

MOUNT DIABLO REVIEW



Fall / Winter 2010

MDIA, PO Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0346 • 925.927.7222 • fax 877.349.5016 • www.mdia.org

PARK SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

by Roland Gaebert



Roland Gaebert,
Bay Sector
Superintendent

It is with great pleasure and relief that we have a new Maintenance Chief, Jason Hart. (See article on page 2.) The Bay Sector has been operating without a Maintenance Chief for almost three years. In the meantime, lots of the burden of the maintenance went to Maintenance Supervisor Sue Schwartz and her very capable maintenance crews. Due to retirement and departmental staff shortages, it had been difficult to find a Maintenance Chief who has the skills

Jason brings to the Sector. His firefighting and construction experience within the department is well known, and we are privileged to have him join the team.

The other matter of great importance to the Sector and to Mount Diablo State Park is the efforts that have been made in the stabilization of the John Marsh House in the Cowell Ranch area. The Cowell Ranch is on state park lands near the city of Brentwood. Mr. Gene Metz, President of the John Marsh Historical Trust, has spent decades in the restoration efforts so that this treasure could be enjoyed by the community. I have asked Mr. Metz to contribute an article (see page 2) detailing a little history and the restoration efforts of the John Marsh House. One important aspect of this project is the process of creating the General Plan, which is presently in the works. I commend and thank Mr. Metz and the Historical Trust for all their passionate efforts to stabilize and restore the John Marsh House. The Cowell Ranch that includes the John Marsh House is presently undergoing the General Plan process.

MDIA PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Jim Mitchell

Welcome to Mount Diablo State Park. The members and volunteers of the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association welcome you to explore and enjoy all 20,000 acres of this unique mountain. Please enjoy your visit and respect the park so that it can remain enjoyable for many future generations.



Jim Mitchell, MDIA President

While many of you are visiting the park to take advantage of the views from the summit, those who slow down to explore what Mount Diablo has to offer will truly discover why it has been called a unique island mountain that is one of the most spectacular state parks that California has to offer. Stop at the overlooks, interpretive displays, and picnic grounds along the way to get the most from your visit. To get even closer to the heart of the mountain, please make time to take even a short hike on one of the many trails that lead off the road.

Diversity could be Mount Diablo's middle name. Mount Diablo is diverse in its geology, plant life, fauna, and cultural history.

Many are surprised to learn that Mount Diablo was not formed from volcanic activity but is actually an ancient plug of Franciscan Formation thrust through what were old marine sediments of a prehistoric ocean. The result is older rock at the top of the mountain and newer formed sandstone near the base. Fossils of marine animals can be seen at many locations in the park as a testament to the rocks' underwater history. *continued on page 3*

If you wish to submit articles or photographs for the
Mount Diablo Review,

leave a message for Ruth Ann Kishi at 925-927-7222
or email at mdiamail@aol.com.

Submission deadline for the Spring/Summer issue is February 1,
and for the Fall/Winter issue is August 1.

Save Mount Diablo generously publishes the
"Events Schedule", which includes hikes in
Mount Diablo State Park.

This schedule may be found online at
www.savemountdiablo.com
or via a link at www.mdia.org.

MOMENTUM FOR THE JOHN MARSH STONE HOUSE AND HISTORIC STATE PARK

by Gene Metz

The John Marsh House, located 10.5 miles due east of Mount Diablo at 21999 Marsh Creek Road, Brentwood, is the centerpiece of one of the newest of California's State Parks. Historically, the house was located on Rancho Los Meganos, a San Joaquin Valley land grant rancho acquired first by Jose Noriega in 1835 and sold to John Marsh, one of the first Anglo



John Marsh Stone House c. 1870

settlers in Alta California, two years later. Marsh resided in a one-and-one-half story adobe on the property for 19 years before building the three-story stone and brick house known as the John Marsh House.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house is significant for its architectural style, as well as for its historical associations with a prominent early Californian, frontier settlement, American period cattle ranching, and commerce on the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. The house and setting are important artifacts of the rancho culture that dominated the San Francisco Bay Area from the 1830s until suburbanization of the surrounding Sacramento Delta communities beginning in the 1980s. Within this context, the John Marsh House and the remains of Rancho Los Meganos represent a way of life all but vanished from California.

The John Marsh House is a massive sandstone and brick house with tower, designed in the Gothic villa style. The main block of the house consists of the original 1856 stone dwelling, two and a half stories tall and rectangular in plan. A breezeway and a one-story wood-framed wing, dating between 1897 and the 1910s, project from the back wall of the house. Note in the photo above that the top of the tower consists of wood panels to simulate the original tower, which failed in an earthquake in 1868.

The current condition of the house is poor. After decades of absentee ownership, the house was transferred to Contra Costa County and later to California State Parks. State Parks funded a conceptual stabilization plan and Historic Structure Report of the house in addition to two small emergency stabilization grants for selective masonry work. (The John Marsh Historic Trust, a not-for-profit friends group, contributed funding for the emergency repairs.) More recently, the California Cultural and Historical Endowment has awarded three grants for construction documents

and construction for stabilization of the house and construction documents for partial rehabilitation of the house. The plan is to restore it to the period of the house in the photo.

A General Plan process is under way to determine the use program and activities for this Historic State Park and the stone house as its centerpiece. Such a General Plan study is required for all state parks and is guided in large part by public and community input. This planning effort is being funded by the city of Brentwood. The third and last meeting for public input to guide the future use and program activities for the park and the house will be announced in the upcoming months.

All the activity currently under way in the park and at the stone house is building momentum. The acquisition of funding and accomplishments thus far are very encouraging, but an understanding of ultimate funding needs indicates that this is only a good start. Momentum is the most important thing going on at this time, and the support of all friends and constituents is very much appreciated. For more information, contact The John Marsh Historic Trust at 925-459-2541 (message), www.johnmarshhouse.com.

JASON HART, BAY SECTOR MAINTENANCE CHIEF

To begin, I would like to extend my appreciation to all of the visitors, staff and volunteers at Mount Diablo State Park and to the Diablo Vista District for helping to make my family and me feel instantly at home.

My name is Jason Hart. I recently moved from Calaveras Big Trees State Park in the Sierra foothills of the Central Valley District where I was the Park Maintenance Supervisor for the Resource Management Department. My new position is the Bay Sector Maintenance Chief for the Diablo Vista District. The previous vacancy of this position, California's budget crisis and the learning curve involved any time you start a new position in a new District all give me the challenges I look forward to confronting.



My wife Neely and I have lived most of our lives in Northern California (Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt Counties) where we have enjoyed gardening, hiking and kayaking as often as we could. For us now, the trails, streams and ocean will temporarily have to wait until our five-month-old son Jacoby grows into his backpack or personal flotation device, whichever adventure comes first. My family and I are all thankful to be here, and we look forward to participating in our new community.

MDIA PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

continued from page 1

The geologic diversity of the mountain serves as a foundation for the mountain's diverse plant life. There are six major biotic communities on the mountain: riparian woodland, grassland, chaparral, foothill woodland (oak savannah), marsh/vernal pools, and rocky outcrops. Endemic species found only on Mount Diablo include the Mount Diablo globe tulip and Mount Diablo sunflower, which can be seen blooming in spring.

Diverse plant life creates the opportunity for diverse habitats for the mountain fauna. Golden eagles and red-tailed hawks patrol the sky, as rabbits and ground squirrels seek shelter. Coyotes, black-tailed deer, bobcats, and grey foxes can be seen in the morning and at dusk; very rarely a mountain lion is spotted on the mountain. As a special treat during late summer and fall, tarantulas, which spend most of the year in underground burrows, hunting nocturnally, come to the surface to look for a mate.

The cultural history of the mountain starts with the Miwok tribes who lived at the base of Mount Diablo for over 5,000 years. Later the Spanish and then Mexicans occupied the land, and several Mexican land grants surrounded the mountain. Ranchers used Diablo's grassland for raising cattle; some cattle can still be seen grazing on ranches on the outskirts of the park.

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association exists to enhance your visit to the park through the development of interpretive displays, publications, and support of park programs that communicate the diversity of the mountain. Any purchases you make in the park visitor centers help support these activities, and since MDIA is staffed only by volunteers, almost all money collected gets invested directly back into the park. If you love the mountain, please consider supporting the park through membership in MDIA, donations, or by volunteering for one of the many programs in the park. Information about MDIA and the park can be found at www.mdia.org. Please enjoy your visit and let the mountain inspire and energize you.

MAKEOVER PLANNED FOR SUMMIT VISITOR CENTER

by Leslie Dawson and Jim Mitchell

Mount Diablo State Park is pleased to announce the planned renovation of the well-loved Summit Visitor Center. Scheduled for this fall, this renovation will include many new visitor exhibits and facility upgrades.

The historic building that houses the Visitor Center was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1939 and 1942 from fossil-laden sandstone quarried in the park. The beacon on top of the summit building was installed during the original building construction. It was moved from the nearby Standard Oil (now Chevron) tower, where it was placed in 1928 as a navigation aid. The summit of Mount Diablo is also recognized as the starting point for the first public lands survey of California and Nevada in 1851.

The majority of the renovation is being funded by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. However, additional money is needed to complete the new visitor experience. The Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) has launched a fundraising campaign for the renovation. Individual and corporate donors are invited to join in the effort. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to MDIA, P.O. Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA 94597. Donations of \$2,000 or more will be recognized on a new donor display in the renovated facility. For more information, contact Leslie Dawson, Fundraising Chairperson, at leslie@forensiccpa.com.

VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM BENEFITS MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

by Steve Elliott

Please consider donating your vehicle to benefit Mount Diablo State Park. The Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) sponsors a Vehicle Donation Program. The net proceeds are used to support the mission of MDIA at Mount Diablo State Park. Your donation will help fund outdoor education classes; interpretive programs; trail maintenance, signage and cleanup; park improvements; etc.

You may donate any of the following types of vehicles: cars, trucks, tractors, recreational vehicles, boats, motorcycles, construction equipment, farm equipment, ATVs and snowmobiles. An acknowledgement of the dollar value received for the donated vehicle will be provided as a receipt for the charitable gift. For more information on how to donate or to offer a vehicle, click the "Vehicle Donation" link at www.mdia.org; or call toll free 800-456-5517. The process is easy. If you have additional questions, please contact Steve Elliott, MDIA Treasurer, at 925-362-8697 or SAE612@msn.com. **We appreciate your support!**

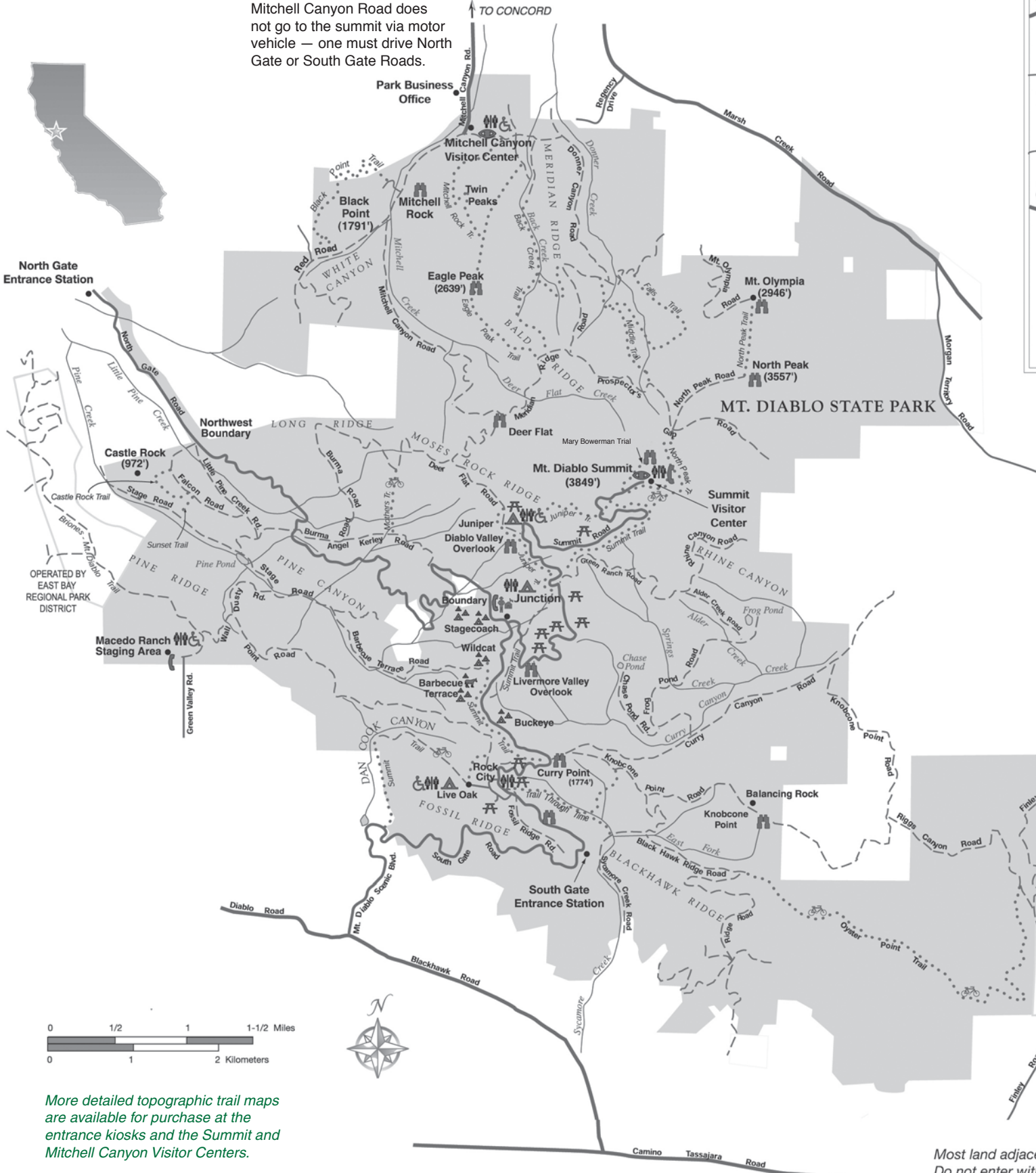
**Summit Museum is open
7 days a week
10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

**Summit temperature
and wind conditions
are updated every
20 minutes at 925-838-9225**



MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

Mitchell Canyon Road does not go to the summit via motor vehicle — one must drive North Gate or South Gate Roads.



More detailed topographic trail maps are available for purchase at the entrance kiosks and the Summit and Mitchell Canyon Visitor Centers.

Most land adjacent to park boundary. Do not enter without permission.

CAMPING AT MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

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

Juniper Campground (36 sites, elevation 3000 ft.) Located approximately 2 miles below the summit, on Summit Road, Juniper is known for its fantastic views. Reservations Available.

Live Oak Campground (23 sites, elevation 1450 ft.) Located one mile above the South Gate Entrance Station, off South Gate Road. Live Oak is near Rock City. At Rock City one can explore rock formations. Reservations Available.

Junction Campground (6 sites, elevation 2200 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.

*All campgrounds are provided with picnic tables, fire pits or stoves, potable water and rest rooms.

*The campgrounds are mainly designed for tent camping, yet they can accommodate RVs up to 20 feet in length. There are no hook ups and no dumping stations provided in the Park.

*A pay phone is located at the Junction Ranger Station.

Camping Procedures

You may make reservations from 48 hours to 7 months in advance by calling **Reserve America at 1-800-444-7275** or by visiting their website at www.reserveamerica.com. Reservations can be made for a specific campground but not a specific site.

Camper will not be registered at Mitchell Canyon.

***Check-in time is 2:00 PM. — Check-out time is 12:00 NOON.**

Group Camps—Buckeye, Barbecue Terrace, Wildcat, Stagecoach and Boundary.

Reservations are available for all group camps with Reserve America. Each campground is primitive with running water and pit toilets. BBQ Terrace is equipped with horse ties for equestrian use. Motorhomes are not allowed in the group camping areas. During the fire season (generally, May—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.

*8 people and 2 vehicles maximum per family campsite.

*Each juvenile (under the age of 18) must have written permission from his/her parents (with the parents' phone number) prior to camping. Phone verifications will be attempted.

*Quiet hours are from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

*No electric generators from 8:00 PM to 10:00 AM.

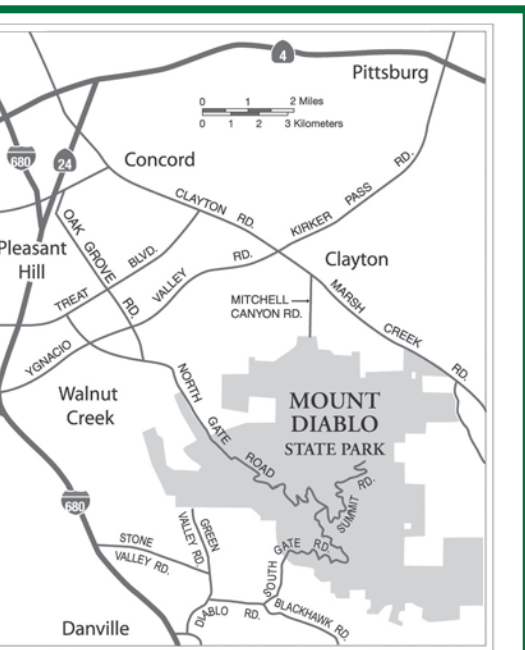
*Firewood gathering is prohibited.

*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 8).

*Campers are locked in the park overnight from sunset to 8:00 AM. For emergencies, dial 911.

*Peace and Quiet: Noise must not carry beyond your immediate camp or picnic ground.



Legend

- Paved Road
- Fire Roads (Hiking, No Vehicles)
- Hiking Trail
- Accessible Feature
- Bicycle Trail
- Campground
- Exhibits
- Group Campground
- Horse Campground
- Picnic Area
- Ranger Station
- Restrooms
- Telephone
- Viewpoint

OPERATED BY
EAST BAY
REGIONAL PARK
DISTRICT

Park Fees: (per car)

Mitchell Canyon Entrance	\$6.00
Macedo Park Entrance	\$6.00
North and South Gates	\$10.00
minus \$1 for Seniors 62+	
Annual Park Pass	\$125.00

ent to the park is private property.
out the owner's permission.

Nightly Rates

Junction Campground	\$30.00
Juniper Campground	\$30.00
Live Oak Campground	\$30.00
Additional Vehicle (one only)	\$10.00
Senior Discount (62+)	\$2.00 off Camping Fees

Group Camps

Name	Nightly Use Fee	Capacity	Vehicles
Stagecoach	\$65.00	20	7
Boundary	\$65.00	20	7
Buckeye	\$100.00	30	10
Wildcat	\$100.00	30	10
BBQ Terrace	\$165.00	50	17

THE DESAIS DO DIABLO

by Dinesh Desai



Dinesh and Joy Desai along North Gate Road

May, 10, 2010: As my wife Joy and I rounded the corner of the trail on Black Hawk Ridge, the full fury of wind, rain and hail bore down on us. There were even a few snowflakes. We had been walking, in light but cold rain, for well over an hour. We were hungry and cold, and I wondered when that much bally-hooded global warming was going to kick in.

It was the eleventh consecutive day of our atypical quest. In the past, like many others, we had hiked to the summit, from the south as well as the north. However, if someone mentioned the beautiful Falls Trail or the breathtaking Eagle Peak Trail, we drew a blank. But that was about to change. We were well on our way to our goal of walking all the trails of Mount Diablo State Park: the popular ones, such as the Summit Trail, as well as the lesser known ones. And we wouldn't skip any of the short or long dead-end trails and utility roads either. We were ready to crown ourselves the pseudo experts of the park's trails.

We were surprised to learn that the park has about 187 miles of trails. Since all the trails did not fit into nice loops, my rough estimate was that we would need to hike upwards of 230 miles. I spent many days configuring the trails we would hike each day. Without detailed planning, it would be easy to miss parts of some trails. Luckily, the many trailheads around the perimeter of the park and along the park's main roads made backpacking unnecessary; we used 11 different trailheads for our day hikes. The trade-off was two long hiking days of 17+ miles.

GO GREEN AT WORK! JOIN THE STATE PARK TEAM

Ever dream of looking out your window at work and seeing the beautiful landscape of park land? Make your dream come true! Consider working at Mount Diablo State Park: flexible hours (some weekends and holidays), competitive pay, dedicated co-workers, scenic commute. Stop by the Sector Office, 96 Mitchell Canyon Road, Clayton, or call Supervising Ranger Dan Stefanisko at 925-855-1730.

To volunteer, contact Mount Diablo Interpretive Association, 925-927-7222, mdiamail@aol.com.

Though our muscles got us up many steep trails, our knees balked on descending the steep North Peak access road and sections of Meridian Ridge Road and Prospectors Gap Road. I had deliberately not spent much time looking at the elevations or the contours on the map. A closer look could have helped us avoid some steep descents. Joy and I both feel that too much information takes away from a sense of discovery and adventure. We did pay a small price for such an attitude. Both of the 17+ mile days turned out to have large elevation gains and steep descents. We shortened the hikes. Our original plan of hiking all the trails in 17 days had to be extended by two days.

We were very thankful for three things: the numerous signposts displaying accurate trail directions, well-maintained trails and cooler-than-average temperatures. Without them, we may have had a bigger challenge than anticipated.

To read a more detailed account of Dinesh and Joy's adventure, go to <http://dineshdesai.info/diablo/index.html>.

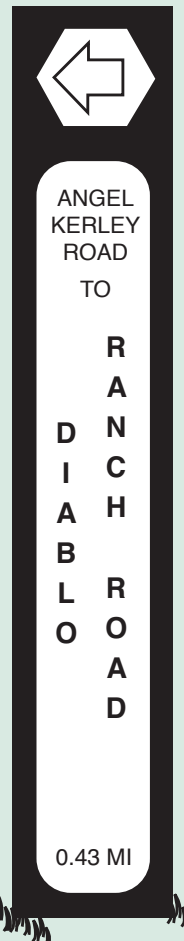
UNDERSTANDING TRAIL SIGNS

Hundreds of trail signs have been installed on over 400 trail signposts identifying almost 187 miles of hiking trails in Mount Diablo State Park's 20,000 acres. This signage project, spearheaded by the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association, has been in effect since 1993.

The trail signs in the park follow a uniform format prescribed for use in all California State Parks. The format has confused more than one visitor who has hastily read only the larger words on the sign. 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 larger type (usually another trail but sometimes a park boundary) shows the termination of that particular trail; the word "TO", in small letters, is important. The mileage to that end point is specified at the bottom.

The simplified sample to the right shows that you are on Angel Kerley Road, and that if you go .43 miles to the left, you will arrive at the junction with Diablo Ranch Road.



MDIA PRODUCT ORDER and MEMBERSHIP FORM

Profits from sales support the educational programs of MDIA.

If you would like to further support MDIA, please consider joining the Association.

MAPS AND HIKING INFORMATION

	Qty.	Amount
Mount Diablo State Park Map	2.25	_____
Mount Diablo State Park Trail Map	7.50	_____
Hike Brochures: Easy, Moderate, and Demanding (set of 3)	2.00	_____

INTERPRETIVE PUBLICATIONS

Mount Diablo Guide	12.50	_____
Geology Brochure and Map	2.00	_____
Trees and Shrubs of Mount Diablo	7.50	_____
Common Birds of Mount Diablo	7.50	_____
Mt. Diablo Wildflowers	7.50	_____
51 Uncommon Names of MDSP	2.25	_____
Mount Diablo State Park Coloring Book	3.75	_____

NATURE GUIDES - Laminated/Folded

Local Birds of the San Francisco Bay Area	9.75	_____
Local Rocks of North America	9.75	_____
Local Butterflies of the San Francisco Bay Area	9.75	_____
Local Animal Tracks of North America	9.75	_____

PRODUCTS WITH MT. DIABLO STATE PARK LOGO

T-shirts: sky blue, pine green or floral (women's); S,M, L, XL (circle size & color)	16.00	_____
Mount Diablo Patch	4.00	_____
Mount Diablo Lapel / Hat Pin	3.50	_____

SUBTOTAL:

10% discount for MDIA and California State Parks

Foundation members and Park Staff

Total Amount: (includes tax & shipping) _____

Thank you for your mail order.

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association Membership Application

Membership Dues are Deductible to the Full Extent by Law

Membership Category (check one) **Make Checks Payable to "MDIA"**

_____ Student/Senior	\$15
_____ Individual	\$25
_____ Family	\$40
_____ Sustaining	\$50
_____ Contributing	\$100
_____ Lifetime	\$500

Donation in addition to membership fee \$ _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Clip and Mail to:

MDIA

P.O. Box 346

Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0346

MOUNTAIN GOLDFISH

by Helene Crowley

On Diablo's South side, after a steep climb,
I see the water-dwellers for the first time.
They are a vision in this setting incongruous,
Their presence a phenomenon conspicuous.

How did these fish come to be here?
I've heard equestrians brought them.
The horses like their water to be clear.
The goldfish gladly solve that problem.

I and my companions gaze
At their glitter as they laze
In their aquarium on the mountain
Providing horses a drinking fountain.



Photo by Mike Woodring

These bright swimmers come to the top,
Curious, they wonder why we stop.
To look delighted at their luminous host,
For which the trail had no signpost.

For many years, they inhabited a single pool.
Then someone decided to increase their school.
Now, if you travel across this trail,
Three goldfish homes you will avail.

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for obeying these and other park rules.
Ask a Park Ranger for further information.**

- **ALL FEATURES OF THE PARK ARE PROTECTED!**
Do not remove or disturb plants, animals or geological features.
- **PARK HOURS:**
Opens at 8 am, and closes at SUNSET.
Visitors should be in their vehicles heading out at sunset to avoid being locked in.
- **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:**
All alcoholic beverages are PROHIBITED IN THE PARK.
- **VEHICLES / BICYCLES:**
SPEED LIMIT is 15-25 MPH on park roads, 15 MPH in campgrounds and picnic areas. All vehicles must stay on pavement and are prohibited on trails and fire roads.
- **BICYCLES ARE ALLOWED:**
Only on paved roads, fire roads and designated trails. Check at Ranger Station for current regulations.
- **SKATEBOARDS, ROLLERBLADES, ROLLERSKATES and GRAVITY-PROPELLED devices are prohibited.**
- **DOGS:**
MUST BE IN TENT or vehicles at night. MUST BE ON LEASH at all times when out of your car. MUST STAY IN DEVELOPED AREAS ONLY — not allowed on trails or fire roads.
- **FIRES:**
RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT DURING FIRE SEASON — check with Ranger.

MUST BE IN STOVES OR BARBECUES PROVIDED — No ground fires.

- **PUBLIC TELEPHONE:** Located at Junction Ranger Station.
Dial 911 for emergencies.
- **FIREWORKS: PROHIBITED**
- **FIREARMS/AIRGUNS: PROHIBITED**
- **HUNTING: PROHIBITED**

Fire Danger - How Will It Affect You?						
Fire Danger Reading	Wood fire permitted in stoves and BBQ pits in designated picnic and camp sites	Use of Compressed Logs	Use of Charcoal	Use of Self-contained Stove	Cigarette Smoking (including within a vehicle)	Park Closed
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

Mount Diablo State Park Phone Numbers

Supervising Ranger	925-855-1730
Junction Ranger	925-837-6129
Mitchell Canyon Ranger	925-672-4266
Summit Museum	925-837-6119
Entrance Station	925-837-0904
Maintenance	925-837-6122
Sector Office	925-673-2891
General Information	925-837-2525

Group Picnic Reservations: Call Ranger Carl Nielson, 925-837-6129, EXT 2

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