



Friends of Five Creeks in 2009

A summary of the year – and a look ahead

Hands-on Restoration

Our all-volunteer organization again led 40+ work parties plus weekly “weed warrior” sessions. We involved hundreds of volunteers in fun, positive work helping the environment, contributing 2000+ hours. Here are the basics:



- Another 200 feet of Cerrito Creek cleared of invasive thornless blackberry and planted with natives, improving habitat and reducing flood danger
 - Another block of the Santa Fe Right of Way (between Hearst and Delaware) cleared of tall weeds, with key areas planted with drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly natives
 - Nearly all Pampas grass clumps gone from the North Basin area of Eastshore State Park
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- Mop-up of the last remaining broom thickets along 400 feet of Bayshore at Berkeley’s Shorebird Park, fill-in planting at Berkeley’s Mortar Rock Park, and continued control of pepperweed near the mouth of Strawberry Creek.
 - With our strong volunteer base, we reached beyond “our” projects to help at Berkeley’s Aquatic Park, UC Berkeley’s Blake Garden, Baxter Creek, and the Eastshore State Park.

What’s ahead: More of the same, plus an ever-growing role for our Weekday Weed Warriors as more of our restoration sites mature.

Murals to birdhouses and more

Many kinds of volunteer effort keep nature vibrant in the city. A series of projects by Eagle Scout candidates from Albany Troop 14 have focused on El Cerrito’s once-forlorn Creekside Park. Scouts have rebuilt collapsed safety fences and built new steps at the ford where the public crosses the creek. This year, Eagle projects gave us a spectacular mural at El Cerrito’s Creekside Park – a major step in discouraging graffiti – and installed birdhouses and bee blocks, encouraging wildlife.



What’s ahead: Better steps at the mouth of Strawberry Creek, bike rack and table at Creekside Park, and natural-history plaques in Berkeley.

Talks, walks, and fun



We repeated our outdoor-art-making sessions on Codornices Creek with environmental artist Zach Pine and homeless kids from the Harrison House shelter. September’s relaxed Picnic by the Creek started a new tradition.

We have expanded our varied program of walks aimed to encourage folks to enjoy and value nature close to home. Our outings ranged from a wild-edibles walk to a Bayshore exploration ending with

sips of wine as the sun set and the full moon rose. Our 50+ walking group, co-sponsored with Albany Senior Center, continues to grow.

Public talks F5C sponsored covered timely topics like “The Drought and What to Do about It.” In addition, F5C President Susan Schwartz gave presentations for Berkeley Path Wanderers (on restoration from Sierras to the Bay), two meetings on volunteer restoration (sponsored by East Bay Regional Park District and the Coastal Commission), and a South Bay gathering of watershed groups.

What’s ahead: More walks and celebrations of nature, plus new handouts to tell people more about history and nature at our sites while updating them on environmental issues and what they can do.

Regional efforts

Our summer GPS survey of invasive perennial pepperweed along the East Bay shoreline will contribute to efforts to control this second-most-serious invasive on the Bay shore.

With a grant from the Rose Foundation for Communities and Environment, we have moved our map of volunteer opportunities throughout the Bay to the Bay Nature Magazine calendar and web site. This broad-based venue should bring more volunteers to all!



Greening Berkeley, the collaboration that we founded three years ago with a UC Berkeley Chancellors Community Partnership grant, each year draws more UC Berkeley students to work hands-on with more community groups. Perhaps the best news – Friends of Five Creeks volunteers are starting their own projects: F5C treasurer Beatriz Motta has organized neighbors to improve Presentation Park, and weed warrior Tom Meyer has founded East Bay Green Parks Association to focus on removing ivy. Other weed warriors are helping to form a new group for Temescal Regional Park.

What’s ahead: More mapping with precise locations from satellites, probably assisting California Invasive Plant Council. More efforts against pollution, including new handouts, talks, and an update of www.bluegreenbldg.org, our web site showcasing public and private developments that control pollution with “low impact” techniques such as rain gardens.

Please help Friends of Five Creeks volunteers continue to help the environment.

Click on “DONATE, JOIN” at left.

