



Trailblazer

A Newsletter Published by the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

Fall 2016

Joint Cities Update

Trail Expansion

Last summer consultant Jana Sokale completed the Joint Cities Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study, exploring options to join Mountain View's five miles and Cupertino's one mile of trail. Because of the limited availability of public property, it was only found feasible for the trail to follow Stevens Creek from the current southern end of Mountain View's trail at the Dale Heatherstone bridge down to Fremont Avenue in Sunnyvale. Continuing south to Stevens Creek Boulevard in Cupertino, the consultant found there is not enough public property for the trail to follow along the creek.

The study was then reviewed by the CWG (Citizens Working Group), three citizens from each of the cities chosen by the Working Team to work directly with the consultant. The CWG reached consensus to endorse three contiguous sections. Section 1 was the route along the creek down to Fremont Avenue, Section 2 a separated path on Bernardo Avenue in Sunnyvale along the Highway 85 sound wall down to Homestead Avenue, and Section 3 a route along quiet Cupertino residential streets east of the creek to be made possible by a proposed new bike/pedestrian crossing of 280, joining them to Cupertino's existing stretch of trail at Stevens Creek Boulevard.

In August last year the supervising Working Team of one council member and one staff person from each of the four cities (Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Altos, and Cupertino) met to consider the study before sending it on to the four city councils. They unanimously approved Section 1 along the creek down to Fremont Avenue. For Section 2, they expressed hope that Sunnyvale would further study the proposed Bernardo path to get to Homestead Road, but chose no route in particular if that didn't work out, simply recommending bike/pedestrian improvements to all feasible routes.

For Section 3 the Working Team left up to Cupertino the choice of an on-street route from Homestead Road down to the northern end of Cupertino's trail at Stevens Creek Boulevard, encouraging Cupertino to keep open the option of a new bike-pedestrian crossing of 280 east of the

creek by sharing those plans with VTA and Caltrans. The full Feasibility Study and both CWG and Working Team recommendations are at stevenscreektrail.insunnyvale.com.

Last November, after review by their BPAC (Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee), the Los Altos City Council accepted the study and the Working Team recommendations. In December Mountain View reviewed the feasibility study results in a study session and informally decided to continue their plan to extend their stretch of trail to Mountain View High School and support extending the trail south to Remington Avenue and Fremont Avenue in Sunnyvale.

In February 2016, after review by their BAC and Parks and Recreation Commission, the Sunnyvale City Council formally accepted the Feasibility Study. It enthusiastically endorsed the proposed Section 1 creek-side trail down to Fremont Avenue, and accepted the suggestion to further study the Section 2 route along Bernardo, starting with a public hearing once construction of Section 1 begins.

On June 21, after review by their BPAC and Parks and Recreation Commission, the Cupertino City Council accepted the study along with the Working Team's recommendations, thereby deferring selection of an on-street trail route from Homestead Road south to Stevens Creek Boulevard. The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail encourages Cupertino to keep the option open for a new bike/pedestrian crossing of 280 east of the creek. We prefer that route over bike lanes on busy city arterial streets.

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail strongly supports the CWG recommendations as the most pleasant and direct means to join Mountain View's and Cupertino's existing trails. We hope Mountain View and Sunnyvale will quickly commence work on a Master Plan for the agreed on Segment 1 from Dale Heatherstone down to Fremont Avenue.





President's Corner

Welcome Friends

Welcome Friends!

2015 and so far into 2016 was a very, very busy time for the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. We expanded our organizational capabilities by getting new canopies featuring our logo to keep us cool and make it easy for people to spot our booth at local events. We also purchased 10 portable bike racks allowing us to park over 100 bicycles at a time at events. Our new race banner signage is much more professional and far easier to set up and take down, and new booth banners make our trail display pictures more visible and wind resistant—our old display boards blew over much too easily.

We hired a second part-time employee to help expand our capacity to manage volunteers and media, especially social media, and with her guidance developed a new and exciting brochure about our purpose and progress. Currently we have 8,200 active friends in our database and almost 3,500 likes on Facebook.

Trails are all about networks, connecting places attractively and allowing people to travel in a safe, pleasant, and environmentally responsible way. Along the same lines, the Friends has been partnering with other like-minded organizations in transportation, parks, science, and health care, including Rails to Trails, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Valley Transportation Agency, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Nerds for Nature, Ridge Trail, Bay Trail, Save Our Trails, Santa Clara County Parks, Santa Clara County Health Department, and others. We helped organize and run the first Santa Clara County Trails Forum in 2015. Together we all are working to make our communities healthier, happier, friendlier, and more sustainable by encouraging people to bike, walk, and enjoy the wonders of nature in their own backyard instead of driving.

During this past year the Stevens Creek Feasibility Study was completed, presented, and accepted by the four cities that sponsored it: Mountain View, Los Altos, Sunnyvale, and Cupertino. See cover article, "Joint Cities Update."

In concert with the Rails to Trails and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, we are working to get better trail use data so future trail development and connections can be data driven as much as possible. We also enabled the VTA to publish their widely used and newly updated 2016 Santa Clara County bike map by providing major funding and other assistance.

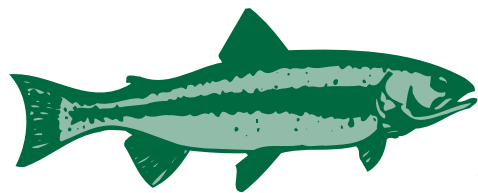
We continue to help improve the Stevens Creek wildlife corridor by assisting the Santa Clara Valley Water District with fish passages. Please see "Can the Steelhead Thrive Again?" below.

Our annual spring creek/trail cleanups are a great way to get our volunteers out and help the environment. Personally, I am working to get my household to zero waste to reduce trash before it enters our creeks and wildlife corridors. Please join me and do easy little creek cleanups every day simply by reducing your use of disposables. For tips see rethinkdisposable.org.

Currently we have 6 miles of trail completed on the valley floor. 3.5 more miles are needed to connect the Cupertino and Mountain View portions, and another mile to reach the Stevens Creek County Park. From there to the Ridge Trail are about 7.5 miles of completed trail and a 3-mile gap. Since Permanente Creek and Trail are nearby and intrinsically connected to Stevens Creek, our organization has adopted this sister trail and wildlife corridor under our wing as well.

The Stevens Creek Trail is making steady progress. We greatly appreciate your ongoing support through financial donations, volunteering, letting others know you support the trail, and using and watching over our trail. Thanks! Happy Trails!

Tim Oey, President
president@stevenscreektrail.org



Can the Steelhead Thrive Again?

Can steelhead trout thrive again in Stevens Creek? We think so, if we return the creek to a more natural flow.

Steelhead are anadromous fish, in the same family as salmon—born in fresh water, going out to sea to grow, then returning after 2-3 years to reproduce. Unlike salmon, they survive spawning and can return many times. Juveniles may live 1-3 years in the creek before migrating to the sea. The main habitat for juveniles in Stevens Creek is below the reservoir in Cupertino.

Stevens Creek is one of the more natural creeks in the area, with most of it still having a bed of dirt and rocks. The problem areas for fish attempting to move up and down stream happen mostly where man has added concrete in the channel, creating flat bottoms where water spreads out too thin for passage, or creates a lip and drops too high for fish to jump, or without a pool for them to takeoff from or land in. Over 40 such obstacles occur in Stevens Creek. Although many are beneath overpasses, one is actually UNDER Stevens Creek where the Hetch Hetchy pipeline crosses it.

In May 2015, the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail began a partnership with the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition to try to expedite improvements to Stevens Creek and remove barriers to passage. The history of this actually dates back 12 years earlier to the 2003 Fisheries and Aquatic Habitat Collaborative Effort (FAHCE) Settlement Agreement with Santa Clara Valley Water District, SCVWD. It culminated with a formal grant application in March 2016 for a study of seven locations along the creek with impediments to fish passage. For this approximately \$75,000 study, we recruited as additional partners and financial supporters the Cities of Cupertino, Sunnyvale, and Mountain View, and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The grant was approved on 30 June 2016 and the study itself should begin in August and conclude by March 2017. Eventual construction costs of improvements will be paid for by SCVWD as part of the 2003 FAHCE settlement.





Trail Progress

Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Altos, Cupertino

Mountain View

Mountain View, the city that started Stevens Creek Trail, continued its full participation and coordination with upstream cities to extend the trail south from its completed five miles. As the trail becomes increasingly popular with people walking and biking, the City has initiated a Trail Ambassador program and installed signage along the trail. Trail Ambassadors promote proper trail etiquette, provide assistance to visitors, and educate users about the history, ecology, and regulations governing Shoreline and Stevens Creek Trails. If interested in becoming a Trail Ambassador please contact shoreline.volunteer@mountainview.gov.

The popularity of Stevens Creek Trail has increased community interest in extending the nearby, younger and so far shorter Permanente Creek Trail. After discussion at its annual Board retreat, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail voted to add the Permanente Creek to its mission. This decision was based on geographic proximity, as both creeks are in the same watershed, and synergistic opportunities for watershed preservation and trail development.

The City of Mountain View has also been active planning improvements on both Stevens Creek and Permanente Creek Trails, including funding approval for the following projects:

- Design study to extend Stevens Creek Trail further south to Mountain View High School;
- Design study to improve its Central Expressway/train tracks/Evelyn Avenue bridge;
- Modify the Permanente Creek Trail underpass at Amphitheater Parkway;
- Extend Permanente Creek Trail from Rock Street to Middlefield Road;
- Feasibility study to extend Permanente Creek Trail from Middlefield Road to McKelvey Park.

Follow us on Facebook for updates on all these developments.

Sunnyvale

The Sunnyvale City Council voted in February 2016 to recommend the Stevens Creek Trail options put forward by the Joint Cities Working Team commissioned by Mountain View, Los Altos, Sunnyvale, and Cupertino. This followed a year of public reviews and comments on the draft feasibility report released in March 2015. The recommended path forward is to initiate an environmental review and secure funding for the proposed segment between Dale Avenue-Heatherstone Way in Mountain View down to Fremont Avenue in Sunnyvale. After that a traffic study would be initiated on the proposed Bernardo Avenue segment further south, between Fremont and Homestead Road. Meanwhile Sunnyvale would partner with the other cities involved to move planning forward on segments between Homestead and Stevens Creek Boulevard, to the existing Blackberry Farm trail. The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail strongly supported the Citizens Working Group which advised the Joint Cities Team as well as fully participated in the various public forums on the recommendations held before the report was forwarded to the respective city councils. The Sunnyvale action represents a significant achievement in closing the trail gaps between Mountain View and Cupertino. Members and supporters of The Friends can take pride that their many years of service and outreach have now resulted in a positive step forward on the mission to see the trail completed.

Cupertino

Cupertino recently added another destination along its beautiful one mile stretch of trail through the 65 acre Stevens Creek Corridor open space between Stevens Creek Boulevard and McClellan Road when the impressive new Environmental Education Center opened last October in McClellan Ranch Nature Preserve. Nearby the Grassroots Ecology (formerly part of Acterra) volunteer habitat restoration project continues in the McClellan Ranch meadow, where the fenced islands of native plantings can be seen from the trail.

Options for extending the trail north of Stevens Creek Boulevard to Mountain View were presented in the Joint Cities Feasibility Study, completed last summer. The lack of public land along the creek between Stevens Creek Boulevard and Homestead Road dashed hopes for a creek-side trail there. Several on-street connector routes are proposed, with a decision possibly years away. However, the City is still considering a tunnel under Stevens Creek Boulevard to get trail users safely across that stretch of road.

Unfortunately a possibility of land becoming available to extend the trail south of McClellan Road as part of a deal to build homes on a piece of land on the creek just north of the County Park expired when the proposed Parkside Trails project was abandoned.

Los Altos

The Los Altos city council on November 24, 2015 unanimously passed a four-page resolution stating, "Now therefore be it resolved, that the City Council of the City of Los Altos hereby supports the recommendations of the Joint Cities Working Team, submitted to the Los Altos City Council on October 27, 2015, and agrees to support the Cities of Cupertino, Mountain View and Sunnyvale in their Stevens Creek Trail planning efforts..." Full text can be found at http://los-altos.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&event_id=262&meta_id=44215.



Cupertino and Los Altos Board Members Needed!

We are looking for new board members who want to see Stevens Creek Trail succeed in expanding all the way from the Bay to the mountains. We particularly need people residing in Los Altos or Cupertino. It's an easy, fun, and rewarding volunteer role to fill. Come meet a great group of people and help us achieve our mission to promote community pride and citizen involvement in the completion, enhancement, and enjoyment of Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor. We meet the fourth Thursday of each month from 7:00–9:00 pm at our office in Cupertino. For more information e-mail Aaron at exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org.



22ND Trailblazer Race

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Trailblazer — Come Out and Enjoy the Trail Sunday, September 25th

Proceeds Benefit the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

Save Sunday, September 25 for the fun and exciting Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk on the scenic Stevens Creek Trail! This is our 22nd annual fundraiser and features certified 10K and 5K races, a 3-mile scenic Trail Walk, and free kids' events. This is truly an event with something for all ages and fitness levels. All proceeds benefit the nonprofit Friends of Stevens Creek Trail.

Paid events start at 8:30 am sharp, include a race T-shirt, and are open to anyone who can safely participate. Free for kids are ongoing inflatable mazes, games, and face painting. Our famous (and also free!) age-appropriate children's races are about 9:45 a.m.

This family-friendly celebration is for all ages and experience levels, from first-timers to competitive athletes and from children to senior citizens. One of our goals is to get more people outside for fun, healthy exercise while enjoying the trail. The event is made possible by support from the City of Mountain View, presenting sponsor Microsoft Corporation, and our other generous benefactors.

Everything starts and finishes at the Microsoft campus, 1065 La Avenida Avenue in Mountain View. The 5K (3.1-mile) and 10K (6.2-mile) footraces are certified by the U.S. Track and Field Association and officially timed. Runners head north on the trail to Shoreline Park before returning back to campus for a spirited finish in front of a crowd of cheering onlookers. The more relaxed, self-paced, and non-competitive 3-mile trail walk enters Stevens Creek Trail from the Microsoft campus and heads south away from the runners along a particularly scenic stretch of trail. Complimentary food, water and Starbucks coffee (while it lasts) are provided.

Registered racers, walkers, and volunteers receive a T-shirt with this year's stylish race logo created by local artist Bill Murray. Free children's events do not include a T-shirt. All registered participants including children are eligible for a post-race drawing of valuable prizes donated by race sponsors.

We need many adult and student volunteers to come early and help setup, hand out food and water, guide and cheer participants on the courses, manage kids' events, and then help clean up afterward. Registered volunteers receive a free race T-shirt and become members of the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail!

Get \$5 off the race-day price for runners and walkers who register in advance online by credit card at www.stevenscreektrail.org until September 24, or until September 12 using our downloadable mail-in registration form. Contact us by September 7 if you need us to mail you a registration form. Volunteers need to register by September 18, at no cost, T-shirt included! We welcome additional sponsors, donations or gifts in kind: exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org or call 408-255-5780 for more information.

The Friends organization has been dedicated to the completion, enhancement and enjoyment of the trail and wildlife corridor since 1992, and each Trailblazer Race helps raise the funds we need to continue our work. Thanks for your support!

Registration	Advance	At Event
Adult 5K or 10K Race	\$25	\$30
Youth* 5K or 10K	\$10	\$15
3-Mile Trail Walk Any Age	\$10	\$15

*Youth rates are for ages 19 and under.

**Register to
Run, Walk, or Volunteer
at www.stevenscreektrail.org**

Tom Bornheimer—Volunteer of the Year

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail is honored to name Los Altos native Tom Bornheimer its 2016 Volunteer of the Year. An avid runner, Tom first became acquainted with the Stevens Creek Trail when he ran the 10K race at the Second Annual Trailblazer Race in 1995. “I thought the area was beautiful, and I needed to explore it more,” said Tom. He began volunteering and has since then contributed hundreds of hours working creek clean ups, staffing our Art & Wine Festival information tables in Mountain View, Los Altos, Cupertino and Sunnyvale, and speaking at city council meetings.

Tom graduated from Los Altos High School, earned an A.A. from Foothill College, his B.A. from University of Hawaii, and his MBA from Golden Gate University. He works in data reporting and analysis for Kaiser Permanente and now lives with his wife Christina in San Francisco. Tom believes in taking local action to make our world a better place.

Tom served fifteen years on the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail board of directors. After volunteering with Friends for several years, in 2001 Tom was laid off from his job at Sun Microsystems. He contacted then-executive director Susie Brain and asked about applying for a board seat. “It was good timing as I was not working and could spend time exploring the trail and adjacent neighborhoods,” he said.

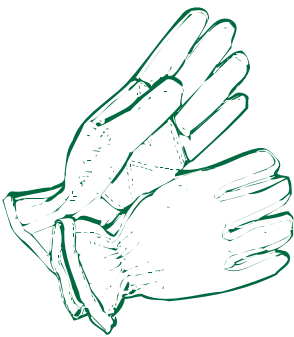
He says the easiest way people can support the Trail is by sending a quick e-mail to our city council members asking them to support completion of the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor. Tom sees the biggest challenges as maintaining community support to encourage the cities to design, fund and construct the remaining sections of the trail. He has a clear vision for completing the Trail and Wildlife Corridor. “Within ten



Tom Bornheimer, Volunteer of the Year, with his wife Christina

years, I hope to see the trail completed to Mountain View High School, within 15 years completed through Sunnyvale and Cupertino to Stevens Creek County Park, and within 20 years completed to the headwaters in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Being part of a volunteer board of directors is extremely rewarding. I highly encourage anyone to join a board for a cause they believe in.”

Thank you Tom, and congratulations!



Trail Cleanup Day 2016

Another fun and successful Trail Cleanup took place on Saturday, April 16. Meeting 9:00 a.m. at Whisman Park on a sunny and pleasant day, 31 volunteers spent the morning on various cleanup and painting activities. After a brief check in and chat, Mountain View City staff organized the volunteers and passed out gloves, garbage

bags and tools. Then everyone headed out to the creek and other park locations, supervised by the attentive Mountain View staff who as always made the event safe and enjoyable. Several families were out volunteering with their kids, plus a major contingent of Mountain View Rotary folks returned once again to pitch in. Everyone was quite enthusiastic, and a commonly heard refrain was, “I use this beautiful trail so often, the least I can do is give back by helping to keep it clean.” Several groups headed up and down the trail to collect waste, resulting in a very large truckload of trash by the end of the morning. Meanwhile others spread out mulch below the trees at the edge of the park, and some painted fences and walls needing attention. A lot was accomplished that morning. We thank our dedicated volunteers and the City of Mountain View for another successful clean-up day. See you next year!



Social Media and Us

Our outreach through online social media platforms has been increasing at a fast-pace. We are tweeting to the public to spread our Stevens Creek Trail message, detail our events, and show appreciation to our loyal followers. Using our Facebook and Twitter pages has greatly increased the number of volunteers and supporters, and has significantly raised awareness of the Friends’ history, accomplishments, and future goals. We hope to reach as many local residents as possible, and also people around the world, to inform them of our trail mission and how far we’ve come. Please follow us on Twitter @fosct or like us on Facebook at stevenscreektrail!



Before you recycle, perhaps you have a friend who would like to read about the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. Please pass it on!



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Trailblazer Race 2016 *Sunday, September 25th*

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Mission: The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail promotes community pride and involvement in the completion, enhancement, and enjoyment of the Stevens Creek and Permanente Creek Trails and Wildlife Corridors.

Thank You Thank You Thank You

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