

Sonoma West Times & News

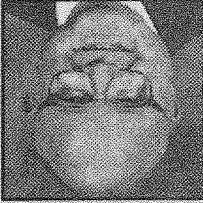
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METES & BOUNDS

An Unfinished Dream

by Bill Haigwood



of a bird song at dusk, the chirping of insects in an open field, the whisper of the wind through aspen leaves and the gentle patter of a summer shower on a quiet pond.

Those who dream of seeing the Laguna de Santa Rosa restored and preserved, for all of the right reasons, are facing almost insurmountable obstacles. On the one hand is the dream of restoring a wetlands habitat and ecological womb for vanishing species, and a spiritual haven for humans in the midst of civilization's chaos. On the other hand is the demand for moderate and low-income housing, land for commercial and industrial development, and space near population centers for parks and recreation. These needs are real in the face of a predicted doubling of the Nation's population by 2100. The problem is that there is not enough land, in the right location and with the necessary amenities, to satisfy the demand. Good land, close to population centers, commands a high price; and as land gets more scarce, the price goes up.

That explains why so much of the land preserving our vanishing wetlands, and so passionate about restoring and diversity of interests can become so involved discover why so many people with such a spiritual sanctuary for humans. Here you can create an ecological preserve for wildlife and of what can be done by dedicated individuals to and Santa Rosa. Here you will find a sampling Memorial Trail in the Sebastopol Laguna Park and the Joe Rodota Trail between Sebastopol dream, you have to walk the Loretta Blincoe understand the dream. And to understand the preserve the wetlands.

To understand the agony, you have to understand the dream. And to understand the endangered opportunities to restore and expensive estates agonize over the loss of who see farms in the Laguna replaced with of development is money well spent; but those any investment to remove land from the threat Some conservation activists might argue that in the way of larger acreages for fewer dollars. The County simply got more bang for the buck District is far removed from urban centers. protected by the Sonoma County Open Space

Hopefully, you also will understand their frustration as the demand for residential property in and near the Laguna drives up prices and makes it more and more difficult to negotiate with owners to restore the Laguna to public ownership. And there's the rub; Laguna land is expensive! And there is a political problem with spending Open Space funds to purchase land in the Laguna when much larger tracts can be purchased for less out in the boonies. But the boonies are not the Laguna, not accessible to the public, and not at risk.

The present and future land needs for a growing population will require decisions demanding the wisdom of Solomon, the skill of Disraeli and the courage of Horatius. For all the right reasons, the vision and dream for the Laguna de Santa Rosa should have priority for Open Space District funds!

Bill Haigwood is a Sonoma West Times & News columnist.