

CIRCUMNAVIGATION

The Ultimate Ridge Trail Adventure!

The notion of traversing a famous long-distance trail can inspire an all-consuming wanderlust. Two of America's best-known, long-distance trails—the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail—offer a magnificent thru-hike adventure, but they require traveling a considerable distance to the starting point, and a large chunk of time to complete in one go. Not so easy if you live in the Bay Area and have a day job. It's a good thing we've got our very own epic adventure close to home—the Bay Area Ridge Trail. "Circumnavigation" is what we call hiking, running, biking, or horseback riding all dedicated sections of the Ridge Trail, and it can be completed at your own pace over weeks, months or even years!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Ridge Trail board member and circumnavigator, Luana España, running along Dinosaur Ridge in Alameda County

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Ridge Trail's clear and compelling mission to plan, build and promote a fully connected trail has been our "North Star" (borrowing this metaphor from circumnavigator Walter Moore, featured on P. 8) guiding us for the past 30 years. As we summit the milestone of 400 miles now complete, and with 150 of the most challenging miles yet-to-connect, what's on the horizon for the Ridge Trail? Two key plans point the way forward: our award-winning *2020 Gap Analysis and Action Plan* and our Strategic

Plan 2025. Our small but mighty team is geared up with the right tools to plan, build and open more miles. We collaborate with amazing partners and are forging new relationships to get more people out on the trail, and to set the Ridge Trail up for continued success. And the last puzzle piece to building a legacy for today and future generations is you! The dedication and support of our members, partners, and volunteers has always been a bright and steady light, helping us navigate the path forward. Thanks for lighting the way!

—Janet McBride

ULTIMATE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

CIRCUMNAVIGATION THEN & NOW

The first adventurous souls to tackle a continuous trek of the entire nine-county route (skirting around planned sections) were Dinesh Desai and Bob Cowell in 1998. Farther back, Indigenous peoples had surely walked every ridgeline long, long before there was a newsletter to talk about it. More and more people are endeavoring to hike, run, horseback ride or cycle their way through the redwoods, oak forests, and grasslands, and take in the windswept vistas along the Ridge Trail. To date, we estimate hundreds of people have traversed all the dedicated sections.



First Circumnavigators in 1998, Bob Cowell and Dinesh Desai

HELP ALONG THE WAY

An impressive 400 Ridge Trail miles are open and ready to explore today, which means tackling circumnavigation requires a lot of planning and coordination. But fear not! With gaps to navigate around, highways to cross, shuttles to manage, and special access permissions to garner, the Ridge Trail has got your back with a suite of tools to assist intrepid long-haulers. Many circumnavigators won't step on the trail without a copy of the *Bay Area Ridge Trail: The Official Guide for Hikers, Mountain Bikers and Equestrians*, with its detailed descriptions, photos and maps. Our handy "Planning Navigator" provides a plethora of information like section miles, elevation gain, directions to trailheads, public transit info, use restrictions, shuttle info, camping, and gaps and how to navigate them. The "Trail Tracker" helps

trekkers track progress section by section, and if you're looking to connect with fellow circumnavigators, try the "Ridge Trail Trekkers" Facebook group for advice on local conditions, helpful hints, and moral support. And all these tools are equally useful to the more casual, but no less adventurous, day-hikers, runners, or riders.

Past, present and future circumnavigators are encouraged to register on our new webpage, **RidgeTrail.org/Circumnavigation**. There you can access our helpful tools and join the Ridge Trail Circumnavigator Club, no matter where you are in the journey. Those who have finished can get their name on the new wall of fame—the "Finisher Circle"—plus a Certificate of Completion to print and hang on your wall. Aside from massive bragging rights, other finisher prizes (like pins and patches) are available, too.

CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Ridge Trail board member and circumnavigator, Luana España, ran and hiked the entire trail in 2016. España, an adventure runner and backpacker who knocks out 15+ miles in a day hardly breaking a sweat, gives this advice to anyone considering tackling all 400 miles: "You don't have to do it all in 5 days, or in 5 months—just make sure it's doable and it will make a great memory." España emphasized the importance of finding a good support crew to cheer you on. "The Ridge Trail is all around us—in a few minutes, you can go from city to summit. Make it your own adventure!" Her inspiring story has surely launched many on a course around the Ridge Trail.

Calling all circumnavigators to join the club at **RidgeTrail.org/Circumnavigation**! Whether you're just starting out, in progress or finished (even decades ago), you'll receive tips and resources, invites to special events, and recognition for completing the journey. Join us on the ultimate Ridge Trail adventure!



People Make the Ridge Trail Run



ANIL RAO, RIDGE TRAIL BOARD MEMBER EXTRAORDINAIRE

In 2020, Anil Rao ran the entire Ridge Trail in nine months as part of a small running team in a virtual relay race. “Soon after completing the race, my team and I had renewed energy to share these wonderful trails with our friends. We also developed an immense appreciation for the Ridge Trail. So, we created an informal group called ‘Friends of Ridge Trail’ with the mission of sharing these trails with our running network, raising awareness for the Ridge Trail and hosting runs to benefit the Trail as well.” Last spring, Friends of Ridge Trail hosted the first North Marin Ridge Run with 25 runners and raised over \$4000, and planning is underway for next year’s event. Thank you for all the ways you support the Ridge Trail, Anil!

CHRISTINE LA, RIDGE TRAIL PAPARAZZI

Christine discovered the Ridge Trail back in 2016 and decided to investigate. “I was pretty new to hiking at the time so the Ridge Trail website became my way of finding new trails.” Christine became an avid trail user and a volunteer as well, most recently lending her photographic talents for *Ridge to Bridge*. “I was excited to see and meet other Ridge Trail enthusiasts, and it was a spectacular place to photograph! The contrasting views of the city skyline and natural rolling hills always makes an interesting juxtaposition.” Christine has also photographed other events, including *Ridge Trail Service Day* last year. If you see her at a future event or just enjoying a day on the trail, smile and wave at the camera! See more of Christine’s work on her website, christinela.com.



PHIL BELLMAN, SIGN ANGEL

Phil Bellman circumnavigated the Ridge Trail in 2017. In addition to the views, beauty, diverse landscapes and a lot of cows, one thing he noticed was a distinct lack of trail signage. When he inquired about volunteer opportunities with the Ridge Trail, he was put to work installing signs. Lots of them. “Well, I lost track at 250, so I’m guessing maybe 400-500 all told? Having hiked the entire trail, I felt I knew what people needed to navigate, especially in the remote areas.” Next time you are miles from nowhere and see a reassuring Ridge Trail sign, thank Phil Bellman, Sign Angel!

NANCY WEINTRAUB, CIRCUMNAVIGATOR AND HELPING HAND

Nancy recently completed her circumnavigation and it has turned her into a true believer, one who now spreads the good word of the Ridge Trail to anyone who’ll listen! “I embarked on this challenge as I retired from my professional career. With the continuation of the pandemic, exploring and experiencing our beautiful Bay Area trails inspired me to learn more and share with others. I believe it is more important than ever to appreciate, enjoy and protect our natural environment, and I’m eager to spend my time sharing the natural environment and inspiring others.” Look for Nancy on the trail in her Ridge Trail hat. She’ll be the one asking if you’d like to know more about a really cool, planned 550-mile trail around the San Francisco Bay ridgelines.



TRAIL NEWS



NAPA COUNTY

Shovels Hit the Dirt on New Ridge Trail in Napa County

On May 24th, construction officially started on a brand new stretch of Ridge Trail in the North Bay! The 4.3 new miles of Ridge Trail will also be shared with the Napa Valley Vine Trail, and will provide a continuous link between the towns of St. Helena and Calistoga. The trail will connect explorers to two state parks (Bothe-Napa Valley and Robert Louis Stevenson State parks) as well as wineries, restaurants, and schools, including the Culinary Institute of America and Napa Valley College. Once this project is complete, the public will be able to enjoy 12.3 continuous, primary Ridge Trail miles, northward through Bothe-Napa, downtown Calistoga, and through Robert Louis Stevenson along the Lower Oat Hill Mine Trail. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is expected in the summer of 2023 to celebrate the opening of this exciting new section of Ridge Trail!



L: Local trail leaders, including Ridge Trail Deputy Director Ryan Mack (R), break ground on new Ridge Trail; **R:** Patwino Worrntla Kodoi Dihi Open Space. Photo by Dennis Ferguson, via Solano Land Trust



SOLANO COUNTY

Patwino Worrntla Kodoi Dihi Open Space— A New Name And a New Section of Ridge Trail!

Just over 2 miles of freshly-minted Ridge Trail is coming to Solano County and expected to open early next year! This new trail section in Patwino Worrntla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park will connect with 4.2 miles of existing Ridge Trail across the street through Rockville Hills Regional Park and Vintage Valley Trail. From the new staging area, “All People’s Trail” will offer an ADA-accessible short trail to a fantastic viewing platform. A separate multi-use trail from the staging area will form the Ridge Trail spine.

The Park’s name is the result of a long collaboration between Solano Land Trust and the Council of Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, the descendants of the Patwin people who were the first stewards of these lands.

Pronounced *Put.win.no War.klaw Kaw.doy De.he*, it means “Southern Rock Home of the Patwin people” in the Patwin language, which has been spoken in this region for thousands of years. Both the Tribe and the Trust are delighted to have a name for this park that honors the original stewards of the land and captures the beauty of the park.

Consideration is underway to name this new section of Ridge Trail after one of the Ridge Trail founders, Doris Klein, a tireless Solano County advocate and volunteer. Her trail passion and infectious happy spirit made her a popular outing leader, introducing countless people to the Ridge Trail over the decades.



3

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Small Steps Toward Big Progress: Connecting the Diablo and Santa Cruz Mountain Ranges

While the words “traffic study” and “freeway overcrossing” may not immediately spark joy in the hearts of outdoor enthusiasts, the Bailey Avenue Overcrossing is no run-of-the-mill Ridge Trail gap. This 4,200’ gap in San Jose is the linchpin to creating a 40-mile connection between Santa Teresa County Park and North Coyote Valley, and to linking the Diablo Range to the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Bailey Avenue project is a proposed Class I (separated, paved) path along the existing Bailey Avenue overpass. Also crossing over Monterey Road, U.S. 101, the high-speed rail corridor, and the Coyote Creek Trail, this design leverages existing under-used road infrastructure by reducing one lane of vehicular traffic on the north side of the Bailey Avenue Overcrossing to accommodate a 12-foot trail corridor.

Creating a safe trail crossing in this location will not only close a trail gap in Coyote Valley, it will also include a wildlife-friendly design to reduce the number of animal/vehicle interactions. Benefits would include better connectivity between urban centers and parks, preserves and open space and transit-to-trails. An additional \$286,000 is needed to move this project from the planning to construction phase. Learn more at RidgeTrail.org/bailey-avenue.



LEAVE A LEGACY

The Ridge Trail has grown from a visionary idea to over 400 miles of trek-ready trail. Legacy gifts from dedicated members help ensure that future trail enthusiasts will be able to circumnavigate a fully-connected Bay Area Ridge Trail. Join our Legacy Circle by contacting Marie Sayles at (415) 561-2595 or mariesayles@ridgetrail.org.



Almaden Quicksilver County Park, Photo by Elizabeth Byers

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Partners Make it Possible: Santa Clara County Parks

Santa Clara County hosts nearly one-third of the ultimate Ridge Trail route, and currently boasts 90 dedicated trail miles open and in use today, with over 100 miles in the planning stage. Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department (County Parks) hosts 60 of those 90 dedicated miles through beautiful parks like Almaden Quicksilver and Coyote Lake Harvey Bear Ranch County parks. Now that's an important partner. The Ridge Trail and its hikers, riders, runners and strollers are extremely fortunate that County Parks thinks the Ridge Trail is as cool as we do.

In Santa Clara County, a U-shaped route forms the southernmost Ridge Trail stretch, traveling from Mt. Umunhum in the west to below Gilroy at the southern tip, before turning back north toward Coyote Lake Harvey Bear. And this is one of the most complex and least developed areas along the planned route. County Parks stepped up to partner with us on a comprehensive review of alternative route options to overcome a multitude of challenges (terrain, ownership, sensitive habitat), thanks in part to generous funding from the WoodNext Foundation. Stay tuned as we learn more, work with other partners, and determine which routes could result in accelerated near-term trail development!

County Parks has also been integral to work on the Bailey Avenue Overcrossing referenced above, linking the Diablo Range to the Santa Cruz Mountains through North Coyote Valley. Thanks to partners like County Parks, the Ridge Trail now offers over 400 miles of dedicated trail around nine Bay Area counties. Mile by mile, partners make it possible.

You can make a difference with a gift today. Scan here or go to ridgetrail.org/donate.



GET INVOLVED!

RIDGE TRAIL CHALLENGE

August 1–December 31, 2022

Our annual trail challenge is back on! Challenge yourself to get out there and explore the Ridge Trail. Your reward? Miles of new adventures, inspiring views, and the chance to win exciting prizes. Join us!



HOW IT WORKS

- 1. Sign Up for the Challenge:** It's free and only takes a minute!
- 2. Get out on the Ridge Trail:** Complete 4 outings of your choice.
- 3. Tell us about your adventures:** Fill out the Finisher Form to be entered for the grand prize drawing! Learn more and sign up at RidgeTrail.org/Challenge.

RIDGE TRAIL SERVICE DAY

November 5, 2022

Save the date for *Ridge Trail Service Day*, back again this year on the first Saturday in November! For 15 years, the Ridge Trail has been teaming up with our partners around the Bay Area to host one of the biggest annual volunteer trail stewardship events around. Hundreds of volunteers, projects across the Bay Area, all in one day on your favorite trail!



Spend the day outside making the Ridge Trail cleaner, safer and more beautiful than ever. We provide the tools, lunch, and even the chance to win great prizes. Watch our e-newsletter and ridgetrail.org for more details, coming soon!

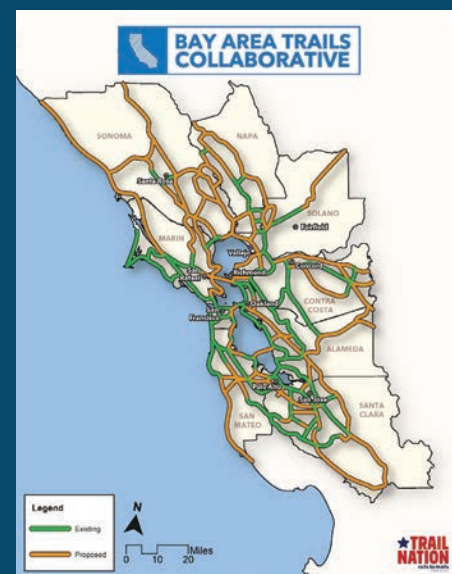
RIDGE TO BRIDGE RECAP

April 30, 2022

Earlier this year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of *Ridge to Bridge*, our biggest annual trail outing in Marin for hikers, runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians. The event brought out over 230 participants who, through event fees and peer-to-peer fundraising, raised almost \$70,000 for the Ridge Trail! Thank you to all who joined in the fun and supported the Ridge Trail along the way.

Connecting 2,600 Miles of Trail

The Ridge Trail is a proud member of the Bay Area Trails Collaborative (BATC), a coalition of over 50 organizations chaired by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, working to complete a 2,600-mile Bay Area trail network. Earlier this year, BATC unveiled a new interactive map of the trail network taking shape across our entire region. Existing and planned trails range from paved pathways following the Bay shore to natural surface trails traveling the hilly ridgelines above the Bay. This interactive tool serves as a guide for collaboration to connect trails and inspire land managers, governments, and residents to imagine what could be. Explore the map and learn more about BATC's vision for the trail network at railstotrails.org/batc.





Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

391 Sutter Street, Suite 701
San Francisco, CA 94108

RidgeTrail.org info@ridgetrail.org

[@ridgetrail](#)

[@ridgetrail](#)

[@bayarearidgetrail](#)

CIRCUMNAVIGATOR SPOTLIGHT

Meet Walter and Mike

WALTER MOORE *President, Peninsula Open Space Trust*

MIKE WILLIAMS *Real Property Manager, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District*

Having worked in the parks and open space field for over 30 years each, one might imagine that Walter Moore and Mike Williams have seen much of what Bay Area parks have to offer. But it wasn't until they started on their joint venture to circumnavigate all 400 miles of Ridge Trail that their eyes opened to how stunningly diverse the Bay Area landscape can be.

Their adventure started in mid-2020, while looking for something to do during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. Walter picked up Elizabeth Byers' guidebook of the Bay Area Ridge Trail and said, "Mike, we need to get on this." Mike has been familiar with the Ridge Trail for a long time and even worked on a number of sections, so he was eager to start. Their travel companions (whenever allowed) are "the girls," two amiable and trail-loving black labs named Shadow and Nellie. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction and using mostly a car shuttle approach (leaving one car at each end to avoid hiking extra miles out and back), they are steadily racking up the miles and are about one-third of the way through. Walter and Mike expect it will take 5-6 years to complete their journey.



Walter discovered a whole new perspective on the Bay Area: "[circumnavigating] really opens up extraordinary experiences almost every time you go out. I can't think of any other way that is as well-structured to experience the entire Bay Area." Mike shared his renewed enthusiasm for the incredible parks and open space that encircle the Bay Area. He has been pleasantly surprised by how well-used the Ridge Trail is, seeing greater diversity and that "a lot of families are out being healthy, having a good time and, in general, it's free."

Their advice for those of you considering circumnavigation? Do it! "Having this "North Star" creates a wonderful way to go sequence-by-sequence around the Bay Area, which is invaluable," says Walter. "It makes a 400-mile trail very manageable. Absolutely do it."

Learn more about Walter and Mike's circumnavigation adventure and their favorite hikes along the trail at ridgetrail.org/walter-and-mikes-journey.