**Trail Trekker Goals and Accomplishments**

Dave Weinstein, President

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**Trail Trekkers’ 2024 Goals**

**Trail work.** Trekkers will continue to maintain and improve trails throughout the city as needed. Trekkers will work with city officials to obtain buy-in on goals to expand the trail network by making impassable urban paths passable. We hope to convince the City Council to add trails to its capital improvement plan.

**Hikes.** Trekkers will continue its wide-ranging series of hikes, including at our popular Hillside Festival, May 4 and 5 this year. We continue to add new events while maintaining relations with some popular hike leaders going back many years. In 2024 we may do our first aquatic “hike,” an environmental boat tour with a leading bay conservationist. All our events are free.

**Directional trail signs to be installed in the Hillside Natural Area**. This will finally be done in 2024, 12 years after the plan was begun with an action grant from the National Park Service, whose rangers designed a signage plan and our map. Still to be accomplished: installation of NPS-designed trail signs outside of the Hillside on our urban paths and stairways. Trekkers has offered to pay for the installation of those signs and we hope we can get the city to let this happen.

**Preserving Open Space**. We will continue to seek the expansion of the Hillside Natural Area through the acquisition of Fairview Open Space and by obtaining easements on some private properties in the Hillside.

**Habitat protection and fire safety**. Trekkers will continue to educate people about fire safety, and will continue to remove vegetative fuels, including French broom, from the Hillside Natural Area, and ivy from other city parks. We have helped publicize efforts by, and lent tools to, a neighborhood group to do the same. We will keep working with the city on a Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan.

Trekkers is advising an El Cerrito resident who hopes to form a nonprofit to promote tree planting in the city. And we are working with Friends of Five Creeks and other volunteers on plans for “bioblitzes” to identify areas of native plantings in the Hillside.

**Pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity**. Trekkers will continue to work with the city of El Cerrito and other groups, including El Cerrito Richmond Annex Walk and Roll and SafeTREC, on these goals, to better integrate El Cerrito’s system of wildland and urban paths with sidewalks, connections to the Bay, and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout our town and region.

**Community building**. In addition to our hikes and festival and work parties, we continue to host get togethers for members and friends to build a sense of community and spread the word about trails and open space.

**Trekker top leadership/always looking for volunteers**. Trekkers has had the same board president since its founding in 2010. At our annual meeting in 2025 we hope to present to members a slate with a new president. A candidate will likely come from our board or advisory group, which are made up of remarkable people. But any member is eligible. Interested in playing a larger role with Trekkers, on our board, advisory group, as a hike or work party leader? Let us know.

**Trail Trekkers’ 2023 Accomplishments**

**Trail work/habitat improvement**. Throughout the year Trekkers led or sponsored numerous broom pulls in the Hillside Natural Area, and the removal of invasive ivy in Canyon Trail Park. Our ivy pulls focused on removing ivy from trees, which are damaged by growth of this weed. The city’s Environmental Quality Committee’ Green Teams worked with us on broom, and the El Cerrito and Albany high schools’ Key Clubs worked with us on both projects. Friends of Five Creeks worked with us on these projects as well. We also worked with volunteers from Prospect Sierra School to remove ivy at Canyon Trail, with the city’s arborist, Stephen Prée.

Throughout the year Trekkers served as a liaison with the city’s maintenance department whenever trails needed repairs or trees blocked trails; the city’s response has always been swift and effective.

**Hikes and programs**: Trekkers led more than a dozen hikes, ranging from Wildcat Canyon rambles and tree walks to art walks and fine homes hikes, in addition to 15 or so events at the Hillside Festival. The city arborist Stephen Prée led a wonderful Arbor Day Hike sponsored by Trekkers, plus a tree hike during the festival.

We had a table at the WorldOne July 4 festival, at the Solano Stroll, and at GRIP’s Harmony Walk in Richmond.

**Trail signage**. For years nothing seemed to be happening with the installation of signs that were designed years ago for El Cerrito trails by the National Park Service. Throughout the year Trekkers worked with City Council members, city staff, and consultants, to make sure this project would move forward. It has.

**Our website**. Trekkers completely redid our website in 2023, producing a brighter and easier-to-use website that also allows members and donors to join and donate with a click of the mouse. (We still accept donations the old-fashioned way, too!)

**Climate Action**. Trekkers took part in efforts by the city to update its Climate Action plan to avert the worst of climate-induced damage to life on our planet.

**Working with city leaders**. Leaders of Trekkers met many times throughout the year, both formally and informally, with every member of the City Council, the city manager, and other city officials, to ensure that trails, open space, and habitat remain top of mind. City officials support our goals, in general.

**Building community**. Trekkers is one of many organizations in El Cerrito where people come together, share interests, meet each other, and learn. We thank everyone who has come to our events, volunteered, or donated so generously to support open space and trails.

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