

Clean Up and Environmentally Restore the Former Almaden Air Force Station Atop Mount Umunhum, San Jose, California April 2009



Plan for the Future: Protect the natural environment, restore the site to a healthy condition, and provide public access to the mountain's spectacular vistas of the greater Bay Area.

- Mountain-top Area: 44 acres
- Former Air Force Station is now embedded in the more than 17,000-acre Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve adjacent to San Jose, California
- Elevation: 3,486 feet
- Purchased at Fair-Market-Value from the United States Government in 1986
- Public interest and involvement in a plan to open up the entire Sierra Azul area and gain access to Mount Umunhum is extremely high, but due to the health and safety risks posed by the deteriorating Almaden Air Force Station the site remains closed to the public.



Restore Mount Umunhum's Natural Environment, Protect Public Health, and Provide Public Access

Background

Mount Umunhum is among the Bay Area's highest peaks and is one of its most prominent and beautiful locations. Rising to an elevation of 3,486 feet, the summit provides a viewing area of approximately 2,000 square miles and spectacular 360-degree views of San Francisco to the north, Monterey Bay to the south, Mount Hamilton to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

The mountain supports a unique and thriving natural ecosystem that includes several special-status species and holds vast outdoor recreation opportunities. Mount Umunhum has the potential to provide a South Bay summit destination on par with its sister summits Mount Tamalpais (North Bay) and Mount Diablo (East Bay), but has remained closed to the public for more than 20 years due to the health and safety risks posed by the deteriorating Almaden Air Force Station.



The vista point at Mount Umunhum will provide visitors with unparalleled panoramic views of the surrounding area.



88 deteriorating buildings, toxins, and other unsafe materials need to be removed to protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for public enjoyment and education.



Threats to Public Health

Reservoirs providing drinking water to San Jose, California are fed by creeks originating on Mount Umunhum. Without the cleanup, toxic materials at the Air Force Station from stored fuel and chemicals, lead paint, asbestos, and PCB-containing transformers will continue to leach downslope into the watershed.



Mount Umunhum's headwaters drain into four reservoirs holding 9.5 billion gallons: the water supply for Santa Clara Valley, home to nearly two million people.

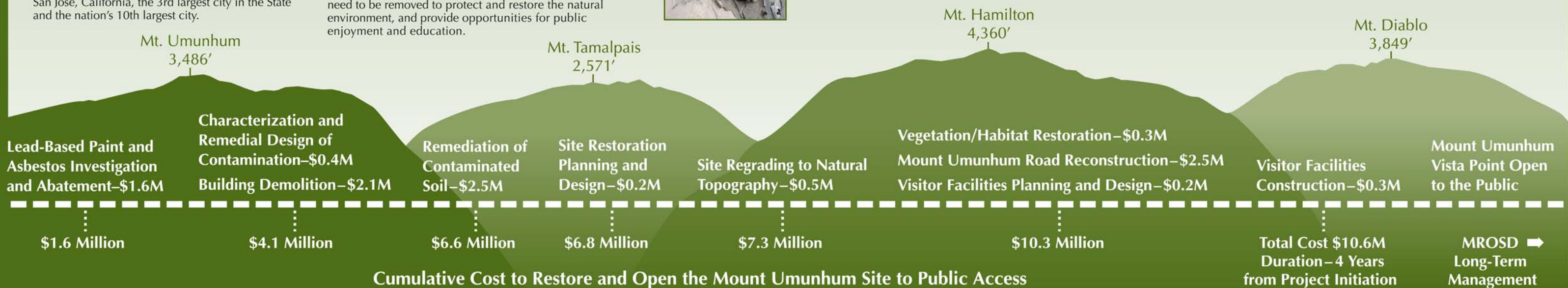


Many of the Air Force Station's 88 buildings contain deteriorated lead-based paint and friable asbestos.

Threats to the Natural Environment

Contaminants from the Air Force Station imperil Mount Umunhum's complex ecosystem, which includes 63 unique plant communities and several endangered and special status species such as the California red-legged frog and golden eagle. These lands also provide important uninterrupted habitat for mountain lion, bobcat, deer, coyote, and many other animal species.

Cleaning up the Station is essential to restore the health of this special mountain-top environment; to protect the quality of drinking water in downstream reservoirs, and to provide public recreational access to an exceptional place.

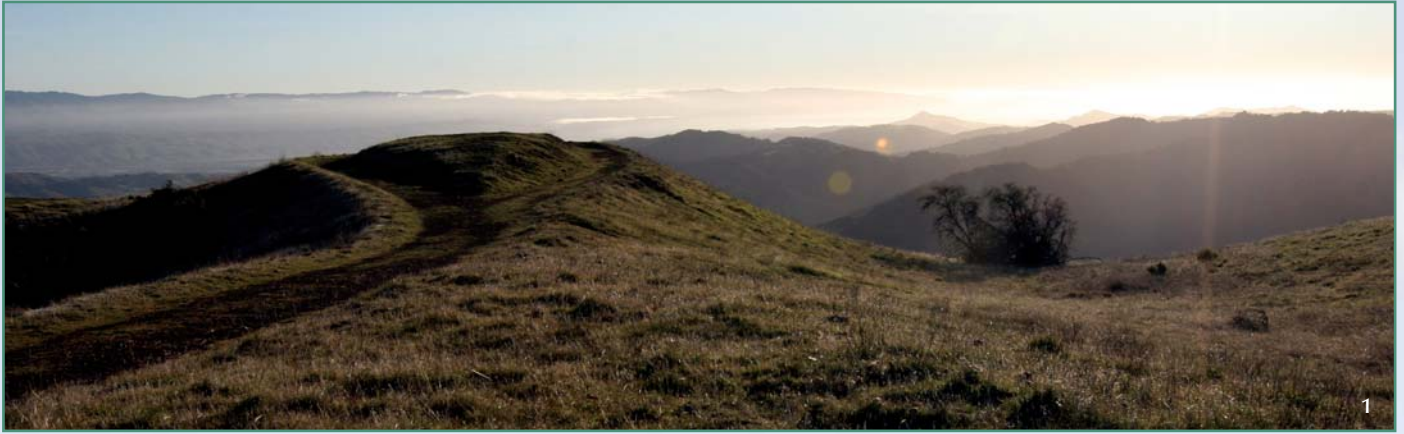


Mt. Umunhum
3,486'

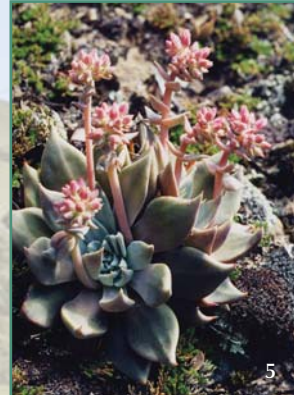
Mt. Tamalpais
2,571'

Mt. Hamilton
4,360'

Mt. Diablo
3,849'



Karl Gohl



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Photos: 1. View from Mount Umunhum;
2. View toward Mount Hamilton from the
Woods Trail; 3. California Red-legged Frog;
4. Summit of Mount Umunhum; 5. Duddleya;
6. Bobcat; 7. Serpentine Grassland

The District's 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.



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