



VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT · SPRING 2025



Springtime poppies bloom in Midpen's Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (Lauren Giurata)

Collaborative Effort Reaches Milestone

Fire Safety and Forest Health Improved Across 1,000 Acres

It all began with the idea that wildland fire does not recognize property boundaries. Midpen joined forces with San Jose Water Company, Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and Santa Clara County Parks to form the Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaboration in 2020, aimed at taking a holistic approach to vegetation management for forest health and fire resilience and safety.

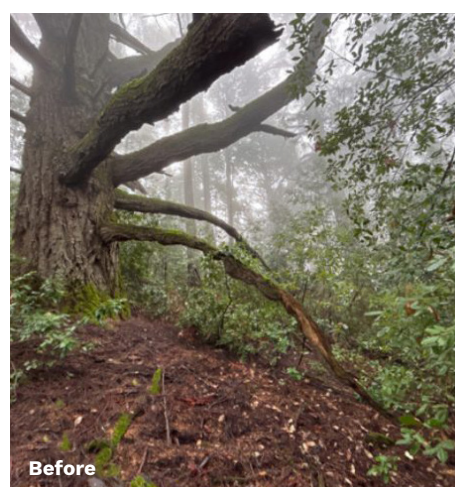
Cal Fire liked this landscape-level thinking too and funded the Collaboration in 2021 with a \$7.5 million forest health grant. This allowed 938 acres to be treated in strategic, interconnected locations throughout lands managed by the Collaboration partners in the greater Santa Cruz Mountains around Lexington Reservoir and beyond.

To date, nearly 1,000 acres of land have been treated as part of this collaboration resulting in healthier and more fire-resilient forests. Approximately one-third of the acres treated were located in Midpen's Bear Creek Redwoods, Long Ridge, Saratoga Gap and Sierra Azul open space preserves.

"Partnerships and grant funding are critical in catalyzing local efforts to significantly reduce wildland fire risk within our region," Midpen General Manager Ana María Ruiz said. "Collaborations like these are leveraging Midpen's resources to proactively increase ecologically sensitive vegetation management within the public open space preserves we manage."

This spring, after a lot of hard work, the Collaborative is celebrating a major milestone with the completion of the first round of grant-funded work.

The goals of this work are threefold: restoring healthy forest ecosystems, reducing the severity of potential wildfires while enhancing the safety



Before



After

The forest health work creates areas that better support biodiversity, reduce the intensity of potential fires, allow firefighters to take a stand and forests to be more resilient afterwards. (Santa Clara County FireSafe Council)

of the surrounding communities and protecting watersheds that provide regional drinking water. To date, all of this work has been achieved through ecologically sensitive mechanical and handwork.

Scaling Up

The Collaboration has been so successful and effective that it recently received a second forest health grant for \$6.9 million from Cal Fire to nearly double its efforts and treat an additional 840 acres. A few larger-scale private property owners that have lands strategically located within the watershed have also been included in the second phase

of the Collaboration's work. Projects funded by the second grant have already begun in earnest, including shaded fuel break work in Midpen's Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve that is also improving habitat for rare, endemic Santa Cruz kangaroo rats.

This second phase of work is expected to finished in the fall of 2027. By that time, the Collaboration intends to have treated nearly 1,800 acres.

Learn more about the ways Midpen works year-round to restore healthy ecosystems and wildfire resilience at openspace.org/fire.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Protecting Local Wildlife

Keeping rodenticides out of nearby nature helps wildlife neighbors stay healthy.



New Trail and a Land Purchase

Midpen staff are gearing up for a new season of trail building and finalizing a new purchase.



Free Docent Guided Activities

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

Honoring Herb Grench

Midpen’s Visionary First General Manager Remembered



Ana María Ruiz

Herb Grench was a pioneer in the preservation of Bay Area open space. As Midpen’s first general manager he built a public agency to stand

the test of time, establishing our first headquarters and developing a basic policy that continues to act as our constitution to this day.

A visionary leader, Herb also saw the need for a nonprofit that could be more agile than a government entity in land acquisitions. In 1977, he helped found Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to protect open space in partnership with Midpen.

This paved the way for POST’s crucial role in the passage of Measure AA, a \$300 million, 30-year bond to deliver community-supported projects in Midpen’s Vision Plan.

Through Measure AA we opened Mt. Umunhum, a towering peak in the Santa Cruz Mountains, to the public. We connected a critical trail gap in Ravenswood Preserve to link 80 miles of continuous Bay Trail; and Cloverdale Ranch, an ecological and agricultural gem on the San Mateo County coast became Midpen’s 27th preserve. This progress is a testament to Herb’s vision.

Herb passed away on December 19, 2024. Over fifty years after Midpen began, his legacy lives on in the vital work that continues with Measure AA,

in the connected greenbelt of 70,000 acres of public open space, the birds that sing and the wildflowers that bloom, and in you and me when we enjoy and feel grateful for this land.

I invite you to walk the Herb Grench Trail in the Windy Hill Preserve and rest at the bench named in his honor. Take in the 360-degree views of the Santa Clara Valley and Pacific Ocean, and in doing so know that whether you’re on a trail, volunteering or just finding room to breathe, we are all connected to this special region that hosts such an incredible diversity of life that sustains us.

The bench honoring Herb Grench in Windy Hill Open Space Preserve reads: In honor of Herb Grench who led the way in preserving these open space lands for all people to enjoy, now and forever.

Midpen’s first general manager, Herb Grench, with Midpen founder and longtime board member Nonette Hanco in 1974 celebrating Midpen’s first land purchase which became Foothills Open Space Preserve. (Midpen)



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
Katie Renz, Guided Activities Editor

Trail Building to Begin

New Loop Will Connect to Highway 17 Crossings Project

Midpen’s trail crews are breaking ground later this year on construction of the Spooky Knoll Trail in the El Sereno Open Space Preserve near Los Gatos. This new trail will be a crucial part of the larger Highway 17 wildlife and trail crossings project, promising increased opportunities for outdoor recreation, stunning views and safe passage across Highway 17 for wildlife at a known roadkill hot-spot.

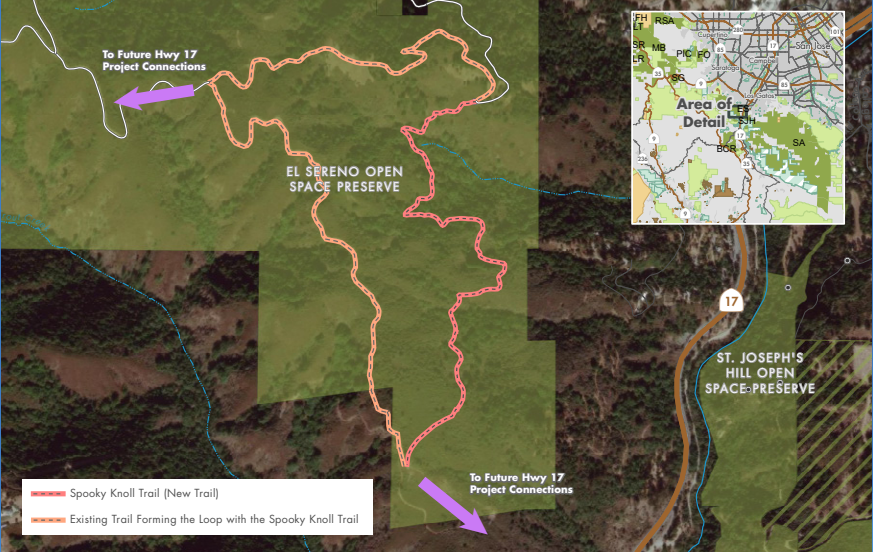
This approximately one-mile trail will establish the first loop within Midpen’s El Sereno Preserve. When the trail is complete, visitors will be treated to panoramic views of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Lexington Reservoir and the sprawling Silicon Valley. This new trail will add to the existing seven miles of trails in the preserve and connect to

over 50 miles of the Bay Area Ridge Trail and Historic Anza Trail, creating a vast network for hikers to explore.

This project has been years in the making, and is supported by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, who helped secure \$400,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation. This money, along with funds from Midpen’s voter-approved Measure AA bond, are helping to make the Spooky Knoll Trail a reality.

While the Spooky Knoll Trail construction is anticipated in 2025, the construction of the Highway 17 wildlife undercrossing and multi-use trail overcrossing is slated to begin in 2027.

Continue to track progress on the trail construction and the Highway 17 project at openspace.org/HWY17.



Why so Spooky?

Interestingly, the trail’s name, “Spooky Knoll,” has a unique origin. It was coined by Midpen’s trail crew after discovering a memorial rock for a pet named “Spooky” on an overlooking knoll during trail scouting. While intended as a placeholder, the name became widely used and was ultimately included in the successful grant application. Due to the intricacies of federal funding, the name must remain, at least for the time being.



The view from El Sereno Open Space Preserve towards Highway 17 and the Lexington Reservoir. (Amanda Mills/Midpen)



Views from the property being acquired in Sierra Azul Preserve looking towards the fog-shrouded Monterey Bay. (Midpen staff)

Small Purchase, Big Vision

New Property Supports a Future Umunhum-to-the-Sea Trail

Midpen has approved the acquisition of a crucial 40-acre property near Mount Umunhum in support of a future vision for an Umunhum-to-the-Sea regional trail while also protecting vital wildlife habitat. The property is a private inholding within Midpen’s Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve.

The conceptual Umunhum-to-the-Sea Trail route is envisioned to one day potentially connect Mount Umunhum in Sierra Azul Preserve to Loma Prieta, the highest peak in the Santa Cruz

Mountains. The trail is envisioned to continue to the Soquel Demonstration Forest and the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park in Santa Cruz County.

This purchase aligns with Midpen’s community supported Vision Plan and is funded by voter-approved Measure AA. This project specifically prioritizes public access, regional trails and habitat protection within Sierra Azul Preserve.

Located at 3,400 feet in elevation on a ridge south of Mount Umunhum, the property offers panoramic views of the Santa Clara Valley, Monterey

Bay and surrounding mountain ranges. The property requires some initial work including removing a dilapidated mobile home and other structures in poor condition, along with debris and abandoned vehicles.

Ecologically, the 40-acre parcel boasts a diverse mix of chaparral, pine woodland, mature oak woodland and mixed evergreen forest, providing habitat for numerous species. The presence of the state and federally protected Santa Cruz kangaroo rat and western purple martin underscores the importance of this land for sensitive species.

Learn more about Midpen’s largest preserve at openspace.org/Sierra-Azul.

“This acquisition represents a pivotal moment in our long-term vision for the Umunhum-to-the-Sea Trail.

This parcel is more than just land; it’s a crucial link connecting existing protected areas and opening up exciting new possibilities for public access and recreation.

It’s a testament to our commitment to preserving the natural beauty of this region for generations to come.”

—Midpen Real Property Manager Allen Ishibashi



Midpen will perform clean up and restoration on the site to improve wildlife habitat. (Midpen staff)

Protecting Local Wildlife

Rat Poisons Can Make Their Way into Nearby Nature

Living near open spaces offers incredible benefits, but it also comes with a responsibility to help protect the delicate balance of local ecosystems. One significant threat to wildlife, specifically those living in preserves near human developments such as Rancho San Antonio and Fremont Older open space preserves near Cupertino, is the use of rat poison, also known as rodenticide, by surrounding homes and businesses. These poisons, intended to kill rodents, have devastating unintended consequences for predators like owls, bobcats, coyotes and mountain lions, and they also pose a serious risk to household pets.

Rodenticides accumulate in the bodies of rodents after they’re ingested. When predators consume these poisoned rodents, they also ingest the toxins. This can weaken their immune systems making them more susceptible to diseases like mange, a highly contagious skin disease caused by mites. In severe cases it can be fatal. Ironically, by poisoning natural rodent predators, rodent populations can actually increase.

Mange can spread from coyotes to dogs and even humans. While treatable in pets, it can be debilitating for wild coyotes, leading to dehydration, starvation and secondary infections. Remember to always keep dogs leashed while visiting a preserve to limit contact between dogs and coyotes. Unleashed pets can lead to defensive behavior in coyotes, increasing the possibility of conflict and the incidental spread of mange.

In addition to the danger posed to wildlife, rodenticides pose a risk to

“Rodenticide use is a widespread issue, and wildlife are reliant on nearby communities to limit the introduction of these poisons into their ecosystem.”

—Midpen Wildlife Biologist Matt Sharp Chaney

household pets. Curious cats and dogs, may accidentally consume bait or prey on poisoned rodents, leading to serious health issues.

You can help protect wildlife by choosing safer alternatives to rodenticides, such as snap traps and live traps. Prevent rodent

intrusion by sealing entry points in your home, trimming branches that touch your house and removing ivy. Support wildlife-friendly policies by advocating for restrictions on rodenticide use within your community and any homeowner’s associations. Finally, never feed coyotes even if they appear sick, as this can habituate them to humans.

“Midpen continues to take proactive steps to advocate for the reduction of rodenticide use in our region to limit its effects on local wildlife,” Midpen Wildlife Biologist Matt Sharp Chaney said.

Midpen actively supports legislation aimed at reducing the harmful impacts of rodenticides on wildlife, including the 2023 California Ecosystems Protection Act (AB 1322) and the 2024 Poison-Free Wildlife Act (AB 2552).

Learn more at openspace.org/rodenticide.



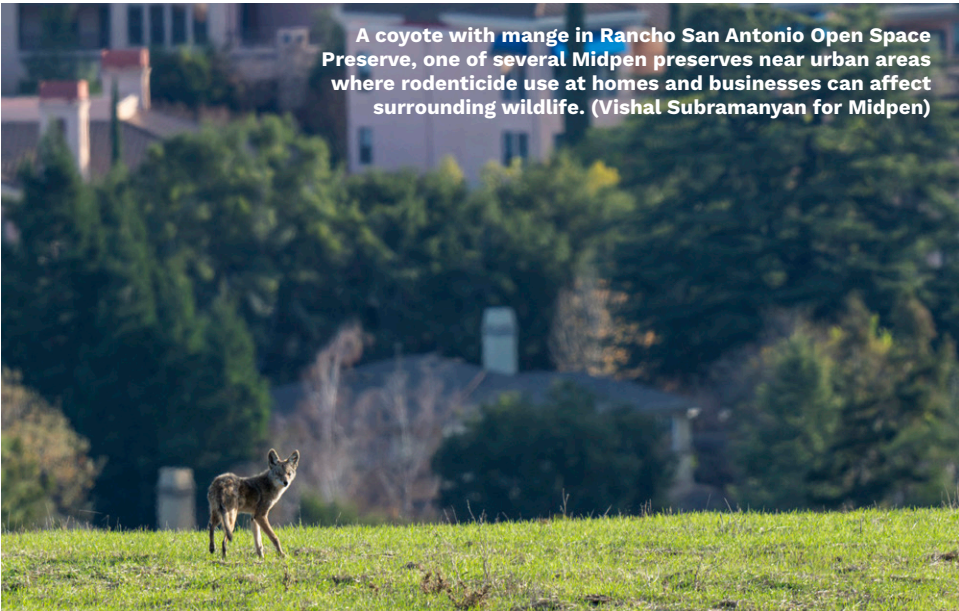
Great horned owl chick (Sue Gale)

What Can You Do?

Wildlife-safe and effective alternatives to rodenticides include:

- **Harden your home against rodents by sealing openings.**
- **Consider manual traps to control rodent populations in your neighborhood.**
- **When working with pest control companies, check the active ingredients of proposed pesticides and avoid a common compound known as diphacinone that can harm non-target wildlife.**

For more information visit Midpen partner organization Raptors are the Solution (RATS) at raptorsarethesolution.org.



A coyote with mange in Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, one of several Midpen preserves near urban areas where rodenticide use at homes and businesses can affect surrounding wildlife. (Vishal Subramanyan for Midpen)



Spring 2025 Docent Naturalist Guided Activities

Ken Lunders

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. For accessibility inquiries, reach out to adacoordinator@openspace.org or by phone at (650) 691-1200 or by dialing the California Relay Service at 711.

March

Peak a View

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

Banana Slugs, Wildflowers and More

Saturday, March 1
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
4 miles [F](#) [M](#)

Flowers Up Close and Personal

Sunday, March 2
9 a.m. – Noon
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
3 miles [M](#)

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, March 2
1 – 3:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Water Wonders

Sunday, March 2
2 – 5 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
5.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Ramble at Rancho

Monday, March 3
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5.5 miles [S](#)

Explorer Hike: Late Winter Along the Ridge

Wednesday, March 5
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
3 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Signs of Spring

Friday, March 7
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.25 miles [M](#)

The Phenomena of Fungi

Saturday, March 8
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area
2 miles [R](#) [E](#) [F](#) [L](#)

Ride the Wildflowers

Saturday, March 8
10 a.m. – Noon
Russian Ridge Preserve
8 miles [R](#) [S](#) [B](#)

Infinite Wonders

Sunday, March 9
9:10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Camden Park & Ride
5 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Life Within the Marshes

Sunday, March 9
10 a.m. – Noon
Ravenswood Preserve
2.5 miles [E](#) [F](#) [W](#)

Mindful Movement Under the Oaks

Tuesday, March 11
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2.5 miles [E](#)

Hawthorns Area Estate Hike

Wednesday, March 12
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles [R](#) [M](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, March 12
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
5 miles [S](#)

Full Moon on Black Mountain

Thursday, March 13
5:30 – 10 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
6 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Farewell to Winter

Friday, March 14
10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area
7 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, March 16
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area
0.25 mile [M](#)

Wonders of Cherry Springs

Wednesday, March 19
9:10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Camden Park & Ride
2.5 miles [R](#) [M](#)

Explorer Hike: Chaparral Adventure

Wednesday, March 19
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
St. Joseph’s Hill Preserve
4 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Flowers Up Close and Personal

Thursday, March 20
9 a.m. – Noon
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
3 miles [M](#)

Equinox at Turtle Rock

Thursday, March 20
4 – 7:50 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Hickory Oaks Roadside Parking
4.5 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Spring Circumambulation

Saturday, March 22
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
7.75 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Coastside Ranching

Saturday, March 22
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Event Center Permit Parking Area
6 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

History on Two Wheels

Saturday, March 22
9:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
10 miles [S](#) [L](#) [B](#)

Hiking and Mindfulness

Sunday, March 23
1 – 4:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
3.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Morning Meander: Newts to Nutmegs

Wednesday, March 26
9 – 11 a.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
2 miles [E](#)

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, March 27
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
5.25 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Introduction to Geocaching

Saturday, March 29
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2.5 miles [F](#) [M](#) [L](#)

Cloverdale Ranch: Midpen’s Newest Preserve

Saturday, March 29
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Cloverdale Ranch
Meet: Directions emailed
4 miles [R](#) [M](#) [L](#)

Poisonous Plants: Who, How, Why?

Saturday, March 29
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles [E](#)

WWW: Wildflowers, Wandering and Wine

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

Lyrical Landscapes

Sunday, March 30
2 – 4 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Skyline Ridge Equestrian Parking Area
1.5 miles [E](#)

April

Explorer Hike: Early Spring Blooms

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

Flowers Up Close and Personal

Saturday, April 5
9 a.m. – Noon
Russian Ridge Preserve
3 miles [M](#)

Waterwheel Downhill Ride

Saturday, April 5
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Parking Area
17 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#) [B](#)

Try Your Hand at Nature Journaling

Saturday, April 5
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
0.1 mile [E](#)

Infinite Wonders

Sunday, April 6
9:15 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Camden Park & Ride
5 miles R S L

Faultlines, Flowers and Hippies

Sunday, April 6
1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles E

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, April 9
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
4.5 miles S

The Magic of Oak Woodlands

Thursday, April 10
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
5.75 miles S

Bayside Yoga and Strength

Friday, April 11
10 – 11:30 a.m.
Ravenswood Preserve
1 mile E

How Flowers Changed the World

Saturday, April 12
9:30 a.m. – Noon
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Parking Area
2.5 miles M

Ride the Wildflowers

Saturday, April 12
10 a.m. – Noon
Russian Ridge Preserve
8 miles R S B



Ramble at Rancho (to Duveneck)

Monday, April 14
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
9 miles S L

Qigong Celebrating Spring

Tuesday, April 15
9:30 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2.5 miles M

Signs of Spring

Wednesday, April 16
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.25 miles M

Explorer Hike: Spring Along the Woods Trail

Wednesday, April 16
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Jacques Ridge Parking Area
5 miles S L

Rogue Valley Waterfall Aerobic Hike

Thursday, April 17
8:45 – 11:45 a.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
6 miles S L

Ferns and Other Ancient Plants

Saturday, April 19
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
3.5 miles M L

Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest

Saturday, April 19
1 – 4:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
4 miles M L

Morning Meander: Seminary to Salamander

Wednesday, April 23
9 – 11:30 a.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
2 miles M

Trail Trek Thursday: Two Preserves

Thursday, April 24
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
7.5 miles S L

Earth Week: Our Power, Our Planet

Friday, April 25
9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Allen Road Permit Parking Area
4.5 miles R S L

Terrific Tadpoles!

Saturday, April 26
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
1.5 miles E F L

Midpen’s Newest Preserve

Saturday, April 26
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Cloverdale Ranch
Meet: Directions emailed
4 miles R M L

Madrone Knoll or Bust

Tuesday, April 29
9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
7.5 miles S L

Echoes of the Past

Wednesday, April 30
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
2.5 miles E L

May

Flowers and Fancy

Thursday, May 1
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
3.5 miles M L

WWW: Wildflowers, Wandering and Wine

Saturday, May 3
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles M L

Ride the Redwoods

Saturday, May 3
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
9 miles R S B

Peak a View on Skyline Sampler

Sunday, May 4
9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
7.5 miles S L

Infinite Wonders

Sunday, May 4
9:10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Camden Park & Ride
5 miles R S L

Sentinel In the Sky

Sunday, May 4
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area
0.25 mile M

Nature’s Bounty: Berries

Wednesday, May 7
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles E F

Explorer Hike: What Was Going on Here?

Wednesday, May 7
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5 miles S L

Peak a View from Mt Umunhum

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

Nature Detectives Wanted!

Saturday, May 10
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Allen Road Permit Parking Area
2 miles R E F L

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, May 14
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
5 miles S

Fabulous Flora

Friday, May 16
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
3.5 miles M

Exploring the Hawthorns Area

Friday, May 16
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles R M

Butterflies of Sierra Azul

Friday, May 16
10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
5 miles M L

The Beauty of Stevens Creek Watershed

Saturday, May 17
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
4 miles M L

Butterflies of Picchetti Ranch

Sunday, May 18
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
2.5 miles R M

Among the Redwoods and Wildflowers

Monday, May 19
9 a.m. – Noon
Thornewood Preserve
4 miles M

Wildcard Ramble at Rancho

Monday, May 19
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7 miles S L

Explorer Hike: Picchetti Wildflowers

Wednesday, May 21
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles S L

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, May 22
9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
6 miles S L

Into the Redwoods

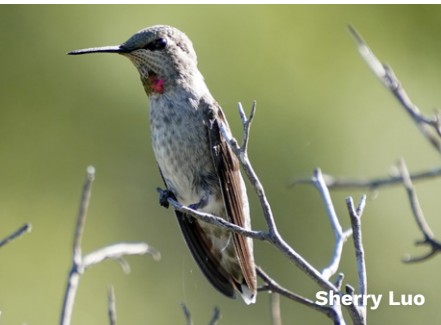
Saturday, May 24
1 – 5 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
4.5 miles M L

Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest

Sunday, May 25
1 – 4:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
4 miles M L

37th Annual Hike the Open Spaces

Monday, May 26
8:15 a.m. – Noon
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Parking Area
2.5 miles R E



Morning Meander: Ridge Grasslands to Oaks

Wednesday, May 28
9 – 11:30 a.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
2.5 miles M

Get Wild with Wildflowers

Saturday, May 31
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2 miles E F L

History on Two Wheels

Saturday, May 31
9:30 a.m. – Noon
Fremont Older Preserve
10 miles S L B

Cloverdale Ranch: Midpen’s Newest Preserve

Saturday, May 31
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Cloverdale Ranch
Meet: Directions emailed
4 miles R M L

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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openspace.org



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Sign up to receive Midpen’s print or electronic newsletters, and email updates on preserves and projects.

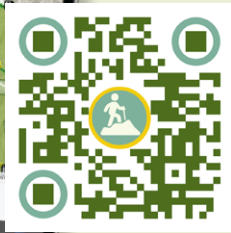
openspace.org/opt-in

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Try Midpen’s New Award-Winning Online Trail Explorer

Midpen’s expert map-makers recently released a new and improved interactive online tool allowing you to filter for 10 different criteria and find the Midpen trails that are best suited to you. Midpen’s more than 250 miles of trail offer a wide range of experiences from contemplative nature study to easy-access trails a family can enjoy together and more challenging routes for outdoor exercise and more. **Check it out at openspace.org/maps.**



Recently, Vista Center provided a group activity at Midpen’s Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. Participants walked through the preserve to Deer Hollow Farm where they engaged with farm animals and received an interpretive talk about the flora and fauna of the preserve from a Midpen ranger. (Midpen staff)

Open Space for All

New Vista Center Partnership Expands Access

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired are teaming up to provide a new activity series in Midpen preserves for individuals with visual impairment.

The Vista Center is a Bay Area nonprofit that serves people living with vision loss and provides tailored support to address emotional, functional and mobility hurdles to community members. Aligned with the Midpen board of directors’ strategic goal to expand opportunities for all individuals to connect with public open spaces, Vista Center has empowered thousands of individuals with visual impairments through specialized programs that enhance their independence and quality of life since its founding in 1936.

Prior to this new partnership agreement, Vista Center and Midpen partnered this past August to provide a pilot hike at

Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. Participants walked through the preserve to Deer Hollow Farm where they engaged with farm animals and received an interpretive talk about the flora and fauna of the preserve from a Midpen ranger.

In partnership with local organizations, Vista Center has previously facilitated accessible nature walks and educational workshops that have reached a broad audience with the goal of enriching the lives of participants. Midpen’s new partnership with Vista Center aims to further enhance equitable access to natural open spaces for individuals with visual impairments to foster a more inclusive community.

The exact preserve locations, times and dates of the new activity series are still being determined and will be posted on Midpen’s event calendar at openspace.org/events.

Land Purchase to Enable New Midpen Ranger and Maintenance Staff Office Serving the Coastside

Midpen recently approved the purchase of three properties near Half Moon Bay that will expand the existing Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve and provide a location for a ranger and maintenance staff office. The properties consist of a commercial property and undeveloped open space lands.

“Midpen staff provide many valuable public services to the Coastside, and this site will enable our staff and equipment to be readily available and provide for greater connection and presence within the community,” said Midpen Superintendent Chris Barresi.

When Midpen’s boundaries expanded to include the San Mateo County coast in 2004, the public agency made a commitment to the community that a ranger and maintenance staff office would be established once Midpen preserved 15,000 acres in the area.

This acreage milestone was reached with the purchase of what is now Cloverdale Ranch Open Space Preserve near Pescadero in 2023. Anticipating this infrastructure need, staff have been putting aside funds for this purpose.

Staff searched for a suitable site for several years before finding a 2.61-acre commercial property within Half Moon Bay city limits. The commercial property is currently leased out to private businesses for parking and storage. The property was a rare fit with all of



Midpen’s narrow criteria including for size, zoning, utilities and absence of prime agriculture or farmland.

Two nearby undeveloped open space properties totaling 62.68 acres were also approved for purchase in the same transaction and from the same owner to be incorporated into Midpen’s adjacent Miramontes Ridge Preserve. These parcels already had an easement over them that prevented development, and their preservation aligns with the priorities in Midpen’s Vision Plan, funded by voter-approved Measure AA.

Improvements to the commercial property will need to occur before Midpen staff and equipment can begin operating out of it. These purchases are scheduled to close escrow this spring. Midpen has several existing ranger and maintenance staff offices located throughout our service area to serve Midpen preserves and visitors.

Learn more about Midpen’s unique work on the San Mateo County coast at openspace.org/Coastside.