

## Tree-A-Thon Returns!

*David Bannister, Executive Director*

As many of you know, last year we introduced the first ever Tree-A-Thon fundraiser and tree planting event. The concept was simple. It is like a walk-a-thon except instead of getting pledges to walk, our fundraisers got pledges to come out and plant native trees and shrubs to restore a riparian corridor. Note the difference: instead of energy being expended to walk, our volunteers put their energy to work helping restore the Laguna! This event was a huge success; much needed revenue was raised to support our programs and over 120 volunteers came out to plant 750 trees. Obviously, we had to bring back the Tree-A-Thon!

We are always trying to improve what we do, so this year we are making a few changes. Some folks told us last year that they wanted to plant trees but not fundraise. We totally understand that and are eternally grateful to our wonderful cadre of volunteers who help us in so many ways. Still, this event is a fundraiser, so for those who aren't "into" seeking sponsorships, please see our LagunaKeepers schedule (page 5) and come out whenever you want to help us get things done on the ground! We can really use your help on any or all of these dates.

For those multi-talented folks who are willing to help fundraise by getting those pledges, please see the enclosed letter for more details and mark your calendars for:

Second Annual Tree-A-Thon is Saturday, January 22, meeting at our headquarters and planting along Irwin Creek.

There are prizes for top fundraisers, and a fabulous lunch overlooking the Laguna from Lynmar Estate for all fundraisers and donors raising or contributing over \$1,000. **Ready to sign up or maybe you own a business and would like to be an event sponsor?** If so, either go to the Tree-A-Thon page on our website to register or contact Nancy Hauptmann at 527-9277x.109 or email: [nancy@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:nancy@lagunafoundation.org).



Tree planting photos from our First Annual Tree-A-Thon. Photos: Erin Sheffield

Of course, we hope that lots of people get comfortable with the idea of fundraising for an organization whose mission they support. Jeanette Doyel was a first time fundraiser last year and this is what she told me:

*I have really enjoyed being part of this fund-raiser. This is the first time I have asked friends family and acquaintances for a donation. Amazingly, I raised over \$800!*

Another great all-around volunteer and first time fundraiser last year was Chris Engel who said:

*Nobody likes to ask people for money or anything else for that matter. But, the worst thing that can happen is that they say no. So what? No one is offended that I asked, especially at this time of year and for this event/organization. In fact, they expect to be asked! And, I am not offended when they say no because I know it is not personal. You just have to ask.*

## Executive Director Report – *David Bannister*

It has been just over a year that I have been the Executive Director of this great organization. What a year it has been! We've:

- Held the Laguna Conference on Climate Adaptation.
- Started the multi-participant cooperative North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative.
- Held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party.
- Created and held the first ever Tree-A-Thon (see article on front page).
- Organized and took a Trolley tour of the Laguna for top Tree-A-Thon fundraisers.
- Became a "Membership" organization.
- Held our first Membership Appreciation Party at Georgetown.
- Recruited and welcomed three new Board members.
- Settled a major construction debt with a local lender.
- Started and completed design work for the Laguna Learning Center.
- Started the permit process for the Laguna Learning Center.
- Held our 7th Annual Garden Art Gala.

Whew! And that is just the activities that I have been directly involved in. Be sure to read the articles by our Department Managers to learn about all that has been going on in our Restoration, Conservation Science and Education Programs.

It has been a busy (as you can see) and wonderful year. I am honored to be at the helm of an organization that enjoys such great support from our many members and volunteers, as well as our partners the Open Space District, the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Cities of Santa Rosa and Sebastopol, the California Coastal Conservancy, and the State Resources Agency, as well as "sister" non-profits Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma Ecology Center, Cotati Creek Critters, Pepperwood Foundation, California Native Plant Society, and many more.

Finally, I would just like to thank the Board of the Foundation. It was this Board that conceived of plucking me from their midst and offering me the position of Executive Director. It has at once been challenging, gratifying, educational, sleep-loss inducing and much more! Furthering our mission to protect, restore and educate the public about Sonoma County's ecological treasure is worth every bit of it!

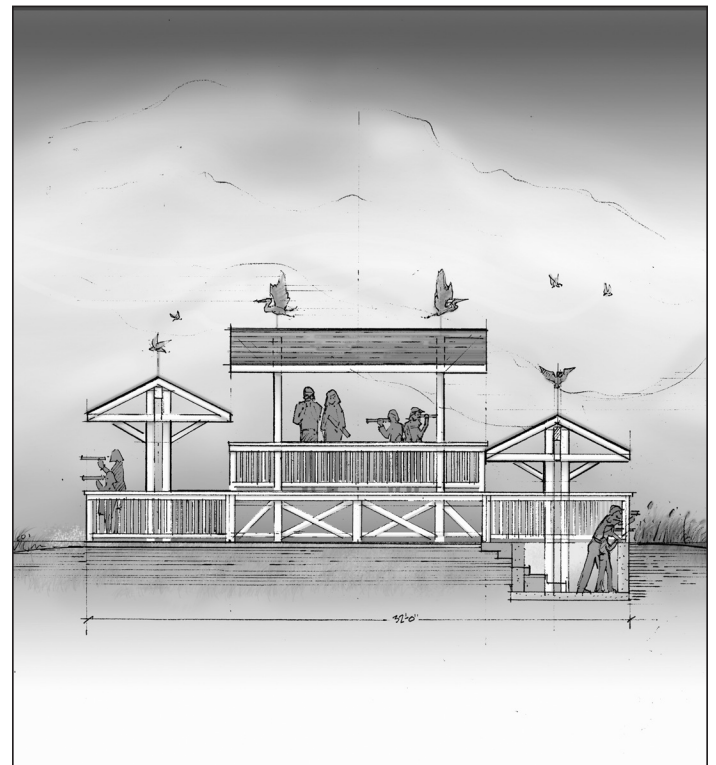
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## Soroptimist Observation Deck

The Laguna is home to a rare diversity of bird life: more than 200 varieties, including osprey, red-tailed and sharp-shinned hawks, and bald eagles, which are occasionally seen flying along the Laguna in the area of the Laguna Learning Center. The observation deck will be a key feature of the Laguna Learning Center and is designed as a multi-level platform with some shade and some seating and lots of space for observing wildlife in the landscape through spotting scopes and binoculars. The multiple levels will allow for viewing "up close" the life in our pond by being at wetland vegetation level and for viewing "afar" by being several feet above ground level. The teaching elements will include a display describing the bird diversity of the Laguna and its notable species.

Thanks to a generous grant from Soroptimist Club of Santa Rosa in memory of Ms. Dora Finnemore, the observation deck will be built and named in their honor. The pond, bridge, kiosk and interpretative building still have naming opportunities available. We also received a generous grant from the Bothin Foundation that will pay for tables, chairs and kitchen equipment in the Learning Center building.

The rest of the project has entered the permitting phase so the timing of when things will be done is hard to predict. We hope to get considerable work done before "real" winter weather sets in but time will tell. Hopefully, by the time you get your next *Meanderings*, a lot will have been done!



Design of multiple scoping areas at different elevations.  
Illustration: Gene Kunit and Associates, Landscape Architects

# This is the Year to Become a Laguna Docent!

Christine Fontaine, Director of Education Programs

Have you been saying to yourself, "Next year I want to go through Laguna docent training." ? Well, with all the exciting things happening around the Laguna, *this is a great year to join the docent training class!* The new trail from Meadowlark Field to Kelly Farm will soon be open and the Laguna Learning Center is just about under construction and we need lots of new volunteers to help run Learning Laguna and new programs being created to help connect Sonoma County school children and community members with the Laguna. While the training course does focus on preparing volunteers to lead Learning Laguna, this training serves as the springboard for other volunteer opportunities that arise.

Over the 10-week program we explore the wonders of the Laguna, both indoors and out, including visits to special places not open to the public. You will read interesting and stimulating articles, learn about the Laguna ecosystems and its natural and cultural history, interact with the engaging and dynamic Learning Laguna activities, all the while having fun and bonding with fellow trainees and the entire docent circle.



Laguna docents studying grasses in a continuing education class.  
Photo: Christine Fontaine



Learning Laguna students learning about aquatic food webs.  
Photo: Dana Vallarino

As one Learning Laguna fourth grade student wrote to a docent...

*I learned so much from you. I learned about nature, animals, water creatures, sky creatures, land creatures and creatures that crawl. I learned about plants and how it feels to be in beautiful nature. Your kindness helped us so much. Thank you and I mean thank you so much.*

Join us for training so you too can experience the deep sense of reward that comes from fostering a love of nature in children, along with the gratification you'll surely feel for being part of the solution for the Laguna.

**We hope to see you in the class of 2011!** Applications are available on our website and orientation events will take place from 6:00-7:30 PM on:

- Tuesday February 15 at the Sebastopol Library
- Wednesday, March 2 at the Central Santa Rosa Library

Training classes occur on Mondays from 9:30am – 2:30pm, March through May. Visit our website for more details or if you have questions, contact Christine Fontaine at 527-9277x102 or email: [christine@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:christine@lagunafoundation.org).

## Education Program Highlights

### Learning Laguna 2009-10 school year

Number of classroom visits: 38  
Number of field trips: 38  
Schools Visited: 18  
Districts Served: 10  
Students: 910  
Docent Teaching Hours: 1230

### Public Education programs

Alpha Farm Evening Exploration  
Delta Pond Rookery Walk  
Santa Rosa Plain Bike & Hike  
SuperKids Camp  
Family Wetland Day  
iWalk Sebastopol

410 participants at six special Laguna Learning Adventures

### Outreach at Public events

Wildflower Celebration at Pepperwood Preserve  
Earth Day – Sebastopol  
Earth Day – Santa Rosa



# Annual Garden Art Gala: A “New” 7-Year Old Event!

*David Bannister, Executive Director*

The Foundation’s 7th annual garden party fundraiser took place at the beautiful Vine Hill House on September 12th and, unlike last year, the weather was spectacular. The fabulous Gala Committee of Susan Churchill, Nina Arrabit, Sandy Mays, Mary Reed, Barbara Shepherd, Yvonne Giambrone-Martin and Jan O’Connell (co-owner of our host Vine Hill House), made a number of changes to revitalize the event. Guests enjoyed oysters, an heirloom tomato tasting, wood-fired pizzas, and gourmet cheeses, plus fabulous local wines. The silent auction featured outdoor “garden” art, a great selection of special wines, and hand crafted willow baskets filled with a beautiful plant and gardening oriented gift certificates. The live auction featured a variety of experiences from kayaking in Baja to a catered dinner for eight with local chef Patty James right there at Vine Hill House.

The Foundation is profoundly grateful to the many, many people that made this Gala one of our best: generous sponsors, the many artists who donated their work for auction, donors of the exciting live auction “adventure packages”, exquisite wines enjoyed onsite and auctioned, and the volunteers who made the Gala possible. Please visit the “Thanks to Our Supporters” section of Meanderings for a complete list of those who helped the Garden Art Gala to be such a wonderful day.

Finally, be sure to **mark your calendars for Sunday, September 11, 2011** for the 8th version of this great event. The committee is already talking about ways to make it better!

## Thank You Gala Sponsors!

### **Bald Eagle (\$10,000+)**

Lynn and Anisya Fritz,  
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*Russian River Valley*

### **Golden Eagle (\$5,000)**

Vine Hill House



### **Otter (\$2,500)**

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### **Bobcat (\$1,000)**

Gallo Family Vineyards, Sonoma West Publications, Clay and Anne Stephens, Vic Trione, ZIX Cookies

### **Heron (\$500)**

Winifred and Harry B. Allen Foundation, AMS Entertainment - Santa Rosa, ASK Realty / Sharon Hawthorne, Bill and Gail Bettinelli, Clover Stornetta Farms, Inc., Coddling Foundation, General Hydroponics, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma Land Trust, Warren and Janis Watkins



Food, wine, entertainment and auction at the Gala. Photos: Robert Hart

# LAGUNAKEEPERS EVENT CALENDAR

*All workdates are from 9 AM to noon. Be sure to wear shoes & clothes you don't mind getting dirty. Only heavy rain cancels. Snacks are on us, but do bring gloves, water, and friends!*

**November 20**

## **Irwin Creek**

More work on the ever-expanding riparian empire along Irwin, where last year's plantings are booming. Meet at Stone Farm (900 Sanford Rd.) & we'll walk down to the site.

**December 11**

## **Stone Farm**

Help us install the first phase of the new Laguna Learning Center landscape, which will feature native plants, fruit trees & ornamentals reflecting the site's agricultural history, and a children's discovery garden. Meet at Stone Farm (900 Sanford Rd.)



**February 12**

## **Delta Pond**

Returning to Delta Pond to cut and sprig willows. Great bang for the buck: there's no cheaper plant material! Enter on the southwest side of Santa Rosa creek at Willowside Rd. (just north of Summerfield Waldorf school, 655 Willowside) and drive 1/2 mile to parking.

**For more information,** or to receive a monthly email reminder of LagunaKeepers workdates, please contact Catherine Cumberland at 527-9277 x108 or email: [catherine@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:catherine@lagunafoundation.org). Visit our website for a full 2010-2011 LagunaKeepers event calendar.

## **Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Complex - Wetland of International Significance**

*Hattie Brown, Conservation Science Program Manager*

On **World Wetlands Day**, February 2, 2011, the Ramsar Convention will name the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Complex as a Wetland of International Significance. Since 1971, wetlands all over the world have been designated by the Ramsar Convention to highlight the importance of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide. Wetlands, for example, control flood surges, filter pollutants, and are important sites for human enjoyment and recreation. The Laguna and other wetlands designated under the Ramsar Convention are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life. The Laguna will join 27 other sites in the nation and 1899 sites worldwide to receive this distinction.

The Laguna and surrounding Santa Rosa Plain Wetland Complex are of particular international importance due in part to the rare and endangered plant and animal species found here. We are lucky to live in such a biodiverse region.

Several public agencies and private landowners signed on to list their properties as a part of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Complex in a lengthy process that began in 2007. Thank you to the many people who have been involved in this process and we'll let you know when to celebrate!

### **What is World Wetlands Day?**

February 2 each year is **World Wetlands Day**. It marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. **WWD** was celebrated for the first time in 1997 and made an encouraging beginning. Each year, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity **to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular**. From 1997 to 2009, the Convention's web site has posted reports from more than 98 countries of WWD activities of all sizes and shapes, from lectures and seminars, nature walks, children's art contests, sampan races, and community clean-up days, to radio and television interviews and letters to newspapers, to the launch of new wetland policies, new Ramsar sites, and new programs at the national level.

**Visit [www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org) to find WWD 2011 activities around the world**

# Pick Up a Community Card at Oliver's Market Today!

Maggie Hart, Administrative Director

**Support the Laguna Foundation and local merchant Oliver's Market at the same time!** Oliver's Market now offers eScrip Community Cards, a program that allows you to contribute up to 5% of your purchase to the Laguna Foundation. Plus, if you shop at Oliver's Market in Cotati, a share of your donation will go towards our partner the Cotati Creek Critters.

## Here's how it works:

- 1. Visit Oliver's Market with the form below and request an Oliver's eScrip Community Card.** Or the cashier will give you the form and you can complete it on site, designating the "Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation."
- 2. Present your card to the cashier every time you shop at Oliver's Market.** You can pay for your groceries any way you choose. Simply presenting your card generates contributions from Oliver's Market to the Laguna Foundation.
- 3. The more you shop, the higher your contribution to the Laguna Foundation.** To track your donations, register your Community Card online: [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com).



### Oliver's Market Locations:

546 East Cotati Avenue, Cotati  
560 Montecito Center, Santa Rosa  
461 Stony Point Road, Santa Rosa

# eScrip

It's Free - It's Easy - It's Powerful



ATTENTION CASHIER  
Card number must be affixed here

## Oliver's eScrip Community Card Registration

### 1. Select the group you wish to support

I've selected the  
**Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation**  
Group ID# 500025034

### 2. Complete the following

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State:   Zip:

Phone/Cell Number:    -    -

⇒ By providing your email address you will receive program updates and special offers from Oliver's.

⇒ Include your phone number and we will link it to your card, and you will have one less card to carry.



## Thank you to our generous supporters since our last *Meanderings*...

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The **Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation**, founded in 1989, works to preserve, restore, and inspire greater understanding and appreciation of the Laguna de Santa Rosa wetland complex, which is the largest tributary of the Russian River and one of Sonoma County's richest wildlife area. The Foundation conducts educational programs, implements preservation and restoration projects, conducts scientific research, 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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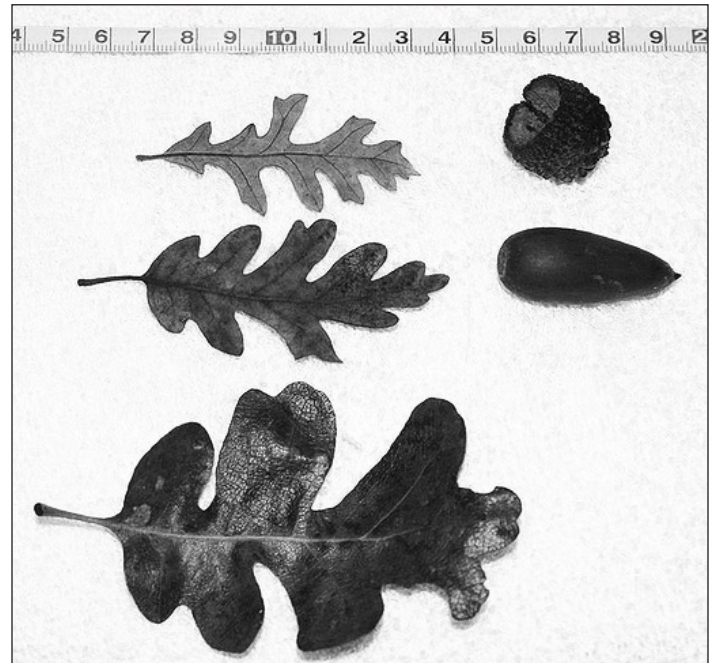
## Acorn Alert

*Catherine Cumberland, Restoration Program Manager*

The Laguna Foundation needs your eyes on the ground and in the trees, helping us look for acorns! If you can tell the difference between a valley oak and other common local oaks, you can participate.

What we're looking for are valley oaks in the Laguna watershed. This includes the towns of Santa Rosa, Windsor, Rohnert Park, Cotati, and the east side of Sebastopol. The most likely place to find them will be in the Santa Rosa plain; i.e., in and around the town of Santa Rosa and the area between Santa Rosa and the Laguna. Possible locations include Doyle Park, SRJC, downtown, Joe Rodota trail, and Santa Rosa creek trail. Pavement and parking lots are great places to collect – the acorns don't get lost in the grass – so we love city trees.

If you see a tree with acorns on it, or lots of caps on the ground, first make sure it's a valley oak and not the more common (and more acorn-prolific) live oak. If you're positive you've seen a valley oak loaded with acorns, please contact Catherine Cumberland at 527-9277x108 or email: [catherine@lagunafoundation.org](mailto:catherine@lagunafoundation.org) with an address and description of where you saw the tree and, if you can tell, whether the acorns are in an accessible public location.



Valley Oak, *Quercus lobata*, leaves and acorns. Photo: Wikipedia.com

*We need to grow 5,000+ trees for next year's plantings! Keep your eyes peeled for the next generation of Laguna oaks, and thanks for your help with this important task.*