



VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT • SUMMER 2026



A view towards the Pacific Coast from Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve's vast and challenging trail system. (Edna Chen)

Guide on the Side

Exploring Open Spaces with Docent Naturalists

One hiker, who usually explores the trails on her own, said she was grateful to be with others while out in nature. Excited to access an area normally closed to the public, a participant from San Jose was extra thrilled to see a bobcat. A local mother was impressed by her children's sustained focus while spotting bats. Even her two-year-old kept whispering, "Shhh, bats!".

What motivates participants to join the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's free, docent-guided activities can be as varied as the outings themselves. Since 1977, five years after the creation of Midpen, docents have been volunteering their time to lead the public along the preserve's trails.

In those 49 years, the Docent Naturalist Program has grown increasingly robust, comprised of over 100 long-term volunteers providing more than 300 activities per year in Midpen preserves from the bayside to the coastside and everywhere in between.

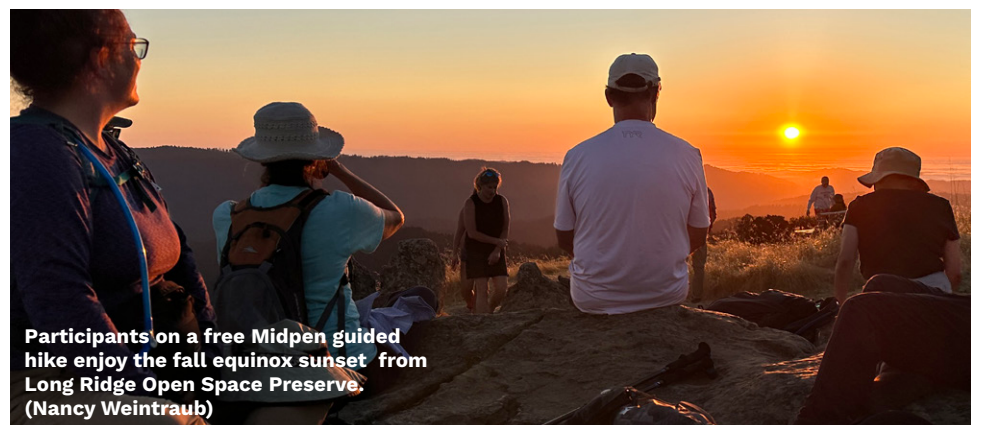
"Midpen's docent program is one of the best. The creativity of the docents and their themed activities are amazing for a deeper dive into the area's different

landscapes and habitats," a participant wrote on their feedback form.

Docents complete a four-month training typically offered biennially. The training involves both weekly classroom lectures and over twice that much time devoted to field study in Midpen preserves. Led by the same local biologist for over a decade, the coursework includes the chance to earn a California Naturalist certification, through the University of California.

The goal is never to be the "sage on the stage" full of dry information but rather, the "guide on the side," helping visitors to make their own connections with nature.

Once they graduate, the docents design activities to share with the public spanning a diverse spectrum of abilities and interests. Would you prefer a two-mile meander along a creek or an eight-



Participants on a free Midpen guided hike enjoy the fall equinox sunset from Long Ridge Open Space Preserve. (Nancy Weintraub)

mile aerobic hike with steep inclines? Birdwatching along an easy-access path, dog hikes, mountain biking, or getting grounded with beginner movement practices under the oaks? Perhaps you need an outdoor activity to engage your children, such as counting banana slugs or geocaching? Or desire to know more about fungi, logging history, nature journaling, animal adaptations, or dozens of other place-based subjects?

Joining a docent activity is the only way to experience the preserves after-hours. Sunset and full moon hikes are always popular, as are other nocturnal adventures like searching for spiders or moths. The docents are encouraged to be inspired by their own passion and creativity. After the when, where and why of an activity is determined, they shape an interpretive program

by making it thematic, engaging and relevant to participants using methods such as storytelling and hands-on observation. Guided activities are always free, and only some require advanced reservations. Before leaving the house, check online for updates and review directions as many locations are remote and may not have cell service.

One participant, Dave A., has been regularly attending Midpen's docent hikes for the past two years.

"These hikes have greatly improved my observation skills of plants, animals and geology," he said. "And it's just plain fun to get outdoors and share interests with other like-minded people."

For a full list of guided activities, peek inside or visit openspace.org/guided-activities.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Stay Cool Like the Wildlife Do

Take a cue from the animals that live in Midpen preserves on how to stay cool during hot weather.

Robert Stronck



Free Docent Guided Activities

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

Roberta Cavazos



Trail Building is Underway

Midpen staff are hard at work on yet another new trail at the beloved Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

Cristeen Kunze

Midpen's Wildland Fire Resiliency Program

Celebrating Five Years



It takes a village to tend the living, changing landscapes that make up the Santa Cruz Mountains. That village has been showing up with boots laced tight and tools in hand—under bright skies, rainy days and everything in between—to help shape a more fire-resilient future for our open spaces and the communities that rely on them. Five years have passed since the inception of Midpen's Wildland Fire Resiliency Program that enabled us to expand upon the work we already do to prepare for and prevent wildland fire and help increase the ecosystem's resilience to it.

Looking back, I am awestruck at the progress we have been able to make in that time and appreciate the many staff involved in making it happen. The complexity of this work is considerable. Projects must be carefully prioritized to make the best use of limited resources and carried out with sensitivity to the natural environment by ensuring native plants, wildlife and habitats are protected and enhanced. The work itself is hard and often involves handwork, operating large equipment and managing steep slopes and difficult access.

In addition to ongoing year-round work that includes annual trail-brushing and mowing and fuel break maintenance, the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program has allowed Midpen to treat an additional 1,044 acres since its inception and reintroduce pile-burning and prescribed burning to our land-management toolbox. Each site we

treat must be maintained in perpetuity moving forward and so as our fire program matures, the annual work plan is now nearly an even mix of maintaining existing fuel breaks and creating new ones.

To get to this point, the necessary resources and capacity had to be built through additional funding, staff, contractors and collaborative partners.

Leveraging Funding

Several large grants have helped launch Midpen's expanded fire program. These include a total of \$2.58 million in grants from the California State Coastal Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board that supported capacity-building, forest health work, equipment purchases and prescribed fire work. In addition, Midpen is a partner in the Los Gatos Watershed Collaborative led by the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and has received more than \$3.3 million in grant funding from CAL FIRE for forest health projects, resulting in 690 acres of Midpen preserves in the South Bay area being treated to date, with more work ongoing.

Building Capacity

Financial resources are only helpful if we have the staff and equipment to physically carry out the vegetation management projects on the ground. Early on in the fire program, we relied more on contractors. Today, we are able to complete large vegetation management projects primarily in-house, having staffed two field resource crews at our Skyline-area and Foothills-area offices. These crews include a Field Resource Specialist, a Lead Open Space Technician (OST), two OSTs and an Equipment Mechanic Operator. Establishing and growing partnerships with local conservation corps and contractors helps to augment the work Midpen staff can accomplish.

A shaded fuel break across 50 acres in Coal Creek Preserve was one of the first projects completed in 2021

under the expanded fire program, and the San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School along with a Proposition 68 grant helped make it possible. Midpen crews have already returned once to maintain this site.

New equipment purchased with grant funding is being put to good use, including two remote-controlled mowing machines that can navigate steep slopes, a chipper and an excavator.

“As our fire program matures, the annual work plan is now nearly an even mix of maintaining existing fuel breaks and creating new ones.”

Partnerships

Fire does not stop at property boundaries, so working with other partners in the area to prioritize and collaborate has been critical to implementing landscape-level projects that are more effective. For example, Midpen partnered with the City of Palo Alto and the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council on an emergency escape route project along Page Mill Road that spanned four Midpen preserves and resulted in about 50 acres being treated on Midpen land within 150 feet of the roadway.

Though fires rarely start in Midpen preserves, fire is a fact of life in California. A changing climate, a local history of intense logging resulting in dense forest regrowth coupled with more than a century of fire suppression are just some factors contributing to a longer, more intense fire season. Midpen's Wildland Fire Resiliency program is aimed at helping Midpen meet these new challenges proactively.

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
Katie Renz, Guided Activities Editor

New Loop Trail Coming to Bear Creek Redwoods

New Parking Will Provide Direct Access

More access is coming to Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. In May, construction crews began building a new parking area, providing direct access to the preserve's recently expanded trail system. Four miles of new trail, opened in October 2024, winding through a diverse landscape of grasslands, redwood forests and creek corridors.

This secondary parking area and trailhead will help alleviate parking demand on Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve's existing, and currently only, parking area located off of Bear Creek Road which often fills on weekends.

The new parking area will accommodate 44 standard parking spaces and six equestrian trailer spaces, all constructed using a permeable surface. The design allows the equestrian stalls to be temporarily repurposed for shuttles or an additional nine standard parking spaces as needed. Other amenities include a two-stall vault toilet, bike

racks and even picnic tables, which are somewhat rare in Midpen open space preserves.

To support Midpen's climate goals, the site also features four EV charging stations with the infrastructure to double that capacity in the future. Throughout the design process, staff prioritized resource protection by shifting the layout to preserve mature trees and implementing passive bioswales for natural stormwater treatment.

The final site plan has been refined to minimize environmental and visual impact, intentionally locating the parking area to maximize visual screening from the road using existing trees and minimize the footprint and need for costly retaining walls.

New Easy-Access Loop Trail

Midpen's expert trail building crew are hard at work on a new half-mile, easy-access loop trail that the public will be able to enjoy from the new parking area. Specifically designed to accommodate



wheelchairs, strollers and those seeking a less strenuous outing, the gently sloped path will feature interpretive signage and a scenic overlook with a bench.

To ensure the safety of both visitors and construction crews during this heavy equipment work, several trail closures will be in effect. Closed routes include the Toad Hollow and Myotis trails, as well as parts of the Beaver, Oak Knoll and Lower Pete Siemens trails.

This Measure AA-funded project represents the next chapter in implementing the 2017 Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve Master Plan, guiding Midpen's work to restore the natural environment and create opportunities for ecologically sensitive public access to one of the Santa Cruz Mountains' most storied redwood forest landscapes. The parking area and trail are expected to open by the end of the year.

Learn more about the new trail at openspace.org/BCR-phase-2.



Water for Fish, Farms and People

Long-Awaited Partnership Project Breaks Ground on the Coastside

Collecting water in the winter when it is abundant and storing it for agricultural use in the summer is simple in theory, but difficult in practice without the right infrastructure. This has been an ongoing challenge at Johnston Ranch near Half Moon Bay particularly since the late 1990s when the listing of steelhead trout under the endangered species act required that dams on Arroyo Leon Creek be opened for the fish, significantly reducing water storage for the farmer.

A new project is breaking ground this summer in Midpen's Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve, led by the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD). It will provide more reliable year-round water for conservation grazing in the preserve and row crops on the neighboring farm.

Midpen's unique mission on the San Mateo County coast, where agricultural roots run deep, includes supporting viable agriculture.

Rare native frogs and other wildlife will also benefit as the existing pond habitat they depend on is being expanded and improved. Fish will benefit from higher summer flows in Arroyo Leon Creek as the new off-stream storage replaces creek diversions during the summer irrigation season.

An existing human-made pond for livestock water will be expanded from one acre-foot—enough water to cover an acre of land one foot deep—to five acre-feet. Winter runoff will flow from the pond into a new reservoir that will store an additional 20 acre-feet of water for the row crops on adjacent land owned by the private, nonprofit



Beating the Heat

What Wildlife Can Teach Us About Staying Cool

As summer heats up, both people and wildlife face the same challenges in open spaces: how to stay cool, hydrated and safe during hot, dry days. Fortunately, the animals that call Midpen preserves home have spent thousands of years perfecting the art of heat adaptation through evolution. By observing their behaviors, we can pick up a few smart strategies for enjoying nature safely, even on the hottest days.

Use Your “Ears” to Cool Off

Look closely at a black-tailed jackrabbit on a hot day and you may notice its very large but thin ears. These oversized appendages are packed with small



blood vessels which carry hot blood from the animal's core to the surface, where the heat can dissipate into the cooler surrounding air. Humans can use heat exchange to our advantage as well by wearing breathable clothing, using hats that allow heat to escape and taking advantage of breezes. Just as the black-tailed jackrabbit relies on airflow across its ears, you can cool down by maximizing air circulation around your body.



Seek Out Shade

During hot, dry periods, banana slugs retreat to moist microhabitats – under logs, leaf litter and dense vegetation, or near water sources such as creeks

or springs to prevent dehydration and overheating. Be like the banana slug and plan your hot-weather hikes around shaded trails with heavy canopy cover or near creeks. Use Midpen's online Trail Explorer tool to find shady trails near you.



Enjoy the Outdoors When it's Cool

Larger predators like coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions often reduce daytime movement during heat waves. This helps them conserve energy and avoid unnecessary exertion. For humans, this means limiting your outdoor hours to cooler parts of the day such as early in the morning or the hours before sunset. Luckily, Midpen preserves are free and open daily one half-hour before sunrise and one half-hour after sunset.

Retreat Underground

To escape the heat, some ground-dwelling creatures such as gophers, ground squirrels, snakes, lizards or certain insects will retreat underground or into crevices, where temperatures are cooler and more stable. Though we can't dig a hole to escape the heat in open space, as humans we often have access to similarly climate-controlled spaces. During heat waves, consider remaining indoors until conditions are safer for outdoor recreation.



As you explore your local preserves this summer, take a moment to observe the amazing heat adaptations on display all around you.

Prepare to stay cool by following the tips at openspace.org/know-before.

Summer 2026 Docent Naturalist Guided Activities

Greg Hughes

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.

June

Explorer Hike: Nutmegs and Ferns of Red Mountain

Wednesday, June 3
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Saratoga Gap Vista Point Parking Area
5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Water Wonders

Friday, June 5
10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
6.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Hike to Black Mountain

Saturday, June 6
10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
7 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Tectonic Bike Ride

Sunday, June 7
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
8 miles [R](#) [B](#)

Earthquake Trivia

Sunday, June 7
2 – 4:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Redwood Ramble

Monday, June 8
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles [S](#)

Spectacular Seeds

Tuesday, June 9
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Willowbrook-Alpine Roadside Parking
3 miles [E](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, June 10
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
5 miles [S](#)

History Hike: Martin & Schilling

Thursday, June 11
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Thornewood Preserve
4 miles [R](#) [M](#)

Signs of Summer

Thursday, June 11
9 – 11:30 a.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
2.75 miles [M](#)

From Sawmill to Seminary to Open Space

Friday, June 12
9 a.m. – Noon
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
3.5 miles [M](#)

A Cool Summer Retreat

Friday, June 12
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Butterflies of Sierra Azul

Friday, June 12
10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Try Your Hand at Nature Journaling

Sunday, June 14
9:30 a.m. – Noon
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
0.5 mile [E](#) [W](#)



Ken Miller

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, June 14
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area
0.25 mile [M](#)

Flowers: Up Close and Personal

Tuesday, June 16
9 a.m. – Noon
Ravenswood Preserve
3 miles [E](#) [W](#)

Explorer Hike: Chestnut Blooms Abuzzing

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

Don’t Look Up – Summer Edition

Friday, June 19
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

History on Two Wheels

Saturday, June 20
9:15 – 11:45 a.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
10 miles [B](#)

Summer Solstice at Audrey’s Way

Sunday, June 21
5 – 9 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area
6 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, June 25
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
Meet: Picchetti Ranch Parking Area
4.75 miles [R](#) [M](#) [L](#)

Surviving Paradise

Friday, June 26
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
3.5 miles [M](#)

The Very Hungry Butterfly!

Saturday, June 27
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2 miles [E](#) [F](#) [L](#)



Duane Carbon

Ramble at Rancho

Monday, June 29
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Full Moon on Black Mountain

Monday, June 29
6:30 – 11 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
6 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

July

Explorer Hike: Law of the Land

Wednesday, July 1
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
3.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Faultlines and History

Sunday, July 5
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Early Morning Meanderings

Monday, July 6
8 – 10:30 a.m.
Thornewood Preserve
3 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Flowers: Up Close and Personal

Tuesday, July 7
9 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Picnic Tables Roadside Parking
4 miles [M](#)



Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, July 8
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Saratoga Gap Vista Point Parking Area
5 miles [M](#)

Literature & Lore

Thursday, July 9
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Skyline Ridge Equestrian Parking Area
4.75 miles [M](#)

Looking for Lizards

Saturday, July 11
9 a.m. – Noon
Edgewood County Park
Meet: Clarkia Trailhead on Cañada Rd.
2 miles [E](#) [F](#) [L](#)

Tectonic Bike Ride

Saturday, July 11
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
8 miles [R](#) [B](#)

Big History, Small Preserve

Saturday, July 11
4 – 6:30 p.m.
Thornewood Preserve
4 miles [R](#) [M](#)

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, July 12
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area
0.25 mile [M](#)

Explorer Hike: Leopard Lily & More!

Wednesday, July 15
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Signs of Summer

Thursday, July 16
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4.25 miles [M](#)

Adaptations at the Marsh

Friday, July 17
10 a.m. – Noon
Ravenswood Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#) [W](#)

Moth Night

Sunday, July 19
8:30 – 11:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
0 miles [R](#) [E](#) [F](#) [L](#) [W](#)

Ramble at Rancho

Monday, July 20
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5.5 miles [S](#)

Stay Cool! Discover the Redwoods

Friday, July 24
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Moonrise from Borel Hill

Tuesday, July 28
6 – 9 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
4 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, July 30
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Willowbrook-Alpine Roadside Parking
8 miles [S](#) [L](#)



Stumps and Survivors

Friday, July 31
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: El Corte de Madera Creek Parking Area
4.75 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Sunset at Mindego Hill

Friday, July 31
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area
3.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)



August

Explorer Hike: Upper Purisima Creek Sampler

Wednesday, August 5
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
4.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Nature & The Gift Economy

Friday, August 7
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
4.75 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Bat-tastic Evening

Friday, August 7
7 – 9:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
1.5 miles [R](#) [E](#) [F](#)

Flowers: Up Close and Personal

Saturday, August 8
9 a.m. – Noon
Long Ridge Preserve
Meet: Sempervirens Point Parking Area
3 miles [E](#)

Tectonic Bike Ride

Saturday, August 8
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
8 miles [R](#) [B](#)

Tuning in to Twilight

Saturday, August 8
6:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
1.5 miles [R](#) [E](#)

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, August 9
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area
0.25 mile [M](#)



A Botanical Scavenger Hunt

Monday, August 10
9 – 11 a.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, August 12
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
5.5 miles [S](#)

Oaks of Portola Valley

Thursday, August 13
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
5.5 miles [S](#)

Bat Night

Saturday, August 15
7 – 10 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2.5 miles [R](#) [E](#)

Wildcard Ramble at Rancho

Monday, August 17
9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7.75 miles [S](#) [L](#)



Explorer Hike: Chilling With the Schillings

Wednesday, August 19
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Thornewood Preserve
4 miles [R](#) [M](#) [L](#)

Forest Bathing

Friday, August 21
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
4.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

History on Two Wheels

Saturday, August 22
8:45 – 11:30 a.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
10 miles [B](#)

Sunset Summer Stroll

Saturday, August 22
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Silicon Valley Vista Point Roadside Parking
3.5 miles [R](#) [M](#)

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, August 27
9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
6 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Full Moon on Black Mountain

Thursday, August 27
5:30 – 10:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
6 miles [R](#) [S](#) [L](#)

Touch Grass! A Phone-Free Immersion

Sunday, August 30
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
7 miles [S](#) [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.



**Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District**
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650-691-1200
info@openspace.org
openspace.org



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Permit #810

Stay Connected to Your Open Space

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

openspace.org/opt-in

Follow us on social media:



GET INSPIRED! Photo Contest

Midpen's annual contest celebrates its 17th year in 2026.
Submissions are accepted through July 31 across multiple
categories including:

- Wildlife
- Landscapes
- Plant Life
- People in Nature
- And more!

A winner will be selected and receive prizes in each
category.

Find out what's new this year, more details and how to
submit your favorite photos taken in a Midpen preserve
at openspace.org/photo-contest.



Richard Warnock



Through Midpen's Partnerships Program, members of Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) recently joined Midpen staff on a short Spanish-language interpretive hike along Wilbur's Watch Trail in Cloverdale Ranch Open Space Preserve near Pescadero. (Zoe Martin/Midpen)

Building Community

Connecting with ALAS on the Coastside

It was Monday morning, it was sunny and it was the perfect time to learn about flora and fauna on the San Mateo Coast. At Cloverdale Ranch Open Space Preserve, Midpen staff joined Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) staff and older adults on a short Spanish-language interpretive hike along Wilbur's Watch Trail.

The salty coastal air was abuzz with animated conversation, laughter, curiosity and excitement as the group wound their way up the gentle slope, occasionally stopping to learn more about the surrounding nature from Spanish-speaking Midpen staff.

The hike event stemmed from Midpen's community partnership with ALAS, a non-profit organization based in Half Moon Bay dedicated to building a resilient Latino community through

cultural connection. From ballet folklórico to legal aid, they aim to make others feel at home and supported. Partnering with ALAS helps Midpen directly connect with Latino residents on the San Mateo Coastside and helps ALAS participants discover new trails and recreational opportunities.

Outdoor spaces and events can bring people together in a shared moment, contributing to stronger community bonds.

This vibrant community culture was evident as the group descended back to the parking area to conclude their hike. Against a backdrop of the Pacific Ocean and Pigeon Point Lighthouse, staff and participants enjoyed a homemade banquet lunch, recounting moments from the hike together.

“For many of the participants, it was their first time visiting such a place. They had the opportunity to learn about the local flora, breathe fresh air, and contemplate the immensity of the sea.”

—ALAS Facilitator and Advisor to Seniors Juana Ruano.

“The activity greatly benefitted their mental health and emotional wellbeing,” said Ruano. “It was an unforgettable experience.”

Learn more at openspace.org/partnerships.

Open Space, Open Government

MIDPEN RECEIVES TRANSPARENCY AWARD

Midpen has been awarded the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF). This recognition honors Midpen's outstanding efforts to promote open government, ethical operations and accessible public engagement.

“Transparency is more than a legal requirement, it is foundational to who we are.”

—Midpen General Manager
Ana María Ruiz

To receive this award, Midpen successfully completed a rigorous program demonstrating our commitment to essential open governance and ethical financial reporting through SDLF, an independent, non-profit dedicated to promoting best practices among California's special districts.

“Public agencies exist to serve the people; therefore, the community must be able to see exactly how their tax dollars are spent and how decisions are made” said Midpen General Manager Ana Maria Ruiz.

For more information visit openspace.org/transparency.