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November 13, 2007


Members of the Life Enrichment Committee  
Oakland City Council  
Oakland, California

RE: Report from Volunteers for Outdoors-California's October 6-7, 2007 trail project in Joaquin Miller Park

Dear Chairperson Chang and Members of the Committee:

Attached for your review is a report from Volunteers for Outdoors-California on their successful October 6-7, 2007 work weekend where close to 200 volunteers rerouted trails, removed flammable vegetation and otherwise improved erosion control within Joaquin Miller Park.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Jean Quan  
District 4 City Council Member

Item: \_\_\_\_\_



**Volunteers  
for Outdoor  
California**

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To: Oakland City Council Life Enrichment Committee  
From: Cathy Moyer, Executive Director of Volunteers for Outdoor California  
Date: November 1, 2007  
Re: Summary Report - Joaquin Miller Park Project

Volunteers for Outdoor California (V-O-Cal) is delighted with the results of our first partnership with the City of Oakland. It is our intent and sincere hope that this is only the first of a long series of annual projects spread throughout the City. As we described when we initially contacted the City about doing a project in Oakland, a key part of our organizational mission is community building, using a fun work project to accomplish that. The project at Joaquin Miller Park, held October 6-7, 2007, was tremendously successful on that front. With over 180 volunteers participating over the course of the weekend, the community spirit and energy that make our projects work was evident.

### **What we did**

After working with Parkland Resource Supervisor Martin Matarrese to identify the most pressing needs and to size and scope the project, we designed a weekend-long project for 200 volunteers to reroute dangerous trail intersections, install a drainage crossing joining two trails, repair sections of other trails that badly needed attention, and remove French Broom on yet another trail. I am proud to report that these volunteers completed the entirety of the core project, meeting a high standard of quality, and significantly improving the safety and user experience in Joaquin Miller Park.

Rerouting the intersection between the Sequoia Bay View & Chaparral Trail involved several things: constructing approx. 1/4 mile of new trail, the construction of 30 ft of rock causeway and finally, closing the original intersection, thoroughly obscuring it to prevent user confusion. The rock causeway, particularly, was a work of art involving the careful placement of many BIG rocks, and all the volunteers who worked on it learned a lot and felt a particular sense of accomplishment.

The reroute between the Big Trees Trail and the Sequoia Bay View Trail also involved constructing 1/4 mile of new trail and closing the old intersection. The greatest challenges on this portion of the project were the many big roots and the steep hillside where these two trails join.

Installing the rock drainage crossing on Sequoia Bay View at the Fern Ravine trail involved removing the plastic culverts that were there, gathering many large and small rocks, and carefully placing those rocks to create a baffled drain with a flat and very stable top surface that contained no gaps that could catch a bike tire, a horse's hoof or a small foot.

Using big weed wrenches, a great crew removed an enormous amount of French Broom at the bottom of the Chaparral Trail, changing completely the view and feel for users of that trail.

And finally, volunteers hiked out to the heavily used Sunset trail and restored that trail to its full width with good drainage. These volunteers had the longest walk carrying their tools, and worked particularly hard in the hot sun – although they did get to see the aerial acrobatics of Fleet Week at the end of the day on Saturday.

### **How it happened**

V-O-Cal projects are true collaborations with our agency partners. A number of City staff were involved – and invaluable – in the successful completion of all this great work. In particular, we'd like to acknowledge Sue Piper from Councilmember Jean Quan's office for her tremendous and tireless contributions to the project. From the Dept of Public Works, Martin Matarrese, Noel Gallo, and Jocelyn Combs; from Parks and Recreation, Stephanie Benavidez, and Marguerite Hinrichs. Plus, with key support from the Joaquin Miller Working Group, the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay, three local horsemen's associations: Tilden Wildcat Horsemen's Association, the Metropolitan Horsemen's Association and the East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Equestrian Ride, Service for Peace, and the Friends of Sausal Creek, this was truly a collective effort. Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, Bay Alarm, CH2M Hill, Horizon Beverage, Jones and Stokes, Kaiser Permanente, Oakland Rotary Nature Center, Safeway, Sara Lee helped support this event. We appreciated that Councilmember Jean Quan and Director of Parks and Recreation Audree Jones-Taylor who joined us during dinner to socialize with the volunteers.



Group shot of many of the volunteers—along with Council Member Jean Quan (center) and Office of Parks & Recreation Director Audree Jones-Taylor (3rd row at right). Everyone is still smiling after 8 hours of hard work!

### **What it felt like...who participated**

With volunteers ranging in age from 12-76, the people who turned out to work on this project were truly multi-generational, multi-ethnic, and came from all over the Bay. Volunteers from as far away as San Jose showed up to help work in this Oakland city park. Fed well and provided with good tools, these volunteers worked very hard, had a great time, and left with a tremendous sense of accomplishment. In a post-project survey, volunteers also raved about the experience. Participants said, "I thought the project was very well organized." "It was a great workout and meaningful work. Got to meet some wonderful people." Other highlights included seeing the completed trail at the end of the weekend, the cookies, the wonderful views and "riding the trails Sunday afternoon post-work and seeing and feeling the great vibe in the park."

We'd also like to mention many employees of Oakland's Dept of Public Works responded to the invitation to come out and help out on this project. Three men were there from a City roofing crew who had never worked on a trail, did not know what to expect or what the work was likely to be, yet they came, they worked hard and had a terrific time. All three expressed a desire to come back and work on another of these projects. An ongoing partnership between V-O-Cal and the City of Oakland has much potential for Life Enrichment for city employees as well as members the community.

### **What is next?**

In addition to working with City staff to identify projects for upcoming annual events in Oakland, V-O-Cal is actively talking with both the Public Works Agency and Office of Parks & Recreation about providing leadership training for City staff. Because our large volunteer groups are broken into crews with trained volunteer crew leaders, we have a leadership development program that is a very good fit for Oakland's needs both at PWA where retirement based loss of personnel is a critical issue, and at OPR where student counselors who "age out" of their programs could benefit from additional leadership training. We will keep you informed as these discussions continue.

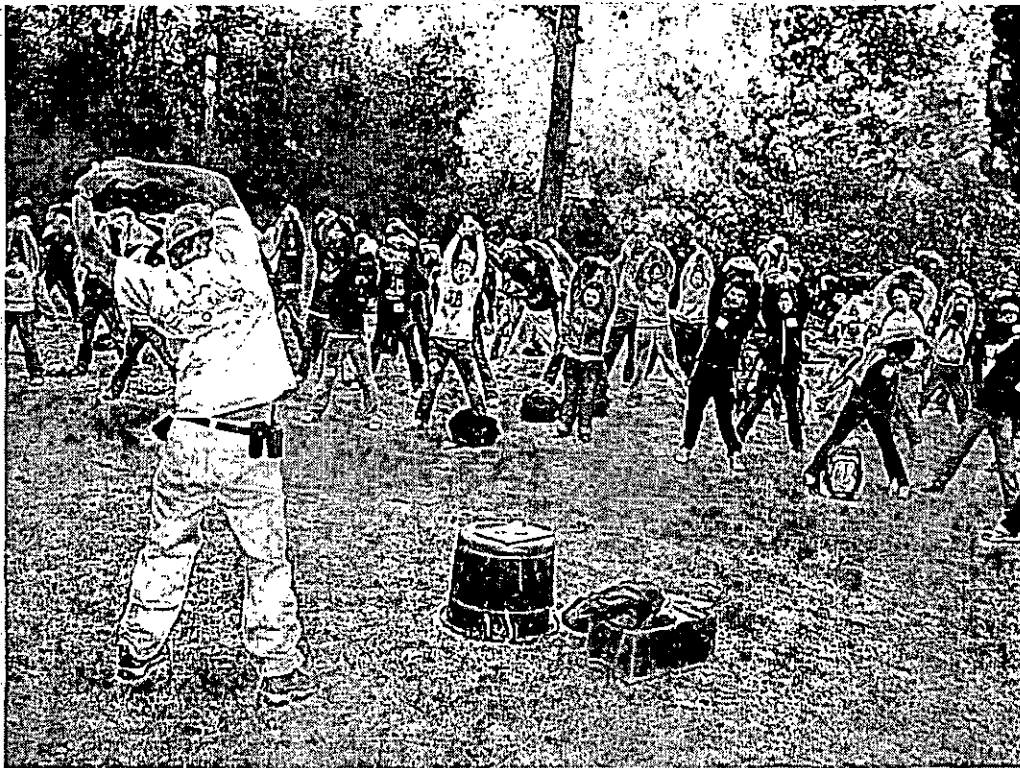




Moving a 250 lb. boulder into an armored drainage crossing at the intersection of Fern Ravine Trail and Sequoia Bayview Trail.



Oakland's Martin Matarrese, Public Works Agency, and Noel Gallo, Office of Parks & Recreation. Martin was the only one not using hand tools!



More than 180 volunteers stretched before heading out to the trails.



Removing duft on the new Big Trees reroute-- all by hand.





After fitting in the boulders and rock by hand like a 3-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, gravel was added on top to help with drainage and to make it safer to cross.



The proud team on the causeway



Making slow progress on Saturday.



The finished product designed so that bicycles won't get caught in any cracks—no cement used— all done by hand in one day!