



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos available upon request

Partnership provides summer jobs connecting youth to open space

Los Altos, CA— A partnership between the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) has East Palo Alto teens learning job skills while earning school credit and a paycheck in Midpen's public open space preserves this summer.

"For many of these students, it's not only their first job, but their first introduction to the open space preserves," said Midpen's General Manager Ana Maria Ruiz. "We hope the experience plants seeds for deeper connections to nature, and opens doors to the environmental field for the next generation."

Through the SCA's Summer Community Crew Program, local teens are currently tackling outdoor projects in 16 of Midpen's public open space preserves including Windy Hill, Fremont Older, Purisima Creek Redwoods, La Honda Creek and Rancho San Antonio.

Their tasks include using digital devices with specialized software to collect geographic and biological data for Midpen's maps and environmental restoration projects. They're also removing non-native invasive plants and attending meetings with Midpen staff to learn more about work in the conservation field.

"We are trying to change the face of conservation in the Bay Area through our program," said SCA's Youth Programs Coordinator Arnold Paloma.

Since Midpen and the SCA began partnering in 2015, students have worked on trail, habitat restoration and data collection projects in all of Midpen's publicly accessible preserves.

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The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is a public agency created by voters in 1972. Its 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. Midpen has successfully protected more than 63,000 acres of open space throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

www.openspace.org

The Student Conservation Association is America's oldest and largest youth conservation organization. SCA conserves lives and transforms lands by empowering young people of all backgrounds to plan, act, and lead, while they protect and restore our natural and cultural resources. Founded in 1957, SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders. www.thesca.org.