

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail 2011 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.

www.stevenscreektrail.org

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail 2011 Annual Report

Executive Summary

For the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, 2011 was a year of steady progress. 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. As in prior years, our fundraising efforts exceed our current needs and allowed the organization to save for future needs.

Stevens Creek Trail currently 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 to Skyline Ridge and the Skyline to Sea trail.

In 2011, construction was started for two trail extensions. In Mountain View, construction began on 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. In Cupertino, an additional access point from Scenic Circle was built and opened. Design for the continuation of the Cupertino section of trail to Stevens Creek Boulevard also started in 2011 and will include restoration work on Stevens Creek.

The 2011 Friends of Stevens Creek Trail organization consisted of 12 board members, a junior board member, and a part-time Executive Director. While a majority of the board members are Mountain View residents, we continue to emphasize adding "upstream" board members. At the end of 2011, the Friends board included five members from either Los Altos, Sunnyvale, or Cupertino.

Financially, 2011 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 2011, including our lead sponsor, Microsoft. Our fundraising success positions us well to focus on our mission of facilitating extension of the trail. Microsoft's support also enabled the Friends to pay for printing 30,000 copies of the VTA Bikeways Map, a valuable resource that had exhausted its previous print run and would otherwise have had no funding for another two years.

Looking forward, we are enthusiastic about future trail segment planning being conducted by the Joint Cities Working Group, an ad hoc assembly of council members and staff from the four cities adjoining Stevens Creek, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and Santa Clara County Parks Department. The Working Group is beginning 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.

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City-by-city Highlights in 2011

Mountain View Workers broke ground on the next extension of the trail in March 2011. This extension picks up from the current end of the trail at Sleeper Avenue, continues a short distance along the creek, then climbs up and over Highway 85 and lands on the east side at the corner of Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way. This fantastic connection will provide a safe and convenient connection across Highway 85 free of car traffic. Many students of Huff Elementary School, Graham Middle School and Mountain View High School live there and will have a much safer, and shorter, alternative to traveling down El Camino Real or up to Fremont Avenue. This new section should be open for use in Spring 2012. Mountain View continues to participate in the Joint Cities Working Group and has contributed \$5,000 towards a feasibility study to identify possible connections between the Mountain View and Cupertino sections of trail. (See Sunnyvale section, below.)

Cupertino Two significant trail events happened in 2011. First, the city built and opened access to their existing section of Stevens Creek Trail from Blackberry Farm and Scenic Circle, providing a great, safer alternative route to school for students on the west side of the creek. Secondly, the city council approved the next section of Stevens Creek Trail at the beginning of the year. This extension will continue the trail from Blackberry Farm, past Blackberry Farm Golf Course, over the creek into the historic Stocklmeir property and out to Stevens Creek Boulevard. This year has been spent on identifying funding and beginning design for the project. The project includes significant creek restoration along side the golf course in addition to the trail development. Major construction is planned to take place in 2013. Cupertino also continues to participate in the Joint Cities Working Group and has contributed \$10,000 towards the feasibility study mentioned above.

Los Altos The trail effort in Los Altos this year has been focused on the Joint Cities Working Group. This group came into being after Los Altos completed their own feasibility study in 2008, when the result pointed towards the need for coordination with Mountain View, Sunnyvale and Cupertino. To this end, Los Altos has participated in the regular meetings and has contributed \$7,500 towards the feasibility study.

Sunnyvale Taking the lead role in the Joint Cities Working Group, Sunnyvale has put together the requirements document, defining the scope for a comprehensive feasibility study of possible trail alignments. With no external grant funding available, Sunnyvale came up with \$80,000 of its own funds to cover the bulk of the study costs. Total funding is now \$107,500, including amounts the other cities pledged together with \$5,000 from the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail (us). This study should start in early 2012 and continue throughout the year.



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 and a half 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 2011 we continued to include a high school student as a non-voting associate board member to gain greater input from our community youth.

Board members during 2011 were:

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

In 2011 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 returned as Executive Director and again stepped down from the board.

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 2011, 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

Frederick “Fritz” Stawitcke was a member of the board of the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail since 2009 and an enthusiastic volunteer long before. In December of 2010, Fritz suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. He had just been unanimously voted Vice President by the board. He was honored as 2011 Volunteer of the Year among family and friends at the January 2012 Celebration of Leaders event hosted by the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce.



Fritz Stawitcke

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 2011, 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 2012 race will be held September 30.

The Friends board of directors continued to pursue a broader and more diverse range of funding sources in 2011. 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 2011.



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 2011, 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 2011:

- 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 16, 2011 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 2011

The Friends' 17th 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 continued as Presenting Sponsor with support staff and use of its campus for the event. Mountain View Parks and Recreation Department Staff provided 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 including inflatable games and a professional face painter, 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 board members and volunteers who brought everything together. Volunteer Director and board member Kathy Bettman organized over 100 volunteers to prepare, carry out, and clean everything up. Except for professional race timing services, volunteers carried out all other event activities.

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, Google, and REI Mountain View. In-kind sponsors included Hobees, the Mountain View Voice, REACT radio volunteers, 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 2011, 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 2012 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 feasibility study of the area between Cupertino, Los Altos, 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.



Site of new trail extension over Hwy 85

We are encouraged by the cooperative planning efforts of all four cities along the creek and remain optimistic about further trail progress in 2012. At the same time, we know a continuing difficult economic environment and competing demands for funds will present major hurdles in the months ahead. We are also mindful that the steady advance of the trail into new communities may raise concerns among residents who question the value of a multi-use trail in their neighborhood, or who wonder about its potential impacts on the environment they treasure. Our commitment to listen well and try to address any and all issues as they arise will keep us very busy in the year ahead.

Following:

- Financial Statements for 2011
- Trailblazer Newsletter Summer 2011

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail		
Statement of Financial Position		
	Year ended 12/31/11	Dec 31, 11
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		\$ 22,938
Short-Term Investments		\$ 113,939
Total Current Assets		\$ 136,877
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 136,877
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Retained Earnings	\$ 137,664	
Net Income	\$ (788)	
Total Equity	\$ 136,876	
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY		\$ 136,876

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail			
Statement of Functional Expenses			
Year ended 12/31/11	Program	Supporting	Total
	Services	Services	
Race Expense	\$ 24,401	-	\$ 24,401
Volunteer and Leadership	\$ 1,233	-	\$ 1,233
Administration			
Payroll & Related Expense	-	\$ 21,233	\$ 21,233
Insurance	-	\$ 731	\$ 731
Rent & Utilities	-	\$ 2,259	\$ 2,259
Office Expenses	-	\$ 2,209	\$ 2,209
Communication	-	\$ 12,259	\$ 12,259
Annual Appeal	-	\$ 100	\$ 100
Total	\$ 25,634	\$ 38,791	\$ 64,425

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail		
Statement of Activities		
Year ended 12/31/11		
Support		
Donations	\$ 19,287	
Special Events	\$ 43,954	
Interest Income	\$ 196	
Other	\$ 200	
Total	\$ 63,637	
Expenses		
Program Services	\$ 25,634	
Supporting Services		
Administration	\$ 26,432	
Communications	\$ 12,259	
Fundraising	\$ 100	
Total Expenses	\$ 64,425	
Net Income	\$ (788)	
Equity, December 31, 2010	\$ 137,664	
Equity, December 31, 2011	\$ 136,876	

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail		
Statement of Cash Flows		
Year ended 12/31/11	Jan - Dec 11	
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net Income		\$ -788
Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to net cash provided by operations:		
Increase in short-term investments		\$ -149
Decrease in Payroll Liabilities		\$ -748
Net cash provided by Operating Activities		\$ -1,685
Net cash decrease		\$ -1,685
Cash at beginning of period		\$ 24,623
Cash at end of period		\$ 22,938

These unaudited statements prepared by
Garth Williams, Treasurer