



SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

October 17, 2025



Planning and Natural Resources Committee (PNR)
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen)
Email to clerk@openspace.org

Re: Beatty Parking Area and Trail Connections Project at Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (R-25-126) – Support for Miller Point Access Only & Protection of Beatty Meadow

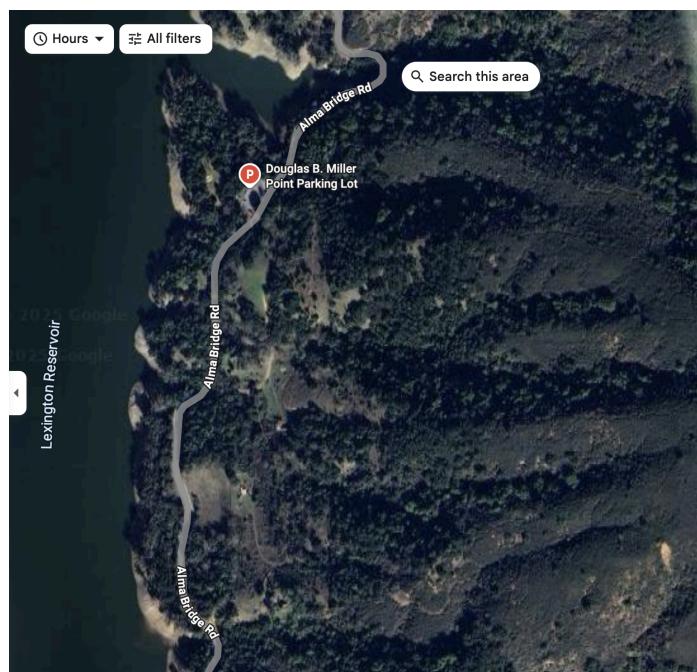
Dear Members of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee,

The District's plan to fulfill its obligation to open a new trail connection from the Beatty property to the Priest Rock Trail is a significant step in expanding public access within Sierra Azul. The Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance and the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter recognize Midpen's commitment to providing this connection, and we acknowledge the need to identify appropriate staging and trailhead access to support it.

However, *how* access is provided is critical.

We commend staff for working with Santa Clara County to pursue use of the underutilized parking at Miller Point. We also acknowledge and appreciate the District's ongoing efforts to address California newt mortality along Alma Bridge Road. However, **we remain firmly opposed to pavement and parking within the Beatty Meadow.**

Figure: Beatty Meadow. The meadow appears as a green, triangular patch in an otherwise densely vegetated landscape. Clearly, this meadow is unique and rare in the Sierra Azul landscape.



During the April 2025 on-site Planning and Natural Resources Committee visit, we were struck by the presence of Fernald's irises scattered across the open grassland. It reinforced what cannot be overstated; open wildflower meadows of this kind are exceptionally rare in the Sierra Azul landscape. This meadow's ecological value as habitat for native wildflowers, birds, pollinators, and wildlife movement would be permanently diminished by grading, paving, or fragmentation.

While access is important, we must emphasize that solving California newt mortality on Alma Bridge Road is of utmost priority. Until meaningful wildlife passage measures are implemented, it would be inappropriate to introduce any additional parking capacity that could increase traffic volumes or visitor pressure on this sensitive corridor. New infrastructure must follow ecological protection, not precede it.

We are ready to assist with advocacy at the County level as needed, and we deeply appreciate staff's care and diligence in navigating this complex project. Thank you for your continued stewardship of this extraordinary landscape.

With appreciation,

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance

Dashiell Leeds
Conservation Coordinator
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter