The Willow Glen Trestle

Larry Ames
Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle
This is a “Third Party” nomination by “Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle”

Local involved residents

Last year, Commission recommended the National Historical Register list the Trestle “at Local Level”

List Keeper questioned trestle’s city-wide impact; “returns” the application

Now we ask Commission to list the Trestle as a local resource on the State Historical Register

SHRC unanimously recommends WG Trestle be listed on the National Historic Register

at the statewide quarterly commission meeting, April 18, 2016

at the Golden Gate Club in the Presidio in San Francisco

The State Historical Resources Commission

Seth Bergstein, historian for Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle

Susan Brandt-Hawley lawyer for the Friends


principal speaker in opposition: Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio, San Jose Dist. 6
Applying for listing at Local Level of Significance

- Not the oldest, tallest, or longest trestle in the State
- (Not even the longest or tallest trestle in San José)
- But the WG Trestle played a major role in the development of Willow Glen.
Willow Glen: an Independent Town, 1927-1936
Willow Glen is an active & involved community

Buffington House - City Landmark

Dancin’ on the Avenue

Touring Historic Willow Glen

Ten Walking Loops

principal author: Joan Bohnett, granddaughter of State Assemblymember L.D. Bohnett

LG Crk Urban Stream Restoration Proj.
Community helped the City win funding

The Three-Creeks Trail

an update for
Jim Beall
L. Ames, March 15, 2012

Save Our Trails!
Promoting trails in Santa Clara County for the benefit and enjoyment of all

Tasia McMahon, President
Bill Rankin, Vice President
Bruce Tichinin, Counsel

from our presentation to
State Senator Jim Beall

a “Historic Trail”

Connects the History Park…

… at Kelley Park …

… by means of a historic train trestle …

... to the historic cannery district in WG.
On the Historic Walk, Gateway to Willow Glen
Abrupt change in plans...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SJ founded Souther Pacific Railroad monopoly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WP RR ↔ TS Montgomery ↔ SJ Ag.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WG Trestle built 1922</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overnight service, less-than-carload</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>small farmers survive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Silicon Valley: farmers &amp; canneries leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>WG Trestle: 3 crks trail</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>GreenPrint: LGCT EIR with Trestle</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trestle &amp; ROW acquired</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eng. Rep. on Trestle reuse; Oct 12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abrupt change; prefab bridge (SJ: non-historic → no loss if demo'd)</td>
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<td>MND appr’vd demo; Jan ’14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SC Court: do EIR; Jul ’14; SJ: appeal &amp; do EIR; Oct ’14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council: not historic; approves EIR for demo; SJ: ask to demo; Denied</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SJ Hist.: Landmark Cms: is Historic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EIR: both Trestle &amp; prefab OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of WG Trestle sue SJ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W G &amp; SJ shaped</td>
<td>1920s, 30s &amp; 40s</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGCT MP 1985</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WG &amp; SJ inform SJ Hist. Landmark Cms</td>
<td>Feb ’14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ Hist.: Landmark Cms: is Historic</td>
<td>Mar ’15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cal SHRC: appr’vd for Nat’l Cal SHRC: Keeper: return for info</td>
<td>Mar ’15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends: file for State listing</td>
<td>Nov ’16</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHRC: hears nomination</td>
<td>Nov ’16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends: file for Nat’l Hist.</td>
<td>Mar ’17</td>
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<td>Friends appeal?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supreme Ct.: too busy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SC Ct.: rehear on demand</td>
<td>Feb ’17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends for Nat’l listing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends: file for Nat’l Keeper</td>
<td>Oct ’17</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHRC: hears nomination</td>
<td>Mar ’17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MND OK (re)do EIR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends appeal?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>changed politics?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WG Trestle restored &amp; adapted for trail use</td>
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<td>Trestle restored &amp; adapted for trail use</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2018?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WG has a historic &amp; iconic &quot;place-making&quot; gateway on trail network</td>
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8
Reason to replace Trestle?

- One can’t see it from the street;
- No one even knows that it is there;
- No one will miss it if it’s gone.
PR Campaign

- site tours
- newspaper coverage
- photo contests
- presentations
Trail Bridges

Public Works Dept. knows how to order bridges from a catalog, but unsure about restoration?
City bought the replacement bridge without proper review...

- City didn’t inform or involve its Historic Landmarks Commission or its Parks & Rec. Commission before decision

- “The City’s actions in approving the project before preparing and adopting the MND violated CEQA.”

  — finding of the Court of Appeal of the State of California, Sixth Appellate District
1. The Los Gatos Creek trestle.
2. Coyote Creek near Story Road.
3. Silver Creek near Eggo and Highway 101.
4. Guadalupe River south of Alma.
5. Los Gatos Creek south of Diridon.
7. Over Pajaro River near Highway 25.
8. At San Benito County line.
City-cited locations

- Guadalupe River
- Coyote Creek
- Mud Slough
- Los Gatos Creek
- Silver Creek

References:
- Guadalupe River
- Mud Slough
- Coyote Creek
- Los Gatos Creek
- Silver Creek

Dates:
- 8/17/16
What to do with the prefab bridge?

- Would be useful and welcome elsewhere:
  - Coyote Creek at Singleton
    - currently floods
    - State Fish & Wildlife wants it changed
  - Coyote Creek at Phelan
    - provide access to nearby Yerba Buena High School.
  - Some other location within City?
From the EIR & Supporting Documents

the WG Trestle is sturdy and can readily be restored and adapted for trail use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trestle “Retrofit”</th>
<th>Prefab Steel Bridge “Project”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction cost</td>
<td>$959,000</td>
<td>$1,637,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. Maintenance</td>
<td>$4,000 / year</td>
<td>not budgeted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. Inspection</td>
<td>$2,000 / year</td>
<td>$500 / year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction time</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Life</td>
<td>30 - 50 years (more if well-maintained?)</td>
<td>75 years (w/o maintenance?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>not a problem</td>
<td>not a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creosote</td>
<td>not a problem if left alone</td>
<td>a concern if disturbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>not a problem: fire-retardant coating; sprinklers, alarms and maintenance</td>
<td>no precautions are provided, and steel loses strength at brushfire temperatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td><em>(To be determined by the State Historical Resources Commission, May 10, 2017)</em></td>
<td>“While this does not salvage the trestle, aesthetics could be made pleasing. Staining the concrete deck to resemble the old track could be done. Also, railroad themed signs could be incorporated at the approaches.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historic Status

- May 6, 2015: San José’s Historic Landmarks Commission unanimously recommended historic recognition
  - Council overruled it; declared it “not historic”
- April 18, 2016: the California SHRC unanimously recommended the Trestle be added to the National Historic Register at the Local Level
  - Nomination returned; nothing happened.
- The Trestle has not yet been deemed to be historic: the city is still free to demolish it.
History of Railroads: 1899 Topo Maps

- First tracks to San José: from San Francisco in 1864
- Tracks ran thru middle of San José, down 4th St., at grade: created traffic congestion.

1899 USGS 15-minute map of San Jose:
http://servlet1.lib.berkeley.edu:8080/mapviewer/searchcoll.execute.logic?coll=histoposf&xsearch=San+Jose+15-minute+Quadrangle
also 1942, 1947, 1951, 1953, and 1961
Western Pacific connects San José to the World
1927 Map

- WP brought to SJ
- Belt-line J-hook loops around SJ, avoiding residential areas
- Breaks SP’s monopoly
Western Pacific comes to Willow Glen

WP Director T. S. Montgomery assures folks that WP will not have “industrial plants, hay barns or anything objectionable” in Willow Glen.

[WG] “will be benefited far more than hurt by the W.P.”

“It is the desire of the company to help beautify and not to destroy” Tracks “will never cross the Alameda”

WP will have “hardly a train a day”, and not the 100 trains a day that Southern Pacific would have.

the Public thus reassured, they did not vote to incorporate as a town.
WP RR thru Willow Glen & to the San Jose Depot


Willow Glen
- residential

1st segment
of laid track

only spur
in WG

Willow Glen Trestle

to Niles, Oakland,
and Salt Lake City

San José station

Chein Lumber
Standard Oil of Calif.
Borchers Bros. [rock]
Georgia-Pacific plywood
California Packing
Union Ice
Impacts on local area

991 Lonus

990 Ramona Ct.

994 Ramona Ct.

Sanborn Maps show developmental impact of trestle
Alternative SP Alignments

- City of San José traded SP off against WP and Willow Glen in the future around-town alignment.
- Willow Glen fought for grade-separation at major arterials.
- WG had to incorporate to have impact.
- Legal battles between SP and WG: Issue went all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.
June 25, 2015: SJ Mayor Sam Liccardo presents Dr. Ames a Commendation for his fight to save the “historic Willow Glen Trestle”
National Heritage Area

Nat’l Heritage Area (NHA) Program

- The National Park Service (NPS) provides technical, planning and limited financial assistance to National Heritage Areas.
- National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.
- A National Heritage Area is not a unit of the National Park Service, nor is any land owned or managed by the NPS. National Park Service involvement is always advisory in nature.
- Designation comes with limited financial and technical assistance from the National Park Service.
- NHA designation does not affect private property rights.

suggestions by L. Ames, NHA taskforce member
The WG Trestle survived the recent floods.
The Willow Glen Trestle: the Connection between “Silicon Valley” and “The Valley of Heart’s Delight”

It is still standing — it can still be saved!
Thank you