



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 7, 2020

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Midpen Open Space invites public comment on proposed Wildland Fire Resiliency Program

Los Altos, CA — The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District invites the public to learn about and comment on its proposed Wildland Fire Resiliency Program at an online scoping session with its board of directors **May 13 from 5-7 p.m.** The Midpen board will review and consider approving the draft program scope, allowing the required California Environmental Quality Act review process to proceed. This public meeting will be held online to comply with current shelter-at-home directives and to protect public health. Details on how to participate will be provided at openspace.org/fire.

“We’re seeking public comment as we develop this program that will proactively expand upon Midpen’s environmentally sensitive vegetation management,” Midpen General Manager Ana Maria Ruiz said. “Our goals with the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program aim to further promote healthy and resilient fire-adapted ecosystems, reduce wildland fire risk and severity, and facilitate fire suppression.”

The proposed program has four main components that the public can learn about and comment on:

- **Vegetation management plan** focused on ecosystem resiliency, fire response and evacuation.
- **Scientific monitoring plan** to keep the program adaptable.
- **Pre-fire plans with resource advisor maps** to assist fire agencies in their response.
- **Prescribed fire plan** to reintroduce prescribed fire to Midpen’s land management toolbox in 2022.

Midpen has protected close to 65,000 acres of open space land in the Santa Cruz Mountains region, reducing the risk of wildland fires by managing vegetation with a focus on ecological health and fire resilience in alignment with its mission and policies.

Ongoing wildland fire prevention, preparation and response are a part of Midpen’s land stewardship. Staff annually maintain hundreds of miles of priority fuel breaks, fire roads and emergency ingress and egress routes. Annual fire suppression training is provided to staff who assist local fire agencies as first responders and advisors on how to protect natural resources. Midpen rangers always enforce bans on high fire-risk activities in preserves, and during fire season carry water pumpers on their trucks. Midpen also manages vegetation and fuel loads with conservation grazing on 8,000 acres on the San Mateo County Coast.

If the Midpen board of directors approve the program scope at the May 13 meeting, a required environmental review process will proceed with further opportunities for public comment. For more information visit openspace.org/fire.

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. openspace.org