

SPANNING 9 COUNTIES

Bay Area Ridge Trail adds 14.1 scenic miles



Patty Karabatsos of San Jose, left, and her friend, Linda Dougall of Oakland, walk along the Lisa Killough Trail at Calero County Park on Thursday in San Jose. The trail adds 14.1 miles to the Bay Area Ridge Trail, which connects all nine Bay Area counties. Hikers, bikers and horseback riders often ride the trail. **DAI SUGANO — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

Stretch through Calero County Park completes 427 miles of 550-mile route

By Paul Rogers
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For nearly 40 years, environmental groups, parks planners and other outdoor lovers have worked to piece together a breathtaking vision: Building a continuous 550-mile trail around the Bay Area's ridgelines for hikers, bicyclists and horseback riders to get out of traffic, step away from computer screens and enjoy the outdoors.

Marked with blue signs, the Bay Area Ridge Trail takes in stunning views of the Golden Gate Bridge from the Marin Headlands, San Mateo County forests above Crystal Springs Reservoir, bucolic former ranch lands on the slopes of Mount Hamilton and the necklace of East Bay parks from Mission Peak to the Carquinez Strait.

Now the project is receiving a significant boost this month as a new 14.1-mile section is added on San Jose's southern edges, which will bring the total to 427 miles — about three-quarters done.

"Fourteen miles is a big stretch," said Janet McBride, executive director of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, a Berkeley nonprofit group

NEW ADDITION TO THE BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL

With the opening of the 14-mile route in Calero County Park in Santa Clara County, more than 427 miles of the 550-mile Bay Area Ridge Trail have been completed.

Miles completed by county

Santa Clara	111
Marin	65
San Mateo	50
Contra Costa	45
Alameda	41
Napa	36
Sonoma	34
Solano	32
San Francisco	14

Note: Total adds up to 428 miles due to rounding
Source: Bay Area Ridge Trail Council



spearheading the project. "The Bay Area is spectacularly beautiful. The trail is a thread that connects all nine counties. It supports wildlife habitat and recreation. It improves our health, our well-being and provides inspiration."

The new 14.1 miles already is open to the public for hiking, bicycling, and horse riding. It runs from the Rancho San Vicente trailhead of Calero County Park in South San Jose to the Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve in the meadows and rolling

foothills between Los Gatos and Morgan Hill.

A public dedication is planned for 10 a.m. on May 31 at the Rancho San Vicente trailhead.

The new stretch of trail — which is open from sunrise to sunset — didn't involve recent construction. Rather, it was the result of a plan by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and government agencies like the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, to reroute

the larger Bay Area Ridge Trail away from its original planned route.

The original route included a stretch along Summit Road on the Santa Cruz-Santa Clara County border. But that area contains few parks, dozens of private properties with owners who haven't wanted to sell their land or trail easements and residents who have been known for decades for putting up no-trespassing signs along road.

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JOBS

Bay Area hirings rebound in April

4,200 positions added last month, but experts warn both tariffs and immigration could derail progress

By George Avalos
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The Bay Area bounced back in April from prior job losses, adding thousands of positions in an upswing that was powered by a surge in South Bay hiring.

While the Bay Area gained 4,200 jobs last month, overall, California added 17,700 positions, the state Employment Development Department reported Friday. All numbers were adjusted for seasonal variations.

"The impacts of tariff and immigration policies will come in the next few months, though the magnitude of pain is still uncertain," said Steve Levy, director of the Palo Alto-based Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy. "The Bay Area job gains in April are a welcome respite from recent job losses but do not mean job growth is here to stay."

Scott Anderson, chief economist with BMO Capital Markets, also issued a warning about what's ahead.

"One month of better job numbers could be a one-off event that easily gets reversed or revised away in the months ahead," Anderson said. "The Bay Area labor market still appears to be on shaky

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OAKLAND

PG&E CEO predicts bills won't rise this year, will fall in 2026

By George Avalos
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OAKLAND — PG&E's top boss said monthly energy bills should be flat or lower over the next few years — even as the utility has asked the state to authorize it to collect more revenue from its ratepayers.

The company said it has begun to rein in costs and improve efficiency to a greater degree than in previous years, allowing it can achieve that goal.

"This is not the old PG&E," CEO Patricia Poppe said in an interview. "This is a turnaround story in the making."

Thursday, the investor-owned utility asked the state Public Utilities Commission to approve additional revenue as part of the company's general rate case, which PG&E files roughly every four years.

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TRAIL

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"It was just stuck," McBride said. "The route along Summit Road wasn't going anywhere. It was extremely difficult. So we changed plans."

Instead planners rerouted 33 miles to the east to better connect Almaden Quicksilver County Park and Mount Madonna County Park near Gilroy.

That kind of flexibility has been key to keeping momentum going over the years.

"It's the reality," said Bob Doyle, retired general manager of the East Bay Regional Park District in Oakland. "If you can't go somewhere because somebody sued somebody, or they built a freeway, the goal is to connect it in the most scenic corridors. In some cases you move the route. That helps drive the vision to reality so it doesn't stall."

There are famous hiking trails across the United States — from the 2,650-mile-long Pacific Crest Trail, which traverses the Sierra and Cascade mountains of California, Oregon, and Washington, to the Empire State Trail, which runs 750 miles from downtown Manhattan to the Canadian border.

But the Bay Area Ridge Trail is unique. A loop overlooking a region of 8 million people, passing through forests, meadows and mountaintops, all within a short walk, drive or bike ride from cities. The idea was born in the dreams of a few hardy hikers.

But it took William Penn

Mott Jr., a former general manager of the East Bay Regional Park District, to make it happen. In 1987, Mott, as President Ronald Reagan's national parks director, provided advice and funding to help organize the trail.

"It was an incredible vision," said Doyle, who was friends with Mott until his death in 1992. "He knew it would take a long time. But it takes a long time to do great things. He would be very pleased now. He would be clapping."

After the first mile was dedicated in 1989 in San Mateo County at Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve and Huddart County Park, the trail grew quickly at first. It reached 100 miles within one year as existing trails in parks were connected. It took another five years to get to 200 miles, then another 10 years to get 300 by 2006. McBride estimated it will take another 20 years to get to 550 miles.

Although there are long unbroken stretches in the Peninsula and East Bay, the route in the North Bay through Napa and Sonoma wineries has been slow to complete. And it had been slow in Santa Clara County, until a boom in recent years of parks agencies and land trusts buying ranches and other property around Coyote Valley and other open areas.

"Just get out on a piece of the trail," said Dan Allison, 73, from Sacramento, who has hiked 400 miles of it twice in the past three years. "You can go out for a day hike and if you enjoy that, you can start backpacking. I run into



people who live in the Bay Area who aren't even aware of all the parks. It's amazing to have that much public land in such an urban area."

On a recent Thursday morning, the new 14.1-mile stretch of trail had regular cyclists, hikers and dog walkers taking in views of Mount Hamilton to the east and Mount Umunhum to the west, a mosaic of oaks and orange poppies.

"I'm from the Midwest where there's lots of open space," cyclist Mike Peterson of San Jose said. "I also lived in Salt Lake City and used to ski after work. When I moved here, I wasn't expecting it to be that outdoorsy. Getting out here is good for your mental health. You can blow off some steam out there on the trail."



Bay Area Ridge Trail Council Executive Director Janet McBride talks during a walk on the Lisa Killough Trail at Calero County Park. She estimates it will take another 20 years for the 550-mile Bay Area Ridge Trail to be completed. The trail is currently 427 miles long.

A bicyclist rides on the Lisa Killough Trail at Calero County Park Thursday in San Jose, which became part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail that spans all nine Bay Area counties. The ridge trail was first organized in 1987. **PHOTOS BY DAI SUGANO — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**