

88-113

M. L. J.

SIERRA CLUB
SONOMA COUNTY GROUP

OCTOBER 25, 1988

The Wilderness Society
729 15th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Attn: Bill Raffault

Dear Mr. Raffault,

As you probably know, Congressman Bosco has appointed a Laguna de Santa Rosa Action Committee to recommend what should be included in a draft of legislation to be introduced in the next session of Congress to establish a Laguna National Wildlife Refuge.

This watershed for much of the Santa Rosa plains area and Russian River overflow-flood basin is the second largest fresh water marsh in Northern California. It covers approximately 7,000 acres, and provides wildlife habitat, open space, a community separator, flood storage, and a biological laboratory adjacent to two large communities. The Refuge proposed would probably be less than 5,000 acres. Since a substantial amount of land in the Laguna is already owned by the State of California, the County of Sonoma, and the City of Santa Rosa, some of their lands may be included in the Refuge also.

Twelve or more land use agencies at the Federal, State, County and local level have an interest or responsibility in the Laguna. This leads to overlap and confusion in its management. The most feasible management approach appears to be establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge, combining lands acquired in fee by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. A cooperative management arrangement between the two agencies is proposed, with California Fish and Game providing day-by-day management activities. This is deemed important, as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has no personnel based closer than the East Bay area, over 80 miles away.

We understand that at this time the Wildlife Service is objecting to proceeding with this type of cooperative management on a National Wildlife Refuge, however there is a precedent, we understand, for this type of management on other National Wildlife Refuges.

Without a cooperative management program, such as the above,

a National Wildlife Refuge may be of very limited or insufficient size in the Laguna. Without a cooperative agreement, development pressures may forestall acquiring this "treasure" for public and wildlife use.

We urge the Wilderness Society to take up this matter with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the highest administrative level. Our Club urges the adoption of this cooperative management concept for the proposed Laguna National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,

Leonard Swenson, Chair
Conservation Committee

cc: Congressman Doug Bosco
Assemblyman Dan Hauser
Supervisor Ernie Carpenter

Mayor Ann Magnie