

Annual Report - Calendar Year 2014



**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 - 2014

Welcome, Friends!

In January I took over as President from Meghan Stawitcke after serving as Vice President for two years and before that as Secretary for three years. Meghan and my other predecessors did a fantastic job for our organization and I hope to live up to their high standards.

I am a long time bicycle and environmental advocate and have been an active volunteer for the Charles River Wheelmen in Boston, Boston Area Bicycle Coalition, Sunnyvale Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Western Wheelers, Almaden Cycle Touring Club, International Mountain Biking Association, League of American Bicyclists, and Adventure Cycling.

For the past three years, I've been toiling away with 11 others on the Stevens Creek Trail Citizens Working Group as well as staff and the Joint Cities Working Team to identify feasible routes to connect the existing trail in Mountain View to the existing trail in Cupertino. At long last the Feasibility Study has been made public and you can read more about it on the cover.

We are at an exciting juncture for the future of the Stevens Creek Trail. This year we will finally see the Joint Cities recommend a route to connect Mountain View and Cupertino. This is just the beginning of a new chapter of the Stevens Creek Trail adventure. This portion of trail then needs to have a Master Plan, Environmental Impact Study and Report, Detailed Design, and finally funding and approval for construction by the cities and agencies involved. This could take another five to ten years...or more.

On other fronts, we are working on logos to mark the entire length of the current and future trail from the Bay to the Ridge; finishing a trail-side plaque and rest area; better trail counts to track trail success as well as enhancement needs; "Creekipedia;" educating people about the trail at local art and wine festivals, Earth Day celebrations, and other events; and hiring a communications manager with web expertise so we can better communicate with all of you and our volunteers.

Stevens Creek Trail is a green jewel in the emerald necklace of trails and parks encircling the San Francisco Bay. We hope many of you will help out at one of our upcoming events to educate people about the trail and how to use it responsibly as well as help racers have fun at our 21st annual Trailblazer Race on Sunday, September 27th.

Happy Trails!

Tim Oey

Tim Oey
President, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail
president@stevenscreektrail.org

Trail Progress - Joint Cities Working Team Publishes Draft Trail Feasibility Study

The long-anticipated Trail Feasibility Study Report on ways to connect the existing Mountain View and Cupertino sections of Stevens Creek Trail was published in draft form on March 27, 2015. The report was produced by the Joint Cities Working Team, a collaborative effort of representatives from the four cities along Stevens Creek and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The study divided the large gap in our trail, from the Dale-Heatherstone bridge in Mountain View to Stevens Creek Boulevard in Cupertino, into three separate reaches on four maps. Each map showed three or more feasible routes with different levels of improvements, ranging from unimproved neighborhood green ways to bike lanes to a Class-I trail completely separated from motor vehicle traffic. Three public meetings then followed in Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and Mountain View/Los Altos, on May 21, June 1, and June 8, respectively, to collect comments and preferences for a route alignment.

It is important to recognize that both the Joint Cities Working Team and its Trail Feasibility Study resulted from the 2008 completion of the Los Altos Stevens Creek Trail feasibility study, which we helped facilitate. At that time it became very clear that coordinated inter-city planning was required for a successful trail through Mountain View, Los Altos, Sunnyvale, and Cupertino, since it would repeatedly cross borders between them. One city council member and one staff person from each city began meeting quarterly to formulate a plan, again with our direct involvement. It resulted in obtaining funding for and providing this thorough feasibility study of how to bridge the large gap from Mountain View to Cupertino. The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail has been a strong supporter of the Joint Cities Trail Feasibility Study since its beginning with constant participation in the meetings and with four of our board members serving on its Citizens Working Group since November, 2012. The most up-to-date study information is at <http://www.Stevenscreek.inSunnyvale.com>.

Going forward, the feasibility study will conclude with the Joint Cities Working Team approving the study report and a set of recommendations that may include a preferred trail alignment. This package will then go to each city to consider adopting and moving forward to the next step. This is still the beginning of a long process. The next steps are to do a Master Plan (one to three years) with traffic and parking studies, Environmental Impact Reports, detailed design, getting funding, and finally constructing the trail extensions, most likely in small sections at a time. It takes considerable time and effort to build lasting and worthwhile facilities. The trail will continue to need active support from the public to move through each of these steps.

Our Position

Our goal has always been to create a safe and beautiful real trail, direct and completely separated from motor vehicles, along or near Stevens Creek. There is only one alignment option in the feasibility study that meets this goal: the Creek Corridor/Bernardo Avenue path. It is a real trail from Dale-Heatherstone to Homestead, first through creek-side public land, and then along Bernardo, direct and completely separated from motor vehicles.

We strongly encourage the joint Cities to move forward with a Master Plan for this option, because it is the only one that creates a real Stevens Creek Trail. This Master Plan needs to consider and address all the community and neighborhood concerns that have been raised. While these concerns are very substantial, they are solvable if city staff considers them carefully and uses imagination and technical resources to address them. As for the segment 3 route from Homestead to Stevens Creek Blvd., we prefer an off-street route that is direct, easy, and safe for children and families. We think further study is needed for this segment.

We want to reach out to local neighbors in the future trail area, as we share many important goals in common with them: protecting the environment, maintaining quiet local neighborhoods, using tax dollars responsibly, raising home values, and providing safe trails for both adults and children to reach parks, schools, nature, and other neighbors. We believe a beautiful Stevens Creek Trail can be created that achieves all of these goals. There is still much more work to be done and much more discussion needed on how to get there. We look forward to working with the people living in this area to make it work for everyone.

Cupertino

Cupertino residents and neighbors have been enjoying their extended one mile stretch of Stevens Creek Trail since the newest segment from Blackberry Farm Park to Stevens Creek Blvd. opened July 1 2014. It now runs the full length of the Stevens Creek Corridor from McClellan Road to Stevens Creek Blvd. Extending the trail upstream to Stevens Creek County Park may become possible on land across the creek from the proposed “Parkside Trails” residential development on Stevens Canyon Road. Extending the trail downstream to Sunnyvale/Los Altos and on to Mountain View is being considered by the Joint Cities Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study.

Los Altos

We really, really, really need one or more people from Los Altos to join our board! Have a great time with our fun, nature loving board members, be a voice for the trail, and help connect us to the Los Altos community! Email us at exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org for more information. Thanks!

Mountain View

In October 2014, the city’s Parks & Recreation Commission passed motions recommending the study of speed limits on Stevens Creek Trail when pedestrians are present, and a one-year pilot project to allow non-motorized skateboards, motorized skateboards, and electronic assistive mobility devices. With increasing development proposals in the north Shoreline area, the Friends have actively engaged advocacy organizations and employers in the area to insure a high level of trail accommodation is included for all current and future trail users. We continue to work with the City of Mountain View to seek funding for the completion of its remaining Trail segments.

Sunnyvale

The Joint Cities Feasibility Study was the main focus of Sunnyvale activities. In addition to our traditional community outreach at the Sunnyvale Art and Wine Festival, we held a community outreach meeting titled “Urban Trail Connections: Pros, Cons and Information” at West Valley Elementary School to provide general information on trail development and its effects on neighborhoods and gather input from the neighbors. The meeting was well attended and provided a forum for many people to have their voices heard while the Joint Cities Working Team continued work on the feasibility study. All the feedback we received was forwarded directly to the Joint Cities Working Team. We also held private meetings with several neighborhood leaders to share information and ideas about the feasibility study.

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 six 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 input from our community youth. We are also served by a non-voting Advisory Board.

Board members during 2014 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)
Steve Garrity, (Svl)
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 2014 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 his first six years. In 2005 he resigned from the board and became 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 again stepped down from the board to return as Executive Director.

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 2014, 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 Chris Mendible



Ever since the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail was founded in 1993, our graphic artist, Chris Mendible, has been instrumental in developing and executing almost all of our communications and artwork, and much, much more. Chris has been our newsletter designer, editor, photographer and layout chief, critiquing content and making copy suggestions as well.

Chris has also produced artwork for all of our annual Trailblazer Races including posters, postcards, flyers, T-shirts, banners, and advertising, plus our mailings and award plaques. In recent years, she has been the Trailblazer Race Volunteer Coordinator, finding and then managing literally hundreds of teenage and adult volunteers needed to put on our major fundraiser. Her husband and three children consider our annual race a family tradition and have quite a collection of T-shirts to prove it!

The Friends would not be the respected and influential organization it is today without all the great efforts of Chris Mendible over these many years. Congratulations to Chris - thank you, and keep up the great work!

Financial Situation

The Friends' financial position improved during 2014, 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 was held 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 2014. 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 2014. Perhaps the most significant event was the continued 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 2014, we attended planning meetings, shared ideas with city officials and established contact with grassroots organizations and other trail supporters in all upstream communities. Our 2014 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 2014



Trailblazer Race 2014

The Friends’ 20th Annual Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk on September 28 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 150 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, 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 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 trail 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 2014, 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 generous Google grant, the Friends has developed 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 2014 we continued developing 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 2015 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 2015. 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 2014

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail
Year ended 12/31/14

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	
Current Assets	
Checking /Savings	\$ 68,210.82
Short Term Invest	\$114,484.63
Other Current	\$ 542.28
Total Current	\$183,237.73
Total Assets	\$183,237.73
Liabilities	
Liability & Equity	\$ 31,143.75
Liabilities	
Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$153,513.73
Net income	(- 1,419.75)
Total Equity	\$152,093.98
Total Liabilities	\$183,237.73

Statement of Functional Expense

Program Services	
Race Expense	\$30,067.45
Supporting Services	
Payroll	\$22,864.94
Insurance	\$ 1,089.60
Office	\$ 3,290.25
Rent	\$ 3,252.62
Fundraising	\$ 768.83
Community Outreach	\$ 5,149.32
Total Supporting	\$36,415.56
Total Expenses	\$66,483.01

Statement of Activities

Support	
Donations	\$23,142.61
Matching	\$ 4,831.09
Other	\$ 510.00
Special Events	\$45,218.34
Investment	\$ 324.24
Total Income	\$74,026.28
Expenses	
Trailblazer Race	\$30,067.45
Supporting Services	
Community Outreach	\$ 5,149.32
Fundraising	\$ 768.83
Administration	\$30,497.41
Total Expenses	\$66,483.01
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 7,543.27

These unaudited statements prepared by Alan Ross, Treasurer