



MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
Celebrating Over 45 Years of Open Space Preservation

VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS ON OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION AND PROGRAMS • FALL 2017

Find Your Connection Atop Mount Umunhum

Mount Umunhum's towering summit opens to the public for the first time this fall thanks to you, local voters, who made it possible by passing Measure AA. Beginning Monday, September 18 we welcome you to connect with and experience this special place.

Gain Perspective



Enjoy breathtaking 360-degree views of our region including San Francisco, Monterey Bay, the Pacific Ocean and sometimes even the Sierras from ADA-accessible viewpoints.

Immerse Yourself in Nature



As the peak is restored its serpentine geology and unique community of plants and animals are revealed. Join our docents for a guided look at Mount Umunhum's natural history.

Discover a Rich History



Delve into Mount Umunhum's fascinating past going back thousands of years through interpretive exhibits. Download the audio tour to hear Air Force veterans, Native Americans and others tell their stories about life on the mountain.

Explore New Trails



Bike, hike or horseback ride (sorry, no dogs) up to the summit from Bald Mountain parking area using the 3.7-mile, newly-constructed Mt. Umunhum Trail. Enjoy views, woodlands and the headwaters of Guadalupe Creek.



Know Before You Go at www.mountumunhum.org



Prepare for all Weather
Conditions at 3,486 feet can be extreme, even on a pleasant day at lower elevations.



Get Directions
The summit can be reached by Mt. Umunhum Road or Trail. Plan ahead at www.mountumunhum.org.



Bring Water and Snacks
None are available at the summit.



Leave the Dog Home
And thanks for packing out what you pack in.

Help create Mount Umunhum's next chapter as one of the Bay Area's great publicly accessible peaks by sharing your stories and adventures atop Mount Umunhum on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram using #Mountumunhum and @mrosd.

A Message from the General Manager

Karl Gohl


Promises Kept

The arrival of fall always feels like a promise kept. Summer's heat turns brilliant wildflowers to parchment and bakes the hills golden brown. Much of life goes dormant, as it should. Then, signs of fall begin appearing everywhere in nature reassuring us that life-giving rains are ahead. Some stand out, like this year's abundant poison oak turning crimson, and noisy young Cooper's and red-shouldered hawks preparing to leave their parents. Others are subtle, like the deeper blue of the sky and that unexpected first cool morning so familiar in memory. And so it goes each year. I see changes going on all around me here at Midpen, too. Projects begun and successfully completed that are signs of promises we have made to you being kept. Some stand out, like the opening of Mount Umunhum's summit this September, with La Honda Creek and Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserves soon to follow suit. Others are harder to see, like legislation we're sponsoring that will enable us to purchase land in the upper Guadalupe Watershed and more quickly and cost effectively deliver public access projects to you. There are too many to mention. I encourage you to peruse the vision plan and our annual accomplishments report on our website and learn about the many ways we're serving the public by protecting, restoring and creating access to local open space.

"We consider it our privilege to complete these projects and keep our promises to you."

than ever before. A newly awarded \$1 million-dollar grant allows us to improve forest health in Bear Creek Redwoods. The restoration of Mount Umunhum's summit supports the return of species like the purple martin. There has even been a possible California condor sighting.

We consider it our privilege to complete these projects and keep our promises to you. Our hope is that each of you benefit from them by being able to breathe clean air, drink clean water, eat local food and get outdoors to observe the many signs in nature promising fall's arrival.


Stephen E. Abbors
General Manager

Midpen's projects are life giving, too. Improved stock ponds at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve had more California red-legged frogs in them this year



Midpen Staff



Douglas Winiowski



Randy Weber



Larry Turino



Chris Terry



Brian Fair



Karl Gohl



Karl Gohl



Julie Anderson

Clockwise starting in upper left: La Honda Creek OSP; Red-shouldered hawk, Rancho San Antonio OSP; Purisima Creek Redwoods OSP; View from Sierra Azul OSP, Guadalupe Reservoir in distance; La Honda Creek OSP; Monte Bello OSP; Purisima Creek Redwoods OSP; Blue Martin Nesting box, Sierra Azul OSP; and Bear Creek Redwoods OSP

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Outdoor Activities

FALL 2017 | September – October + November

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

GENERAL INFORMATION

With this newsletter in hand and a sense of exploration in mind, we invite you to enjoy the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District preserves. These 26 extraordinary preserves include over 62,000 acres of permanently protected open space, from redwood forests to bay shoreline. We encourage you to participate in the wide variety of adventures offered inside *Outdoor Activities*.

The activity durations listed are averages based on our experience. However, always allow extra time in your schedule for unusual circumstances, or the slower pace of some groups. You can help by arriving a little early to ensure a prompt start for each activity. The activities are FREE; some require reservations.

All activities are developed and led by docents who have completed a District training program. These docents volunteer their time to share their knowledge of nature with you. For more information about the volunteer docent program, visit the District's website at www.openspace.org, or phone the District at 650-691-1200 weekdays, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. 🦋

Rancho San Antonio
Open Space Preserve



Karl Gohl



Frank Crossman

Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

To Ensure Your Experience is Enjoyable, Please Review this Information

- Please be courteous to other trail users. Stay alert and make your presence known to other trail users well in advance, particularly when approaching from behind.
- Heavy rain cancels hike activities unless otherwise noted in the description. If there is light rain or the threat of rain, go to the meeting place. Docents will plan to meet participants – hike route or duration may be altered due to weather and trail conditions.
- Participants are encouraged to make personal decisions on comfort and willingness to drive or hike in stormy or threatening weather conditions.
- For a mountain bike or horseback ride, heavy rain within two days prior to the activity will cancel it.
- Hikers yield to horses; bicyclists yield to hikers and horses. Observe trail speed limits (15 mph max; 5 mph when passing).
- Equestrians must provide their own horses (no stallions). Lead lines are required and breast collars are recommended for all horses, and helmets must be worn by all riders under age 18.
- For all hikes, wear boots or sturdy walking shoes appropriate for rugged trails. Dress in layers (T-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, sweater, and/or jacket). The weather can be unpredictable. No matter what season it is, be prepared for rain, wind, fog, or sun!
- Carry ample drinking water with you. Water is not available on preserves.
- Bring sun protection (hat, sunscreen) and consider insect repellent.
- Restrooms are not always available; please plan accordingly.
- Please carpool if possible. Parking is limited in some locations.



Anne-Sophie Gaudet

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Special Note

If you have a group of 8 or more people who would like to attend a docent-led activity listed here, please contact the Docent Program Manager to discuss in advance at 650-691-1200 or docent@openspace.org. Other arrangements may need to be considered for your group. 🦋

Header photo: Monte Bello Open Space Preserve by Frank Crossman

WHERE TO MEET

Directions to preserves featured in this season's schedule of *Outdoor Activities* are listed below. Some preserves have more than one access point. Some activities meet at different locations than where the activity will actually occur. If an activity does not meet at the preserve listed, or if there is more than one preserve access point, the alternate meeting location will be indicated in italics on a separate line following the preserve name as part of the activity header. (For example: **Skyline Ridge Meet: Russian Ridge** or **Russian Ridge Meet: Caltrans vista point**). If no information follows the preserve name, then refer to the detailed directions for the preserve or alternate meeting location listed below.

Note: Restrooms are not always available; please plan accordingly.

PLEASE CHECK THE LISTED DESCRIPTION TO MAKE SURE YOU MEET YOUR ACTIVITY LEADER AT THE CORRECT LOCATION.

DANIELS NATURE CENTER

Park at the Russian Ridge Preserve parking lot on the northwest corner of the Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) and Page Mill/Alpine Road intersection (across Skyline Blvd. on the right). Walk to Alpine Pond at Skyline Ridge Preserve by going through the tunnel under Alpine Rd. The Nature Center is a small gray building on the east shore of Alpine Pond.

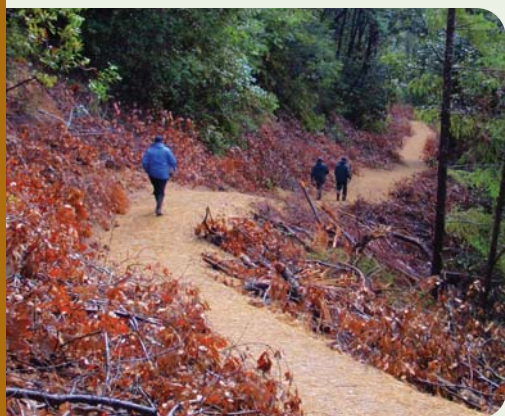
EDGEWOOD COUNTY PARK

Exit I-280 at Edgewood Road. Head east on Edgewood Rd. about 1 mile to the park entrance on the right (at Old Stagecoach Road).

EL CORTE DE MADERA CREEK

Meet at the Preserve parking lot located on the west side of Highway 35 (Skyline Boulevard), about 1-mile south of the Caltrans Skeggs Point parking area and 2.7 miles north of the intersection of Highway 35 and Highway 84.

Skeggs Point: Meet at the Caltrans vista point on the east side of Skyline Boulevard, about 4 miles north of La Honda Road (Highway 84) and 1.5 miles south of Kings Mountain Road. Please note that Caltrans prohibits a left turn into the parking lot when approaching from the north along Skyline Blvd.



El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve

FREMONT OLDER

Meet at the Preserve parking lot on Prospect Road in Cupertino. Exit Highway 85 at De Anza Boulevard. (From northbound 85 turn left on De Anza Blvd. and from southbound 85 turn right on De Anza Blvd.) Travel on De Anza Blvd. (toward the mountains) for about 0.5 miles. Turn right on Prospect Rd. At the first stop sign, turn left and cross the railroad tracks to remain on Prospect Rd. Follow Prospect Rd. for 1.3 miles, turning left after the Saratoga Country Club, until you reach the Preserve parking lot.

LONG RIDGE

Peters Creek Trailhead: Meet at the roadside pullout area on the west side of Skyline Boulevard, 3.6 miles north of Highway 9 or 3.3 miles south of Page Mill Road. If you are coming from the north on Skyline Blvd., the pullout is just past Portola Heights Road on the right. From the south, the pullout is near the Palo Alto city limits sign on the right. There is additional parking across Skyline Blvd. at the Grizzly Flat trailhead (Santa Clara County Park).

LOS TRANCOS

Meet at the Preserve parking lot on Page Mill Road (across from Monte Bello Preserve), 7 miles west of I-280 or 1.5 miles east of Skyline Boulevard. Those traveling from I-280 on Page Mill Rd. should allow approximately 35 minutes travel time.

MONTE BELLO

Meet at the Preserve parking lot on Page Mill Road (across from Los Trancos Preserve), 7 miles west of I-280 or 1.5 miles east of Skyline Boulevard. Those traveling from I-280 on Page Mill Rd. should allow approximately 35 minutes travel time.

PICCHETTI RANCH

From the intersection of I-280 and Foothill Expressway, go 3.5 miles southwest (toward the mountains) on Foothill Boulevard/Stevens Canyon Road. Turn right on Montebello Road. The Preserve is 0.5 miles up Montebello Rd. on the left.

PULGAS RIDGE

From I-280, exit Edgewood Road. Drive 0.75 miles on Edgewood Rd. toward San Carlos/Redwood City. Turn left (north) on Crestview Drive, then immediately turn left on Edmonds Road. Follow Edmonds Rd. to the Preserve parking lot entrance on the right.

PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS

North Ridge parking lot: This entrance is on Skyline Boulevard next to the now closed Kings Mountain Country Store. The parking lot is 4.5 miles south of Highway 92, and 8.1 miles north of Highway 84.

Purisima Creek Road entrance: From the Highway 92 and Highway 1 intersection in Half Moon Bay, travel south on Highway 1 approximately 4.3 miles. Turn left on Verde Road. After turning on Verde Rd. and traveling 0.25 miles, continue straight to remain on what becomes Purisima Creek Road. (Verde Rd. splits off to the right.) Travel approximately 3.7 miles on Purisima Creek Rd. to reach the Preserve.



Karl Gohl

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

RANCHO SAN ANTONIO

From I-280, take Foothill Boulevard south and turn right almost immediately onto Cristo Rey Drive. Continue about 1 mile, veer right around the traffic circle, and turn left into the park. Go to the lot farthest to the right and meet near the restroom at the bottom of the hill.

RUSSIAN RIDGE

Meet at the main Preserve parking lot on the northwest corner of the Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) and Page Mill/Alpine Road intersection (across Skyline Blvd. on the right). Those traveling from I-280 on Page Mill Rd. should allow approximately 40 minutes travel time.

RUSSIAN RIDGE (continued)

Mindego Gateway parking lot: From I-280, exit Page Mill Road and head west. Drive about 9 miles to the junction with Skyline Boulevard, cross over Skyline Boulevard and on to Alpine Road. Continue on Alpine Rd. for 1.5 miles. Parking area is on the right. Allow 45 minutes travel time from I-280.

SIERRA AZUL

Jacques Ridge parking lot: Exit Highway 85 at Camden Avenue. (From northbound Hwy. 85 turn left on Branham Avenue and then turn left on Camden Ave. and from southbound Hwy. 85 turn left on Camden Ave.) Travel on Camden Ave. about 1.6 miles. Turn right on Hicks Rd. and travel for about 6.3 miles. Turn right on Mt. Umunhum Rd. The Preserve parking lot will be on the right.

SIERRA AZUL (continued)

Bald Mountain parking lot: Exit Highway 85 at Camden Avenue. (From northbound Hwy. 85 turn left on Branham Avenue and then turn left on Camden Ave. and from southbound Hwy. 85 turn left on Camden Ave.) Travel on Camden Ave. about 1.6 miles to Hicks Road and turn right, and travel for about 6.3 miles. Turn right on Mt. Umunhum Rd. and continue for about 1.7 miles. The parking lot will be on the left.

SKYLINE RIDGE

Meet at the Preserve parking lot on Skyline Boulevard located one mile south of the Skyline Blvd. (Highway 35) and Page Mill/Alpine Road intersection. After entering the Preserve, turn right and go to the farthest parking lot. Those traveling from I-280 on Page Mill Rd. should allow approximately 45 minutes travel time.

WINDY HILL

From I-280, exit Alpine Road in Portola Valley. Go south on Alpine Rd. about 2.9 miles to Portola Road (the first stop sign). Turn right on Portola Rd. and travel 0.8 miles to the parking lot on the left side of the road. 🌿



Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve

KEY TO SYMBOLS



Easy Hike: Flat to gently rolling hills. Total elevation gain less than 200 feet. Leisurely pace.



Moderate Hike: Steeper or more frequent uphill grades. Total elevation gain 200 to 600 feet. Leisurely to moderate pace.



Strenuous Hike: Steep hills and/or long distances. Total elevation gain greater than 600 feet. Moderate to vigorous pace.



Suitable for children: must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. See the activity description for any additional information.



Wheelchair accessible.



Stroller accessible: Jogger-type suggested.



Meal/snack break: Bring a lunch, dinner, or snack as appropriate.



Dogs on leash: Well-behaved and socialized dogs are allowed, and must be controlled on a maximum six-foot leash.



Equestrian Ride: Riders under age 18 must wear a helmet. Lead lines are required and breast collars are recommended for horses. Equestrians must provide their own horses (no stallions).



Reservations required: Reservations for activities requiring them will only be accepted within the two (2)-week period just before the activity date. To make a reservation or a cancellation, visit the District's Web site www.openspace.org/reservations or call 650-691-2150 (enter 2). If you provide information prior to the reservation acceptance period, it will not be processed. Please limit your reservation to a maximum of four (4) people.



Easy Nature Ride: Slow, leisurely pace, minimal climbing, and multiple stops to observe nature.



Introductory Mountain Bike Ride: Outings include demonstration and practice emphasizing trail etiquette and techniques required for dirt riding followed by a 5- to 7-mile ride on fire roads and single-track trails, with occasional natural history stops. Riders should be in good physical condition to perform climbs and descents.



Intermediate Mountain Bike Ride: 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.



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.

Note: For all rides, bicyclists must wear helmets and bikes must be in good condition, and the participants must be very familiar with the operation of gears and brakes. Mountain bikes are strongly recommended for all except the Easy Nature Rides. Easy Nature, Introductory, and Intermediate Rides include a natural history component that is provided by the docents during the rest stops. Advanced rides develop and improve mountain bike skills – any natural history discussion stops are secondary to the overall riding experience.



Healthy Parks, Healthy People – Bay Area: Introductory level and easy to moderate activities for people of various ages. Some activities have a health and wellness focus. Visit www.hphpbayarea.org.

Wonders of Cherry Springs Pond

Saturday • September 2

Sierra Azul • 3 mi

Meet: See text below

9:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Greg Azevedo, Huey-Shin Yuan, David Schwaderer, Emma Finter, Nina Bell, and District staff Ellen Gartside for an easy hike at a special access area of this Preserve that will traverse mixed evergreen forest and grassland. You'll discuss local history, and learn about the pond environment and flora of the area while enjoying views of Santa Clara Valley and the surrounding Preserve. **(Note: Directions will be sent. This activity includes some off-trail hiking; long pants are recommended and closed-toe shoes are required.)** Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after August 19.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday

September 2 and 3

Daniels Nature Center

12:00noon to 5:00pm



As seasons change, so do the interactions of life at the edge of Alpine Pond...bring family and friends to discover the David C. Daniels Nature Center on Saturdays and Sundays this fall between 12:00 noon and 5:00 pm. You can enjoy an audio nature tour (loaner listening devices available to "check out"), view displays about natural communities and larger-than-life pond strata mobiles, take a pond prow, study live aquatic organisms "borrowed" from Alpine Pond with the assistance of a docent, or enjoy a picnic with your companions on nearby tables (pack out your own trash please!). Autumn is an amazing season for a visit. **(Note: The Nature Center hours change on October 14 to 11:00 am – 4:00 pm for the remainder of the season.)**

Earthquake Hike

Sunday • September 3

Los Trancos • 2-3 mi

2:00pm to 4:30pm



Join docents Dave and Judy Boore for a fun and educational hike along the San Andreas Fault. On this leisurely stroll, you'll stop to discuss the wonder of plate tectonics, examine remnants left by thousands of major earthquakes, and learn how to prepare for future earthquakes. This easy hike with minimal elevation change is well suited for children and those needing a less physically challenging outing.

Bats of Alpine Pond

Sunday • September 3

Skyline Ridge • 1.5 mi

Meet: Russian Ridge

6:30pm to 8:30pm



Join docents Karen DeMello and Jan Hintermeister to learn some facts and dispel some myths about one of the world's most misunderstood mammals: the bat. As the sun goes down, you'll hang out near the David C. Daniels Nature Center to see whether bats appear over Alpine Pond, returning to your car before darkness sets in. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Signs of Fall

Wednesday • September 6

Pulgas Ridge • 4.25 mi

9:00am to 12:00pm



Enjoy seeing a variety of oak trees, plants with berries, and dusky-footed woodrat nests on this hike with docents Liz Foreman and Mary Jo Colton. You'll hike along the Blue Oak, Dick Bishop, Dusky-footed Woodrat, and Cordilleras Trails, and take in the scenic views from the top of the ridge as you explore for signs that fall is approaching. This moderately-paced hike includes some hills and uneven terrain with an elevation gain of about 800 feet.

Explorer Hike: Late Summer Saunter

Wednesday • September 6

Picchetti Ranch • 4.5 mi

10:30am to 2:30pm



Join docents Kate Gudmundson, Lynn Jackson, and Mary Brunkhorst on this leisurely-paced hike along the beautiful Zinfandel Trail. Learn about and observe different strategies used by various plants to cope with dry summer conditions as they wait for winter rains. You'll lunch at picnic tables next to Stevens Creek. After lunch you'll hike back through forest, chaparral, and oak woodland while making an approximately 600-foot elevation gain.

Ohlone Footsteps

Saturday • September 9

Skyline Ridge • 2 mi

Meet: Russian Ridge

10:00am to 12:00pm



Prior to European settlement, the Bay Area was home to a mosaic of Native American tribal communities and many frequented the Santa Cruz Mountains. Join docents Kim Borick and Sarah Schoen for a leisurely-paced hike with frequent stops along the Ipiwa and Sunny Jim Trails. Historical perspective, including California native people's management and use of indigenous plants, animals, and raw materials will be shared. You'll discover what brought the first people time and again to these mountains. Engaged children 12 years and older are welcome. Bring lunch to enjoy at Alpine Pond following the hike.



Jack Geescheit

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Plants and Animals of Alpine Pond

Saturday • September 2

Skyline Ridge • 2 mi

Meet: Russian Ridge

12:00pm to 2:30pm



Who lives here? Why? How can you tell? Join docents Gerri Tiernan and Kim Borick for a leisurely exploration along the Pond Loop, Sunny Jim, and Ipiwa Trails. You'll hear a little history and learn about plant communities and habitats while looking for evidence of animals. The hike begins with a visit to the David C. Daniels Nature Center for a guided exploration of the displays. While the Nature Center is open to visitors of all ages, the hike is appropriate for adults and capable school age children.

Interested in Visiting Mount Umunhum on a Guided Hike?

Check this schedule now for a few opportunities to explore this unique and special area of Sierra Azul Preserve with docents, and continue to check online at www.openspace.org/what-to-do/calendar to find additional activities at the summit area and nearby trails.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
September 9 and 10
Daniels Nature Center
12:00noon to 5:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.



Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

Cool Workout Among the Redwoods

Sunday • September 10
Purisima Creek Redwoods • 10 mi
Meet: North Ridge parking lot
9:00am to 1:30pm



Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Ray Curiel, and Vivian Neou for a fast-paced exploration of giant redwoods and enjoy cool air on what could be a hot day. You'll experience a 1,500-foot elevation gain workout along the Whittemore Gulch, Purisima Creek, Craig Britton, Harkins Ridge, and North Ridge Trails with a refreshing lunch break among the trees.

The Redwood that Got Away

Tuesday • September 12
El Corte de Madera Creek • 9 mi
Meet: Skeggs Point
10:00am to 3:30pm



Explore the interior of this Preserve with docents Ed North and Huey-Shin Yuan. You'll visit a tafoni sandstone formation and an old growth redwood tree, and hike the Resolution Trail named in honor of those who lost their lives in the 1953 DC-6 plane crash. This fast-paced hike will include approximately 1,500 feet elevation gain along the Tafoni, Fir, Resolution, Methuselah, and Timberview Trails.

Scenic Aerobic Hike I

Wednesday • September 13
Skyline Ridge • 5 mi
10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Louise Casey, Fran Keeler, Huey-Shin Yuan, and Mary Brunkhorst for a moderately-paced, exercise-focused hike on trails with beautiful scenery. "Scenic Aerobic" hikes are offered at different preserves every second and fourth Wednesday. The route of each hike will be determined by the docents based on current trail and weather conditions. (Note: These hikes will vary in difficulty from moderate to strenuous; please refer to the difficulty rating to choose a hike suitable for you.)

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
September 16 and 17
Daniels Nature Center
12:00noon to 5:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

Redwood Oxygen

Sunday • September 17
Purisima Creek Redwoods • 5 mi
Meet: Purisima Creek Road entrance
10:00am to 3:00pm



Find out why you'll be breathing some of the cleanest air in the world with docents Bob Segalla and Sam Berry on the Purisima Creek and Craig Britton Trails. This moderately-paced, 500-foot elevation change hike is suitable for capable children and has a downhill return. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after September 3.**

Introductory Geocaching

Sunday • September 17
Bear Creek Redwoods • 2 mi
Meet: See text below
10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Jenny Whitman and an REI Outdoor School Instructor to search for geocaches, or hidden treasures, using GPS units supplied by REI. This fun and interactive outing is great for all ages. You are encouraged to bring small trinkets (inexpensive children's toys, less than 2 inches in length are ideal) to use as trade items for the cache. This activity is an introduction to geocaching and is geared toward the first-time geocacher, but all are welcome. (Note: Directions will be sent. This activity includes some off-trail hiking; long pants are recommended and closed-toe shoes are required.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after September 3.

Explorer Hike: Redwood Autumn

Wednesday • September 20
El Corte de Madera Creek • 4 mi
10:30am to 2:30pm



You'll enjoy hiking under the forest canopy with docents Lynn Jackson, Dennis Smith, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst. This moderately-paced hike with a 200-foot elevation gain will take you along the Sierra Morena, Methuselah, and Fir Trails with a visit to an old-growth redwood tree. You'll be introduced to history of the Preserve, and learn about the flora and fauna of this mixed evergreen and redwood forest.

Skyline Birds and Berries

Friday • September 22
Skyline Ridge • 4 mi
8:30am to 12:00pm



Late September is a good time to see birds not usually seen at other times of the year such as migrant duck, hawk, and songbird species. Docents Bill and Marilyn Bauriedel, and Farhana Kazi will identify and discuss various bird habits and habitats with you, as well as be on the lookout for fall nuts and berries. This leisurely-paced walk with an elevation gain of about 400 feet will take you to Horseshoe Lake and Alpine Pond, and through chaparral and oak woodland habitats.



El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve

Stop In and Explore

Saturday • September 23
Daniels Nature Center
12:00noon to 5:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

(Note: The Daniels Nature Center will be closed on Sunday, September 24 to allow volunteers to attend the annual recognition event held in their honor.)

Scenic Aerobic Hike II

Wednesday • September 27
El Corte de Madera Creek • 6 mi
Meet: Skeggs Point
10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Fran Keeler, Huey-Shin Yuan, and Mary Brunkhorst for a moderately-paced, exercise-focused hike on trails with beautiful scenery. "Scenic Aerobic" hikes are offered at different preserves every second and fourth Wednesday. The route of each hike will be determined by the docents based on current trail and weather conditions. (Note: Scenic Aerobic Hike II is a strenuous hike with about 1,000 feet of gain.)

Oaks of Monte Bello

Wednesday • September 27
Monte Bello • 3.5 mi
10:00am to 2:00pm



Join docents Steve Brugler, Noa Doitel, and Susan Bernhard to learn about the oak trees along the White Oak and Canyon Trails. You'll also meet oak enthusiast Al Keuter, who will help explain the complexities of oak identification. This loop hike has 600 feet of elevation change and the pace will be leisurely, giving you time to study the characteristics of five species, including the lesser known Shreve oak.

Bridges of Rancho San Antonio

Thursday • September 28
Rancho San Antonio • 6.5 mi
9:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Denise Lawrence and Mark Prusinowski for a moderately-paced journey to learn about the streams and watershed of this Preserve. You'll cross many bridges as you hike the Lower Meadow Trail, ascend the Upper Wildcat Canyon and Upper High Meadow Trails for about 850 feet of elevation gain, and have a well-deserved lunch break at the High Meadow Vista. You'll return via the Wildcat Loop and Rogue Valley Trails while observing signs of autumn along the way.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
September 30 and October 1
Daniels Nature Center
12:00noon to 5:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.



Join Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and other agencies and organizations around the San Francisco Bay Area in celebrating our coast, bay, and waterways! September 16 – October 8, 2017 is Coastweeks, an annual celebration of our coastal and water resources. Saturday, October 7, 2017 is the 2nd annual Bay Day. You're invited to go on a District docent-led hike or check out other events and activities at coastal.ca.gov and bayday.org.

OCTOBER

Earthquake Hike

Sunday • October 1
Los Trancos • 3 mi
2:00pm to 4:30pm



Join docents John Seyfarth and Paul Billig, and please see the activity description for September 3.

Explorer Hike: Ridge to Creek

Wednesday • October 4
Monte Bello • 4.5 mi
Meet: Long Ridge
10:30am to 2:30pm



Enjoy the shade of California bay laurels and Douglas firs in neighboring preserves as you hike from ridge to creek with docents Kate Gudmundson, Dennis Smith, Lynn Jackson, and Mary Brunkhorst. This moderately-paced out and back hike will meet at the Peters Creek Trailhead at Long Ridge Preserve and then travel down through Stevens Creek County Park to reach Monte Bello Preserve by way of the Grizzly Flat Trail. After a lunch stop near Stevens Creek, you'll make an approximate 1,000-foot elevation gain return up through the canyon.

History and Nature

Friday • October 6
Picchetti Ranch • 4.5 mi
10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Gerri Tiernan and Jayita Bhojwani to learn a little history, explore a seasonal pond, and enjoy a lovely view on a moderately-paced hike along the Orchard Loop and Zinfandel Trails. You'll hike into adjoining Stevens Creek County Park for a brief rest stop at picnic tables. A visit to historic Picchetti Winery (on your own) is an option at hike's end.

Introductory Geocaching

Saturday • October 7
Los Trancos • 2-3 mi
10:00am to 1:30pm



Join docents Debbie Mytels and Nina Bell, and REI Outdoor School instructor, and please see the activity description for September 17. (Note: This activity includes some off-trail hiking; long pants are recommended and closed-toe shoes are required.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after September 23.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
October 7 and 8
Daniels Nature Center
12:00noon to 5:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

Trees and Tafoni Tour

Monday • October 9
El Corte de Madera Creek • 10 mi
Meet: Skeggs Point
10:00am to 3:00pm



Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan and Vivian Neou to explore this beautiful and heavily-forested Preserve along the El Corte de Madera Creek, Tafoni, Fir, Resolution, North Leaf, Methuselah, Giant Salamander, Timberview, Manzanita and Sierra Morena Trails. You'll take a side trip to visit a tafoni sandstone formation and an old growth redwood tree. This will be a fast-paced aerobic workout with stops along the way to learn the history and plants of the Preserve.



Dean Birney

Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

A Longer Long Ridge Hike

Tuesday • October 10

Long Ridge • 6.5 mi

10:00am to 2:00pm



Join docents Mark Prusinowski and Denise Lawrence for an invigorating hike through cool forests to the heights of this Preserve. You'll gain 1,000 feet of elevation while enjoying the hills and valleys along the Peters Creek and Long Ridge Trails. This loop will be extended by an out-and-back hike on the Hickory Oaks Trail to Turtle Rock for a lunch break, and to admire the scenic views of Big Basin State Park, Butano Ridge, and the Pacific Ocean. This moderately-paced hike will have several short but steep climbs, and will include frequent stops to investigate interesting plants and animals that you encounter.

Signs of Fall

Tuesday • October 10

Pulgas Ridge • 4.25 mi

1:00pm to 4:00pm



Join docents Liz Foreman and Lina Mesa, and please see the activity description for September 6.



Scenic Aerobic Hike I

Wednesday • October 11

Fremont Older • 5 mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 13. **(Note: These hikes will vary in difficulty from moderate to strenuous; please refer to the difficulty rating to choose a hike suitable for you.)**

Cool Forests and Beautiful Views

Thursday • October 12

Monte Bello • 8 mi

10:00am to 3:00pm



Join docents Ed North and Huey-Shin Yuan for a brisk-paced hike with an elevation gain of approximately 1,500 feet as you travel through this beautiful Preserve. You'll experience the cool forests of the Stevens Creek Trail and beautiful views from the top of Black Mountain and Bella Vista Trails.



Stefher Smith

Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

Friggatriskaidophobia Cure

Friday • October 13

Russian Ridge • 5 mi

5:00pm to 10:30pm



Are you afraid of Friday the 13th, especially this close to Halloween? A walk across the fields and through the woods of Russian Ridge Preserve is the cure for you. Join docents Paul Billig and Katherine Greene for a sunset and night hike. This moderately-paced hike includes approximately 500 feet of elevation gain and a sunset viewing stop on Borel Hill where you'll enjoy the dinner you brought with you. Bring a jacket to wear for cool conditions after the sun goes down, as well as a small flashlight and any lucky charms you need to chase away your fears. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after September 29.**

Good Neighbors/ Bad Neighbors

Saturday • October 14

Picchetti Ranch • 4.5 mi

9:30am to 1:30pm



Explore plant relationships within their natural communities with docents Tara Lee, Jayita Bhojwani, and Judy Sencenbaugh along the Orchard Loop and Zinfandel Trails. You'll discover unseen interactions and interesting survival strategies on this moderately-paced hike with about 400 feet of elevation change. The hike will continue into adjoining Stevens Creek County Park for a brief snack stop by the creek. Come learn which plants are good neighbors, and which ones you do NOT want moving in next door!

Ohlone Medicine

Saturday • October 14

Long Ridge • 5 mi

10:00am to 2:00pm



Native Americans, including California Indians, had a great number of uses for the plants growing on their lands, an important use being medicinal. Join docents Sarah Schoen and Kim Borick on this hike exploring the Peters Creek and Long Ridge Trails, with a lunch break overlooking the western slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains. There will be frequent starts and stops as you learn how selected native plants were used to treat ailments before the introduction of modern medicine.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday

October 14 and 15

Daniels Nature Center

11:00am to 4:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2. **(Note: The Nature Center hours change this weekend to open and close an hour earlier.)**

Trees for Health and Happiness

Sunday • October 15

Picchetti Ranch • 2-3 mi

9:30am to 12:00pm



Who doesn't like trees? Trees are beautiful and can lower the temperature several degrees on a hot day. Did you know trees have a highly developed sensory system that can communicate with other trees? Come learn about the strategies that enable trees to survive. In a natural oak grove you'll be encouraged to relax and open your senses with some simple practices from the Chinese system of qigong. Join docents Maureen Draper and Padma Satish on this easy walk along the Zinfandel Trail. Capable children who like to hike are welcome.



Deane Little

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

History of Bear Creek Redwoods

Sunday • October 15
Bear Creek Redwoods • 2 mi
Meet: See text below
10:00am to 12:30pm



Docents Jenny Whitman, Collin Lim, and Meena Sundaram will take you and your family on an easy hike around the former Alma College site and surrounding Preserve. You'll explore history through stories and be shown an amazing collection of photographs and maps dating back to the 1880's of the three lavish estates that once stood on the property. Among the photographs are pictures of the Alma College campus when it was being used as a finishing school for Jesuit Priests. **(Note: Directions will be sent.)** **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after October 1.**

Explorer Hike: Nuts and Berries

Wednesday • October 18
Skyline Ridge • 4-5 mi
10:30am to 2:30pm



You'll enjoy fall in open space as you head to a chestnut farm in the less explored area of this Preserve with docents Dennis Smith, Lynn Jackson, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst. On this leisurely-paced hike along the Tree Farm Trail with only a minor elevation change, you'll enjoy fall colors, birds on the pond, and many berries and other seeds as the flowers, shrubs, and trees finish this year's reproductive cycle.

The Stegner Special

Saturday • October 21
Long Ridge • 5 mi
10:00am to 2:00pm



Join docents Susan Bernhard and Ann Reisenauer for a moderately-paced hike along the Peters Creek and Long Ridge Trails. You'll identify native plants in the forest and stream habitats along the trails, and with luck, glimpse wild turkeys foraging for acorns. You'll stop midway for a snack and a few words at the Wallace Stegner Bench. The location marks one of Stegner's favorite places and has sweeping views of the Santa Cruz Mountains and Pacific Ocean.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
October 21 and 22
Daniels Nature Center
11:00am to 4:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

Scenic Aerobic Hike II

Wednesday • October 25
Russian Ridge • 6 mi
Meet: Mindego Gateway parking lot
10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 27. **(Note: Scenic Aerobic Hike II is a strenuous hike with about 1,000 feet of gain.)**



Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

Woodrats In Autumn

Friday • October 27
Pulgas Ridge • 4.5 mi
9:30am to 1:30pm



As nature enters its dormant season the landscape opens up and you're able to see deeper into the underbrush where dusky-footed woodrat nests are abundant. Leaves will crunch underfoot and you may hear deer, squirrels or birds before you see them. Acorns will be ready for harvesting by these animals and there may still be a few berries or rosehips coloring the landscape. You'll gain about 450 feet of elevation on this moderately-paced hike. Docents Farhana Kazi, and Bill and Marilyn Bauriedel will share what is seasonally special about this Preserve.

Wonders of Time Past

Saturday • October 28
El Corte de Madera Creek • 6-7 mi
10:00am to 3:00pm



You'll witness the effect of centuries of nature at work in this beautiful Preserve including an 1,800 year old redwood tree and a rock whose formation started millions of years ago. Join docents Marie-Anne Neimat and Judy Sencenbaugh to explore the densely wooded Sierra Morena, Fir, Tafoni, and Resolution Trails with an elevation gain of 800 - 1,000 feet. You'll stop for lunch at the vista point where you'll enjoy a lovely view before heading back on the same route.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
October 28 and 29
Daniels Nature Center
11:00am to 4:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

Search for the Everlasting

Sunday • October 29
Picchetti Ranch • 4 mi
10:00am to 3:00pm



Join docents Bob Segalla and Greg Azevedo to enjoy the wonders of this Preserve so close to home. You'll discover if the cudweed plant (sometimes called everlasting) smells like maple syrup to you. A lovely view awaits along the Orchard Loop and Zinfandel Trails and you can listen to the sound of Stevens Creek as you enjoy lunch at a Santa Clara County Park picnic area. Capable children can handle this moderately-paced hike with a couple of 200-foot climbs. A visit to Picchetti Winery is optional (on your own) at the hike's end.



Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

NOVEMBER

Explorer Hike: Mindego Gateway

Wednesday • November 1
Russian Ridge • 5 mi
Meet: Mindego Gateway parking lot
10:30am to 2:30pm



Join docents Lynn Jackson, Dennis Smith, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst for a moderately-paced hike along the Mindego Hill Trail. This out-and-back hike will include two 400-foot climbs. You'll discover the historic and current uses of this land and learn about some of the residents that make this area so special. The beautiful views you'll enjoy will be an added bonus.



Long Ridge Open Space Preserve

Clues to Local History

Friday • November 3
Long Ridge • 4.6 miles
10:00am to 1:30pm



On this loop hike with docents Debbie Mytels and Mike Alexander you'll follow the shady Peters Creek Trail, pass by the green "carpet" at Jikoji Pond, and stop for a snack while taking in the terrific view from the Wallace Stegner Bench on the Long Ridge Trail. Along the way you'll seek out signs of this Preserve's colorful history and hear a few stories of local lore including why Stevens Creek County Park's parking area on Skyline Boulevard is called "Grizzly Flat".

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
November 4 and 5
Daniels Nature Center
11:00am to 4:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

History of Bear Creek Redwoods

Sunday • November 5
Bear Creek Redwoods • 2 mi
Meet: See text below
10:00am to 12:30pm



Join docents Jenny Whitman, Paul Billig, and Meena Sundaram, and please see the activity description for October 15. **(Note: Directions will be sent.)** Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after October 22.

Introductory Geocaching

Sunday • November 5
Los Trancos • 2 mi
10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Kim Borick and Collin Lim, and REI Outdoor School instructor, and please see the activity description for September 17. **(Note: This activity includes some off-trail hiking; long pants are recommended and closed-toe shoes are required.)** Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after October 22.

View from the Ridge

Sunday • November 5
Long Ridge • 4 mi
10:30am to 3:30pm



Join docents Bob Segalla, Steve Brugler, and Theresa Walterskirchen to explore what this Preserve has to offer. You may see newts along the lush Peters Creek Trail and enjoy a tranquil pond, green forests, ridges, and grasslands on the Long Ridge Trail. You'll stop for an ocean view at the Wallace Stegner bench. This moderately-paced, 600-foot elevation change hike is suitable for capable children.

Earthquake Hike

Sunday • November 5
Los Trancos • 3 mi
2:00pm to 4:30pm



Please see the activity description for September 3.

Mt. Umunhum Exploration

Monday • November 6
Sierra Azul • 12 mi
Meet: Jacques Ridge parking lot
9:30am to 3:00pm



Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Ed North, and Vivian Neou to explore the newly opened Mt. Umunhum area. You'll travel on the new trail from Bald Mountain parking lot to the top of Mt. Umunhum and then hike all the way down to the start of Woods Trail. You'll enjoy a fast-paced aerobic workout while appreciating the spectacular view of the Bay Area. This hike includes over 2,000 feet of elevation gain. **(Note: Participants will carpool to the trailhead and have an option for a shorter 8-mile hike.)** Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after October 23.

Scenic Aerobic Hike I

Wednesday • November 8
Saratoga Gap • 4-5 mi
10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 13. **(Note: These hikes will vary in difficulty from moderate to strenuous; please refer to the difficulty rating to choose a hike suitable for you.)**

Close Encounters with Lichens

Friday • November 10
Long Ridge • 4.5 mi
10:00am to 2:00pm



You'll make a close inspection of specialized organisms and gain an appreciation of their fascinating role in the environment, and learn about a unique relationship between fungi and algae that are paired in every lichen. Docents Marilyn and Bill Bauriedel, and Farhana Kazi will help you find and identify a few of the common lichens growing on trees, fence posts, shrubs, and rocks. You'll also enjoy the beauty of this spectacular Preserve on this moderately-paced hike with elevation gain of about 400 feet.

Diversity in Ecological Communities

Saturday • November 11
Windy Hill • 4.5 mi
9:00am to 12:00pm



How many biotic communities coexist in this area, and how did they evolve into such an intricate mosaic? Discover this Preserve's diversity with docents Jayita Bhojwani and Mike Alexander on a moderately-paced hike with about 450 feet of elevation change. You'll make stops to observe changes in vegetation as you explore different habitats, and learn about the common species that call these habitats home and how they have adapted to their unique environment.

Umunhum Vistas

Saturday • November 11
Sierra Azul • 3.5 mi
Meet: Bald Mountain parking lot
9:00am to 1:30pm



Join in this highly anticipated walk from the Mt. Umunhum summit along the new trail and enjoy unparalleled vistas with docents Greg Azevedo, Huey-Shin Yuan, David Schwederer, and Emma Finter. Along the way, you'll hear stories about Mt. Umunhum's past, more recent, and current place in history. Prior to the formal trail walk, you'll be given time to meander around the mountaintop and enjoy all the summit has to offer. **(Note: Participants will carpool to the summit.)** Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after October 28.



Outdoor Activities Fall 2017



Monte Bello Open Space Preserve by Eric Lew

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
November 11 and 12
Daniels Nature Center
11:00am to 4:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2.

Up and Over

Sunday • November 12
Russian Ridge • 5 mi
10:15am to 2:00pm



Even when wildflowers are not in bloom, this Preserve offers a variety of habitats for native plants and wildlife. Join docents Chris MacIntosh and Susan Bernhard on this moderately-paced hilly hike up and over grassland hills and along a ridgeline forest. From Borel Hill (elevation 2,572 ft) on a clear day you can see the Pacific Ocean to the west, the East Bay hills and Mt. Diablo to the east, and Mt. Umunhum to the south. You'll look for signs of the changing season such as acorns, berries, fungi, mammal tracks, and raptors following the fall migration.

Signs of Fall

Tuesday • November 14
Pulgas Ridge • 4.25 mi
1:00pm to 4:00pm



Join docents Liz Foreman and Debbie Mytels, and please see the activity description for September 6.

Explorer Hike: Turkey Trot

Wednesday • November 15
Rancho San Antonio • 5-6 mi
10:30am to 2:30pm



Join docents Dennis Smith, Lynn Jackson, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst on an annual search for the wild turkeys that will NOT be part of your Thanksgiving holiday dinner. Participants on past Tots have enjoyed anywhere from dozens to none of these wonderful birds, so sightings aren't guaranteed. Either way, you'll enjoy the colors of fall as you ascend about 800 feet on this moderately-paced hike along the Rogue Valley and Upper Rogue Valley Trails to a vista point for lunch and a terrific view. You'll return on a trail to be selected based on weather conditions.

Stop In and Explore

Saturday and Sunday
November 18 and 19
Daniels Nature Center
11:00am to 4:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 2. **(Note: This is the last weekend of the season that the Nature Center will be open. The facility will re-open in April 2018 – see you then!)**

Creature Feature

Sunday • November 19
Edgewood County Park • 2.5 mi
9:00am to 12:30pm



What do dusky-footed woodrats look like? What are their stick houses like inside? How many live in one house? What do they eat? Who wants to eat them? How do they find mates and raise pups? Why are they also called packrats? Come ask docents Kathryn Strachota and June Cancell all of your questions and learn about this keystone species. This is a very interactive, moderately-paced hike with 400-foot elevation gain along the Sylvan, Serpentine, Franciscan, and Baywood Glen Trails loop. Curious children are particularly welcome! **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after November 5.**

Fall in the Forest

Sunday • November 19
Purisima Creek Redwoods • 9 mi
Meet: Purisima Creek Road entrance
9:00am to 3:00pm



Explore the signs of autumn with docents Marie-Anne Neimat and Mary Bernstein on this moderately-paced hike in a lovely forest. You'll climb up the Purisima Creek Trail under a canopy of redwood trees and colorful big leaf maples and continue on the Craig Britton Trail with changing scenery from dense forest to open views of the Pacific Ocean. A short climb on Harkins Ridge Trail will be followed by a well-deserved lunch break before you complete the hike with a scenic descent on the Whittemore Gulch Trail. Total elevation gain is approximately 1,800 feet. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after November 5.**

Signs of the Season

Sunday • November 19
Russian Ridge • 5 mi
Meet: Mindego Gateway parking lot
10:00am to 2:00pm



You'll visit an ancient oak forest and look past Mindego Hill to the Pacific Ocean on this moderately-paced loop hike. Join docents Ann Reisenauer and Susan Bernhard on the newest trail in this Preserve. You'll walk down an old ranch road, loop around on the Charquin Trail, and travel back up through the trees to gentle switchbacks on the hill as you return to your starting point. You'll look for signs of the dry-to-wet seasonal change such as mushrooms and other fungi, and may see raptors flying for their fall migration.

Scenic Aerobic Hike II

Wednesday • November 22
Sierra Azul • 6 mi
Meet: Bald Mountain parking lot
10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for September 27. **(Note: Scenic Aerobic Hike II is a strenuous hike with about 1,000 feet of gain.)**

#OptOutside on Black Friday

Friday • November 24
Russian Ridge • 5.5 mi
10:00am to 2:00pm



On this shopping holiday, avoid the crowds and **#OptOutside** to reconnect with nature. Join docents Jayita Bhojwani, Denise Lawrence, and Mark Prusinowski to stock up on fresh air and scenic vistas. You'll hike along the Ridge, Hawk Ridge, Alder Spring, and Ancient Oaks Trails, covering about 600 feet of elevation gain, and making frequent stops to observe seasonal specials. Come discover what the great outdoors has "in store" for you! 🦋



Ann George

Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

2017 Photo Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners of our 2017 Photo Contest! We received over 300 submissions this year. After narrowing the field down to five finalists in each category, winners were chosen by a public vote on Facebook.

People in Open Space Category Co-winner



Family time in the outdoors, where no one is left behind

by Josephine Chan
Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

Plant Life Category Winner



Nature's Fingerprint

by Molly Pekula
Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Wildlife Category Winner



Hunting Egret

by Michelle Yau
Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Area

People in Open Space Category Co-winner



Trails laced with California Poppies made today's spring ride addictive

by Ruben Garcia
Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Landscape Category Winner



After Winter Storm

by Mike Asao
Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

Your Coastside Open Space: Lower La Honda Creek OSP Opening Soon



If you've ever driven Highway 84 towards the coast, you know that as you descend from Skyline an iconic red barn built more than a century ago comes into view. This is La Honda Creek Open Space, one of our largest and most diverse preserves. These 6,144 acres of grasslands, forests, watersheds and ranchlands are woven into the fabric of Coastside life going back centuries.

Some of what you can't see from the highway that traverses the edge of this preserve are its hilltop views, lush creeks and working cattle ranch. To date, only limited public access has been feasible. That is about to change thanks to the recent passage of Measure AA by local voters. In August, we broke ground on a new parking area at the end of Sears Ranch Road in La Honda. It is scheduled to open this winter, giving hikers and equestrians access to six miles of new trail through historic ranchland where grazing continues.

This is only the beginning of a grand vision for La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve expected to take three decades and an estimated ten million dollars to fully realize. A roadmap for achieving this vision is described in the Preserve's master plan. It balances recreational and ranching uses for the benefit of the land, wildlife and surrounding community. The ambitious plan includes a 30-mile network of trails accessed from multiple parking areas; interpretation of the preserve's unique plants, animals and history; cattle grazing; and restored habitat for rare species including California red-legged frog, King's Mountain manzanita, and pallid and Townsend's big-eared bats.

We're excited to take this first step, allowing those who have only peered into La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve's beautiful working landscape from their car to stop and explore its beauty, richness and history integral to life on the Coastside.

Visit www.openspace.org/LHC to see the master plan and stay informed of the upcoming grand opening event. 🦋



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Photos on front cover, clockwise from upper left by Nate Donovan,
Beth Hamel, Midpen Staff, Midpen Staff, Ken Hickman, and Courtesy
of Hooked on Los Gatos—Library and Museum History Project.

Highway 17 Wildlife Crossings Blaze a New Path for Wildlife and People

Wide-ranging animals often use existing bridges and culverts to cross roads and reach the food, habitat and mates they need to survive. But not all roads provide safe opportunities, including Highway 17 through the Santa Cruz Mountains. Road kill and Santa Cruz Puma Project data show obvious “hot-spots” along Highway 17 where drivers consistently hit mountain lions, deer and other wildlife attempting to cross.

In response, two groundbreaking projects are being planned to make Highway 17 safer for animals and people. With critical public support and funding from Measure AA, Midpen is spearheading a recreational trail and wildlife crossing near Los Gatos with several partners. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and its partners are planning another wildlife crossing at Laurel Curve near Scotts Valley.

While the two Highway 17 projects will be the first of their kind in our region, they are informed by the success of others. Nevada’s Department of Wildlife installed crossings in 2008 along a “hot-spot” for migrating mule deer and vehicle collisions. Researchers with the University of Nevada Reno reported that after four years the

project’s three underpasses, two overpasses and fencing along Highway 93 decreased wildlife-vehicle collisions by 80 percent and kept more than 35,000 mule deer off the road. Nevada is currently installing more crossings in critical areas, including a project on Interstate 80 to be completed this fall.

“We need to connect not just one side of the road to the other, but create connectivity across the diverse ecosystems that animals need.”

With the Highway 17 wildlife crossings leading the way regionally, nearby projects will hopefully follow suit allowing animals that leave the Santa Cruz Mountains to connect with surrounding open space.

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority is assessing a Highway 101 crossing in Coyote Valley, The Nature Conservancy is exploring a project in the Pajaro River area and the Big Sur Land Trust is researching crossings at the southern end of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

“We need to connect not just one side of the road to the other, but create connectivity across the diverse ecosystems that animals need,” said Midpen Resource Management Specialist Julie Andersen. “The more crossings, the better.”

Find details and sign-up to receive updates about our Highway 17 wildlife and trail crossings project on our website. 🦋



Ken Hickman



Karl Gohl



Yamil Saenz