



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

# For Immediate Release

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## **Work begins at Mt. Umunhum to clean up former Almaden Air Force Station**

**Los Altos, California [January 31, 2011]** – The Army Corps of Engineers has begun removing hazardous materials from buildings at the former Almaden Air Force Station atop Mt. Umunhum, one of the highest peaks in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The work is an important step towards the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's goal of restoring the natural environment at Mt. Umunhum and eventually opening the site to the public.

The Open Space District purchased Mt. Umunhum from the federal government in 1986, incorporating it into the Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve with the understanding that the government would clean up the air force station. Many trails throughout the now 18,000-acre preserve are open to the public, however, the Mt. Umunhum area has remained closed.

While the federal government is cleaning up hazardous materials, expected to be complete this June, the Open Space District is creating a plan for environmental restoration and public access at Mt. Umunhum. Expected to be finalized this fall, the plan will include public input and be consistent with the Open Space District's mission of preserving land, protecting and restoring the natural environment and providing for public enjoyment and education. The Open Space District is also working to secure roughly \$10 million still needed to complete the removal of buildings at the air force station and implement the environmental restoration and public access plan.

With views as far as San Francisco and Monterey Bay, Mt. Umunhum is special to the military personnel and their families who were stationed there, as well as the local Native People. More details about the project can be found at [www.mtumunhum.org](http://www.mtumunhum.org)

*Created by voters in 1972, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has successfully protected and managed more than 59,000 acres. It is a California special district whose mission is 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.*  
[www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)