

# Midland School Trails



Grass Mountain • Maple Canyon • Lover’s Loop • Green Gate • High Country Trail

Photo Credit: Michael Ramsey



Photo Credit: Ray Ford



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## About Midland

Midland School was founded in 1932 as a small, rural boarding school for grades 9–12. Offering a challenging college preparatory curriculum and experiential learning, Midland cultivates a strong work ethic rooted in community and stewardship. Midland attracts and develops self-reliant and responsible students, who become effective leaders, partners, parents, employees, and citizens. In 2009, Midland was awarded a Governor’s Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership, California’s highest environmental honor.

### Midland School Property

With Figueroa Mountain Road being the only paved road in the vicinity, Midland’s property contributes significantly to one of the largest undeveloped and unfragmented habitats in the mountains and foothills of Southern California. Midland School is forward-thinking and cares deeply about its land. By placing 95% of its 2,860 acres into a conservation easement with The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, Midland has preserved its land forever. Midland makes 35 miles of private trails accessible to the public. Midland does not charge for use of its trails; however, donations are greatly appreciated and help the school to oversee the permit process and maintain public access. To learn more about Midland or to make a gift to help preserve the property, please email [office@midland-school.org](mailto:office@midland-school.org), visit [www.midland-school.org](http://www.midland-school.org), or call 805.688.5114.

### Midland School Trails

Midland School has made two entry points for the trail network available to the public ON FOOT and HORSEBACK ONLY. Mountain biking is NOT permitted on Midland’s trails. The first is known as the **Green Gate** trailhead and is located at the east edge of what was formerly Michael Jackson’s Neverland Ranch. This trailhead is popular with equestrians, as there is an excellent

parking area a few hundred yards inside the gate and miles of jeep roads and open countryside for those on horseback to explore.

A mile further east on Figueroa Mountain Road, near the bridge over Birabent Creek, you’ll spot the main parking area and entry point for those on foot. The main trail leads directly upstream towards Grass Mountain, with side trails into other parts of the ranch offering a variety of loop hikes. The *Santa Barbara County Trails Council* has been extremely active in building new trails and improving existing ones to expand the trail system even further.

Use the map with the mileage and elevation information described below to put together your own adventure. Combining parts of several trails – Lover’s, Birabent Canyon, Red Rock Springs, Senior Cutoff, Maple Canyon, and High Country – you can piece together loop routes ranging from a bit over a half mile in length to ones over 10 miles long. The ultimate experience in the spring for those on foot is the trip up to Grass Mountain when the poppies and lupine are in bloom. The views are always amazing.

### PERMITS REQUIRED

The Midland School trails are a private trail system opened to the public through the generosity of the school. Permits must be obtained prior to heading out on the trails. Hikers must fill out a permit and parking pass at the trail heads, where permit boxes are located. Horseback riders must make a trail ride reservation at least 48 hours in advance of their visit by emailing [horseback@midland-school.org](mailto:horseback@midland-school.org). Permission to ride will be granted via email with detailed instructions. Midland does not accept trail ride requests by phone.



## Trail Facts

### Grass Mountain Trail

**Distance**—0.65 miles up the creek to crossing where you head uphill; 1.65 miles to the top of the ridge; 2.65 miles to the top of Grass Mountain; 3.0 to Zaca Ridge.

**Elevation Gain**—125’ along creek; 790’ to the ridge-top; 1000’ to base; 2380’ to top of Grass Mountain; 2550’ to Zaca Ridge.

**Difficulty**—Moderate to the ridge; hard core to the top.

### Maple Canyon Trail

**Distance**—0.65 miles up the creek to crossing; .8 miles to Red Rock Springs; .9 miles to the Senior Cutoff; 1.4 miles up canyon to High Country turnoff; 1.75 miles to start of High Country Trail; 2.0 miles to end of the canyon.

**Elevation Gain**—125’ along creek; 300’ to Senior Cutoff; 500’ to High Country intersection; 700’ to start of High Country Trail; or 680’ to the end of Maple Canyon.

**Difficulty**—Moderately strenuous up the canyon; hard core via High Country loop which adds 425’ gain and 2.5 miles in length.

### Green Gate Loop and High Country Trail

**Distance**—2.5 miles for Jeep Loop; 1.25 miles from Green Gate to top of Jeep Loop; 1.8 miles to Red Rock Springs Trail; 1.85 miles to “T” intersection; 2.3 miles west to High Country Loop; 3.2 miles to Coulter saddle; 3.9 miles down to Maple Connector; 3.7 miles back to “T”; 5.55 back to Green Gate.

**Elevation Gain**—379’ to top of Jeep Loop; 700’ to “T” intersection; 1150’ to Coulter Saddle; 2300’ to top of Coulter Pine Ridge.

**Difficulty**—Moderate for Jeep Loop; Strenuous to High Country Loop; Hard Core to top of Coulter Pine Ridge.

### Lover’s Loop Trail

**Distance**—0.8 miles for short loop; 1.2 miles to end of meadow; 2.7 miles across and down to the creek; 3.65 miles for entire loop.

**Elevation Gain**—150’ to top of short loop; 300’ to top of ridge; 680’ to high point; 500’ elevation loss down to creek.

**Difficulty**—Easy to short loop; Moderate to end of meadow; Moderately strenuous for the entire loop.

### Hiking Safety and Etiquette

- Stay on the trails: taking shortcuts causes erosion.
- Carry and drink plenty of water: a leading cause of injuries on the trail is dehydration.
- Dogs must be on-leash.
- Be prepared for sudden changes in weather and conditions.
- Horses and mules have the right of way on trails.
- Do not litter. Pack out what you pack in. Leave no trace.
- Trails are often steep. Travel carefully and at your own risk.
- Stay alert. The chaparral and mountainous terrain is home to bears, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, rattlesnakes, and ticks.
- High Fire Hazard Area. All fires prohibited. No smoking!
- In case of emergency: Call 911

### About the Santa Barbara County Trails Council

Founded in 1967, the Santa Barbara County Trails Council is a non-profit advocacy group that supports nature-based recreation and enhancement of the Santa Barbara County trail system for safe shared use by everyone. The organization advocates for the conservation of natural spaces in order to create opportunities for the expansion a county-wide network of multi-use trails for recreation. The Trails Council provides guidance and effective management for trail planning, construction and maintenance projects. The Midland School trail system is maintained by the Trails Council.



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
Trails Council



# Midland School Trails



### Restricted Access

Permits are Required

A conservation agreement to forever protect and preserve the Midland Ranch trail network and surrounding area exists between Midland School and the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. The ranch continues to be private property and permission to access the trails is limited and can be revoked at any time. To ensure future public access please stay on the trails and respect the natural resources.

