

THE ROSS REVIEW

Volume 2 | Issue 4 | April 2026

Mayor's Report



Mayor Julie McMillan

Mayor's Report - April 2026

Chief Pata's Retirement and Celebration Coffee - April 30: The Town of Ross has been so fortunate that Raffaello Pata joined us as Police Chief in March 2021. Chief Pata has demonstrated a deep commitment to serve and interact with the Ross community.

Chief Pata began his career as a city fire dispatcher at age 17, becoming a police officer in 1985 at age 20. After 34 years, he retired from San Rafael in 2018 and then worked for the Northern California Computer Crimes Task Force, assisting and training investigators.

In Ross, Chief Pata has been known for his open-door policy, broad smile and warm laugh. He has seamlessly led his department of eight Police Officers. Chief Pata engages with residents and genuinely cares about our community. He has been an excellent partner with students and staff at Ross School and Branson. He was instrumental in educating Ross E-Bike riders and leading the county's efforts to regulate E-Bikes to enhance safety for the riders and community. He has attended nearly every Ross Town Council meeting, providing a voice of reason and collaboration.

After five years of dedicated service, Chief Pata will retire on April 30. While we are sad to see him go, we are deeply grateful for his exceptional work with the Ross community, and excited for him to begin his next chapter. The Town will host a morning coffee for Chief Pata Thursday, April 30. Please look for more details which will be emailed soon and join us to thank Chief Pata and wish him well!

Please Support Downtown Ross Businesses: Many of you are already aware that beloved Crown & Crumpet has closed. We are very sorry to see them go. Each month, the *Ross Review* has been featuring a Ross business. Please patronize the fine businesses in our charming downtown – they need our continued support to thrive. At the March RPOA meeting, Ross resident Kevin Erdman shared ideas about how to enhance the downtown Ross business environment. Working with RPOA, Kevin will be implementing some of these steps soon. We thank Kevin and RPOA for their efforts!

Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendations - Wednesday, April 29: The Citizens Advisory Committee has been hard at work since mid-February and will give its recommendations about the Town facilities and fire station at the April 29 Council meeting. (Please note that the May Council meeting has been moved up to April 29 due to scheduling conflicts.) This meeting, like all Council meetings, will also be available on Zoom.

Chat with the Council every month on the day of the Council Meeting from 11am-1pm at the Ross Post Office.

(Council Meetings are held the Second Thursday of the Month unless otherwise noted.)





MAY IS WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH

Ross Valley Fire Chief Dan Mahoney

Happy Spring! May is Wildfire Awareness Month, and as your Ross Valley Fire Department Fire Chief, I want to remind our Ross residents that wildfire preparedness is a shared responsibility. Your fire department is here to support you every step of the way—from defensible space guidance, evacuation planning, to home hardening and emergency preparedness. By working together, we can reduce risk and strengthen our community's safety and resilience. Below are some key areas we ask our Ross residents to focus on. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator at preparedness@rossvalleyfire.org, if you have additional questions or need assistance.

1. Signing up for emergency alerts

We highly recommend that all members of our communities are signed up for Alert Marin, please use this link to sign up or verify that you are signed up today. [Alert Marin Sign Up](#) Please note that Alert Marin and Nixle are separate alert systems, evacuation alerts will only come through Alert Marin.

2. Have an evacuation plan.

We know that evacuation is a difficult topic for most people. In an effort to support our residents in their preparedness plans we recommend using the FireSafe Marin website as a resource for checklists, resources and information to make a comprehensive evacuation plan for you and your families. Click this link to start or continue your evacuation planning [Evacuation Planning](#).

3. Keeping a clear, fire smart yard

Fire smart landscaping does not mean a barren yard. The goal with a fire smart yard is to provide a buffer between your home and the surrounding combustible materials. Using proper plant spacing and prioritizing native plants you can help protect your home from the threat of embers, flames and radiant heat. To learn more or get planting ideas visit this link: [Fire Smart Yards](#).

4. Preparing your home

During a wildfire event embers are the cause of most home ignitions. Help reduce the risk to our communities by retrofitting your home with 1/8th inch vent mesh and metal gutter covers. There are many other ways to retrofit and defend your home and communities, you can find more information here: [Harden Your Home](#).

5. More Resources

- a. County Wide Chipper Day Sign Ups: <https://www.chipperday.com/marin>
- b. Defensible Space Inspection Program: <https://www.marinwildfire.org/dspace>

April 2, 2026 Council Meeting Highlights

Council Approves New Police Chief Employment Agreement

The Town of Ross announced the appointment of **Raul Ernesto Aguilar** as the Town of Ross's next Chief of Police following an open, competitive recruitment process.

"Raul Aguilar brings more than 25 years of law enforcement experience focused on community partnership, public trust, and professional policing to Ross and a well-earned reputation for steady, thoughtful leadership," said Town Manager Christa Johnson. Chief Aguilar currently serves as Chief of Police for the Marin Community College District Police Department and previously held a wide range of leadership and operational roles with the San Rafael Police Department. He will officially begin serving the Ross community on April 27, 2026.

A first-generation immigrant from Mexico, Chief Aguilar began his career with the San Rafael Police Department in 1999 as a police recruit. Throughout his career, he has worked closely with residents, educators, and local organizations while respecting the humanity of every individual. As a supervisor, he led units focused on Traffic Safety, Street Crimes Investigations, and Community Engagement, with an emphasis on transparency, collaboration, and fairness. He also served as a bias free policing instructor and bilingual public information officer, strengthening communication and accessibility with diverse communities.



Chief Aguilar holds Basic, Advanced, Supervisory, and Management certifications from the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). His leadership training includes the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Supervisory Leadership Institute and the Advanced Leadership Development for Command Staff program at the Museum of Tolerance. He earned a Master's degree in Public Affairs from the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy.

"I am honored to be appointed as Ross's next Police Chief and am committed to maintaining Ross's tradition of public safety through relationship-based policing, proactive problem-solving, and close collaboration with residents, businesses, visitors and Town leadership," expressed Chief Aguilar. "I have been meeting with Chief Pata and look forward to working with the dedicated members of the Ross Police Department to ensure a smooth transition."

Chief Aguilar succeeds Raffaello Pata, who is retiring after serving the Town of Ross with distinction as Chief of Police for five years. Chief Pata's last day will be April 30.



The Ross Farm Stand Returns

Town Council authorized a three year revocable lease for an Organic Farm Stand to be held Thursdays on Ross Common from April to November each year during the period 2026-2029. Visit the farm stand between 11:00am - 7:30 pm to stock up on fresh produce for the week.

Town Council received a presentation from staff and Nicole Kissam, with NBS, regarding amending the fee schedule. The presentation included evaluation of fees for services for Administration and Finance, Planning, Building, Public Works, Police and General Plan Updates. Upon completion of the presentation, Council voted to amend the fee schedule effective July 1, 2026.



Town Council Receives Key Updates on Facilities Plan and Financial Outlook

At its April 2 meeting, the Ross Town Council took an important step forward in planning for the future of the Civic Center and public safety facilities. The meeting featured two related presentations including one focused on the Town's financial capacity and the other on progress implementing the Facilities Master Plan.

A Look at the Numbers

The Town's municipal advisor, Fieldman Rolapp, provided an overview of Ross's financial outlook and its ability to fund major capital improvements. The Facilities Master Plan includes projects estimated at \$21 million to \$30 million. Based on current projections, the Town's existing revenues, largely tied to property taxes, are not sufficient to fully fund these improvements without additional revenue sources.

The presentation outlined potential options such as bonds and parcel taxes, each with its own tradeoffs. It also addressed the potential financial impacts of the Friends of the Ross Firehouse (FORF) initiative.

Progress on the Facilities Master Plan

The Town's Project Manager shared an update on the Town's progress moving the Facilities Master Plan from concept toward implementation.

Recent milestones include:

- Completion of the §9212 Fiscal Impact Report evaluating the FORF initiative
- Release of RFQs for affordable housing and design services
- Selection of a municipal advisor to support funding strategies
- Continued refinement of project costs and timelines

The Town is also preparing to begin environmental review under CEQA, a key step before design and construction.

What's Next

Work is now underway to identify a housing development partner and select a design team for Civic Center improvements.

As the process moves forward, the Council will be focused on:

- Prioritizing and phasing projects
- Identifying funding options
- Considering how the Facilities Plan aligns with the potential FORF initiative

Stay Informed

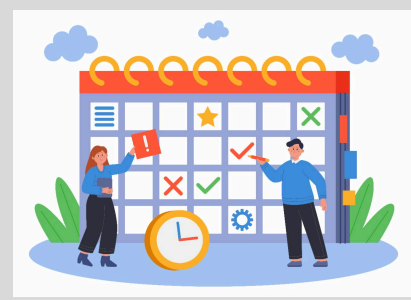
Residents are encouraged to review the full reports and presentations on the Town's website:

- [Financial Presentation](#)
- [Facilities Master Plan Update](#)

These updates reflect steady progress as the Town moves from planning toward implementation. The next phase will focus on aligning community priorities, funding strategies, and project design to shape the future of Ross's Civic Center.

Town Council Meeting Schedule Revised

Town Council adopted **Resolution 2616** changing its meeting schedule by moving the May 14, 2026 meeting up to Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 6:00 pm.



There will be no Town Council meeting in May.

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the April 2, 2026 Council meeting. Staff reports and video for the meeting can be found on the Town's February 12 website page. The minutes for the meeting will be posted on that page after adoption by the Council.

Address: 3 Allen Lane

Applicant: Imprints Landscape Architecture

Council Action: Approved

Vote (for/against/abstain): 4-0-0 (Council Member Salter Absent)

Address: 5 Allen Lane

Applicant: Imprints Landscape Architecture

Council Action: Approved

Vote (for/against/abstain): 4-0-0 (Council Member Salter Absent)

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 2026

April 2 6:00pm - Ross Town Council Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)

April 17 5:00pm - Live on the Common (Ross Common)

April 23 9:00am - Budget Workshop (Town Hall & Zoom)

April 29 6:00pm - Council Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)

May 2026

May 19 6:00pm - Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)

May 25 All Day - Memorial Day Holiday - Town offices closed

June 2026

June 11 6:00pm - Council Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)

June 16 6:00pm - Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)



Heart of Ross: Downtown Business Spotlight

Featuring What Makes
Ross Unique

Studio M

Studio M is a warm, welcoming space where great hair and real connection go hand in hand. Studio M is intentionally small. We get to know our clients, grow with them, and take the time to do things well. At the moment we have 3 talented stylists: Megan, Joel and Raquel.

Learn more about us on our website www.studiominmarin.com/

Our hours are Tue 8am–7pm Thu & Fri 8am–7pm and Sat, Sun, Mon, Wed by appointment only. Please reach out anytime: [415.250.0452](tel:415.250.0452) text or call or email StudioMinMarin@gmail.com.



What if wildfire safety made your yard more livable and enjoyable?

Zone 0, the five feet closest to your home, is one of the most important spaces for wildfire protection.

Noncombustible materials, such as gravel, stone, or pavers can make a beautiful area that:

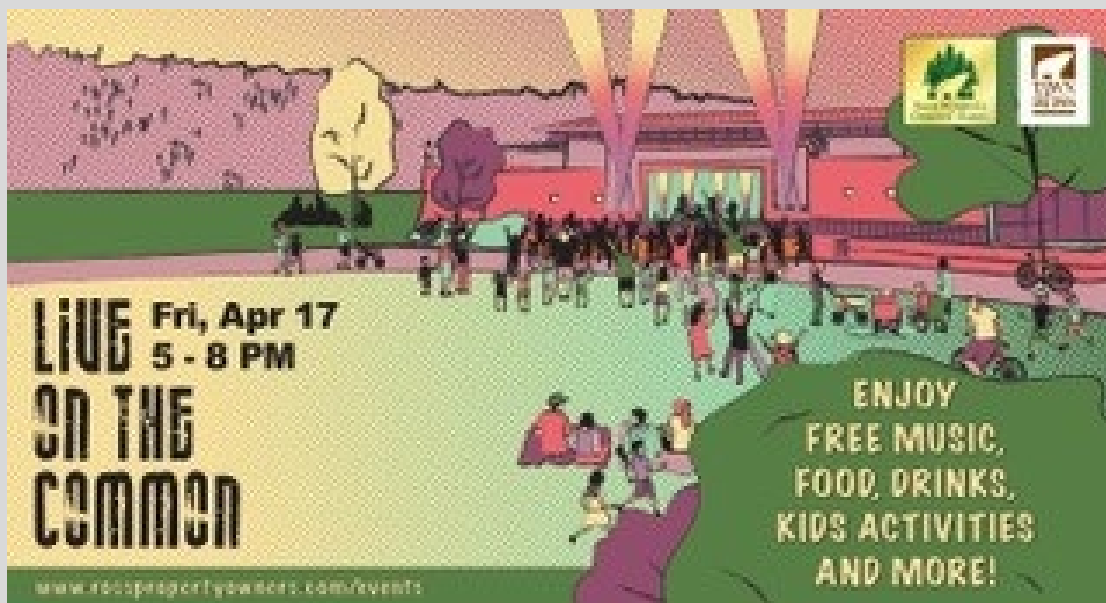
- > Reduces ember ignition risk
- > Cuts back on watering and maintenance
- > Creates clean, usable spaces

Beyond Zone 0, drought-tolerant plants and thoughtful layouts help yards stay green, inviting, and easy to care for. It's also a perfect place to create defined outdoor areas for gathering, play, and everyday use.

Resilient yards aren't empty. They are an opportunity to create an area that requires less water, less upkeep, and more space for enjoying time with your friends and family.

Learn more about creating safer, low-maintenance outdoor spaces: <https://bit.ly/Resilience-Reimagined>. You can also watch videos about many fire safe options [here](#).





Live On The Common

Friday, April 17 2026
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

MUSIC

[Petty Theft](#)

San Francisco's premier Petty Theft tribute band brings the iconic sound of Tom Petty to life with high-energy, authentic performances of his greatest hits.

Readers' Choice Awards: Voted Best of Marin's Local Band 2026

FOOD & DRINK

[Tony Tutto Pizza](#)

Delicious organic, seasonal, and artisanal pizzas crafted with care. [Pre-order](#) your pizza to skip the line, or grab a convenient [family pack](#) special with just a click.

[Taqueria Marin](#)

Classic Mexican street-style favorites featuring a full menu of tacos, burritos, enchiladas, quesadillas, nachos, tortas, fresh salads, house-made salsas, and more. Pre-order to save time in line.

[Riley's Food Truck](#)

Serving up crave-worthy comfort food including chicken sandwiches, crispy chicken Caesar salad, chicken & waffles, loaded fries, chicken tacos, and more.

[HopMonk Tavern Truck](#)

Fresh, locally sourced, seasonal ingredients come together in handcrafted artisanal sandwiches and thoughtfully curated eats.

[CurveBall Food Truck](#)

A local favorite since 2014, serving up flavorful sliders, juicy burgers, and classic fries.

[Poke-A-Go-Go](#)

Fresh, healthy poke bowls and more—perfect for a light and refreshing option.

[6oz Wine Bar](#)

A beloved local wine bar from Ross offering wine, beer, and other adult beverages. Now featuring beers from Best Day Brewing.

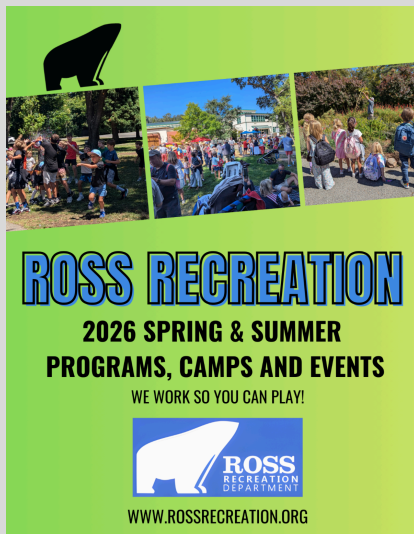
[Kona Ice Truck](#)

A fun, one-of-a-kind gourmet shaved ice experience with a wide variety of customizable flavors.

ACTIVITIES

[AndrewsCamps](#)

Kids can jump into a wide range of exciting, supervised games and activities led by the energetic AndrewsCamps team. From dodgeball and capture-the-flag to parachute games, musical hula hoops, tug-of-war, and more—there's something fun for every age group.



[Spring & Summer 2026 Guidebook](#)

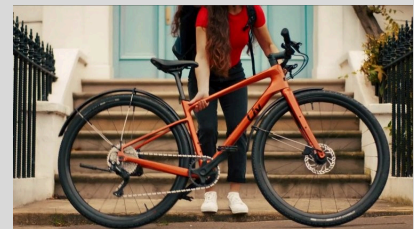
[Register for Summer Camps 2026!](#)

[Register for Spring Classes 2026!](#)

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Wheel Kids Bike Club is Back

Join the Club!
Wednesdays
1:45 - 4:15



This popular program is back at Ross, starting again this spring. Kids get the chance to ride together through their community as they learn safety fundamentals. This class is our only program not to register on the Sawyer platform. Visit <https://campscui.active.com/orgs/WheelKidsBicycleClub> to register.

There's More Biking

If a weekly class doesn't work for your kids' schedules, Wheel Kids is partnering with Ross Recreation and Walk & Roll for more April clinics! These one day opportunities are another good way to get kids out practicing safe riding on the road.

2nd graders can sign up for the April 13th clinic: **Ross Recreation - Walk and Roll Bike Clinic - 2nd Graders**

3rd and 4th graders can sign up for the April 20th clinic: **Ross Recreation - Walk and Roll Bike Clinic - 3rd & 4th Graders**

But space is limited and filling fast!

Get Outside and Play Some Sports!

With the weather getting warmer soon, there's plenty more options for after school sports with Ross Recreation.

Coach Schafer is coming to Ross Elementary for the following after school programs:

Mondays, 3:15 - 4:15

Ross Recreation - Sporty Girl Sports K-2 (Monday)

Mondays, 4:15 - 5:15

Ross Recreation - All Sports (K-2)

Tuesdays, 3:15 - 4:15

Ross Recreation - Soccer (Grades K-2)

Thursdays, 3:15 - 4:15

Ross Recreation - Coed Lacrosse (K-2)

And by popular demand, Coach C's All-Out Afterschool Sports is coming back to Wednesdays, from 1:45 - 3:00!

Ross Recreation - All-Out Afterschool Sports! (Gr. 1-5)

Our golf classes with TGA Golf are another great option - at both Ross School and Bacich Elementary.

Mondays, 2:00 - 2:50 at Ross Elementary for Kindergarten

Ross Recreation - TGA Junior Golf (Kinder)

Mondays, 3:00 - 4:00 at Ross Elementary, Grades 1-4

Ross Recreation - TGA Junior Golf

Fridays, 2:00 - 2:50 at Bacich Elementary for Kindergarten

Ross Recreation - TGA Junior Golf at Bacich (Kinder)

Fridays, 2:55 - 4:00 at Bacich Elementary, Grades 1-4

Ross Recreation - TGA Junior Golf at Bacich



Inspire Creativity After School

New! - Nature Inspired Art Lab



***Mondays | 2:00 - 3:00pm | Kinder
March 23 - June 1 at Ross School***

Students will explore drawing, painting, and mixed-media art through the lens of nature and the seasons. Using inspiration from plants, animals, textures, and landscapes, young artists will experiment with watercolor, collage, and drawing. Emphasis is placed on creativity, curiosity, and confidence rather than the "perfect" results. Each week introduces a new material or technique, encouraging self-expression and imaginative thinking while building foundational art skills.

Art Explorations

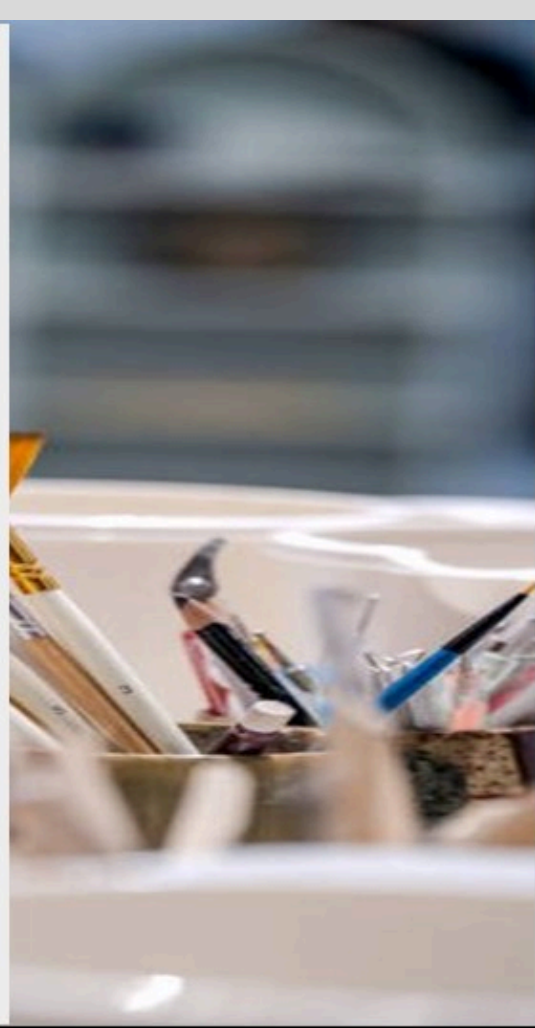
Wednesdays | 1:50 - 4:00PM |

Grades 2nd - 6th

March 25 - June 3

Marin Art & Garden Center

In this TWO-HOUR class, taught by two credentialed art teachers, students receive instruction about seeing the natural world around the gardens, as well as accessing realms within their imagination to create unique expressions of fine art. Specific skills of drawing, painting and sculpting are taught and built upon over time with the goal of allowing freedom to achieve art reflective of their desired goal.



Introduction to ArKIDtecture



Thursdays | March 26 - June 4

Kinder: 2:00 - 2:45pm

Grades 1-4: 3:00 - 4:00pm

Ross School

Curious about how buildings and cities are designed? In this hands-on class, students will explore the exciting world of architecture by learning the basics of design, structure, and creativity. Through various fun activities like building mini models, and experimenting with materials, participants will discover how architects turn ideas into real spaces. Perfect for curious minds who enjoy building, drawing, and imagining the places of the future!

Check out these options for Adult classes this spring:

NEW - Driftwood Painting Two-Day Workshop

Discover the art of driftwood painting in this brand new, hands-on two-day workshop! Two sessions are available — April 13 & 14, or May 18 & 19 — both running 10:00am–12:00pm. \$225 per two-day workshop.



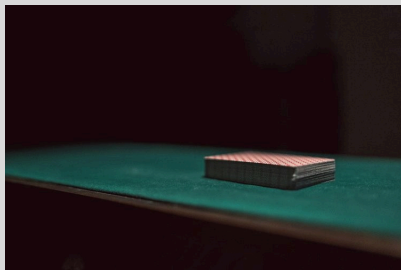
Tai Chi with Hal Mosher

Tai Chi has been shown to reduce stress, improve balance, and boost overall well-being. It's low impact, making it a great choice for adults of any fitness level. If you've been curious about it, this 7-week series at the Marin Art and Garden Center is the perfect way to give it a try.



Pickleball

Pickleball is fun, addictive, and easier to learn than you'd think. Join a class and find out why everyone seems to be picking up a paddle these days!



Bridge: No Trump Conventions

Ready to tackle one of bridge's most rewarding challenges? No Trump conventions can seem tricky at first, but with the right instruction they click fast. Come join a group of fellow card game enthusiasts and take your bridge game further. Register here: [Ross Recreation - Bridge: No Trump Conventions](#)

CONTACT US

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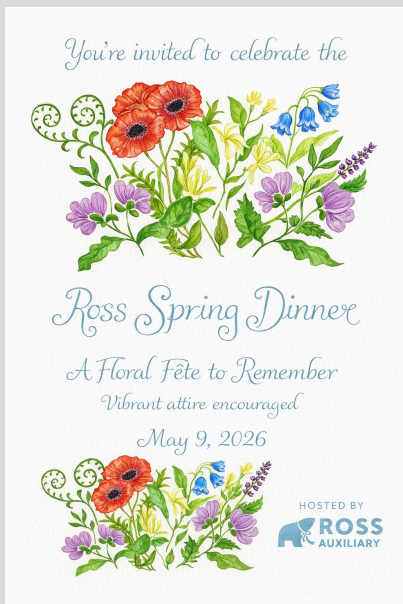
The Ross Auxiliary Spring Dinner is back!!

Saturday, May 9, 2026

Spring is in the air, and so is one of our town's most cherished traditions!

We are thrilled to officially invite you to the [Ross Spring Dinner on Saturday, May 9th](#)

This decades-long biennial tradition is the perfect way to celebrate the season with both old friends and new neighbors. We'll begin the evening with a vibrant cocktail reception in the gardens of the Lourdeaux Estate, followed by intimate, catered dinner parties hosted in beautiful homes throughout Ross.



The Details:

- **When:** Saturday, May 9th
- **Cocktail Reception:** 5:00 – 6:30 PM (Lourdeaux Estate)
- **Dinner Parties:** 7:00 – 10:00 PM (Private Residences)
- **Attire:** "Floral Fête" – Please come dressed in your favorite vibrant colors!

Why You Should Join Us: The magic of the Ross Spring Dinner lies in the surprise. Guests are randomly assigned to small dinner groups (couples stay together!), allowing us to foster the unique sense of community that makes our town so special. You'll enjoy a seasonal three-course meal prepared by wonderful local chefs, paired with stellar wine and exceptional company.

[Buy your tickets here!](#)

Garden Walk 2026

Join us for an age-friendly walkable tour of 5 private gardens plus a Garden Market along Glenwood Avenue between Lagunitas Road & Fernhill Avenue in Ross. Each garden features a unique style appealing to men, women, master gardeners and garden enthusiasts!

Grab your friend, partner and parents and enjoy a wonderful afternoon touring stunning themed gardens!





FIRE-SMART TIPS FROM THE UC MASTER GARDENERS APRIL 2026 MULCH

UC Marin Master Gardeners. APRIL 2026
MULCH

Mulch is any material spread over soil to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and prevent erosion. **Inorganic mulches** such as rock and pebbles

are a non-combustible option. **Organic mulch** is composed of plant material. Common organic mulch includes composted mulch which contains woody material and may have soil mixed in and medium bark nuggets and wood chips. All organic mulch is combustible but different materials and their size have varying flammability. It is important to select the right mulch and apply it in the right manner for each of the Defensible Space Zones to decrease fire risk as such, the best choice is composted wood mulch or bark chips or bark mulch 1-1.5 inches in diameter.

Zone 0 (0-5 feet from structures)

Use only non-combustible mulch like stone, gravel, or decomposed granite in this critical area around your house and wooden structures. These materials reduce the risk of ember ignition, offering extra protection for your home. Apply a weed barrier under rock mulch to inhibit weed growth, synthetic weed barrier is acceptable, ensuring that the weed cloth is not exposed or touching combustible siding.

Zone 1 (5-30 feet)

Composted wood chips or medium bark mulch work well here, but follow these guidelines:

- Keep combustible mulch depth to 3 inches or less
- Use combustible mulch in plant groupings separated by non-combustible mulch or hardscaping pathways or dry creek bed features. Synthetic weed barrier is not recommended beyond 5' from the home because they can inhibit water infiltration.
- Keep mulch away from the trunk of larger bushes and trees as exposed roots and bark can be killed by burning mulch. This is also better for the health of the tree.

Zone 2 (30-100 feet)

Follow the same guidelines as in Zone 1. Pine needles to 3" are acceptable in this zone as well.

Materials to Avoid

The most hazardous mulches are shredded western red cedar ("gorilla hair") and shredded or ground rubber and should be avoided, as they ignite easily and burn faster than wood chips. Fire retardant-treated mulches have a limited effective life and have shown to be no less flammable than untreated mulch.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FIRE-SMART LANDSCAPING, VISIT <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-marin-master-gardeners>

ZERØWASTEMARIN

Waste Less, Save More

Earth Month AND Tax Season

Both are a great reminder to take stock of our resources. Here's some tips on how to support a circular economy while supporting your personal budget.



Repairing > Replacing

If your item breaks or your clothing rips, repair it instead of buying a new one! Join a repair fair, find a fixer near you, or find a video online.



Borrowing or Buying Used

Only need something for a short time? Borrow it from a friend instead of purchasing. If you need to buy something, check a thrift store first!



ZERØWASTEMARIN

Intentional Spending

Sometimes it is worth it to spend more once on an item instead of continuing to repurchase cheaper versions. Investing in good cookware, tools, and clothes will last longer.



Meal Planning

Stick to buying what you need and what you know you will eat. This prevents food waste and saves you money!



ZERØWASTEMARIN

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