

Strategic Branding Final Project

Develop a Branding Strategy for the FSNP

Andrea Chichester, Lana Clifford, and Cliff Cochran

Section 1 – Field Stations and Nature Preserves Snapshot and Brand Review (Lana Clifford)

The Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves offer a specific on-site learning experience that is exclusive to a location such as this. They have hands on education for every focus at Sonoma State. Whether it is engineering, biology, environmental sciences or even geology the preserves offer a one of kind learning and discovery journey, that can be used to physically apply what they have learned in a classroom and put it to real time experience.

At the preserves, students and faculty conduct experiments and projects year round. Classes and individual groups are able to come out and use the facilities to gain knowledge about different kinds of habitats and grasslands. They can also study the specific water sheds, plant life, and biological make-ups of the grounds.

On the more technical side, the preserves also have a weather station and solar panels, which are used to meet off-grid electrical needs. These mechanisms and on-site buildings require maintenance and renovation when newer technologies come out. The field station always chooses students to work on these projects first, both technical and environmental, to offer the best real life experience that can only be gained out in the field.

The preserves have many strong suits. They offer a wide variety of services to a wide variety of majors at the university. Its main purpose is to allow students to learn in a class room and then take what they have learned and apply that in an actual field work environment. The down side to the program is they don't get enough hype. No one knows who they are or what

they offer, so spreading the word is crucial. We need to let students and educators know this is a place to get the experience needed to make that next step in their career. This incredible resource is just at their fingertips and cannot be surpassed anywhere else in the Bay Area.

The preserves have a small brand image, being associated mostly with SSU and with a few on-campus events, like “Bug-a-Palooza”, and having a small link on the biology page, which isn’t enough. We need to make them a county-wide known entity, where people will associate education and field experience. The preserves need to be a place where the classroom meets the start of your career.

Our project intends to make this happen, and to run the preserves more like a business. When the name is said, people need to have a feeling of respect and awe for the great many things they offer. The goal is to get people out there based on the facts, but have them leave thinking “what an amazing place.” So when they tell their friends, facts come out of their mouths, but the words are filled with excitement and emotion about the involvement they had their.

Section 2 - Competitive Review

There are no key competitors for the Sonoma State Field Stations and Nature Preserves. The overall assessment is the preserves do not have any competitors in the North Bay Area.

Section 3 – Target Market Analysis (Lana Clifford)

Fortunately for our group and the preserves, they have a large demographic they can cater to. We want to reach out to all ages. The preserves have something for everyone after all. It’s a great place for kids to come and experience, students to come and learn, and people to gain

knowledge of their local surrounding. This brings me to location, in our branding campaign we would like to keep it local for the promotion segment of it. Although we do plan on having the SSU do a little revamping of the web site which will allow proper exposure from all over the country.

It makes sense in our initial push to market towards like-minded people, people who are nature enthusiasts and share the same love for education, science and the outdoors. This is a large group given that we live in Sonoma County and are a college town. We have devised a survey that we plan to implement that will give us a more narrow scope of the things people would like to see more of at the events people would like to attend and what types of events people might even pay money for. We have included an age grouping as well.

We hope this will give us a better understanding of what makes people decide to come to the preserves and what they find valuable. What they would attend and what they find worthy of spending their time and money on. Our ultimate goal is to create a criterion that is focused with statistical information to back it up.

Survey for the Preserve

The premise for these classes should be that they are taught by students in the senior year level for real time experience they can put on the resume, or taught by MBA students working on a degree. This would lower the cost the preserves would have to pay them to teach. In some circumstances a real teacher could be brought in. Also this needs to be formatted with boxes at the end to check yes or no and a place here they can answer the open ended question.

Types of workshops or instructional classes that could be offered at the site

- 1) Wetland restoration/riparian restoration

- 2) Learning about watersheds in the Sonoma county and Copland Creek area
- 3) Weather station mechanics and maintenance
- 4) Solar panel (PV photo voltaic) structure/maintenance/battery banks/stored energy vs. on-site energy consumption/electrical transmission and infrastructure
- 5) Glass lands workshop
- 6) Geology (landscape infrastructure)
- 7) Copland Creek/biological insect and habitat make-up
- 8) Invasive species work shop
- 9) Photography classes

Questions to ask

- 1) Would you pay to take these types of classes?
- 2) Is this something you would bring a to? Or share the information with?
- 3) Would a discount to students make a difference?
- 4) Did you know this was even an option?
- 5) Did you know they offer internships and free space to conduct on site projects?
- 6) What would like to see that maybe wasn't mentioned?
- 7) Would this be a place you would take your kids?
- 8) Age demographic. 18-25/26-35/36-45/46-55 and so on.

Section 4 – SWOT Analysis (Lana Clifford)

This learning and discovery journey is unique to the preserves. As is the fact they ask and prefer students to perform the up keep at the field stations which is a huge strength for their entity. Along with great education they collect their findings and place them in a data base where

anyone can gain access get and learn from past projects, making them a vast resource for information and statistics. Their broad range of opportunities allows them to market themselves to many different focuses in the SSU, the possibilities are endless for the students and the university and should be make know as such.

The unfortunate side to things is students aren't aware of all the advantages the preserves have to offer. It, at first glance just might seem like a "preserve" a place where nature is just kept for the sake of keeping. Or it might look like a place that only biologist or students in the plant field might enjoy of have take-always from. In reality it is a place for all people to come and learn and discover and ultimately apply their knowledge to real life circumstances. They have little funding and less advertising, getting the word out is going to be crucial for the preserves to thrive.

All hope is not lost. The field stations have many viable options to get people understanding what it is they do and to get involved. Being linked to the SSU has so many opportunities. They have a whole university of exposure at their fingertips, never mind the fact we live in one of the most environmentally conscious counties in the United States. The goal here is to harness that opportunity to exposure and find new and creative ways to exploit it. They don't need to reinvent the wheel they just need to get it going again.

A few key things really do hold the preserves back. The first is the parking. They have no real place to facilitate the patrons they are trying to market to. The lot is small and just by the looks of it gives you a nonprofessional "Podunk" feel, this is no good for business. Next is the staff. They are amazing but they have no idea what they need to do to get people through the door. They are the brains of the operation, the knowledge keepers if you will. They are only one piece of this puzzle. Granted a vital piece but alone they will not succeed. Lastly they lack a

plan. There is no promise as of now to make this place alive! There is no plan that will allow them to thrive! Without a course of action they are dead in the water.

Section 5 – Marketing Goals (Clifford Cochran)

The purpose of the marketing plan is to increase student and public awareness of the Sonoma Nature Preserves. This should increase interest, and transform the preserves into active research and study areas. The preserves are a valuable resource for both students of Sonoma State University and other schools in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Current research shows that less than 10% of students at Sonoma State University are aware of the nature preserves. The main goal of the marketing plan is to increase student awareness to over 50%, which may produce a related increase in use of the preserves. There is virtually no public awareness of the nature preserves in Sonoma County and the North Bay. The secondary goal of the marketing plan is to promote the preserves to relevant groups in the San Francisco Bay Area. Members of the community may also benefit from environmental opportunities provided at the preserves.

The marketing goals at Sonoma State University are to generate student interest and promote active involvement from the Biology and Engineering departments. The marketing goals in the North Bay community is to promote the preserves are affordable and available outside Sonoma State students and faculty.

Section 6 – Promotional Program Situation Analysis (Clifford Cochran)

The current marketing program for the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves is inadequate to effectively promote the sites. The preserves attempt to reach

students through a series of fliers and attending university promotional events. The staff attempts to convey the message that the preserves are active areas with benefits for many different departments at Sonoma State University.

The target market of the preserves is students at Sonoma State University of all backgrounds and studies, and interested members of the community. The staff reaches out to these groups using primarily word-of-mouth. Since the preserves lack a substantial budget, the staff is unable to conduct effective marketing to both students and the community. However, proper dissemination of brochures, hosting events and tours, and conducting market research can effectively improve promotion of the preserves.

The brochures disseminated by the preserves staff are well designed and effectively attract attention to the sites. The problem with the handouts is that there are not enough copies to satisfactorily promote the preserves. This reduces the staff's desire to pass out the few fliers they possess, limiting their ability to spread the word on the preserves at the university and in the community.

The preserves currently offer tours on a limited, scheduled basis. The staff is unable to conduct tours or host events on a regular basis. If the staff of the preserves were able to advertise tours for groups of students, it could draw attention and increase student involvement. Hosting events on site is the best method to attract attention to the preserves. Our interest in the preserves was only increased after visiting the site.

And finally, the staff of the preserves wants to reach out to all students and members of the community, but does not know what these groups want. Market research is needed to determine what the preserves need to gain the support necessary to thrive.

Section 7 – Review of Existing and Past Programs (Clifford Cochran)

The staff of the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves has been unable to establish viable marketing programs. The preserves are staffed with one full-time employee and one part-time employee, with several student volunteers. The primary duties of the staff is maintaining the preserves and guiding tours. There is no active marketing plan in place to attract attention to the preserves.

In the past, Dr. Claudia Luke, Director of the Preserves, has taken it upon herself to personally generate interest and funding to meet the \$50,000 budget. She has not followed a strategic marketing plan, and has not actively pursued interested groups, beyond offering internships for students at Sonoma State University.

The weakness of the marketing program for the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves is that no program currently exists. It will be challenging to attract attention to the preserves, which are located miles away from the Sonoma State campus, and student residential areas. Staffing and funding will also be a challenge, as the preserves get very little support for the university. Furthermore, the legal framework of the preserves prevents portions of them to be sold to raise monies for funding.

The strength for the preserves is the potentially high usefulness for many different groups at Sonoma State and in the North Bay Area. The preserves offer hundreds of acres for research projects in unique nature environments. Students of Sonoma State and other universities in the Bay Area have the potential to conduct research and classes at the preserves. In addition to university research, members of the community, such as agricultural groups, may use the preserves to study local habitats.

The overall assessment of the preserves marketing program must be updated with a more aggressive marketing strategy. There are significant research opportunities in the preserves, but these need to be effectively promoted to potentially interested groups. With a little extra work and expanding current promotional efforts, the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves could become an important feature of the university and in the North Bay community.

Section 8 - Integrated Marketing Communications Objectives and Strategies (Lana Clifford)

Our objective is to reach at least 300 plus people during our rush time with the following branding campaign. We are going to use a three step process that will cover all of our bases. Step one involves promoting an event that is already in place. Step two entails show casing an open house at the preserves and step three leaves Dr. Luke with ideas for a sustainable future so she can continue the branding campaign.

Step 1, we plan on creation flyers and brochures that will have our new logo, slogan and name for the preserves. On this flyer will have the dates for Seawolf Day where the preserves will already be showcasing their “A Walk Through The Watershed.” We don’t need to reinvent the wheel she already has an amazing display planned and in place. Our plans are to pass out flyers in classrooms, farmers markets, tree planting events, and online advertisement. For the cyber change up we will focus on a new and improves Facebook, SSU web site revamping, which will not only include our new slogan and logo, but more publicity on the ENSP sites and well as the Geology site. We would also like to do some advertisement on local online web sites.

Step 2, the big week. Dr. Luke is going to have a huge expo at the preserves set up all about watersheds! Our goal/job is to get people out there to experience the magic for themselves.

On our flyers we will also have the dates of the open house week. We will also pass out additional information at the preserves booth on Seawolf Day explaining days and times. We figured 2 hours a day for 7 days. This would leave a small time frame so there would be enough room for parking and faculty availability.

Step 3, involves a carefully thought out survey, that will list events and classes that could be held at the site. Our hope is to find out what people are interested in, and what they would come out to see and experience. It will let us see where we currently stand. Telling us who even knows about the site or the amazing things it has to offer. We also included a list of demographic questions to better gauge our audience and get a feel of where they are coming from, and what we should expect. Just by handing out this questionnaire we will be raising awareness to the preserves.

Ultimately once this survey is implemented the main objective is to acquire solid statistical data that will allow Dr. Luke to narrow down the preserves opportunities to a hand full of viable choices. This will leave Dr. Luke with a fishing pole. She will now have a list of classes she could offer there for money, that could be taught by students for internship credits, which would cost the preserves no out of pocket expense and add so much curb appeal to students thinking about coming to SSU. It's part of our new preserves, slogan where education and application meet. Now the preserves themselves would become like a school, portrayed like a business entity and given true respectable word of mouth. Finally bridging the 50,000 budget gap, and allowing for new renovation and future branding to be funded!

Section 9 – Positioning and Campaign Theme (Andrea Chichester)

Curiosity is a powerful driving factor in why people want to find an answer to a question they do not know. The desire to learn transcends age and gender, which is why we want to position the preserve to target an audience of individuals – regardless of age – who want to learn. This goes beyond involving college students in research studies and projects and tours for elementary students. We want the preserve to reach out to the general public who take a genuine interest in learning about nature and science.

We want the preserve to be in the vein of the Solar Living Institute, where they offer workshops for those interested in expanding their knowledge. The preserve will offer on site workshops where people can not only gain knowledge about this preserve, but also participate in hands on projects where ideas are encouraged. They will charge for these workshops and the amount will, depending on how long the workshop runs. A day's workshop would cost about \$150, where a week long workshop would run about \$700. These fees would go towards materials and staffing needed to run these workshops. Also, the fees could vary depending on how involved the workshop will be. The more hands on it is, the more they can charge. We also want to see the preserve offer unit classes for Sonoma State and SRJC students that apply to their major. The cost will be in line with unit fees as well as a lab fee due to its lab like qualities.

By positioning the preserve this way, people would want to participate in what they have to offer because it is hands on learning. Many people stay away from classroom like learning activities because they do not get to apply what they learn. With this they are able to see how what they learn applies to the world. With this idea in mind we want our campaign slogan to be, “Sonoma Nature Preserves: Uniting Both Pieces of the Education Puzzle”.

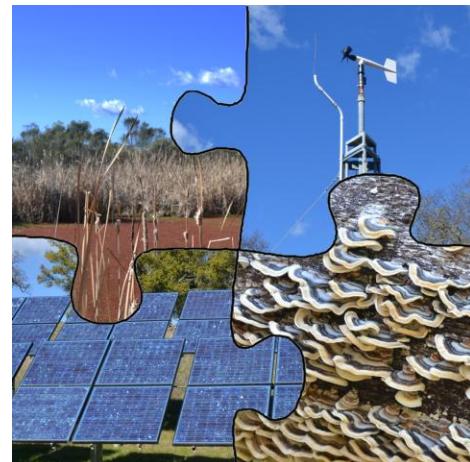
Section 10 – Creative Recommendations (Andrea Chichester)

Our advertising has two objectives: create awareness and persuade our target market that the Sonoma Nature Preserve is a unique place to share your ideas and learn with like minded individuals.

As we've already learned, less than 10% of Sonoma State University students are aware of the preserve and it's virtually unknown to the general public. Most people are ignorant to that fact that there is this beautiful preserve teaming with history waiting to be discovered in their backyard. We want all of Sonoma County and beyond to be aware of the preserve and what they have to offer.

We want our advertising to persuade our target market that this is a place to share your ideas and learn. This place is unique because it is not a traditional classroom setting. You are out and in the thick of your subject. You get to have hands on lessons and your ideas are welcome to find the answer to the question posed. By conveying this through our advertising people will be interested because they get to be a participant in the learning process rather than an audience member.

The message will be derived in our underlying theme of education being a puzzle and uniting gaining knowledge and building relationships through sharing ideas to meet a common goal. Our slogan is, "Sonoma Nature Preserves: Uniting Both Pieces of the Education Puzzle". Our logo is a puzzle with pictures of the preserve demonstrating its ability to link learning and application together.



Section 11 – Overall Marketing Objectives for Advertising Campaign (Andrea Chichester)

Our target audiences are individuals – regardless of age – wanting to expand their knowledge in science and the environment. We want our audience to not only consist of Sonoma State and elementary school students, but students of other San Francisco Bay area universities and the general public with the desire to learn.

Currently there is hardly any advertising for the preserves. They had out fliers and attend university events, however, that is not enough to reach as grand of a scale as we want to reach. We want to increase advertising dramatically so it spans throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. We feel this will create a drastic increase in individuals interested in the preserve and generate traffic which will make the workshops lucrative.

We want to start out at a small scale, advertising at local events in the Sonoma County Community. Go to local farmers markets, SSU and SRJC events, advertising in the local papers and putting a link to the preserves site with the new logo on the front page of the SSU home page, and revamp the Facebook page. Once a larger interest is generated for the general public in Sonoma County we want to expand the advertising out to the rest of the Bay Area through television, radio, newspaper, and other affiliated websites; i.e. colleges in the Bay Area, different County's events sites, etc.

Section 12 – Direct Marketing Recommendations (Andrea Chichester)

We want our direct marketing to target the general public in Sonoma County. We want to reach all individuals interested in learning about our environment and applying that knowledge. We will reach this audience and create awareness and interest in the preserves. Will we be able to reach individuals of all ages because these public events are not target to one age group.

In order to do this we want to go out into the community to tell people about the preserve. We want to attend community events that we feel will have our target audience. The events we're interested in attending are a tree planting event, farmers markets, hand out fliers at Seawolf Day.

These events will allow us to speak directly to the public and build awareness in the community. We're able to explain what the preserve is all about; how the learning experience is unique because it combines application, how it is open to all ages and expands on a broad range of interests. Those interested will be able to ask any questions and get the details of the week long drop in for the water shed exhibit.

Cost for this would be minimal; we can keep the budget around \$500. To have 500 flyers printed up by FedEx Office would cost us roughly \$98. To make any posters, they would be about \$87 through FedEx Office and we would probably want three to four. This would use up the budget, but we would be able to do the rest for free. We will have volunteers come to help promote at each event. Each volunteer will be given a crash course in what the preserve is about, unless they are already a part of it. We are able to go to these events and promote for free because we are a non-profit so we don't have to allocate the budget to promoter fees.

Section 13 – Internet/Interactive Recommendations (Andrea Chichester)

Internet marketing will focus more on our older audience, just because many parents do not allow their children to go online. Reaching out to older audience, however, will make parents aware of the preserves and what programs they have to enroll their children in. Internet marketing will also be focused in on SSU students primarily because you go through the SSU webpage.

Our objectives through the Internet are to create awareness for those that many not attend the public events we want to promote at. We want a link to be placed on the home page of Sonoma.edu. To find a link to the preserve's webpage you have to click on the "Science and Technology" link. Unless you're seeking out the preserves page one would not stumble upon the link. We want to have a link similar to the ones towards the bottom of the home page. There's one for Sonoma Rideshare, Green Music Center, Water Works, and the Library. Each link has the logo of what they're promoting. We want a similar link with the new log of the puzzle pieces with Sonoma Nature Preserves as the title. It's easy to find and attention grabbing which people can stumble upon. It will also make it easier for those visiting Sonoma.edu to find a link to the preserves. Also, at the top of the home page the preserve should be included in the news and events going on with Sonoma States to promote their events.

This shouldn't cost anything for the preserves because it should already be a part of Sonoma State's fixed costs for maintaining their website. They don't have to go out and hire a website designer because SSU already has them employed. It would be part of the standard maintenance and updating of the website.

Section 14 – Public Relations Recommendations (Andrea Chichester)

Our target market for our public relations will be all ages interested in learning in the environment and applying what they learn. We will be able to reach a large group because we will be out in the community promoting the preserves.

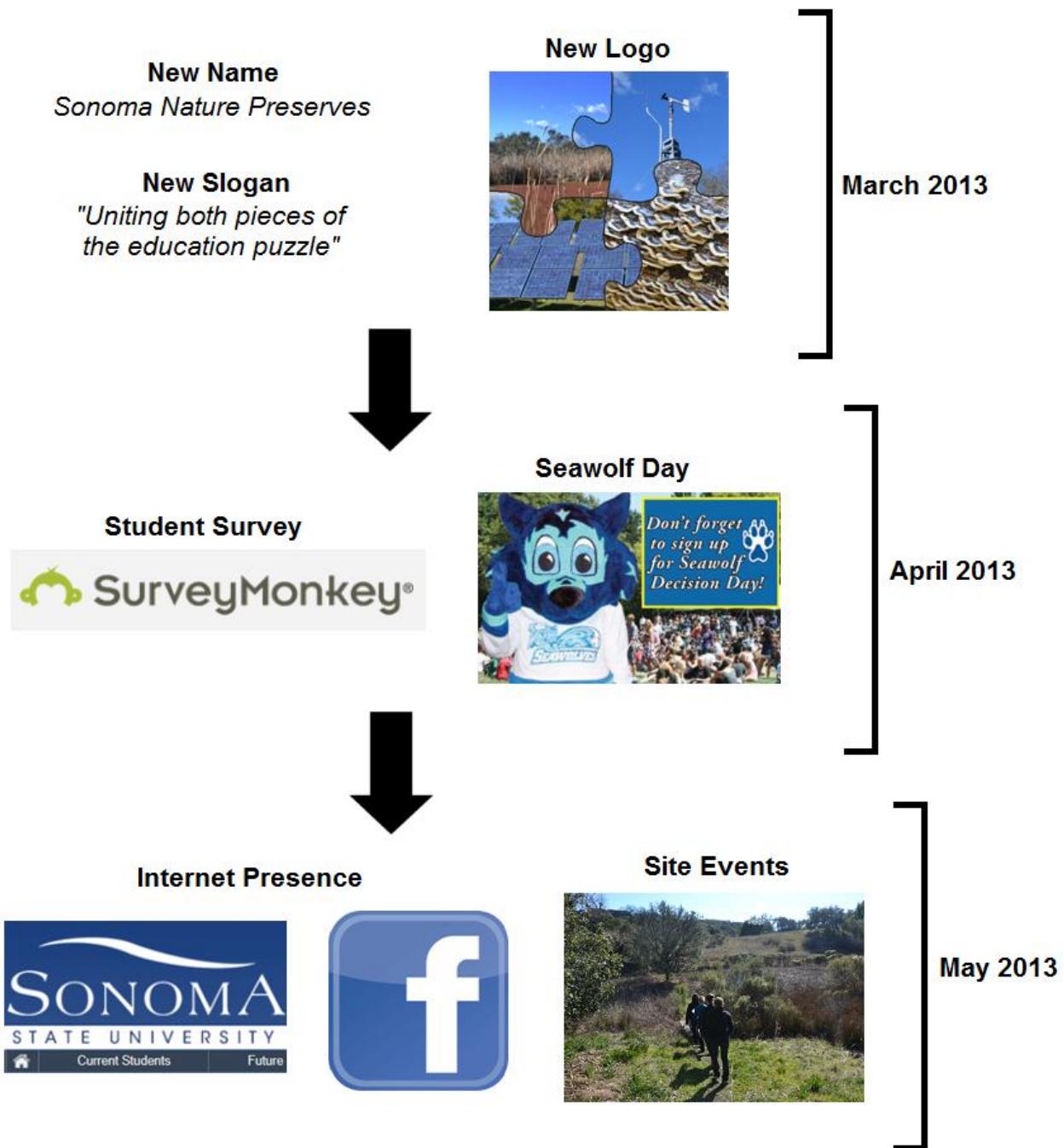
Our objective is to go to as many community events such as tree planting, farmers markets, and SSU events like Seawolf Day. There we are able to interact with those interested in

the preserves and generate awareness. At these events we want to promote the water shed exhibit which will be open for a week the preserve.

The water shed exhibit will serve a couple purposes; get people up to the preserve and have the take our survey. People can come and check out the preserve and see the water shed exhibit as well as what research is going on. They can take a tour and see the unique features it has to offer. At the end of the visit have all visitors take our survey about future workshops and classes. From there we are able to gain insight of what workshops people would be interested in and how much they would be willing to pay. With the survey collect email addresses for those interested in taking the workshops if they happen. From there Claudia and the rest of her staff can put a schedule together and create a sign up and email it out to those that gave them their address.

A budget for this would be minimal. The preserve has had the water shed exhibit in the works, so they don't have to plan that. As far as having more visitors than normal, they can have the preserve staffed with all their interns that day, which are unpaid. They can set up a computer kiosk at the field station for visitors to take the survey online, where they can use Survey Monkey for free.

Section 15 – Campaign Flowchart (Clifford Cochran)



Section 16 – Measurement and Evaluation (Clifford Cochran)

During the implementation of our plan to develop the brand for the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves, we intend to closely track progress.

Improvements will be closely evaluated throughout the re-brand process, and data will be collected to ensure the success of our efforts.

During the first stage, when the new name and logo is prepared for release, our group will conduct market research to find the best name and logo. We will poll students on campus and determine what would most attract them to the preserves. The data we gather will determine how we create our brand image, which will provide numbers on how effective our re-brand efforts will be.

During the second phase of implementation, our group will release a survey to determine what exactly students want with the preserves. We intend to use a detailed survey on SurveyMonkey.com, a website popular for collecting and organizing survey data. From the demographic data also gathered on the survey, we will be able to determine who is most interested in the preserves. We will use this data to make the preserves more appealing to the interested groups. During this phase, our group will attend Seawolf Day on April 13 at the preserves tent, and further spread the word. We will maintain a stats sheet from this event.

During the final phase, our group will use data gathered to establish a solid Internet presence. We will create a new Facebook page for the preserves and “like” profile pages for students of Sonoma State University. We will add photographs of the preserves to attract attention and track popularity with student “likes”.

When the re-branding is completed, we will analyze the visitor logs for the preserves, which will show the direct results of our efforts. Visitor logs are currently maintained at the

preserves and will show increases in student and community member involvement, once the re-branding plan has been completely and successfully launched.

Section 16 – Budget Summary (Clifford Cochran)

The budget of our re-branding plan for the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves is simple and cost effective. The current budget for the re-branding efforts is \$500, and our group should be able to complete all branding efforts under the proposed budget. The primary requirement for the re-brand efforts will be labor, which has been the primary reason for the preserves marketing troubles.

The most expensive cost in the re-brand effort will be the printing of promotional materials. In order to effectively market the preserves, new fliers with updated name and logo will need to be printed. FedEx Office offers 500 tri-fold brochures printed in full color and folded for \$98. These brochures are critical to disseminate information about the preserve. Another promotion cost could be creating posters to place around the Sonoma State campus. Large posters can be printed at FedEx Office starting at \$22. Our group will determine the appropriate portion of the budget to be spent on fliers and posters.

The primary challenge with marketing the preserves is in labor, and our group is willing to meet this need. We have designed a professional logo using student resources, and have photographed one of the nature preserves using a professional grade camera. Once chosen to implement our three-phase plan, we will attend key student and community events to create a presence for the preserves.

In addition to providing the necessary labor, our group will be able to assemble social media pages on Facebook to attract more student interest and attention. This can be done free of

charge and using the resources mentioned above. Facebook is free and an excellent resource when trying to market a relatively unknown entity.

In summary, the primary costs of the re-brand efforts for the preserves are for printed materials, such as posters and fliers. We plan to use the \$500 budget to promote social media sites, such as Facebook, which are free. Once our social media becomes popular, we intend to focus our promotional efforts in that manner, since it will be free of charge. With the semester completed we intend to turn our work over to Dr. Luke and the Sonoma Nature Preserves to maintain for future promotions.

Part 18 – Conclusion (Lana Clifford)

Our hope is that our 3 step plan will allow us to hit on all major points of the branding campaign. From beginning to end we would like to use what Dr. Luke already has in place to showcase the wonders of the Preserve. “A Walk Through The Water Shed” Is going to be the perfect opportunity for people to see just how multifaceted the SSU Preserves really are.

With flyers, online, and survey publicity we are sure to reach at least 300 plus new people and have them attend not only Sea Wolf day but the expo that will be held at the site. We want to be able to reach out to as many people as possible young and old as the Preserves appeal to a wide range of ages and interests. Facebook and revamping the SSU site is only the start when it comes to uniting both pieces of the education puzzle

Ultimately we are going to conduct a wide range survey and have people take a look at a list of classes that could potentially be held at the Preserves. We would like to leave Dr. Luke with a fishing pole, an opportunity for her to really narrow down her list and give her a hand full of viable options to keep the preserves “alive.” Once we have a better feel of what people would

like to see out there we can start having clients come out for classes that require a premium. This will give her the business edge she has been lacking and the respectable word of mouth that is invaluable when trying to brand any product.

In the months to come we will give local events and advertisements the chance to get people out to the site. We will also acquire data that will draw people in for years to come and generate money so the preserves can bridge the \$50,000 deficit they have every year, and leave a monetary cushion for a sustainable future branding budget.