

Laguna Foundation Launches \$500,000 Fundraising Goal!

Help us Secure a \$100,000 "Top-Off" Donation!

The Laguna Foundation is the only organization whose work is focused on protecting the Laguna Watershed for people and wildlife. Our work involves important collaborations with private landowners, public agencies and other non-profit organizations. In fact, they rely on our leadership to achieve the goals before us.



Julie Atwood and Raini Sugg (plus an Anonymous Donor) will contribute \$100,000 to the Laguna Challenge if we can raise the remaining funds.

To accelerate our conservation work, the Foundation has launched a **\$500,000 Laguna Challenge** with a goal to raise \$500,000 in donations by December 31st. So far, generous donors from all over Sonoma County and beyond have contributed \$250,000, leaving half to be raised by year-end.

Three visionary leaders representing the agricultural, environmental and business communities have combined efforts to help us reach the finish line. Julie Atwood, Raini Sugg and one Anonymous Donor have announced this challenge: **If we can raise an additional \$150,000 by December 31st, they will donate the remaining \$100,000.**

How will Challenge funds be used? As we look toward 2016, we see an exciting year ahead with unprecedented opportunities to create new partnerships in the Laguna Watershed, including leaders in the agriculture, business and conservation communities. Our top priorities are:

- **Improve Water Quality and Groundwater Resources for All:** Collaborate on short- and long-term strategies to remove pollutants, trash, and woody debris from the main channel to increase water flow,



The Laguna de Santa Rosa. (Drew Jackson)

improve water quality and facilitate the migration of endangered salmon and steelhead.

- **Restore Habitat Corridors for Wildlife, Fish and Birds:** Work closely with private and public landowners on invasive species management that includes grazing and restoring native grasses while restoring habitat to protect endangered wildlife.
- **Explore the Wetland and Watershed:** More walks and talks with year-round outdoor hikes to restoration sites. Be on the look-out for sunrise, sunset and after dark explorations! Ensure opportunities to hike, kayak, bicycle and walk.

Challenge, Continued on page 4

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Board of Directors

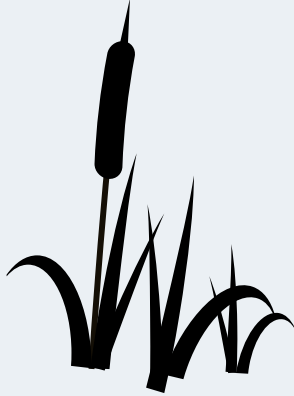
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2016 Wonder Goals – Natural Inspiration

On advice from several folks, I took a hike at Fort Ross on my way to explore Gualala and Point Arena. I soon found myself on a coastal footpath winding through fern-filled wooded ravines. An explosive chirping broke the shaded silence as a tiny mouse-like bird leapt to the top of a tall fern and let the world know he was very upset. The Winter Wren vibrated and bobbed as he gave the alarm. Why? A Sharp-shinned Hawk was chasing him on-foot through the ferns, like a tiny fierce ostrich, hoping to make the wren his next meal. The brilliant red eyes of the jay-sized hawk flashing as he scanned the ferns for his noisy prey pulled me instantly from my thoughts of schedules and budgets. It all fell away as the outraged hawk looked me in the eye, leapt from the forest floor, and rocketed into the air. The natural drama of these birds had given me a wonder-moment; a reminder of the energy, life and even awe one can experience outside.

The last few years I've set myself wonder-goals; natural events I challenge myself to experience each season - something to remind me of the wonder and perspective nature provides. We set ourselves goals for finance, career, and home-improvement, but how many do we set to keep inspired? The many environmental challenges facing our communities are complex and demand creative, inspired problem-solving. The Laguna Foundation needs your help in offering these solutions. Set yourself wonder-goals for 2016 and allow some of that inspiration to flow into solutions for the Laguna.

My list of wonder-goals for 2016 includes seeing my first Pygmy Owl, exploring the Sierras and kayaking through bioluminescent plankton. What are yours? It could be anything from watching a sunrise each season, learning to cook with local mushrooms, taking photos of the bees and butterflies in your local park, or camping under redwoods. Whatever brings you inspiration – nature, especially in Sonoma County, provides nearly endless opportunities for wonder.

For the Laguna,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Munroe".

Kevin Munroe
Executive Director

As the nation prepares for one of the strongest El Niño weather cycles on record, here are a few helpful tips to get you ready for the wet winter ahead.

- 💧 Prevent soil erosion and prepare your soil to absorb water by planting native plants and covering bare soil with mulch.
- 💧 Clear out gutters, downspouts and storm drains.
- 💧 Clear your yard of debris and trash. Floodwaters may reach higher than normal this year. Help keep trash out of the Laguna.
- 💧 Save water by turning off your automatic lawn and drip irrigation water systems. Although El Niño will bring lots of rain, we still have a long way to go to recover from the drought.

Find out more on how you can prepare for the coming winter storms, visit NOAA's web site at: www.elnino.noaa.gov.

Making Connections in 2016 - Tell us about YOUR Laguna

Kevin Munroe, Executive Director

It's easy to think of the Laguna as "out there in West County" – a place to visit on weekends, or in the evening for a quick walk along the paths in Sebastopol. But to keep these *Ramsar Convention** internationally recognized wetlands a functioning ecosystem means "seeing the whole board," something any accomplished chess player knows how to do. I'm lousy at chess, but I've learned that understanding a wetland means understanding and "seeing" the whole watershed.



Connect with your Laguna this coming year by exploring local trails both familiar and new. (Christine Fontaine)

The Laguna's 254 square-mile watershed is surprisingly vast and impressively diverse. Take out a map when you have a chance, and picture an amoeba-like shape that stretches from Windsor south to Cotati and Sonoma Mountain, and from Sebastopol east to Oakmont and Hood Mountain. Every drop of rain that falls into this vast area flows down into the Laguna wetlands!

Did you know that the southwest slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains are part of the Laguna watershed? Did you know that when you're shopping at the Target or Costco in Santa Rosa you are inside the Laguna watershed? That means every drop of water that falls in Santa Rosa, the largest urban center in California north of San Francisco, flows into the Laguna wetlands.

To fully enjoy, explore, celebrate and conserve this unique watershed and its life-filled wetlands means learning from each other how best to understand all its corners and inter-connected systems. This is, of course, YOUR Laguna, or rather a Laguna that belongs to all of us. The Laguna Foundation doesn't own the Laguna, but rather develops and executes watershed stewardship programs on multiple properties, both public and private, so we are only as effective as our partnerships. The Laguna wetlands will only be as healthy as the many communities within its watershed choose for it to be. So 2016 and the years that follow are about YOU, and your neighbors, and your contributions to shared watershed stewardship.

Let's kick off the new year with questions; questions to ask ourselves, our neighborhoods and larger communities here in Sonoma County:

- Do you know your watershed address? Start with the stream closest to you – do you know its name, what stream it flows into, and how many links exist between it and the ocean? How many different properties does it touch on its path?

- The four corners of the watershed include a large and diverse area – can you picture how it functions and connects, and how can we help you and your neighbors make it more tangible?

- What hidden part of this watershed would you most like to share with people? How can you help people see and appreciate that piece?

- What native plant or animal used to live in the streams and wetlands of the Laguna that you'd love to see here again? How can you help bring it back?

- What aspects of this watershed connect dairy farmers, urban neighborhoods, vintners, small towns and wild lands? How can you help make those connections positive and form productive partnerships?

We hope to use your answers and ideas to connect, engage and form new partnerships as we finish our first 25 years and start thinking about what we might celebrate with you when we come to our 50th. Stay tuned for exciting new projects and programs we hope to unveil in our spring issue! And don't hesitate to email, mail or call with your answers and ideas to these important questions.

**The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, also known as the Ramsar Convention, is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. For more information, visit www.ramsar.org.*

Challenge

Continued from page 1

- **Increase Education Opportunities, Community Stewardship and Public Engagement:** We are expanding our volunteer and docent programs and “Learning Laguna” for school children. Through Citizen Science and new wildlife monitoring techniques, combined with increased website and social media efforts, we will connect with new communities and engage new patrons. Our goal is to invite residents to become stewards of their resources, and for everyone to learn their watershed address.

Each year more than 4,400 individuals and families have come to the Laguna Environmental Center, our headquarters, to learn more about the Laguna and the important work of the Foundation.

Our Education programs reached 1,300 school children in 2015 and our conservation team worked on the restoration of more than 100 acres throughout the watershed. Our scientists continue to improve habitat values and wisely steward public and private lands.



(Thomas Reynolds)

Our friends and donors are partners in this important work. We truly appreciate your willingness to embrace our efforts to improve the Laguna Watershed. You make a difference when you open your hearts and wallets for the work we know to be so important to the health of the Laguna, and the health of us all.

Your gift towards this Challenge will invigorate our long-term goal of working in every corner of the Laguna Watershed and help us to educate and inspire people of all ages to protect this magnificent natural area for future generations.

Please donate a special year-end gift to ensure that the Foundation continues to be the leading voice for our most spectacular land and water asset ... The Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland and Watershed.

For information about the Challenge or to donate stock, please contact Bev at (707) 527-9277, ext. 106 or at bev@lagunafoundation.org.

To make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope or online at www.lagunafoundation.org.



(Jerry Dodrill)

Join the Legacy Society... The Laguna is Here Forever

Help ensure that the Laguna is a healthy part of our community forever. Please provide lasting support by remembering the Foundation in your will or estate plan.

“Leave a true legacy for your children and future generations. One sure way is to include the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation in your estate plans. I invite you to join me.”

—Christine Engel

To join the Legacy Society or for information on planned gifts, contact Bev Scotland at (707) 527-9277, ext. 106 or email bev@lagunafoundation.org.

Laguna Explorations and Learning

Join us at one of our public education events coming up!

All programs take place in Heron Hall at the Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa unless otherwise noted.

Laguna Environmental Center Open Houses

Second Saturday of the Month, 10:00am-3:00pm
(No Dec. Open House) Jan. 9, Feb. 13, and so on . . .
Free, all ages, no RSVP required.

January 9, Ducks Day, with special displays and activities for all ages, and a presentation at 3pm with "Duck Man" Dave Barry. Details below.

February 13, River Otters, with special displays and activities for all ages, and a presentation at 3pm with the River Otter Ecology Project. Details below.



Male Wood duck. (Frank Vassen)

Waterfowl of the Laguna and the Pacific Flyway

Presentation with Dave Barry
Saturday, January 9
3:00-4:30pm. \$10 at the door.
No RSVP necessary.

Waterfowl of the Laguna and the Pacific Flyway

Walk with Dave Barry
Sunday, January 10
7:30-11:00am
\$30, Pre-registration required.

California Flora: Botanical Paintings in Colored Pencil

Heron Hall Art Exhibit by Nina Antze,
January 7 – April 25

Opening Reception Saturday, January 23, 3:00-5:00pm
FREE, no RSVP necessary.

Grounding Your New Year's Intention with Visual Journaling and the Laguna

Workshop with Dianne Monroe
Saturday, January 30, 10:00am-4:00pm
\$65, Pre-registration required.

Edible and Medicinal Plants of California: A Bioregional Exploration

Workshop with Tellur Fenner
Saturday, February 6, 2016, 10:00am-5:00pm
\$85 (includes materials fee)
Pre-registration required.

River Otters Are Back!

Presentation with Megan Isadore, E.D. of the River Otter Ecology Project
Saturday, February 13
3:00-4:30pm
\$10 at the door.
No RSVP necessary



River Otter. (Tom Reynolds)

Drawing the Colors of Winter and Spring: Colored Pencil Techniques

Workshop with Nina Antze
Saturday, February 20, 10am-3pm
\$85. Pre-registration required

The True Nature of American Badger

Presentation with Susan Kirks
Thursday, March 3, 7:00-8:30pm
\$10. No RSVP necessary.

California Tiger Salamander Terrestrial Ecology Workshop

Friday, March 18, 8:00am-5:30pm
\$250 (\$225 early-bird before Feb 8), \$125 student
Pre-registration required.

Rare Pond Species Survey Techniques Workshop

Friday, March 19-20, 2-day workshop
\$400 (\$375 early-bird before Feb 8), \$150 student
Pre-registration required.

Spring Birding in the Laguna Series

Birdwatching Walks with Lisa Hug
March 20, April 16, and May 22, 8:30am-1:00pm
\$45 per walk, or \$120 for all three.
Pre-registration required.

Dazzling Dragonflies

Presentation with Kathy Biggs
Thursday, March 24, 7:00-8:30pm
\$10. No RSVP necessary.

We continually add new events. Please visit our website www.lagunafoundation.org/laguna_walks_classes or contact Anita Smith, Public Education Coordinator at (707) 527-9277, ext. 110 or anita@lagunafoundation.org.

Southern Laguna Project and Discovery Trail: A Site Transformed!

Christine Fontaine, Director of Education Programs

The Southern Laguna Restoration Project

The southern reach of the Laguna de Santa Rosa was once a shallow meandering stream home to a wide variety of plant and wildlife species. In the 1970's, a section of the Laguna just west of the intersection of Rohnert Park Expressway and Stony Point Road was straightened and deepened to increase flood protection to growing neighborhoods and businesses. Riparian and in-stream vegetation was also removed at that time (via herbicide spraying from helicopters!) toward the goal of moving water out of the area, quickly. Very soon, it became obvious that those practices had negative effects on the ecosystem. Sprouting trees & shrubs were allowed to grow back in the channel but ended up facilitating sediment build-up which resulted in large areas of stagnant water upstream, all suggesting a possible over correction!

Today, management practices aim to balance flood protection and ecosystem functions. In a 2008 cooperative grant application to the River Parkways Program (Proposition 84), the Sonoma County Water Agency and the Laguna Foundation proposed a project to improve flood control and water quality while enhancing the natural ecological value of the area. Activities outlined in the proposal incorporated sediment removal, improved in-stream vegetation management practices, the construction of a low-flow summer channel, installation of native vegetation, and increased public access to the area.

The Laguna Foundation's contribution to the project included the restoration of riparian and upper floodplain native vegetation along a 1.7-mile reach of the Laguna utilizing more than 4,884 container plants and approximately 15,000 grass seedlings over 30 acres, plus the creation of six interpretive signs to inform visitors walking on the new trail of the Laguna's unique and diverse environment and



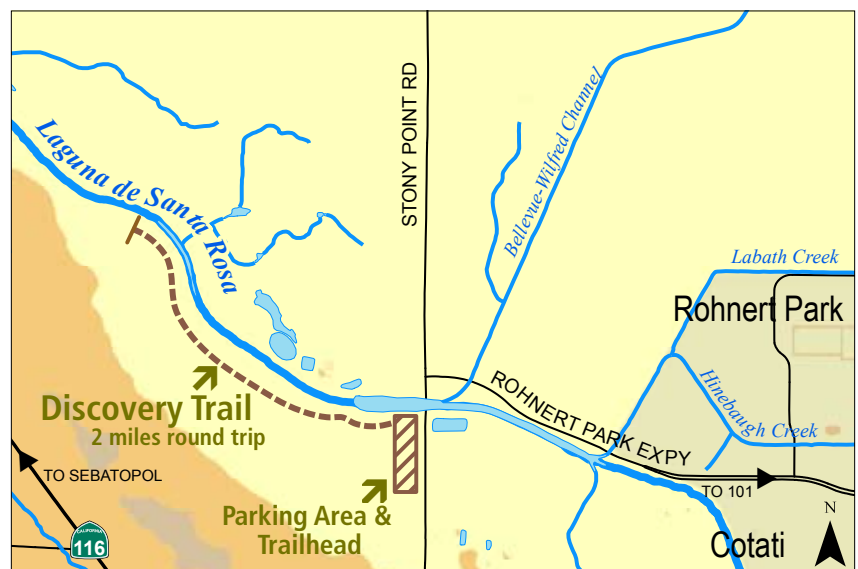
the benefits of a healthy ecosystem.

After seven years the project has come to completion and the results of the work are already beginning to show! The overall plant survival rate is at 86%, Monarch butterflies have found the Narrow-leaf Milkweed, birds are utilizing the increased perch, nest

and forage opportunities, and the low-flow channel is hindering the spread of invasive plant species.

The Discovery Trail and Interpretive Signs

A project completion celebration and grand opening of the Discovery Trail will take place in spring, but you can begin enjoying the 2-mile round-trip trail today. Bring binoculars and watch for Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Audubon's Warbler and Bushtits in the willow trees, White-crowned Sparrows along the trail, Say's and Black Phoebes in the open areas, plus Cooper's, Red-tailed Hawks and Northern Harriers over-head. Deepen your Laguna sense of place by getting to know this area of the watershed now and watch it develop and flourish over time. We hope to see you at the celebration of the success of the project in the spring! Details will be announced in the March e-news.



Map ID: 827-A ©2015 Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. Data Sources: Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, PCI, Sonoma County ISD, Sonoma County Vegetation Mapping and LIDAR Consortium. Cartography: Hattie Brown

The Laguna Foundation Welcomes New Board Members



Carolyn Johnson

Carolyn Johnson (CJ) first served on the Laguna Foundation Board of Directors from 1998 to 2006. She helped found our “Learning Laguna” environment education program and has provided leadership for the program since 2000. We are pleased to have CJ rejoin our Board of Directors. Most recently CJ served for 10 years on

the Board of Directors of Point Blue Conservation Science, including three years as Board Chair. She is also co-founder, with her husband (Rick Theis), of the Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy. She is President of their family foundation, Fledgling Fund, and is an avid bird watcher and gardener. She earned an interdisciplinary MA at Sonoma State University in biology and land use policy, with a thesis focus on wetland mitigation, and a BA from The Evergreen State College. CJ and Rick reside near Graton with their two border collies.



Richard Peterson-Jones

Richard Peterson-Jones earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his law degree from Stanford Law School. He is married to a Santa Rosa native, and now lives in Santa Rosa after 34 years in Marin County. Prior to his retirement in 2014, Richard practiced law over thirty years as lead attorney

for a major company in a variety of matters and large, complex transactions, many involving creating and implementing projects costing over one billion dollars each. He handled a wide range of issues relevant to the Laguna Foundation’s work, including environmental laws, permitting, contracting, strategic and project planning, human resources and employee benefits. He volunteers for the Laguna Foundation as a Learning Laguna Docent, providing legal services and participating in various events. He has also served as a volunteer for the San Francisco Food Bank and the Salvation Army. He enjoys hiking, biking, backpacking, contra dancing and tennis.

Martin Stein has spent most of his career in Banking and Technology and was a Vice-Chairman at Bank of America. Currently, he is a partner in RSA Ventures, a technology



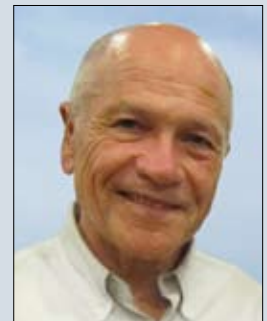
Martin Stein

investment group and is on the Board of Bank of Hawaii. Marty is a member of other non-profit Boards such as The Jewish Home, The BOH Foundation, and Forget Me Not Farm. He has previously been on boards such as The Philadelphia Stock Exchange, the New York Clearing House, 724 Systems, and Sequent Computers. He was also a member of President Clinton’s National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC). His educational background includes a B.A. and honorary doctorate from St. John’s University. Marty has lived in Santa Rosa for 18 years with his wife, Marlene and their 62 animals.

Thank You Hugh Helm and Bill Cox!

For the past six years, the Laguna Foundation has benefited from the dedication and expertise of **Bill Cox** (not pictured) and **Hugh Helm**.

During their tenure as board members, their contributions have been invaluable. Hugh’s legal knowledge was put to use many times and the board is very thankful for his years of service including one year as Board President. Bill has been involved and supportive of the Foundation since the very first state of the Laguna conference when he was working for the



Hugh Helm

Department of Fish and Game. Although they both have served the maximum number of years on the board, we are grateful that these two outstanding members of our Laguna community will continue their involvement by joining our Advisory Board. Thank you Bill and Hugh!



Founded in 1989, the Laguna Foundation is a place-based organization focused on the Laguna de Santa Rosa, a Wetland of International Importance. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit 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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Find us on social media and stay connected with daily photos and announcements!

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Laguna Keepers Schedule 2015 - 2016



Join us for some fun hands-on field work!

We have a wide variety of sites and projects to choose from and we want our Laguna Keeper days to be as rewarding to the participants and productive as possible for the Laguna. We will read the weather and site conditions and release the details of the site location a week or

two in advance of the Laguna Keepers workday.

Save these dates and stay tuned to your email!

December 19
January 23
February 20

March 12
April 16th
May 14th

Workdays are on Saturdays, 9am - noon. Keepers will meet at locations throughout the Laguna. No RSVP is required. Only heavy rain cancels. Dress for dirt. Snacks are provided but please bring water, gloves and friends! Check out our website for more details.



Laguna Guides Training 2016

The Laguna Guides training program is a fun and engaging way to learn about the diverse habitats, flora, fauna and ecosystem services of the Laguna while making new friends! Laguna Guides volunteer year-round, primarily on evenings and weekends for our public education events. The next 8-session training course will occur in May-June 2016 with Wednesday evening classes and Saturday field trips.

For more information, contact Christine Fontaine, at (707) 527-9277, ext. 102 or visit us online at lagunafoundation.org.