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**TRAIL DEDICATION**  
**May 18, 2002 10:30 AM**  
**Dreaming Big**

William E. Haigwood, President Emeritus, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation

The dream of restoring and preserving the Laguna de Santa Rosa has unified the Community of Sebastopol more than any other single activity. That is saying a lot, because Sebastopol is noted for many accomplishments, from the sublime to the ridiculous; from creating a world-class community playground to defying the world's nuclear powers by declaring our city a "nuclear-free zone." There have been many projects, pushed by private interest groups in the community with varying degrees of conflict. But the one arena where all the factions are on one side is "saving the Laguna."

Looking back from the vantagepoint of a senior citizen, I can recall many heroic efforts by groups of citizens, organized in a common cause, coming together with courage and determination to accomplish the impossible. But never before have I seen so many volunteers stepping forth on their own to help their community accomplish so much for so many for so far in the future and in such a short time as demonstrated in the continuing drive to save the Laguna.

The future of the Laguna has been of particular concern to Sebastopol residents for many years. In 1986, that concern became a focused effort with the appointment of a Laguna Study Committee by Mayor Anne Magni at the urging of a local resident, Richard Nichols. The Study Committee evolved into the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation with Robert Sharp as President and Kim Cordell as CEO and Technical Advisor. Bob and Kim were the driving force behind the Foundation and the architects of its success. For more than a decade, Bob provided the leadership and inspiration that motivated hundreds of individual citizens to become involved in making the dream of the Laguna a reality. Bob was named President Emeritus of the Laguna Foundation in 1996 and died in 1999. His ashes were scattered in his beloved Laguna. A plaque commemorating Bob's leadership is installed on a rock near the bridge a few hundred feet from here, but if you seek the true monument to this man's accomplishments, just look about you!

Other participants in the continuing effort to restore and preserve the Laguna have included the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Open Space District, The Ghilotti Family, Emmett



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J. Blincoe, The Lightfoot Foundation, Ann Stroberger, Juliana Doms, Bob Evans, Laguna Docents, Circuit Riders, Laguna Keepers, the City of Sebastopol, Sebastopol City Planning Director Kenyon Webster and hundreds of individuals from school children to senior citizens. Volunteer efforts included a bake sale by third-graders at Pinecrest School, days of hard labor in the removal of brush and restoring of native plants, a series of benefits, dances and performances. Laguna Day events provided information programs to educate the public about the importance of the Laguna as an ecological necessity and wildlife habitat.

So many citizens, representing a true cross section of the political and social groups within the community, have been involved that it is impossible to identify them all or even to give credit where it is due. I regret that my memory bank fails me because there are so many deserving of recognition; and they are the ones that we must look to for the future realization of our collective dreams for the Laguna.

The dedication of this trail today is another step forward, one of many that eventually can lead to our goal of a restored and preserved Laguna de Santa Rosa -- a wetlands habitat and ecological womb for vanishing species, and a spiritual refuge for humans in the midst of civilization's chaos.

You have helped bring us to where we are today, but we still have a long ways to go. I would urge you to dream no small dreams, for it takes large dreams to capture the public's imagination. It costs no more to dream large dreams than to dream small ones, and the accomplishments are greater when the dreams come true! Please, for your children and your children's children, make it happen!

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