



VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT · SPRING 2024



A newly restored 160-year-old barn at the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. (Frances Freyberg)

Withstanding the Test of Time



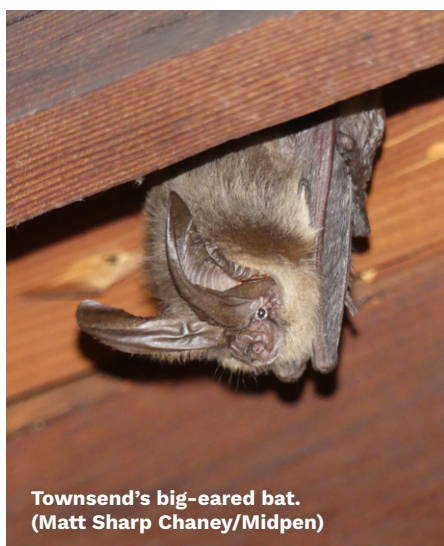
Coastal Barn Provides a Window into Agricultural Roots and Roosting Bats

Within Midpen preserves on the San Mateo County coast, where agricultural roots run deep, conservation and agriculture are often intertwined. Recently, a 160-year-old barn was restored as both a nod to the region's heritage and an important habitat for rare wildlife.

The barn was built sometime before 1860 and remained part of a working farmstead until the 1970s. Located in what is now La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve along the Cielo Trail, the barn was in dire need of structural repairs for preservation and public safety. Rust, missing windows, insect and water damage and a weakened foundation were taking a toll.

Midpen's staff and board explored several options for the future of the barn, which according to an evaluation qualifies as an historic resource. Ultimately, the board chose to stabilize and repair the barn while improving roosting habitat for bats inside and creating interpretive signs about the

agricultural and natural history of the barn and surrounding area. This aligns with Midpen's unique coastal mission which includes preserving rural character, restoring the natural environment and providing for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.



Townsend's big-eared bat. (Matt Sharp Chaney/Midpen)

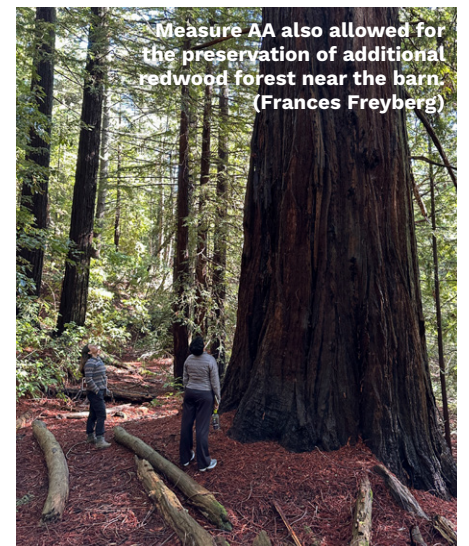
Construction on the barn's foundation and many other repairs were completed in late 2023 with funding from Measure AA, a \$300 million bond approved by local voters in 2014. Measure AA provided Midpen with the resources to open La Honda Creek Preserve to the public in 2017.

The bond also supports ongoing work to build-out the preserve's trail system, improve agricultural infrastructure in support of conservation grazing and the recent addition of nearly 100 acres of redwood forest making a future trail connection to neighboring El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve possible.

Soon, the public will not only be able to walk the barn's perimeter, but also view its resident bats through a special window installed for that purpose.

At the request of Midpen biologists, the interior of the barn was enhanced specifically for bats with special boxes placed in the rafters for roosting, windows allowing bats to enter and exit the barn and a way to collect and remove their guano.

Surveys have found eight different species of bats in the immediate area of the barn, including Townsend's big-eared bat, pallid bat and western red bat, all of which are California state species of special concern.

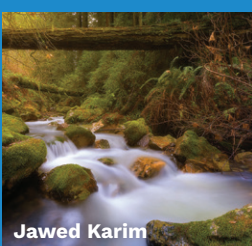


Measure AA also allowed for the preservation of additional redwood forest near the barn. (Frances Freyberg)

"Man-made habitats for wildlife aren't perfect, but they are a good interim solution until more natural habitats, including large snags and hollowed trees, are protected and enhanced," Midpen biologist Matt Sharp Chaney said. "And seeing bats up close and personal can really charm people in unexpected ways."

The restored barn is visible from the Cielo Trail in upper La Honda Creek Preserve. Due to very limited space a free permit is required to park at the nearby trailhead. Learn more at openspace.org/La-Honda-Creek.

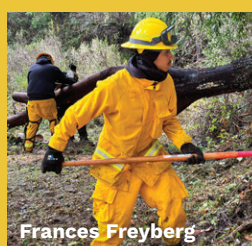
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Restoring Nature, Preserving History

Cleaning up a dump reveals treasures from the past and makes watersheds healthier into the future.

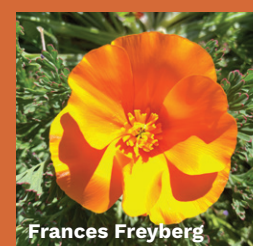
Jawed Karim



Creating Forest Health and Jobs

A new partnership builds wildland fire resilience in Midpen preserves along with conservation careers for young adults.

Frances Freyberg



Free Docent Guided Activities

Midpen docent naturalists share their passion for nature with free activities throughout the spring.

Frances Freyberg

Measure AA Bond is a Game Changer



Ana María Ruiz

Ten years ago, more than two-thirds of voters residing within Midpen boundaries voted “yes” on Measure AA. Passage of this ballot measure is allowing Midpen to sell up to \$300 million in general obligation bonds over 30 years, “To improve access to hiking and biking opportunities; protect and preserve redwood forests, natural open spaces, critical wildlife habitat and the scenic beauty of our region and coastline; restore creeks to protect water quality; and reduce forest fire risk.”

To date, Midpen has spent \$88.4 million, with another \$6.8 million in this year’s budget, toward these goals, tracking well with the expenditure plan. This year, as we celebrate 10 years of Measure AA accomplishments, I am reminded of how critical this public funding support is for our region.

Looking back at 2009-10, the economic downturn had constrained Midpen’s revenues which are primarily made up of a small percentage of the property taxes homeowners pay to their county. Revenue was projected to be flat in 2010-11 and only slightly increase in 2012-13. Midpen’s capacity to borrow money for future land purchases was severely constrained as our operating and capital expenses, plus existing debt service payments, were at 94% of revenues.

Yet the needs were growing. There were critical gaps and missing linkages in habitat and trail

connectivity. Important and intact natural systems needed protection. Concern was growing about the continued viability of local agriculture, and there were decades of deferred land stewardship needs plus ongoing infrastructure repairs, replacements and maintenance.

Rising costs coupled with Midpen’s limited funding for capital projects made the situation dire. Without a change, Midpen’s ability to preserve open space lands was predicted to shrink from approximately 1,500 acres to about 200 acres per year.

We were just beginning to understand the impacts of climate change and the role open space plays in landscape-level resilience; and the investments needed in vegetation management, invasive weed control, restoration forestry and grassland management.

The Midpen board decided to seek solutions by reaching out to the people. We put in a lot of effort, resources and time going out into our local communities, from Los Gatos to Mountain View, over to Half Moon Bay and up to the neighborhoods along Skyline Boulevard, asking people to envision the future of open space.

We held meetings, conducted surveys and posted questions online. In the end, thousands of community members came together over 18 months to come up with a Vision Plan consisting of 54 portfolios of projects organized around five key themes that resonate with Midpen’s mission: outdoor recreation and healthy living; natural, cultural and scenic landscapes; healthy nature; connecting with nature and each other; and viable working lands.

The top 25 portfolios were deemed the highest

priority, out of which an expenditure plan was prepared. The Midpen board then asked the public if they were willing to support a funding measure to help implement these projects. Most of the identified projects in the top 25 portfolios were included in the \$300 million ballot-measure ask, and on June 3, 2014, 67.96% of voters said “yes!”

In addition to the overwhelming public support and new influx of funding for capital projects, what makes Measure AA a game changer is a bit harder to see. Dedicated capital funding increased our ability to leverage more than \$23 million in grant funding to date, and partnerships, making taxpayer dollars go so much further.

Midpen’s operational general fund budget can now be used to expand public interpretive and educational programs, increase field maintenance and patrol capacity, scale-up capital project delivery, and hire dedicated staff to address wildland fire resiliency, climate sustainability and facilities maintenance.



Stay tuned for more to come throughout 2024 as we celebrate 10 years of Measure AA accomplishments. Learn more at openspace.org/Measure-AA.

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Springtime Blooms Along the Coast

Four Native Wildflowers to Look For Along Grassland Trails

Each year, Midpen preserves are adorned with subtle pops of color as beautiful native wildflowers begin to bloom, proclaiming the arrival of spring. With thousands of species of flowering plants in California, wildflowers can be found across a diverse array of environments from grassy hillsides to shaded creek banks beneath dense redwood canopies.

Of all of California’s habitats, coastal grasslands are among the most biodiverse. Cloverdale Ranch Open Space Preserve, Midpen’s newest preserve established in 2023, contains large tracts of biologically rich coastal grassland and coastal scrub habitats, supporting a diverse community of native plants including many unique wildflowers.

The purchase of Cloverdale Ranch Preserve, funded in part by Measure AA which local voters approved in 2014, ensures that important native wildflower habitats are protected and cared for in perpetuity.

In alignment with Midpen’s unique mission on the San Mateo County coast, Measure AA will also fund infrastructure improvements at Cloverdale Ranch Preserve to help sustain conservation grazing in parts of the preserve. This program in partnership with local ranchers provides periodic disturbances that coastal grasslands evolved with, and can benefit from, to prevent encroachment of shrubs and forest and loss of biodiversity to nonnative plants. Midpen staff monitors conservation grazing areas to ensure that grazing management is promoting conservation goals.

“Within the grassland community, small-seeded wildflowers and native grasses are not particularly competitive with the more pervasive, nonnative annual grasses that dominate local grasslands today,” Midpen rangeland ecologist and botanist Lewis Reed said. “Conservation grazing can help moderate that competition, benefitting certain native plants.”

These four native wildflowers can be found along grassland trails, including at Cloverdale Ranch Preserve, this spring. As you embark on a treasure hunt for

these spring gems, please leave them as you find them to ensure that wildflowers continue to thrive for years to come.

Dwarf Checkerbloom

A native to the coastal regions of California, the rose-colored flowers of dwarf checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*) flowers from March to July each year.

California Bee Plant

Blooming from February to May, the California bee plant (*Scrophularia californica*) produces copious amounts of nectar, attracting hummingbirds, bees and wasps to its small red flowers, and also serves as a host plant to the Chaldeon checkerspot butterfly.

Sky Lupine

Small in stature but brilliantly blue, the aptly named sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*) can often be found growing alongside California poppies and tidy tips on grassy hillsides from March through May.

Fremont’s Star Lily

With yellow and white star-shaped flowers that bloom from March to May, Fremont’s star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) can easily be mistaken for look-alikes with edible bulbs. All parts of this plant are poisonous to animals, including humans.

Explore more wildflowers found in Midpen preserves at openspace.org/wildflowers.



Sky lupine (Shannon Reilly)



Dwarf checkerbloom (Shannon Reilly)



Fremont’s star lily (Shannon Reilly)



California bee plant (Alexis Babayan)

Forest Health & Career Paths

New Conservation Corps Program Supports Wildland Fire Resiliency Projects

Midpen and the San Francisco Conservation Corps (SFCC) are teaming up to expand capacity for work that increases the natural environment's resiliency to climate change and potential wildland fire.

The Forestry Corps, a new branch under SFCC's umbrella, was created to train young corps members in land and fire management techniques. When the SFCC applied for a grant to fund this new program in 2022, they were looking for a partner agency with land to support their stewardship training goals and Midpen was a great fit, according to Midpen vegetation ecologist Coty Sifuentes-Winter. Now in 2024, the Forestry Corps is in full force, and recently began working in Midpen preserves on ecologically sensitive vegetation management projects in multiple preserves as part of our Wildland Fire Resiliency Program.

"The Forestry Corps are helping Midpen with forest health work," Sifuentes-Winter said. "In return as part of the partnership, Midpen staff provide them with education and job training."

Midpen trains the corps members in topics such as wildlife biology and fire ecology, as well as land management techniques like preventing the spread of invasive species, arboriculture



SFCC member at a wildland fire resiliency project in La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. (Frances Freyberg)

and sensitively thinning trees and vegetation for conservation purposes. Midpen continues building capacity to proactively increase vegetation management across our more than 70,000 acres of preserved public open space lands for wildland fire resiliency through partnerships, with the support of outside grant funds, and by increasing our own resource management capacity.

"By tapping into the Forestry Corps, we can help develop their knowledge and skills in the conservation field," Sifuentes-Winter said. "And when Midpen is looking to hire, they are going to be primed to apply for these jobs and be successful. It's a win-win."

Sifuentes-Winter also provides career-path inspiration for corps members, who are 18-26 years of age. He often brings out Midpen staff to give the corps members informal career talks.

SFCC Director of Corps Member Development and Evaluation Kip Bowmar said that Forestry Corps members are earning certifications in wildland fire behavior and introductory firefighting.

"After we ordered uniforms and equipment a corps members said, 'take a picture of me in my uniform, I want to send this to my mom'," Bowmar said. "It makes your heart swell up with happiness and pride."

"I like to highlight for these young adults that you can come from a whole host of different backgrounds, and have a career in conservation."

—Coty Sifuentes-Winter

Another corps member, Jason Verdugo, said the Forestry Corps gave him the opportunity to do something he loved: work outdoors.

"I've always had an interest in firefighting, but never really knew how to get there," Verduga revealed. "The corps said 'we got you, we'll let you know how to do it, just show up, show your effort. That's cool!'"

Learn more at openspace.org/fire.

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

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

Our Mission: 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.

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

BOARD MEETINGS

Are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7 p.m. in-person and via Zoom. For details visit openspace.org/board-meetings.

Ana María Ruiz, General Manager
Leigh Ann Gessner, Open Space Views Editor
Ellen Tjosvold, Guided Activities Editor



The discovery and removal of a diesel tank helps keep watersheds clean. (Frances Freyberg)

Restoring Nature, Preserving History

FUNDED BY
MEASURE AA
2014 OPEN SPACE BOND

Dump Cleanup Creates a Healthier Watershed

When Midpen acquired Bear Creek Redwoods in 1999, the land had been heavily used and manipulated by human hands including Gold Rush-era logging mills, Dr. Harry Tevis's grand estate and botanic wonderland in the early 1900s and Alma College, a seminary for priests-in-training in the 1930s.

While a former carport that now serves as bat habitat provides a visible marker of Tevis's once-palatial estate, and the remaining Marian Shrine reminds visitors of the former Alma College, other evidence of use has been buried deep: including in a once-active landfill filled with artifacts from the lives of prior inhabitants.

As part of Midpen's mission to reclaim natural areas and restore the land's natural functions to support a healthy thriving ecosystem, staff recently completed the cleanup of this old landfill discovered within the preserve. The cleanup involved two distinct

efforts: systematically collecting and documenting as many historic artifacts as possible, and removing contaminated soil and other hazardous waste.

The landfill was located near an old worker's village, built by Tevis to support his estate and house the nearly 100-member staff. The village included living quarters, greenhouses, storage buildings, garages, a barn and carport. When the Jesuits assumed control of the area, a book binding and print shop were set up. These activities resulted in a considerable amount of waste which was regrettably burned and dumped into a nearby ravine.

"The location is incredibly interesting and revealed some treasures from the past," said Midpen project manager Zachary Alexander. "Unfortunately, most of them were covered in thousands of pounds of contaminated soil."

In a cleanup process that began in 2022, crews collected nearly 3,500 artifacts. Glass, ceramic and metal food and

beverage containers and tableware were most common. Other items that were unearthed include newsreels and films, buttons and buckles, shoes, silverware, pharmaceutical containers, personal hygiene products and writing ink.

The curated items have been transferred to Sonoma State University to be catalogued, stored in a secure, climate-controlled facility and utilized for research.

The work then turned to removing the leftover waste. Diesel, motor oil and asbestos were identified within the dump and former village site.



Zachary Alexander (Frances Freyberg)

Before finishing up, crews had one more obstacle: a 1,200-pound underground diesel tank that had to be excavated and removed. Crews drained nearly 500 gallons of diluted diesel and removed the tank to prevent seepage of pollutants into nearby creeks.

Bear Creek Redwoods is in the Guadalupe watershed, meaning the waters of most creeks and tributaries flow into the Lexington Reservoir. The water in Lexington Reservoir is used to replenish groundwater supplies and serves as an integral component of Santa

Clara Valley's water supply.

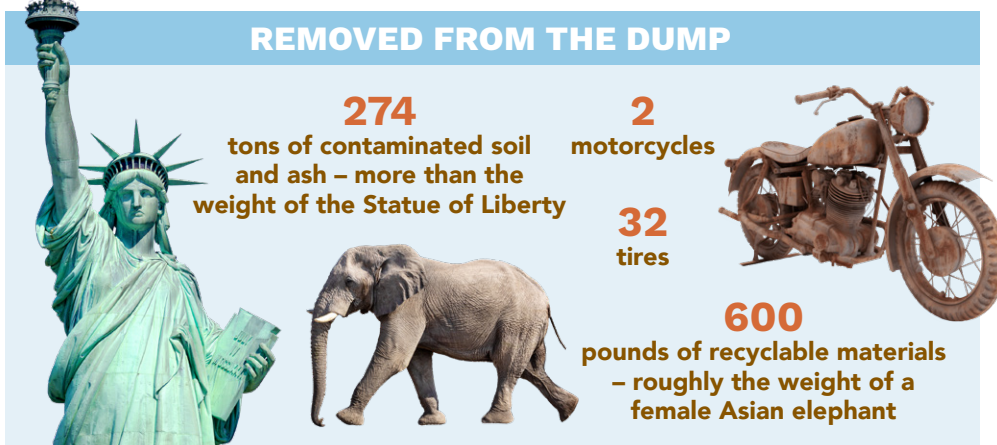
This project was funded in part by Measure AA, Midpen's 30-year \$300 million bond. Passed in 2014, this bond included the funding necessary to open Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve to the public in 2019 as well as construct additional trails and control non-native invasive plants such as French broom, Italian thistle and stinkwort.

"While it was a heavy lift, both literally and metaphorically, it's rewarding to leave a place much cleaner than we found it."

—Midpen project manager Zachary Alexander

"By restoring natural open space lands, we are helping to protect public health and safety, and the health of our native plants and wildlife. We know California newts and western pond turtles inhabit this preserve, so removing these pollutants will certainly benefit these species and others downstream," Alexander said.

Visit Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve to learn more through the interpretive signs there, or take the journey online at openspace.org/Alma-tour.



Spring 2024 Docent Naturalist Guided Activities

Indian paintbrush bring a splash of red to many Midpen preserves in the late spring and early summer. (Frances Freyberg)

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

To pique your interest, take a look here at the list of guided activities and then refer to our website openspace.org/guided-activities for all additional needed details. The activities are FREE and only some require reservations. Please note that some preserves have more than one access point and some activities meet at a preserve or location other than where the guided activity will occur. If there is no special "where to meet" information then the activity meets at the preserve's main parking area.

March

Earthquakes: How and Why

Sunday, March 3
1 – 4:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles [M](#)

Explorer Hike: Ancient Oaks Discovery

Wednesday, March 6
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Ranchlands to Woodlands

Thursday, March 7
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Sears Ranch Road Parking Area
5 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Stroll the Overlooked Trail

Saturday, March 9
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
El Sereno Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2.4 miles [R](#) [E](#)

Scenic Skyline Sampler

Sunday, March 10
9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
7.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Trees are Smart

Sunday, March 10
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles [E](#) [L](#)

Hiking for Your Health

Monday, March 11
12:30 – 4 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
4 miles [M](#) [L](#)



Oak titmouse
(Carol Ann Krug Graves)

Signs of Spring

Wednesday, March 13
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.2 miles [M](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, March 13
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
5 miles [S](#)

Wildland Knowledge of Native Peoples

Friday, March 15
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
4 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Geocaching Hike

Saturday, March 16
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2.5 miles [R](#) [E](#) [F](#) [L](#)

Taking the Long View

Sunday, March 17
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
4.7 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Ramble at Rancho

Monday, March 18
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Spring Frolic

Tuesday, March 19
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
6 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Equinox at Turtle Rock

Tuesday, March 19
3:30 – 8 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Hickory Oaks Roadside Parking
4.5 miles [R](#) [M](#) [L](#)

Explorer Hike: Early Spring Blooms

Wednesday, March 20
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
3 miles [M](#) [L](#)

How Flowers Changed the World

Friday, March 22
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Parking Area
2.5 miles [M](#) [F](#)

Who's Back at the Pond?

Saturday, March 23
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#) [L](#)

Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest

Saturday, March 23
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [F](#) [L](#)

A Cold War Sentinel on Mt. Umunhum

Saturday, March 23
1 – 2:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit
Parking Area
0.25 miles [M](#)

Morning Meander: Newts to Nutmegs

Wednesday, March 27
9 – 11 a.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
2 miles [E](#)

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, March 28
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Jacques Ridge Parking Area
7.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Faultlines, Flowers and Hippies!

Friday, March 29
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles [M](#)

Wonders of Cherry Springs

Saturday, March 30
9:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2.5 miles [R](#) [M](#)

WWW: Wildflowers, Wandering and Wine

Saturday, March 30
10 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Birding on the Boardwalk

Sunday, March 31
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Ravenswood Preserve
2.5 miles [E](#) [F](#) [W](#)

April

No Fooling: Springtime Qi Gong

Monday, April 1
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles [E](#)

Explorer Hike: Welcome to Spring

Wednesday, April 3
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
3 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Counting Lizards

Saturday, April 6
9:30 a.m. – Noon
Skyline Ridge Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#) [L](#)

Listening and Looking

Saturday, April 6
2 – 4:30 p.m.
Ravenswood Preserve
2.8 miles **E F W**

Faultlines, Flowers and Hippies!

Sunday, April 7
1:30 – 4 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles **M**

Among the Wildflowers, Redwoods and Ferns

Monday, April 8
9 a.m. – Noon
Thornewood Preserve
3.5 miles **M**

Waterfall Wonder

Tuesday, April 9
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Thornewood Preserve
3.5 miles **M**

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, April 10
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
St. Joseph's Hill Preserve
Meet: Little League Field Parking Area
6 miles **S**

Following in Ohlone Footsteps

Saturday, April 13
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2.5 miles **M L**

California History at Hawthorns Area

Sunday, April 14
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles **R M**

Ramble at Rancho

Monday, April 15
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7.5 miles **S L**

Explorer Hike: Two Ponds and a View

Wednesday, April 17
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
4 miles **M L**

Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest

Saturday, April 20
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
4.5 miles **M F L**

Scenic Skyline Sampler

Sunday, April 21
9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
7.5 miles **S L**

Wildflower Walk

Sunday, April 21
1 – 4 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
3.5 miles **M F**

Everyday Earth Day! Restoration Party

Monday, April 22
8:45 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Thornewood Preserve
3 miles **R S L**

Morning Meander: Ridge Grassland to Oaks

Wednesday, April 24
9 – 11 a.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
2 miles **M**

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, April 25
9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
6.5 miles **S L**

Little Naturalists

Thursday, April 25
3:15 – 5 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles **R E F**

Ferns and Other Ancient Plants

Saturday, April 27
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
3.5 miles **M L**



Lorquin's admiral
(Kevin Shoban)

May

Explorer Hike: May Day Flowers!

Wednesday, May 1
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles **M L**

Following in Ohlone Footsteps

Friday, May 3
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
8.5 miles **S L**

Exploring the Hawthorns Area

Friday, May 3
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles **R M**

Wonders of Cherry Springs

Sunday, May 5
9:45 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2.5 miles **R M**



Nature center visitors can meet Midpen's rescued gopher snake, Rolo, who is an ambassador for environmental education.
(Charles Castrovinci)

Nature Center Season Begins

The David C. Daniels Nature Center, located on the edge of Alpine Pond at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, opens for the season on Saturday, April 6, 2024. Come by to explore the exhibits and engage with docents Saturdays and Sundays from noon until 5 p.m. during spring and summer. Learn more and plan your visit at openspace.org/nature-center.

Earthquake Trivia

Sunday, May 5
2 – 4:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles **M F**

Flowers and Fancy

Tuesday, May 7
11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
3.5 miles **M L**

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, May 8
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area
5 miles **S**

Nutmegs in California?

Friday, May 10
9 a.m. – Noon
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Achistaca Roadside Parking
4 miles **R M**

Do You Speak Flower?

Saturday, May 11
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
3 miles **M F L**

Geology: Moving Mountains

Saturday, May 11
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
5 miles **S L**

Love Your Mother

Sunday, May 12
9 a.m. – Noon
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4 miles **M F**

Signs of Spring

Wednesday, May 15
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.2 miles **M**

Explorer Hike: Spring Along the Woods Trail

Wednesday, May 15
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Jacques Ridge Parking Area
5 miles **M L**

Sierra Azul Sampler

Saturday, May 18
9:35 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Jacques Ridge Parking Area
6 miles **R S**

Geocaching Hike

Saturday, May 18
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles **R E F L**

WWW: Wildflowers, Wandering and Wine

Saturday, May 18
10 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles **M L**

Butterflies of Picchetti Ranch

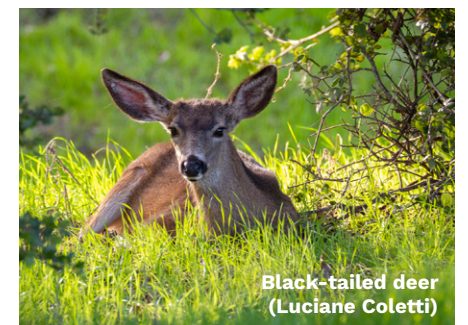
Sunday, May 19
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
3 miles **R M**

Sunset at Mindego Hill

Sunday, May 19
5:30 – 8 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area
3 miles **M L**

Ramble at Rancho

Monday, May 20
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7.5 miles **S L**



Black-tailed deer
(Luciane Coletti)

Morning Meander: Tafoni and Views

Wednesday, May 22
9 a.m. – Noon
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
2.7 miles **M**

Full Moon and Sunset from Borel Hill

Wednesday, May 22
5 – 9 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
3.5 miles **R M**

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, May 23
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
7 miles **S L**

Butterflies of Sierra Azul

Friday, May 24
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
5 miles **M L**

Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest

Saturday, May 25
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
4.5 miles **M F L**

36th Annual Hike the Open Spaces

Monday, May 27
8:30 – 11:55 a.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Parking Area
2 miles **R E**

Legend

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



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Stay Connected to Your Open Space

Sign up to receive Midpen's monthly e-newsletter and updates on preserves and projects.
openspace.org/opt-in

Follow us on social media:



Get Inspired! 2024 Digital Photo Contest

Midpen's annual photo contest returns with entries accepted beginning April 1. One winner will be selected in each category, including:

- Landscapes • Plant Life • Wildlife • People in Nature
- Aspiring Photographers for youth grades 6-12

Find all of the contest details at openspace.org/photo-contest.



The first event as part of the expanded partnership between Latino Outdoors and Midpen was a hike in Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. (Shreeya Aranake/Midpen)

Join Us!

Upcoming events as part of Midpen's partnership with Latino Outdoors include:

- Hiking at Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve
- Backpacking at Black Mountain backpack camp in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve
- A summer trails virtual video series

Everyone is welcome to participate in these engaging outings and activities.

Stay up-to-date with Midpen and Latino Outdoors partner events and other free guided activities in Midpen preserves at openspace.org/events.

Building Community

Midpen Expands Partnership with Latino Outdoors

Latino Outdoors held its first event of 2024 at Midpen's Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve in early February. Participants on the hike entitled Amor y Amistad embarked on a four-mile adventure while making new connections, chatting with friends and learning about plants and wildlife along the way. Many of the participants sought out Latino Outdoors as a way to build community with others who share a similar background and an interest in exploring nature.

Latino Outdoors is a nationally recognized nonprofit that connects communities to the outdoors with a focus on Latino youth and families. The hike was the first of many made possible through a recently expanded two-year contract with Midpen. Midpen and Latino Outdoors have been partners

since 2015, but have reviewed their partnership on an annual basis until now.

Latino Outdoors volunteer Eve Yaret Martinez found the organization when she was new to the Bay Area. She had done a lot of solo-hiking as an adult and joined the organization to inspire others.

Hike participant Mireya Casarez found Latino Outdoors through Facebook when she was searching for people to hike with following knee-replacement surgery.

"Latino Outdoors has given me the confidence to continue hiking and exploring new places, while learning about the public open space the Bay Area has to offer," Casarez said.

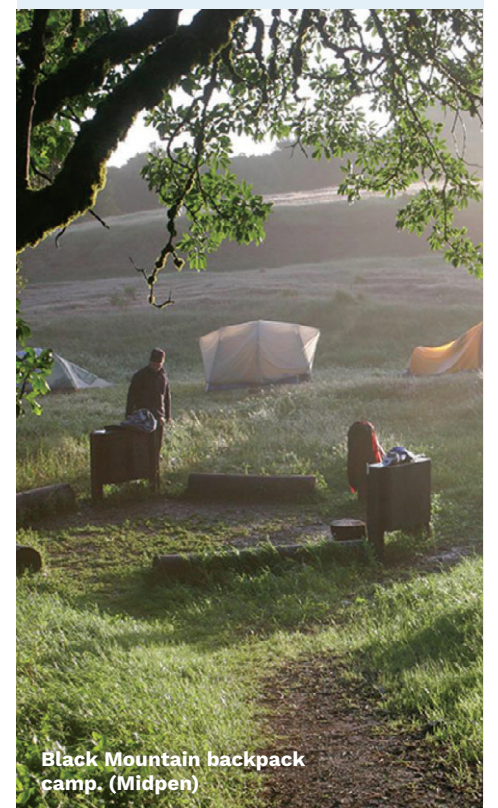
At the end of the Amor y Amistad hike, participants feasted on papusas, a

"Latino Outdoors has given me back my sense of community. I didn't grow up with the outdoors. By volunteering I can expose people who look like me and come from similar socio-economic backgrounds to these opportunities."

—Latino Outdoors volunteer Yaret Martinez

flatbread stuffed with beans and cheese originating from El Salvador and Honduras, at the trailhead.

"I'm excited about continuing our partnership with Midpen," Latino Outdoors San Francisco Bay Area Regional Coordinator Aurora Cortes said, "It's great to have our partners' support in getting our Latino Outdoors community out into nature."



Black Mountain backpack camp. (Midpen)