

Voice News

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COMING UP: Trailblazer Race on Sunday For 14 years, event has celebrated growing stretch of Stevens Creek Trail

by Andrea Pyka
Mountain View Voice Staff

One of Mountain View's greatest assets is its system of trails, and this Sunday its crown jewel, the Stevens Creek Trail, will be celebrated once more in the 14th annual Trailblazer Race.

According to Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, a nonprofit group, having a path run the length of the Stevens Creek corridor has been a goal of local advocates for more than 40 years. Slowly but surely, local governments and agencies have been chipping away at that goal, and Mountain View has more than done its part: The trail now extends for six miles through the city, running from Shoreline Park to the south side of El Camino Real.

The trail's biggest yearly celebration also is held in Mountain View, hosted at the Microsoft campus on La Avenida. Participants will begin the Trailblazer from there on Sunday morning, embarking on 10K, 5K and children's races or walks.

The event is a fundraiser for the trail, and Aaron Grossman, executive director of Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, said he hopes the steady contributions and support will eventually be enough to extend the trail all the way to Cupertino.

"There is a desire to have an environmentally sensitive trail, where people can see the creek and wildlife without negatively impacting the creek," Grossman said.

A small but important extension of the trail was completed only five months ago, when the city of Mountain View, at a cost of \$3.5 million, tunneled the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly path under El Camino Real.

More improvements are on the way. Since May, Mountain View Public Works has been constructing a pedestrian and bicycle overpass at Moffett Boulevard. (Between 30 and 40 percent of trail users are bicyclists, according to Grossman.)

All these improvements add up to even more respite for trail users, who say Stevens Creek Trail provides them with a place for exercise, commuting and simple peace and quiet.

"I walk a minimum of five miles a day," said Mountain View resident Evan Scott. Standing in the trail on a recent weekday, wearing comfortable walking shoes and carrying a book, Scott said the trail makes for a perfect setting to enjoy nature.

"The new extension of the trail is nice," he added, "because you can get around the El Camino without getting hit by a car."

Many teenagers frequent the trail after school hours, coasting their bikes up and down the maze of man-made sand dunes along Mercy Street. Parents take their children to the parks attached to the path, such as Creekside Park on Easy Street.

"People and the local government are realizing that urban trails are a benefit in so many ways," Grossman said. "It's open space, it's recreation, it gets people out of their cars, and if it's done right, it's a real boost for the environment."

Walking the trail "is a nice contrast from being at work," said Microsoft employee Katarina Ling. "You always meet interesting and friendly people. I hope that it stays that way."

INFORMATION:

What: The 14th annual Trailblazer Race
When: Sunday, Sept. 28. Registration begins at 7 a.m. Sunday, and the first race is at 8:30 a.m.
Where: The Microsoft campus, 1065 La Avenida Ave., Mountain View
Info: For details, including maps, race times and information on how to register or volunteer, visit www.stevenscreektrail.org/trailblazer or call Aaron Grossman at (408) 255-5780

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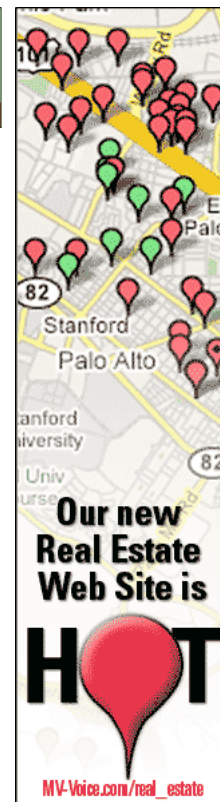


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