



**Berkeley
Partners
for Parks**

Working Together for 22 Years

Building vibrant, healthy, ecologically sound communities by providing structure needed to engage volunteers in work for public open space and recreation.

www.BPFP.org PO Box 12521 Berkeley, CA 94712

Jan. 2017 Report from our Partner Groups

What is a BPFP Partner Group? Berkeley Partners for Parks brings together citizens working as volunteers to enhance public open space, nature, and recreation. These citizens work on myriad local projects, in groups large and small. Varied as they are, these projects all spring from:

- people with an idea or dream for outdoor spaces or recreation
- people willing to volunteer their time or give money
- organizations with know-how and experience.

BPFP manages the finances, providing essential services including insurance, accounting, and tax deductibility. We also provide collegiality, inspiration, a wide range of experience, advice on funding sources, suggestions for partnerships, and encouragement when needed. We make it all hang together! To support us, click on the DONATE tab on our website, or send us a check.

Here is a sampler of what our partner groups achieved in 2016:



Take To The Hills

Thanks to \$2000 in donations, Take to the Hills was able to buy and install 94 new wood steps on the trail from the top of Dwight Way up to Panoramic Way, on UC Berkeley property. Thanks to all the volunteers who restored this popular connection to the UC fire trails, replacing the badly eroded staircase installed by Boy Scouts more than 20 years ago. The new steps and remnants of the old ones can be seen in the photo at left.

To keep erosion from recurring, and reduce fire danger, we continue pull invasive French broom, bundle it, and install it in new bio-swales. On Berkeley Project Day, we also again led 25 Cal students picking up trash at the scenic pullouts on Grizzly Peak Boulevard. Keeping this up through the years has led to a slight, but still noticeable, decrease in litter at these popular viewpoints!

Friends of the Rose Garden

Friends of the Berkeley Rose Garden got a new pulse of energy from the City's investment in rebuilding the iconic trellis in Berkeley's 1937 Works Progress Administration treasure, as well as hiring of a new rosarian! Along with Berkeley Path Wanderers Association, we made recent contributions to the city for new paving stones. A successful

volunteer day in November cleared weeds from the lower rose beds. A new web site is under construction, part of plans to "rebuild" Friends of the Berkeley Rose Garden.

Look for announcements of volunteer days and meetings to lay the groundwork for a fundraising campaign to help the City make the Berkeley Rose Garden one of the premier municipal rose gardens in the nation. Email Sandy McCoy at wbmccoy@gmail.com to get on our email list. And stop by the Rose Garden on Euclid Avenue to see progress!

Point Isabel Habitat Creation Project

In 2016 we extended our revegetation/habitat creation project along the Bay Trail at Hoffman Marsh, aiming for 1/3 mile of restoration, from the intersection of Central Ave. and Rydin Road to beyond the Hoffman channel. At low tide, we also ventured into the marsh itself, picking up trash and weeding to keep the habitat pristine for birds and removing the Algerian sea-lavender that was crowding out the CA native lavender (*Limonium californicum*).

Three new stewards give us a total of seven volunteers caring for specific sections of the site. We hosted volunteer groups including CorePower Yoga and the English Studies Institute, along with many two-legged and four-legged individuals (e.g., our dog friend Scout). Natives we planted included arroyo willows, black cottonwoods, pink-flowering currants, grasses, and yarrow. We also collected buckeye seeds from the two trees along the trail and will add the saplings to the 18 buckeyes we have already planted. The native shrubs and wildflowers are vigorously re-seeding and the Point Isabel crew is looking forward to the coming spring bloom.



Aquatic Park EGRET

The two classes of 7th graders from Head-Royce School arrived at the south end of Aquatic Park to brilliant sunshine after showers. The piles of wood chips delivered by City of Berkeley Forestry were soon being attacked by rakes, shovels, and buckets. By the end of the session the chips formed a fresh carpet around the shoreline cypress trees that serve as roosts for the egrets and herons. The students' delight at seeing all the local water birds was matched by their ability to work cooperatively and with great enthusiasm. Thanks to all!



Pacific Oaks Community Garden (El Cerrito)

Our first 16 months have given us a solid start at the site of former Portola Middle School. We raised funds for a 1,500 gallon water tank to provide our water supply, constructed four planting beds, and planted corn, squash, rosemary, tomatoes, chard, and eggplant (left).

A core group of families is involved, and open garden sessions invite neighbors to drop by to learn about the project. We are also exploring an exciting partnership opportunity with another gardening group, and hope to use the site to enrich the education of the students at Wilson Elementary, which will use temporary buildings on the site until its Richmond campus is rebuilt.

El Cerrito Community Garden Network

Our network continues to grow! At our original demonstration garden in Fairmont Park, we routinely give out produce to neighbors passing through and host Veg Mob crop swaps May through October. Flowers that support beneficial insects help with the yield! We have taken on maintenance of the mostly-native Stone Circle Garden at the El Cerrito Senior Center and planting natives near the city-owned King-to-Shevlin steps. A big new project is working to create an environmental-education center at the future Dorothy Rosenberg Memorial Park, on 1.5 acres with a house, donated to the city. Our volunteering helped qualify for a grant to remove brush and dead trees, reducing fire danger.

We also keep up public activities, supplying plants and information at the El Cerrito Earth Day, July 4th Fair, spring and fall Citywide Garage Sales, and El Cerrito Hillside Festival. We keep up seed libraries at the El Cerrito Recycling Center and El Cerrito Public Library, organize fruit-gleaning events at local homes where owners aren't able to pick the fruit. Our events, email newsletter, and web site provide garden advice – particularly about the challenge of growing during our area's foggy summer!

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association

Our latest path-building project, Keeler Walk, soon to be re-dedicated as John Muir Path, was a major effort, requiring us to clear dense underbrush before steps could be put in. Our path-building team also rebuilt part of lower Glendale Path and helped Take to the Hills with their big project. Our Path Maintenance group continued to clean one path each month.

More than 700 people joined us on 27 volunteer-led walks, with something for everyone. To name a few: We explored from Quirky Berkeley to walkers' Inner Yogi, toured San Francisco's mosaic stairways, traced the path of the 1991 Oakland Firestorm, and trekked through five regional parks in a day. A new addition in November, our first fundraising path event, brought in more than \$1,100 to restore Rose Garden walkways and add a new handrail on one of the steep hill paths. Thanks to all who helped!



Friends of Terrace View Park

Our park is getting much more use since major updates were completed about a year ago, with a functional basketball court, small grassy area, and updated play space for little ones – as well as unseen infrastructure improvements. Neighbors have gotten together at numerous community events, including National Night Out at summer's end and a neighborhood pumpkin carving event for Halloween. We look forward to the next phase of improvements!

Citizens for Cesar Chavez Off Leash Area (CCCOLA)

CCCOLA held multiple work days for pulling and diffing weeds and back-filling holes dug by dogs. Thanks to an "All City Work Day" with Parks and Waterfront staff, piles of wood chips arrived and were spread on paths – a good erosion preventer now that rains have returned!

TONA Urn Project (Thousand Oaks)

The Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association Urn Project has two new urns ready for installation and stored at McCutcheon Construction. Big thank-yous to them for the space! The bottleneck has been sites. The locations we chose turned out not to be level, requiring new engineering drawings. Our volunteer structural engineer hasn't had time to do new drawings, so we are investigating alternate sites that can be used without new plans. We're hoping for installation – and celebration – in spring!



Friends of Halcyon Commons

In addition to four work parties during the year, 150 neighbors and friends celebrated the 20th anniversary of neighbor-built Halcyon Commons with a gala event featuring two live musical groups, refreshments courtesy of Whole Foods Market, coffee thanks to Starbucks, kids' activities sponsored by the CBCB, and a City Council proclamation read (and sung!) by Councilmembers Kriss Worthington and Lori Droste. We also dedicated a sculpture of a halcyon bird of peace by local sculptor Nina Lyons, with nest and tree-of-life base from recycled bridge cable by neighbor Bruce Wicinas. The park's original design set the location for a sculpture of the halcyon bird, which in myth has the power to calm storms. Many thanks to generous contributions from neighbors and over two dozen local businesses that donated raffle prizes, all making this long-held dream possible.

Friends of Ohlone Park

Friends of Ohlone Park – FOOP – has had a busy year since it was re-established in 2016! We started by meeting and consulting with neighbors, including surveying neighbors on park hours and trash issues and a night survey of park lighting. We can see results: The city has begun replacing old barrel drums with new, standard trash receptacles. Two major work days – an All Crew Work Day with neighbors and Berkeley Project Day with UC Berkeley students – removed weeds, re-painted fences, and more.



At the Dog Park Re-opening Ceremony, on Oct. 21, city officials and dog owners celebrated a major renovation of the dog park, as well as the opening of a separate new park for small dogs, adjacent to the old one. Residents were involved in working with park and city officials to establish new hours for the park and a renewed pact for civility in use of the park.

Our mission also includes recognizing and honoring the Ohlone culture for which the park is named. We were proud to co-sponsor a Dec. 4 panel at the North Berkeley Senior Center, “Native Berkeley: Ancient Wisdom for Troubled Times,” led by Heyday Books publisher emeritus Malcolm Margolin.

Friends of Five Creeks

Friends of Five Creeks’ incredibly busy 20th year included offering seven Bay Currents talks on natural history and environmental issues, twelve walks for seniors, monthly walks mapping invasives, popular booths at the Albany Arts and Green and El Cerrito July 4 Fairs, and replacing interpretive signs on Albany’s Bay Trail. Our Week-day Weed Warriors helped maintain our main sites every Tuesday morning, and we held more than two dozen weekend work parties for the general public or groups.

Tilden Regional Park’s fire-prone broom patches continue to shrink, while our useful weed map keeps growing thanks to monthly walks using CalFlora’s cell-phone apps. Along the Bay shore, our volunteers have kept up the pressure on serious invasives that threaten large areas. Meanwhile, on Cerrito Creek at the foot of Albany Hill, rain has let us focus on planting. Maintenance continues to be a challenge at the big professional restorations on lower Codornices Creek. We are working toward longer-term political solutions.



In the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area, our volunteers have cleared most of the giant French broom that could quickly



Our mission: Berkeley Partners for Parks builds vibrant, healthy, ecologically sound communities by providing structure needed to engage volunteers in work for public open space and recreation, in and around Berkeley, California.

Berkeley Partners for Parks is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. To donate, click on the DONATE tab on our website, or send us a check.

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