

Deal ...

(Continued from front page)

weeks ago to sign off on their pipeline across Audubon and McCord Ranch," said Reilly.

Santa Rosa officials said they'd already done studies and were prepared to pay \$1.2 million for the Audubon easement, said Reilly.

But in researching the title, it was discovered that the county Agricultural

Preservation and Open Space District had to approve the easement across a designated "forever wild" parcel on the Audubon Society land.

"It's not Audubon's easement, it's ours," said Reilly.

Since then "continuous negotiations" with Santa Rosa led to the deal for the Laguna properties, said Reilly.

The discussion centered on "Now that they have the Geysers, what to do with their land in the Laguna," said

Reilly.

"This works," said Reilly.

This Tuesday the Board of Supervisors was scheduled to vote on accepting a conservation easement over Santa Rosa's Laguna irrigation properties as mitigation for the Geysers wastewater pipeline.

The Laguna property will be used for for public trails and a permanent conservation easement, said Reilly.

"It's all their irrigation

properties," said Reilly.

Under the terms of the conservation easement, "They'll still be able to use it. The county Open Space District will take it. We have to work out the management of the trails."

The acquisition will augment Laguna properties owned by the city of Sebastopol and the state Department of Fish & Game, said Reilly.

Reaction to the deal this

week included a mix of surprise and enthusiasm.

"Wow," said Sebastopol Planning Director Kenyon Webster, who had heard no word of the project prior to this week.

"The potential is pretty amazing" for the Laguna wetlands habitat restoration effort that has been a key goal of the city of Sebastopol and the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, said Webster.

"It's great," said Laguna de

Santa Rosa Foundation President Kim Cordell.

"Basically it connects the Department of Fish and Game land on the north of Occidental Road all the way to Department of Fish & Game land on Todd Road," said Cordell.

"The city owns 1,400 acres that pretty much connects all of them," the Department of Fish & Game properties and the city of Sebastopol properties, said Cordell.