

Colorado Lagoon Could Be Site Of Bird Rescue Center

By Harry Saltzgaver
Executive Editor

Many species of birds make Colorado Lagoon their home for all or part of the year.

If Frank Colonna's dream comes true, those birds and others in Long Beach will have a hospital at the Lagoon as well as a migratory stopping place. Vice Mayor and Third District Councilman Colonna said he thinks a Bird Rescue and Education Center can be created at the lagoon in spite of the current local and state budget crunch.

"I think numerous grant opportunities now present themselves, especially from the San Gabriel and lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (where Colonna chairs the board)," Colonna said. "I think that the time's right to move forward, look for funding and get some volunteers."

Colonna said he would like to turn the former snack shack on the east side of the lagoon into the bird center. He has suggested partnering with the El Dorado Nature Center to start work on the project.

Colorado Lagoon long has been an environmental issue in east Long Beach. Colonna has supported a Los Angeles County storm drain project that he says would improve water quality in the lagoon by increasing circulation, but neighbors oppose to the project.

A group called Friends Of Colorado Lagoon (FOCL) has stopped the county's storm drain project through legal action requiring a new Environmental Impact Report. Colonna has responded to that court decision by forming a task force — including FOCL members — to come up with a new master plan for the lagoon. However, that group has not been active.

Colonna said the bird rescue center project could move forward independent of the other aspects of the lagoon issues. He sent a memo to Acting City Manager Jerry Miller last week asking for a meeting to move the project forward.

To get on the volunteer list for the bird center, call 570-8756.