



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

# VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS ON OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION AND PROGRAMS • WINTER 2018-2019

## A Message from the General Manager Honoring a Trailblazer

**N**onette Hanco is an environmental pioneer and one of the founders of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. As she prepares to retire after 46 consecutive years on our board of directors, we are recognizing the trails she blazed that shape our region. The undeveloped open spaces surrounding our communities, from the baylands to the foothills and forested mountains, exist in large part because of the vision and vigilance of Nonette and her fellow conservationists.



Ana María Ruiz

In its infancy, Midpen focused mainly on acquiring land. Today, Midpen is balancing land conservation with environmental restoration and public recreation and education. Nonette has been there every step of the way, keeping us grounded in the founding vision that is just as clear and essential now as it was in 1972.

Nonette's story shows us how critical community support is to the success of public open space. Here at Midpen, we're expanding our efforts to deepen community connections and engage more voices in the tireless work of conservation. We each play an important role in realizing the vision of "room to breathe," and inspiring the next generation as Nonette did for us.

*Ana M. Ruiz*  
Ana María Ruiz,  
General Manager



Under construction: A new trail and bridge over Webb Creek in Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

## Bear Creek Redwoods Opening Soon

Protected Redwoods • Preserved History • Restored Creeks

**T**hanks to local voters who passed Measure AA, we're hard at work preparing to open Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve to the public for the first time in 2019. We're creating a new entrance with a 50-space parking area off Bear Creek Road, an easy-access path around a historic pond, interpretive signs and six miles of new trail crossing creeks and traversing redwood and mixed hardwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

improves water quality downstream and habitat for native plants while benefitting rare and protected wildlife that call Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve home such as California giant salamanders, Santa Cruz black salamanders and western pond turtles.



California Giant Salamander

This is the first of several phased public access projects in Midpen's 20-year plan to restore the 1,432-acre preserve's

natural environment and provide opportunities for the public to connect with nature and discover local history. Stay tuned as grand opening plans begin taking shape. We're excited to share this public open space preserve with you. Learn more at [www.openspace.org/BCR](http://www.openspace.org/BCR).



# La Honda Creek Preserve is a new Birding Hotspot



## Coastal Corner

new birding hotspot. Visitors using the free citizen science apps iNaturalist and eBird have observed 140 bird species there, making it one of the top ten most prolific birding sites in San Mateo County.

“What sets it apart are its vast, grazed grasslands and the birds thriving there that have become rare on the Peninsula as agriculture has declined,” said Garth Harwood, who birds at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve regularly. “The birding community was delighted to discover lark, chipping and grasshopper sparrows successfully breeding here, which is cause for celebration.”

California’s native grasslands are one of the most species-rich ecosystems in the country, and one of the rarest. Visitors to La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve enjoy trails alongside grazing cattle that are part of a conservation program aimed at preserving agriculture, managing vegetation for fire protection and restoring grasslands that support people, native plants and wildlife including an abundance of birds.

Winter is a great time to look for birds migrating through or spending the season in our temperate climate. Rare burrowing owls and ferruginous hawks, a large and beautiful raptor, are migratory visitors to La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. Northern harriers seen hunting in the preserve’s grasslands year round are the only hawk that relies more on hearing than eyesight to locate prey. Songbirds like western bluebirds and western meadowlarks are also frequently seen.

As we mark the one-year anniversary of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve’s grand opening, we find the public enjoying it in a surprising way — as a

“American kestrels, tiny falcons as fond of insects as they are of mice, were once common year round in the region but are now rare as breeders. They, too, are succeeding at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve,” said Harwood.

Birding is available to anyone with eyes or ears and a little curiosity. The free activities in this issue provide opportunities for all to learn birding with docent naturalists. Report what you observe on eBird and help us continue learning about the diversity of birds in Midpen preserves, and what they can teach us about the ecological health of our public open space lands.



Birding with docents in Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Jack Gescheidt

The National Audubon Society’s annual Christmas Bird Count is the nation’s longest-running citizen science project. Counts are conducted across the country including in La Honda Creek and several other Midpen preserves. Learn how to participate in this year’s 119th count between December 14 and January 5 at [audubon.org](http://audubon.org).

Header photo by Frances Freyberg. Circle photos by Karl Gohl, Jack Gescheidt, Jill Tierney, and John Green.



Northern Harrier



Western Bluebird



Burrowing Owl

*“Midpen’s mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.”*

## Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors

Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m., at Midpen’s administrative office: 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA.

**Pete Siemens—Ward 1** (Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga)

**Yoriko Kishimoto—Ward 2** (Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto, Stanford, Sunnyvale) | **Jed Cyr—Ward 3** (Sunnyvale)

**Curt Riffle—Ward 4** (Los Altos, Mountain View) | **Nonette G. Hanko—Ward 5** (East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Stanford)

**Larry Hassett—Ward 6** (Atherton, Menlo Park, Pescadero, Portola Valley, Redwood City, San Gregorio, Woodside)

**Vacant—Ward 7** (El Granada, Half Moon Bay, Montara, Moss Beach, Redwood City, San Carlos, Woodside)

Ana María Ruiz—General Manager | Leigh Ann Gessner—Open Space Views Editor | Renée Fitzsimons—Outdoor Activities Editor

# Outdoor Activities

WINTER 2018-2019 | December – January – February

## 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 63,000 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](http://www.openspace.org), or phone the District at 650-691-1200 weekdays, 8:30am to 5:00pm. 🦋

Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve



Dulce Finegold

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve



Karl Gohl

### ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

#### To Ensure Your Experience is Enjoyable, Please Review this Information

- Please be courteous, 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.



Ken Nitz

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](mailto:docent@openspace.org). Other arrangements may need to be considered for your group. 🦋

Header photo: Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve by Karl Gohl

## 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.**

### 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.

### 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).

**Hickory Oaks trailhead:** The trailhead pullout is 5.1 miles south of Page Mill Road or 1.3 miles north of Highway 9 on the west side of Skyline Boulevard.

### 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.

### 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.

**Caltrans vista point:** Meet at the pull out area opposite Russian Ridge Preserve gate RR01, located on Skyline Boulevard 1.2 miles north of Page Mill Road and 6 miles south of Highway 84. Those traveling from I-280 on Page Mill Rd. should allow approximately 40 minutes travel time.

**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:** Meet at the parking lot located near the intersection of Hicks Road and Mt. Umunhum Road in San Jose. 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.

**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.



Kelly Miller

Los Trancos Open Space Preserve

**SIERRA AZUL (continued)**

**Northside lot – Free Limited Parking:**

Meet at the parking lot located at the northeast corner of Highway 9 and Santa Cruz Avenue in Los Gatos. The sign at the lot says: “Northside lot – Free Limited Parking.” Take Highway 17 south toward Los Gatos. Exit at Hwy. 9-Los Gatos/Saratoga and continue west on Hwy. 9 (approximately 0.33 miles) to the parking lot, located on your right just before Santa Cruz Ave. Carpool to the activity location.

**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.

Tim Teske



Purisima Creek Redwoods  
Open Space Preserve

**ST. JOSEPH’S HILL**

**Little League Field parking lot:** Take Highway 17 south toward Los Gatos. Exit at Highway 9-Los Gatos/Saratoga and continue west on Hwy. 9 (approximately 0.33 miles) to University Avenue. Turn left on University Ave. toward downtown Los Gatos. Turn left on Miles Avenue and proceed two blocks to the parking lot on the left for the Little League field.

**STEVENS CREEK SHORELINE NATURE AREA**

Meet in the “Kite Area” parking lot at Shoreline-at-Mountain View Park. From Highway 101, take Shoreline Boulevard east to the Shoreline Park entrance. After passing the entrance kiosk, turn right into the parking lot.

**THORNEWOOD**

From I-280, take the Highway 84/Woodside Road exit. Follow Highway 84/Woodside Road through Woodside and then to a junction with Portola Road at 3.3 miles. Bear right to stay on Highway 84, now La Honda Road. At 4.9 miles from Highway 280, turn left at a brick wall marked 895-897; look for the District sign just inside this gate. The small parking area is on the right about 500 feet from the entrance gate. Please do not drive beyond this lot toward the private residences.

Alternatively, from the junction of Highway 35 (Skyline Boulevard) and Highway 84 in Sky Londa, take Highway 84/La Honda Road north 1.9 miles and turn right at the brick wall marked 895-897.

**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. 🐾

**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](http://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.

# December

## Seasonal Exploration

Saturday • December 1

Long Ridge • 4.5 mi

Meet: Peters Creek trailhead

12:00pm to 4:00pm



You'll explore what early winter has to offer with docents Chris MacIntosh and Susan Bernhard. Early rains may have fungi popping up, robins may be feasting on berries, and fall colors may linger. This exploration will loop along the Peters Creek and Long Ridge Trails where you'll enjoy the view toward the Pacific Ocean along the way (fog permitting). This will be a moderately-paced hike with frequent stops, as well as steep sections. Suitable for capable children who enjoy hiking and are curious about nature.

## Earthquake Hike

Sunday • December 2

Los Trancos • 2 mi

2:00pm to 4:30pm



Join docents Paul Billig and Lindsay Joye 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 actively engaged children (who are capable of hiking 2-3 miles and attentive listening) and those needing a less physically challenging outing.

## Explorer Hike: Wintertime Traditions

Wednesday • December 5

Long Ridge • 4.8 mi

Meet: Peters Creek trailhead

10:30am to 2:30pm



Enjoy a moderately-paced hike with docents Kate Gudmundson, Dennis Smith, Laura Levin, and Mary Brunkhorst. You'll follow the Chestnut Trail along the ridge from Long Ridge Preserve to Skyline Ridge Preserve on this out-and-back trek with a 200-foot elevation gain. You'll see chestnut and conifer trees and learn how traditions associated with these lovely trees have brought cheer to many a cold winter's day.



David Weintraub

Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve

## Introductory Geocaching

Saturday • December 8

Los Trancos • 2.5 mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Debbie Mytels and Lindsay Joye, 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: 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 November 24.

## Scenic Aerobic Hike I

Wednesday • December 12

St. Joseph's Hill • 4-6 mi

Meet: Little League Field parking lot

10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Mary Brunkhorst, and Fran Keeler for a moderately-paced, exercise-focused hike on trails with beautiful scenery. "Scenic Aerobic" hikes are offered at different preserves every second Wednesday. The route of each hike will be determined by the docents based on current trail and weather conditions.

## Fleas Navidad Dog Hike

Saturday • December 15

Pulgas Ridge • 3 mi

9:00am to 11:00am



Let's compare tails! Celebrate the beginning of the holiday season by joining your canine companions on a moderately-paced hike. The dogs will enjoy smells along the Blue Oak, Hassler, and Polly Geraci Trails as docents Ann Reisenauer, Veronica Chouinard, and Patty Lovelace describe the natural surroundings. All dogs must be on leash. Please bring plastic bags for poop scooping. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after December 1.**



Kristen Robinson

Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

## Diversity in Ecological Communities

Saturday • December 15

Windy Hill • 4 mi

9:00am to 12:00pm



How many biotic communities co-exist in this area, and how did they evolve into such an intricate mosaic? Discover this Preserve's diversity with docents Jayita Bhojwani and Gerri Tiernan 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. Along the way, you'll learn about the common species that call these habitats home, and how they have adapted to their unique environment.

## Beyond Earthquakes

Sunday • December 16

Los Trancos • 5 mi

9:30am to 1:30pm



Explore forest, chaparral, and grasslands with docents Mary Bernstein and Marie-Anne Neimat on this "lollipop" hike (half of the hike is out and back, the other half is a loop). You'll learn about the different trees of this Preserve's forest and, depending on the weather, have grand views of the San Francisco Bay. Winter-blooming chaparral shrubs will be seen along with the beginnings of spring in the grasslands. You'll keep an eye open for over-wintering birds and animals while learning that there's more to this Preserve than earthquakes and geology. Although there won't be a lunch break per se, do bring a snack.

## Hiking and Mindfulness

Sunday • December 16

Monte Bello • 4.5 mi

10:00am to 2:00pm



Take a break during the busy holiday season. Join docents Diane Maez, Marie Evitt, and Ann McCarty on a moderately-paced, invigorating, and relaxing hike on the Canyon, Skid Road, and White Oak Trails. You'll learn and practice mindfulness strategies by tapping into the healing and calming powers of nature.

## Literature, Lore, and Life Sciences

Sunday • December 16

Rancho San Antonio • 5 mi

12:30pm to 4:30pm



Would a rose by any other name smell as sweet? Unpack the diverse symbolic and scientific meanings behind familiar quotes from literature across the centuries and continents on this moderate hike along many of this Preserve's popular trails including the Coyote, Wildcat Loop, and High Meadow Trails. Docents Anna Lee and Lindsay Joye will guide you on an exploration of the many ways nature has inspired literature and lore throughout history, and the various paths through which humans have made sense and meaning of the environment in our lives.



Jill Terney

Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

## Signs of Winter

Tuesday • December 18

Pulgas Ridge • 4 mi

1:00pm to 4:00pm



Enjoy an afternoon hike with docents Liz Foreman and Lindsay Joye as you explore for signs of winter. You'll see a variety of trees and bushes with berries as well as dusky-footed woodrat nests. There is a spectacular view from the top of the ridge. This moderately-paced hike along the Blue Oak, Dick Bishop, and Dusky-footed Woodrat Trails will include several hills and uneven terrain. Please leave your dogs at home for this hike.

## Explorer Hike: Late Autumn in the Redwoods

Wednesday • December 19

El Corte de Madera Creek • 4 mi

10:30am to 2:30pm



Enjoy the last days of autumn by joining docents Mary Brunkhorst, Kate Gudmundson, Laura Levin, and Dennis Smith on an exploration of this wooded Preserve. You'll hike along the shaded Sierra Morena, Fir, and Methuselah Trails, and visit an old growth redwood tree. You'll be introduced to the cultural and natural history of the area on this moderately-paced exploration.

## Winter Solstice Time

Friday • December 21

Russian Ridge • 3.5 mi

10:00am to 1:30pm



Take a break from the hectic holiday shopping and enjoy a quiet, peaceful respite with docents Marilyn and Bill Bauriedel. You'll learn what is so special about the seasonal transitions taking place that may not be visible at first glance. Bring a poem or story to share about this special time of year.

## Escape the Holiday Madness

Sunday • December 23

Picchetti Ranch • 4.5 mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Escape for a while from the holiday crowds! There are a wide variety of plant communities in the Bay Area, and many are found in this Preserve. Join docents Martin Manley and Linda Smith for a moderately-paced hike. You'll discuss how the varieties of plant communities have adapted to their unique environments. If the weather allows, a lunch break is planned at the picnic tables down by Stevens Creek. At the end of the trip you'll have the option for a little wine tasting (on your own) at Picchetti Winery. Please note that a shortened version of this hike will go ahead in light or moderate rain — it can be a wonderful time to see this Preserve if you have good rain gear.

## A Road Less Traveled

Tuesday • December 25

Skyline Ridge • 4 mi

Meet: Russian Ridge

10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Stephen Buckhout and Stella Yang on Christmas Day for a short out-and-back hike on Old Page Mill Trail to explore a section of the former road to Page's Mill. You'll travel at a slow to moderate pace through mixed evergreen forest and chaparral with sandstone rock outcrops. If there's been winter rain, you may see some small waterfalls. You should anticipate an elevation gain of 500 feet on the return leg.



Larifar Apaitira

El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve

## New Year's Eve Fun

Monday • December 31

Sierra Azul • 11 mi

Meet: Northside lot – Free Limited Parking  
9:00am to 3:00pm



Want to have a little extra fun before the New Year? Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Vivian Neou, Ray Curiel, Alex Woo, and Joyce Tang for a fast paced aerobic hike with 2,300 feet of elevation gain. You'll travel through rugged terrain and enjoy panoramic views of the Bay Area and Santa Cruz Mountains along the Priest Rock, Kennedy, and Limekiln Trails. **(Note: Participants will carpool to the trailhead.)**

## January

### Healthy New Year Resolution

Tuesday • January 1

Monte Bello • 11 mi

Meet: Picchetti Ranch  
9:30am to 3:00pm



If "stay healthy" is one of your New Year's resolutions, you can start with a fast paced aerobic hike with docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Vivian Neou, Ray Curiel, and Joyce Tang. You'll explore some less travelled trails of this Preserve starting from Waterwheel Creek to Adobe Creek to Indian Creek Trail as you transition through mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, and grassland communities. You'll enjoy beautiful views of the Santa Cruz Mountains from the top of Black Mountain on this vigorous hike with over 2,000 feet of elevation gain. **(Note: Participants will carpool to the trailhead.)**

**A New Year in Nature!**

Tuesday • January 1  
 Picchetti Ranch • 4.5 mi  
 10:00am to 2:00pm



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



Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

**Explorer Hike: Something Old, Something New**

Wednesday • January 2  
 Russian Ridge • 4 mi  
 Meet: Mindego Gateway parking lot  
 10:30am to 2:30pm



Welcome in the New Year and walk off some of your holiday indulgences with a hike along old and new trails in this beautiful Preserve. Join docents Dennis Smith, Kate Gudmunson, Laura Levin, and Mary Brunkhorst on this moderately-paced hike with an elevation gain of approximately 700 feet. You'll search for signs of the passing of autumn and the coming of spring as you move from riparian to grassland habitats. Although the exact route will depend on the weather, you'll experience the 'new' (at least for recent "Explorer Hike" participants) with an ascent of the Charquin Trail, passing through the 'old' of the ancient oaks and Douglas firs on the way to the Ridge Trail for your return.

**Big Birds - Little Birds**

Friday • January 4  
 Stevens Creek Shoreline  
 Nature Area • 3 mi  
 10:00am to 1:30pm



You'll see many "big birds" on this winter birding walk which may include great and snowy egrets, great blue heron, pelicans, a few raptors on towers, vultures, and geese. It's always a treat to see some of the more elusive "little birds" such as the common yellowthroat. The most numerous birds will be ducks, gulls, and sandpipers. You'll view distant groups of birds through a spotting scope, and others up close. Bring your binoculars and join docents Bill and Marilyn Bauriedel on this leisurely-paced birding walk. Beginners are most welcome!



Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area

**Umunhum Vistas**

Sunday • January 6  
 Sierra Azul • 4 mi  
 Meet: Bald Mountain parking lot  
 7:45am to 1:00pm



Join in on this walk along the popular and highly regarded Mt. Umunhum Trail. You'll enjoy unparalleled vistas and hear stories about Mount Umunhum's past, and current place in history with docents Greg Azevedo, Huey-Shin Yuan, Emma Finter, Nina Bell, and Helena Cohen. Prior to the formal trail walk, you'll be given time to meander around the summit and discover all that it has to offer. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after December 23.**

**Earthquake Hike**

Sunday • January 6  
 Los Trancos • 2-3 mi  
 2:00pm to 4:30pm



Join docents Strether Smith and Nina Bell, and please see the activity description for December 2.

**Monte Bello Serendipity**

Tuesday • January 8  
 Monte Bello • 4 mi  
 9:30am to 12:30pm



Join docents John Seyfarth and Debbie Mytels for a leisurely-paced morning hike high above the valley. You'll stop and explore the many delights that nature has to offer along the Canyon and Bella Vista Trails on the slopes of Black Mountain. You'll learn a little bit about local history and earthquake geology, and look for signs of animals and plants in their natural habitats, including colorful fungi or birds, or a newt or banana slug crawling across the trail. Capable, attentive children 10 years and older are welcome.

**Scenic Aerobic Hike I**

Wednesday • January 9  
 Rancho San Antonio • 4-6 mi  
 10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for December 12.

**Tafoni Trek**

Saturday • January 12  
 El Corte de Madera Creek • 5 mi  
 Meet: Skeggs Point  
 9:30am to 1:30pm



Take a break from seasonal activities and get outside with docents Sarah Schoen, Naureen Moon, and Catherine Crawford-Swent to explore this wooded Preserve along the El Corte de Madera, Fir, and Tafoni Trails. You'll enjoy learning about tafoni sandstone formations and a variety of other natural wonders on this moderately-paced hike.

**Inside Stories of Plants**

Sunday • January 13  
 Purisima Creek Redwoods • 3 mi  
 Meet: Purisima Creek Road entrance  
 11:00am to 2:30pm



Explore the beautiful redwood forest in winter. You'll enjoy a leisurely-paced hike up the Redwood Creek Trail and return the same route. Docents Sabra Abraham, Marie Faust Evitt, Ann McCarty, and Bob Abrams are eager to share their insights into how plants ward off enemies and attract friends. (Chemistry may be involved!) **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after December 30.**

**Explorer Hike: Winter Waterfowl**

Wednesday • January 16  
 Stevens Creek Shoreline  
 Nature Area • 4 mi  
 10:30am to 2:30pm



Embark on a birding expedition with docents Kate Gudmundson, Dennis Smith, Laura Levin, and Mary Brunkhorst to look for waterfowl and other birds visiting the San Francisco Bay as they migrate along the Pacific Flyway. You'll enjoy the salt air and bay views as you leisurely walk the Bay, Levee, and Stevens Creek Trails. You'll scout a variety of habitats including a tidal marsh, salt ponds, sloughs, and a creek in your quest to see feathered friends from near and far.

## Sunset Hike and Lunar Eclipse

Sunday • January 20  
Monte Bello • 5 mi  
Meet: See text below  
3:00pm to 10:00pm



Join docents Paul Billig, Debbi Brusco, and Katherine Greene for a sunset hike followed by a lunar eclipse viewing. You'll climb about 600 feet along Waterwheel Creek Trail and Monte Bello Road to Black Mountain where you'll view the sunset. After sunset, while the moon slowly goes into eclipse, you'll make your way back down to the parking lot to enjoy the final stage as the moon goes into total eclipse. The outing ends when the moon begins to reemerge after about an hour. Bring a flashlight with red filter, warm clothing, and something to sit on while viewing the eclipse. (Note: Directions will be sent.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 6.

## Signs of Winter

Tuesday • January 22  
Pulgas Ridge • 4 mi  
1:00pm to 4:00pm



Join docents Liz Foreman, Lindsay Joye, and Steve Brugler, and please see the activity description for December 18.

## Fungal Fun

Saturday • January 26  
Purisima Creek Redwoods • 7 mi  
Meet: North Ridge parking lot  
9:00am to 4:30pm



What's in a name? Slimy brown blobs, aren't they? How about red, yellow, or white; underfoot or overhead; tall and thin or short and wide? Join docents Chris MacIntosh, Naureen Moon, and Kim Borick to hike up and down trails in different environments as you train your eyes to notice the sometimes camouflaged, but always fascinating fungi that flourish in winter. You'll enjoy the variety of size, shape, and growth habits on this non-technical fungus appreciation hike on the North Ridge, Whittemore Gulch, and Harkins Ridge Trails. The rain (or lack of) will determine what is seen. Bring lunch, stamina, and your curiosity for this moderately-strenuous hike.



Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

## All Creatures Great and Small

Saturday • January 26  
Russian Ridge • 3 mi  
Meet: Caltrans vista point  
9:30am to 2:00pm



What is a scrape and why is it sometimes next to a pile of scat, and sometimes not? Who lives in that hole? A spider? A gopher? A coyote? Who left that track, and who that trail of slime? You'll "bio-blitz" a stretch of trail and come up with a total critter count including every and all signs of wildlife, from mountain lions to molluscs with docent Frances Reneau, Helena Cohen, and Lindsay Joye. You'll explore grassland, mixed evergreen forest, and wetland/riparian areas. Capable, attentive children 8 years and older are welcome.

## Umunhum Barlow Explorer

Sunday • January 27  
Sierra Azul • 5 mi  
Meet: Jacques Ridge parking lot  
7:45am to 1:15pm



Join docents Greg Azevedo, Huey-Shin Yuan, Emma Finter, Nina Bell, Gordon Ferguson, and Helena Cohen for an uncommon hike around the lower area of Mount Umunhum via Barlow and Woods Trails. This moderately-strenuous hike with many short breaks and wonderful views includes trail sections that are steep with varied surfaces. You'll begin your hike along Mt. Umunhum Road near the Bald Mountain trailhead and continue to Barlow Road to hike down to the parking lot. Participants are advised to carry ample drinking water. Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 13.

## Fetid Adder's Tongue?

Sunday • January 27  
Pulgas Ridge • 5 mi  
9:30am to 1:30pm



One of the unique and earliest wildflowers in the region and blooming at this Preserve is fetid adder's tongue. With docents Mary Bernstein and Ann Reisenauer, you'll search out these small gems. This area is also home to the dusky-footed woodrat; you'll learn to recognize their "palaces" and learn a bit about their behavior as you explore most of the trails in this small Preserve. Although there will not be a lunch stop per se, feel free to bring a snack.

## February

### A Most Special Place

Saturday • February 2  
La Honda Creek • 3 mi  
Meet: See text below  
10:00am to 2:00pm



Join docents Chris Christensen, Ann McCarty, and Helena Cohen for a moderately-paced walk through the less-visited upper portion of this Preserve. Learn the history of the Dyer Ranch that occupied these magnificent hills while enjoying the inspiring combination of open grasslands, redwood forest, and dramatic views that make this area so special. You'll explore the Coho Vista Loop Trail with a 400-foot elevation gain, traversing a ridge out to the spectacular Vista Point affording distant views of Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean, before continuing on a short loop along the Cielo Trail to the enormous old-growth redwood that survived the axes of loggers. (Note: Directions will be sent.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 19.



Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

### Ohlone Past and Present

Sunday • February 3  
 Russian Ridge • 1 mi  
 1:00pm to 3:30pm



The Ohlone lived in this area for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. Experience a glimpse into the Ohlone way of life with docents Marie Faust Evitt, Kim Borick, and Ann McCarty through fun activities, stories, and a leisurely-paced hike along the Alpine Loop and Ipiwa Trails. Discover how modern-day descendants are working to rebuild their culture and traditions. Capable, attentive children are welcome. Bring a snack to enjoy at Alpine Pond.

### Earthquake Hike

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



Join docents John Seyfarth and Kathryn Strachota, and please see the activity description for December 2. (**Note: This is an earlier start and end time for this regular monthly hike.**)

### Chinese New Year Celebration

Tuesday • February 5  
 El Corte de Madera Creek • 10 mi  
 10:00am to 3:00pm



Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Vivian Neou, Alex Woo, and Chris Christensen to celebrate the year of the Pig. You'll explore this beautiful and heavily-forested Preserve along the Oljon, Steam Donkey, Gordon Mill, Timberview, Giant Salamander, and Fir Trails. After visiting an old-growth redwood tree and a 30+% grade climb along the Fir Trail, you'll enjoy lunch at a scenic spot with a picnic table. This activity will be a fast-paced workout with 2,000-feet of elevation gain.

### Explorer Hike: Wildflower Treasure Hunt

Wednesday • February 6  
 Thornewood • 4 mi  
 10:30am to 2:30pm



Experience the delight of discovering early spring wildflowers with docents Laura Levin, Dennis Smith, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst. Descending through chaparral into redwood forest at a leisurely pace, you'll travel along the Schilling Lake and Bridle Trails on this out-and-back hike. If the timing is right, you'll be treated to a display of fetid adder's tongue near your shaded creekside lunch spot. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 23.**

### Looking for Clues in Nature

Saturday • February 9  
 Picchetti Ranch • 2.5 mi  
 10:00am to 12:00pm



On a leisurely walk along the Zinfandel Trail, docents Debbie Mytels, Ann McCarty, and Helena Cohen will show you clues that open the door to understanding more about history and natural processes in this beautiful Preserve. Why are these trees the same distance apart? Why is the air suddenly cooler here? You'll also discover clues to human history and the behavior of water and rocks along this leisurely-paced hike through sun and shade.

### Introductory Geocaching Hike

Sunday • February 10  
 Skyline Ridge • 2.5 mi  
 10:30am to 12:00pm



Join docents Kim Borick and Alisa Stutzbach and an REI Outdoor School Instructor, and please see the activity description for December 8. (**Please Note: This activity includes some off-trail hiking; long pants and close-toed shoes are required.**) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 27.

### Early Wildflowers and Scenic Views

Tuesday • February 12  
 Pulgas Ridge • 4 mi  
 1:00pm to 4:00pm



Enjoy an afternoon hike with docents Liz Foreman and Lyle Rice as you explore early blooming wildflowers, such as shooting stars and fetid adder's tongue, and look for other signs of upcoming spring. You'll also see a variety of oak trees and chaparral plants. There is a spectacular view of the San Francisco Bay and surrounding mountains from the top of the ridge. This moderately-paced hike along the Blue Oak, Dick Bishop, and Dusky-footed Woodrat Trails will include several hills and uneven terrain. Please leave your dogs at home for this hike.

### Health and Wellness Hike

Wednesday • February 13  
 Monte Bello • 4 mi  
 10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Catherine Crawford-Swent, Helena Cohen, and Marie Faust Evitt on a wellness hike to explore the interconnectedness found within the natural world, while investigating your individual connection with nature. Learn how spending time in nature results in health benefits related to reduction in cortisol level and blood pressure, and increased immune response, memory and concentration, and creativity. You'll explore basic mindfulness practices while discussing stress release, relationships, and connections as the hike starts out along the White Oaks Trail.

### Scenic Aerobic Hike I

Wednesday • February 13  
 Pulgas Ridge • 4-6 mi  
 10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for December 12.

### Wandering and Writing in Nature

Sunday • February 17  
 Long Ridge • 4.6 mi  
 Meet: Peters Creek trailhead  
 1:00pm to 4:30pm



Writers and philosophers across the ages have found inspiration, wisdom, and peace through time spent in nature. Join their ranks on this moderately-paced hike along the Peters Creek and Long Ridge Trails accompanied by the words and spirits of John Muir, Alice Walker, Aristotle, and others. You'll discuss various philosophies with fellow hikers and docents Anna Lee and Ping Li, then discover your own insights through journaling or quiet contemplation during an extended break at the Wallace Stegner Memorial Bench. You're encouraged to bring a journal, a writing implement, and/or your favorite nature quotes to kindle reflection and discussion.



Charles Tu

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve



Gary Linford

Fremont Older Open Space Preserve

### Explorer Hike: A Fault Runs Through It

**Wednesday • February 20**  
**Los Trancos • 3-4 mi**  
**10:30am to 2:30pm**



Eager for spring? Search for early wildflowers at a leisurely pace with docents Laura Levin, Kate Gudmundson, Mary Brunkhorst, and Dennis Smith in hills that host the headwaters of Los Trancos Creek and bear evidence of the San Andreas Fault. You'll explore the basics of earthquake geology and enjoy views from the Franciscan Loop, Lost Creek Loop, and Page Mill Trails. In forest and grassland along the way, you'll find welcome signs of the coming spring.

### Your Brain on a Hike

**Thursday • February 21**  
**Pulgas Ridge • 4 mi**  
**8:00am to 11:30am**



Have you ever wondered why you suddenly feel calm, relaxed, or happy once you're on a hike? You'll explore the topics of brain chemistry, sensory input, and the neurochemicals of hiking on this leisurely-paced hike with about 500 feet of elevation gain. The morning conversation will be a casual and broad survey of this vast subject; you'll hear about brain anatomy and physiology, and consider the brain chemicals released during a typical hike as you enjoy a relaxed hike along the Blue Oak, Dick Bishop, and Dusky-footed Woodrat Trails. Does this spark your curiosity? Join docents Greg Hughes, Susan Bernhard, Helena Cohen, Chris Christensen, Lindsay Joye, and Catherine Crawford-Swent to exercise your body and mind, and leave with serotonin and dopamine levels surging.

### Who Stole My Meadow?

**Thursday • February 21**  
**Long Ridge • 4 mi**  
**Meet: Hickory Oaks trailhead**  
**9:30am to 2:00pm**



Wintertime and the livin' is easy. Grass is growing and the hills are all green...at least that's how it works here in California. Nearly all the grasses you'll see and learn to identify on this hike, or any other hike you take on District lands, are annuals that are native to Europe. What happened to all of California's native perennial grasses and the meadows of wildflowers they supported? Which, if any, of these non-native invasive grasses is the District actively combating and why? Join docents Frances Reneau and Helena Cohen to discuss these questions. Capable, attentive children 8 years and older are welcome.

### History Ride

**Thursday • February 23**  
**Fremont Older • 12 mi**  
**9:45am to 12:00pm**



Learn the natural and human history of this Preserve on an intermediate mountain bike ride (with a 2,000-foot elevation gain) led by docents Linda and Glenn Wegner. Riders must have experience with single-track trails, fire roads, and climbing hills. The ride leaves promptly. Bring ample drinking water and power snacks. **(Note: Arrive early to find parking; additional parking may be available on Prospect Road).**

### Purisima Wet and Wild!

**Thursday • February 23**  
**Purisima Creek Redwoods • 5 mi**  
**Meet: Purisima Creek Road entrance**  
**10:00am to 2:00pm**



Experience the canyon at its best when streams are roaring, waterfalls are tumbling, and newts and banana slugs are having the time of their lives. Join docents Chris Christensen, Helena Cohen, and Sam Berry for a moderately-paced winter walk on the wild side along the Purisima Creek and Craig Britton Trails. Be prepared for wet weather and a little mud.

### Wonders of Cherry Springs

**Sunday • February 24**  
**Sierra Azul • 3 mi**  
**Meet: See below**  
**8:30am to 1:00pm**



Join docents Greg Azevedo, Emma Finter, Gordon Ferguson, and District staff Ellen Gartside 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. This moderately paced hike includes a 500-foot steep uphill segment. **(Note: Directions will be sent.)** **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after February 10.**

### Fungal Fun

**Sunday • February 24**  
**Purisima Creek Redwoods • 7 mi**  
**Meet: North Ridge parking lot**  
**9:00am to 4:30pm**



Join docents Chris MacIntosh, Paul Billig, and Wendy Crowder, and please see the activity description for January 26.

### Early Wildflowers at Windy Hill

**Sunday • February 24**  
**Windy Hill • 7 mi**  
**Meet: See text below**  
**9:30am to 2:30pm**



Look for early spring flowers with docents Mary Bernstein and Marie-Anne Neimat. You'll get plenty of exercise as you climb to the top-of-the-hill picnic tables for lunch, then return by Spring Ridge Trail. You may spot a variety of over-wintering birds and wildlife, and with any luck run across the elusive northern rubber boa. From the Anniversary Trail you'll have grand views of the Bay Area below. **(Note: Directions will be sent.)** **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after February 10.**



Bernadette De Zoyza

Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

- ▲ Nonette Gloria Close is born in San Mateo, spending many childhood days outdoors.

1931



In the Sierras as a child

- ▲ Marries Robert Hanko. Moves to Palo Alto where their family grows to include four children.

1948



With Robert Hanko, 1947

- ▲ A Palo Alto City Council recall sparks Hanko's interest in local politics.

Stanford's plans to develop Coyote Hill brings Hanko out to public meetings.

1967-1970

## Celebrating Nonette Hanko's Journey

Every great idea has a humble beginning. A towering redwood emerges from a tiny seed. Learning Chopin on the piano starts with a single note. And the creation of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District began with a meeting in Nonette Hanko's Palo Alto living room. As Hanko prepares to retire in January after spearheading the formation of Midpen and serving 46 consecutive years on its board, we are celebrating her legacy as a champion of open space.

Hanko was born and raised on the Peninsula where a love of music and time spent in nature shaped her childhood. An aspiring concert pianist, she studied music at San Francisco State University before marrying her husband Robert. They moved to Palo Alto in 1950 and had four children whom Hanko felt did not have the same opportunities to connect with nature she had enjoyed as a child.

In the late 1960s, a recall of Palo Alto City Council members and Stanford University's proposed development of Coyote Hill began drawing Hanko out to public meetings. *Palo Alto Times* reporter Jay Thorwaldson published an editorial on February 16, 1970 stating that if conservationists really wanted to preserve land on the rapidly developing Peninsula, they should create a public agency capable of acquiring it as had been done in the East Bay. After reading it, Hanko cried herself to sleep and awoke the next morning inspired to take action.

She planned a meeting at her house, inviting everyone she knew that might be able to help create a local park district. Over homemade blueberry coffeecake, Hanko galvanized a movement that has shaped our region. She remained the consistent force behind putting Measure R on

Santa Clara County's ballot in 1972, allowing voters to create Midpen. We sat down with Hanko in her Palo Alto living room where it all began to talk about her journey bringing the organization from a great idea to 63,000 acres of public open space – and growing.



*"As with many good ideas, it took someone, or a small group to make it happen, as anthropologist Margaret Mead once observed. And the central figure of that group was a housewife and piano teacher, Nonette Hanko."*

— Jay Thorwaldson

1974

- ▲ Midpen makes its first purchase: 90 acres that becomes Foothills Open Space Preserve.



With Herb Grench, Foothills Open Space Preserve

1976

- ▲ Citizens successfully petition to put Proposition D on the ballot to expand Midpen's boundaries into southern San Mateo County. It passes by only a few hundred votes.

1977



- ▲ Peninsula Open Space Trust is formed to work in partnership with Midpen.

1985

- ▲ Appointed to Santa Clara County's 2020 Task Force, Hanko recommends the creation of what becomes the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.



Hanko introducing her mother Edna to Wallace Stegner at an event she hosted

▲ *Palo Alto Times* publishes an editorial advocating for the creation of a local park district, inspiring Hanko to hold a meeting in her Palo Alto living room.

1970



▲ Santa Clara County Supervisors support the idea of a single-county park district. Measure R is added to the November 1972 ballot passing with 67.71% of the vote, creating Midpen. Hanko is elected to the board.

1971-1972



Hanko in 1971

# as a Founding Mother of Midpen

How was your interest in nature sparked?

My parents took us camping in the Sierras every summer, except during the war when there wasn't enough gas. I liked going out to explore in the woods. Near our house in Burlingame, I would go to Mills Estate and enjoy the quiet and wildlife.

Why did you want to create Midpen?

I'd lost the wild places I had as a little girl. In Palo Alto there were NO TRESPASSING signs all the way to Skyline. Coyote Hill was one of the few places I could go and hear nothing but bird song. That's what I was looking for all the time. When Jay's editorial came out, I took it seriously. I said to myself, here's an idea that could be used, why not? The first meeting I held at my house I invited someone from East Bay Regional Parks and we all had a wonderful talk. They helped us get started.

What motivated you to continue for 46 years?

It's a dream come true, being able to do something about saving our open spaces for people and animals. There is still land that needs to be acquired and trails we need to connect. When you're building something important, and we're still building it, you never lose that joy.

What is your hope for the future?

That the work continues. And that others are encouraged to do the same. There's a great law in California's public resources code that enabled us to create Midpen. It should be used more as a way for people to save their open spaces.



Ed Shelley; Herb Grench; Dick Bishop; Melany, Craig and Margo Britton; Nonette Hanko and Jim Bollend celebrate 10,000 acres preserved, 1981

What wisdom do you have to leave with us?

Don't give up. And let your friends and relatives know about these special places. Take them out so they can enjoy the beautiful lands we've acquired for the public good.

Director Hanko's last public board meeting will be on December 12. You can send her a message, share your thanks or let her know what Midpen means to you at [www.openspace.org/Hanko](http://www.openspace.org/Hanko).

1992



Midpen preserves 35,000 acres in 20 years.

2004

▲ The Coastside Protection Program extends Midpen's boundary to include the San Mateo County coast.



At a trail connection event, 2007

2014

▲ A \$300 million bond to fund Midpen's Vision Plan passes in June with 67.96% of the vote.

January 2019

▲ Director Hanko retires from Midpen's board after **46 years of public service** and **63,000 acres preserved**.





## Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

330 Distel Circle  
Los Altos, California 94022-1404  
Phone: 650-691-1200 • Fax: 650-691-0485  
E-mail: [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org)  
Web site: [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)



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# Bobcats Bouncing Back

Five years ago, the news about local bobcats was distressing. Twelve bobcats at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve died from notoedric mange and dozens were reported sick. This disease is caused by mites infesting the skin of animals with compromised immune systems, making them weak and emaciated. The suffering of these bobcats was incredibly sad for preserve visitors, volunteers and staff.

Our research discovered that commonly available rat poisons called second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides were linked to the bobcats' illnesses. Predators like bobcats, hawks and owls eat hundreds of mice and rats a year. Poisoned rodents make easy prey and the bobcats eating them were becoming sick.

In response, Midpen staff educated preserve neighbors about the effects of rodenticides on wildlife and joined the ongoing effort to lobby the California State Legislature in prohibiting their use. In 2014, the legislature passed AB 2657 limiting access to second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides to individuals with pest control licenses. Midpen also implemented a new plant and animal pest management program in



John Kesselring

A healthy bobcat in Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

the preserves, using non-chemical techniques whenever possible to protect human and environmental health.

Today, we are receiving consistent reports of healthy bobcats at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. We remain cautiously optimistic that this trend will continue, but there is more work to be done. Some anticoagulant rodenticides are still readily available in California and are impacting wildlife statewide.

You can help. Make your home less hospitable to rodents by patching holes in buildings, removing habitat such as dense ivy and cleaning up easy food sources including fallen fruit and pet food. When necessary, choose non-chemical methods such as snap and box traps to control rodent populations in your neighborhood. Finally, let us know about the bobcats and other wildlife you're seeing by using the free iNaturalist app on your smart phone. Reports from open space preserve visitors play an

important role in our work protecting local wildlife, including bringing Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve's bobcats back to health.

For more information visit [openspace.org/rodenticides](http://openspace.org/rodenticides).

# Conservation Leaders Draw Inspiration from Mount Umunhum

Land conservation professionals hailing from the Appalachians to the Andes recently visited Mount Umunhum to exchange information and ideas. Midpen's Senior Planner Meredith Manning and Acting Assistant General Manager Kirk Lenington provided a site tour and facilitated a high-level discussion exploring the challenges, opportunities and benefits of large-scale landscape preservation in an urban area.

"Our tour of Mount Umunhum illustrated the power of partnership and collective vision," said event co-host Sharon Farrell with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. "The field of large landscape conservation is still emerging, and sharing knowledge inspires new ideas for collaboration, science and stewardship."

The group also toured prominent open space projects in the Sonoma, Marin and Santa Cruz areas.



International conservation leaders at Mount Umunhum