



Trailblazer

A Newsletter Published by the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

Summer 2002



President's Message

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail have been busy! As part of our many efforts, we are excited to announce the Trailblazer Race, our major fundraiser, is back for 2002! It will be a fun and exciting event and we hope to see you there!

On other fronts, R4S1 (Reach 4 Segment 1), from Dana Street almost to El Camino Real, is moving along well and should open this fall, maybe in time for the Trailblazer. The Environmental Impact Report for the next stretch of trail, Reach 4 Segment 2, has just been published and is now available for public review.

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail Board and Executive Director Susie Brain have also kept very busy. We recruited five very well-qualified new members from upstream communities where we need to continue the Trail. Then we worked on a number of habitat restoration projects ranging from creek-bed clean-ups to tree plantings—see photos of volunteers in action throughout this newsletter. It was hard work but the projects were a lot of fun and it felt good doing hands-on help for the environment. This was of course in addition to attending numerous meetings and conferences to help further the cause of completing the trail all the way through from the Bay to the Mountains!

2002 will be a banner year, and thanks for being part of it! We can't do it without you!

Happy Trails!

Aaron Grossman, President



Trailblazer Race & Trail Walk Return!

New Race Course Highlights the Trail—Sunday, September 29

The Trailblazer Race returns in 2002 with fun for the whole family on Sunday morning, September 29. Microsoft is our new presenting sponsor and all events start and finish in front of their campus by the Stevens Creek Trail on La Avenida, just off Shoreline Boulevard by Highway 101. The main events start at 8:30 a.m. and include a 10K Race, 5K Race, and a 5K Trail Walk. Free Children's Races will follow the main events, including short dashes on the lawn for younger kids and for those children who wish, a longer run around campus on the sidewalk.

All the courses are new and highlight much more of Stevens Creek Trail. Walkers and runners will have separate courses and start/finish areas, with the Trail Walk almost entirely on Stevens Creek trail within a few hundred feet south on the trail towards Walkers may include the Street to Yuba Drive if it is



Runners will enter the trail line and head north towards start will be separated from ten minutes. 5K runners will Creek Tidal Marsh, turn left on the long footbridge to cross it, and then return south along the trail to the start/finish line at Microsoft.

10K runners will go up the trail along the west side of the tidal marsh to enter Shoreline Park and turn west along the salt ponds. Next they turn south past the boathouse, Rengstorff House, and the Golf Course Clubhouse. Runners then turn east on Shoreline Park's Energy Road behind Shoreline Amphitheatre and past the Kite Area to rejoin the trail back to the start/finish line at Microsoft. With its new stretches on Stevens Creek Trail and by circling most of Shoreline Park, this is now one of the most scenic 10K runs around!

There will be a festival area, prizes, and much more. Be sure to mark your calendar so that you don't miss out. Even better, register now! Pre-registration for the main events is strongly encouraged. To avoid delays on race day, please mail in the enclosed form, print out additional registrations at www.stevenscreektrail.org or register online at www.active.com.

We still need volunteers and additional sponsors for individual events and prizes. All race-day volunteers receive Trailblazer T-shirts and are eligible for random prize drawings. If you can help out please contact Executive Director Susie Brain at (408) 255-5780 or friends@stevenscreektrail.org.



Trail Update

Mountain View Trail Extension

R4S1 (Reach 4 Segment 1) of the trail from Landels School on Dana Street to Yuba Drive, just off El Camino near Grant Road, should be completed by early fall this year. It is a particularly challenging section because of the engineering required to cantilever portions of the trail. Existing roadway structures as well as ADA requirements required creative design and engineering work. This short but critical stretch will provide bikes and pedestrians a safe and aesthetically stunning alternative to the potentially hazardous use of El Camino to cross highway 237, one of the major roads that still divides our community. We will keep you posted regarding dedication ceremony details.

Cupertino Status

On March 18 the Cupertino City Council held its first study session on the Stevens Creek Trail Task Force recommendation to proceed with a Draft Feasibility Study. The council members expressed overall support for the trail concept and were pleased to see the progress the task force had made in addressing initial community concerns and studying alternatives to create greater community support for the trail.

However, they did question some trail alignment recommendations and use of a tunnel structure at Blackberry Farm. Other challenges include single-use vs. multi-use trail options, trail impacts at McClellan Ranch Preserve, and the Blackberry Farm trail alignment and private property concerns there. Restora-



Rendering of the Stevens Creek Trail bridge over Highway 237 by artist Mark Thomas

tion benefits were viewed as a key component for the project's success.

The Council directed staff to proceed with a Draft Feasibility Study. The process involves submitting the recommendations to the appropriate agencies for their input, including the California Department of Fish & Game, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Also, the Planning Commission will produce a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to identify impacts to traffic, restoration, and adjacent properties, and the Parks & Recreation Department will hold hearings for input from user groups.

The City Planning Commission will discuss the Stevens Creek Trail Draft Feasibility Report at its next meeting on Monday, August 26th, at 6:45 p.m. in Cupertino City Hall. Cupertino Trail advocates are encouraged to attend. You can read the report at <http://www.cupertino.org/update/rec/info/stvnsckreport.htm>. Call 408-255-5780 for more details.

Wildlife and Trail Corridor Improvements Noted

A recent public presentation noted the variety of creek habitat improvements contributed by work on the Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor. Native plant landscaping has enhanced habitat degraded by construction of adjacent Highway 85 and provided wildlife cover and forage along the trail. The City of Mountain View has already planted and installed automatic irrigation systems for over 3,000 native shrubs and trees, many of which were grown from locally harvested seeds and acorns. Greater public use of the trail has increased public interest and sensitivity for improving the area for wildlife. Synopsys, a local company, has even sponsored a teachers' guide for classrooms visiting the creek corridor. Additionally, homelessness and illegal dumping has almost disappeared in completed areas.

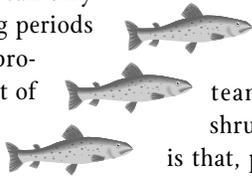


Volunteers Jessica Lai, Jeff Foster, Gail Bower and Board Treasurer Ross Heitkamp planting willow saplings on the creek bank.

Other benefits are that the trail now reconnects neighborhoods once fragmented by roadways and rails. It provides walking and bicycle access to five parks and three schools located along the creek. When completed, it will form a six-mile long linear riparian park so people can literally walk in the woods for miles, right here in town. All sections are ADA accessible and designed to meet or exceed guidelines. The trail offers direct commute options to employees and residents, and connects to Light Rail, Caltrain, and major bus routes. The June 2000 survey showed 1,300 to 1,600 users per day, and they were predominantly adults and families from nearby neighborhoods. Peak usage was 6-7 p.m. midweek and 3-4 p.m. on weekends. In the future, the trail will be an important valley floor link between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean and also a connector to the Bay Trail. Please help us to ensure that this all takes place. Support the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail!

Stevens Creek Drop Structure Modification Project

What's going on at the Central Avenue Trailhead!? The Santa Clara Valley Water District is beginning a four-month project to remove the stream gauge concrete drop structure that poses a large physical barrier to migrating steelhead. Steelhead currently can only navigate up this section during periods of very high water flow. The proposed replacement will be a set of weirs designed with a series of fish-friendly smaller jumps and resting pools. This will be the first of several possible drop structure modification projects along Stevens Creek over the next five to ten years. The project should end by early October and the trail will remain open the entire time. In order to get the construction equipment into the creek bed, a ramp will be



assembled at the Central Avenue trailhead. This, unfortunately, required the removal of much of the vegetation at the trailhead. In March, the Water District transplanted trees to other locations along the trail, and in April the Friends, the City of Mountain View and community volunteers including the Synopsys Green Team teamed up to relocate the remaining shrubs and ground cover. The good news is that, per their standard policy, the Water District will replant the trailhead at the end of the project, replacing trees at a 3-to-1 rate for natives. Keep your eyes open for much happier steelhead in the creek next year! For more information about the project contact Gordon Lau at (408) 265-2607 ext. 2686.



Friends Volunteers Work Along the Creek

March 9 Stevens Creek Clean-Up

Twelve hard-working volunteers wearing boots and gloves collected 23 bags of trash in one day from the creek and surrounding riparian area by the trail in Mountain View! A winter storm the day before had everyone worried, but then the sun shown through and conditions were great. Trail users noticed us and were very pleased to see our extensive creek clean up. Thanks go to Board member Steve Olson for organizing the entire day, getting permits from the Water District, recruiting volunteers, and lining up the donation of a tasty pizza and salad lunch for the hungry volunteers.

April 20 California Trail Day/Earth Day

Forty volunteers from the Friends, the Synopsys "Green Team," and the local community turned out for this year's annual collaboration with the City of Mountain View. Habitat restoration included planting and re-locating 44 native buckeye trees and ceanothus shrubs at the Central Avenue trailhead. Other work included fence painting and more clean-up along the creek and trail corridor. Tony & Alba's generously donated lunch and the Mountain View Voice featured an article with photos of the event.



*Stevens Creek Clean-Up Day
Volunteers Glen Eckols and Spence Everson finding lots of trash!*

April 27 Cupertino Tree Planting at Blackberry Farm

Eighteen volunteers including a number from the Friends as well as local residents worked closely with City of Cupertino Naturalist Barbara Banfield on this creek-side habitat restoration and stewardship project at Blackberry Farm. They planted 18 native buckeye, cottonwood, and coast live oak trees to help provide the necessary shade for the creek that in turn will keep the water cool enough for Steelhead trout to survive. All the work was done by



Above: Volunteers Ruth Anderson, Alison Takata and her son fence painting along the trail



Below: Volunteers Gail Bower and Yvonne Heinicke planting a native Coast Live Oak near the creek at Blackberry Farm

hand, including some tough digging in several very difficult sites. Everyone had a wonderful sense of accomplishment and enjoyed the fine pizzas generously donated by Bruschetas.

Contact the Friends if you would like to volunteer in any capacity—all efforts are appreciated!



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Trail Advocates and Volunteers

Many people have asked for email notification of upcoming trail advocacy issues, meetings, and volunteer opportunities. If you have not been receiving any of these, it may be because we do not have your current email. Please send us your current email address, preferably by email, to Susie at friends@stevenscreektrail.org. Thank you.

Yes, I share the vision of extending the trail through communities along the creek, linking the Baylands to the Foothills and supporting trail and wildlife corridor stewardship activities.

- Please send me an email when your newsletter is posted.
- Please email me action alerts and updates to extend and promote the trail.
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Thanks!

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Thank You

Thanks to all who have so generously contributed to the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail since our last newsletter!

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Trailblazer Race 2002
Sunday, September 29th



Mark your calendar for a day of fun for the entire family!