

DIGGING INTO

what matters

ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018



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ON THE COVER: A TEEN JUMPS INTO THE RUSSIAN RIVER DURING LANDPATHS' TEEN RIVER TREK, JULY 2018. PHOTO BY JOHN BURGESS.

INSET COVER PHOTO OF BOY AND MAN DOING WOODWORK BY JOHN BURGESS.

PHOTO ON THIS PAGE BY HUY PHAM



We are delighted to release into the world, *Digging into What Matters*, LandPaths' first ever Annual Report.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this snapshot of our work for the 2017–2018 fiscal year. Your support is what allows us to connect the people of Sonoma County with nature and each other.

In 2017, the North Bay fires were an unwelcome catalyst for LandPaths to take immediate action, including a pop-up camp and community relief center, and coastal Outings to fresher air. In the wake of those responses, we took time to reflect on our work, mission, community, and an environment increasingly impacted by climate change. Amidst the emotional, tough, and uphill recovery we found greater clarity and purpose.

In this report you will see the results of our effort to devote time and energy to what truly matters—to make our work more powerful and impactful. In 2017 we invested in the strengths—informed by our unique, proven combination of conservation and people—that truly matter to our mission and community: youth, inclusive conservation, and uniting people through and with the land.

These strengths became the basis for three major initiatives:

Rooting Youth in Nature — Twenty years ago, we launched In Our Own Backyard, a groundbreaking approach to environmental education, and one of the first in Sonoma County to feature multiple visits to one site. Youth adopt a property, spending four full days over the year, discovering, learning and caring for nature. Over the last two decades, the number of youth we connect with has increased by a factor of 10.

Branching out Conservation for Everyone — In 2005, we committed to



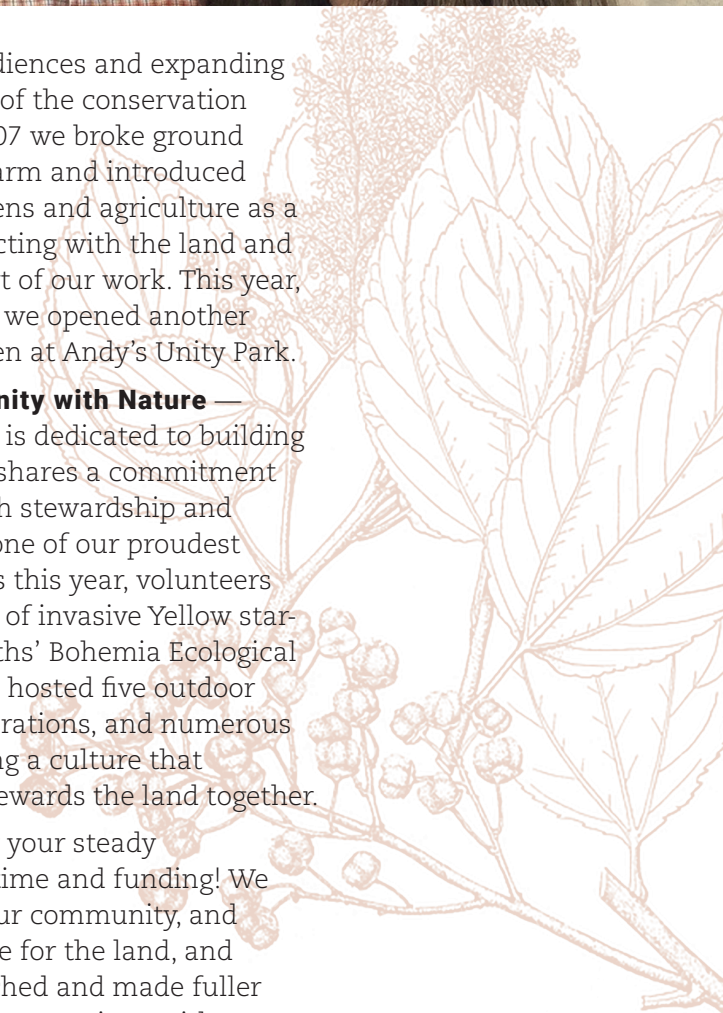
reaching new audiences and expanding the look and feel of the conservation movement. In 2007 we broke ground to create Bayer Farm and introduced community gardens and agriculture as a means for connecting with the land and each other as part of our work. This year, by local demand, we opened another community garden at Andy's Unity Park.

Growing Community with Nature — Today, LandPaths is dedicated to building community that shares a commitment to nature, through stewardship and collective joy. In one of our proudest accomplishments this year, volunteers cleared 550 acres of invasive Yellow starthistle at LandPaths' Bohemia Ecological Preserve! We also hosted five outdoor community celebrations, and numerous potlucks, affirming a culture that celebrates and stewards the land together.

We thank you for your steady contributions of time and funding! We are grateful for our community, and our collective care for the land, and for the lives enriched and made fuller through positive connections with each other and nature. This is truly the time to dig deeply into what matters.

Craig Anderson, Executive Director

Beth Wyatt, Board President



first time **experiences**


First time...



...leads to an opportunity to dig into what matters.

PHOTO CREDITS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
HUY PHAM, JOHN BURGESS, LANDPATHS, HUY PHAM

digging into jessica's story



When Jessica, 14, arrived for the opening day of LandPaths' Russian River Trek in July, she was worried. She didn't know anyone. Her fears quickly fell away during the first day's paddle. "It was peaceful and stress-relieving," says Jessica, a 9th grader at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa. "You are in nature, on the water, with nice people. They were helpful and accepted me for who I am."

She also discovered a new love for cooking healthy food outdoors. "I wasn't a big fan of vegetables before, but I enjoyed cutting them and seeing people enjoying the food," she says. Since then, she's tried to make more "colorful lunches" and eat a healthier diet, especially as diabetes runs in the family.

Her summer looked very different from the one previous: "My summer before was

boring," she recalls. "I didn't really do anything and spent most of my time at home, by myself. I definitely enjoyed this summer way more. I don't like the heat much. But I love nature. It was so great to escape the internet. It's good for you, being outside."

She also volunteered at Owl Camp, helping the younger kids feel welcome and comfortable, while building her own confidence and being a good role model. She'd love to volunteer again in 2019, and plans to recruit friends to join her!

"I like being with little kids and helping them to look at nature in a different way," Jessica says. "Not as something scary, but as something beautiful."

"I love nature...
It's good for you,
being outside."

— Jessica



rooting **youth** in nature

“This is the best day of my life!”

— **Edwin Eagle, Owl Camper**



The goal of our youth initiative is simply to engage more youth in outdoor experiences that tap into the opportunities for wonder, learning, and connection offered by nature. In 2017–2018, we continued to build on our hallmark elementary school program with a pop-up camp to support families during wildfire-impacted school closures, expand our ever-popular Owl Camp, and increase opportunities for older youth through established programs like Inspired Forward and two new teen camps.

gained comfort in the outdoors, got to know their nearby “adopted” site through four daylong themed field trips, learned with hands-on science curriculum based on Next Generation Science Standards, and made seasonal observations. On the final trip, they completed a stewardship project. Each school received a full scholarship and more than 50 percent of participating schools have a majority of students that qualify for free and reduced lunch.

“One day with IOOBY is worth 30 in the classroom!”

— **Cynthia Spigarelli, 3rd grade teacher, Luther Burbank Elementary School**

INSPIRED FORWARD

LandPaths combines the need for positive, life-expanding experiences with the opportunities presented by the land for one of our most vulnerable populations — teens. This year, we partnered with seven different youth groups, adding outdoor adventure, positive leadership-building, and ecological learning to 112 teens’ education and social development.

OUT OF SCHOOL

iRead OUTSIDE

LandPaths brings together a love of the outdoors with the magic of nature-themed children’s books to support Sonoma County’s iRead Outside initiative. This year, we distributed 450 books to children five and younger and their families, paired weekly summer read-alouds and outdoor exploration to promote literacy, family bonding, and a love of nature.

IN SCHOOL

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD (IOOBY)

Our groundbreaking approach to environmental education transforms local parks and open spaces into outdoor classrooms. This year, LandPaths partnered with 14 schools, reaching 696 elementary school students. Students

"I feel really good and accomplished a lot of things. We learned how to communicate with each other, and what's outside of our cities because we don't see that a lot. It's better to have nature around us."

— Jose Gutierrez, 8th Grade,
Inspired Forward participant

SUMMER CAMPS

Now in its tenth year, the word has clearly gotten out about Owl Camp. Hosted at a historic ranch outside of Santa Rosa with a creek, pond, barn, garden, and miles of trails, this year saw 170 campers spend full days exploring the land through open-ended play, games, and skill-building crafts. Owl Camp was the blueprint for our pop-up camps for students impacted by school closures during the North Bay Fires in October 2017.

LandPaths also launched Russian River Trek, a new camp for teens aged 12 to 14, to provide a close-to-home skill-building adventure. Sixteen enthusiastic campers

kayaked, swam, and learned about the Russian River watershed ecology. Five of these youth had never been in a boat before! In addition to boat skills, they cooked together, shared healthy meals, and discovered the simple joy of river time with peers.

Backcountry Basics, for teens aged 13 and up, was another new addition. Backcountry Basics introduces youth to the wild corners of the county and builds backpacking skills: how to pack your pack, safety skills, and nutrition on the trail. As with our other teen programs, LandPaths taps into teens' desire for adventure and pushing limits in a safe manner while promoting peer-to-peer camaraderie.

our year by the NUMBERS

20,881
TOTAL HOURS SPENT
OUTSIDE BY YOUTH

1,109
YOUTH SERVED
BY LANDPATHS
PROGRAMS
AND CAMPS

0 to 21
AGE RANGE OF
YOUTH REACHED



branching out **conservation** for everyone



LandPaths expands the percentage of people in Sonoma County who benefit from healthy land, understand the value of nature, and cultivate a sense of reciprocity with our environment. In 2017–2018, we continued to expand our own understanding of conservation, welcoming new perspectives and a larger community that sees themselves as part of the conservation movement.

This year we reached deeper into communities that face multiple barriers to connecting with nature.

OUTINGS

LandPaths provides free public outings that are inclusive by design and instill an appreciation of nature's beauty, bounty, and delight as they deepen a sense of



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN BURGESS

“I will remember this day forever!” -

— **Suguey Hernandez,**
Vamos Afuera participant

“This hike is exactly what I needed after such a turbulent week. Thank you LandPaths for the all the work that you do to bring people to places like this; it really soothes the soul.”

— **Outings participant**

shared community. This year, a team of staff and volunteer docents led 91 outings. Nearly 50 percent of participants discovered new-to-them parts of the local landscape because of LandPaths. Vamos Afuera, a part of our Outings offerings, welcomed 358 native Spanish-speakers to local parks, waterways, and open spaces.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

In March 2018, we celebrated 10 years as stewards of Bayer Farm with the formal opening of Bayer Neighborhood Park and Garden in Santa Rosa’s Roseland neighborhood. At near the same moment, LandPaths, with the Moorland community, broke ground to create a second garden, Andy’s Unity Park Community Garden, also in southwest Santa Rosa. LandPaths now manages both gardens, with eighty-eight families tending allotments. With these gardeners at the center, volunteers powered 109 activity-days driven by the community’s needs. Both gardens served Summer Free Lunch (6,238 lunches served in partnership with the Redwood Empire Food Bank), offered a nature-based enrichment activity each day of the week, and celebrated the long days of summer in community with Friday potlucks. These gardens have become gathering places for the surrounding neighborhoods to grow food and friendships. On at least one volunteer workday, LandPaths staff acted as interpreters so that neighbors could meet and communicate for the first time.



DIGGING INTO Martha’s Story

Martha Almeida was a star volunteer with the 2018 Free Summer Lunch Program at Andy’s Unity Park Community Garden. Volunteers delivered 1,504 lunches, courtesy of Redwood Empire Food Bank, to an average of 34 children a day. Martha set up canopies, assembled and distributed food distribution boxes on Fridays for families, and worked tirelessly to ensure that youth and families in her neighborhood had access to healthy, fresh food. She always brought along her young son as well as her foster son, to teach them the importance of collaboration. Born in Colombia and raised in Venezuela, Martha moved to Sonoma County over a decade ago. She is studying to be a Promotora de Salud at the Center for Well-Being. Martha says she volunteers with LandPaths because she believes in the importance of her community’s access to natural spaces and good food.

our year by the NUMBERS

200

OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES

1,260

NEW PARTICIPANTS

49

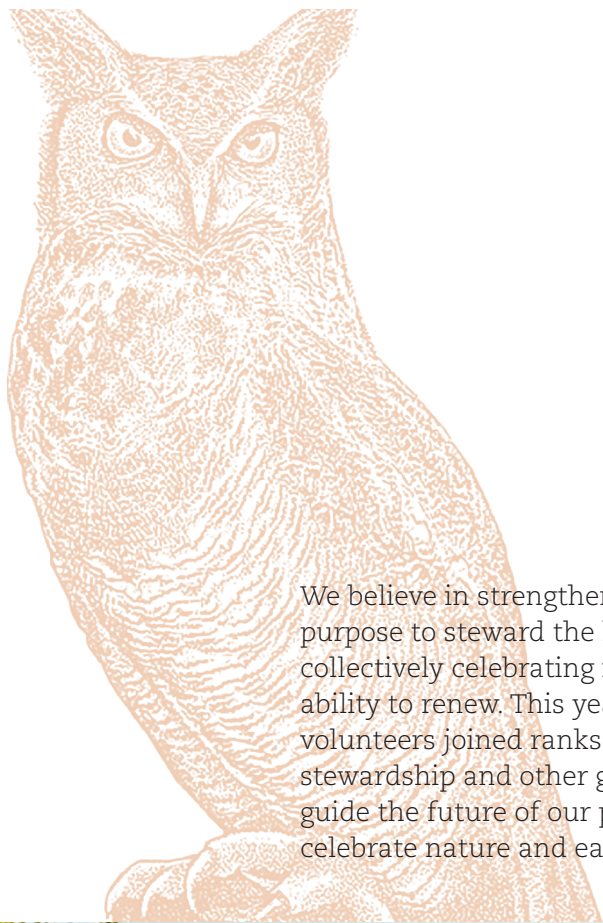
NATURAL PRESERVES AND OPEN SPACES VISITED IN SONOMA COUNTY

358

PARTICIPANTS FIRST LANGUAGE IS SPANISH

27

PARTICIPANTS WITH FIRST LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH OR SPANISH



growing **community** with nature

We believe in strengthening our shared purpose to steward the land while collectively celebrating its beauty and ability to renew. This year, LandPaths' volunteers joined ranks to accomplish stewardship and other goals, help guide the future of our preserves, and celebrate nature and each other.

STEWARDSHIP

In 2017–2018 volunteer and staff-powered workdays—all 124 of them—gave back to the land in a way that improved the health and resiliency of local ecosystems. At our five local preserves, and four preserved partner properties, LandPaths volunteers and staff reduced fire fuel loads by



PHOTO CREDIT: HUY PHAM

"This was a very unique and wonderful trip for me. I do hike quite often with groups and in beautiful places, but this trip was different. The connection with people and nature was deeper and more real than what I usually experience."

— **Bohemia to the Sea trek participant**



removing non-native and invasive species like Douglas Fir, French broom, and Yellow Thistle, which outcompete native flora. We also completed a half-million dollar ranch road project, which will prevent sediment from entering Dry Creek.

PRESERVE NEIGHBORS AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Friends of the Grove (FOG) continued to meet regularly, nearly two decades after working with LandPaths to protect the original Grove of Old Trees. Working under the leadership of a tireless FOG volunteer, LandPaths partnered with the group and Save the Redwoods League to add an additional 15 protected acres to the Grove, expanding the total acreage to 48. The surrounding neighborhood continued their annual workday and potluck in celebration of community with nature, even in the aftermath of the wildfires.

Volunteer docents led 28 outings at Bohemia Ecological Preserve, sharing their passion for the land every step of the way. From nature journaling to yoga, and outings for seniors, docents expanded LandPaths' reach, continuing the local tradition of weaving Bohemia into the fabric of West County life. A volunteer-run Bohemia Advisory Team (BAT) guided a concept plan, wrestling over important decisions about trails, horses, bikes, campfires, huts, camping, parking, and safety.

TREKSONOMA

Inspired by the ancient art of walking and great opportunities

to walk and explore around the world, TrekSonoma led four treks in 2017–2018, including a Memorial Day Family Trek, Bohemia to the Sea, a new route on Sonoma Mountain, and a new "Stone Soup" style trek where participants cooked collectively. LandPaths also hosted Sam Demas, a national researcher and international expert on trekking and Hut-to-Hut systems. Sam met with community leaders and trek participants over a series of hikes, talks, and paddles; he concluded that, yes, indeed, Sonoma County has the right combination of elements needed to support a unique trek system.

JOYFUL GATHERINGS

Designed to weave together connections between people and nature by marking special events, LandPaths hosted multiple celebrations this year: Bayer Neighborhood Park and Gardens official opening, Spring Equinox, Day of the Child, Fall Harvest, Volunteer and Donor Thank You Party, and the 17th Annual Holiday Gathering. Participants enjoyed food, music, nature, craft-making, and each other, all outdoors. During and after the North Bay fires, LandPaths' tradition of community meals transformed into "Meal and Heals" where the community came together at Bayer Farm, kept people fed with healthy food for two weeks, and provided an important logistical hub for information along with mental health resources.

our year by the NUMBERS

550

ACRES OF INVASIVE
YELLOW STAR
THISTLE CLEARED
FROM BOHEMIA
ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE

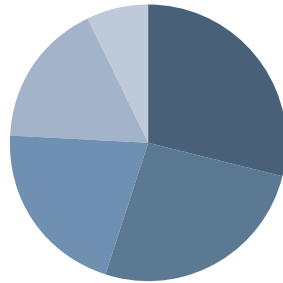
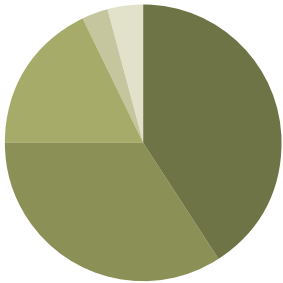
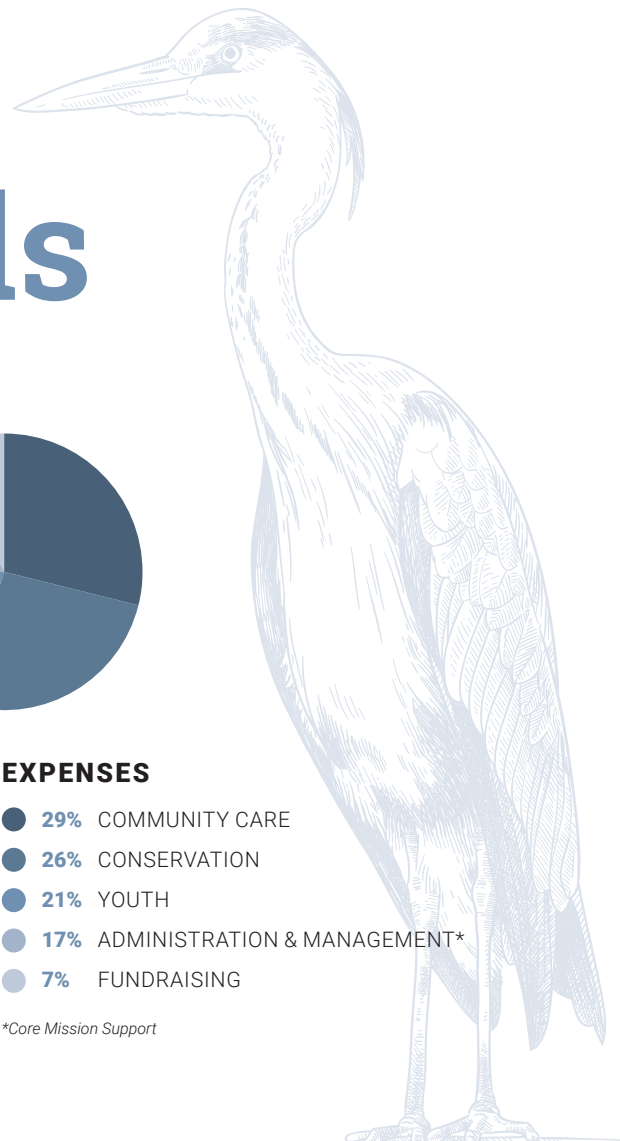
4,724

HOURS CONTRIBUTED
BY STEWARDSHIP
VOLUNTEERS

34

COLLECTIVE MEALS
SHARED OUTSIDE

financials



REVENUE

41%	DONATIONS	\$869,300
34%	GRANTS	\$704,000
18%	CONTRACTS	\$375,000
3%	PROGRAM FEES	\$62,000
4%	OTHER	\$76,000
		\$2,086,300

EXPENSES

29%	COMMUNITY CARE
26%	CONSERVATION
21%	YOUTH
17%	ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT*
7%	FUNDRAISING

*Core Mission Support



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Beth Wyatt, *President*
Naomi Ramsden, *Secretary*
Tim Choate, *Treasurer*
Michael Ellis
Craig Hazel
Teresa Lopez
Richard Power
Susan Shaw
Steven Woodside

STAFF

Craig Anderson, *Executive Director*
Lee Hackeling, *Programs Director*
Sheridan Rapolla, *Finance and Administration Director*
Mary Miyano, *Administration Specialist*
Pam Davis, *Development Lead*
Jessica Jones, *Database and IT Lead*
Leilani Clark, *Communications Lead*
Jamie Nakama, *Youth Programs Manager*
Bree Benton Arthur, *In Our Own Backyard Lead*
Jessica Holloway, *Inspired Forward and Camps Lead*
Kelly Hidalgo, *Field Specialist*
Lilah Gliksohn, *Field Specialist*
Omar Gallardo, *New Audiences Manager and Outings Lead*
Guadalupe Casco, *Bilingual Field Specialist*
Jesica Rodriguez, *Field Specialist*
Jonathan Bravo, *Bilingual Garden Specialist*
Emmett Hopkins, *Bilingual Community Care Manager*
Erin Mullen, *Preserve Stewardship Lead*
Nicolas Whitaker, *Bilingual Stewardship Specialist*
Kyle Gift, *Facilities and Stewardship Specialist*



PHOTO CREDIT: GARY HUNDT

how to **participate**

MISSION

Fostering a love of the land
in Sonoma County since 1996

GET INVOLVED

- ⇒ Join us on an outing
- ⇒ Visit one of our community gardens or preserves
- ⇒ Sign up for a camp or trek
- ⇒ Volunteer
- ⇒ Donate

*Thank you to our generous donors and volunteers!
We couldn't do this work without you!*

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@LandPaths



“Our job is just taking people there. Nature does the rest.”

— **Guadalupe Casco,**
Bilingual Field Specialist





PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN BURGESS

 
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