a mom shared the story of working on the Camp Tule Field Journal with her daughter. When they came to the question, "What are you grateful for?" her daughter responded, "MUD!" Another family story came from a camp grandma who shared that her grandson started a lavender "business" to make money so he can come to two sessions of Camp Tule in 2020. A meaningful (and overheard!) conversation took place between counselors around the lunch table. One of them spontaneously said: "I am learning so much about

myself this week!" Stories like these tell us Camp Tule is doing what we want it to. Camp is significant to kids and the counselors. They build a love of nature and grow socially and emotionally.

The significance of camp experiences extend far beyond the week. The American Camp Association and researchers at the University of Utah are studying the lasting impacts of summer day camps and overnight camps. Early results are showing that camp experiences give children and camp staff alike broader perspectives, increased confidence, and tools for success in school and jobs. Camp enhances independence, builds self-reliance, and expands lives while helping young people gain important proficiencies early in life, freeing up cognitive space for higher learning.

We hope the children in your life have the opportunity to go to camp this summer. And, we hope Camp Tule is your choice! The Laguna Environmental Center is our home-base, providing all the necessary conveniences plus scenic beauty and the delights of Irwin Creek and the Laguna just a short hike away.

Registration for summer 2020 is now open! Each Camp Tule session runs 9:00am–3:00pm, Monday–Friday.

- June 22–26, for ages 9–11
- July 6–10, for ages 6–9
- July 13–17, for ages 6–9

Tuition is \$275 per session. Through the generosity of individuals within our community, scholarships are available. *We are excited to meet your young explorer this summer!*

## COUNSELOR JOBS AT CAMP TULE



Counselors and interns help make Camp Tule a nurturing, safe, and creative learning community. We are looking for motivated, caring, responsible teens and young adults who want to develop their leadership and environmental education teaching skills. This is a meaningful opportunity to learn about the Laguna ecosystem and effective strategies for working with young children while spending time outside having fun! Paid and volunteer positions are available during each week of camp.

Visit our website for the full descriptions and applications. Deadline to apply is May 18. Interviews take place May 22 and 27. Mandatory staff training is on June 17 & 18.

# Volunteer Highlight: Going Above and Beyond

By Maggie Hart, Outreach Manager

For the past three years, Ron Dodge has gone above and beyond (literally!) as our Facilities Management Volunteer. He is incredibly skilled and can do everything from carpentry to plumbing to electrical to general building maintenance. Not only does he bring all his own tools, but also offers to take projects home to his workshop to complete. Ron is especially patient in researching products online that have broken and contacting the manufacturer to find replacement products. We also greatly appreciate Ron picking up materials from the hardware store too many times to count!

We are very fortunate Ron gives so much of his valuable time and talent to the Laguna Foundation (as well as many other local nonprofits). He has saved us thousands of dollars in costly repairs, as

well as greatly improved the infrastructure of our buildings, grounds, and native plant nursery, making the Laguna Environmental Center a special place to work and for visitors to enjoy.

But most of all, we love seeing Ron's wonderful smile every Wednesday. He is a joy to work with, always enthusiastic and ready to problem solve. His most common reply to our long list of tasks is, "No problem!" From quick fix-it projects to custom woodworking to multi-week construction projects, Ron has volunteered diligently and wholeheartedly on each and every one. We are so thankful for his excellent support!

*No job is too "tall" for Ron! Each year, he changes the batteries in all 20 window shades in Heron Hall!*



## A SPECIAL REQUEST FROM THE DESK OF ANNE MORKILL



As Executive Director of this incredible organization, I take seriously the challenges facing the Laguna in the short and long term, such as improved water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and insuring our efforts to inspire our youth to be the next generation of Laguna stewards.

*That is why I ask you to renew your membership support today. Your membership donation will advance the restoration and conservation of this critically important wetland complex for the benefit of both the wildlife and the people that depend on a healthy and resilient watershed. Your donation will be put to work immediately to...*

### 1 Improve Water Quality & Enhance Wildlife Habitat

- Restore urban streams and increase flood-holding capacity by removing pollutants and sediment.
- Mitigate fire risks and reduce invasive plants through conservation grazing.
- Creating pollinator habitat by planting milkweed and other native plants.

### 2 Inspire Community Stewardship

- Motivate the next generation of conservation stewards through our *Learning Laguna* program.
- Provide scholarships to under-served youth and jobs for teens at Camp Tule.
- Expand our Community Education Program to include events for all ages.

Your 2020 renewal form should arrive shortly in the mail, but you can always make a secure gift through our website or by using the enclosed envelope. **Please help the Laguna Foundation continue to improve the wetland ecosystem, water quality and wildlife habitat, and thereby the quality of all of our lives. Thank you!**



“  
...the heart of this is stewardship, the understanding that human life or community life is deeply intertwined with the flourishing of the ecosystem in which people find themselves. To care for it is natural.

Sanjay Kabir Bavikatte

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## Executive Director *Continued from page 1*

and folklore, recreational activities and physical exercise, and social relations and family heritage - like my life-long bond with my dad through fishing.

In the Fall 2019 issue of the California Native Plant Society's magazine, *Flora*, they interviewed Sanjay Kabir Bavikatte about his book, *Stewarding the Earth: Rethinking Property Rights and the Emergence of Biocultural Rights*. He defines "biocultural rights" as the "right to care for, tend, and nurture landscapes as shared resources," regardless of whether or not we own these landscapes as "property". He said "...the heart of this is stewardship, the understanding that human life or community life is deeply intertwined with the flourishing of the ecosystem in which people find themselves. To care for it is natural." I believe this is the key to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation's enduring legacy since 1989 of conserving, restoring and inspiring others through partnerships, volunteer stewardship, and environmental education. It's the interconnectedness of people and ecosystems, and their inherent desire to take care of nature.

Conservation is ultimately a social undertaking. People can have complex relationships with the environment - they may serve as conservation stewards, they may depend on intact resources for their livelihoods and well-being, or they may exert pressure on biodiversity and resources through unsustainable use. Consequently, conservation success is most likely achievable when people recognize the benefits they receive from nature and how their decisions impact an ecosystem and its ability to provide these benefits.

This is not a new concept for the Foundation. We've already embraced this theme as our tagline of "We all depend on a

healthy watershed — not just to live, but to live well." And in the aftermath of the devastating fires, we highlighted "the restorative power of the Laguna, its wildlife and its vast wetlands [that] act as powerful buffers against natural disasters like fire, drought and flood [and] helps create a safer and more resilient landscape."

And yet, many Sonoma County residents are unaware of where the Laguna is and how its health touches their daily lives. The opportunity now is building on the past 30 years of success in a way that reinforces our ability to deliver meaningful, measurable, and most importantly, financially sustainable conservation outcomes that also help to reconnect people with the Laguna. Over the next several months, we'll begin evaluating progress under our current Five-Year Strategic Plan and laying out a road map for the next 5-10 years towards achieving our vision of a healthy, thriving, and resilient Laguna that benefits a diversity of communities, both wild and human, throughout its 250 square mile watershed. This will culminate in the celebration of our 10th anniversary of the designation of the Laguna de Santa Rosa as a Wetland of International Importance in 2021!

I feel very honored and fortunate to be joining the Foundation, especially at this pivotal point in time as communities throughout the watershed face challenges of the ever-changing climate, resulting in more frequent flooding and wildfires. Together we can grapple with the ramifications for both the natural environments and community well-being in Sonoma County. I look forward to meeting you all over the next few weeks and months. I want to learn about your own story of getting hooked on nature and your connection to the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Please join us on our journey towards ensuring a healthy and resilient Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed.



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Find us on social media and stay connected with daily photos and announcements!

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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*The landscape at the Laguna Environmental Center. Photo by Marlene Smith*

