Mission Statement

“To preserve, restore and enhance the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to inspire greater public understanding and appreciation for this magnificent natural area.”

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Raini Vallarino

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Restoration/Biodiversity
Jenny Blaker
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Betty Burridge
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Miscellaneous
Ryan Dixon
Don Jackson
Joseph McIntyre
Rob Sanville
Robert Thille
This has been an extraordinary year for the Laguna Foundation. With growing support from throughout the community, public attention to the Laguna is truly “taking flight”. This growth in public concern is reflected by great leaps in the Foundation’s visibility, in the scope of our projects, our partnerships and relationships with individuals and institutions, and in the strength and numbers of our board, staff, volunteers and donors. Our activities have received widespread attention in the local press, with strong editorial support for our vision of a restored, thriving Laguna for our region’s future.

In the past year, the Foundation’s base of supporters, the “Friends of the Laguna”, has swelled to more than 1,000 households. Growing ranks of Laguna docents, LagunaKeepers and other volunteers have selflessly devoted thousands of hours to educating children in the wonders of the Laguna, leading hikes for young and old, performing restoration and clean-up work, and providing specialized services that have helped us to keep the momentum going. We’ve reached out to the Laguna’s many stakeholders to develop a rigorous Laguna Ecosystem Restoration and Management Plan, implemented the first year of an ambitious effort to control the invasive water plant Ludwigia, kicked off the capital campaign to restore the historic Stone Farm as the Laguna Learning Center, and planned and organized a major habitat restoration initiative which will begin in 2006.

The process of creating this kind of momentum is breathtaking, and we know it will require effort and diligence to maintain. But we believe that the hardest part is behind us. We learn from the waterfowl of the Laguna that after the laborious work to muscle up into the air, a grace arrives. We’re confident that the Foundation—and the restoration and celebration of the Laguna—will continue to rise. To soar.

Susan Churchill
President

Dan Schurman
Executive Director
Education is a core element of the Foundation’s work. Each new person who comes to understand the unique complexity, aliveness and beneficial function of the Laguna becomes another advocate for restoring and preserving it.

Founded in 1999, our flagship docent-led education program, Learning Laguna, provides a fun, activity-based wetland science course in the classroom and a memorable hands-on experience in the Laguna for hundreds of Sonoma County 2nd-5th grade children each year. The program fulfills California State Science Standard requirements for grades served, and for some students, it is their very first chance to experience Sonoma County’s wild outdoor environment.

Created and managed for many years by volunteers, Learning Laguna is now capably staffed by our dynamic Education Coordinator, and the ranks of trained volunteers who teach our curriculum in classrooms and lead field trips have swelled to 50 active docents. In 2005, teams of Laguna docents provided the Learning Laguna program to 731 students in 11 school districts surrounding the Laguna.

This year the program made important advances. We developed a popular program of ongoing continuing education activities for our trained docents, which has markedly increased volunteer retention and the enthusiasm and cohesiveness of this essential group of Laguna volunteers. We have begun to focus on serving economically disadvantaged schools, have started to address issues of language diversity, and initiated a transportation scholarship fund to allow financially strapped school districts to participate in the Learning Laguna program, even if they can’t afford to pay for a bus to transport their students to the Laguna field trip.

"As a professional educator, I’ve attended many classes and workshops over a 35-year career, few of which were as interesting, informative or well taught as the Laguna Foundation’s ten-week docent training."

—Jim Dempsey, docent
Achievements: Education

Currently, the Foundation’s other primary educational program is Laguna Walks and Talks, a series of docent-led interpretive walks held primarily on Laguna properties that are publicly owned, but generally not open to hikers. Launched in 2004, Laguna Walks and Talks is extremely popular; docents have led hundreds on these interpreted Laguna adventures.

Looking ahead, we see our education programs expanding to provide teacher training and to serve middle school students, and anticipate the opening of the Laguna Learning Center, which will give us a facility where our education programs can truly showcase the Laguna’s complex biology and long human history.

“...so knowledgeable and patient... Once we were in the field, the children came alive with the knowledge learned in the classroom presentations. I will look forward to returning next year.”
– Nancy Cartan, teacher, Proctor Terrace Elementary School.

DOCENTS
Mary Abbott
Barnee Alexander
Nemea Arborvitae
Dana Blake
Sandra Bodley
Sharon Bouton
Veronica Bowers
Barbara Briggs-Letson
Bev Buswell
Denise Cadman
Patricia Canfield
Bob Caricato
Susan Churchill
John Condon
Nancy Dakin
James Dempsey
Jeanette Doyel
Rebecca Dwan
Christine Engel
Dotty Geiger
Kathy Gilliam
Joany Goodwin
Woodrow Guderian
Ramona Haller
David Hanes
Linda Hanes
Elizabeth Haylock
Helen Heal
Norman Hill
Joe Honton
Nikolai Hrebov
Don Jackson
Jennifer Joell
Cheryl Johnson
Marcia Johnson
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Lana Koboloff
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Franny Minervini-Zick
Pam Moskovitz
Nancy Presson
Joan Przekop
Jymmey Purtill
Lynn Renn
Lilith Rogers
Elizabeth Sanville
Susan Shea
Erin Healy Sheffield
Anne Stephens
Calvin Stroble
Virginia Strom-Martin
Robert Thille
Terriann Tomlin
Raini Vallarino
Patrick Woodworth
As magnificent and filled with life as the Laguna is today, it was once a true wildlife paradise, where flocks of waterfowl darkened the skies for hours at a stretch, pronghorn antelope and tule elk browsed, salmon leapt by the thousands, and interpenetrated habitats of rare and unique plants turned through their annual cycles in abundance.

We understand that time cannot be reversed. But much can be done to restore the Laguna’s ability to support wildlife, to filter and cleanse its waters, and to hold and slow floodwaters. The Foundation is spearheading the movement to address problems as they arise and to build broad public consensus for restoring the Laguna’s biological well-being.

This year, we implemented three major Restoration initiatives. Each is an exciting step forward for the long term health of the Laguna.

**The Laguna Ecosystem Restoration and Management Plan** is a two-year planning initiative begun in 2004. The “RMP,” planned for publication in spring of 2006, is a “blueprint” for restoring the Laguna’s biological health and coordinating land use practices among participating landowners to benefit the Laguna’s natural systems. Created in consultation with landowners, scientific experts, regulatory agencies, public jurisdictions, and outdoor recreation advocates, the Plan will serve as a broadly adopted framework for restoration and management of the Laguna for many years to come.
Achievements: Restoration

The Ludwigia Control Project is an effort to beat back an invasive South American water weed which has choked some areas of the Laguna, impairing water quality, displacing native vegetation and creating a perfect breeding habitat for “foul water” species of mosquitoes which are known to be carriers of West Nile Virus. The Foundation launched this control effort in 2005 after convening and consulting with public agencies and Laguna stakeholders for 18 months to identify an effective and mutually agreeable control strategy. Using a combination of herbicide spraying and mechanical removal, the first year of the Ludwigia Control Project treated 115 acres of Ludwigia and removed 5330 tons of plant biomass from the floodplain. This multi-year project involves research on long term control and restoration strategies for these areas, and we are collaborating with the US Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service and researchers from Sonoma State University as a part of the overall effort. It has been very visible in the local press as concerns about West Nile Virus drew long-overdue attention to the condition of the Laguna.

Restoration Projects  On the ground, the Foundation accomplished several other achievements in 2005. Our volunteer restoration corps, the LagunaKeepers, has regular work days on public lands in the Laguna to clean up trash and plant native trees and shrubs. We developed a partnership with the local watershed group Cotati Creek Critters to submit a successful grant application, which will allow the Critters to stabilize banks, clear invasive blackberries, and plant native riparian plants in the upper reaches of the Laguna. And we developed the plan and began to secure funding for the Laguna Middle Reach Restoration Project, an extensive program of streamside, seasonal wetland and oak woodland restoration along a two-mile stretch of the Laguna.

It’s been an extraordinary restoration year. We’re excited as we look to 2006, when we will publish the Restoration and Management Plan, implement Year Two of the Ludwigia Control Project, and begin work on the Middle Reach Restoration effort.
Most exciting of all the Laguna Foundation’s many strides in 2005, the capital campaign to build the Laguna Learning Center kicked off in the late spring and has been steadily growing. This project will rehabilitate Civil War-era farm buildings on Stone Farm, a property owned by the City of Santa Rosa and believed to be Sonoma County’s oldest farmstead still surviving in a rural setting. Stone Farm has been designated as City of Santa Rosa Cultural Landmark #1.

In 2005, the City generously leased the farmhouse and barns on Stone Farm to the Foundation for a nominal fee. We will rehabilitate these buildings and add a new interpretive center in the style of the historic structures to create a world-class facility celebrating the Laguna’s natural, Native American, and agricultural history. The Center will house the Foundation's education programs, an exhibit hall, research facilities and offices, creating a focal point for public attention on the Laguna. We are working with members of the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria and with local agricultural leaders to ensure the accuracy of the Native American and agricultural history elements of education programs at the Center. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District is planning a system of Laguna trails nearby, so the Learning Center will also be a perfect place for visitors to learn about the unique value of the Laguna before jumping out on the trail.
As of the end of 2005, pledges to the capital campaign to build the Laguna Learning Center exceeded 25% of the $5 million estimated project budget. Outreach to prospective donors and grant programs is in full swing. We are also reaching out to the local construction industry to seek in-kind contributions to the project—the project is a true “barn raising,” and the Foundation hopes to enlist support from all the many communities which will benefit from the Learning Center.

With hard work and a little luck, we believe that construction of the Laguna Learning Center can be completed within three years, transforming the Foundation’s capacity to communicate the importance of the Laguna to young and old.
Partnerships and Support


Restoration Program Supporters: California State Coastal Conservancy, California Wildlife Conservation Board, Sonoma County Water Agency, Santa Rosa Subregional Sanitation District, City of Santa Rosa, Community Foundation Sonoma County, Marin-Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District, ESRI.


General Support Donors: The Foundation also wishes to thank our generous general support donors, including members of our Preservation Circle and all the fine people and businesses listed below who have given funds or in-kind contributions to advance the Foundation’s work (partial list):

Valerie and Curtis Abbott
Barnee and Gary Alexander
The Winifred and Harry B. Foundation
Ken and Stephanie Alton
Mathilde Amiot
Edwin and Jean Anderson
Barbara Arbunch
Nina and Don Arrabit
Jocelyn Audette
Eric Anex
Allen Barbieri
Genevieve Barnhart
Jane and Alan Baron
Dan and Ann Benedetti
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Bill and Gail Bettinelli
Jim Beyers
Don Bishop
Mary and Dennis Black
Donald Black
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Susan Borowicz
Veronica Bowers
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Sherri Couture
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Don Martin
Jack Stuppin
Robert Thille
Richard Thomas
Betsy Timm and Don Ketman
Margaret Tourje and Jane Krensky
Sonoma Land Trust
Neva and Stephen Turer
Jan Vannatta
Jarold and Kay Warren
Warren and Janis Watkins
Gary Weiner
John and Claire Werner
Gretchen Whisenand
Whole Foods Market, Sebastopol
Pat Wiggins and Guy Conner
Mary Wilkinson
Judy Wintee and Stephen Sweeney
Greg Young
Kathleen Youngquist
**Statement of Condition**

### ASSETS

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### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

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### INCOME

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### EXPENSES

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Dec. 31, 2005
The Laguna Foundation

The Laguna Foundation is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1989. Our mission is “To preserve, restore and enhance the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to inspire greater public understanding and appreciation of this magnificent natural area.”

The Foundation implements restoration projects, works with land-owners and public agencies to protect and improve Laguna resources, conducts educational programs for children and adults, and creates opportunities for walking, riding and paddling in the Laguna.

Our board includes recognized leaders from throughout our community who share the vision of the Laguna as a thriving natural, educational and recreational amenity for Sonoma County’s future.