

2001.4

Volunteers help Americorps clean up Laguna area for spring

SEBASTOPOL — For the second year, members of Sonoma State University's AmeriCorps programs completed a combined Earth Day/National Youth Service Day event on Saturday, April 21, at the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve. Some 105 volunteers participated in the project at three sites on the Laguna.

There will be another Laguna Keepers work day on May 19 from 9 a.m. to noon to remove the unused spray pipes from the Barlow field. Meet at the parking area west

of the Chevron station. Bring work boots, clippers and gloves.

On Saturday, Mayor Larry Robinson and Laguna Foundation president Kim Cordell greeted the teams at their base camp at the Sebastopol Teen Center. Using tools provided by the city, West County Community Services and SAY, the group divided into teams and headed for their work sites.

At the Barlow Field, a newly acquired Laguna project off Sebastopol Road, AmeriCorps members from Sonoma State joined members of their sister program at Solano Community College and young people from the Youth Volunteer Corps of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County. Barlow field, a 50-acre meadow with large oaks, had formerly been used as an area of apple waste disposal. Plans for it include establishing a perimeter trail and planting native valley oaks. Volunteers cleared 1,500 feet of barbed wire fence by removing wire and digging up metal posts. Members of the Laguna Keepers provided assistance and encouragement in removing the wire.

At the Sebastopol Teen Center, a team of AmeriCorps members cleared invasive blackberries from the trails and areas around the Outdoor Education circle. A similar

project last year removed blackberries at the Morris St. bridge.

Volunteers cut back the blackberry visit to free the path for visitors to the Laguna.

As a third project, the deck of the Sebastopol Teen Center was sanded and weatherproofed. Because of the rain on Friday, the deck project was completed on Sunday by an additional group of volunteers led by Julie McClure, director of Service Projects at Sonoma State University.

The Saturday workday concluded with a meal prepared by the AmeriCorps members and a reflection on the project. Sonoma State University's AmeriCorps organized the Earth Day/National Youth Service Day project in partnership with the city of Sebastopol and TERRA, a non-profit ecological action group. The project was partially underwritten by Sebastopol Ready-Mix, West County Community Services, and a local school.

For more information on AmeriCorps, contact Pamela Nirdlinger, AmeriCorps Promise Fellow with the Sonoma Regional Service Collaborative at 664-2044.

Sebastopol's plans for the Laguna include a loop trail around the spray field, a bike trail link between Sebastopol Avenue and the Joe Rodota



Photo by Bob Venezia, AmeriCorps VISTA

A THORNY MATTER — Students from Santa Rosa Junior College, though the Sonoma State University AmeriCorps project, helped clear blackberry brambles from the area near the Sebastopol Community Center last Saturday.

trail and a wetlands treatment system at the Calder Creek storm drain outfall near the Joe Rodota trail.

The city is looking for donations to help with the projects, including donations for trees, trail benches, a boardwalk at the Morris Street wetlands, maintenance, butterfly houses and a tool shed. They are also looking for a volunteer familiar with basic carpentry

to remodel some donated bat boxes.

To donate, send a check to the city of Sebastopol Laguna Fund, attn. Kenyon Webster,

Planning Department, 714 Johnson St., Sebastopol 95472. For more information, call 823-6167 or visit www.admin.ci.sebastopol.ca.us.

SONOMA WEST - April 26, 2001 "Volunteers help....."