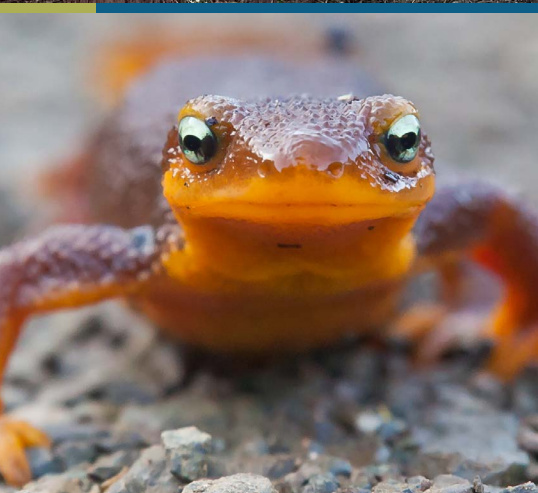
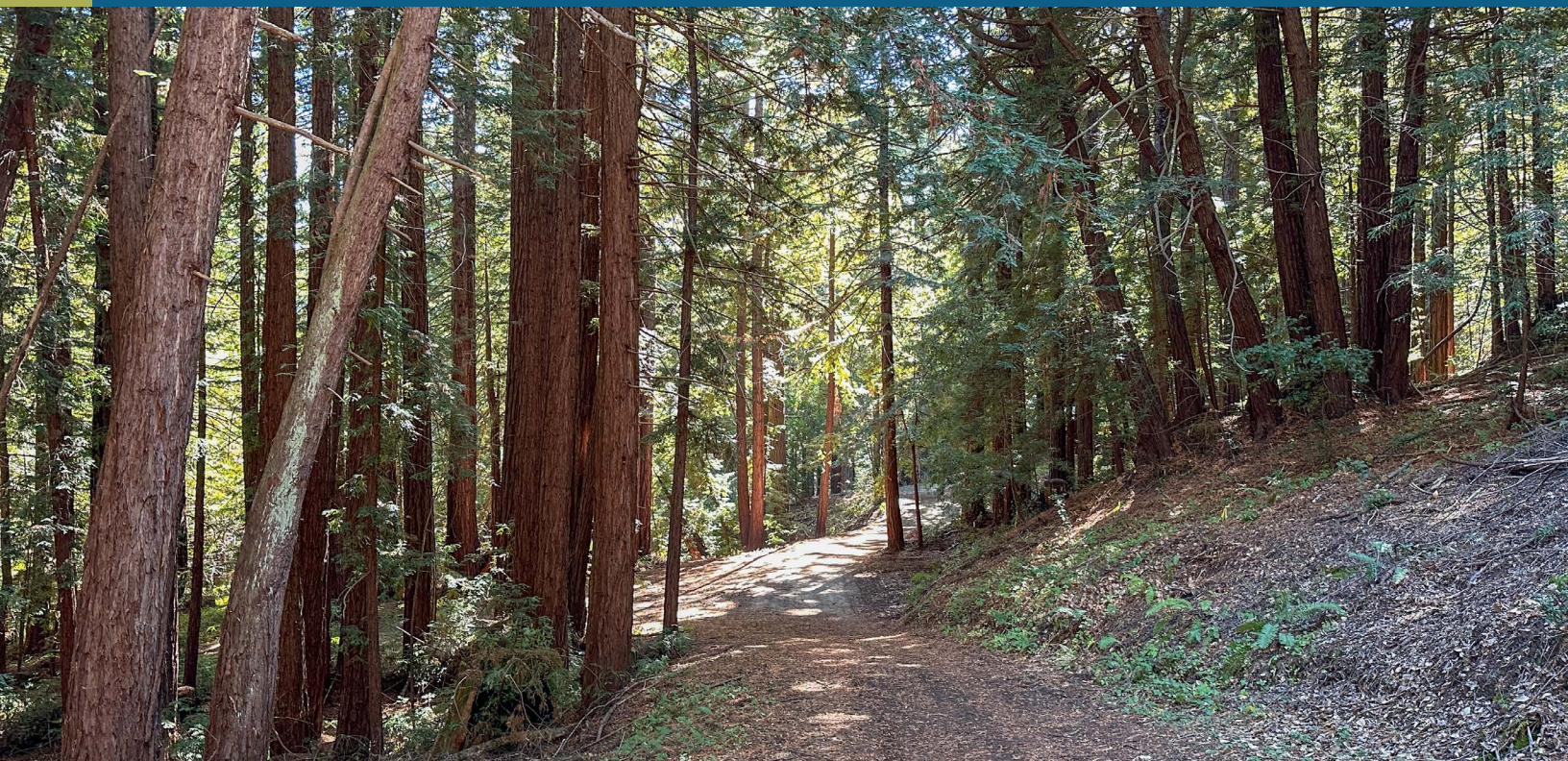




FY26 Major Accomplishments Report

JULY 1, 2025-JUNE 30, 2026



Headquarters in Los Altos, California



MISSION 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.

COASTSIDE MISSION To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover, top: La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Frances Freyberg)
Cover, lower left: Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (Karl Gohl)
Cover, lower middle: Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Ellen Gartside)
Cover, lower right: Portola Valley Wildlife Awareness Event (Midpen Staff)
This page: Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Frances Freyberg)

FY26 Major Accomplishments Report

JULY 1, 2025-JUNE 30, 2026

As we conclude fiscal year 2026 (FY26), this report highlights significant achievements within the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (Midpen) priority program areas. Accomplishments related to specific areas of interest span all four priority program areas. An accompanying icon key is provided below to indicate both priority program areas and areas of interest throughout this report.

PRIORITY PROGRAM AREAS

Land Acquisition and Preservation

Midpen seeks to purchase or otherwise acquire interest in the maximum feasible area of strategic open space land within the district, including baylands, foothills and ridgelines, and link its open space lands with federal, state, county and city parklands and watersheds.

Public Access, Education and Outreach

Midpen provides ecologically sensitive public access to the open space lands for low-intensity recreational uses to everyone, regardless of physical abilities or economic status.

Natural Resource Protection and Restoration

Midpen protects and restores the natural diversity and integrity of its resources for their value to the environment and the public.

Assets and Organizational Support

Midpen employs a highly capable, professional workforce and provides them with the facilities and resources needed to run an efficient and responsible organization on behalf of the public.

AREAS OF INTEREST

Agriculture

Preserving agricultural working lands and sustaining agricultural uses, including conservation grazing on Midpen lands to protect rural character and the open space values of agricultural lands.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Connecting diverse communities to their public open space preserves through access improvements, partnerships and inclusive public outreach and engagement to inspire support and active participation in a regional conservation and environmental protection vision.

Wildland Fire Resiliency

Working with local fire agencies and surrounding communities to strengthen the prevention of, preparedness for and response to destructive wildland fires for enhanced ecosystem resiliency and public safety.

MEASURE AA

Following approval of the Vision Plan, in June 2014 voters approved Measure AA, a 30-year, \$300 million general obligation bond to fund land conservation, public access and restoration projects from the top 25 Vision Plan priority action portfolios.

ICON KEY



Land Acquisition and Preservation



Agriculture



Natural Resource Protection and Restoration



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Public Access, Education and Outreach



Wildlife Fire Resiliency



Assets and Organizational Support



Measure AA

Midpen is proud of the work we've accomplished to serve our communities and region, in close collaboration with partner agencies. All projects and programs reflect the priorities set annually by the board of directors. View Major Accomplishments Reports from prior fiscal years at openspace.org/reports.



Land Acquisition and Preservation



Acres preserved
in FY26 *



Land value **

* Includes 277 acres for the POST North Cowell Agricultural Conservation Easement funding contribution, which was added in FY26 after the FY27 Budget-in-Brief was printed.

** Includes a \$500,000 contribution for the North Cowell Agricultural Conservation Easement.

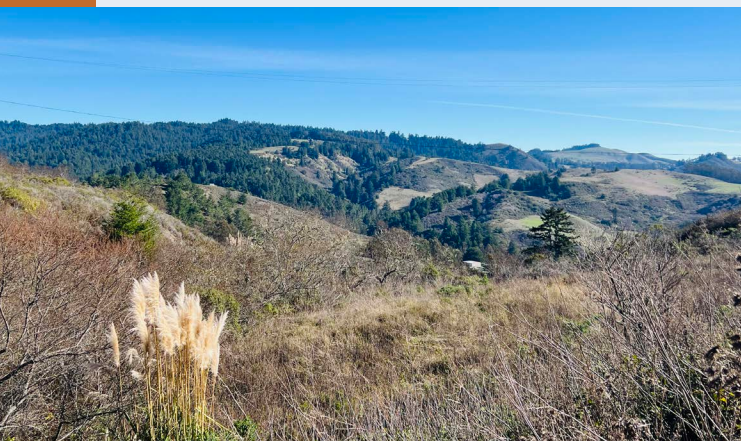
Note: Midpen also acquired 2.61 acres of operational property, critical to support Midpen's ongoing open space land management, natural resource stewardship, and visitor services work—this property to become the site of Midpen's future Coastal Field Office.



IRISH RIDGE ACQUISITION EXPANDS TUNITAS CREEK OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

In October 2025, Midpen secured multiple property rights across 152.6 acres of the Tabachnik Trust properties, known as Irish Ridge, as additions to Tunitas Creek Open Space Preserve. The acquisition includes a 1.85-acre fee purchase and a 150.8-acre conservation, trail and riparian easement, expanding Midpen's long-term conservation work between Lobitos Creek Road and Tunitas Creek Road, approximately one mile east of Highway 1.

Irish Ridge creates an important connection between Purisima Creek Redwoods and Tunitas Creek Open Space Preserves and strengthens ecological protection of the Tunitas Creek watershed. Although Midpen has no current plans for public access in this area, the acquisition offers the opportunity to create a future trail connection between the two preserves.



Left: North boundary of the Tabachnik fee parcel looking east onto conservation easement. Right: Southern portion of Tabachnik conservation easement looking southwest toward Lobitos Creek Cut-Off and Pacific Ocean. Tunitas Creek Open Space Preserve (Jasmine Leong)

The acquisition also protects important natural resources, including creek tributaries, springs, sensitive riparian vegetation communities and approximately half a mile of Tunitas Creek along the southeast boundary of the easement area. The Tunitas Creek watershed supports spawning habitat for threatened steelhead trout, while the surrounding coastal scrub and riparian areas provide habitat and movement opportunities for deer, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, birds and other wildlife.



DUAL ACQUISITIONS PROTECT WATERSHEDS AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS IN SIERRA AZUL OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

In April and June 2026, Midpen expanded Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve by acquiring the 34.1-acre Valoff-Pezzoli property near Mount Thayer and the 38.9-acre Cunningham-Walsh property near Loma Prieta Ridge. Together, these acquisitions protect 73 acres of forested lands, wildlife habitat, watershed lands and scenic open space within Midpen's largest preserve, bringing the total preserve acreage to 19,585 acres (as of June 2026).

The Valoff-Pezzoli acquisition strengthens the protection of open space connections and wildlife corridors in the Cathedral Oaks area between Lexington Reservoir and Mount Thayer. The property protects land within the Upper Los Gatos Creek and Upper Guadalupe River watersheds and includes steep slopes with scrub oak, madrone and chaparral habitats that support wildlife movement through the surrounding preserve lands.



Looking northwest towards the Pacific Ocean from the Valoff-Pezzoli property. Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Lupe Hernandez)

The Cunningham-Walsh acquisition fills a critical inholding surrounded by Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve on three sides. Located between the Mount Umunhum and Loma Prieta summit areas, the property protects chaparral, pine woodland, mature oak and mixed evergreen forest habitats. These habitats support a wide range of wildlife, including deer, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, mountain lions, birds and small mammals. The acquisition also supports species protection efforts for sensitive species observed near the property, including Purple Martins and the Santa Cruz kangaroo rat, a critically imperiled subspecies, while strengthening a regional wildlife linkage between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo and Gabilan ranges.



View looking southwest to Monterey Bay from a knoll on east side of Cunningham-Walsh property. Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Jasmine Leong)

KEY PROPERTY ACQUISITION STRENGTHENS COASTSIDE FIELD OPERATIONS

In October 2025, Midpen acquired the 2.6-acre Alves commercial property in Half Moon Bay as the future site of a Coastal Area Office. Located near Highway 1 and Miramontes Point Road, the property gives rangers and field staff a strategic Coastsides location with improved access to nearby preserves, including Cloverdale Ranch, Miramontes Ridge, Purisima Creek Redwoods and Tunitas Creek Open Space Preserves.

The existing commercial property will be developed into a Midpen office for staging field operations, vehicle and material storage and future staff support. This acquisition helps Midpen respond to growing operational and maintenance needs on the coast while avoiding the development of existing open space lands.

Midpen anticipates completing a nearby acquisition of the remaining Alves (Uplands) open space parcels in FY27. Once acquired, those parcels will expand Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve and support long-term conservation in the Coastsides area.



View of the 2.6-acre Alves commercial property, future Coastal Area Field Office site. Half Moon Bay (Paul Kvam)



Natural Resource Protection and Restoration

FIRST-EVER SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS IN SANTA CRUZ

On January 30, the sold-out Science and Stewardship Symposium convened more than 250 leaders working on scientific research and hands-on land stewardship in the Santa Cruz Mountains region. Hosted by the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network (SCMSN), a coalition of 25 organizations, the event featured the innovative work of partners, including Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District who was the primary sponsor, as well as Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), University of Santa Cruz (UCSC) and others. The day-long program featured dozens of presentations and posters that bridged the gap between scientific research and land management, featuring contributions from scientists, Native American Tribes, policymakers, land managers, and more. Midpen proposed the concept of a symposium to SCMSN partners and worked on the core planning team to bring the symposium to fruition. Videos of the sessions are available [here](#).



Top left and above: Attendees gather at the inaugural Science and Stewardship Symposium in Santa Cruz on January 30, 2026. (Chris Cassell/Pro Bono Photo)

Left: Midpen Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington speaks during the symposium. (Chris Cassell/Pro Bono Photo)



ENHANCING SAN GREGORIO AQUATIC HABITAT

Midpen partnered with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to complete the second phase of the San Gregorio Creek Fish Habitat Enhancement project at the Apple Orchard property within La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. This project is improving aquatic habitat through the installation of 10 large wood structures within the creek. San Gregorio Creek is an important regional stream, as it provides designated critical habitat for the endangered coho salmon and the threatened steelhead trout. Many watersheds across Midpen lands, including San Gregorio, suffer from a deficit of large wood due to the historical loss of old-growth forests and past in-stream wood removal. These new structures were strategically placed to create the deep pools necessary for juvenile fish to survive across the seasons and through periods of low water flow. Additionally, wood helps sort sediment during high flows, fostering the gravel bed conditions essential for adult spawning and providing critical cover from predators.

Contractors installing large wood into San Gregorio Creek with the guidance of San Mateo Resource Conservation District staff. La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Jackie Van Der Hout)



IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR IMPERILED SANTA CRUZ KANGAROO RAT

In 2019, a new population of the critically endangered Santa Cruz kangaroo rat, a species once known to exist in only one other location globally, was discovered within Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve.

Unfortunately, ecological vegetation succession, likely exacerbated by fire suppression, has caused woody vegetation to encroach upon the SCKR habitat within Sierra Azul. Recognizing that this population (estimated at only 23-29 individuals in the areas surveyed) is highly susceptible to extirpation or extinction due to the loss of essential habitat, Midpen and its partners developed a Habitat and Population Management Plan this past year. This Plan outlines a long-term conservation strategy designed to restore kangaroo rat habitat and improve the resiliency of this keystone species. Also, in June 2026, Midpen was awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Santa Clara Valley Water District's Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program. These funds will support future vegetation management and fuels reduction across 40 acres, aimed at expanding available kangaroo rat habitat and improving connectivity for the existing Santa Cruz kangaroo rat population.



The presumed population of Santa Cruz kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys venustus venustus*) is found in five locations within Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve. Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Ken Hickman)



WILDLAND FIRE RESILIENCE AND FOREST HEALTH

For the past five years, Midpen's Wildland Fire Resiliency Program has been proactively expanding and maintaining environmentally sensitive vegetation management projects to promote ecosystem resilience, reduce wildland fire risk and facilitate emergency response. In addition to ongoing, year-round work, such as annual trail-brushing, mowing, and fuel break maintenance, the program has allowed Midpen to treat over 1,000 acres since its inception and reintroduce pile-burning and prescribed burning to our land-management toolbox. Because each site we treat requires perpetual maintenance, as our fire program matures, the annual work plan is steadily approaching an even balance between maintaining existing fuel breaks and creating new ones.

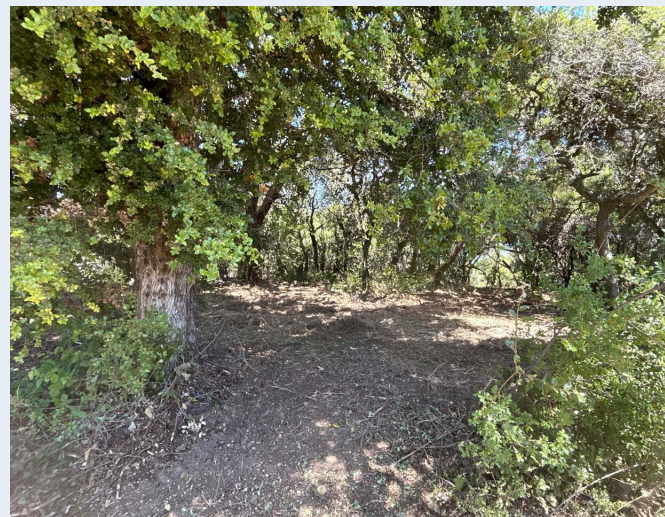
While large fires are very rare in Midpen preserves, our staff work year-round on strategies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to potential incidents. This year, crews treated approximately 150 new acres in portions of El Sereno and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserves and Felton Station. Additionally, in May 2026, trained Midpen staff successfully burned 30 piles of excess vegetation in a closed area of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to support forest health and maintain a community escape route. In early June 2026, crews completed work on a shaded fuel break along the Chamise Trail in Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. This initiative is part of a broader collaboration with the Los Altos Hills County Fire District, which launched its own fuel break program in 2022, spanning multiple key areas, including Foothills Preserve, Hidden Villa and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. Lastly, a formal burn plan was developed for a future oak woodland understory burn.



Pile burning operations underway. Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Chelsea Young)



Before (left) and after (right) photos of the Chamise Fuel Break. Rancho San Antonio (Brian Fair)



Forest health treatment before (left) and after (right) photos at El Sereno Preserve. El Sereno Open Space Preserve (Mike Mathiesen)



CONSERVATION GRAZING AND IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Conservation grazing is a land management tool Midpen uses to enhance grassland biodiversity, reduce fuel loads, and lower wildland fire risk while supporting local agriculture on the San Mateo County Coast. This year, Midpen improved its rangelands that form part of its Conservation Grazing Program across Cloverdale Ranch, La Honda Creek, Purisima Creek Redwoods and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserves. Improvements included upgrades to gates and corrals, two new agricultural wells and nearly 18,000 feet of new wildlife-friendly perimeter fencing. These efforts improve grazing distribution and support responsible cattle management and exclusion practices to safeguard nearby creeks and riparian habitats.



New stretch of fence and gate at Lobitos Grazing Unit, Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Matthew Shapero)



New corrals at the Red Barn, La Honda Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Matthew Shapero)



MADONNA CREEK DAM REPAIR PROTECTS WATERSHED

During the 2022-2023 winter storms, Madonna Creek Dam, located in Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve, sustained damage due to overtopping of an existing adjacent spillway. To prevent further erosion and structural degradation, Midpen completed repairs, including slope re-grading,



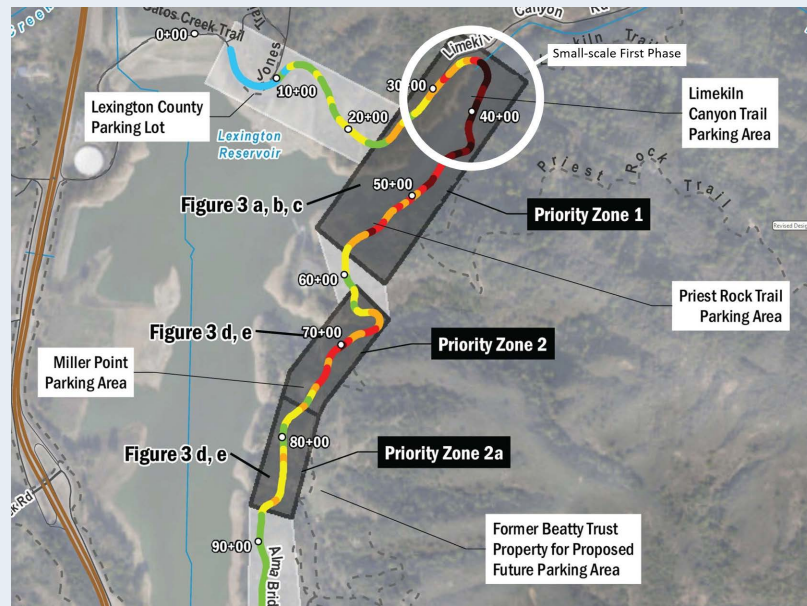
installation of erosion control measures, drainage improvements and site revegetation. These repairs are critical not only for dam safety, but also for the preservation of essential pond habitat for the federally threatened California red-legged frog, which relies on the dam and surrounding riparian areas. These efforts support long-term watershed protection and ensure the continued reliability of vital infrastructure within the preserve.

Completed construction of the engineered fill slope below Madonna Dam, Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Sean Yao)

ALMA BRIDGE ROAD WILDLIFE PASSAGE MOVES CLOSER TO IMPLEMENTATION

The Alma Bridge Road Wildlife Passage project reached key milestones this year with completion of 65% plans, specifications and estimates, and environmental clearance. Staff also worked with project partners and consultants to submit permit applications and begin 90% design for the first phase of the project, which Midpen will lead before transferring the project to Santa Clara County Roads and Airports to complete final design and construction. The project aims to reduce road-related mortality for California newts and rough-skinned newts as they move between upland foraging habitat and seasonal breeding grounds in Lexington Reservoir within the larger Los Gatos Creek watershed. Once complete, the project will support habitat connectivity, road safety and continued public access in the Sierra Azul area.

Alma Bridge Road Wildlife Passage (white circle represents the first phase of the project area).



Left: Existing Alma Bridge and roadway. (Midpen Staff)

Center: Close-up photo of a Newt making its way across a gravel path. Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (Karl Gohl)

Right: Midpen and Santa Clara County staff discuss proposed Alma Bridge Road newt passage improvements during a field visit. (Midpen Staff)

TRAILS AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Volunteers in our Trails and Stewardship Program actively contribute to a more resilient environment and an engaged community through hands-on landscape restoration. Volunteers also assist visitors along the trails, contribute to community science and increase community awareness through both short- and long-term programs.

Volunteer efforts this past year included:



Advanced Resource
Management
Stewards (ARMS)
volunteer hours



Volunteer trail
patrol hours



Trail patrol
reports submitted



Land and Community
Group Steward
volunteer hours



Land and Community
Group Steward
projects



Volunteers from the Trails & Infrastructure Program repaint a popular viewing platform. Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (Judd Volino)



Youth Land Stewards remove non-native plants. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Ellen Gartside)



Students from West Valley College posing for a photo on a group volunteer project. Coal Creek Open Space Preserve (Catherine Caldwell)



Public Access, Interpretation, Education & Outreach



NEW NEIGHBORHOOD ENTRANCE POINT OPENS AT RAVENSWOOD PRESERVE

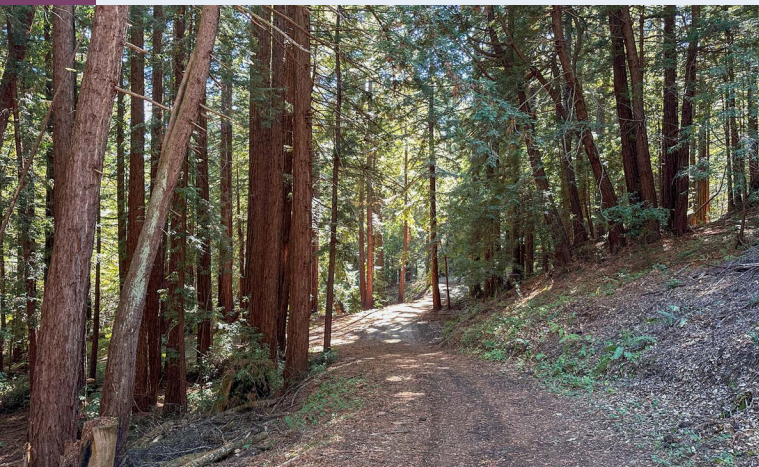
A new access gate, located at the end of Rutgers Street in East Palo Alto, is designed to provide safe, direct and convenient access to the San Francisco Bay Trail for nearby neighborhoods. This new entrance is providing safe, convenient access to the Bay Trail and open space, strengthening community connections to nature and supporting the health and wellbeing of residents. The project aligns with regional efforts to expand public access to bayside open space, and fulfills a key priority identified in the City of East Palo Alto's Parks Master Plan to improve connectivity to the Bay Trail for city residents. The automated gate is designed to balance accessibility with safety requirements, as it complies with San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) requirements to secure the Bay Trail outside operating hours (10 p.m.–5 a.m.), while maintaining convenient daytime access for the public.

The new entryway, which was completed at the end of March 2026, includes a solar-powered automatic pedestrian gate, security fencing, sidewalk extension, drainage improvements and clear trail signage. Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (Zach Alexander)



NEW TRAILS AT LA HONDA CREEK PRESERVE

The newly opened Coho Vista, Western Meadowlark, Lone Madrone and Lonely Forest trails total approximately six miles and connect all existing trails in this vast preserve into one system, totaling more than 17 miles. These new trails are also providing new access to the preserve's central area, and opening access to designated trails in La Honda Creek Preserve for mountain bikers for the first time. These new trails are a blend of major improvements to existing ranch roads and new, expertly designed and constructed trails designed by Midpen staff to provide an enjoyable visitor experience, protect the natural environment and stand the test of time.



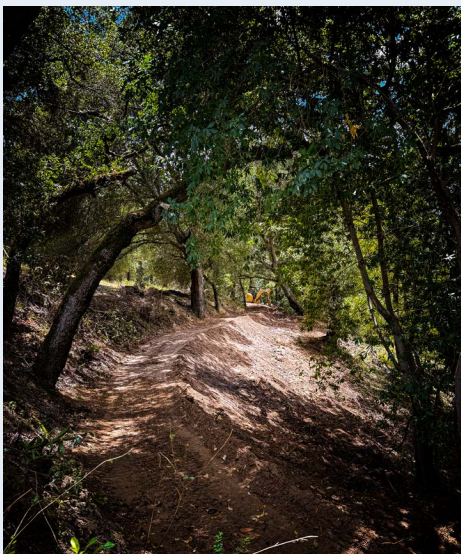
The Lonely Forest Trail (left) and Coho Vista Trail (right) opened to the public in late 2025. La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Frances Freyberg)



PARKING AND TRAIL CONNECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT BEAR CREEK REDWOODS



Construction began on the new North Parking Area at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve during the early summer. Staff secured permits, completed environmental review steps and pre-construction cultural and biological surveys, and notified neighbors and interested parties about construction and trail closures. Site work progressed with initial clearing and grading underway. Once complete in late 2026, the North Parking Area will create a new visitor gateway with 44 standard parking spaces, six equestrian trailer spaces, a two-stall vault toilet, bike racks, picnic tables and electric vehicle charging stations. Trail crews also began constructing a connecting and gently graded, easy-access trail that will extend nearly half a mile from the new North Parking Area.



The Bear Creek Redwoods Phase 2 Multi-Use Trail project also advanced in late FY26 with staff pursuing the design and technical studies for a creek crossing along this alignment. The next phase of work will add a new, quarter-mile multi-use connector between Salamander Springs Trail/Road and Briggs Creek, beginning the future continuous multi-use route between Middle and Lower Pete Siemens Trails.

Top: Clearing and grubbing work completed with rough grading underway at the North Area Parking location. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Alex Harker)

Left: Progress on the easy-access trail that will connect to the North Parking Area. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Alex Rodriguez)



MAJOR PROGRESS ON THE HIGHWAY 17 WILDLIFE AND TRAIL CROSSINGS

The Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings project aims to build a wildlife undercrossing and a separate multi-use trail overcrossing near Lexington Reservoir. These crossings will reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, connect more than 50 miles of regional trails, and link over 30,000 acres of protected public lands and habitat—providing safe passage for mountain lions, deer, and other wildlife across Highway 17.

Board tour of the potential Highway 17 over and undercrossing site locations. Santa Clara County (Midpen Staff)



This year, Midpen continued moving the project toward construction through close coordination with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Caltrans and the project's design team. Staff completed review of the 65% construction design documents and provided comments to support the next phase of design. Midpen also advanced the project's aesthetic design elements through internal review and coordination with partner agencies. Staff will refine the design package following Caltrans' preliminary review and bring it to the Board for review and approval. Midpen also continued working with Caltrans on maintenance agreement terms, a critical step toward securing approval to advertise the project for construction bids and advancing related coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Additionally, in June 2025, Midpen was awarded \$750,000 by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Program to support construction of the Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings project.

PURISIMA CREEK TRAIL REPAIR AND PONDS PROJECTS ADVANCE TOWARD CONSTRUCTION

Midpen advanced two major projects in Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve this year, moving both closer to construction. For the Purisima Creek Trail and Vehicle Access project, the project engineer completed 100% plans, specifications and estimates, bringing the project to a bid-ready stage. Staff also confirmed the California Environmental Quality Act review process and submitted Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program permitting notifications to the appropriate regulatory agencies. For the Purisima Ponds project, the engineer of record completed 100% plans, specifications and estimates in May 2026, and staff issued a request for bids in June 2026. Together, these milestones position both projects for bidding and construction next fiscal year, pending the necessary FEMA and Cal OES approvals.



FEMA and Midpen staff inspect washout damage along Purisima Creek Trail, where repairs are needed to restore patrol and emergency vehicle access following the 2022–23 winter storms. Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Midpen Staff)

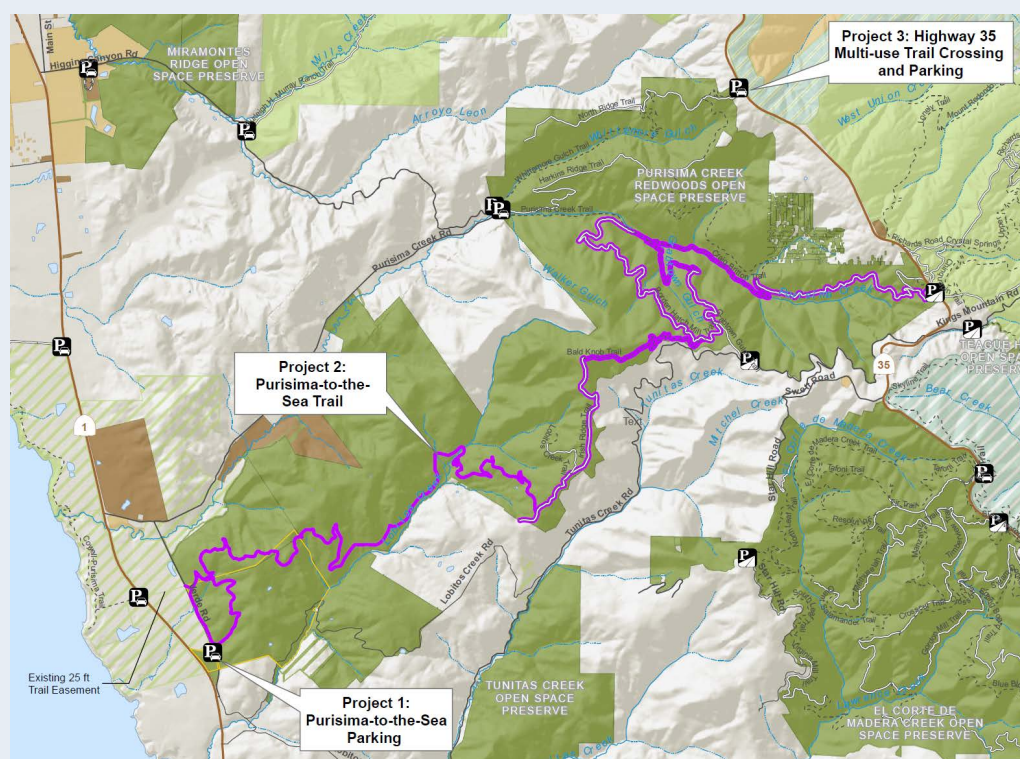


DESIGN AND PERMITTING ADVANCED FOR NEW PARKING AND TRAIL PROJECTS AT PURISIMA

Planning and design work advanced this year for several Purisima access projects. For the Purisima-to-the-Sea Parking project, the project team completed 65% design development, prepared the Coastal Development Permit application, initiated environmental review, pursued grant funding, completed tribal consultation with a Ramaytush representative, and continued coordination with POST on the North Trail easement portion of the project.

The Purisima-to-the-Sea Regional Trail project also moved forward through early permitting and technical work. Staff initiated environmental review, completed the geological report, supported a Wildlife Conservation Board site tour for potential new funding, initiated a fencing and gate plan in coordination with the Conservation Grazing Program and prepared the Coastal Development Permit application.

Design and permitting work also progressed for the Highway 35 Multiuse Trail Crossing and Parking Implementation project. The project team completed 65% design development, initiated environmental review, pursued grant funding and drafted a cost-sharing agreement with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Together, these milestones move the project closer to completing environmental review and permitting to prepare for construction in upcoming years.



Map of the Purisima-to-the-Sea Projects, with the solid purple line reflecting the proposed trail alignment.



BEAR CREEK STABLES PARTNERSHIP ADVANCES SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A new partnership between Midpen and Friends of Bear Creek Stables is advancing a sustainable future for the equestrian facility at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. In February 2026, the Board approved a two-year management agreement with the nonprofit Friends group to oversee the horse boarding and stables operations and provide public programming, with the official start date commencing on July 1, 2026. Under the new model, horse boarders will participate in public programming as volunteers, helping create a stronger connection between the stables and the broader community.

The project team also continued design development for upcoming large-scale capital repairs and working through the County Use Permit process to support long-term equestrian uses and expanded programming at the site. Staff advanced design documents to 90%, resubmitted the Use Permit application with newly requested information and revisions, and submitted a separate application to the County Department of Environmental Health for a new onsite water treatment system to support the construction of public restrooms. These efforts build on earlier repairs to water supply lines, driveway hardening and erosion control, while preparing for future improvements such as ADA-accessible parking, restrooms and a replacement hay barn.



Top: The view overlooking Bear Creek Stables. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Midpen Staff)

Left: Community support for Bear Creek Stables was highlighted during a Midpen Board meeting as the District advances a new partnership with Friends of Bear Creek Stables to sustain equestrian operations and public programming. (San Jose Mercury News)



EXPANDING PRESERVE ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH ADA IMPROVEMENTS

Over the past year, Midpen expanded preserve accessibility by completing ADA improvements at Pulgas Ridge, Skyline Ridge and Russian Ridge Open Space Preserves. At Pulgas Ridge, staff improved the main parking area by adding ADA-compliant parking spaces, loading zones, an accessible route to the restroom and trailhead. Along the Cordilleras Trail, drainage improvements, upgraded trail surfacing, and safer crossings were installed to improve accessibility.

At Skyline Ridge, staff rebuilt the ADA parking area near Horseshoe Lake and improved the pathways from the parking lot to the restroom, trailhead and Horseshoe Lake Dam rest area. In addition, new accessible parking stalls, upgraded trail surfaces, two ADA-compliant picnic benches, a new trail bench with companion seating space, retaining wall repairs and drainage improvements were also completed.

At Alpine Pond and the David C. Daniels Nature Center area, staff improved the pathway between the ADA parking area, restroom, trailhead and nature center. The completed work included a new crosswalk and sidewalk, improved trail surfacing along the Ipiwa Trail, drainage upgrades and replacement of the trail stair railings.

Together, these ADA improvements remove access barriers for people with disabilities and help more visitors safely access parking areas, restrooms, trailheads, trails, picnic areas and scenic rest stops across Midpen preserves.



Horseshoe Loop Retaining Wall (left) and Skyline Parking lot (right) ADA enhancements. Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (Zach Alexander)

IMPROVING VISITOR WAYFINDING AND MULTIMODAL ACCESS

Staff improved visitor wayfinding and multimodal access across several preserves this year. Trail junction numbers were installed at Rancho San Antonio and Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserves to help visitors navigate trails more confidently. Planning interns also completed initial field work ahead of schedule for future trail junction numbering at Windy Hill and St. Joseph's Hill Open Space Preserves.

At Purisima Creek Redwoods, staff installed new bike amenities to make it easier and more convenient for cyclists to visit the preserve, implementing one of the high-priority elements of the board-approved Purisima Multimodal Access Study. These improvements include new bike racks near the Redwood Parking Area restroom and a 10-bike corral-style rack, bike repair station, wheel brush and boot brush station near the Purisima Creek Road Parking Area restroom. Together, these efforts support safer, more convenient access for hikers, bicyclists and other preserve visitors.



New bike racks are installed near the Purisima Creek Road Parking Area. Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Tyler Smith)

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Docents are dedicated, long-term volunteers who are passionate about educating and inspiring Midpen preserve visitors. Docent naturalists lead interpretive hikes and bike rides throughout the preserves. At Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, outdoor education docents guide field trips for elementary school students, and on weekends, docents warmly greet visitors at the David C. Daniels Nature Center.

The following statistics show just how much docents have contributed to Midpen's mission this past year.



Interpretation &
Education Program
Docent hours



Docent naturalist
guided activities



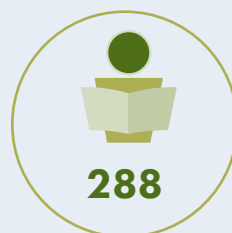
Docent-guided
activity participants



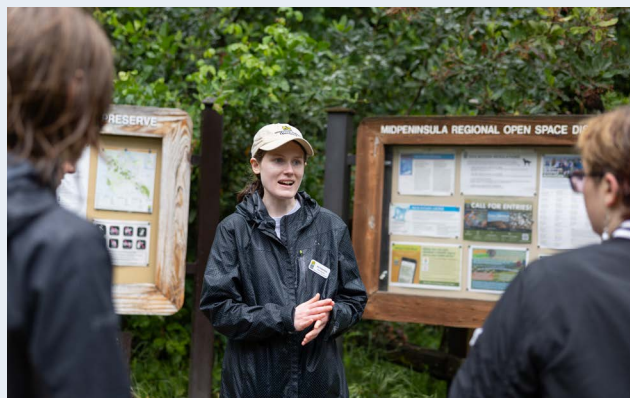
David C. Daniels
Nature Center visitors



School field trips
hosted by outdoor
education docents



Elementary school
students served



Participants engaging in a Docent Naturalist hike.
Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve (Max Lim)



Visitors exploring the David C. Daniels Nature Center.
Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (Shannon Mees)



Volunteers on an Outdoor Education Docent training hike.
Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (Jeff Butterworth)



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Through the Community Partnership Program, Midpen reaches a diverse range of people through partnerships with external program providers, who can serve as a bridge to introduce new visitors with the outdoors in a holistic and supported way. The program works to address specific barriers such as transportation, language support, safety concerns, knowledge about outdoor recreation and other support resources that provide comfort and ease to individuals who are unfamiliar with more wildland, natural settings. Supported community partners foster dialogue and create opportunities to gain greater understanding and awareness, as well as ensure that a wider range of community members are able to enjoy their public open space lands. This past year, Midpen programmatically and financially supported 11 community partners through this program.

Partner	Programs Provided	Primary Demographics Served
Latino Outdoors	8 community hikes and 1 virtual program	Latino families, youth, seniors and particularly new preserve users
Vista Center	4 hikes	Blind and visually impaired adults and seniors
Bay Area Older Adults	6 community hikes	Seniors with financial, physical and educational barriers
Saved by Nature	6 community hikes	All Bay Area residents and especially communities who have been historically underfunded
Branching Out	6 community hikes	LGBTQIA+
Boys and Girls Club of the Coastsides	2 community hikes	Coastside youth and young adult
Student Conservation Association	2-week long field project	Youth and young adult conservation career seekers
Vista Center	4 hikes	Blind and visually impaired people
ALAS	1 pilot hike	Latino families, youth, and seniors from the Coastsides
Vista Center Voyagers	1 pilot hike	Blind and visually impaired youth
Loma Mar Outpost	1 pilot presentation	Families, youth and seniors from the Coastsides



Student Conservation Association participants learning how to perform trail maintenance. Los Trancos Open Space Preserve (Midpen Staff)



A Boys and Girls Club of the Coastsides event at Rancho San Antonio. Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (Midpen Staff)



Ayudando Latinos A Soñar (ALAS) participants hiking at Cloverdale Ranch. Cloverdale Ranch Open Space Preserve (Midpen Staff)



A Latino Outdoors event at Bear Creek Redwoods. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Latino Outdoors)

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Informational tabling events provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction between Midpen representatives and the public, raising awareness of Midpen and the available public trails and activities, as well as allowing for meaningful conversations and direct feedback. Through a compelling and informative display, these events aim to spark interest in Midpen's work and encourage deeper community engagement in open space conservation.

This past year, a total of 56 outreach events were held across the region and included the following:

Pasifika STEM Fair

State Parks Coastal Wildflower Day

Sustainable Pescadero Spring Picnic

POST's Wild and Scenic Film Festival

Community Firewise Day

San Carlos, Pescadero, Half Moon Bay and Mountain View Pride Events

Cali Native Night

Los Gatos Youth Climate Town Hall

Climate Resilient Communities' East Palo Alto Coffee and King Tides Event

Portola Valley Wildlife Awareness Day



Above: Midpen rangers and staff answer questions from attendees at the Cupertino Earth Day Event. (Midpen Staff)

Left: Midpen staff speak with attendees at the Portola Valley Wildlife Awareness event. (Midpen Staff)



Assets and Organizational Support

CAREERS IN CONSERVATION FAIR ADVANCES REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Midpen hosted its first-ever Careers in Conservation Job Fair in March 2026, creating a regional platform for conservation career exploration, networking and workforce development. The event drew 1,300 registrants and more than 800 attendees from across the Bay Area and beyond, along with 35 participating organizations with 10 informational breakout sessions and a large networking tabling offering. Attendees explored career pathways, connected directly with employers and learned from sessions focused on conservation work, equity, Native American perspectives and inclusive approaches to environmental stewardship. Strong participation and partner feedback demonstrated the region's demand for accessible conservation career programming and positioned the event as a meaningful step toward cultivating the next generation of open space stewards.



Attendees explore conservation career pathways with Midpen staff and partner agencies at the Careers in Conservation Job Fair. (Frances Freyberg)

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

The 2024 greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, completed in FY26, has demonstrated a 37% emissions reduction from the 2016 baseline, nearly reaching the goal of 40% reduction by 2030. In FY27, staff will undertake a 10-year review of the Climate Action Plan. This review will focus on streamlining and updating inventory methods and identifying new strategic actions to continue driving long-term emissions reductions.



FOUR-YEAR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN APPROVED

Midpen is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. In FY26, Midpen completed the development of a four-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan. This Plan incorporates feedback gathered from internal assessments and is the culmination of extensive collaboration across the District. Progress on the four-year plan is well underway to enhance internal and external communications, engagement, and input on Midpen activities for greater outreach and inclusion. 13% of the initiatives are complete and 36% in progress. Specifically for Year 1 (FY27), 38% of initiatives have been completed and 38% are currently underway, demonstrating strong early implementation momentum.



Midpen Staff. (TOPO Collective)

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Through its Governmental Affairs Program, Midpen staff continued to advance policy solutions that support open space stewardship. The passage of District-sponsored Senate Bill 653 (Cortese) created a statutory definition of environmentally sensitive vegetation management (ESVM) that includes specific measures to enhance biodiversity while reducing overall fuel loads in a manner that provides sustainable benefits. Four out of five of the Legislative Program's Priority 1 bills were signed into law



by the Governor, with Midpen providing primary testimony for two of these bills including Assembly Bill 902 (Schultz) which integrates habitat connectivity into regional transportation projects.

ESVM Legislative Staff Tour. Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Joshua Hugg)

STRENGTHENING PRESERVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FIELD OPERATIONS

Midpen completed several facility and infrastructure projects in FY26 to support land management and field operations and to steward and maintain capital assets over the long-term. At Fremont Older Open Space Preserve, staff completed construction of the new Prospect Road culvert in November 2025, expanding the project from a targeted repair to a full culvert replacement for a more durable solution. At Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, staff completed a remodel of an existing single-family structure for use as a ranger residence to enhance onsite presence, monitoring and off-hours response. Midpen also advanced key facility planning work by completing a structural assessment, construction documents and securing a building permit for the Coal Creek barn roof replacement. Progress was also made on the development of a new ranger and corporation yard facility to meet long-term field staff operational needs in the Skyline Field Office region. Staff procured architectural design services, completed schematic designs and technical studies, and initiated coordination for water use and land use permitting and environmental review to support the Skyline Field Office Project.



A completed Prospect Road culvert replacement at the main access road into Fremont Older Open Space Preserve. Fremont Older Open Space Preserve (Zach Alexander)



Structure improvements completed to serve as a new ranger residence. Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Paul Kvam)

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

In addition to receiving the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers Budget Award for the 9th straight year, Midpen's Budget and Finance Department also received the Government Finance Officers Association's special **Triple Crown Medallion** for preparing annual comprehensive financial reports that embody the spirit of transparency.

The Triple Crown Medallion includes the following awards:

Distinguished Budget Presentation Award (10th year).

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report Award (eighth year).

Popular Annual Financial Report Award (seventh year).

Midpen's Procurement Program also earned a first-time recognition from two major award programs this year. The team received its first **Government Finance Officers Association Award for Excellence** for its submission, "Midpen's Procurement Program Transformation, and "How We Finally Got a Seat at the Table." The award recognizes innovative programs and practical, documented work that advances government finance practices. Procurement also received its first **Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award**, a national recognition honoring public procurement organizations for innovation, professionalism, productivity, e-procurement and leadership. Together, these awards highlight Midpen's commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement across both financial reporting and procurement practices.



GFOA 2025 Award for Excellence. (Sarah Araya)



Achievement of Excellence in Procurement 2026 Award. (NPI)

Finally, Midpen also received the Municipal Information Systems Association of California (MISAC) **Quality in IT Practices Award**, which recognizes local government agencies for implementing and documenting effective IT governance and operational practices, including security and privacy controls for a wide range of threats such as cyberattacks, human error and natural disasters.

FUNDING IMPACT: GRANTS PROGRAM

Over the past year, Midpen's Grants Program has been instrumental in advancing critical initiatives, securing essential funding and fostering partnerships that deliver tangible results. The program successfully secured six grant awards totaling **\$2.1 million** to support Midpen's mission. Furthermore, with **\$27.1 million** currently in pending funding requests, Midpen is well-positioned to unlock significant additional opportunities in the coming years.

We appreciate the incredible financial support from our FY26 funding partners:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Jack and Lynne Rosser

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water)

The Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation

The Orange County Community Foundation

