



CULTURAL HISTORY
MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

MITCHELL CANYON INTERPRETIVE CENTER
(MCIC) OPENS IN SEPTEMBER

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After January 1, 2005 the center was renamed "Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center"

The opening of the Mitchell Canyon Interpretive Center on the north side of Mount Diablo State Park on September 25 will be accompanied by the reactivation of one of MDIA's earliest and most popular programs on behalf of the Park.

Back in 1974, during the first few months after it was founded, MDIA began a program of docents. These were members who volunteered their time and efforts to help visitors to Mount Diablo understand and enjoy their experience more fully.

The docents received several hours of special training dealing with the geology, flora and fauna of Mount Diablo, the Native American history of the region, the post-contact history of the mountain, and the Park's history and trails. In addition to leading hikes, walks and tours on the mountain, docents manned the Visitor Center in the Summit Museum until that function was taken over some years ago by the Park staff. The docent program itself gradually was phased out, though many MDIA volunteer activities continued.

The main function of the MCIC will be to provide information, both printed and oral, as well as items of Mount Diablo interest to the many persons who use the Park's staging area at the south end of Mitchell Canyon Road. The building will have permanent wall displays, bulletin boards and orientation maps. There will also be changing exhibits from related organizations. The Center will be open at hours of greatest public use on weekends, and will be staffed entirely by MDIA docents, who will be responsible for opening and closing the building, giving information to visitors, selling MDIA products such as T-shirts and cards, distributing MDIA's many free brochures, keeping records of sales and inventory, and maintaining contact with the Park service.