

Annual Report - Calendar Year 2013



**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

Executive Summary

President's Corner - 2013

Welcome, friends!

Over the past year, as Sunnyvale continues to work with the Joint Cities, government officials and community members to complete its feasibility study, I continue to be impressed by the passion the people of the Bay Area possess for the Trail. I am truly grateful to live in a community so dedicated to bettering the world we live in. We would not have come this far, or have this bright a future, without all of you.

2013 was very busy, which seems to be par for the course. In this Annual Report, you'll read about the exciting happenings last year in Sunnyvale, the Joint Cities' continued collaboration, the 19th annual Trailblazer Race, our many volunteer activities, and development of our online Creekipedia project.

The Stevens Creek Trail continues to see progress in several cities. In Cupertino, the second phase of Trail restoration and extension near McClellan Ranch neared completion. Mountain View added new trail access, saw a possibility of a major new addition towards the bay, and considered continuing on to MVHS. Sunnyvale continued leading the crucial Trail Feasibility Study to link all four cities together. We are excited about all the progress happening with the Trail in these cities.

As we mentioned last year, the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail (FoSCT) received a Google grant to develop an online educational tool to convey the complexities of the Stevens and Permanente Creek watershed to the public. Progress on our mobile application, Creekipedia, continues at a rapid clip. We are proud to say that Google has recently chosen us as recipients of a second grant for 2014 to carry on our hard work. We are eager to share with you all, and are proud of the many layers this mobile app will explore, including wildlife, flora, human impact and even pollution. If you or your organization is interested in participating, please contact Board member Greg Unangst at gunangst@stevenscreektrail.org.

Our 20th annual Trail Blazer Race will be on Sunday, September 28th, 2014. Please see our web page for more information and to register.

We are always happy to have more volunteers, so if you are interested, let us know! Email us at exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org or www.stevenscreektrail.org.

Happy Trails!



Meghan Stawitcke
President, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

Joint Cities Working Group

Formed in 2009 and led by consultant Jana Sokale, the group continued to meet often during 2013. The Citizens Working Group (CWG) portion, originally with two representatives from each city, was expanded to three each. Major progress was made to identify several feasible routes from the Mountain View section at Dale/Heatherstone to the Cupertino section at Blackberry golf course. Especially exciting is a possible off-street route into Cupertino. Next the CWG will specify their preferred alignment. Final feasibility study publication is expected late summer or early fall 2014.

Cupertino

Cupertino worked on finishing a new section to complete the trail from McClellan Road to Stevens Creek Boulevard. It will pass under towering trees, across a new bridge over the creek, and through an old orange orchard that the City is restoring, donating the oranges to those in need. Native re-vegetation and restored steelhead habitat are major parts of the project. Cupertino's section of Stevens Creek Trail now includes the only place where those in wheelchairs have access to play in the creek.

Los Altos

The Los Altos City Council voted not to publicly discuss the Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study topic further until publication of the study draft report, expected later in 2014. This was in response to public concern over on-street trail connectors which conflict with the city's own 2008 feasibility study recommendation. Los Altos city council and residents await the new Trail Study release.

Mountain View

Mountain View gained direct trail access from the north side of El Camino Real in 2013. Access at Crittenden Lane has been identified for future ADA access improvements, and other access may also be added in the North Shoreline area. An exciting new possibility is a nearly two mile long trail extension towards the bay as part of the South Bay Salt Ponds restoration. Further south, continuing the trail on to MV High School, which we strongly support, is under consideration.

Sunnyvale

Sunnyvale continues to lead the Joint Cities Working Group feasibility study for the remaining middle portion of the Stevens Creek Trail between Cupertino and Mountain View. Sunnyvale staff acquired additional funding for the feasibility study so new suggestions from the public could be adequately studied to determine if they would be feasible or not. The most recent updates on the study can be found on the City of Sunnyvale's web page at www.Stevenscreek.inSunnyvale.com.

The Friends Organization

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail is a publicly supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in December 1992. It supports local efforts in Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Cupertino, Los Altos, and Santa Clara County 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 planned. Our 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 governs the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. They live, work or take an active interest in our creek-side communities. A non-voting high school student associate board member gives us input from our community youth. We are also served by a non-voting Advisory Board.

Board members during 2013 were:

Meghan Stawitcke, President (Svl)
Tim Oey, Vice President (Svl)
Anne Ng, Secretary (Cup)
Garth Williams, Treasurer (Svl)
Kathy Bettman (MV)
Tom Bornheimer (SF)
John Brazil (MV)
Ross Heitkamp, (MV)
Alan Ross (MV)
Bridget Steele (LA)
Greg Unangst (MV)
Sarah Chekfa – Associate (Cup)

Kevin Duggan - Advisory
Art Takahara - Advisory
Roy Verley - Advisory

In 2013 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 early 2005 he resigned from the board to become executive director, a half-time staff position. At the end of 2006 he left the ED position to pursue a full-time career opportunity and was quickly re-elected to the board. 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 paid, half-time position.

Volunteer Programs

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

During 2013, 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 volunteers greatly helped board members staff our information booth at community fairs in Sunnyvale, Los Altos, Mountain View, and Cupertino. Key volunteers also work on photography, signage, database and computer projects.

Our volunteer-recruitment efforts keep bringing new talent and energy to the Friends. The Trailblazer Newsletter, periodic email 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.

Creek Cleanup Volunteers



Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

Volunteer of the Year: Art Takahara



After twenty busy years on our board, Art Takahara stepped down early in 2013. From helping founder Rhonda Scherber Farrar start things at our very beginning in 1992, Art worked tirelessly to develop the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail and carry out its mission.

Although about 90% of the trail is finished in Mountain View, Art believes the goal should remain a continuous bay to mountains trail. He finds it amazing how many people still don't know about the trail and creek, and reminds us that we need to keep reaching out to them.

Art sometimes gets impatient with the apparently slow progress of the trail, but he knows these big projects take time. The Moffett Boulevard over-crossing is something he wanted from the beginning as a safety issue, but could not get included in the original trail plans. He never gave up and it was eventually completed in 2009. Likewise, the El Camino Real north side trail entrance was finally added and opened in 2013.

We deeply thank Art for his many years of service and myriad contributions.

Financial Situation

The Friends' financial position improved during 2013, 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 2014 race will be on September 28.

Google was not only a significant Race sponsor, but also gave us an educational grant of \$60,000 to fund our "Creekipedia" project, a Google Earth-based interactive map, which will be a comprehensive treatment of the Stevens and Permanente Creeks watersheds.

The Friends Board continued to pursue a broader and more diverse range of funding sources in 2013. 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 2013. Perhaps the most significant event was the participation of four board members, Anne Ng (Cupertino), Tim Oey (Sunnyvale), Ross Heitkamp (Mtn. View), and Greg Unangst (Mtn. View), on the Joint Cities Citizen Working Group, aka CWG. The CWG serves as an extension of the city 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 2013, we attended planning meetings, shared ideas with city officials and established contact with grassroots organizations and other trail supporters in all upstream communities. Our 2013 services and activities included:

Developing and maintaining a brochure on the Friends and Stevens Creek Trail, sending email, and providing maps, trail updates and printed materials;

Making personal presentations to city officials, businesses, service clubs and neighborhood associations, and participating in conferences and workshops;

Participating at educational fairs and events, such as "Bike to Work Day" 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 talks for Leadership Mountain View, other cities and other groups;

Publishing our annual report and Trailblazer newsletter for city officials, our members, and the community;

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

Saturday, April 19 saw another fun and successful Trail Clean-up day at Whisman Park. Fifty volunteers spent the morning on various clean-up activities. Mountain View City staff supervised the work and passed out gloves, garbage bags and tools. As always, they helped make the event seamless, fun and safe for the volunteers.

It was rewarding to see several families come out with their kids, many of whom were volunteering for the first time. A common sentiment we heard was “I use this beautiful trail so often; the least I can do is give back by helping to keep it clean.” Thank you all!

Trailblazer Race 2013



Trailblazer Race 2013

The Friends’ 19th Annual Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk on September 29 was another great way for area residents to enjoy the trail and show their support for the Friends’ mission. The event drew well over 1,000 participants – runners, walkers, volunteers, exhibitors and spectators. As always, it attracted many repeat participants plus a lot of new ones to the trail.

The Trailblazer Race features 10K and 5K race courses officially certified by the USA 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, we also include free and popular children activities, including kids-only races, inflatable games, and a professional face painter. These activities provide kids a fun time out with their parents, and help us attract entire families to attend the event.

Microsoft continued as Presenting Sponsor, giving support staff, use of its campus, and major funding 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.

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 graphics designer Chris Mendible as our Volunteer Director to organize over 200 volunteers who helped prepare, operate, and clean up after the event. 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, 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, Hobeas, 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 neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies, connecting them to sources of information, volunteers, or donations that could further benefit 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 advocating for the trail, we always 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 that come up about the trail, including trail safety, environmental preservation and public access.

In 2013, 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.



Mountain View Sleeper Bridge



Dale-Heatherstone Ramp

Creekipedia

With a Google grant, FoSCT is developing a "Creekipedia", a browser-based Google Earth application that can be readily accessed with an Internet connection. It includes a thorough and detailed multi-layered map guide to the Stevens and Permanente Creek watersheds and stream corridors. In 2013 we developed the initial layers: watershed, Stevens Creek and Trail highlights; Permanente Creek highlights; open space preserves; earthquake fault lines; geology; historical creek, habitat, and other points. We plan to grow and expand this tool, and expect it to serve as a model for similar guides to geographic areas anywhere else in the world.

What's Ahead

In 2014 we look forward to working closely with all four creek-side cities on the Joint Cities planning initiative launched in December 2008. In particular are:

- Cupertino: finishing the trail extension to Stevens Creek Boulevard, plus new signage, local access, and possible trail addition south and north.
- Sunnyvale: continuing its lead role in the Joint Cities feasibility study.
- Los Altos: determining the qualities they want in their part of 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 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 2014. At the same time, we know a tight 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 raises concerns among residents who question the value of a multi-use trail there, or who wonder about its potential impacts on the environment they treasure. Our key role of listening and trying to address issues as they arise will keep us very busy next year.

Following:

- Financial Statements for 2013
- Trailblazer Newsletter Summer 2013

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail
Year ended 12/31/13

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	\$ 97,400
Short-Term Investments	<u>\$ 114,756</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 212,156</u>
 TOTAL ASSETS	 \$ 212,156
 Liability & Equity	
Liabilities	
	\$ 67,605
Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$ 134,127
Net Income	<u>\$ 10,424</u>
Total Equity	<u>\$ 144,551</u>
 Total Liability & Equity	 \$ 212,156

Statement of Functional Expense

Program Services	
Race Expense	\$ 26,237
 Supporting Services	
Administration Payroll	
& Related Expenses	\$ 21,873
Insurance	\$ 1,274
Rent & Utilities	\$ 2,209
Office Expenses	\$ 2,097
Communication	\$ 10,118
Annual Appeal	<u>\$ 340</u>
Total Supporting	<u>\$ 37,911</u>
 Total Expenses	 \$ 64,148

Statement of Activities

Support	
Donations	\$ 26,032
Special Events	\$ 48,152
Interest Income	<u>\$ 388</u>
Total Income	<u>\$ 74,572</u>
 Expenses	
Trailblazer Race	\$ 26,237
Supporting Services	
Administration	\$ 27,453
Communications	\$ 10,118
Fundraising	<u>\$ 340</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 64,148
 Increase in Net Assets	 \$ 10,424

Statement of Cash Flows

Operating Activities	
Jan - Dec 2013	
Net Income	\$ 10,424
Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to net cash provided by operations:	
Increase in Payroll Liabilities	\$ 145
Creekipedia Project	\$ 7,460
Decrease in Investments	<u>\$ (275)</u>
Net cash increase	\$ 17,754
 Cash at beginning of period	 <u>\$ 79,645</u>
 Cash at end of period	 \$ 97,400

These unaudited statements prepared by Garth Williams, Treasurer