

MOUNT DIABLO REVIEW



MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

Established in 1974

Autumn 2007

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

Superintendent's Report

By Craig Mattson

After 32 years of service to California State Parks I am hanging up my ranger hat and retiring at the end of this year. I have spent just over two years of this at Mount Diablo State Park. This has been one of my great assignments working for State Parks and has been a great place to end my career. I have found the assignment challenging and a pleasure. The staff and our stakeholders and partners have treated me very well and most of all Mount Diablo is truly one of the great California State Parks. During my tenure here I have enjoyed living on the mountain. We are all very fortunate the people of California had the forethought to set it aside for future generations.



Although I have a love for Mount Diablo I have fond memories of all of my assignments. I started my career in 1975 in Southern California cleaning restrooms at Carpinteria State Beach. From there I went to Big Sur, Burney Falls, Castle Crags, Santa Monica Mountains, Lake Oroville, back to Burney, Mojave Desert, Calaveras, back to Mojave Desert, and lastly Mount Diablo.

I have had a wonderful career with each of these assignments being wonderful memories. I am returning to my home in Arnold, Calaveras County, where my immediate plans are to take some time off, take care of my family, and traveling, especially in the United States. I want to see as many National Parks as I can!

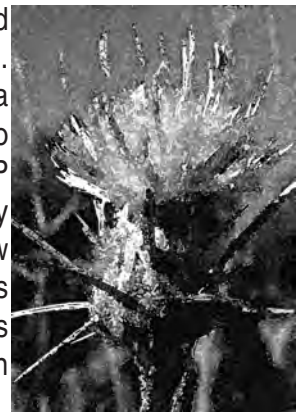
I wish everyone at the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association well and say thank you for all your support to me and to Mount Diablo State Park.

Craig Mattson, Superintendent
California State Parks - Bay Sector

Yellow Starthistle Research at Mount Diablo State Park

by Sarah Swope

Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) is an invasive weed from the Mediterranean region. It was introduced to California accidentally over 120 years ago and was first recorded in MDSP by the pioneering botanist Mary Bowerman in 1944. It is now abundant throughout the Park's grasslands and oak woodlands and infests nearly 15 million acres statewide.



Impacts

Yellow starthistle is toxic to horses, reduces forage for cattle and native herbivores, and displaces California's native plants. Its deep taproot depletes the water available in the soil for other plants, which contributes to its tendency to form dense stands where few other species persist. Star-like spines attached to its flowerheads can be painful for humans, dogs, and wildlife to walk through.

Management

Because of these impacts, we are actively seeking to reduce the abundance of yellow starthistle throughout the Park. Doing so will help restore native ecosystems, maintain rangeland for native herbivores, and protect recreational resources.

Research

Although yellow starthistle is among California's most problematic invasive plants, relatively little is known about certain aspects of its biology. We are conducting research in the Park to learn more about two key questions: Is there an "Achilles' heel" in its life cycle that we can target to reduce its abundance? Do native herbivores help keep its abundance in check?

Yellow starthistle is an annual, which means that it

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MDIA President's Column

Mount Diablo is my Kilimanjaro! In August 2002, I had the unique opportunity to climb the world famous Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, elevation 19,340 feet, the highest peak in all of Africa. My daughter was in the Peace Corps in Morocco at the time, and she was able to take ten days vacation, so we climbed it together. However, would you believe, Mount Diablo has Mount Kilimanjaro beat in a number of ways:

- Mount Diablo has lots of visible fauna and flora. On Kilimanjaro, we saw only a few birds, no mammals, and limited foliage above the lower rain forest.
- Mount Diablo does not require one to have a guide and porters. On Kilimanjaro, it is mandatory.
- Mount Diablo's heights do not give one elevation sickness.
- Mount Diablo's vistas are almost always spectacular. On Kilimanjaro, the vistas are almost always obscured by low-lying clouds. By the way, the best time to see the view from the summit of Mount Diablo is this time of the year--after a cold winter storm has cleared the air. It is estimated that 40,000 square miles, in at least 35 of California's 52 counties, are visible from Mount Diablo's summit on a clear day. Landmarks to be observed include Mount Tamalpais at 37 miles away, Mount Hamilton at 40 miles away, Farallon Islands at 60 miles away, Mount Saint Helena at 65 miles away, Sutter Buttes at 92 miles away, Yosemite's Half Dome at 153 miles away, and Mount Lassen at 185 miles away.
- Mount Diablo has restrooms, water fountains, and access for the physically challenged. You'll find none of these on Kilimanjaro.
- Mount Diablo has great directional trail signs. Kilimanjaro has none.
- Trash and debris are ever-present on Kilimanjaro. Mount Diablo is almost 100% trash free.

So, why travel halfway around the world to a per-

ceived better place when you can have an improved experience and enjoyment right in your own backyard? It has been wildly rumored that Mount Diablo has the second best view in the world, behind Kilimanjaro that is. Whether or not that is accurate, Mount Diablo is number one for many other reasons. Now, go out and conquer Kilimanjaro in Mount Diablo State Park!



Rich McDrew, President

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germinates from seed, grows, flowers and dies in a single year. This means that a yellow starthistle infestation must regenerate itself anew from seed each year. Reducing seed production may seem like an obvious way to reduce its abundance, but because each plant can produce over 5,000 seeds, seed production would have to be dramatically reduced before it would affect the plant's abundance.

By tracking the fate of thousands of individual plants as they progress from seedling to flowering and back to seed, we will be able to determine if yellow starthistle is particularly vulnerable during any part of this life cycle. Some invasive species have a Achilles' heel during the seedling-to-flowering transition: a small reduction in the number of plants that survive to the flowering stage results in a big reduction in the size of the infestation. If yellow starthistle is similarly vulnerable, management targeted at this stage may enable us to reduce its abundance more effectively.

Some of the study plots we are using for this research are protected by wire cages. This allows us to learn more about how native wildlife affect its abundance. Mice and chipmunks eat the seeds after they disperse from the flower and rabbits and deer consume the seedlings before they flower and produce the spines for which the plant is notorious. Our initial results indicate that native herbivores can substantially reduce survival during the potentially vulnerable seedling-to-flowering transition. In this way, native animals may keep the plant from forming even larger infestations and spreading further.

Sarah Swope

Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Santa Cruz
Exotic and Invasive Weeds Research Unit, USDA, Albany, CA

Deadlines for submission to the Mount Diablo
Review (published twice annually):
April 15 — Summer Issue
August 15 — Autumn Issue

Spotlight On —THREE BROCHURES DESCRIBING
HIKES OF VARIOUS DEGREES OF DIFFICULTY

reviewed by Harvey S. Brosler

The three hiking brochures contain suggested hikes of various levels of difficulty. The brochure entitled Short, Pleasant Walks in Mt. Diablo State Park lists hikes which would take no more than two hours and are on relatively level roads or trails. The brochure entitled Moderate Hikes in Mount Diablo State Park describes hikes which should take no more than four hours and may involve some difficulty. The third brochure entitled Demanding Hikes in Mount Diablo State Park may take from four to eight hours and describes some of the most difficult hikes in the park. Along with the Trail Map of Mount Diablo State Park, these brochures would be an excellent addition for patrons wishing to explore the many trails and roads within the Park. These brochures can be purchased at the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center or the Summit Visitor Center for \$.25 each or by mail from MDIA as a set for \$1.25, (price includes tax and shipping, if applicable. 10% discount for MDIA members)

Questions and Answers

Q. What is an easy hike which would take less than one hour round trip?

A. Hike 3 in the brochure entitled Short, Pleasant Walks in Mount Diablo State Park describes a hike which begins at the Mitchell Canyon staging area and would go along Mitchell Canyon Road to the junction of Red Road on primarily flat terrain with a return by Mitchell Canyon Road.



Q. What is a moderate hike where there is plenty of scenery and something different to see in the spring?

A. Hike 1 in the Moderate Hikes In Mount Diablo State Park brochure entitled Falls Trail Loop. It begins at the end of Regency Drive in Clayton. This is a 5.9 mile hike and in winter (rainy season) and early spring offers fine views of one of the park's spectacular attractions, several waterfalls up to 100 feet high.

Q. What is a moderate hike which will take approximately 2 hours with some elevation gain?

A. Hike 3 in the Moderate Hikes In Mount Diablo State Park brochure entitled Twin Peaks-Mitchell Rock Loop. This hike begins at the Mitchell Canyon Staging Area and is a 4.9 mile loop, involving Eagle Peak, Mitchell Rock, and Coulter Pine Trails, a total climb of approximately 1220 feet.

Q. What is one of the best hikes on Mount Diablo which would take most of the day?

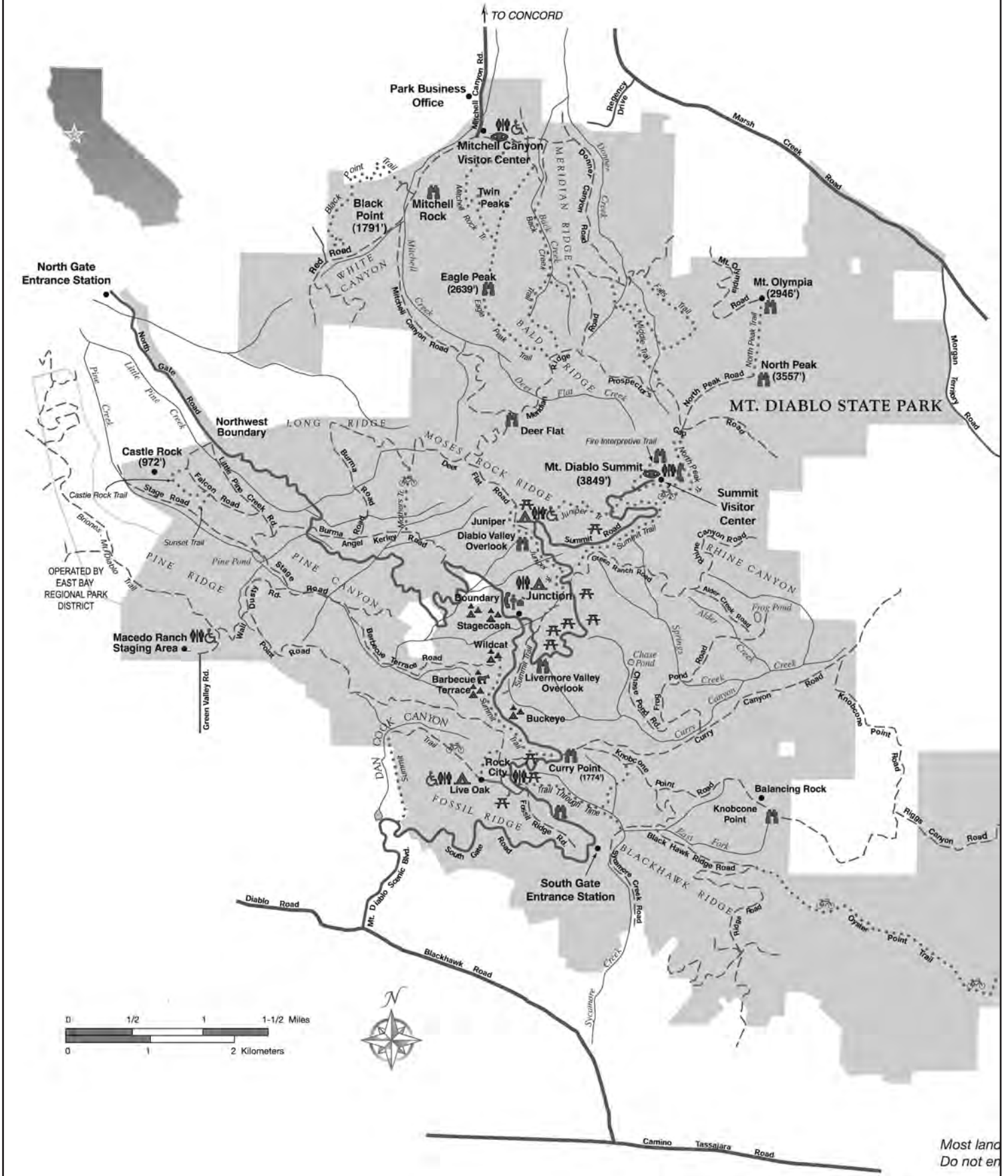
A. Hike 1 in the Demanding Hikes in Mount Diablo State Park brochure entitled Summit from Mitchell Canyon (Loop) which begins at the Mitchell Canyon Staging Area, goes to the summit, and returns primarily by use of single track trails. This is a 14 mile loop with a total climb of 3400 feet. Based upon ability, a nice way of doing this hike would be to leave the Mitchell Canyon Staging Area between 8:30 and 9 a.m., spend some time at the Summit Visitor center, have lunch, and return to Mitchell Canyon between 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Nightly Rates		
In- Season	May 15 - September 15	\$20.00
Off- Season	September 16 - May 14	\$15.00
Additional Vehicles		\$6.00
Senior Discount		\$2.00 off Camping Fees

Group Camps			
Name	Nightly Use Fee	Capacity	Vehicles
Stagecoach	\$45.00	20	7
Boundary	\$45.00	20	7
Buckeye	\$66.00	30	10
Wildcat	\$66.00	30	10
BBQ Terrace	\$111.00	50	17

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



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.

*Pay phones are located at the Junction Ranger Station and the Summit Visitor Center.

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.

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

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

Reservations are available for all group camps with Reserve America. Each campground is primitive with running water and pit toilets. Barbecue 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

*Consumption of alcoholic beverage is prohibited in the park.

*8 people and two vehicles maximum per 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 3).

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

ALL FEATURES OF THE PARK ARE PROTECTED.

Do not remove or disturb plants, animals or geological features. You are responsible for obeying all park rules. Ask a Park Ranger for further information.



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	\$3
Macedo Park Entrance	\$3
North and South Gates	\$6
minus \$1 for Seniors 62+	

The park is private property.
Use only with the owner's permission.

Understanding the Trail Signs

The identification of the hiking trails on Mount Diablo has been much improved of late owing to the signage project spearheaded by the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association. Nearly 400 signs have been added as part of the effort begun in 1993 by MDIA.

The signs on Mount Diablo follow the 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 where the trail you are on leads to if you follow it in the direction of the arrow above the sign; the word 'TO', in small letters, is important. The mileage to the destination is specified at the bottom.

Here is a simplified sample to the right.

The sign 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.



Park Fees: (per car)

Mitchell Canyon Entrance	\$3 (\$2 for Seniors 62+)
Macedo Park Entrance	\$3 (\$2 for Seniors 62+)
North and South Gates	\$6 (\$5 for Seniors 62+)

Name That Mount Diablo Site



Do you recognize where this is in Mount Diablo State Park? For the answer, turn to page 7.

Paid in Sunsets

There is a saying in California State Parks that its employees get "paid in sunsets." Never has this been so evident to me in my 13 years with State Parks than working at Mount Diablo State Park.

The elevation of 3,849 feet makes Mount Diablo State Park the perfect place to view the sunset. One could almost set one's watch to the sunset and see the cars form a parade to view the gift that Mother Nature has to offer. Driving up the long winding road to the summit of Mount Diablo makes the journey from either of the two park entrances worth it.

Facing towards the west, the sun is often framed perfectly by the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco. There is almost a simultaneous sigh of amazement by these viewers as the sun's reflection turns the hills a bright orange. As soon as the sun sets and can no longer be seen, you can see the contentment on these viewers' faces as they climb back into their cars and descend down the mountain.

There are many exciting activities to do before reaching the summit. Stop at one of the secluded picnic sites along South Gate and Summit Roads for an outdoor feast. Hike on one of the 200 miles of trails that the park has to offer. Become a volunteer and give back to the mountain. If you don't feel like leaving after watching the sunset, make a camping reservation and stay at one of our campgrounds. When you make it to the top come in and visit the Summit Visitor Center. You will be glad you did.

As the sun starts to dip and begins to set, make sure that you are on top of Mount Diablo to help the Rangers cash in on those beautiful sunsets as they close the park.

Dan Stefanisko, Supervising Ranger
Mount Diablo State Park

Save Mount Diablo generously publishes the "Events Schedule" which includes hikes in Mount Diablo State Park. This schedule may be found on-line at www.save-mountdiablo.com or via a link at www.mdia.org.

**MDIA PRODUCT ORDER
and MEMBERSHIP FORM**

(Profits from sales support the educational programs of MDIA)

Thank you for your mail order.
If you would like to further support MDIA you might consider joining the Association.

**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 _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

City/State/Zip _____

Clip and Mail to:

**MDIA
P.O. Box 346
Walnut Creek, Ca 94597-0346**

MDIA AND MDSP PUBLICATIONS

	Qty.	Amount
Mount Diablo State Park Map	1.50	_____
Mount. Diablo State Park Trail Map	6.00	_____
Geology Map, Mt. Diablo 8-1/2" x 11"	2.00	_____
Guide to Common Trees, Mount. Diablo	1.25	_____
Hike Brochures: Easy, Moderate, and Demanding-(set of 3)	1.25	_____
Interpretive Brochures: Amphibians & Reptiles, Mammals, Geology-(set of 3)	1.25	_____
Animal Lists: Birds, Butterflies, Mammals-(set of 3)	1.25	_____
Mount Diablo Guide	14.00	_____
MDSP Coloring Book	3.50	_____
51 Uncommon Names of MDSP	2.25	_____
Mount Diablo Wildflowers color booklet	9.00	_____

LAMINATED NATURE GUIDES

Bird Guide	9.00	_____
Rock Guide	9.00	_____
Butterfly Guide	9.00	_____

PRODUCTS WITH MT. DIABLO STATE PARK LOGO

T-shirts: lt. blue or lt. olive; S,M, L, XL (circle size & color)	15.00	_____
Mount Diablo Patch	3.75	_____
Bandana with print of State Park Map	5.50	_____

TOTAL AMOUNT (prices include tax & shipping)* _____

* 10% discount for MDIA members and Park Staff.

ANSWER: THE ADA TELESCOPE ON THE MARY BOWERMAN TRAIL

The Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) owns and operates the two fee telescopes located on the Summit Museum's observation deck. Just recently, a third telescope has been added in the Park. This was made possible through a generous \$1,250 grant from the California State Parks Foundation, an amount that was matched by MDIA. The expert installation was done by the fine Park maintenance staff. We're proud to be able to say that this telescope is ADA (Americans for Disabilities Act) compliant; i.e., visitors in wheelchairs can use and enjoy this telescope. Of course, all are welcome to use it. Viewers will take in a 250-degree panorama of the west, east, and north directions. The usage is free. This telescope is located just below the summit on the Mary Bowerman Trail (formerly named the "Fire Interpretive Trail"). Access to this trail is best from the north trailhead, opposite a picnic table on the paved portion of the trail. The telescope can be found about 300 yards from the trailhead on the level asphalt trail. Enjoy the views!

**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 CLOSING TIME:** Park 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. State laws regarding alcoholic beverages are STRICTLY ENFORCED

• **VEHICLES/BICYCLES:** SPEED LIMIT is 15-25 MPH on park roads, 15 MPH in campgrounds and picnic areas. OFF ROAD USE PROHIBITED. 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 STAY IN DEVELOPED AREAS ONLY — not allowed on trails or fire roads. MUST BE IN TENT or vehicles at night. MUST BE ON LEASH at all times when out of your car.

• **CAMPING** — MAXIMUM OF 8 PERSONS AND TWO VEHICLES PER CAMPSITE IS

PERMITTED ONLY IN THE JUNIPER, JUNCTION AND LIVE OAK CAMPGROUNDS. JUVENILES (under 18) MUST HAVE WRITTEN PERMISSION from parents

QUIET HOURS 10pm to 6am

NO ELECTRIC GENERATORS 8pm to 8am

• **FIRES** — RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT DURING FIRE SEASON—check with Ranger MUST BE IN STOVES OR BARBEQUES PROVIDED - no ground fires FIREWOOD GATHERING PROHIBITED

• **PEACE AND QUIET:** NOISE must not carry beyond your immediate camp or picnic ground

• **TELEPHONES:** Located at Junction Ranger Station and Summit. Dial 911 for emergencies

• **FIREWORKS:** PROHIBITED

• **FIREARMS/AIRGUNS:** PROHIBITED

• **NO HUNTING**

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

State Park Phone Numbers:

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

www.parks.ca.gov

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Mount Diablo Interpretive Association

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**Mount Diablo
Summit
temp. & wind
conditions, updated
every 20 minutes
925-838-9225**

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