

## LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

At a press conference on January 17, 1989, Congressman Bosco announced that he is submitting a bill to Congress to establish the Laguna de Santa Rosa National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge boundaries would contain approximately 9,000 acres and would cost under \$20,000,000 to acquire, according to the report submitted to the Congressman by the Laguna Technical Advisory Committee. The introduction to the report states, "Inasmuch as wetland preservation, and an increase in wetland acreage, has been recognized as a national goal, the Laguna de Santa Rosa should be considered a high national priority for protection."

The Laguna Technical Advisory Committee is chaired by Bob Sharp, former Chairman of the Sebastopol Laguna Advisory Committee, and is ably staffed by Joel Rodgers, Bosco's Congressional Assistant. Other Committee members are Joan Vilms, SLT consultant; Jim Swanson, Allan Buckman and Bill Cox from the State Department of Fish & Game; Bob Beach, Director of the Sonoma County Water Agency; Bob Klamt, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board; Dwain Campbell, U.S. Soil Conservation Service; Richard Munoz, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and Marco Waaland, Consulting Ecologist.

In preparing its report, the committee interviewed many individuals and representatives of organizations connected with the Laguna. Organizations and agencies contacted included the Farm Bureau, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Northcoast Builders Exchange, the Northwest Cultural Resources Information Center, the City of Santa Rosa, the City of Sebastopol, and the League of Women Voters.

The committee's report is being used as the resource document for drafting federal legislation. If all goes according to schedule, Bosco's bill would become law in October 1989. The official refuge boundaries would be finalized in 1990, whereupon acquisition and development of a management plan would commence. According to Congressman Bosco, the Refuge would be a joint venture between the State Department of Fish & Game and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, with the responsibilities of both agencies spelled out in a memorandum of understanding.

Readers will remember that 5 years ago, SLT was instrumental in conveying nearly 100 acres of prime Laguna habitat to the State Department of Fish & Game (DFG). Currently we are working on a 175-acre project, which has been approved for acquisition by DFG and should be completed shortly.

Many people have been quietly working to save the Laguna for over 10 years. When Congressman Bosco picked up the ball, the media picked up the story, the public paid attention, and the dream moved a giant step closer to becoming reality.