

## Our Final Ascent to 400 Miles

**Y**our personal journey on the Ridge trail could be a simple, daily stroll in the park, or maybe you are on a year-long adventure, attempting to circumnavigate the existing trail sections.

For quite a few of you, it began over 30 years ago, as one of the first supporters to fall in love with the bold vision of a 550 mile continuous trail along the ridgelines of the Bay Area. Whatever your path has been, we're so glad you're with us now, as the Ridge Trail makes its final ascent to 400 miles of dedicated trail. It has taken decades of work and support from trail lovers like you to get to this far, and this is just one exciting milestone on the path to a fully connected Ridge Trail.

The Ridge Trail story began well before the first mile was dedicated in 1989 with a vision shared by a small group of trail enthusiasts, led by William Penn Mott, Jr, Brian O'Neill, and others at NPS, GGNRA and the Greenbelt Alliance (then People for Open Space). The dream was brought to life by these dedicated leaders, along with park and open space partners, working together to see the vision of a trail connecting over 75 parks and all nine Bay Area counties take shape. The early days saw rapid progress as the most accessible areas were quickly connected, and the 100th mile was dedicated in 1990. As the easier sections were opened and the harder sections remained, the pace gradually slowed but the work continued, as trails were added inch by inch, mile by mile, and year by year.

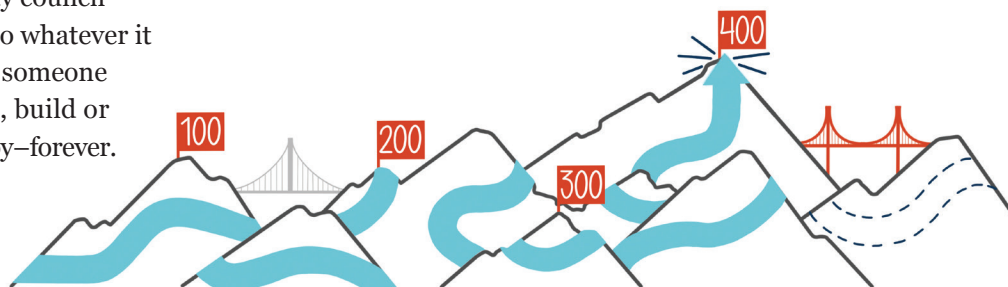
The Ridge Trail relied heavily on trail enthusiasts, supporters, and volunteers that were willing to roll up their sleeves, pick up a shovel, attend city council meetings, lead trail outings, make gifts or do whatever it took. Every inch of trail is possible because someone stepped up, spoke out and acted to protect, build or restore and make it open to the public to enjoy—forever.



The next phase of the journey to connect all 550 miles will require more determination, support and focused partnerships than ever, as the remaining miles are the most challenging. But as the adage goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This spirit has permeated the Ridge Trail project. It has taken collaboration, advocacy, and hard work to advance the trail to where it now stands: 393 miles.

We are set to reach the prodigious milestone of 400 miles by year's end. This year's path to reaching 400 miles includes two recent trail dedications: 2.6 miles of trail in Ed Levin County Park in Milpitas, and a 0.1 mile section crossing Green Valley Road in Solano. Two additional trails—Coyote Creek Trail (1.7 miles) in San José and El Sereno Open Space Preserve (3.5 miles) in Los Gatos plus a few under-the-radar options—are in the works to get us across the finish line by year's end.

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## 400 MILES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We are celebrating the ascent to 400 miles all year long, and we invite you to join us! Maybe you caught a recent feature on Doug McConnell's OpenRoad on NBC Bay Area or read some of the newspaper coverage? Whether you pick up a shovel for Ridge Trail Service Day (Nov 6), hike a few peaks for Ridge Trail Challenge, renew your membership, or just get out on the trail, the journey continues with the most challenging 150 miles ahead. We need our most ardent partners and supporters along with us, and we're ready for the challenge. Learn more at [ridgetrail.org/400-miles](https://ridgetrail.org/400-miles).

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## Inclusivity on the Trail

We believe that the Ridge Trail can play an important role in fostering equitable access to local nature and the outdoors while addressing historical inequities in outdoor recreation. Ridge Trail Board Member and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Taskforce Chair, Taylor Jang, sees the Ridge Trail as, "an inspiring regional trail that connects us not only to places within the Bay Area, but also to people and communities. By encouraging safe and inclusive experiences in the outdoors, the Ridge Trail can contribute to the Bay Area's sense of inclusivity." Learn more about the Council's commitment and efforts at [ridgetrail.org/inclusion](https://ridgetrail.org/inclusion).

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## Your Legacy Can Bring the Ridge Trail Full Circle

By including the Ridge Trail in your will or trust, you can help us realize the bold vision for a 550-mile trail that circles the Bay—linking people, parks, and open space for generations to come.

With almost 400 miles dedicated and open to the public, now is the time to make the Ridge Trail part of your legacy. It's a commitment that costs nothing to make now and will ensure our work to complete the trail continues.

Bring the Ridge Trail full circle with a legacy gift of your own. Reach out to Marie Sayles at 415-425-3519 or [mariesayles@ridgetrail.org](mailto:mariesayles@ridgetrail.org) for more information.

## TRAIL NEWS



### SANTA CLARA COUNTY

## El Sereno Open Space Preserve

The much anticipated 3.5 miles of Ridge Trail in El Sereno Open Space Preserve will be a key step in connecting a Ridge Trail network. The multi-use Ridge Trail stretch will include 2.2 miles of the Aquinas Trail and the 1.3 mile Serenity Trail and will allow visitors to explore a Chaparral landscape and take in fantastic views. In conjunction with the planned Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trails Crossing, these trails will eventually contribute to a trail network that connects approximately 50 miles of existing Ridge Trail and links 30,000 acres of protected open space lands stretching from Almaden Quicksilver County Park to Sanborn County Park.

The Ridge Trail Council is working closely with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) to formally dedicate this trail, which is expected later this fall. Midpen preserves and manages nearly 65,000 acres of public open space from Santa Clara County through San Mateo County, and works hard to balance public access with the health and preservation of the diverse landscapes they protect. Many beloved Ridge Trail sections lie within Midpen lands, including Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve, Windy Hill Preserve, and El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve, one of our newer Ridge Trail sections.

Many key partners have been involved with this project, including the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) who assisted in purchasing a key piece of property to expand the preserve and close a gap in this future Ridge Trail segment, and former Senator Jim Beall who secured the funding for Midpen to acquire this land through a State budget request. We thank all of these wonderful partners for their work to expand one of Midpen's oldest preserves and make it possible to close key gaps in the Ridge Trail.





# PATH TO 400 MILES—AND BEYOND

These trails will help the Ridge Trail reach 400 miles and beyond. We couldn't do it without the generous support of our donors and funders and the hard work of our partners, board, staff and volunteers.



Help us reach 400 miles of Ridge Trail - Donate Today! [RidgeTrail.org/Donate](https://RidgeTrail.org/Donate)



# The Ridge Trail has Something for Everyone

Everyday, people all around the Bay Area explore nature nearby via the Ridge Trail in their own way. Some are out for epic adventures, and some find peace in a short stroll near home. These are just a few of those who enjoy the Ridge Trail experience, and share it on Instagram to inspire others to explore! We love hearing about your adventures on the Ridge Trail: follow and tag us on Instagram [@bayarearidgetrail](#).



**EILEEN & GANNON**  
[@runneradventures](#)

"We love the Ridge Trail because they are close to home. We don't have to drive hours to experience nature. Spending time with nature can refresh your mind; spending time with nature and great company can revitalize your soul."



**SHALESHNI**  
[@fiji\\_wildflower](#)

"I love hiking the Ridge Trail because you get the best of everything: the forest, the ocean, the mountain, views and workout and peace."



**DIANE & BIGGES**  
[@whitneywiz23](#)

"Bigges and I love our hiking adventures on the Bay Area Ridge Trail because of the beautiful views and a sense of being in the wild yet so close to major metropolitan cities. Adventures are so near to our ridges."



**KRIS**  
[@cafejane](#)

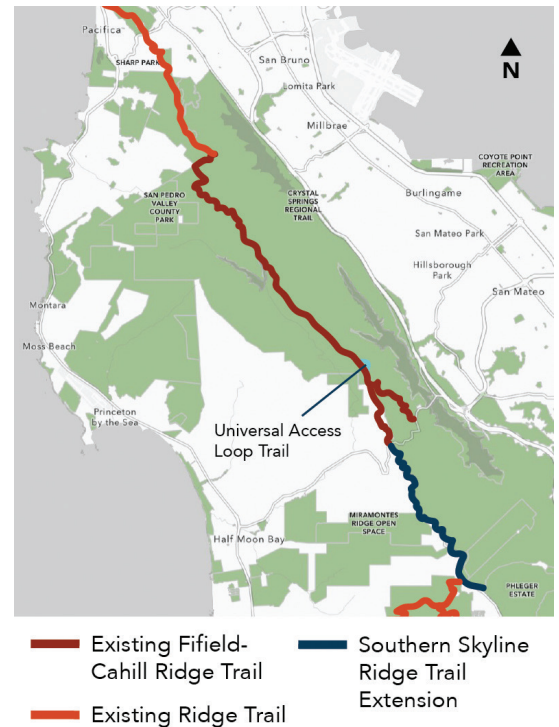
"The Ridge Trail is a path that leads me to a wondrous variety of beautiful places all over the Bay Area that I would not likely visit otherwise."



**HEATHER**  
[@heath.er.wer.ner](#)

"When I first moved to the Bay Area, I was blown away by how accessible all these parks and open spaces are. We're quite literally surrounded by them. I can't wait to see the loop fully connected one day; our own little Bay Area version of the PCT."





## PARTNER

# San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)

The Fifiel-Cahill Ridge Trail, located in the San Francisco Peninsula Watershed and managed by the SF Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), offers visitors the chance to explore dense forests and hilly grasslands with extensive views of the Bay Area. This expansive 23,000-acre watershed is home to a State Fish and Wildlife refuge, as well as the highest concentration of rare, threatened and endangered species in the Bay Area.

The SFPUC provides utility service and manages the protected watershed lands for the City of San Francisco and several Bay Area counties. The Ridge Trail Council works closely with the SFPUC to balance the protection of these habitats and the species that live there with responsible public recreation. The 10-mile Fifiel-Cahill Ridge Trail is open to the public via docent-led trail outings, including hiking, running, and mountain biking.

And thanks to 20 years of dedicated coordination between the Ridge Trail Council, SFPUC, and many other key partners, work is expected to begin next year on six new miles of Ridge Trail, south of Highway 92. The Southern Skyline Ridge Trail Extension will run along Highway 35, south of Highway 92 and include a half-mile trail loop compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and will provide a parking lot and two restrooms. Unlike on the

existing Fifiel-Cahill Trail where visitors require a docent, the new trail will be accessible through a permit system.

This new trail brings us six miles closer to a fully connected Ridge Trail, and—once the highway crossing is complete—extends our longest stretch along the “Western Ridge” to 86 miles. We are deeply grateful to the SFPUC for their valued partnership, and we look forward to coordinating further on the Southern Skyline Ridge Trail Extension and other projects in the future.

## Become a Trail Advocate

Advocates have been key to the completion of the Southern Skyline Ridge Trail Extension. We are always looking for more ways to advocate for trail connections around the Bay Area. Sign up to become a Ridge Trail advocate at [ridgetrail.org/advocacy](https://ridgetrail.org/advocacy) or contact our Advocacy and Outreach Manager at [alexsabo@ridgetrail.org](mailto:alexsabo@ridgetrail.org).





## Finding Inspiration on the Ridge Trail

**W**hen Besaint Sahni began trail running five years ago, she never imagined she'd run the entire Ridge Trail, completing over 400 miles during a global pandemic. Besaint learned about trail running in her local gym in 2017 and decided to try it, curious to understand how the human body is capable of such a feat. She loved running the open trails and did so faithfully. Unfortunately, in the fall of 2019, an injury and emergency hip replacement sidelined her, and her doctor said she would never be able to run trails again. A few months into her recovery though, Besaint began hiking—and then later running—the trails she had grown to love. Soon she was running more than ever before.

When the pandemic hit in early 2020, one of the only places to exercise safely was out on the trails. Besaint heard about the TogetheRelay, a 400 mile trail race along the Ridge Trail produced by longtime event partner, Pacific Coast Trail Runs, and felt it would be worth trying—even if she could only complete 20 percent of it. Soon she discovered that the more trails she completed, the more she wanted to do.

Besaint looked forward to these runs, which felt like mini vacations. Each weekend brought a new adventure, and each trail uncovered something new and different. A favorite memory of Besaint's was running the Palisades Trail in the Robert Louis Stevenson State Park in Calistoga. Local fires delayed trail access, the elevation was challenging, and sometimes the path was barely visible. But carving her own path was worth the stunning reward she received. Huge rocks contrasted by colorful wildflowers brought delight, and looking down onto the Napa Valley took her breath away.

Running in the beauty of nature has been a meditative and inspirational experience and Besaint looks forward to exploring more of the Ridge Trail. The reward of pushing herself to accomplish all she can has given her confidence and a belief in herself. People plan trips to climb mountains, see majestic views, and have grand adventures, but Besaint finds all of that right here. "You never need to leave the Bay Area to find these adventures," she says, "You can find all of it right here on the Ridge Trail."



## Ridge Trail Challenge 2021

How much of the Bay Area Ridge Trail have you seen? Our annual Ridge Trail Challenge is a great opportunity to join over 1,000 fellow trail lovers to experience even more of our beautiful trails.

We have handpicked over 30 trail adventures and activities for you to complete through the end of the year. Sign up, then choose and complete at least 4 trail adventures to be eligible to win prizes. Don't forget to share on social media using #RidgeTrailChallenge2021.

You must register and complete the finisher form to be entered for the grand prize draw, plus add in some bonus challenges for the chance to win even more prizes! It's easy and free—find everything you need and our list of adventures at: [ridgetrail.org/challenge](https://ridgetrail.org/challenge).



## Ridge Trail Service Day: Saturday, Nov. 6th

We're excited to announce that Ridge Trail Service Day is back for 2021! As we celebrate our 400-mile milestone, we're looking for 400 volunteers to help us build and beautify our trails. This year, we'll host 12+ projects surrounding the Bay Area supported by 20+ park partners with 400+ volunteers on one day with one purpose: to steward and build more Bay Area Ridge Trail for you and others to experience and enjoy.

Join us on Saturday, November 6 to get outside and care for your favorite trails at one of our 10-12 work sites around the Bay. We'll provide lunch, a chance to win prizes, and our thanks for your hard work. Sign up is easy. Just go to [ridgetrail.org/RTD2021](https://ridgetrail.org/RTD2021) and choose the time and location that works best for you. We look forward to seeing you there!





## Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

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San Francisco, CA 94108

# Connecting Trails for Lucas

Connection is key to the mission of the Ridge Trail—connecting people to nature and connecting people to one another. One person who embodied the spirit of connection was Lucas Horan (February 1981–December 2020). Lucas was a spontaneous and joyful nature enthusiast and ultra-runner, and his boundless energy inspired those around him. As a scientist at Eureka Therapeutics, Lucas was a creative force devoted to finding innovative ways to re-engineer the body's immune system to fight cancer.

In a show of both his love of adventure and tremendous enthusiasm, Lucas circumnavigated the San Francisco Bay via the Ridge Trail not once, but twice. In 2017, it took him just 8 days to complete the journey, stopping only to eat and sleep. During that time on the trail, Lucas fell in love with the beauty of the area, and became passionate about connecting the trails to create one continuous loop for everyone to experience and enjoy. During his 2nd trip around the Ridge Trail in 2019, each time he saw a blue Ridge Trail marker along his route he “got a little burst of energy and felt a special connection to everyone that shares the vision of a Bay Area Ridge Trail.”

Lucas had the incredible ability to form real and lasting connections with folks, even after a short jaunt out on the trails. That spirit of connection is what inspired his friends and family to partner with the Ridge Trail to create a memorial fund in his honor. Close to \$50,000 has been contributed, and it will be used to build a memorial bridge dedicated to Lucas in the East Bay Parks along the future Garin to Niles Canyon section of the Ridge Trail. Additional funds will be used to help connect other gaps in the Ridge Trail and support programs to make the trail more accessible. You can honor Lucas and his legacy by making a gift to the Lucas Horan Memorial Fund at: [ridgetrail.org/lucasmemorial](https://ridgetrail.org/lucasmemorial).

