

# Berkeley's

# PATHS

*Berkeley Path Wanderers Association is a grassroots volunteer group of community members who have come together to increase public awareness of the City of Berkeley's pathways. BPWA hopes to accomplish this goal through volunteer-led path walks; identification and accurate mapping of Berkeley's complete path network; and eventual restoration of paths that have been blocked or obscured. We hope the final outcome of the community effort will be the preservation and on-going maintenance of all the paths, lanes and steps throughout Berkeley.*

A Newsletter of the Berkeley Path Wanderers Association, Fall 1999 Vol. 2 No. 4

## Meetings

**7-9 pm Live Oak Park Recreation Center**

- Nov. 18 General Meeting**  
Flat Land paths  
possible speakers: Susan Schwartz & Zasa Swanson
- Jan. 20 Board Meeting**
- Feb. 17 General Meeting**  
Pedestrian Transportations  
by Christy Camp
- Mar. 16 Board Meeting**
- Apr. 20 General Meeting**  
Rose Walk talk  
by John Underhill

## Path Walks RAIN OR SHINE

**Saturdays at 10:00 am (allow 2-3 hours)**

**January 22** Strawberry Creek (East)  
Janet Byron, leader 848-4008  
Meet at Center St. at Berkeley Farmers Market - Ecology Center Booth

**February 26** Strawberry Creek (West)  
Sue Fernstrom, leader 215-0873  
Meet at Le Conte & La Loma

**April 1** Park Hills Paths  
Charlie Bowen, leader 540-7223  
Meet at Shasta & Grizzly Peak

Volunteer to lead a walk: 524-4715

## A Walk in the Eastshore State Park

The Bayshore Trail now extends from the Richmond Marina to Point Isabel. The segment from Point Isabel south to the Albany Bulb is nearing completion.

Walking south from the Albany Bulb, along the privately owned waterfront of Golden Gate Fields, you can enter the new Eastshore State Park south of Gilman. There is wonderful exploring in the undeveloped park from Seabreeze Market at University Avenue and Frontage Road, to the Albany Bulb with its sandy beach, lagoons, and squatter-created art.

### The Pre-Gold Rush Waterfront

The Spanish exploring San Francisco Bay found an unusual bayfront in what is now Berkeley. Largely because of the strong tidal currents opposite the Golden Gate, salt marshes and willow groves did not dominate. Instead, a crescent of sand, the Berkeley Bight, stretched along most of the Berkeley waterfront. This gradually sloping sandy beach lay about where today's I-80/I-580 freeway runs now.

One notable break in the beach, the willow marsh at the mouth of Strawberry Creek, was edged by a Native American village. Similar villages lay at the marshy mouth of larger Temescal Creek in today's Emeryville, and on the northeast side of Albany Hill, where rocks with mortar holes worn by Ohlone women remain



near a remnant of the marsh at the confluence of Middle and Cerrito Creeks.

Firm land lay behind the sandy crescent from north of Strawberry Creek to about today's Delaware. (Here Jacob's Landing, built in 1853, became the nucleus of Oceanview.) Starting at about today's Virginia Street, however, a brackish slough ran north behind the bight. Along with tidal bay water, it was fed by Schoolhouse Creek at its south end, by Codornices Creek spilling over a low, grassy plain, and by Marin Creek near today's Buchanan, where the slough reached the Bay. The Codornices channel between the Freeway and Golden Gate Fields roughly follows the slough's course.

West of the slough, the sandy crescent ended at a jutting sandstone remnant of an old chain of hills. This outcrop, called El Cerrito del Sud or Southern Little Hill by the Spanish, was renamed Fleming Point, for a goldrush-era San

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*Renew your membership*  
**DUES ARE DUE**  
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Francisco butcher who bought it from Domingo Peralta, son of the Spanish land grantee. The top of Fleming Point, now Golden Gate Fields racetrack, has been leveled, but the rocky bit of golden sandstone bluff on the Bay side is the only remaining fragment of the area's original shoreline.

**Industry and Destruction of the Beach**

From the 1850s until about 1920, farmers and town dwellers in Oceanview, Berkeley, and Albany, and even vacationing San Franciscans enjoyed the beach. But they also destroyed it, hauling off sand for construction.

With completion of the Union Pacific railroad in 1869, the area became industrial: soap, paint, cigars, starch, flour, lumber, beer, tanning, and canning were among the products. Most spectacular were the dynamite plants. Driven out of the San Francisco dunes after causing too many explosions, dynamite manufacturing briefly found a home on the north side of Fleming Point in the 1870s before the continuing explosions drove it northwest of Albany Hill and finally to Point Pinole.

**Filling the Waterfront**

Most of the filling of the waterfront took place after 1924, when garbage collection became a city responsibility. In Albany, construction debris created the peninsula now called the Albany Bulb. In Berkeley, garbage fill moved gradually north from the boundary at Codornices Creek. Fill turned the Berkeley Wharf, first built in 1875, into

lower University Avenue. But the wharf's massive timbers remain, making humps in the road as the garbage rots and subsides.

Plans advanced for this new Berkeley/Albany waterfront have been many and various. The railroad secretly bought up the privately owned Berkeley tidelands and advanced plans for a huge commercial port, only to deadlock against another plan, with piers running at right angles to its desires. In the 1940s an international airport was proposed; in the 1950s a virtual town doubling the size of Berkeley. A plan for a Worlds Fair site would have filled from Richmond to Oakland.

**Eastshore State Park, Shoreline Trail**

In 1982, conservationists were galvanized by plans by Catellus (successor to the railroad's land holdings) for 3.8 million square feet of development. The proposal led to the founding of Citizens for the Eastshore State Park (CESP), a coalition led by the San Francisco Bay, Golden Gate Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club. Their lobbying led to creation of the state park; purchase of the land was finally

completed in late 1998. The next step is the planning and actual creating of the park. The former dump has become a significant wildlife refuge, supporting, among other creatures, chorus frogs, rabbits, ground squirrels, geese, ducks, shorebirds, egrets, herons, rails, falcons, harriers, and kingfishers. It also is a magnet for trash, squatters, and invasive pest plants.

Strawberry Creek's mouth now is an unprepossessing pipe on the south side of University, west of Seabreeze Market. Schoolhouse Creek also ends in a pipe, where the broad Meadow narrows to the North Basin Strip. These creeks could be daylighted, with Schoolhouse in particular becoming a salt marsh or willow marsh. The small salt marsh south of Buchanan, at the mouth of Codornices and Marin Creeks, is owned by Golden Gate Fields, and is badly in need of restoration and enlargement. Completing the East Bay Shoreline Trail is another challenge. The only missing link between Richmond and Emeryville is now Golden Gate Fields.

As you explore, think of what you would like to see here, and make your ideas known.

*Story by Susan Schwartz*

Berkeley Path Wanderers' has received a \$2000 Berkeley Parks Mini-Grant to improve dirt paths with better drainage and grading, wood chip surfaces, and wood edging and steps where needed. In the coming year, we will improve at least three of the following paths: **Acacia Walk, Keeler Avenue Path (north half), Mosswood Lane, Oak Street Path Walk, Sterling Path, and Twin Path**. The grant pays for materials; volunteer work parties will do the rest. About a dozen not-too-steep paths could be improved by volunteers in this way, providing needed emergency routes as well as pleasant walking. Boy Scouts from Troop 19 are interested in taking on some of these as Eagle projects; and if you can help with materials or construction expertise, **please Call 848-9358**

**Berkeley General Plan 2000-2020 (2nd Draft)**

BPWA is pleased that many of our suggestions were included in the 2nd Draft Berkeley General Plan, which is now available for public review at the Planning & Development Department, at Berkeley libraries, and the City's web page at [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us). Members may want to check out the following references:

**BERKELEY 2020: A Vision . . . "our public pathway system through the City will be much improved."** p 8  
**GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES**  
**GOAL #1. 5 Restore creeks, natural habitat areas, and the City pathway system.** GOAL #2. 5 **Repair and improve . . . public assets such as the pathway system to encourage pedestrians and provide additional evacuation routes.** p 11  
**LAND USE POLICY LU-2 (Neighborhood Character).** **Ensure that any City owned pathways or dedicated easements adjacent to or abutting private property are preserved when reviewing new development proposals.** p 23  
**POLICY T-45 PATHWAYS.** **Develop and improve the public pedestrian pathway**

**system. Improve those pathways dedicated but not improved for public use . . . Develop and maintain a complete and accurate inventory of Berkeley's Pathway Network, to include all known paths . . . Work with residents and interest groups adjacent to pathways to prepare a "Top Priority Improvement List" for pathway restoration . . . include neighbor support and clear title; paths with utility for evacuation; paths which continue existing paths; paths which improve circulation and provide access to community services.** p 46  
**POLICY OS-2 (Repair and Enhancements).** **Repair and enhance existing open space . . . with improvements such as: Restoring the existing network of paths and historic**

**street features, such as gateways, lighting and stairways.** p 70  
**POLICY OS-9 (Improvements).** **Restoring impassable or obstructed public paths.** p 71  
**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY EM-38 (Citizen Efforts).** **Encourage citizen efforts to restore ecological resources and open space areas, such as pathways and stairways.** p 80  
**URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICY UD-10 (Landmark Identification and Preservation) . . . Identify, preserve and maintain sites, structures, pathways . . . as significant visible reminders of Berkeley's architectural and cultural heritage.** p 89

*For more information see BPWA's website, [www.InternetTime.com/path](http://www.InternetTime.com/path)*

Annual membership in Berkeley Path Wanderers Association is \$5.00 due January 1st of each year. Benefits include Path Inventory Index, maps of pathways, quarterly newsletter, and BPWA mailings. Mail form with check or money order, payable to:

**BPWA, Berkeley Partners for Parks  
 2371 Eunice St., Berkeley, CA 94708.**

(BPWA is a member of Berkeley Partners for Parks, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.)

**BPWA Membership Form Please print**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_