



## **Frequently Asked Questions** **Coastside Protection Program**

### **Introduction to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen)**

#### **Purpose**

Midpen's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of natural public open space and agricultural lands to protect the area's natural resources and provide public use and enjoyment.

#### **History**

Created in 1972, Midpen has preserved over 63,000 acres of public land and manages 26 open space preserves in the Bay Area. In 1976, the voters expanded Midpen to include southern San Mateo. In 2004, Midpen's boundary was extended to the coastline in San Mateo County. In 2014, Measure AA, a \$300 million general obligation bond was passed to help fund new open space protection and public access projects. The measure includes seven projects within the Coastside Protection Program Area.

#### ***Midpen's Coastside Mission Statement***

*"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"*

#### **Q. What is the Coastside Protection Program?**

**A.** Midpen's Coastside Protection Program kicked-off in 2004. The lands extend to the Pacific Ocean, from Pacifica to the Santa Cruz County line. The Coastside Protection Program expanded Midpen's service boundary to include 140,000 acres of the San Mateo County coast, serving nearly 40,000 coastside residents.

#### **Q. What is the Coastal Service Plan?**

**A.** Adopted in 2003, the Coastal Service Plan outlines the commitments that Midpen will provide to residents in the Coastside Protection Area. The Coastal Service Plan ensures that the coastal community's public input is taken into consideration when Midpen begins new projects on the coastside.

#### **Q. Why did Midpen extend its boundaries to the San Mateo coastal area?**

**A.** In 1997, Midpen received requests from individuals and organizations to work together to protect local open space and agricultural lands. In 1998, passage of Measure F showed that coast side residents believed that preservation of open space from Skyline to the coast was very important. Other park agencies such as California State Parks and San Mateo County Parks did not have the capacity for long-term management. Midpen helped fill the role in providing long-term stewardship of these lands.



***Q. How many acres have been preserved in the Coastside Protection Area?***

A. Midpen has protected about 10,000 acres. By 2019, Midpen is scheduled to meet a goal of managing approximately 11,800 acres of land within the Coastal Protection Area.

***Q. What are the local benefits of Midpen's Coastside Protection Program?***

A.

- Permanent protection of lands that are key to preserving the coast's rural character, scenic beauty, and local agricultural heritage
- Habitat restoration and protection for the area's unique and fragile species
- New recreational opportunities, including local and regional trails
- Support for protecting local working farms and ranches
- Docent-led outdoor programs, environmental education, and volunteer opportunities
- Open space and regional trail planning collaboration with the community and local partners
- Midpen pre-fire emergency planning with Cal Fire
- Midpen ranger emergency response to medical emergencies and fires on or threatening District lands in coordination with Cal Fire

***Q. What kind of governing power does Midpen have on the coastside?***

A. Midpen has no regulatory power over how people or other agencies use their own property. As a landowner, Midpen complies with the same permit requirements as private property owners.

***Q. How much did it cost coastside taxpayers to become part of Midpen?***

A. Nothing. The initial coastal annexation did not lead into any additional charge of District fees on coastal lands.

***Q. How does Midpen support agriculture on the coast?***

A.

- Midpen purchases agricultural land and makes improvements to support cattle grazing.
- Midpen leases these lands back to local ranchers and works with grazing tenants to preserve grassland habitats.
- Midpen sometimes leases back farm residences to agricultural tenants to support housing for agricultural workers.

***Q. Has Midpen ever used the power of eminent domain to gain coastside land?***

A. No. Midpen has acquired property from willing sellers only. Midpen's Board agreed to give up eminent domain in the Coastside Protection Program Area.



***Q. Is Midpen planning to do more to support the Coast?***

**A.**

- Adopted in 2014, Midpen's *Open Space Vision Plan* identifies new priority actions for open space preservation and regional trails in the Coastside Protection Program Area.
- Passage of Measure AA in 2014 provided \$300 million in District funding, of which up to \$126 million is available for coastal projects.
- The priorities for Measure AA projects include redwood forest protection, fisheries habitat restoration, conservation grazing, and providing the community greater access to trails and preserves.

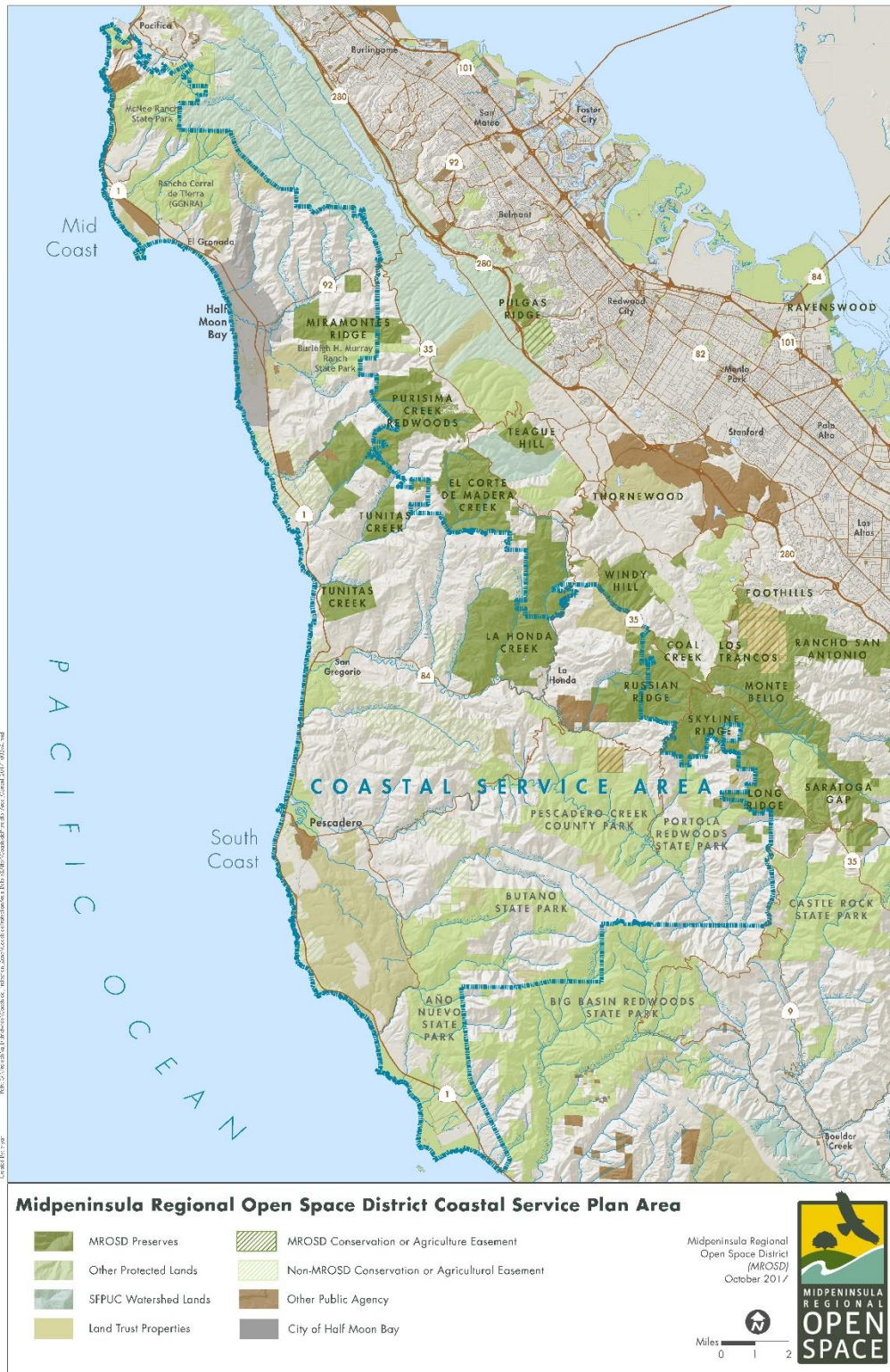
***Q. What are some upcoming public access opportunities coming up in the coastal area?***

**A.**

- **2016** - Mindego Hill area of Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve was opened. It includes 2.2 miles of new and existing trails through a working cattle ranch to the summit of Mindego Hill and a connection to many miles of trails within the preserve.
- **2017** - The lower area of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve is scheduled to open in Fall 2017, which includes 6 miles of new trail through coastal grasslands.
- **2018** - Trail planning for the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve will begin in 2018/19. In the future, users will be able to travel from the coastside to the upper regions of the preserve, with trails connections along Skyline Boulevard.
- **2019** - In partnership with the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and the City of Half Moon Bay, Midpen will purchase the uplands of Johnston Ranch in 2019 for trail use. The agricultural fields will be preserved in private ownership.
- **2020** - The Red Barn site at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve is a future public access project, scheduled to open 2020/2021. The site will have a new parking area and additional trails, including an "easy access" trail for a wide range of user abilities.



## Coastal Service Plan Map





Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## Contact List

### **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District**

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### **Additional Questions and Concerns?**

Midpen staff strive to provide high quality customer service. Please contact Midpen staff first with questions or to address any concerns or complaints. You can e-mail Midpen at [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org) or call at (650) 691-1200.

If you have reached out to Midpen staff and have been unable to resolve an issue, you can contact the Midpen Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson follows up on resident and neighbor inquiries to resolve misunderstandings that have not been resolved satisfactorily by staff. The Ombudsperson works independently and objectively to assist in maintaining positive relations with District residents and neighbors.

For more information about the Ombudsperson, please see Midpen's Good Neighbor Policy at [https://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/Good\\_Neighbor\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/Good_Neighbor_Brochure.pdf)  
The ombudsperson can be contacted by email through Midpen's Web site or at [ombudsperson@openspace.org](mailto:ombudsperson@openspace.org).

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