



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 13, 2017

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High-res photos available at www.openspace.org/um-images

Midpen Opens Mount Umunhum to the Public on September 18

Los Altos, CA—The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District opens the summit of Mount Umunhum to the public for the first time on Monday, September 18. The prominent peak, located within the Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve in the South Bay, is one of the highest points in the region. The mountaintop will be open daily, free of charge, for visitors to experience panoramic views, new trails and a rich natural and cultural history.

“We’re thrilled to invite the community to create Mount Umunhum’s next chapter as one of the Bay Area’s great publicly accessible peaks and nature destinations,” said Midpen’s General Manager Steve Abbors. “Thank you to the voters who passed Measure AA making it possible to restore and share this remarkable place.”

In 2009, the federal government provided \$3.2 million to clean up contaminants and the remnants of a Cold War-era Air Force station atop Mount Umunhum. Midpen began working with the public on a plan to make the peak accessible to all. In 2014, the passage of Measure AA by local voters in support of public open space provided an estimated \$16.6 million of the project funds needed to restore and open the mountaintop. The California Coastal Conservancy and the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council also contributed \$1 million, with the remaining funds coming from the District general fund.

The once-flattened peak has been reshaped to its original contours and native plant restoration is underway. New road surfaces, parking areas, trails, stairways, shelters and paths provide ADA-accessible access to nature and reveal spectacular vistas. Interpretive signs connect visitors with the mountain’s stories about native Californians, miners and the military as well as its diversity of plants and animals unique to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

“Restoring Mount Umunhum sustains not only the amazing species that live here, but all of us, who benefit in so many ways from a healthy natural environment and opportunities to connect with nature,” said Abbors.

More details about the project, suggestions for an enjoyable visit and directions can be found at www.mountumunhum.org.

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Created by voter initiative in 1972, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has successfully protected more than 63,000 acres of open space. The District is a California special district governed by an elected board of directors. The District’s mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land and agricultural land of regional significance in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

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