



SONOMA  
ECOLOGY  
CENTER

**IMPACT**  
**REPORT**  
**2017**

*Celebrating  
27 years of  
building  
partnerships  
in Sonoma Valley*





# Beautiful. Sustainable.

## Sonoma.

*Sonoma Ecology Center works to address challenges related to open space, rural character, biodiversity, energy, and climate change, and strives for a better quality of life for all residents.*

*Since 1990, we've worked to increase appreciation and stewardship of Sonoma Valley's natural heritage and create measurable benefits in areas of land, water, climate change, and biodiversity.*

### Mission

Our mission is to work with our community to identify and lead actions that achieve and sustain ecological health in Sonoma Valley.

### Vision

We envision a future where people, land, water, and wildlife thrive.

### Values

#### Biodiversity

We value natural ecosystems and the diverse animals and plants they support.

#### Sustainability

We seek multi-benefit solutions to the environmental, social, and economic challenges facing our community.

#### Evidence-Based Action

We monitor our work and the environment to continually improve our programs and inform local and regional decisions.

#### Education

We have education programs for youth, teens, and adults to support an informed and empowered community.

#### Stewardship

We engage community members as partners in our work.

#### Collaborative Problem Solving

We strive to work with all stakeholders—including residents, government, agriculture, students, and businesses—to solve problems and build community.

#### Be the Change

Act locally to replicate globally. We learn from others and create and share models, techniques, and tools that others can use.

## From the Executive Director



*“After 25 years working with our community to take care of this remarkable place, we realized that we cannot accomplish our mission of ecological health in Sonoma Valley without systemic change that involves the whole community.”*

— Richard Dale, Executive Director

Watching nature in action—a steelhead swimming upstream, or a spring storm rolling in—many of us are immediately struck by its beauty. Watch closely, though, and you might start to notice something else about nature: its orchestration.

Consider a beaver colony on one of Sonoma Valley’s streams. Their dams make pools that can start a cascade of beneficial effects. Native plants and animals thrive in the added water. That water slows down and more of it seeps in, which raises shallow groundwater levels, benefiting adjacent trees, homes, and farms, and even deeper aquifers that are a key part of our water supply.

It’s all connected, and no one knows that better than those of us fortunate to live and work with nature here. This is why I’m writing to say thank you to our many friends, partners, collaborators, and supporters, who are working with Sonoma Ecology Center to help keep this place beautiful and its natural systems healthy.

This spirit of partnership culminated this year with the launch of Sustainable Sonoma, a regional initiative that sees economic, social, and environmental challenges as interconnected, calling for comprehensive, cross-sector solutions. After 25 years working with our community to take care of this remarkable place, we realized that we cannot accomplish our mission of ecological health in Sonoma Valley without systemic change that involves the whole community. As a result, community leaders in social justice, health care, environment, and business are working to align their efforts around a shared set of goals, bringing solutions to our toughest problems—housing, groundwater, balancing tourism, inequality, and so on. None of us can solve these problems alone, and we can't solve them without your support.

It has been our great privilege, for more than a quarter century, to learn about, share, and take actions to help the great living orchestra that is the foundation of our community. With your continued support, we'll keep doing this work, helping the natural world, in greater partnership with our Sonoma Valley community, for a healthier, more connected, and prosperous future for all of us. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Dale'.

Richard Dale  
Executive Director

# 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

## **Sustainable Sonoma**

The challenges facing our community can only be resolved through an unprecedented level of collaboration. Sustainable Sonoma is a platform for organizations and community stakeholders to come to the table for the benefit of Sonoma Valley. With our core partners—leaders in health care, business, and social justice—we are working together to build a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, excellent communication, and backbone support for our partners.

[www.sustainablesonoma.net](http://www.sustainablesonoma.net)

## **Team Sugarloaf**

Team Sugarloaf is a partnership of five nonprofit organizations dedicated to keeping Sugarloaf Ridge State Park open to the public, and to protecting its exceptional natural and cultural resources. Sonoma Ecology Center is the lead partner, overseeing hands-on restoration, research, and mapping, and K-12 education. Under Team Sugarloaf's management, the number and quality of visits to this stunning park have bloomed.

[www.sugarloafpark.org](http://www.sugarloafpark.org)

## **SDC Coalition**

The Sonoma Developmental Center is nearly 900 acres of public land that makes a huge contribution to our Valley's environment and economy. Its future is uncertain. The SDC Coalition is working to retain services for those with developmental disabilities, explore facility reuse, advocate for the permanent protection of its open space, and expand public access and recreation opportunities that are compatible with the protection of the property's conservation values.

[www.transformsdc.com](http://www.transformsdc.com)

## **Sonoma Garden Park Master Plan**

Sonoma Garden Park is a place that celebrates the intersection of people, food, and nature. It demonstrates ecologically sound practices in gardening and resource use, and offers an experiential hands-on garden curriculum covering sustainable agriculture, the environment and the watershed. The 2017 Master Plan describes current conditions and development needs of Sonoma Garden Park.

[www.sonomagardenpark.org](http://www.sonomagardenpark.org)

# PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

Sonoma Ecology Center (Richard Dale), Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce (Patricia Shults) and La Luz (Juan Hernandez) have come together around the shared goal of making Sonoma Valley more healthy, thriving, equitable, and sustainable.

To achieve this goal, we launched Sustainable Sonoma—an initiative focused on building relationships, trust and cooperation in our community.



# 10 Ways We make a difference in Sonoma Valley

*The priceless heritage of Sonoma Valley—its beautiful land, water, and wildlife—deserves an ongoing commitment of care from all of us. Sonoma Ecology Center is the only environmental organization devoted to the dynamic spectrum of what ecological health means for Sonoma Valley. It exists to address the specific needs of this unique place.*

*Here are some ongoing ways we work with our community to create measurable benefits in areas of land, water, climate, biodiversity, and community.*



## 1 Saving Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

When the state threatened to close Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, Sonoma Ecology Center pulled together a team of skilled nonprofits to create Team Sugarloaf, which reopened the park in 2012 and assumed responsibility for this local landmark.



## 2 Providing Science Education

Over 12,000 K-12 students have benefited from hands-on lessons in biodiversity, watershed science, environmental science, and field trips with our team of educators. Our teaching reaches nearly every 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade student in Sonoma Valley.



## 3 Creating the Valley's Best Hikes

Hundreds of acres of protected open space that Sonoma Ecology Center has helped preserve—Sonoma Overlook Trail, Montini Open Space Preserve, Jack London State Historic Park additions, and Van Hoosear Wildflower Preserve—offer some of the Valley's most rewarding hikes.



## 4 Founding Sonoma Garden Park

Our team founded and manages a 6.1 acre working farm—a local model of sustainable agriculture, an education center and a vibrant gathering place for the community, with gardening classes, harvest markets, summer camps, community garden plots, and more.



# 5 Preparing our Community for Climate Impacts

Our researchers are leaders in innovative climate response. We've helped build effective partnerships like the North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative and the Sonoma County Climate Resilience Team that are models around the country, and we led the first-ever "Roadmap for Climate Resilience in Sonoma County."



# 6 Protecting Wildlife and Their Habitat

We established the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor in 1997 to protect diverse habitats for deer, mountain lions, coyote, bobcats, and black bears, as well as threatened species such as steelhead trout and northern spotted owl. We restore salmonid habitat, replant native plant communities, manage stormwater and control erosion, and safeguard streamflow for aquatic wildlife.



# 7 Creating Nathanson Creek Preserve

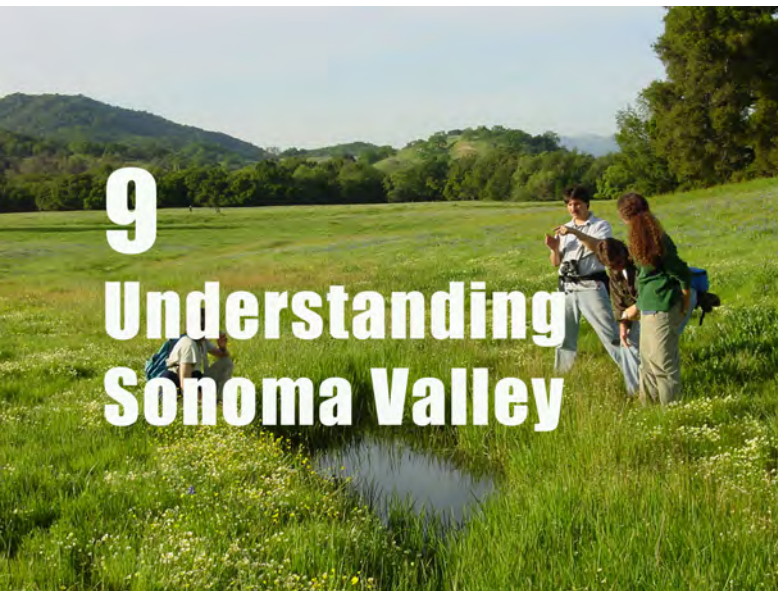
Once polluted and neglected, nearly a mile of Nathanson Creek that runs through Sonoma became a Sonoma Ecology Center project in 1994 and now features improved fish habitat, native plant demonstration gardens, a teaching landscape for nearby schools, water-wise landscaping, and a floodplain. Our regular creek clean-ups bring the community together around stewardship of our local watershed.





## 8 Planting Trees in the Springs

Our EnviroLeader program is repopulating The Springs with trees through the Trees for the Springs project. The teenage students in this program plant new trees along the Highway 12 corridor. In the process, they gain essential job and life skills by learning about civic engagement, urban forestry, native plants and horticulture.



## 9 Understanding Sonoma Valley

Our researchers and technicians have gathered and analyzed volumes of data about the health of our Valley's natural systems. With this information, we are able to inform policy and help decision makers make better choices. By looking to the past to inform current and future choices, we can take actions that help restore and sustain Sonoma Valley's ecological health.



## 10 Saving Sonoma Developmental Center

We are a core member of the SDC Coalition, working for the permanent protection of the open land on the SDC property and the essential services it provides, such as habitat and movement corridors for wildlife, clean and ample drinking water and a place of beauty for the public to enjoy.

# LOOKING FORWARD

*Looking forward, we are digging deeper than ever to create the necessary conditions for achieving ecological health in Sonoma Valley. Our success will be measured in growing support for open space and healthy water from new partners in business, agriculture, social justice, and health.*

RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIPS  
RESTORATION  
EDUCATION  
PRESERVATION



# 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

# PRESERVATION

# TO 2018...

## **PRESERVATION**

**Science + Policy =  
A greener future for  
Sonoma Valley**

Major land use policies will be decided in the coming months. We will use science, maps, and common sense to promote policies that contain growth within already-developed areas, and protect precious natural areas and open space. We will be contributing to the General Plans of the City of Sonoma and the County of Sonoma, plus the Urban Growth Boundary renewal for the City.

## **EDUCATION**

**Bilingual learning  
experiences for  
tomorrow's  
landowners, voters,  
and consumers**

With the addition of the bilingual educator, we will reach not just the 2nd, 4th, and 5th graders of Sonoma Valley, but also 6th graders with our new Climate Champions program. We will update our materials in Spanish, reach more English Language Learners in our science programs, and continue our Senderos Naturales outings series in Spanish.

## **RESTORATION**

**Caring for creeks and  
engaging our  
community**

Supported by knowledge gained by our Research Team and the expertise of our Restoration Team, we will continue to create projects that improve the health of the Sonoma Valley watershed—repopulating creek and streambanks with native plants grown at Sonoma Garden Park, improving fish habitats and migration routes, organizing creek clean-ups, and helping local governments and landowners make environmentally informed decisions.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

**Bringing people  
together around the  
future of Sonoma  
Valley**

Through Sustainable Sonoma, we are bringing local leaders together to engage the community in a goal setting process to create a shared vision and support a shared agenda for action, across the sectors of health care, economic development, social justice, housing, transportation, tourism, land use, recreation, and environmental protection. We will build on our promising partnerships, especially with La Luz, Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Health Action.

## **RESEARCH**

**Steelhead trout are  
the canary in the  
coalmine**

Our new Streamflow Stewardship Program, a partnership with Trout Unlimited, collects streamflow data and works with willing landowners to make sure there is enough water in local creeks to support steelhead and other water-dependent wildlife through the hot, dry season. The projects we're working toward, such as water storage tanks or rain capture, also create a secure water supply for landowners on wells.

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2016 SUPPORTERS

For a complete list, please visit  
[www.sonomaecologycenter.org/supporters](http://www.sonomaecologycenter.org/supporters)

**10,000+ volunteer hours**

*Your support enables our team of scientists, educators and community leaders to enhance and sustain the ecological health of this remarkable place.*

## Individuals

### *\$10,000+*

Anonymous (1)

### *\$5,000-\$9,999*

Michael and Ann Mary Hasenstab  
Carry Thacher

### *\$1,000 - \$4,999*

Anonymous (1)  
Mary Evelyn Arnold  
Mike and Mary Benziger  
Virginia Bertelsen  
Drew and Ellen Bradley  
Mark and Linda Brewer  
Alice Cornwall  
Katherine and Tom Culligan  
Donald and Jane Friend  
Mark Schlesinger and Christine Russell  
Doug Hanford  
Katharine Kunst and Katherine Fulton  
Warren Lyons  
Laurence Meyer  
Patty Moore  
David Morell and Janet Bruno  
Jamel Perkins  
Susie Schroll  
Mike and Mary Schuh  
Preston Sitterly  
Chris and Sheri Starr  
Richard and Carol Swillinger

### *\$500-\$999*

Will Bucklin  
Amos Clifford  
David and Jennifer Cooper  
Bill and Joyce Tipton Cox  
John and Sara Donnelly  
Barrie Eddy  
Ted Eliot  
David Faris  
Mark Feichtmeir  
Anina Fuller  
Gemma Gallovich and Ted Cutler  
Jared Hubbell  
Keith and Cherie Hughes  
Paul Kenny and Nancy Wever  
Gabe and Stacey Ward Luddy  
Eric and Yvonne Norrbom  
Colleen and Steve Rose  
Barbara Sachs Senn  
John and Elizabeth Sheela  
Kriya Stevens

### *\$100 - \$499*

Anonymous (2)  
Antonia Adezio  
Peter and Adrienne Alcantara  
Roberta and Carter Alexander  
Paul Amara and Yong Quig Liu  
Bob Anderson  
Stephen and Valerie Arelt  
Michael and Helen Bates

Linda Biscoe  
Kimberly and Simon Blattner  
Mike and Susan Bobbitt  
Homer and Virginia Boushey  
Mark Bramfitt  
William and Gerry Brinton  
John Broughton  
Tanya Brunner and David Landau  
Kate Bucklin  
Mary Ann Carr  
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William and Sara Clegg  
Barbara and Pat Collins  
Randy Cook  
Brett Cooper and James Fontanilla  
Bob and Gina Crozier  
Katherine and Tom Culligan  
Richard and Mary Ann Cuneo  
Laurie Decker and Chuck Abshear  
Brian and Tana Dennen  
Deanne DiPietro  
Patricia Donchin  
Marge and Todd Evans  
Mark and Jean Farmer  
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Colleen Ferguson  
Ann and Alex Frick  
Ray Gallian  
Chic and Terry Gast  
Carolyn Greene  
Rhonda Guaraglia

Phyllis and John Gurney  
Kathleen Haas  
Charesa Harper  
Ann and Alex Frick  
Ray Gallian  
Chic and Terry Gast  
Carolyn Greene  
Rhonda Guaraglia  
Phyllis and John Gurney  
Kathleen Haas  
Charesa Harper  
Jim and Amy Harwood  
Patty Hiatt  
Steven and Troy Hightower  
Darla Hillard and Rodney Jackson  
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Sandy and Alice Horowitz  
Shelly and Shannon Hutchinson  
Alice Horowitz  
Sharon and Jim Jackson  
Kimberly Johnson  
David Katz  
Tonia Lach and Kevin Scott  
Maya Land  
Terry and Karen Larson  
David and Stephanie Lawrence  
David Leland  
Carol Lieberman  
Nancy Lilly  
Karen Lombardo  
Mary Luddy  
Mary Mackay and Thomas Wilson  
Michael Maguire  
Deniece Mailloux  
Nancy Mavis  
Howard and Danna McDonough  
Monica McKey  
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Monica McKey  
Oona McKnight and Eric Moes  
Myles McMonigle  
Tom Menzies  
Ladd Miyasaki  
Bob and Carole Nichols  
Ken and Betsy Niles  
Jack and Hope Nisson  
Kate O'Conner  
Pamella Olson  
Jim Ouimette  
Domenic and Birgitta Paino  
Peter Parkinson  
Fred Perry and Barbara White  
Will and Anna Pier  
Melissa Roberts  
Diana Sanson  
Amy and Richard Schuh  
Charles Schultz  
Jean Schulz  
Catherine Sevenau  
Charles Schultz  
Jean Schulz  
Catherine Sevenau  
Dr. Shantilal Shah  
Megan and Stefanki and Paul Segre  
Jamie and Andrew Storck  
Toby Taylor  
Anne Teller  
Craig Tracy  
Katherine Twain  
Deborah Votek  
Isabel Wade  
Lorraine Wedekind  
Peter and Jane Wellington

### **Business Supporters**

All Business Documents  
Amy's Kitchen Inc.  
Anderson's Tree Service  
Clover Stornetta  
Econscious  
Four Wheel Campers  
Hanford A.R.C  
IBM

Lucky Supermarket  
Moore Recycling Associates  
Oak Hill Farm  
Oliver's Market  
PG&E Corporation Foundation  
Sonoma Leadership Systems  
Sonoma Market  
Starbucks  
Trader Joe's  
Whole Foods Market

### **Foundations and Nonprofits**

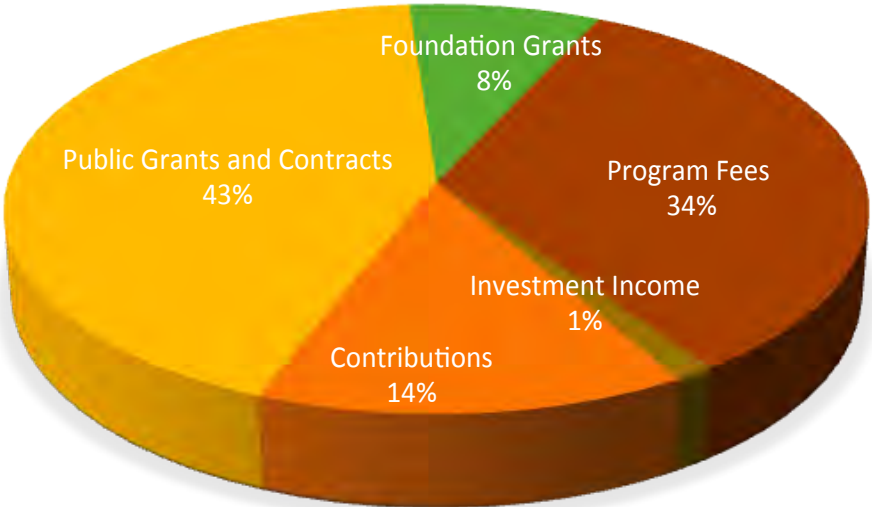
Appleby Foundation  
Community Foundation Sonoma County  
Eel River Watershed Improvement Group  
Gaia Fund  
Impact 100 Sonoma  
Kakatu Foundation  
Kimball Foundation  
Marin Community Foundation  
Rose Foundation  
Save the Redwoods League  
Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Sonoma Land Trust  
Sonoma Valley Woman's Club  
Speedway Children's Charities  
The Heck Foundation  
Resnick Family Foundation  
United Way Of The Wine Country  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Water Foundation  
Washington Square Health Foundation, Inc.

### **Public Agencies**

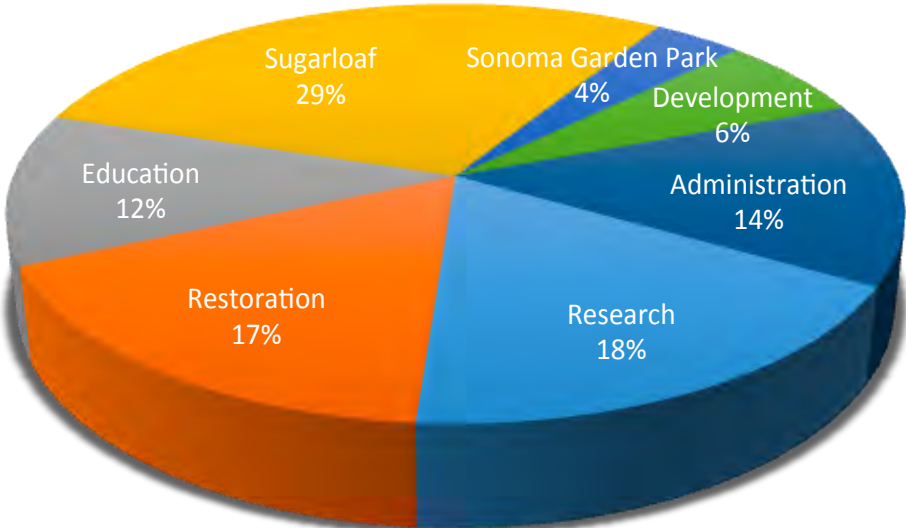
City of Sonoma  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
California Invasive Plant Council  
California Wildlife Conservation Board  
Delta Conservancy  
Department of Water Resources  
Sonoma County Advertising Fund  
Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department  
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District  
Sonoma County Regional Parks  
Sonoma County Water Agency

# 2016 REVENUE AND EXPENSES

## Revenue by Source



## Expenses by Program



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*"Only Sonoma Ecology Center knits together all the elements that this special place, this special community, needs in order to thrive."*

— Chris Starr, President



Chris Starr, PhD,  
President

Biochemist and Founder, Raptor Pharmaceutical

David Morell, PhD  
CFO

Environmental Compliance Consultant, Professor

Bernie Krause, PhD

Founder, Wild Sanctuary

Ellie Insley,  
Secretary

Landscape Architect

Bill Friedeman

Philanthropy Executive

Jan McFarland

Fairhaven Institute, Consultant

Parker Bacon

Student Adjunct Board Member

## Contact Us

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## Shipping Address

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Creekside Complex

Eldridge, CA 95431

# STAFF



*"I treasure the opportunity to deepen Sonoma Valley youths' environmental understanding, and also their sense of personal connection to their watershed and home... to teach global concepts through a local lens."*

— Holland Gistelli, Educator

Richard Dale  
Executive Director

Raymond Baltar  
Sonoma Biochar Initiative

Celina Briggs  
Human Resources

Steve Carara  
Sonoma Garden Park  
Garden Coordinator

Caitlin Cornwall  
Research Program Manager

Cody Dopheide  
Restoration Technician

Dan Foley  
Restoration Technician

Don Frances  
Communications Manager

Laurie Friedeman  
Development Officer

Holland Gistelli  
Educator

Minona Heaviland  
Planner and Grant Development  
Manager

Deb Hennessy  
Bookkeeper

Tina Howard  
Operations & Finance Manager

Kim Jones  
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Sustainable Sonoma Coordinator

Mark Newhouser  
Restoration Program Manager

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Melissa Roberts  
Watershed Science Technician

John Roney  
Park Manager, Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

Bryan Sesser  
GIS Analyst

Patrick Willis  
Restoration Technician

Alex Young  
GIS Manager

