



# VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT • FALL 2026



The century-old red barn is still utilized for agriculture as part of Midpen's conservation grazing program on the Coastside, and is also important habitat for local bats. (Randy Weber)

## Bats in the Barn

Motion-Sensor Cameras Reveal New Information

The iconic red barn in Midpen's La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve has served many uses in its more than 120-year history. Today, it continues supporting coastal agriculture as part of Midpen's conservation grazing program, is a visual gateway to the rural San Mateo County coast for travelers along Highway 84, and is a roosting site for five different species of local bats.

Midpen wanted to better understand how bats were using the red barn and partnered with wildlife photographer Vishal Subramanyan to get a closer look. Subramanyan designed and set up a one-of-a-kind, motion-activated camera in an upper window that Midpen biologists annually observe bats flying in an out of. It took quite a bit of trial and error to even begin capturing properly

**"We were able to verify that these pallid bats were returning to the barn for almost the duration of their entire life, which showed an incredible site fidelity, and underscored the importance of this barn for this bats' survival."**

—Wildlife photographer Vishal Subramanyan

focused images of fast-flying bats entering and exiting the barn.

"I wanted to capture high quality photos of these bats for the first time and tell the story about how sometimes these animals rely on places that are unexpected," Subramanyan said.

What the photos revealed was part art, part science. The photos were so clearly detailed that bands placed by biologists on some of the pallid bats' legs nearly a decade ago were visible.

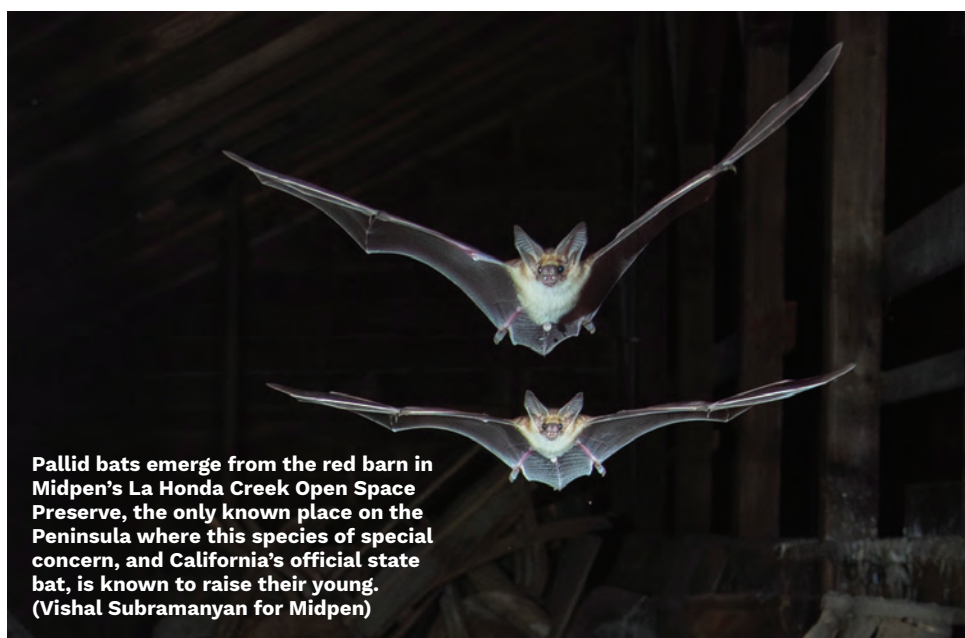
The red barn is the only known pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) maternity roost on the Peninsula, meaning pregnant females gather here to give birth and tend their young from April through August. This nocturnal species of special concern is named for its light-colored fur and was recently recognized as California's official state bat in part because they provide more than \$1 billion worth of pest control to California agriculture annually.

Subramanyan's photos captured all five species that utilize in the barn: pallid, Townsend's big-eared, Mexican free-tailed, California myotis and big brown bats.

"The photos provide information that help Midpen continue protecting the red barn as a roosting, maternity and potential hibernation site for bats, especially while conducting barn restoration projects or determining how and when people access the barn," said Midpen biologist Matt Sharp Chaney.

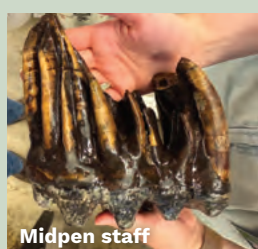
Within Midpen preserves on the San Mateo County coast, conservation and agriculture are closely intertwined. This aligns with Midpen's unique coastal mission which includes preserving rural character, encouraging viable agriculture, restoring the natural environment and providing for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment.

**Learn more at [openspace.org/bats](https://openspace.org/bats).**



Pallid bats emerge from the red barn in Midpen's La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, the only known place on the Peninsula where this species of special concern, and California's official state bat, is known to raise their young. (Vishal Subramanyan for Midpen)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



### Peering Into the Past

A mastadon tooth discovery and new interpretive signs explore preserve history.



Rebecca Hollan

### Free Docent Guided Activities

Midpen docent naturalists share their passion for nature with free activities this fall.



Zoe Miller

### Contest Results Announced

See the winning photos and learn what they mean to the photographers.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Capturing the Meaning of Room to Breathe



Ana María Ruiz

Recently, Midpen wrapped up another successful and awe-inspiring annual photo contest. Looking through the winning entries reveals more than simply pretty pictures. The six winning images shown below and chosen from the 125 submitted reflect to me the many ways our open space preserves provide *Room to Breathe* for all residents and visitors across our densely populated Bay Area region.

While exploring Midpen preserves, which are free and open to the public daily, the winning photographers contemplated a wide spectrum of scale and beauty found within nature, from the vast and far-reaching Milky Way to the tiny, individual spores found on the underside of a fern. They witnessed different moments in time, including

## Annual Photo Contest Winners Announced



experience. For me, photography is about connection and deeply rooted in family. With loved ones dispersed across the world, sharing photos is how we stay close. My grandfather is a photographer whom I look up to; one of the ways I connect with him is by sharing photos like this one, and he sends back voice notes with feedback and encouragement. After capturing the photo of this group of hikers navigating the ridge, our paths later intersected and we traded greetings. I'm grateful for these moments of connection through nature with people near and far."



a little estranged by the conditions of the light or weather, and suddenly you can see it in a new way — the way this delicate frond, spotted with spores, seemed to have unfurled to catch the sun at just this angle. As Darwin wrote so many years ago, 'It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank!'"



bobcat was endearing to me and made me stop and capture this image. I estimate the cat was approximately 15-18 months old and fully independent, but clearly still young and playful. Usually, when I observe bobcats, they are very focused on the task at hand (hunting, grooming, etc.) but this cat was clearly enjoying itself in play and still developing its survival skills which allowed for this unique image."



### PEOPLE IN NATURE

#### Shared Trails

##### Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

By Ksenia Kolosova

"On a clear August afternoon at Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve, the view stretched all the way to the ocean. Seeing a group of hikers enjoying the trail made the moment feel even more special because the scene bridged the things I love most about our local open spaces: the majesty of nature and the joy of shared

### PLANT LIFE

#### One Frond of a Tangled Bank

##### Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

By Rebecca Richardson

"While I was hiking at Skyline one day, the sun broke through the trees and was beaming like a spotlight on this one patch of moss and ferns. One frond was especially striking, between the illumination of the sun and the background of the shadows deeper into the trail. I love those moments when a familiar sight is

### WILDLIFE

#### Let Sleeping Cats Lie

##### Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

By Shravan Sundaram

"The low light conditions were challenging for photography, but it was fun to observe this cat chase California towhees, play with sticks, roll around in the dirt and nap right in front of me. It's truly amazing how much wildlife you can see close to home in our urban parks. The curiosity and energy of this young

### LANDSCAPES

#### Milky Way Chasing

##### Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

By Julie Elmqvist

"I am in love with the starry night sky, so to capture this image so close to home with the quiet beautiful open space that we are blessed with was magical. The quiet expanse of the night is my happy place."

### TRAIL LESS TRAVELED

#### Sunrise at Clouds Rest

##### Coal Creek Open Space Preserve

by Max Kessler

"Coal Creek Preserve boasts a sweeping view of the Bay with Mount Diablo and Dumbarton Bridge. Some mornings, like the one photographed, I wake up at dawn to reach a vista as the sun comes over the hills and lights up the Bay Area."

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL  
OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Midpen helps plants, animals and people thrive throughout the greater Santa Cruz Mountains region by preserving a connected greenbelt of more than 70,000 acres of public open space. Midpen is a public agency created in 1972 by a grassroots voter initiative to protect the green spaces in parts of Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties. We manage 27 open space preserves with more than 250 miles of trails for you to explore, free of charge, all year long.

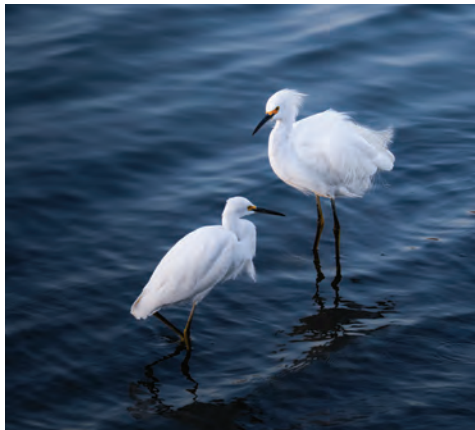
**Our mission** on the San Mateo County Coast: To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

While out in a Midpen preserve working on a project to enhance habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog, Brigid Lynch made a surprising discovery in a creek bed: a massive, fossilized molar. What initially looked like an unusual rock turned out to be an exceptionally preserved adult tooth belonging to a Pacific mastodon (*Mammut pacificus*). "I was down in the creek bed surveying rocks when I came across it and thought - that one is very weirdly shaped," explained Lynch, a geomorphologist with Balance Hydrologics.

Not knowing exactly what she had discovered, she took a photo and continued with her surveying work. It wasn't until the next day, as Lynch was reviewing the photos, that she learned it was a prehistoric fossil.

"As a geologist, I've gone out and seen stuff in the field, but definitely nothing as exciting as this," she added.

The Pacific mastodon is the newest species of mastodon to be recognized.



### ASPIRING PHOTOGRAPHERS (STUDENTS K-12)

#### Snowy Egrets in the Shifting Blue Water

##### Ravenswood Open Space Preserve

By Iris Apostolopoulos

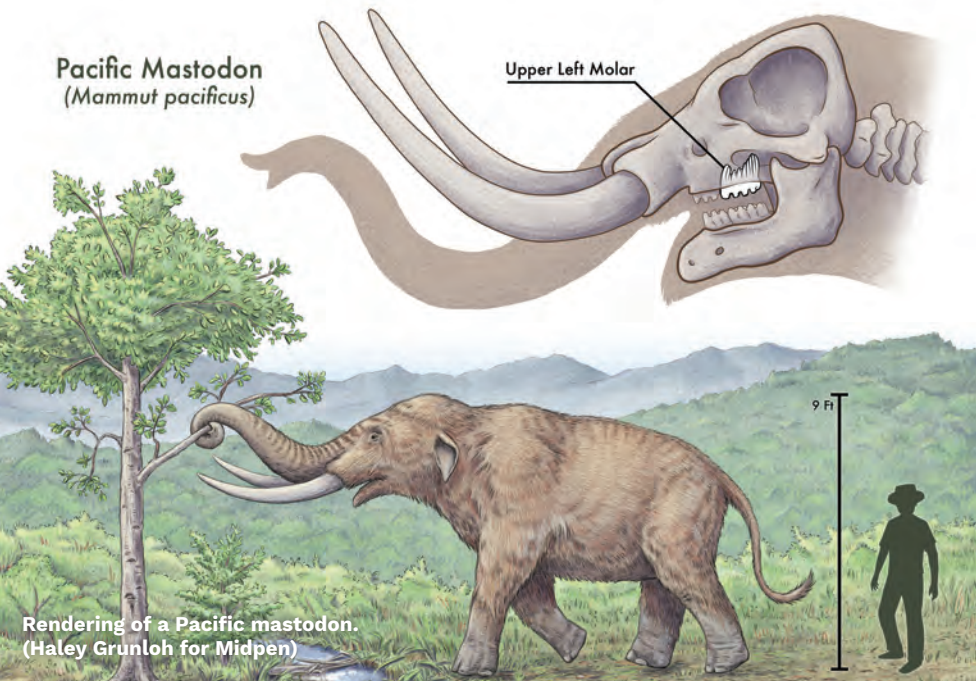
"I took this photo while on a walk with my brother. We usually see snowy egrets, but on this occasion there were three together (one just outside the frame) and although they typically fly away pretty quickly, these ones stayed for a long time, giving me the unique chance to really observe them and take several photos."

**"I enjoy wildlife photography because it makes me pay attention to small moments, and this was one of them; nothing dramatic was happening, but the contrast between the egrets' white feathers and the dark blue moving water stood out to me."**

—Iris Apostolopoulos

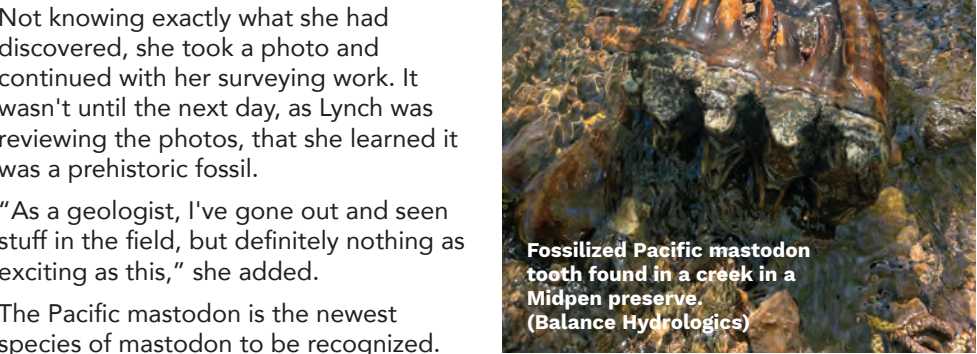
## Ice-Age Discovery

### Fossilized Mastodon Tooth Found in Creek



Once thought to be identical to the widespread American mastodon (*Mammut americanum*), recent genetic and anatomical studies revealed that Pacific mastodons were distinct, featuring narrower teeth, thicker leg bones and other differences. "The tooth itself is in immaculate condition. It's the most complete mastodon molar from our area, and the most spectacular mastodon molar that

the tooth itself is in immaculate condition. It's the most complete mastodon molar from our area, and the most spectacular mastodon molar that



## Fruity Fall

### There's More to Flowers Than a Pretty Blossom

In spring, wildflowers get all the love. As they should — they're gorgeous! But what then comes after the rainbow of petals and blooms abuzz with bees? In fall, it's time to focus on fruits.

Exploring Midpen's preserves is an easy way to start paying better attention to the wild fruits all around us. But first, some Botany 101.

Reproduction is the name of the botanical game. For a flower to become a fruit filled with seeds, two processes must happen successfully. First, pollination. A microscopic pollen grain from the male part of a flower has to get to the female part of another flower of the same species. Since plants can't



I've ever seen," said Wayne Thompson, paleontologist and owner of Pacific Paleontology. "I had chills and shivers up and down my spine, so I was super happy to see this discovery because it can teach us a lot about the creatures themselves as a species and about this particular area. It's another puzzle in the Ice Age saga that we can put into place."

These massive herbivores roamed this area during the Pleistocene epoch, spanning 2.5 million years ago until their extinction around 11,700 years ago. Unlike mammoths, which were also present in the area and fed on grasses, mastodons were considered browsers and used their massive trunks to strip leaves, soft shoots or fruits of high-growing and woody plants. Modern-day browsing wildlife include deer, moose, horses, elephants and giraffes.

"Alder [trees] were their favorite food," said Thompson. "We find [mastodons] on occasional dig sites with alder material preserved in their mouths and stomachs."

It's easy to imagine the Pleistocene era as an alien world filled only with long-extinct wildlife and vastly different flora, but in many ways the ancient Bay Area landscape shares many of the same iconic wildlife and plants we see today.

"This creek valley was not too much different back then," Thompson added. "However, the sea level was up to 300 feet lower during the various glacial peak periods of the Ice Age. Around 120,000 years ago, mammoths could walk out to the Channel Islands, and pygmy mammoth fossils are preserved there from that time period."

While megafauna and mastodons vanished at the end of the Ice Age, they shared the creeks and hillsides with modern native species.

Mountain lions and bobcats may have stalked prey alongside now-extinct saber-toothed cats and dire wolves, adapting to smaller game as the large herbivores vanished. Tule elk, coyotes and American badgers likely roamed the valleys inhabited by mastodons and bison-sized Jefferson's ground sloths.

the petals. To do this, the pollen grain "grows" a tube to reach the ovules, or eggs. This might take months or might not even happen at all.

If it does, over time, the ovary grows and matures, ripening into a fruit. Those pretty petals, no longer needed to woo pollinators, shrivel and usually drop off. Whether a tough pod like a lupine or the squishy berries of honeysuckle, the fruit is a womb, protecting the next generation of seeds.

Fruits are categorized by whether or not they are fleshy, like a thimbleberry, or dry, like the winged "helicopters" of a big-leaf maple tree. And still, botanists have more classifications based on how the fruits split open, such as a California poppy's long, scimitar-shaped "capsule" that can explode its dozens of black seeds up to six feet away.

A plant's partnership with animals doesn't end with pollination. Many fruits are tasty and nutritious, giving them a better chance of attracting animals and being dispersed away from the parent plant. Signs of this interdependence are all over in open space, from manzanita fruits in grey fox scat to stands of oak trees sprouted from caches of acorns forgotten by scrub jays. Nuts are fruits, just one-seeded ones.

**As with so many aspects of the natural world, much of the beauty of fruits is in their diversity. There are as many different kinds as there are flowers.**

**"That mastodons were out here in the same landscape that I'm in today, 11,000 years ago roughly, really drives home how important the work we do is to keep species from winking out forever."**

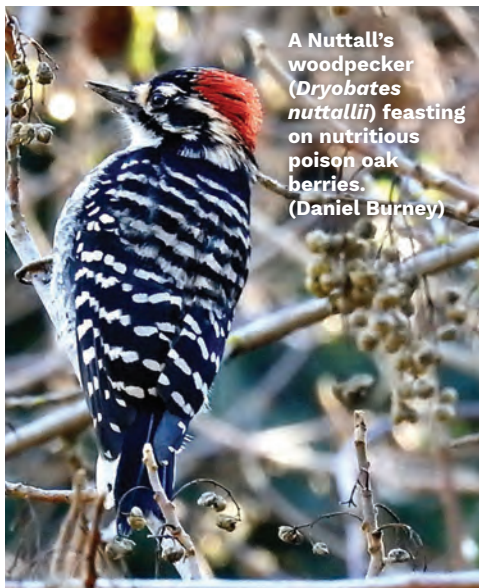
—Midpen Biologist Matt Sharp Chaney

Finding the remains of an extinct mastodon during a modern habitat improvement project serves as a powerful reminder of Midpen's mission of protecting and restoring the natural environment.

"For me, this find is interesting in that a lot of the work that I do at Midpen is associated with trying to keep species from going extinct," explained Midpen biologist Matt Sharp Chaney. "We work with a lot of threatened and endangered species, like Santa Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog and the recently listed mountain lions in our region. This find highlights for me that the presence of mastodons wasn't that long ago, in geologic time."

To ensure this discovery serves the public and the scientific community, the tooth has been donated to Stanford University's Doerr School of Sustainability's collection. The tooth will be made available to researchers who plan to use carbon dating to determine when the mastodon lived, their exact diet and the local climate conditions of its era.

"Fossils are our only opportunity to see into the past and the area's historic biodiversity," explained Christine Garcia, curator and manager of the Earth specimen collection at Stanford University. "We can look at our fossils to better understand Earth's history, past wildlife and help us make better predictions and better decisions about how we help our ecosystems and biodiversity thrive into the future."



Of course, human animals are partial to fruits, too. The Ohlone have gathered bay nuts, a fruit related to avocados, since time immemorial. Remnants of old orchards and vineyards are found in several Midpen preserves. Some fruits still play important ecological roles even after their seeds have been released. For example, the husks of wild cucumber fruits can be used as nurseries for juvenile insects.

What are your favorite wild fruits to observe in nature? Blue elderberries, toyons, madrones, globe lilies? Poppies, canyon oaks, or even poison oak berries, a vital winter food source for migratory and resident songbirds? Ready to go fruiting?

Please remember to observe fruits with your eyes or camera lens; foraging is prohibited in Midpen preserves.

# Fall 2026 Docent Naturalist Guided Activities



Are you ready to explore and enjoy the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District preserves? We invite you to discover these extraordinary places that include many thousands of acres of permanently protected open space, from redwood forest to bay shoreline. All guided activities are developed and provided by docent naturalists who have completed an extensive training program. These docents volunteer their time to enrich your experiences and share knowledge with you about natural and cultural history.

To pique your interest, take a look here at the list of guided activities and then refer to our website [openspace.org/guided-activities](https://openspace.org/guided-activities) for all additional needed details. The activities are FREE and only some require reservations. Please note that some preserves have more than one access point and some activities meet at a preserve or location other than where the guided activity will occur. If there is no special “where to meet” information then the activity meets at the preserve’s main parking area. For accessibility inquiries, reach out to [adacoordinator@openspace.org](mailto:adacoordinator@openspace.org) or by phone at (650) 691-1200 or by dialing the California Relay Service at 711.

## September

### What’s in a Name?

**Tuesday, September 1**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
Windy Hill Preserve  
Meet: Picnic Tables Roadside Parking  
3.5 miles [M](#)

**Explorer Hike: Redwood Ramble**  
**Wednesday, September 2**  
**10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve  
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area  
5 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

**Vultures: Nature’s Unsung Recyclers**  
**Sunday, September 6**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
Windy Hill Preserve  
Meet: Picnic Tables Roadside Parking  
3 miles [M](#)

**Earthquake Country**  
**Sunday, September 6**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Los Trancos Preserve  
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

**Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest**  
**Sunday, September 6**  
**1 – 4:30 p.m.**  
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve  
4 miles [M](#) [L](#)

**Four Preserves, One Hike**  
**Tuesday, September 8**  
**9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
7.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

**Scenic Aerobic Hike**  
**Wednesday, September 9**  
**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve  
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area  
6 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

**Happy Hour Qigong Hike**  
**Friday, September 11**  
**4 – 7 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
3.5 miles [M](#)

**Arachnophilia!**  
**Saturday, September 12**  
**6 – 11 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
3.5 miles [R](#) [M](#) [L](#)

**Summertime Berries**  
**Sunday, September 13**  
**9 – 11 a.m.**  
Windy Hill Preserve  
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area  
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

**Try Your Hand at Nature Journaling**  
**Sunday, September 13**  
**9:30 a.m. – Noon**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area  
1 mile [E](#) [F](#) [L](#) [W](#)

**Ramble at Rancho**  
**Monday, September 14**  
**9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Rancho San Antonio Preserve  
Meet: Lot 6  
5.5 miles [S](#)

**Explorer Hike: Sky Island Tour**  
**Wednesday, September 16**  
**10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Sierra Azul Preserve  
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area  
4 miles [S](#) [L](#)

**Spectacular Seeds**  
**Thursday, September 17**  
**10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Picchetti Ranch Preserve  
2.5 miles [E](#)

**Cool Canopy Climb**  
**Friday, September 18**  
**10 a.m. – 3 p.m.**  
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve  
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area  
7 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

**Sentinel in the Sky**  
**Sunday, September 20**  
**1 – 3 p.m.**  
Sierra Azul Preserve  
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area  
0.25 miles [M](#)

**Earthquakes in Your Backyard**  
**Sunday, September 20**  
**2 – 4:30 p.m.**  
Los Trancos Preserve  
2 miles [E](#)

**Signs of Fall**  
**Monday, September 21**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
Pulgas Ridge Preserve  
4.25 miles [M](#)

**Trail Trek Thursday**  
**Thursday, September 24**  
**9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve  
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area  
6 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

**Skyline Serendipity**  
**Friday, September 25**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area  
3 miles [M](#) [F](#)

**What’s in a Name?**  
**Saturday, September 26**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve  
Meet: Methuselah Roadside Parking  
3 miles [R](#) [M](#)

**Mid–Autumn Festival Moon Hike**  
**举头望明月·中秋登山赏月**  
**Saturday, September 26**  
**4:30 – 7:30 p.m.**  
Russian Ridge Preserve  
4 miles [R](#) [M](#)

**Hiking & Mindfulness**  
**Monday, September 28**  
**4 – 7 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
3.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

**October**  
**History on Two Wheels**  
**Saturday, October 3**  
**9:15 – 11:15 a.m.**  
Fremont Older Preserve  
11 miles [R](#) [B](#) [L](#)

**Explorer Hike: Fall Along the Fault**  
**Wednesday, October 7**  
**10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Los Trancos Preserve  
4 miles [M](#) [L](#)

### Legend

- [E](#) **Easy Hike/Walk:** Flat to gently rolling hills. Total elevation gain less than 200 feet. Leisurely pace. Frequent stops. Usually less than 3 miles.
- [M](#) **Moderate Hike:** Steeper or more frequent uphill grades. Total elevation gain 200 to 600 feet. Leisurely to moderate pace. Usually between 3 and 5 miles.
- [S](#) **Strenuous Hike:** Steep hills and/or long distances. Total elevation gain greater than 600 feet. Moderate to vigorous pace. Usually more than 5 miles.
- [B](#) **Bike Intermediate:** Intended for participants with dirt single-track riding experience; able to climb and descend steep and moderately rough trails. Recreational ride at a moderate/brisk pace; 8+ miles on a wide range of fire roads and single-track trails. For experienced riders in very good physical condition with good endurance.
- [A](#) **Advanced Mountain Bike Ride:** Intended for participants with dirt single-track riding experience; competent at climbing and descending steep and rough trails. Moderate to fast pace, 10+ mile ride on a wide variety of trail conditions. For experienced riders with a high level of physical fitness and excellent endurance.
- [L](#) **Meal/Snack Break:** Bring a lunch, dinner or snack as appropriate.
- [F](#) **Family Friendly:** Suitable for children; must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. See the activity description for any additional information.
- [W](#) **Wheelchair Accessible**
- [D](#) **Dogs:** All dogs must be on a leash, well-behaved and socialized. Please bring water for your dog and be prepared to carry out dog waste.
- [R](#) **Online Reservations Required:** [openspace.org/guided-activities](https://openspace.org/guided-activities) will accept reservations two weeks in advance of an activity date and allow a maximum of four people per reservation. No walk-up participation allowed. Please cancel your reservation if you can no longer attend.



**New Trails at La Honda Creek**  
**Friday, October 9**  
**9 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
La Honda Creek Preserve  
Meet: Allen Road Permit Parking Area  
6.5 miles **R S L**

**Wonders of Cherry Springs**  
**Saturday, October 10**  
**9:25 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.**  
Sierra Azul Preserve  
Meet: Camden Park & Ride Lot  
2.5 miles **R M L**

**Evening Explorations at Alpine Pond**  
**Saturday, October 10**  
**5:30 – 8:30 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area  
2 miles **R E F L**

**Four Preserves: Following in Ohlone Footsteps**  
**Sunday, October 11**  
**9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
8 miles **S L**

**Sentinel in the Sky**  
**Sunday, October 11**  
**1 – 3 p.m.**  
Sierra Azul Preserve  
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area  
0.25 miles **M**

**Scenic Aerobic Hike**  
**Wednesday, October 14**  
**10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Preserve Parking Area  
5 miles **R S**

**Habitat Restoration & Interpretive Hike**  
**Saturday, October 17**  
**9 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
Saratoga Gap Preserve  
4 miles **R M L**



**“The Hills are Alive” Afternoon Loop**  
**Saturday, October 17**  
**2 – 5 p.m.**  
Long Ridge Preserve  
4.5 miles **M F L**

**Night Sky Journey**  
**Saturday, October 17**  
**6:30 – 9:30 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
Meet: Skyline Ridge Equestrian Parking Area  
0.25 miles **R E F W**

**Ramble at Rancho**  
**Monday, October 19**  
**9 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
Rancho San Antonio Preserve  
Meet: Lot 6  
7 miles **S L**

**Explorer Hike: Bayside Birding**  
**Wednesday, October 21**  
**10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
Ravenswood Preserve  
3 miles **E L W**

**Horseshoe Lake to Alpine Pond**  
**Thursday, October 22**  
**10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
4.5 miles **M L**

**Sunset Serenity**  
**Saturday, October 24**  
**3 – 7 p.m.**  
Russian Ridge Preserve  
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area  
5 miles **S**



**Autumnal Beauty Loop Hike**  
**Sunday, October 25**  
**8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
Windy Hill Preserve  
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area  
7.5 miles **S L**

**Ride the Views from Gap to Gully**  
**Sunday, October 25**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Saratoga Gap Preserve  
13.5 miles **R A**

**Full Moon on Black Mountain**  
**Sunday, October 25**  
**4 – 8:30 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
6 miles **R S L**

**Full Moonrise from Borel Hill**  
**Monday, October 26**  
**4 – 7 p.m.**  
Russian Ridge Preserve  
4 miles **R M L**

**Trees & Friends**  
**Tuesday, October 27**  
**9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve  
5.5 miles **S L**

**Trail Trek Thursday**  
**Thursday, October 29**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Russian Ridge Preserve  
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area  
5 miles **S L**

**Signs of Fall**  
**Friday, October 30**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
Pulgas Ridge Preserve  
4.25 miles **M**

**Halloween & Hiking Hounds**  
**Saturday, October 31**  
**10:30 a.m. – Noon**  
Pulgas Ridge Preserve  
2.5 miles **R M D**



**November**

**Waterwheel Downhill Ride**  
**Sunday, November 1**  
**10 a.m. – 3 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Preserve Parking Area  
17 miles **R A L**

**Hiking the Highlights**  
**Monday, November 2**  
**10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve  
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area  
4 miles **M L**

**Explorer Hike: Lichen Eyes**  
**Wednesday, November 4**  
**10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Long Ridge Preserve  
5 miles **M L**

**Finding Awe in Nature**  
**Thursday, November 5**  
**10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve  
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area  
4 miles **M L**

**Fall Frolic With a View**  
**Friday, November 6**  
**1 – 4:30 p.m.**  
Long Ridge Preserve  
4.5 miles **M L**

**Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest**  
**Saturday, November 7**  
**1 – 4:30 p.m.**  
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve  
4 miles **M L**

**Ride the Views from Gap to Gully**  
**Sunday, November 8**  
**9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Saratoga Gap Preserve  
13.5 miles **R A**

**Sentinel in the Sky**  
**Sunday, November 8**  
**1 – 3 p.m.**  
Sierra Azul Preserve  
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area  
0.25 miles **M**

**Scenic Aerobic Hike**  
**Wednesday, November 11**  
**10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
5 miles **S**

**Observing Ecosystems in Transition**  
**Saturday, November 14**  
**9 – 10:30 a.m.**  
La Honda Creek Preserve  
1.5 miles **E**

**Giving Thanks**  
**Saturday, November 14**  
**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
Skyline Ridge Preserve  
4 miles **M F L**

**Tidal Marsh Appreciation**  
**Sunday, November 15**  
**9:30 a.m. – Noon**  
Ravenswood Preserve  
3 miles **E F W**

**Early Winter Exploration**  
**Sunday, November 15**  
**10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Long Ridge Preserve  
4.5 miles **M L**

**Ramble from Rancho to Black Mountain**  
**Monday, November 16**  
**8:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.**  
Rancho San Antonio Preserve  
Meet: Lot 6  
13 miles **R S L**

**National “Take a Hike Day” Dog Hike**  
**Tuesday, November 17**  
**12:30 – 5 p.m.**  
Windy Hill Preserve  
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area  
7 miles **R S L D**

**Return to the Green**  
**Wednesday, November 18**  
**9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve  
5.25 miles **R S L**

**Explorer Hike: Annual Turkey Trot**  
**Wednesday, November 18**  
**10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
Rancho San Antonio Preserve  
Meet: Lot 6  
5 miles **M L**

**Sawmills to Seminary to Open Space**  
**Thursday, November 19**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve  
3.5 miles **M**

**Signs of Fall: Afternoon Edition**  
**Friday, November 20**  
**1 – 4 p.m.**  
Pulgas Ridge Preserve  
4.25 miles **M**

**Counting Banana Slugs!**  
**Saturday, November 21**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve  
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area  
2 miles **R E F L**



**Fall & Winter Berries**  
**Saturday, November 21**  
**Noon – 2 p.m.**  
Windy Hill Preserve  
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area  
2 miles **E F**

**Manzanita Morning Hike**  
**Sunday, November 22**  
**9 a.m. – Noon**  
St. Joseph’s Hill Preserve  
3.5 miles **M**

**Full Moon on Black Mountain**  
**Tuesday, November 24**  
**3 – 7:30 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
6 miles **R S L**

**Ferns & Other Ancient Plants**  
**Saturday, November 28**  
**10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**  
Monte Bello Preserve  
3.5 miles **M L**



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[openspace.org/newsletters](https://openspace.org/newsletters)

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## COMING SOON! New Access at Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve

**Midpen's expert trail-building crews  
are hard at work on a new half-mile,  
easy-access loop trail that the public  
will be able to enjoy from a new parking  
area, also currently under construction.**

**Stay up-to-date on when it will open  
by joining our monthly e-newsletter.**



A new trail under construction at  
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve.  
(Frances Freyberg)

# Hike Through History

New Interpretive Panels Explore One Piece of a Preserve's Past

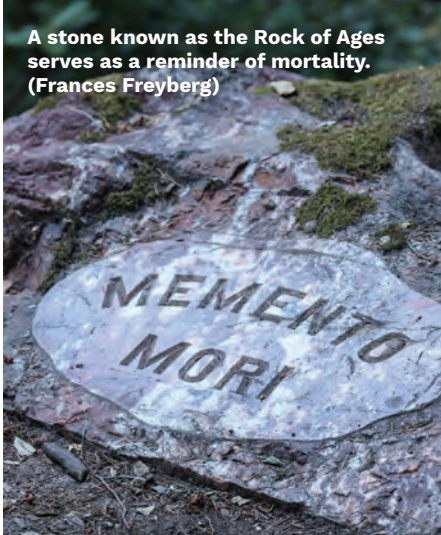
**T**hornewood Open Space Preserve is named for Edna and Julian Thorne, who bought the property in 1908 and established a summer home which still stands today. In addition to the Thornewood House, the land was the site of an expansive estate owned by August Schilling of the Schilling Spice Company. With remnants of Schilling's estate still visible on the land, four new interpretive panels have been installed along the Rock of Ages Trail, giving visitors a glimpse into the past. After cofounding the successful Schilling Spice Company in 1881, Schilling acquired land from the Thornes to

establish his 150-acre estate featuring a mansion he called Portola Hall. Following Schilling's death in 1934, the mansion was demolished in 1952 because it was a fire hazard. The Thorne estate was then bequeathed to the Sierra Club Foundation and, in 1978, Midpen purchased parcels that had been part of the Schilling estate. Today, visitors can explore pieces of Schilling's legacy in sites such as the Redwood Temple and Rock of Ages stone and pergola remnants by traveling along the 0.75-mile Schilling Trail from the preserve entrance until reaching the short, shaded Rock of Ages Trail.

**The Redwood Temple**  
Built around 1920, the Redwood Temple was one of many scenic features within Schilling's grand estate. Only the concrete foundation and fountain basin remain today. The structure was constructed of redwood logs and estimated to be 50 feet tall and 40 feet wide, featuring a central fountain that flowed across deep grooves in the concrete base into an artificial stream leading down to Schilling Lake below. The former lake is now being filled in naturally through the ecological process of succession, slowly transforming the artificial lake into a forested area. As the physical and plant community changes, this area will continue to provide important habitat for several sensitive wildlife species.

**The Rock of Ages**  
Also located along the trail is a jasper rock described by Schilling in his book of photos from the estate as the Rock of Ages. The rock is inscribed with the words, "Memento Mori," Latin for, "remember you must die," serving as a reminder of mortality. The rock likely comes from Fremont, near salt ponds once operated by Schilling and the Leslie Salt Company.

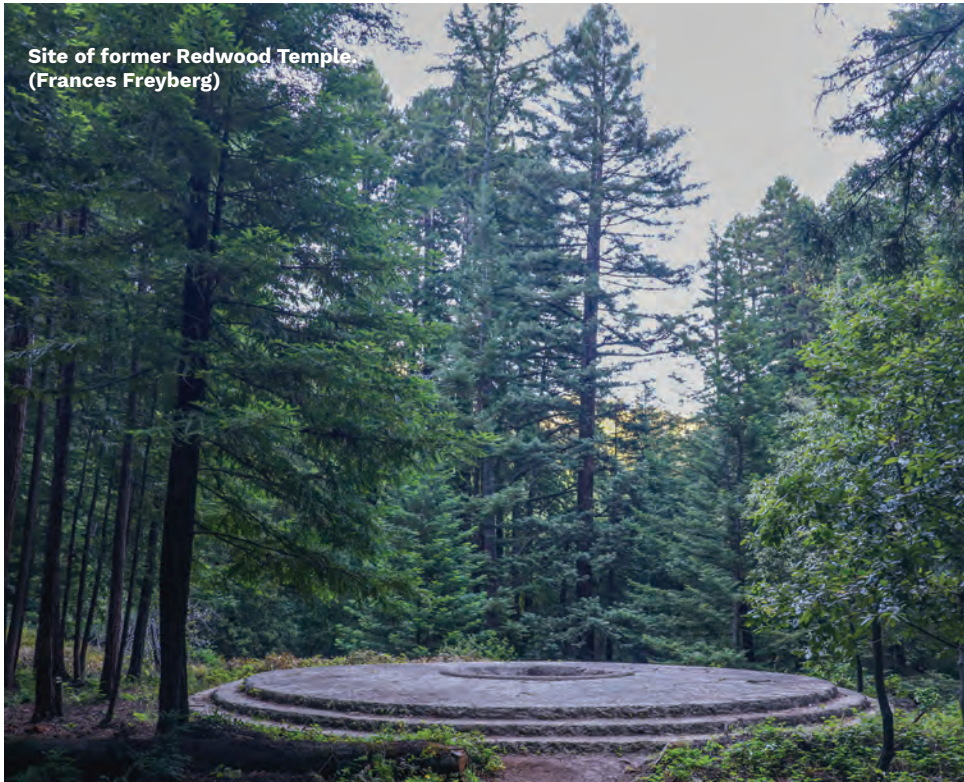
**The Pergola**  
Constructed by August Schilling for his guests' enjoyment, the redwood pergola represented the pinnacle of the artificial features along this trail, which once served as a roadway for both automobiles and carriages.  
**Learn more at [openspace.org/Thornewood](https://openspace.org/Thornewood).**



A stone known as the Rock of Ages serves as a reminder of mortality.  
(Frances Freyberg)

**“It was common during the late 1800’s and beyond for wealthy people from San Francisco to have rural summer estates with large mansions and elaborate gardens in the Santa Cruz Mountains.**

**Several of these former sites are now within Midpen preserves, including Thornewood.”**  
—Midpen Assistant General Manager Brian Malone



Site of former Redwood Temple  
(Frances Freyberg)