

# Annual Report - Calendar Year 2012



## **FRIENDS OF STEVENS CREEK TRAIL**

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**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](http://www.stevenscreektrail.org)

# Executive Summary

What an exciting year we had at the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail in 2012. Never before have we had activity on so many fronts and been making such great progress in all of the communities where Stevens Creek flows. As more of the trail is completed, we continue to shift our role to include more stewardship for the existing trail in addition to our planning and advocacy for completion of the trail.

Stevens Creek Trail currently extends about 5.7 miles: 5 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 around and above Stevens Creek Reservoir, connecting to Skyline Ridge and to the Skyline to Sea trail.

In 2012, construction was completed in Mountain View on a short but crucial extension of the trail from Sleeper Avenue with a crossing over Highway 85 to the east side at Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way. This was an immediate success when it opened in June.

In Cupertino, design for the continuation of the Cupertino section of trail to Stevens Creek Boulevard that started in 2011, continued through 2012. It will include restoration work on Stevens Creek. Construction is planned to begin in April 2013.

The 2012 Friends of Stevens Creek Trail organization consisted of 12 board members, an associate board member, a part-time Executive Director and a part-time director of race volunteers. While half of the board members are Mountain View residents, we continue to emphasize adding "upstream" board members. At the end of 2012, the Friends board included six members from Los Altos, Sunnyvale, or Cupertino.

Financially, 2012 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 2012, including our lead sponsor, Microsoft. Our fundraising success positions us well to focus on our mission of facilitating extension of the trail. A Google grant is enabling us to develop a comprehensive, interactive tool for gathering and accessing information on the Stevens and Permanente Creek watershed.

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 has begun a feasibility study of how to best join the trails in Mountain View and Cupertino and we have 4 board members actively participating. 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.

## City-by-city Highlights for 2012

**Joint Cities Working Group:** Formed in 2009, the group initially met quarterly to develop plans on how to proceed, secure funding, and hire a consultant to perform a feasibility study. With the consultant now hired to prepare the feasibility study, meetings are monthly and progress more rapidly. The consultant is Jana Sokale, no stranger to the Stevens Creek Trail. She prepared Mountain View's 1991 Feasibility Study and worked with Cupertino on both their 2002 feasibility study and current Stevens Creek Corridor restoration and trail project. A Citizens Working Group has also been assembled with 2 representatives plus an alternate from each city, selected from applicants. These folks include 4 of your Friends of Stevens Creek Trail board members and serve as an extension of staff to review materials and be ambassadors at public meetings. The Friends contributed \$5,000 in 2012 towards this study. The first public meeting took place in November 2012 to gather input on possible trail routes. More public meetings will take place throughout 2013 to discuss and refine the potential routes with public input.

**Cupertino:** Stevens Creek Corridor project Phase II is underway, with design nearly complete and construction scheduled to begin in April 2013. The current trail heading north from McClellan Road through McClellan Ranch Preserve and Blackberry Farm Park will be extended a short distance along the Blackberry Farm Golf Course before crossing the creek into the Stockmeir orchard and on to Stevens Creek Boulevard, then along Stevens Creek Blvd. to a crossing at Phar Lap Drive. Creek restoration is included in the project, to be completed by the end of the year. Possible trail routes north from Stevens Creek Blvd. are being researched in the Joint Cities Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study, in which Cupertino is actively participating.



**Los Altos:** Their trail effort is focused on the Joint Cities Working Group, which came into being after the Los Altos feasibility study in 2008. That study showed the need for direct trail coordination with Mountain View, Sunnyvale and Cupertino.

**Mountain View:** Big news here was the grand opening of the Stevens Creek Trail extension south from Sleeper Avenue, with a bridge across Highway 85 to the corner of Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way. Nearly 1000 people attended the ceremony, the biggest attendance yet! It opened up direct trail access for the first time to Mountain View and Sunnyvale residents on the East side of Highway 85, and was an immediate hit. Mountain View has also been participating fully in the Joint Cities Working Group.



**Sunnyvale:** Taking on the lead role of the Joint Cities Working Group, Sunnyvale organized a crucial feasibility study for the remaining middle portion of the Stevens Creek Trail between Cupertino and Mountain View. They did the fundraising, put together a plan of scope, and hired a study consultant. Since Stevens Creek defines Sunnyvale's western border, having portions of the trail within Sunnyvale is key to providing their residents with good access to this valuable resource.

## **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, more than 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 2012 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 2012 were:

Ross Heitkamp, President (MV)  
Tim Oey, Vice President (Svl)  
Meghan Stawitcke, Secretary (Svl)  
Garth Williams, Treasurer (Svl)  
Kathy Bettman (MV)  
Tom Bornheimer (SF)  
John Brazil (MV)  
Anne Ng (Cup)  
Alan Ross (MV)  
Art Takahara (MV)  
Greg Unangst (MV)  
Joe Walton (Cup)  
Shreyas Bharadwaj – associate (SJ)

In 2012 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 within 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, paid 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 2012, 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.

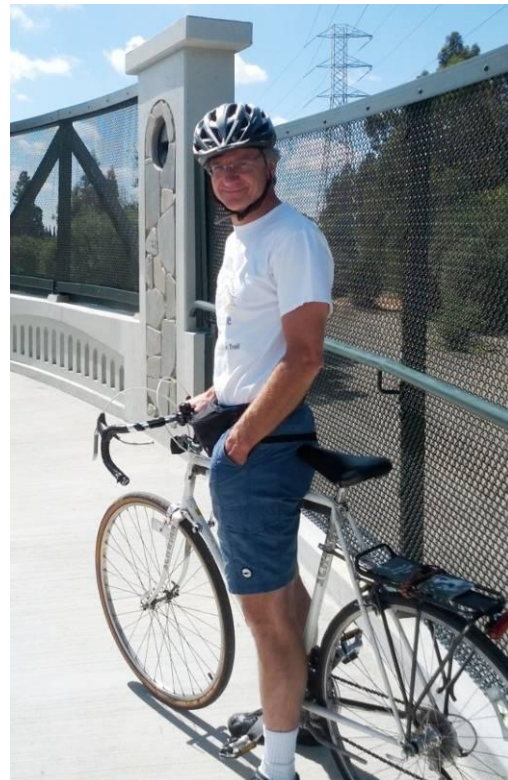


### Creek Cleanup Volunteers

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

## Volunteer of the Year

Roy Verley started volunteering with the Friends 8 years ago at a Creek Cleanup Day and soon joined the Board of Directors so that he could take an even more active role in extending and completing the trail. He eventually served as the board president for 3 years, carefully guiding the Friends in expanding our role from being rather focused on Mountain View to one coordinating with all 4 of the cities along the creek and increasing the trail activity in those cities in the process.



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 continued sluggish economic downturn in 2012, the Friends' financial position improved during the year, reflecting our conservative management practices and effective fundraising efforts. Key income elements were the Trailblazer Race, our annual appeal letter and an educational grant.

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 2013 race is on September 29.

Google not only became a significant Trailblazer Race sponsor, but also gave an educational grant of \$60,000 to fund a "Watching Our Watersheds" or WOW project, a Google Earth-based interactive map, which will be a comprehensive treatment of the Stevens Creek-Permanente Creek watersheds.

The Friends Board continued to pursue a broader and more diverse range of funding sources in 2012. 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 2012. Perhaps the most significant event was the appointment of 4 board members, Anne Ng (Cupertino), Tim Oey (Sunnyvale), Ross Heitkamp (Mtn. View), and Greg Unangst (Mtn. View), to the Joint Cities Citizen Working Group, aka CWG. The CWG serves as an extension of the staff working on a feasibility study for the connection of the Stevens Creek Trail between Mountain View and Cupertino.

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 2012, we attended planning meetings, shared ideas with city officials and established contact with grassroots organizations and other trail supporters in all upstream communities. Our 2012 services and activities included:

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" and corporate health and fitness days.

Developing and maintaining a brochure on the Friends and Stevens Creek Trail.

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 to our members and at community events.

Updating our helpful website [www.stevenscreektrail.org](http://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 21, 2012 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 2012**

The Friends' 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk, held on September 30, 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. We hired our longtime page designer, Chris Mendible as our Volunteer Director this year to organize over 200 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 Google, HSBC bank, Star One Credit Union, Avery Construction, Recology, Kiwanis MV, Tori A Corbett Realty, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Fenwick & West, Honu Wealth Management, Coulomb Technology and Rotary MV. In-kind sponsors included Microsoft, 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 2012, 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





**New Dale-Heatherstone ramp**

## **What's Ahead**

In 2013 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:

- Cupertino: construction of the trail extension north from the current end at Blackberry Farm to Stevens Creek Boulevard, plus local access, and possible trail extension south.
- 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.

We are encouraged by the cooperative planning efforts of all four cities along the creek and remain optimistic about further trail progress in 2013. 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 2012
- Trailblazer Newsletter Summer 2012

**Friends of Stevens Creek Trail**  
**Year ended 12/31/12**

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	\$ 78,135
Short-Term Investments	<u>\$ 115,991</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 194,126</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 194,126</b>
Liability & Equity	
Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$ 141,235
Net Income	<u>\$ 52,891</u>
Total Equity	<u>\$ 194,126</u>
Total Liability & Equity	\$ 194,126

Statement of Functional Expense

Program Services	
Race Expense	\$ 29,776
Volunteer & Leadership	\$ 3,132
Supporting Services	
Administration Payroll	
& Related Expenses	\$ 21,915
Insurance	\$ 693
Rent & Utilities	\$ 2,065
Office Expenses	\$ 2,009
Communication	\$ 9,412
Annual Appeal	<u>\$ 280</u>
Total	\$ 69,281

Statement of Activities

Support	
Donations	\$ 18,608
Special Events	\$ 44,313
Interest Income	\$ 600
Other	<u>\$ 60,000</u>
Total	\$ 123,521
Expenses	
Program Services	\$ 29,776
Supporting Services	
Administration	\$ 26,681
Communications	\$ 12,544
Fundraising	\$ 280
Total Expenses	\$ 69,281
Net Income	\$ 54,239
Equity, December 31, 2011	\$ 141,235
Equity, December 31, 2012	\$ 194,126

Statement of Cash Flows

Operating Activities	
Jan - Dec 2012	
Net Income	\$ 54,239
Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to net cash provided by operations:	
Increase in short-term investments	\$ -2,053
Decrease in Payroll Liabilities	\$ 0
Net cash provided by Operating Activities	<u>\$ 3,011</u>
Net cash increase	\$ 55,197
Cash at beginning of period	\$ 22,938
Cash at end of period	\$ 78,135

These unaudited statements prepared by Garth Williams, Treasurer