



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 27, 2020

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Video available for public distribution ([YouTube link](#))

Midpen Open Space needs public cooperation to keep preserves open

Los Altos, CA — The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is asking the public to cooperate with current health directives to allow it to keep preserves and trails open. These include sheltering-at-home except for essential activities including outdoor exercise, and when out, maintaining a social distance of at least 6 feet from everyone not in your household.

Parks and open space agencies across the region, including Midpen, are experiencing high visitation.

"We need everyone's help," Midpen Foothills Superintendent Brad Pennington said. "If we can't keep people safe, we can't stay open. We all need to take the shelter-at-home orders seriously and stay as close to home as we can."

Midpen has temporarily closed Windy Hill Preserve at the request of Town of Portola Valley public officials, and is working hard to keep other areas open to provide a safe opportunity for people to be in nature for mental and physical health during these stressful circumstances.

"We recognize that being in nature has real health benefits and that some people in our community don't have a backyard or safe outdoor place to connect with nature," Pennington said.

The shelter-at-home orders in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties allow individuals to leave their residence only to perform essential activities. These include outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, or running as long as social distancing requirements are followed. Midpen asks the public to follow these rules:

- Stay home if you or a member of your household are sick or at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Stay as close to home as possible and avoid crowded areas. If parking lots or trails are crowded, visit another time or a different preserve.
- Do not meet up with anyone you don't live with.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone you don't live with.

"If we each do our part, we can stay open and stay safe," Pennington said.

Visit Midpen's website at openspace.org to see a full, up-to-date list of the significant changes Midpen has made in response to public health directives to help keep our community healthy and safe by reducing the spread of COVID-19.

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The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's 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. On the San Mateo County coast, our mission also includes preserving agricultural land of regional significance and rural character and encouraging viable agricultural use of land resources. Midpen has successfully protected nearly 65,000 acres of public open space land in the Santa Cruz Mountains region since 1972.