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Laguna . . .

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Other names announced and applauded as Haigwood credited the Laguna preservation effort included Richard Nichols, Bob Sharp, and Kim Cordell, the Laguna Foundation director.

"She held the whole thing together," said Haigwood.

The centerpiece of Saturday's dedication was the Loretta Blincoe memorial trail, named in memory of the late wife of Emmett Blincoe, whose \$200,000 gift last year helped convince the Sebastopol City Council to fund \$78,000 in plans needed for the park's implementation.

Emmett Blincoe, a retired Sebastopol contractor, is "very pleased" that the park "has grown from an idea, to a plan, and finally to reality," said Blincoe, in a letter read by attorney Ken Jacobs.

The improvements dedicated Saturday included hundreds of young native trees and shrubs planted by volunteers who started work last fall.

Nearly 50 donations to the Laguna Community Fund also contributed to the phase one improvements such as the entry arbor and permanent benches along the Laguna channel.

One bench overlooking the water represented a \$600 donation from Willa Amorelli, of Pop—Eye's hair salon in Sebastopol, whose teen-age daughter, Willa, died in a fatal auto accident. The bench is adorned with a simple bronze plaque that says "In memory of Amber Amorelli. Willa Amorelli."

The wooden arbor and information kiosk was paid for by a \$12,000 donation from O'Reilly & Associates, the computer software and publishing company now located on Morris Street.

After the ribbon-cutting, the audience set out under a stormy sky, with a cold breeze rippling the grey channel, to explore the new trail. White egrets stood in a field beyond the former city wastewater pond that will be restored as wetlands habitat. Ducks paddled in the stream and birds darted and chirped in the tangle of riparian trees at the city's edge.

Laguna supporters hope that the creation of the City's 80-acre preserve is just the beginning of an ongoing effort to preserve and restore most of the remaining Laguna de Santa Rosa that runs from the city of Cotati to the Russian River.

As an environmental resource for education and recreation, "There's so much that could be done with this," said Miles Ferris, the director of the city of Santa Rosa's Utilities Department and a member of the Laguna Preservation Foundation.

"This is a marvelous body of water," said Ferris, who frequently defends the city of Santa Rosa's Laguna wastewater discharge policies against attacks by environmentalists.

On Saturday, Ferris praised the preservation effort, and marveled at the diversity of plant and animal life supported by the Laguna wetlands habitat.