

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail 2010 Annual Report



**FRIENDS OF
STEVENS CREEK TRAIL**

**22221 McClellan Road
Cupertino, CA 95014**

Mission Statement:

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail promotes community pride and involvement in the completion, enhancement and enjoyment of the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor.

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail 2010 Annual Report

Executive Summary

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail enjoyed a prosperous year in 2010 with many accomplishments. We continued our stewardship of the existing trail and participated in planning and advocacy for extending the trail while our organization continued to adapt to the changing requirements of this planning. And, again, our fundraising efforts went beyond satisfying our current needs.

Stevens Creek Trail extends about 5.5 miles: 4.75 miles completed in Mountain View and 0.7 miles of trail in Cupertino. These urban sections are in addition to the hiking portions of Stevens Creek Trail above Stevens Creek Reservoir connecting up to Skyline Ridge and the Skyline to Sea trail.

In 2010, the design, funding, and approval were accomplished for two trail extensions. In Mountain View, a short extension of the trail from Sleeper Avenue with a crossing over Highway 85 to the east side at Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way completed design and went out to bid. Construction is expected to be completed in spring of 2012, though the extension will likely open by the end of 2011. In Cupertino, an additional access point from Scenic Circle was approved and funded. This should open mid-2011. Design for the continuation of the Cupertino section of trail to Stevens Creek Boulevard will also take place in 2011 and will include restoration work on Stevens Creek.

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail organization in 2010 consisted 13 board members, 1 junior board member, and a part-time Executive Director. While most of the board members are Mountain View residents, reflecting where the majority of trail work has been happening, we have continued to emphasize adding "upstream" board members and had 5 board members from those cities: Los Altos, Sunnyvale, and Cupertino.

Financially, 2010 was a very successful year for the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. Our main fundraising activities continued to be our annual appeal letter and our fun, community oriented Trailblazer running race and trail walk. Nearly all of our race sponsors returned in 2010, with our lead sponsor, Microsoft, increasing their support substantially. We also found a new major sponsor when HSBC bank opened a location near the trail on Grant Road. This all positions us well to focus on our mission of facilitating extension of the trail.

Looking forward, we are enthusiastic about the planning for future trail segments that is going on with the Joint Cities Working Group, an ad hoc assembly of council members and staff from the four cities adjoining Stevens Creek in addition to the Santa Clara Valley Water District and Santa Clara County Parks Department. They are working on obtaining funding for a feasibility study of how to best join the trails in Mountain View and Cupertino. Internally, we are focused on building our representation in Cupertino, Los Altos and Sunnyvale.

As the only nonprofit organization dedicated to the Stevens Creek Trail project, we are very gratified by these accomplishments and pleased that our sustained efforts helped bring them about. We are deeply grateful for the continuing support and cooperation of our many community partners, including city and county officials, volunteers, businesses, donors and other supporters. As a volunteer organization with one part-time staff member, the Friends relies heavily on the generosity and goodwill of others who share our passion and vision for the trail. The work we do would not be possible any other way.

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail 2010 Annual Report

City-by-city Highlights in 2010

Mountain View added a new half-mile section of trail to Sleeper Avenue in 2009, featuring many native plants and trees along the trail and an oak grove with a meandering walking path. It also opened a new bridge over Moffett Boulevard to eliminate the only street-grade crossing on the entire trail. The Friends supported a combined celebration of both openings in June 2009 by leading walkers and cyclists along the trail between the two locations.

In 2010 Mountain View completed and approved design of the next segment, a major project continuing the trail south from Sleeper Avenue over Highway 85 and connecting to Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way. This extension is fully funded, construction has started, and completion is expected in 2012. The Friends appreciate Mountain View City Council's steadfast commitment to the trail!

Los Altos is waiting on Sunnyvale and Mountain View plans to be developed before continuing with their own. This follows several years of diligent work on a Los Altos feasibility study. Sharing a common border with Sunnyvale along Stevens Creek, the city believes trail work there needs to be well coordinated. Los Altos has worked to move Joint Cities planning forward using their own feasibility study as an example. We thank their City Council for being a staunch supporter of the Friends' proposal to form a "4-city team" and making the "Joint Cities" working team a reality!

Sunnyvale saw major action in 2009 when the City Council removed their 1994 general plan amendment prohibiting the Stevens Creek Trail, and adopted a general plan statement to: "Support proliferation of multi-use trails within Sunnyvale, and their connection to regional trails, in order to provide enhanced access to open space, to promote alternative transportation options, and to increase recreational opportunities, while balancing those needs with preservation of natural habitat, public safety, and the quality of life in residential neighborhoods." Sunnyvale is now leading the cross-jurisdictional feasibility study. The Joint Cities team and the Friends are delighted with their leadership!

Cupertino became the second city with a section of Stevens Creek Trail in 2009 with the Phase I reopening of Blackberry Farm. That created a new 2/3-mile-long section of trail from McClellan Road along the side of McClellan Ranch and into Blackberry Farm.. The trail was part of an even larger project restoring the creek to a gentler slope and eliminating much concrete from the banks and streambed. The result is a wonderful, natural riparian area.



In 2010 Cupertino continued planning Phase 2 of the project to extend the trail north to Stevens Creek Boulevard, perform further creek restoration, and improve the city-owned Stockmeir property. The Friends applauds the City of Cupertino for a job well done!

The Friends Organization

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail is a publicly supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It was founded in December 1992 to support local efforts in the cities of Mountain View, Cupertino, Los Altos and Sunnyvale, plus the County of Santa Clara, to create a multi-use trail along Stevens Creek and its wildlife corridor. Thanks to grass-roots community action and generous donor support, approximately five miles of the trail exist today, with more under construction or planned. The Friends office is in McClellan Ranch Nature Preserve on Stevens Creek in Cupertino. The board meets there on the fourth Thursday of each month.

The Board of Directors

A volunteer board of directors, typically between 9 and 15 members, governs the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. Board members live, work or take an active interest in our creek-side communities. In 2010 we also added a high school student as a non-voting associate board member to gain greater input from our community youth.

Board members during 2010 were:

Ross Heitkamp, President (MV)
Jeannie Bruins, Vice President (LA)
Tim Oey, Secretary (Svl)
Garth Williams, Treasurer (Svl)
Kathy Bettman (MV)
Tom Bornheimer (LA)
John Brazil (MV)
Fritz Stawitcke (Svl)
Anne Ng (Cup)
Alan Ross (MV)
Billy Symons (MV)
Art Takahara (MV)
Roy Verley, (MV)
Shreyas Bharadwaj – associate (SJ)

In 2010 the board continued to implement its strategic plan, focusing on four key issues:

- 1) increasing awareness and support for the trail in upstream communities;
- 2) building our organizational capacity and upstream representation;
- 3) increasing our financial capacity;
- 4) strengthening our marketing and communication tools.

Good progress was made in each of these areas, as noted elsewhere in this report.

During the year, board members attended or made presentations at official city meetings, participated in health and environmental fairs, and represented the Friends at community events, such as art and wine festivals.

Executive Director

Executive Director Aaron Grossman has deep roots with the organization. He was elected to the Friends board in 1999 and held various officer positions during an initial six-year stint. In 2005, he resigned from the board to become executive director, a part-time staff position. After nearly two years as ED, he left the position to pursue a full-time career opportunity and was quickly re-elected to the board. Later in 2007, he again stepped down from the board and returned as Executive Director.

The Executive Director of the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail is a part-time position.

Volunteer Programs

The Friends board continues to be very much a “hands-on” organization, with board members also serving as committee chairs, project leaders and active volunteers. Community volunteers complement and bolster these activities many times over. Volunteers are vital to the mission of the organization. With their active assistance, community outreach, fundraising, trail advocacy and special projects are greatly enhanced.

During 2010, the Friends maintained growing e-mail lists of past, current and prospective volunteers interested in trail/creek workdays or special events, such as the annual Trailblazer Race. We also attracted volunteers from local high schools, corporations, businesses and service clubs. Community outreach volunteers were invaluable in helping board members staff our information booth at community fairs in Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Altos and Cupertino.



Creek Cleanup Volunteers

We also continued to appreciate the services of key volunteers who worked on photography, signage, database and computer-related projects.

Volunteer of the Year

Carol Stanek, a Cupertino resident and long-time active supporter of the trail, was named our 2010 “Volunteer of the Year” by the board of directors. This honor was awarded among family and friends at the January 2011 Celebration of Leaders event hosted by the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce.



Carol Stanek, Anne Ng, Mike Stanek

Carol was selected because of her years of persistent work to get Stevens Creek Trail and local access to it launched in Cupertino. She has volunteered with us, attended countless City Council meetings, and worked tirelessly to make the trail a success in Cupertino.

Our volunteer-recruitment efforts continue to bring new talent and energy to the Friends. The Trailblazer Newsletter, periodic emails and our annual appeal also encourage volunteers to sign up for various projects. Our two biggest volunteer events are the spring Trail Work Day and the fall Trailblazer Race.

Financial Situation

Despite the economic downturn that continued into 2010, the Friends' financial position improved during the year, reflecting our conservative management practices and effective fundraising efforts. Key income elements were the Trailblazer Race and our annual appeal letter.

With Microsoft Corporation continuing to support our Trailblazer Race and Walk as Presenting Sponsor, the Friends was able to secure other major sponsors and maintain the enthusiasm and spirit of the much-loved community-oriented event. Held every September on the trail, the race has been the Friends' primary means of support since its inception. The event enjoys strong support from the city of Mountain View and a loyal following of race enthusiasts. The 2011 race will be held September 25.

The Friends board of directors continued to pursue a broader and more diverse range of funding sources in 2010. Our donor base is expanding as we focus increased efforts on upstream communities, where awareness of and support for the trail can be expected to grow in future years.

Community Outreach & Involvement

This is a fundamental part of our efforts to raise awareness about the value of Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor as a community asset. Since our inception, we have worked closely with the City of Mountain View and with various community groups to overcome obstacles and build support for each phase of the project. These efforts continued in 2010.

With upstream communities now becoming more active in planning their own trail



routes or access points, we have stepped up our activities outside of Mountain View considerably. During 2010, we attended planning meetings, shared ideas with city

officials and established contact with grassroots organizations and other trail supporters in all upstream communities. Here is a sampling of our services and activities during 2010:

- Sending emails and providing maps, trail updates and printed materials.
- Making personal presentations to city officials, businesses, service clubs and neighborhood associations.
- Participating in local and regional conferences and workshops.
- Participating at educational fairs and events, such as "Bike to Work Day," the Challenge Bike Ride and corporate health and fitness days.
- Providing information booths at art and wine festivals in Cupertino, Los Altos, Mountain View and Sunnyvale.
- Providing trail tours and background talks for Leadership Mountain View, other cities and other groups.
- Publishing our annual report and Trailblazer newsletter for city officials and for distribution at community events.
- Developing and maintaining a brochure on the Friends and Stevens Creek Trail status.
- Updating our helpful website www.stevenscreektrail.org with links to the City of Mountain View with the technical support of Friends board member and webmaster Ross Heitkamp.

Trail and Creek Work Days

On April 17, 2010 with full participation and support of staff members from the Mountain View Shoreline Park Department, the Friends organized another very productive Creek and Trail Clean-up Day. Dozens of volunteers gathered to collect trash, pull weeds and paint benches and fences.

Every year we attract many volunteers wishing to give back to their community by participating in this event. Volunteer teams from nearby businesses, such as Synopsys and Google, are especially helpful. Hot food and cold drinks donated by local merchants always make the event especially enjoyable.



Trailblazer Race at La Avenida

Trailblazer Race 2010

The Friends' 16th Annual Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk, held on September 25, was another great way for area residents to enjoy the trail and show their support for the Friends' mission. The event drew about 1,000 participants – runners, walkers, volunteers, exhibitors and spectators. As always, the race attracted numerous repeat participants as well as many new faces to the trail.

Microsoft, Presenting Sponsor for the overall event, again generously provided the

use of its campus and support staff for race-day festivities. Mountain View Parks and Recreation Department Staff and management provided extensive planning, operational, and logistical support prior, during, and after the event. We could not have done it without their effective help.

The Trailblazer Race features 10K and 5K racecourses that are officially certified by the US Track and Field Association. They run on Stevens Creek Trail, loop through Shoreline Park and circle back to the Microsoft campus. In addition to the two big runs and our more relaxed 5K trail walk, the event also includes free and popular children's races and activities. New this year were inflatable games and a professional face painter, both of which proved very popular with kids out having a fun time with their families, part of our goal to increase attendance at the event.

Race Director Aaron Grossman and former board member Ray Meyer III oversaw a hardworking race committee of other board members and volunteers, who brought everything together. Except for professional race timing services, volunteers carried out all other activities, with more than 100 of them helping out.

Race Sponsors

Many local businesses and individuals also provided support through financial sponsorships and in-kind donations. Along with Microsoft, they included HSBC bank, Star One Credit Union, Avery Construction Co., Recology, Mountain View Rotary, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Tori A Corbett Realty, Kim Copher Realty, Fenwick & West, Honu Wealth Management, Minton's Lumber, REI Mountain View, and Summer Winds Nursery. In-kind sponsors included AMR Ambulance, Hobees, the Mountain View Voice and the City of Mountain View.

Media Coverage and Reporting

The Friends continued to enjoy editorial support and exposure in local and regional newspapers. Papers featuring Stevens Creek Trail or the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail included the San Jose Mercury News, Cupertino Courier, Los Altos Town Crier, Sunnyvale Sun, Mountain View Voice and the Palo Alto Daily News. We encourage reporters from local papers to call on the Friends for information or comments on creek- and trail-related stories.

The Friends also served as a resource to other neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations and public agencies, helping to connect them with sources of information, volunteers or donations that could be of further benefit to the community.

Individual board members and Executive Director Aaron Grossman spoke at city and community meetings in support of the trail, describing benefits already seen along the completed sections of trail in Mountain View and Cupertino.

Advocacy

The Friends' policy is to support the efforts of public agencies in planning, funding, constructing and maintaining Stevens Creek Trail. In all of our efforts to advocate for the trail, we try to consider and respect the views of varying interests along the creek.

While advocating passionately for the extension of the trail, the Friends does not take a position on any specific alignment. We meet periodically with city staff to discuss any issues they may have about the existing trail. This includes trail safety, environmental preservation and public access.

In 2010, we continued this process in Mountain View and Cupertino, where our past efforts have helped win approval, segment by segment, for construction of the trail. We also focused increased attention on Los Altos and Sunnyvale. Passage through one or both of these communities will be required to connect the Mountain View and Cupertino portions of the trail. The Joint Cities meeting and joint planning process described in the Executive Summary of this report are a direct reflection of the efforts we've made over the years to promote the trail as a regional asset.



Sleeper Bridge

What's Ahead

In 2011 we look forward to working closely with all four creek-side cities on the regional (Joint Cities) planning initiative launched in December 2008. In addition, we will be supporting, participating in or actively monitoring the following projects:

- Mountain View: construction and opening of the trail extension from the current end at Sleeper Avenue, over Highway 85 to the corner of Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way.
- Cupertino: design and construction of the trail extension from the current end at Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard, plus local access.
- Sunnyvale: continue its lead role in the Joint Cities search for grant funding for a feasibility study of the area between Cupertino and Mountain View.
- Los Altos: co-leaders of the Joint Cities planning process; determination of the qualities they want in the Stevens Creek Trail.

We will organize more volunteer creek and trail workdays and explore other projects along the creek corridor. We will continue to advocate for the trail and the wildlife corridor and promote education and understanding of both as part of our outreach activities.

We deeply appreciate the continued interest and support of city and county officials and of our many donors and volunteers. Together, we are bringing the dream of completing the Stevens Creek Trail – from bay to mountains – closer to reality.

Following:

- Financial Statements for 2010
- Trailblazer Newsletter Summer 2010



Site of new trail extension over Hwy 85



**FRIENDS OF
STEVENS CREEK TRAIL**

**22221 McClellan Road
Cupertino, CA 95014**