Decades ago, the summit area of Mount Diablo State Park was a primary destination of the visiting public, but no trails were there for visitors to experience close contact with the mountain’s exceptional natural environment.

Shortly after its founding in 1974, the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA) undertook its first major project: a survey of the park’s trails network. One recommendation that emerged from this survey was construction of what is now known as the Mary Bowerman Trail, a fairly level 0.7-mile circuit along a contour line just below the summit.

Not long after a primitive path was constructed, the August 1977 fire destroyed the plants on the north-facing slopes, as well as any traces of the new trail. Undeterred, a group of young people from the California Conservation Corps built the spectacular Fire Interpretive Trail through the burned area, and a grand dedication of the trail was held in 1982 at the trailhead. Speakers included Superintendent of California State Parks William Penn Mott Jr., State Senator John Nejedly, and Dr. Mary Leolin Bowerman.

Dr. Mary Bowerman was a celebrated field botanist of Mount Diablo, a founding member of MDIA, and co-founder of Save Mount Diablo. After Dr. Bowerman passed away in 2005 at the age of 97, the Fire Interpretive Trail was renamed in her honor. Ironically, Dr. Bowerman did not originally favor a trail through the area. She was afraid, with some justification, that the construction effort and large visitor volume would impact the fragile plant life. Fortunately, rare and sensitive plants such as bitterroot (Lewisia rediviva) have fared well. Some highlights of this fascinating nature trail are documented at posts along the trail.

Following extensive incineration during the 2013 Morgan Fire, the trail continues to serve as a fire interpretive trail, allowing the public to monitor post-fire recovery of the plant communities over the coming years. The section of trail on the north side of the mountain was reconstructed in 2015 to allow for easy access by visitors on foot or wheelchair.

Park at the lower summit parking lot, and walk up a few steps to the trailhead, at the bottom of the steep one-way road leading to the summit. A clockwise circuit is recommended. Enjoy!
Mount Diablo State Park is a very clean park, but occasionally people get careless and drop litter along trails, roads, and in campgrounds and picnic areas. Litter not only detracts from the natural beauty of the park, but it is also hazardous to wildlife. For example, a coyote will eat plastic bags and mylar balloons due to the enticing food scents on the plastic. This can block its digestive system, causing a slow and painful death.

Please help keep Mount Diablo State Park free of litter by carrying a bag with you for your own litter. Also consider picking up any and all litter you see along the trail. The park, wildlife, and other visitors will thank you! And while we’re talking trash, here are some interesting numbers to ponder. Take a look at the lifespan of some items commonly littered in the park. Numbers can vary depending on which scientific study you’re looking at, but you get the idea. These stats are as reported in the “California Waste Management Bulletin.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>DECOMPOSITION TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glass bottle</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum can</td>
<td>200 to 500 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber boot sole</td>
<td>50 to 80 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>Up to 50 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nylon fabric</td>
<td>30 to 40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic film container</td>
<td>20 to 30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painted wooden stake</td>
<td>13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bag</td>
<td>10 to 20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic coated paper</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool clothing</td>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette butt</td>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton rag</td>
<td>1 to 5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange or banana peel</td>
<td>2 to 5 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mount Diablo
By Diane Lang

About a million years ago, the mountain wasn’t here. Instead there lay an inland sea, that soon would disappear. When Earth’s thin plates collided, and their meeting changed the scene, Rising high while molten rock was pushed up in between. Pretty soon that rock uplifted made the seas retreat.

As, high and dry, the mountain rose to ‘most 4,000 feet. Now you can see fossils that were in the ancient sea, As well as bones from animals that later came to be. Grizzly bears and mastodons and giant cats with fangs, Camels and huge dire wolves, who hunted prey in gangs.

All those animals have gone, but still so many roam. Because we’ve saved so much of it, they’ve made the mountain home: Coyotes, raccoons, great horned owls, and hummingbirds in flight, Tarantulas and salamanders; barn owls grace the night.

Listen for a woodpecker. Is it hawk in view? Many golden eagles choose the mountain for their nest. While streams and grass and live oak trees give homes for all the rest. Meanwhile there is much for us—rocks to climb, and hikes, Spots to camp, views all around, whatever each one likes.

Wonders on the mountain number more than we can list; Mount Diablo long will be a treasure in our midst.
Mount Diablo has three designated family camping areas and five group camps:

**Juniper Campground** (36 sites, elevation 3,000 ft.) Located approximately 2 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 Road and North Gate Road 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 equipped 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 feet in length. No hookups and dumping stations are provided.

**Camping Procedures**

Make reservations 48 hours to 7 months in advance by contacting Reserve America at 800.444.7275 or www.reserveamerica.com. Reservations can be made for a specific campground but not a specific site. Campers cannot be registered at Mitchell Canyon. 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.
- 8 people and 2 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.
- Campfires are prohibited in the park.
- 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 a.m. For emergencies dial 911.
- Quiet—noise must not carry beyond your immediate camp or picnic ground.

**Group Picnic Reservations**: Call Ranger Daniel Golde at 925.837.6129 x3

Greenhill Ranch, also known as Green Ranch on maps and trail signage, was a 170-acre parcel held by Robert and Deborah Green from 1938 to 1965. The Greens built a south-facing summer home near Mount Diablo’s summit for their family of four children. Renowned architect William Wurster designed the house. The summer retreat included a large swimming pool, tennis court, and guest quarters. In 1965, the Greenhill site became part of Mount Diablo State Park. The main house, barn, and caretaker’s building are gone, but the still-standing fireplace marks the location of the former living room.

Green Ranch is accessible by hiking from Oak Knoll Picnic Area via Oak Knoll Trail and Green Ranch Road.

References:
- Mountain Lore, by Rich McDrew and Rachel Haislet
- California Treasure, by Linda Rimac Colberg and Stephen Joseph.
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 a 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire Danger Reading</th>
<th>Wood fire permitted in stoves &amp; BBQ pits (designated picnic and campsites)</th>
<th>Use of Compressed Logs</th>
<th>Use of Charcoal</th>
<th>Use of Self-contained Stove</th>
<th>Cigarette Smoking</th>
<th>Park Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH WITH RED FLAG</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY HIGH/EXTREME</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Understanding Trail Signs

Around 400 trail signposts identify over 160 miles of backcountry hiking trails and fire roads in Mount Diablo State Park's nearly 20,000 acres.

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, 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.

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
South Gate Entrance Station .......925.837.0904
Maintenance ........................925.837.6122
Sector Office .........................925.673.2891
General Information .................925.837.2525
TTY Relay Service ....................711

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

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