

Benefits of These Basic Guidelines

Public Safety and Protecting Natural Resources

Remaining on designated trails and adhering to Midpen speed limits helps reduce conflicts with other visitors, prevent injury to one's self and others, and avoid unnecessary erosion and resource damage to the landscape.



Protecting Wildlife

The open space preserves provide permanent sanctuaries for native wildlife and vegetation. As pressures from the expanding human population increase, the preserves become even more important as refuges for wildlife. Nesting birds, stream life, reptiles, and mammals depend on the protection of open space.



Midpen Equestrian Programs

Volunteer Trail Patrol Equestrian Program

Trail Patrol volunteers, which include bicyclists, equestrians, hikers, runners, and companion dog patrollers, patrol Midpen trails, talk with preserve visitors about trail safety and etiquette, provide information, report trail conditions to staff, and monitor conservation easements. For more information on this program or if you're interested in signing up, please visit the Midpen website www.openspace.org.

In Case of Emergency

If you experience an emergency on Midpen lands (fire, accident, or other immediate threat to life or property), call **911** or contact Midpen's 24-hour emergency dispatch number for Midpen rangers at **650-968-4411**. This phone number is for emergency use only.

Docent-led Equestrian Activities

Midpen generally offers docent-led equestrian outings throughout the year. Check the *Outdoor Activities* schedule located inside the quarterly newsletter *Open Space Views* available from Midpen and on the Midpen's website www.openspace.org. The activities are free, though some require advance reservations.

Be Aware and Be Prepared

Drinking water is not available at most Midpen preserves—carry water with you. Rattlesnakes are native to this area and are especially active in warm weather. Poison oak grows on most preserves; learn to identify and avoid it in all seasons. Be aware that ticks are present in this area and may carry diseases. Mountain lions are a natural part of this region's environment and are occasionally sighted.

For More Information

Please call, write, or visit the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA 94022-1404. The telephone number is 650-691-1200, email to info@openspace.org, or visit www.openspace.org.

Key for front cover:

- 1 Accessible by permit only
- 2 Designated equestrian parking available
- 3 Available by permit
- 4 Rancho San Antonio County Park
- 5 Almaden Quicksilver County Park



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Photos in this brochure were provided by David Foote, Ken Nitz, Karl Gohl, and Midpen Staff.



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Equestrian Access Guidelines



There are many beautiful trails for you to enjoy while riding your horse on Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District preserves. The vast majority of Midpen's open space preserves are open to horseback riding, and include designated trails at:

- Bear Creek Redwoods¹
- Coal Creek
- El Corte de Madera Creek
- El Sereno
- Foothills
- Fremont Older
- La Honda Creek^{1, 2}
- Long Ridge
- Los Trancos
- Monte Bello^{2, 3}
- Picchetti Ranch
- Purisima Creek Redwoods
- Rancho San Antonio^{2, 4}
- Russian Ridge
- Saratoga Gap
- Sierra Azul^{2, 5}
- Skyline Ridge²
- St. Joseph's Hill
- Teague Hill
- Thornewood
- Windy Hill



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District



Equestrian Access Guidelines

Midpen is committed to providing an open space experience for every type of user. Most of Midpen's 245 miles of designated trails are unpaved "wildland" trails in steep, rugged terrain. Approximately 215 miles, 87% of these trails are open to equestrian use.

Before heading out to one of the multi-use preserves, please review the equestrian access guidelines below. Your cooperation and compliance with the following guidelines is essential to ensure your safety, resource protection, and an enjoyable experience for everyone using the trails.

Sharing the Public Trails

Midpen offers low-intensity recreational use consistent with resource protection and preservation. Hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, runners, small children, senior citizens, dog-walkers, photographers, people in wheelchairs, bird watchers, and other nature study groups are all out on the trails exploring open space.

- To help make multiple-use trails work, each user should keep in mind the needs of others.
- All trail users, including hikers, bicyclists, and visitors with dogs, should always yield to equestrians.
- Some visitors may be unfamiliar with and possibly frightened by horses. When you encounter other visitors on your horse, inform them of the safest way to pass.
- You are responsible for maintaining control over your horse at all times. If your horse is high-spirited, please alert other trail users.



Recommended Equipment



Helmets

Midpen recommends helmets for all equestrians riding on Midpen lands.

Other

Lead lines and detachable reins are recommended in the event you need to hitch or lead your horse at any time along the trail. Breast collars are recommended to prevent saddle slippage on uphill trail sections. Consider packing an easy boot/tape for use should your horse lose a shoe on the trail. A hoof pick and basic first aid kit are also suggested.



Speed Limits

Control your speed at all times and obey the 15 mph speed limit (5 mph when passing or on blind turns).

A walk/trot pace is suggested. Use caution if you choose to canter/lope your horse. Select open areas or areas with long lines of sight to canter/lope. Racing and reckless riding are prohibited.

Closed Areas/Off-trail Use

Ride on designated trails only (those shown on Midpen maps for equestrian use). Closed area, use of trails posted no horses, and off-trail use are strictly prohibited.

Use of Fire Breaks/Disc Lines

Equestrians are permitted to ride on Midpen fire breaks/disc lines.

Rentals

Midpen does not rent or provide rental horses.

Safety

Ride with a companion whenever possible to be better prepared in the event of an emergency.

Know your personal and physical limitations as well as your horse's. Choose a ride within the limits of your horse's ability.

Plan your ride! Know the name of the preserve(s) you will be going to, the trail(s) you will take, including the trail mileage you will travel and what to do if an emergency occurs on the trail. Being aware of the location of the closest phone or call box is recommended because cellular telephones may not have reception in the preserves. While on the trail, read gate numbers. If an emergency occurs, wait for incoming emergency responders.

Water Troughs

If you're planning a long or endurance ride, please plan accordingly and bring water if needed. Water troughs for horses are available on a very limited basis on Midpen's preserves.

Equestrian Parking Areas

Trailer parking is very limited at most preserves. Designated trailer parking is only available at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve (by permit), Rancho San Antonio County Park, and Almaden Quicksilver County Park adjacent to Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve.

Do not block driveways. When parking your truck or trailer, ensure you can back the trailer out and exit easily from the parking area.

No at liberty horse grazing. Horses must be tethered securely to the trailer. Use hay nets to help prevent the spread of non-native, invasive species.

Other

Horses are not allowed to be loose in the preserves. Horses must be attended, and held or securely tied at all times.

Carts and wagons are prohibited.

If necessary while out on the trail, horses may be tethered to a tree.

Trail Conditions/Seasonal Closures Information

Each year, Midpen seasonally closes certain trails to bicycle and equestrian use during wet conditions to ensure visitor safety, protect the trail tread, and prevent resource damage. Decisions to close trails are based on current and predicted weather conditions. Trails may also be closed temporarily throughout the year due to construction or resource conservation projects. When you visit the preserves, always look for trail closure signs. Violations of any official trail closures are subject to citation.

Before heading out on your ride, please check Midpen's trail conditions and seasonal closures information.

- Visit www.openspace.org/trail-conditions;
- Call the Trail Conditions Hotline at 650-691-2150 (enter Option 3);
- Call Midpen's administrative office at 650-691-1200.