



SEEKING NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL DESIGNATION FOR THE

Bay Area Ridge Trail



The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council seeks Congressional action to authorize a feasibility study to designate the Bay Area Ridge Trail as a National Scenic Trail.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A Trail for Everyone

The Ridge Trail provides nearly 8 million Bay Area residents and visitors access to 145+ parks and open space preserves across 9 counties—connecting communities to nature close to home, work, and school.

Broad Congressional Support

The entire Bay Area congressional delegation, plus U.S. Senators Schiff and Padilla, introduced legislation in January 2026 to authorize a feasibility study. No supplemental funding is required to authorize the study.

Critical Conservation

Designation would protect irreplaceable open space and wildlife habitat in one of America's most populous regions—preserving it for current and future generations.

National Recognition

Only 11 trails nationwide hold National Scenic Trail status, including the Pacific Crest. Designation would place the Ridge Trail among the country's most iconic outdoor destinations.

Federal Partnership

National Scenic Trail status brings new resources and support to complete the remaining 150 miles and ensure long-term stewardship of a world-class trail.

Economic Boost

Designation strengthens the regional outdoor recreation economy, drawing new visitors and supporting local communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

WHAT IS THE CRITERIA

The Bay Area Ridge Trail aligns with the criteria for National Scenic Trails outlined in the National Trails System Act of 1968:

✓	Extended trail route of more than 100 miles
✓	Provides maximum outdoor recreation potential
✓	Provides for enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic and cultural qualities
✓	Represents desert, marsh, grassland, mountain, canyon, river and forest
✓	Represents landforms that exhibit significant regional geographic characteristics
✓	Connects with side trails, which provide additional public access



"National Scenic Trail status would raise awareness and expedite completion of this world-class trail, which boasts over 400 completed miles, on the path to a 550-mile fully connected loop."

— Janet McBride, Executive Director, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council



The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that partners with park agencies, local governments, land trusts, landowners, and volunteers throughout the Bay Area to complete the Ridge Trail.

Mission

To plan, promote, and sustain a connected hiking, cycling, and equestrian trail on the ridgelines around San Francisco Bay – linking people, parks, and open space for today and future generations.

History

Decades ago, park visionary William Penn Mott, Jr. had a big idea: to unite the ridges encircling the San Francisco Bay Area via a continuous park “necklace” or ridgeline trail for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.

Mott’s idea took hold, and in 1989, the first Ridge Trail section was dedicated. Within the first five years, the Bay Area Ridge Trail grew to 200 miles by adding existing trails on public lands to the network.

Today, over 400 miles of Ridge Trail are ready to explore. Step by step, long continuous sections are being knit together to provide thru-hike (or bike or horseback) opportunities.

Long Connected Stretches

WEST
80 miles

from Big Rock in northern Marin County to Highway 92 in San Mateo County

EAST
45 miles

from Kennedy Grove Regional Park in Contra Costa County to Garin Regional Park in Alameda County

Bay Area residents and visitors can reach the world-class Ridge Trail within a short trip from home, work, or school through multiple access points around the Bay. The Ridge Trail brings people and communities together and offers opportunities for exercise, recreation, and a connection to nature with scenic vistas close to a diverse urban area.

Get in Touch

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Bay Area Ridge Trail

- Current Trail
- - - Future Trail
- - - County Lines

