

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

OPEN SPACE VIEWS

PRESERVE SPOTLIGHT

La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

Considered by many as a gateway to the San Mateo coast, the 2,056-acre La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve features forests of redwood and Douglas fir, contrasting open grassland hilltops, and dramatic views leading to the coast.

MRCSD Archives



La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

This lesser known and traveled preserve offers visitors a sense of solitude and is an ideal spot to escape the everyday stresses of urban life. There are three miles of trails (old ranch roads) available to hikers and equestrians for exploration. (Currently, the southern portion of the preserve, which includes the restored historic Red Barn, is not open to the public, but future access and use to this area will be addressed as part of the master planning process for the preserve. See the Master Planning Update for more information.)

Visitors can wander under the forest's canopy and visit one of the few remaining old-growth redwoods, the impressive "Big Tree," with a nearly 14-foot-diameter base. The rolling grassland ridges will also beckon visitors to their summits. Take a moment to look overhead as raptors such as turkey vultures and red-tailed and Cooper's hawks can sometimes be seen soaring above. A trip to La Honda



MRCSD Archives

La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

Creek Preserve wouldn't be complete without a stop at the Vista Point. On a clear day, visitors will be rewarded with spectacular views of the coastal foothills and ocean.

The threatened California red-legged frog has been identified at this preserve.

Coyote, deer, and bobcat are also found here and may even be spotted from the trail. This preserve also hosts two rare plants; Kings Mountain manzanita and leatherwood.

Note: A special permit is required to access La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. Please call the District office at (650) 691-1200 to obtain a permit and a map of the preserve.

Master Planning Update

The master planning process for La Honda Creek Preserve continues. Two public workshops have been held to date, and more workshops and opportunities for public participation will occur in the spring and summer of 2005. The District is working with a planning consulting firm, Design, Community & Environment, to complete an inventory of La Honda Creek Preserve's natural and cultural resources, and to identify opportunities for public access, resource protection, and agricultural preservation, among many other topics. The District's goal is to prepare a Plan that provides appropriate access to the Preserve, while ensuring long-term preservation of the rural landscape and its ecological values. For more information about the master planning process, please visit the District's Web site at www.openspace.org.

WILD THINGS

Mountain Lions

About half of California is prime mountain lion habitat. This fact is a surprise to many visitors. These large, powerful predators have always lived here, preying on deer and other wildlife, and playing an important role in the ecosystem.



©Tupper Ansel Blake

Mountain Lion

Safety

Many of the District's lands provide prime mountain lion habitat, and mountain lions are occasionally sighted in the open space preserves. Learning about wildlife you may encounter is important for your safety, and the District is committed to providing ongoing visitor information and education about wildlife behavior and habitats, what people can do to avoid potentially dangerous interactions with wildlife, and what to do if inappropriate wildlife behavior is observed.

Signs, which include general information and warnings, are posted in multiple locations at preserves, and information is posted on the District's Web site at www.openspace.org.

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WORKING FOR OPEN SPACE

District staff and volunteers who work to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources

Although he originally planned on becoming a teacher after earning a degree in history from Santa Clara University in 1999, working four seasons as a Park Aide at Portola and Castle Rock State Parks changed Skyline Ranger Chris Barresi's mind and his career path.

“Chris was hooked on working on behalf of open space by the opportunity to work in a beautiful environment and the chance to help people.”

In 2000, Chris began his position as a District ranger. “On any given day, to be one of only a handful of people in some of the District’s vast and remote open space areas, makes me think of what it must have been like back in the days of the wild west,” said Chris.



Skyline Ranger Chris Barresi

Chris is also a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and enjoys the emergency and medical response, search and rescue, and fire fighting aspects of his job. In January 2004, Chris, as part of a District search effort in cooperation with the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office, aided in finding a missing hiker alive in Purisima

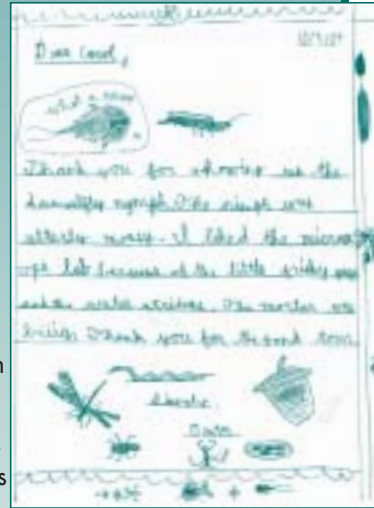
Creek Redwoods Preserve. Meshing his interest (and degree) in history with his work as a ranger, Chris looks forward to learning more about the cultural history of District preserves and sharing the information with other staff and visitors to open space.

Volunteers Needed

The District is looking for Outdoor Education Leaders (OELs) for its award-winning, environmental education field trip program *Spaces & Species*.

OELs work with a small group of school children grades 3-6 at the Daniels Nature Center and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve to facilitate discovery, interpret nature, lead activities, hike, and enjoy open space. Field trips are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays during the spring and fall of each year.

A six-week training begins March 22, 2005. If you’re interested in this program, please contact Renée Fitzsimons, Docent Programs Coordinator, at (650)691-1200 or at docent@openspace.org.



Letter: Owen-Kings Mountain Elementary School

Author Appearance & Signing for Peninsula Tales & Trails Guide Book

Each District ranger has a preserve or two that is considered their area of responsibility, where they concentrate more of their time on patrol, maintenance, and resource management. Chris’ areas of responsibility include Long Ridge and El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserves. One of the issues Chris has been focusing on is monitoring illegal trail construction and use at El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve. This process involves both law enforcement and resource management tasks. In addition to monitoring illegally constructed trails for type, quantity, and time of usage, the area must be restored back to its natural state and any environmental damage and negative impacts to important wildlife habitat must be corrected.

The District often works in conjunction with other agencies and volunteers on restoration and resource management projects, and Chris has worked with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) in closing illegally constructed or undesignated trails using large logs. Chris, a volunteer liaison, also works closely with Trail Patrol and Preserve Partners volunteers. His favorite volunteer project involved working with Preserve Partners on a two-day project repairing a damaged trail pad and installing a culvert on the Peters Creek Trail at Long Ridge Preserve.



Photographer and Author David Weintraub

Since its publication in December 2004, the District’s first-ever trail guide book *Peninsula Tales & Trails* has been well-received by members of the public, the media, and industry representatives alike.

“*Peninsula Tales & Trails* is more than just a trail guide. The new guide describes the high points, the plants and animals, and above all, the history of the lands threaded by the trails.”

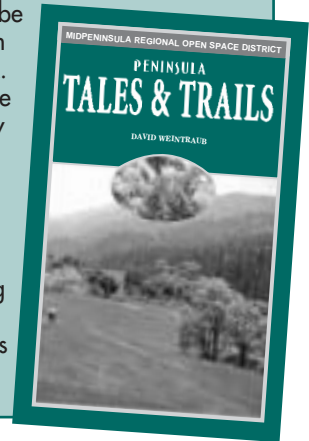
—Marion Softky, *The Almanac*

Produced in commemoration of the District’s 30th Anniversary, this unique book is a comprehensive guide to the magnificent, unspoiled public open spaces in the San Francisco Midpeninsula area and features 38 selected routes in 22 of the open space preserves.

Photographer and author David Weintraub will be returning to the Bay Area this March to make an appearance at Kepler’s bookstore in Menlo Park. At this special appearance, David will read some of the excerpts from the histories collected, describe the process of how he produced the book, answer questions, and sign copies of the book.

When: Wednesday, March 16, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Kepler’s, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Phone: (650)324-4321, Web site: www.keplers.com

The price for *Peninsula Tales & Trails* is \$19.95 per book (not including tax) and will be available for sale at the event. *Peninsula Tales & Trails* is also available on-line and through selected stores, and signed copies will also be available at the District office.



Our 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.

Mountain Lions *(continued from page 1)*

Appearance & Behavior

- The mountain lion, also known as cougar, panther or puma, is tan colored overall with a whitish underside. The long tail (about 2/3 length of the body) and small rounded ears are tipped with black; small head.
- Adult male mountain lions can be up to 8 feet long from tip of nose to end of tail; weigh 130-150 pounds.
- Adult females can be up to 7 feet long, weigh 65-90 pounds.
- Tracks - no nail marks, its 1-inch claws are normally withdrawn into pockets in its feet; M-shaped palm pad with 3 bumps on back and 2 bumps on top; toes arranged asymmetrically around palm pad.



- Male mountain lion territory can be as much as 100 square miles; female's territory 20-60 square miles; solitary, territorial animal.

What You Can Do to Promote a Safe Experience in Open Space

- Hike in groups
- Keep small children close to you
- Do not let pets run unleashed
- Do not wear headphones while recreating in wildland areas

In the Unlikely Event You Encounter a Mountain Lion

- Do not approach a lion; give the lion an opportunity to retreat
- Do not crouch down, squat, or bend over; if you have small children with you, pick them up without bending over or turning away from the mountain lion
- Do not run from a lion; running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase. Instead, stand and face the animal. Make eye contact.
- Do all you can to appear larger. Raise your arms; wave your arms slowly. Speak firmly in a loud voice. Open your jacket if you're wearing one. Wave a stick, throw stones, branches, or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back.
- Fight back if attacked.

What You Can Do to Be a Good Neighbor to Wildlife

As development pressures continue in the Bay Area, homes are being built closer and sometimes partially surrounded by natural areas, which might be mountain lion habitat. If you live in mountain lion habitat, here's what you can do to reduce the potential for wildlife coming near your home.

Do Not Feed Wildlife. By feeding deer, raccoons, or other wildlife, you may be inadvertently attracting mountain lions or coyotes to your yard or home. If you're feeding birds, do not let birdseed pile up on the ground.

"Deer-Proof" Your Landscape. Irrigated landscaping is inviting deer into yards. Landscape your yard with plants that deer do not like to eat. Deer are a mountain lion's primary prey.

Keep Your Pets Safe. Keep your pets indoors, especially at night. Cover dog runs. If feeding pets outdoors, only keep food out for a short time.

Keep Livestock Secure. Keep livestock in enclosed sheds and barns at night, and be sure to secure all outbuildings.



Mountain Lion Strolling Along a Hill Base

Photo provided by Mountain Lion Foundation

Install Outdoor Lighting. Installing motion or timer-activated outdoor lighting around your home and animal enclosures may keep mountain lions away. You might also try sprinklers, or other equipment that makes noise.

Remove Garbage. Clean up garbage, including picking up ripe fruit and vegetables from the ground, and cover garbage containers tightly. Do not release feral animals or found wildlife in open space preserves.

For More Information

For additional tips and recommendations, refer to the Mountain Lion Foundation's Web site at www.mountainlion.org, the Department of Fish and Game's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/news/issues/lion.html, or the District's Web site at www.openspace.org.

IMMEDIATELY REPORT ALL ENCOUNTERS OR ATTACKS

If you are involved in a face-to-face encounter with, or an attack by, a mountain lion or coyote, immediately contact a ranger, or the District office at (650)691-1200, or on weekends or evenings, the District's 24-hour dispatch at (650)903-6395. The threat to public safety will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken. To report mountain lion sightings that are not an emergency (animal's behavior was not threatening), call the District office at (650)691-1200. Also report any sightings of dead or injured mountain lions.

Some text has been adapted from information provided by the California Department of Fish and Game.

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Pull out and save your schedule of spring
Outdoor Activities in open space and . . .

be sure to visit us on our Web site for preserve
 maps, volunteer opportunities, and more.

www.openspace.org

FIELD NOTES

**Sierra Azul &
 Bear Creek Redwoods
 Open Space Preserves
 Master Planning**

Preliminary planning, stakeholder interviews, and data collection is currently underway for the Sierra Azul-Bear Creek Redwoods Master Plan. The first public workshop is tentatively scheduled for mid-March 2005. Please check the District Web site or the upcoming project mailing for actual date, time, and meeting location. The first workshop will introduce the public to the planning process and serve as a visioning session for the future use, development, and management of Sierra Azul and Bear Creek Redwoods Preserves.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive a copy of the project mailing, please contact Ana Ruiz, Project Planner, at (650) 691-1200.



Karl Gohl

Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

**El Corte de Madera Creek
 Open Space Preserve
 Watershed Protection
 Program Update-
 Phase Two Begins**

During Phase Two of the Watershed Protection Program, the District anticipates completing the realignment of the Crossover Trail, tentatively in May 2005.

The new alignment follows natural contours to reduce the potential for erosion and incorporates a striking rock formation. The District will also begin planning for the realignment and/or reconstruction of sections of the El Corte de Madera Creek

and Giant Salamander Trails. These projects will include the planning and design of a number of new bridges to help protect water quality. Phase Two will also include a number of drainage improvement projects along

portions of Gordon Mill, Spring Board, and Timberview Trails. Projects may include installation of new culverts, application of road rock, and culvert replacements.

New Regional Staging Area

This spring, the District will also begin planning and design of a regional staging area at El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve. Located near the Gordon Mill Trailhead (near gate CM03 and just across Skyline Boulevard from the Skyline Trail), the new staging area would relieve much of the pressure on the nearby Skeggs Point Caltrans parking lot. It would also provide a central area to disseminate information about El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve and other accessible public lands in the area, including the trails in the California Water Service Company's Bear Gulch Watershed and in Wunderlich County Park and provide welcome restroom facilities. The planning and design process will include opportunities for the public to provide input. Please check the District's Web site at www.openspace.org for future announcements regarding the public input process.