



Celebrating Over 45 Years of Open Space Preservation
And Five Years of Measure AA Accomplishments

VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS ON OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION AND PROGRAMS • WINTER 2019-2020

Watersheds in Winter

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District boundaries encompass just over 350,000 acres on the peninsula, more than 15%, or nearly 65,000 acres, of which we've protected in perpetuity. It's easy to recognize the dominant feature of these lands: the Santa Cruz Mountains. Harder to see, but perhaps more important, are the 11 major and six smaller watersheds that flow from these hills across Midpen preserves. Some of these, like the San Francisquito, flow east to the bay, while others, like the San Gregorio, flow west to the ocean.

Watersheds are defined by the land drainage area that channels water flow to a specific exit point. Regardless of the outlet, it's important to keep our watersheds healthy to provide clean water for plants, animals and people.

With wide upper reaches that funnel to a narrow mouth, the San Gregorio watershed provides a clear example of how what happens in the upper area of a watershed can impact the land and water downstream. As the caretaker of El Corte de Madera Creek, La Honda Creek and Russian Ridge preserves, which make up about one-third of this watershed, Midpen has learned a lot about watershed protection.

The steep redwood-covered slopes at El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve, for example, were clear cut at the turn of the century. This unsustainable practice, combined with the construction of a network of dirt roads to get the logs out, created serious erosion that allowed soil to wash downstream and choke off spawning habitat for the now endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout. The bare, scraped hillsides replaced healthy tree roots, duff and the soft, meandering paths of an undisturbed forest floor became slick, steep gullies and gulches. This increased the flow of water coming down the hillsides, rather than soaking into the ground.

"When we acquired El Corte de Madera Creek, it had a history of intense use that created a lot of sediment runoff into creeks," explains Midpen Water Resources Specialist Aaron Hébert. "It needed major restoration to help heal the land and clean up the watershed."

Midpen invested \$1.25 million and thousands of hours of work over 15 years to complete the watershed protection program at El Corte de Madera, working on 24 miles of roads and



Midpen manages about one-third of the approximately 33,000 acres in the San Gregorio watershed, which provides important habitat for the endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout.

Source: County of San Mateo, California Bureau of Land Management

trails — constructing bridges, repairing failing culverts, converting old roads to single-track trail or returning them to a more natural state.

"We inherited a legacy of issues," Hébert said, "and people want public recreational access, so it's challenging to try to balance everything for the health of the watershed that hosts important salmonids. This is the most substantial, longest-running watershed protection program Midpen has undertaken and preliminary monitoring indicates it's working. Less sediment is entering the streams and downstream fish habitat has improved."

Healthy watersheds are so important to the resilience of our communities that a host of public agencies are charged with watershed protection. Midpen collaborates with many partners for ongoing stewardship. Staff, contractors and volunteer crews replace invasive vegetation with native plants to promote deeper and more diverse root structures to hold soil in place. Large woody material is strategically added to creeks to create more salmonid spawning habitat. We also curtail operations in the winter and close trails when conditions are wet and muddy to avoid disturbances that can increase soil runoff.

You can help by following low-impact recreation best practices, obeying trail closures and volunteering as a preserve partner. We can all work together to keep our watersheds healthy at a landscape scale. 🌿



A Message from the General Manager It Takes a Community to Care for Open Space

Nature is one of our best teachers, showing us how all living things are part of a larger community. For example, in the preserves this winter you may observe bees feeding on the nectar of blooming manzanita, which in turn depends on the bees' buzzing vibration for pollination to produce seeds and regenerate.

Here at Midpen, we also depend on the contributions of our broad community to protect, restore and connect people to our natural ecosystem. Our community includes people from many different backgrounds and walks of life with diverse talents and expertise, who share common values around natural open space lands.

Our more than 110 volunteer docent naturalists and nature center hosts are working professionals and retirees who dedicate thousands of hours annually, enriching visitors' experiences with greater knowledge and appreciation of our surrounding natural and cultural history. Recent staff additions to our Interpretation and Education Program are allowing us to expand our programs and engage even more people, including the next generation of environmental stewards.

Our more than 450 resource management, trail patrol and special project volunteers are hardworking seniors, scouts, school and community groups, corporate employees and supporters dedicated to making public open space preserves healthy and accessible.

Mutually beneficial partnerships with a variety of local organizations are also critical to fulfilling our mission and creating a more resilient and thriving region that benefits people, plants and animals. They include our long-standing land acquisition and funding partner POST, local fire departments, scientific researchers, youth conservation corps and a host of regional trail partners.

Our new grant-giving program, launched in 2019, is connecting us with new partners doing exciting and beneficial projects for the open space community. Through this work, we are supporting hands-on environmental education programs for students from low-income Bay Area schools and scientific studies on French broom impacts to native plant pollination and on the historic composition of bird nests that will inform our restoration work.

This holiday season, we extend our enduring gratitude for your support, and the many hands, hearts and minds working together as an open space community to successfully further Midpen's mission.

With much appreciation,

Ana M. Ruiz
Ana María Ruiz,
General Manager

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors

The board holds regular meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7 p.m., at the Midpen 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)

Karen Holman — Ward 5 (East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Stanford)

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

Zoe Kersteen-Tucker — Ward 7 (El Granada, Half Moon Bay, Montara, Moss Beach, Redwood City, San Carlos, Woodside)

Ana María Ruiz — General Manager

Peggy Gibbons — Open Space Views Editor

Renée Fitzsimons — Outdoor Activities Editor

Trail Will Soon Link Saratoga to the Coast

FUNDED BY

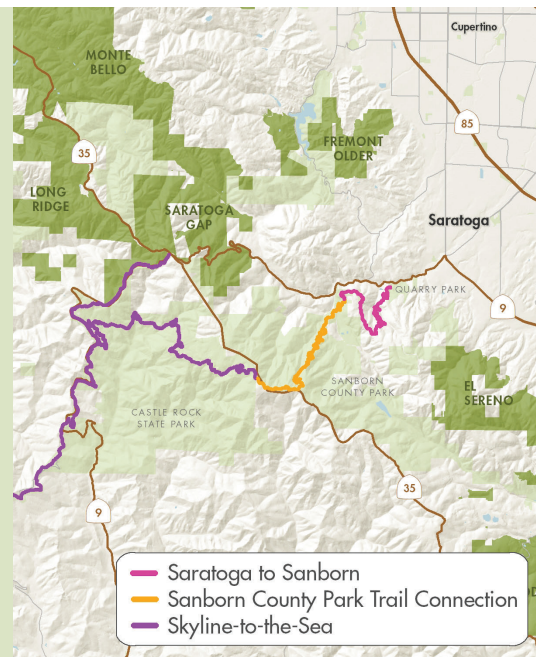
MEASURE AA

2014 OPEN SPACE BOND

Through funds from voter-approved Measure AA, Midpen has supported the design, environmental review and engineering required to construct a new 3.2-mile trail from Quarry Park to Sanborn County Park. The new trail will pass from Saratoga's newly opened Quarry Park through San Jose Water Company land to Sanborn County Park, connecting to the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail and ultimately to the Pacific Ocean.

As part of a regional vision and through partnerships like this one with City of Saratoga, Midpen is helping close gaps between existing trails, connecting people to more open space preserves, improving access for bicyclists and equestrians, and creating wildlife corridors that allow animals to move safely.

Construction is expected to span through 2020, with completion and opening of the trail later that year. 🍂



Outdoor Activities

WINTER 2019-2020 | 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 nearly 65,000 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 – always allow extra time in your schedule for unusual circumstances, or the slower pace of some

groups. Please arrive 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 Docent Naturalists who have completed an extensive training program. These docents volunteer their time to share their knowledge of natural and cultural history with you. For more information about the volunteer docent program, visit the District's website at openspace.org, or phone the District at 650-691-1200 weekdays, 8:30am to 5:00pm. 🦋



Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Karl Gohl

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

To Ensure Your Experience is Enjoyable, Please Review this Information

- For all hikes, wear boots or sturdy walking shoes appropriate for rugged trails. Dress in or bring 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.
- If you have internet access, you are advised to check the District website – Outdoor Activities and Trail Conditions – for possible notifications before heading out to a docent-led activity. Occasionally activities must be cancelled or trails closed with little notice.
- 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 and discuss hike options – route or duration may be altered due to weather and trail conditions.
- Participants are encouraged to make personal decisions on comfort, safety, 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.
- 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.
- Hikers yield to horses; bicyclists yield to hikers and horses. Observe trail speed limits (15 mph max; 5 mph when passing).
- Please be courteous, stay alert, and make your presence known to other trail users well in advance, particularly when approaching from behind.
- Restrooms are not available at all preserves; please plan accordingly.
- Please carpool if possible. Parking is limited in many locations.



Ian Lee

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 Interpretation and Education Program Manager to discuss in advance at 650-625-6536 or 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 1.0 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

Meet at the roadside pullout area for Peters Creek Trailhead on the west side of Skyline Boulevard, 3.6 miles north of Highway 9 or 3.3 miles south of Page Mill Road. Traveling 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 Hwy. 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. Travel approximately 3.7 miles on Purisima Creek Rd. to reach the Preserve.

PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS (continued)

Redwood Trail entrance: Meet at the small turnout on the west side of Skyline Boulevard, 13.2 miles north of Page Mill Road and 6.5 miles south of Highway 92.

RANCHO SAN ANTONIO

From I-280, take Foothill Boulevard south and turn right almost immediately onto Cristo Rey Drive. Continue about 1.0 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.

RAVENSWOOD

From Highway 101, exit on University Avenue. Follow University Ave. north (about four long blocks) to Bay Road. Turn right on Bay Rd. and follow it to the very end (about 1.2 miles). The Preserve entrance and parking lot are marked with large signs.

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), about 9 miles west of I-280. Those traveling from I-280 on Page Mill Rd. should allow approximately 40 minutes travel time.

Mindego Gateway parking lot: Continue on Alpine Road past the main Preserve parking lot for another 1.5 miles. The Mindego Gateway parking lot is on the right. Allow 45 minutes travel time from I-280.

SARATOGA GAP

Meet at the Caltrans vista point on the southeast corner of the Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) and Highway 9 intersection.

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.

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.



Kathleen Murphy

Foothills Open Space Preserve

ST. JOSEPH'S HILL

Lexington Reservoir Dam: Meet at the County boat launch parking lot next to the Lexington Reservoir Dam. From southbound Highway 17, take the Bear Creek Road exit, cross over the highway, and go 0.4 miles north on Highway 17 to Alma Bridge Road. Follow Alma Bridge Rd. over the top of the dam. Continue beyond the dam as the road jogs to the right. Turn right into the parking lot just before the road veers to the left. A Santa Clara County Park parking fee is in effect.

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/Walk:** Flat to gently rolling hills. Total elevation gain less than 200 feet. Leisurely pace. Frequent stops.
-  **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.

DECEMBER

Earthquake Walk

Sunday • December 1

Los Trancos • 2mi

1:30pm to 4:00pm



Join docents Lyle Rice and John Seyfarth for a fun and educational hike along the San Andreas Fault. 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. Families with engaged children (who are attentive listeners and capable of hiking several miles) are welcome on this leisurely-paced outing with minimal elevation change. **(Note: This popular hike is not suitable for large groups, thank you.)**

Signs of Winter

Tuesday • December 3

Pulgas Ridge • 4.25mi

1:00pm to 4:00pm



Enjoy an afternoon hike with docents Liz Foreman and Debbie Mytels as they explore for signs of winter. You'll view a variety of oak trees, bushes with berries, and dusky-footed wood rat nests. At the top of the ridge take in a scenic view of the surrounding area and SF Bay. This will be a moderately-paced hike with several hills and uneven terrain.

Explorer Hike: Wintertime Traditions

Wednesday • December 4

Long Ridge • 5mi

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.



La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

R. Caldwell

Early Winter Exploration

Saturday • December 7

Long Ridge • 4.5mi

10:00am to 2:00pm



Come along with docents Chris MacIntosh and Kathryn Strachota to explore early winter along the Peters Creek and Long Ridge Trails. Will the expected rains have encouraged fungi to appear? Will the birds be hungrily eating berries? What nature surprises will you encounter? Whether its frosty or warm, drizzly or dry, this is always a very enjoyable loop walk with a great view to the ocean if the fog permits.

Tafoni Trek

Sunday • December 8

El Corte de Madera Creek • 5mi

Meet: Skeggs Point

9:30am to 1:30pm



Take a break from seasonal activities and get outside with docents Sarah Schoen and Mary Bernstein to explore this wooded Preserve along the El Corte de Madera Creek and Fir Trails. You'll enjoy learning the geology behind tafoni sandstone formations and about a variety of other natural wonders on this moderately-paced hike.

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday • December 11

St. Joseph's Hill • 5.5mi

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.

Old Growth - Forest & Trees

Friday • December 13

La Honda Creek • 3.5mi

Meet: See text below

9:00am to 12:30pm



Join docents Frances Reneau, Lindsay Joye, and Helena Cohen to explore a forest and its trees. There are two "old-growth" redwood trees growing in the upper portion of this Preserve. Why were these trees spared the axe and how do they differ from the young redwoods surrounding them today? While serene and beautiful the "second growth" forests of Midpen preserves are mere shadows of their former selves. Crowning the day's walk will be a view from the Vista Point out toward the Pacific Ocean. **(Note: Directions will be mailed.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after December 1.)**

Fleas Navidad Dog Hike

Saturday • December 14

Pulgas Ridge • 3mi

9:00am to 11:00am



Celebrate the beginning of the holidays by walking the dog. The dogs will enjoy smells along the Blue Oak, Hassler, and Polly Geraci Trails as docents Ann Reisenauer and Patty Lovelace describe the natural surroundings for you on a moderately-paced hike. Holiday attire suggested. All dogs must be on leash. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after December 1.**



Habitats in Harmony

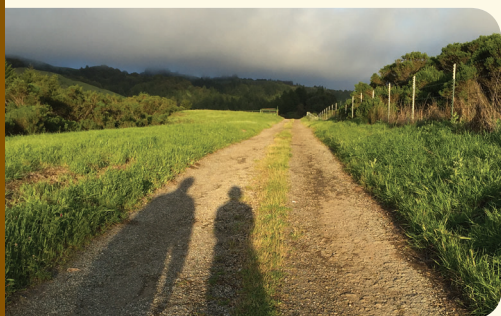
Sunday • December 15

Windy Hill • 4mi

9:00am to 12:00pm



How many habitats abound in this area, and how do they co-exist in an intricate mosaic? Discover this Preserve's diversity with docents Jayita Bhojwani and Naureen Moon 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 ecological communities. Along the way, you'll learn about the common flora and fauna that call these habitats home, and how they have adapted to thrive independently together!



Long Ridge Open Space Preserve

Suzanne Anshel

Explorer Hike: Late Autumn in the Redwoods

Wednesday • December 18
El Corte de Madera Creek • 5mi
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.



Peter Reinold

St. Joseph's Hill Open Space Preserve

Chaparral Survival Strategies

Friday • December 20
St. Joseph's Hill • 4mi
Meet: Lexington Reservoir Dam
9:00am to 12:00pm



Have you ever wondered how plants in the chaparral community survive the hot dry conditions on rocky south facing slopes? Learn the adaptation strategies these plants have developed to thrive here. Join docents Jumana Latif and Marie-Anne Neimat on a moderately-paced hike where you'll discover some of the most common chaparral plants along the Jones, Manzanita, and Novitiate Trails. Additionally you'll be rewarded with sweeping views of Lexington Reservoir and beyond.

Winter Solstice Time

Friday • December 20
Russian Ridge • 3mi
Meet: Mindego Gateway parking lot
10:00am to 1:00pm



On this hike with docents Bill and Marilyn Bauriedel, and Farhana Kazi you'll traverse the Ancient Oaks, Bo Gimbel, and Ridge Trails, observing that trees are casting extra-long shadows due to the angle of the earth. At the Audrey Rust Commemorative overlook area you'll gaze upon the beauty of undulating coastal mountains and the distant ocean. You are encouraged to bring and share a poem or a story about winter's arrival and the gradual return of the light.

Holiday Madness Escape

Saturday • December 21
Picchetti Ranch • 4.5mi
10:00am to 1:30pm



Escape for a while from the holiday crowds! Join docents Martin Manley, Linda Smith, and Mary Bernstein for a moderately-paced hike. You'll discuss a wide variety of regional flora and the ways these plants have adapted to their unique environments. If the weather allows, bring lunch or a snack to enjoy at the picnic tables down by Stevens Creek. At the end of the outing you'll have the option for a little wine tasting on your own at the Picchetti Winery. Please note that a shortened version of this hike will occur even 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

Wednesday • December 25
Skyline Ridge • 4mi
Meet: Russian Ridge
10:00am to 1:00pm



Join docents Stephen Buckhout, Padma Satish, and Paul Billig on December 25th 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 has been winter rain, you may see some small waterfalls. You should anticipate an elevation gain of 500 feet on the return leg.

Ride Black Mountain

Sunday • December 29
Monte Bello • 9mi
10:00am to 1:00pm



Docents Dave Kocsis and Patty Lovelace will guide you on an intermediate-level bike excursion exploring this beautiful Preserve. You'll climb Black Mountain for the views and explore the Waterwheel Creek area before descending the Bella Vista Trail into Stevens Creek Canyon and returning to your starting location. Participants must be experienced, able to ride on fairly steep, narrow dirt trails, and ready to climb more than 1,000 feet. Experienced youth cyclists are welcome. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after December 15.**

Search for the Everlasting

Sunday • December 29
Picchetti Ranch • 5mi
10:30am to 2:30pm



Join docents Bob Segalla and Collin Lim to share the enjoyment of this Preserve so close to home and take the opportunity to decide if a certain plant smells like maple syrup – many people think it does! A lovely view awaits you along the Orchard Loop and Zinfandel Trails as does the sound of Stevens Creek. Capable children are welcome on this moderately-paced hike. A visit to the Picchetti Winery for wine tasting is optional (on your own) at the hike's end.



Doris Livezey

Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

New Year Eve's Fun

Tuesday • December 31
Sierra Azul • 11mi
Meet: Northside lot – Free Limited Parking
9:00am to 3:00pm



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



Charles Tu

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

JANUARY

Healthy New Year Resolution

Wednesday • January 1

Monte Bello • 10mi

Meet: Picchetti Ranch

9:30am to 3:00pm



If 'stay healthy' is one of your New Year resolutions, you can start with a fast-paced aerobic hike with docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Ray Curiel, and Vivian Neou. Explore some less travelled trails of this Preserve, starting on Waterwheel Creek to Adobe Creek to Indian Creek. You'll go through mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, and grassland habitats. Enjoy beautiful views of the Santa Cruz Mountains at the top of Black Mountain. **(Note: Participants will carpool to the trailhead.)**

Explorer Hike: Winter Waterfowl

Wednesday • January 1

Stevens Creek Shoreline

Nature Area • 4mi

10:30am to 2:30pm



Embark on a birding expedition with docents Kate Gudmundson, Laura Levin, Mary Brunkhorst, and Dennis Smith 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 in your quest to see feathered friends from near and far.



Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Area

Getting to Know Shorebirds

Saturday • January 4

Stevens Creek Shoreline

Nature Area • 2.5mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Observe ducks, gulls, sandpipers, egrets, and other birds in shoreline wetlands with your docents Bill and Marilyn Bauriedel, and June Cancell to learn field marks of distant birds through a spotting scope. Bring your binoculars and a bird field guide or app if you have them. This walk is appropriate for all ages. Beginners are welcome.



Karl Goshl

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Earthquake Hike

Sunday • January 5

Los Trancos • 2mi

2:00pm to 4:30pm



Join docents Paul Billig and Helena Cohen, and please see the activity description for December 1. **(Note: This popular hike is not suitable for large groups, thank you.)**

Trail Run - Hill Climb

Tuesday • January 7

Windy Hill • 7.4mi

7:00am to 9:00am



Start your morning by conquering Windy Hill! Join trail running docents Anna Lee and Ray Curiel on a run to the top and a downhill return along the Spring Ridge, Anniversary, Lost, and Hamms Gulch Trails. This is an activity for experienced hill-climbers - you'll gain about 1,400 feet in the first few miles.

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday • January 8

Rancho San Antonio • 5mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for December 11.

Little Apples of Teague Hill

Saturday • January 11

Teague Hill • 2mi

Meet: Purisima Creek Redwoods - Redwood Trail entrance

9:30am to 12:30pm



Just as there are many kinds of apples, there are numerous species of manzanitas - "little apples" in Spanish. *Arctostaphylos* (the genus name, meaning "bear grapes" in Latin) is an attractive and important plant species found in chaparral habitat. Docents Frances Reneau, Jayita Bhojwani, and Helena Cohen will guide your discovery of several species growing along the walk route including the endemic king's mountain manzanita.

Fremont Older History Ride

Saturday • January 11

Fremont Older • 12mi

9:45am to 12:15pm



Learn the history of this Preserve on an intermediate mountain bike ride (with a 2,000-foot elevation gain) led by docent Linda Wegner and volunteer Glen Wegner along Toyon, Coyote Ridge, Hunters Point, Sevens Springs, Maizes Peak, Nob Hill Trails. 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.)**

Hiking and Mindfulness

Saturday • January 11

Long Ridge • 2.5mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Take a moment, or a few, for mindfulness on this leisurely hike where you'll stop to share and practice mindfulness strategies among the trees with docents Anna Lee and Ann McCarty. Please bring your lunch and something to sit on.

Ohlone Past and Present

Sunday • January 12

Skyline Ridge • 1mi

Meet: Russian Ridge

1:00pm to 4:00pm



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, Chris Christensen and Ann McCarty through fun activities, stories and a leisurely-paced hike along the Alpine Loop and Old Page Mill Road trails. Discover how modern-day Ohlone descendants are working to rebuild their culture, knowledge, and traditions. Capable, attentive children are welcome. Bring a snack to enjoy at Alpine Pond.

Signs of Winter

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



Join docents Liz Foreman and Toni Gooch and please see the activity description for December 3.



Clare Lu

Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve

Explorer Hike: Early Bloomers and Nesters

Wednesday • January 15
Long Ridge • 5mi
Meet: Saratoga Gap
10:30am to 2:30pm



You'll begin the search for the wildflowers of 2020, joined by docents Dennis Smith, Laura Levin, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst. Although it's early season, you should expect to find both late and early bloomers on this leisurely-paced hike with less than 200 feet of elevation gain on the Skyline-to-the-Sea and Achistaca Trails. You also may be fortunate enough to observe some early nesting birds. Bring cameras and binoculars, and enjoy lunch at Turtle Rock with magnificent views of the surrounding woodlands and ocean.



Health and Wellness Hike

Saturday • January 18
Monte Bello • 4mi
10:00am to 1:30pm



Your health matters! Enjoy the benefits of being out in nature while learning how to improve your health. You'll explore interconnections within the natural world while deepening your own connection to the environment. Docents Catherine Crawford-Swent, Marie Faust Evitt, and Ann McCarty will use simple mindfulness practices and discuss stress reduction. The first mindfulness exercise will be overlooking a valley view where the North American and Pacific tectonic plates meet. Join in and take a step toward improving your health and wellbeing.

Looking for Clues in Nature

Monday • January 20
Picchetti Ranch • 2.5mi
10:00am to 12:30pm



On a leisurely walk along the Zinfandel Trail, docents Debbie Mytels and Lindsay Joye will show you clues that open the door to understanding more about the natural processes in this beautiful preserve. Why are these trees the same distance apart? Why is the air suddenly cooler here? In addition to exploring the behavior of water, rocks, and fungi, you'll also see clues to human history as you enjoy beautiful views through sun and shade. Optional visit to the Picchetti Winery on your own at the walk's end.

Chinese New Year Celebration

Saturday • January 25
El Corte de Madera Creek • 10mi
9:00am to 3:00pm



Join docents Huey-Shin Yuan, Vivian Neou, and Ray Curiel to celebrate the Year of the Rat. You'll explore this beautiful and heavily-forested preserve on 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 will enjoy lunch at a scenic spot with a picnic table. It's a fast-paced strenuous workout with a 2,000-foot elevation gain.



Andrew Forster

Los Trancos Open Space Preserve

Fungal Fun

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



Can you find candlesnuff, bird's nest, and orange peel along the trail? These are a few of the fungi that docents Chris MacIntosh, Paul Billig, and Naureen Moon hope to discover with you on this non-technical fungus appreciation hike. Hiking Whittemore and Harkins Ridge Trails through different habitats, you'll notice the sometimes camouflaged and always fascinating fungi which flourish in winter. Bring boots for mud, stamina, and your curiosity. Despite frequent stops, there are some very steep sections of trail on this loop hike with about 1,500 feet of elevation gain.

View from the Ridge

Sunday • January 26
Long Ridge • 5mi
10:30am to 2:30pm



Join docents Bob Segalla, Collin Lim, and Steve Brugler to explore what this Preserve has to offer. You can hope to see newts along the lush Peters Creek Trail and enjoy a tranquil pond, green forests, distant ridges, and rolling grasslands on the Long Ridge Trail. You'll stop for an ocean view at the Stegner Bench. This moderately-paced hike is suitable for capable children.



Deane Little

Long Ridge Open Space Preserve

Your Brain on a Hike

Thursday • January 30

Pulgas Ridge • 4mi

9:30am to 12:00pm



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 as you enjoy a relaxed nature outing along the Blue Oak, Dick Bishop, and Dusky-footed Woodrat Trails. Does this spark your curiosity? Join docents Greg Hughes, Susan Bernhard, Nina Bell, and Alex Woo, and get ignited.

FEBRUARY

Earthquake Hike

Sunday • February 2

Los Trancos • 2.5mi

1:30pm to 4:00pm



Join docents John Seyfarth and Lindsay Joye, and please see the activity description for December 1. **(Note: This popular hike is not suitable for large groups, thank you.)**

Explorer Hike: Wildflower Treasure Hunt

Wednesday • February 5

Thornewood • 4mi

10:30am to 2:30pm



Experience the delight of discovering early spring wildflowers with docents Laura Levin, Mary Brunkhorst, Kate Gudmundson, and Dennis Smith. Descending through chaparral into redwood forest at a leisurely pace, you'll travel along the Schilling Lake and Bridle Trails, losing and then gaining 400 feet of elevation, 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. **(Note: The number of vehicles is limited for the reservations due to parking capacity; max participants per car is requested to be 4 people.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or before January 22.**

Clockwise from right: El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve by Gerri Tiernan, Los Trancos Open Space Preserve by Elke Baurichter, Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve by C. Schell, and Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve by Lanette Olvos

The World Beneath Our Feet

Saturday • February 8

Long Ridge • 3mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



So much life goes on invisibly in the soil where countless species of invertebrates, fungi, and various kinds of matter are busy interacting. Without this often invisible world of decomposers and recyclers life on earth would be very different. Join docents Chris MacIntosh, Jack Owicki, and Maureen Draper on a leisurely hike along Peters Creek to explore for and discover hidden life. Interested and capable children 5 years and older are welcome.

Hiking and Mindfulness

Saturday • February 8

Long Ridge • 2.5mi

10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for January 11.

Fungal Fun

Sunday • February 9

Purisima Creek Redwoods • 7mi

Meet: North Ridge parking lot

9:00am to 4:30pm



Join docents Chris MacIntosh, Paul Billig, and Marie Faust Evitt, and please see the activity description for January 26.



What's On The Menu Today?

Sunday • February 9

Long Ridge • 3.5mi

Meet: See text below

9:00am to 12:00pm



It's winter, and every creature in the Preserve is searching for life-sustaining nourishment. Join docents Helena Cohen and Frances Reneau to search for signs of woodland dining, and help determine what's been stored and who's been snacking in the Preserve neighborhood. This will be a leisurely out and back hike, following the Achistaca Trail. Children over eight years old are welcome. **(Special Meeting Location/Directions: This hike will meet at a roadside parking location adjacent to the trailhead. Travel 1.0 mile west on Highway 9 from its intersection with Highway 35/Skyline Boulevard. The pullout-parking area will be on the right-northside of Highway 9. Do not block any gates.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 26.**

Wonders of Cherry Springs

Sunday • February 9

Sierra Azul • 3mi

Meet: See text below

9:30am to 2:30pm



Join docents Greg Azevedo, Mary Bernstein, and Emma Finter 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 local flora while enjoying views of Santa Clara Valley and the surrounding Preserve. This moderately-paced hike includes a 500-foot elevation gain uphill segment. **(Note: Directions will be sent and participants will carpool to the trailhead.) Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after January 26.**



Transitions: Exploring Life Cycles

Wednesday • February 12
El Corte de Madera Creek • 5.5mi
9:30am to 2:00pm



Explore transitions in nature's life cycles with docents Catherine Crawford-Swent, Marie Faust Evitt, and Lindsay Joye. Hiking through the forest you'll encounter ferns, wildflowers, Douglas fir, and redwood trees along Sierra Morena, Oljon, Steam Donkey, and Methuselah Trails. You'll discover how new plants form, identify plant strategies for survival, and how mature plants evolve and change. You'll explore the profound impact that the history of this Preserve had on area plant life. Perhaps you'll also discover corollaries with transitions in your own life.



John Green

Ravenswood Open Space Preserve

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday • February 12
Pulgas Ridge • 5.5mi
10:00am to 1:00pm



Please see the activity description for December 11.

Introduction to Geocaching

Saturday • February 15
Los Trancos • 2.5mi
10:00am to 1:30pm



Join docents Debbie Mytels and Joyce Tang, 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, though 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 February 1.

Three Cheers for the Red, White, and Blue

Monday • February 17
Picchetti Ranch • 5mi
10:00am to 3:00pm



Do you know the three early spring wildflowers that match our nation's colors? Join docents Paul Billig and Jumana Latif as you celebrate Presidents' Day and search the trails of this Preserve for these early risers. After exploring the area around the seasonal pond, you'll head out on the Zinfandel Trail and stop for lunch at the picnic area in Stevens Creek County Park. You'll hike at a moderate pace with about 500 feet gain in elevation. Participants are encouraged to dress in patriotic colors.

Arrival of Spring

Tuesday • February 18
Pulgas Ridge • 4.25mi
1:00pm to 4:00pm



Enjoy an afternoon hike with docents Liz Foreman and Lindsay Joye as you explore for the signs of spring's arrival. You'll view early spring flowers, possibly fetid's adder tongue, as well as a variety of oak trees and dusky-footed wood rat nests. At the top of the ridge, enjoy a scenic view from the ridge of the surrounding hills and the SF Bay. This will be a moderately paced hike with several hills and some uneven terrain.

Explorer Hike: The Oljon Trail

Wednesday • February 19
El Corte de Madera Creek • 5mi
10:30am to 2:30pm



On this leisurely-paced hike, you'll be among the first to explore the newly-opened Oljon Trail. With docents Dennis Smith, Laura Levin, Kate Gudmundson, and Mary Brunkhorst, you'll learn about the extensive work that has been done to protect the watershed of El Corte de Madera Creek as you descend and climb about 600 feet. The project work includes this new trail segment and a new linkage to many of your favorite trails in this Preserve. Along the way you'll find spring wildflowers, observe migrating birds, and experience the recovery of the redwood and Douglas fir forest.



Amy Leonard

Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve

Literature, Lore, and Life Sciences

Saturday • February 22
Skyline Ridge • 5.5mi
8:30am to 12:30pm



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 Ipiwa, Tree Farm, and Chestnut Trails. Docents Anna Lee, Jayita Bhojwani, and Jumana Latif 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 nature in our lives.

Beginning Bayland Birding

Saturday • February 22
Ravenswood • 2.4mi
9:00am to 12:00pm



Do birds like great blue herons, Canada geese and mallard ducks frame the scope of your current bird identification ability? Join docents Frances Reneau and Helena Cohen to add a few more common water birds to your birding repertoire—bring your curiosity, observation skills, binoculars (if you have some), and your dusty copy of Sibley's or another field guide. The wide, flat Ravenswood Trail serves as a moving observation platform for a morning of discovery.



Chris Perry

El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve

Wandering and Writing in Nature

Saturday • February 22
Long Ridge • 4.6mi
1:30pm to 5:00pm



Writers and philosophers across the ages have found inspiration, wisdom, and peace through time spent in nature. Join their ranks on this moderate hike along Peter's Creek and Long Ridge Trails, accompanied by the words and spirits of John Muir, Alice Walker, Aristotle, and other friends and mentors, old and new. Discuss meanings and philosophies with fellow hikers and docents Anna Lee and Jumana Latif, then discover your own insights through journaling or quiet contemplation during an extended break at the Wallace Stegner bench. You are invited to bring a journal, a writing implement, and/or your favorite nature quotes to kindle reflection and discussion.



Stretcher Smith

Long Ridge Open Space Preserve

Umunhum Barlow Explorer

Sunday • February 23
Sierra Azul • 6mi
Meet: Jacques Ridge parking lot
7:45am to 1:45pm



Join docents Greg Azevedo and Steve Brugler for an uncommon outing around the lower area of Mount Umunhum via Barlow Road and the Woods Trail. This moderately-paced, mostly downhill hike will have many short breaks, wildflowers, and wonderful views. You'll begin your hike at a trailhead along Mt. Umunhum Road near the Bald Mountain parking lot. Several trail sections are steep with varied surfaces. Bring ample drinking water.

(Note: Participants will carpool to the trailhead.) Reservations are required. Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after February 9.

Trail Run – Landmark Tour

Sunday • February 23
El Corte de Madera Creek • 9.6mi
9:00am to 11:30am



Get your long weekend miles in with trail running docents Anna Lee, Ray Curiel, and Joyce Tang on this high mileage tour of the landmarks and special features of this Preserve. See the majestic Methuselah Tree, the unique tafoni sandstone formations, and the regal old growth redwoods. Olympic speed not necessary – multiple running paces accommodated – but be prepared for the miles and some definite elevation changes!

Redwood Oxygen

Sunday • February 23
Purisima Creek Redwoods • 5.3mi
Meet: Purisima Creek Road entrance
10:30am to 2:30pm



Find out why you'll be breathing some of the cleanest air in the world with docents Bob Segalla, Sam Berry, and Paula Maurano on the Purisima Creek and Craig Britton Trails. You'll also learn about the redwood logging history of the area. This leisurely-paced hike through a cool mystical forest is suitable for capable children.

Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after February 9.

Fetid Adder's Tongue "The Stink Plant"

Fetid adder's tongue (*Scoliopus bigelovii*) is an unusual little plant and its peculiarity is reflected in its name. To begin, the genus name *Scoliopus* means "curved foot" and refers to the way the flower stalk bends, curves, and sprawls on the ground as the seed pod matures; the plant's flower also has an unpleasant odor. The plant's species name *bigelovii* honors John Milton Bigelow, a surgeon and botanist from Ohio who discovered the plant on Mount Tamalpais in 1854 as part of a U.S. Army surveying mission.

A member of the lily family, fetid adder's tongue has two closely rolled green leaves at its base that later open out displaying their beautiful maroon-mottled leaves and three-angled flower stems that become limp and sprawling. Fetid adder's tongue typically flowers in late winter and early spring (February to March); its flowers are pale green, lined with prominent dull reddish-brown, purple, maroon, or dark brown finely etched veins. The actual petals are smaller, threadlike, and up-curving. When the flower first appears, the flower stalk stands up straight, holding the flower above its two leaves.

After the flower has been pollinated, the fruit or seed pod begins to swell and the flower parts fall off. The weight of the growing pod causes the slender stalk to bend over, twist, and touch the ground, contributing to the plant's other names – "slink pod" and "slink lily." Instead of broadcasting their seeds like many flowering plants, the seed pod goes into the ground, while still

attached to the "mother plant." By the time the flowers have disappeared, the maroon-blotched leaves have grown quite large and will be present for months. This habit contributes to the name "adder's tongue." The "fetid" part of the name comes



Stretcher Smith

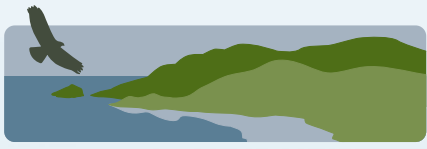
Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve

from the odor of the plant's ill-scented flower. The flower's nectary induces insects to enter and crawl around, with pollen generally deposited on the insect's back. Likely attracted to the flower's odor, fungus gnats and flies are the principle pollinators of fetid adder's tongue.

Fetid adder's tongue can be found in the coast ranges of northern California, often in deep-shaded, moist woods.

This winter, visit the District's Coal Creek, El Corte de Madera Creek, Purisima Creek Redwoods, Pulgas Ridge, Teague Hill or Thornewood Open Space Preserves to look for fetid adder's tongue. For the really inquisitive visitor, kneel down to get a closer look at the plant and you might be able to get a whiff of the flower's odor.

Information adapted from the Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society materials and Wikipedia.



Coastal Corner

Celebrating 15 years of Service to the Coastside

As Midpen celebrates 15 years of partnership with the Coastside community, we are reflecting on what we've accomplished together and the opportunities on the horizon.

Looking back to the 1990s, as development pressure threatened the Coastside's scenic beauty, rural character and agricultural heritage, residents expressed their support for extending the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District boundaries to include the San Mateo County Coastside. In 2004, the coast to ridgeline from Montara to the San Mateo-Santa Cruz county line officially became Midpen's Coastside Protection Area.

Since then, Midpen has preserved more than 11,000 acres of coastal open space and agricultural lands. With the 2014 voter approval of Measure AA, a \$300 million 30-year bond, we have invested more than \$16 million on the coast: restoring streams and

redwood forests, enhancing sustainable agriculture and opening areas for low-impact outdoor recreation. Highlights include:

- Opening lower La Honda Creek Preserve to the public with 6 miles of hiking and equestrian trails.
- Protecting more than 1,200 acres of redwood forests, grasslands and watersheds.
- Restoring habitat in San Gregorio Creek for endangered coho salmon and steelhead trout.
- Completing new water systems, fencing and corrals to support conservation grazing.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Coastside community, protecting and restoring the natural and agricultural lands that contribute so much the area's rural identity, natural beauty and quality of life.



Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve by Karl Pflazer

Ravenswood Bay Trail to Connect Commuters and Communities

A new section of the San Francisco Bay Trail is currently under construction at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve. The trail will close a 0.6-mile critical gap on the peninsula, connecting 80 miles of continuous Bay Trail and providing important commute alternatives for cyclists. The new trail will also provide improved bay access for East Palo Alto and Menlo Park communities, and create opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, including hikers, joggers and bicyclists.

The trail project includes a new boardwalk and bridge spanning the wetlands at the northern end of the preserve. An overlook along the boardwalk will include benches and interpretive signage, providing a great location for birdwatching along the easy-access trail.

Ravenswood Preserve contains a valuable and dynamic portion of the San Francisco Bay's native salt marsh habitat, home to the federally endangered Ridgway's rail and salt marsh harvest mouse. The project, funded by Measure AA and grant funds from multiple partner organizations, includes wetlands enhancement along with the trail construction.



Visual simulation of boardwalk overlook at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve

Partner Organizations

- Association of Bay Area Governments
- City of East Palo Alto
- City of Menlo Park
- Coastal Conservancy
- County of San Mateo Measure K
- County of Santa Clara
- Facebook
- San Francisco Bay Trail
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
- Urban Greening Program



John Green

"We are improving habitat for local wildlife at the preserve by building refugia islands and improving transition zones," Midpen Resource Management Specialist Karine Tokatlian said. "These areas provide a gradual slope that allows marsh-dependent species access, like the tiny salt marsh harvest marsh, to shelter on higher ground during high-tide events."

Ravenswood Preserve is closed during construction. To avoid the endangered Ridgway's rail breeding season, construction activity in the wetland areas is limited to September through January. The preserve is scheduled to reopen in February 2020, with the new trail opening anticipated in summer 2020.

For more information visit: openspace.org/bay-trail





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Measure AA accomplishments with new gear!



openspace.org/holiday

Mountain Lion Family Travels Through Rancho San Antonio

It's no surprise that the Santa Cruz mountains are home to mountain lions. Scientists estimate 50 to 100 mountain lions inhabit the Santa Cruz Mountain range. What was a surprise, however, to Midpen wildlife biologists was a Rancho San Antonio Preserve visitor recording footage of three mountain lions nonchalantly trotting down a trail during daylight hours in close proximity to people. This unusual behavior — mountain lions typically avoid humans and are usually most active at dawn and dusk — prompted the closure of a few trails to establish a safe distance between the pumas and people. Additional lion activity then expanded the closure to the entire preserve on a busy summer weekend. "We proactively closed the preserve so that we could work with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to evaluate the situation and ensure the safety of both people and mountain lions," Matt Chaney, wildlife biologist at Midpen, explained. "When the mountain lion family moved up into the hills, we reopened the preserve."

Rancho is by far Midpen's most popular preserve (approximately 700,000 preserve users visits each year), drawing more than four times the visitors of Fremont Older Preserve, the second most popular with approximately 160,000 visits. With a steady stream of human traffic, coupled with the area's abundance of deer, mountain lion sightings are more likely here than at other preserves. In addition, the preserve

is boxed in by the Lehigh Permanente quarry to the south and urban neighborhoods to the north and east. These habitats are not as suitable for mountain lion movement, so lions passing through the area are more likely to end up in the preserve.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A MOUNTAIN LION:

Face lion, back away slowly.

Be Large. Shout.

Keep children close.
Pick up children without bending.

IF ATTACKED, FIGHT BACK.

Under normal circumstances, mountain lion sightings are still rare in Midpen preserves. Should you see a mountain lion while hiking, stand tall, make noise, throw objects and pick up small children or pets without bending over. Back away slowly and leave the area at once. Never run from or turn your back to a mountain lion, as this may trigger the animal's instinct to chase. We encourage all preserve visitors to remain alert and report any mountain lion sightings to a Midpen Ranger.

Midpen's mission is to preserve and protect the natural environment, including native wildlife like mountain lions, and to provide for public enjoyment of the preserves. It's a balance, and our goal is to allow mountain lions and visitors to safely share the preserve.

For more information about mountain lions visit: openspace.org/mountain-lions.