

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail

2024 Annual Report



Message from the President

After three years as the President of the Board of Directors, I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished. At the end of 2024 I resigned this position to focus on my personal health. I am confident that Scott Walker, the incoming President will fill the position with energy and focus and carry the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail into their next chapter. I will remain as a Board Member of the Friends.

Board of Directors

Greg Unangst, President
Scott Walker, Vice President
Garth Williams, Treasurer
Andrea Stawitcke, Secretary
John Brazil • Ross Heitkamp • Subra
Kumaraswamy • Richard Lowenthal
Jim Meyerson • Anne Ng • Scott Trappe

Executive Director

Rajiv Mathur

Advisory Board

Rhonda Farrar, Founder
Kathy Bettman • Kevin Duggan
Art Takahara • Roy Verley

Upon reflection, we have achieved many things during my tenure as President. Here are a few that I am especially proud to have seen:

The Friends initiated and managed a project to remove a barrier to fish passage along the creek. This is a project that much larger organizations would be challenged to accomplish in a similar timeframe.

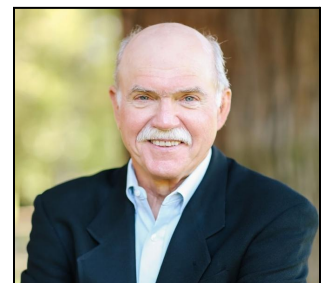
In Cupertino, our Board members and volunteer supporters helped clear out dirt tracks which we hope will eventually become the trail and close one of the gaps that exist today. And further expansion in Sunnyvale & Mountain View is in progress.

Our signage project unified the trail's identity from the Skyline to the Bay and has transitioned into the maintenance & sustaining phase.

We built back the Trailblazer Race post-pandemic to a significant event with huge attendance.

The report that follows details the Friends activity during the past year - and there is much for which we can be proud. All in all, 2024 was a good year and I look forward to our endeavors along the creeks and trail in 2025. Once again, I am grateful for what we have here. The Stevens & Permanente Creek Trails are a haven for cleansing the mind and body by immersing yourself in fresh air, exercise and nature. They are gems that will continue to be protected and enhanced by the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail.

- Greg Unangst,
Board President



Get Involved

The work and accomplishments you will read about have been completed almost entirely by volunteers. We pride ourselves on being a grassroots organization with passionate supporters who develop trails, maintain the riparian habitat of the creeks, and promote our mission at community events. If you or your team are interested in volunteering with us in any way, please visit [this site](#) to express your interest and someone will contact you to arrange an opportunity with you.

Our all-volunteer Board members bring a diversity of backgrounds, interests and profiles to the organization. They give their time in several ways - trail development, signage, outreach through communications, website and social media, engagement with cities and jurisdictions, strategy direction and planning, events, use of technology and fundraising. They love the trail and are a mix of avid bikers, walkers, and runners. If you have an interest in attending our Board of Directors meetings and / or have thoughts about joining our Board, contact exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org.

Trail Development

At our tabling events throughout the year, one of the most frequent questions we get is “What are the plans to bridge the gaps and expand the trail?” We are proud of the progress we have made with our first-hand efforts and we are also looking forward to the kickoff of construction for the expansion of the paved trail from its current end point at Dale / Heatherstone south to Fremont Avenue.

Trail Extensions in Cupertino

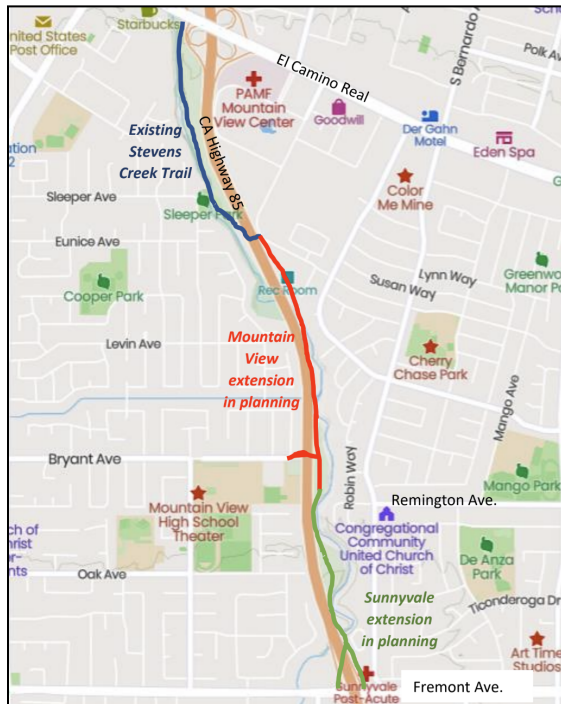
Work has steadily progressed on an alignment from Varian Park south to Stevens Creek Boulevard. The path is smoothed out, and the grounds surrounding the new segment have been cleared out and improved. Piles of fallen eucalyptus bark have been removed from the surrounding grounds, and a steep slope has been stabilized with native plantings. It is becoming an increasingly popular spot to walk, and provides a safe conduit for students traveling to/from Stevens Creek Elementary School.

We have focused on defining a route for the 1mi segment connecting Linda Vista Park to Stevens Creek County Park. To this end, we hosted multiple work days this year to clear brush, survey & mark routes, and designate a path to make this segment passable by both hiking and mountain bike.



Trail Extensions in Mountain View and Sunnyvale

The cities of Sunnyvale and Mountain View are coordinating plans to extend the trail to connect Fremont Avenue Sunnyvale to Dale/Heatherstone Avenue in Mountain View. See map alongside with the blue section indicating the existing trail, red to be built by Mountain View, and green to be built by Sunnyvale. This new trail segment would connect several schools and provide a bike and pedestrian-friendly route for families in the area.



Unfortunately, planning progress for the trail extension was slowed for both cities in 2024.

For Mountain View, Project 20-50, Stevens Creek Trail Extension is underway, but has been delayed by a lack of staff resources and by design elements that make the project complex, such as multiple bridges over Stevens Creek, a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over State Highway 85, and potentially the relocation of a freeway sound wall. A Measure B grant funding agreement between the City and VTA was executed last year and will be followed shortly by a funding agreement between the cities of Mountain View and Sunnyvale to secure the \$6 million required for the project's feasibility study, environmental clearance, and design.

For Sunnyvale, both VTA and CalTrans are requiring study documents that were not previously planned by City Staff. Project #835630 is on the list of the top 30 capital improvement projects to be presented for FY 2025-2026 budget approval in the Spring of 2025. This

would allow Sunnyvale to allocate the resources necessary to complete the required study documentation and move the project forward to the detailed design phase.

FoSCT is actively engaged with the cities and other agencies, and will continue to publicize public meetings on these budget items so that the trail extension can move forward as quickly as possible. We encourage you to be an active voice in the Sunnyvale and Mountain View annual budgeting process and to contact your council members about the importance of these projects.

Signage - Medallions Projects Completed in Mountain View and Cupertino

Phase I of the Stevens Creek Trail medallion project was completed in 2023. In Mountain View, 64 medallions cover the 5 miles of trail from the entrance in Shoreline to the trailhead at Dale - Heatherstone. In Cupertino, 33 medallions are located from the north entrance at the Stockmeir House to the current trail end in Linda Vista Park. Nine medallions are installed along the Tony Look Stevens Creek Trail in Stevens Creek County Park, and 11 medallions are along trails in Midpen's Monte Bello Preserve.

The Friends is now in "Maintenance Mode," occasionally checking that all medallions are still in place. We are otherwise waiting to help with new signage installation as further sections of the trail get built and opened. The medallion was developed in collaboration with a working group of public agencies in the

region (Cities of Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and Los Altos, Santa Clara County Parks and Midpeninsula Open Space District) and other regional trail partners (Bay Area Ridge Trail and San Francisco Bay Trail). Sunnyvale and Mountain View will include the medallions in their new trail sections as they open in the coming years. Midpen and SCCP are also planning projects to develop segments in the upper Stevens Creek watershed that will include SCT medallions.



Other Trail Improvements

The City of Mountain View completed an access point to the Permanente Creek Trail from Colony Street. The main elements of the project include a prefabricated bridge over Permanente Creek, paving the trail connection from the bridge to the existing trail, and connecting the trail to the cul-de-sac of Colony Street.

In September, the Mountain View Public Works Department completed construction work to repair the Sleeper Avenue Bridge, located at Stevens Creek, adjacent to Sleeper Park and the Stevens Creek Trail. The project improved the structural stability of the bridge foundation on the eastern bank of Stevens Creek. The Stevens Creek Trail and the Sleeper Avenue Bridge remained open during construction with construction areas fenced off to provide safety barriers for trail users. The project area and the adjacent creek bank were then hydroseeded before the rainy season.

Wildlife Corridor

Fish Passage Project

In 2020, the Friends took on an ambitious project to remove a barrier to steelhead trout at Deep Cliff Golf Course in Cupertino. We completed the project in 2022 and after the second post-project annual monitoring, habitat experts supported by volunteers confirmed that the project site is meeting requirements and provides deep pool shelters for fish. We are evaluating remaining barriers to fish passage along the rest of the Stevens Creek and value your



backing to help us achieve this mission to improve the wildlife corridor.

Volunteers from Grassroots Ecology helped us plant native saplings on the banks of the creek next to the project site. This will help revegetate the slopes that were disturbed during the construction phase of the project.

Creek and Corridor Restoration Work

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail organized two trail restoration projects in 2024. The first involved the removal of invasive Cape Ivy and the planting of native plants in the Fish Passage area of the creek (within the Blackberry Farm golf course). The second project was initiated by the City of Mountain View and coordinated with the Los Altos High green team, to re-plant native vegetation in Sleeper Gardens – a neglected area between the Sleeper Park bridge and the Highway 85 overpass. A third planting, coordinated with Scout Troop 80 and the city of Mountain View, installed additional native plants in the Sleeper Gardens area in early January, 2025.

Events & Engagement

Trailblazer Race

The 30th anniversary Trailblazer Race held on Sunday, September 29th was certainly one for the history books. We had 643 runners and trail walkers check-in for the race, an increase of almost 25% over last year! As everyone milled about before the start, a number of people told us that they were participating for the very first time. Since the Trailblazer Race has become a favorite for many Bay Area runners and walkers, the crowd also included more than a handful of people who were at the very first race. One of our former Board members even brought out his t-shirt from that 1994 race to display at the FoSCT booth.



Our youngest participant was just 1 year old in the 3mi trail walk (way to go - get them out on the trail early), and the oldest was 84 years old. We had participants come from as far away as Las Vegas for this year's race. We love to see the diversity of participants enjoying the trail and supporting the Friends!

Again, it is with the strong support of dedicated volunteers that this milestone event happens. Nearly 100 volunteers supported the race along with our entire Board of Directors.



Solstice Ride

Our Solstice Ride on June 21st was a great success with approximately 75 participants of all ages! This first-time collaboration among the Friends, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, GBike, and Valley Water was a memorable bike ride along the Stevens Creek Trail and Shoreline Park that we will definitely strive to bring back in 2025. Thanks to those who participated and the great panel of guest speakers who reinforced how important it is to protect our watershed in order to preserve the trails we enjoy.

Trail Cleanups

In 2024, Friends of Stevens Creek hosted or coordinated 9 trail cleanup events involving over 200 people. The events included trash pickup and/or weed eradication, primarily on the trail stretches in Mountain View. They are good outdoor activities to promote community spirit as well as maintain the trail worthiness.

The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail organizes both public and private trail cleanups of the trail and creek bed. For many years, the Friends has coordinated with the City of Mountain View and Valley Water for two annual public creek cleanups. These are synchronized with Rails to Trails' Celebrate Trails Day initiative in April, and California Coastal Cleanup Day in September. In 2025, these cleanups will be on April 26th and September 20th, respectively, so mark your calendars.

Participation in Community Events

In addition to these milestone events this year, the Friends maintained our annual appearance in the Mountain View Art & Wine festival. Sunnyvale was unable to hold their A&W festival in 2024, but we are hopeful that the 50th occurrence will return in June 2025. Through these tabling events in Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Los Altos, Friends is able to promote use of the Stevens Creek Trail, registration for the Trailblazer Race, and community involvement. We anticipate at least the same participation level in 2025.

We hosted an 'energizer station' along the trail on Bike to Work Day in May and look forward to an even larger turnout next year.

Financial Performance

We are grateful to our sponsors who support us in good times and bad. The full list is below in this report. In addition to those, we are grateful to Hobee's who as always gifted us multiple trays of their delicious coffee cakes. The gifts of coffee and hot cocoa from Starbucks went really well with the cakes!

The tech slowdown in Silicon Valley had an impact on us as well. Our sponsorship numbers were below the 2023 levels. However, community support helped us tide over this deficit. Noticing the dip in our sponsorship revenues we sent out a newsletter with a special appeal in mid August 2024. In the two-and-a-half months that followed, our individual donors sent us 4 times as much as we had received in the same period the previous year. We couldn't have done it without you. Additional tightening measures helped in closing out the year with a surplus.



Priorities for 2025

Trail Development

We will continue to bring community support to the Mountain View and Sunnyvale City Councils to ensure that the extension of the trail from Dale / Heatherstone to Fremont continues as quickly as possible.

Maintaining the section of the trail from Blackberry Farm to Varian Park will continue along with advocacy for a long-term solution to create a trail underpassing Stevens Creek Boulevard.

It is our goal to align the final route connecting Linda Vista Park to Stevens Creek County Park, balancing our mission to expand the trail with the recovering habitat of that area.

We will follow the City of Mountain View's plans to reinforce the erosion along the trail at Whisman and Sleeper Parks following the rain and washout of the creek in early 2023.

Wildlife Corridor

We will continue to maintain our current fish passage improvement along the creek and seek other opportunities to improve the wildlife habitat.

The City of Mountain View has proposed the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail would be the designee for nearly the entire trail segment under the Adopt-a-Trail program. We welcome this opportunity to be designated stewards of over 6mi of the Stevens Creek Trail.

Events

The 31st Trailblazer Race will be held on September 28, 2025. We also seek to expand our offerings for community businesses partners to participate in the festival area.

We will continue to seek partnerships with bike / walk advocacy teams that connect the Stevens Creek Trail to the network of safe alternative commute methods around the South Bay.

At present, there are two planned public trail cleanups in 2025: on April 26th and September 20th. There are already multiple requests for private trail cleanups. We expect 5-10 such activities during the year.

Planning for a "State of the Creek" summit will be a focus area in 2025. This summit will assemble community partners, Government agencies, and nonprofits with a vested interest in the Stevens Creek and Trail to set the stage for our continued work for future generations.

Board

We seek to expand our Board of Directors to better balance our workload and have an even greater impact in our community. We encourage prospective Board members to engage in regular volunteer projects with Friends of Stevens Creek Trail and attend our Board meetings as a guest to gain greater insight into our operations.



How You Can Help

Do these projects matter to you, or do you have something you wanted added to our list? If so, get involved! We are a community organization and our work is done primarily by community-conscious citizens like you. Reach out to us through any of the means listed below.

Donate

We welcome contributions by check, credit card or through PayPal (accessible by the QR code here). We accept stock transfer donations and you can transfer required disbursements from retirement accounts to avoid income tax implications. For additional information, please send an email to exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org.



Our sincere thanks to our donors! Many of them went the extra mile to secure matching contributions from their employers. Our FEIN is 77-0334262 for tax-deductible contributions.

We do not share donor personal information, and are proud to hold a Platinum rating with [Candid](#).

Platinum
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2024

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Volunteer

Those who are passionate about the trails or the wildlife corridors and would like to volunteer please contact us at volunteer@stevenscreektrail.org. Corporate / Company teams are also welcome.

Sponsor

Sponsorships have been an integral part of the fundraising efforts at Friends of Stevens Creek Trail. There's more information on sponsorship at [our website](#) including a [prospectus](#) of opportunities.

Social Media

Please visit and subscribe to our social media pages for more information about FoSCT and interesting content for trail enthusiasts of all types:



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We encourage your feedback on social media. If you have content suggestions or information you would like us to share, please email comms@stevenscreektrail.org.

We thank our 2024 sponsors! Please help us thank them with your support.



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