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Laguna reserve plans move ahead

by Dan Collins

⁸⁹ The dream of a park featuring the Laguna de Santa Rosa is creeping closer to reality, thanks to the efforts of local lawmakers.

Both the city of Sebastopol and Congressman Doug Bosco (D-Occidental) are seeking funds for creation of a Laguna park and wildlife refuge protecting the sensitive wetlands which border Sebastopol to the east.

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Bosco plans to introduce legislation this week which would provide \$15 million for creation of a federal wildlife reserve surrounding the Laguna wetlands, which provides habitat for a vast array of flora and fauna. The money would fund studies of the area, land

acquisition and initial management of the reserve.

The 9,000-acre reserve would extend the length of the Laguna from south of Sebastopol to where it meets the Russian River.

While that current legislation is the first step, Bosco said that

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Laguna . . .

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Laguna preservation will be an "ongoing project" once the government makes a commitment to protection of the wetlands. "Our immediate goal is to make that commitment and begin protecting the Laguna environment," he said.

"I feel strongly that our primary goal is protection of the environment itself," Bosco continued. "Access or other decisions are secondary."

The congressman lauded council members for playing a "lead-

ing role" in the effort to preserve the Laguna wetlands.

Included in the \$4 million bond issue approved by the Sebastopol City Council last week is \$100,000 for development of a Laguna park. An ordinance aimed at protecting the wetlands has just undergone revision by the planning commission.

Under whose jurisdiction management of the reserve will fall remains unknown. At present, the city plans to manage its own

park, but if a federal reserve is created, it may be administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At the same time, officials of the State Department of Fish and Game have indicated that they, too, are interested in managing the reserve.