

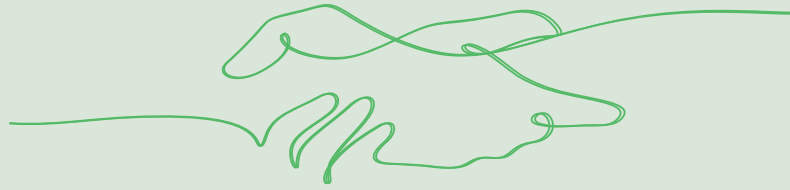


35 YEARS
SONOMA
ECOLOGY
CENTER
1990 - 2025

*How Community,
Nature & Shared
Purpose Shape
Our Future*

**COMMUNITY
IMPACTS
2025**





At the heart of our work is a simple but impactful belief: ecological health depends on people working together.

For 35 years, Sonoma Ecology Center has partnered with residents, schools, landowners, local governments, and community organizations to protect and enrich Sonoma Valley's land, water, wildlife, and quality of life.

We are proud to share these recent achievements made through collaborative stewardship of Sonoma Valley's natural resources, research, education, and bringing people together to work towards shared goals that benefit the future of Sonoma Valley.

With gratitude,

The Board and Staff of
Sonoma Ecology Center

SONOMA ECOLOGY CENTER DOES ITS WORK ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE WAPPO, COAST MIWOK, AND SOUTHERN POMO PEOPLES, WHO HAVE STEWARDED THIS LAND FOR GENERATIONS.

IN THIS REPORT

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

As the largest provider of environmental education in Sonoma Valley, cultivating the next generation of earth stewards at no cost to schools.

THE SONOMA VALLEY HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ROADMAP

Leading Sonoma Valley Collaborative to address the single most impactful issue on environment, economy, and equity.

EXPERIENCES IN NATURE FOR ALL

Breaking down barriers to open space, with an all-natural playground, free gear for outdoor exploration, and community celebrations rooted in stewardship.

WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

Guided by our researchers, engaging volunteers, residents and businesses in cleaning creeks and restoring wildlife habitat.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

1,500 STUDENTS

We teach over 1,500 students every year throughout Sonoma Valley, Petaluma and Santa Rosa.

2ND, 3RD, 4TH, 5TH, AND 6TH GRADES

Our environmental educators teach lessons that support core-curriculum science with in-class lessons and field trips for each grade level.

NO COST TO SCHOOLS

At no cost to schools, we are the largest provider of environmental education in the Sonoma Valley United School District.

OUR WATERSHED EDUCATION PROGRAM MODULES SUPPORT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND CALIFORNIA'S NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS.

2ND GRADE WILDLIFE DEFENDERS

Students learn concepts of habitat, adaptation and survival, natural communities, and life cycles through the lens of the oak woodland ecosystem. Using models and hands-on explorations, we explore specific flora and fauna that make up their local ecosystem, including what they can do as stewards of this diverse natural community, with a field trip to the Montini Open Space Preserve.

3RD GRADE FIRE FOLLOWERS

We teach students about the positive and negative effects of wildfires and prescribed burns, fire-dependent plants and animals, soil chemistry and carbon sequestration, with a field trip to the Van Hoosear Wildflower Preserve.

4TH GRADE GROWING DISCOVERY

These students learn about pollination and pollinators, the structure and function of flowers, food chains, and decomposition. We explore how our food is grown and sustainable agriculture concepts, including what they can do to foster a healthy local and backyard ecosystem, with a field trip to Sonoma Garden Park.

5TH GRADE WATER WONDERS

Using the Sonoma Creek watershed as a model, students learn about water conservation, types of pollution and prevention, the salmon life-cycle and anatomy (with a salmon dissection), and creek ecosystems. Students learn where Sonoma Valley's water comes from and goes to, and what they can do to foster a healthy local watershed and ecosystem, with a field trip to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, home to the headwaters of Sonoma Creek.

6TH GRADE CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Students explore the impacts of climate change through the elements of air, water, fire, and earth. Models, simulations, and games illustrate the connections between earth systems and how human impacts can alter these systems. Students monitor the ecosystem of Sonoma Creek watershed and discuss solutions to locally relevant issues, with a field trip to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.



THE SONOMA VALLEY HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ROADMAP



[sonomavalleycollaborative.org/
theroadmap](https://sonomavalleycollaborative.org/theroadmap)

A stable, affordable home may not seem like part of environmental work at first glance—but for our community to be sustainable, housing and habitat go hand in hand. Compact, affordable development is essential for preventing sprawl, protecting wildlife corridors, conserving water, and housing people essential to our community.

Our program, Sonoma Valley Collaborative, worked with over 30 community leaders and housing experts to create an action plan to address our community’s housing affordability crisis. Published in Fall 2025, *The Roadmap* recommends strategies to produce affordable infill homes, protect precariously housed renters, and preserve affordable infill homes.

Sonoma Valley Collaborative built credibility as a broad-based, effective coalition promoting housing affordability in the City’s and County’s Housing Elements. Now that those policies are in motion, it’s time to work towards *The Roadmap’s* actionable implementation plan with the support of Sonoma Valley Collaborative members, a wide range of sectors across Sonoma Valley working together.



THE ROADMAP ADVANCES THE 3 P'S OF HOUSING

PRESERVE

existing affordable homes

PROTECT

vulnerable residents

PRODUCE

new attainable infill homes

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR LAND, WATER, WILDLIFE, CLIMATE, AND PEOPLE

The Roadmap describes eight strategies for “infill” and “missing-middle” housing—building within already developed areas, instead of expanding into open land.



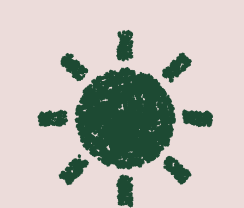
PROTECTS HABITAT & BIODIVERSITY

By focusing new housing where infrastructure already exists, we avoid encroachment on open spaces, woodlands, or wildlife corridors. Through design and location, housing and habitat can support each other.



WATER CONSERVATION

New, infill development is extremely water-efficient, reducing pressure on groundwater and surface water. It also avoids the sprawl-inducing infrastructure that can degrade watersheds and streams.



CLIMATE RESILIENCE & EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Denser, more affordable housing supports walkability and shorter commutes for people who work in Sonoma Valley, lowering our per-capita carbon footprint and improving workers' quality of life.



SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Affordable housing in already developed areas prevents the displacement of low- and middle-income families who are essential to local community life, schools, and local businesses. Walkable neighborhoods helps everyone's social life and mental health.



EXPERIENCES IN NATURE FOR ALL

**AT SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK &
SONOMA GARDEN PARK**

**STEWARDED 5,326 ACRES OF
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

With the support of donors, volunteers,
and visitors, we steward public open
spaces that our community loves.



SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK

FREE OUTDOOR GEAR LIBRARY AT SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK

Students and environmental educators from across Sonoma County gather at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park to utilize Sonoma Ecology Center's free Outdoor Gear Lending Library.

Sonoma Ecology Center is proud to manage Sugarloaf Ridge State Park without State funding—only the support of our donors, volunteers, and visitors.

STRENGTHENING TRIBAL RELATIONSHIPS

Through the collaboration between the Mishewal-Wappo tribe and Sonoma Ecology Center at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, the tribe holds gatherings and programs within the park, and Sonoma Ecology Center staff integrates tribal knowledge into mutually beneficial programming and initiatives.

EXPANDING THE CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA AT SONOMA GARDEN PARK

This year, we added to the Children's Play Area at Sonoma Garden Park. In addition to the climbing wall, slide, and swings, children can now enjoy bug springers, a 4-person see-saw and a dynamic balancing bar—all made from natural materials.



SONOMA GARDEN PARK

Sonoma Ecology Center is proud to manage Sonoma Garden Park for the City of Sonoma, with dedicated staff and volunteers.

ANNUAL HARVEST FESTIVAL

Our annual Harvest Festival at Sonoma Garden Park is many things—a day of celebration, community, and appreciation of the sustainable gardens and family friendly gathering spaces of Sonoma Garden Park, created by and for the local community.

WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY TO FOSTER THE ECOLOGICAL HEALTH OF SONOMA'S CREEKS



RESTORATION AT MORTON'S WARM SPRINGS

We planted 700 native plants and created a new floodplain habitat for the benefit of Steelhead, Chinook Salmon, and other species.



CREEK CLEAN UPS

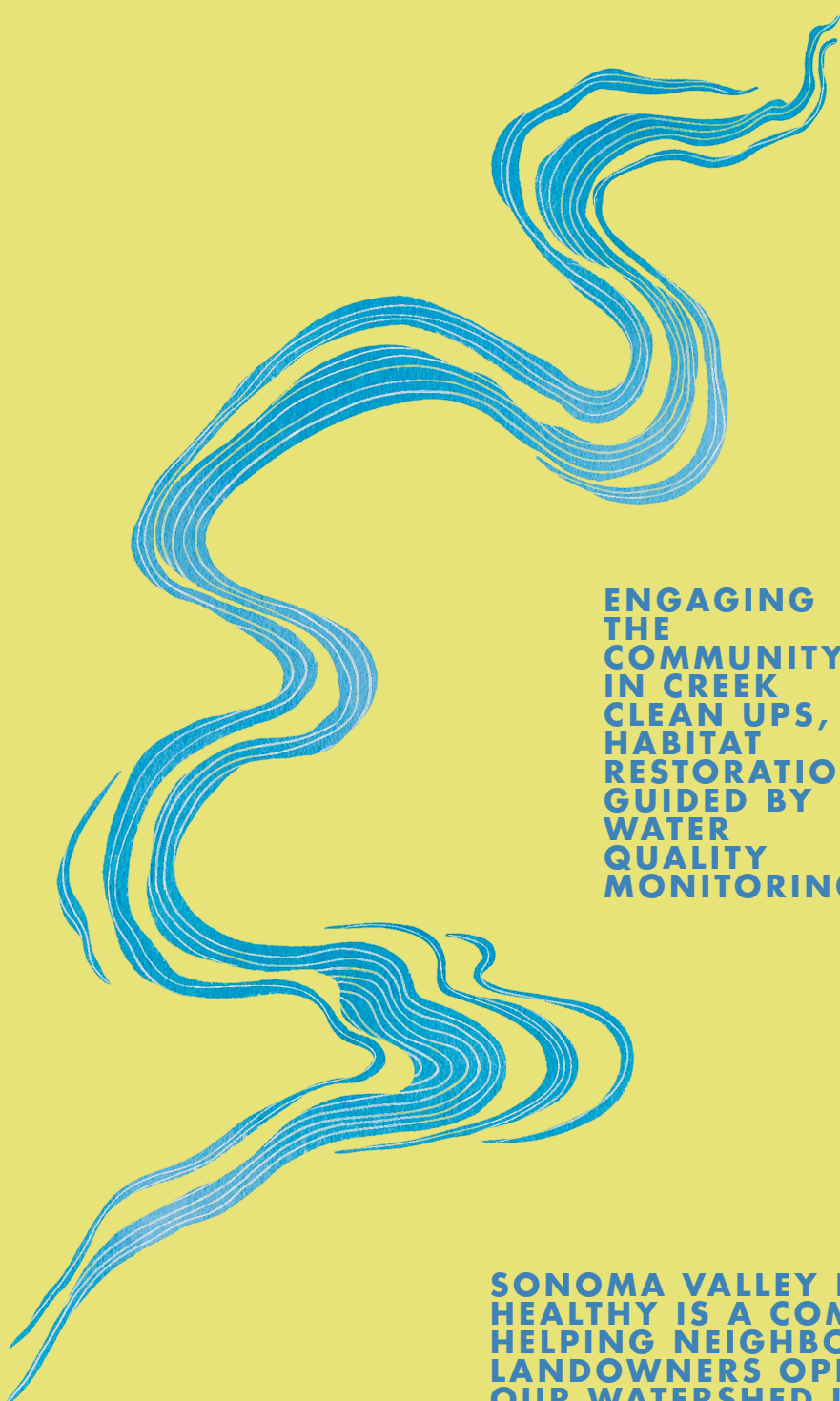
In collaboration with community partners, we removed six tons of debris from creeks that would have otherwise been washed downstream as pollution.



WATER QUALITY MONITORING

We monitor the creeks in the Sonoma and Petaluma watersheds to identify water quality problem areas to inform regional water resource management.





**ENGAGING
THE
COMMUNITY
IN CREEK
CLEAN UPS,
HABITAT
RESTORATION,
GUIDED BY
WATER
QUALITY
MONITORING**

Creeks are one of Sonoma Valley's most precious natural resources, connecting our Valley, providing habitat, and shaping the living landscapes that define our home.

We all have a role to play in keeping our creeks clean and livable for wildlife. Sonoma Ecology Center creates community creek cleanups that prevent trash from being swept away, works with landowners to restore habitat throughout the watershed, and shares water quality data with decision-makers.

Sonoma Ecology Center has a restoration vision for Upper Sonoma Creek that can only happen with landowner and community partnerships.

SONOMA VALLEY IS A WATERSHED, AND KEEPING IT HEALTHY IS A COMMUNITY EFFORT. NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS. VOLUNTEERS STEPPING UP. LANDOWNERS OPENING THEIR GATES. PROTECTING OUR WATERSHED ISN'T JUST ONE PERSON'S JOB. IT TAKES ALL OF US.

Sonoma Ecology Center
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*The Northern Lights over Sonoma
Valley in November 2025*