### Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods Annual Report 2019 - 2020

#### August 25, 2021

#### Dear fellow Stewards,

My heart is full as I present you with a two-year annual report spanning 2019-2020. In 2019, Stewards was impacted by the effects of fires in Sonoma County, from which we were evacuated, and a flood that impacted our local community of Guerneville. Despite those challenges, we realized many accomplishments including our work with the Sonoma MPA Collaborative to complete a video entitled, *Kashia Pomo Tribal Traditions in the MPA*, the beginning of our Pond Farm Artist-in-Residence program, a new tide pool touch table, and fuel reduction work with volunteers and the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps. In concert with so many others, Stewards faced more unexpected and prolonged challenges in 2020, beginning with closed access to all of our parks due to the pandemic, followed by the sweep of the Walbridge wildfire in August, which burned through over 5,000 acres of Austin Creek State Recreation Area and a portion of Armstrong Redwood State Natural Reserve. These back-to-back developments created financial uncertainty for Stewards, impairing our usual income stream from fundraising events, gate revenues and retail sales. In recent months, with concerted effort, including a major commitment to fiscal responsibility, we have begun a strong recovery from these setbacks. Our community of supporters, local businesses, dedicated staff and board have rallied with us to face these challenges and remind us of what we have not lost.

As we continue to recover from 2020, staff and board are building on our current strategic plan to develop specific priorities for the future. The goals that Stewards is setting out to accomplish in the next three to five years include not only fire recovery and preservation of our natural surroundings, but a new vision for the experiences of our visitors and community. 'Impact' has taken on new meaning for us this year, as we address recovery from impacts of fire damage and park closures, in order to realize the impacts we seek in delivering to the communities we serve.

**Our Mission is to Promote, Restore and Protect Your State Parks** 

1985 to 2020 ~ Response & Resiliency

We look forward to building on the legacy of Stewards' long-serving Executive Director who will be retiring at the end of 2021. We share immense gratitude for her wise leadership and the strength she has brought to the Stewards organization, our finances, and our all-important relationship with California State Parks. ~Hollis Bewley, Board President

Facility Management and Operations will be a primary focus in the near future. Assessment of the wildfire damage, managing the recovery and rebuilding the infrastructure of Armstrong Redwoods SNR and Austin Creek SRA is a significant task we are working on with our State Parks partners. This includes rehabilitating trails, fencing, bridges and campground facilities.

Future projects include upgrades to the Visitor Center facilities in both Jenner and at Armstrong Redwoods and incorporating bilingual signage throughout the Parks we hold in stewardship. We will focus on accessibility, connecting with the communities we serve and recognizing the indigenous lands on which we sit. These all open up opportunities for Stewards to serve the community in unique and creative ways, incorporating principles of climate resilience and actions to internalize diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Volunteers are the backbone of Stewards. A small staff of highly experienced and dedicated people coordinate the work of hundreds of volunteers who provide school and community-based education, docent-led interpretation of the Redwood Forest, Intertidal, and Marine ecosystems. 2020 and 2021 created an unplanned break in our offerings of environmental education programs that has provided opportunities to update and renew our commitment to our curricula and youth programs. One partnership we are particularly excited about is our continued work with the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps (SCYEC). With Stewards serving as the in-park partner managing operations and interpretive programs related to the ecology and natural resources specific to our parks, and SCYEC as the in-community partner, we are connecting youth in need, not only to their parks, but to services that help build bridges to their futures.

In the summer of 2020, Stewards' board and staff made a strong commitment to address Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. A dedicated committee has come together to help us navigate a better future, incorporating DEI across all aspects of our work in the coming years.

As I leave my leadership role with Stewards at the end of 2021, I will always remember how honored I have been to be a part of all that we have accomplished together in the past 27 years and blessed by all the staff and volunteers that I have been fortunate to work with and now consider friends. You have nurtured my heart and soul, for which I will always be grateful.

With appreciation,

Michele Juna

## Helping our Forests Recover and Regenerate!

# From the Forest

"Our study of our relationship to the natural systems around us was not just an education in California – it extended to the interconnected bonds of a living planet and its more-than-human inhabitants." ~Erika Lutz - California Naturalist Course 2019

# to the Sea

"Thank you so much for another beautiful day at our gorgeous Sonoma coast. What it did for the children was phenomenal but the impact it had on the parents was powerful. You educate at all levels!! Please thank all the docents for their time and knowledge, this was the highlight of the year. " ~Melissa Rodda, Teacher at Madone Elementary School

## Serving Youth in our Parks

#### 2019

All Armstrong Redwoods/Austin Creek Reservations Docent-led Programs

All Marine Science/Tidepool Reservations

Docent -led Programs

Watershed Programs

Summer Day Camp/Overnight Programs

Daycamp 2019 ~ Austin Creek SRA Hike with Kat Rawhouser

Climate Science

Steward Ship School Visits

#### 2020 - Scheduled programs after March 2020 were cancelled due to Covid-19

5,616	All Armstrong Redwoods	193
2,310	Armstrong Progams cancelled	2,564
2,758	Steward Ship School Visit	100
931	Steward Ship Visit cancelled	75
397	Marine Science/Tidepool cancell	<mark>ed</mark> 869
24	Watershed Program	5
90	Watershed Programs cancelled	12
339	Climate Science - cancelled	210



Teen Camp Participants in the Willow Creek watershed

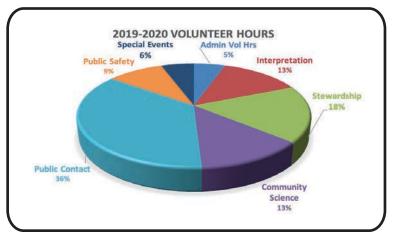
Watershed Education at Pomo

2019-2020 Volunteer hours for Interpretation - 2,095

### 2019-2020 Volunteer Hours Reported - 15,650

	Total	2019	2020
Admin Vol Hrs	819	458	362
Interpretation	2,095	1,330	765
Stewardship	2,767	1,400	1,367
Community Science	2,003	1,345	659
Public Contact	5,655	4,570	1,085
Public Safety	1,456	1,019	437
Special Events	854	522	332
Total	15,650	10,643	5,007

\* These hours reflect only those reported through Better Impacts, the State Parks portal for reporting volunteer hours.



Volunteer participation dropped significantly from 2019 to 2020 due to Covid-19, the Walbridge wildfire and the subsequent closure of Armstrong Redwoods SNR and Austin Creek SRA. Despite these setbacks, volunteers stepped up significantly to assist in fire recovery efforts at Armstrong Redwoods and Austin Creek. Environmental education programs with youth stopped as of March 2020 along with most programs where volunteers interacted with the public. During this time, Stewards maintained ongoing remote communication and engagement with volunteers.



Volunteers are the Heart and Soul of our work!

# Operating Your Parks

Park visitation	2019	2020
Armstrong Redwoods	702,487	362,426
Austin Creek	219,565	118,054
Camping at Austin Creek	8,269	3,146

Visitation at Armstrong Redwoods SNR decreased from 2019 to 2020 because of the devastating Walbridge wildfire that swept through both parks and closed them after August 17, 2020.

A critical initiative for Stewards in partnership with State Parks has been focusing on fuel reduction in order to protect our parklands from the devastation that can be caused by wildland fires. We believe our efforts did help prevent greater damage during the Walbridge fire. By the time the fire reached the forest floor of Armstrong Redwoods, it burned low and slow, and no buildings were lost in that park.

Working together in partnership, Stewards and State Parks tackled the huge job of recovering from the Walbridge Fire. Responsibilities were delineated and each entity reported to one another regularly on their progress, gradually checking off tasks on the punchlist.

#### State Parks - 2020

- Safety precautions were taken and access to fire areas limited until it was deemed safe.
- Outside agencies were involved with immediate fire cleanup.
- Trees were assessed for fire damage and possible removal.
- Infrastructure damage was documented and utilities were assessed.

#### Stewards - 2020

- Loss of tools and supplies were reported to our insurance company and replaced.
- Stewards mobilized and trained volunteers for bucking trees and firewood processing.
- Hundreds of trees lost due to the fire began being processed into firewood by staff and volunteers.
- Stewards played a key role in keeping the community updated on fire recovery efforts.

e Recovery and Resiliency

## Collaborating Environmental Partnerships

Stewards is honored to be an active participant in the efforts of these agencies and nonprofit organizations working with us to promote, restore and protect the natural and cultural resources in our State Parks.



Stewards is a founding member of the Sonoma MPA Collaborative, comprised of 30 agencies including scientific institutions, environmental NGOs, tribal governments, and agencies committed to raising awareness of Marine Protected Areas amongst coastal residents and visitors. We have produced 4 videos that highlight different aspects of working, playing, fishing and Kashia tribal traditions in the Sonoma Coast MPAs.



The goal of the Sonoma Environmental Education Collaborative (SEEC) is to increase environmental literacy in Sonoma County. SEEC identifies and addresses regional needs for environmental education, identifies gaps in existing resources and considers how existing resources can be leveraged to achieve common goals.



In 2007, Stewards launched the Pinniped Monitoring Program in partnership with the Sonoma Water . Citizen Scientists collect and provide data used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to ensure that pinnipeds are safeguarded under the Marine Mammal Protection Act at the mouth of the Russian River.



Now that the National Marine Sanctuary System has been expanded into Sonoma Coast waters, Stewards is working closely with the Greater Farallones and Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuaries to expand outreach and collaborate on programs and events that serve the general public and schools, including Beach Watch.



A partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, the California Coastal National Monument and the Seabird Protection Network has supported Stewards in creating a new Sonoma County Chapter of the Seabird Protection Network including Sea Ranch as well as three monitoring locations on the Sonoma Coast. Community Scientists collect data during the breeding and non-breeding seasons and report disturbances to seabirds to the Seabird Protection Network.

## Pond Farm Pottery The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain

#### **Recent Accomplishments**

- In 2019-2020, we welcomed our first artists-in-residence. Due to the Walbridge Fire, some artists had to be cancelled or postponed.
- Docent tours of Pond Farm took place in 2019 but were cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19 and the Walbridge Fire.
- Conducted an art program with a home school group at Pond Farm with Pond Farmer Brian Martens.
- Funding was donated to started the Julia Terr Pond Farm Fellowship to fund BIPOC artists to attend the artist-in-residence program at no cost, with an additional stipend to cover related supplies and expenses.
- Supported National Landmark status for Pond Farm Historic District.
- Supported Annual Sunset Dinner, a benefit for Pond Farm in 2019. Cancelled due to Covid-19 in 2020.

#### PARTNERSHIPS



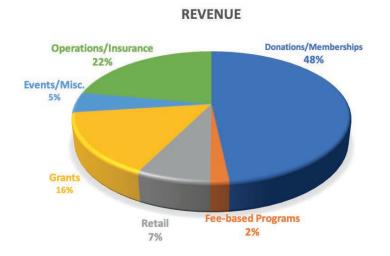


Kick Wheel Demonstration with Brian Martens



Fiber Artist in Residence - Mary Grisey

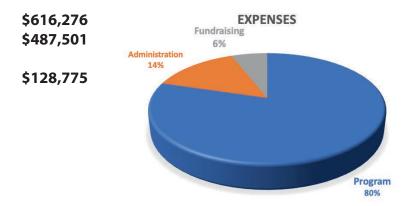
# Our Finances - Year-end 2020



Revenue

Expenses

Net



#### Assets

Cash	\$352,282
Grants Receivable	\$222
Other Assets	\$13,590
Inventory	\$108,557

**Total Assets** 

\$474,651

#### **Liabilities & Fund Balances**

Liabilities	\$143,597
Unrestricted Funds	\$169,055
Board Designated	\$115,681
Temporarily Restricted	\$27,687
Permanently Restricted	\$18,631

#### Total Liabilities & Funds \$474,651

With fiscal responsibility a strong focus in 2020, Stewards applied for, and received emergency funding, including recovery grants and Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans. We also implemented many cost saving measures including staff furloughs.

## **Events**

Family Day in Your State Park Sunset Dinner Old Grove Festival Volunteer Celebration

The above noted events all took place in 2019, however due to Covid-19, all events were cancelled in 2020. Stewards has much to contemplate with regards to future special events and when they should take place considering the threat of wildfires, bird nesting seasons and the implications of holding events during a pandemic.

As we continue to plan for events that provide memorable experiences for park visitors, we must also consider the safety of participants and the environment. For this reason some events may take place at different times of the year in the future.

> "Family Day offers wonderful educational opportunities at Armstrong Redwoods that inspires future stewards of our parks" ~Attendee



"The ambiance of the Old Grove Festival is spectacular, a redwood cathedral that provides lovely acoustics." ~Attendee



## With Gratitude to our 2019 and 2020 Donors

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#### **\$21,500** Marcy and Jim Beck

#### \$15,000 to \$17,500

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