

Open Space Views

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A publication of THE SAN ANSELMO OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MISSION

The SAOSC is a volunteer committee of the Town of San Anselmo. We exist to identify and preserve valuable open space lands, viewsheds, and trails located in San Anselmo and the greater Ross Valley.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jonathan Braun, Co-Chair
Liz Huntington, Co-Chair
Kathleen Sanders, Treasurer
Linda Hoch, Secretary
Leonard Charles
Brian Crawford
Barbara Dwyer
Peter Horn
David Broome
Daniel Krebs
Stanley Radtke

TO CONTACT THE SAOSC

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The Committee meets the third Wednesday of every month at Town Hall. Please feel free to join us.

www.SanAnselmoOpenSpace.org

Making “Miracles” Happen

As the Town Council Chamber fills with neighbors of Hawthorne Canyon, my heart starts racing at the thought that I am the one who has to run this meeting. It's 1996 and the owners of the Hawthorne property are starting on new plans to develop this pristine canyon. However, before getting too far along in the extensive planning process, our General Plan requires that these developers meet with the San Anselmo Open Space Committee. As the three developers walk to the front of the room enveloped in an air of confidence, I think to myself, “We're just volunteers on the Committee. This is going to take a miracle.”

Today, Hawthorne Canyon is a 22-acre Open Space Park owned by the Town of San Anselmo! Since that unforgettable meeting, the ensuing years entailed difficult negotiations between the Town and the owners, door-to-door canvassing by incredibly dedicated neighbors, and generous donations from County Supervisor Hal Brown, the Open Space Fund, and a remarkable number of private and public donors. What seemed nearly impossible a few years earlier had become a reality.

It is at a very similar meeting back in 1990 that I first learn about the Open Space Committee. Notices regarding a development of 12 houses on Bald Hill galvanize neighbors on Redwood Road. The meeting, in retrospect, has much the same substance and dynamic as the Hawthorne meeting. The difference, however, is that over the next four years, protracted negotiations between the owner and Town Council produce a compromise allowing seven houses on six acres with 18 acres designated as open space.

Beginning with the purchase of a small knoll called Kite Hill back in 1982, to compromising for 18 acres on Bald Hill, greater successes quickly follow with purchases of seven acres on the Bald Hill Ridgeline above Deer Park School and Hawthorne Canyon. In all, over 53 acres are now permanent open space to be enjoyed by all.

While the Committee's job is to advise Town Council on preserving lands designated in our General Plan, to raise money, along with preserving trail access, wildlife habitat and viewsheds, the work we do only succeeds with the hard work of all our community, from all walks of life. Many times people wonder who is behind the scenes at the Open Space Committee. We're just San Anselmo residents, volunteering our time to keep our town lovely. You've stood in line with us at United Market or the Roastery, so we thought you might like to meet us. The following pages provide a snapshot, a sampling of our members' life histories and talents that have made such “miracles” happen.

By Kathy Sanders



Meet the Committee



Back left to right: Linda Hoch, Stanley Radtke, Jonathan Braun, Peter Horn, Danny Krebs. Front: Liz Huntington, Barbara Dwyer, Kathy Sanders. Not pictured: Leonard Charles, Brian Crawford, David Broome.

JONATHAN BRAUN, CO-CHAIR

A lifelong resident of San Anselmo, in the 1970's a horrendous development plan threatened the hilltop above our home. I was subsequently appointed by the Town Council to a committee charged with drafting an ordinance to govern hillside development. In 1981, I worked with a citizens group to advocate formation of an open space committee for San Anselmo. In that year the Council voted to create the Open Space Committee. I have been a Chair or co-Chair for more than 20 of our 28 years. I am a potter, wood worker and classical guitarist. Being in wilderness—be it our own back yard, the High Sierra, or the southwest Red Rock canyons—is my greatest pleasure.

KATHLEEN SANDERS, TREASURER

As an artist who revels in Marin's landscapes, joining the SAOSC over 18 years ago seemed a perfect fit. I was acting Chair in 1996 when we helped to preserve Hawthorne Canyon near Sleepy Hollow. Now, as treasurer, I am happy to build up our "war chest" for the bigger battles, such as the preservation of the top of Bald Hill. With my husband Jeff's permission, I occasionally borrow his 1962 Convertible VW Beetle, so that the Committee can promote our cause at local parades, turning my artistic training from UC Berkeley into practice.

BARBARA DWYER

A truly avid hiker, biker, and backpacker, I have lived in San Anselmo since 1972 and joined the SAOSC in 2006. Originally from a very densely populated town in Connecticut where the concept of "open space" garners little interest and less respect, I feel very lucky to live in San Anselmo. I was always a 'nature lover,' even as a child, and being out-of-doors was a large part of growing up. It's easy to take the beautiful undeveloped areas that surround us here in San Anselmo for granted and working to preserve them is a small way to give something back to our town.

LEONARD CHARLES

As a life-long partner in the dance with animal, plants, and the lands they inhabit, I have watched and participated in too many battles to save this or preserve that. As an environmental consultant, I firmly believe the one irrevocable way of protecting our remaining treasures is to buy them.

DAVID BROOME

We moved to San Anselmo in 1999 from Santa Barbara and started a family in this amazing place. My wife's an avid trail marathoner and I a serial outdoorsman and bicyclist. Our open spaces in and around town are precious and I feel must be preserved for future generations. Growing up in Houston, TX, we had the bayou and forests to play and explore nature. When traveling back to Houston today, sadly many of these places have been taken by development. I'm an open space advocate and have been a member of the committee since 2007.

PETER HORN

I have been a member of SAOSC for about 12 years. I have been a San Anselmo resident since 1974 and have always enjoyed outdoor activities including hiking, skiing, etc. I love Marin for its natural beauty and access for residents, and I wanted to help preserve as much as practical and possible from development, which would be irreversible. I have been involved in various community activities, former board member of Robson House, and I am currently small business counselor at SCORE/SF. Grass roots organizations are very important to our communities and I think SAOSC is doing a good job in raising awareness.

LIZ HUNTINGTON, CO-CHAIR

I have been a resident of San Anselmo since 1997, but have had family here for many years. I am a 5th generation San Franciscan, and have grown up with stories of California's development. An extraordinary amount of preservation has been accomplished by ordinary citizens at their kitchen tables. When I joined the Committee in 2002, my son Bobby was at Brookside School and I wanted to preserve a beautiful future for him. I also wanted to set an example that we too could be caring citizens at our kitchen tables, making a difference.

STANLEY RADTKE

My family has lived in San Anselmo for the last three years. We were life-long residents of San Mateo County, but we moved to this area for the stellar schools and the spectacular natural beauty of the land. I joined the Open Space Committee so that I could pitch in and help to preserve the open spaces in our community, one of the vital elements that makes Marin County a truly special place. I am an attorney specializing in Immigration and Deportation Defense. I try to find the time to take at least one family hike each week out on one of our exquisite trails.

DANNY KREBS

At a very early age, my family was involved in local, state and national political campaigns and a range of causes. My father was recently honored with the "John Krebs Wilderness Area" in the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park due to his efforts to protect the beautiful Mineral King valley. I have always valued the preservation of these special places, and keep the family tradition as an attorney with a focus on business and real estate transactions. I have lived in San Anselmo since 1996 with my wife Susan, and have two sons, Clay and Peter, both of whom enjoy hiking and all of the great areas to explore in Marin.



BRIAN CRAWFORD

I have been on the Open Space Committee since 2003. I am an avid hiker and play the game of geocaching under the handle "Bric." I became active in local open space issues when I joined the Sorich Park Area Residents, or SPAR, in 2002 to try to save an undeveloped parcel adjacent to Sorich Park. I have been co-chair of SPAR for the last two years. Since I enjoy the creation of new trails, I organized the construction of the Dean Nyberg Trail to Rock Fort in Sorich Park. I am also spearheading the proposed Sunny Hills Ridge Trail. My wife Linda and I have lived on Oakland Avenue for 23 years, and I spend free hours sailing, enjoying Renaissance music, creative writing — and pulling broom and picking up litter in Faudé Park. My son Nathan graduated from Drake and is now at Prescott College in Arizona.

LINDA HOCH, SECRETARY

TEETH...those were was the last things I wanted to be involved with when I decided to volunteer with our town. Since I graduated from UCSF in 1962 I had practiced in dental hygiene and was ready to avoid the oral cavity. So about 23 years ago I joined the SAOSC and have been participating ever since. Their goals are similar to my feelings. It is so important to save our precious limited open space areas and I feel our committee has made a good start by preserving 53 acres in the Ross Valley that could have been developed. My husband Peter and I have lived in San Anselmo since 1972 but I spent my childhood summers here as I grew up in San Francisco. The Marin Town and Country Club and roaming the hills near Fairfax were favorite activities for my friends, my husband and myself.

Preserving Open Space

Our mission is to preserve undeveloped property for public access and as visual open space. We work in collaboration with public agencies, the Marin Open Space Trust, and local neighborhood groups to purchase and preserve properties in the Ross Valley that have been identified in the San Anselmo General Plan as open space resources that benefit the health and well-being of local residents.

Over the past 28 years, we have protected 53 acres. The success of our efforts is due in large part to the enthusiasm and support of community members like yourself. But we still have work to do. Certain beloved areas of open space, such as the top of Bald Hill, remain unprotected. Other important parcels include lands adjacent to Sorich Park, parcels owned by the San Francisco Seminary on the lower slope of Bald Hill, and several others.



Our remaining wild lands contain important visual, natural, and recreational resources. The soul of a community is comprised of many attributes – cultural, relational, economic, and environmental. The iconic blend of developed and undeveloped landscapes defines San Anselmo and the greater Ross Valley as a unique and wonderful place to live. Without open space, our town and valley become part of the nameless suburbia that is inexorably spreading across the continent.

So, when you are deciding who to give some money to this year, please remember this local group which will use your donation to buy land to benefit plants, wildlife and the human community of San

Anselmo and the Ross Valley. And remember that a donation to our committee is within the true definition of "thinking globally and acting locally."

By Leonard Charles

The San Anselmo Open Space Endowment Fund

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Please make checks out to:

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San Anselmo, CA 94960





Sunny Hills Ridge Trail Proposed

From Memorial Park to Sorich Park

Your Open Space Committee is working to develop an exciting new trail connecting two of our beautiful Town Parks, Memorial Park and Sorich Park. If we are successful, the new trail would start near the American Legion Log Cabin and climb to the top of Sunny Hills Ridge behind Red Hill Shopping Center. The ridge offers spectacular views of the City, the Bay, and the town of San Anselmo, and provides one of the best local displays of wildflowers in the spring. From the summit of the ridge, the trail would again descend to join the Sorich Park Trail.

The entire trail would be three quarters of a mile long and would provide a more scenic alternative to walking the length of San Francisco Boulevard to reach Sorich Park. Hikers could continue up Cemetery Fire Road through the Open Space Preserve and down through Faudé Park, making a 3.2 mile ridge top loop entirely around Sorich Valley. This new trail could be a real jewel for the Town and would connect two of our most popular parks. The Open Space Committee and Marin Open Space District have received a grant from the Marin Community Foundation to help in construction. We will keep you informed as events develop.

By Brian Crawford

Open Space Views is produced as an informational service to the residents of San Anselmo and the Ross Valley, and is funded by contributions to the Open Space Committee. Editorial provided by Committee members, and layout by Liz Huntington. Masthead photo provided courtesy of Ernest Braun.



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