



**Berkeley
Partners
for Parks**

Working Together in 2011

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

PO Box 13673 Berkeley, CA 94712 www.BPFP.org

With structure provided by Berkeley Partners for Parks, and cooperation with the City of Berkeley, citizen volunteer groups have been transforming Berkeley's parks, open space, and recreation for 17 years. BPFP 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 BPFP projects, as well as thousands of dollars in funding from UC Berkeley Chancellor's Community Partnership grants.

Here is a sampler of partner groups' achievements in 2011:

Hillside Club Native Plant landscape project

Our newest partner, the Hillside Club, is also our oldest! The club was founded in 1898, "to cultivate a spirit of civic patriotism among the residents of Berkeley; to work for and encourage the making of parks and the planting of trees within the city limits; to beautify the streets, gardens and homes within said city; and to encourage all branches of art." In keeping with those original ideas of environmental activism, the club's volunteer Landscape Committee worked hard to create a garden of California native plants on the street side of the club's historic brown-shingle community Center on Cedar Street. (The structure dates from 1924, when it replaced the original building, destroyed in Berkeley's 1923 fire.) A \$2000 grant from the LEF foundation made it possible to grade the land, turn and amend soil, lay out decomposed-granite paths, install irrigation and bicycle racks, and establish plants that will provide habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies while demanding little irrigation or fertilizer. Please stop by to see the result, and look for more progress in 2012!





LeRoy Steps Stewardship Project

History was important in several BPPF projects in 2011. Six attractive new lights are now enhancing 100-year-old LeRoy steps -- part of a larger partnership with UC Berkeley to increase nighttime safety on the path. Two years of effort by neighbors, help from Councilmember Susan Wengraf, and grants from the UC Chancellor's Community Partnership Fund, PG&E, and the City of Berkeley made the lighting a reality. Overgrown trees and shrubs also have been trimmed and new drought-tolerant plantings are highlighted by spring daffodils.

Thousand Oaks Urn Replacement

When Thousand Oaks subdivision was opened a century ago, more than 20 monumental concrete urns graced its curving streets, designed to harmonize with the landmark oaks and huge boulders preserved by the developers. By 2003, when members of the Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association set out to replace some of the urns, only one remained, at the base of Indian Trail steps. In fall 2011, two replica urns were dedicated: at Yosemite Road and The Alameda and in Great Stoneface Park.



Neighborhood residents and local businesses donated to the project, which also got a major boost from a \$7,200 UC Chancellor's Community Partnership grant. Councilmember Laurie Capitelli arranged a fee waiver.



Berkeley Path Wanderers Assn.

With so many historic path rights-of-way already open, Berkeley Path Wanderers' remaining path-building projects tend to be major efforts. In 2011, the Park Hills right-of-way formerly called Path 80 was opened as rustic Wildcat Path, following hillside contours down to Wildcat Canyon Road and Tilden Park. Miller Path East, connecting Creston Road to Grizzly Peak Boulevard, also was completed after much bamboo wrangling. In BPWA's ongoing

program of adding railings on steep paths, Middle Glendale and Shasta Paths got much-needed handrails. Volunteers including UC Berkeley students, BuildOn, neighbors, and many other residents helped maintain the network of 136 paths, while more than 24 free guided walks, plus continuing sales of BPWA's definitive map helped more people enjoy the paths and outdoors.

Friends of Five Creeks

Major clearing and ivy removal by Friends of Five Creeks volunteers opened up Codornices Creek between 9th and 10th Streets in 2011. In partnership with East Bay Regional Parks, the group also removed brush and weeds to create a second major "window" of Bay view in Eastshore State Park and launched a campaign against fennel near the mouth of Schoolhouse Creek. Moving up into the hills, volunteers freed large areas from

invasive, fire-prone broom in Tilden Park. In a regional effort, Friends of Five Creeks engaged more than 100 volunteers in surveying for the Sudden Oak Death pathogen from Oakland to El Sobrante, and also organized training for local park staff members.



Friends of Grotto Rock Park

Safe new path and steps now circle Grotto Rock Park, dubbed "the most romantic place in Berkeley to watch the sunset." Help came from UC Berkeley student volunteers, Boy Scouts working on an Eagle Scout project, Friends of Five Creeks volunteers, and a UC Chancellor's Partnership grant. Like most projects, this one involved years of groundwork. Park gardener Pam Boland worked with neighbors and Friends of Five Creeks volunteers to cut back overgrown trees and brush, remove weeds, and plant natives.

Installing steps and preparing the old path for re-surfacing took days of hard work. For the final push, UC students wheelbarrowed, leveled, and tamped more than 10 tons of decomposed granite!

East Bay GPA/ Los Amigos de Codornices

East Bay Green Parks Association and Los Amigos de Codornices – a pioneer grassroots group revived by grandsons of the founder -- put in 180 hours of work in the beautiful redwood canyon of Codornices Park. Volunteers from preschoolers to retirees cleared invasive ivy, spread mulch provided by the City of Berkeley, and planted over \$1000 worth of native plants around the historic fireplace. They also maintained the large areas of creek bank cleared in previous years, where natives planted a generation ago are re-emerging as the ivy blanket is removed.

And many more around the town ...

In Southeast Berkeley, **Friends of Halcyon Commons** hosted five work parties, three of them with great help from UC Berkeley students (from Berkeley Project or the School of Public Health). The 15th Anniversary of the park that replaced a parking lot was celebrated with a potluck, jazz-funk quintet, potluck, and a proclamation from the City Council.

In West Berkeley, **Aquatic Park EGRET** volunteers removed trash and invasives from the edge of Middle Pond, finished unearthing masonry terraces installed by the WPA, and used mulch to create a protective blanket for roots of natives. Trees planted in past years are reaching skyward, provided even more bird habitat in this birdwatchers' paradise.



In Central Berkeley, **P-Squared** continued to weed and maintain Presentation Park gardens planted in previous years, and enjoyed the annual Night Out in the revitalized park. After installing a third play area, **Friends of King Park** is looking forward to a well-earned breather before returning with plans for improved seating.



Schoolhouse Creek Common, the neighbor-built park at the corner of Virginia and Curtis, is approaching maturity. With help from UC Berkeley volunteers, the group tweaked the plantings, spruced up the "patio" outside the adjacent Adult School, added a chess board in one of the tables, and made entrance signs.