

Dog-Friendly

HIKES

of the Peninsula & South Bay

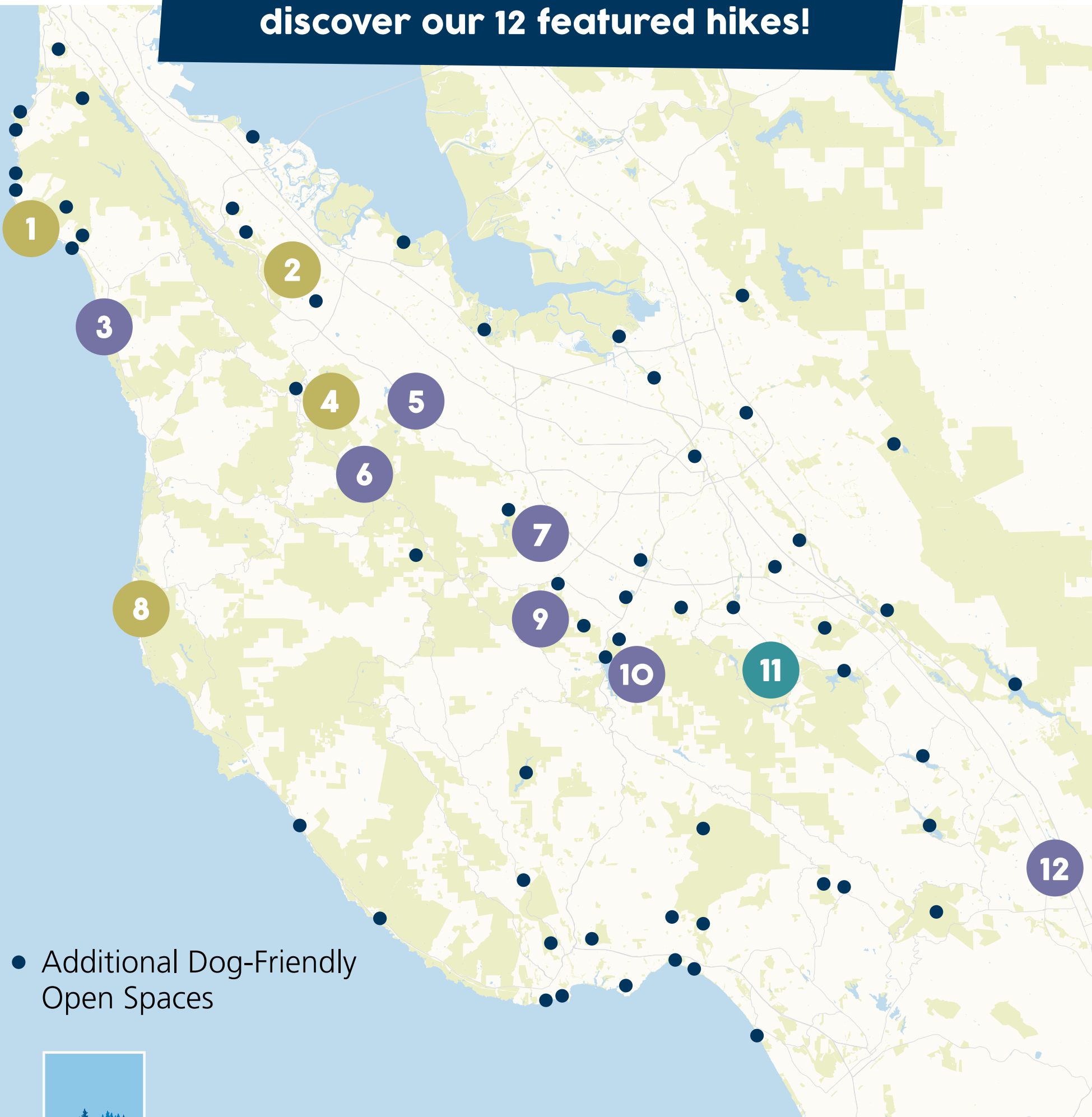


We're dog lovers. For many of us at POST, a trip to our open spaces isn't the same without our furry friends. But knowing where you can or can't take your dog can be challenging, so we've made this helpful guide.

Below you'll find 12 featured hikes, brought to you by our staff's opinionated four-legged friends. They've all spent a lot of time on our trails and know these open spaces better than we do! We have also included a [complete list](#) of all of the dog-friendly open spaces in our little pocket of California.

Dig in and find your next dog-friendly hike.

Click the numbered circles to discover our 12 featured hikes!



● Additional Dog-Friendly Open Spaces



- 1 Jean Lauer Trail
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Easy



Moderate



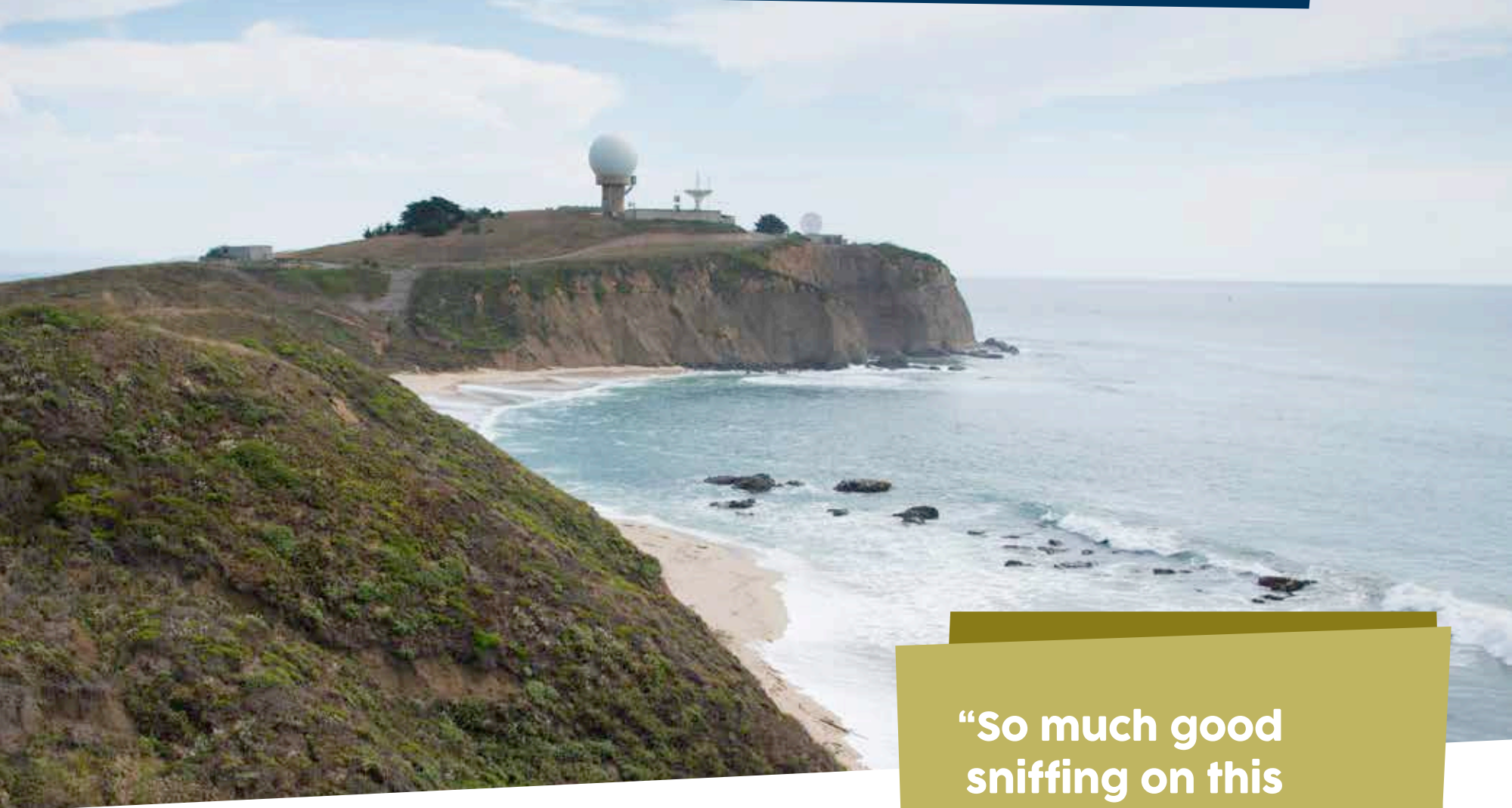
Difficult




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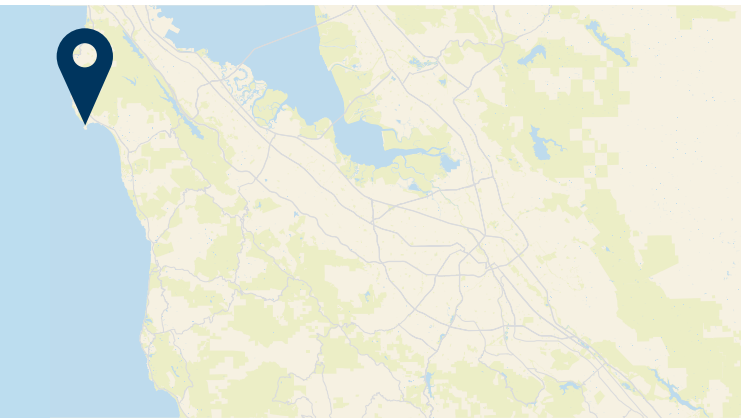
Jean Lauer Trail



Preserve: Pillar Point Bluff 
County Park
Length: 1.5 miles round-trip
Difficulty: Easy

This trail was named in memory of Jean Lauer, a former POST staffer who loved this stretch of coastline. In the winter, it’s the best spot to see the world-famous Mavericks surf break and is close to the Fitzgerald Marine

Trail Map 




“So much good sniffing on this trail. A cornucopia of coastal scents mixed with a surprising variety of K-9 flavors. Like, whoa.”

-Bentley



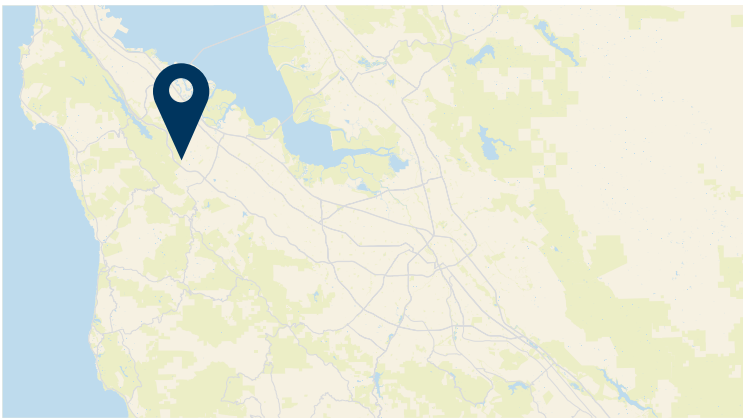
Pulgas Ridge



Preserve: Pulgas Ridge 
Open Space Preserve
Length: 1.5-mile loop
Difficulty: Easy

In the center of this preserve is a large, **off-leash dog area** and this trail takes you right to it. This is a great spot if your pooch needs to let loose and really burn some energy. Go, dog, go.

Trail Map 




“Sometimes nature calls when you’re on the trail. But my person knows what’s up and always packs out waste.”
-Roxy



Wavecrest



Preserve: Wavecrest Open 
Space Preserve
Length: 4 miles round-trip
Difficulty: Easy

With sweeping views of the Pacific, it’s no wonder this trail is a favorite for local dog-walkers. The birding here is great too. In the winter, this is one of the most important nesting sites for raptors in the entire Bay Area, so bring your binoculars.

Trail Map 




“I’m a local coastsider so let me tell you—this is one awesome spot. But let’s keep it that way by observing the rules of the trail and staying on leash.”
-Peppy



Windy Hill



Preserve: Windy Hill 
Open Space Preserve
Length: 6 miles round-trip
Difficulty: Moderate

Climb to the top of Windy Hill for a panoramic view of rolling hills stretching west to the Pacific Ocean. The site of POST’s first land protection project, this preserve is a favorite among many of our staff (and their dogs).

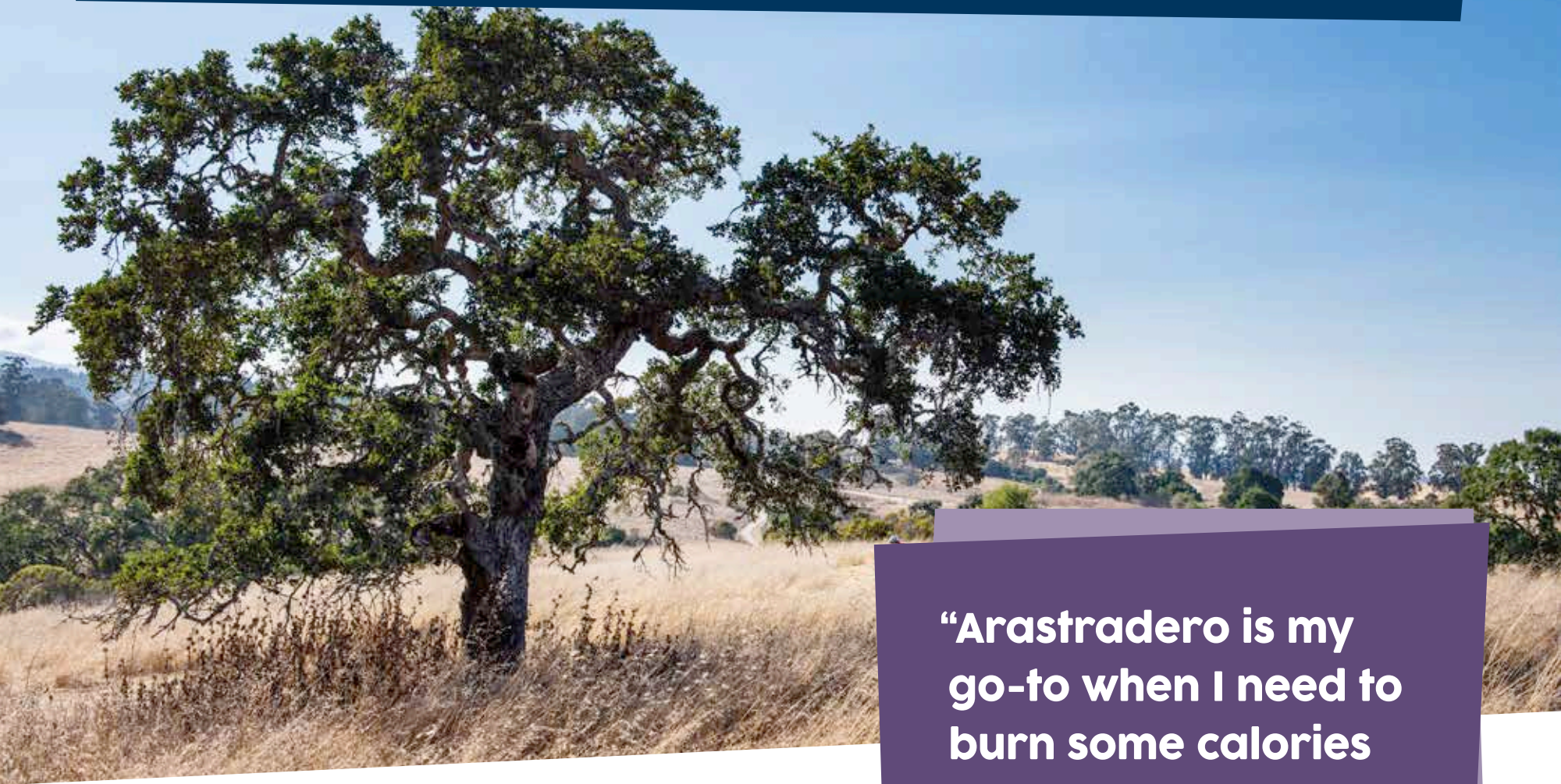
Trail Map 



“Having grown up near this preserve, I know this trail like the back of my paw. I highly recommend it!”
-Tito



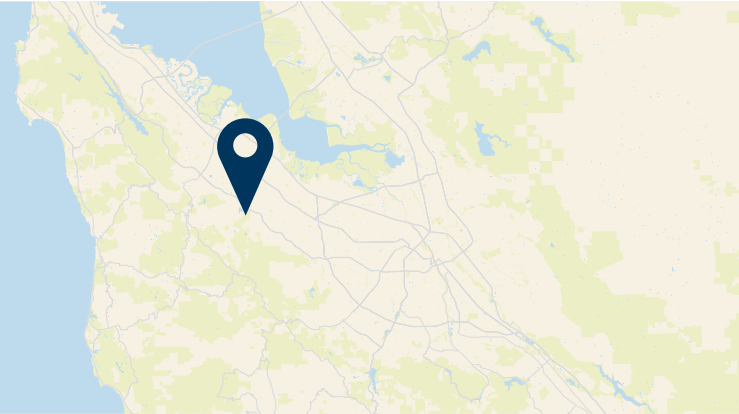
Pearsons-Arastradero Preserve



Preserve: Pearsons-Arastradero [↗](#)
Preserve
Length: 4.5-mile loop
Difficulty: Moderate

Close to Highway 280, access to this preserve is relatively easy, especially for residents of the Peninsula. On this hike, you'll enjoy ancient oaks, abundant wildlife and sweeping vistas from the western hills to the Bay; it's a great place for a sunset walk.

Trail Map [↗](#)



“Arastradero is my go-to when I need to burn some calories and clear my head. And I always hydrate at the trailhead’s built-in water bowl—no celebration for dehydration, right?”

-Aspen



Coal Creek Open Space Preserve



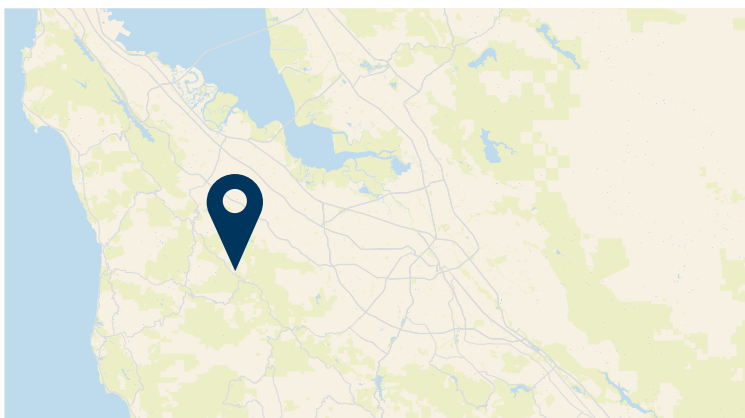
Preserve: Coal Creek Open Space Preserve [↗](#)

Length: 3 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Moderate

This hike has a little bit of everything: a winding trail through an oak forest, spectacular views and a small waterfall. It's an ideal spot for a relatively short hike with just enough elevation to keep things interesting.

Trail Map [↗](#)




“The views on this hike are certainly something to howl about. I can even see my house in Menlo Park!”

-George



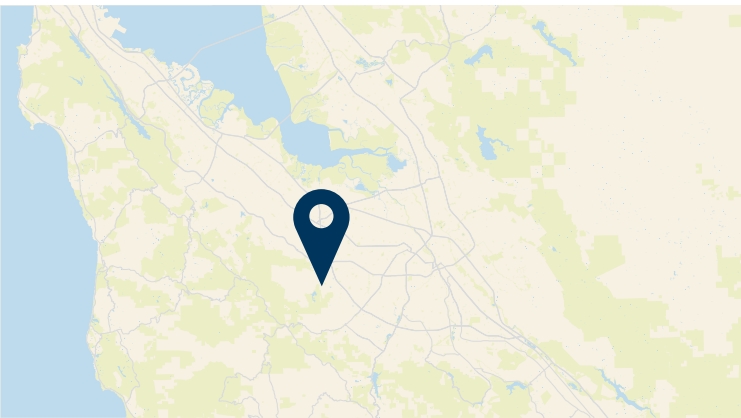
Fremont Older



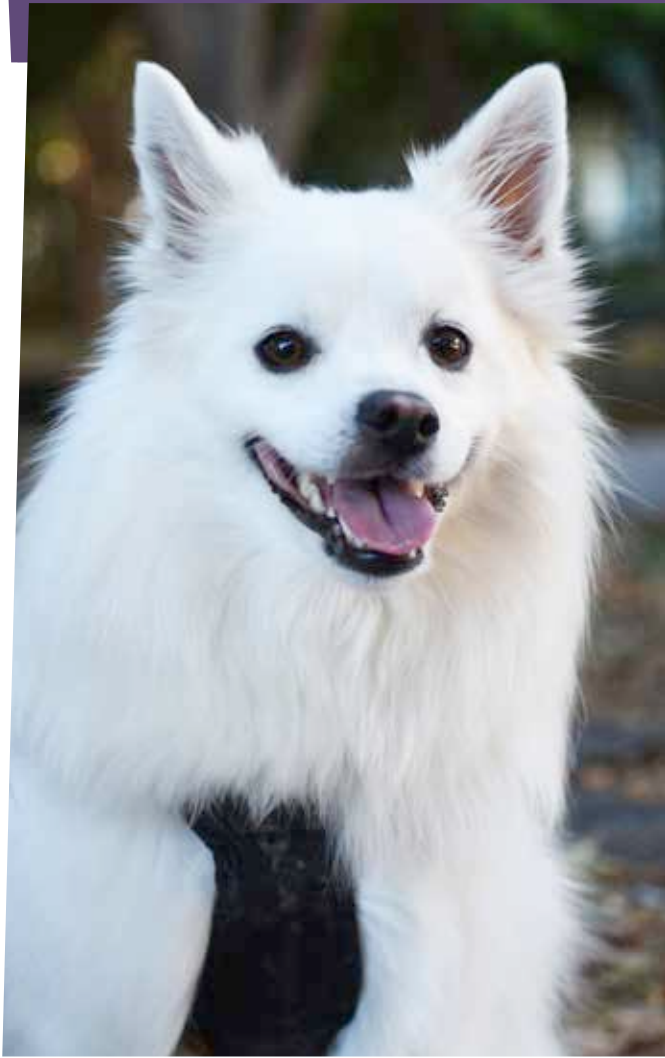
Preserve: Fremont Older 
Open Space Preserve
Length: 2.5 miles round-trip
Difficulty: Moderate

A hike to the top of Maise’s Peak is a must, especially for South Bay residents. Wind through a beautiful forest and rolling hills to the summit for panoramic views of the surrounding open spaces.

Trail Map 



“I love rolling around when I’m out in nature and there are some great spots here for just that. Gets my coat just the way I like it.”
-Mango



Bean Hollow State Beach



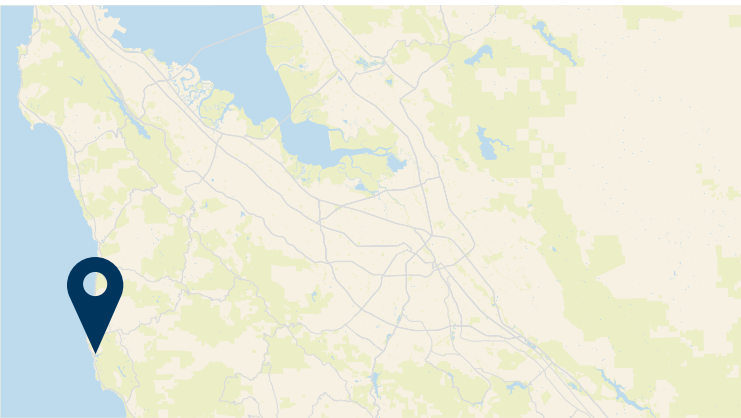
Preserve: Bean Hollow [↗](#)
State Beach

Length: 1.5 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Easy

This is a magical spot, especially for your K-9 friends. Both the beach and short trail along the coast are dog-friendly. The parking lot can get full on the weekend if the weather’s nice, so try to get there earlier in the day if you can.

Trail Map [↗](#)



“Dude, this is one totally rad spot. I like to hit the waves and feel the sand between my paws—need I say more?”

-Arlo



Sanborn County Park



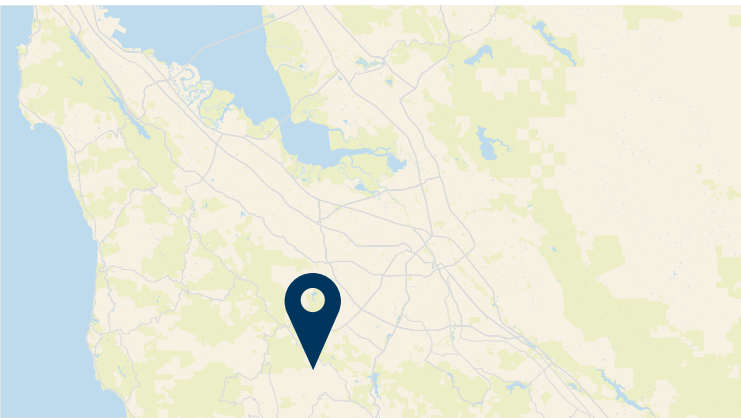
Preserve: Sanborn County Park [↗](#)

Length: 6 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Enjoy a section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, views of the South Bay and a beautiful mixed Douglas fir and redwood forest. Most of this hike is in the shade, making it a great choice in the warmer, summer months.

Trail Map [↗](#)

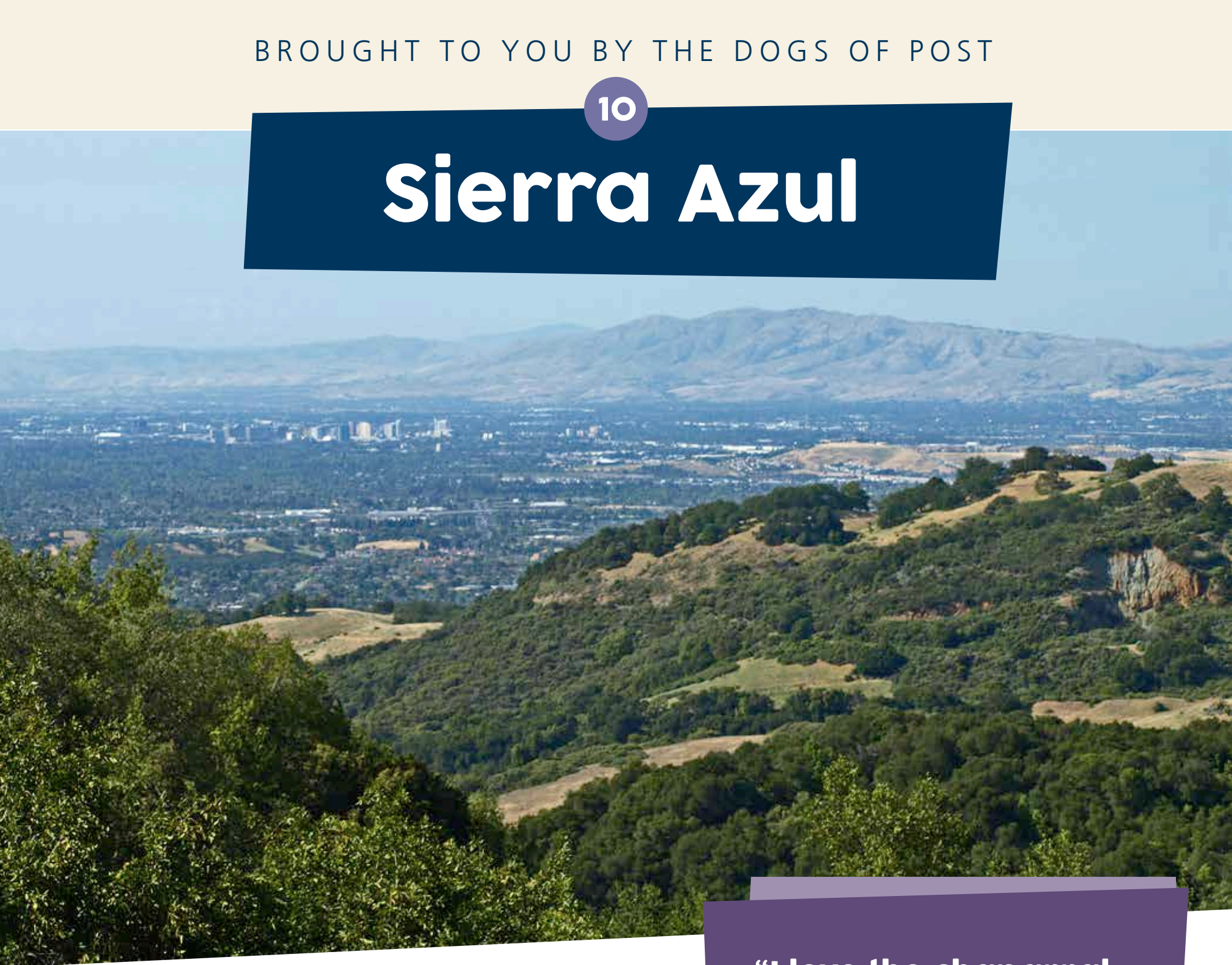



“I’m pretty furry, so I prefer to hike in the shade when I can, which is why this trail is one of my faves.”

-Trixie



Sierra Azul



Preserve: Sierra Azul 
Open Space Preserve
Length: 5-mile loop
Difficulty: Moderate

Escape into one of the Bay Area’s largest open space preserves. Just minutes off Highway 17, access to this trailhead is easy, especially for residents of the South Bay. On clear, bright days you'll have great views of Mount Hamilton, too.

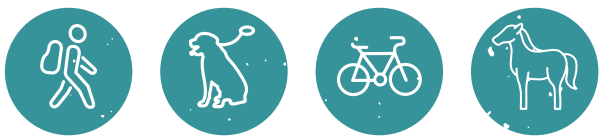
Trail Map 



“I love the chaparral and gnarled live oaks of Sierra Azul. And coming from San Jose, we’re there in just a few wags of the tail.”
-Dingo



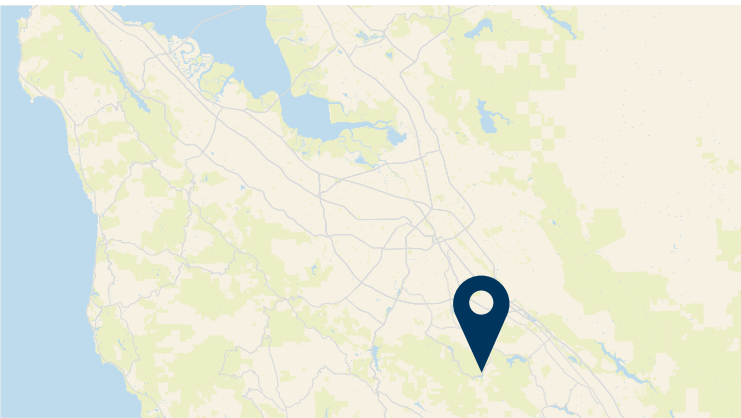
Almaden Quicksilver County Park



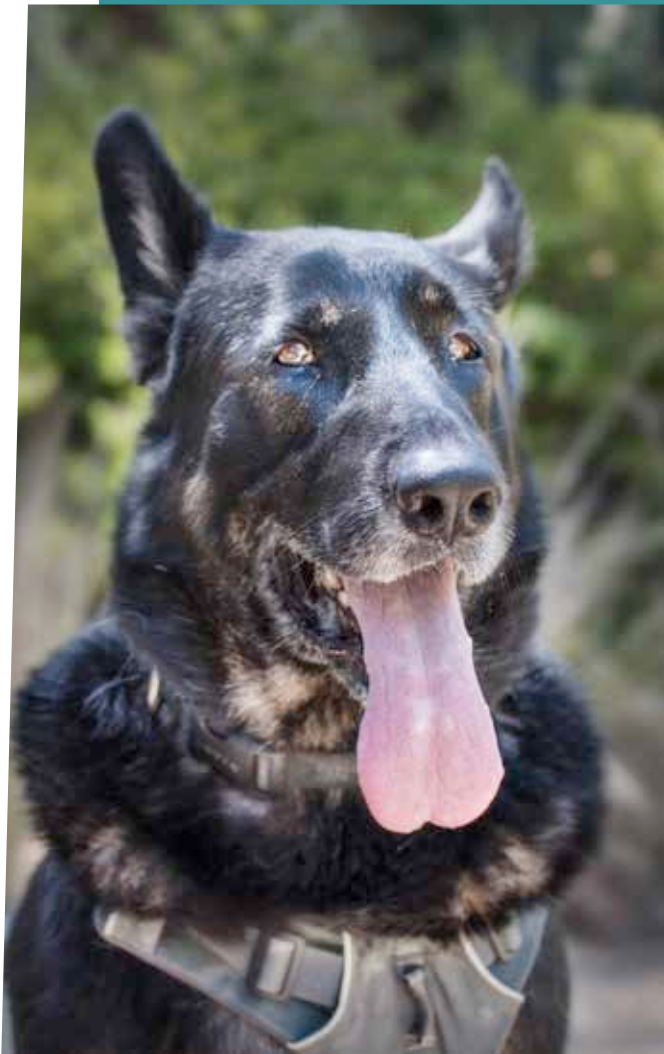
Preserve: Almaden Quicksilver [County Park](#)
Length: 10-mile loop
Difficulty: Hard

All of the trails in this park are dog-friendly, so take your pick. This trail is our favorite, looping through the heart of the preserve and leading past the entrance of the San Cristobal Mine, a Gold Rush era mercury ("quicksilver") mine.

Trail Map [↗](#)



“Dang, it gets mad-hot in the South Bay. So, be cool y’all, hook your friends up with some water when tongues start to hang.”
-Victor



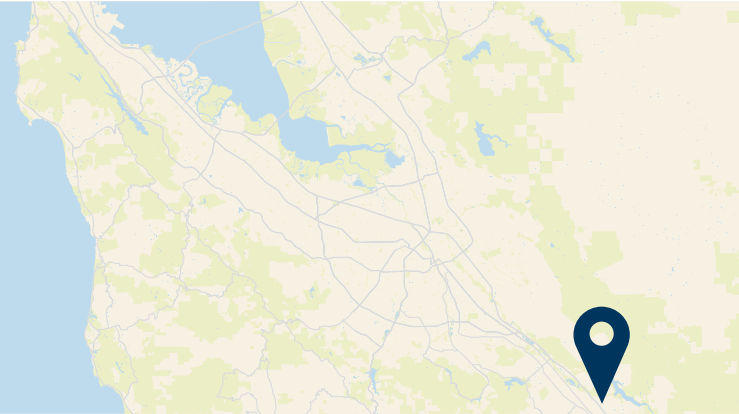
Coyote Lake Harvey Bear Ranch



Preserve: Coyote Lake Harvey Bear Ranch County Park [↗](#)
Length: 4-mile loop
Difficulty: Moderate

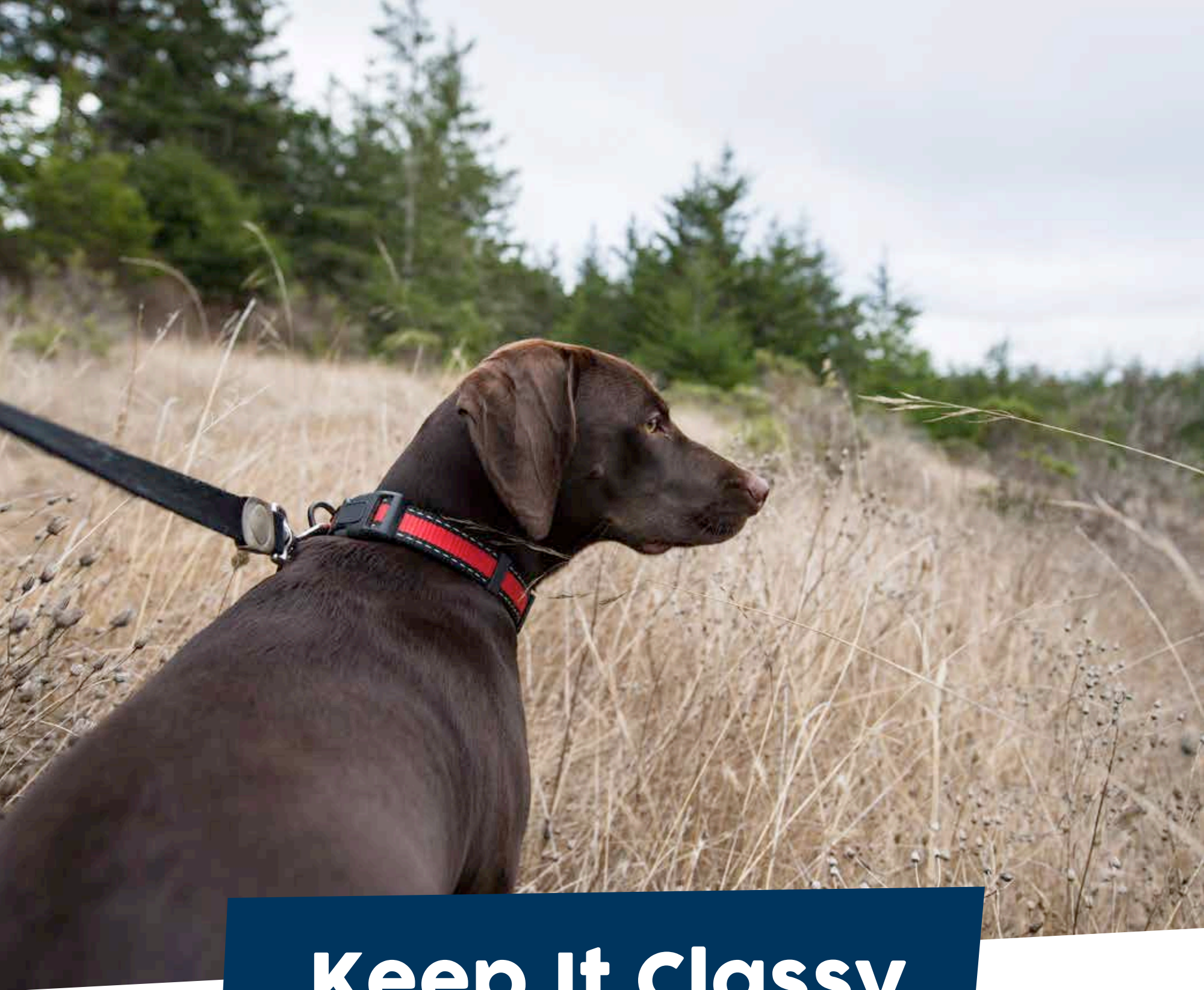
This trail weaves through golden hills sprinkled with towering valley oak. With spectacular views of the South Bay, this is a must-see piece of the iconic California landscape. Great for fall walks when the weather is cooler.

Trail Map [↗](#)



“At fourteen, I’ve reached a point in my long hiking career where I prefer to stick to my favorite go-to trails. And let me tell you, this is one of them.”
-Sitka





Keep It Classy

Here are a few guidelines for dog-friendly hiking:

- Limit yourself to three dogs per person.
- Keep your dogs out of streams and ponds to help protect wildlife.
- A six-foot leash is required for leashed areas—self-retracting leashes are allowed with a maximum extended length of 25 feet.
- Keep your dogs from harassing wildlife or other visitors.
- Please remove dog waste by packing it out.
- Always ask before approaching dogs on the trail.



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Dog-Friendly Open Spaces

Some open spaces are dog-friendly on designated trails only—please plan accordingly.

Mid Peninsula Regional Open Space District

Coal Creek

El Sereno

Fremont Older

Long Ridge

Pulgas Ridge

St. Joseph's Hill

Thornewood

Windy Hill

National Park Service

Fort Funston

Milagra Ridge

Mori Point

Rancho Corral de Tierra

Sweeney Ridge

San Mateo County Parks

Devil's Slide

Edgewood

Fitzgerald Marine Reserve

Mirada Surf

Pillar Point Bluff

Quarry Park

City of Santa Clara

Ulistac Natural Area

Santa Clara County Parks

Almaden Quicksilver

Alviso Marina

Anderson Lake

Calero

Chesbro Reservoir

Coyote Creek

Coyote Lake Harvey
Bear Ranch

Ed R. Levin

Hellyer

Joseph D. Grant

Lexington Reservoir

Los Gatos Creek

Martial Cottle

Mt. Madonna

Penitencia Creek

Sanborn

Santa Teresa

Stevens Creek

Uvas Canyon

Uvas Reservoir

Vasona Lake

Villa Montalvo

City of Menlo Park

Bedwell Bayfront



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Dog-Friendly Open Spaces

Some open spaces are dog-friendly on designated trails only—please plan accordingly.

Coastside Land Trust

Wavecrest

California State Parks

Bean Hollow

Henry Cowell State Park

Forest of Nisene Marks
State Park

Lighthouse Field
State Beach

Manresa State Beach

Montara State Beach

New Brighton State Beach

City of Los Gatos

Heintz

Santa Rosa

City of Redwood City

Stulsaft Park

City of San Jose

Guadalupe River Park

Guadalupe Oak Grove Park

City of Belmont

Water Dog Lake

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

Soquel Demonstration
State Forest

City of Palo Alto Open Space Preserves

Arastradero

Palo Alto Baylands

Santa Cruz County Parks

Greyhound Rock Beach

Moran Lake Park

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Byrne-Milliron Forest

City of Santa Cruz

Davenport Beach

DeLaveaga Park

Land of Medicine
Buddha

Loch Lomond
Recreation Area

Mitchell's Cove Beach

Pogonip

Rio del Mar State Beach

City of San Carlos

Big Canyon and
Eaton Parks

City of San Mateo

Laurelwood/Sugarloaf Park

Seal Point Park



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