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Bosco unveils study and plan for Laguna

by Mike Jasper

Santa Rosa's City Council chambers seemed eerily vacant, just a smattering of media types in chairs scattered across the room.

Was there really going to be a press conference on the Laguna here? Or did the reporters have the wrong room.

Finally, the reassuring presence of Bob Sharp emerged. Sharp was chairman of Congressman Doug Bosco's Laguna Advisory Committee as well as chairman of the city of

Sebastopol's Laguna Advisory Committee.

A few minutes after the members of the media — the only guests invited — received their reports, the congressman entered the building and the press conference was on.

"This is the first time I've ever called a press conference in ten years in Sonoma County," Bosco began. He said he decided to do so because this committee's report was different. Unique.

It was. Bosco said he intended to introduce legislation to create a National Wildlife Refuge in

the Laguna de Santa Rosa. He also wants to snare \$14 million in federal funds for land acquisition within the refuge.

Sharp introduced the report, which he said drew heavily from the 1977 Sonoma State Study and the 1988 Laguna report.

"It is not a research document," Sharp cautioned.

It'll do till one comes around. The report lists more plant and animal species found in the Laguna than a final exam in a

(please turn to page A8)

Laguna...

(continued from front page)

college biology class.

But the heart of the report is in its three recommendations.

First, the committee recommends establishing a National Wildlife Refuge in the Laguna de Santa Rosa under the cooperative management of the U.S. Fish and Game Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The next step is to acquire about 6,000 acres within the Laguna, about a 10-mile strip from Barnett Valley Road to the south, north to Trenton Road.

The land would be acquired only from willing landowners. Another 3,000 acres of the planned 9,000 acre refuge would

be owned by private individuals and public agencies.

About \$4 million dollars of the purchase price would come from the state through last June's Proposition 70. The rest would be federally funded.

Laguna activities, such as the city of Santa Rosa's water reclamation system, the Sonoma County Water Agency aqueduct, flood control channels, agriculture and lands already developed including portions of the city of Sebastopol would be managed for appropriate enhancement of the refuge area.

Committee member Joan Vilms said there will be enhanced wetlands for the refuge and treatment wetlands for primarily wastewater uses.

"Engineers control treatment wetlands, the wildlife managers control the enhancement wetlands."

Sebastopol snubbed

Although the city of Sebastopol has taken a lead role in Laguna preservation, not one member of the City Council was notified about the release of the report from Congressman Bosco's Laguna Technical Advisory Committee.

Not even a phone call.

"I haven't even seen a copy of the report," Mayor Anne Magnie told the *Times & News*.

When asked why only the media was invited to the Jan. 17 press conference at Santa Rosa City Council chambers, Bosco deferred to committee chair Bob Sharp, who said public hearings will be held later.

When asked if Sebastopol was left out, Bosco said, "They'll be left in."