



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

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City to Celebrate Open Space

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, August 4, 2010 – The City will hold a reception Thursday, August 12 at 5:30 pm at City Hall for a community celebration of the 322 acres of Bainbridge Island forest, farmland and shoreline preserved since an Open Space bond received voter approval nine years ago.

Almost 70 percent of Bainbridge Island voters approved the 2001 bond issue, which set aside \$8 million to cover the cost of "acquiring or otherwise preserving forested areas, open space, wildlife habitat, farms and agricultural lands and creating new trails and passive parks...." The Open Space Commission, which was created to advise the City Council in carrying out this mandate, began its work in January, 2002.

“With the commission preparing to sunset now that its duties are complete, we thought it was well past time to celebrate the tremendous contributions that they and the other participants in this process have made to the Bainbridge Island community,” said Debbi Lester, City Council member.

During the past eight years, commission members worked with City staff and the City Council to select properties for preservation. Most open space properties were purchased with bond funds, although some – or portions of some – were donated, while others were paid for with grant or general funds or acquired through land swaps and cooperative purchases.

“One of the particularly exciting aspects of this process was the extent to which we were able to leverage public dollars in the acquisition of special properties,” said long-time Commission Chair Andy Maron. “Individual residents, non-profit organizations like the Bainbridge Island Land Trust, and larger property owners like the Peters family all came together to support the concept of preserving our heritage of green space for the long-term.”

Properties preserved through the City’s Open Space program include a portion of Pritchard Park; the Close, Peters and Schel Chelb properties, which form a greenbelt extending from Gazzam Lake to the beach at Lynwood Center; Hawley Cove, on the north shore of Eagle Harbor; the Bentryn and Morales farms, and the Battle Point Trail, a series of easements that connects the Grand Forest with Battle Point Park.

“I think each of us had our favorites among the properties we recommended to Council,” said current Chair Connie Waddington, who was among the original commissioners. “One of the very special things about serving on this volunteer group was the passion and dedication of each of the members, and each of us were passionate about different qualities of the properties we identified for preservation.”

Members of the public are invited to learn more about the City’s Open Space acquisitions and express their appreciation to the Open Space Commission, the City Council and other participants in the process at next Thursday’s reception. An Open House is scheduled from 5:30 – 6, with displays on the various open space properties; a presentation will take place at 6 pm, and a reception will follow in the Town Square at 7 pm. For more information, contact Cathie Currie, Communications Coordinator, City of Bainbridge Island, (206)780-8632 or ccurrie@ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us.

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