



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



About Midland

Midland School, a co-ed boarding school for grades 9-12, has been the leader of place-based college preparatory education since 1932. Midland’s curriculum focuses on rigorous academics, community, and stewardship. Midland’s scale empowers students with authentic leadership opportunities, provides highly personalized learning, and inspires the pursuit of intellectual passions. At Midland, over half of students receive financial aid, and the depth of the experience facilitates both top-tier college admissions, experiential learning, and future success.

Midland School Property

Midland School’s 2,860-acre property lies adjacent to the Los Padres Forest and five miles north of Los Olivos. With steep mountain slopes, winding creeks, oak woodlands, coastal scrub, and chaparral. Midland’s property contains a diverse array of habitats, ecosystems, and geological features.

Midland uses every corner of the property to support the school’s mission. Science students practice observation and data-collection skills, ecology students document the growth of the rare Santa Barbara jewelflower, anthropology students learn the history of the Chumash, and art and writing students find inspiration in the quiet landscape. When not in class, the cross-country team trains on the hills, equestrians ride the 35 miles of trails, and all students go on backpacking trips. On one celebrated day each spring, school is cancelled, and everyone hikes to the top of Grass Mountain.

Midland placed 95% of its 2,860 acres into a conservation easement with The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County in 2008. While Midland still owns the property, neither the school nor any subsequent owner can develop the land—the easement preserves Midland’s land forever. Students will continue to live close to nature and receive the benefits of a truly unique education, and the public will continue to have access to some of the most stunning trails in the county.

Midland School does not charge for use of its trails; however, donations are greatly appreciated and help the school to maintain public access. To learn more about Midland or to make a gift to help preserve the property, please email office@midland-school.org, visit www.midland-school.org, or call 805-688-5114.

Trail Access

Two entry points to the trail network are available to hikers, and one entry point is available to horseback riders. Mountain biking is NOT permitted.

The Green Gate trailhead is located at mile-marker 5.2 on the east side of Figueroa Mountain Road. Horseback riders will find ample parking for trailers 200 yards beyond the gate entrance. The main trailhead begins a mile further east on the road, just after the bridge over Birabent Creek.

The Santa Barbara County Trails Council builds, maintains, and improves the trail system. Midland’s outdoor leadership group also maintains trails. Occasionally, Midland closes all or part of the trail system for maintenance, during hunting seasons, within 48 hours of rain or in case of a fire. Parking is limited; do not park on the road or block gate access.

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 using the trails. Please fill out our annual hiking permit online in advance at: <https://midland-school.org/hikers/>. Horseback riders must make a reservation at least 48 hours in advance through the online registration system at <https://midland-school.org/horseback-riding/>. 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 miles 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 County 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 the beginning of the meadow; 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: dehydration contributes to most injuries on the trail.
- 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 and uneven. 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 shared-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.



Midland School Trails



Restricted Access

Permits are Required

A conservation agreement to forever protect and preserve the Midland School 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.

Trail	Description	Round-Trip Distance	Difficulty Elevation Gain
Green Gate Loop	Popular with equestrians and hikers, this trail does have some uphill but is a pleasant walk.	2.55 miles 2-3 hours	Easy + 147 feet
Lover's Loop	Primarily used by hikers, runners, and birders, this loop includes some great vistas and varied terrain.	3.94 miles 3-4 hours	Moderate 927 feet
Grass Mountain Trail	This steep trail is much harder than it looks and it is not maintained. Do not take this hike lightly.	4.65 miles 6-8 hours	Very Difficult 2,386 feet

LEGEND

- Green Gate Loop (Hiking/Equestrian Trail)
- Lover's Loop (Hiking/Equestrian Trail)
- Birabent Trail (Hiking Trail)
- Other (Hiking/Equestrian Trails)

