

## Appendix D: Recreation and Education Report



Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Liv Amos





Appendix D-1:

## Vision Plan Existing Conditions for Access, Recreation and Environmental Education

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## CONTENTS

Existing Access, Recreation and Environmental Education Opportunities by Subregion.....	3
About the Subregions.....	3
Subregion: North San Mateo County Coast.....	5
Subregion: South San Mateo County Coast.....	8
Subregion: Central Coastal Mountains.....	10
Subregion: Skyline Ridge.....	12
Subregion: Peninsula Foothills.....	15
Subregion: San Francisco Baylands.....	18
Subregion: South Bay Foothills.....	20
Subregion: Sierra Azul.....	22
Existing Access, Recreation and Environmental Education Opportunities by Activity.....	23
Mountain Biking.....	23
Dog Access.....	23
Horseback Riding.....	24
Accessible Trails.....	24
Environmental Education, Interpretation, and Stewardship.....	25
District Web-Based Interpretation.....	25
District Public Information.....	25
District Volunteer and Docent Programs.....	25
On-Site Interpretation.....	26
Partnerships.....	26
Other Interpretive Opportunities.....	26

## EXISTING ACCESS, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES BY SUBREGION

This section is intended to provide useful information for the public regarding existing access, recreation and environmental education opportunities in the overall region of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Vision Plan. It provides context for analysis and suggestions as to what the ideal future vision would be. The Vision Plan process will reference these descriptions and tables to define general, and where appropriate, more location-specific proposals for new access, recreation and educational opportunities.

### About the Subregions

The overall Peninsula and South Bay Region can be considered as a series of subregions with unique geographic conditions – coast, ridgeline, summit, interior mountains, foothills, or bay shore. These subregions tend to have their own levels and routes of access for visitors. Organizing the Vision Planning Area into subregions helps clarify the lands, facilities and activities that are available, and helps participants to review and comment on them in more detail. The study area

for the Vision Plan has been divided into eight subregions (see **Figure 1**), as listed below. The boundaries and names are for study convenience and are not formally defined. The subregions are described in the following sub-sections with corresponding tables of park and open space lands, facilities and activities.

- North San Mateo County Coast
- South San Mateo County Coast
- Central Coastal Mountains
- Skyline Ridge
- Peninsula Foothills
- San Francisco Baylands
- Peninsula and South Bay Cities
- South Bay Foothills
- Sierra Azul

Peninsula and South Bay Cities comprises a very important subregion, but is not analyzed in this report because the District does not acquire land or manage facilities in these urbanized areas. Through the Vision Plan and other ongoing planning and implementation, the District is continually striving to best serve these urban constituents.

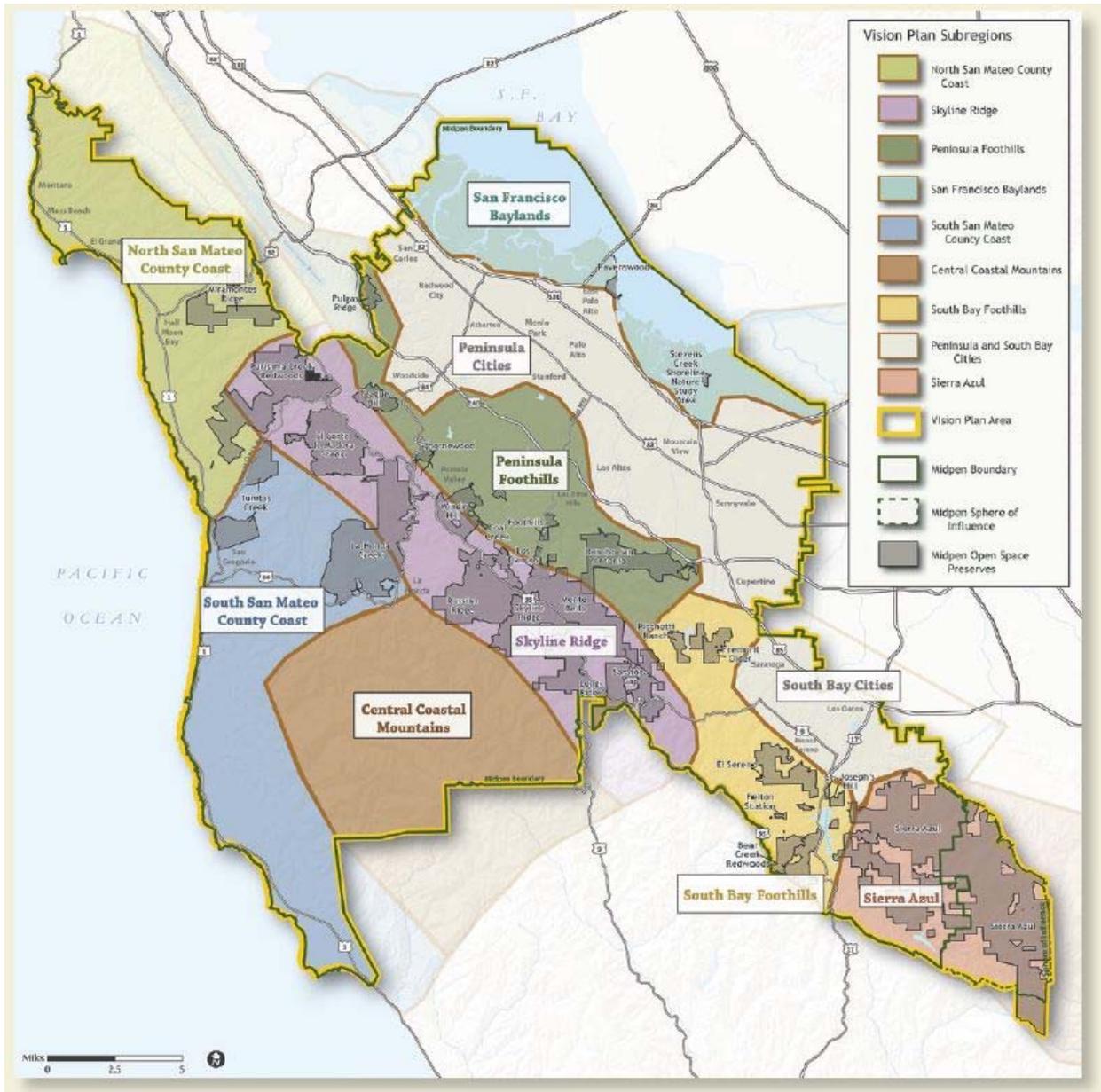


Figure 1: Subregions Map

## Subregion: North San Mateo County Coast

The North San Mateo County Coast Subregion extends from the City of Pacifica south, including the small communities of Montara, Moss Beach, Princeton-by-the-Sea, and El Granada, and centered around the City of Half Moon Bay. Highway 1 provides access up and down the coast, and Highway 92 and the much longer and more winding Highway 84 provide access from the Peninsula. These routes often experience major traffic backups on weekends and holidays. Highway 1 also is a popular route for local and touring bicyclists, and Half Moon Bay has implemented a separate paved path paralleling most of its' length in the City. The small historic agricultural village of San Gregorio lies near Highway 84, and to the south, the similarly picturesque community of Pescadero occupies a scenic valley between the coast and redwoods at Pescadero Creek Road.

Starting in the north, significant open space and regional park areas include Pacifica State Beach and Sharp Park Golf Course. The relatively undeveloped coastal hills between Pacifica and Half Moon Bay are partially protected by the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) at Sweeney Ridge, and in San Pedro Valley County Park, and the Sanchez Adobe County Park. Other significant areas include Montara State Beach and McNee Ranch State Park, and the Point Montara Lighthouse. To the south is San Mateo County's Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, including the POST-owned Pillar Point Bluff area, and adjacent Pillar Point Harbor lands that provide access to the famous Mavericks surf break and a popular short trail that also accommodates bikes and dog walking. In the hills, the GGNRA now manages the 4,000 acre Rancho Corral de Tierra property, with trails and a working farm and ranch.

Half Moon Bay State Beach and its' coastal trails, picnic and camping areas are very popular destinations. The City of Half Moon Bay's Frenchman's Creek Community Park and

Pilarcitos Creek Trail and adjacent parks provide a nearly-complete connection from the coast east into the historic downtown. Just south of downtown Half Moon Bay is the POST-owned historic Johnston farmhouse (operated by a non-profit foundation) and adjacent farm lands; the Elkus Youth Ranch in the coastal foothills; the Cowell State Beach coastal access, and adjacent Cowell-Purisima Coastal Trail, currently owned and operated by POST, on which a 3 mile trail follows the coastal bluff past working farmlands.

### Open Space District Preserves

South of Highway 92, the lower portion of the District's Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve extends into the Coastal Subregion, but is not yet open to the public. The District's Coastsides Protection Program became a reality on September 7, 2004, when the Certificate of Completion of Annexation extended the District's boundary to the Pacific Ocean from the City of Pacifica to the Santa Cruz County line. In response to overwhelming concern by San Mateo County residents, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has partnered with coastsiders to share the important responsibility of protecting coastal land. The program is slated to protect 11,800 acres of the coastsides as open space and agricultural land over the next 15 years, though the District to date has not been able to take an active role in opening and managing lands in the subregion due to funding constraints.

### Landscape Character

The North San Mateo County Coast Subregion features broad coastal terraces transitioning sharply to steep hills, with grasslands, agricultural fields, and coastal scrub and chaparral vegetation, especially at the north, transitioning on the upper slopes and canyons to redwood and Douglas fir forests. The highlights of the coastal environment are the dramatic views of the sea, the grassy lower slopes and forested mountains extending to the Skyline Subregion. Most of the access points have relatively short trails and loops – a long hike providing a sense of remoteness or allowing a

connection from the coast to the interior forests or Skyline Sub-Area are not yet developed. The California Coastal Conservancy's California Coastal Trail Project is a state-wide effort that has helped implement land projection and trail construction in many areas of San Mateo County and elsewhere in the state.

A major land protection and restoration focus in the coastal region has been habitat for steelhead

trout and coho salmon. Major land use and environmental policy goals of San Mateo County and the California Coastal Commission have been limiting the spread of urban development and supporting the continuation of agriculture. POST has been particularly active and successful in furthering these goals through acquisition of lands and easements.

**Table 1: North San Mateo County Coast Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running 	Equestrian 	Bicycling 	Dogs on Leash 	Wheelchair/Disabled Access 	Parking 	Restrooms 	Historic Site 	Nature or Farm Center 	Camping (Car/RV or Hike-In) 	Picnic 	Play Structure/Fields 
<b>Half Moon Bay</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Miramontes Ridge (western part)	●											
Purisima Creek Redwoods (western part)	●	●	●		●	●	●					
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Sweeny Ridge (GGNRA)	●					●		●				
Montara State Beach/McNee Ranch	●	●	●	●		●				●		
San Pedro Valley County Park	●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	
Sanchez Adobe County Park					●	●	●	●				
Half Moon Bay Blufftop Coastal Park	●	●		●		●						
HMB Coast Side Dog Park				●		●						
Esplanade Beach	●			●								
Fitzgerald Marine Reserve/Pillar Point Bluff	●		●			●	●		●		●	
Half Moon Bay State Beach	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●		
Pillar Point Harbor	●		●	●	●	●						
Point Montara Light House	●				●	●	●	●		hostel	●	
Quarry Park	●	●	●			●			●		●	●
Rancho Corral de Tierra	●	●	●	●								
Pacifica State Beach	●					●	●					
Cowell Coastal Access and Cowell-Purisima Coastal Trail	●		●		●	●	●	●				
Johnston House						●	●	●	●			

## Subregion: South San Mateo County Coast

The southern portion of the San Mateo County Coast is much less populated and developed than the Half Moon Bay area, and features more rugged terrain extending to the sea, and less coastal terrace. Highway 1 provides the primary access to this subregion, with Highway 84 connecting at the northeast. This subregion features primarily agricultural grasslands, along with native coastal scrub and chaparral, with pockets of agricultural fields along coastal terrace and valley areas, and redwood, douglas fir and oak woodland forest extending along coastal streams.

### Open Space District Preserves

District Preserves include the undeveloped Tunitas Creek Open Space Preserve consisting of two separate parcels, and the lower portion of the vast La Honda Creek Preserve – a former ranch occupying much of the area north of Highway 84 above the community of La Honda. Additional District preserves are envisioned in the subregion as a long-term objective of the District’s Coastsides Protection Program, as discussed above.

### Other Open Space

A series of State Beaches provide beach access parking and limited day use facilities at San Gregorio, Pomponio, Pescadero, Bean Hollow, Pebble Beach and Pigeon Point Light Station.

Major protected lands to the south include Cloverdale Ranch, Bolsa Point Ranch and other POST-owned areas, along with Año Nuevo State Park and Butano State Park. Together, these areas create 14 miles of contiguous open space just east of Highway 1, and 10 miles of unspoiled beachfront west of the highway. Ano Nuevo State Beach is a major destination for popular elephant seal tours. Nearby is the private Coastanoa Lodge, which affords a rustic setting with a high level of amenities for tent, RV, tent cabins, and lodge accommodations. To the south in Santa Cruz County is the West Waddell Creek State Wilderness, which features a nature center and a trail connecting east to the large Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The beach at Waddell Creek is a popular destination for kiteboarders, windsurfers, and surfers, and those who like to watch them.

### Landscape Character

Overall, the San Mateo County Coast affords terrific views of the mountains, slopes, and sea, many beachfront sites to visit, and some for picnics, but as yet little in the way of continuous and connecting trails, or major public use facilities. This is due to the area’s remoteness, the challenging weather conditions, with prevalent strong winds, and a deliberate objective to keep the area wild and scenic, and preserve agriculture, by keeping developed facilities minimal.

**Table 2: San Mateo County Coast Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running Equestrian Bicycling			Dogs on Leash Wheelchair/Disabled Access		Parking Restrooms Historic Site			Nature or Farm Center Camping (Car/RV or Hike- In) Picnic Play Structure/Fields			
<b>South San Mateo County Coast</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Tunitas Creek												
La Honda Creek (western part)	●	●										
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Pomponio State Beach	●					●					●	
Bean Hollow State Beach	●		●	●		●	●					
San Gregorio State Beach	●					●	●					
Pescadero State Beach	●				●	●	●					
Pigeon Point Light Station	●				●	●	●	●		hostel		
Ano Nuevo State Park	●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	
Cloverdale Ranch (POST)												
West Waddell Creek State Wilderness	●	●				●						

## Subregion: Central Coastal Mountains

This subregion features forested ridges and valleys between the main coastal ridge along Skyline Boulevard and the less mountainous and more agricultural lands along the coast. Once heavily logged, it is famous for redwood forests, steep hills and winding valleys sheltering beautiful coastal streams. Its parks are some of the most remote areas on the Peninsula, and thus afford a real opportunity to “get away from it all” and experience the quiet and grandeur of the redwoods while still being relatively close to urban areas.

District Open Space Preserves connect to, but generally do not extend into this subregion, which features large State Parks, County Parks, and lands

protected by POST, Save-the-Redwoods League, and Sempervirens Fund. San Mateo County’s vast Pescadero Creek County Park includes 8,020 acres and is comprised of Sam McDonald, Memorial, and Heritage Grove Parks. It features Pescadero Creek, a year-round stream that provides habitat for steelhead trout and silver salmon, and nesting for the endangered marbled murrelet seabird. These parks feature developed camping, picnic, hostel, and youth camp facilities. To the south Butano State Park provides picnic and camping facilities accessible from Highway 1. Further south in Santa Cruz County, abutting the District’s boundary, is Big Basin Redwoods, California’s oldest state park—covering more than 18,000 acres and providing excellent hiking, picnic, camping and nature and history learning opportunities.

**Table 3: Central Coastal Mountains Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running	Equestrian	Bicycling	Dogs on Leash	Wheelchair/Disabled Access	Parking	Restrooms	Historic Site	Nature or Farm Center	Camping (Car/RV or Hike- In)	Picnic	Play Structure/Fields
<b>Central Coastal Mountains</b>												
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Big Basin Redwoods State Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Butano State Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Cowell - Purisima Trail	●		●		●	●	●					
Cowell Ranch State Beach	●					●						
Elkus Ranch						●	●		●	●		
Memorial County Park	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	
Pescadero Creek County Park	●	●	●			●	●			●		
Portola Redwoods State Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sam McDonald County Park	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	
Smith Field Little League Park				●		●					●	●
Heritage Grove	●										●	
Big Basin Redwoods State Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Butano State Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Cowell - Purisima Trail	●		●		●	●	●					
Cowell Ranch State Beach	●					●						
Elkus Ranch						●	●		●	●		
Memorial County Park	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	
Pescadero Creek County Park	●	●	●			●	●			●		
Portola Redwoods State Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sam McDonald County Park	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	
Smith Field Little League Park				●		●					●	●
Heritage Grove	●										●	

## Subregion: Skyline Ridge

This subregion consists of the backbone of the Santa Cruz Mountains on the Peninsula, starting near Pacifica on the San Francisco Watershed lands, and extending south through the ridge top communities of Kings Mountain and Skylonda, and the upper portions of the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley. The middle and southern portion of this subregion is centered on Skyline Boulevard/Highway 35 and is crossed by Highway 92 in the north, 84 in the center, and 9 in the south. Many parks and preserves extend from Skyline west into the North or South San Mateo County Coast subregions, or east into the Peninsula Foothills subregion.

At the north end, beyond the District's boundary, the Skyline Ridge subregion includes the upper reaches of the San Francisco Water Department's Crystal Springs Watershed Lands, over which a scenic easement is held by the National Park Service. The watershed lands are generally not publicly accessible, but the Fifield-Cahill Ridge Trail, a part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, is open for guided hikes and rides by reservation. Within the ridge top watershed lands to the south is the upper extent of lands of the historic Filoli Estate, owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The house and grounds are included in the Peninsula Foothills subregion. On the east side of Highway 35 farther south are the upper portions of the National Park Service's Phleger Estate, and San Mateo County's Huddart and Wunderlich Parks.

### Open Space District Preserves

The Skyline Ridge Subregion contains many of the District's largest and most popular preserves, comprising a near-continuous band of open space and trail connections from the City of Pacifica in the north to south of Highway 9 above the City of Saratoga. The previously-described GGNRA lands, San Francisco Watershed lands, and San Mateo County parks comprise the greenbelt at the north end, and Santa Clara County's Skyline-Sanborn County Park and Castle Rock State Park

comprise the southeast and southwest ends, respectively. However, the bulk of the Skyline Ridge greenbelt is comprised of District preserves in a chain up and down both sides of Highway 35, creating a near-continuous band of protected lands and trails. On the north, to the west of the S. F. Watershed Lands, are the District's undeveloped **Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve**, and Burleigh-Murray State Park, followed by the District's **Purissima Creek Redwoods Preserve**, featuring loops through the redwoods and a popular trail from Skyline nearly to the sea along Purissima Creek. **El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve** has similar rugged redwood forest terrain and a well-developed trail system that is very popular with mountain bikers. To the south on the west side of the ridge is the upper portion of **La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve** and on the east **Windy Hill Open Space Preserve**, with a well-developed trail system from the valley to the ridge, and it's prominent grassy ridge tops offering dramatic view to the sea and Peninsula. Windy Hill is adjacent to POST-owned lands of the Driscoll Ranch on the west side of 35, extending south to a complex of open space lands including all of **Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve**, **Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve** and **Long Ridge Open Space Preserve** west of 35, and all of **Coal Creek, Montebello and Saratoga Gap Open Space Preserves** east of 35.

### Landscape Character

The Skyline Ridge Subregion is appreciated for its redwood and Douglas fir forests, which tend to be more extensive to the north and west sides; its grasslands and chaparral, generally in the central and southern reaches, and its' oak woodlands scattered throughout. View of the Bay and the Pacific Ocean, forests, wildflowers, strenuous and technical trails and a true sense of wildness and remoteness are some of the hallmarks of this subregion. Many, if not most visitors, experience the Skyline area from vehicles, with short ventures into the parks and viewpoints. The annual grasslands, maintained by traditional grazing, are

appreciated for their open vistas of the Bay and ocean, and for their annual wildflower displays; at Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve in particular. Ponds and streams are a highlight of the Skyline Region. Daniels Nature Center at Alpine Pond at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve is a major center for educational and interpretive programs.

### **Trails**

The Bay Area Ridge Trail is the primary north-south connection, and is mostly complete in this area, while east-west connections include trails through Huddart or Wunderlich County Parks (open to hikers and equestrians, but not mountain bicyclists or dogs) to Purisima or El Corte de Madera Preserves. Alpine Road – a closed

portion of a County public road, connects from the foothills in Portola Valley southwest to open space preserves around the intersection of Highway 35 and upper Page Mill Road. The Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail parallels Highway 9 at the southern end. Consistent with the mountainous terrain, Skyline Ridge Subregion trails tend to be more strenuous – winding, steep, and sometimes narrow – the Skyline Subregion is noted for its “single track” trails, constructed by the District and other agencies specifically for, hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use, along with the “road width” former ranch and logging roads that are incorporated into the trail system of these and most other parks and preserves.

**Table 4: Skyline Ridge Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running	Equestrian	Bicycling	Dogs on Leash	Wheelchair/Disabled Access	Parking	Restrooms	Historic Site	Nature or Farm Center	Camping (Car/RV or Hike- In)	Picnic	Play Structure/Fields
<b>Skyline Ridge</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Miramontes Ridge (eastern part)	●											
Purissima Creek	●	●	●		●	●	●					
Redwoods (eastern part)												
El Corte de Madera Creek	●	●	●			●						
La Honda Creek (eastern part)	●	●										
Thornewood (western part)	●	●		●		●						
Windy Hill (western part)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
Russian Ridge	●	●	●			●	●					
Coal Creek	●	●	●	●		●						
Los Trancos	●	●				●						
Skyline Ridge	●	●	●		●	●	●					
Monte Bello	●	●	●			●	●					
Long Ridge	●	●	●	●		●						
Saratoga Gap	●	●	●			●						
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Sweeney Ridge GGNRA	●		●									
Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park	●					●	●	●				
Castle Rock State Park	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●	
Sanborn Skyline County Park		●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Upper Stevens Creek County Park	●	●	●									
Sweeney Ridge GGNRA	●		●									
Castle Rock State Park	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●	
Sanborn Skyline County Park		●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Upper Stevens Creek County Park	●	●	●									

## Subregion: Peninsula Foothills

This subregion consists of the lower eastern slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains on the San Francisco Peninsula, including the lower portions of the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley and upper portions of the Cities of San Carlos and Redwood City in San Mateo County; as well as the upper portions of the cities of Palo Alto and Los Altos Hills in Santa Clara County. The Peninsula Foothills subregion is centered on the rift valley of the San Andreas Fault, which reflects its' unique topography and geology.

These areas are typically easily accessible from local roads, and I-280 provides a north-south corridor for access and sweeping views of the hills and valleys. The San Francisco Water Department's Crystal Springs Watershed Lands protect over 20,000 acres of habitat, primarily to the west of 280 and to the east of the coastal mountain ridge. In addition to I-280, some county and local roads, and the Crystal Springs golf course, the watershed lands accommodate San Mateo County's popular Crystal Springs Trail – a paved recreational trail for biking and walking; and the Bay Area Ridge Trail along the ridge. The Historic Filioi Estate, owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is located at the southern end of the watershed accessible from Canada Road off I-280. The GGNRA's Phleger Estate preserves the area at the south end of the watershed, along with San Mateo County's Huddart and Wunderlich County Parks, which offer improved facilities for group and family picnics and associated recreational activities, as well as camping.

### Open Space District Preserves

To the east of 280 at the south end of the S.F. watershed lands off Edgewood Road are the District's **Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve** and San Mateo County's Edgewood County Park. The District's **Teague Hill Open Space Preserve** lies in on the upper slopes of the Town of Woodside, between Huddart County Park and Wunderlich County Park. West of I-280 and south

of Highway 84 are the District's **Thornewood Open Space Preserve**, with its' historic house and quiet Schilling Lake, and lower portions of **Windy Hill Open Space Preserve** in Portola Valley, where trails and views extend to the ridge at Skyline Boulevard. To the south are the smaller **Foothills and Los Trancos Open Space Preserves**, which both abut Palo Alto Foothills Park (open only to Palo Alto residents) and the private Hidden Villa environmental center. Palo Alto's Arastradero Preserve lies to the north of Foothills Park. **Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve** abuts and is accessed from Cupertino via Rancho San Antonio County Park, which is managed by the Open Space District. Rancho San Antonio Preserve features the popular Deer Hollow Farm demonstration farm and garden, and a popular wide trail that extends from the County Park to the Farm. From Rancho San Antonio Preserve trails continue into the hills to Monte Bello Open Space Preserve and the Skyline Ridge Subregion.

### Other Open Space

Other protected open space lands in the Peninsula Foothills Subregion that are not publicly accessible include the Jasper Ridge Ecological Reserve – a research site owned by Stanford University, and Stanford campus open space lands on both sides of I-280 that provide important environmental and visual protection. The Hidden Villa private youth camp, hostel and environmental education/demonstration center provides an important opportunity for local youth to learn about and experience nature.

### Landscape Character

The Peninsula Foothills environment transitions from rolling hills near the urbanized areas to steeper slopes toward the ridges to the west. Variety of vegetation types is one of the attractions, with a patchwork of grasslands, chaparral, and oak woodlands to the east and to the south, and tending to mixed coniferous redwood and Douglas fir forests to the northwest. Trail opportunities abound in the Peninsula

Foothills area, and many trails interconnect. They include both easy corridors and loops, and strenuous routes that connect to the Skyline area.

These parks and preserves are very popular due to their close proximity to suburban neighborhoods and easy vehicular and bicycle access.

**Table 5: Peninsula Foothills Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running 	Equestrian 	Bicycling 	Dogs on Leash 	Wheelchair/Disabled Access 	Parking 	Restrooms 	Historic Site 	Nature or Farm Center 	Camping (Car/RV or Hike-In)  	Picnic 	Play Structure/Fields 
<b>Peninsula Foothills</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Pulgas Ridge	●			●	●	●	●					
Teague Hill	●	●										
Thornewood (eastern part)	●	●		●		●						
Windy Hill (eastern part)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
Foothills	●	●		●								
Rancho San Antonio	●	●	●		●	●	●					
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Junipero Serra Park	●					●					●	●
Crystal Springs Regional Trail	●	●	●		●	●	●				●	
Edgewood County Park	●	●				●	●					
Filoli Estate (Nat. Trust for Hist. Pres.)		●										
Pheleger Estate (GGNRA)	●	●										
Huddart County Park	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	
Wunderlich County Park	●	●	●			●	●	●				
Enid W Pearson Arastradero Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
Palo Alto Foothills Park	●			●	●	●				●	●	
Hidden Villa (private)	●	●		●		●	●		●	Hostel		

## Subregion: San Francisco Baylands

The Baylands include the protected lands and parks along the San Francisco Bay shoreline, starting in San Mateo with the County's Coyote Point Recreation Area and its prominent eucalyptus-forested hill, unique to the Baylands Subregion, which is otherwise flat except for landfill sites. Coyote Point features many active picnic, play and recreation opportunities, including a golf course and marina, as well as a popular nature center and natural history museum. To the south, the City of San Mateo manages Seal Point Park, a former landfill site, now a great opportunity for Bay vistas. The next major bayfront open space is in Redwood City at POST's Bair Island Preserve. Other public open space and protected wetlands extend south through shoreline, tidal wetland, and water areas of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the City of Menlo Park Baylands Park.

### Open Space District Preserves

Baylands areas owned and managed by the District include the 376 acre **Ravenswood Open Space Preserve in East Palo Alto**, with its' restored tidal wetlands, and the 55-acre **Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area**, located adjacent to Mountain View's Shoreline Park.

### Other Open Space

The City of East Palo Alto Cooley Landing Park is currently being planned and would provide 9 acres of park space to the City at this prominent point south of the Dumbarton Bridge. It would be the City's first nature park and first bayfront park.

To the south is the City of Palo Alto's 1,940-acre Baylands Preserve, which features the Lucy Evan interpretive and nature center and hand-launched boat access, as well as an art park at Byxbee Park, a former landfill site. Palo Alto Golf Course is located nearby, to the west of the Palo Alto Airport. The City of Mountain View's 750-acre Shoreline Park features wildlife areas, active

recreation facilities, a golf course, a 50 acre boating/windsurfing lake, and the historic Rengstorff House and the famous amphitheater.

East of Mountain View Shoreline Park is Sunnyvale Baylands Park, which provides over 70 acres of developed parkland offering active recreation, pathways and picnic areas for families and large groups. An additional 105 acres of seasonal wetlands is protected as a Wetlands Preserve providing habitat for plants and wildlife. Baylands Park is a joint venture between Santa Clara County, which owns the property, and the City of Sunnyvale which manages and maintains the Park.

### Trails

The Baylands are very accessible from Peninsula and South Bay cities, including connecting bike routes and trails from developed areas to the shoreline, most notably the partially completed Stevens Creek Trail, which is intended to connect from Stevens Creek Reservoir in the Foothills, through Cupertino, Los Altos, Sunnyvale and Mountain View to the Bay Trail near Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area. The San Francisco Bay Trail, a paved multi-use trail planned to circle the entire Bay, is nearly complete in this portion of the Baylands, connecting to trails and paths in individual preserves and parks along the shore or wetlands edge. Bird watching is a prime activity along the Baylands, along with bicycle riding, walking and running on primarily flat, paved levee trails.

### Landscape Character

Much of the Peninsula and South Bay baylands have been filled for development, or converted to salt ponds for commercial production. A major effort to restore formal tidal wetlands is the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, a federal/state multi-agency effort (Fish and Wildlife Service, California State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and local water districts) aimed at restoring 15,100 acres of commercial salt ponds at the south end of San Francisco Bay to a

mix of tidal marsh, mudflat, and other wetland habitats. Other restoration projects have been completed at Bair Island, in Menlo Park, at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, and at Palo Alto Baylands Preserve. The environment of the Baylands is generally flat topography, with broad vistas and persistent wind. Levees or fill areas, or in some cases natural uplands, protect the urban

development on the inner side. Combinations of upland non-native grassland vegetation transition to native wetland vegetation throughout the subregion, depending on original disturbance and more recent restoration.

**Table 6: San Francisco Baylands Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running	Equestrian	Bicycling	Dogs on Leash	Wheelchair/Disabled Access	Parking	Restrooms	Historic Site	Nature or Farm Center	Camping (Car/RV or Hike- In)	Picnic	Play Structure/Fields
												
<b>San Francisco Baylands</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Ravenswood	●		●		●	●						
Stevens Creek	●		●		●	●						
Shoreline Nature	●											
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Coyote Point Recreation	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Seal Point Park, City of San Mateo	●		●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●
Bair Island Preserve	●		●		●	●						
Don Edwards SF Bay NWR	●					●	●				●	
Don Edwards SF Bay NWR Visitor center	●		●	●	●	●	●				●	
Bedwell Bayfront Park - Menlo Park	●		●	●		●	●				●	
Palo Alto Baylands	●		●	●		●	●				●	
City of Mtn View Shoreline Park	●		●			●	●					
Sunnyvale Baylands Park	●					●	●					

## Subregion: South Bay Foothills

The foothills of the Santa Clara Valley provide a dramatic backdrop for Silicon Valley. Protected lands are sparser than along the Peninsula Foothills, in part because of earlier, heavier development pressures and patterns consumed much of the agricultural and natural land. Parks and open space in this subregion can be accessed via Highways 85, 9, and 17 and connecting local roads, but access to some parks and open space is constrained due to winding and steep local roads that also serve many residents.

### Open Space District Preserve

Protected areas occupying the slopes above Cupertino and Saratoga include the **Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve** with its' working historic winery, and **Fremont Older Open Space Preserve** with its' historic home. Above the City of Monte Sereno is the District's El Sereno Open Space Preserve, which contains portions of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, and above Los Gatos is **St. Josephs Hill Open Space Preserve**, which abuts both Lexington County Park, and to the south and on the higher slopes, the lower portions of Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve. To the west of Highway 17 near Lexington Reservoir is the District's **Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve**, which is open on a reservation basis, and contains the closest major redwood forest to the Santa Clara Valley, the former Alma College seminary complex, and the private Bear Creek Stables.

### Other Open Space

Santa Clara County's Stevens Creek County Park provides trails, picnic and fishing opportunities

around the reservoir and along the creek between Picchetti Ranch and Fremont Older Open Space Preserves, and at the Upper Park area provides a trail connection through Monte Bello Open Space Preserve all the way to Skyline. Above Saratoga is the County's Villa Montalvo County Park, with a historic estate, now a popular center for art and music, along with popular trails. In Los Gatos, Santa Clara County's Vasona County Park with its' reservoir, paths, picnic, and active recreation facilities is a major draw for residents across the region and a major destination on the County's Los Gatos Creek Trail, which extends as a multi-use path from downtown San Jose to Lexington Reservoir. The County's Lexington Reservoir and Park is a popular fishing and non-motorized boating spot, and connects to St. Josephs Hill and Sierra Azul Preserves.

### Landscape Character

The environment of the Los Gatos Foothills is generally dryer and the topography more abruptly steep than the Peninsula Foothills. The vegetation includes grassland and chaparral, with oak woodlands on the more northerly slopes and in valleys, and mixed coniferous forest on the upper reaches in the southwestern portion. Because protected lands are less continuous there are fewer long connecting trail opportunities, but there are excellent local loops of generally easy trails. Compared to the Skyline Ridge or Peninsula Foothills subregions, a greater percentage of the trails tend to be former ranch roads rather than "single track" built specifically for recreational trail use.

**Table 7: South Bay Foothills Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running 	Equestrian 	Bicycling 	Dogs on Leash 	Wheelchair/Disabled Access 	Parking 	Restrooms 	Historic Site 	Nature or Farm Center 	Camping (Car/RV or Hike- In) 	Picnic 	Play Structure/Fields 
<b>Los Gatos Foothills</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Picchetti Ranch	●	●			●	●	●					
Fremont Older	●	●	●	●		●	●					
El Sereno	●	●	●			●						
St. Joseph's Hill	●	●	●	●		●	●					
Bear Creek Redwoods	●	●										
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Stevens Creek County Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	
City of Saratoga Trails	●	●		●								
Los Gatos Creek Trail	●		●	●	●	●	●				●	
Vasona Lake County Park	●		●	●	●	●	●				●	
Villa Montalvo	●					●	●	●				
Lexington Reservoir County park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	
Santa Teresa County Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	
Penitencia Creek County Park	●	●	●	●		●	●					

### Subregion: Sierra Azul

Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve is a vast complex of protected lands assembled by the District and POST around the centerpiece of Mt. Umunhum – the highest point to the south above Santa Clara Valley, with views as far as Monterey Bay.

Although known for its chaparral-covered slopes, Sierra Azul has pockets of serpentine grasslands, bay and blue oak woodlands, and lush riparian corridors, including the headwaters of Guadalupe Creek. Home to deer, bobcat, coyote, and the federally listed-as-threatened red-legged frog, the preserve also provides exceptional habitat for mountain lions. It has the beauty and ruggedness of an unspoiled wilderness and attracts visitors seeking a more vigorous hiking, biking, or equestrian experience. Sierra Azul is less accessible than other areas due to very steep slopes and steep and winding local roads that provide access.

The former Almaden Air Force Station at Mount Umunhum was acquired by the District in 1986. This 1950s era site is special to the military personnel and their families who were stationed there, and important to the Ohlone people as part of their creation belief. The huge concrete radar tower is a landmark to many Santa Clara Valley residents. Federal funding will allow the District to continue cleaning up unsafe structures and contamination on the site so that planning for restoration and public access can proceed.

To the east of the Sierra Azul Preserve is the County’s Almaden Quicksilver County Park, and the protected lands of the South Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. To the south, the Preserve includes a portion of land in Santa Cruz County extending south to the Soquel Demonstration State Forest and Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, the location of popular mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian trails.

**Table 8: Sierra Azul Amenities by Park or Open Space**

Sub-Region, Regional Parks and Preserves	Hiking, Running 	Equestrian 	Bicycling 	Dogs on Leash 	Wheelchair/Disabled Access 	Parking 	Restrooms 	Historic Site 	Nature or Farm Center 	Camping (Car/RV or Hike-In) 	Picnic 	Play Structure/Fields 
<b>Sierra Azul</b>												
<b>District Preserves</b>												
Sierra Azul	●	●	●	●		●	●					
<b>Other Parks and Preserves</b>												
Almaden Quicksilver County Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	
Rancho Canada del Oro	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	
Soquel Demonstration Forest	●	●	●	●		●					●	

## EXISTING ACCESS, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES BY ACTIVITY

The subregion descriptions above provide an overview of regional park and open space lands and opportunities. The associated subregion Activity and Facility Tables provide more detail on area-specific opportunities. The following section describes the activity-specific opportunities within the Vision Planning Area.

### Mountain Biking

Most of the District's 220 miles of designated trails are unpaved "wildland" trails in steep, rugged terrain. Approximately 65% of these trails are "multiple use" trails and are open to bicyclists, which is the highest ratio of trails open to bikes among parks and open space in the Bay Area. Many of these trails are also single-track trails, providing bicyclists with a more technical experience. Sixteen open space preserves are open to mountain biking, and the following four preserves are among the most popular and well-developed for this activity:

- **El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve**  
Features 34 miles of multi-use trails, including some steep, technical single-track trails; rugged, heavily forested terrain; redwoods; occasional views to the coast.
- **Fremont Older Open Space Preserve**  
Nearby urban areas affording a quick trip after work; features 11 miles of multi-use trails; woodland, chaparral, rolling hayfields, and former orchard; 900-foot Hunters Point; Maisie's Peak.
- **Long Ridge, Monte Bello, Russian Ridge, Saratoga Gap, and Skyline Ridge**  
These South Skyline Area preserves are interconnected affording bicyclists with miles of multi-use trails to explore; grasslands; oak, madrone, and Douglas-fir forests; views of Big Basin Redwoods, Butano Ridge, and the Monterey Peninsula.

- **Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve**  
Features approximately twenty-six miles of multi-use trails; rugged, steep terrain; chaparral-covered slopes; dense stands of bay trees; outstanding views of Santa Clara Valley; 2,999-foot Mt. El Sombroso.

### Dog Access

Access for dogs is relatively limited on the Peninsula and in the South Bay compared to the North and East Bay Areas. San Mateo County Parks do not allow dogs, leashed or otherwise.

**District Preserves:** Several District preserves offer access for dogs on leash, and one off-leash area:

- Coal Creek Open Space Preserve— all trails
- Foothills Open Space Preserve— all trails
- Fremont Older Open Space Preserve— all trails
- Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve— all trails + marked off-leash area
- St. Joseph's Hill Open Space Preserve— all trails
- Thornewood Open Space Preserve— all trails
- Long Ridge Open Space Preserve— designated trails only
- Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve- Kennedy-Limekiln Area only
- Windy Hill Open Space Preserve – designated trails only

#### Other Dog Access Areas:

- Sweeney Ridge
- McNee Ranch State Park
- Quarry Park
- Menlo Park Bayfront Park
- Palo Alto Baylands Preserve
- Palo Alto Arastradero Preserve
- Stevens Creek County Park (only below the dam on Stevens Creek Trail)
- Vasona County Park
- Almaden Quicksilver County Park

## Horseback Riding

Twenty-one open space preserves are open to horseback riders. The District's trails provide the long distance opportunities for riding that are valued by equestrians, especially when trails allow connections between adjacent preserves or other public lands, such as the Bay Area Ridge Trail. These preserves are among those favored by equestrians:

- **Long Ridge, Monte Bello, Russian Ridge, Saratoga Gap, and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserves.** These South Skyline Area preserves are adjacent to one another and provide corridors for equestrians with access to miles and miles of multi-use trails. Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve has an equestrian parking lot to accommodate rigs of all sizes. From these preserves, equestrians can ride through a variety of ecosystems, including mixed evergreen forests, oak woodlands, chaparral, and grasslands. Great views to the coast are prevalent along the ridges.
- **Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.** Towering redwoods, ferns, and creeks will provide a cool respite for afternoon riders that choose to explore this preserve on horseback. This area provides a look at the unique history of logging on the midpeninsula – along Purisima Creek Trail riders may catch a glimpse of areas that were once the site of sawmills. Twenty-one miles of trails await you.
- **Windy Hill Open Space Preserve** features 13 miles of trails, including forested terrain, creek crossings, open grasslands, and beautiful views of San Francisco Bay and the midpeninsula.

## Accessible Trails

The District's lands are typically rugged, and deliberately left in a relatively natural condition, there are several good options for visitors with wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, small children... and

for anyone desiring a less strenuous open space experience:

- **Monte Bello Open Space Preserve:** The first 500 feet of the Stevens Creek Nature Trail from the main parking area can accommodate a wide array of physical abilities (although it is not officially designated an accessible trail).
- **Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve:** This preserve features the historic Picchetti Winery. The winery complex is located just next to the preserve parking lot, and has wide dirt roads that can be navigated by most wheelchairs. There is an accessible restroom and a wheelchair lift into the winery tasting room.
- **Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve:** The Cordilleras Trail extends 0.8 miles at a very slight grade parallel to a paved road and along Cordilleras Creek into a quiet wooded valley with a clearing and bench next to the creek.
- **Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve:** the ¼ mile Redwood Trail features two picnic tables and an accessible restroom. The western side of the preserve provides a moderately accessible trail on the Purisima Creek Trail, an old logging road an accessible restroom and a gentle uphill grade with a few short sections of 10%-15% grade. The trail follows along Purisima Creek, crossing the water over several bridges.
- **Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve:** adjoins Rancho San Antonio County Park, where accessible parking and restrooms are available. From the county park, a wide, level dirt path leads approximately one mile to historic working Deer Hollow Farm this preserve. Approximately 0.8 miles of the Rogue Valley Trail beyond the farm is also relatively level and wide.
- **Ravenswood Open Space Preserve:** provides approximately 1.5 miles of wheelchair accessible trail on levees leading to Bay wetlands overlook platforms and benches.

- **Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve:** Features two ponds with trails designed for wheelchair access. Alpine Pond trails access the Daniels Nature Center and a floating pier, and accessible restroom. Horseshoe Lake provides a more rustic trail extending approximately a quarter of a mile from the parking area along the shoreline.
- **Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area:** This bayfront preserve offers an aggregate surface levee trail extending approximately 1/4 mile to an overlook that offers good bird watching. Accessible restrooms are available in nearby Mountain View Shoreline Park.
- **Windy Hill Open Space Preserve:** The picnic area at the upper end along Skyline Boulevard/Highway 35 is wheelchair accessible, including a restroom. Three tables are located in a grassy area with views overlooking Portola Valley.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, INTERPRETATION, AND STEWARDSHIP

The Open Space District and other agencies and organizations on the Peninsula and in the South Bay offer environmental interpretive, educational and volunteer stewardship programs that occur on various sites and settings. The District's recently-prepared *Interpretive Planning Guide*<sup>1</sup> provides an overview of these opportunities, which is summarized and augmented below:

### District Web-Based Interpretation

Visitors can learn about the District and its activities, programs, and preserves through the District's web site ([www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)). District staff maintain a Twitter feed and a Facebook page, as well as Flickr and SmugMug accounts of digital images contributed by photo contestants and volunteers. As a pilot project, a multi-media nature tour is currently under development for the area around Alpine Pond, adjacent to the Daniels

Nature Center. Associated with EveryTrail, (a mobile travel guide application), this digital audio guide will be available on the EveryTrail Web site ([www.everytrail.com](http://www.everytrail.com)) and from the District's web site as well as at the site.

### District Public Information

The District gets the word out about nature-oriented events and activities through press releases, volunteer recruitment flyers, and information tables at community events such as art and wine festivals. The District's quarterly newsletter "Open Space Views" and schedule of docent-led activities is also available. The "Spaces & Species: Exploring Natural Communities" field trip program brochure and solicitation letter is sent to all schools within the District boundary and surrounding area each spring and fall. Listings for docent-led activities are featured in local newspaper and family magazine calendars.

### District Volunteer and Docent Programs

The District staff manages volunteer and docent programs to which over 500 volunteers commit thousands of hours each year preserving and protecting open space lands by educating and inspiring visitors, constructing and maintaining trails, and removing invasive, non-native vegetation. Nature Center Hosts staff the David C. Daniels Nature Center. Outdoor Activity Docents introduce preserve users to the natural and cultural history, and ecology of the mid-peninsula region and Santa Cruz Mountains. An Outdoor Education Leader works as part of a team with small groups of 3rd-5th graders on a field trip to the Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve and the David C. Daniels Nature Center. Preserve Partners get involved in restoring and maintaining District trails and preserves. Each year the District hosts over 65 fun, educational, and productive outdoor service projects, and Preserve Partners can sign up for as many of them

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<sup>1</sup> Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Interpretive Planning Guide, December, 2011

as they wish. Trail Patrol Volunteers provide a valuable resource to open space preserves visitors while hiking, or riding their bike or their horse. They talk with visitors about trail safety and etiquette, provide general information, and monitor trail conditions.

### On-Site Interpretation

MROSD currently has a wide range of ongoing interpretive programs and services that are conducted at the preserves and Daniels Nature Center.

#### Daniels Nature Center

The David C. Daniels Nature Center, located at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve on scenic Alpine Pond, features a small visitor center with exhibits on pond life, a live gopher snake, and an interactive display of local wildlife skulls and skins. The center is staffed by volunteer hosts.

#### Deer Hollow Farm

The 150 year-old Farm is an educational center where the public, school classes, and community groups can observe and participate in a historic working farm. Located within Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, the Farm is operated by the City of Mountain View and the non-profit Friends of Deer Hollow Farm. In the tradition of a working homestead, the Farm produces food on-site, such as fresh eggs and seasonal orchard produce. Nearly 5,500 elementary students (K-5th grade) participate in the Farm's environmental education program each year. Volunteer teaching docents lead small groups of students through the farm and garden, the surrounding preserve. Visitors are welcome to take a self-guided tour and learn about the history of the Farm, meet the friendly farm animals, and tour the gardens and orchard and a replica Ohlone Village. Picnic tables in an old barn structure are available at the north end of the

Farm for groups of 20+ people based on reservations from the District.

### Partnerships

**Area Schools.** MROSD partners with schools within and around the District's boundaries to expose students to its award-winning environmental education program, Spaces & Species.

**Higher Education Relationships** with universities and other area colleges are cultivated to generate interest in research on the District's natural and cultural resources. The District administers a Resource Management Small Grant program that solicits and funds applicable research project work from local institutions.

**Local Retailers.** Some area retailers that offer outdoor recreation gear and supplies provide customers with information about opportunities available on MROSD and other lands.

**Special Interest Organizations.** Conservation-minded organizations, like Sierra Club and Acterra provide District maps and brochures as a service to members.

**Professional Networks.** Continued connections (formal and informal) with professional networking groups like Midpeninsula Environmental Educators Alliance (MEEA), National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Region 9, and Volunteer Best Management Roundtable will keep the District current on opportunities and events for partnerships.

### Other Interpretive Opportunities

Many other agencies and organizations offer interpretive environmental education and other "hands on" opportunities to learn about and interact with nature:

#### Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).

This private nonprofit land trust works to give permanent protection to the beauty, character and diversity of the San Francisco Peninsula and Santa Cruz Mountain range. POST encourages the use

of these lands for natural resource protection, wildlife habitat, public recreation, and agriculture. POST manages a volunteer program that trains and places volunteers in the roles of Conservation Easement Monitors, Open Space Guardians, and Stewardship Volunteers.

#### San Mateo County Parks (CP)

- **Fitzgerald Marine Reserve** This coastal site offers education and interpretation activities related to intertidal reefs; the beach, uplands, and marsh/wetlands; as well as recreational activities (walking, nature-study, and picnicking) that are compatible with natural resource protection. Programs include staff-led tours, docent naturalists, and trained volunteers; workshops, seminars, and classes; and training for staff and volunteers.
- **San Pedro Valley CP** This 1,150-acre park has three fresh-water creeks, which flow year round through lush valleys, the south and middle forks of the San Pedro Creek and Brooks Creek. They are of particular significance because they provide some of the few remaining spawning areas for migratory steelhead in the county. A friend's group staffs the park's visitor center and provides various programs and activities that help park rangers maintain the facilities.
- **Coyote Point Recreation Area** This site has the Peninsula's only environmental science museum, CuriOdyssey (formerly the Coyote Point Museum). It has exhibits featuring the six major ecosystems found in the Bay Area. One can also experience games and short films, as well as changing exhibits. The Wildlife Habitats Center, adjacent to the museum, houses live reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds.
- **Edgewood Natural Preserve** This 467-acre park and preserve has significant wildflower displays in the spring, and provides easy access to the population centers of the San Francisco Peninsula. A friend's group organizes restoration activities as well as providing visitor education and docent-led tours. A new Edgewood Education Center opened to the public in April 2011.
- **Huddart CP** This 900-acre park provides many miles of trail through a coastal mountain environment, and is a favorite among equestrians. The Sequoia Day Camp is visited by thousands of area youth during the summer. An active friend's group provides tours.
- **Wunderlich CP** With a similar environment to the nearby Huddart CP, this park includes the Folger Stable, transformed into a museum that showcases local history, including farming and the horse and buggy eras. An active friend's group provides tours.
- **Pescadero CP Complex** This group of parks comprises 8,020 acres and a significant amount of forest and watershed-related resources, including a major steelhead spawning stream.

#### California State Parks (SP)

Interpretive programs at state parks in San Mateo and San Francisco counties are supported by the San Mateo Coast Natural History Association. This includes the many beaches owned by CA State Parks (often managed by municipalities).

- **Portola Redwoods SP** This state park features a short nature trail, and a visitor center with natural and cultural history exhibits. Interpretive programs are conducted during the summer and on some weekends.
- **Butano SP** This 4,600-acre park features guided nature walks and weekend campfire programs.
- **Castle Rock SP** This park features 32 miles of hiking and equestrian trails, linking with trails that traverse the Santa Clara and San Lorenzo valleys and connect to the Big Basin Redwoods SP and the Pacific Coast.
- **Big Basin Redwoods SP** California's oldest SP, Big Basin consists of more than 18,000

acres of old growth and recovering redwood forest. A museum offers historic photos and redwood ecology exhibits, and docent-led activities are offered during the summer and on weekend during fall and spring.

#### **Santa Clara County Parks (CP)**

- **Rancho San Antonio CP** This park is managed by MROSD. Interpretive offerings are included on the adjacent Rancho San Antonio Preserve.
- **Almaden Quicksilver CP** Broad natural diversity and a landmark of California history - the park is the site of over 135 years of mining activities and former home to more than 1,800 miners and their families. The park encompasses 4,152 acres, occupying a majority of Capitancillos Ridge. During early spring, the park offers one of the most spectacular wildflower displays in the region. Remnants of the mining era also offer an exciting look into the mining operations of the latter part of the 19th century.
- **Lexington Reservoir CP** A 941-acre park and reservoir near urban centers of Santa Clara County; includes a 475-acre man made reservoir available for shore-line fishing. Part of a chain of parks and open spaces connected by the Bay Area Ridge Trail, which, when completed, will connect Sanborn with Almaden Quicksilver County Parks as well as Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve and other parks in the greater San Francisco Bay region. An interpretive panel about mountain lions is located at the boundary of this County Park and St. Joseph's Hill Preserve (MROSD).
- **Sanborn County Park** A heavily wooded park of over 3,688 acres nestled in the Santa Cruz Mountains between Saratoga and Skyline Boulevard. This mountain park of redwoods and tan oaks offers hiking, camping, RV camping and picnicking opportunities year round.
- **Villa Montalvo Art Center** Once the grand estate of Senator James Phelan, this 137-acre

park offers formal gardens. The expansive lawn area is a favorite site for outdoor weddings. There are also miles of hiking trails within the park grounds. The Villa Montalvo Association manages all areas except the hiking trails above the Villa, managed by County Parks, and hosts a summer concert series.