In the spirit of bringing you new adventures, we’re thrilled to announce the opening of the newest addition to the Ridge Trail: three forested miles in Angwin, in Napa County on the Pacific Union College (PUC) campus.

Our newest three miles—a moderately easy stretch through coast redwoods, Douglas firs, ponderosa pines, oaks, bay laurels, and Madrones—are part of a 35-mile network of hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails in PUC’s 1,000-acre forest, which has just opened to the public thanks to a new trail license agreement between PUC and the Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District. As part of the agreement, Napa County Parks will be responsible for trail improvements and maintenance, signs, maps and public education about the forest and the trails. We’re supporting their efforts, of course, to make sure hiking, biking and riding the trails is the best it can be. Information kiosks, wayfinding and interpretive signs are being installed to help with trail orientation and nature study on this special site.

EVENTS

A FEW SPOTS STILL OPEN!

12th Annual Ridge Trail Day
Saturday, November 2, 2019

Ridge Trail Day is the Ridge Trail Council’s largest annual event, with hundreds of volunteers participating every year. We partner with REI Co-op and local land managers to host over a dozen volunteer trail work parties to build and improve sections of the Ridge Trail and inspire individuals to be stewards of their local wild places. Last year, more than 350 volunteers worked in teams to learn new skills, bond with fellow trail enthusiasts, and make a real impact.

Registration for Ridge Trail Day opened in September, and sites are filling up fast. Visit our website to sign-up for Ridge Trail eNews and you’ll be the first to know about next year’s Ridge Trail Day and other volunteer events throughout the year. Sign up at ridgetrail.org

PARTNER EVENT

Pacific Coast Trail Runs: Woodside Trail Run
Saturday, November 2, 2019

Join Pacific Coast Trail Runs for the fifth and final run in their Ridge Trail Race Series! Choose from 4 distances (50K, 35k, 17K, 10K) that will take you through Huddart and Wunderlich Parks where you will get your fill of towering coastal redwoods, lush ferns, and rambling streams. And be sure to refuel at the coveted post-race BBQ!

Not interested in running the race? Race volunteers are needed too. Sign up at pacificcoasttrailruns.com

PUC continued on page 6
Highway 17 winds through the Santa Clara Valley and the Santa Cruz Mountains, connecting San José to Santa Cruz. It’s a beautiful drive through the redwoods, but the highway is notorious for its narrow shoulders, sharp turns, blind curves, and dense traffic that seems to change speed when you least expect it.

Along the way, Highway 17 bisects over 30,000 acres of protected public lands, running through a crucial wildlife corridor. Unsurprisingly, this stretch of highway is known as a “roadkill hotspot”; since 2000 more than 150 deer, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, skunks and other animals were struck and killed as they tried to cross the road.

The highway also crosses the planned path of the Ridge Trail, creating a gap between an existing 25-mile stretch on one side and a 21-mile stretch on the other.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), in partnership with many stakeholders, has been working for years toward a solution that provides safe passage for wildlife, improves safety for motorists, and creates new opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

“We’re thrilled to be involved,” says RT’s trail director, Liz Westbrook. “If we can close that gap, we’ll have an unbroken stretch of Ridge Trail all the way from Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve to Almaden Quicksilver County Park, about 50 miles that goes through Sanborn, El Sereno and Sierra Azul.” If the environmental review process (state and federal), permitting, design and fundraising all proceed accordingly, the Highway 17 wildlife crossing could begin as early as 2024. Development of the connecting trails can begin following environmental review.

Where is the project now?
After several rounds of exploring numerous potential route crossings, with solicitation and incorporation of feedback from Caltrans, Santa Clara County Parks, the Ridge Trail Council, the public and other stakeholders, Midpen is in the final stages of preparing a proposal for environmental review. In October, Midpen’s Board will consider moving four alternatives through environmental review: two wildlife-only undercrossings (near the center of the roadkill hotspot) and two recreational overcrossings for the Ridge Trail (shared with other trails, including the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail) that would connect directly to El Sereno Open Space Preserve and the Los Gatos Creek Trail. We love the Northern recreational overcrossing (Crossing 5a) option because of its proximity to regional trails on either side of the highway, which will be a huge boon for trail lovers eager to explore the surrounding parks and wilderness areas.

What’s next?
The environmental review process will get underway next year and will take up to 24 months. Permitting, design and construction—which will be contingent on a successful fundraising effort—will follow. Although Measure AA bond money provides $16 million for the project, a significant amount of funds still need to be raised to complete the two crossings and trail connections. For detailed information about the project, visit the Highway 17 project page of the Midpen website and sign-up for updates at: www.openspace.org/hwy17

Connecting El Sereno to Sierra Azul Preserve—the hard way!
Action and Adventure: Once this gap is closed, you will have 50 continuous miles of trail to enjoy...from Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve near Los Altos all the way to Almaden Quick Silver County Park southwest of San José.
“Variety is the spice of life,” says 74-year-old hiker Bobbie Jenkins, “and it was wonderful to see so much of the Bay Area on foot and discover that each trail, each park and each town the Ridge Trail crosses has its own story.”

After four years of weekly hikes, Bobbie and her hiking partner Patty Griffith completed their circumnavigation of the Ridge Trail with a hike to the peak of Mt. Umunhum in January 2018, completing all 375 miles of Ridge Trail.

Bobbie and Patty, who live in Sonoma and are retired, did most of their hikes on Wednesdays, when traffic (on the roads and on popular trails) was lighter. Lifelong hikers and longtime Bay Area residents, they knew how beautiful it would be and that they would relish their time on the trail. Along the way they learned about watersheds and obscure Bay Area ranches, raptors and mountain lions, natural history and human history, and much more.

Both women highly recommend circumnavigation, especially to fellow retirees, and say that what began as a challenge became much more. “You just need to be present and open to a varied experience,” Bobbie says. “There’s always nature, which is what calls most strongly to me. The diversity of experience—varied terrain and landscape, random things you stumble upon, the connections you make with people along the way—that’s the icing on the cake.”

What’s your circumnavigation style?
Every Wednesday for four years like Bobbie and Patty? A week straight every spring? One continuous loop? For inspiration, maps and planning tools, visit the Circumnavigation page of the Ridge Trail website. (under Trail Maps & Tools)
San Francisco is just 49 square miles, and yet the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (SFRPD) administers more than 220 parks, playgrounds and open spaces, including world-renowned destinations like Golden Gate Park, Coit Tower and the Palace of Fine Arts.

It should come as no surprise, then, to learn that SFRPD has been an enthusiastic Ridge Trail Council partner ever since 1989, when we worked together to dedicate the first Ridge Trail segment in the city: 4.4 miles from Stern Grove to Fort Funston.

Today, you can walk the Ridge Trail all the way through San Francisco, from the Golden Gate Bridge to the border with Daly City near Lake Merced. Some parts of the route are on city streets, but bit by bit we’re changing that. We’ve been collaborating with SFRPD and other partners for over a decade to reroute those traffic-clogged sections to new and existing greenbelts, and we’re very excited about the two newest components of this long-term collaboration:

**Twin Peaks Promenade Redevelopment.** Tourists and residents alike flock to Twin Peaks for its spectacular 360° views of San Francisco and beyond. Two years ago, SFRPD launched an initiative to improve Twin Peaks Boulevard and its coastal scrub and grasslands. They also seek to improve access for hikers and other visitors, while providing protected habitat for the endangered mission blue butterfly, the white-crowned sparrow, and animals like brush rabbits and coyotes.

**Connecting Twin Peaks to Mount Sutro.** Sutro Tower, the iconic red and white TV and radio tower on a hill between Twin Peaks and Mount Sutro, is a well-known landmark on the San Francisco skyline. But Mount Sutro itself is a hidden gem, an ethereal 80-acre cloud forest with five miles of trails and its own native plant nursery. A Ridge Trail connection from Twin Peaks will make this hauntingly beautiful forest easily accessible by foot.

*We need your help!* SFRPD is taking the lead on both components of the project, but the Ridge Trail is assisting with project management, advising on sustainable trail design, rallying volunteers for construction and coordinating hazardous tree removal. Both projects are “shovel-ready,” meaning plans, permits and approvals are in place, but construction is not adequately funded. You can help by donating to the Ridge Trail today, at [ridgetrail.org/donate](http://ridgetrail.org/donate).
What’s Next?
As you can see on the map, we have more “planned trail” than “dedicated trail” in this part of the North Bay. Not only are we excited to add these three new miles, but also about partnering with Napa County Parks to connect the PUC section to the lovely 5-mile stretch of Ridge Trail that already traverses Moore Creek Park to the south. We’re working together now on property rights, permits and preliminary trail planning, to close the next 3.5 mile gap on a route that will run east of Las Posadas State Forest. All details are pending, but we hope for a near-term solution to create 11+ miles of connected Ridge Trail.

Make a Day of It at PUC
Ready to check out our new stomping grounds? Drive through Napa’s rolling hills and vineyards, grab picnic supplies at Oakville Market a few miles north of Yountville, Sunshine Foods in St. Helena, or Howell Mountain Market right next to the PUC campus. You can access the Ridge Trail from either the main trailhead where Las Posadas Road meets the Las Posadas State Forest, or from the north end of the property, at the intersection of Howell Mountain Road and Ridge Road (Look for the new PUC Forest map on the Maps page of our website, which includes directions to the trailhead). Whether you’re hiking, biking or horseback riding, you can do an out-and-back on the Ridge Trail or combine the RT with other trails to make a loop. Be sure to include Inspiration Point; with its panoramic views it’s a perfect spot to picnic.

OuterSpatial
A New Way to Navigate
What if you had GPS tracking and all our Ridge Trail maps right in the palm of your hand? Now, you can!
We’ve joined a host of other outdoor stewards in partnering with OuterSpatial—a mobile mapping app. OuterSpatial helps you discover new places, navigate on trail, and find the info you need for an amazing outdoor experience. It is the only app that includes the full suite of Ridge Trail section maps, trails descriptions and circumnavigation tools.
To download OuterSpatial (it’s free!), visit iTunes or the Google Play Store. Once on the app, scroll to the bottom and click on the Ridge Trail logo. After clicking on the logo, you will have access to Ridge Trail upcoming events and 67 outings. Click on individual outings such as Almaden Quicksilver County Park to see route descriptions and maps by location.
We love our mountains, creeks, forests and ridgeline views that stretch for miles. But we also love how the Ridge Trail connects urban centers and suburbs to the natural beauty of the Bay Area. Notice the second half of our mission: “to plan, promote and sustain a connected hiking, cycling and equestrian trail on the ridgelines around San Francisco Bay—linking people, parks and open space for today and future generations.”

That’s why we’re so excited that (barring further delays) the new Berryessa BART station in northern San José will be open by early 2020. The station extends the Fremont/Warm Springs line and intersects with the Ridge Trail along the Penitencia Creek Trail, a 3.9-mile Parkway that crosses San José neighborhoods and ends at the eastern edge of the Santa Clara Valley. Mostly paved (and excellent for biking), the trail follows Penitencia Creek, a tributary of Coyote Creek, which flows down from Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve and Alum Rock Park.

The parkway covers 134 acres and passes through two sizable parks—Penitencia Creek Gardens and Penitencia Creek Park. After a very small gap, the Ridge Trail continues through rugged Alum Rock Park and Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve connecting an additional 2,300 acres of protected open space. The historic Alum Rock Park, nestled in a steep canyon in the foothills of the Diablo Range, is a natural beauty great for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and picnicking. Sierra Vista boasts sweeping views and rugged habitat for numerous protected wildlife species including the California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, American badger, and Western burrowing owl.

With funding from the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority’s Urban Open Space Program, Rails to Trails, and Ridge Trail donors (thank you!), we’ve worked with the Valley Transportation Authority and the City of San José’s Trail Program to create:

- Wayfinding signs in and around the station, leading people to local parks (and beyond to the ridge) via the Ridge Trail
- Interpretive panels that include an overview map and highlight the benefits of trails and active transportation
- Brochures and maps
- Hosted trail outings (including some in Spanish) to introduce people to the Ridge Trail

For updates on the grand opening and related Ridge Trail events, visit our website ridgetrail.org and sign up for Ridge Trail eNews. You can also follow us on Facebook @ridgetrail and Instagram @bayarearidgetrail.
To all of you who’ve registered for the Ridge Trail Challenge—thank you! We love that you’re helping us celebrate our 30th anniversary year in such an organic way. Keep the stories and pictures coming on social media.

Special shout out to the lucky winners of the first two Challenge Taker drawings: Bridgette Fargo (May drawing) and Surah Li (August drawing). Bridgette and Surah have each won a Challenge Taker prize pack (valued at $220), which includes an REI Co-op Trail Flashpack, an REI Co-op Hydroflask Bottle and REI Co-op Traverse Trekking Poles. Great prizes, to be sure, but both women agree that the biggest prize of all is the experience of being out on the trail.

Bridgett loves hiking on all kinds of trails, especially when it’s with her dog, Nemo. Her favorite part of the Challenge so far has been the demanding climbs of Lower Oak Hill Mine, which reward with sweeping views of Napa.

Surah loves exploring the trails of San Mateo County with friends; one of her favorite Ridge Trail experiences is at Sweeney Ridge with a connection to Mori Point loop, replete with spring wildflowers and windswept ocean views.

The final Challenge Taker drawing will take place on October 31. If you’re registered for the Challenge, you’re already entered to win.

Not registered yet? Get moving!
It’s not too late to take the Ridge Trail Challenge (and win prizes!), but time is running out. It’s free and simple: We handpicked 30 local adventures. You choose 5 to complete before December 15, 2019. If you succeed, you win The Official Guide to the Bay Area Ridge Trail or a stylish Ridge Trail hat, plus entry into the Finisher’s raffle. For more details and to register, visit ridgetrail.org/challenge.

NAPA
Put Your Vote Where Your Boot Is!
Voters and Volunteers needed

Napa County’s Measure K on the March ballot will provide local funding to protect Napa’s water, parks and open space including important Ridge Trail sections. We hope you will vote for this measure and volunteer for the campaign. For more information, visit: www.yesonnapameasurek.com.