

# City, Audubon Society Agree — Lake Merced Gets Deeper

By Peter Tira

Lake Merced's water level is on the rise — the result of a compromise between the city and the Golden Gate chapter of the Audubon Society.

The city's Water Department began the daily pumping of five million gallons of dechlorinated water from the city's drinking supply into Lake Merced last Thursday. The pumping will continue for five weeks.

Previous attempts to add water to the lake were thwarted by the Audubon Society because a drastic increase of the lake's water level could adversely affect birds nesting along the shoreline. Some of the birds are protected by international treaties.

The Water Department initially wanted to raise the lake's water level by 4 feet; the Audubon society agreed to 2

feet immediately and 2 feet in July at the conclusion of the nesting season.

*See Merced, page 6*

# MERCED: Lake Water Getting Deeper

from page 1

"We felt the benefit to the lake would offset any damage to the nests," said Michael Healy, a representative of the Golden Gate chapter of the Audubon Society. "Instead of raising the level to 4 feet or waiting until July, we said add half now."

Gregg Tom, deputy general manager of the city's Water Department, called the infusion of water a "man-made fix to a natural problem."

Tom said the long-term solutions to the lake's diminishing water levels wouldn't be realized until there was better management of the underground spring feeding into the lake. The spring, or aquifer, is being pumped by a host of municipalities, golf courses, and cemeteries.

## Compromise reached

Supervisor Annemarie Conroy spearheaded the City Hall efforts to bring together the different factions concerned with Lake Merced's future. The compromise was agreed upon after Conroy held a City Hall

***'Lake Merced is really a city treasure. If we didn't add water, we would have lost the lake.'***

— Supervisor Annemarie Conroy

hearing on the lake.

"If we lost another couple of feet, it would have affected the fish," Conroy told the Independent regarding the urgency of the action. On March 1, Lake Merced's water level

dipped to an all-time low of 12 to 13 feet. It once boasted a depth of 27 feet.

Conroy also called the infusion of water a "stop-gap" measure and said there would be more hearings devoted to better management of the

aquifer by the competing users.

"Lake Merced is really a city treasure," she said. "If we didn't add water, we would have lost the lake."

Meanwhile, the Committee to Save Lake Merced will hold a public meeting at 10 a.m. on April 23 at Lake Merced's Boathouse Restaurant.

"Citizens will have an opportunity to thank San Francisco officials for taking the first step and to encourage them to now put forth a serious effort at dealing with the root causes of the problems at the lake," said an announcement issued by the committee.

of a similarly equipped  
cells has an M.S.R.P. of  
er seating, remote key-  
power