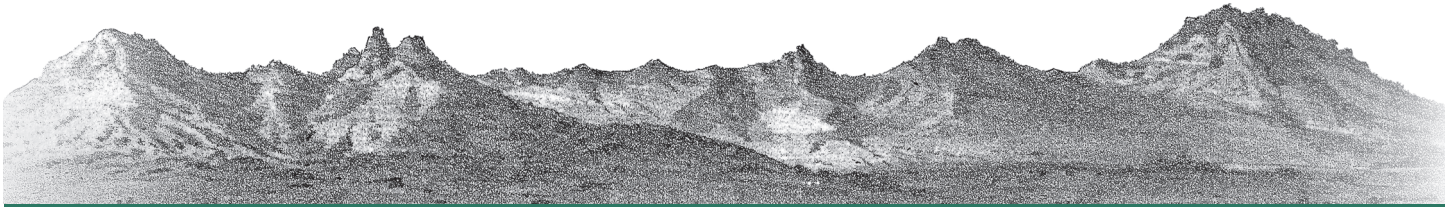


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# MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES

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*Image Adopted from Thompson & West History of Sutter County 1879*

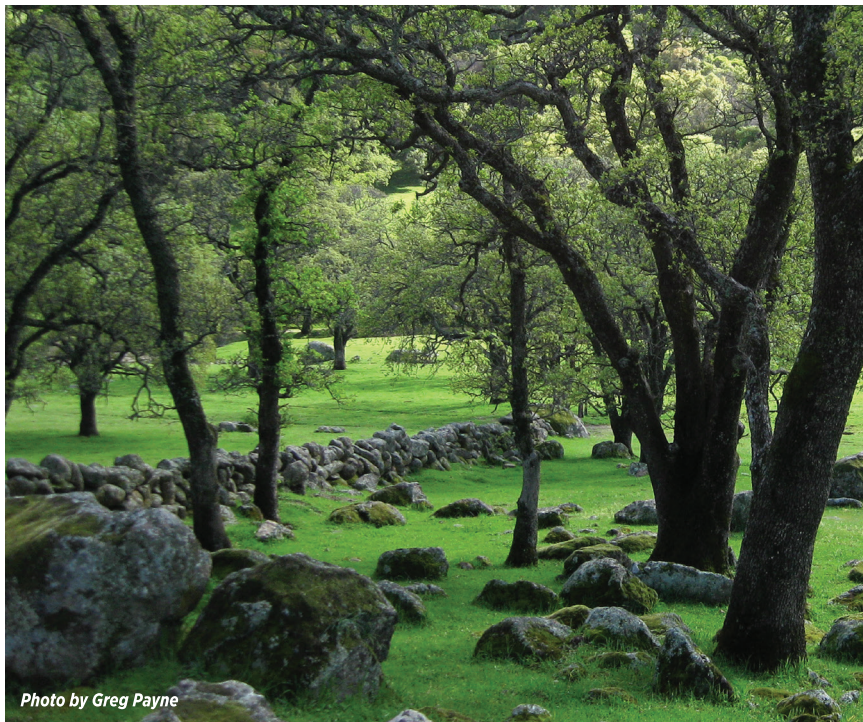
2024 SPRING

## President's Message The Sutter Buttes

BY GREG PAYNE

Visitors and residents of our area see the Sutter Buttes in various ways. Those who reside in the cities that are close to them, such as Yuba City, Sutter, Marysville, Colusa, or Live Oak, see the Buttes as they drive around their towns. They may think of them as part of the local landscape, in their “backyard.” For them the Sutter Buttes can become a beacon to their homes as they return from a road trip. I have often heard residents of these cities tell me that as they drive back from a long journey, when they see the Sutter Buttes in the distance, they know they are almost home.

There are others who view the Sutter Buttes in a different way. Some may be local, and some may be just passing by. They notice the Sutter Buttes as they drive along Interstate 5 or State Highways 20 or 99 and are often curious about them. They might be inquisitive about what caused these small mountains in the distant landscape to rise out of the



*Photo by Greg Payne*

flat Sacramento Valley, or they might wonder about what it would be like to be in the middle of these oak covered peaks and grassy hillsides. When viewed from one of these highways, the Sutter Buttes seem to be surrounded by farms and ranches and small towns, but except for the communication towers on South Butte, the hills and peaks seem to be uninhabited and undeveloped.

To satisfy that curiosity, of course, we offer our many hikes. As our name says, we offer interpretive hikes. On any

of our hikes you are likely to hear about the geologic origin of the Sutter Buttes. You will be introduced to the mixture of plants and animals found in the Coast Range and foothills of the Sierra Nevada (that somehow got to the Sutter Buttes), and maybe we will awaken the “naturalist” in you and an appreciation for the natural land. Your hike may take you to mortar rocks that are the evidence of the visits from the early Native Americans. When you hike with us in the Sutter Buttes you

will perhaps experience a little of what California was like 150 years ago. We want you to feel like you are hiking back in time as you see an old barn or the lichen and moss-covered rock walls.

Of course, we want you to enjoy the wildflowers or birds or the views along the way as you hike up North Butte, whatever is the focus of your hike. We hope that after hiking with us in the Sutter Buttes you will understand why this is such a special place.

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 MMIH, a 501c(3) non-profit organization. To donate send check to PO Box 3613, Yuba City, CA 95992-3613*

### Who We Are

#### Board of Directors

President: Greg Payne, Director/  
Education Program  
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Kathy Larsen, Education Program Advisor  
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Tyrone Shaeffer, Landowner  
Gene Trapp, Biologist  
Stan Wright, Biologist  
David Wyatt, Biologist

Inquiries may be directed by mail, by email, or by telephone:

#### Mailing Address:

PO Box 3613, Yuba City, CA 95992

#### Email:

mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com  
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. Our guides share knowledge of the hiking terrain's origins and history. As a group you examine together the natural ecosystems and habitats of this small mountain range. The different territories of the Buttes provide a wide variety of hiking experiences.

MMIH offers a definitive guideline/chart of "1 to 6 Boot" hike ratings pertaining to physical fitness (ability/agility levels) to help all hikers succeed with individually selected hike(s). This hike guideline/chart was specifically established by MMIH to assist hikers with choosing compatible hikes. (Our "Hike Boot Ratings" chart is included in this newsletter and on the MMIH website).

All of our outings are educational/interpretive hikes. Note, the same hikes/outings are not offered every season. A typical day begins at 8:00 a.m. for hike meet and greet sessions and ends about 3:00 p.m. (unless otherwise stated). Scheduled hikes usually proceed in all but the most severe of weather conditions.

Hike participants 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/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.

Smoking/vaping is not allowed on Sutter Buttes privately owned properties. We do not hike on the Buttes working ranches in the summer because of the serious threats of fire danger and rattlesnakes. Rattlesnakes, though common in warmer weather, are usually reclusive and inactive during our hiking seasons of fall/winter (combined) and spring.

Some hikes are acceptable for children, but most are not. There are no hikes appropriate for babies or toddlers. Hikes rated 3 or 4 Boot may be suitable for children 12 or older (although this depends on the child and hike). Please inform the Hike Coordinator if you are considering making a hike reservation which includes children.

Open Hikes are limited to approximately 20 hikers unless otherwise stated. The hikes range from \$35 to \$45 per person. To sign up/register for open hikes, please email: [mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com](mailto:mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com); or text/phone 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 maximum of 20. To arrange a charter (private/custom) hike, email [lushinthebuttes@gmail.com](mailto:lushinthebuttes@gmail.com) or text/phone 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 beginning in late October or early November), and the spring-hiking season is usually posted in early February (with hikes beginning in late February or early March). All hike information is available on the MMIH website at: <https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>. For the seasonal hike schedule, updates/announcements, please 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!



# Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes Education Program

By Kathleen Payne



Photo by Kathleen Payne

**Nat-u-ral-ist:** What is a “naturalist?” According to the dictionary, “A naturalist is either an expert in or student of natural history.” Only a few of us hikers in the Sutter Buttes would be considered an “expert,” and typically the few that are experts are our research college professors. The rest of us are “naturalists” simply because we are always studying nature and sharing this knowledge with others. Our eyes are always looking towards nature and constantly learning new things to tuck into our “portfolio of life.” When we are in the Buttes leading a group of children, we pay close attention to the nature around us as we walk along the trails. Of course, we teach them the standard curriculum of geology, native peoples, animals, and plant behavior. But we are always looking at nature with new eyes and helping them discover the wonders of nature right in front of them! On some of our trails we might come across a little pile of dirt in the dust. Is it an anthill? Or perhaps it is the evidence of the ever-elusive Calisoga spider? After a little observation with the students, we can share our knowledge with them as to what it might be. Usually after lunch when

the air currents have warmed up during the winter months, we will find turkey vultures soaring over the mountain tops. Footprints in the dusty road or muddy trails show the evidence of last night’s nocturnal visitors, perhaps deer or raccoons. Tiny galls on a tree leaf catch their attention. What is it? Let’s figure it out!

Third and fourth grade students also learn about “adaptations.” As adults, we do not think about that word much at all, but it is part of the school curriculum. “Adaptation is the evolutionary process whereby an organism becomes better able to live in its habitat or habitats.” To truly understand nature, they need to understand how the plants and animals have adjusted through eons of time to become what they are today. It is such a delight for our group of nature-loving, retired-volunteer educators to share this knowledge with our younger generation of children, and help nurture them into becoming “Junior Naturalists” and stewards of this land!

# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENT NEWS!

## SUTTER COUNTY MUSEUM SPEAKER SERIES

### THREE-THOUSAND YEARS OF LAND AND PEOPLE: AN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF YUBA-SUTTER

WITH DAVID RUBIALES, RETIRED YUBA COLLEGE  
PROFESSOR

In this special series, local author and historian David Rubiales will discuss the natural landscape as it existed before the arrival of human beings, use of the landscape by Native Americans, changes wrought by early settlers, impacts of the Gold Rush and hydraulic mining, and the introduction of modern agriculture. Join us at the Museum for part II of this ongoing series of presentations.

FEBRUARY 15, 2024  
6:30PM  
DOORS OPEN AT 6:00PM

PART II OF A  
PRESENTATION  
SERIES



Sutter County Museum · 1333 Butte House Road · Yuba City, CA 95993 · suttercountymuseum.org

## PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

THE 20TH ANNUAL SUTTER BUTTES LAND TRUST  
CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST

### All Photographers including:

Professional, Amateurs, and  
Students K-12th grade

### Deadline:

Friday, April 26, 2024.

### Photo Subject:

- The Sutter Buttes and surrounding areas
- Farmers, Ranchers, Farming Activities
- Native Fauna and Flora
- Geological Features
- Waterfowl Habitats
- Natural or Weather Aerials or Landscapes
- Agricultural Heritage or Landscapes

For Submission information and forms

<https://www.sutterbutteslandtrust.org/photo-contest>



For more information contact us at:  
(530) 755-3568 or  
Photos@SutterButtesLandTrust.org

Spring 2024

## Open-Hikes Schedule & Hike Descriptions

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

*Detailed hike and payment information emailed upon your reservation. Unless otherwise specified in the following hike descriptions, the cost is \$35/per person; meet and greet time is at 8:00 a.m. with a 3:00 p.m. ending time; and each hike is limited to approximately 20 registrants. All hikers are to carry a backpack containing: lunch, snacks, and plenty of water (for a day's hike). Wear hiking boots or strong/ tough/ sturdy shoes with good tread/traction (no tennis shoes/sneakers)! Note: Hiking/walking sticks are a great idea for all participants!*

### Summit | Dean Place - North Butte

The 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 approximately 15 hikers. Cost: \$45.

**Hike Difficulty Level: 5 Boot. Dates: Saturday, February 17; Sunday, February 25; Saturday, March 9; and Sunday, March 17.**

### Vines & Vistas | Shaeffer Ranch

Enjoy a stroll through the Cordi Winery orchards and vineyards before entering the hills of the lovely Shaeffer Ranch. After exploring the ridges and views for most of the day, return to Cordi for optional wine tasting (additional fee of \$10 to be paid separately [day of hike] to Cordi). Cost: \$40.

**Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot (with gentle climbs and descents). Dates: Sunday, February 18; and Saturday, March 2.**

### Shaeffer East | Shaeffer Ranch

Hikers explore the historic Shaeffer Ranch belonging to the same family since the 1860s. This moderately challenging hike provides scenic (interior) views of North Butte and Peace Valley. Mount Lassen and Shasta are often seen in the distant horizon, weather permitting. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Saturday, February 24; and Sunday, March 17.**

### Moonlight Stroll | Dean Place

Under the bewitching spell of the moonrise's lunar glow, we contemplate, observe, ponder, and reflect upon the mysteries of the Sutter Buttes while strolling amongst illuminated, shadowy oak groves and alluring hillsides. **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Saturday, February 24.**

**Time: 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

### Ridin' Fence | Dean Place

Walk the fence line of the historic Sutter Buttes ranch, Dean Place. The fence line terrain is rugged just like the cowboys charged with mending it. Bring sturdy boots, a day's worth of water, and your sense of adventure - work gloves optional. **Hike Difficulty Level: 6 Boot. Date: Saturday, February 24. Time: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

### Brockman Canyon | Brockman Ranch

Travel to the intriguing, fascinating central core 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 mesmerizing views.

**Hike Difficulty Level: 3 - 4 Boot. Dates: Sunday, February 25; and Saturday, March 16.**



### Geology | Dean Place

Learn about the exciting 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, March 3.**

### Brockman Challenge | Brockman Ranch

Prepare for a six-mile strenuous, steep ascent between the tallest of ridge tops. The trail is narrow and has us traversing a precipitous incline with an elevation gain of 1,000 feet. At the hike's midway point, we are rewarded with a scenic view of deep hidden valleys. **Hike Difficulty Level: 5 Boot. Date: Sunday, March 3.**

### Shaeffer Wildflowers | Shaeffer Ranch

Enjoy a springtime walk amongst the green hills of Shaeffer Ranch, where we hope to be greeted with a delightful plethora of wildflower blooms like: Popcorn Flower, White Hyacinth, Larkspur, Monkey Flower, Dutchman's Pipe, Shooting Stars, and Baby Blue Eyes. Remember to bring your hand lens, camera, and wildflower field guide. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Saturday, March 9.**

(cont. on next page)

### **Brockman Wildflowers | Brockman Ranch**

While hiking the unique terrain of Brockman Ranch, we hope you enjoy seeing a lovely variety of wildflower blooms like: California Poppies, Gold Nuggets, Woodland Stars, Cream Cups, Gray Mule Ears, Fiddlenecks, and Lacepods. Remember to bring your hand lens, camera, and wildflower field guide. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Sunday, March 10; and Sunday, March 24.**

### **Shaeffer West | Shaeffer Ranch**

This moderate/challenging hike has you exploring the Shaeffer Family Ranch, an historic Sutter Buttes property belonging to the same family since the 1860s. Depending on visibility, this hike may include views of North Butte, Peace Valley, and the old Titan Missile Site. Both Mount Lassen and Shasta are often seen in the distance. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Saturday, March 23.**

### **Nature in the Buttes | Brockman Ranch**



Learn about the exciting diversity of plants and animals found in the Sutter Buttes and examine the fascinating adaptations that allow them to survive. Plan to study nature and learn about the natural world in a beautiful outdoor setting. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 - 4 Boot. Date: Saturday, March 30.**

### **Dean Flowers | Dean Place**

Enjoy a glorious spring day hiking Dean Place, where we hope to be greeted with an enchanting array of wildflower blooms like the: Paintbrush, Canyon Larkspur, Chinese Houses, Showy Milkweed, Filaree, Lupine, and Bird's-eye Gilia. Remember to bring your hand lens, camera, and wildflower field guide. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Saturday, March 30.**

### **Shaeffer - Guide's Choice | Shaeffer Ranch**

This hike takes place on either the East or West Ridge of the Shaeffer Ranch and may also include sections of both. Your guide considers the day and enthusiasm of the group before you set off to discover the hills and views of this historic property. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 - 4 Boot. Date: Saturday, April 6.**

### **Dean Ridge | Dean Place**

Hike and climb the rocky, rather steep and hilly ridges of historic Dean Place, a working-cattle ranch, belonging to the same family since the 1890s. This invigorating hike rewards you with unforgettable interior views of the Sutter Buttes. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 - 4 Boot. Date: Sunday, April 7.**

### **Birds of the Buttes | Dean Place**

Let's go birding in the Sutter Buttes! Explore a variety of habitats (riparian, shrub, and oak woodlands) while we slowly and deftly search for resident and seasonal birds. This is a birder's hike with quality time for photography and scopes – if you choose to carry the gear. Do bring binoculars! **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Sunday, April 14. Time: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

### **Sacred Manner | Dean Place**

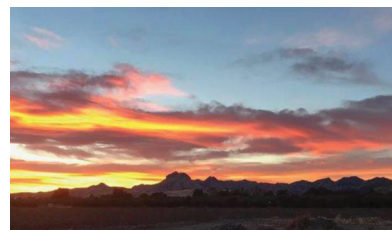
While walking in a SACRED MANNER with Stan Padilla, we learn about his respectful reverence for life and the Native-American mythology of the Sutter Buttes. Did you know that our name, Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes, offers homage to the spiritually vital indigenous name, Mountains in the Middle? **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Saturday, April 20.**

### **Bats of the Buttes | Dean Place**

This Bat-Research Outing is a rare opportunity for a limited number of participants to witness mammal biologist, David Wyatt, conduct bat research in the Sutter Buttes. In addition to food and water, bring a folding chair or cushion and flashlight. **Hike Difficulty Level: 1 Boot. Date: Saturday, April 27. Time: 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**



### **Sunset Serenade in the Sutter Buttes – at Historic Dean Place**



Join Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes at its annual fundraiser, Sunset Serenade, scheduled to be held (weather permitting) on Saturday, May 4, in an enchanting outdoor setting at the

base of North Butte. Plan to enjoy an afternoon stroll or hike, delicious appetizers, wine and beer, a catered dinner, light-classical music, fine desserts, and pleasant company. Unique items are always featured at the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust (SBRLT) silent auction and drawing. Pre-registration is required at <https://www.middlemountainhikes.org> or [mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com](mailto:mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com). Cost is \$125 per person (SBRLT hike discounts are not accepted). Information/details emailed upon registration.

**Meet/Greet Time for Stroll/Hike is at 2:30 p.m.; appetizers at 5:00 p.m.; and dinner at 6:00 p.m.**

**Meet/Greet Time for Dinner is at 4:00 p.m.; appetizers at 5:00 p.m.; and dinner at 6:00 p.m.**

## HIKE/EVENT BOOT RATINGS

Hike/Event Boot Ratings are a guideline for helping you to choose an outing that matches your physical fitness/ability levels. Distance and elevation gain are dependent on the outing, the property, and the guide.

**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 multiple and/or significant elevation gains/losses in excess 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 and weather).

## 2024 SPRING SEASON HIKE SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	HIKE NAME	RANCH	BOOT
2/17/2024	SATURDAY	SUMMIT*	DEAN & NORTH BUTTE	5
2/18/2024	SUNDAY	VINES & VISTAS**	SHAEFFER	3
2/24/2024	SATURDAY	SHAEFFER EAST	SHAEFFER	3
2/24/2024	SATURDAY	MOONLIGHT STROLL	DEAN	2
2/24/2024	SATURDAY	RIDIN' FENCE	DEAN	6
2/25/2024	SUNDAY	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN	3 - 4
2/25/2024	SUNDAY	SUMMIT*	DEAN & NORTH BUTTE	5
3/2/2024	SATURDAY	VINES & VISTAS**	SHAEFFER	3
3/3/2024	SUNDAY	GEOLOGY	DEAN	4
3/3/2024	SUNDAY	BROCKMAN CHALLENGE	BROCKMAN	5
3/9/2024	SATURDAY	SHAEFFER WILDFLOWERS	SHAEFFER	3
3/9/2024	SATURDAY	SUMMIT*	DEAN & NORTH BUTTE	5
3/10/2024	SUNDAY	BROCKMAN WILDFLOWERS	BROCKMAN	3
3/16/2024	SATURDAY	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN	3 - 4
3/17/2024	SUNDAY	SHAEFFER EAST	SHAEFFER	3
3/17/2024	SUNDAY	SUMMIT*	DEAN & NORTH BUTTE	5
3/23/2024	SATURDAY	SHAEFFER WEST	SHAEFFER	3
3/24/2024	SUNDAY	BROCKMAN WILDFLOWERS	BROCKMAN	3
3/30/2024	SATURDAY	NATURE IN THE BUTTES	BROCKMAN	3-4
3/30/2024	SATURDAY	DEAN FLOWERS	DEAN	3
4/6/2024	SATURDAY	SHAEFFER - GUIDE'S CHOICE	SHAEFFER	3 - 4
4/7/2024	SUNDAY	DEAN RIDGE	DEAN	3 - 4
4/14/2024	SUNDAY	BIRDS OF THE BUTTES	DEAN	3
4/20/2024	SATURDAY	SACRED MANNER	DEAN	2
4/27/2024	SATURDAY	BATS OF THE BUTTES	DEAN	1
5/4/2024	SATURDAY	SUNSET SERENADE	DEAN	1 - 3

\*\$45 Hike. \*\*\$40 Hike. All other open hikes listed are \$35.

Notes: The approximate number of hikers (per hike) = 20. Summit & Ridin' Fence Hikes = 15.

## 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,  
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](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org) to receive  
announcements 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](mailto:mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com) or 530-370-4777
- Laura Lush, Charter Hikes Coordinator,  
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- Margit Sands, Hike Program Director,  
[sandsmp@comcast.net](mailto:sandsmp@comcast.net) or 530-846-5142
- Gregory & Kathleen Payne, Education Program  
Coordinators, [greg947@sbcglobal.net](mailto:greg947@sbcglobal.net) or 530-218-1346

#### Newsletter

Editor: Kelly Gash Printer: Printworx

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

For Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust information, contact SBRLT at:  
PO Box 3359, Yuba City, CA 95992-3359; Phone 530-755-3568;  
[info@sutterbutteslandtrust.org](mailto:info@sutterbutteslandtrust.org); or <http://www.sutterbutteslandtrust.org>.