
MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES



Image Adopted from Thompson & West History of Sutter County 1879

SPRING 2022

President's Message Spring Hikes Are Here!

BY GREG PAYNE

Twalk along a path covered with the old, brown leaves that have fallen from the blue oaks that now leafless, cast intricate shadows upon the ground.

As I walk from under these trees into an open area, I find the ground is now green with the new growth of grasses and unnamed plants that in a month or two will have colorful wildflowers. The Sutter Buttes have changed from their summer tan to their winter green...and it only took a couple of weeks! Most years it takes several rainstorms over many weeks to start seeds germinating and growing so that the hills are once again green. The massive storm of October started things off by soaking the ground and filling ponds in a week: ponds that were dry all last winter.

Then came the rains of December, and the seasonal creeks started running; the low, grassy spots now “squish” with extra moisture when you walk across them; and every hill and mountain is cloaked in green. If you look up at the tops of the blue oaks and valley oaks, you see their branches are dark and bare against the sky. This is the time of year for hiking in the Sutter Buttes.

Today, I was a back-up guide on a charter hike. We watched a coyote run along one of the rock walls. We saw a red-tailed hawk soaring above us, and we listened to the calls of the acorn woodpeckers. We were also surprised to find a couple of very early wildflowers. They are probably a product of our crazy California weather. Yes, it is a really good time to be hiking in the Sutter Buttes!

Our fall-winter hiking season is coming to an end, and as I write this, we have just finished making our schedule of hikes for spring. You will find that schedule in this newsletter. We have more hikes this spring than we did in the spring of 2019 or the spring of 2018. We hope you will be able to join us on one.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 is still with us. Because of the omicron variant, we will continue our protocols of social distancing and masks (when necessary) and the requirement that those who come on our hikes must be fully vaccinated. (Our logic is still the same. Our guides have said: “They only want vaccinated people on their hikes.” And without guides, we have no hikes.)



Photo by Greg Payne



Photo by Greg Payne

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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The Sutter Buttes



The Sutter Buttes played an important part in the lives of the Nisenan Maidu Native Americans, who lived in villages within sight of the Buttes. They called the Buttes “Histum Yani” or “Esto Yamani” and relied on them to provide food, including acorns, deer, roots, grass seeds, berries, elk, antelope, ducks, and geese from nearby marshes. The Sutter Buttes are still a haven for wildlife, birds, and a wide variety of plant life. The Nisenan Maidu considered the Buttes to be a “Spirit Mountain” and believed that their spirits went there after death. Gabriel Moraga, a Spaniard trying to locate possible mission sites, was the first European to see the Sutter Buttes in 1806 and 1808. Another Spaniard, Luis Arguello, led an expedition in 1817 to explore Northern California by water. He called the Sutter Buttes “Los Picachos” or “The Peaks.” He also named the Feather River “El Rio de las Plumas,” because he saw many feathers of wildfowl floating on the water. In 1822, the renowned mountain man, Jedediah Smith, trapped in the vicinity of the Sutter Buttes. A brigade of Hudson’s Bay trappers was in the Buttes from December 15 through December 30, 1832. James Dwight Dana explored the Buttes on October 16, 1841, while part of the United States Exploring Expedition. Captain John C. Fremont and his U.S. Army troops camped in the Sutter Buttes from May 30 to June 8, 1846, while they prepared for their role in the Bear Flag Revolt in Sonoma, California.

The Sutter Buttes have had various names like the: “Marysville Buttes,” “Sacramento Buttes,” and “Los Tres Picos.” In 1949, they were officially named: “The Sutter Buttes.” The Sutter Buttes are mostly privately owned and public access is limited.

For information regarding scheduled open hikes in the Sutter Buttes contact: Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes at: 530-370-4777; mmsutterbutteshikes@yahoo.com; <https://www.middlemountainhikes.org>; or, P.O. Box 3613, Yuba City, CA 95992-3613.

For more information about the cultural and natural history of the Sutter Buttes, visit the Sutter County Museum at 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City, CA 95993; www.suttercountymuseum.org; or call 530-822-7141. Note, for your bookshelves, the Museum recommends the following reading materials (some of which are for sale at its gift shop):

- Walt Anderson; The Sutter Buttes: a naturalists view; (The Natural Selection; 1983)
- Walt Anderson; Inland Island, the Sutter Buttes; (The Natural Selection and Middle Mountain Foundation | Publishers; 2004)
- Michael Don Hubbartt; The Sutter Buttes (Images of America | Arcadia Publishing; 2010)
- Louise Butts Hendrix; Sutter Buttes: Land of Histum Yani; (Normart Publishing; 1980)
- Howel Williams and G.H. Curtis; The Sutter Buttes of California, A Study of Pliocene Pleistocene Volcanism; (U.C. Publications in Geological Sciences; 1977)
- Sutter County Historical Society Bulletins available at: www.suttercountymuseum.org
- G. Kimball Epperson; A Descriptive Study of the Growth and Development of Sutter, California 1830 - 1900; (Sutter County Historical Society Bulletin; July 1964; www.suttercountymuseum.org)
- Katherine L. Heenan; The Sutter Buttes: An Insider's View; (Sutter County Historical Society Bulletin; July 1986)
- Anita Lang Laney; Some of the Early Settlers of the Sutter Buttes, 1850 - 1900; (Sutter County Historical Society Bulletin; July 1976)
- Anita Lang Laney & Laura Jane Coats; The Sutter Buttes A Peaceful Sanctuary; (Peace Valley Press; Sutter County; 2004)

— The Sutter County Museum



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The Children Have Returned to the Sutter Buttes!

BY KATHLEEN & GREG PAYNE



Photo by Kathleen Payne

During January 2022, we had five classes of third graders hike with us from the Kynoch School in Marysville. Due to COVID, these children have spent much of their education with distance learning from the middle of first grade — and most, if not all, of second grade. They returned to the classroom in third grade. According to their classroom teachers: “Many of these children live below the poverty level and do not have the same opportunities as other children of their age. This trip to the Sutter Buttes was a life experience they will never forget!”

So...instead of explaining about what they learned during a January field trip on a working cattle ranch in the Sutter Buttes, we will have them tell you themselves!

We were not called by our normal names, we had names of things we see or talk about on the hike. (*Nature trail name tags!*)

- The Maidu used elderberries to make medicine.
- We saw a deer antler on the ground while we were hiking.
- We talked about how we can look at animal bones to see if they were meat eaters or herbivores.
- Woodpeckers have super long tongues that help protect their head when they are knocking on the trees.
- The Maidu would pretend to be deer so they could sneak up closer to kill them.
- Deer don't have good vision.
- We got to jump over little creeks!
- I learned that raccoons are related to ringtails.
- Animals who have eyes in the front, like to hunt.
- After deer take a bite of grass, they check behind them to make sure they are safe.
- Native Americans would crack an acorn and grind it down into a powder for eating. We got to smash acorns too!

Words of Wisdom from Our Third-Grade Naturalists of Kynoch School!

Middle Mountain Hike Descriptions/Information

See Page 6 for COVID-19 Restrictions.

Detailed hike registration and payment information are emailed to hikers upon reservation. The cost is \$35 per hiker. Meet and greet time is 8:00 a.m. – unless otherwise stated in the hike description. Hikes are limited to 15-registered hikers. Important-Hike Notes: Carry food and water. Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes. Hiking/walking sticks are very helpful.

Summit Ascent/North Butte – Dean Place

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. **Cost = \$45. Hike-Difficulty Level = Five Boot. Saturday, February 26; | Sunday, March 6; | Sunday, March 20; | Sunday, April 10**

Ridin' Fence – Dean Place

Walk the fence line of the historic Sutter Buttes ranch, Dean Place. Fence-line terrain will be rugged just like the cowboys charged with mending it. Bring sturdy boots, a days-worth of water, and your sense of adventure – work gloves optional. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Five Boot. Saturday, March 12; 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Shaeffer East Ridge – Shaeffer Ranch

Hikers will explore the beautiful Shaeffer Ranch belonging to the same family since the 1860s. Weather permitting, this wondrous hike (on the northside of the Buttes) provides inland views of North Butte and Peace Valley; and, amazingly, Mount Lassen and Mount Shasta are often seen in the distant horizon. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Three Boot. Sunday, February 27**

Brockman Challenge – Brockman Ranch

This is a six-mile strenuous/steep ascent between the tallest of ridge tops. It is a narrow trail traversing a precipitous incline with a 1,000-foot elevation gain. Midway, you will be looking deeply into the beautiful hidden valleys below. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Five Boot. Saturday, March 5**

Brockman Canyon Trek – Brockman Ranch

Travel to the intriguing, fascinating center of the Sutter Buttes! Be prepared for steady climbing on uneven ground. Frequent stops will be provided for curiosity's sake alone! These special moments will allow for examinations of the landscape's intriguing natural elements and eye-catching scenic vistas. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Four Boot. Saturday, March 19; | Sunday, March 27**

Shaeffer Wildflowers – Shaeffer Ranch

On a springtime walk in the beautiful green hills of the Sutter Buttes, you will find a plethora of wildflowers 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 = Three Boot. Sunday, March 20; | Saturday, April 2**

Shaeffer West Ridge – Shaeffer Ranch

This challenging hike occurs on the northside of the Sutter Buttes. Hikers will explore the Shaeffer Family Ranch, an historical Sutter Buttes property that has belonged 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 Shasta are often seen in the distance. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Three Boot. Saturday, March 26; | Saturday, April 9**

Wild Nature – Dean Place

Learn about the exciting diversity of animals and plants in the Buttes, and the fascinating adaptations which have allowed them to survive. Your leader will be Gene Trapp, Professor Emeritus of Biological Science at CSU Sacramento. Bring your questions about mammals for interesting conversations about their behavior and ecology. Bring your camera and binoculars! **Hike-Difficulty Level = Three Boot. Saturday, April 2**

Geology – Dean Place

Discover the violent origins of the Sutter Buttes, a small-mountain range, with Volcanologist, Dr. Brian Hausback. Amazing clues will be revealed about the Buttes 1.5 million years of geological history! Did you know that the study of geology is the study of the Earth, and so is ultimately the study of rocks? Geologists define a rock as: a bound aggregate of minerals, mineraloids, or fragments of other rocks. Learn about the three major groups of rocks: Igneous; sedimentary; and metamorphic. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Three to Four Boot. Sunday, April 3**

Birds of the Buttes – Dean Place

Hopefully, our Middle Mountain birders will witness an array of birds contentedly living and thriving amongst the majestic splendor, scenery, and glory of the uniquely beautiful Sutter Buttes. Hikers will search for a myriad of birding habitats forever hiding and lurking in the brush, shrubs, and ancient oak trees. By the way, did you know that the Sutter Buttes are located in the famous Pacific Flyway?! Birding Notes: Remember to bring your binoculars and camera. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Two Boot. Saturday, April 16; 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Full Moon – Dean Place

While under the bewitching spell of the full moon's entrancing, always magnificent lunar glow, hikers will contemplate, observe, ponder, and reflect on nature's celestial, earthly mysteries, while strolling through the illuminated, shadowy oak groves perfectly set amidst the alluringly gentle hillsides of Dean Place. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Two Boot. Saturday, April 16; 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**



Sacred Manner – Dean Place

A lovely and 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. Padilla will share sacred stories about the indigenous people living in and around present-day Sutter County, the land of the Southern Maidu/Nisenan. Did you know that “Maidu” means “the people”? **Hike-Difficulty Level = One Boot. Saturday, April 23**

Photography – Dean Place

This popular event is designed for photographers of all levels! Joe Reusser and Laura Lush are the hike’s leading interpretive guides. There will be several backup guides available so that photographers may scout the beautiful terrain of the Sutter Buttes for photo opportunities galore! Remember to bring your camera! **Hike-Difficulty Level = Two to Three Boot. Saturday, April 23; 2:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

Dean Place Wildflowers – Dean Place

On a springtime hike in the beautiful green hills of the Sutter Buttes, you will find a lovely variety of wildflowers 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! Prepare for some moderate climbing and uneven ground. **Hike-Difficulty Level = Three Boot. Sunday, April 24**

Bats of the Buttes – Dean Place

This is a uniquely rare opportunity for a limited number of participants to witness mammal biologist, David Wyatt, conducting bat research in the Sutter Buttes! Special Notes: Bring a flashlight and a folding chair or cushiony seat to watch the show! **Hike-Difficulty Level = Two Boot. Saturday, April 30; 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

Sunset Serenade – Dean Place (SAVE THE DATE)

Hopefully, COVID-19 will not prevent Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes from hosting its annual fundraiser, Sunset Serenade! We will keep you informed... In the meantime, please “save the date!” **Hike-Difficulty Level = Two Boot. (SAVE THE DATE) Saturday, May 7; 2:00 p.m. & 5:00 pm. to 9:30 p.m.**

Spring 2022 Hike Schedule

DAY	DATE	HIKE NAME	WHERE	BOOTS
SAT.	FEB. 26	SUMMIT ASCENT*	DEAN PLACE	5
SUN.	FEB. 27	SHAEFFER EAST RIDGE	SHAEFFER RANCH	3
SAT.	MAR. 5	BROCKMAN CHALLENGE	BROCKMAN CYN	5
SUN.	MAR. 6	SUMMIT ASCENT*	DEAN PLACE	5
SAT.	MAR. 12	RIDIN’ FENCE	DEAN PLACE	5
SAT.	MAR. 19	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN CYN	4
SUN.	MAR. 20	SUMMIT ASCENT*	DEAN PLACE	5
SUN.	MAR. 20	SHAEFFER WILDFLOWERS	SCHAEFFER RANCH	3
SAT.	MAR. 26	SHAEFFER WEST RIDGE	SHAEFFER RANCH	3
SUN.	MAR. 27	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN CYN	4
SAT.	APR. 2	SHAEFFER WILDFLOWERS	SCHAEFFER RANCH	3
SAT.	APR. 2	WILD NATURE	DEAN PLACE	3
SUN.	APR. 3	GEOLOGY	DEAN PLACE	3-4
SAT.	APR. 9	SHAEFFER WEST RIDGE	SHAEFFER RANCH	3
SUN.	APR. 10	SUMMIT ASCENT*	DEAN PLACE	5
SAT.	APR. 16	BIRDS OF THE BUTTES	DEAN PLACE	2
SAT.	APR. 16	FULL MOON	DEAN PLACE	2
SAT.	APR. 23	SACRED MANNER	DEAN PLACE	1
SAT.	APR. 23	PHOTOGRAPHY	DEAN PLACE	2-3
SUN.	APR. 24	DEAN WILDFLOWERS	DEAN PLACE	3
SAT.	APR. 30	BATS OF THE BUTTES	DEAN PLACE	2
SAT.	MAY 7	SUNSET SERENADE	DEAN PLACE	2

* \$45 Hike. All other regular/open hikes are \$35.
The maximum number of hikers/per hike is 15 except for the Sunset Serenade

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).



MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES



2021 / 2022 COVID-19 Policy / Safety Guidelines

We have put procedures and protocols in place for the safety of the public, our volunteers, and our staff during the Coronavirus pandemic. We are only able to offer public hikes and activities if hikers fully comply with these protocols. Thank you for your cooperation.

BEFORE SIGNING UP, ASSESS IF THIS HIKE IS RIGHT FOR YOU:

- If you are at high risk for COVID-19 or with pre-existing health conditions, you should not attend.
- **You must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.**
- Group size is limited to a total of 15-paid hikers, and you must register in advance to participate.
- Guests are expected to follow safety procedures.

PRIOR TO ARRIVING:

- Review the information on your confirmation email advising you of what to bring and how to prepare.
- **If you have had any flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms, fever, or cough in the past 24 hours, or think you have been exposed to someone with the virus, please stay home and join us another time.**
- Before leaving your home, take your temperature (must be less than 100.4°), and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water.
- **Fill out the Liability Release Form on the next page and bring it with you.**

AT HIKE CHECK IN:

- When you check in, you must have this completed Liability Release Form with you to continue.
- All of our Guides and Guests should wear face coverings when within 6 feet of others. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth and give others space.
- While on the trail, maintain at least a 6-foot distance from anyone not in your immediate household.
- Bring your own face coverings, hand sanitizer, and sufficient water & food for the hike. Please carry them with you at all times and keep them in easy access. No sharing of personal items with people outside of your household.

If you are not comfortable or able to comply with the Safety Guidelines stated above, we respectfully ask that you do NOT sign up to hike with us this season. Thank you.



MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES



Liability Release Form

A California Non-Profit Corporation [501 c (3)]

I recognize that there are foreseeable and unforeseeable risks associated with any outdoor activity, including but not limited to travel, plant and animal hazards, accidents, illnesses, acts of nature, man, and God. I understand that there is to be no smoking or vaping at any time during this activity, that I am to stay with the organized group during our activity, and that I will remove nothing from the activity site except by permission of the guide.

In consideration of the right to participate in this activity, I, on behalf of myself, my family, estate, heirs and assigns, release and upon request will indemnify and defend, the Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes, its officers, employees, agents, volunteers, and guides and any landowner(s) on whose property the activity may take place from and against all claims, damages, and responsibilities, including attorney's fees, for losses or delays due to any reason whatsoever suffered by me or my property arising out of my participation in the activity and assume all risks and dangers in connection with the activity.

- I have not had any flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms, cough, or fever in the past 24 hours, or been exposed to anyone with COVID-19.
• I agree to wear a face covering when I cannot maintain a 6-foot distance from others.
• I have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19. _____ << (please initial here)

By my signature below I do affirm that I have read, fully understand, and fully concur with all of the above.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

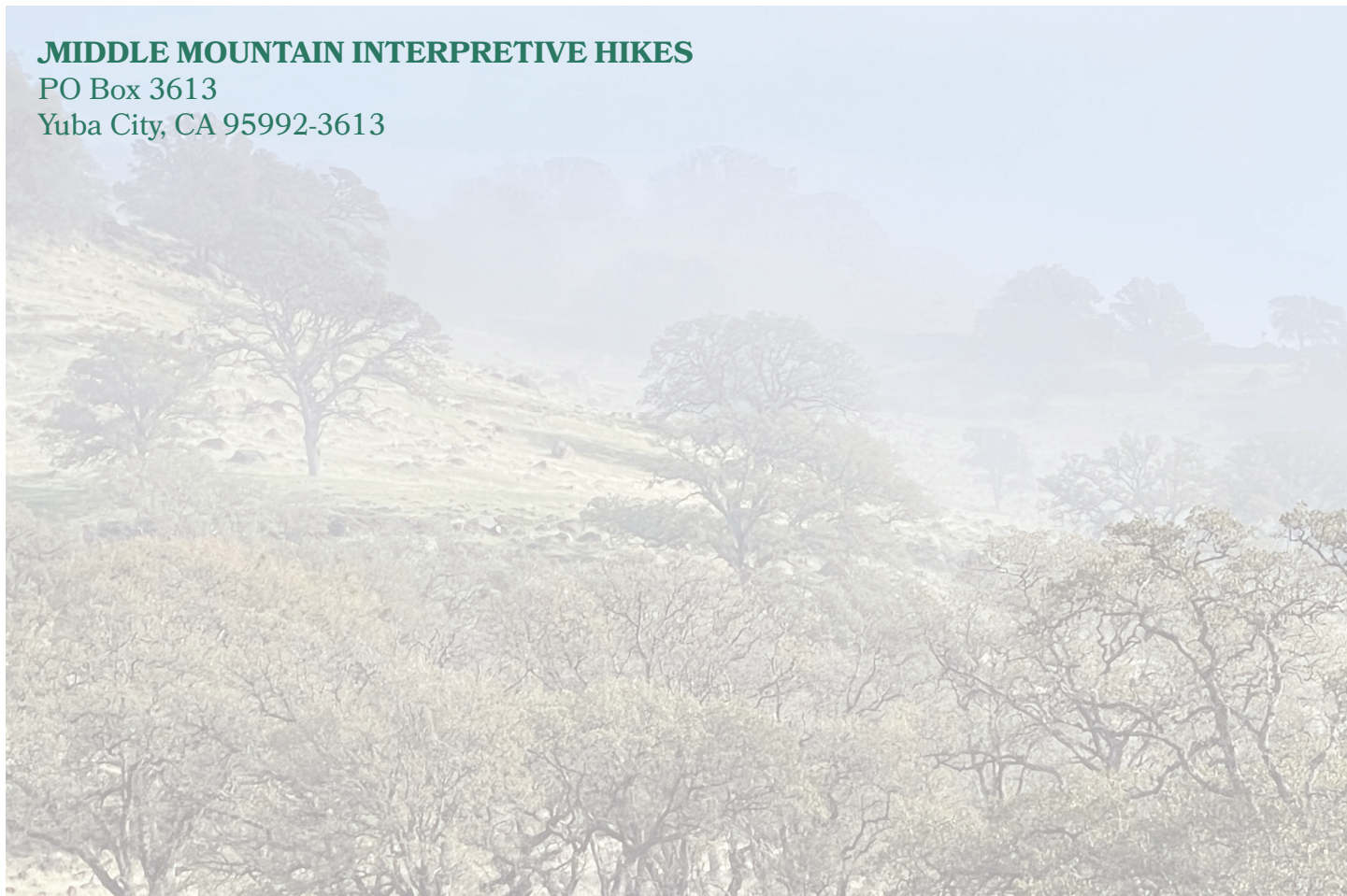
E-Mail Address: _____

Contact Phone #: (_____) _____

(If you come down with COVID-19 [in the next 14 days], please notify us for Contact Tracing.)

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!**

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WWW.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:*

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- By mail: PO Box 3613, Yuba City, CA 95992-3613
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For Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust information, contact SBRLT at:
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