

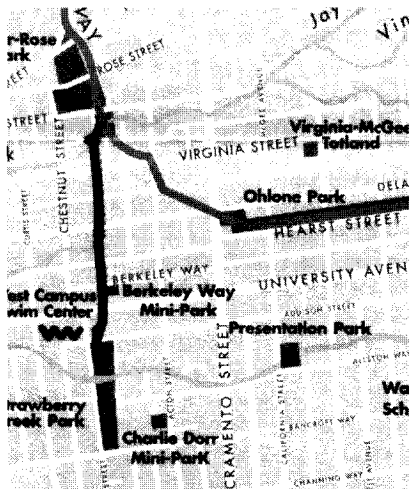
Berkeley Partners For Parks



Improving Berkeley's parks, community gardens, paths, and open space.

Winter 2001/02 Vol. 5, No. 2

Immediate Opportunity for Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathway on the Santa Fe Right of Way—Your Help is Needed



Proposed Santa Fe Trail Above

Some good luck and changed circumstances have made the possibility of a pedestrian/bicycle greenway along the Santa Fe Right of Way from Strawberry Creek Park to the Ohlone Greenway a much stronger possibility. Berkeley Montessori School has purchased the property currently leased by the Santa Fe Bar and Grill. BPPF received a letter from Berkeley Montessori expressing interest in creating a right-of-way through their property connecting their school to the Santa Fe Right of Way.

At the same time, the City of Berkeley has received a one million dollar HIP grant to fund pedestrian-related improvements. Spending this money to fund a Santa Fe greenway would create a well used bicycle/pedestrian trail, as well as open up a greenway of open space. The entire greenway would be planned as part of a Parks & Recreation Commission process. Neighbors and interested parties could participate in this process

A well-designed and adequately funded right-of-way would create a south to north-west Berkeley pedestrian trail that



An undeveloped portion of the Santa Fe Right of Way that could form a greenway trail from Strawberry Creek Park to the Ohlone Greenway.

also links to central Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito and Richmond via the Ohlone Greenway. It would become a treasured resource for the entire City.

Crosswalks, a pedestrian-activated traffic signal across University Avenue, curb cuts, and paved trails would be needed. The entire million dollar HIP grant is needed to fund these improvements. If the City chooses not to fund a Santa Fe greenway at this time, it is possible that Berkeley Montessori might conclude the City is not serious about a pedestrian/bicycle trail and not include a right-of-way through their property in their school plans.

The City Council should be deciding in the next couple of months how they will allocate the HIP grant. It is not known at this time what the staff recommendation is for spending the money.

You can help by writing a letter in support of funding a greenway along the Santa Fe Right of Way. Write to "Mayor and Council" at 2180 Milvia St., Berkeley 94704 or email clerk@ci.berkeley.ca.us.

Parks & Rec. Facilities—Room for "Capital" Improvement

Thanks to public and City Council support, Berkeley has had an amazing run of park expansion and new features at the same time property taxes have tightened-up in the post-Proposition 13 era beginning in 1978. Park acreage has doubled in size, increasing by 114 acres. New features like Dreamland for Kids playground and Harrison Playing Fields are up and running. Soon Harrison Skate Park, the Pedestrian/Bike Bridge, and the Bay Trail will open. These parks and improvements have been made possible by reclaiming a landfill (Cesar Chavez Park), creating new parks out of Santa Fe Right of Way property given to the City (Strawberry Creek Park, Cedar/Rose Park), capital expenditure ballot measures (1974 City Parks & Recreation tax ballot measure, 1988 Measure AA State Parks bond ballot measure, 2000 State Parks Bond), one time allocations (\$1.5 million in a state Public Employee Retirement System refund was directed to parks and recreation by the City Council in 1994), and by the City issuing bonds (Harrison Fields/Skate Park).

Beginning in 1996 the City Council began funding playground renovations, first from one time sources, now annually out of the General Fund. This was thanks to the advocacy and documentation of existing play area hazards by the Parks and recreation Commission, Berkeley Partners for Parks, and Parks staff.

At the same time we've had these great improvements, money has been lacking for maintenance and renovation of most existing capital infrastructure, and small, non-eye catching improvements in existing parks. The voter-approved parks tax goes primarily to landscape maintenance. Buildings and infrastructure are allowed to deteriorate until the next big pot of money comes along. For less in demand build-

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Adopt-a-Park News

Berkeley Path Wanderers and City of Berkeley Continue Path Improvements by Susan Schwartz

Both Berkeley Path Wanderers Association (BPWA) and city staff have been at work improving Berkeley's historic path network.

Using BPWA's Berkeley Parks Mini-grant, volunteers from Congregation Beth El, UC Berkeley's CalCorps, and Berkeley Boy Scout Troops 6 and 19 have installed wooden steps on two hill paths with magnificent Bay views -- Acacia Walk and Atlas Path. Atlas, a major project requiring more than 70 wooden steps, is expected to be complete by early 2002.

With advice on priorities from BPWA, the Berkeley Public Works Department has been repairing concrete paths and steps that have become hazardous. Broken pavement on the Tamalpais Steps was repaired using funds paid to compensate for the large redwoods that a neighbor cut without city permission. Repairs also are scheduled for dangerously cracked Martinez Path, heavily used Easter Way, and other paths including Alta Vista and South Crossways. Billie Jean Path is slated to get handrails.

In other projects, board members are at work on an accurate map of Berkeley paths, to be professionally published and

sold. A new committee headed by Board Member Charlie Bowen is focusing on developing unimproved paths, including removing fences and other obstacles that infringe on use of paths.

BPWA's monthly walks continue to be popular. Winter's schedule, with leaders and contact numbers, includes Northside Paths January 26 (Jim Sharp, 841 7271), and the Claremont Area February 16 (Helen Wynne, 843-5738). For general information on the group contact Jackie Ensign, 524-4715.

Volunteers Plant Ecology Garden at Dreamland for Kids by Zasa Swanson

With the installation of the Nature Ecology Garden at Dreamland, our kids not only can play, but they can experience other aspects of nature. There are hummingbirds, earthworms, and butterflies--and not forgetting the slugs as well! Dreamland -- although not without it's incumbent stresses-- is well-used! The garden was designed by Corinne Louise Greenberg to be California native and butterfly and hummingbird attracting. Volunteers from Cliff Bar, and several community members, including moms with tots in tow, did much of the planting work. If you haven't visited Dreamland lately, come on down on a nice day--you'll be pleasantly surprised.

For more information or to get on the volunteer gardener list, email Zasa Swanson at zasa@bigfoot.com or call 649-9874.

Friends of Five Creeks News Susan Schwartz

Friends of Five Creeks is working mostly on the Albany-El Cerrito-Richmond border this fall and winter. Working with Urban Creeks Council and East Bay Conservation Corps, volunteers helped clear a blackberry jungle from 1000 feet of Cerrito Creek adjacent to Pacific East Mall. The area will be replanted with wildlife-friendly native plants, with a creekside trail. In 2002, the group expects to partner with the City of El Cerrito in restoring another 800 feet of the creek, adjacent to El Cerrito Plaza. Both projects are part of a larger program of creating a trail from the Ohlone Greenway (BART right of way) to the Bay Trail. Both the El Cerrito Plaza restoration and planning for the trail are being funded from voter-passed Proposition 12, through the state Coastal Conservancy.

Other projects planned for the winter include a joint meeting of Bay Area creek groups, in February; creek-group participation in planning requirements for lessening pollution from urban runoff; installing sculptor Bill Creitz's beautiful metal quails on the volunteer-built bridge rail on Codornices Creek at the Ohlone Greenway, and the annual frog survey.

Friends of Five Creeks also will work with children from Oxford Elementary School in Berkeley and Oceanview Elementary School in Albany to plant natives on their neighboring creeks this winter. Teachers or other youth-group leaders interested in similar projects should contact Susan Schwartz, 848-9358.

Friends of San Pablo Park by Stephen Swanson

This October, Friends of San Pablo Park installed two tetherball poles in the basketball area of San Pablo Park. Tetherball has been an instant hit and the balls have been left up 24/7 with no loss to date.

We will be re-submitting, with the blessing of the Parks & Recreation Department, a Community Development Block Grant proposal for a climbing wall for the school age play area at San Pablo Park. More challenging play equipment for older children has long been a goal of the community, and in particular a climbing wall has been sought as a way to accomplish this. We also anticipate applying for a Parks Mini-Grant this spring, to focus on additional school-age play equipment.

Your help is needed! Please contact Stephen Swanson at sswanson@bigfoot.com or call 649-9874.

BAM Poetry Garden News by Steven Rosenbaum

Friends of the Berkeley Arts Magnet (BAM) Poetry Garden/Allen Ginsberg Memorial, at Milvia & Lincoln Streets, invite you to wander through this Garden before the winter rains. Enjoy the autumnal flora and the newly posted poems written by BAM elementary school students. The annual Open Mike poetry reading will be on a Saturday afternoon in April 2002 (National Poetry Month)--after Spring Break at which time the Historical Plaque Project will unveil its "cultural landmark" plaque. For more info on the Garden or to help plan for the annual reading or fund-raise for a tiled Garden mural, contact Steve Rosenbaum at 644-3971 or email srosenba@socrates.berkeley.edu.

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Meetings are held every third Monday of the Month, 7:30PM to 9:00PM, Corporation Yard, 1326 Allston Way.

Berkeley Partners for Parks (BFPF) is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation founded in 1994.

We are dedicated to the improvement of parks, community gardens, paths, and open space in Berkeley.

Adopt-a-Park News Cont.

Sonoma/Hopkins Triangle News by Daniel Snippen

The Sonoma/Hopkins Triangle was a memorial gathering place for the September 11 tragedy for hundreds of neighbors and visitors, and it continues to be a place that people come to contemplate and to leave messages of peace, tolerance and love for others to read.

This spontaneous outcome of the September 11th tragedy, and the need for a memorial gathering place, has enlarged our vision of the triangle from a mere pedestrian safety issue, to something considerably more complex. We hope to hear from neighbors on the actual form that some of their concerns might take, and will try to synthesize the input into our design. The budget for the project, as well as the traffic safety issues we are dealing with, will be a factor in the scope of the project.

We also anticipate forming committees for additional fundraising and contributions, searching for licensed contractors willing to do some of the work, and a committee to handle communications with all of the various interests in the project. Although the mini-park is a fairly simple design and construction project, recent events have increased the number of people who may feel they have a stake in the way this should turn out.

The prospects for maximizing the use of funds for construction are good, and we are going to make every effort to build as much as our budget will allow by the

Spring of 2002. Contact Daniel Snippen at DSNPPN28@aol.com or call 524-7259 for more information.

Friends of Strawberry Creek News by Jane Kelly

In July, the many Friends of Strawberry Creek began restoring a section of Strawberry Creek just east of Strawberry Creek Park. The site is located on the grounds of the Strawberry Creek Lodge at 1320 Addison.

The team of volunteers has removed tons of ivy, exposing a beautiful section of the creek, as well as a broken culvert that now has the attention of the nearby residents, the City of Berkeley, and other local creek advocates. Temporary steps have been constructed to allow easy access to the creek. Currently, a 30' x 25' section of the embankment has been cleared of non-native growth and covered with a coir erosion control blanket. Planting of a variety of native species began on November 11. Once the work is complete, Jane Kelly will submit the project to the National Wildlife Federation for certification as a wildlife habitat.

This restoration effort is supported by a small grant from the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program. To date, Lodge residents, Berkeley High School students (Kiwanis Key Club and WorkAbility program) and many other dedicated Friends of Strawberry Creek volunteers have contributed over 500 hours to the project.

For more information, contact Jane Kelly at jandtkelly@igc.org or call 528-3949.

City Park Projects

Playground renovations at Codornices Play Area and Ohlone Park school-age play area at McGee are being planned. Contact Brad Ricards (981-6437, bricards@ci.berkeley.ca.us) for a schedule of future meetings, or look for announcements posted in the park.

The City is planning on removing all CCA-treated wood play structures including those at King School Park, Cedar Rose Park Tot Lot, Live Oak Park and Shorebird Park. Make-safe precautions were implemented by the City in July 2001, and all exposed lumber has been sealed. Sealant prevents CCA from being dislodged, but this is only a temporary fix. Much more funding is needed to "do it right" and community support will be helpful when the time comes for the City Council to consider recommendations developed by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Bids for the Harrison Skate Park came in \$100,000 over budget, and the City is now planning on filling in the planned bowls on one end of the skate park to reduce costs. Construction should begin soon. Contact Kate Obenour of Friends of Berkeley Skate Park at 548-1707 or Mark Mennucci of the City of Berkeley (981-6436, mennucci@ci.berkeley.ca.us) for more information.

The City of Berkeley has hired Dillingham Associates, Landscape Architects from Berkeley, to develop landscaping plans for the University Avenue Medians. This public process is just getting underway; contact Brad Ricards (981-6437, bricards@ci.berkeley.ca.us) for more information.

I want to support Berkeley's Parks and Open Space.

BFPF relies on your membership to operate! Has your membership to BFPF expired? Check your mailing label. Make your checks out to BFPF. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name (s): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

- \$1-25 (low income) \$50 (contributing membership) \$500 (benefactor membership)
- \$30 (individual membership) \$100 (supporting membership) \$1,000 (patron membership)
- \$40 (family membership) \$250 (business membership) Other: \$ _____

Contributors of \$50 or more are entitled to receive a complimentary T-shirt (natural color with BFPF's logo in forest green); if you are giving \$50 or more, please indicate your preferred T-shirt size: Medium Large Extra Large

Thank you for your support!!!!

(Continued from page 1)

ings and park features, sometimes the money never comes.

The recreation centers have been allowed to deteriorate, and only recently, with the 2000 State Parks Bond money, are their deferred capital maintenance issues being addressed. Frances Albrier Recreation Center in San Pablo Park has a leaky roof, cupboard doors coming off the hinges, old, dirty curtains, and dull paint. Eight years ago, when the rains destroyed the wood floor of the meeting hall, the roof is leaking again from an inadequate patch job. Until recently, Live Oak Recreation Center had a bad boiler and leaky roof. Berkeley's share of the 2000 State Parks Bond, which was expected to be spread around to improve parks throughout the City, was instead directed by Council to go largely to repairing the neglected recreation centers.

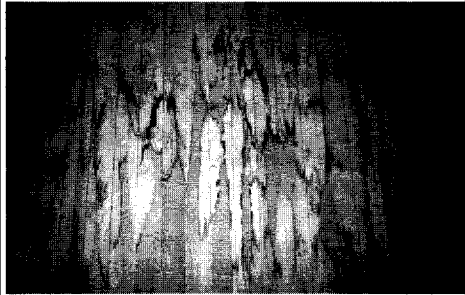
The clubhouses in the hills have fared much worse. The clubhouse at Codornices Park burnt down and was never replaced. The historically significant John Hinkel clubhouse, once used by the Berkeley Folk Dancers and Berkeley Shakespeare Festival youth training program, was completely neglected and is now in need of total restoration. In the flatlands, almost every single building of several at Aquatic Park is in need of serious renovation.

Some federal ADA money is available for making Berkeley's parks more accessible, but not enough. The playground at Terrace View Park cannot be updated because there isn't enough money to create accessibility ramps from the street. Playground renovation money often does not cover the related site work that needs to be done. The pathways in many parks are deteriorated - at Aquatic Park the pathway is falling off in chunks into the lagoon.

A huge community effort restored the Rose Garden, but the play amphitheatre was never rebuilt. At many parks, the word that comes to mind is "underdeveloped". Smelly portable toilets are used as substitutes for permanent plumbing. Play areas are renovated with no money for nearby park benches. Patches of grass are left unirrigated.

There seems to be no regularly allocated money for the smallest of capital improvements, unless a community member takes it up as a community-installed mini-grant project. Mini-grants have been a great

Deferred Maintenance in Our Parks & Rec. Facilities



Clockwise from top left: The historic John Hinkel Clubhouse, neglected and shuttered. The seriously eroded pathway along the east shore of Aquatic Park. The roof is leaking at Frances Albrier Recreation Center in San Pablo Park.

source of community volunteerism and small improvements in the parks, but they usually do not and can no longer cover the essentials because of the amount of money and skill needed.

Some of the more notable parks improvements of recent years, such as Harrison Fields & Skate Park and Dreamland for Kids, have been community driven. Fundraising drives and special allocations by Council resulted in spectacular new projects. But community activism cannot maintain the infrastructure of our parks and our recreation buildings.

For a start, a maintenance plan needs to be created and Council needs to set aside the money annually to keep the recreation centers, park buildings, and other capital infrastructure in good shape.

Second, an additional state parks bond is on the March 2002 ballot. We need to insist that this money go to real park improvements as identified by a community process led by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Council must not take this money to substitute for basic maintenance expenditures like fixing roofs and boilers that should be coming out of the General Fund.

Send your thoughts to mail@bfpf.org.

Parks Grant Writer Needed

Berkeley Partners for Parks (BFPF) seeks a volunteer or an on-commission Grant Writer. We are looking for someone with excellent oral and written communication skills. Experience in grant writing is not required.

This position requires only a few hours per week. The Grant Writer will take direction from BFPF's Board of Directors, liaison with the community at large, and with the City of Berkeley's Parks staff to develop grant-writing ideas. State, federal, private and foundation grants may be pursued.

Berkeley Partners for Parks is having an audit of its own 2001 books to facilitate its suitability for the receipt of grants.

Your participation will make a difference for Berkeley's parks.

Send an email with your particulars to mail@bfpf.org or via regular mail to Grant Writer, Berkeley Partners for Parks, PO Box 13673, Berkeley, CA 94712.

Restoring John Hinkel

The clubhouse could possibly be restored with historic restoration grants and neighborhood donations. Are you a well-connected neighbor interested in such a project? Call 649-9874 or email mail@bfpf.org and we will share what we know.