



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Midpen Open Space receives medal for exemplary service during the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Los Altos, CA** — The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District received a medal from Supervisor Joe Simitian from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for exemplary service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Midpen was honored for its efforts to keep its public open space preserves safely open to the public during the shelter-at-home orders. Outdoor recreation and time spent in nature is considered an essential service under state and county health orders.

“We are honored to receive this award, which is a great testament of the continued dedication and commitment of our agency and staff,” Midpen General Manager Ana Maria Ruiz said. “We will continue to do all that we can to keep our preserves open safely for the community to enjoy and find much needed respite in nature.”

A growing body of research shows that simply being in nature has real, quantifiable health benefits, for both physical, emotional and mental well-being. Some of that research is being conducted in the Bay Area and is summarized at [openspace.org/nature-health-benefits](https://openspace.org/nature-health-benefits).

Midpen preserves continue to remain open safely to offer outdoor recreation opportunities for the community. Midpen also encourages residents to explore nature close home and developed a growing list of “nature at home” resources for people to learn about nature through virtual tours, family-friendly nature activities and environmental education resources. Find out more about virtual nature resources at [openspace.org/virtual-nature](https://openspace.org/virtual-nature).

At its Monday meeting, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors dedicated medals to a list of individuals, groups, businesses and organizations who provided extraordinary acts of heroism and service countywide during the pandemic. Supervisors presented the medals at the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors meeting Monday, via a virtual ceremony that highlighted the incredible resilience and enduring efforts from the community despite the ongoing challenges in the past year.

*The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land of regional significance in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. On the San Mateo County coast, our mission also includes preserving agricultural land of regional significance and rural character and encouraging viable agricultural use of land resources. Midpen has successfully protected nearly 65,000 acres of public open space land in the Santa Cruz Mountains region since 1972. [openspace.org](https://openspace.org)*