

# Mount Diablo Interpretive Association

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## 2022 Annual Report



PROPOSED NEW MITCHELL CANYON VISITOR CENTER | WARE ASSOCIATES

— PRESERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION —

P.O. Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA, 94597-0346 • 925-927-7222 • [www.mdia.org](http://www.mdia.org)



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

**IN 2022, MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION** (MDIA) continued its 48-year partnership with Mount Diablo State Park as the park's 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 general 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. We are proud of our accomplishments despite another challenging year and look forward to our continued support of the park and community in the future.

### MDIA Board

**MDIA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONSISTS** of 13 members who are responsible for overseeing operations of the organization. We are appreciative of 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, other dedicated volunteers at MDIA ensure our continued success. Lisa Anich maintains our membership roster and dues, Ken Lavin answers our phones and website inquiries, Steve Beatty works tirelessly behind the scenes to produce our Wildflower Bloom Report and several wonderful helpers distribute newsletters throughout the community. In addition, this year MDIA has taken over stewardship of the Peregrine Team in Pine Canyon, and we have many wonderful new volunteers dedicated to educating the public in the Castle Rock area. Thank you.

### Mission

**IN 2022, 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."

### Board Retreat

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** held its fourth annual board retreat this year, an in-person event held on the eastern flanks of the mountain. We set several goals for ourselves coming into 2023. Primary among these goals is the exciting project of building a brand-new visitor center at Mitchell Canyon in the next 3 years. We particularly focused on fundraising strategies, marketing goals, corporate and grant seeking and other avenues to raising \$3 million. Despite our increased use of Zoom for monthly board meetings, post-pandemic we always find that intensive in-person interaction in a serene and isolated setting is exceptionally powerful and worthwhile.



—*Stephen Smith*  
MDIA President

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

## New Mitchell Canyon Education Center

**THE VISION FOR A NEW EDUCATION CENTER** moves forward. The year 2022 saw major advances in making the new Education Center in Mitchell Canyon a reality.

After the architects completed conceptual drawings in October 2021, a major effort was launched to secure a State Grant. Unfortunately, the grant was not awarded to MDIA, as there were \$230 million in requests for only \$23 million in funding.

MDIA quickly pivoted to investigate what would be needed for a fundraising campaign. MDIA contracted with My Philanthropy Team (MPT) to work with us in Spring 2022 to determine our capacity to fundraise. The campaign committee reported the results of this analysis to the MDIA Board in July 2022 at which time the Board authorized a contract to hire a fundraising coach through My Philanthropy Team to develop material to support and initiate the campaign. The MDIA Board authorized a pledge of \$250,000 from their reserves to be devoted to the construction of the new Education Center.



*MDIA Board. Front: Leslie Contreras, Linda Kwong, Tere Dixon, Carol Lane, Interpretation and Education Manager Elise McFarland. Back: Vice President Mike Brandy, Treasurer Dan Fitzgerald, Secretary Dan Sandri, Dick Nicoll, Wally DeYoung, President Steve Smith. (Not shown: Staci Hobbet, Julie Braun Martin, Harry York)*

By October, the campaign material was sent to the printers and a larger campaign steering committee was formed to guide the effort. This committee was composed of Board members and community members.

One of the first activities of the committee was to organize “Giving Tuesday” on November 29, 2022. This turned out to be a huge success as MDIA raised \$250,851 through donations and pledges by December 31. These contributions came from 97 individuals who shared the vision for the new Education Center.

The focus of the campaign in 2023 will be to secure funding from foundations and larger donors, as well as through the legislative budget process. We will continue to host “information nights” to bring together smaller groups of potential donors to engage them in the project. Our goal is to raise enough money for the entire project, which would cost approximately \$3 million.

The Board is committed to making this vision a reality to enhance the opportunities for the education community and the visitors who come to Mount Diablo State Park. MDIA’s mission of “Preservation through Education” will be well served by this exciting project.

## Finances

**MDIA'S 2022 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PARK** included funding the following projects:

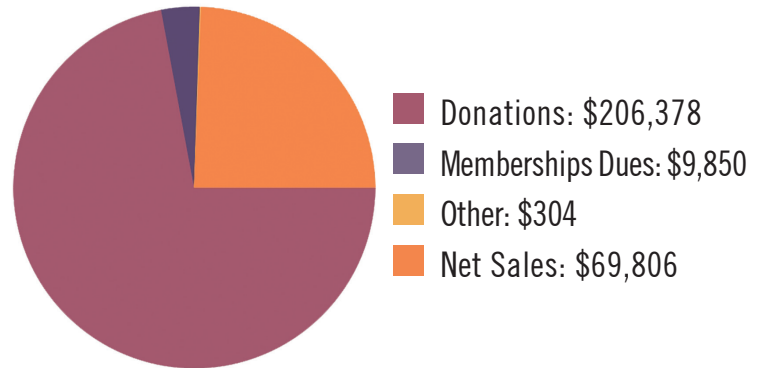
- Publishing and printing 80,000 copies of the Mount Diablo Review newsletter given to all park visitors and community organizations
- Producing a new Audible Mount Diablo Guide: "Native to Right Here—The Plants, Animals and People of Tuushtak"
- Hosting the Mountain Talks educational speaker series in Zoom format
- Producing our Wild Mount Diablo video series including segments on Poppies, Bobcats, and Kestrels
- Funding for the Diablo Stove Restoration Team
- Supporting the Native Plant Garden
- Fundraising for a new Education Center
- Waterproofing the Summit Observation Deck

## MDIA Membership

On December 31, 2022, total membership was 350.

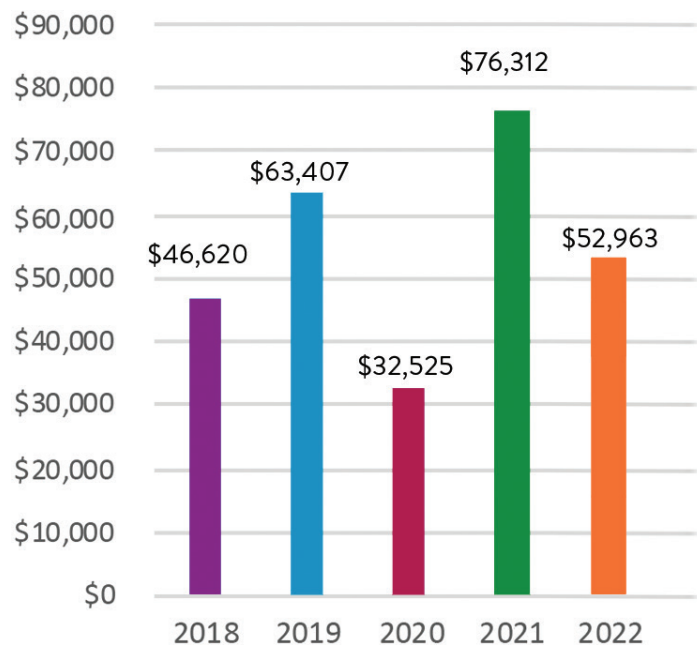
- Life ..... 93
- Contributing..... 41
- Family..... 42
- Individual ..... 27
- Senior ..... 143
- Student ..... 2
- Associate ..... 2

## MDIA Sources of Revenue for 2022



Proposed Education Center | Ware Associates

## Annual Contributions to the Park from MDIA 2018–2022



## Merchandising

**MERCHANDISING IN 2022** remained challenging due to the ongoing supply chain issues and increasing inflation along with shipping concerns. Overall, sales did return to near normal levels and remained 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. Visitors to [mdia.org](http://mdia.org) can choose from a wide variety of educational, interpretive, and informational products along with a selection of apparel and souvenirs.

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 of these operations are performed by volunteers, the financial benefit is substantial.

## Publications

**MDIA CONTINUED TO PUBLISH OUR BIENNIAL** issue of the park newsletter, the Mount Diablo Review, for distribution to park visitors. In 2022, featured articles focused on the return of the California Condor, the mistletoe plant, road safety, tips when visiting the park, and park attractions accessible by car. Current and past editions of the Review can be found at <https://www.mdia.org/newsletters>.

## Education

**THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE IS** collaborating with the Contra Costa County Office of Education to promote an awareness of the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association's current programs and resources which are available to all educators. In the fall Dick Nicoll and Julie Braun Martin met with the science coordinators (STEAM) from all

over the county to introduce them to our website, point out the materials and resources available for their use on the MDIA site and encourage them to let all teachers know about our volunteer efforts to support education. We spoke together about the fact the Mount Diablo State Park offers a wonderful opportunity for students to pursue their science studies in a beautiful nature setting, and our website has materials which teachers can use to create those experiences. We look forward to continuing to work with the county to provide educators with tools and opportunities they can share with their students.

## Peregrine Falcon Team

**IN MAY, MDIA ADOPTED THE** Peregrine Team in Pine Canyon as an official project. A handful of MDIA volunteers began monitoring peregrine falcons in the Castle Rock cliffs in 2015. As the group grew and evolved, they wanted broader advice and oversight, and turned to MDIA's Board of Directors. MDIA offered to adopt the team, and the P-Teamers jumped at the chance. The Peregrine Team begins its 9th season on February 1, 2023, when the peregrine breeding season begins. To support the birds, the Castle Rocks close to all visitors for six months, through July 31, 2023. For more info, contact Staci Hobbet, P-Team Lead: [anastasiahobbet@gmail.com](mailto:anastasiahobbet@gmail.com)



## Park Maintenance

**THE MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEER GROUP (MVG)** was mainly focused on one large project in the park this year, the waterproofing of the Summit Observation Deck. Because the concrete deck sits above the visitor center exhibit space, cracks in the existing substrate have led to numerous leaks into the interior of the building. A 6-day process was undertaken with help from park staff to install a 4-part professional waterproofing system which will hopefully eliminate rainwater infiltration for several years to come. Additionally, our Diablo Stove Restoration team continues its diligent work on the masonry repairs of these historic stoves located throughout the park. Their focus this year has been in the Rock City area.



*Steve Smith and Rod Sterling Waterproofing Summit VC Roof*

## Trash Removal Project

**TRP VOLUNTEERS REMOVED DEBRIS** from a collapsed structure along Marsh Creek Road near the Sharkey Gate entrance. It was an eyesore for many years, eventually fell, and was approved for removal. In addition, we worked to improve the ingress and egress across the bridge that leads to the MCVC parking area. Potholes caused by the deteriorating concrete and asphalt roadway made access tricky. We removed the old roadway on each side of the bridge and applied new asphalt. We also filled in areas under the bridge with concrete to prevent further erosion of the bridge supports.

The State is still reviewing several proposed projects, and the TRP crew is ready to assist in maintenance and to accomplish more to bring the park back to as natural state as possible.



*TRP Volunteers Repairing Mitchell Canyon Road*

## Website

**THE MDIA WEBSITE [WWW.MDIA.ORG](http://WWW.MDIA.ORG)** has an updated Wildflower Guide that includes filtered lists by color, indicators if invasive and/or toxic, bloom status and integration with site search. A quick link to the list of blooming flowers is now on the Home Page under What's New. Also added is a directory of MDIA sponsored videos Wild Mount Diablo (<https://www.mdia.org/wildmountdiablo>) a series of short, inspiring videos highlighting plants or animals unique to Mount Diablo State Park. Finally the website has been expanded to include the latest information regarding the fundraising campaign for a new Education Center in Mitchell Canyon (<https://www.mdia.org/mountdiabloedcenter>). Here, a website visitor can learn about the project, sign up for email updates, or securely make a donation online.

## Hikes

**ALTHOUGH LIMITED BY COVID** restrictions, we did a total of 36 walks this year. The most popular hike was the monthly Nature Walks. We saw many “Birds, Butterflies and Blooms”, as the title implies and also spotted rare gray foxes! A close second were the Tarantula walks in September. Adults & kids alike were eager to hear all about the lifecycle of the Aphonopelma. We also did some Common Poorwill & Scorpion hikes in late Spring and Summer. We have recruited some new hike leaders, and we are planning on adding more walks for the next year.

## The Mountain Talk Webinar Series

**MDIA CONTINUED THE VERY SUCCESSFUL** webinar series. These webinars covered a wide range of topics including: opossums, birds, geology, fox, butterflies, bobcats, native bees, paleontology, and spiders. There were over 475 attendees during the year. We are grateful to the talented presenters, most of whom are volunteers, who created and presented the programs.

Of particular note was the creation of a 25-minute film premiere sponsored by MDIA. Cafe Ohlone founders

Vincent Medina and Louis Trevino led a walk in the hills below their most sacred peak, Tuushtak, aka Mount Diablo. As they discuss plants and animals, they present Ohlone history, culture, and cuisine—and how we can all celebrate what is “native to right here.”

## Outreach

**OUTREACH EFFORTS INCLUDED** the following: Pine Canyon hike for the Diablo Region Women's Clubs, presentation for the Diablo Region Women's Clubs annual convention, Peregrine Hike for Bay Nature magazine, presentation to the Contra Costa Watershed forum, article on Monarchs for The Valley Sentinel, table at Mount Diablo Challenge, table at Bancroft Garden event, “Native to Right Here—Tuushtak” video premiered at the American Indian Film Festival, and article on the Mitchell Canyon Education Center in Alamo/Danville Today and the Claycord Pioneer. Presentations included: Lafayette Library, SIRS Las Trampas Branch, Danville Senior Center, San Ramon Valley Historical Society, the Trilogy Community, Chicago University Alumni and SIRS San Ramon Branch.

Wild Mount Diablo Episodes Produced and Released included: American Kestrel, Bobcats, California Poppy, River Otters, Mistletoe, and Black Tailed-deer. View at: <https://www.mdia.org/wildmountdiablo>.



*Vincent Medina and Louis Trevino in Tuushtak Video*

## 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.

### 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	

### 2022 Donations and Pledges

#### \$250,000+

MDIA Board

#### \$100,000–249,999

Terese and Doyle Dixon in Honor of Donald Dixon

#### \$20,000–99,999

Frank Valle-Riestra  
Mike and Sue Brandy  
Catherine and Richard Nicoll  
Anastasia and Randall Hobbet  
Carol Lane

#### \$10,000–19,999

John Van Heertum  
William Kerr Foundation  
Nootbar Family Fund  
Gale and John Vocke

#### \$5,000–9,999

Mornette McShane

#### \$1,000–4,999

Valley Spokesmen Touring Club  
Daniel Fitzgerald  
Mt. Diablo Audubon Society  
Daniel and Karen Sandri  
Spencer Fulweiler  
GFWC Past Presidents  
Michael Sweeney  
Steven Beatty  
Peter W Davis  
Sue Donecker  
John and Tena Gallagher  
Pam Kershner  
Sharon Landwehr  
Jeff & Julie Martin  
Richard McDrew  
Judith Sweet  
John Villalpando  
Ramona Watson

#### \$500–999

Mark Blair  
Karl Schindhelm  
The Blackbaud Giving Fund  
Burt Bogardus  
Robert and Cynthia Brittain  
Joan Hamilton  
Thomas J. Logue  
Steven Ricks  
Anonymous

#### \$100–499

Jean Fiske  
Karen McNeil  
Jeanne Thomas  
Sue Pitsenbarger  
Wicked Events, Inc.  
Melissa Allen  
Steve and Linda Jacobs  
Paul Limesand  
Abigail J Bornstein  
Tina Freeman  
Linda J Thurston  
Stephen Smith  
Daniel Galvin  
Alamo Women's Club  
Jeanne Boyd  
Terri Denslow  
Andrew Naegeli  
Nicholas Sharrock  
Williams Giving Fund  
Museum of San Ramon Valley  
Frederick Ruegsegger  
Janet Belanoff  
Arthur Binder  
Paul Cardinet  
Kevin Erickson  
Melitta Haslund  
David Hobbet  
Lisa Hockett  
Judith Immel-Hutting

### 2022 Donations and Pledges

Kathleen James  
Larry Long  
Shelly Maramonte  
Stephen Peck  
Jim Pooler  
Judy Ryan  
Paul Yamshon  
Paul Andrews  
Mary Boyle  
Anonymous  
Philip R. Matthews  
Shawn Richardson  
Bob & Rosemarie Scrosati  
Kathy Siegel  
Chris Valle-Riestra

Karin Deas  
Mariana Elder  
Tom Hagler  
Kathryn Martinsen  
Sydney Serratore  
Doug VanEmmerik  
Contra Costa Hills Club  
Bea Agronow  
Maureen Fischl  
Mike Palmer  
Judith & Charles Parker  
Maria Ley  
Fred Sullivan  
Beth Tibbits  
Dorothy Bradt  
Holly Garber  
Sue Rohlicek  
Daniel Jacobs  
Eric Edmondson  
Richard Guarienti  
Tim Montgomery  
Sonja Wilkin  
Clyde Chroswhite  
Mark Langer  
Richard Davis  
Megan Sandri  
Gayle Blake  
Thomas H. Mathews  
Helen Pereira  
Michael Robertson  
Richard Sexton

#### \$1–99

Bennett Berke  
William Wadsworth  
Tim Brandy  
Marilyn Day  
Lisa Anich  
Lisa Cline  
Vicki Flickinger  
Rochelle Fortier  
Mei-Hsia Lee  
Sharyn Mitzo  
Emily Wheeler  
Chris and Teri Wills  
Harry York  
Patricia Brown  
Mel and Tim Comay

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.

