



VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT · SPRING 2023

Predators, like this red-tailed hawk at Rancho San Antonio Preserve, are excellent at natural rodent control but can be harmed by the use of rodenticides in the surrounding community. (Luiz Barroso)

Ripple Effects

Rancho San Antonio Wildlife Impacted by Rodenticide Use

Recently, a deceased coyote and bobcat were found in Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, and both were confirmed to have been exposed to multiple kinds of rodenticides (pesticides and poisons that target rodents). This prompted Midpen staff into action, doing outreach about how the use of rodenticides in the surrounding community pose a significant threat to neighboring wildlife, especially predators and scavengers. It was not the first time.

Ten years ago, 12 bobcats at Rancho San Antonio Preserve died and dozens more were reported sick. Subsequent investigations, including autopsies and lab analysis by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) determined that second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) were the cause. Then as now, Midpen worked to educate neighbors of the unintended effects of rodenticides on wildlife.

At that time, Midpen advocated to the California State Legislature to prohibit the use of SGARs. In 2014, the

Midpen continues to advocate for the reduction of rodenticide use within our larger region to limit its effects on local wildlife

legislature passed AB 2657, limiting access to SGARs to individuals with pest control licenses. In 2020, Midpen supported AB 1788, known as the California ecosystems protection act, which further prohibited most uses of SGARs. While these efforts help, the use of SGARs continues to kill and weaken wildlife in our area. A recent CDFW study found that 70% to 90% of tested wildlife have SGARs in their systems.

Bobcats, coyotes, owls, white-tailed kites and other predators eat hundreds of mice, rats and other rodents each year. When they prey upon rodents poisoned by rodenticides, toxins accumulate in the predator's body, weakening their immune system and causing them to become more

susceptible to potentially deadly diseases such as mange.

"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. "However, this is a widespread issue, and wildlife are reliant on nearby communities to limit the introduction of these poisons into their ecosystem."

Preventing rodent intrusion to your home is more effective and safer for wildlife than rodenticides. Removing ivy and trimming branches that touch your

home are great first steps. If active pest control is necessary, consider manual traps such as snap and box traps that do not rely on poisons. Installing owl boxes in appropriate locations can encourage natural rodent control, as families of owls can consume up to 1,000 rodents per year. If working with a pest control company, request to review and approve any pesticides being used. If you are part of a neighborhood, or home owners association, check to see their policies on the use of rodenticides and advocate for safer alternatives.

Learn more about Midpen's work at openspace.org/rodenticides.



A healthy bobcat hunts at Rancho San Antonio Preserve. Bobcats and other predators are affected by the use of rodenticides in the surrounding community. (Sue Gale)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Will Boucher/
California Sea Grant

Adding Nearly 100 Acres

New purchase protects redwoods, coastal creeks, rare fish and nearly connects two large Midpen preserves.



Rosalina Calderon

Free Guided Nature Activities

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



Judith Duffy

Wildflower Season is Here

For a change of pace, try exploring the blooms that can be found on the floor of the redwood forest.

The Work Behind the Wildflowers



March through June mark the peak of the wildflower season, when an outing to a Midpen preserve can become a treasure hunt for the showiest blooms our region has to offer. These little bursts of color that herald spring are more than just beautiful to witness, they are beneficial to our region’s rich biodiversity and in part, a result of the work Midpen does on your behalf.

Midpen staff, who protect the approximately **70,000 acres of preserved open space**, help visitors enjoy the flowers respectfully, ensuring they bloom again next year for the pollinators that rely on them and the visitors who enjoy them. Much of the behind-the-scenes restoration work Midpen does is aimed at promoting healthy, functioning native plant communities. These include:

- **Timed mowing** such as at the Hawthorns area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve to reduce the spread of invasive yellow star thistle.
- **Reintroducing prescribed fire** to Midpen’s land management toolbox in 2023.
- **Plant restoration by hand**, including a grant-funded 5-year project to remove invasive, nonnative plants within Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve’s watersheds.
- **Conservation grazing** on the Coastside as a land-management tool for enhancing coastal grasslands for biodiversity in alignment with our coastal mission, which includes supporting viable agriculture.

Midpen’s **volunteer programs** provide opportunities for you to roll up your sleeves and work alongside us on restoration projects.

Our **docent naturalist-led outings** featured in this issue can get you get out on the trails this spring to learn more about the wildflowers in our midst. If you get a chance to stop and smell the native California roses this spring, please also take a moment to appreciate the preservation and restoration efforts that help them continue blooming year after year, and your role in supporting this essential work.



C. Henry

Five Springtime Blooms of the Redwood Understory

When we think of a wildflower bloom, we often think of grasslands full of California poppies, lupines and owl’s clover, but wildflowers are not limited to rolling, sunny ridges. There are hundreds of species of flowering plants in California, and wildflowers can be found in many different environments: nestled in oak woodlands, holding on in the crevices of sparse scrublands or braving the current alongside streams. Even the dark understory of the redwood forest is decorated with unique and beautiful blossoms.

The downpours that fell on the Santa Cruz Mountains in January are likely to bring a lovely wildflower bloom this

spring. This is a great time to go on a treasure hunt in new environments so that you can experience the full diversity of wildflowers in the Bay Area.

Beat the wildflower-seeking crowds this spring and head to El Corte de Madera Creek or even forested areas of Long Ridge and La Honda Creek open space preserves to look for these five underappreciated blooms that thrive on the redwood forest floor. As you seek out these jewels, please remember to take only pictures and leave only footprints to ensure that wildflowers remain year after year.

Learn more at openspace.org/wildflowers.

Trilliums

True to their name, trilliums are a study in threes. Their three-petaled flowers appear in many shades from white and pink to a deep red. The Bay Area is home to multiple species of trillium including the Pacific trillium (*Trillium ovatum*), and giant trillium (*Trillium chloropetalum*, pictured).

Spotted Coralroot

Did you know that the Bay Area has native orchids? Spotted coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*) grows as a single stem bearing up to 40 intricate flowers. This plant has no leaves or chlorophyll to make its own energy. Instead, spotted coralroot survive by parasitizing the root systems of fungi.

Western Azalea

The western azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*) is a one of three

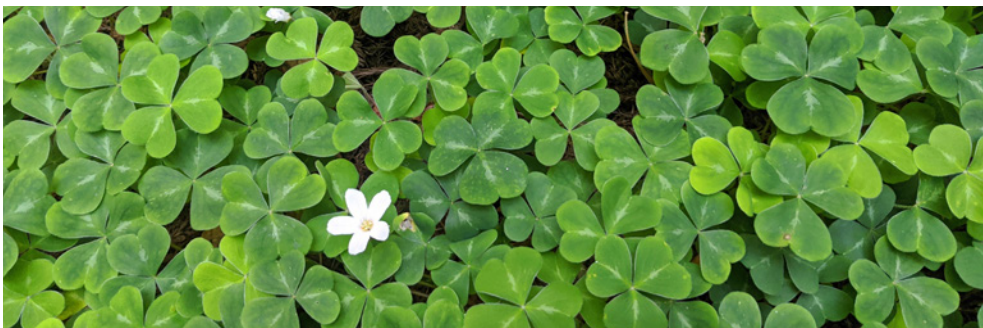
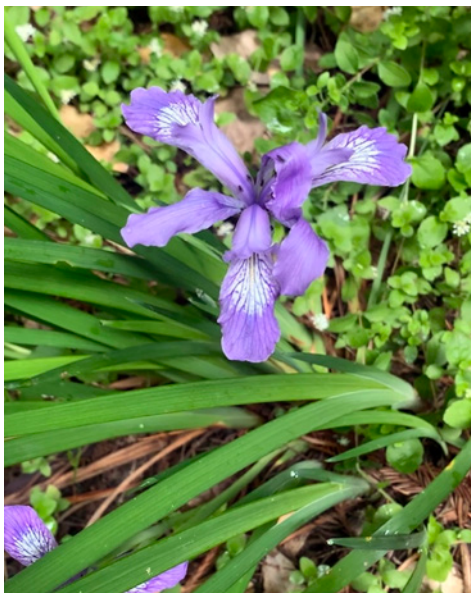
rhododendrons native to the West Coast. Each spring, this uncommon shrub sends out bursts of white or pink flowers that many say they smell like cloves. Look for them near streams or in marshy areas under the redwood canopy.

Douglas Iris

Look for the attractive blooms of the Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) near streams and wet areas of the redwood forest. Their delicate flowers range from a deep blue-purple to a cream, and its evergreen, sword-like leaves can be found growing in large clumps throughout the year.

Redwood Sorrel

The heart-shaped leaves of redwood sorrel (*Oxalis oregana*) grow ubiquitously on the redwood forest floor. Each spring, the carpet of sorrel is adorned with adorable five-petaled flowers that range from pinky-purple to white in hue.



Clockwise from top left: giant trillium (Karl Gohl), western azalea (Adobe Stock Photos), spotted coralroot (Karl Gohl), Douglas iris (Eileen Melton), redwood sorrel (Chris Rinaldi)

Small Purchase, Big Impact

Connecting Preserves & Protecting Coastal Creeks

A small purchase with big benefits for coastal creeks, future trail connections and narrowing the gap to physically join Midpen’s La Honda Creek and El Corte de Madera Creek open space preserves is expected to finalize later in 2023. In January, Midpen’s board of directors approved the purchase of a nearly 100-acre addition to the La Honda Creek Preserve from a local family.

The steep, wooded property on the western slope of Skyline Ridge is nearly all redwood forest. Within its understory, the headwaters of La Honda Creek originate and flow year-round, eventually joining San Gregorio Creek and flowing out to the Pacific Ocean. San Gregorio Creek, federally listed as impaired due to sediment, is one of only a few waterways remaining on the San Mateo County Coastside where both endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout are still able to spawn.

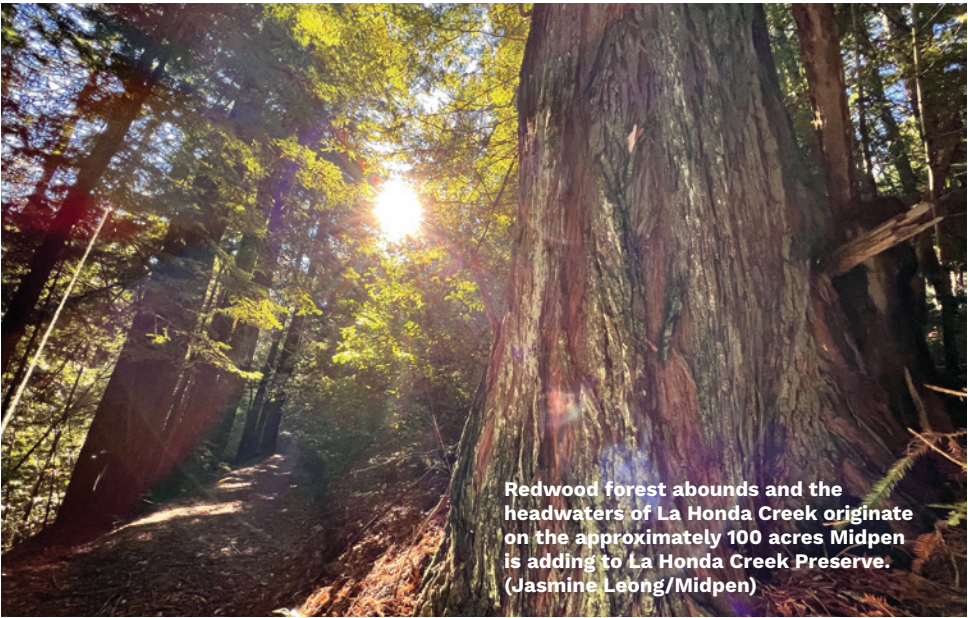
Midpen and our partner, the San Mateo Resource Conservation District, have put many years of work into reducing sediment and restoring the creeks within this watershed, including reintroducing anadromous fish in San Gregorio Creek and installing woody debris to provide them with needed habitat to spawn.

“The concept of a healthy watershed starts at the headwaters. Everything that happens there has an impact downstream,” Midpen Senior Planner Meredith Manning said. “Because this property is at the headwaters of La Honda Creek, which flows to the sediment-impaired San Gregorio Creek, Midpen now has even more ability to help restore both waterways.”

In the past, the property had been used as an unofficial motorcycle course, however, the current owners invested approximately \$450,000 to rehabilitate the land and improve drainage, including resurfacing old logging roads with rock and installing culverts and retaining walls to reduce erosion of sediment into the creek.



San Mateo Resource Conservation District staff reintroduce coho salmon to the watershed. (Jordan Plotsky)



Redwood forest abounds and the headwaters of La Honda Creek originate on the approximately 100 acres Midpen is adding to La Honda Creek Preserve. (Jasmine Leong/Midpen)

“The greenbelt is most valuable when it’s connected. It’s not just about protecting the greenbelt, it’s increasingly about connecting the greenbelt.”

—Midpen Senior Resource Specialist Julie Andersen

“The roads have been improved to the caliber that Midpen’s own land and facilities staff would implement,” Midpen Real Property Specialist Jasmine Leong said. “This road improvement provides one of the most efficient and beneficial ways to reduce sedimentation

in the creek from headwaters to the Pacific Ocean, the entirety of which is important habitat for fish and other aquatic plants and animals.”

This purchase is made possible through Measure AA, a \$300 million general obligation bond measure passed by local voters in 2014 to support Midpen’s community-supported vision plan projects, which include efforts to protect and restore habitat in La Honda Creek Preserve.

Once Midpen takes ownership, a future planning process will explore opportunities for trail connections between the two preserves. In the meantime, wildlife, coastal waterways and redwood forests benefit from permanent protection.



Returning Fire to the Landscape

For thousands of years, fire was a natural part of California’s landscape and a land management tool the Native people in this region used to enhance hunting areas and plants they relied on for food and fiber.

As part of Midpen’s Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, staff is ready to return prescribed fire to our land management toolbox this year, possibly as soon as this spring. Currently, staff members are working with fire ecologists and fire agencies to put together comprehensive plans for potential locations in Midpen preserves. These plans will include details on public safety measures, public notification and outreach, smoke management and more.

“Midpen will start with small, simple burns in partnership with fire agencies and local Indigenous tribes,” Midpen Senior Resource Specialist Coty Sifuentes-Winter said. “Our overall goals are to support diverse plants and animals in our region, and human communities as well, by restoring fire-adapted and fire-resilient landscapes.”

Learn more and sign up to stay informed at openspace.org/fire.

Photo at top: A member of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band ceremonially lights a fire using traditional methods. Midpen seeks to partner with local tribes as part of our prescribed fire planning. (Plus M Productions)



Vegetation management in Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve includes protecting special status plants and wildlife, their habitats and cultural resources. (Deborah Hirst/Midpen)

Wildland Fire Resilience Takes a Village

Collaborative Forest Health Project Work Begins

With torrential rains soaking the Bay Area at the start of 2023, wildfires are not top-of-mind for many. However, work to increase our lands’ resilience to wildfire is a long-term commitment that requires perpetual diligence.

In 2020, Midpen joined the San Jose Water Company, Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and Santa Clara County Parks to form the Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative. This highly cooperative group was brought together to take a holistic look at forest health over nearly 1,000 acres in the Los Gatos Creek Watershed.

Together, we are committed to improving forest health by focusing on creating ecosystem resilience, mitigating wildfire risk, protecting sensitive native and endemic species and habitats, and protecting the drinking water in Lexington and Elsan reservoirs which supply water to over 100,000 residents.

“This is critically important work that can help reduce wildland fire severity and risk in our region,” Midpen Field Resource Specialist John Holback said. “This collaborative shows the region’s commitment to increasing our land’s resilience to fire as we work together.”



Santa Clara County FireSafe Council’s Dave Manson updates work area maps in real time. (Deborah Hirst/Midpen)

“This is critically important work that can help reduce wildland fire severity and risk in our region. The Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative shows the region’s commitment to increasing our land’s resilience to fire as we work together.”

—Midpen Field Resource Specialist John Holback

The project was made possible by a \$7.5 million grant awarded through Cal Fire’s Forest Health Program. Work is expected to be complete by spring of 2025. More than 350 acres of Midpen property are in the treatment zone including approximately 245 acres within Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve and 108 acres across Long Ridge, Saratoga Gap and Sierra Azul open space preserves.

Botanical and cultural resource surveys were completed prior to the onset of forest health and vegetation management activities, as prescribed in our Wildland Fire Resilience Program.

In late 2022, Midpen crews began overseeing work in the watershed, including thinning of underbrush, removal of some non-native species and smaller trees to meet forest health and wildfire fuel management goals in and around Midpen’s Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve.

Future work will include the reforestation of several former tree farm plantation areas with native trees and invasive species control.

Learn more about Midpen’s Wildland Fire Resiliency program at openspace.org/fire.



Spring 2023 Guided Activities

Karl Gohl

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 lot.

March

Explorer Hike: Hill and Dale

Wednesday, March 1

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Meet: St. Joseph's Hill Preserve

Little League Field parking lot

5 miles **M** **F** **L**

Little Serpentine Meadow

Saturday, March 4

9 a.m. – Noon

St. Joseph's Hill Preserve

3.5 miles **M**

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, March 5

1:30 – 4 p.m.

Los Trancos Preserve

2 miles **M**

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, March 8

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Sierra Azul Preserve

Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area

4 miles **M**

Dogs & Winding Trails

Friday, March 10

5 – 6:30 p.m.

Fremont Older Preserve

2.5 miles **E** **D**

Fremont Older History Ride

Saturday, March 11

9:30 a.m. – Noon

Fremont Older Preserve

11 miles **B** **R**



Deane Little

Bay Trail Boardwalking

Saturday, March 11

10 a.m. – Noon

Ravenswood Preserve

3 miles **E** **F**

Explorer Hike: It's Almost Spring

Wednesday, March 15

10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Picchetti Ranch Preserve

4.5 miles **M** **F** **L**

Looking for Lizards

Saturday, March 18

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Skyline Ridge Preserve

Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area

2.5 miles **E** **F**

Geology: Moving Mountains

Saturday, March 18

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Monte Bello Preserve

5 miles **M**

Among the Trees, Bushes and Flowers

Monday, March 20

9 a.m. – Noon

Thornewood Preserve

4 miles **M**

Morning Meander: Newts to Nutmegs

Wednesday, March 22

9 – 11 a.m.

Picchetti Ranch Preserve

2.4 miles **E**

Trail Trek

Thursday, March 23

9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Rancho San Antonio Preserve

6.2 miles **M**

Animal Architecture

Saturday, March 25

9 a.m. – Noon

Picchetti Ranch Preserve

3 miles **E** **F** **L**

Simply Irresistible Loop

Saturday, March 25

10 a.m. – Noon

Skyline Ridge Preserve

Meet: Equestrian Parking Area

1.2 miles **E** **F** **L**

Trail Run – Purisima Climb

Sunday, March 26

9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve

Meet: Directions emailed

10.6 miles **S** **R**

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- D Dogs:** All dogs must be on a leash and well-behaved and socialized. Please bring water for your dog and be prepared to carry out dog waste.
- 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.



Midpen Staff

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 1, 2023. 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.

Skyline Serendipity

Tuesday, March 28
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
3 miles [M](#)

April

Wonders of Cherry Springs

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

Ohlone Footsteps

Sunday, April 2
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2 miles [E](#) [L](#)

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, April 2
1:30 – 4 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles [E](#)



Douglas Croft

Explorer Hike: Early Spring Blooms

Wednesday, April 5
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Parking Area
3 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Connecting with Nature

Wednesday, April 5
12:30 – 4 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
4 miles [M](#)

Natural & Human History

Saturday, April 8
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
7 miles [S](#) [L](#) [R](#)

Spineless Wonders

Saturday, April 8
6 – 10:15 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Parking Area
3 miles [M](#) [R](#)

Signs of Spring

Wednesday, April 12
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.2 miles [M](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, April 12
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Edgewood County Park
Meet: Front of Bill and Jean Lane Education Center
5 miles [M](#)

Spring Bird Songs at Sausal Pond

Friday, April 14
9 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Parking Area
2 miles [E](#)

We’re Going On A Bear Hunt!

Saturday, April 15
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
1.5 miles [E](#) [E](#)

Geology: Moving Mountains

Saturday, April 15
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
5 miles [M](#)

Views of Spring

Saturday, April 15
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Awe Walk

Saturday, April 15
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
4.5 miles [M](#)

Explorer Hike: Spring Along Woods Trail

Wednesday, April 19
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Jacques Ridge Parking Area
5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

The Magic of Oak Woodlands

Friday, April 21
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Hickory Oaks Roadside Parking
5 miles [M](#)

Grasshopper Loop Wildflower Walk

Friday, April 21
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
1.3 miles [E](#) [L](#)

Earth Day Family Nature Walk

Saturday, April 22
1 – 5 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
3 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Morning Meander: History, Views & Wildflowers

Wednesday, April 26
9 – 11:30 a.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Hickory Oaks Roadside Parking
3 miles [E](#)

Trail Trek

Thursday, April 27
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
5.5 miles [M](#) [R](#)

Redwoods: Heroes of the Forest

Thursday, April 27
1 – 4 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#) [R](#)

Dogs & Winding Trails

Friday, April 28
5 – 6:30 p.m.
St. Joseph’s Hill Preserve
3.2 miles [M](#) [D](#)



Children and Nature

New Hagen Meadow

Saturday, April 29
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
3 miles [M](#) [R](#)

Ferns & Other Ancient Plants

Saturday, April 29
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
3 miles [E](#)

Scenic Skyline Sampler in the Springtime

Sunday, April 30
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
8 miles [S](#) [L](#)

May

Explorer Hike: Let 1,000 Flowers Bloom

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

On the Trail with Poets

Friday, May 5
10 am – 12:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Parking Area
3 miles [E](#)

Three Worlds in One Hike

Saturday, May 6
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Hidden Life of the Forest

Saturday, May 6
1 – 4 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles [F](#) [E](#)

Wonders of Cherry Springs

Sunday, May 7
9:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Directions emailed
2.5 miles [M](#) [R](#)

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, May 7
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
3 miles [F](#) [E](#)

Signs of Spring

Tuesday, May 9
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.2 miles [M](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, May 10
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
5 miles [M](#)

Earthquake 101

Saturday, May 13
1 – 4 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2.5 miles [E](#)

Sunset at Mindego Hill

Saturday, May 13
5 – 8:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Parking Area
4 miles [M](#) [F](#)

Springtime Qi Gong

Wednesday, May 17
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower parking area
1.5 miles [E](#)

Explorer Hike: Two Ponds and a View

Wednesday, May 17
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
3.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Grass: The Miraculous Plant

Thursday, May 18
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
3.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Geology: Moving Mountains

Saturday, May 20
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
5 miles [M](#)

Butterflies of Picchetti Ranch

Saturday, May 20
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
2.5 miles [E](#) [R](#)

Championing the Chaparral

Sunday, May 21
10 a.m. – Noon
St. Joseph’s Hill Preserve
4 miles [M](#)

Morning Meander: Ridge Grassland to Oaks

Wednesday, May 24
9 – 11:30 a.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
2.2 miles [E](#)

Trail Trek

Thursday, May 25
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles [S](#) [R](#)

Ohlone Medicine

Saturday, May 27
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

35th Annual Hike the Open Spaces

Monday, May 29
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Preserve Parking Area
2.5 miles [E](#) [F](#) [R](#)



Alisha Laborico



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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! 2023 Digital Photo Contest

Midpen's annual photo contest returns with online entries accepted **April 1 through June 30** with fans voting for their favorite images on Facebook and Instagram in July. One winner in each category will receive a \$100 REI gift card and a Midpen swag bag. Categories are:

- Landscapes
- Plant Life
- Wildlife
- People in Nature
- Aspiring Photographers for youth grades 6-12.
- The Trail Less Traveled, a new category seeking photos featuring less-often visited Midpen preserves.

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



Full Circle

Midpen Grants Help Connect Urban Youth to Nature

After a long drive from south San Jose, 15 students from the Davis Junior High School Boys and Girls Club step off of their bus into Midpen's Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, welcomed with open arms by Richard Tejeda and Elexis Padron of Saved by Nature.

Saved by Nature, a Bay Area-based nonprofit founded by Tejeda in 2018, focuses on connecting people of all backgrounds, ethnicities and abilities to the outdoors. Saved by Nature offers field trips into Midpen preserves and other open spaces to several Boys and Girls Clubs, and are recent recipients of Midpen's grant funding. Before beginning their hike, Tejeda leads the kids through deep breathing exercises to root them in the calm of open space.

"As a nonprofit, we can't do this work without the support of grants," Tejeda says, as one student calls out that he sees a hummingbird. As the kids hike along the Ancient Oaks Trail, Tejeda and Padron point out plants and explain their qualities and uses, such as how Indigenous peoples used moss to cushion beds and the ancient and modern medicinal uses of yerba buena.

As the group stops for a break beneath a massive oak tree, Tejeda plays a wood flute while the kids complete a scavenger hunt for plants and wildlife provided by Padron. As the final notes of Tejeda's song end, he closes his eyes and takes in the sounds of children running through the leaves, laughing with their friends and exclaiming with wonder and surprise as a deer enters the clearing.

"This is full circle for me," Tejeda says, once a student at Davis Junior High School himself. "It's a dream."

Learn more at openspace.org/grants.



A child runs in Midpen's Russian Ridge Preserve during a grant-funded field trip with Saved by Nature. (Natalie Jolly/Midpen)



Midpen staff Karine Tokatlian and Ariel Starr survey a pond in La Honda Creek Preserve in late January, finding many newt and Pacific tree frog egg masses. (Leigh Ann Gessner/Midpen)

Pond Patrol

Connecting Conservation and Agriculture on the Coast

Every winter when the rains begin, California red-legged frogs, newts, Pacific tree frogs and other amphibians journey to coastal ponds to breed and lay eggs, and Midpen biologists follow. Between January and March, our staff annually monitor dozens of ponds throughout our coastal area preserves that were originally built decades ago by ranchers to provide water for cattle.

Today, they are managed and restored as part of Midpen preserves for the dual purpose of providing critical habitat for rare native wildlife while continuing to provide water for cattle that are now part of Midpen's conservation grazing program aimed at managing coastal grasslands for biodiversity. Staff track wildlife present (particularly by identifying their egg masses in the water), test water quality and inspect pond infrastructure for any needed work.

"Even though these stock ponds were created artificially in the past by ranchers, they have since become extremely useful for supporting the recovery of certain wildlife species like the California red-legged frog."

—Midpen's David Liefert

"We also try to anticipate the effects of climate change on a longer time scale so that we can plan for how water availability on the landscape is going to change," Midpen Resource Management Specialist David Liefert said.

Learn more at openspace.org/ponds.