



PENINSULA AND SOUTH BAY

HIKING GUIDE

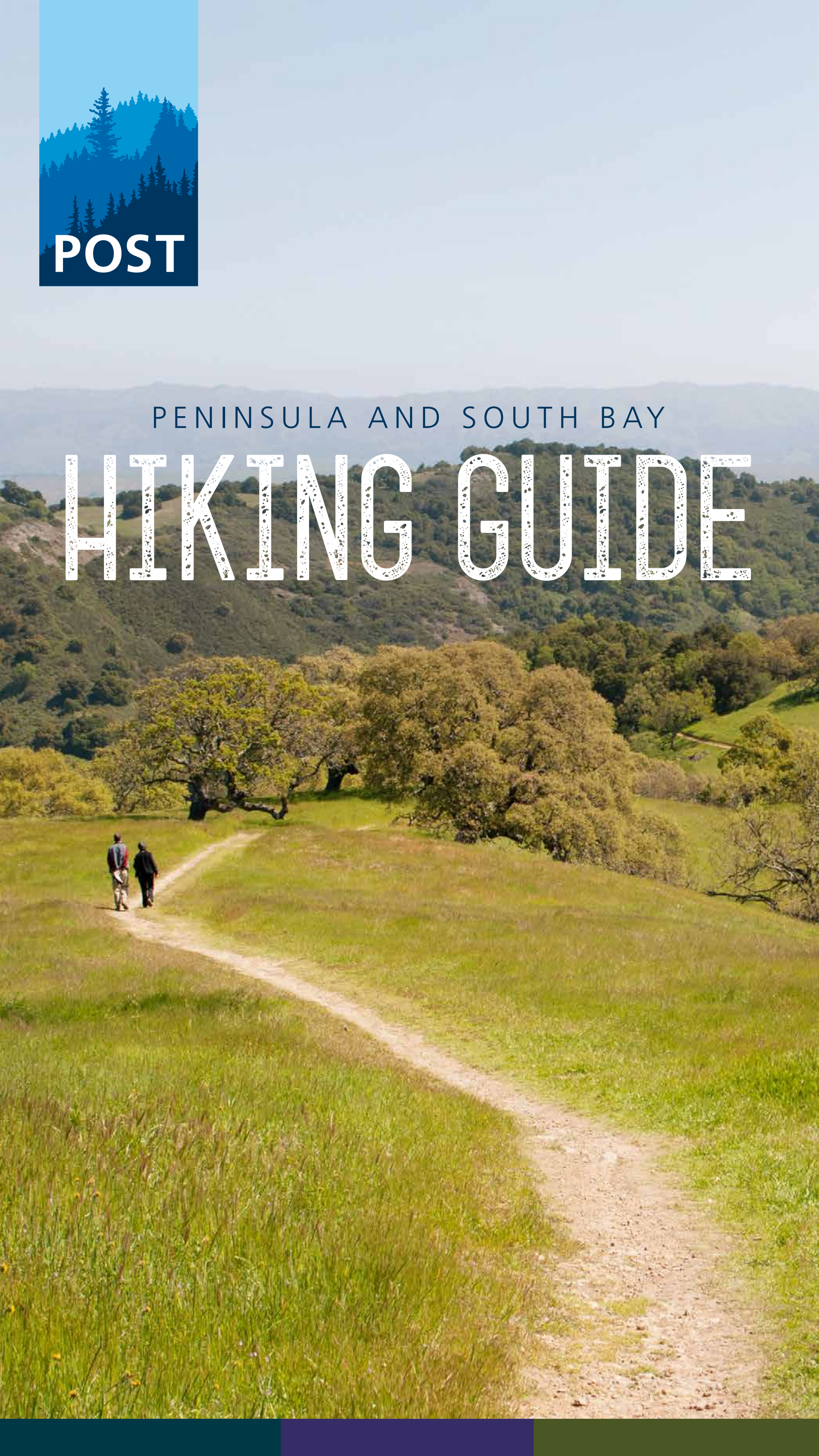


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Click on the buttons below to jump to the first hike in each category.

EASY

Under 4 miles,
mostly flat



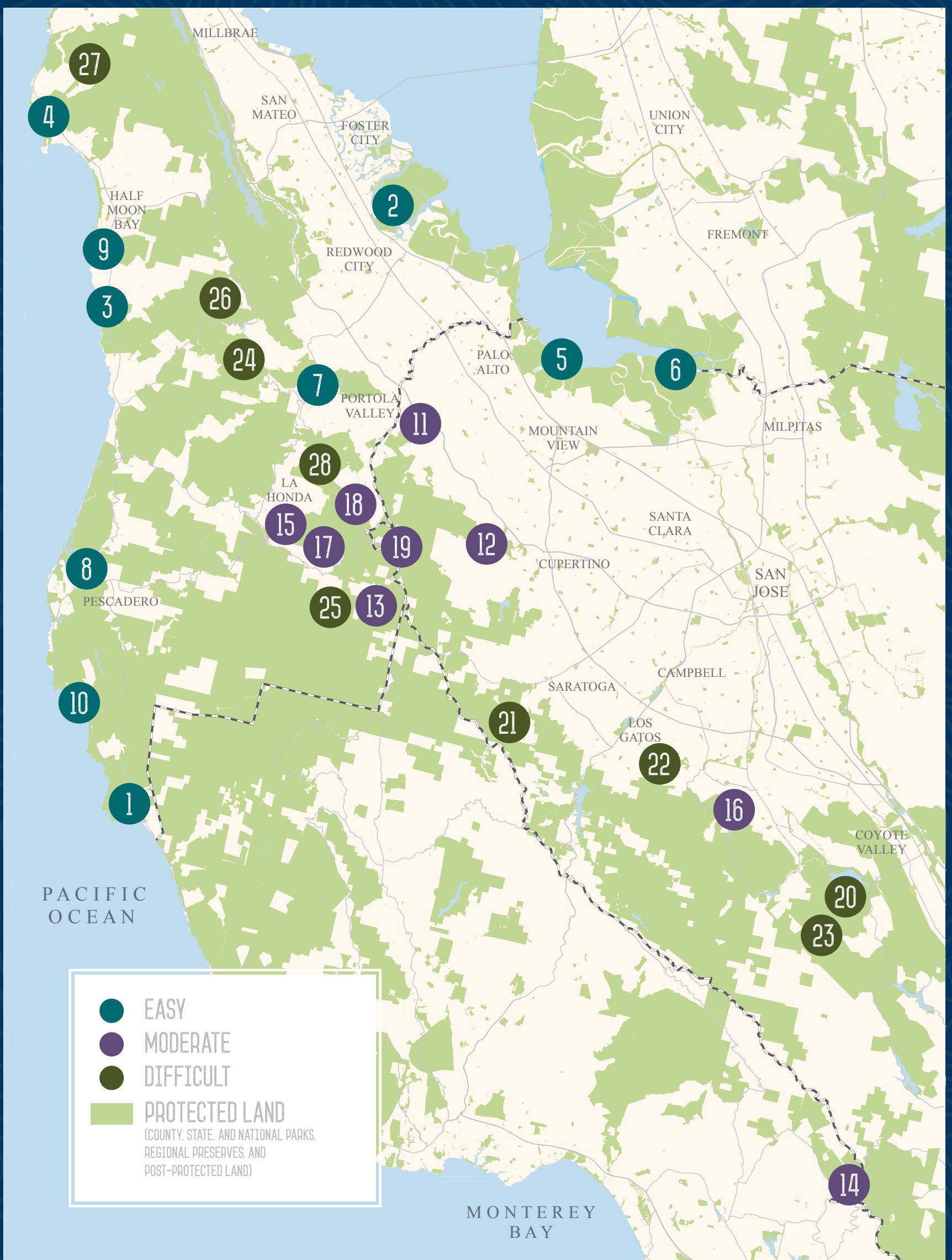
MODERATE

Under 6 miles,
moderate elevation
changes

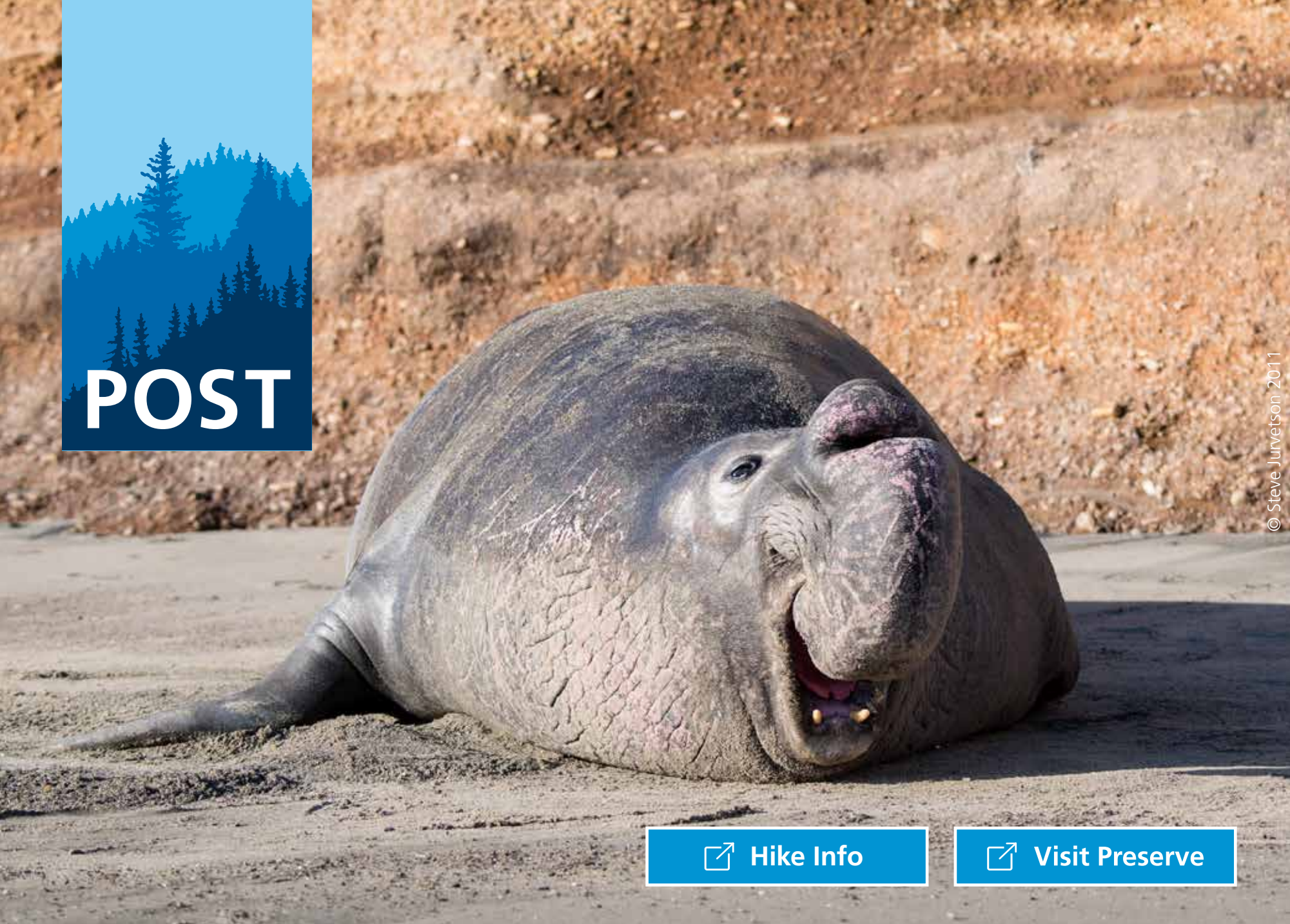


DIFFICULT

More than 7 miles,
strenuous elevation
changes



- EASY
- MODERATE
- DIFFICULT
- PROTECTED LAND
(COUNTY, STATE, AND NATIONAL PARKS,
REGIONAL PRESERVES, AND
POST-PROTECTED LAND)



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1. AÑO NUEVO POINT TRAIL

PESCADERO, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

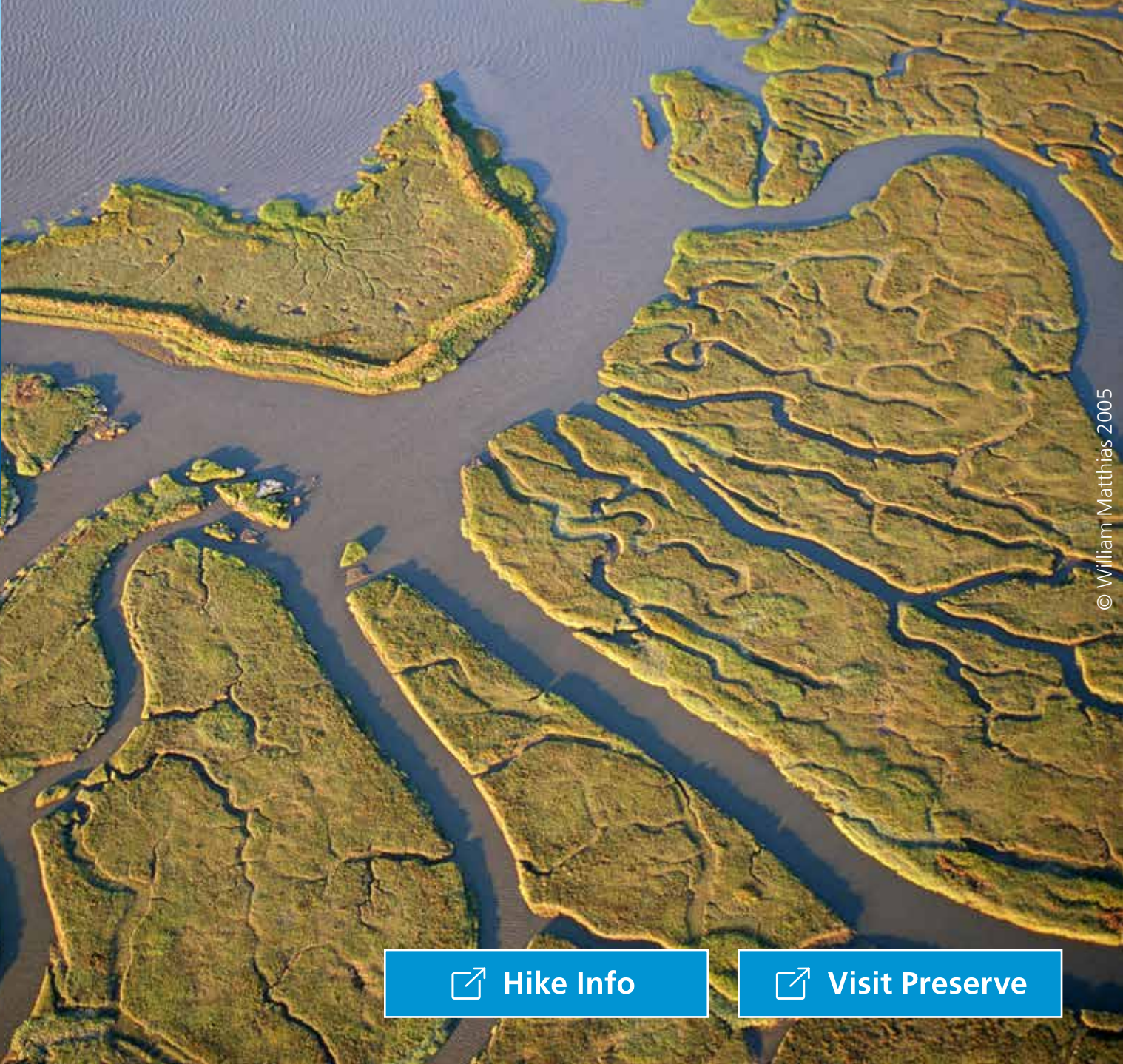
Año Nuevo is the perfect spot to see 10,000-pound elephant seals in their natural habitat. Also look for sea lions and harbor seals.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Año Nuevo State Park
1.5-mile round trip
Flat, fully exposed
Follow the ADA compliant Año Nuevo Point Trail along the coastal bluffs. Retrace your steps.

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2. BAIR ISLAND

REDWOOD CITY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

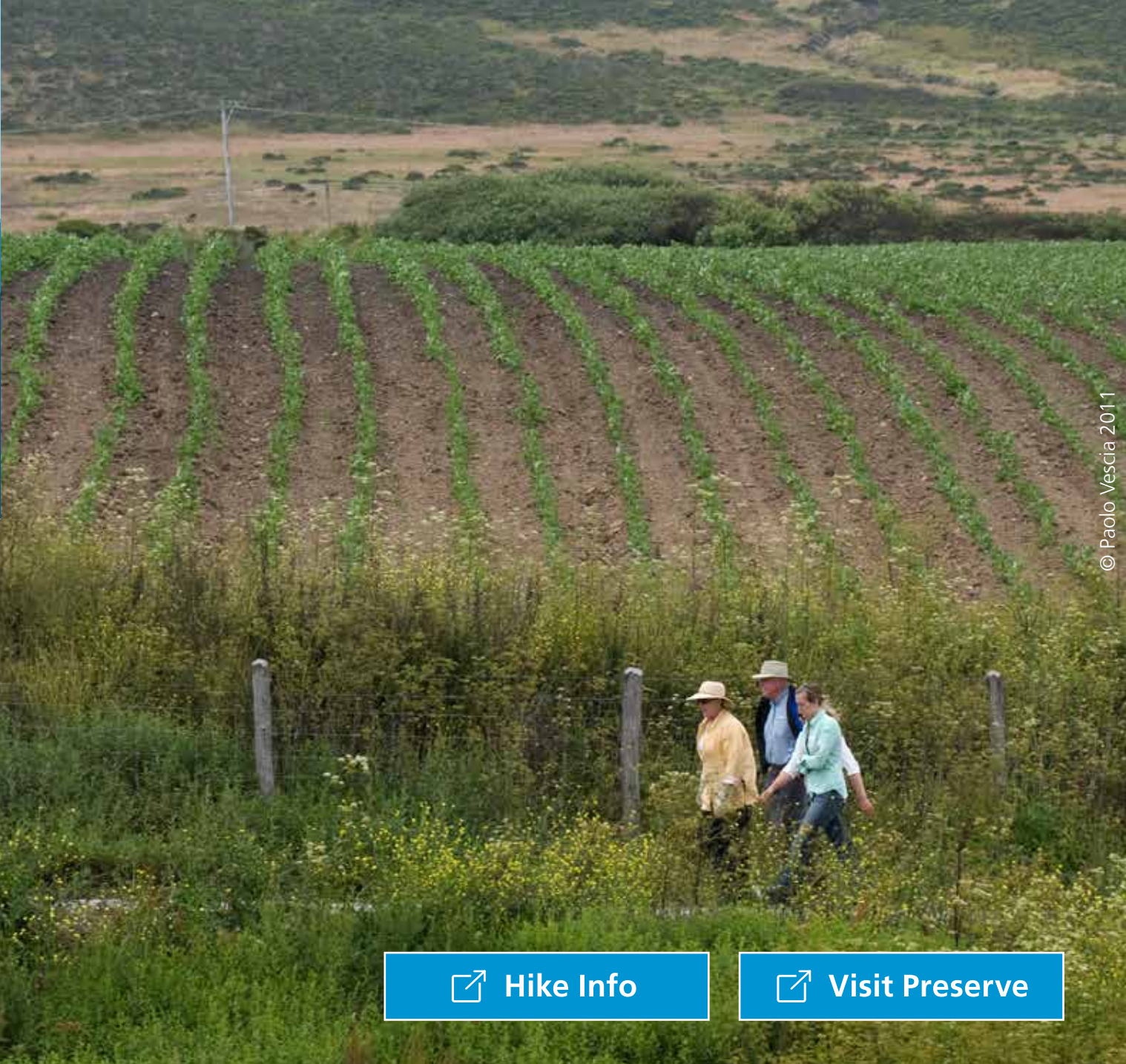
Opened in 2015, Bair Island has great views of the Bay and the adjacent wetlands. Look for large rays, leopard sharks, egrets, great blue herons and other shorebirds.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge
3.4 miles round trip
Flat, fully exposed
From the parking area, follow the trail to the Middle Bair Island observation deck. Retrace your steps.

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3. COWELL-PURISIMA TRAIL

HALF MOON BAY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

This section of the California Coastal Trail has it all: stunning Pacific vistas on one side, working farmland on the other and a secluded beach at the northern end. Look for harbor seals, dolphins, hawks, pelicans, migrating whales and deer.

PRESERVE

Cowell Ranch State Beach

MILEAGE

3.6 miles one way (arrange a ride back to the start)

DETAILS

Flat, fully exposed

ROUTE

Take the Cowell-Purisima Trail, starting at Cowell Ranch State Beach.

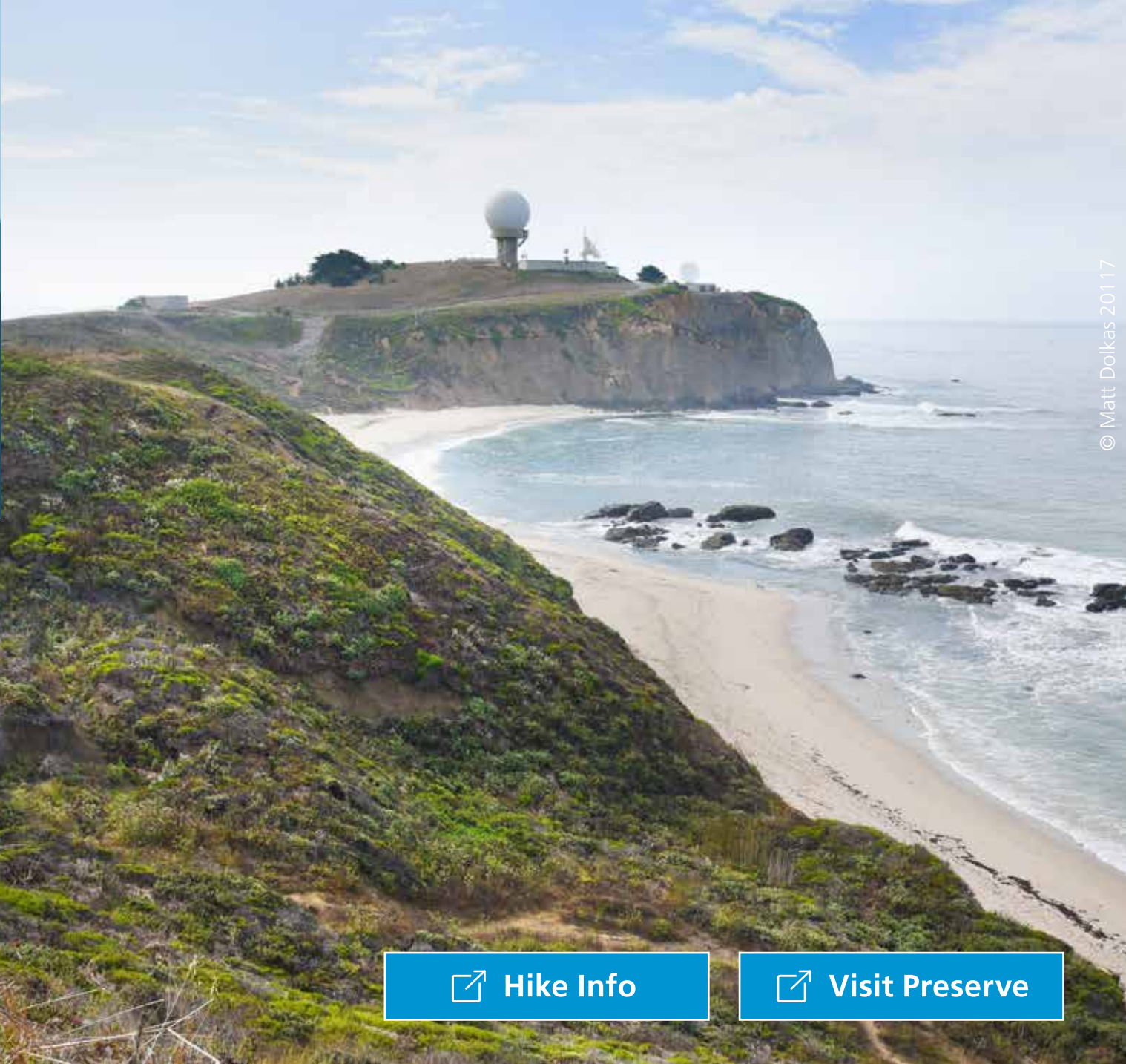


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4. JEAN LAUER TRAIL

MOSS BEACH, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

The Jean Lauer Trail was created in memory of Jean Lauer, a former POST staffer who loved this stretch of coastline. Watch for views of the famous surf break at Mavericks, seals, pelicans, gulls and endangered San Francisco garter snakes.

PRESERVE

Pillar Point Bluff County Park

MILEAGE

1.4-mile loop

DETAILS

Flat, fully exposed

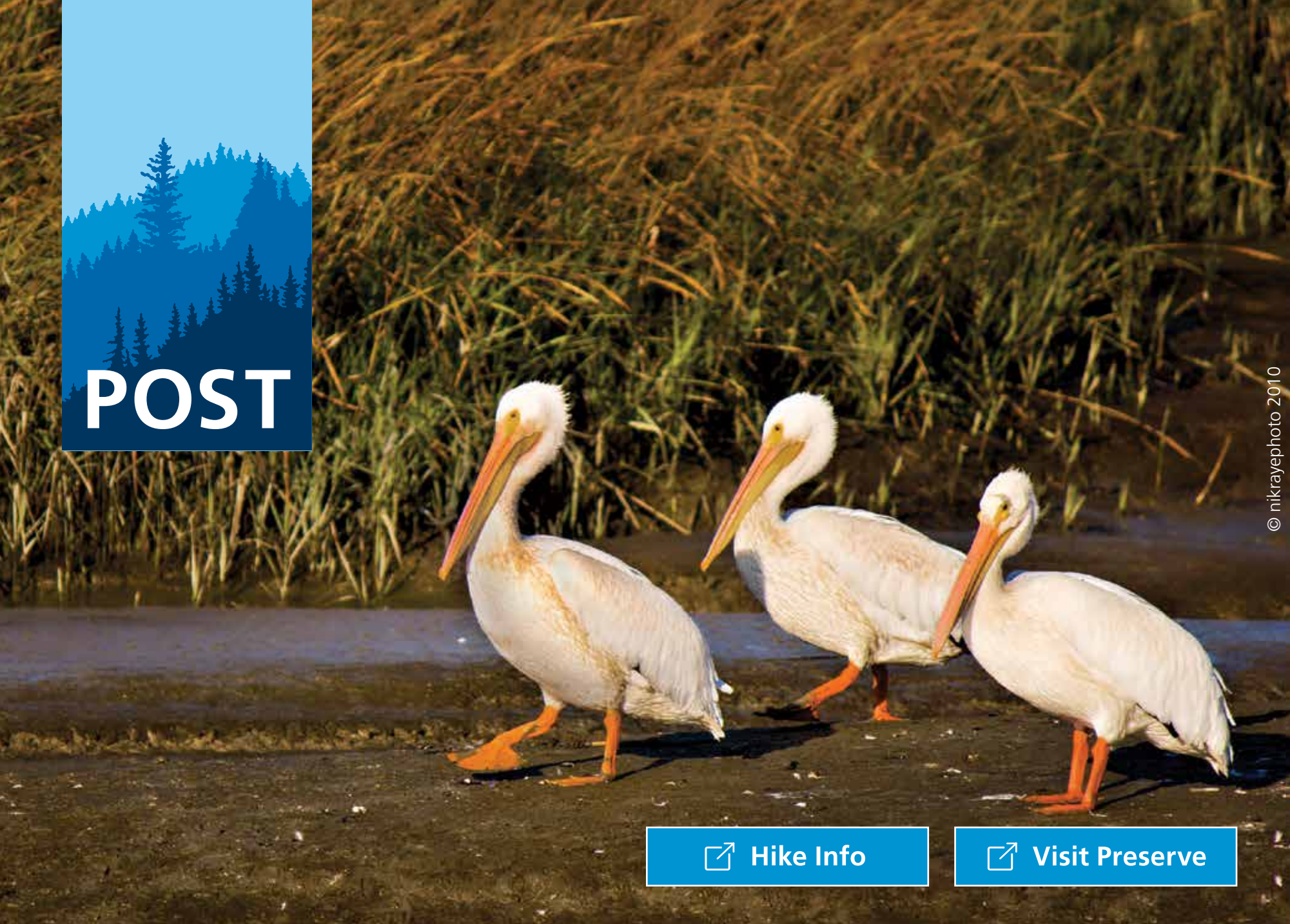
ROUTE

Starting from the Pillar Point Bluff trailhead, take the Jean Lauer Trail across the bluff.



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5. LEVEE TRAIL

MOUNTAIN VIEW, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



EASY

This stroll is a birder's delight. Located within the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, you'll have the chance to see the endangered Ridgeway's rail, least tern or maybe even the American white pelican.

PRESERVE

Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area

MILEAGE

1-mile round trip

DETAILS

Flat, fully exposed

ROUTE

From the Crittenden Lane parking area, cross the bridge and head north along the Levee Trail past the Stevens Creek Nature Study Area. Retrace your steps.

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6. MALLARD SLOUGH TRAIL

SAN JOSE, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



EASY

This trail takes you through fantastic bay habitat, an oasis for millions of migratory birds and endangered species. It also boasts views of the surrounding mountains.

PRESERVE

Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge

MILEAGE

3.3 miles round trip

DETAILS

Flat, fully exposed

ROUTE

From the Environmental Education Center parking area, take the Mallard Slough Trail loop.

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7. SCHILLING LAKE TRAIL

WOODSIDE, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

This stroll is great for an after-work escape. Look for migratory birds and California slender salamanders at Schilling Lake.

PRESERVE

Thornewood Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

1.5 miles round trip

DETAILS

100' elevation, slightly exposed

ROUTE

Take the Schilling Lake Trail to Schilling Lake. retrace your steps.



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8. SEQUOIA AUDUBON TRAIL

WOODSIDE, SAN MATEO COUNTY



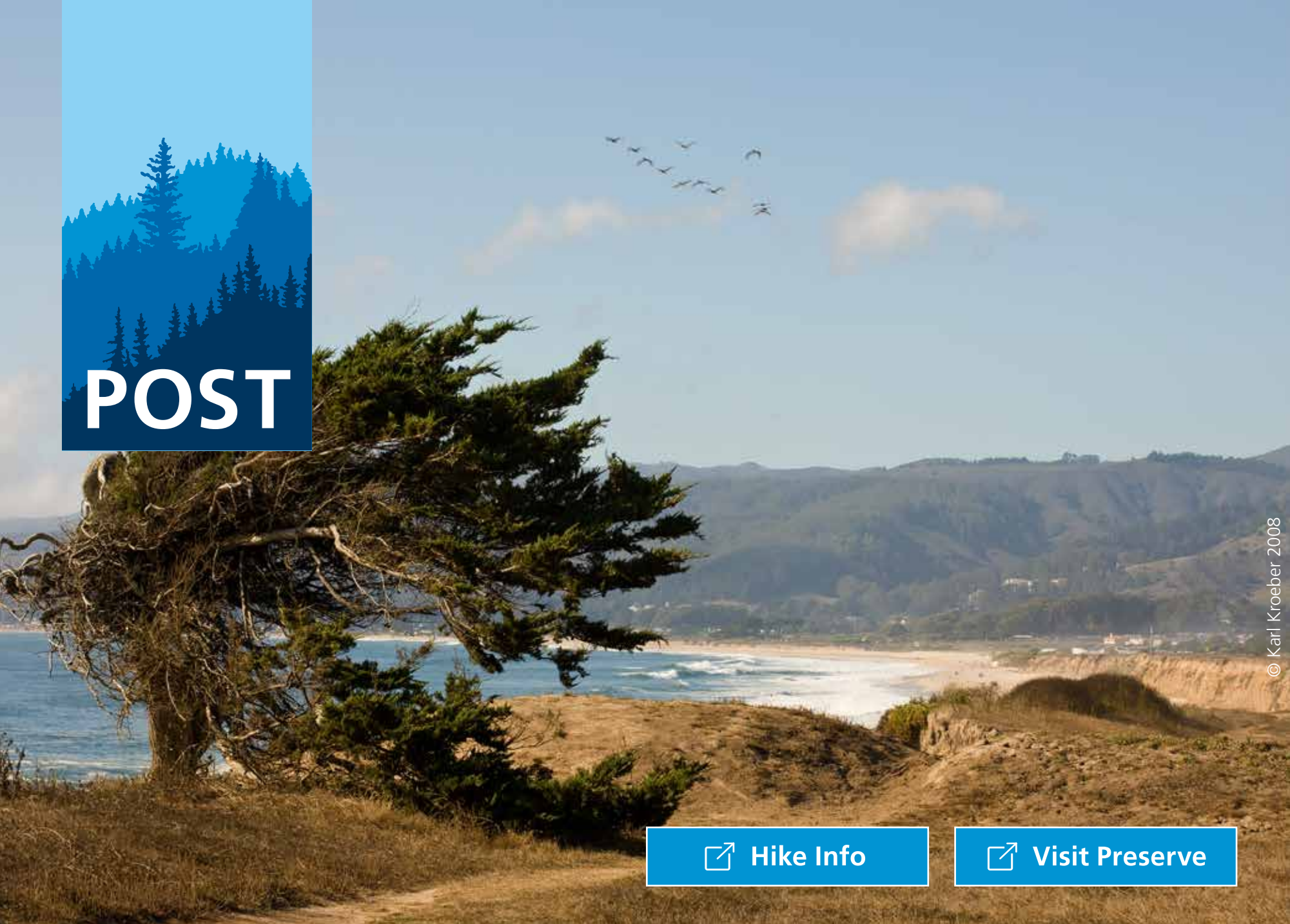
The Pescadero Marsh is full of life and this trail winds right through the middle of it. In the spring and summer, keep a lookout for migrating butterflies, great egrets and endangered California red-legged frogs.

PRESERVE	Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve
MILEAGE	1.5 miles round trip
DETAILS	Uneven, mostly exposed
ROUTE	From the parking lot west of Highway 1, head east on the Sequoia Audubon Trail out and back.



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9. WAVECREST TRAIL

HALF MOON BAY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

Enjoy the views and cool ocean breezes on this coastal trail. If you're lucky, you might even see great blue heron, snowy egrets and migrating whales.

PRESERVE

Wavecrest Open Space Reserve

MILEAGE

1.5 miles round trip

DETAILS

Flat, mostly exposed

ROUTE

From the parking area near the baseball fields, follow the trail north then turn left through the trees toward the beach. At the edge of the bluffs, continue onto the Wavecrest Bird Trail. Retrace your steps.

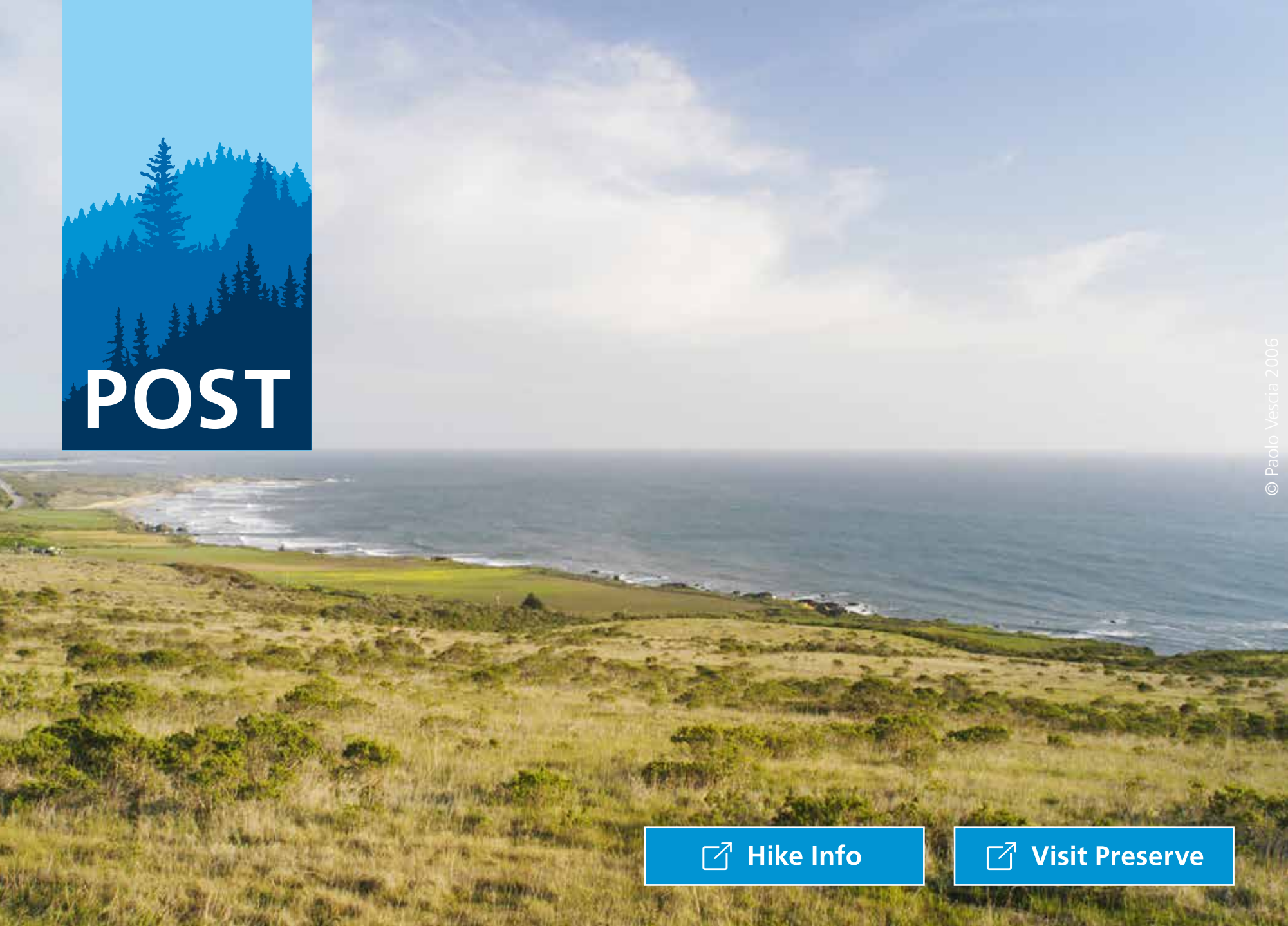


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10. WILBUR'S WATCH

PESCADERO, SAN MATEO COUNTY



EASY

The ocean breeze coming off the Pacific makes this a perfect summer stroll. Look for migrating whales, California poppies and views of Pigeon Point Lighthouse.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Public trail on POST-owned Cloverdale Coastal Ranches

2 miles round trip

260' elevation gain, fully exposed

Start at the Pigeon Point Road parking lot and follow the trail up to a viewpoint and back.



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11. ARASTRADERO CREEK LOOP

PALO ALTO, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



MODERATE

The Pearson-Arastradero Preserve is easily accessible from Highway 280, and this hike provides a welcome break from the summer heat. Look for wildflowers, California quail, blackberries, wild roses and cottontail rabbits.

PRESERVE

Pearson-Arastradero Preserve

MILEAGE

3.7-mile loop

DETAILS

300' elevation gain, shady

ROUTE

Take the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail to the Arastradero Creek Trail, then take the Woodrat Trail and Meadowlark Trail before connecting back with de Anza.

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12. HIGH MEADOW TRAIL LOOP

LOS ALTOS, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



MODERATE

This hike is great for all seasons. Enjoy wildflowers in the spring, cool canyon shade in summer and wildlife all year long.

PRESERVE

Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

5.5-mile loop

DETAILS

800' elevation gain, mostly exposed

ROUTE

From the Permanente Creek Trail, take the Lower Meadow Trail, right on the High Meadow Trail and left onto Upper Wildcat Canyon Trail. Then retrace your steps.



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13. LONG RIDGE TRAIL

LOS GATOS, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



MODERATE

At the top of the ridgeline, this hike has sweeping views of the surrounding forests and Pacific Ocean. The wildflowers are amazing here in the spring, but it's lovely all year long.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Long Ridge Open Space Preserve

4.7 miles round trip

500' elevation gain, partially exposed

From the Peters Creek Trailhead, head to the Peters Creek Trail and go right on Long Ridge Trail. Continue onto Long Ridge Road and then left onto Peters Creek Trail. Retrace your steps.

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Hike Info



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14. MERRY-GO-ROUND LOOP

WATSONVILLE, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



MODERATE

Mount Madonna supports a highly diverse landscape with redwood forests, oak woodland, dense chaparral and grassy meadows. While it's pleasant any time of year, it's best to visit in the spring when the wildflowers are in bloom.

PRESERVE

Mount Madonna County Park

MILEAGE

4.6-mile loop

DETAILS

1200' elevation gain, fully exposed

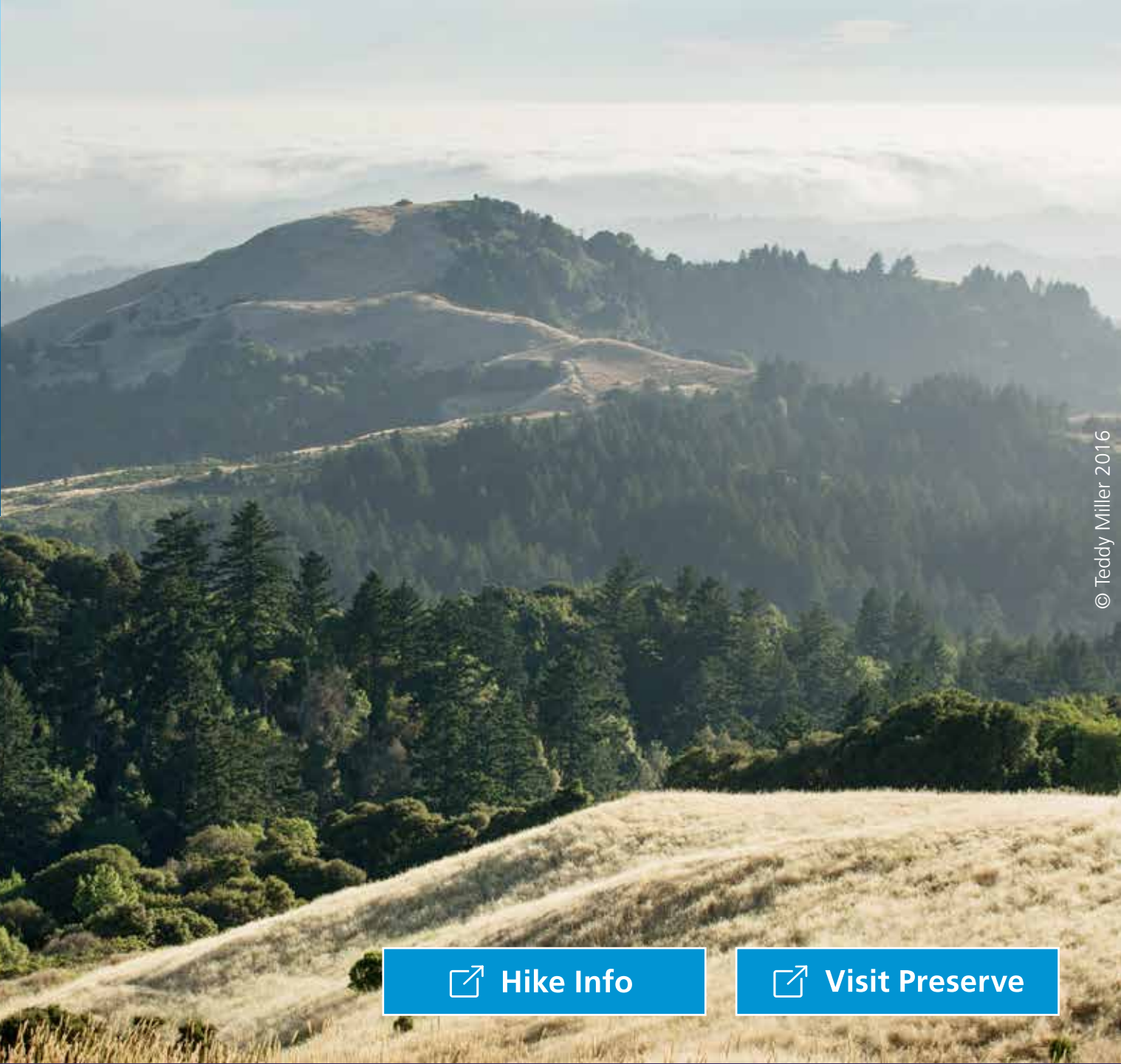
ROUTE

From the Sprig Lake entrance, go right and continue on the Merry-Go-Round Trail, left on the Loop Trail, then follow the Ridge Trail back to the parking lot.



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15. MINDEGO HILL TRAIL

LA HONDA, SAN MATEO COUNTY



MODERATE

As the highest point in the area, Mindego Hill has amazing 360-degree views. Look for spring wildflowers, western fence lizards, red-tailed hawks and California quail.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

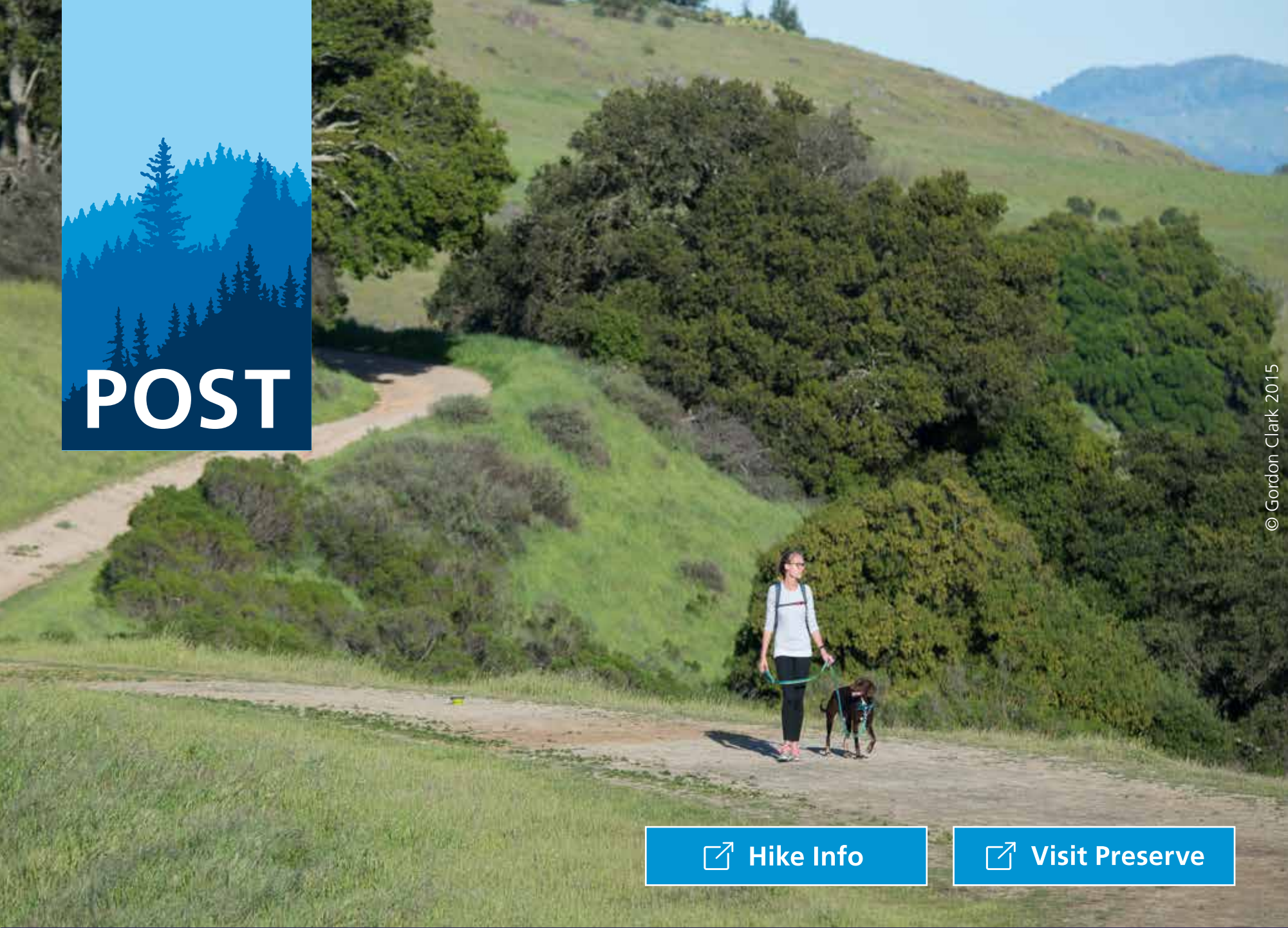
4.6 miles round trip

1300' elevation gain, mostly exposed

From the Audrey Rust Commemorative Site parking area, follow the Mindego Hill Trail out and back.

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16. MOCKINGBIRD LOOP

NEW ALMADEN, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



MODERATE

If you're curious about local history, this is the hike for you. This park is the site of the first quicksilver (mercury) mining operation in California, and the most productive mine in state history. With over 30 miles of trails, there's lots to explore.

PRESERVE

Almaden Quicksilver County Park

MILEAGE

3.9-mile loop

DETAILS

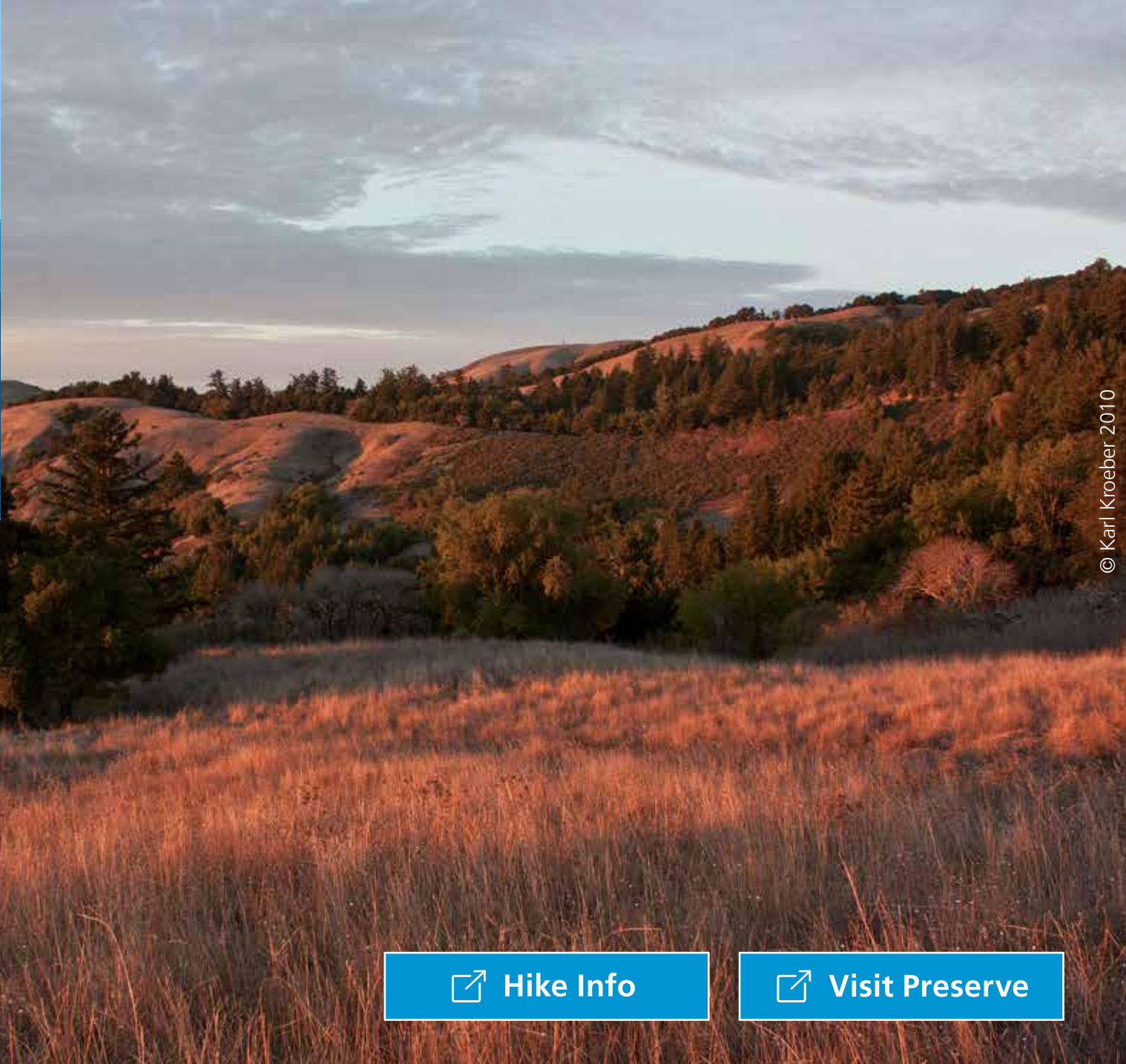
600' elevation gain, mostly exposed

ROUTE

From the Mockingbird Hill entrance take the Hacienda Trail, right on Capehorn Pass Trail, right on the Randol Trail, right on the Buena Vista Trail, right on the New Almaden Trail and right on the Hacienda Trail back to the parking lot.

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17. RIDGE TRAIL

LA HONDA, SAN MATEO COUNTY



MODERATE

This trail follows the ridgeline and provides sweeping vistas the entire time. If you're looking for wildflowers and wildlife in the spring, this is the place to visit.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

3.6 miles round trip

600' elevation gain, mostly exposed

Take the Ridge Trail to the Ancient Oaks Trail, then the Charquin Trail and return on the Ridge Trail.

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18. HUDDART PARK

WOODSIDE, SAN MATEO COUNTY



MODERATE

This scenic wooded hike offers a great combination of elevation change, length and beauty. A downhill section flattens out to follow Union Creek as it winds through second-growth redwoods. Look for newts, banana slugs, black-tailed deer and bobcats.

PRESERVE

Huddart County Park & Phleger Estate

MILEAGE

4.6 miles round trip

DETAILS

400' elevation gain, mostly shaded

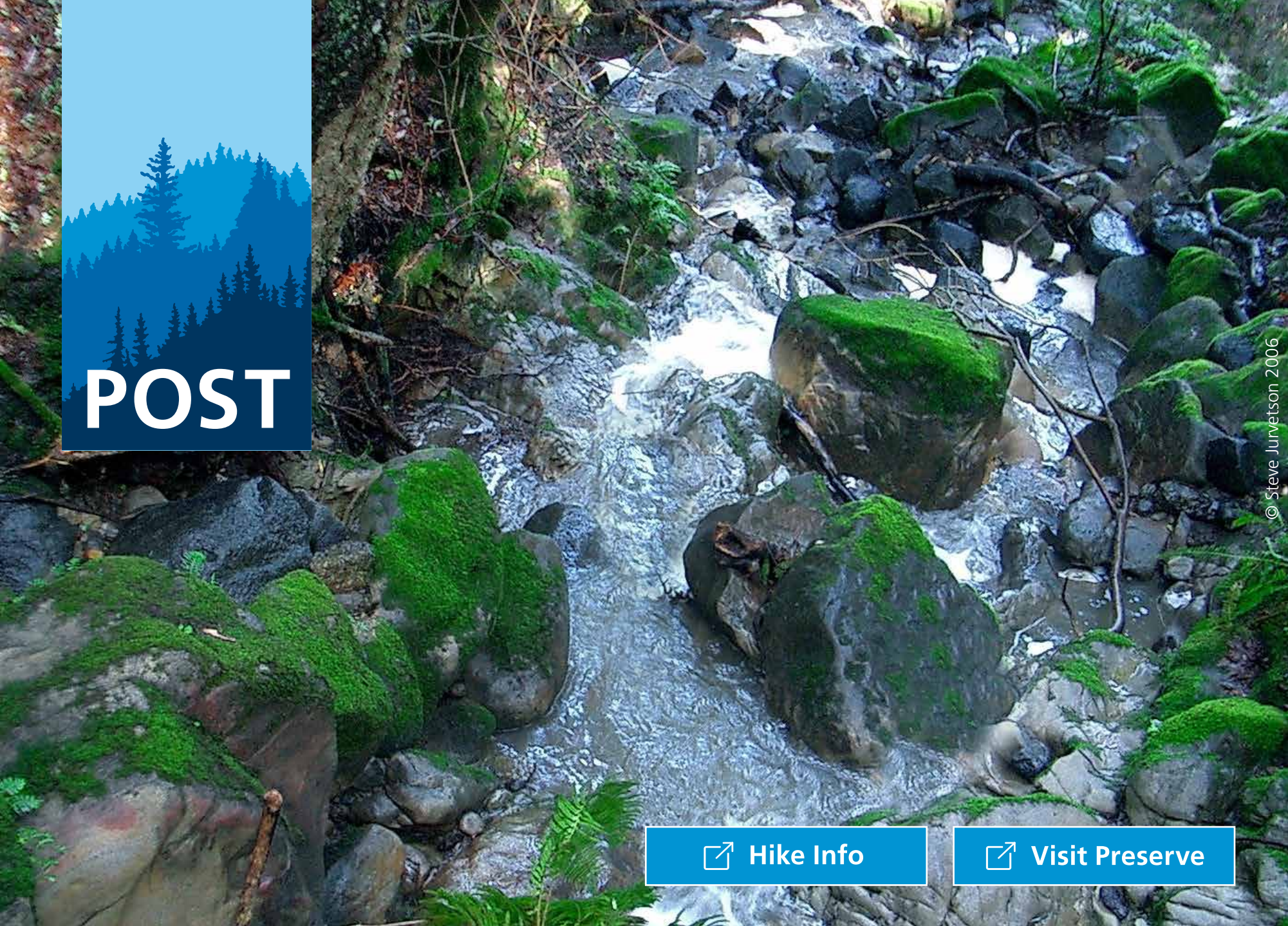
ROUTE

Take the path from the Huddart Park entrance, then hike from the Crystal Springs Trail to Richard's road, then take the Miramontes Trail. Turn around at the junction with the Raymundo Trail.



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19. WATERFALL TRAIL HIKE

PORTOLA VALLEY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



MODERATE

This hike offers a lovely mix of woods and grassy patches, with an energetic stream winding through it all. Look for raccoons, skunks and blackberries along the trail.

PRESERVE

Coal Creek Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

3 miles round trip

DETAILS

700' elevation gain, mix of shade and sun

ROUTE

From Skyline Blvd., take the Meadow Trail to Alpine Road, then take Crazy Pete's Road to the waterfall. Turn around at Alpine and Meadow.

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20. BALD HILLS LOOP

SAN JOSE, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



DIFFICULT

Although it's only a few miles from downtown San Jose, this park feels remote and offers some of the best views in the South Bay.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Calero County Park

8.4-mile loop

2010' elevation gain, exposed

Follow the Peña Trail to the Serpentine Loop Trail. Left on the Cottle Trail. Left on Chisnantuk Peak Trail and Bald Peaks Trail. Left on Cañada del Oro Trail and right on Vallecito Trail back to the Peña Trail and parking lot.

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21. INDIAN ROCK TRAIL

SARATOGA, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



DIFFICULT

This trail takes you on a long climb to the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains. It's worth the effort for the views at Indian Rock.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Sanborn County Park

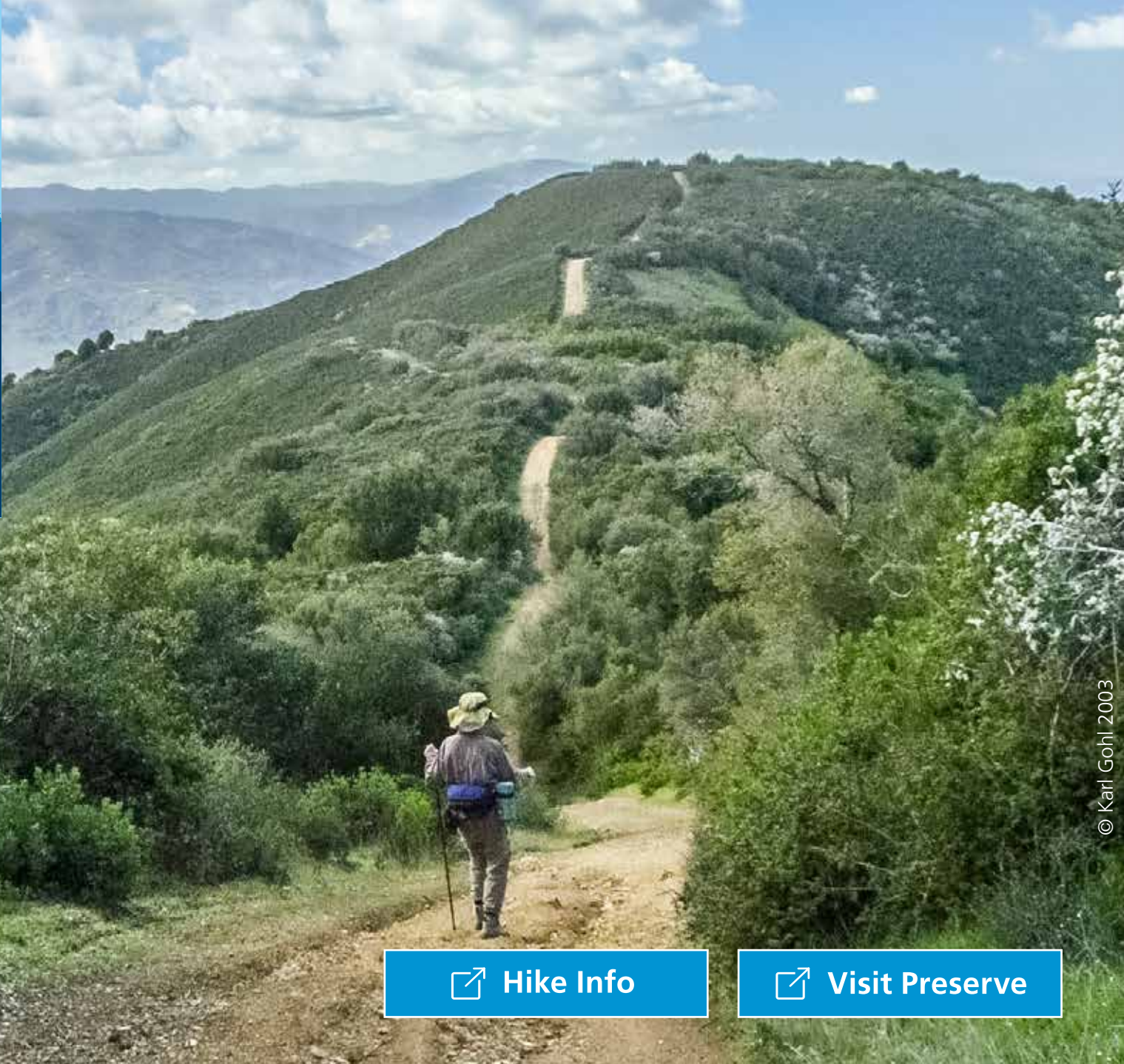
9 miles round trip

1800' elevation gain, partly exposed

From the park's headquarters, climb the Sanborn Trail, right on the Skyline Trail and right on the Indian Rock Trail. Retrace your steps to the Skyline Trail, left on Skyline Trail, left on Sanborn Trail and then follow the San Andreas Trail back to the parking lot.

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22. KENNEDY-LIMEKILN AREA LOOP

LOS GATOS, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



DIFFICULT

With this much vertical gain over such rugged terrain, this challenging hike is great for serious hikers. Your hard work will be rewarded with panoramic views of the South Bay. Look for coast live oak, bay trees, redwoods, deer, bobcats and coyotes.

PRESERVE

Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

13.3-mile loop

DETAILS

3300' elevation gain, mostly exposed

ROUTE

Take the Kennedy Trail to the Limekiln Trail, the Priest Rock Trail, and back to the Kennedy Trail.

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Hike Info



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23. LONG LOOP

SOUTH SAN JOSE, SANTA CLARA COUNTY



DIFFICULT

This hike is best in the spring when wildflowers carpet the hillsides, including California poppy, Mariposa lily, and wild iris. Look for views of Mount Hamilton, deer, bobcats, California quail, coyotes, foxes and mountain lions.

PRESERVE

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

5.8-mile loop

DETAILS

1460' elevation gain, fully exposed

ROUTE

Take Mayfair Ranch Trail to Logwall Canyon Trail, Bald Peaks Trail, Catamount Trail and Serpentine Loop.



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24. LOWER PARK LOOP

REDWOOD CITY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



DIFFICULT

This hike is not as complicated as it sounds from the route description and with this guide you'll know just where to go. It's well worth it to see some of the preserve's most remote locations and huge old-growth redwoods.

PRESERVE

El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

8.8-mile loop

DETAILS

2100' elevation gain, partly exposed

ROUTE

From the parking area take the El Corte de Madera Creek Trail, Tafoni Trail, Fir Trail, Methuselah Trail, Giant Salamander Trail, Timberview Trail, Manzanita Trail before returning to the parking area via the Fir Trail.



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25. PETERS CREEK LOOP

LA HONDA, SAN MATEO COUNTY



DIFFICULT

Peters Creek is home to the third largest old-growth redwood grove in the Santa Cruz Mountains. On this trek, you'll enjoy big trees, meandering creeks and slithering banana slugs. It's a great spot if you're looking for a redwood adventure.

PRESERVE

Portola Redwoods State Park

MILEAGE

11.5-mile loop

DETAILS

1800' elevation gain, partly exposed

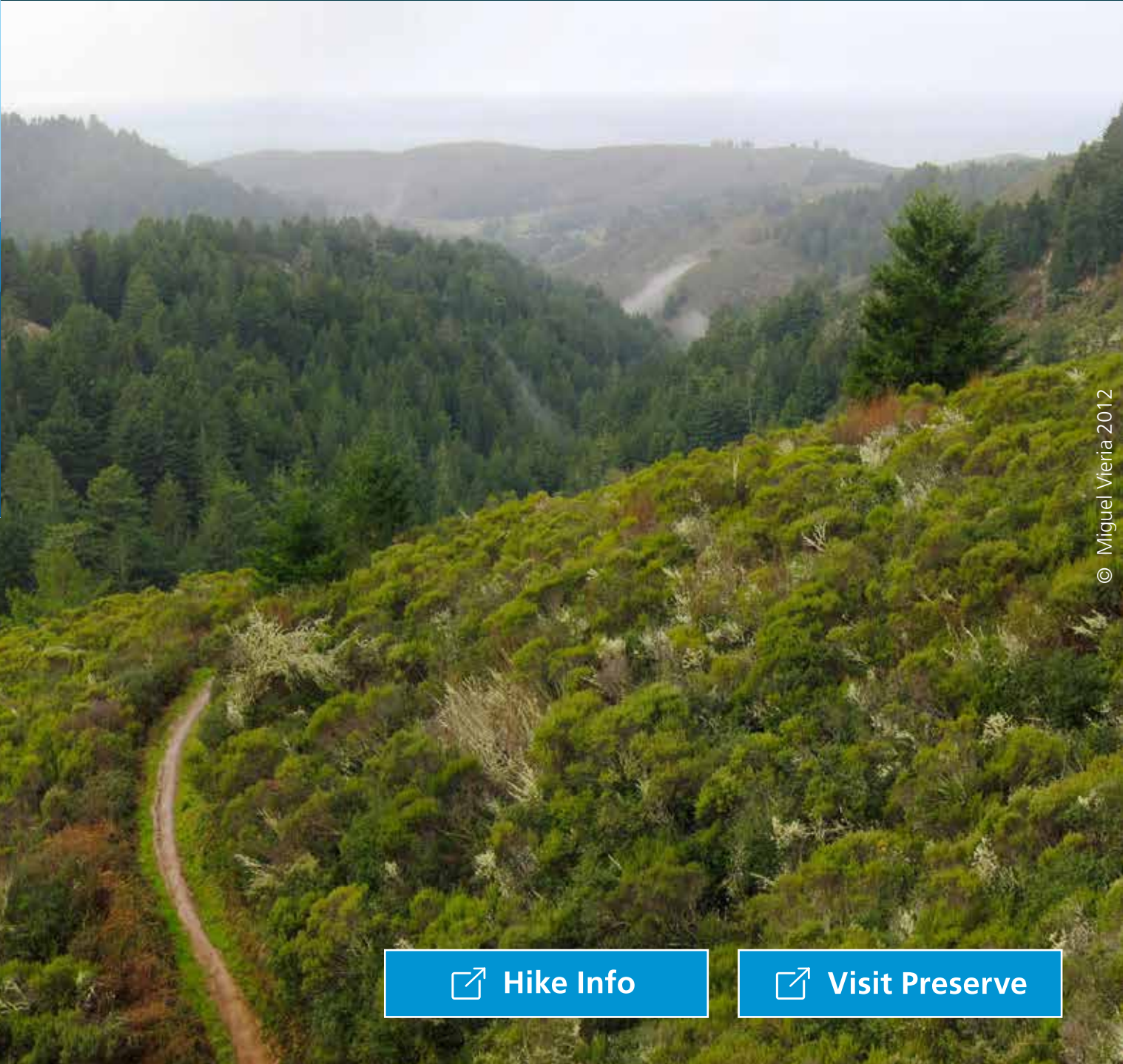
ROUTE

From the park's headquarters, take the Slate Creek Trail and go left on the Bear Creek Trail to the Peters Creek Loop trail. Retrace your steps.



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26. PURISIMA CREEK AND WHITTEMORE GULCH

HALF MOON BAY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



DIFFICULT

This hike meanders through redwoods and along a creek before climbing up to a more exposed ridge and back down to another stream in a quiet forest. Look for redwoods, huckleberry shrubs, madrone, tan oak and lots of banana slugs.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

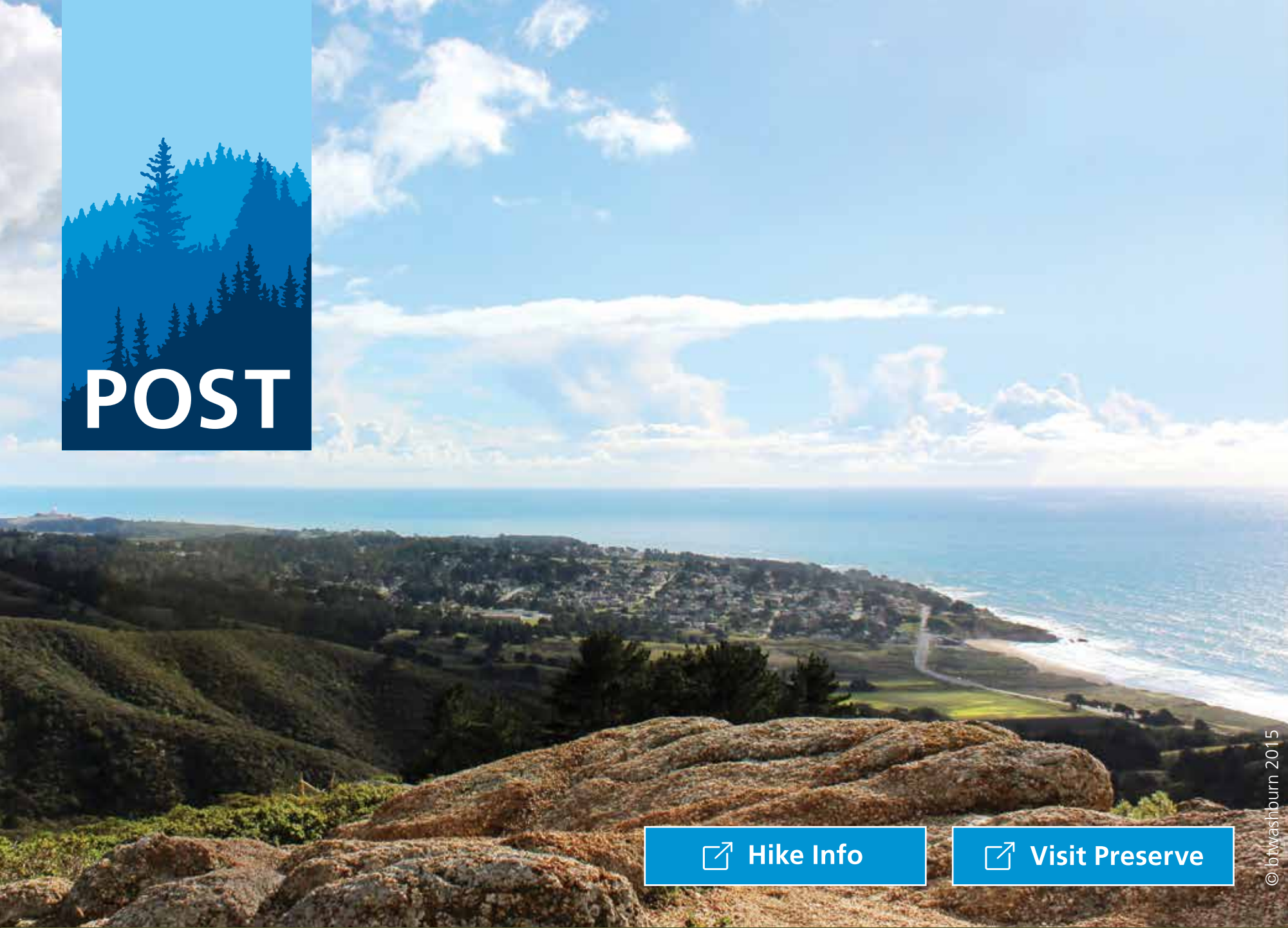
9.1-mile loop

1600' elevation change, mostly shady

Take the Purisima Creek Trail to the Craig Britton Trail, then the Harkins Ridge Trail, North Ridge Trail and Whittemore Gulch Trail.

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27. RANCHO CORRAL DE TIERRA

MOSS BEACH, SAN MATEO COUNTY



DIFFICULT

This hike can take you above the fog and on a clear day you can see Pillar Point in Half Moon Bay. Keep a lookout for endangered San Francisco garter snakes and whales breaching off the coast.

PRESERVE
MILEAGE
DETAILS
ROUTE

Rancho Corral de Tierra

8-mile round trip

1400' elevation gain, exposed

From the parking area, climb Ranch Road past the Ember Ridge Equestrian Center. Continue onto the ridge and follow the Spine Trail out and back.

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28. WINDY HILL TRAIL

PORTOLA VALLEY, SAN MATEO COUNTY



DIFFICULT

This classic and popular hike provides beautiful views of the entire Peninsula from the summit of Windy Hill. Look for Mount Diablo, Mount Tamalpais and Mount Hamilton, as well as California mule deer, coyote, bobcats and raptors.

PRESERVE

Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

MILEAGE

7.5-mile loop

DETAILS

1400' elevation gain, shaded climb, exposed descent

ROUTE

Take the Spring Ridge Trail to the Hamm's Gulch Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail and the Anniversary Trail to reach the summit. Descend via the Spring Ridge Trail to Betsy Crowder Trail.



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POST protects open spaces on the Peninsula
and in the South Bay for the benefit of all.

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