

Open Space Views

Vol. 31 ~ November 2020

SAN ANSELMO 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
Stanley Radtke, Co-Chair
Kathleen Sanders, Treasurer
Daniel Krebs, Secretary
Leonard Charles
Brian Crawford
Peter Horn
Karin Ludwig
René Voss
Paul Foxx
Nancy Grover
Henry Pratt

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

SORICH PARK

Of all the parks and trails protected and overseen by your Open Space Committee, the largest and most visited is the 62-acre Sorich Ranch Park at the end of San Francisco Boulevard. In these days of lockdown and social distancing, having this beautiful park available for relaxing, hiking, and enjoying wildlife is more valuable than ever. The tale of how this land came to be an open space park is a long one.

After millennia of care and use by the Coast Miwok people, the San Anselmo valley was settled by Juan Maria Sais in 1835. Four years later, the Mexican government granted most of the land to his son Domingo Sais. After Domingo's death, the rancho was soon broken up. The part north of Drake Blvd. from Red Hill to Butterfield Rd. was sold to George Cozzens. In 1879, it was purchased by brothers Jacob and John Orey Baptiste Short, who built a large family home on Durham Road.

They later subdivided and sold the area from Sleepy Hollow to Memorial Park. In 1895 the Short family moved to San Rafael and leased the remaining ranch to a succession of renters who grazed cattle on it. In the 1920's, it



was purchased by the Spagnoli family, who turned it into the San Anselmo Dairy. In 1945, it was purchased by Nicholas and Genevieve Sorich, who renamed it Nick's Dairy. In 1950, in a play on their family name, they changed it to the So-Rich Dairy. Three years later, they sold the land to the Town of San Anselmo,

who built their Corporation Yard there for the Public Works Department. The remaining 62 acres were designated as a park.

Unfortunately, the park was largely neglected and used as a storage and dumping area for debris and for construction materials. Around 1990 the Open Space Committee, with the support of some of the neighbors, took

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SORICH PARK

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the initiative to turn it into a real park that could be enjoyed by everyone.

The next step involved the development of a Master Plan for the Park to preserve its open space quality and map out park improvements. With the assistance of Tom Murphy, a landscape architecture graduate student from UC Berkeley, the plan was prepared and eventually approved by the Town Council. This enabled the Committee to seek and receive a matching grant for \$20,000 from the State of California. For every dollar and volunteer hour the Town invested in

the Park, the State agreed to match that amount. Improvements have included native plants and trees, a drinking fountain, new picnic tables, a new arbor, as well as drainage improvements. In addition, the parking area was relocated away from the central feature of the park, a fabulous rock outcropping. Subsequently, the Committee applied for and received

another \$5,000 grant from the Marin Community Foundation and a \$5,000 grant from the Longs Foundation. In 2005 the Open Space Committee



placed a memorial plaque in the redwood grove to honor John Walters, who worked for years to preserve Sorich Park and protect open space in San

Anselmo. The plaque was made by local artist Jonathan Braun, co-chair of the committee.

In 2006, local Eagle Scout Liam Hughes constructed a new trail from the redwood grove to an old rock fort in

the upper reaches of Sorich Creek. The trail was named the Dean Nyberg Trail in honor of the longtime Parks Director and friend of open space.

A volunteer community group, the Friends of Sorich Park, meets on the second Saturday of each month to mow weeds, pull broom, plant native trees and grasses, and maintain an irrigation system. To volunteer, write to TedBakkila@yahoo.com.

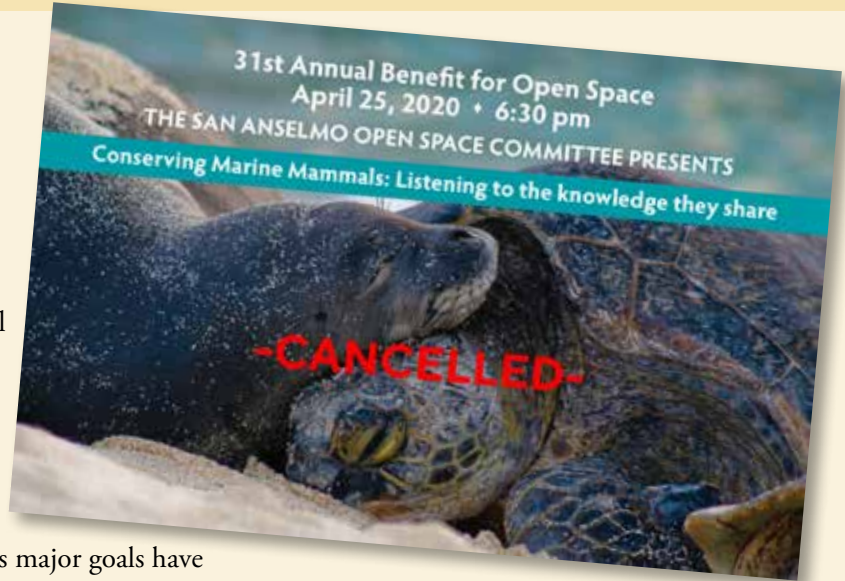
So if you're getting cabin fever and want to get outside, think of Sorich Park. The Sorich Trail connects with the Cemetery Fire Road, which climbs to Ridgewood Fire Road, providing excellent views (smoke permitting) of Terra Linda and San Francisco Bay. From there you can circle around the top of the park and descend to San Francisco Boulevard.

~ By Brian Crawford



Pathways to Freedom and Peace of Mind

It was March 13th, and preparations for our 31st Annual Spring Benefit were coming together nicely. We had just picked up and paid for all the printed materials for the invitations and raffle. Three days later, everyone's plans suddenly changed with the Shelter-in-Place Order. As the following weeks crept by, and neighbors began to venture out to find fresh air and solace, they began to explore the expansive backyard we call the Ross Valley. We would hear and see images of so many people confined to stifling apartments and hot concrete cities, sensing their intense claustrophobia, but ever so grateful for our own vast open space, our own pathways to freedom and peace of mind.



For 40 years, the San Anselmo Open Space Committee's major goals have been to preserve the natural beauty of the Ross Valley, purchase prominent undeveloped lands (68 acres to date), and to keep access to our public open space free to all. Whenever there is a development application that threatens access to public lands, it is the Committee's job to advocate for the preservation of these trails and access points. These trails are *in addition to* our recently constructed Red Hill and Memorial Ridge Trails, as well as the Dean Nyberg and Sorich Trails. These trails on which we all travel for our health and peace of mind found root in this Committee due to our very dedicated and long serving members.

This last spring, we unfortunately had to cancel this year's benefit and fundraiser, so we hope that as you hike the Ross Valley and explore new avenues, you think of the value these areas have added to your quality of life, and frankly, your sanity. We still have much work to do, especially in regards to Bald Hill, and we appreciate any contributions, great and small. Our Committee is entirely volunteer and works under the auspices of the Town Council. Therefore, no administrative fees are associated with this Fund. As always, the Committee thanks all of you for your vital support!

~ *Kathleen Sanders, Treasurer*

The San Anselmo Open Space Committee Fund

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$150 _____ Other

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Please make checks out to:
Town of San Anselmo OSC Fund
Your gift is tax-deductible.

Please mail to:
San Anselmo Open Space Committee c/o Town Hall
525 San Anselmo Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960

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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. Articles and photos by Committee members.

Or Current Resident

**WONDERFULLY WILD MARIN:
*A Calendar and Online
Fundraiser for Open Space***

Want to help protect local open spaces during these trying times and get some amazing artwork to grace your wall? Here's how!

The Fairfax Open Space Committee and San Anselmo Open Space Committee have collaborated to create an informationally rich and stunningly beautiful Calendar for 2021 called ***Wonderfully Wild Marin***. The calendar notes astronomical events, holidays from diverse cultures and religions, seasonal, cultural, and historical information about our natural surroundings along with outstanding vistas by talented local photographers.

So here's an opportunity to get the holiday shopping done early, benefit local open spaces, and to visualize a brighter and better 2021! To purchase go to: sananselmoopenspace.org or call 415-456-5476

