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Peninsula Open Space Trust Opens Cabin in San Mateo Redwoods for Public Health, Public Access

Audrey Edna Cabin now available for priority use by participants in San Mateo County Health's Park Rx program



Photo: Madison Kotack for Hipcamp

Palo Alto, Calif. (May 2, 2023) — [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#) (POST) today announced the official opening of an overnight hikers' cabin situated on the 350-acre Alpine Ranch property that POST protected in 2012 near La Honda, Calif. Located adjacent to Sam McDonald County Park, the secluded Audrey Edna Cabin is now available for overnight use by participants in [San Mateo County's Park Rx program](#), who will access the cabin through a health care provider's office. Other available dates are available to the general public through the online booking service Hipcamp.

"Along with our mission to protect lands for biodiversity and climate resilience, POST is committed to making access to the outdoors available to everyone equitably," said **Walter T. Moore**, president of POST. "The sad reality is that one in four Californians do not have a public park or open space within walking distance of their home. These new partners share our

commitment and are helping POST to bridge that gap by creating a new outdoor experience that can boost the health and well-being of folks right here in our community.”

Priority Access Through San Mateo County Health’s Park Rx Program

Free priority access to the Audrey Edna Cabin is available to clients of [San Mateo Medical Center clinics](#) and the [Ravenswood Family Health clinic](#). Clients and their families are encouraged by healthcare providers to participate in an overnight experience at the cabin.

[Numerous scientific studies](#) have shown that time in nature can benefit a wide variety of medical conditions, including anxiety, stress, high blood pressure and diabetes. San Mateo’s Park Rx program is part of a [nationwide public health initiative](#) that encourages healthy communities by prescribing time in the outdoors in order to improve the wellbeing of community members while also advocating for outdoor equity.

“The healing power of time spent at the Audrey Edna Cabin and other outdoor locations reaches beyond just one patient,” said **Gloria Cahuich Gonzalez**, community program specialist II at San Mateo County Health. “We’ve had families tell us that all the siblings felt *libre* – free, in Spanish – by the opportunity to play without fear that the noise they make would bother the neighbors and threaten their tenuous housing situation.”

[Partnering with San Mateo County’s Park Rx](#) for use of the Audrey Edna Cabin is part of POST’s commitment to improving equitable access to nature. [Studies into equitable access](#) issues in the region have revealed that availability and cost are two of the main barriers to accessing local overnight opportunities for people in under-resourced communities. To reduce those barriers, POST is reserving most weekend dates at the Audrey Edna Cabin for Park Rx patient use.

About the Audrey Edna Cabin

The Audrey Edna Cabin sits at a scenic overlook on Alpine Ranch, a 350-acre property southeast of the town of La Honda and adjacent to Pescadero Creek and Sam McDonald County Parks. POST purchased and permanently protected the ranch in 2012. The cabin is accessed by a 1.7-mile hike from [Sam McDonald County Park](#), with drive-up access available to guests with mobility challenges.

“We envision this cabin as an ideal setting for families and other groups who want to experience backpacking and hiking in for the first time,” added **Rachel Faye**, POST’s public access program manager. “There are very few locations where a short distance takes you so deeply into nature, where you can be introduced to the health and recreational benefits of that immersive experience without a lot of physical or logistical challenges.”

The remote cabin was built in the early 1900s and was in a state of disrepair when POST acquired Alpine Ranch in 2012. After years of planning, POST completely renovated the property as a hiker’s cabin for overnight stays and named it after Audrey Edna Butcher, the mother of a longtime POST supporter who helped protect the property.

The cabin sleeps up to 12 guests, with electricity, running water, and basic furnishings in two bedrooms, two bathrooms (toilets only; no showers), a living room, porch and fully equipped kitchen. A wheelchair ramp and other on-site accommodations are available.

Access for All via Hipcamp

All dates not reserved for Park Rx patients are available for booking by the general public via [Hipcamp](#), an online service that connects landowners with people who want to experience the outdoors. Funds generated from public bookings will support managing and maintaining the property and making the cabin accessible to a wide variety of users.

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Note to media: Photos of Audrey Edna Cabin are available for media usage and download [here](#).

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About Peninsula Open Space Trust

POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. As a private nonprofit land trust, POST has been responsible for saving more than 86,000 acres since its founding in 1977. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to connect people and nature. Visit openspacetrust.org for more information.