

Check trail conditions and seasonal closures by calling the Midpen office at 650-691-1200 or visiting the website [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org).



Jack Geschickel

## The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Created in 1972, Midpen is an independent special district that has preserved over 63,000 acres of public land and manages 26 open space preserves. Midpen's boundary extends from San Carlos to Los Gatos and to the Pacific Ocean from south of Pacifica to the Santa Cruz County line.

Midpen's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment.

## 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.

Be aware that cellular telephones may not have reception in the Preserve. A pay phone is located at the Backpack Camp.

## 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.

Source: <sup>1</sup>"History of Black Mountain and Monte Bello Ridge," written in 1959 by George Morell.



Piper Nicolosi



Efren Alvarez

## Green Tip

Save paper! Did you know this Preserve map is available online at [www.openspace.org/camping](http://www.openspace.org/camping) and can be downloaded and saved to your mobile device? Please do your part by returning or recycling maps when you're through.

## For More Information

For further information about the Black Mountain Backpack Camp at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, or any of the Midpen open space preserves, please call, write, or visit 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](mailto:info@openspace.org), or visit [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org).



### Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

330 Distel Circle • Los Altos, CA 94022-1404  
Phone: 650-691-1200 • Fax: 650-691-0485  
E-mail: [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org)  
Website: [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)



Help prevent waste by passing this publication on to a friend or recycling it when you're through. Thank you.



Revised 8-2018

# Black Mountain Backpack Camp



Karl Goff

## Sleep Under the Stars... Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Whether you're looking for a stopping place on your backpacking trip from the valley to the coast, or you're simply looking for a relaxing local overnight filled with stargazing, the Black Mountain Backpack Camp at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve is the only site Midpen lands where visitors can "sleep under the stars."

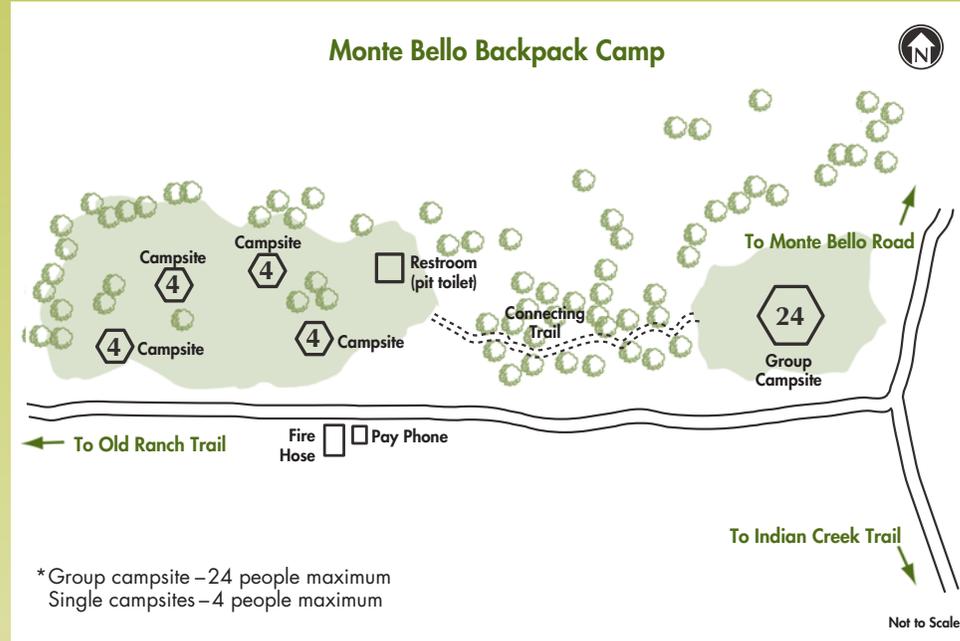


Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## About the Camp

Monte Bello Ridge and Black Mountain provide the scenic backdrop to the communities of Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and Cupertino. Four campsites (four people maximum at each site) and one group site (24 people maximum) are available throughout the year for one or two overnight stays. Camping is allowed in the designated campsites only.

- Visitors must arrive at the campsite before sunset; the surrounding open space preserve area is closed a half-hour after sunset.
- The camp is a 1.5-mile hike from the parking lot, including a 500-foot uphill climb. If you're mountain biking to the campsite from the parking lot, a helmet is required.
- A chemical toilet and water for washing is available.
- The water is non-potable; campers must bring a water purifier or carry in their own drinking water.
- **Campfires are prohibited.** Gas cook stoves or gas lanterns may be used in designated area specified for camping.
- Store your food appropriately in the storage lockers provided at each camp site; wildlife is common at the Preserve.
- Sorry, no dogs on this Preserve.
- Campers must be 18 years of age unless accompanied by an adult.



- **Pack it in. Pack it out.** Trash cans are not available. Please plan to carry out everything you bring in, including refuse. Help care for the site; if you find trash left behind, please carry it out with you.

## Camp Reservations and Fees

**Camp reservations and a permit are required, and visitors must apply in advance for a permit online.**

For campsite availability, please see our **online calendar**. If no campsites are listed for a date, all campsites are booked, and there is no availability. Reservations and permits are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Stays are limited to two nights.

We encourage you to submit an online permit application at least a week in advance for the date you are interested in, as the campground can fill up quickly.

**Website address:** [www.openspace.org/camping](http://www.openspace.org/camping)

**Note:** these permits are not handled through the normal activities reservation line.

**Fees.** A nominal fee of \$2/per person is charged to camp overnight.

**Parking.** Parking for the Backpack Camp is at the main Monte Bello Open Space Preserve parking lot on Page Mill Road (across from Los Trancos Preserve). A permit for overnight parking is required.

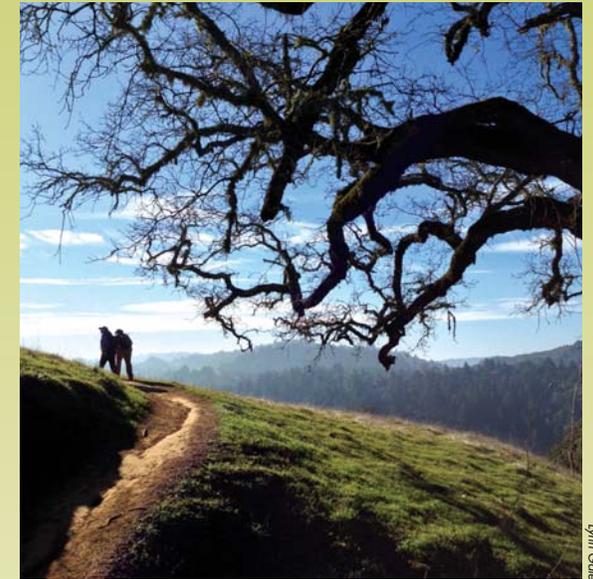
## History of Black Mountain

The Spanish explorers called Monte Bello Ridge and its high point Black Mountain the Sierra Morena, or dark mountain. Early American settlers to this area named one of their towns Mountain View because they had a view of Black Mountain and they were "deeply affected by the loftiness and beauty of this great rock looming against western sky."<sup>1</sup>

George Morell, a wealthy newspaper publisher, originally owned the Black Mountain Ranch property. "Nature in the raw" is what led Mr. Morell to buy Black Mountain Ranch. Following is an excerpt from his essay, "History of Black Mountain and Monte Bello Ridge," written in 1959:

*This is a very primitive area, kept so because of its inaccessibility either by road or trail. On the Morell, Winship, Johnson properties no destructive mark of fire or axe can be found. The land remains much as it was a century ago. Wildlife abounds. A magnificent coyote chorus greets the rising moon from a bald promontory. Coons, wild cats and foxes seem to be everywhere. Mountain lions have been in residence during most of the years since 1940, when*

*I bought the ranch. Last year a female raised two cubs and exercised them almost daily within a quarter mile of the ranch buildings. It is hoped that the primitiveness of this core area, the Johnson, Winship, Morell ranches may be preserved. Wilderness areas such as this are becoming more rare and consequently more precious each year.*



Lynn Gale

Stanford University later received Black Mountain Ranch as a gift from Mr. Morell and, in 1974, Midpen purchased the 760-acre ranch property, creating the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve.

From the top of Black Mountain, visitors have an incredible view of Santa Clara Valley and the Mt. Hamilton Range. On clear days, visitors can see beautiful sunsets from the Black Mountain Backpack Camp, or watch the fog roll in from the coast. A former long-term caretaker of the ranch property remembers, "We had a 200-degree view of the Pacific Ocean. We could see the Crystal Range above Lake Tahoe a few times a year on a really clear day. Arguably we saw some of the greatest sunsets and sunrises in the world."



Karl Cahill