

Mount Diablo Review

MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

Spring/Summer 2020 • MDIA, PO Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0346 • 925-927-7222 • www.mdia.org

Volunteering at Mount Diablo State Park • Steve Elliott, Volunteer Lead

“It is one of the most rewarding things I do!” As is often the refrain, volunteers love being at Mount Diablo State Park. There are so many diverse and interesting ways to give of your time.

If you love hiking, there is backcountry patrol. Volunteers hike, bike, or ride horseback, assisting visitors and reporting on trail conditions. If you enjoy wildflowers, history, and native animals, serving as a docent might be a good fit. The opportunities are endless. Volunteers help maintain the trails and park facilities on scheduled workdays. They lead hikes. They protect/foster native plants and remove invasive ones. Volunteers are even responsible for the trail signage. Believe me, there is something for everyone!

Those who like working outdoors tend to gravitate towards one of our field teams—scheduled trail maintenance, environmental cleanup workdays, and facility maintenance. Twice a month, the trail crew meets to repair trails. It is rewarding, hands-on work! The monthly cleanups include projects like removing dilapidated fencing, old dump sites, and other environmental challenges.

The limited park staff struggles with keeping all the buildings, picnic areas, and campgrounds in good shape. Thus, there are regular opportunities to do painting, carpentry, and other tasks as part of a volunteer team.

Other roles include leading or helping to lead hikes. In the spring, we offer wildflower hikes, while the tarantula hikes are popular in the fall. Destination hikes, say to Eagle Peak, the Summit, or the



VOLUNTEERS CLEARING A TRAIL • STEVE ELLIOTT

ever-popular Grand Loop are offered throughout the year. Training is offered on all aspects of hike leadership or the related content (like wildflowers).

Volunteers help host school groups, scout troops, and the summer campfire program. Docent roles include volunteering for scheduled shifts on weekends and holidays at the Mitchell Canyon and Summit Visitor centers. It is quite enjoyable to spend time with visitors helping to guide their visitor experience. Likewise, training is available and these roles are perfect if you are a “people person.”

How much time you give and when is up to you. Backcountry patrol is whenever you want. Other activities have a regular schedule that you plug into, as your time permits. Scheduled workdays or visitor center shifts tend to be four to six hours once or twice a month. Participation is a function of your availability.

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Park Supervising Ranger's Report

Cameron Morrison



The Wildlife in our Backyards

As the days begin to get longer and warmer, Mount Diablo State Park experiences a significant increase in visitation as we move through spring and into summer. Some of these visitors may be coming to see the wildflowers, some want to experience the spectacular views the park has to offer, and others may simply want to explore the park and spend time connecting with nature. Although there is no way to definitively forecast the likelihood of a so-called wildflower “superbloom” or know which days will provide for the best viewing, there are a few things that we can reliably predict.

With an increase in visitation, park staff tend to field more questions from the public about the various animals, plants, or wildflowers they might see on their hikes. These range from questions about unusual flower sightings to questions about how common

it is to see particular animals during the daytime. Since Mount Diablo encompasses nearly 20,000 acres and has more than 162 miles of trails and fire roads, it is quite likely that park visitors will come into contact with something they find unusual.

During this time of year, we also often receive questions from concerned parents about the likelihood of encountering rattlesnakes. While many people may fear snakes, the fear is generally unwarranted—especially in Mount Diablo. Although more than 11 different types of snakes have been identified here, only one is venomous to humans: the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus oreganus*). This generally mild-mannered snake would much rather avoid interactions with humans, but if antagonized—either accidentally or intentionally—it will defend itself. Thankfully, this is rare.

Over the past two decades, there has been only one confirmed rattlesnake bite at Mount Diablo and one unconfirmed. The park visitor who was confirmed to have been bitten by a rattlesnake was attempting to move the snake off the fire road with a stick. The park visitor that was treated for a suspected rattlesnake bite was bitten on the hand after she had placed her hand between two rocks.

Worth noting, recent research by Stanford University found a connection between increased rattlesnake bites following winters with heavy rainfall. This contradicts the previously held belief that rattlesnake bites increased during drought periods due to rattlesnakes having to forage for food over further distances. Instead, the Stanford researchers theorize that because heavy precipitation means more shrub growth, which in turn provides more habitat for rodents—which are a staple of the rattlesnake’s diet—it is likely that more rattlesnake offspring will survive.

While your chances of being bitten by a rattlesnake are extremely low, there are several steps that you can take to further minimize a negative encounter with a rattlesnake:

- Stay on established trails and walk in the center of the trail so you can better see what is in front of you.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Always watch where you are walking and wear closed-toe shoes. If you see a snake, walk around it. Listen for the distinctive warning sound a rattlesnake makes when it feels threatened.
- Teach children to respect snakes and to leave them alone.
- Do not touch or disturb a snake, even if it appears dead.
- Note that juvenile rattlesnakes can easily be mistaken for other snakes since they may only have one “rattle,” which does not actually make noise.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

MDIA President's Column

Stephen Smith



Welcome to Mount Diablo State Park and all of its brilliance! This time of year is particularly resplendent as we usher in the height of wildflower season. The blooms you see before you are often understated when compared to the grand super blooms you may see elsewhere in the state. But make no mistake, the flowers you will encounter during your visit are equally spectacular in their beauty, abundance, diversity, and singularity. And for those of you looking for a wall-to-wall carpet of color, you can find that here also. There is something here for everyone to enjoy—whether you are gazing upon the hills through a car window, whisking past them on two wheels, or meandering through them on two feet (or atop four).

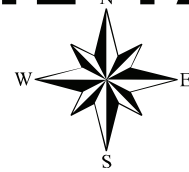
Maybe you know a couple of common names, like the Poppy or Lupine, or perhaps you are looking for endemics like the Mount Diablo Fairy Lantern. Some of you are seeking *Arctostaphylos auriculata*, while others are just hunting for pretty pink petals. No matter your level of knowledge about our blooms, one thing is certain: we are all beholden to their splendor and eager to find more. A self-taught wildflower enthusiast myself, I always want to know what I am looking at, something most of us share as a curious species. Attaching a name to a particularly beautiful flower fosters a connection that allows us to speak about it with others—or perhaps label it in our social media posts. For just that reason we have the perfect tool for you: a comprehensive online guide to the wildflowers of Mount Diablo. Created by the volunteers at Mount Diablo Interpretive Association, the guide allows you to browse over 300 different varieties, grouped by color. Each flower contains a beautiful color picture for identification along with the common and scientific names and bloom period. The guide is just a click away at mdia.org/wildflower-guide. For those of you who want to know exactly which flowers are in bloom right now, you can keep up with our comprehensive list by clicking the “What’s Blooming Now on Mount Diablo” link found at the bottom of the wildflower guide home page.

Where to find all these flowers, you ask? The short answer is just about anywhere on the mountain. If you take the time, you will find flowers. My go-to spots for impressive varietal displays include Mitchell Canyon Road, Black Point Trail, and Mitchell Rock Trail, all located on the North side of the mountain. Another hotspot is North Peak Trail between the Summit and Prospector’s Gap, or the hillsides along Burma Road. For those peering through a car window, North Gate Road usually offers a dazzling display as well. And if you are reading this in the summer when the grasses have turned to gold, there are still many beauties out there to find. You just may have to look a little harder.

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing your visit by developing interpretive displays and publications, offering nature hikes and programs, and so much more. All net proceeds from merchandise sales, membership dues, and donations go directly back to the park! Please visit mdia.org to plan your visit, check out the calendar for upcoming events, shop for publications and souvenirs at the online store, or sign up to become a member of MDIA. Please enjoy your stay and come again soon—one visit is never enough.

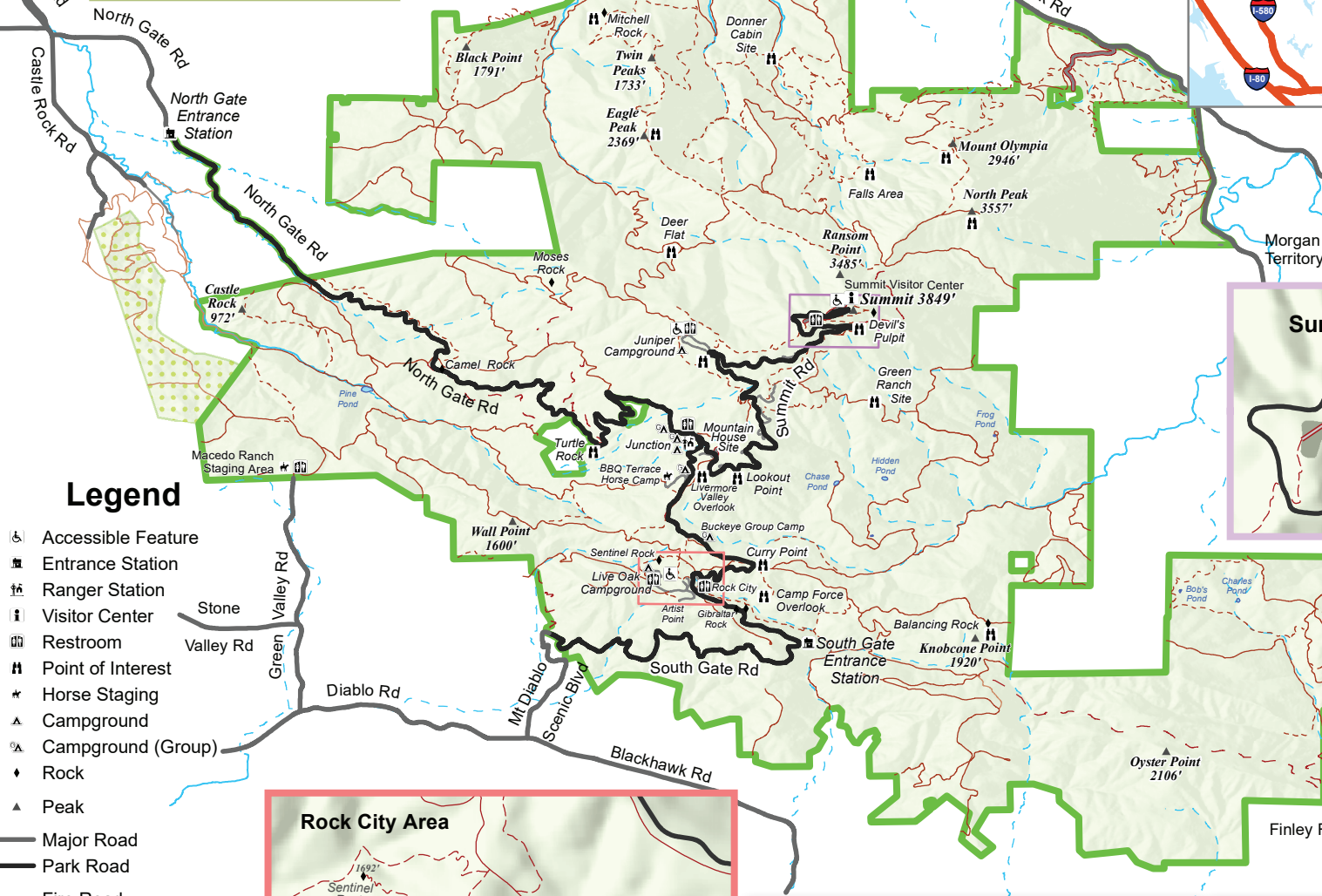
MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

0 0.5 1 Miles
0 0.5 1 Kilometers



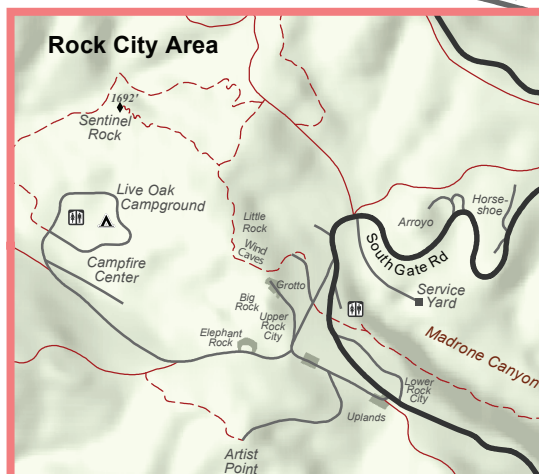
Mitchell Canyon Road does not offer a route to the Summit via motor vehicle. Vehicles must enter through North Gate Road or South Gate Road.

Most land adjacent to the park is private property. Do not enter without the owner's permission.



Legend

- Accessible Feature
- Entrance Station
- Ranger Station
- Visitor Center
- Restroom
- Point of Interest
- Horse Staging
- Campground
- Campground (Group)
- Rock
- Peak
- Major Road
- Park Road
- Fire Road
- non-MDSP
- Single-track Trail
- Trail Bikes OK
- Paved Trail
- Perennial Creek
- Seasonal Creek
- Pond
- Administered By EBRPD
- Mount Diablo State Park



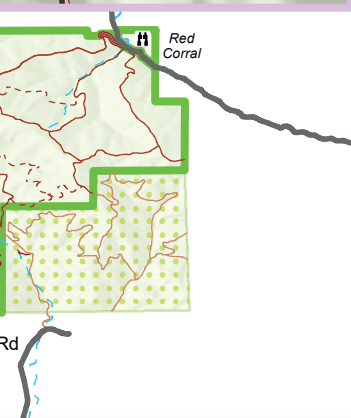
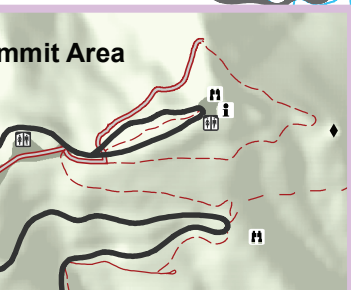
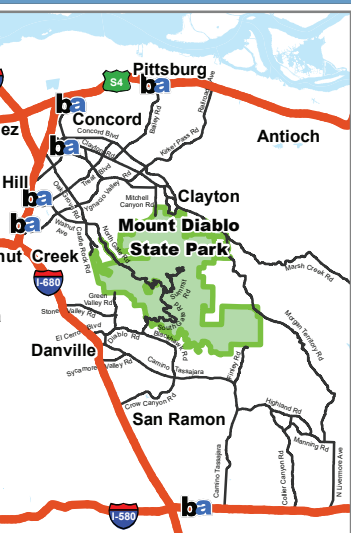
Park Fees per Car

Mitchell Canyon Entrance*	\$6.00
Macedo Ranch Entrance*	\$6.00
North and South Gate Entrances*	\$10.00
Golden Poppy Annual Pass	\$125.00
California Explorer Annual Pass	\$195.00

* MINUS \$1 FOR SENIORS 62+

SITE

- Stagecoach
- Boundary
- Buckeye
- Wildcat
- Barbecue Ter



Mount Diablo has three designated family camping areas and five group camps:

Juniper Campground (36 sites, elevation 3,000 ft.) Located approximately two miles below the summit, on Summit Road, Juniper is known for its fantastic views. Three campsites meet accessibility (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards. **Reservations available.**

Live Oak Campground (23 sites, elevation 1,450 ft.) Located one mile above the South Gate Entrance Station, off South Gate Road. Live Oak is near Rock City, where one can explore rock formations. **Reservations available.**

Junction Campground (6 sites, elevation 2,200 ft.) Located where South Gate and North Gate meet at the Ranger Station. This campground is situated in an open woodland area. **Available on a first-come, first-served basis only.**

Group Camps are Buckeye, Barbecue Terrace, Wildcat, Stagecoach, and Boundary. Each campground is primitive with running water (subject to availability) and pit toilets. Barbecue Terrace is equipped with horse ties for equestrian use. RVs are not allowed in the group camping areas. **Reservations available.**

- All campgrounds are provided with picnic tables, fire pits or stoves, potable water (subject to availability) and restrooms. Showers are available at Juniper and Live Oak campgrounds at no additional charge.
- The campgrounds are mainly designed for tent camping, but can accommodate RVs up to 20 ft. in length. No hookups and dumping stations are provided.

Camping Procedures

Make reservations up to six months in advance using the ReserveCalifornia website at reservecalifornia.com. To view a map of the campgrounds and for additional info, please visit mdia.org/camping.

Check-in time is 2:00 p.m. Check-out time is 12:00 noon.

During the fire season (generally May to October) the park is subject to closure due to extreme fire danger. Campers must call the park at 925-837-2525 or 925-837-0904 one day prior to their arrival to confirm park status.

General Rules

- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the park.
- Eight people and two vehicles maximum per campsite.
- Each juvenile (under age of 18) must have written permission from his/her parents (with parent's phone number) prior to camping without adult supervision. Phone verifications will be attempted.
- Quiet hours are from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- No electric generators from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m.
- Firewood gathering is prohibited.
- Fires must be in stoves or fire pits provided. **NO GROUND FIRES.**
- Campfire restrictions are in effect during the fire season. Check fire conditions for appropriate use (see page 6).
- Campers are locked in the park overnight from sunset to 8:00 a.m. For emergencies dial 911.
- Quiet—noise must not carry beyond your immediate campground or picnic area.

Group Camps

	NIGHTLY USE FEE	CAPACITY CAMPERS	VEHICLES
	\$65	20	7
	\$65	20	7
	\$100	30	10
	\$100	30	10
rrace	\$165	50	17

2020 Public Astronomy Programs on Mount Diablo

2020	START	TOPIC
Mar 28	7:00 p.m.	We Are Stardust: Where does the iron in your blood come from? The calcium in your bones? The gold in California gold mines? "We are Stardust" is explained. Follow the story of the stars as you tour the telescopes.
Apr 25	7:30 p.m.	Rocks & Ice in the Solar System: Comets, meteors, and asteroids: how are they different, how are they related? Help make a comet and hold an ancient rock from space.
May 30	8:00 p.m.	Light and Shadow: Moon shadows, Earth's shadow—what is day and night, really? Is that a planet or is it a star? Shadows, reflections, and starlight in space.
Jun 13	8:00 p.m.	A Universe of Galaxies: Help build a scale model and catch a glimpse through the telescopes of galaxies outside our own Milky Way.
Jul 25	8:00 p.m.	Do Coyotes Use Solar Power? Discover the <i>real</i> power of the Sun. Safely view the Sun through a telescope and explore planets and stars after dark.
Aug 22	7:30 p.m.	Supernova! Why do some stars explode? Which star is next? Would you exist without supernovae? Take home a sky map of stars likely to explode as supernovae.
Sep 19	6:30 p.m.	Our Place in the Galaxy: What is our Milky Way Galaxy—and where is our place in it? Tour the center of the galaxy and more through telescopes.
Oct 10	6:00 p.m.	Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Planets of our Solar System: Here's your chance to explore <i>three</i> planets through the telescopes. Make a Pocket Solar System and imagine what it would be like to live on other worlds.
2021 Mar 20	7:00 pm	First public astronomy program of 2021—mark your calendar!

Time: Evening, beginning about a half hour before sunset. You may stay until 11:00 p.m.** **Plan to enter the park entry gate at least 45 minutes before the program starts.**

Where: Lower Summit parking lot of Mount Diablo State Park.

Parking: **Parking in the lower Summit lots is limited and first come, first served.** If the lots are full when you arrive, you may park outside those lots, with these requirements:

- Park **only** in other designated parking areas or completely off the road.
- Illegally parked cars are subject to ticketing or towing by Park personnel.
- It is rare, but possible, that nearby parking will not be available.

Cost: The astronomy program is free, but there is a \$10 park entry fee per vehicle.

Bring: Kids, binoculars, warm clothes (temperature can drop significantly), snacks, water. If you bring a flashlight, please cover it with red cellophane or red cloth.

Leaving: The Park gates will be locked and visitors will only be able to leave the summit and **exit the park by escorted caravans through the North Gate** a few times during the evening. Caravans will be announced at intervals during the program (1st caravan: about two hours after program starts). For safety, visitors should only leave with these escorts.

For more details, go to Mount Diablo Astronomical Society's website, www.mdas.net, and click on Event Calendar, or call Mount Diablo State Park at 925-837-2525.

Fire Danger: How Will It Affect You?

- Maintain fires at all times in a safe condition that does not threaten any person or natural or structural feature.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Extinguish all fires prior to departure.
- Ground fires are not permitted.
- Firewood gathering is prohibited.
- Report all wildfires immediately. Call 911.

Fire Danger Chart

Fire Danger Reading	Wood fire permitted in stoves and BBQ pits (designated picnic and campsites)	Use of Compressed Logs	Use of Charcoal	Use of Self-contained Stove	Cigarette Smoking ¹	Park Closed ²
LOW	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
MEDIUM	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
HIGH	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
HIGH WITH RED FLAG	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
VERY HIGH/EXTREME	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

¹ THE PROHIBITION OF SMOKING UNDER HIGH FIRE DANGER INCLUDES SMOKING WITHIN A VEHICLE.

² PARK CLOSURE APPLIES TO ALL HIKERS, VEHICLES, BICYCLISTS (MOUNTAIN AND ROAD), AND HORSEBACK RIDERS.

Volunteering at Mount Diablo State Park

For many areas, like the field work, getting started is simply a matter of contacting us. We will then connect you to the right volunteer lead. For all of the roles that involve public interaction, there is a required application, orientation, background check, and fingerprinting—all of which is done on a Saturday afternoon. Sessions are held every two or three months.

While the main reward of volunteering is the satisfaction of a job well done, regular volunteers are offered a free entrance pass to Mount Diablo State Park and are eligible to earn a free pass to all of the state parks in our district or a statewide pass to most of the state parks in California.

Volunteers are invited to our special volunteer-only hikes and events, like the annual spring picnic and the Fall Volunteer Dinner. We recognize exceptional volunteer service with several different awards. And as a volunteer, you are welcome to participate in as many of our training and personal enrichment sessions as you like, depending on where your interests lead you.

While the choice is yours, there are many ways to spend time with outdoorsy, like-minded people!

For more information about volunteering, email volunteer@mdia.org or leave a phone message at 925-927-7222.

Wildlife in our backyards (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Please remember that **natural scenery, plants, and animal life** are the principal attractions of most state parks. They are integral parts of the ecosystem and natural community. As such they are protected by federal, state, and park laws. Disturbance, destruction, or collection of these resources is strictly forbidden.

If you would like more information about the many plants and animals that call Mount Diablo State Park home, please visit the Summit Visitor Center (open daily from 10-4), the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center (open weekends from 8-4), or visit www.mdia.org.

MDIA Membership Form

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT MDIA, PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association

Membership dues are deductible to the full extent allowed by law. New memberships include a free Mount Diablo trail map.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (CIRCLE ONE)	
Student/Senior (55+)	\$15
Individual	\$25
Family	\$40
Contributing	\$100
Lifetime	\$500

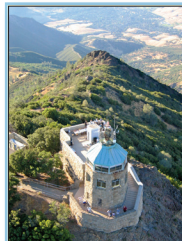
Donation	\$
Name:	
Address:	
City:	
State/Zip:	
Telephone:	()
Email:	

Clip and mail check to: MDIA, PO Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0346, made payable to MDIA.

Join MDIA or renew your membership online now. Use your smartphone.



<https://squareup.com/store/mount-diablo-interpretive-association/item/mdia-membership>



Summit Museum

is open 7 days a week,
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
928-837-6119

Event Calendar

Check out all the hikes and other events happening in Mount Diablo State Park.

www.mdia.org/Events

Park Rules

You are responsible for obeying these and other Park rules

- **All Features of the Park Are Protected!** Do not remove or disturb plants, animals, or geological features.
- **Park Hours:** Opens at 8 a.m. and closes at sunset. Visitors should be in their vehicles heading out at sunset to avoid being locked in.
- **No Alcohol:** All alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the park.
- **Vehicles/Bicycles Speed Limit:** 15 to 25 mph on park roads, 15 mph in campgrounds and picnic areas. All vehicles must stay on the pavement and are prohibited on trails and fire roads.
- **Bicycles** are allowed only on paved roads, fire roads, and designated trails. Check at the Ranger Station for current regulations.
- **Drones or Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** are prohibited.
- **Skateboards**, rollerblades, rollerskates, and gravity-propelled devices are prohibited.
- **Dogs:** Must be on leash at all times when out of your car; must be in tent or a vehicle at night; and must stay in developed areas—they are not allowed on trails or fire roads.
- **Fires:** Restrictions in effect during season. Check with a Ranger. Fires must be in fire stoves or barbecues provided—no ground fires.
- **Emergencies:** Dial 911.
- **Fireworks** are prohibited.
- **Firearms**/airguns and hunting are prohibited.

**PASS
WITH
CARE**

Rules of the Road for Motorists and Cyclists



Share the roadway with all Park users.

- Drive at or below the posted Park speed limits.
CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 22350*
- Pass with sufficient visual clearance
CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21751 *
- Do not pass on blind curves.
CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21752(A)*
- Give bicyclists 3 feet clearance.
CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21760(b)*
- Yield to equestrians.
CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE 21759*

*MINIMUM FINE: \$238

Understanding Trail Signs



Trail signs in the park follow California State Parks uniform format. The name of the trail you are on is specified in relatively small horizontal type near the top of the sign. The name that appears vertically in large type (another trail but sometimes a destination or park boundary) identifies the termination of that particular trail; note the word "TO" in small letters. The mileage to that end point is specified at the bottom.

California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the Contra Solano Sector Office, 925-673-2891. This newsletter is available in alternate formats by contacting 925-673-2891.

Mount Diablo State Park Phone Numbers

Supervising Ranger925-855-1730
 Junction Ranger925-837-6129
 Mitchell Canyon Ranger.....925-672-4266
 Summit Museum925-837-6119
 South Gate Entrance Station...925-837-0904
 Maintenance.....925-837-6122
 Sector Office925-673-2891
 General Information.....925-837-2525
 TTY Relay Service.....711

Mount Diablo State Park
 96 Mitchell Canyon Road
 Clayton, CA 94517-1500

