

FRIENDS OF SANTA TERESA PARK



The Hidden Springs Trail leading to Coyote Peak

2026 is the 250th Anniversary of the Anza Expedition's Arrival in the Bay Area

The story of the ownership of Rancho Santa Teresa begins 250 years ago. In 2026, we are celebrating the 250th anniversary, called the Semiquincentennial, of America. In 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. We recognize this as the birthday of the United States of America. However, on the west coast of the continent, another important event was happening that year. On June 27, 1776, an expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza, arrived at their destination in San Francisco. It was a landmark event because it established a land route for Spanish settlement from Mexico to San Francisco. It reinforced Spain's control over Alta California and thwarted Russian expansion into the San Francisco Bay area.

In 1773-1774, Spanish lieutenant-colonel Juan Bautista de Anza, commander of the Tubac Presidio in Sonora (now southern Arizona), scouted a land route to Alta California. In 1775, he organized the first overland colonizing expedition to California. Over 240 colonists from Sinaloa and

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Our Mission

The Friends of Santa Teresa Park (FOSTP) is a volunteer and neighborhood association, founded in 1992 and based in San Jose. Our mission is to help protect, enhance, maintain, and restore Santa Teresa Park and the surrounding neighborhood through education, volunteer involvement, coordination, and communications with the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department staff, the City of San Jose, and the greater community. We are a diverse group with a wide range of interests. We report on problems and concerns in the park and adjoining neighborhood and recommend changes and improvements. We help out with park maintenance and events. If you are interested in helping out at the park or just want to know what's going on, you are welcome to join us. See our website for more information: www.stpfriends.org. Please visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/STPFriends

Meetings: 7:00 pm, 1st Thursday of each month, Zoom meetings since the pandemic shutdown.

Website: <http://www.stpfriends.org>.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/STPFriends/>

Email: fostp@stpfriends.org (email us to request Zoom meeting link)

Officers:

- Mike Boulland, President
- Maurice Bayani, Vice President
- David Huntley: Treasurer
- Ronald Horii, Secretary, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor

President's Message

By Mike Boulland

This spring, our dedicated Friends of Santa Teresa Park members and volunteers are excited that the Pandemic is over, and we can get back to work maintaining the Bernal Historic Site garden boxes, Butterfly cage, corrals, Santa Teresa Spring, and trails.

For 34 years, our goal has been "to promote the enjoyment and safe use of Santa Teresa County Park by visitors through projects and events that preserve the park's natural and cultural history."

Thanks to our volunteers' dedication and the Santa Clara County Parks Department's and BeautifySJ support, that mission has helped transform a once blighted, abandoned ranch site into a welcoming, well-loved community park. Today, families visit Santa Teresa Springs to enjoy the ducks and goldfish, while runners and seniors have a safe, beautiful place for their daily walks and exercise.

I encourage you to join us in volunteering once a month to help restore our beloved Bernal interpretive historic site. We need help restoring and interpreting the farm equipment around the barns. We also need more community help removing invasive plants like star thistle, blackberries, Bermuda grass, and other weeds.

Join us on the first Friday of every month at 9 am at the Chicken Coop to beautify our neighborhood and help keep Santa Teresa Park a wonderful place to play and enjoy nature. We welcome walk-ons for their first visit.

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See <http://www.stpfriends.org/#newsletters> for this and past newsletters.

Status of IBM's Almaden Research Center Site

Last year's newsletter had an article about the closure of IBM's Almaden Research Center (ARC). It's in the Santa Teresa Hills next to Santa Teresa County Park. The park's popular Stile Ranch Trail mostly runs through an easement on IBM's property. On August 18, 2026, the San Jose City Council voted 9-2 to rezone the site into two sections. 35.1 acres occupied by the current lab buildings are now an "industrial park zoning district." 565.1 acres of undeveloped lab around the lab buildings are zoned as an "open space zoning district." Though no plans have been submitted, there have been a number of discussions about it. The existing buildings total 544,500 square feet. Some possible uses are industrial, R&D, a data center, advanced manufacturing, or an office complex.

The open space zoning protects the undeveloped land for now. Mayor Matt Mahan said, "All of us want to see what IBM intended to keep as open space forevermore, to see that protected." Hopefully, that will happen, but there's no guarantee. The best way to protect it is if IBM's open space gets purchased by the county and added to Santa Teresa County Park. That could allow the expansion of the park's trail system, with access from Harry Road. No plans have been announced for acquisition of the open space, but FOSTP will be monitoring it.



ARC from the Rocky Ridge Trail



ARC from the Stile Ranch Trail

Update on the Fortini Property

The 2024 and 2025 newsletters talked about planning for the Fortini Property, which will join Calero County Park's Rancho San Vicente entrance with Santa Teresa County Park's Stile Ranch/Fortini trailhead. Acquired in 2022, the property covers 47 acres and is located along Fortini Road between McKean Road and San Vicente Avenue.

The environmental site (CEQA IS/MND) plan was released in April 2026. The Site Plan Report was released in June 2026. It was approved by the Parks & Rec Commission on October 1, 2025 and the Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation Committee on June 25, 2026. The Board of Supervisors approved the site plan and CEQA document on August 25, 2026.

The plan calls for a primary multi-use trail, called the Valley Floor Trail, with bridges over Calero Creek and Santa Teresa Creek. It will be about 1 mile long. Two hiking-only seasonal trails, the Clay Trail and Tarweed Trail, will loop off the main trail. They will be about 1/2 mile each. Two staging areas are in the plan. One is on San Vicente Avenue, across from the Stile Ranch Trailhead. The other is adjacent to the existing Rancho San Vicente parking lot and can be configured for equestrian trailer parking. A new crossing light will be at the intersection of McKean Road and Fortini Road and a raised crossing will be on San Vicente Avenue. A rest area will be in the middle of the property south of the Santa Teresa Creek bridge. It will have three benches and an interpretive panel. Next to the new parking lot on San Vicente Avenue will be a picnic area with two benches and three picnic tables. The need for a restroom here will be studied. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$5.19 million, with the highest cost items being the Valley Floor Trail, The Rancho San Vicente Staging Area expansion, and the McKean Road Crossing. The next steps will be final design decisions, coordinating with project stakeholders, creating construction documents, obtaining permits, and getting construction bids. The timing will depend on funding and park staff priorities.

<https://parks.santaclaracounty.gov/learn/plans-and-projects/current-plans-and-projects/fortini-property-site-plan>



View of the Fortini Property from the Stile Ranch Trail

FOSTP Volunteer Spotlight

By Mike Boulland

Joan Murphy

I want to introduce you to Joan Murphy, an enthusiastic FOSTP member who is always eager to support our events and activities. Joan joined us several years ago and enjoyed caring for the Bernal Garden Boxes and making sure the trees around were watered. When she had time during the week, she traveled from Willow Glen to water her favorite garden plants, especially the trees behind the Bernal Ranch House.

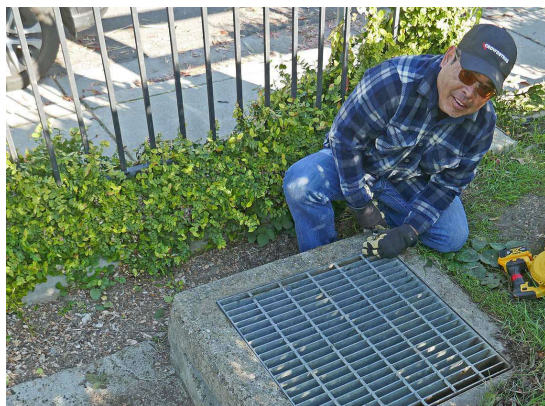
One of her favorite volunteer activities is working with the public at our FOSTP event booth. She loves donating candy to children, pulling raffle tickets from the basket, and giving away prizes. Another volunteer activity she loves is portraying the character Maria Zacarias Bernal Berryessa at our annual Mothers and Flowers Hike. Joan uses her fluent Spanish to introduce her character and dresses in costume as a 1850 high fashion style woman. Her performance is one of the highlights of the event.

I look forward to her returning by listening to our Zoom FOSTP meetings and events so she can add her supportive, creative ideas to help make FOSTP a better organization.



Maurice Bayani,

We welcome Maurice Bayani, as our new member, to our 2026 FOSTP Board of Directors. He lives in the Santa Teresa neighborhood and is eager to help us with BeautifySJ projects. Also, he volunteered to join the Santa Teresa Garden Box Adopt-a-Spot Team. We are honored to have Maurice to serve as our 2026 FOSTP Vice President.



Ron Horii

I would like to recognize Ron Horii as one of FOSTP's most important and talented members. I first heard about Ron from Park Ranger Eric Goodrich in 1995. He said he was an amateur photographer, worked at IBM, and would be a good fit for our FOSTP organization.

Ron joined us at one of our FOSTP meetings in 2000 and became a board member, then Secretary. Every month, Ron recorded and reported the meeting minutes. He showed his beautiful flower, trail, and event slideshows at the Santa Teresa Golf Club during our meetings. They were the highlight of the meetings. He gave me a copy of the slideshow and pictures on a disc to put in my files at home. That collection grew to over one hundred discs.

When it came time in 2000 to build a FOSTP website, Ron stepped up to create it and volunteered to serve as webmaster. It became www.stpfriends.org. With support from San Jose CAP Grants, which covered the Yahoo web fees, Ron reported notable events in the Blossom Hill and Santa Teresa community in our newsletters and on our website.

Today, FOSTP has a Facebook page, and Ron's descriptions of events at Santa Teresa Park serve as an archive of the park's and community's history. His photographs captured major historical events and the people who helped make Santa Teresa Park the eighth-best park to visit in San Jose, according to a local website.

Ron expanded his website portfolio to other organizations, including the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association. The County Parks Department recognizes him as their official volunteer park photographer. Local television news stations have interviewed Ron several times about his photography, and his park pictures have appeared on billboards and VTA buses. He has a personal website: www.rhorii.com, which covers Bay Area recreation and travel photography.

Ron loves riding bikes and taking photographs. I am amazed that he can ride his bike to cover several major community events in a single day, sometimes five.

Now, it is time for all the community residents to recognize Ron's special talent for volunteering to capture and archive the history of Santa Teresa Park and the surrounding Santa Clara County and San Jose communities for future generations of residents.



Ron with the sign he helped create on Coyote Peak

La Fuente September 20, 2025

On 9/20/25, the nearly-annual La Fuente event (called Fandango and other names in the past) was held at the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch in Santa Teresa County Park. La fuente means 'the source' or 'the origin' in Spanish. This was the description of it: "This event honors the cultural heritage and shares the rich history of the families who lived and continue to live in the Santa Teresa area. Drop by Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch (372 Manila Drive, San Jose, CA) on Saturday, September 20th between 4:00PM – 7:00PM to explore the historic ranch house and barns, meet some of our live animals, and watch live performances!" The folklorico dance group, El Grito de la Cultura, led by Elena Robles, has been to every La Fuente/Fandango since the first one in 2006. They performed traditional Mexican folk dances, and Elena talked about Mexican cultural traditions. Janice Frazier brought her horse Tex and let people pet him. There were crafts tables, animal pelts for touching, and saw-horse cattle-roping. The Friends of Santa Teresa Park had tables with displays, newsletters, pictures, games, and candy. They raffled off pumpkins. The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority had information about their preserves and nature displays. There was an interpretive walk in Spanish to Santa Teresa Spring, led by Ranger Roberto Romero.

Unfortunately, due to resource issues, there will be no La Fuente in 2026. There will be smaller events, like a concert by Los Panaderos on September 6. The Friends of Santa Teresa Park will be participating in Viva Calle SJ on September 13, with an information table at Martial Cottle Park.



FOSTP at La Fuente 9/20/25

FOSTP First Friday Work Days

The Friends of Santa Teresa Park have been holding a First Friday Work Day on the first Friday of each month, weather-permitting, from 9 am to 12 pm, starting at the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch. The County Parks' Volunteer Office recruits volunteers to help us. Sometimes they get volunteers from companies or church groups. Park maintenance workers and interpreters let us know what needs to be done. We work primarily around the ranch buildings, the garden boxes, the culverts, the barns, the walkways, and Santa Teresa Spring. We sometimes work at the Pyzak/Jacoba Bernal House on Curie Drive. We do weeding, mulch-spreading, landscape watering, dirt removal, leaf raking, and general cleanup. Below are pictures from two of our work days. See our website for more pictures. To volunteer for these work days, contact the Volunteer Office at <https://parks.santaclaracounty.gov/get-involved/volunteer-keep-your-parks-beautiful>. If you come to the work days, bring work gloves. Long sleeves, long pants, and a hat are recommended.



Volunteers clearing blackberries from the drain above the street



Volunteers re-painting the garden boxes



Folklorico dancing at La Fuente

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Sonora set forth from Tubac on October 23, 1775. They included 30 soldiers and their wives, more than 100 children, native guide, cowboys, muleteers, and servants. They traveled by horseback, mule, and on foot through rugged terrain and dangerous weather conditions for nearly five months. They arrived at the Presidio of Monterey on March 10, 1776. In June 1776, they continued the journey to San Francisco.

Among the families on the expedition were the Bernal. They consisted of soldier Juan Francisco, his wife Anna Maria Soto, and their seven children. The second oldest child was 15-year-old Jose Joaquin.

Jose Joaquin Bernal became a soldier in the San Francisco Presidio. He married Maria Josefa Daria Sanchez y Morales in Mission Dolores in San Francisco in 1785. They had 11 children. In 1791, their daughter Maria Zacarias was born. In 1805, Joaquin became a soldier at the Pueblo of San Jose. Also in 1805, his daughter Maria Zacarias married Jose de los Reyes Berreyesa, and they later founded Rancho San Vicente, west of Rancho Santa Teresa. In 1819, Joaquin retired and settled his family in South San Jose, near Santa Teresa Spring, and founded Rancho Santa Teresa. He was granted 9,647 acres by the Mexican government in 1834. He died in 1837, leaving control of the ranch to sons Bruno, Agustin, and Juan Pablo.

In 1853, Agustin Bernal petitioned the US court for recognition of the Rancho Santa Teresa land grant. It was recognized in 1854. In 1855, he left control of the ranch to his sons Francisco and Ygnacio. The ranch was passed down through Joaquin's descendants. It got smaller over time as it was divided up and sold. In 1858, Joaquin's granddaughter Rufina inherited part of the ranch and later married Carlos Maria Gulnac, who built the ranch house that still survives today. Their daughter Susan married Patrick Joice in 1894. In 1896, Ygnacio Bernal owned 395 acres of the ranch. His son Pedro took over management of the ranch after Ygnacio died. Pedro established the Bernal Marl Fertilizer Company, mining and selling marl mined on the ranch. The Mine Trail in Santa Teresa County Park goes past the remnants of the marl mines. Pedro and his mother Jesusita founded the Santa Teresa Springs water company, selling bottled water from the spring. In 1935, Pedro died and left the ranch to Jacoba Bernal Fisher and Rufina Bernal Gulnac. In 1936, Jacoba died, leaving control of the ranch to James Carlos Joice. The last of the Bernal descendants to live at Rancho Santa Teresa were the Joice's, who sold the land to IBM in 1980. IBM in turn traded the land to Santa Clara County, which added it to Santa Teresa County Park. The historic ranch area is now called the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch.

The Bernals are remembered today in the Santa Teresa district of San Jose. There's a Bernal Road, Bernal School, and Bernal Church, among other places. Rancho Santa Teresa's name is preserved in the Santa Teresa neighborhood of San Jose, along with Santa Teresa Blvd., Santa Teresa High

School, Santa Teresa School, and many businesses. The Bernal family members spread out to other parts of California. That's why there's Bernal Avenue and Augustin Bernal Park in Pleasanton.

De Anza and his colonizing expedition is recognized nationally in the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. It covers 1200 miles from Sonora, Mexico to San Francisco. The largest state park in California, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, bears his name. De Anza's name persists in Santa Clara County in De Anza Boulevard, De Anza College, De Anza Park (in Sunnyvale and San Jose), and many other places.



In 1775-1776, Juan Bautista de Anza led an expedition overland to settle upper California



Mike Boulland points to model of the Anza Expedition in the Martinez Adobe at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez on 8/26/17. The Martinez Adobe building is currently closed due to seismic safety concerns.

FOSTP Leads History/Nature Hike

The Friends of Santa Teresa Park (FOSTP) led a hike in Santa Teresa County Park on 5/9/26, the day before Mother's Day. It was called the "Mothers and Flowers Hike." The hike was on the Fortini, Mine, and Stile Ranch Trails and included stories about important mothers in the history of the Rancho Santa Teresa area, along with viewing late spring wildflowers. FOSTP members Mike Boulland, Dorene Boulland, Joan Murphy, and Ron Horii came to help with the event. Mike portrayed Jose de Los Reyes Berreyesa, owner of Rancho San Vicente. Joan Murphy portrayed Maria Zacarias Bernal de Berreyesa, who married Jose de los Reyes Berreyesa. Dorene was Clementine Fortini, whose family bought the Fortini Ranch and ran the Club 14-E resort, which is now part of the park. Ron pointed out the wildflowers and trees along the trail and talked about how the serpentine soil promotes native plants. There were lots of late-season wildflowers, including some rare ones. Here are pictures from the hike:

<https://tinyurl.com/2wrrab9dv>



Dorene Boulland portrays Clementine Fortini



The group hikes down the Stile Ranch Trail

Adopt-a-Spot: Bernal Ranch Gardens

By Lee Bangphrasay

The Adopt-A-Spot project at the garden boxes of Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch House began in June 2025. Throughout the year, volunteers dedicate their time in the upkeep of the kitchen garden at the ranch house, with support from the Parks Interpretation staff. Activities include composting, weeding, planting, and daily watering. The garden has yielded carrots, eggplants, peppers, beans, chard, and lots of tomatoes. Our Adopt-A-Spot volunteers also participate in First Friday Beautification Days with the Friends of Santa Teresa Park. Below are pictures of the garden and its produce:



Garden volunteer crew: Maurice, Lee, Youngmee, Robin



Fire in Santa Teresa Park

On 5/6/26, there was a 19-acre grass fire in the hills of Santa Teresa County Park. It was called the "Curry Fire," which was probably a misspelling of Curie Drive, which runs below the fire. Firefighters were called around 5:40 pm. The fire burned above homes and Bernal School on Curie Drive and Heaton Moor, as well as historic buildings in Santa Teresa County Park. It was 100% contained by 10:20 pm. Cal Fire and San Jose Fire Department ground crews, assisted by water-dropping Cal Fire helicopters, fought the fire and prevented damage to any structures. A downed power line was being investigated as the cause of the fire. PG&E shut off power for safety, which caused local blackouts. For awhile, the nearby Costco had no power. What burned was mostly dead annual grasses, poison oak, and some coyote brush. The fire burned down to the Norred Trail and up to the Bernal Hill Trail. The trails acted as firebreaks. The fire did not jump the trails. If it had jumped the Norred Trail, the Coyote-Alamitos Canal could have acted as another firebreak, though there were more trees farther down the hill, including flammable eucalyptus. There have been many fires in the Santa Teresa Hills over the years. Fortunately, the rapid response and hard work of firefighters have prevented the destruction of neighboring structures and homes.



Views of the burned hills above the Bear Tree Lot and from the Norred Trail, which acted as a firebreak

Wash Days Return

An activity that began over 23 years ago, but was stopped in recent years was the old time wash days. Kids learned what it was like to wash clothes in the old days. They washed clothes by hand and using washboards, tubs, and a machine with a hand-operated agitator and roller wringers. Then they would hang the clothes out to dry on a clothesline. This year, the activity came back. Time and the elements got to the old wash tubs and washboards, so they bought new ones. They had wash days out in the yard by the ranch house and plan to have more.



Park Staff News

Here are some news about recent changes in the County Parks staff:

Jason Bombardier has been promoted to Volunteer Program Supervisors. He's served in that role several times in the past on a temporary basis. His normal job was in maintenance. He was a volunteer at the Bernal Ranch for many years, starting from when he was a teenager.

The manager of the Volunteer Program is Veronica "Ronni" Johnson.

There are two new park interpreters: Amanda "Mandy" McGuire and Casey Chalmers. Many will be the interpreter at Martial Cottle Park and will be helping with weekend coverage at the Bernal Ranch. Casey will be the interpreter for Chitactac-Adams and will be working out of the Anderson Visitor Center, along with Rob McDonnell, who was previously the interpreter at the Bernal Ranch.

The manager of the Interpretive Program is Terri Lopez. She was previously the Interpretive Program Supervisor.

Region 1 Interpretive Parks Program Coordinator, Lynda Will, retired at the end of August.

Park intern Jack Foster has been working at the Bernal Ranch, staffing the ranch house on Saturdays. He's a history major at San Jose State.

Colby Meenk is the Senior Ranger for Santa Teresa, Hellyer, and Martial Cottle.

Good-bye to Chickens at the Ranch

Chickens have been at the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch since its early days. The ranch was dedicated in 2002. Along with the completion of the ranch buildings, the chicken coop was unveiled. It was an Eagle Scout project by Neil Steiner. Coyote Crest 4-H took care of the chickens in the coop, as well as the garden boxes. Many years later, the agreement between 4-H and the county expired. Since 4-H is under the UC system, state lawyers and county lawyers got involved and could not come to an agreement on terms. However, they did come to an agreement at Martial Cottle Park, so 4-H has a big ranch there with lots of chickens and a variety of coops. 4-H has more autonomy at Martial Cottle vs. Santa Teresa. If you want to see chickens, go there.

The chicken coop at Santa Teresa was empty for awhile, especially during the pandemic, when the whole ranch was unstaffed. After the pandemic, a loose chicken was found wandering around one of the parks. The park staff captured it and put it in the coop temporarily. It was moved out later, but they found other birds. Volunteers in the neighborhood agreed to take care of the chickens under the Adopt-a-Spot program. Eventually, the flock grew to 4. One of them died, and they were down to 3.

This year, because of policies concerning animal care and staff shortages, they had to remove the chickens at the end of June. They were sent to a private animal rescue sanctuary in East San Jose, where they will have 12 acres of land to free-range. Unfortunately, it's not open to the public. The chicken coop will stay, but it may be re-purposed for storage. Will the chickens ever come back? Maybe, if policies change or if 4-H or some other organization agrees to take care of them.



New Signs on the Gulnac Trail

In mid-November of 2021, after months of construction that began in June, a new trail from Santa Teresa Spring to San Ignacio Avenue, was open to the public. On December 11, 2021, there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new trail, called the Curie Drive Trail at the time. See past newsletters for details. It took several years, but the new trail was given its official name: the Gulnac Trail. The historic ranch is called the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch after the 3 families, related by marriage, who owned Rancho Santa Teresa. The Bernal and Joice families already have trails named after them. It was only fair that the Gulnacs have a trail named for them. Carlos Gulnac, who married Rufina Bernal (granddaughter of Rancho Santa Teresa founder Jose Joaquin Bernal), built the historic ranch house in 1858. Their daughter, Susan Gulnac, married Patrick Joice in 1894 and inherited the ranch.

In August, new trail signs for the Gulnac Trail were installed, along with signs for the much older Santa Teresa Springs Trail. The signs started at the bus stop entrance on Manila Drive. Other signs were placed along entrances to the trail. Since the 1990's, the Friends of Santa Teresa Park has been advocating for the preservation of what is now the Rancho Santa Teresa Historic Area and the creation of a safer way for bikes and pedestrians to travel down Curie Drive, which is the Gulnac Trail.



New sign at the entrance to the Gulnac Trail at the corner of San Ignacio Avenue and Curie Drive

This newsletter is funded by the City of San Jose's Beautify San Jose Grant (formerly CAP Grant). FOSTP is a member of the United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County (UNSCC), which is the financial agent for this grant.

For more on FOSTP, see <http://www.stpfriends.org/>
Visit our STPFriends Facebook page