

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association

2025 Annual Report



SHADOW OF DIABLO OVER NORTH PEAK | PHOTO: STEVE SMITH

PRESERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION

P.O. Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA, 94597-0346 • 925-927-7222 • www.mdia.org



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

IN 2025, THE MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION (MDIA) marked its 51st year in partnership with Mount Diablo State Park as the official cooperating association. Thanks to the remarkable efforts of our members, MDIA has expanded its impact in the park through trail signage, maintenance projects, and educational opportunities. We have also continued to provide interpretive services to park visitors and the public through natural history webinars and publications. This year has seen a tremendous amount of effort poured into our endeavor to build a new Education Center in Mitchell Canyon, and we are proud to have raised nearly \$1.5 million on our own at the close of 2025.

MDIA Board

MDIA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS CURRENTLY consists of 11 members who are responsible for overseeing operations of the organization. This year we honored Mike Brandy and Dick Nicoll by inducting them into our MDIA Hall of Fame—their names were added to our plaque at Mitchell Canyon. We appreciate the knowledge, experience, and dedication of our past and current board directors and are always looking for new directors who can bring a fresh outlook, insight, skill, and enthusiasm to our organization.

In addition to our board members, we have a wonderful group of volunteers who give of their time for outreach, short films, peregrine team, bookkeeping, wildflower reports, and so much more. This year we honored Patricia Yamshon and Kathy Siegel with the MDIA Achievement Award given at the annual Mount Diablo State Park Volunteer Appreciation Event. They both serve as co-leaders of our Peregrine Team in Pine Canyon and dedicate hundreds of hours to furthering our mission of protecting the peregrines and educating the public about them. Thanks to all of our generous volunteers for contributing over 2,000 hours in service to MDIA.

Mission

IN 2025, MDIA CONTINUED its mission of financial and interpretive support of Mount Diablo State Park. Merchandise sales, donations, membership contributions, employee matching funds, and grants enabled us to support a variety of projects within the park. Because we are an all-volunteer staff, our administrative expenses remain low, ensuring that nearly 90% of our income is allocated to providing visitors with the best experience possible. Some of the many projects funded by MDIA are outlined in this report. I would like to personally thank you, our members, for continuing to support our efforts of “Preservation through Education.”



—*Stephen Smith*, MDIA President

Board Responsibilities

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| STEVE SMITH | President, Merchandising, Displays, Maintenance, Trail Signage |
| MIKE BRANDY | Vice President, MCEC, Fundraising, Mountain Talks |
| DAN SANDRI | Secretary, Print Archives |
| DAN FITZGERALD | Treasurer, Finance, Volunteers in Parks, Merchandising |
| MARK BRAUER | Outreach, Nominating |
| JULIE BRAUN MARTIN | Membership, Fundraising, Education |
| LESLIE CONTRERAS | Hikes, Recruitment |
| LINDA KWONG | Insurance, Merchandising, Recruitment |
| DICK NICOLL | Contracts, Publications, MCEC, Fundraising, Education |
| MICHELE STANTON | At Large |
| STEVE VIARENGO | Website and Social Media |

We acknowledge that Mount Diablo is the ancestral home, since time immemorial, of the Wilton Rancheria, Bay Miwok, Confederated Villages of Lisjan, Northern Valley Yokuts, Muwekma, and Ohlone peoples.

Mitchell Canyon Education Center

2025 MARKED A PIVOTAL YEAR for the Mitchell Canyon Education Center, with significant steps taken toward realizing this long-awaited project. Ware Associates completed the final design, and it received necessary approvals from both the State Fire Marshal and the Accessibility Department—key milestones that allowed the project to advance. The completed plans and specifications have been submitted to the Department of State Parks, and bidding is expected to begin in 2026.

Even though core funding has been secured, MDIA continues to raise additional funds for possible change orders and interior programming needs.

A **\$55,000 grant from the Tribal Lands Project** was awarded to Mount Diablo State Park, facilitating tribal consultation and the creation of exhibits that incorporate tribal perspectives and advice. This initiative will strengthen the Center's educational mission and enrich its connection to the region's cultural heritage.

Community involvement remained central in 2025. MDIA set a fundraising target of **\$150,000** for the Fall campaign. Thanks to the generosity of **113 donors**, the campaign surpassed expectations, raising an outstanding **\$188,000**.

Exhibit planning began in Fall 2025, in collaboration with professional exhibit designers at **JM Productions**. This process includes four phases designed to shape visitors' experiences at the Center. Phase One, slated for completion by February 2026, centers on clarifying the Center's objectives and themes, as well as developing initial concepts for exhibit locations and content. Collectively, these achievements illustrate a year filled with meaningful advancements and increasing momentum. MDIA extends its profound gratitude to partners, donors, and community supporters who help turn the vision for the Mitchell Canyon Education Center into reality.

Bus Stop at the MCEC / Ware Associates

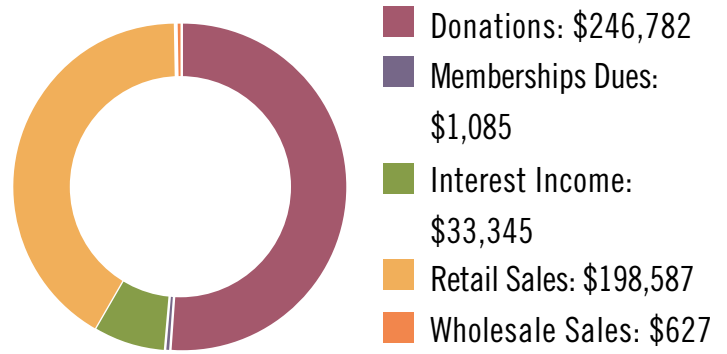


Finances

MDIA'S 2025 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PARK included funding of the following projects:

- Publishing and printing 30,000 copies of the *Mount Diablo Review* newsletter given to all park visitors and community organizations
- Hosting 9 Mountain Talks educational speaker series via webinar
- Producing our Wild Mount Diablo video series including segments on Scarlet Pimpernel, Serpents, and Animals at the Watering Hole
- Major Funding for the Diablo Stove Restoration Team
- Major Funding of the Native Plant Garden's new engraved plant signage
- Continued Fundraising for the new Education Center
- Funding and implementation of waterproofing measures at the Summit Building

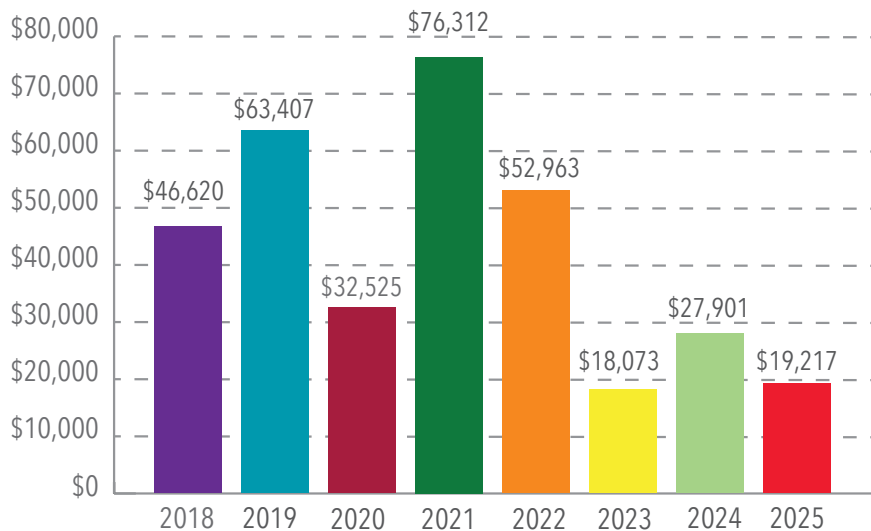
MDIA 2025 Sources of Revenue



Membership

IN FEBRUARY 2023, MDIA APPROVED a new membership model with two categories: Regular and Life Membership. Existing Life members continued in this status, and all donors of \$1000 or more were made Life members. Beginning January 2025 all current members were invited to renew, and non-members were given the opportunity to join MDIA. Life Members, now 171 in total, are thanked for their support. This January the 2026 renewal letters were sent to members. The memberships support the ongoing operations of MDIA including publications, park maintenance, contributions to the park, and webinar events for example.

Annual Contributions to the Park from MDIA 2018–2025



Mui's Hairstreak on Narrowleaf Goldenbush / Dan Sandri

Merchandising

WE SAW OUR BEST YEAR to date in merchandise sales, nearly \$200,000 gross sales for the first time. Increasing inflation along with shipping costs continue to rise along with tariff surcharges prompting an increase in some of our prices. Sales have increased 22% over the previous year (likely due to a mild summer and higher visitation) and remain our main source of revenue aside from fundraising. Online sales continue to be robust in the interim, and we are able to generate revenue and share our materials with the many people who came to experience Mount Diablo and the regenerative powers of nature. Our new outreach efforts have also seen a huge uptick in sales along with brand marketing.



Mark Brauer and Leslie Contreras

Thank you to Dan Fitzgerald, Steve Smith, and Linda Kwong, our merchandising team, who coordinate the design of new products, purchase ordering, inventory management, packaging, shipping, and delivery. Because all these operations are performed by volunteers, the financial benefit is substantial.

Peregrine Team 2025 Season Summary

FOR THE SECOND SEASON IN A ROW, the cliffside real estate in Pine Canyon hosted no peregrine residents during the nesting season. Peregrines and prairie falcons visited, and a peregrine pair appraised the property but didn't bite. We don't know why and can't blame the usual suspects, human trespassers, as we didn't see many this season, proof to us that the closure season signage

that MDIA helped push through a few years ago has succeeded beautifully.

We always welcome new volunteers who might like to help us keep one of the mountain's iconic species safe. The peregrine is not one of those critters who is tolerant of humans close to a nest site. If humans are nearby, they fly.

Maintenance and Trail Signage

SEVERAL ONGOING MAINTENANCE PROJECTS include repair and replacement of historic CCC era picnic tables in collaboration with the Diablo Woodworkers group and the Diablo Stove Team. The stone mason volunteers have continued work on Diablo Stoves, erosion control, and other park projects. Work is ongoing in maintaining and refurbishing 16 trail map kiosks throughout the park. Work continues to keep the waterproofing in good repair at the Summit Building. The second part of a long-anticipated trail sign order was filled with 40 new signs replacing many dilapidated and worn signs throughout the park. Most notably is the replacement of nearly 20 signs in the Perkins Canyon area of the park where signs that merely read "Trail" have been replaced with actual trail names.



Steve Smith Waterproofing Summit Building

Education

MDIA HAS CONTINUED TO WORK CLOSELY with the Contra Costa County Office of Education regarding our efforts towards the Mitchell Canyon Education Center project and educational opportunities for students in the community. We appreciate the wonderful support the superintendent and staff provided when we applied for the Wildlife Conservation Board grant and their continued interest in supporting our projects for students. This year we established the Learning Page on our MDIA website. It offers students and adults who work with youth articles and resources for how to enjoy the state park and take advantage of its educational opportunities. MDIA also worked with Park Interpreter Sharon Peterson regarding events on the mountain like the Junior Rangers program and served as volunteers for school field trips.

Outreach

MDIA CONTINUED TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY organizations through participation at the following events: Oakland Marathon, March; Diablo Trails Challenge, April; Pollinators and Friends at the Ruth Bancroft Garden, April; John Muir Birthday celebration, April; Walnut Creek Art & Wine Festival, May; Clayton Pride festival, June; Martinez Beaver festival, June; Clayton Oktoberfest, October; and Diablo Summit Stomp, October.



Linda Kwong and Leslie Contreras at Muir Birthday

Hikes

MDIA HOSTED 50 PUBLIC HIKES and walks in 2025, including First Day, Chaparral Spring, Wonder, Geology, Wildflower, Pollinator, History, Solstice, Common Poorwill, Tarantula, Scorpion, Halloween, Green Friday, and Winter Solstice Hikes. We also organized 6 additional MDIA-led hikes throughout the year. There's a hike for everyone—visit mdia.org/events to find yours.



Desert Tarantula | Dan Sandri

Webinars 2025

MDIA HOSTED NINE WEBINARS IN 2025 on topics such as mushrooms, Diablo Range lizards, hiking the Knobcone Trail, forest bathing and meditation, foraging, wildflower identification, raptor rescue, protecting nesting habitat along the Pacific Flyway, and winter identification of trees and shrubs. These events drew 335 attendees and helped advance MDIA's mission of "Preservation through Education." MDIA thanks the presenters for their expertise.



Joseph Belli and Mike Brandy

Website and Social Media

OVER 53,000 PEOPLE VISITED THE MDIA WEBSITE in 2025, and more than two-thirds were first-time visitors. Our most popular pages featured the mountain's top hikes, articles on rattlesnakes and tarantulas, and our dynamic Wildflower Guide—where visitors can see what's blooming on the mountain in real time. We also brought our popular *Native Bees of Mount Diablo* content online, allowing anyone to explore what's buzzing on the mountain right from their phone.

In 2026, we look forward to expanding our online offerings with additional hikes, points of interest, and more mobile-friendly content to support visitors exploring the mountain.

MDIA.org continues to be the best place to find the latest webinars, public hikes, and updates on the new Mitchell Canyon Education Center. It's also home to an ever-growing library of content created by the mountain's leading naturalists and experts. You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram, where our team regularly shares photos, stories, and updates from across Mount Diablo.

1974 MDIA Founding Members

Sam Smoker	Frank Valle-Riestra	Phil Gordon
Paul Carlson	Ed Earl	William Bland
Howard Knight	Mary Bowerman	John Werminski
Joanne Dean	Betty Zilen	Miles Standish
Beverly Clemson	Ron Edwards	

MDIA

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that supports the California Department of Parks and Recreation in maintaining and interpreting Mount Diablo State Park for its hundreds of thousands of annual visitors. MDIA works side by side with State Park staff to enhance the visitors' experience and appreciation of the park.



Lazuli Bunting / Dan Sandri

2025 Donations – We Thank You!

50,000

William Kerr Foundation

\$10,000 - 25,000

Anonymous
CEMEX Materials LLC
Mike and Sue Brandy
Robert and Cynthia Brittain
Terese and Doyle Dixon
Catherine and Richard Nicoll
Gale and John Vocke

5,000 - 9,999

Paul Allen
Leslie Contreras
Claudia Hein
Anastasia & Randall Hobbet
Carol Lane
Stephen Peck
Philip Reed

1,000 - 4,999

Sue Donecker
Spencer & Rena Fulweiler
John and Tena Gallagher
Joan Hamilton
John Heron
Elizabeth Hudson and George
Doddington
Sharon Landwehr
Michael Marchiano
Jeff & Julie Martin
Philip R. Matthews
Mornette McShane
Ogden Family Trust
Karl Schindhelm
The McLin Family Foundation
Patricia N Smith
Michele Stanton
Judith Sweet
Wicked Events, Inc.

\$500 - 999

Mark Blair
Burt Bogardus
Mark Brauer
Paul Cardinet
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Susan and Dennis England
Jean Fiske
Daniel Fitzgerald
Jennifer Kellar
Mt. Diablo Bird Alliance
Tom Nootbaar
Thomas R. O'Brien
Shawn Richardson
Shirley Roberson
Michael Robertson
Jennifer Roe
Frederick Ruegsegger
Daniel and Karen Sandri
Gene Schulting
Nicholas Sharrock
Rex and Janet Takahashi
Linda J Thurston
Jake VanAkkeren
Kelly Weissburg
Lonna Wolf

\$100 - 499

Karen Anderson
Claude Benedix
Marielle J Boortz
Abigail J Bornstein
Carolina Camacho
Dave Caniglia
Janet Colello
Susan D'Alcama
Ron DeBacker
Jill Dresser
Sue Elliott
Heyden Family
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Cheryl Farr
Daniel Galvin
Nancy and Kyomi Glover

Gaston Habets
Christine Hagelin
Nancy Halloran
Sheila Haraldson
Linda Jacobs
Kathleen James
Hongyang Jiao
Thomas Johannesson
Alvin Jong
Patricia Kale
William Kellar
Lauren Kindorf
Arti Kirch
Paul Kubicek
Beverly Lane
Sandra Leich
Lynn Mackey
Jon Maienschein
Audrey and Ed Marlovits
John Mercurio
John Mitchell
Karen Mitchoff
Christine Mitroff
Craig Olson
Edwin Osada
Tom Patterson
Percent Impact Foundation
Jim Pooler
Suzanne Ragsdale
Jean Reinhart
Steven F Scholl
Sue Schwartz
Viacheslav Shepvalov
Judith Sherwood
Robert Slyker
Stephen Smith
Maren and Jerry Smith
Aline Soules
Christine Sunderland
Michael Sweeney
Frances Veal
Stephen Viarengo
Tania Vong
Wild Birds Unlimited

Kenn Wilson
Clayton Worsdell
Amy Worth
Paul Yamshon
Harry York

Up to 99

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Bennett Berke
Peter Boffey
Hans Bogdanos
Rosanne Carey
Karen Cohn
Mel and Tim Comay
Walter Conrad
Helen Deaguero
Karin Deas
East Bay Nature
Rick Edmondson
Maureen Fischl
Rochelle Fortier
Jill Franklin
Kenneth Gertsen
Pam Giarrizzo
David Goldsmith
Lori Haupt
Martha Henderson
Contra Costa Hills Club
Sue Howell
Karen Knox
Ann Lehr
Charlee Liebes
Carolyn MacKenzie
Carrie Miller
Tim Montgomery
Steven Nakazono
Judith & Charles Parker
Nancy Roberts
Karl Ruddy
Judith Ryan
William Wadsworth
Western National Parks
Association
Chris and Teri Wills



MDIA was established in 1974 as a nonprofit organization that is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes, with exempt status under IRS Section 501(c)(3), Federal Tax ID 23-7444529.