



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Internship Program



Photo Credit: Christine Clarke

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) Internship Program is designed for motivated college students and recent graduates seeking professional work experience and exposure to opportunities in local government. This program is designed to provide challenging work experiences that are unique to Midpen in its mission to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land for protection and public use and enjoyment. Under the guidance of mentors, interns complete department specific projects to develop their administrative and analytical knowledge, skills, and abilities. Interns can expect to work alongside and learn from seasoned Midpen employees and contribute their talents to a variety of projects. Our interns often gain full-time employment in the public sector after completing their internship.

As part of a larger community, Midpen partners with the local cities and counties through the NextGen Silicon Valley Regional Internship Program. Interns will get a chance to attend professional development workshops and networking events specific to the public sector. Overall, the Midpen internship program strives to educate, attract and retain talent to contribute to the legacy of open space protection and outdoor recreation. It is also proving to be an effective tool in furthering the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals, establishing a recruitment pipeline for entry-level positions, and providing project and program level support for the agency.

ABOUT US

Midpen helps plants, animals, and people thrive throughout the greater Santa Cruz Mountains region by preserving a greenbelt of more than 70,000 acres of public open space with more than 250 miles of trails in 27 extraordinary open space preserves, permanently protected for natural resource conservation and ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. Our mission is “to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.” On the San Mateo County coastside, our mission also includes protecting the rural character and encouraging viable agricultural use of land resources. Midpen is a public agency with a focused mission that guides our work, and where every employee makes an impact.

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Find your path...

Midpen hosts about 11 interns annually, from majors that include Biology, Business Administration, Computer Science, Ecology, Engineering, Public Administration, Communications, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, GIS, Geography, Graphic Design, Journalism, Information Technology, Management Information Systems, Marketing, Park Management, Land Use/Planning, Policy/Government, Resource Management, and many others.



Photo Credit: Chih Hsin Wang

INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTIONS

Natural Resources Department

The **Wildlife Biology Intern** assists with essential projects and programs like the wildlife camera program, the mountain lion collaring project, and wildlife monitoring to support capital and routine work. The intern also assists with reviewing and preparing permits for outside researchers. Training is provided in a variety of wildlife identification and field survey techniques as well as desktop review of wildlife imagery, data entry and management.

The **Conservation Biology Intern** assists with essential projects and programs like the Conservation Grazing Program, Mitigation and Monitoring Programs, and capital improvement projects as a biological monitor. In addition, the intern assists with the Request for Qualifications and Proposals and/or Requests for Bids process as needed. Training is provided in a variety of natural resource identification and field survey techniques.

Human Resources Department

The **HR intern** gains valuable work experience and exposure to various HR functions and the public sector, including recruitment, selection and retention activities; onboarding and offboarding employees; staff training, staff development and recognition; research of employee benefits; HR metrics and demographics tracking, analysis and reporting; policy research; assistance with compensation studies; data entry into the Human Resources Information System and employee/customer service. Interns participate in the HR functions in the lifecycle of Midpen employees and provide a myriad of HR support. The interns receive feedback, coaching and practical experience needed to advance as a professional in Human Resources.

Engineering & Construction (E&C) Department

Under general direction, the **Engineering and Construction intern** supports professional-level engineering and construction project management activities, including the design and implementation of capital improvement and natural resource preservation and protection projects; coordinate project related assignments with other Midpen staff, outside consultants, contractors and regulatory agencies; assist with the construction bidding process; and perform related work as required.

Find your passion...

INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTIONS, CONTINUED

Planning Department

Planning Interns responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, researching and compiling project information, supporting with community and stakeholder engagement, assisting with environmental review and documentation, researching new programs and initiatives, conducting field surveys and data collection, and using computer-based systems such as GIS, Microsoft Excel and Adobe Illustrator for analysis of data and preparation of documents regarding Midpen lands and facilities.

Public Affairs Department

Interns are engaged with supporting outreach and event planning; editorial planning; digital content management; and public/media relations planning. Interns learn and practice project management skills; strategic content creation; and public engagement strategies. Public Affairs Interns may also work on a wide variety of assignments and projects, including research and writing for publications; creating social media posts and campaigns; creating and updating website content; drafting, proofreading and production of various informational materials; and special projects; may also support governmental relations projects.



Interns at the 2024 Next Gen Intern Forum

Information Systems and Technology (IST) Department

The **IST intern** is exposed to government information technology. They gain applicable experience to prepare them for an IT Technician job. This intern also participates in new cybersecurity projects, software integration and provide hands-on helpdesk support. In addition, they are exposed to contracting and overall IT management processes.

The **GIS Intern** gains experience in cartography, data collection/management, web/software support, and customer service by performing entry level GIS services that support Midpen operations and projects. The GIS Intern supports the GIS mapping and data entry needs of Vision Plan and Measure AA projects and of field-related programs, including the tracking of fuel and vegetation treatment related to the Wildland Fire Resiliency and Integrated Pest Management Programs.

Visitor Services Department

Responsibilities of the **Visitor Services interns** may include but are not limited to supporting essential administrative or field functions or projects related to visitor counter data collection, preserve sign management, volunteer management, Outdoor Education programming or Ranger Operations. The intern will receive feedback, coaching, and practical experience to prepare for a career in parks or open space management.

What you bring...

Eligibility

- Internships are open to applications from current students or recent graduates (within the last 12 months).
- Interns work 20 – 40 hours per week, which will extend up to a total of 950 hours over a 6-9-month period. This is a non-benefited position.
- Interns at Midpen have flexible hours to work around class schedules.
- Summer and Fall internships are offered depending on department specific projects.
- Work schedules designed to meet project and student needs (fully on site or hybrid available depending on position).



Interns and Supervisors at the 2024 Midpen Networking Event



Join our team...

WHAT WE OFFER

- Competitive hourly pay rate
- Exposure to local government
- Access to an organization that values diverse perspectives and new ideas
- Flexible work schedule (allows for independence and flexibility)
- Variety of work (field, on-site and remote work)
- Experience Midpen culture & mission
- Multi-department engagement
- Field of study work exposure
- Academic and professional growth
- Internship is supplemented with training and external educational sessions



- Access to a network of professionals in the field of local government
- Enriching on-the-job experience
- Professional networking access
- Expands knowledge on how Midpen delivers services to the public
- Provides opportunities for public engagement

BENEFITS

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- 24 hours of sick leave
- Commute incentive (bike and carpool)



HOW TO APPLY

- Midpen Intern Positions are posted throughout the year on Cal Opps - www.calopps.org.
- An online application, cover letter, resume and supplemental questionnaire is **required** in order to be considered for the internship.
- If you don't see an internship opportunity that you are interested in, create a personal profile and sign up for future notifications of available jobs matching your employment search criteria.



Intern Testimonials



Bill Dornbach, Planning Intern '23/'24
BA in Environmental Studies, GIS
UC Santa Cruz (Graduate '22)

My internship with the district has exposed me to many parts of the critical public planning process involved in carrying out preservation and public access work. As a Planning Intern, I have had the opportunity to blend my background in ecology, GIS, and land management with practical experience in community engagement and conservation planning. So far, this internship has been a remarkable journey, and has offered me invaluable insight into the balance of ecological preservation and public access. Conservation is often pitted against community, however Midpen has shown me that an agency can hear and accommodate citizens' concerns or support while prioritizing the wellbeing of communities and our natural resources. I'm proud to say that my time here has confirmed for me that a career in planning is in my future. If you resonate with Midpen's mission like I do, then an internship with the district is a great way to contribute towards furthering it.

Rachel Frost, Planning Intern '23/'24
BS in Environmental Science
UC Santa Barbara (Graduate '23)

Interning at Midpen has been such a rewarding experience.

I have enjoyed the range of projects and flexibility to explore what I found interesting. From data collection out in the preserves to public engagement to assisting with environmental review, I've gained valuable experience in regional-scale conservation planning. This is a great place to make a positive impact among people who work hard and love what they do.



Sherilyn Reinhart, Public Affairs Intern '22/'23
MS in Environmental Studies
San Jose State University (Graduate '22)
BS in Ethnobotany, University of Hawaii

My time at Midpen has been fun, challenging and rewarding. I have enjoyed witnessing conservation concepts that I've learned about academically, such as restoration ecology, community engagement and environmental justice, being implemented in real time by Midpen's dedicated staff. I appreciate this opportunity to learn about how governmental agencies work.

Sofiia Malushkina, IT Intern '23/'24
BS in Business, Management Information Systems
San Jose State University (Graduate '24)

Being an IT intern at Midpen has been an invaluable experience. The diverse projects I tackled allowed me to apply my skills in real-world scenarios, both in the field and in the office. The supportive team and organization's commitment to conservation have greatly inspired me, reinforcing my dedication to making a meaningful impact in our community. This internship has not only equipped me with essential skills but also gave me a deep appreciation for Midpen's mission and values.



Shreeya Aranake, Public Affairs Intern '24/'25
BA in History
The George Washington University (Graduate '22)

"Over the course of the past six months, I have learned so much about what it takes to preserve open space. Midpen's internship program gave me the opportunity to meet people from all different kinds of backgrounds, who all share the same goal and passion for the environment. This job has given me the confidence and skills to pursue a career in the environmental field!"

Intern Testimonials



Gwyn Fritz, Natural Resources Intern '23/'24
BA in Biology, Minor in Chemistry & Anthropology
Willamette University (Graduate '23)

I came to Midpen after graduating college and hoping to gain more hands-on experience with the different sides of plant conservation. I have since been exposed to so many different aspects of plant ecology working in Natural Resources, learning from experienced biologists with many specialties. The projects I've worked on with Midpen--including assisting in the establishment of their herbarium, surveying botanical resources, and assisting in the execution of scientific sampling and processing of soil in Redwood forests--have been invaluable experiences for me as I plan my career in biological conservation going forward. I'll leave this internship with gratitude for the biologists' mentorship throughout the last few months and excitement for becoming one myself.

Talia Klein, Public Affairs Intern '24/'25
Interdisciplinary Studies: Science, Technology, and Society
Cal Poly SLO (Graduate '23)

As the outreach intern for public affairs, I have been able to connect deeply with community members on the Midpeninsula over our shared love for the outdoors.

Preserving open spaces not only benefits the environment but also enriches the lives of those who explore and connect with the land, and it is so inspiring to see firsthand.

I've worked on a diverse range of projects with public affairs, both within and outside of the office, collaborating with other departments and our fantastic partners. Midpen staff foster a supportive and welcoming work environment, it has been a pleasure being part of the team.



Shannon Lynch, Wildlife Biology Intern '24/'25
BS in Biological Sciences
Cal Poly SLO (Graduate '23)

My internship at Midpen has provided me hands on opportunities to understand and implement wildlife management practices alongside knowledgeable staff, contractors, and researchers. During my time with Midpen I was able to explore my interests and discover new ones with an impressive diversity of projects and species across our preserves.

