



View of the Wall Property from Scenic Road

Dec. 1, 2008

Fairfax Open Space Committee

Land Stewardship for Future Generations

Letter from the Chair

FAIRFAX OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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- Ryan O'Neil, Co-Chair
- Ruth Horn, Secretary
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- Jack Judkins
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My Dear Fellow Fairfaxians,

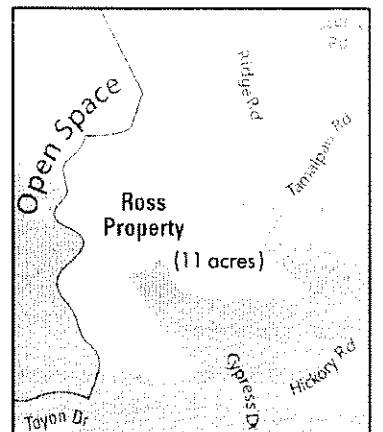
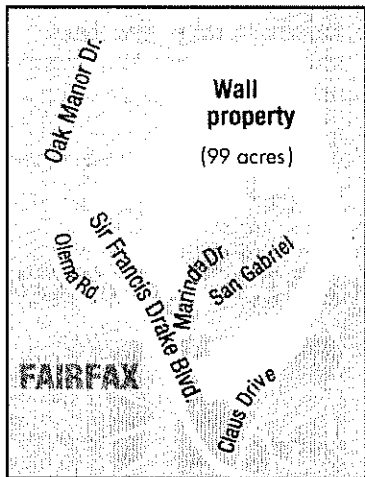
To all of you who have supported Fairfax Open Space (FOSC) in some way during this past year, THANK YOU!! Our small group of dedicated volunteers owes its successes to our community and to the wonderful people who cherish Fairfax and its open spaces as much as we do and who have supported our efforts. There are still beautiful, as yet undeveloped properties, which we would like to assist the Town in purchasing, especially those connected to other dedicated open space.

Throughout 2008, we focused most of our acquisition efforts on the Wall Property and the Ben Ross Property. Both properties would be incredible assets for the Town, and our goal is to preserve them as open space. As you stand in downtown Fairfax and look up at the unspoiled ridge line that stretches from behind Good Earth Natural Foods all the way west to Oak Manor Drive, you are looking at a huge piece of our visual corridor which is not now protected open space. Known as the Wall property, it is comprised of 99 acres of pristine hills, hiking trails and indigenous flora and fauna.

The 11-acre Ben Ross property, located near the end of Toyon Road, is accessible by hillside trails running through its magnificent Madrone forest. It is also connected by other trails to the Marin County Open Space ridge line, which it borders. Views from Mr. Ross' land of the hills and valleys of Fairfax are spectacular, and the property itself is center stage as one enters Fairfax from the east along Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Both the Wall and the Ross properties have been designated by the Fairfax Town Council as priorities for acquisition as open space. FOSC has mounted displays and information tables at Town festivals to raise awareness and support for our mission. We are searching for new ways to raise the large funds necessary for this undertaking, including seeking funding through foundation grants, government agencies and private sources. Together, with your donations, these funds will help us accomplish our goals. Thank you for your continuing support.

Mimi Newton, Chair, Fairfax Open Space Committee



View of the Wall Property from Olema Road. Circa 1930

Courtesy Bill Sagar

Old-Time Fairfax Families and Open Space

by Mike Ardito

Have you ever tried to imagine what Fairfax looked like when open space was abundant? Glimpses of the early 20th century are possible through visits to photo archives. One venue I found was tucked away on the Fairfax Historical Society shelf behind the reference librarian desk at the Fairfax library.

In the booklet, "Fairfax Family Album" in Box 3 on the shelf, I discovered a treasure of pictures. Listed by family names such as Arbini or Vaccaro, the old-time photos are accompanied by interesting family stories. Some of these families are now in the fourth or more generation as Fairfax residents. For example, the photo on the left from Lou Vaccaro's family shows his parents, Ida and Joe, with the milk cow in the pasture behind their home with a hillside of the Wall Property in the background. Today, Lou's home sits on the former cow pasture.

We ask you to join us in the important work of preserving the natural environmental of Fairfax. Today, more than ever, your generous tax-deductible contribution is essential to these projects.

*You Can Help
Protect Fairfax Open Space!*

—2008—

A view from the Ben Ross Property



*Fairfax Open Space Committee
142 Bolinas Road, Fairfax, California 94930*

Fairfax Resident
Fairfax, California 94930

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Access To Our Hiking Trails

Hiking, biking or running in undeveloped lands is one of the great joys of living in Fairfax. We tend to assume that all of these trails are on publicly owned lands. This is not always the case as I first realized when a trail I had regularly used for years was one day fenced off, gated with a lock and posted with a "No Trespassing" sign. I have since seen this happen to other trails that have been used by the public for many decades.

Under pre-1972 law, if the public had frequently and openly used a trail on private property for at least five consecutive years, without any attempt by the owner to prevent public use, then a trail easement may have been dedicated, by implication, for permanent public use. In 1972, the California legislature passed a new law stating that public use of private property that occurs after March 2, 1972 can no longer be used to establish an implied dedication of a public trail. For this reason, it is especially important to document the use of trails on private lands in and around Fairfax by the public prior to March 1972. No one, to our knowledge, is collecting this historic documentation. If you have any personal knowledge about trail use in Fairfax before March 1972, please call FOSC member Jack Judkins at 456-5503 and help us begin to collect these important histories.

Marin on Fire

With images of the 1,600 fires in California this summer fresh in our minds and vivid memories of the Oakland hills inferno, it is imperative that we address the serious threat of wildfire in Fairfax. In the DVD, "Marin on Fire, Preparing for the Next Urban Wildfire," narrator Peter Coyote cautions, "A wind-driven wild fire could begin in San Rafael and not stop until it reaches Muir Beach." Fire personnel believe such a disaster is inevitable unless action is taken. Many lives and homes would be lost. The existing fuel load of overgrown vegetation combined with the steep hillsides and canyons of our topography intensify our risk. Overwhelmed firefighters would not be able to help. "Marin on Fire" shows how to prepare as individuals and as a community to avoid catastrophic fire. The DVD details how to create defensible space around homes, eliminate highly combustible plants and materials, and identify evacuation routes. Fairfax neighborhoods are beginning to come together to raise awareness and to reduce fire hazards with the help of this important video, available FREE at the Fairfax Fire Department. We urge everyone to pick up a copy.



A view from the Vival Property

You Can Help Us Do More:

Join Us: The FOSC meets the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm at the Community/Youth Center at 16 Park St. in Fairfax. We welcome your ideas and participation.

Your Tax-deductible Gift will help preserve our precious open space for future generations.

Please make your contribution payable to:

Fairfax Open Space Committee
Town of Fairfax
142 Bolinas Rd., Fairfax, CA 94930



Visit Us: www.town-of-fairfax.org/BoardsandCommissions/OpenSpaceCommittee/