

MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES



Image Adopted from Thompson & West History of Sutter County 1879

FALL-WINTER 2022-23

President's Message Come Hike with Us!

BY GREG PAYNE

It is officially autumn. The fall equinox occurred at 6:03 p.m. on September 22, 2022. A few days before that, at least here in Yuba City and in the Sutter Buttes, we had rainfall of over an inch to make it feel like fall. Unfortunately, our cooler weather was short lived. Today, the temperature is supposed to be over 90 degrees for a high and tomorrow is forecast to be warmer. This reminds me of why Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes does not offer hikes year-round. We do not offer hikes in the summer because it is uncomfortably hot for hiking (often over 100° F), and the chances of running into rattlesnakes are much higher. This year's hiking season will start on the weekend of November 5th. You will find the schedule in this newsletter and on our website, as well.

I remember a hike I was on a couple of years ago. It was a cool, clear day in November. The hillsides of the Sutter Buttes were still covered in dry, tan grasses. The blue and valley oaks' leaves were starting to turn a dusty orange, and occasionally a strong breeze would free them from their branches, and they would fall like giant snowflakes to the ground. There, they would mix with acorns that had fallen weeks before. An acorn woodpecker



flew overhead making its recognizable call and showing flashes of white from under its wings. I heard snow geese calling as they flew overhead, and as I looked up, I noticed some high clouds starting to fill the sky from the west. I thought, maybe this is a sign of the coming storm mentioned in the weather forecast for tomorrow. I hoped it would rain soon as that would initiate more seasonal changes in the Buttes.

When the rains begin in the fall, the first immediate change is the moss. It seems like within minutes of a rainfall, the moss changes in color from charcoal gray to green. Sometimes it is a dark green, other times a brighter green, depending on the variety of moss. The lichens that cover the same volcanic rocks do not change color

so much but do seem more alive and certainly brighter. A day or two after a good rain, seeds start to germinate, and grasses and other plants start to grow. With more rain and time, these plants will start to dominate the hillsides, and the view of the Sutter Buttes from nearby highways will be green instead of brown. As fall turns to winter, hard rains can knock the remaining leaves from the trees. Soon the bare branches will become dark, crooked silhouettes against the sky.

Fall and winter are wonderful times to visit the Sutter Buttes. You will not find the wildflowers of spring, but green, moss-covered rocks, babbling creeks, drops of water clinging to bare branches, and colorful fungi on decomposing logs can make the Buttes seem magical. Even a hike on a foggy day can be enchanting. I invite you to check out our schedule of hikes and come hike with us.

To purchase the 2023 Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust Calendar, visit the Sutter County Museum located at 1333 Butte House Road in Yuba City. Or virtually visit the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust at: <http://www.sutterbutteslandtrust.org>.

To sign-up for Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes E-Newsletters, please visit the MMIH website at: <https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>.

The Mission of Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes

“Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes advances the understanding of the natural and cultural features of the Sutter Buttes through interactive educational activities for schoolchildren and the public.”

Donations are welcome at Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes. Please make checks payable to MMIH. Thank you!

Who We Are

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Stan Wright, Biologist
David Wyatt, Biologist

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Telephone: 530-370-4777

Website:

<https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>

MMIH General Information

Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes is not requiring hikers to be vaccinated. Please note, masks are welcome! If you have cold, flu, or Covid-19 symptoms, do not come on your registered hike.

None of our hikers or guides want to be exposed to cold/flu/Covid symptoms. If you are ill, MMIH will either refund your money or reschedule your hike. Thank you in advance for your kind and respectful consideration of others!

Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes provides access to privately owned ranch land of the Sutter Buttes. MMIH Guides will share their knowledge of the hiking terrain's origins and history. As a hiking group, you will examine the natural ecosystems and habitats.

The different territories of the Buttes provide a wide variety of hiking experiences. MMIH offers a helpful guideline/chart of “One Boot to Six Boot” ratings pertaining to physical fitness (ability/agility levels) to help all hikers succeed and thrive with their individually selected hike(s). This comprehensive hiking guideline (included in this newsletter and on the MMIH website) has been established to assist hikers with choosing a compatible hike.

All outings are educational/interpretive hikes. Note, the same hikes/outings are usually not offered every season. A typical day for hiking begins at 8:00 a.m. with meeting and greeting sessions amongst hikers/guides and ends about 3:00 p.m. (unless otherwise stated). Scheduled hikes will proceed in all but the most severe-weather conditions. Participants of all hikes should be prepared for uneven footing, stepping over rocks and boulders, crossing streams, and hill climbing. Fall hikers are likely to encounter and contend with thistles and stickers. Spring hikers are likely to encounter wet, squishy, and ankle-deep grass. Poison oak is abundant, but you will be warned of proximity. Mosquitos are often present unless there has been a recent freeze.

No smoking and/or vaping is allowed on the Sutter Buttes privately owned properties.

We do not hike on the Sutter Buttes working ranches in the summer because of the much more serious threats of fire danger and rattlesnakes.

Rattlesnakes, though common in the warmer weather, are usually reclusive and inactive during our hiking seasons of fall/winter (combined) and spring.

Some hikes are acceptable for children, but many are not. No hikes are appropriate for babies or toddlers. Hikes rated 3 Boot or 4 Boot may be suitable for children 12 or older, but it depends on the child and the hike. Please inform the hike coordinator if you are considering making a hike reservation which includes children.

Open Hikes are limited to 20 unless otherwise stated. The hikes range from \$35 to \$45 per person. To sign up/register for open hikes, email mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com or call/text: 530-370-4777 during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Charter Hikes cost \$300 for up to 10 hikers and \$30 for each additional hiker, with a maximum of 20. To arrange a charter (private/custom) hike, email llush@mac.com or call/text: 530-301-7371 during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The fall-hiking season is usually posted in early October (with hikes to begin in late October or early November), and the spring-hiking season is usually posted in early February (with hikes to begin in late February or early March) on the MMIH website at: <https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>.

For seasonal hiking news, subscribe to Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes e-Newsletters at:

<https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>

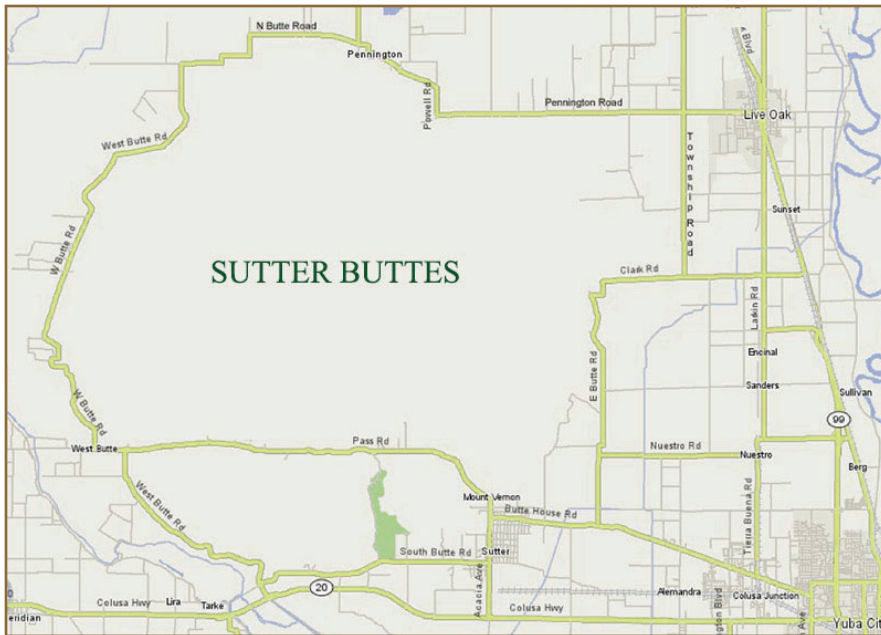
Follow Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes on Facebook at:

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



Like Us on Facebook!





Maps name the captivating 1.6 million-years old volcanic peaks as the “Sutter Buttes.”

Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes offers homage to the indigenous name of the spiritually vital “Mountains in the Middle” rising dramatically from the center of the Sacramento Valley.

Views from afar inspire closer visits through a 60-minute drive, 45-mile bike ride, or a memorable hike within the Buttes 10-mile-wide range.

Education-Program Notes

BY KATHLEEN PAYNE

Every September finds me busy with scheduling 3rd & 4th graders for a Nature Hike in the Sutter Buttes with Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes. Many schools return year after year because our outdoor classroom perfectly dovetails with 3rd and 4th grade curriculum.



Photo by Greg Payne

But unfortunately, schools are dealing with an ongoing bus-driver shortage which is preventing some local schools from offering field trips to their students this school year.

Of course, we are happy for those schools able to join the MMIH Education Program.

On a positive note, we have been able to add a few new schools on hikes in the Sutter Buttes and have about 18 schools coming this school year.

Last spring a new school from a farming community joined us for the first time. Their knowledge base was quite different in comparison to our local low-income schools that often hike with us. For instance, while walking the road – which led us by a barn and heifer pasture – a 4th grader asked: “What kind of cattle do you run on your ranch?” Great question, but I am not the property owner! I quickly

explained I don’t own this property, but “the cattle owner runs Herefords on her ranch, usually around 100 pregnant females waiting to have their spring calves.” He paused for one second before commenting, “I do see an influence of Black Angus in your cattle.”

He was correct, Margit, the cattle woman, introduced

a Black Angus bull a few years back and some heifers were Black Baldies (a Hereford, Black Angus mix – of which have dark-black coloring and a distinct white-face marking).

At the end of a spring hike, we had a quick gray fox dash across the trail right in front of our group of 25 students. The fox ran and leaped, with its beautiful fluffy tail, until it sailed over a rock wall and disappeared up the hillside. We were minutes away from loading back up on the school bus, so what a wonderful way to finish up a hike with about 50 students able to see this wild creature.

We never know what we might see or hear on a hike with 25 excited children. So now you can see why 20+ retired educators volunteer to come hike with children in nature every school year in the Sutter Buttes! We love it too.

Sunday, November 20th

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

“Explorations of Ancient Arts”

PRESENTED BY WILLOW DEER EDUCATION
& MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES

Eons ago, ancient people from all around the world
made everything that they needed from the Earth. EVERYTHING!
Food - Clothing - Fiber - Tools - Shelter - Utensils - Toys - Music - Art - Weapons

*With Co-Guides, Chuck Kritzon and Mike Hubbartt
Location: Shaeffer Ranch at the Sutter Buttes*



A trip into the Buttes is
a trip back into time.
You will experience nature
and learn how
different cultures have impacted the
landscape over the centuries.
This unique experience is not a hike.
We will not go places or climb peaks.
It is a stroll of discovery.
It is a walk with pauses
for a series of demonstrations
and a workshop to learn
about handcrafting something
as the ancients once did.

Many artisans today
still practice these ancient crafts.
These are survival skills.

This is a whole new tour into the Buttes.

Limited to 20 participants.

Cost = \$35/per person.

Make your reservation at:

<https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>

Open-Hikes Schedule & Hike Descriptions

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION AT [HTTPS://WWW.MIDDLEMOUNTAINHIKES.ORG](https://www.middlemountainhikes.org)

Detailed hike and payment information emailed upon reservation. Unless otherwise specified in the following hike descriptions, cost is \$35/per person; meet and greet time is by 8:00 a.m. with an ending time of 3:00 p.m.; and each hike is limited to 20 registrants.

All hikers are to carry a backpack containing a sack lunch/snacks and water (for a day's hike).

Wear hiking boots or strong/tough/sturdy shoes with a good tread (no tennis shoes/sneakers, please). Hiking/walking sticks are always a great idea!

Summit | Dean Place/North Butte

Summit Ascent is one of our most challenging treks. This route is a steep 1,000-foot push straight up North Butte. It is off trail and has no easy switchbacks. Hikers must be in extremely good physical condition and not suffer from vertigo. Limited to 15 hikers. **Cost: \$45. Hike Difficulty Level: 5 Boot. Dates: Sunday, November 6th; Saturday, November 19th; Saturday, December 3rd; Sunday, January 8th; and Saturday, January 21st.**

Nature Study | Dean Place

Learn about the natural elements and features of the Sutter Buttes – things not made by people. Opportunities abound for observing and examining flora and fauna. We will study nature and learn about the natural world in a beautiful outdoor setting while establishing a living sympathy with everything we see along on our path—be it a bird, insect, or plant. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Sunday, November 6th.**

Brockman Challenge | Brockman Ranch

Prepare for a six-mile strenuous and steep ascent between the tallest of ridge tops. The trail is narrow and will have us traversing a precipitous incline with an elevation gain of 1,000 feet. At the hike's midway point, we will be gazing with wonder at the deep, beautiful hidden valleys below. **Hike Difficulty Level: 5 Boot. Date: Saturday, November 12th. Time: 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Sacred Manner | Dean Place

A lovely, peaceful nature walk with Stan Padilla focuses on his reverence for the sanctity of all life and the Native-American mythology of the Sutter Buttes. Did you know that the name “Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes” offers homage to the spiritually vital indigenous name, “Mountains in the Middle”? **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Saturday, November 12th. Time: 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Geology | Dean Place

Learn about the volcanic origins of the Sutter Buttes, a small mountain range, with Volcanologist, Dr. Brian Hausback, as he teaches us about the Buttes 1.6 million years of geological history. **Hike Difficulty Level: 4 Boot. Date: Sunday, November 13th.**

Explorations of Ancient Arts | Shaeffer Ranch

For information/details about this NEW Sutter Buttes outing presented in partnership with Willow Deer Education, look for our full-page flyer featured in this newsletter. **Hike Difficulty Level: 1 Boot. Date: Sunday, November 20th.**



Dean Ridge | Dean Place

Hike and climb the rocky, rather steep, hilly ridges of Dean Place, a working-cattle ranch, belonging to the same family since the 1890s. This invigorating hike will reward you with unforgettable views of the Sutter Buttes interior upon greeting its beautiful landscape of woodlands, a dense growth of trees and shrubs. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Sunday, November 27th.**

Birds | Dean Place

Witness a multitude of birds in the Sutter Buttes while searching for and studying their natural habitats. Did you know that December is prime time in the Pacific Flyway? **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Sunday, December 4th. Time: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Tres Picos | Dean Place & North Butte

Our Tres Picos adventure is for serious hikers able and willing to hike, climb, and summit the rugged, challenging, and daunting three peaks: North Butte, Old Man, and Pigeon Peak. Hikers must be in excellent physical condition. Limited to 15 hikers. **Hike Difficulty Level: 6 Boot. Date: Saturday, December 10th. Time: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Shaeffer East | Shaeffer Ranch

Hikers will explore the historical Shaeffer Ranch belonging to the same family since the 1860s. This moderately challenging hike provides inland views of North Butte and Peace Valley. Weather permitting, Mount Lassen and Mount Shasta will be seen in the distant horizon. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Sunday, December 11th and Sunday, February 19th.**

Moonlight Stroll | Dean Place

While under the bewitching spell of the moonrise's lunar glow, we will contemplate, observe, ponder, and reflect upon the mysteries of the Sutter Buttes, while walking amongst the illuminated, shadowy oak groves and alluring hillsides of Dean Place. **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Saturday, January 7th. Time: 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Shaeffer Double | Shaeffer Ranch

Hikers will enjoy an invigorating adventure trekking the historical Shaeffer Ranch. This strenuous hike will have you circling the boundaries of the entire property. **Hike Difficulty Level: 5 Boot. Sunday, January 15th.**



Brockman Canyon | Brockman Ranch

Travel to the intriguing, fascinating center of the Sutter Buttes! Be prepared for a steady climb on uneven ground with frequent stops for contemplation of the landscape's natural elements and amazing views! **Hike Difficulty Level: 3-4 Boot. Dates: Sunday, January 22nd and Saturday, February 4th.**

Shaeffer West | Shaeffer Ranch

This moderately challenging hike will have you exploring the Shaeffer Family Ranch, a historical Sutter Buttes property belonging to the same family since the 1860s. Depending on visibility, the hike may include views of North Butte, Peace Valley, and the old Titan Missile Site. Both Mount Lassen and Mount Shasta are often seen in the distance. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Saturday, February 11th.**



2022-23 FALL-WINTER HIKE SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	HIKE NAME	WHERE	BOOT
Nov. 6	Sunday	Summit*	Dean Place/N Butte	5
Nov. 6	Sunday	Nature Study	Dean Place	3
Nov. 12	Saturday	Brockman Challenge	Brockman	5
Nov. 12	Saturday	Sacred Manner	Dean Place	2
Nov. 13	Sunday	Geology	Dean Place	4
Nov. 19	Saturday	Summit*	Dean Place/N Butte	5
Nov. 20	Sunday	Explore Ancient Arts	Shaeffer Ranch	1
Nov. 27	Sunday	Dean Ridge	Dean Place	3
Dec. 3	Saturday	Summit*	Dean Place/N Butte	5
Dec. 4	Sunday	Birds	Dean Place	2
Dec. 10	Saturday	Tres Picos*	Dean Place/N Butte	6
Dec. 11	Sunday	Shaeffer East	Shaeffer Ranch	3
Jan. 7	Saturday	Moonlight Stroll	Dean Place	2
Jan. 8	Sunday	Summit*	Dean Place/N Butte	5
Jan. 15	Sunday	Shaeffer Double	Shaeffer Ranch	5
Jan. 21	Saturday	Summit*	Dean Place/N Butte	5
Jan. 22	Sunday	Brockman Canyon	Brockman	3 to 4
Feb. 4	Saturday	Brockman Canyon	Brockman	3 to 4
Feb. 11	Saturday	Shaeffer West	Shaeffer Ranch	3
Feb. 19	Sunday	Shaeffer East	Shaeffer Ranch	3

*\$45 Hike. All other open hikes listed are \$35.
The maximum number of hikers per hike is 20 except for the Summits and Tres Picos Hikes.

HIKE/EVENT BOOT RATINGS

Hike/Event Boot Ratings are a guideline for helping you to choose an outing that matches your fitness and ability.

1 Boot = Easy: One to three miles and less than 300 feet elevation gain/loss.

2 Boot = Moderate: Two to five miles and generally less than 600 feet elevation gain/loss.

3 Boot = Moderately Challenging: Four to seven miles with the possibility of multiple elevation gains/losses of 600 - 800 feet.

4 Boot = Difficult: Four to seven miles and elevation gains/losses likely in excess of 800 feet.

5 Boot = Strenuous: Four to eight miles with significant elevation gains/losses of 1,000+ feet.

6 Boot = Extreme: Five to fourteen miles with multiple and significant elevation gains/losses in excess of 1,000+ feet (miles determined by outing).



The Sutter County Museum presents

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:

California Wildflowers and Climate Change

October 4 — November 20

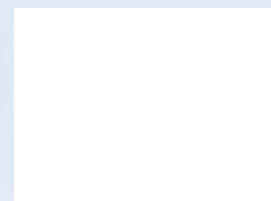
RECEPTION:
OCTOBER 7, 2022
6-8PM

For over 20 years, international award-winning photographers, Rob Badger and Nita Winter, have worked to capture California's vanishing wildflowers, bringing awareness to the beauty of the Golden State.

SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM SPEAKER SERIES
OCTOBER 20, 2022, 5:30-7pm
Wildflowers of the Sutter Buttes with Laura Lush, Margit Sands, and Ty Shaeffer of Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes.

MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES

PO Box 3613
Yuba City, CA 95992-3613



**MMIH Gift Certificates
are a great gift idea
for hikers and nature
enthusiasts!**

TO SIGN-UP FOR MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES E-NEWSLETTERS,
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
[WWW.HTTPS://WWW.MIDDLEMOUNTAINHIKES.ORG](https://www.middlemountainhikes.org)

SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM



Admission to the Sutter County Museum is free. Donations are welcome! Register for the Museum's monthly E-Newsletter at www.suttercountymuseum.org to receive updates about upcoming programs and events.

Like & Follow the Sutter County Museum on Facebook & Instagram!

Contact Us

*Thank you for reaching out to
Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes! You may contact us:*

- On our website: <https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>.
- By mail: PO Box 3613, Yuba City, CA 95992-3613
- Kelly Gash, Open Hikes Coordinator,
mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com or 530-370-4777
- Laura Lush, Charter Hikes Coordinator/Hike Program
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Editor: Kelly Gash

Printer: Printworx

*Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
organization; Federal Tax ID #32-0454378.*

For Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust information, contact SBRLT at:
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info@sutterbutteslandtrust.org; or <http://www.sutterbutteslandtrust.org>.