



**LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA FOUNDATION**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

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**2019 | 2020**

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Dear Friends,

Despite the challenges of 2019-2020, we are pleased to share with you the successes!

We relied on our core values and responsibilities to chart a course driven by dedicated staff members that once again proved their ability to adapt and innovate as they responded to the changing circumstances and needs that surrounded us. Along the way, they demonstrated a deep caring for each other, for the land, and our community.

Their response has deeply moved me to the social and environmental injustices of our time. In response, staff and board members initiated exploration and process to become more inclusive as we fully embrace our culturally rich community.

As you read these pages, I hope you feel the inspiration we experienced throughout the year. Our successes were your successes! Your continued vote of confidence allowed us to rise to the occasion. Thank you! We remain committed to healing and restoring the Laguna and to providing inspiring nature opportunities for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Johnson".

**Carolyn (CJ) Johnson**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PRESIDENT



Dear Supporters,

What a beginning! My first day with the Foundation was the same day the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic. This team has amazed me from the start! I am honored to be working with such passionate and hard-working people to build on the vision realized 30 years ago by our founders and tackle today's challenges through restoring wetland habitats and reconnecting people to nature.

I hope you enjoy reading our annual report and recognize it as a story that you made possible.

Our work touches so many lives in different ways, from providing solace looking out over the vibrant wetlands, walking the creek trails, learning new skills through our education programs, and participating in our restoration stewardship. Everyone has a special story to tell.

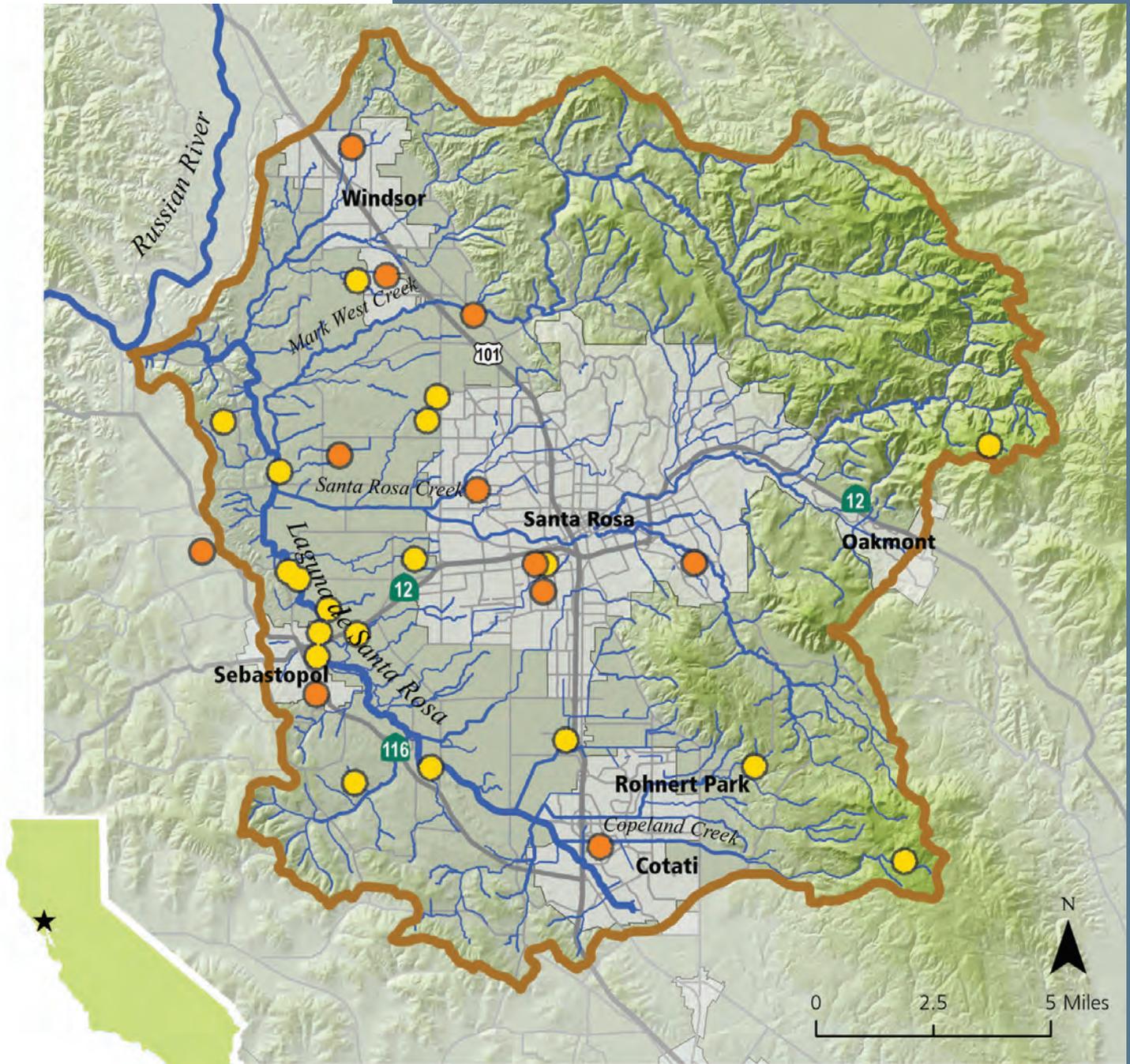
Like you, I look forward to the return to "normal." While that will bring easier times, in the meantime, I couldn't ask for a better community of which to become a part.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Morkill".

**Anne Morkill**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# OUR WORK AT A GLANCE



Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation © 2016. Data Sources: California DWR, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, Sonoma County ISD, USGS. Map ID No. 848-A

**● 19/20 RESTORATION & CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

**● 19/20 LEARNING LAGUNA PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**

Our mission is to restore and conserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa and inspire a public appreciation for this Wetland of International Importance. Recognizing its vital connection to our overall environment and its direct link to our economy, we steward these habitats across the 254-square mile Laguna watershed to ensure their health and well-being. This work doesn't happen alone. It happens because of you – our supporters, volunteers, partner agencies, Native tribes, and public and private landowners. We are grateful for you! *We all depend on a healthy watershed — not just to live, but to live well.*

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

### CONSERVING THE MOST RARE

Our Conservation Science Program focuses on actively conserving six of the rarest and endangered plant species found in the Laguna watershed. Protecting endangered species is important because of their inherent value, beauty, and their representation of rare and unique habitats. They are part of the web of life, supporting many other living beings, from insects and birds to amphibians and mammals.

The Pitkin marsh lily thrived this year after our extensive habitat restoration work at Cunningham Marsh in Sebastopol. We partnered with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) with funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners in Wildlife Program. After removing dense invasive plants and opening the forest canopy to sunlight, a plethora of lilies bloomed this spring — the most we've seen in over 20 years. More flowering lilies mean more food for insects, and thus the web of life is enhanced!

The Sebastopol meadowfoam also had a fantastic year. After scattering more than 100,000 seeds in Fall 2019, the vernal pools along the Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail were once again carpeted in white flowers and buzzing with pollinators this spring, after being absent for many years. We also continued monitoring and stewardship work with various partners on Vine Hill clarkia, Vine Hill manzanita, Burke's goldfields, and Sonoma sunshine.



### PRESERVING AN ICONIC LANDSCAPE

The Santa Rosa Plain, situated at the heart of the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed, is a vast oak savannah grassland, dotted with vernal pools and swales that become visible in spring once they fill with rainwater and wildflowers bloom in a burst of colors. While 85% of these vernal pools have been lost over the past 50 years, we must preserve biological diversity that we protect what few we have left.

This past year we expanded long-standing efforts to restore and conserve the remaining habitat through invasive plant control, conservation grazing, long-term monitoring, public education, and stewardship. We monitored 73 pools and managed 132 acres spread across six sites, partnering with public and private landowners across this iconic landscape.



## ADAPTING TO FIRE

As a result of prolonged drought and climate change, wildfires continue to impact our watershed. This year we assisted in landscape recovery after wildfires and reintroduced “good fire” as a habitat management tool by:

- Collaborating with Audubon Canyon Ranch’s Fire Forward to implement prescribed burning throughout Sonoma County.
- Assisting Pepperwood Preserve in Santa Rosa with their recovery efforts after the 2019 Kincadee Fire.
- Reducing high-risk fuels at our Laguna Uplands Preserve in Sebastopol by removing lower branches from trees and mowing tall grasses.
- Collecting seeds of over 20 native species from across the watershed, including rare serpentine plants, Sargent’s cypress, and knobcone pine. We will use these seeds to grow new trees, ready to plant where needed, to recover native habitats impacted by wildfire.

## RESTORING THE WATERSHED

Riparian forests are critical in our watershed because of the role they play in filtering water as it flows into our creeks, shading water to keep it cool for native fish, and provide safe habitat corridors for a variety of birds and mammals.

In addition to our ongoing restoration on more than a dozen sites this year, we collaborated on three new projects. We began a two-phase project to widen the riparian buffer along Hinebaugh Creek in Rohnert Park by growing and planting 670 trees, shrubs, grasses, and sedges on nearly 3.5 acres. We propagated 845 plants planted by our partners at Prunuske Chatham along Mark West Creek in Santa Rosa. We also collaborated with the City of Santa Rosa to propagate and plant 3,000 native grasses and sedges along Santa Rosa Creek at Flat Rock Park.



## GROWING FOR THE FUTURE

We are proud to say that the Laguna Foundation and the CNPS Milo Baker Chapter continue to provide leadership and training to the restoration community about best management practices for plant disease prevention in nursery operations. This year, we made substantial progress toward becoming a certified disease-free native plant nursery. We grew more than 65 different species for projects from the top of the watershed at Hood Mountain down to the main Laguna de Santa Rosa channel. We collect all of our seeds locally so that our plants are adapted to the particular climate and soils of the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed.

## YOUTH EDUCATION



### TEACHING TOMORROW'S STEWARDS

*Learning Laguna* capitalizes on the natural curiosity of students in grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>. As they explore nature and learn about the unique wetlands of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, they develop a deeper connection to the land where they live and are given the opportunity to experience life as a part of nature rather than living apart from it.

*Learning Laguna* has now reached every school district within the Laguna watershed and the first children who participated 20 years ago are now adults. We have succeeded in creating a program that stands the test of time, and today there is a new generation of Laguna stewards! Our volunteer docents' sustained commitment and our donors' financial support, Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, Fledgling Fund, and the Kimball Foundation enable us to offer *Learning Laguna* at no cost to schools or families.

In the Fall of 2019, we engaged with 358 students in 16 classes from six schools in the rich experiences of *Learning Laguna*, including in-class teaching and outdoor field trips to the Laguna at Stone Farm. We prepared through the winter for Spring 2020 *Learning Laguna*, which was scheduled to reach 520 students in 22 classes at six additional schools until in-person teaching closed in March due to the pandemic. As schools moved to a distance-learning model for the rest of the school year, we kept *Learning Laguna* alive by transforming lessons into at-home

activities and distributing them to parents and teachers as part of a new series called *Learning Laguna Magnified*. These self-guided activities helped children and adults stay connected to the natural world at home. To date, the *Learning Laguna Magnified* series has reached more than 10,000 homes!

**SINCE 1999, OUR  
LEARNING LAGUNA  
PROGRAM HAS REACHED...**

**50**

SCHOOLS

**808**

CLASSROOMS

**20,500+**

CHILDREN IN SONOMA COUNTY



*I am forever grateful to the Laguna Foundation for all the work that you do to protect and restore our local waterways, and for helping me to be a better mentor to my own children, and the children I work with.*

*- Jennifer Seeley, Laguna Explorers @ Home parent*

## EXPLORING NATURE AT HOME

From spring into summer, as our community continued sheltering in place due to COVID-19, our education team once again put their creative and adaptive skills to work developing new virtual teaching methods. We re-tooled our popular *Camp Tule* summer day-camp activities into a dynamic virtual camp that became *Laguna Explorers @ Home* to help children discover nature in their backyards while staying safe and healthy. We assembled backpacks outfitted with learning supplies and materials, and produced several how-to videos to lead 25 Laguna Explorers through a series of activities they shared as a group on daily virtual meetings. As with *Camp Tule*, *Laguna Explorers @ Home* was created to connect children more deeply with the natural world, build a sense of community, and be engaging and fun. The new skills and teaching methods we developed this year under extraordinary and unexpected circumstances will surely support our education endeavors for years to come!



## GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

Spring also brought the announcement of an expanded, multi-year educational partnership with Sonoma County Ag + Open Space. Established by voters in 1990, Ag + Open Space permanently protects the diverse agricultural, natural resource, and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations. They are a great partner in conservation and in connecting people to the land.

Our goal is always to provide *Learning Laguna* free of charge, and Ag + Open Space is helping us do just that. We will be able to grow and adapt *Learning Laguna* to continue to meet the needs of teachers, children, and their families. We will also be able to provide additional free educational programs for other grade levels, as well as support our Community Education programs. We are grateful to Ag + Open Space for their support, and for emphasizing the importance of the Laguna de Santa Rosa to Sonoma County and its contribution to a healthy, diverse community.



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

## BUILDING INSPIRATION

While meeting the challenges of the 2019 wildfires and the 2020 pandemic, the Community Education program has thrived. Our offerings have grown and changed to meet new needs within our community and gained new, expanded audiences. Despite running 14 fewer programs due to cancellations, we reached more than 1,500 people this year, a hundred more than the prior year. These events connected the Laguna watershed's natural and cultural majesty through art, stewardship, and science to residents throughout Sonoma County. We rapidly adapted to virtual programming as soon as the pandemic hit and connected with participants throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the country, and even around the world! We connected with people from San Jose to Canada and France. It was a spectacular experience and one we plan on continuing.

This year started with 22 in-person programs in Fall 2019, serving over 530 people, highlights of which included a



birdwatching event with Pepperwood Preserve, a natural remedies workshop with local herbalist Amy Charnay, and a mini speaker-series to accompany the CNPS fall plant sale. That momentum continued into Spring 2020 with six more successful in-person events, including a new bilingual nature journaling event with LandPaths and Marley Peifer, and a relief printmaking class with artist Emily Robinson. All events were well attended, and many sold out.

Despite no experience running virtual programs and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in late March, we pivoted quickly to offering a robust online programs series. We missed our fantastic Laguna Guide and Greeter volunteers and felt their absence as they are integral to our programming! Nonetheless, our virtual offerings were met with great success. Our nine spring webinars, covering a range of topics from vernal pools to Laguna cultural history, reached almost 700 people and provided them with much-needed, high-quality education accessible from the comfort and safety of home. These programs offered the Laguna Foundation a way to stay connected to our loyal and enthusiastic community of volunteers, instructors, and supporters while reaching many people new to our organization. Most importantly, we did our part to flatten the curve.



# WELCOME TO STONE FARM



## 10 YEARS AND COUNTING!

What is now known as the Laguna Environmental Center began with a big dream, only made a reality thanks to the generosity of donors, hardworking volunteers, grant funding through the California Coastal Conservancy, and a long term lease with the City of Santa Rosa. In 2009, the once abandoned and dilapidated historic Stone Farm became home to the Laguna Foundation. The 4-acre parcel now boasts of a restored landmark farmhouse serving as our administrative headquarters, Great Blue Heron Hall, which provides space for art and events, storage space for tools and vehicles used in our restoration work, a native plant nursery, a children's nature playscape, and beautiful native plant gardens and habitats bustling with the activity of wildlife and nature lovers alike.

It took vision and commitment to restore Stone Farm and create the Laguna Environmental Center, and it takes many volunteers to continue to preserve this special place. Volunteers continue to play a critical role in making all of our programs possible, more robust, and more effective. Even when COVID-19 prevented in-person activities in the spring, our dedicated volunteer community stayed in touch and engaged virtually. We need to extend our deepest gratitude to the more than 450 volunteers who generously donated their time, superior skills, and passions to support our mission!



## CONTINUING THE DREAM

For the past ten years, Stone Farm has welcomed thousands of visitors for hundreds of educational programs and special events. We look forward to many more decades to come! Our volunteer community helps in a variety of ways:

- Facilities and garden maintenance
- Art gallery and gift shop sales
- Visitor orientation and interpretive walks
- Education docents, trail guides, and event greeters
- Restoration project stewards
- Administrative and special event support

# DONORS & FRIENDS

**The Laguna Foundation is grateful to the following supporters who made generous contributions this fiscal year.**

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Sylvia Marie  
Marsha Vas Dupre & John Dupre  
Lydia & Mike Martinez  
Kathleen McBride  
James McEwen  
Marna McKenzie  
Christine McNamara  
Glenn & Franny Minervini-Zick  
Sheila Mone  
Susan Mullaney  
Suzanne & Gary Nelson  
Crystal Norris  
Margarite Olmos  
Molly Oshun  
Laura Owens  
Anna Paul  
Ray & Judy Peterson  
Joseph Petzel  
Ralph & Tecla Pierotti  
Ann Possinger

Christina Raymond  
Ken & Sarah Reid  
Nancy & Willard Richards  
Daniel Roberts  
Lawrence Rosenblum  
Susan & Jerry Roth  
Bill & Kathy Rueve  
Blake Rushworth  
Ruth Sanford  
Sarah Schaeffer  
Diane Schmidt  
Teri Schmidt  
Brian Shears  
Doris Sloan  
Kay Smith  
Susan Snow  
Ginny Spencer  
Glenn Stocki  
Linda Swartz  
Christina Toms  
Bob Truax  
Francesca Tyrnauer  
Mike & Elaine Vonderporten  
Eileen Way  
Shirley Weisman  
Susan Wielk  
Betty Young  
Patricia & Bruce Yoxall

## GIFTS-IN-KIND-DONORS

Community Connections -  
Catholic Charities Santa Rosa  
DeLoach Vineyards  
Ron & Sandy Dodge

Lagunitas Brewing Company  
Mary's Pizza Shack  
New Endeavor Foundation  
Rialto Cinemas  
Bob & Sharon Rubin  
Sebastopol Hardware  
Taylor Lane Organic Coffee  
Three Twins Ice Cream  
Whole Foods Market

## LEGACY SOCIETY

Anonymous (3)  
William & Florence Dodson  
Christine Engel  
Barbara Gay  
Linda & David Hanes  
Sharon Hawthorne  
Carroll & John Hirsch  
Carolyn Johnson  
Ellen & Wayne Krebs  
Barrie Ann Mason  
Mike & Barbara Shepherd  
Roger & Ellen Sherron  
Dr. Dianne Smith  
Raini Sugg & Steve Vallarino  
Arlene Ulmer  
Gretchen Whisenand

## GRANTS & CONTRACTS

Alton Preserve, LLC  
Alton South Conservation Preserve, LLC  
California Department of Fish & Wildlife  
City of Sebastopol  
D.M Jacobson & Sons Inc.  
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria  
Fledgling Fund  
Fulton Road Preserve, LLC  
Kimball Foundation  
LandPaths  
Permit Sonoma  
Sarah K. de Coizart Article Tenth Perpetual Charitable Trust  
Sonoma County Ag + Open Space  
Sonoma County Airport  
Sonoma County Regional Parks  
Sonoma County Water Agency  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Wildlife Heritage Foundation

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL
<b>REVENUES AND SUPPORT</b>			
Grants & contracts	\$ 452,465	\$ 95,000	\$ 547,465
Contributions	446,243	25,000	471,243
Program & miscellaneous income	78,745		78,745
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>130,234</u>	<u>(130,234)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenues and support	1,107,687	(10,234)	1,097,453
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Program services			
Restoration & conservation science	502,760		502,760
Education	205,500		205,500
Heron Hall programs	<u>18,260</u>		<u>18,260</u>
Total program services	726,520		726,520
Supporting services			
Administration	180,025		180,025
Fundraising & outreach	<u>136,210</u>		<u>136,210</u>
Total supporting services	316,235		316,235
Depreciation	<u>70,031</u>		<u>70,031</u>
Total expenses	<u>1,112,786</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,112,786</u>
Change in net assets	(5,099)	(10,234)	(15,333)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>1,982,801</u>	<u>389,578</u>	<u>2,372,379</u>
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 1,977,702</u>	<u>\$ 379,344</u>	<u>\$ 2,357,046</u>

*These statements are unaudited and for internal use only.*

*Note 1 - Land is shown at current appraised value. The property is encumbered by a conservation easement.*

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

### ASSETS

#### Current Assets:

Cash in bank	\$ 457,713
Accounts receivable	135,661
Prepaid expenses	<u>7,594</u>
Total current assets	600,968

#### Fixed assets

Land <sup>1</sup>	150,000
Building & property improvements	2,063,772
Furniture & equipment	112,217
Vehicles	<u>29,855</u>
	2,355,844
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(558,795)</u>
Total fixed assets	1,797,049

#### Other assets

Lease gift-in-kind less value discount	157,466
Endowment fund	<u>10,198</u>
Total other assets	<u>167,664</u>

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$ 2,565,681

### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

#### Current liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$ 13,209
SBA Paycheck Protection Program loan	145,000
Accrued vacation	45,070
Payroll liabilities	3,990
Other payables	<u>1,366</u>
Total current liabilities	208,635

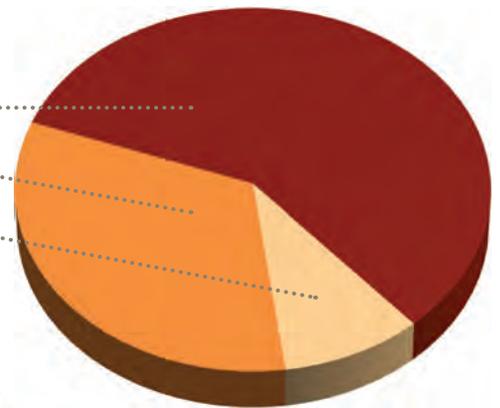
#### Net assets:

Without donor restrictions	1,977,702
With donor restrictions	<u>379,344</u>
Total net assets	<u>2,357,046</u>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS** \$ 2,565,681

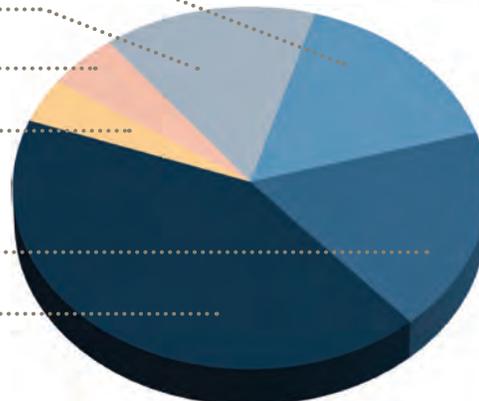
### INCOME

52%	Grants & Contracts
41%	Contributions
7%	Program & Miscellaneous Income



### EXPENSES

12%	Fundraising & Outreach
16%	Administration
6%	Depreciation
2%	Heron Hall Programs
18%	Education Programs
46%	Restoration & Conservation Science





LagunaFoundation.org | 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 | 707-527-9277



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