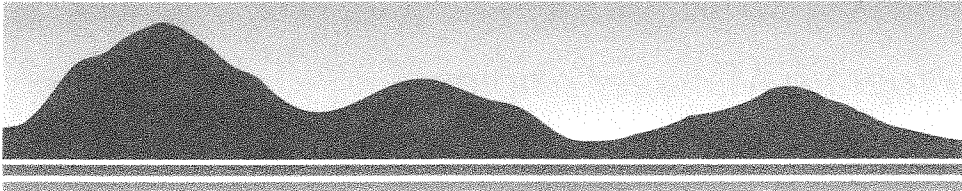


2000.7

June 1, 2000



SONOMA LAND TRUST

NEWS

Summer 2000 • Volume 25, No. 3

Documenting the Laguna

It's the Russian River's largest tributary, stretching from Cotati to the Russian River. This waterway gives its name to a biologically diverse expanse of freshwater marshes, wetlands, vernal pools, riparian forests and oak woodlands that provides habitat for migrating waterfowl and hundreds of species of plants, birds, fish and invertebrates, some of which are rare, threatened or endangered.

Historically, the Laguna de Santa Rosa provided habitat to a rich diversity of wildlife and biological communities, as it supported several large and thriving groups of Native Americans. With the coming of European settlers in the 1830s, much of the area was converted to farms.

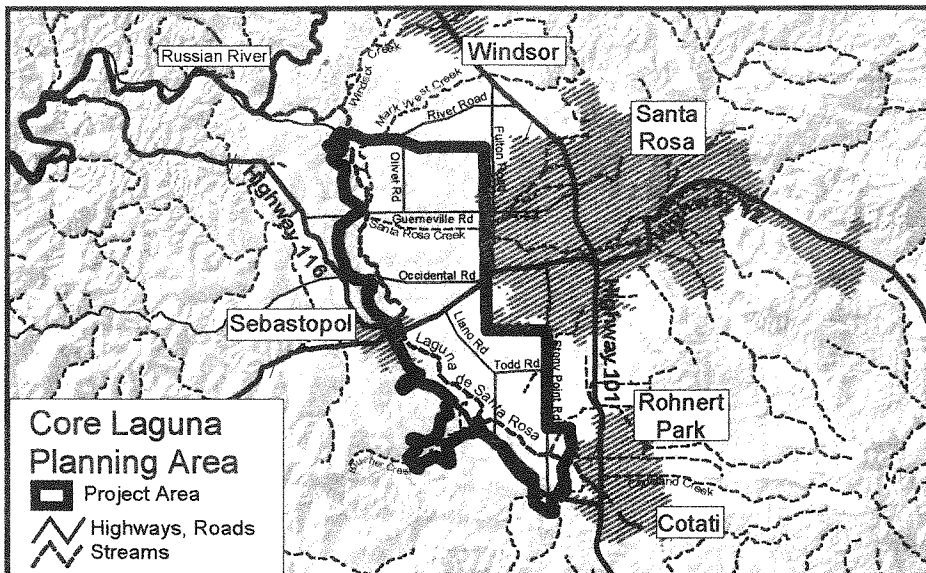
In recent times, urban development has increasingly encroached into the

Laguna, and it has become a fragmented mix of agricultural and urban uses amid natural spaces threatened with further development and loss. Today the Laguna is in marked decline with a number of threatened and endangered species, serious loss of habitat, and a worrisome deterioration of its critical function in mitigating flood levels in the Russian River.

In response to this decline, the Sonoma Land Trust and the Laguna Foundation have initiated a cooperative preservation project for the "core" Laguna area (see map). The purpose of this project is to create a Geographical Information System (GIS), a detailed mapping of the lands and resources of the Laguna de Santa Rosa. This system will coordinate various types of

see page 4

Kim Cordell of the Laguna Foundation defined the project area, Michael Fitzgibbon of Omware manipulated the data, and SLT intern Brian Turner made this map.



2000.7.1
It's what you know
and whom you know

Our Laguna de Santa Rosa project is a beautiful example of collaboration for environmental benefit. The Land Trust's partners in this venture include the Laguna Foundation with Diane Test and Kim Cordell in the lead; the Open Space District, with whom we've worked on several projects; Omware, a West County software company/Partner in Nature; and Mary McClary, a high performance volunteer.

Remember the political maxim, "Early money is like yeast?" The principle is operative here too, except we're talking about early energy. This vanguard is laying the groundwork for comprehensive protection and restoration of the Laguna's resources, and the players and process seem to be coming together amazingly smoothly.

The Laguna Foundation came to us for help, since we have staff, they don't, and we have a similar vision for the Laguna. The District, of course, is the primary funder for Sonoma County land conservation. SLT's point person is Wendy Eliot, our wetlands specialist; she happens to be married to Michael Fitzgibbon, one of the world heavyweights in Geographical Information Systems. Michael was recently wooed from a heavy commute tech job to Omware, Sebastopol maker of The Master Builder. Omware head

see page 4