

MDIA E-Newsletter • August 2026

## Public Bidding Has Begun!



## First Look at the Center Interior

*Hint For Mobile Users:  
Turn your phone sideways for a better view!*

California State Parks is now accepting bids until **September 2, 2026** for the construction of the new Mitchell Canyon Education Center. Information for bidders is posted at [Cal Procure](#). If you know of any contractors who might be interested in the project, encourage them to consider bidding. Note that there is a mandatory bid walk on August 13 for all potential bidders.

After bids are opened, receipt of required submittals and final contract discussions, construction may start this fall.

This is a major milestone, which is made possible by your generous support.

Meanwhile, the first phase of exhibit planning is completed. Once the bids are opened, and we know what the building will cost, we will evaluate the need for additional fundraising for exhibit fabrication and installation.

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## **The 175th Anniversary of Mount Diablo Initial Point Celebration at Mount Diablo Summit**

Every time I travel home from visiting far-off parts of California I am reminded of the prominence of Mount Diablo—it stands as a 3849-foot sentinel in the distance and a landmark I can point my vehicle towards. If you have ever visited the summit of the mountain on a clear day then you already know that it offers one of the grandest views in California. Offering a viewshed of over 20,000 square miles, parts of 40 of the state's 58 counties can be seen. Iconic landmarks like Lassen Peak to the north, Yosemite to the east, Mount Hamilton to the south, and the Farallon Islands beyond the Golden Gate to the west. It is this very reason, its prominence on the horizon, that it was chosen as the initial point for land surveying as our young state began developing.

Mount Diablo State Park recently celebrated the rich history of surveying by commemorating the 175th anniversary of the establishment of the initial point in July of 1851. As the gold rush brought thousands of new residents to the state, many of the prospectors abandoned their dreams of striking it rich in favor of other opportunities including ranching and land ownership. With settling the land came unscrupulous speculators and disputes over property lines and boundaries. For these reasons, the US Surveyor General tasked Colonel Leander Ransom with establishing the initial reference point atop the summit of Mount Diablo.

During a sweltering week in July, Ransom hacked his way through dense chaparral and steep terrain to make his way to the top of the mountain. There he found the very highest point and chiseled out a 6-inch square in the bedrock in which to

erect a 30-foot flagpole tethered in place. He then traveled nine miles south to Pleasanton to begin the survey, sighting Mount Diablo as they went. From this survey the initial point was established, a reference still seen on all property deeds throughout a majority of Northern California and all of Nevada.

The actual divot in the rock is still visible on the mountain in a preserved section of the rock housed inside of the summit building's museum floor. The grand celebration atop the mountain was presented by California State Parks, Mount Diablo Surveyors Historical Society, and Mount Diablo Interpretive Association. Visitors experienced antique surveying equipment, presentations on the history of the initial point, interactive surveying games, and commemorative items. If you missed the event do not fear, you can always make the journey to the top (whether by foot, hoof, or wheel) and experience it for yourself. Visit [mdia.org](http://mdia.org) to plan your visit today!

(This article written by Steve Smith originally appeared in Clayton Living Magazine.)

Dan Sandri, MDIA Board Member, autographing Native Bees of Mount Diablo book



Steve Smith describing a deer skull with antlers to an interested family

## What Is Missing From the Lower Parking Lot?



Remember when there was a huge gravel pile in the Mitchell Canyon overflow parking lot that greatly reduced capacity? Our neighbors at Cemex have moved the extra gravel to another location within the park opening up the entire area for parking. Thanks to Cemex, Ryan Goering, and Cameron Morrison!

## RBK Interns at Mitchell Canyon

On July 30, MDIA hosted summer interns from Rebecca Bauer-Kahan's office at Mitchell Canyon. Mike Brandy presented an overview of the Mitchell Canyon Education Center's project and described the Assembly member's critical role in obtaining funding for the project.



## Upcoming Events



Walk: [Wonder Hike](#)

*August 12*

*8:30am – 12:30pm*

Wonder and wander in  
Mitchell Canyon

Webinar: [Plate](#)

[Tectonic Evolution of](#)  
[Mount Diablo](#)

*August 26*

*7–8pm*

The geology of Mount  
Diablo explained

Astronomy: [Sunrise to](#)  
[Moonrise](#)

*August 29, 7–10pm*

*Lower Summit Parking*  
*Lot*

Enjoy sunset followed  
by moon rising  
through telescopes

Click [here](#) for a listing of more upcoming events!



We're on [Instagram](#)! Come like and follow us on our brand new Instagram page. You can see several posts every week, cool photos, interesting creatures, event updates, great articles and much more.

BECOME A MEMBER



Thank you for your support of the Mount Diablo  
Interpretive Association and I will see you on the  
mountain!

*Steve*

We're on [Facebook](#)! Come like and follow us on our brand new Facebook page. You can see several posts every week, cool photos, interesting creatures, event updates, great articles and much more. [Come give us a like!](#)

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