

March 14, 2023

## IT'S OUT

Our twice-yearly newsletter

### *The Mount Diablo Review* Spring/Summer 2023

On the front page

*Spirit of Mount Diablo: Building an Education Center in Mitchell Canyon*  
by Stephen Smith, MDIA President

The Spring/Summer Mount Diablo Review is out, with an excellent feature about our plans to build a new Education Center in Mitchell Canyon, along with updates from MDSP Supervising Ranger Cameron Morrison. and MDIA President Stephen Smith.

Read it [HERE](#) or pick it up **free** at MDSP entry kiosks, visitor centers, and vending displays around the park.



#### Spirit of Mount Diablo: Building an Education Center in Mitchell Canyon

Mount Diablo is a majestic place, and each side of the mountain offers different opportunities for exploration and discovery. If you have made multiple visits to the park, you have probably found access via Mitchell Canyon in Clayton. This is the magnificent North Side of the park, and a true representation of all that this mountain has to offer in a compact package. I grew up on the South Side of the mountain and still call this my home, so Mitchell Canyon was an elusive hidden part of the park for me. It wasn't until I started volunteering here that I truly experienced the lush diversity it offers. This place embodies the true *Spirit of Mount Diablo*.

As I began to expand my roles on the mountain, I fell in love with sharing my enthusiasm with the public as a docent at the visitor center in the canyon. We welcome roughly 35,000 visitors to Mitchell Canyon every year with a fraction of those venturing into our humble trailer. What you will find there is an eager volunteer staff and a 400 square foot space packed with wonderful displays, exhibits and posters detailing the myriad of flora and fauna you may experience once you step out onto the trail. The problem is not our passion for educating the public but instead an issue of space and accessibility, we have simply outgrown our little 25-year-old trailer.

As opposed to our more mainstream visitor center atop the Summit which attracts many first-time visitors, tourists and out-of-town guests, Mitchell Canyon is where our more regular visitors go to recreate and experience nature at its finest. Here we focus

our attention on guided nature hikes, classes, and educational experiences. The north side garners much attention during the spring with a bounty of wildflowers dotting the hillside, birds returning from winter vacation, butterflies flitting about and new life springing forth all around. But the canyon offers great opportunities at all times of year for learning and discovering the complexities and wonders of the natural world.

The Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) has been a park partner for nearly 50 years. An all-volunteer non-profit cooperative association, we have been tasked with helping visitors interpret, experience, investigate, appreciate, and conserve the mountain. Our motto of *Preservation Through Education* is paramount to our mission. Finally, the board of directors has identified the importance of creating a brand-new Mitchell Canyon Education Center. In late 2020 we began the planning process by enlisting the help of our stakeholders and



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE CANNON FOR MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

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## A REMINDER OF OUR MARCH MOUNTAIN TALKS VIA ZOOM JOIN US!



Mr. Townsend, a winter resident and arguably our region's most beautiful warbler, awaits a turn at a walnut feeder in (appropriately) Walnut Creek. (Randall Hobbet, March 2023)

March 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Webinar: Wild Mount Diablo's  
Far Out Film Team

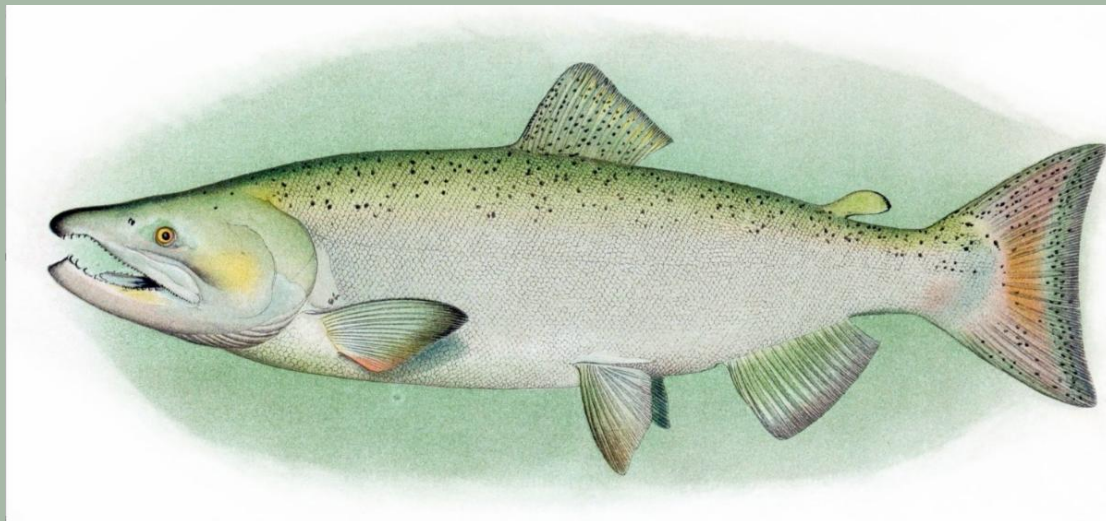
7:00 p.m. via Zoom

In 2021, MDIA sponsored a new project, Wild Mount Diablo, a series of very short films on the iconic native species of Mount Diablo State Park. Joan Hamilton, director and producer of MDIA's well-known longer film series, Audible Mount Diablo, heads the three-person production team. Joan, Wally De Young and Kendall Oei film and produce the segments.

Join them as they share their beautiful nature nuggets with you, along with their personal perspectives on filming each subject: ladybugs, deer, river otters, poppies, bobcats, mistletoe, kestrels, and "Wonders of Diablo 2022." Your blood pressure will go down, and your happiness will spike, when you let this parade of beauties pass before your eyes.

Our movie-makers clockwise from top left: Joan Hamilton, Kendall Oei, Ken Lavin, Wally De Young

Register in advance for this [webinar](#).



**March 29, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Mountain Talk:**  
**Migration Cut Short: Local Trout and Salmon with Nowhere to Go**

For millennia, the first rains of autumn have signaled the start of the annual run of Chinook salmon, also known as king salmon, in the Walnut Creek watershed. Steelhead and resident rainbow trout begin later, in the fall, winter, and on into spring. But since the 1950's, flood control concerns of fast-developing cities have spelled doomsday for these native fishes. In Mitchell Creek, for instance, the last sightings were in the late 1980's. The good news: restoration of Pine Creek, for instance, on MDSP's western edge, would be "relatively easy" according to our speaker, James Hale, known as Doc, a vertebrate zoologist who has spent 50 years studying the wildlife of the East Bay. Can we recover other creeks, and what would it take?



## About the Fishy Talk Above

Doc Hale, formally known as James Hale, but not by us, is among the most popular public speakers and presenters in the Diablo area on numerous natural history topics. He's worked as a vertebrate zoologist for 50 years, specializing in mountain lions and native fish. He also gives talks on native plants and Native Americans of the East Bay. To take a hike with him is to see the world anew. As he says, "I'm not getting any younger!" So put those dinner dishes in the sink and come watch him on Zoom.

(Photo: Bruce Erickson)



## UPCOMING HIKES

March 15, 2023, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Early Wildflower & Bee Walk

March 19, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Rocks on the Move

March 29, 2023, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Nature Walk 3: Birds, Butterflies and Blooms



## Event Details

### Early Wildflower & Bee Walk

March 15, 2023, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Start from Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center**

**Leads: Dan Sandri & Leslie Contreras**

Join naturalists Dan, also known as the "bee guy", and Leslie as we stroll up Mitchell Canyon Road, with a few side trips to see the emerging flowers. We will also hear about the bees, spiders, and bugs that inhabit those wildflowers. This is a four mile walk with a few hundred feet in elevation gain. Bring liquids & snack. Dress for the weather. Rain cancels.

Register [HERE](#)

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### Rocks on the Move

March 19, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**Start from Rock City**

**Leads: Ken Lavin & Liz Watson**

Join us on a journey through 180 million years of geologic time! We'll car caravan to fascinating sites on Mount Diablo and take short hikes to view fossils, wind caves, the Devil's Pulpit, and other amazing rocks and landforms ranging in age from Jurassic times to the Anthropocene (human) epoch.

We'll also view flora that grows nowhere else in the world but here, and learn how climate change is impacting the flora and fauna of Mount Diablo and the Bay Area. This will be a number of short hikes totaling about 3 miles. Bring snacks and lunch and water. Dress in layers and wear good hiking shoes. Bring hiking poles if you normally use them.

Register [HERE](#)

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### Nature Walk 3: Birds, Butterflies and Blooms

March 29, 2023, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Start from Mitchell Canyon**

Lead: Dan Fitzgerald

Join naturalist Dan Fitzgerald for a nature walk in the Mitchell Canyon area. We will be looking for birds, butterflies, and some early/late Spring flowers. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars if you have them. The walk is about 3 miles with some elevation gain. We ask participants who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 to please wear a mask.

Register [HERE](#)

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## ***FUND-RAISING for the Education Center Continues*** **Look for MDIA's Earth Day Outreach**

Three-million dollars will build an educational dream-come-true

See the architects' drawings, and imagine the future in this [two-minute video](#).

**Donate**

## **IMAGINE**

*Below is our current visitor center in Mitchell Canyon from the back side. The parking lot is just beyond. Now, imagine this trailer gone, opening the view up the beautiful canyon and revealing the Native Plant Garden in the foreground of this photo. The new education center will be at the bottom of the slope to the right, facing west, with an open pavilion for all weathers. Yes?*



John Lennon "Strawberry Fields" memorial, Central Park, New York, Wikipedia Commons.

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