



VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT · FALL 2024



Midpen Photo Contest Winners Announced

A deer among the trees at Windy Hill Open Space Preserve by Soo Hwa Yuan was one of more than 100 photos submitted.

See the winning entries at openspace.org/photo-contest.

New Trails Opening This Fall



Restoring Nature and Expanding Access at Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve

Get your hiking shoes ready: New trails will soon be open at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. Midpen is nearing the finish line on a Measure AA-funded project to expand public access and help restore the ecological health of this South Bay preserve, known for its redwood forests in close proximity to Silicon Valley. Approximately two miles of new trail will open this fall, bringing the preserve's total trail network to approximately 10 miles.

"This new project at Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve is a great example of how Midpen staff work to thoughtfully design and construct new public access infrastructure that complements the land and enriches the experience for preserve visitors," said Midpen Capital Projects Manager Zachary Alexander.

Landslide repairs, erosion control measures and creek restoration projects are also being completed in this preserve, which has a long and storied history of human uses. Crews removed debris dumped in the creek, stabilized storm-damaged slopes and recontoured a creek bed to better withstand winter flows.

The new trails will wind through a tapestry of ecosystems. One new trail will be named in honor of longtime Midpen board member Pete Siemens, who passed away in 2023, and was a champion of protecting and opening Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve.

The Pete Siemens Trail will take visitors through a cathedral-like redwood grove before descending into a shaded oak woodland and traversing babbling creeks lined with ferns and willows using newly constructed bridges.

"In addition to providing more trails for our preserve visitors, we really prioritized habitat restoration."

—Midpen Capital Projects Manager Zachary Alexander

Emerging from the creek, the trail ascends toward a sun-drenched expanse of California grassland, sporting its dry-season golden hue, then transforming

to its green winter coat when the rains arrive. Here, the trail abuts a wetland meadow supporting water-loving plants and wildlife.

"This project was a great opportunity for our team to provide an enjoyable trail experience while also contributing to the health of the preserve. There are several features built into the trails to make sure they withstand the test of time and prevent erosion into nearby creeks," explained Midpen Maintenance and Construction Supervisor Cody Fickes, who oversaw the trail-building teams.

The overall vision for Bear Creek Redwoods is outlined in a comprehensive preserve plan that was finalized in 2017, and emphasizes balancing public access with environmental protection. Measure AA, a bond measure approved by local voters in 2014, has provided the funding allowing Midpen to begin implementing the preserve plan over the last decade, including opening Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve to the public in 2019, restoring its forests and waterways, preserving and interpreting its rich cultural history and building out a trail network allowing the public to enjoy this special place for generations to come.

You can learn more about the new trails and sign up for email updates at openspace.org/Bear-Creek-Redwoods.



New trails opening this fall in Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve will traverse several ecosystems, including grasslands. (Frances Freyberg)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Free Docent Guided Activities

Midpen docent naturalists share their passion for nature with free activities this fall.

Karl Gohl



Fire and Wildlife

A first-of-its-kind project improves wildland fire resiliency while providing big benefits for rare wildlife.

Mari Stauffer Howard



Connecting the Greenbelt

Newly purchased property expands a Midpen preserve and protects redwoods and waterways on the San Mateo County coast.

Frances Freyberg

The Heart of Midpen

Graduating Class of New Docent Naturalists Hit the Trails



Ana María Ruiz

People are at the heart of the work we do here at Midpen. This especially includes Midpen's volunteer docent naturalists, who are doing the critically important task of connecting our community to nature.

It was my great honor to participate in the recent graduation of 23 new Midpen docent naturalists at Picchetti Winery, located in Midpen's Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve.

The ceremony was the culmination of more than three months of weekly evening lecture classes, Saturdays in the field at various preserves in all weather, infinite questions and countless "aha" moments. The 2024 class is the newest addition to Midpen's 47-year-old docent naturalist program. Trainings happen approximately every two years, welcoming about 20 new docents each training year.

For several years, the training has been taught by Diane West-Bourke, a local biologist and naturalist. Inspired by her encouragement, zest and storytelling, the trainees immersed themselves in the natural world of the Santa Cruz Mountains, delighting in everything from snake scales shimmering in bobcat scat at Windy Hill Preserve to a perching bald eagle at St. Joseph's Hill Preserve.

While taking a deep dive into the life

histories of plants and animals and the ecological relationships among them, trainees simultaneously practiced the art of interpretation, or ways of making information meaningful and engaging for public participants.

By creating opportunities for people from all walks of life to experience awe, wonder and connection to the natural world, docent naturalists are enriching the lives of our residents while instilling the conservation values that are central to Midpen. From the bottom of my heart, I thank them for their dedication and service to



A group of new Midpen docent naturalists recently completed their rigorous training and are ready to lead guided activities for the public in Midpen preserves. (Annette Herz)

The graduates are now eagerly embracing their new roles, joining Midpen's approximately 90 volunteer docent naturalists in guiding the public to explore their public open space preserves.

their community and for their efforts to support land conservation in our region.

Explore all of Midpen's free docent naturalist-led outings throughout the fall in this newsletter, and at openspace.org/guided-activities.

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Midpen helps plants, animals and people thrive throughout the greater Santa Cruz Mountains region by preserving a connected greenbelt of more than 70,000 acres of public open space. Midpen is a public agency created in 1972 by a grassroots voter initiative to protect the green spaces in parts of Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties. We manage 27 open space preserves with more than 250 miles of trails for you to explore, free of charge, all year long.

Our Mission: 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.

Our mission on the San Mateo County Coast: To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

BOARD MEETINGS

Are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7 p.m. in-person and via Zoom. For details visit openspace.org/board-meetings.

Ana María Ruiz, General Manager
Leigh Ann Gessner, Open Space Views Editor
Katie Renz, Guided Activities Editor

Finding Your Way in the Forest

New Signage Helps Visitors Navigate Midpen Trails

El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve is home to Midpen's most complex trail network with more than 34 miles of multiuse trail traveling alongside creeks and winding through redwood and mixed evergreen forests.

In an effort to assist with visitor wayfinding and support emergency response, Midpen has completed a new trail-junction numbering system throughout this nearly 3,000-acre preserve.

Midpen staff collected input from focus groups within the organization as well as partner agencies, including Santa Clara County Parks and San Mateo County Parks, to develop a user-friendly navigation system for helping visitors more easily pinpoint their location within the preserve.



Midpen staff

updated the printed maps available at the preserve's trailheads. Digital maps on Midpen's website, as well as third-party map applications Avenza and OuterSpatial that allow wifi-free GPS navigation, were also updated to reflect the preserve's new trail-junction numbers.

Midpen plans to provide a similar trail-junction numbering system at the popular Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, as well as for the new trails being built at Bear Creek Redwoods and La Honda Creek open space preserves.

Learn more about Midpen's many map resources to help you enjoy your public open space preserves at openspace.org/maps.

Creating trail-junction numbers for El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve's complex trail system has laid the groundwork for similar projects at other Midpen preserves.

The system assigns numbers to every trail junction, allowing visitors to match numbers on printed and digital maps of the preserve to the physical trail signs they pass. In August, Midpen staff completed installation of the new numbered trail markers and



Students enjoy a field trip at UC Elkus Ranch. (Elkus Ranch)

Midpen Grant Supports Outdoor Education

Hundreds of students were able to have a unique outdoor experience this past school year thanks to Midpen grant funding. Nestled in the coastal hills south of Half Moon Bay, University of California Cooperative Extension Elkus Ranch hosts farm animals, a garden and educators willing to share their knowledge with visiting students.

Elkus Ranch was one of seven recent Midpen grant recipients. Using \$17,250 in funding, the ranch was able to provide field trips for more than 1,250 students who otherwise might not get the opportunity

for this programming over the last two school years. Students spend the day at Elkus Ranch learning how a sheep's coat becomes wool; which animals are predators and which are prey; and petting donkeys, chickens and goats.

Learn more about Midpen's grantmaking program at openspace.org/grants.

"The Midpen grant covers what is sometimes the only field trip that a classroom will get to take. The teachers find transportation to the ranch, and we take care of the rest."

—Elkus Ranch community educator Beth A. Loof

New Property Expands La Honda Creek Preserve

FUNDED BY
MEASURE AA
2014 OPEN SPACE BOND

Measure AA-Funded Purchase Protects Redwoods and San Gregorio Creek

Midpen's largest preserves are often protected piece by piece over many years. Recently, Midpen added 60 acres to its La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve with the help of Measure AA funding, a bond approved by local voters in 2014 to support Midpen's Vision Plan projects.

La Honda Creek Preserve now totals nearly 6,500 acres, making it Midpen's second-largest preserve. The newly purchased property is forested with

redwood and Douglas fir trees, including an impressive old-growth redwood.

The property was sustainably logged before Midpen acquired it. The timber harvest completed by the previous owner removed some dense second-growth redwood trees while retaining larger, mature trees that are important habitat for wildlife such as the endangered marbled murrelet, a seabird that nests in coastal forests.

"The trees on the property are well-distributed in age and size, which are



The newly acquired property protects approximately 1,000 feet of San Gregorio Creek. (Frances Freyberg)

signs of a healthy forest," Midpen Forest Ecologist Arianna Camponuri said.

Approximately 1,000 feet of San Gregorio Creek forms the southern boundary of the property, and this was also a crucial aspect of Midpen's decision to purchase the property. With this new addition, Midpen has now protected nearly 40% of the San Gregorio Creek Watershed.

"Creeks depend on the health of the surrounding watershed. By protecting San Gregorio Creek and the nearby open space lands, Midpen has more ability to implement projects that benefit

"One of the priorities in Midpen's Vision Plan is to permanently protect forests and wildlife habitat in the San Gregorio Creek Watershed. This purchase helps us do just that."

—Midpen Real Property Planner
Aaron Peth

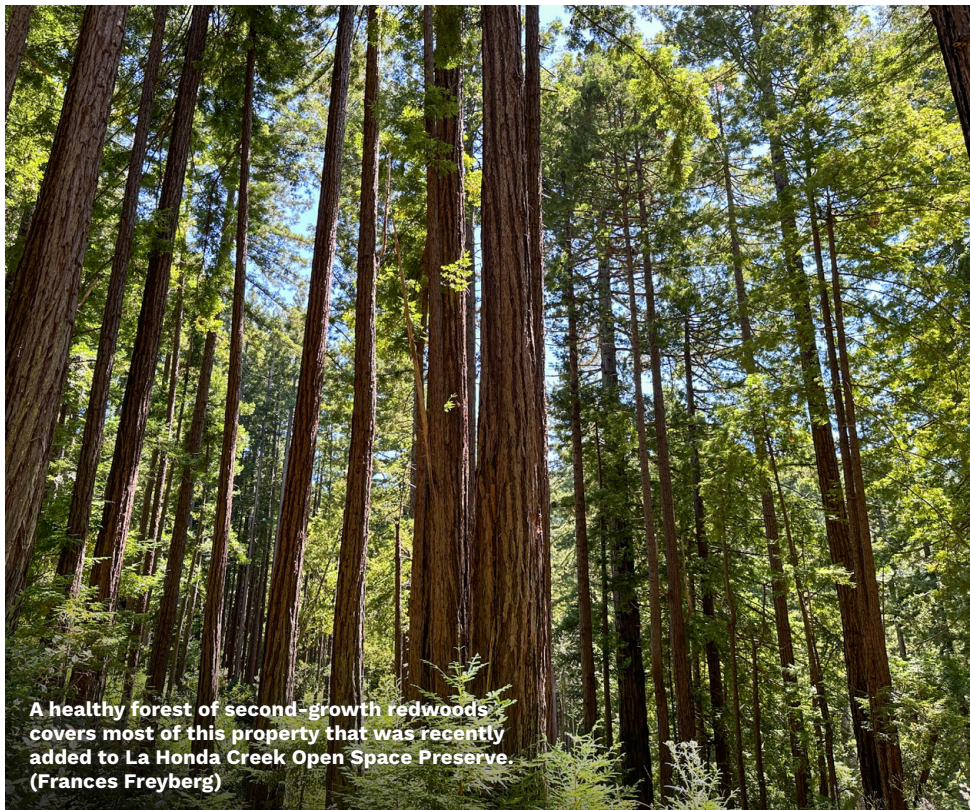
fish, other wildlife and people," said Midpen Water Resource Specialist David Liefert.

Near the newly acquired property, Midpen and the San Mateo Resource Conservation District are already partnering on a multiyear project to improve San Gregorio Creek's habitat for federally threatened steelhead trout and endangered coho salmon.

This project strategically places logs in the creek channel, once common in coastal streams before human development, to recreate pools where fish can forage and rest and enhance riverbed habitat where fish lay their eggs.

The newly purchased property is intersected by Highway 84, and nearly connects Midpen's vast La Honda Creek Preserve with nearby Sam McDonald County Park, piecing together the preserved regional greenbelt central to Midpen's mission.

Learn more about this large and diverse coastal preserve at openspace.org/La-Honda-Creek.



A healthy forest of second-growth redwoods covers most of this property that was recently added to La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. (Frances Freyberg)

Everything is Connected

Project Supports Fire Resiliency and Rare Wildlife

Biologists were ecstatic when they recently confirmed that the Santa Cruz kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys venustus venustus*) is living in Midpen's Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve. The misnomered species, which is more closely related to chipmunks, had not been seen in Santa Clara County for nearly 100 years.

As a keystone species, they positively impact the plants and animals in the chaparral habitat that they are specially adapted to, helping to maintain ecological balance.

"The discovery was really just the beginning of the work. We launched a research project to learn how Midpen can best support Santa Cruz kangaroo rats, and we're adjusting projects in the area to benefit them," said Midpen wildlife biologist Matt Sharp Chaney.

One of Midpen's highest priorities is to increase the land's wildland fire resiliency. Midpen's Wildland Fire Resiliency Program projects occur year-round to improve the health of the natural environment and reduce nonnative and invasive species. Some of these projects also create strategically

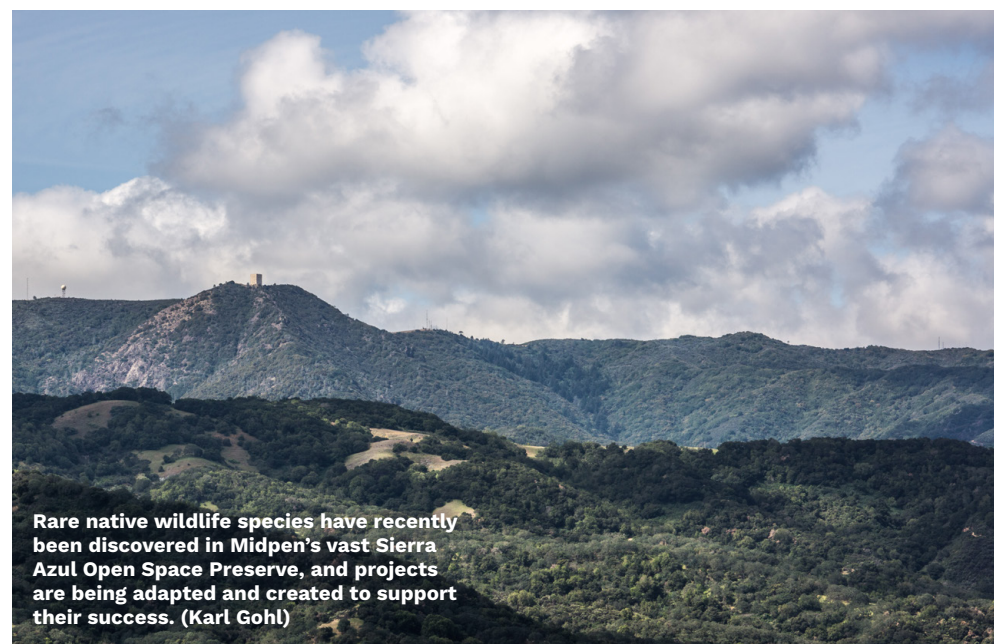
"We saw an opportunity to both reduce wildland fire risk in the area and benefit the newly discovered population of rare Santa Cruz kangaroo rats."

—Midpen wildlife biologist
Matt Sharp Chaney

placed fuel breaks, where potential fires can be slowed or stopped.

Midpen staff identified a patrol road in a remote region of Sierra Azul Preserve as a priority area to reduce roadside vegetation and create and maintain a fuel break. This road also happens to wind through prime Santa Cruz kangaroo rat habitat.

Staff from multiple departments worked together and came up with a plan to use an excavator to pull the vegetation, roots and all, up and out of the ground to both aerate the soil and avoid compaction. Loose soil is essential for Santa Cruz kangaroo rats which bury



Rare native wildlife species have recently been discovered in Midpen's vast Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, and projects are being adapted and created to support their success. (Karl Gohl)

seeds and construct burrows for shelter. The project will also generate dead standing trees called "snags" to help support nesting opportunities for a migratory swallow called the western purple martin (*Progne subis arboricola*), another species recently discovered to be living in Sierra Azul Preserve that has become rare in Santa Clara County. Additionally, the open habitat created by the fuel management work will help Blainville's horned lizards (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), which are known to utilize Santa Cruz kangaroo rat burrows.

Midpen is also removing knobcone pines which have encroached into the chaparral after decades of fire suppression, slowly transforming the habitat to be less favorable for Santa Cruz kangaroo rats. Kangaroo rats have a mutualistic relationship with manzanitas, gathering and caching seeds for food. Seeds that aren't eaten are protected from fire, promoting future generations of manzanita.

Midpen crews completed the first phase of the work earlier this year, and are now supervising additional work being conducted through the Los Gatos Creek Watershed Forest Health Collaborative, a multiagency effort that is sharing resources to increase wildfire resiliency in the region. Overall, more than 10 acres of prime Santa Cruz kangaroo rat habitat will be improved this year, along with critical wildland fire resiliency work.

Learn more about Midpen's Wildland Fire Resiliency Program at openspace.org/fire.



Blainville's horned lizard (Stock photo)



Santa Cruz kangaroo rat (Ken Hickman)



Western purple martin (Alvaro Jaramillo)

Fall 2024 Docent Naturalist Guided Activities

A docent naturalist-led hike in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve. (Karl Gohl)

Are you ready to explore and enjoy the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District preserves? We invite you to discover these extraordinary places that include many thousands of acres of permanently protected open space, from redwood forest to bay shoreline. All guided activities are developed and provided by docent naturalists who have completed an extensive training program. These docents volunteer their time to enrich your experiences and share knowledge with you about natural and cultural history.

To pique your interest, take a look here at the list of guided activities and then refer to our website openspace.org/guided-activities for all additional needed details. The activities are FREE and only some require reservations. Please note that some preserves have more than one access point and some activities meet at a preserve or location other than where the guided activity will occur. If there is no special "where to meet" information then the activity meets at the preserve's main parking area.

September

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, September 1

1 – 3:30 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve

2 miles

E F

Explorer Hike: Redwood Autumn

Wednesday, September 4

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve

4 miles

M L

Biodiversity Bonanza: Restoring Oak Woodlands

Thursday, September 5

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Lost Trancos Preserve

3 miles

M L R

So Many Trees!

Saturday, September 7

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve

2 miles

E F L

Cloverdale Ranch: Midpen's Newest Preserve

Saturday, September 7

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Cloverdale Ranch Preserve

Meet: Directions emailed

4 miles

M L R

The Spirit of Methuselah

Monday, September 9

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve

2.75 miles

E

Merry Berry Quest

Wednesday, September 11

10 a.m. – Noon

Windy Hill Preserve

Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area

2 miles

E

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, September 11

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Purissima Creek Redwoods Preserve

Meet: Purissima Creek Road Parking

Area

6 miles

S L R

Signs of Early Fall

Friday, September 13

9 a.m. – Noon

Pulgas Ridge Preserve

4 miles

M

My Gall Friday

Friday, September 13

9 a.m. – Noon

Skyline Ridge Preserve

Meet: Skyline Ridge Equestrian

Parking Area

2.5 miles

E

Geocaching Hike

Saturday, September 14

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve

2.5 miles

E F L R

A Cold War Sentinel on Mt. Umunhum

Saturday, September 14

1 – 2:30 p.m.

Sierra Azul Preserve

Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit

Parking Area

0.25 miles

M

Sunset from the Ridge

Sunday, September 15

4:30 – 7 p.m.

Russian Ridge Preserve

Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area

3 miles

M L

Moonrise and Sunset from Borel Hill

Tuesday, September 17

5 – 8:30 p.m.

Russian Ridge Preserve

4 miles

S R

Explorer Hike: Lichens 101

Wednesday, September 18

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Long Ridge Preserve

5 miles

M L

Equinox at Turtle Rock

Sunday, September 22

3:15 – 7:35 p.m.

Long Ridge Preserve

Meet: Hickory Oaks Roadside Parking

4.5 miles

S L R

Wildcard Route at Rancho

Monday, September 23

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve

Meet: Lot 6

6.5 miles

S L

Morning Meander: Orchard to Creek

Wednesday, September 25

9 – 11 a.m.

Picchetti Ranch Preserve

2 miles

E

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, September 26

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

La Honda Creek Preserve

Meet: Allen Road Permit Parking

Area

5 miles

S R

October

Explorer Hike: Fall Along the Fault

Wednesday, October 2

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve

4 miles

M L

Signs of Fall

Friday, October 4

9 a.m. – Noon

Pulgas Ridge Preserve

4 miles

M

History on Two Wheels

Saturday, October 5

8:45 – 11:15 a.m.

Fremont Older Preserve

10 miles

S B R



Mountain biking at
Fremont Older Preserve
(Jack Gescheidt)

Life Within the Marshes

Saturday, October 5

10 a.m. – Noon

Ravenswood Preserve

2.5 miles

E W

Cloverdale Ranch: Midpen's Newest Preserve

Saturday, October 5

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Cloverdale Ranch

Meet: Directions emailed

4 miles

M L R

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, October 6

1 – 4 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles**E F****The Old Summit Road**

Wednesday, October 9

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Saratoga Gap Preserve
Meet: Hickory Oaks Roadside Parking
7.5 miles**S L****Scenic Aerobic Hike**

Wednesday, October 9

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Limekiln Trailhead
5 miles**S****Autumn Hike with Qigong**

Thursday, October 10

10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles**M****My Gall Friday**

Friday, October 11

9 a.m. – Noon

Monte Bello Preserve
2.5 miles**E****Celebrating Our Native Song Dog**

Sunday, October 13

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve
6 miles**S L****Little Naturalists at Alpine Pond**

Sunday, October 13

10 a.m. – Noon

Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
1.5 miles**E F R****Following in Ohlone Footsteps**

Monday, October 14

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Skyline Ridge Preserve
4 miles**S L****Explorer Hike: Bayside Birding**

Wednesday, October 16

10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Ravenswood Preserve
3 miles**E L W****Hawthorns Area Hike**

Friday, October 18

10 a.m. – Noon

Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles**M R****Geocaching Hike**

Saturday, October 19

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles**F M L R****A Cold War Sentinel on Mt. Umunhum**

Saturday, October 19

1 – 2:30 p.m.

Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit
Parking Area
0.25 miles**M****Oaks, Acorns and Galls**

Saturday, October 19

3 – 6 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve
4.5 miles**M L****Wonders of Cherry Springs**

Sunday, October 20

9:25 a.m. – 1:25 p.m.

Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2.25 miles**M R****Rancho to Duveneck Windmill Pasture**

Monday, October 21

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
10 miles**S L****Morning Meander: Autumn Habitats**

Wednesday, October 23

9 – 11:30 a.m.

Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2.5 miles**E**

California quail (Molly Seto)

Aerobics and Views

Thursday, October 24

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5 miles**S****Trail Trek Thursday**

Thursday, October 24

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Skyline Ridge Equestrian
Parking Area
6 miles**S****So Many Colors!**

Saturday, October 26

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Skyline Ridge Preserve
2 miles**E F L****Nature at Night**

Saturday, October 26

4:30 – 10:30 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve
4 miles**M L R**Bigleaf maple leaf
(Bryan Lovegren)**November****Now Be Thankful**

Friday, November 1

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7.5 miles**S****My Gall Friday**

Friday, November 1

9 a.m. – Noon

Pulgas Ridge Preserve
2.5 miles**M****Explorer Hike: Ranchland Rambles**

Wednesday, November 6

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

La Honda Creek Preserve
4 miles**M L****Signs of Fall**

Friday, November 8

9 a.m. – Noon

Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4 miles**M****Trolling the Toll Road**

Friday, November 8

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Saratoga Gap Vista Point
Parking Area
4.5 miles**S****Ferns and Other Ancient Plants**

Saturday, November 9

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve
3.5 miles**M L****Cloverdale Ranch: Midpen's Newest Preserve**

Saturday, November 9

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Cloverdale Ranch
Meet: Directions emailed
4 miles**M L R****Veteran's Day Hiking and Mindfulness**

Monday, November 11

10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve
3.5 miles**M L****A Cold War Sentinel on Mt. Umunhum**

Monday, November 11

1 – 2:30 p.m.

Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit
Parking Area
0.25 miles**M****Scenic Aerobic Hike**

Wednesday, November 13

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Skyline Ridge Preserve
5 miles**S****Exploring the Hawthorns Area**

Thursday, November 14

10 a.m. – Noon

Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles**M R****Fall Frolic in the Redwoods**

Friday, November 15

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
5.5 miles**S L****Seeds, Berries and Bling**

Saturday, November 16

2 – 5 p.m.

Long Ridge Preserve
4.5 miles**M****Wildcard Route at Rancho**

Monday, November 18

9:30 a.m. – Noon

Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5 miles**S****Explorer Hike:****Annual Turkey Trot**

Wednesday, November 20

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
4 miles**M L****Green Friday**

Friday, November 22

8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
7 miles**S****Amazing Giants**

Saturday, November 23

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking
Area
2 miles**E F L R****Ferns and Friends**

Monday, November 25

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles**S L**

Ferns (A. Aldrich)

Morning Meander: Meadow to Farm

Wednesday, November 27

9 – 11:30 a.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
2 miles**E****Opt Outside with a Trail Trek**

Friday, November 29

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve
5.5 miles**S L****Throw Off That Turkey Torpor**

Friday, November 29

10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles**M L****Legend**

- E Easy Hike/Walk:** Flat to gently rolling hills. Total elevation gain less than 200 feet. Leisurely pace. Frequent stops. Usually less than 3 miles.
- M Moderate Hike:** Steeper or more frequent uphill grades. Total elevation gain 200 to 600 feet. Leisurely to moderate pace. Usually between 3 and 5 miles.
- S Strenuous Hike:** Steep hills and/or long distances. Total elevation gain greater than 600 feet. Moderate to vigorous pace. Usually more than 5 miles.
- B Bike Intermediate:** Intended for participants with dirt single-track riding experience; able to climb and descend steep and moderately rough trails. Recreational ride at a moderate/brisk pace; 8+ miles on a wide range of fire roads and single-track trails. For experienced riders in very good physical condition with good endurance.
- L Meal/Snack Break:** Bring a lunch, dinner or snack as appropriate.
- F Family Friendly:** Suitable for children; must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. See the activity description for any additional information.
- W Wheelchair Accessible**
- R Online Reservations Required:** openspace.org/guided-activities will accept reservations two weeks in advance of an activity date and allow a maximum of four people per reservation. No walk-up participation allowed. Please cancel your reservation if you can no longer attend.



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, California 94022
650-691-1200
info@openspace.org
openspace.org

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Stay Connected to Your Open Space

Sign up to receive Midpen's print or electronic newsletters, and email updates on preserves and projects.

openspace.org/opt-in

Follow us on social media:



We Want to Hear From You!

Midpen's Basic Policy is like our Constitution, providing high-level guidance on implementing our mission.

Midpen is currently going through a public process to update the Basic Policy in order to incorporate Midpen's unique commitments to the San Mateo County coast, including around agriculture.

Learn more and comment at openspace.org/basic-policy.



Preserved agriculture and open space lands on the San Mateo County coast. (Leigh Ann Gessner/Midpen)

FUNDED BY
MEASURE AA
2014 OPEN SPACE BOND

Shaping Open Space

Planning is Underway for the Hawthorns Area

The 79-acre Hawthorns Area of Midpen's Windy Hill Open Space Preserve offers picturesque views of rolling oak woodlands, grasslands and the Santa Cruz Mountains.

This preserved open space in the town of Portola Valley also provides important wildlife refuge and reflects the region's natural, agricultural and social history. The property was gifted to Midpen in 2011.

Currently, Midpen staff are working on two separate planning processes for the Hawthorns property.

Both projects are funded in part by Measure AA, a bond measure passed by local voters in 2014 to support open space projects in Midpen's community supported Vision Plan.



A barn in the historic complex area of the Hawthorns property. (Midpen staff)

Hawthorns Historic Complex

The Hawthorns Historic Complex is an approximately 13-acre site located within the Hawthorns Area that includes an old olive orchard and several structures dating back to the late 1800s. Multiple structures within the Historic Complex are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district due to the pattern of estate settlement of "gentlemen's farms" along the Peninsula in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Four of the buildings were reportedly designed by famed California architect Julia Morgan, including a house, barn, cottage and garage.

Due to the unique cultural resources within the Historic Complex, planning for its use and management is a separate effort from the planning process for the surrounding undeveloped open space of the Hawthorns Area.

An ad hoc committee of three Midpen board members was formed in the fall of 2023 to work with staff on exploring future use and management ideas, and partnership opportunities. As part of this exploration, high-level technical studies are underway to understand the feasibility of future uses for the Historic Complex. The preliminary results of the committee's work are expected to be presented at a public meeting to the Midpen board by the end of 2024.

Over the next several years, Midpen will continue developing options for the Historic Complex with the intent of incorporating it holistically into the overall Hawthorns Area Plan.



Grassland, seasonal wildflowers and a variety of oaks are found throughout the undeveloped open space in the Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Preserve. (Midpen staff)

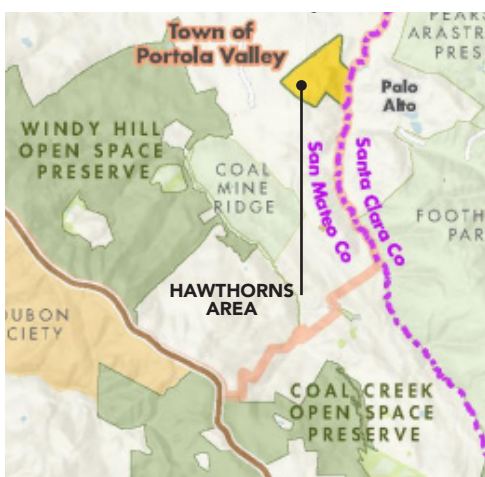
Hawthorns Area Plan

Work began in 2021 with the intent of creating a comprehensive plan for protecting and managing the land's natural, scenic, cultural and open space resources and providing ecologically sensitive public access, consistent with Midpen's mission.

A Public Access Working Group was formed in June 2023 comprised of interested regional residents, members of the public from each of Midpen's seven geographic "wards" within its boundaries, a Midpen board liaison and a Town of Portola Valley liaison. The working group is helping to develop and evaluate options for introducing public access to the Hawthorns Area that align with the project's board-adopted vision and goals.

The working group's recommendations for an internal trail system, connections with surrounding town and regional trails, trail uses and conceptual parking designs will be presented at a public meeting to Midpen's Planning and Natural Resources Committee on September 17, 2024.

The committee will provide feedback and consider sending the recommendations to Midpen's full board of directors for final approval, allowing a required environmental review process to begin.



Opportunities for public input are occurring throughout the duration of both Hawthorns Area planning projects. For more information and to sign up for email updates visit openspace.org/Hawthorns.