



Berkeley Partners For Parks

Update 2007

Berkeley Partners for Parks is a citywide nonprofit devoted to supporting parks and open space in Berkeley through encouraging citizen involvement.

Partnerships: Thoughts from the Board

We are hopeful the energizing power of partnerships will become a theme of the 21st century. Around the world individuals are organizing in their local areas to improve their lives, and Berkeley Partners for Parks is a leader in those efforts in our community.

Our 501(c)(3) charitable organization status enables our affiliates to operate as nonprofits and to enjoy technical and administrative benefits that few could afford on their own. This support makes it much easier for a new group of people with creative ideas, dedication and energy to launch their organization and manage their finances. In so many different ways our affiliates are improving outdoor life in Berkeley, as you can see below. Thanks to BPFP, the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts.

This past year, several of our affiliates banded together under the banner "Greening Berkeley Hands-On" to apply for a UC Chancellor's Community Partnership Grant specifically for efforts that use a lot of volunteers for a variety of outdoors greening projects. An innovative part of the grant application was to request funds for a UC intern to work with the CalCorps service organization on campus to recruit student volunteers for our projects. The students have loved working all over town and seeing the very visible results of their labor, and of course it has given an big boost to the affiliates, who have all made great progress with the extra help. Not to mention how pleasant it is to be around the enthusiasm and energy of young people.

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association



Berkeley Path Wanderers Association (BPWA) had an eventful year in 2007. In the summer we published the 4th edition of our popular *Berkeley Pathways* map, this one with a street index so it is more useful to newcomers. Since we published the 1st edition in 2003, we have sold over 20,000 maps. The pathways make urban hiking possible and we want everyone to know about the paths and use them for pleasure, exercise, and transportation. We lead two free path walks each month, and also have an archive of walks on our website for people to walk on their own.

Our path-building work is ongoing, and in 2007 we had the very welcome help of many workparties of UC students in addition to our own dedicated community volunteers. We continue to be super-grateful for the input and cooperation we get from the Public Works Engineering Department.

In September we held our annual meeting at the rustic and historic Hillside Club, featuring a speaker from the Bay Area Ridge Trail council, with guest emcee Josh Kornbluth. For more information, contact Charlie Bowen at 540-7223 Website: www.berkeleypaths.org

Schoolhouse Creek Common

With the help of many UC student volunteers and dedicated neighbors, Schoolhouse Creek Common spent its third year of existence installing a major and mucky drainage system underneath the new play area and adding to the long list of native plantings, including an increasingly spectacular wildflower display each spring. The community park and garden is at the corner of Virginia and Curtis streets. We hope to wrap up the year by installing an information board that will include "plants of the month" and gardening tips, and an accessible "game table" with chess boards embedded in its top and located next to the vigorous and fragrant rose garden. Work days are the second Saturday of each month, 10-noon. For more information, please contact Jamie Day, or 559-8368.



Halcyon Neighborhood Association: Halcyon Commons



It was another active year at Halcyon Commons. Neighbors organized six work parties in the park, two of them with the assistance of student volunteers from Cal's Berkeley Project. In October, 30 UC student mentors and their Willard Middle School mentees pitched in alongside 20 neighbors to weed, mulch, remove graffiti, and paint sidewalk addresses in and around this South Berkeley neighborhood-designed park. In addition, we planted 52 new plants, thanks to a grant from the UC Chancellor's Community Partnership Fund in 2006. This grant will also fund an archway metalwork entry with animal cutouts by artist Amy Blackstone.

We held a big party in the park to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of HNA, which came into being to create the park and continues to guide efforts to maintain it. Over 150 neighbors attended, enjoying music provided by two live groups. The event included a City Council proclamation acknowledging HNA for "[serving] as a model for other neighborhood and greening efforts in the City of Berkeley through positively organized community collaboration and partnership." Contact Nancy Carleton at halcyon92@gmail.com or John Steere at 849-1969 to help

Friends of Five Creeks

Friends of Five Creeks marshaled a small army of varied volunteers for major campaigns against invasive weeds in Berkeley in 2007. Walden School, Berkeley High School Environmental Science students, and many, many UC Berkeley student groups, along with the stalwart Weekday Weed Warriors worked from Tilden Regional Park to the Bay. Our biggest new Berkeley initiative was removing ivy from Mortar Rock Park, a spectacular but sadly neglected rhyolite outcrop with Indian grinding holes, one block east of Indian Rock. With help from neighbors and Berkeley Parks gardener Pam Boland, Mortar Rock already looks transformed!

Partnering with Berkeley Path Wanderers, F5C also began removing invasives and planting natives on Berkeley paths in the upper Codornices Creek watershed. At the waterfront, volunteers cleared a wall of broom from Shorebird Park, put a huge dent in the giant broom forest north of Schoolhouse Creek, and pulled out carpets of ice plant at the mouth of Strawberry Creek – seeding salt-tolerant natives as replacements. With yellow-star thistle and cape ivy remaining under control, F5C also continued to curb perennial pepperweed and other waterfront invaders. For more information, contact Susan Schwartz, Phone: 848-9358 Email: F5Creeks@aol.com



BPFP Fundraising Event at Aquatic Park

In late September, Berkeley Partners for Parks hosted an outdoor reception and social gathering at the lovely south end of Aquatic Park, by Middle Pond and the EGRET cabin. We wanted our supporters to have a chance to get to know other like-minded people from all parts of town and all agreed that it was a very pleasant afternoon. The food was fabulous, provided by the Board members, and the Berkeley Old-Time String Players turned out to play live music and add their mellow spirit to the event. Someone set up a spotting scope so people could watch the birds, bike riders pedaled past, disc golf players teed off a few yards away--we experienced the many things Aquatic Park has to offer on a Sunday afternoon. At the end one of the musicians made a point of saying that we should be sure to contact them to do the music "next year", so maybe this will become an annual event.



East Bay Labyrinth Project

The East Bay Labyrinth Project has moved into lively activity to raise the \$100,000 needed to install a beautiful stone labyrinth on the East Lawn at the Marina. To raise community awareness of our project we created a temporary labyrinth on the site. On Sept. 23, a cloudy Sunday morning, 10 women, 3 hours, over 1000 yards of yellow caution tape, 500 irrigation stakes: voila! an amazingly true-to-design 40' labyrinth appeared on the lawn. People stopped and walked it, asking questions and happy to learn a permanent labyrinth would be at the location within 18 months.

Late October found us hosting a fund-raiser at the beautiful Berkeley City Club, featuring a concert by singer/songwriter Margie Adam, Special Guest speaker Lauren Artress and a 40' canvas labyrinth for walking, with images of Scotland's ancient Callanish stones projected on a large screen as backdrop. The atmosphere was filled with quiet beauty and tranquility, and once again people were delighted to know of the project and gave generously in support of it.

For further information, or to make a donation, please contact: nina@eastbaylabyrinthproject.org



Future site of the labyrinth at the Marina

United Pool Council



One vision for a pool complex (Lompoc)

The United Pools Council (UPC) and Pools for Berkeley (PFB) are citizen-driven, community-based initiatives to proactively address the needs of Berkeley in the areas of public swimming and aquatics recreation. Our primary objective has been to engage and focus the community – including swimmers, non-swimmers, Berkeley schools and parent associations, City officials, non-profits, and others – to examine, discuss, plan, and act upon the issues facing Berkeley pools in order to ensure more sustainable, long-term solutions.

Over the past several years, we have conducted extensive community outreach including several well-attended public town hall-style meetings, fundraising and “fun-raising” events at the pools, and a swim community survey. The process to address the long-term needs of Berkeley aquatics recreation and therapy has been underway for years. In the years to come there will undoubtedly be gains and setbacks, false starts and real progress, disappointments and successes but we hope to ultimately end up with aquatics facilities that make us all proud. We welcome anyone interested in joining this effort to *contact us through* www.poolsforberkeley.org or Charlie Banks-Altekruze at 510-913-3669.

Aquatic Park EGRET

Migratory ducks returning this season to Aquatic Park are finding a more vibrant shoreline cleared of invasive weeds with native vegetation again flourishing. Fourth graders from Rosa Parks Elementary School, taking a science unit on watersheds with Kids for the Bay, planted Monterey Cypress trees along the shore. UC students protected those trees with heavy mulching so that in a few years their waterside branches will provide safe roosts for the egrets and herons. EarthTeam brought hundreds of high school students to the park on two days for coastal cleanup and other habitat improvements. One highly visible result is excavation of the 1937 masonry seating terraces around Middle Pond.

Thanks to a grant from the San Francisco Estuary Project, the 1930's-era Cabin where EGRET stores its tools is now home to a permanent exhibit of the park's cultural and natural history. Come see the glorious color images of local birds by noted photographer Obie Gilkerson, including the Great Egrets which make their group roost every evening in the trees above the Cabin. To arrange a work party for your group or to schedule a guided walk of the park and Cabin, *contact* Mark Liolios at 549-0818 or egret@lmi.net



Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association

Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association represents 1800 households and the Berkeley end of the Solano Ave. commercial strip. TONA just became an affiliate of Berkeley Partners for Parks this year, but for 41 years we have distributed a quarterly newsletter to all residents and businesses in the area with a dedicated corps of more than 50 volunteer



deliverers. (Each issue of our newsletter is illustrated by neighbor Nancy Gorrell with whimsical drawings of acorns.)

This year our meetings featured a presentation by the Berkeley Path Wanderers, a traffic and safety meeting, and an evening about recycling in Berkeley. We also sponsored a Thousand Oaks Path Wander to explore our own paths. In addition, TONA and local historian Trish Hawthorne submitted an application to the UC Chancellor's Community Partnership Fund for grant money to replicate 5 of the urns that originally graced most of the street corners in the original Thousand Oaks subdivision. Our request wasn't funded but our interest in the urns continues. We have an on-going relationship with the Thousand Oaks PTA and help to publicize clean-up days, Walk and Bike to School Days, and other school events. For more information, contact Elizabeth Sklut email: ElizSklut@comcast.net

The Young Artists Workspace

For the last decade, YAWS has served the community by creating an art center dedicated to providing children, ages two to sixteen, with free and low-cost art classes. Children who attend our programs develop knowledge of various fine art techniques, acquire an appreciation of art from many cultures, and share their artwork by participating in public exhibitions. At YAWS, children are guided to discover in themselves their unique artistic ideas, participate in a workshop setting to expand skills, and begin to think critically about their artwork.

Central to the our philosophy is the notion that *every* person is an artist with his or her own important artistic style and vision. To encourage this process, YAWS offers three types of art classes: *Art for Threes and Fours*, *Fine Art for Kids*, and *Young Artists Studio*. Nearly 200 school-age children are served by their enrollment in YAWS classes, which run throughout the academic year. This year, several neighbors and YAWS supporters gathered donated materials to refurbish the look and function of the YAWS studio space, located at Totland Park on the corner of Virginia and McGee.



For more information, please email Jennifer Burke at jennyaws@yahoo.com or call (510) 204-YAWS

Westbrae Commons-Ohlone Greenway & Peralta/Northside Gardens



Friends of Westbrae Commons celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Berkeley's Parks by throwing a neighborhood party attended by more than 200 people at the Peralta Garden. Amid the joyful tunes of local musicians, gardeners shared their crops with the public. We received a UC Chancellors Community Grant to "expand the green" of the Ohlone Greenway near the Peralta Garden. Members of CHIA, the native plant group at Peralta Garden, planted a beautiful array of native plants with a group of student volunteers from Cal, an ongoing partnership to create a Coastal Prairie Habitat to replace a patch of bermuda grass. Local volunteers have planted a regenerative roof of red clover on the Cob house in the Northside Garden, and are installing an exhibit of Berkeley's agricultural past on the Greenway. For more information or to get involved please contact Neal Collier at 510-527-9445 or nacollier@pacbell.net.

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