

# Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

## 2008 Annual Report



### **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.**

### **Executive Summary**

In many ways, 2008 was a very productive year for the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. It was marked by substantial progress, both physical and political, toward our long-term goal of completing the Stevens Creek Trail from San Francisco Bay to the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Friends organization remains dedicated to this mission and passionate about its fulfillment, step by step, community by community, just as we have been since our founding in 1992.

During the year, a significant new trail segment was opened in Mountain View, and construction began on three additional projects – two in Mountain View and one in Cupertino. Equally important, the cities of Los Altos and Sunnyvale took their first major steps toward participation in the trail initiative, as detailed below. Since the participation of one or both cities is essential, in simple geographic terms, to the goal of a continuous trail, these developments were extremely welcome news to all who share our vision for the trail.

In December, perhaps the most important development of the year took place. At the suggestion of the Friends, the mayors and key staff members of all four cities met as a group for the first time to explore ways to work together on trail extension and connections. To that end, the cities agreed to create a Stevens Creek Trail Working Team, consisting of one councilmember and one staff member per city, as well as representatives from the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The goal of the Working Team will be to work cooperatively on ideas for trail alignment through all four communities. The Friends strongly endorses this regional approach and applauds Mountain View Mayor Margaret Abe-Koga, Los Altos Mayor Megan Satterlee and former Mayor Val Carpenter, Sunnyvale Mayor Anthony Spitaleri and Cupertino Mayor Orrin Mahoney for their initiative and active support of the joint planning process.

As the only nonprofit organization dedicated to the Stevens Creek Trail project, we are very gratified by these developments 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:

- **Mountain View:** A new segment of trail that passes beneath El Camino Real near the Highway 85 interchange was completed and dedicated in April. This section dramatically improves trail access for residents and businesses in the southern part of the city and neighboring communities. The city also began work on the next phase, an extension from El Camino Real to Sleeper Avenue, shortly thereafter. Work on the Moffett Boulevard overpass, which will eliminate the only existing surface-street crossing along the trail, also began in 2008. Both projects are scheduled for completion in spring 2009.
- **Los Altos:** The city completed a feasibility study, funded in part by a \$5,000 grant from the Friends, to determine possible trail routes through the city. In September, recommendations from the study were presented to the city council, which accepted the study with much praise for its thoroughness and the openness of the process used to develop it. The council subsequently decided to postpone further action in anticipation of the 4-city meeting noted above.
- **Cupertino:** Construction of the city's first segment of trail began in 2008. This permeable concrete, all-weather stretch runs from McClellan Road through McClellan Ranch Park and Blackberry Farm. Trail construction is part of a multi-year Stevens Creek Corridor project that includes rerouting of the creek, renovation of park structures and reductions in parking space and picnic capacity. Trail dedication is scheduled for July 4, 2009, as part of grand re-opening ceremonies for Blackberry Farm. An additional trail segment, continuing north to Stevens Creek Boulevard, is planned for Phase II of the project.
- **Sunnyvale:** City leaders decided to take a much closer look at the trail project in 2008 despite a restrictive policy, implemented in 1994, that opposes trail development within city limits along the creek channel. Interest was triggered in part by a "Parks of the Future" study commissioned by the city that showed strong resident support for trails and open spaces in the city. This led officials to accept an invitation from neighboring cities to participate in the joint planning session discussed above. Shortly after that meeting, a study issue on "Policy Supporting Connections to Regional Bike Facilities" came before the city council. In response to strong citizen input, which the Friends helped organize, the council voted unanimously to begin the process of striking its restrictive policy regarding the trail. It also agreed to cooperate fully in the 4-city planning process and to listen openly to any and all alignment alternatives.

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail actively supported these city-led initiatives while continuing to showcase and help maintain the existing trail. Our annual Spring Clean-up attracted dozens of volunteers, and the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk in the fall drew more than 1,000 participants, volunteers, sponsors and supporters for the fun-filled festivities.

During the year we added two new board members, one each from Los Altos and Cupertino, reflecting our increased interest in upstream communities. We enter 2009 with a strong and talented board, including representatives from all four cities involved with the trail, and an experienced team of officers serving as our executive committee.

The dream of completing a scenic, well-maintained, multi-use trail from bay to mountains remains a distant vision. By listening carefully to the needs and concerns of area residents, working diligently with community groups and local officials, and bringing creativity and energy to the resolution of potential issues, we believe the dream can be realized, one step at a time.

## **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 four miles of the trail exist today, with more under construction or planned.

### **The Board of Directors**

A volunteer board of directors, typically between nine and 12 members, governs the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. Board members live, work or take an active interest in our creek-side communities. While many board members historically have lived in Mountain View, where the trail began, we now have representation from Los Altos, Sunnyvale and Cupertino as well.

Board members during part or all of 2008 were:

Roy Verley, President  
Alan Ross, Vice President  
Ross Heitkamp, Treasurer  
Tom Bornheimer, Secretary  
Kathy Bettman  
John Brazil  
Jeannie Bruins  
Joe Mitchner  
Anne Ng  
Billy Symons  
Art Takahara  
Garth Williams  
Deepa Kollipara – associate

In 2008 the board continued to work on implementing its strategic plan, focusing on four key issues: 1) increasing awareness and support for the trail in

upstream communities, 2) building our organizational capacity, 3) increasing our financial capacity, and 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 and Office**

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.

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 stepped down to pursue a full-time career opportunity but was quickly re-elected to the board. Later in 2007, he was again appointed to the ED 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 2008, 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.



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

Steve Olson, a former board member and long-time supporter of the Friends, was named our 2008 “Volunteer of the Year” by the board of directors. Steve was recognized particularly for his eight years of dedicated service as registration coordinator for the Friends annual Trailblazer Race. He was presented with an award plaque at the November Celebration of Leaders event hosted by the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce. Board members, family and personal friends were present at this special event to recognize Steve’s many contributions, as well as those of other outstanding community volunteers.

Volunteer-recruitment efforts continued to bring new talent and energy to the Friends. The Trailblazer Newsletter,

periodic emails and our annual appeal also encouraged volunteers to sign up for various projects.

### **Financial Situation**

Despite the severe global economic downturn of 2008, the Friends’ financial position improved modestly 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 Corp. 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 2009 race will be held September 27.

The Friends board of directors continued to pursue a broader and more diverse range of funding sources in 2008. 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.

In March, the Friends was awarded a \$5,000 cash grant from the Kiwanis Club of Mountain View for supporting outdoor activities for youths and seniors. The donation, one of the largest philanthropic grants the organization has ever received, was presented to the Friends at the Kiwanis Club’s annual community-awards banquet. It was used to help fund the 2008 Trailblazer Race and related children’s events.

## Community Outreach and Involvement



Community outreach and involvement is a fundamental part of the Friends' efforts to raise awareness about the value of Stevens Creek Trail 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 2008.

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 2008, we attended planning meetings, shared ideas with city officials and established contact with grassroots organizations and other trail supporters in all upstream communities.

Listed below is a sampling of the services we provided and the activities we initiated or supported during 2008:

- Sending emails and providing maps, trail updates and printed materials.
- Making personal presentations to city officials, businesses and service clubs.
- 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.
- Providing information booths at art and wine festivals in Cupertino, Los Altos, Mountain View and Sunnyvale.
- Providing our annual trail tour and background talk for Leadership Mountain View.
- Publishing our annual report and Trailblazer newsletter for city officials and for distribution at community events.
- Updating [www.stevenscreektrail.org](http://www.stevenscreektrail.org), our informational website 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 26, with the very active participation of several 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 2008**



The Friends' 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Trailblazer Race and Trail Walk, held 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 an estimated 1,000 participants – runners, walkers, volunteers, exhibitors and spectators. As always, the race attracted numerous repeat participants as well as many new faces to the trail.

Microsoft, Presenting Sponsor for the overall event, again generously offered the use of its campus and support staff for race-day festivities. The staff and management of the Mountain View Parks and Recreation Department provided extensive logistical support leading up to and during the event. We could not have done it without their help.

Both the 10K and 5K racecourses 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.

In 2008, Race Director Aaron Grossman and former board member Ray Meyer III oversaw a hardworking race committee, made up of other board members and volunteers, who brought everything together. Except for professional race timing services, volunteers carried out all other activities, with more than 100 of them helping out.

Many local businesses and individuals also provided support through financial sponsorships and in-kind donations. Along with Microsoft, they included the Mountain View Kiwanis Club, Star One Credit Union, Avery Construction Co., Richard Lowenthal, Foothill Disposal, Atwell Realty, Minton's Lumber, BMW of Mountain View, Camino Medical Group, Fenwick & West, Nolte Associates and Honu Wealth Management. In-kind sponsors included AMR Ambulance, Hobees, Trader Joe's, Smart & Final, Milk Pail, Posh Bagels, the Mountain View Voice and the City of Mountain View.

### **Media Coverage and Reporting**

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

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

Several 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.

### **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 2008, 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, when completed. The 4-city meeting and joint planning process described in the Executive Summary of this report is a direct reflection of the efforts we've made over the years to promote the trail as a regional asset.

### **What's Ahead**

In 2009 we look forward to working closely with all four creek-side cities on the regional (4-city) planning initiative launched in December 2008. In addition, we will be supporting,

participating in or actively monitoring the following projects:

- Mountain View: completion of the Moffett Boulevard overpass and the southern extension of the existing trail, from its current terminus near the intersection of El Camino Real and Highway 85 to a new terminus at Sleeper Avenue;
- Cupertino: dedication of the city's first trail segment along the Stevens Creek Corridor and planning for trail extensions as part of the multi-year creek- and park-restoration project;
- Sunnyvale: consideration of possible alternatives for trail construction and/or possible connections as part of the regional planning initiative;
- Los Altos: consideration and possible implementation of key recommendations from the feasibility study in conjunction with the regional planning initiative.

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

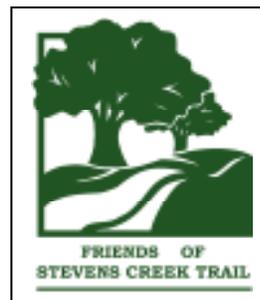
We deeply appreciate the continued interest and support of city and county officials and of our many donors and volunteers. Together, we are bringing the dream of completing the Stevens Creek Trail – from bay to mountains – closer to reality.

#### *Following:*

- *Financial Statements for 2008*
- *Trailblazer Newsletter Summer 2008*

# Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

## 2008 Annual Report



### Friends of Stevens Creek Trail Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2008

Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$	26,325
Short-term Investments		<u>85,185</u>
Total Assets	\$	<u>111,510</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Payroll Liabilities	\$	<u>654</u>
Total Liabilities		654
Net Assets		<u>110,856</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	<u>111,510</u>

### Friends of Stevens Creek Trail Statement of Functional Expenses For the Year ended December 31, 2008

	Program Services	Supporting Services	Total
Race Expenses	19,399	-	19,399
Volunteer and Leadership Administration	362	-	362
Board Development	-	558	558
Payroll & Related Expense	-	21,988	21,988
Insurance	-	685	685
Rent and Utilities	-	2,397	2,397
Office Expenses	-	2,726	2,726
Professional Services & Fees	-	2,670	2,670
Communication	-	2,124	2,124
Annual Appeal	-	<u>408</u>	<u>408</u>
Total	<u>19,761</u>	<u>33,556</u>	<u>53,317</u>

### Friends of Stevens Creek Trail Statement of Activities For the Year ended December 31, 2008

Support		
Donations	\$	15,780
Special Events		41,823
Interest Income		1,094
Realized Losses on Securities		<u>(1,868)</u>
Total Support		56,829
Expenses		
Program Services		19,761
Supporting Services		
Administration		31,024
Communications		2,124
Fundraising		<u>408</u>
Total Expenses	\$	<u>53,317</u>
Increase in Net Assets		3,512
Net Assets, December 31, 2007		<u>107,344</u>
Net Assets, December 31, 2008	\$	<u>110,856</u>

### Friends of Stevens Creek Trail Statement of Cash Flows For the Year ended December 31, 2008

Cash Flows From Operating Activities		
Increase in net assets	\$	3,512
Adjustments to reconcile increase in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Increase in short-term investment		1,279
Increase in payroll liabilities		<u>218</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		5,009
Net Increase in Cash		<u>5,009</u>
Cash, December 31, 2007		<u>21,316</u>
Cash, December 31, 2008	\$	<u>26,325</u>

These unaudited statements prepared by Jane Benthin Stokes, CPA