



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Midpen breaks ground today on public access to Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve**

**Los Gatos, CA** — The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District ceremoniously broke ground today in Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, which it plans to open to the public next spring thanks to the support of voters who passed Measure AA. Los Gatos Mayor Rob Rennie and local environmental leaders attended the celebration.

The event kicked-off construction of a parking area on Bear Creek Road, an easy-access path around a historic pond and six miles of trail through forested slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains above Lexington Reservoir. It is the first of several phased public-access projects in Midpen's plan to restore the 1,432-acre preserve's natural environment and provide opportunities for the public to connect with nature and discover local history.

People have been drawn to Bear Creek Redwoods for centuries. Native Californians ground acorns in mortar stones still visible there. Since the gold rush, the property has been the site of elaborate estates, logging operations, the West Coast's first Jesuit school of theology and a century-old horse stable still in use. Midpen is working to share Bear Creek Redwoods' layers of local history while restoring the health of its forests and creeks for the many benefits they provide people and wildlife.

Grants from Santa Clara Valley Water District support the removal of harmful non-native plants like English ivy and French broom along the preserve's creeks. Old logging roads are being regraded or converted into trails to improve water quality by reducing erosion. And Midpen is partnering with researchers to protect the area's forests from sudden oak death.

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*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 of regional significance in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. Midpen has successfully protected more than 63,000 acres of open space throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)*