



VIEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT • WINTER 2024



Midpen has made significant progress on the Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings project that will benefit wildlife, including bobcats, as well as people. (Christopher Nguyen)

Protecting a Pivotal Piece of the Puzzle

FUNDED BY
MEASURE AA
2014 OPEN SPACE BOND

A Step Forward for the Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings

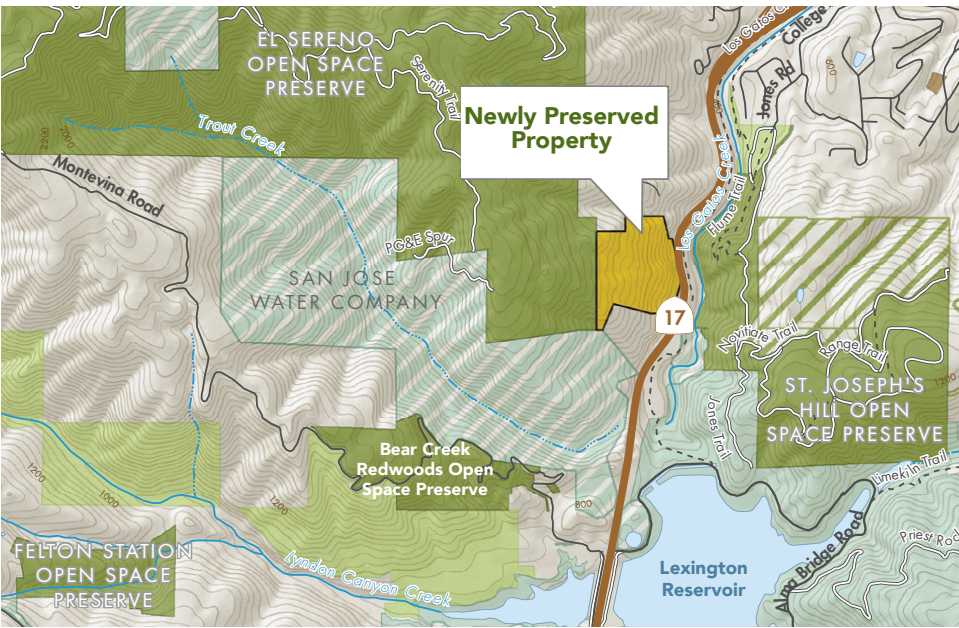
Is there any more satisfying feeling than putting the last piece of a difficult puzzle into place? In December, Midpen is doing just that by finalizing the purchase of a 35-acre property near the Lexington Reservoir that will become part of the existing El Sereno Open Space Preserve, and is critical to advancing the larger Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings project. This strategic \$1.2 million purchase is funded by Measure AA, a 2014 bond measure passed by local voters to support priority open space projects in Midpen's Vision Plan like this one.

The property is a key component within a complex landscape, made up of several different landowners, where a planned public multiuse trail overcrossing of Highway 17 will link Midpen's El Sereno Preserve on the west side of the highway with the Los Gatos Creek Trail to the east. This trail overcrossing will also close a gap in the Bay Area Ridge Trail, linking together 50 total miles of regional trails.

At the heart of this project is a separate wildlife crossing that will go under Highway 17, and is intended to help mountain lions, deer, foxes and many

“Conservation alone isn’t enough. We need to actively restore and reconnect our ecosystems. This project is a testament to the power of regional collaboration. By working together, we can implement practical solutions to address the challenges wildlife face today and ensure the long-term health of our local ecosystems.”

—Ana María Ruiz,
Midpen General Manager



other wildlife safely access the habitats they need to survive. Keeping wildlife off the roadway will also make this stretch of Highway 17, a known roadkill hotspot, safer for drivers.

“The property itself offers some stunning views of Lexington Reservoir and the Santa Clara Valley, which will be a wonderful feature for the future trails. By acquiring and preserving the property as open space, it will help funnel wildlife looking to cross the highway towards the critical wildlife

undercrossing that we are also building as part of the project,” said Midpen Real Property Planner Aaron Peth.

In 2024, Midpen achieved other important milestones to move this project forward, including selecting the preferred locations for the projects’ two highway crossings, and completing the required environmental review process. The project is now in final design phase, being led by our project partner, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

Learn more at openspace.org/Hwy-17.

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Fire-Resilient Forests
New grant-funded project is transforming an area dominated by eucalyptus trees into a healthy, native forest.

Melinda Hom



Anouchka Gaillard

Free Docent Activities
Midpen docent naturalists share their passion for open space with diverse activities throughout the winter.



Ryan McCauley/
Midpen

Cows for Conservation
How conservation grazing on the San Mateo County coast protects agricultural heritage and coastal grasslands.

Reflections and Gratitude

Looking Back on a Year of Accomplishments



Ana María Ruiz

As we enter the holiday season, I am filled with gratitude—to staff for their dedication and hard work, to our volunteers for their passion and commitment and to our community whose support has allowed us to make significant strides in fulfilling the promise of Midpen’s mission and Measure AA.

This year we preserved an additional 845 acres of open space, protecting forested lands, serpentine chaparral and wildlife habitat in perpetuity. Through partnerships we completed vegetation management projects as part of our Wildland Fire Resiliency Program at eight preserves; and for the first time in more than 10 years, we conducted a prescribed burn reducing vegetation to natural levels and improving ecosystem health.

We also celebrated a major milestone: 10 total miles of public trails in Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve and 10 years of accomplishments made possible by the passage of Measure

AA. At the trail-opening event, I was joined by volunteers who spent more than a decade removing invasive species and protecting native plant life at this location. Together they mingled with rangers, natural resource experts and the Midpen trail team who helped further expand access and restore the ecological health of the preserve. I was moved by Midpen Equipment Mechanic Operator Brennan McKibbin who hoped to create a trail that offered a sense of wonder and adventure. He noted it was a spiritual process and an honor to do this work.

This is the embodiment of staff’s deep commitment to deliver the community-supported projects in Midpen’s Vision Plan, made possible by Measure AA. We thank the voters for entrusting us with this vital work.

With the successful completion of environmental review for the Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings Project, we are ever-closer to linking a critical wildlife corridor, connecting 30,000 acres of public lands and more than 50 miles of existing trails. And with our award-winning Trail Explorer app, people of all ages and abilities can find the trail that’s right for them

It is with a full heart that I extend our sincerest thanks. I hope to see you on the trail, at a public meeting, on our social media channels, or perhaps as a volunteer as we continue to care for the land that cares for us.

for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment.

Our work would not be possible without the incredible volunteers and community members who give so generously of their time. In this year alone, the trails and stewardship program volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours, and our volunteer docents offered nearly 250 guided activities to inspire and educate preserve visitors. In addition, our outreach partnership program which engages youth, families, seniors and historically underserved groups partnered with organizations such as Saved By Nature, the Vista Center and the East Palo Alto Library to help develop future environmental stewards and leaders.



Jayasimha Nuggehalli



Midpen will transition vehicles to electric and hybrid. (Jack Gescheidt)

Driving Climate Action

Midpen has been implementing its Climate Action Plan since 2018, and is tracking to reduce the agency’s greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.

One of four main strategies is transitioning Midpen’s fleet of more than 100 vehicles to electric and plug-in hybrid electric models. Midpen’s board recently approved a fleet transition plan to accomplish this by 2039, including installing needed charging infrastructure.

The estimated reduction in emissions over the life of the electric vehicles is equivalent to removing 1,600 passenger vehicles from the road for a year.

Other strategies in Midpen’s Climate Action Plan include reducing emissions from Midpen offices, residences within the preserves and employee commutes.

Learn more about our efforts at openspace.org/climate.



Horseshoe Lake in Skyline Ridge Preserve is a scenic destination with newly improved accessibility. (Midpen staff)

Improving Access to Open Space

Midpen Completes Several New Accessibility Projects

Everyone deserves the opportunity to bask in the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Over the past several months, Midpen has been working on a series of improvements to parking areas and trails in our Skyline Ridge, Russian Ridge and Pulgas Ridge open space preserves to enhance easy-access opportunities and allow more people to enjoy these public lands.

The work has improved pathways from the Russian Ridge Preserve parking area on Alpine Road, the Skyline Ridge

Preserve circle parking area and the Pulgas Ridge Preserve parking area to their respective trailheads in order to meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards by grading and paving ADA parking spots, accessible paths to the trailheads and access ramps.

The project also included regrading and resurfacing easy-access portions of the Horseshoe Lake Loop, Ipiwa and Cordilleras trails. Segments of these trails now have a steadier, flatter grade and are topped with a layer of Granitecrete, a material similar to concrete but with a more natural

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

“We focused on making these easy-access trails embody the full experience of being out in the open space preserves. We made sure each segment of improved trail has a destination to enjoy at the end, whether it’s a nice vista point or an interpretive element.”

—Midpen Capital Projects Manager
Zachary Alexander

aesthetic and easier maintenance for Midpen staff in the future when repairs may become necessary.

Thanks to these improvements, visitors can now more easily access the Daniels Nature Center and Alpine Pond from the Russian Ridge Preserve parking area, as well as travel from the Skyline Ridge Preserve circle parking area around part of Horseshoe Lake to a scenic spot that is soon to be complete with picnic tables.

These new improvements are part of Midpen’s larger ADA Barrier Removal Project, which was created to systematically remove accessibility barriers at Midpen facilities and preserves.

Projects include modernization and ADA upgrades to restrooms, accessible parking and pathways, easy access trails, signage, facilities and other preserve amenities.

Learn more about Midpen’s ADA accessibility projects at openspace.org/ada-projects.

Forests for the Future

Midpen Restores an Oak Woodland in Sierra Azul Preserve

In the fall, Midpen began removing approximately 150 eucalyptus trees on a 2.5-acre site in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve near Lexington Reservoir, beginning work to transform a landscape that was significantly altered by people back to a native forest.

“Eucalyptus is referred to as California’s largest weed,” explained Midpen Forest Ecologist Arianna Camponuri, who is overseeing the restoration project. “These trees are challenging for land managers. They create so much leaf and bark litter, coating forest floors and inhibiting undergrowth plants. On top of that, they exude chemicals into the soils that make it harder for other native species to grow, reducing valuable natural biodiversity.”

Eucalyptus trees were originally introduced from Australia during the Gold Rush in part to meet lumber needs, though they make for poor lumber. Eucalyptus trees were also

planted as agricultural wind breaks and as ornamental trees. This restoration project is fully grant-funded by the State of California’s Wildlife Conservation Board to support Midpen’s Wildland Fire Resiliency Program goal of ecologically sensitive vegetation management. The work was conducted during a narrow window to be protective of nesting birds and roosting bats.

As crews removed the towering eucalyptus trees, several of the logs were installed along the hillside to help

“This work takes a lot of patience and diligence to come back season after season and ensure this land becomes a native healthy forest.”

—Arianna Camponuri, Midpen Forest Ecologist



Invasive eucalyptus trees are removed while native oak trees are retained as Midpen works to improve fire safety and forest health in Sierra Azul Preserve. (Frances Freyberg)

stabilize the land and reduce erosion while the native plants take root. The work to fully restore the land to a more natural ecosystem will take place over many years. Eucalyptus can regrow rapidly from stumps or fallen branches.

“It’s a bit like whack-a-mole,” Camponuri explained. “There will be

saplings and young eucalyptus trees trying to reestablish themselves in places we just removed them, which is why we will return in the following years to continue caring for this forest.”

Learn more about Midpen’s wildland fire resiliency projects at openspace.org/fire.

Next-Generation Ranching

Conservation and Agriculture Intersect on the Coastside

Two new ranching tenants are joining Midpen’s Conservation Grazing Program after a competitive recruitment process. Baird Livestock and Land Management are leasing conservation grazing areas within coastal areas of Midpen’s Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, while Willow Creek Land and Cattle will be operating in a portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

Baird Livestock is a family-owned ranching operation made up of brothers Sean and Arron Baird and their parents. Their family has lived in San Gregorio for six generations, and started the first San Gregorio General Store. They continue ranching today, bringing formal educational backgrounds and expertise in natural resource and rangeland ecology management along with experience working with public agencies.

“We apply whole-systems thinking, considering all of the natural resources in an ecological system when it comes to creating land management objectives. Consistent monitoring and adaptive management are crucial to sustainably managing rangelands,” the Bairds said in their proposal.

Willow Creek Land and Cattle was founded by siblings Liz and Matt Reikowski to provide conservation-oriented grazing management and natural resource stewardship on public and private lands, including at Pinnacles National Park. Willow Creek is made up of

three partners who have formal education and experience in ecology, natural resource management, grazing planning and monitoring, livestock operations and infrastructure maintenance.

“Willow Creek specializes in grazing to achieve natural resource management objectives. We conduct science-based rangeland monitoring and use the results to objectively evaluate how well grazing is meeting land management objectives,” Willow Creek stated in their proposal.

20 Years of Coastside Protection

2024 marked 20 years since Midpen’s boundaries expanded to include the San Mateo County coast, where agricultural roots run deep. Midpen worked with Coastsiders to create a unique mission guiding Midpen’s work on the Coastside that includes preserving agricultural land and rural character and encouraging viable agriculture.

To date, Midpen has preserved more than 19,000 acres of natural and agricultural lands on the Coastside that include more than one-third of San Mateo County’s remaining undeveloped ranchlands. Midpen has also performed dozens of environmental restoration projects throughout the coastal-area preserves and opened more preserves and trails.

Conservation Grazing

The primary way Midpen supports agriculture on the Coastside is through its Conservation Grazing Program, which began in 2007 and has grown to



include more than 14,000 acres within parts of five preserves. Eight ranching tenants hold leases with Midpen to manage small-scale conservation grazing operations with cattle, continuing the Coastside’s agricultural heritage, providing local food and working towards conservation goals.

“The new tenants are very sophisticated in the way they think about ranching, and they understand the conservation part of conservation grazing.”

—Matthew Shapero, Midpen Conservation Grazing Manager

Conservation grazing is a land management tool to improve wildland fire safety and maintain and enhance coastal grasslands and the community of native plants and wildlife that depend on this open habitat.

Midpen staff develop custom rangeland management plans for each grazed area to meet conservation goals, maximize biodiversity benefits and protect natural resources by controlling the number and type of livestock, grazing durations and locations. Appropriately placed water troughs and wildlife-friendly fencing move livestock around and contain them in areas where conservation grazing is desired and beneficial.

Coastal Grasslands

Coastal grasslands are one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in North America. They evolved with, and can benefit from, periodic disturbances such as grazing and fire which help prevent loss of biodiverse ecosystems to introduced species and eventual encroachment by shrubs and forest. These disturbances were historically provided by grazing wildlife herds, periodic lightning-caused fires and Native American burning practices that are no longer regularly present on the landscape. Today, carefully managed conservation grazing can provide these periodic disturbances to help maintain and enhance coastal grasslands.

Monitoring by Midpen staff in the conservation grazing areas has shown increased diversity of native grasses and wildflowers. Conservation grazing in coastal grasslands supports the management and recovery of rare species that need grassland habitat including San Francisco garter snakes, American badgers, burrowing owls and California red-legged frogs.

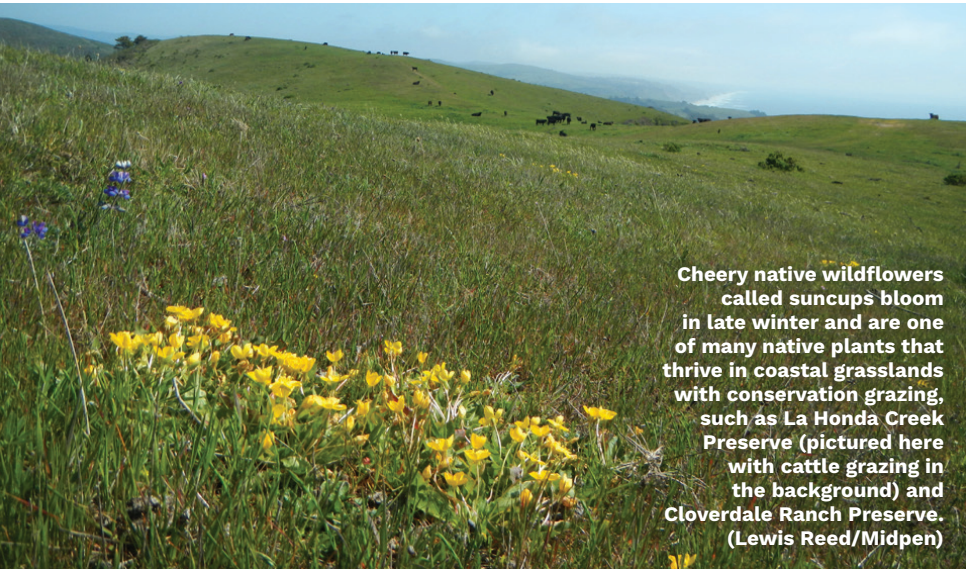
Defining Midpen’s Role in Coastside Agricultural

Through a multiyear public process, Midpen staff created an agricultural policy that clarifies and defines Midpen’s role in encouraging viable agriculture on the San Mateo County Coast in alignment with the coastal mission. Midpen’s agricultural policy covers diversity, equity and inclusion goals; agricultural workforce housing; agricultural uses and infrastructure; water supply; and compatibility with environmental protection and recreation. The policy creates an informed, consistent and effective decision-making tool for Midpen’s staff and board, including guiding the process for soliciting and selecting conservation grazing tenants.

“Midpen’s newest conservation grazing tenants are a direct outcome of the work and community feedback that went into the agricultural policy,” said Midpen Conservation Grazing Manager Matthew Shapero. “Both new tenants are very interesting expressions of the agricultural policy.”

Conservation grazing leases are soon expiring in several coastal preserves, and Midpen staff will be soliciting proposals from prospective conservation grazing tenants in early 2025.

Learn more about Midpen’s work in the coastal area at openspace.org/Coastside.



Cheery native wildflowers called suncups bloom in late winter and are one of many native plants that thrive in coastal grasslands with conservation grazing, such as La Honda Creek Preserve (pictured here with cattle grazing in the background) and Cloverdale Ranch Preserve. (Lewis Reed/Midpen)



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Grasshopper Loop Trail Seasonally Reopens to Dogs On Leash

This 1.3-mile, easy-access loop trail in La Honda Creek Preserve reopens to seasonal on-leash dog access December 15 through July. The seasonal access allows Midpen to balance ecologically sensitive recreation, environmental protection and active conservation grazing in the preserve. The trail is open year-round for hiking.

Learn more about the trail and plan your visit at openspace.org/La-Honda-Creek.



Rare western leatherwoods bloom in the winter along the Grasshopper Loop Trail. (Leigh Ann Gessner/Midpen)

A New Way to Connect

You're Invited to Restore and Explore the Preserves

Sometimes a hike or saunter in the the open space sounds like the perfect thing to do. Other times, learning about the natural and cultural history of a preserve is on the agenda. For some, contributing to the health of the landscape through hands-on stewardship might be a preferred way to experience the outdoors. Yet why pick just one when you can do all three in a single visit?

Enter the creation of a joint endeavor between Midpen's Interpretation & Education and Volunteer Programs. This new opportunity offers a small taste of two of Midpen's most popular volunteer and public programming elements: land stewardship and docenting. For those new to the preserves, this is an introduction to open space, while for those familiar with one type

of opportunity but not the other, it provides a chance to support Midpen's work in a different way. With Midpen's Volunteer Program Lead, Catherine Caldwell, giving an introduction to habitat restoration in the morning and Midpen's Interpretive Specialist, Katie Renz, guiding a short hike afterward, it is a natural collaboration that simultaneously engages hands, hearts and minds.

"This new opportunity offers a condensed version of some of the public programs available at Midpen, and gives participants a starting point to determine where they might find their next outdoor adventure."

—Midpen Volunteer Program Manager
Jennifer Williams

This desire to participate in a multifaceted way was birthed last spring, when Earth Day presented an obvious opportunity to organize a volunteer project in tandem with a docent naturalist-led interpretive activity. But since so little trash is littered in the preserves (thank you visitors for leaving no trace!), a standard litter-removal activity did not make sense. Instead, on Earth Day participants pulled French broom at Midpen's Thornewood Open Space Preserve and then, after well-earned snacks, took



Midpen staff, docent naturalists and volunteers are creating new quarterly outdoor opportunities for the public. (An Scharlaken)

a leisurely paced hike to discover the history of the area and of the holiday. The following season, in honor of California Biodiversity Week in early September, an activity to pull yellow-star thistle followed by a wander through the oak woodlands at Midpen's Los Trancos Open Space Preserve had to be canceled due to heat and will be rescheduled in 2025.

These projects will be scheduled once per quarter and require advanced registration. The next event is entitled Loving the Unloved, planned for the

day after Valentines Day at Midpen's Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. Participants will pull an invasive, wiry weed called vinca near Purisima Creek before going on a short hike to get to know some of the native plants and animals often considered feared, unwanted or even repulsive in popular culture. Since restoration and hiking are both calorie-burners, there might be chocolate. We hope to see you there!

For more information, please contact docent@openspace.org.



A Midpen volunteer pulling invasive French broom at Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve. (Alisha Laborico)

Midpen's Volunteer Programs By the Numbers



4,547
docent
hours



249
guided
activities



2,520
nature center
visitors



10,627
stewardship
volunteer hours

Over the last year, Midpen's dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate volunteers have helped thousands of community members connect with nature, and helped care for the land in Midpen preserves.



Winter 2024-2025 Docent Naturalist Guided Activities

Evan Collins

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.

December

Trail Run: Landmark Tour

Sunday, December 1
9 – 11:30 a.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
9.5 miles [S](#) [T](#)

Water Wonders

Monday, December 2
8:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
7.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Explorer Hike: Redwoods and Creeks

Wednesday, December 4
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Seasonal Shift

Thursday, December 5
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Signs of Early Winter

Friday, December 6
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4 miles [M](#)

Ranchlands to Woodlands

Friday, December 6
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
5 miles [S](#) [L](#) [R](#)

Wonders of Cherry Springs

Saturday, December 7
9:25 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2.25 miles [M](#) [R](#)

Silly Nature Songs

Saturday, December 7
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
2 miles [F](#) [M](#)

Ride the Redwoods

Saturday, December 7
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
9 miles [S](#) [B](#) [R](#)

Of Mice and Men

Sunday, December 8
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
4 miles [M](#) [L](#) [R](#)

Infinite Wonders

Sunday, December 8
9:45 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
4.5 miles [S](#) [R](#)

Water Wonders

Sunday, December 8
1 – 4:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

Winter Rambling at Rancho

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



Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, December 11
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5 miles [S](#)

Coastside Ranching

Saturday, December 14
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Event Center Permit Parking Area
6 miles [S](#) [L](#) [R](#)

Scenic Skyline Sampler

Saturday, December 14
9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
7.5 miles [S](#) [L](#)

Nature’s Provisions

Saturday, December 14
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles [E](#)

Fleas Navidad

Sunday, December 15
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
2.5 miles [E](#) [D](#) [R](#)

Water in a Winter Wonderland

Sunday, December 15
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
3.5 miles [F](#) [M](#)

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, December 15
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit Parking Area
0.25 mile [M](#)

Yoga Under Oaks

Wednesday, December 18
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles [E](#)

Explorer Hike: Wintertime Traditions

Wednesday, December 18
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

What’s in a Name?

Thursday, December 19
9 a.m. – Noon
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
4 miles [M](#)

Escape the Holiday Madness

Saturday, December 21
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Picchetti Ranch Preserve
4.5 miles [M](#) [L](#)

A Road Less Traveled

Wednesday, December 25
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
4 miles [M](#)

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, December 26
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Russian Ridge Preserve
Meet: Mindego Gateway Parking Area
5 miles [S](#)



January

Trail Run: Four Preserves

Saturday, January 4
9 a.m. – Noon
Russian Ridge Preserve
7 miles [S](#) [T](#) [L](#)

History On Two Wheels

Saturday, January 4
9:15 – 11:30 a.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
10 miles [S](#) [B](#)

Fungal Fun

Sunday, January 5
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Long Ridge Preserve
5 miles [M](#) [L](#) [R](#)

Earthquake Walk

Sunday, January 5
1 – 3:30 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles [E](#) [F](#)

Winter Rambling at Rancho

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

Signs of Winter

Wednesday, January 8
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4 miles [M](#)

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, January 8
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
5 miles [S](#)

A Walk in the Garden

Wednesday, January 8
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Picnic Tables Roadside Parking
2.5 miles M L

Windy Hill Serendipity

Thursday, January 9
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles M

Winter Blooms

Friday, January 10
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
5.5 miles S

Hike with Your Hound

Friday, January 10
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
La Honda Creek Preserve
Meet: Allen Road Permit Parking Area
5 miles S L D R

Counting Banana Slugs!

Saturday, January 11
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking Area
2 miles E F L R

Hawthorns Area History

Saturday, January 11
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles M R

Winter Birding at the Bay

Saturday, January 11
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Area
2.5 miles E F

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, January 12
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit
Parking Area
0.25 mile M

Explorer Hike: Winter Waterfowl

Wednesday, January 15
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Area
4 miles M L

Winter Qigong

Wednesday, January 15
1 – 3:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2.5 miles M

What’s in a Name?

Saturday, January 18
9 a.m. – Noon
El Sereno Preserve
Meet: Montevina Roadside Parking
4 miles M

Ride the Redwoods

Saturday, January 18
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
9 miles S B R



Alisha Laborico

Nature and History Hike

Monday, January 20
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles S

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, January 23
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
5.5 miles S

Summiting in Search of Manzanitas

Friday, January 24
9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Bald Mountain Parking Area
8.5 miles S L

Poisonous Plants

Saturday, January 25
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles E

Hidden Life of the Forest

Sunday, January 26
1 – 4 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles E F

Roving for Curiosities

Wednesday, January 29
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles S

It’s the Little Things

Thursday, January 30
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Thornewood Preserve
3 miles M L



Mari Stauffer Howard

February

In Search of Manzanitas

Saturday, February 1
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
4.5 miles M

What’s Glowing at Night?

Saturday, February 1
6 – 9 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2 miles E F L R

Infinite Wonders

Sunday, February 2
9:45 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
4.5 miles S R

Faultlines, Fungi and Hippies

Sunday, February 2
1 – 4 p.m.
Los Trancos Preserve
2 miles F M

Winter Rambling at Rancho

Monday, February 3
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Rancho San Antonio Preserve
Meet: Lot 6
5.5 miles S

Red, White and Blue Wildflowers

Wednesday, February 5
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
4 miles M



Melinda Hom

Walk ‘n’ Roll: Sensing Changes

Wednesday, February 5
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
0.5 mile E W L

Explorer Hike: Black Mountain Views

Wednesday, February 5
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Monte Bello Preserve
5.5 miles S L

Slimy Sojourn

Friday, February 7
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
Meet: Skeggs Point Parking Area
5.5 miles S L

Fungal Fun

Saturday, February 8
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
5 miles S L R

Ride the Redwoods

Saturday, February 8
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
9 miles S B R

Tails and Twilight Trails

Saturday, February 8
5 – 7 p.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
3 miles M D R

Sentinel in the Sky

Sunday, February 9
1 – 3 p.m.
Sierra Azul Preserve
Meet: Mount Umunhum Summit
Parking Area
0.25 mile M

Scenic Aerobic Hike

Wednesday, February 12
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve
5.5 miles S

Loving the Unloved

Saturday, February 15
9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve
Meet: Purisima Creek Road Parking
Area
4 miles M L R

Wild and Weird Valentines

Saturday, February 15
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve
5 miles S L

Yoga Under Oaks

Tuesday, February 18
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
2 miles E



Stephanie Miller

Explorer Hike: Breezes and Views

Wednesday, February 19
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Picnic Tables Roadside Parking
5 miles M L

What’s in a Name?

Thursday, February 20
9 a.m. – Noon
St. Joseph’s Hill Preserve
4 miles M

Local History, Wild Blossoms

Thursday, February 20
1 – 4 p.m.
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
3 miles M

Hawthorns Area History

Friday, February 21
10 a.m. – Noon
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Directions emailed
2 miles M R

History on Two Wheels

Saturday, February 22
9:15 – 11:30 a.m.
Fremont Older Preserve
10 miles S B

Did Horton Really Hear a Who?

Saturday, February 22
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Skyline Ridge Preserve
Meet: Russian Ridge Parking Area
2 miles E F L



Jim Liskovec

Framing the Foothills

Sunday, February 23
9 – 11:30 a.m.
Windy Hill Preserve
Meet: Lower Windy Hill Parking Area
5.5 miles S

Morning Meander: Up for Flowers

Wednesday, February 26
9 a.m. – Noon
Pulgas Ridge Preserve
2.5 miles M

Trail Trek Thursday

Thursday, February 27
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
St. Joseph’s Hill Preserve
Meet: Little League Field parking lot
6 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.
- T **Trail Run:** Trail run on single-track trails and/or fire roads. Terrain and pace vary; visit website for more details.
- 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, well-behaved and socialized. Please bring water for your dog and be prepared to carry out dog waste.
- 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.