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Midpen announces annual photo contest winners including new youth category

Los Altos, California [August 30, 2018] – The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has announced the winners of its ninth-annual digital photo contest.

This year, photographers of all abilities submitted nearly 250 images taken in publicly accessible areas of Midpen's 24 open space preserves throughout the South Bay, Peninsula and San Mateo County coast areas. A new youth category added this year encouraged middle and high school students to participate.

"The beauty of nature has always fascinated me," said youth category winner Sohum Phadke, a middle school student from Sunnyvale. "During a photography field trip with my class, I spotted a stunning acorn woodpecker a little off the trail. This photo made me realize how fun photography really was, and I made it a weekly thing to go out and take photos of nature."

Winners were chosen by a public vote on Midpen's Facebook page. The first-place winner in each category received a \$100 REI gift card. Contest details are at openspace.org/photo-contest. The 2019 contest is expected to open in the spring.

"The contest is a fun way for people using everyday technology, like smartphones and digital cameras, to connect with nature close to home," said General Manager Ana María Ruiz. "We hope people are inspired to explore their public open spaces, perhaps for the first time, and capture those moments of awe and wonder in nature."

2018 Winning Entries

Youth: "Perched Woodpecker", Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, by Sohum Phadke of Sunnyvale.

Wildlife: "My Baby", Thornewood Open Space Preserve, by Serisha Nagothu of San Jose.

Plant life: "Thistle Firework", Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, by Stephanie Richardson.

Landscapes: "Silky Sunrise", Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, by Jack Lucas of Portola Valley.

People in open space: "Because in the end, you won't remember the time you spent working in an office or mowing the lawn – Jack Kerouac", Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve, by Vedyia Konda of San Jose.

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Created by voter initiative in 1972, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is a public agency created by voters in 1972. Its mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

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