



## ***Suggestions To Improve The Open Space Planning Process***

***Open Space Fact Sheet #4***

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- Review existing Open Space Plans for your town or county before developing a new one. Many localities have excellent older Open Space Plans containing pertinent recommendations that have never been implemented by administration.
- Determine what's wrong with existing Open Space Plans (e.g., lack of key natural resource data) and concentrate your efforts correcting these deficiencies.
- Ask local officials or professional planners to review the existing Open Space Plan and comment on its worth.
- An Open Space Plan takes time to prepare. Realistically you are looking at a one or two year project. A good plan is based on public participation, which takes time, but it's time well spent.
- Review other Open Space Plans and compare them to what you've visualized for your town.
- Seek assistance from public agencies with staff knowledgeable about land planning and natural resource protection. Agencies such as SC DHEC/OCRM, SC DNR, regional planning agencies or your local COG are excellent sources.
- You might wish to hire a consultant. Before seeking private assistance try to determine specific areas where professional help is especially needed (e.g., map preparation or data compilation) and seek several estimates before signing a contract. Make sure the consultant is an expert in natural resource protection.
- Keep local officials informed of the Open Space Plan's progress. Communication is vitally important to avoid turf wars.
- Develop a slide presentation to address service clubs, commissions, senior citizens, etc. Show elements of local character such as marsh vistas or native habitat and how the Open Space Plan seeks to maintain these features.
- Ask newspaper reporters to do feature articles on the Open Space Plan and its implications for the community's future.
- Hold several informal meetings to educate the public on the Open Space Plan rather than one formal public hearing.
- Set up an exhibit of maps, photos and reports and place it in public places such as schools, the library or town hall.
- Conduct a Community Survey to gain public involvement and test reaction to your

preliminary ideas. The survey can also be a great public relations tool. Local stores and offices can serve as collection points for survey returns.

- Don't let your plan collect dust. Make sure it is folded into the local Comprehensive Plan as well as zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Personally contact owners of land designated as Open Space to discuss what the designation means. If they are willing,

ask them to discuss their future plans for their property and how those plans fit with the Open Space Plan objectives.

- Update your Open Space Plan periodically so you are not overwhelmed with the task of a major rewrite.
- Open Space preservation is a continuous effort.

To learn more, contact:

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