

LOCAL NEWS

MMWD dedicates 11 miles of Bay Area Ridge Trail on Mount Tam



Visitors hike along the Rock Spring Trail at Mount Tamalpais State Park on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026. The Marin Municipal Water District has added more than 11 miles of fire roads on Mount Tamalpais to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. (D. Ross Cameron/Special to the Marin Independent Journal)



By **ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ** | arodriguez@marinij.com | Marin Independent Journal
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A series of fire roads in the Mount Tamalpais watershed has become part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a planned 500-plus-mile network of paths along the spines of ranges in the nine-county region.

The Marin Municipal Water District, which owns the land, voted unanimously this month to dedicate the six new segments. All paths are fire roads that allow hiking, biking and equestrian access.

“It’s hard to imagine any reason not to support this,” said Ranjiv Khush, a district board member.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail was established in 1989 to promote and sustain connected hiking, cycling and equestrian trails on the ridgelines around San Francisco Bay, said Carly Blanchard, an environmental planner for the district.

Since its establishment, more than 400 miles of trails have been dedicated to connect 145 parks and open spaces, Blanchard said.

In 2005, the Marin Municipal Water District approved its first dedication, 5 miles of road segments along the San Geronimo Ridge and Peters Dam access.

“This set the precedent for recognizing district roads that are compatible with land management objectives as a potential part of the Ridge Trail network,” Blanchard said.



The trailhead at the Lagunitas-Rock Spring Fire Road at Mount Tamalpais State Park on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026. The Marin Municipal Water District has added about 11 miles of fire roads to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. (D. Ross Cameron/Special to the Marin Independent Journal)

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council approached the district to request that specific segments in the watershed be added to the network, said Shaun Horne, a watershed manager for the district.

Horne said there is a trail from Ridgecrest Boulevard along the Bolinas Ridge Trail that connects to Samuel P. Taylor Park. The trail is east of Shoreline Highway and most of it runs on the west of Alpine Lake and Kent Lake. After meandering east through Samuel P. Taylor Park, it connects to the San Geronimo Ridge before going north again.

The 11-mile addition will create a shortcut north to the San Geronimo Ridge from the area of Easy Grade and East Ridgecrest Boulevard.

The segments include about 3 miles on the Pine Mountain/San Geronimo Ridge; nearly 2 miles of Liberty Gulch Road; 0.39 miles of Bullfrog Road; nearly 5 miles on Lagunitas-Rock Springs Road to Alpine Lake; and about a quarter-mile of East Ridgecrest Boulevard.

“Now, this section would not have been possible two years ago because we didn’t have Liberty Gulch built as a multi-use segment,” Horne said.

Just last year, the district completed a multiyear restoration of Azalea Hill, which included bank stabilization work along a portion of the trail near Bolinas-Fairfax Road. This included drilling and pouring 18 retaining wall piers and installing a retaining wall, redwood guardrail fence and rock slope protection.

The project made the connection possible, Horne said.

“So this is connecting folks to the Alpine Lake area, and then finally connecting them out into the Pine Mountain part of the watershed,” Horne said.

The dedication comes as Rep. Jared Huffman, Sen. Adam Schiff and every member of the Bay Area congressional delegation introduced legislation to designate the Bay Area Ridge Trail as a National Scenic Trail. The designation would help attract new visitors and help make connections to different routes, according to Huffman’s office.

“The Bay Area Ridge Trail is a crown jewel of our region, providing millions of people with access to some of the most stunning natural landscapes in the country and connecting our communities to the outdoors,” Huffman, a Marin resident, said in a prepared statement.

“Designating it as a National Scenic Trail would not only help complete it — it would set it on par with iconic trails like the Appalachian and Pacific Crest and elevate the incredible and diverse Bay Area landscapes,” he said. “This would be a major boost for the recreation economy, and our bill gets that ball rolling.”

Matt Samson, a board member of the Marin Municipal Water District, said the designation also could open up more funding for trail projects.

“I’m very excited we’re going to continue to add to it and be able to show off our watershed even more,” Samson said.