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Laguna . . .
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as one.”

“I think we can have a wildlife refuge and agriculture. If we can't, then we won't have a wildlife refuge. Agriculture is here to stay,” said Bill Cox, Dept. of Fish & Game.

The conference displayed that the scales will definitely tip before they balance, and the need for continued and further communication is the only solution.

Kim Cordell, Co-Chairman of the conference, closed the conference with a reminder that the Laguna Advisory Committee meets the fourth Monday of every month, meeting locations can be obtained through Sebastopol City Hall by calling 823-7863.

Laguna conference provides answers

by Michelle O'Kane

“A lot of serious questions were answered,” said Miles Ferris, former director of Public Works, summarizing the first State of the Laguna Conference, held Saturday in the Sebastopol Veterans Memorial Building.

The conference successfully achieved its goal of providing a forum for anyone concerned about the laguna. Farmers, area residents, politicians, environmentalists, and members of regulatory agencies gathered to listen and ask questions.

More than 225 people attended the one-day conference.

Congressman Doug Bosco



Many attendees of the first State of the Laguna conference took the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists.

gave the introductory speech, telling the crowd that “this is the time to focus on the Laguna.”

Last year Bosco announced that he would sponsor a \$20

million bill to create a Laguna de Santa Rosa wildlife refuge, but only if there is a consensus in the community.

The conference started with a narration of the natural and

cultural history of the laguna, delivered by Bill Cox, of the California Dept. of Fish & Game and Michael Jablonski, an archaeologist at Sonoma State University.

Judy Nosecchi, of the City of Santa Rosa Utilities Dept., followed with an explanation of how the water reclamation plant, located in the laguna, operates and affects the laguna.

Biologist Marco Waaland, of Golden Bear Biostudies, offered a comprehensive view of the laguna's current condition and an inventory of endangered plants, wetlands and wildlife contained in the laguna, which acts as an invaluable reservoir diverting flood waters from the Russian River.

During the afternoon session, two groups of panelists addressed the laguna's future.

The thrust of the speeches

and questions from the audience revolved around two points.

The first dealt with the moral responsibility of preserving California's second largest wetland and its wildlife, and the second with the need to meld Sonoma County agriculture with the pressing environmental, residential and industrial demands facing the laguna.

“We are going to have to incorporate agriculture into the laguna, not the laguna into agriculture,” said Dennis Rogers-Martinez, YA-KA-AMA Indian Education and Development, Inc. “We have to consider agriculture and ecology

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