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# Blincoe donates another \$200K to Laguna Park

by Frank Robertson  
Sonoma West Staff Writer

SEBASTOPOL — The City's Laguna de Santa Rosa wetlands preservation effort heard good news this week when retired Sebastopol contractor Emmett Blincoe donated another \$200,000 towards implementation of the Laguna park.

"Wonderful news," said Sebastopol City Councilman Larry Robinson. "That's going

**That's going to mean we can really move ahead.** — Larry Robinson

to mean we can really move ahead" on improvements to the wetlands preserve east of Morris Street.

"Mr. Blincoe is my hero," said City Councilman Ken Foley. "I'm just delighted.

What a great guy. I think that's marvelous."

Last year Blincoe gave the Laguna project \$200,000 in a pivotal gesture that helped persuade a previously deadlocked Sebastopol City Council to move forward on implementing the Laguna Park plan.

Blincoe's \$200,000 donation this week arrives just as a new phase of proposed Laguna Park preservation and improvement efforts began moving through

the City approval process. Sebastopol Planning Commissioners last week approved a substantial list of Laguna park improvements to be completed this year, including a bridge and hiking path to provide greater public access to the nearly 100 acres of city-owned wetland east of Morris Street.

The donation should add to the celebration in two weeks when the second-annual Laguna in Balance day takes

place on Sunday, May 2, at the wetlands preserve.

In announcing this week's donation, "I expect the funds to be used to further enhance and expand the ongoing efforts to protect and restore the natural beauty of the Laguna de Santa Rosa," said Blincoe, in a written statement released through his attorney, Ken Jacobs.

Blincoe donated \$200,000 last year in memory of his late wife, Loretta. (Please see *Donate* page A11)

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## Donate . . .

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wife, Loretta Blincoe. A Loretta Blincoe memorial trail was dedicated during the official opening dedication of the park in January.

Blincoe this week reiterated his support of the effort "to increase public enjoyment and appreciation of the Laguna by providing recreational and educational access wherever possible," said his announcement that was delivered to the City Council this week by Laguna de Santa Rosa President Bill Haigwood.

"Your contributions have provided us with a quantum leap forward towards our goals," Haigwood said this week in a thank-you statement to Blincoe.

"Few men are granted the opportunity to see their dreams come true," said Haigwood. "Your generosity is making our fondest visions a reality."

Blincoe's donations are augmented by \$17,000 in contributions from local businesses and residents, a

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—Kenyon Webster

County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board grant of more than \$5,000, and a \$7,000 donation of native plants from Circuit Rider Productions. The City has also applied for \$166,500 in grant funds, said City planning director Kenyon Webster.

The Blincoe funds should enable the City to complete its high-priority list of Laguna wetlands improvements now scheduled for completion this year.

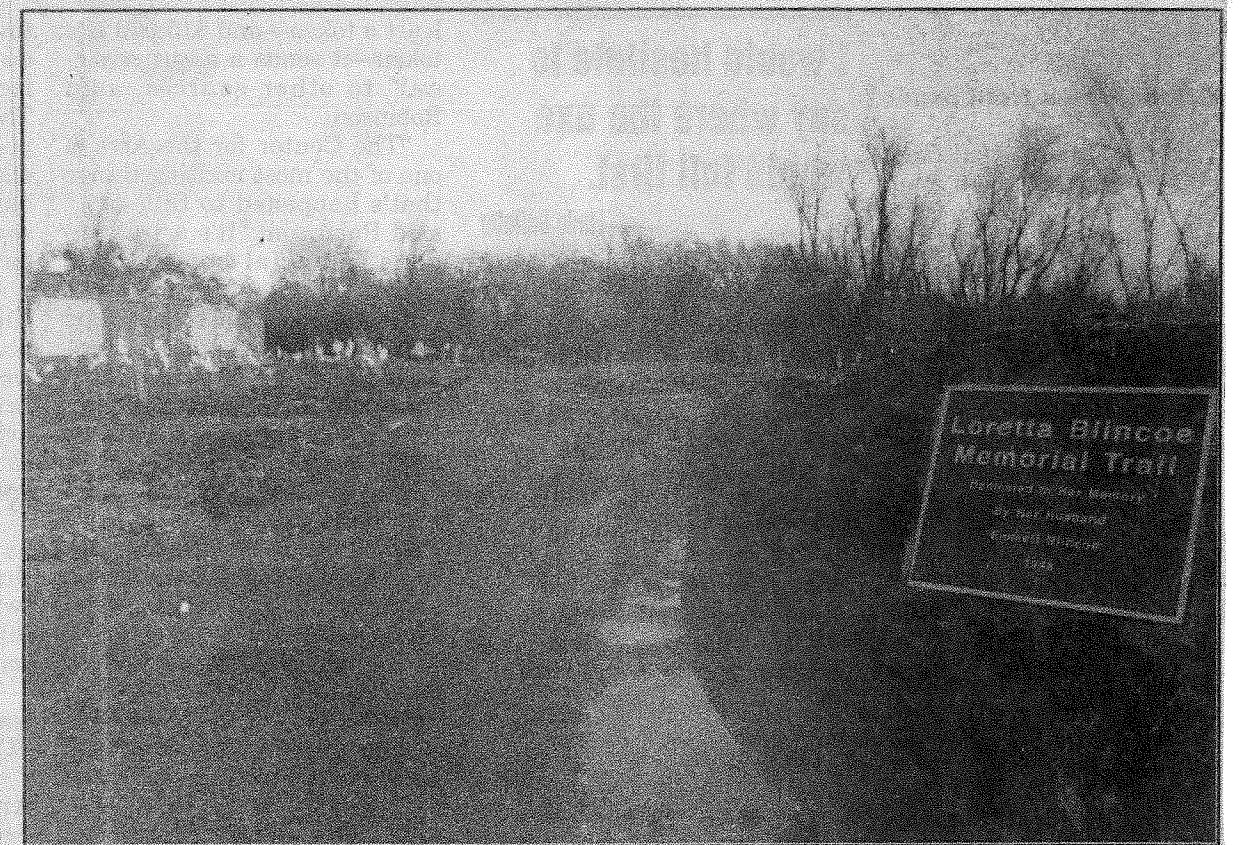
"With the remaining money that we have plus this additional donation I think we can complete all of the priority

1-As and 1-Bs on the list" of Laguna park projects, said Webster.

High priorities include installation of an irrigation system, continued planting of native trees and shrubs, and installation of a 90-foot seasonal floating bridge to create trail access to the east side of the waterway. The bridge ramp area would also be designed to allow for launching of kayaks and canoes.

Supporters hope the local Laguna preservation project will serve as a "lightning rod" to stimulate restoration and preservation elsewhere in the 245-square-mile Laguna watershed that runs from Cotati to the Russian River in Forestville.

In its entirety the Laguna functions as one of the most significant coastal freshwater wetlands in California and provides habitat for numerous rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife species such as the western pond turtle, the California freshwater shrimp, and the ringtail cat, according to information on the park's new entryway.



FRANK ROBERTSON

**MORE SEED MONEY** — Emmett Blincoe has donated a second gift of \$200,000 to the City of Sebastopol to continue the development of a wetlands preserve in the Laguna de Santa Rosa along the city's eastern boundary. The money was donated in memory of Blincoe's late wife, Loretta.