



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

# Memorandum

DATE: May 14, 2025

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana Ruiz, General Manager *AR*

FROM: Matt Anderson, Chief Ranger and Visitor Services Manager

SUBJECT: Informational Report on the Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve - Los Vientos Way Trailhead

---

## SUMMARY

The creation of a new trailhead entrance into Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve (Preserve) at the end of Los Vientos Way in the City of San Carlos and the associated Use and Management Plan Amendment to allow access to the Preserve for hiking and dog-on-leash uses was approved by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) on February 14, 2024. ([R-24-19](#), [minutes](#).)

Trailhead improvements were completed, and the trailhead was opened on April 26, 2024. This report provides a summary of the use and management over the last year, including community and partner feedback, and staff observations.

## DISCUSSION

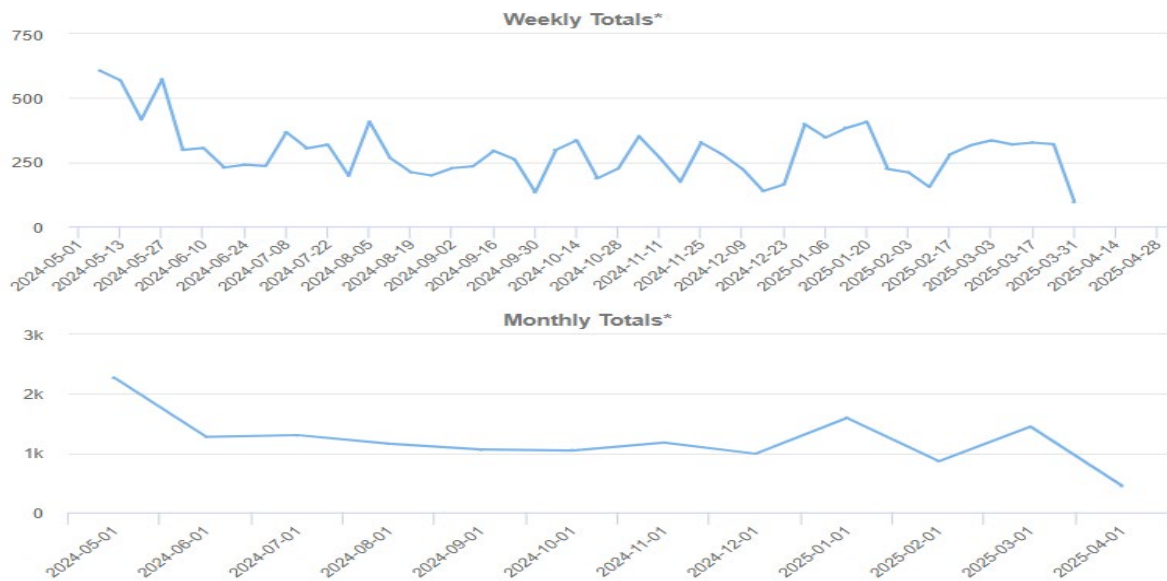
As requested by the Board, District staff installed various new access improvements at the trailhead, including a new emergency vehicle gate, split rail fencing, hiking stile, regulation sign, trail signage, and a bicycle rack. A dog waste bag dispenser and trash receptacle were installed and are maintained by the City of San Carlos. See photos in Attachment 1. Moreover, the [preserve map](#) has been updated with the new entrance and trail segment.

The Almanac newspaper published two articles related to the Board action and the associated ecological surveys completed for the trailhead entrance prior to opening.

[Midpeninsula District Board approves plans for new Pulgas Ridge entrance](#)

[Midpen ecologists work to ensure endangered butterfly isn't adversely impacted by new trail opening](#)

Data collected from a pedestrian trail counter installed at the trailhead reflects weekly totals that peaked in the first couple of weeks after opening at about 600 persons and have leveled off to approximately 250, which is typical of secondary access points such as this. See graph below.



In the first couple months of operation, Rangers received and responded to a handful of calls about parking issues from neighbors; however, upon arrival, the issues had resolved themselves. There have been no further calls for service or parking complaints since and the access has become a routine patrol check for Rangers covering the preserve. Land and Facilities and Ranger staff have not experienced any issues with litter, graffiti, or vandalism. The District has not received any inquiries or complaints via our public comment email.

An unsolicited email from one of the neighbors who originally expressed opposition to the new entry point included this positive statement...

“we have used the new access to our delight and it appears there have been no issues with traffic.”

Staff contacted Allison Stanton, who organized neighbors around highlighting concerns of potential impacts, to get her feedback on how the access point was working. She replied,

“...There have been increased reports of dirt bikes and e-bikes that the rangers have been tracking at the access point and behind the properties. There have also been reports made to the rangers about dogs off leashes as some groups are using the top of the trail like a dog park. There is also parking in front of the fire gate that block ranger access and calls have been made to them and nonemergency San Carlos police. There is increased traffic around the trailhead that depends on day and season. Some calls have been made to monitor night car activity but that has not been too frequent. There have also been questions about fire prevention as the area at the trailhead and behind the homes does not look like it has been mowed this season.”

As mentioned above, the few calls Rangers received regarding vehicles blocking gate access were resolved by the time Rangers arrived. Rangers have seen some bicycle tracks, but this has not been an ongoing issue. Dogs off leash have been an issue throughout the Preserve and was a patrol emphasis for Rangers last year resulting in increased enforcement, which will hopefully impact compliance since most dog owners are repeat visitors. Regarding the fire clearance, the District conducted a brush removal project in 2022. This project is meant to be cyclical (once every multiple years) versus annual. However, the District continues to provide permits for neighbors to conduct annual fire clearance around structures that lie less

than 100 feet from the property boundary with District lands to achieve the full 100-foot defensible space clearance.

Feedback from the City of San Carlos Parks and Recreation Director:

“Things are going great from the city side. We agree that while we heard from one or two neighbors soon after the gate opened, we have not heard from them since. I hear from folks here and there that they use this access and enjoy it. Overall, it's been a great addition to trail access in our community!”

After a year of operation, this access has been overall well received and appreciated by visitors and the City of San Carlos and has not significantly increased the burden on District staff to manage it. Neighbors still have some concerns, which appear manageable through ongoing patrol and maintenance.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Trailhead Photos (2)



Pulgas Ridge - Los Vientos Way Trailhead

