

# Laguna

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Key committee proposals include preservation of the laguna, prohibiting development in natural low-lying areas and putting one agency in control of the waterway.

The council will hold a public hearing on the committee's plan and recommendations during a special, one-item meeting at 7 p.m. Monday at the Sebastopol Community Center, 390 Morris St.

Rogers said Bosco, D-Occidental, believes the laguna merits a concerted approach and study beyond today's piecemeal regulation by several agencies.

The wildlife refuge proposal was announced Monday during a press conference by Friends of the Laguna. Members of the citizens' group and advisory committee members also accused the Sebastopol city staff of behind-the-scenes lobbying to exempt the city from a new floodway designation being prepared for the laguna by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Sebastopol City Manager Melvin Davis later said his staff has talked to Corps officials about the impact of the floodway designation on the city. He said the issue will go before the council after it considers the committee's recommendations, possibly within six months.

A floodway is more restrictive on filling or development than the "flood-plain" designation that now blankets the laguna and includes some of the lower elevations of developed and undeveloped properties within the Sebastopol city limits. A floodway includes a requirement that any fill on lands 75 feet above sea level must be offset by an equal removal of materials elsewhere to prevent an adverse impact on the flood elevation.

The environmentalists and residents at the press conference were disappointed with what they consider reluctance by Sebastopol officials to take the lead in supporting the advisory committee's recommendations including no develop-

ment and no filling along the laguna or its waterways.

Members of Friends of the Laguna want to protect 235 species of birds, 200 types of plant life and 20 species of fish they say make up the living laguna.

"A more compelling reason to keep the laguna alive is as a possible regional park, our version of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park," said Bill Haigwood, realtor and Chamber of Commerce board member.

Rogers said Bosco met with some of the environmental leaders and praised the advisory committee's efforts. Bosco is a member of the Fisheries and Wildlife Subcommittee of the House Merchant Marine

and Fisheries Committee which would get the first look at any wildlife refuge proposal.

As a refuge, the laguna would become a managed area, meaning that all wildlife would be protected and that all applicable regulations must be met.

Bill Stillman, Sonoma County Water Agency chief engineer, said public hearings will be required before all or part of the laguna's designation is changed from flood-plain to floodway. He said Sebastopol's interest in being exempted from the new designation involves existing commercial and industrial properties already within the flood plain.

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## Bosco says laguna needs protection

By JOHN ADAMS  
Staff Writer

SEBASTOPOL — North Coast Rep. Doug Bosco is considering introducing legislation to designate Laguna de Santa Rosa a national wildlife refuge, an aide said Monday.

As a refuge, the waterway and wildlife corridor would fall under the jurisdiction of the federal Fish and Wildlife Service, eliminating the regulatory layers of about a dozen agencies.

The laguna is a 7,000-acre, 13-mile-long natural barrier between the cities of Sebastopol and Santa Rosa.

Legislative aide Joel Rogers said Monday that Bosco, who is reviewing the Sebastopol-appointed Laguna Advisory Committee's report and proposals, "feels the laguna warrants some type of federal protection."

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