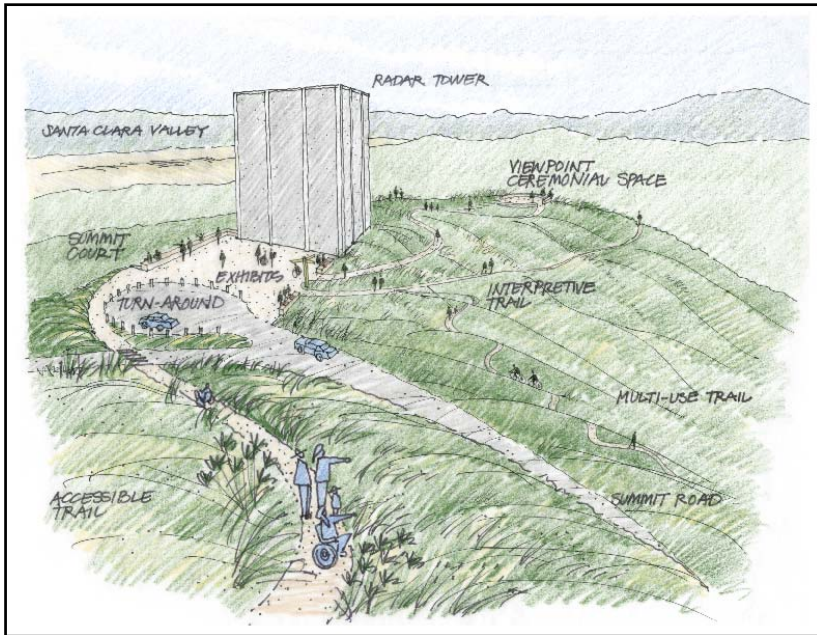




Help Shape Mt. Umunhum!

Public input is an important part of the planning process. Contact us and let us know if you are interested in receiving notice about public input opportunities on the Mt. Umunhum project.



Phone: (650) 691-1200

MROSD Web site: www.openspace.org

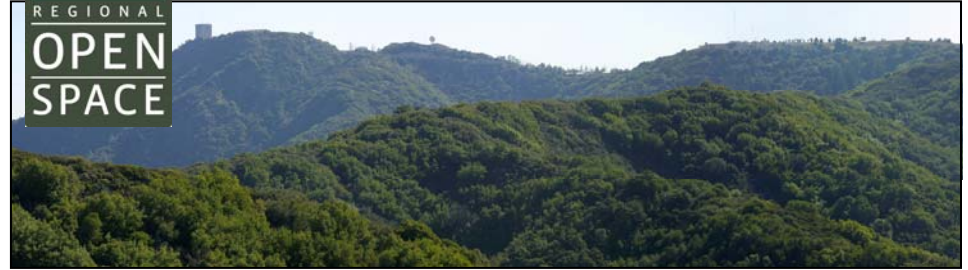
Email: mt.um@openspace.org

Project Web site: www.mtumunhum.org

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is a public agency whose mission is to preserve land as open space, protect and restore the natural environment and provide for ecologically-sensitive public enjoyment and education.



Planning for Public Access to Mt. Umunhum



About Mt. Umunhum

Rising 3,486 feet above Los Gatos, Mt. Umunhum is one of the highest peaks in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Its name comes from an Ohlone word meaning hummingbird. The Almaden Air Force Station operated atop the peak from 1957 to 1979.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District bought Mt. Umunhum from the federal government in 1986 and incorporated it into the Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve. Mt. Umunhum's slopes host a rich diversity of life and contain the headwaters of several creeks. The mountain holds cultural significance for local Native People.

Planning for Public Access

In late 2009, the federal government appropriated \$3.2 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to begin cleaning up the former air force station. Another \$4.28 million in federal dollars has been requested, but not yet granted, to complete the work.

The cleanup allows the District to begin planning for public access to the peak. The final plan must be consistent with the District's mission, and be financially sustainable. One way to achieve this is by phasing in public access and amenities as funds are secured.

Vision for Public Access and Planning Timeline

After a long, winding ascent to the peak, Mount Umunhum will reward visitors with incredible panoramic views of the Bay Area, the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the Pacific Ocean. Minimal amenities, including a self-guided interpretive trail, benches, informal seating, and a few picnic tables will complement the restored natural beauty of the site. Several paved parking lots will accommodate high visitor use on peak summer weekends.

Eventually, a small interpretive center and backpack camp may be added if grant funding is secured. Aside from these amenities, the only built feature on the site will be the massive radar tower (provided it is seismically sound and financially sustainable). All entrances to the radar tower will be sealed. Visitors will access the summit on foot, horseback, bicycle, or by car, and dogs on-leash will be welcome. Advanced hang gliders will enjoy a world-class launching site a safe distance from the summit. Access for disabled visitors will be provided to the maximum extent possible.

Mount Umunhum will be designed to welcome many new visitors to open space, and encourage them to return and discover other preserves. Thoughtful management planning will minimize visitor impact on the site's natural resources and on District staff resources. Two additional ranger positions, one additional maintenance position and staff to manage increased docent and permitting requirements will be provided to ensure adequate visitor safety and site security. An electric gate will be located at Jacques Ridge and an "iron ranger" parking fee collection system will be located either at this gate or the summit parking area. Driving access to the summit will be phased, beginning with special docent-led tours immediately following hazard abatement. A permit system will be implemented after safety upgrades to Mount Umunhum Road are complete. Finally, full vehicle access will be available when basic facilities are built and the road is resurfaced. This phasing scheme was developed in response to stakeholder, staff, and general public input, and provides access to the summit as quickly as possible while simultaneously allowing deliberative and sustainable site development.

