

# Mount Diablo Interpretive Association

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## 2023 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 2023, THE MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION** (MDIA) continued its 49-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 and 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 to have raised \$1M from local funding at the close of 2023. And in 2024 we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary of providing terrific service to the park and the community at-large.

### MDIA Board

**MDIA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS CURRENTLY** consists of 12 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. 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. This year has also seen tremendous help from our campaign committee volunteers Judith Parker and Gary Parkhurst. Thank you also to our many wonderful volunteers dedicated to educating the public as part of our Peregrine Team. Special thanks to our excellent film makers Joan Hamilton, Wally DeYoung and Kendall Oei for their work on Wild Mount Diablo. Thank you.

### Mission

**IN 2023, 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 fund 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 fifth annual board retreat this year, an in-person event at the home of a board member. We set several goals for ourselves coming into 2024. Primary among these goals is the exciting project of building a brand-new education center at Mitchell Canyon with goals of obtaining additional grant funding. We hope to break ground this year. We also set goals of exploring more diversity on the board and recruiting more directors. 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

**THIS YEAR WAS A SIGNIFICANT** fundraising year for MDIA. The campaign to raise money for the new Education Center officially kicked off with Earth Day in April. We met at Mitchell Canyon with donors and interested parties to announce our fundraising goal of \$80,000 to match challenge grants from the William Kerr Foundation and Save Mount Diablo. By August, our donors had stepped forward and had met the goal.

Earlier in July we were thrilled to learn that Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer Kahan, had secured a budget allocation of \$1 million for the new Education Center. In September, we held an in-person event at Heather Farms for donors highlighted by a presentation by John Ware on the development of the construction drawings for the Education Center complex. Our fundraising effort continued with a year-end campaign to bring the total of local contributions to \$1,000,000 to match the State budget allocation. Local donors responded generously, and the campaign was successful after a MDIA Board Member donated \$20,000 and an anonymous donor contributed over \$39,000.



*MDIA Board celebrating \$1 million in local contributions to the new MCEC. Left to right: Leslie Contreras, Tere Dixon, Mark Brauer, Dan Fitzgerald, Steve Smith, Julie Braun Martin, Mike Brandy, Dick Nicoll. (Not shown: Linda Kwong, Staci Hobbet, Carol Lane, Dan Sandri)*

By the end of the year, we had raised a total of \$443,916 from our community and business supporters during 2023, bringing our two-year total to \$1,001,472. We deeply appreciate the individual donors as well as the businesses and organizations listed in this report for their outstanding support of this project.

### 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	

## Finances

**MDIA'S 2023 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PARK** included funding the following projects:

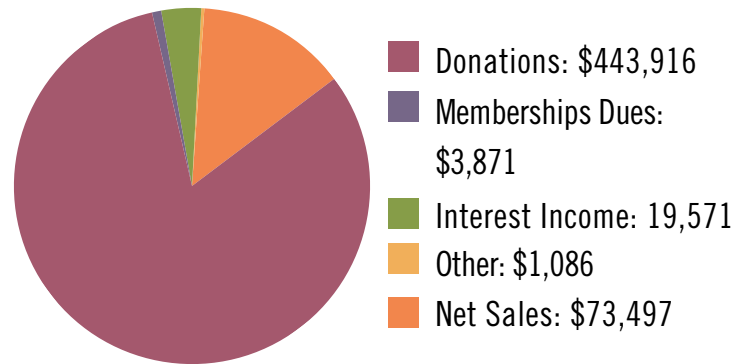
- Publishing and printing 80,000 copies of the *Mount Diablo Review* newsletter given to all park visitors and community organizations
- Hosting the Mountain Talks educational speaker series via webinar
- Producing our Wild Mount Diablo video series including segments on Pines, Ladybugs and Early/Late Blooming Wildflowers
- Funding for the Diablo Stove Restoration Team
- Supporting the Native Plant Garden
- Fundraising for a new Education Center
- Funding for Trail Crew

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.

## MDIA Membership

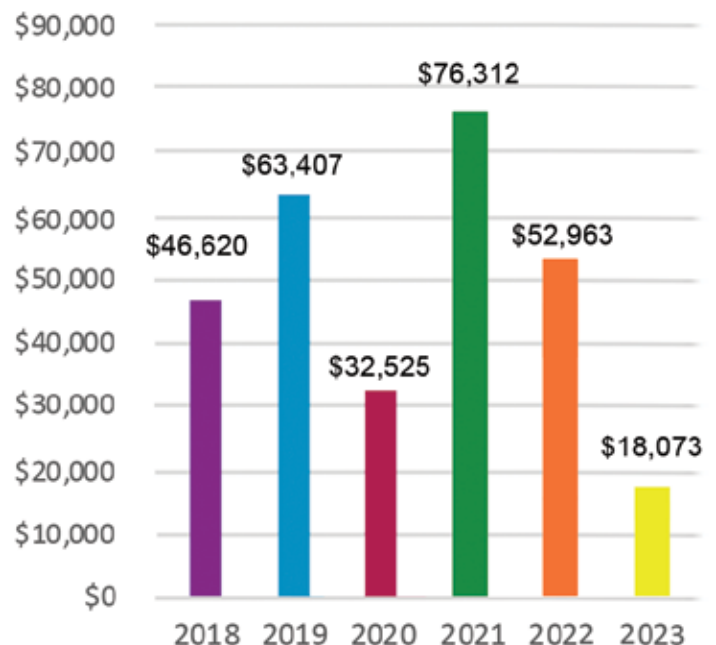
On February 23, 2023, the Board of Directors approved a new membership model with two categories: Regular and Life Membership. All former life members continued in this status, and any donor of \$1,000+ was made a Life member. MDIA continued to send renewal reminders to Regular members via email. These changes went into effect April, 2023. By the end of 2023, there were 158 Life members, 61 Regular members, and a total of 974 individuals and organizations participating with MDIA.

### MDIA Sources of Revenue for 2023



Monarch Caterpillar | Hema Shah

### Annual Contributions to the Park from MDIA 2018–2023



## Merchandising

**MERCHANDISING IN 2023** saw major improvement in the ongoing supply chain issues, but increasing inflation along with shipping costs continue to rise prompting an increase in some of our prices. Overall, sales have returned to normal levels in 2023, 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.

## Peregrine Falcon Team

**IN 2024, MDIA'S PEREGRINE TEAM** will celebrate its tenth season arm-in-arm with MDIA as it celebrates its 50th birthday. In 2023, the P-Team clocked 2,000 volunteer hours in its six-month season, February through the end of July, as it monitored the mountain's peregrine falcon nest sites, hoping for chicks. The Castle Rock cliffs did the parents proud, raising three fat and healthy fledglings, two females and one male. In early July, two raptor biologists from the team's partner, the 50-year-old Predatory Bird Research Group at UC Santa Cruz, safely banded all three youngsters. At the remote cliffs in the mountain's Black Hills, the falcon pair met with worse fortune. In recent years, the cliffs offered peace and privacy, but an unsanctioned trail, known colloquially as "Jose's World", winds through a narrow canyon at its base, and when Covid hit, people poured into all our parks and open spaces. In this narrow canyon,



*Dan Fitzgerald and Steve Smith installing trail closure sign.*

unlike the trail along Pine Creek below the Castle Rock cliffs, park visitors are too close for comfort. The noise they make, both their voices and equipment, in such a narrow passage made the birds think better of settling there. In cooperation with MDSP, MDIA designed, produced, and installed trail closure signs around the nesting zone for 2024. For more information, see [mdia.org/peregrine-team](http://mdia.org/peregrine-team), or contact the Team Lead, Staci Hobbet, [anastasiahobbet@gmail.com](mailto:anastasiahobbet@gmail.com).

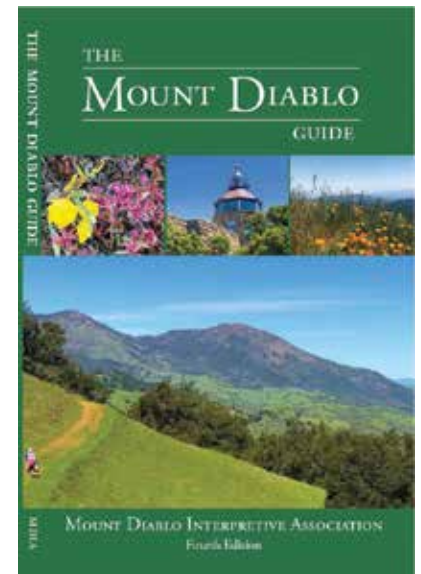
## Education

**MDIA COMMUNICATED MONTHLY** with the Contra Costa County Office of Education Superintendent, Lynn Mackey, regarding the MDIA activities and resources and the efforts to build a new Mitchell Canyon Education Center. The County Superintendent provided materials about MDIA and the effort to establish an education center to the superintendents of local school districts. MDIA met with the Mt. Diablo Education Foundation regarding the work of MDIA and the campaign to build an education center. The foundation has an interest in collaborating with MDIA and setting up field trips for students.

## Publications

MDIA CONTINUED TO PUBLISH OUR BIENNIAL ISSUE OF THE PARK newsletter, The Mount Diablo Review, for distribution to all park visitors. In 2023, featured articles included The Role of the Mount Diablo Initial Point in Surveying California and the plan for the new Education Center in Mitchell Canyon. Past editions of the Review can be found at <https://www.mdia.org/newsletters>.

In addition, MDIA completed the fourth edition of the Mount Diablo Guide, the go to book for everything Mount Diablo. The year long effort resulted in a major revision of species names, cycling information, the discussion of Native Americans, and other sections as well. Substantial progress was also made on a new publication: Native Bees of Mount Diablo.



*Mount Diablo Guide, 4th Edition*

## Trash Removal Project

THE TRP CREW SPENT TWO DAYS ASSISTING in the cleanup of the Balcerzak property which was acquired by Save Mount Diablo and located entirely within the State Park boundaries. There is still much work to be done there and 2024 will provide other opportunities to work. In addition, TRP volunteers worked with park maintenance personnel to clear dry grasses and shrubs from picnic and camp sites.

## Outreach

OUTREACH EFFORTS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING: Earth Fest at Peace Lutheran Church in Danville, Earth Day campaign kickoff, Clayton Oktoberfest, and the Walnut Festival Art & Wine Festival. In addition, presentations were made to: Walnut Creek Garden Club, SIRS San Ramon Branch, Danville Senior Center, Concord Senior Center, San Ramon Valley Historical Society, and Mount Diablo Bird Alliance.



## Website and Social Media

**THE MDIA WEBSITE [WWW.MDIA.ORG](http://www.mdia.org) HAS A NEW FEATURE:** Find Your Hike (<https://www.mdia.org/find-your-hike>) which provides a quick online search tool for popular hikes sorted by level of difficulty or trailhead. Hike descriptions have been updated based on current trail conditions. The feature can be found along with the list of other Activities in Mount Diablo State Park on the website top navigation.

A webpage hosting the library of Park Brochures is now available on the website (<https://www.mdia.org/brochures>) and enables one to view or download a brochure of various topics, including wildlife, plants and specific trail information. Another new feature is the Support Tab (<https://www.mdia.org/support>) that provides website visitors with all the information about ways to support MDIA, including donate, become a member, sign up to volunteer, and other methods for contributing to MDIA's priority for a new Education Center in Mitchell Canyon (<https://www.mdia.org/mountdiabloedcenter>).

Finally, MDIA is now on social media. Follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram to receive updates from our dedicated naturalists and volunteers, upcoming events including hikes and webinars, bloom reports and more.

<https://www.facebook.com/MountDiabloInterpretiveAssociation>

<https://www.instagram.com/mdia.webmaster>

## Mountain Talk Webinars

**IN 2023 WE CONTINUED OUR SUCCESSFUL SERIES** of Mountain Talk webinars. This year we offered ten webinars on a wide variety of topics including: Animal Tracking, River Otters, Wild Mount Diablo films, Native Fish on Mount Diablo, Fire Ecology, Restoration of Historic Stoves on Mount Diablo, Wilderness First Aid, Rattlesnakes and Ground Squirrels, Mount Diablo's Role in Surveying,

Balancing Conservation and Hunting, A Review of the Book "Why We Need to be Wild," and Masting of the Acorn Population.

There was a total of 340 (duplicated) participants signing on to these webinars on Wednesday nights, averaging 34 participants each session. While these sessions offered wonderful information, they also served the purpose of expanding MDIA's visibility and reach. Each of the webinars was recorded and is available on our website at <https://www.mdia.org/events/archiveall>. In this way, many have viewed webinars at a more convenient time.

## Hikes

**MDIA CONDUCTED 49 HIKES IN 2023, CONSISTING** of: 1 – Peregrine Wander, 2 – Geologic Hikes, 2 – Insects Walks, 5 – Poorwill Hikes, 11 – Wildflower Walks, 12 – Birds, Butterflies, and Blooms Hikes, and 16 – Tarantula Treks. Visitors enjoyed the bountiful flowers, birds, butterflies and tarantulas evident this past year. We hope to increase the number of walks/hikes in 2024!



Steve Smith leading tarantula hike | Staci Hobbet

## 2023 Donations

### \$20,000 - 60,000

William Kerr Foundation  
Terese and Doyle Dixon  
Clayton Business and  
Community Association  
Anonymous  
Save Mount Diablo  
Anonymous  
Admiral James Ellis (Ret)  
& Dr. Elisabeth  
Pate-Cornell  
Carol Lane

### \$10,000 - 19,999

East Bay Community  
Foundation  
Mike and Sue Brandy  
Catherine and Richard  
Nicoll  
John Van Heertum  
CEMEX Materials LLC  
Marathon Community  
Investment Programs  
Gale and John Vocke  
Barr Campbell Family  
Foundation

### \$5,000 - 9,999

Anonymous  
Gary and Carol Parkhurst  
Mornette McShane  
Mt. Diablo Bird Alliance  
Richard & Linda Moulton

### \$1,000 - 4,999

Spencer Fulweiler  
PG&E Matching Fund  
Anastasia and Randall  
Hobbet  
Linda Kwong  
Jeff & Julie Martin  
Judith Sweet  
Brent and Barbara Dixon  
Walnut Creek Garden Club  
Peter W Davis  
The Safeway Foundation -  
Northern California Division  
Jill Franklin  
Rex and Janet Takahashi  
Daniel and Karen Sandri  
Daniel Fitzgerald  
Richard McDrew  
Gina Morais  
Tom E Lee  
Karen OBrien  
John and Tena Gallagher  
Elizabeth Hudson and  
George Doddington  
John Villalpando

The McLin Family  
Foundation  
Robert Simmons  
Sharon Landwehr  
Gene Schulting  
Mike Heffernan  
Pat & Janet Hoy  
Sunrise Rotary Community  
Foundation  
Pam Kershner  
Claudia Hein  
YourCause  
ENGE0  
Leslie Dawson  
Rhonda L Bartlett  
Chris and Tom Moore

### \$500-999

David A Knapp  
Karl Schindhelm  
Judith & Charles Parker  
Stephen Smith  
Exploratorium  
Anonymous  
Elizabeth Schwabauer  
Mark Harrigan  
Jennifer Kellar  
Iurii Bogdanov  
Sheryl Castaldo  
Burt Bogardus  
Michael Sweeney  
Wicked Events, Inc.  
Heidi Logue  
Joan Hamilton  
Jeanne Thomas  
Liz Behrens  
The Gale Family Foundation  
Fromer & Garcia  
Charitable Fund  
Jim Bily  
Jean Fiske  
Thomas R. O'Brien  
Peter & Kathleen Muller  
Family Fund

### \$100-499

Robert Slyker  
Merrick Bush  
Jake VanAkkeren  
Beverly Lane  
Chevron Matching Fund  
Frederick Ruegsegger  
Rich Johnstone  
Jack McKeown  
Elizabeth Chapple  
Tom Nootbaar  
Abigail J Bornstein  
Linda Jacobs  
Scott Olle

Irene Gessling  
Roger & Elizabeth Goldberg  
Mark Brauer  
Sue Elliott  
Anthony Siino  
Robert/Joaline Stedman  
Paula Whitney  
Craig Olson  
Joyce Kirstein  
Judith Immel-Hutting  
Mike Palmer  
Susan England  
Doug VanEmmerik  
Mike Hrast  
Nicholas Sharrock  
Jane Fisher  
Jeanne Boyd  
Bob & Rosemarie Scrosati  
California State University  
East Bay  
Arnold Ertola  
Greg Bartow  
Arthur Binder  
Jody Sherrard  
Arti Kirch  
Tim Brandy  
Karen Amos  
David Mackesey  
Lynn Mackey  
Thomas Delfosse  
Karen Mitchoff  
Edi Birsan  
Patricia Middendorf  
Barbara Bigby  
Brynda Dobson  
Sandra Fox-Sohner  
Karen Sakata  
Carol Williams  
Paul Yamshon  
Ryan Harris  
Patricia Osborn  
james topic  
Teresa and Dennis Adler  
Terence Carroll  
Heather Stover  
Mary Jankowski  
Lisa Hockett  
Simon Yee  
Carolyn Balling  
Janet Belanoff  
Stephen J. Taylor  
Heyden Family  
Tamara Rodriguez  
Dave Wiltzius  
Claude Benedix  
Egon Pedersen  
Leslie Contreras  
Susan Sherwood  
Linda and Paul Salsgiver

Bernie Wolf  
Richard Davis  
Igor Skaredoff  
Gabriel Escobar  
Paul Limesand  
William Stark  
Harry York  
Suzanne Ragsdale  
Judith Sherwood  
Christine Sunderland  
Douglas Leich  
Daniel Galvin  
Melanie J Prole  
Tom Patterson  
GAP Matching Fund  
Roberto Deloso  
Robert and Catherine  
Butler  
Thomas H. Mathews  
Tom Hagler  
Margaret Kruse  
Marielle J Boortz  
Jill and Bruce Dresser  
Lauren Kindorf  
Marian Shostrom & Harry  
Baker  
Michael Rothschild  
Telma Barnard

### \$1-99

Beth Tibbits  
William Nownes  
Stephen Williams  
John Karachewski  
Joanie Smith  
Daniel Jacobs  
Chris and Teri Wills  
Dick Bogaert  
Carlene Visperas  
Lisa Cline  
Valerie Cadrett  
Tom and Jane Kelly  
Mark Nakano  
Patty Fischer  
Brian Thomas  
Bennett Berke  
Steven Nakazono  
Susan D'Alcarno  
Kathryn Martinsen  
Ian J. Rich  
Diana Brooks  
John Mercurio  
Kathy Siegel  
Leslie Holst  
Trisha Corey  
Sue Schwartz  
Carolyn MacKenzie  
Marni Berendsen  
Sue Griffin

David Goldsmith  
Contra Costa Hills Club  
Wells Fargo Matching Fund  
Steve Nakazono  
Cyndi Kobay  
Edwin Love  
Pam Giarrizzo  
Judith Ryan  
Melanie & Bill Speir  
Alice Castellanos  
Cindy Brittain  
Sandy and Fred Fogg  
Arnold Joe  
Tami Maytum  
Dora Odne  
Lucy Henderson  
Fred Sullivan  
Mariana Elder  
Maureen Fischl  
Arden Campbell  
Sharyn Fernandez  
Amanda Panikowski  
Helen Reznick  
Anonymous  
Lisa Anich  
Helen Pereira  
Christine Hagelin  
Dirk Muehler  
Mark Saliman  
Thomas Okeefe  
Diane Bast  
Liz Watson  
Brad Palmquist  
Gary Fox  
William Motzer  
Christine Mitroff  
Karen Metschuleit  
Illana Weisman  
Maria Ley  
Ernest Castiaux  
Norma Bowerbank  
Philip Nelson  
Megan Sandri  
Muriel Holzer  
Nancy Topp  
Peter Boffey  
Patricia Mahoney  
Dorothy Bradt  
Mary Boyle  
Lynn Kelly  
Martin Steinpress  
Nancy Robinson  
Chtistine L Garcelon  
Jeff Fontas  
Duane Stevens  
Karen Parkinson  
Maribeth Sands  
Joe Pirrone  
Carrie Miller