

## Cupertino celebrates opening of restored creek, trail project

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The city of Cupertino has blazed a new trail where residents can enjoy a picturesque stroll or bike ride from McClellan Ranch all the way to Stevens Creek Boulevard.

On July 1, the city celebrated the completion of phase two of its long-awaited trail and creek restoration project. A new trail links McClellan Road with Stevens Creek Boulevard by way of a nearly one-mile trail.

The new trail segment is approximately one-quarter mile and winds through the former Stocklmeir property and orchard, which is now accessible to the public. A gathering space and small nature trail is also located in the orchard.

The trail continues out onto Stevens Creek Boulevard, near the Blue Pheasant Restaurant and alongside Blackberry Farm Golf Course.

The July 1 celebration came almost exactly five years after the grand opening of phase one of the corridor project. Phase one in 2008-09 saw major renovations to Blackberry Farm, along with creek restoration, creek rerouting, a new trail, new landscaping, and a new parking lot at Blackberry Farm.

Phase two of the project boasts a new bridge over Stevens Creek, a new trail through the Stocklmeir orchard, new native plantings, irrigation system improvements, and new trail fencing installations, which run alongside the Blackberry Farm Golf Course and protect pedestrians from wayward golf balls. Decorative stone work adorns a new bridge entrance that spans the creek. New benches and points of respite are located along the trail.

Until now, the trail in Blackberry Farm dead-ended in the parking lot near the golf course. The trail now continues out onto an entry point on Stevens Creek Boulevard near the Blue Pheasant Restaurant and Blackberry Farm Golf Course parking lot.

Stevens Creek saw a makeover similar to the creek work done in 2008 during first phase of the restoration. Workers removed broken concrete in the creek, widened the channel for high water events, added native planting, and improved the creek habitat for threatened steelhead trout. Dozens of native plant species can be found along phase two of the trail, with many displaying information signs.

A walk along the new path can also provide a visual reminder of California's drought, as the formerly rushing Stevens Creek is currently bone dry along the new segment of the trail.

"The creek restoration was completed during a significant record-breaking drought. The Stevens Creek Reservoir upstream of us is exceptionally low, as are the reservoir releases that feed the creek," public works director Timm Borden said during the July 1 dedication. "It won't stay that way once normal rain returns. We hope that [residents] will come back in the months ahead to see how the restoration progresses and enjoy the creek and wildlife when the creek is flowing once again."

The total construction contract cost of phase two was \$3.281 million, with \$2.831 million in project funding coming from grants and other outside funds and contributions, according to the city. Robert A. Bothman, Inc. did the construction on both phases of the project. Phase two construction began in June 2013 and the planning process involved numerous regulatory and resource agencies.

"We appreciate the cooperation of the 17 different agencies who came together to produce this project before you," Mayor Gilbert Wong said during the dedication ceremony.

The dedication also culminated a process that was roughly a decade in the making and saw the input of countless residents, multiple city council members, city managers, public works directors, and parks and recreation directors.

"Several years ago we were piecing together money with all of our different grants, and it was really the support and leadership of the city council that kept this moving through some tough times. We owe them our deep gratitude and commitment throughout the entire process," Borden said.

The beginning of the trail can be found at McClellan Ranch, 22221 McClellan Road, or near Blackberry Farm Golf Course, 22100 Stevens Creek Blvd. The new trail segment can be found near the Blackberry Farm parking lot, 21979 San Fernando Ave., in Cupertino. The trail is open 365 days a year.