



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
(July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010)  
**FAIRFAX OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

16 Park Road, Fairfax

August 30, 2010

**OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE:**

Mimi Newton - Chair

Michael Ardito

*Denise Ferry*

Ted Bright

Ruth Horn

Barbara Coler

Jack Judkins

*Niccolo Caldararo*

Ryan O'Neil – Co-Chair

Helen Fauss

*Jane Richardson-Mack*

To: The Fairfax Town Council

From: The Fairfax Open Space Committee

Re: Annual Report for Period July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010

Below are some of the highlights from the Fairfax Open Space Committee's (FOSC's) efforts over the past year. We are very excited about our new website (<http://fairfaxopenspace.com/>), which went online in May. We've also made progress this year in acquiring an undeveloped parcel for the cost of the back taxes that were due. The Committee also made significant efforts in assisting in the development of the proposed revisions to the Town's Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan, proposed Rules for Use of Open Space, and proposed criteria for the acquisition of open space.

However, we have suffered this year also from the resignations from our ranks of the irreplaceable and irreplaceable *Denny Ferry*, *Jane Richardson-Mack* and *Niccolo Caldararo*, all of whom have made significant contributions in their own ways to the Open Space Committee over their years of service to our organization. We will continue to rely on their advice and good nature as our most recent alums. By the end of June of 2010, however, we had also met with our most recent addition, new FOSC member Chelsea Donovan, and we continue to look for two new members to complete the Committee.

**Fundraising Activities:**

We raised Open Space funds selling t-shirts and other items at the 2009 Good Festival (\$206), the 2009 Fairfax picnic (\$128), and the 2010 EcoFest (\$248).

We acquired organic cotton tote bags bearing the FOSC logo to sell at fundraising events in 2010.

**Open Space Acquisition/Preservation Actions:**

We continued working with the Town to help ensure continued access to the Egger Redwood Grove in the Cascade neighborhood through the easement across the Berg property. We also have continued to try to address bank erosion along the stream adjacent to the Egger Redwood Grove.

FOSC continued to locate, visit and identify Town owned Open Space properties as well as properties that the Town may be interested in acquiring.

On July 1, 2009, at the request of FOSC, the Town Council unanimously approved the acquisition of two tax delinquent parcels for Open Space. Both are adjacent to or in the middle of other open space or undeveloped land. Simply for payment of back taxes, the Town of Fairfax had the first rights to purchase the lots. Otherwise, the parcels would have been auctioned off by the County to the highest bidder. The first parcel had been in default since 2002, but was redeemed by its owner in August of 2009, leaving only one potential parcel for acquisition.

- The other parcel number is 003-161-07, on Cypress Drive. This parcel had been in default on its taxes since 2003. The Town has now successfully purchased this parcel for \$5,700, the amount of the back taxes that were owed.

We have worked with our Town Public Works Director to develop proposed Rules for Use of Open Space.

We began efforts with the Town to seek a permanent easement to access Jolly Hill behind the Bennett House.

We met with neighbors and community leaders regarding the Ross Valley School Board's consideration of both the former Marin Town and Country Club and the former Deer Park School as possible sites for a new school and expressed some of our concerns about ensuring the preservation of undeveloped open spaces in correspondence to the School Board.

We began development of proposed criteria to help guide the Town's decision making in terms of prioritizing particular parcels for acquisition.

We wrote inquiries to land owners that we had heard were interested in making land donations to the Town for open space.

**Fairfax General Plan Update:**

Throughout the year, FOSC continued its participation in the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)'s efforts to update the Open Space and Conservation Elements of the General Plan.

**Town of Fairfax Actions:**

We provided input to the Town Manager regarding the development of financial guidelines for Town boards and commissions.

Representatives met with the Town Finance Director on a number of occasions to assist with her efforts to audit the funds available for the acquisition of open space by the Town and the development of an Open Space Committee budget. In May of 2010, FOOSC submitted a proposed budget to the Finance Director. In August of 2009, the Finance Director reported preliminarily that the Town Open Space Fund has roughly \$6,000; the Wall Property fund (donations specifically for the purchase of the Wall property) has around \$8,000; and there is a reserved \$29,000 – related to the former Melvin property, now Egger Redwood Grove acquisition - for future open space purchases. While FOOSC has not received a final audit report from the Finance Director regarding the results of her audit of the Town's open space funds at the time of this Annual Report, we anticipate receiving additional information in the fall of 2010.

**Liaison/Networking/Coordination/Outreach/Education Actions:**

In July 2009, we began work on the Fairfax Open Space Committee's new website. The website (<http://fairfaxopenspace.com/>) went online in May of 2010.

In August of 2009, FOOSC members went on a Saturday hike with Marin Conservation League guides at Samuel P. Taylor Park.

We worked with the Town to create a map of undeveloped land within the Fairfax Planning Area to use for outreach at public events. The map depicts protected undeveloped parcels and private, unprotected undeveloped parcels and includes the locations of any structures on all parcels within the Fairfax Planning Area. This great map allows for a visual grasp of the connectivity and breadth of open spaces in our community.

Members of FOOSC attended the San Anselmo Open Space fundraiser in April of 2010.

Members of FOOSC attended a wild fire information session sponsored by the Town of Fairfax.