

# Groups begin drive to park

## But the question is: What will the Laguna linear park include?

by Mike Jasper

Laguna study sessions make for strange bedfellows.

A diverse mix of representatives from the city of Sebastopol, county and state agencies, scientists and concerned citizens have been meeting to devise a master plan to create a Laguna linear park.

At its first meeting, the committee members held a brainstorming session where ideas for the uses and design of the park were discussed.

At its second meeting, Oct. 24 in the Sebastopol Library Forum room, the members worked on the

brass tacks of creating a master plan, with goals and objectives.

"This isn't an advisory group; we can make things happen," said Councilman Nick Stewart, who is the group's facilitator.

But others wondered exactly how a Laguna park plan would be developed.

"How do we get from where we are this evening to getting a draft prepared for a working master plan?" Sebastopol Mayor Anne Magnie asked.

Santa Rosa Utilities Director Miles Ferris suggested that all parties involved decide specifically what the Laguna park should be.

Questions posed included: Should there be public access? Should there

be public recreation? Hunting? Fishing? A wildlife refuge?

And Sebastopol Councilman Richard Johnson wanted to know who was going to be in charge. Johnson said one agency, created from the committee, should be in charge.

Ferris disagreed. He said if the agencies could reach a consensus of opinion on park priorities, a responsible agency would not be needed.

"If there is a unified plan that works, then you don't need a lead agency," Ferris said.

When asked why the City of Santa Rosa was interested in Sebastopol's lagoon, Ferris said Santa Rosa owns close to 1100 acres adjacent to the Laguna. Also, two of Santa Rosa's wastewater facilities are in the Laguna area at Meadow Lane and Delta Road.

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Bill Cox of the state Fish and Game department said the Laguna park committee should work closely with Congressman Doug Bosco's Laguna Task Force, which is largely looking for ways to provide a wildlife refuge in the Laguna area.

Cox, Joan Vilms of the Sonoma Land Trust, scientist Marco Waaland and former Sebastopol Laguna Committee Chairman Bob Sharp all sit on both committees. Communication between the two committees, Cox said, should be no problem.

All told, three Laguna committees now exist: Bosco's Laguna task force, Sebastopol's Laguna park committee and the Sonoma County Laguna Committee headed up by Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board.

Board chairman George Snyder said he thought the Laguna park committee could pull all the concerned agencies together for one overall goal.

"We're going to come up with a management plan," Snyder said. "This is a real melding of all the different groups that want to be involved."

Stewart formed a subcommittee near the end of the meeting to begin work gathering information for the Laguna park plan. Along with Stewart, subcommittee members include Ferris, Waaland, Cox, former Sebastopol Laguna

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Committee member Richard Nichols and environmental consultant John Cummings.

Others involved in the Laguna park process include Joe Rodota, County Regional Parks Director; Dave Richardson, wastewater engineering consultant for the city of Santa Rosa; Suzanne Nelson, former Sebastopol Laguna Committee member; Greg Jacobs, Gene Nelson, John Taylor and Karen Christensen of the Sebastopol Park and Recreation Commission; Sebastopol Councilmembers Tom Miller and Bill Roventini; Mindi Marshall of the Sebastopol Little League and Fifth District Supervisor Ernie Carpenter.

The next Laguna park study session is set for Nov. 21, 7 p.m. at the Sebastopol Library Forum Room.