

## Berkeley Partners For Parks

### **Working Together for 20+ Years**

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

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**May 2015**

### **What is a BPFP Partner Group?**

Each of our projects brings together:

- people who approach us with an idea or dream for outdoor spaces or recreation
- people who are 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!

*Here is a sampler from our partner groups:*

### **Take To The Hills**

Our new group has already led two Berkeley Project teams of UC students picking up trash in the Hills! In fall, we cleaned up the Big C, and in spring we started cleaning up the pull-outs at the top of Grizzly Peak Boulevard. We are working with UC to rebuild the steps from Dwight Way to the top of Panoramic Hill. This badly deteriorated trail, built by Boy Scouts long ago, is a boon to hikers and a vital escape route for residents in an emergency. We are well on our way to raising \$2000 from community donations in order to complete the work this fall!



### **Friends of Becky Temko Tot Park**

Friends of Becky Temko Tot Park has been in a quiet period, waiting mostly for the City of Berkeley to decide on plans for renovating and improving the park. We look forward to adding our ideas and resources to those plans! Meanwhile, we continue our tradition of a pre-Halloween festival for neighborhood families. We provide materials for carving and decorating pumpkins, and kids from toddlers to teens, as well as adults, have fun getting together and sharing a creativity activity.

### **Citizens for Cesar Chavez Off Leash Area [CCCOLA]**

With a new name, we have re-invigorated our members and launched a series of volunteer work days at the off-leash area in Cesar Chavez Park. For the first one, March 28, the City mowed the meadow area, and 25 volunteers raked the cut foxtails and pulled those the mower couldn't reach. The haul was 90+ bags of weeds that won't be able to hurt our dogs (or us by getting into our socks!) We plan to have cleanup and maintenance projects every 4-6 weeks. Look for flyers announcing dates and times! We also have posted bulletin-board notices about the dangers of foxtails, and a clear map showing the boundaries of the Off-Leash Area.



## Viva Cesar Chavez Park

Our new group launched its petition drive for Better Bathrooms in Cesar Chavez Park in January – and hundreds of people have signed up already! A set of early signatures has already gone to the Parks Commission and City Council. Look for founder Martin Nicolaus collecting signatures at an ironing board just upwind from the porta-potties along the park entry road -- or sign online at our blog about the park <http://viva-cesar-chavez-park.org>. It's not just about bathrooms – the blog features park news and bits of beauty, too!



## El Cerrito Community Garden Network

The El Cerrito Community Garden continues to grow! Our raised beds at Fairmont Park produce flowers, fruit, and vegetables, which we give to neighbors passing through, encouraging visitors to come back and harvest! Our weekly crop swaps at the park were a big hit, and we look forward to resuming them – as well as fruit-gleaning at homes where the owners were not able to pick the fruit themselves.

We routinely provide free seedlings: 200 vegetable seedlings at the El Cerrito Earth Day, 400 milkweed seedlings (food for monarch butterfly caterpillars) at the El Cerrito Hillside Festival, 50 tomato plants to cancer-patient caregivers at the American Cancer Relay for Life, and seedlings for the Community Health Fair for Asian Americans in Richmond. We took part in the El Cerrito Urban Greening Master Plan, and are delighted that a permanent Fairmont Park Community Garden is one of the priority projects!

## Schoolhouse Creek Common

Schoolhouse Creek Common will celebrate its 10th anniversary this fall! If you haven't seen our garden at the corner of Curtis and Virginia lately, come by! A perfect time is the 6 PM Friday potluck organized by neighbors and open to all – a really happy scene. Our neighborhood-built park has grown to be pretty much what we all wanted with help from all sides -- neighbors, UC student volunteers, the school district and, of course, BPPF. It is used and beloved by many.



## Friends of Westbrae Commons

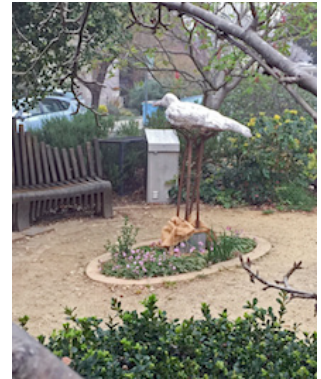
The Friends of Westbrae are focused on building community spirit through the creation of shared gardens and public open space. The Karl Linn, Peralta and Northside Gardens provide plots for growing food and flowers, and spaces for community gatherings. Ongoing events include weekly Tai Chi, art exhibitions and classes on plants for nutrition and medicine. Northside Garden hosted a Halloween event with pumpkin carving and costumes for the neighborhood kids. Volunteers working with the Chia group continued to maintain and expand the native planting along the Ohlone Greenway. The Salon de Plants presented a monthly workshop on a featured plant, teaching its history, culture and uses. The annual fall Harvest Party is a celebration of food, music and garden culture that is open to all.

## Presentation Park-ers

Presentation Park is flourishing at the corner of Allston and California! We mulched and weeded at the end of January. One person waters once a week, and except for a couple of plants pulled by mistake by young volunteers, everything is growing! We walk around enjoying the park and the new bioswale to treat runoff, and pick up trash if we spot any. We hope to get a few more plants to fill in empty spaces in fall, when rains come.

## Friends of Halcyon Commons

With donations from neighbors and Whole Foods Market, we look forward to a volunteer weekend refurbishing the park pathways this summer, under the supervision of the Parks department. We also are moving toward installing a sculpture of our namesake halcyon bird. Nina Lyons, the sculptor, has produced a maquette, with nest and pedestal created by fabricator Bruce Wicinas. We are planning a fun event with music and raffle Sunday July 19, to fund the final stage for this project, which has been on the wish list for our community-designed park from the beginning 20 years ago! We continue to host several work parties each year to weed and mulch, and we especially appreciate the support of Cal Berkeley Project student volunteers in the spring and fall.



## Poetry Garden

Our interactive nature garden at Berkeley Arts Magnet School, at the corner of Lincoln and Milvia, continues to be a joy for students and the public. The students learn pruning techniques, weeding, seed saving, transplanting, and how to carefully interact with creatures. We find newts and worms, and play “pass the fish” with our mosquito fish in the pond. Children are encouraged to interact with the garden...usually without destruction...so there is lots of moving of rocks and logs, or picking flowers and leaves to make altars and fairy houses.

## Berkeley Path Wanderers

The new, improved BPWA map has been flying off the shelves since fall 2014, shortly after the New York Times called it “-- a terrific map of all [Berkeley’s] secret routes and corridors.” It’s a sign of our community’s sustained interest in Berkeley’s public pathways! Since 1998, BPWA path-building volunteers have cut the number of inaccessible paths in half, from 50 to 25 of Berkeley’s 136 numbered public pathways. Upper Halkin Walk and Tilden Path are the most recent successes.

We continue to lead two free walks per month, sometimes drawing more than 100 people! Our walk leaders are wonderfully imaginative – recent walks range from the annual “New Year’s Resolution Walk” through “Where the Wild Things Are” (on edible plants), and “Right-Brained Berkeley” (sites associated with famous members of Berkeley’s creative set). Look for the BPWA booth at the Solano Stroll and visit our newly redesigned website <http://berkeleypaths.org> for the latest information.

## Friends of the Berkeley Rose Garden

The roses are looking lovely right now! Gary Soto continues to lead volunteers in maintaining the Rose Garden 9-11:30 AM on Tuesday mornings. Contact him at 845 4718 if you’re interested. Otherwise, Friends of the Berkeley Rose Garden has had a quiet year, first waiting for voter approval of city park funds in November, and now waiting for plans for ADA accessibility and repair of the pergola, which is currently closed. We look forward to taking part in meetings on the plans!



## Aquatic Park EGRET

Aquatic Park EGRET's volunteers continue to work hard to improve the south end of the park, controlling non-native plants that had overtaken the shoreline landscape. Our recent focus has been the park's original main entrance at the southwest corner of Middle Pond. A blanket of wood chips eliminated the forest of poison hemlock that had surrounded and hidden the World War II memorial, and elementary-school students in the after-school EDAH program and 8th graders from North Oakland Community Charter School halted an invasion of thistle on the loop trail along the pond's western shore. Park visitors now have easy viewing of the amazing water birds on the tidal pond – come and see!



## Hillside Club Landscaping Project

The Hillside Club has transformed its Cedar Street face, with new plantings of California natives, re-done pathways in durable paving brick (some with donor-members' names), and a beautiful and sturdy Julia-Morgan-designed bench, where passersby stop every day! A member also repainted our Hillside Club sign in its original bright colors. The work enhances our historic building and creates an open, inviting, usable front yard – much better than when it was covered with junipers!

## Friends of Five Creeks

Besides Friends of Five Creeks' Tuesday Weekday Weed Warriors group and general monthly work parties, we have been joined by at least 20 other groups at a dozen restoration sites over the year. Due to drought, one current focus is removing invasive, fire-prone French broom. We continue to pilot new projects, from post-King-Tides litter pickups (being adopted by East Bay Regional Parks) to using CalFlora's smartphone apps to map natives and invasives. Gentle advocacy has led to better management of urban nature, including new, nature-friendly mowing practices.

Our monthly e-news continues to gain subscribers. Our "rot score" game has been a hit with all ages at festivals, and our monthly walks for ages 50+ promote good health while introducing seniors to easy-to-reach local natural treasures. New publications range from info on water saving and water policy to a beautiful flyer on wildflowers of the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area. [www.fivecreeks.org](http://www.fivecreeks.org)

## South Berkeley Santa Fe ROW Bioremediation Garden Project

After workshops on bioremediation for the public, researchers from the lab of UC Berkeley's Dr. Celine Pallud, working with neighboring families and BFPF, have planted and harvested brake ferns on the arsenic-contaminated Santa Fe Right of Way. Lab tests show the ferns are removing arsenic from the soil; the experiment is being continued for two more years to see whether this results in a significant decrease of arsenic in the soil. BFPF has worked for many years to make this former railroad right-of-way in South Berkeley a public greenway, garden, or park.

*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.*