



Working Together in 2010

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

With structure provided by Berkeley Partners for Parks, and much-appreciated fruitful cooperation with the City of Berkeley, citizen volunteer groups have been transforming Berkeley's parks, open space, and recreation for 16 years. BPPFP provides (a) nonprofit status so our partner groups can accept tax-deductible contributions, (b) back-office necessities including accounting and insurance, and (c) collegiality, a wide range of experience, advice on grants and funding sources, and valuable partnerships. For example, our Greening Berkeley partnership with UC Berkeley brings hundreds of student volunteers each year to BPPFP projects, as well as thousands of dollars in funding from UC Berkeley Chancellor's Community Partnership grants.

Here is a sampler of new and old partner groups' achievements in 2010:

Every Kid 2 Swim: Giving low-income kids joy and safety in the water

BPPFP's newest partner, Every Kid 2 Swim, became "official" only in August 2010. But they already have forged a partnership with the Berkeley Recreation Department and East Bay Regional Park District to offer free swimming lessons to all economically disadvantaged third and fourth graders in Berkeley public schools. The first round of lessons, in September 2010, gave more than 50 kids the safety, fitness, and fun that comes with being at home in the water!

Aquatic Park EGRET's Mark Liolios wins Cox Conservation award!

Congratulations to Aquatic Park EGRET's founder and head Mark Liolios, named a Cox Conservation Hero in 2010, honoring more than a decade's work restoring the south end of Berkeley's beautiful Aquatic Park. Over the year 2010, more than 300 volunteers, from elementary-school-aged to seniors, weeded, mulched, and removed trash, planted trees, and continued unearthing the WPA-era seating terraces, and leveling and clearing trails along these beautiful manmade lagoons.



Mark Liolios with volunteers

Replacing historic urns, lighting a historic path

A hundred years ago, developers of Thousand Oaks decorated their new development with more than 20 large concrete urns, their design inspired by popular illustrator Maxfield Parrish. Only one urn remains – at The Alameda and Indian Trail.

Thanks to a successful fund drive, the Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association's Urn Project has started production of two replacement urns. Look for one in Great Stoneface Park in 2011!

Historic LeRoy Steps, a well travelled shortcut to campus, has a new partner group: the LeRoy Stewardship Project worked with UC's Police Department to obtain a \$7,160 Chancellor's Community Partnership grant to install pedestrian lighting, improving safety on this busy pedestrian route.



Right: last original Thousand Oaks concrete urn.

Friends of Grotto Rock: Colorful flowers and safety



Grotto Rock Park, one of the chain of volcanic outcrops that includes Indian, Mortar and Contra Costa Rocks, had been overrun by blackberries, acacia, and other weeds. Neighbors worked with Berkeley Parks Gardener Pam Boland to replace the invasives with plantings that are drought-tolerant, insect-friendly, and colorful. Many more people now enjoy the rock's spectacular views – volunteers even unearthed a staircase hidden by tree roots! Encouraged, the group joined BFPF in 2010 and successfully sought a grant from the UC Berkeley's Chancellor's Community Partnership Fund, through BFPF's Greening Berkeley project. The money will improve safety on what is now a slippery trail around the rock. Volunteers from UC service group Circle K have already begun the work, which should be finished early next year.

East Bay Green Parks Association: Getting rid of the ivy scourge

Despite founder Tom Meyer's limited time, East Bay GPA has made amazing strides toward its goal: "the removal of all ivy everywhere." In Codornices Park, the ivy that has taken over so many natural areas, creating habitat for nothing but rats, has been removed far up the Codornices Creek canyon. Lo and behold, natives planted by Los Amigos de Codornices in the 1970s were revealed. They drew breath and took off, joined by new plantings. East Bay GPA also has helped the Berkeley Parks Department roll back the ivy in Hinkel Park, particularly working with UC students on Berkeley Project Day.



King Park, Santa Fe Right of Way: Murals and more

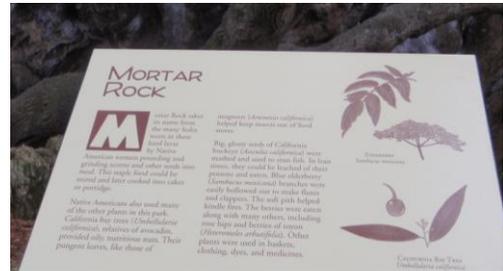
Friends of King Park, a new partner group in 2009, in its first year installed a safety railing, two new benches at the tot lot, drought-tolerant landscaping, and a colorful play structure for 5- to 12-year-olds! This winter, with a grant from Alameda Countywide Clean Water, the group is planning a watershed-themed mural to be painted by muralist Eduardo Pineda and King Middle School students in cooperation with Kala Arts Institute. Look for more landscape improvements, too!



In Southwest Berkeley, Berkeley Partners for Parks itself has partnered with the Community Gardening Collaborative in a long-term effort to establish a greenway and paths along the neglected Santa Fe Right of Way– open space that the city has owned for more than 30 years. In 2009 and 2010, the partnership worked with community members to create and display the outdoor “mobile mural” shown above – envisioning what the area could be.

Natural History Plaque Project: Telling why

The new Natural History Plaque Project seeks to provide glimpses into the geology and ecology that shapes our area. In 2010, the group installed its first three interpretive plaques, about geology of the Berkeley Hills, origins of creeks, and Native American uses of plants. Look for them at Mortar Rock Park and on the Glendale Paths.



Berkeley Path Wanderers: Ever more welcoming wandering

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association continued more than a decade of progress toward completing the historic path network envisioned in the early 20th Century.



This year saw completion of BPWA’s longest, most difficult project to date: Northgate Path, with 233 steps. It took 18 work parties and two Boy Scout Eagle projects, and involved switchbacks, stump removal, installing handrails, and cutting a city traffic barrier.

Undaunted, volunteers have moved on to build Miller Path East, another challenging project requiring digging out stubborn bamboo and securing steps on a tricky diagonal slope. BPWA also continues selling its ever-popular map.

Friends of Five Creeks: 40+ work parties, weekly “weed warriors,” get it done

With more than 40 work parties yearly plus Weed Warriors sessions every week, Friends of Five Creeks continued progress at eight sites plus partnering with others. Most visible in Berkeley: Broom thickets gone in Shorebird Park, ivy gone in Mortar Rock Park, Schoolhouse Creek mouth/North Basin Strip with views and no longer creepy, lower Codornices Creek thickets thinned, all these plus Strawberry Creek mouth now vibrant with new, varied natives. F5C also hosted its largest groups to date in 2010: More than 50 Mexican teens on an international program, 55 on Coastal Cleanup Day, and 89 on Climate Action Day.

Presentation Parkers, Schoolhouse Creek Common, Westbrae Commons: Fun, too

BPFP isn't all work and no play, as our October Sunday Stroll showed at three West Berkeley parks. At Presentation Park, two years of volunteer effort transformed weed thickets into gardens (with funding help from Gap Foundation and UC Chancellor's Partnership Fund). This third year, Presentation Parkers (P-Squared) started really enjoying the results: A successful National Night Out, treasure hunts for birthday parties, and an outdoor christening were just some of events showing how this Central Berkeley park (at California at Allston) has become an integral part of neighborhood life. Ahead for 2011: new flower beds for the east side of the park.



Neighborhood-created oases: Presentation Park, left, and Schoolhouse Creek Common, right.

At Schoolhouse Creek Common at Curtis and Virginia, neighbors planned and carried out the metamorphosis of bare hardscape to colorful drought-tolerant flowers, children's play area, picnic table and chess board, shade trees, mini-lawn, and more. Monthly work parties continue, but the new park is truly a beautiful Common, serving neighbors and students at the adjacent Berkeley Adult School.

Friends of Westbrae Commons and the CHIA Project also continue monthly work parties, but passers-by on the busy Ohlone Greenway (BART route) between Hopkins and Gilman enjoy the coastal prairie plants edging the regional trail as well as the volunteer-installed decomposed-granite pedestrian path that improves safety. As with the other two projects, UC student volunteers and UC Chancellor's Community Partnership grants have been integral to success.

And still more...

Visit our web site, www.bpfp.org, to find more partner groups all over the city, including Friends of Shorebird Nature Center, Friends of Cesar Chavez Park, Becky Temko Tot Park, Friends of Terrace View Park, and Halcyon Commons. **And please donate to help us continue our work!**