



## **Mount Umunhum**

### 60 seconds

Mount Umunhum consists of 18,000-acres and has an elevation of 3,486 feet making it one of the highest peaks in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Open Space Preserve contains over 63 unique species and over 324 native and animal species. Mount Umunhum has been closed to the public since 1980 and will open back up as of September 16, 2017. With the reopening of the Preserve comes 5 miles of new trails fit for hikers, bikers, and equestrian. Through federal funding and Measure AA, Mount Umunhum was able to undergo construction in order to expand and improve roads and trails as well as create more parking facilities and weather shelters. These much needed construction updates will reestablish Mount Um to even better than its former glory.

Mount Umunhum is teeming with rich history dating back millions of years ago to when the San Andreas fault began forming and shaping the mountain itself. The San Andreas Fault created a diverse geologic environment which has attracted people from all over for hundreds of years. Mount Umunhum served as one of the largest Native American population centers in all of North America with about 70 different tribes calling it home. The Native Americans respected the lands and their practices helped to conserve the environment which allowed it to flourish. The name "Mount Umunhum" comes from the Ohlone Indian phrase for the resting place of the hummingbird.

Along with native history, Mount Umunhum is also well known for its military history. The Almaden Air Force Station was built atop Mount Um in the late 1950s and was used until the 1980s. The station was used as a radar station during the Cold War but was ultimately shut down when satellites rendered the radars ineffective.

Some of the many unique species that reside on Mount Umunhum include hummingbirds, purple martin, side-blotched lizard, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, western screech owls, and California thrashers. It is suspected that California Condors may settle on Mount Um as they have been spotted at the nearby Mount Hamilton.

Support the Loma Prieta Chapter activism educating the public and elected officials about the importance of protecting Mount Umunhum. Become a member, donate to our conservation programs, and help one of our conservation teams described on our website.

### Additional 180 seconds

#### **Value as Wildlife Habitat**

In addition to the species mentioned above, Mount Um is home to venus thistle, white-flowered yampa, tarweed plants, big berry manzanitas, madrones, and many more.

Some of the wildlife includes black-tailed deer, gray foxes, chipmunk, band-tailed pigeons, yellow warblers, black-throated gray warblers, bobcats, spotted towhee, and blue-gray gnatcatchers.

### **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Restoration**

Midpen has spent the last decade working with the state in order to receive federal funding to be able to restore Mount Umunhum. In 2009 they were able to remove 3,000 cubic yards of hazardous materials from Mount Um, most likely from the old military base. Local nonprofit environmental organization Acterra will be providing seeds from Mount Um to eventually result in the planting of over 2,000 plants at the summit. The work of both Midpen and Acterra has been monumental in the restoration of Mount Umunhum so that it can be enjoyed recreationally by many.

### **References/Additional Resources**

Information courtesy of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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