



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Bay Area Ridge Trail Memo December 12, 2019

The following memo and presentation prepared by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council for the December 12, 2019 PAWG meeting are being provided in response to a request from a PAWG member to invite a Bay Area Ridge Trail representative to explain the significance of the regional trail connection through La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 26, 2019

To: La Honda Public Access Working Group

From: Liz Westbrook, Trail Director, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

RE: **Bay Area Ridge Trail in Upper/Central La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve**

Project Background:

This memo is intended to provide background about the significance of constructing the Ridge Trail in the upper/central portions of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve). The planned 5-mile gap in the Preserve is considered a high priority because of its close proximity to other long continuous sections of the Ridge Trail, the Preserve's extensive trail system and the future trail's location on publicly-owned land in a spectacular natural setting with expansive coastal views. Additionally, closing this gap would complete almost 25% of the remaining planned Ridge Trail route in San Mateo County.

Bay Area Ridge Trail Regional and County Overview:

The vision for the Bay Area Ridge Trail is to unite the ridgelines of the nine Bay Area Counties with a 550-mile continuous multi-use trail. Today, more than 380 miles of Ridge Trail are in place and open to the public. Our longest continuous stretch for hikers is located along the western ridges of the Bay, stretching over 80 miles from Marin to San Mateo County. The effort to complete the trail is led by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, a non-profit organization with the mission to plan, promote and sustain a connected hiking, cycling and equestrian trail – linking people, parks and open space for today and future generations.

San Mateo County is the home of the first Ridge Trail dedication at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve in May 1989. Thirty years later, San Mateo is more than 70% complete, thanks to the historic trails and successful partnerships with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), San Francisco Public Utility District (SFPUC), San Mateo County Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).

The Ridge Trail's longest continuous stretch for hikers spans over 88 miles from Lucas Valley Open Space Preserve in Marin County and currently ends at Highway 92. Six additional miles on SFPUC watershed land between Highway 92 and Purisima Creek Redwoods are set to open by 2021. Once this trail is open and a safe Highway 92 crossing is completed, there will be an unbroken 110-mile section of Ridge Trail.

Importance of Upper La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to the Ridge Trail:

The Ridge Trail gap in Upper La Honda Creek would be adjacent to this future 110-mile uninterrupted stretch. Finding a solution that will open the upper and central area of the Preserve to public access will greatly enhance future regional recreational trail connectivity.

The most immediate way that the Ridge Trail Council plans to support increased access and awareness of this high priority gap is through annual/biannual permitted outings that would begin and end at the Allen Road Permit Lot. Hosting permitted outings would also support the goal to educate the public about the importance of the Preserve's natural resources and habitat protection. Expanding access to the trail system and the future Ridge Trail would further enhance the public's awareness of regional conservation goals.

The Ridge Trail supports Midpen and the La Honda Public Access Working Group's effort to find the most feasible option for future staging and public access that will eventually close this high priority gap in the Ridge Trail. We stand by to provide planning expertise, feedback, advocacy and funding to support the project. Please note that all planned trail routes shown on Maps 1 and 2 on the following pages are conceptual, do not reflect the most up-to-date information, and may be subject to change.

Map 1: Bay Area Ridge Trail Regional Map



Map 2: Sub-regional Map with Project Location

