

# MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES



Image Adopted from Thompson & West History of Sutter County 1879

2024-25 FALL/WINTER

## President's Message

BY GREG PAYNE AND DAN RUSSELL

It is now fall, the days are getting cooler, and the hiking season in the Sutter Buttes is almost here. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find our hiking schedule for this coming season. It is time to find a hike that you find interesting and sign up for it. This year you will find there are a few changes here at MMIH. First of all, when you contact us for a hike, you will be contacting our new Open Hikes Coordinator, Hope Spencer. Kelly Gash, our wonderful Hikes Coordinator for the past 5 years, has retired from MMIH. We will miss Kelly's enthusiastic personality and efficient way of handling hike sign-ups. Also new this year will be a new payment method. You can still pay for your hike with a personal check, but beginning this year we will be offering Venmo as a payment method. You will receive Venmo payment instructions when you receive your hike registration form. Another change this year is our cancellation policy. While we sincerely hope that everyone who signs up for one of our hikes is able to come join us on that day and have an unforgettable experience in the Buttes, we also understand that sometimes life can get in the way and interrupt even your best laid plans. And the potential for wrenches being thrown into your hiking dreams only increases the farther



Photo by Greg Payne

out on the calendar you're trying to schedule. With this understanding, we here at MMIH want to be as accommodating as we can in the event you need to cancel your hike reservation.

However, we must also balance this willingness to accommodate cancellations with the ever-increasing popularity of our hikes and public demand for joining them. Our hikes regularly fill up to their limit of hikers very quickly, sometimes within hours of opening them up for reservations, often resulting in lengthy wait lists. And while cancellations do open up spots for those on the wait list, we also need to be respectful of everyone's time constraints (including those of our Open Hikes Coordinator!) and be able to offer any newly opened spots with sufficient time for people to make decisions about joining us. With this understanding in mind, please read our cancellation schedule which follows.

- *Cancellations Up To Two Week (14 days) Prior to Hike Date: Refund of hike payment, less processing fee of \$5, or certificate (voucher) for a comparable-cost future hike to be applied with reservation within one year of issuance.*
- *Cancellations Between Less Than Two Weeks and 72 Hours Prior to Hike Date: Certificate for a comparable-cost future hike to be applied with reservation within one year of issuance.*
- *Cancellations Within 72 Hours of Hike Date: No refund or hike certificate issued.*

There are a couple of things that have not changed at Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes. One is our fee. We have not raised our cost to go on one of our guided interpretive hikes. It seems like prices are higher for almost everything around us, but we are keeping our cost for hikes between \$35 and \$45.

Also unchanged are the Sutter Buttes. They might look different as the seasons change from fall to winter to spring. The oaks will pass from dusty orange leaves and fallen acorns to dark silhouetted branches to fresh new green leaves. The ground will change from dry, brown grasses to running creeks and carpets of green to hillsides colored with wildflowers. The beauty and mysteries of the Buttes are still there. Find the season you like best and come hike with us.

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

#### Mailing Address:

PO Box 3613, Yuba City, CA 95992

#### Email:

info@middlesmountainhikes.org  
Telephone: 530-370-4777

#### Website:

<https://www.middlesmountainhikes.org>

## MMIH General Information

*Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes does not require 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, please do not attend.*

*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: [info@middlesmountainhikes.org](mailto:info@middlesmountainhikes.org); or text/phone 530-370-4777 during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 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.middlesmountainhikes.org>.

For the seasonal hike schedule, updates/announcements, please subscribe to Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes e-Newsletters at: <https://www.middlesmountainhikes.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



Education Program Guide: Denise Jones  
Photo by Kathleen Payne

Hiking with children in the Sutter Buttes is always an adventure. Our schools come from the city and some from the farm schools surrounding the Buttes. Many of our students come from inter city schools and eat their lunches in the cafeteria's, typically at assigned seats.

When students hike in the Buttes with us on a working cattle ranch, it means sitting on the ground to eat lunch. For most children, this is something they have never experienced before. Some are totally confused as to where to sit, and they wander around in circles trying to find the perfect spot. Others gather their friends and find a spot to eat together. One day we had a group of boys finally settle on a grassy

area only to erupt about 10 minutes later, dancing in circles swatting themselves! They sat on a bed of ants and ants in the pants is quite a surprising experience! Another time three little 3rd grade girls had spread out their jackets on the ground and gathered their food in a communal lunch. When I walked by, one sweet little girl looked up at me and explained, "We are having a Maidu picnic."

One March hike, the weatherman didn't quite get the weather report accurately enough and we ended up hiking students on a very overcast misty day. We dodged from tree cover to tree cover and finally sat down to eat lunch under the overhang of some

live oak trees. The poncho dressed teacher looked a little bit grumpy, so I thought I'd liven up the mood. I asked the students, "kids, have you ever hiked in the rain?" The immediate answer came back with a unanimous "NEVER!" Then I asked, "Do normal responsible adults let you cross raging creeks?" Again, they shouted out "NEVER!" "What about eating lunch on the ground in a rainstorm?" The enthusiastic "NEVER" brought a smile to the teachers face and she had to admit, this was a hike she would never forget! The students loved it and their fellow 3rd grade students were a little disappointed when they got a bluebird sunny hiking day two days later when it was their turn to hike!

# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENT NEWS!



# 2024 SWAN FESTIVAL

**ADMISSION TO HUB LOCATIONS IS FREE!  
GUIDED TOURS WILL REQUIRE A PER PERSON FEE AT REGISTRATION**

- BIRDING TOURS, WORKSHOPS, VENDORS, AND MORE!
- OVER 25 GUIDED BIRDING AND NATURE TOURS
- KID'S ZONE
- LIVE WILDLIFE PRESENTATIONS BY WEST COAST FALCONRY AND WILD THINGS!

@ Photo by Alyssa Lindman

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**Registration Opens October 8th**

## 08-10

NOVEMBER 2024

7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

## YUBA COLLEGE

2088 N BEALE RD  
BUILDING 300  
MARYSVILLE, CA 95901



FOR MORE INFORMATION

530-755-3568

INFO@SUTTERBUTTESLANDTRUST.ORG

WWW.CASWANFESTIVAL.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, 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 water (for a day's hike). Wear hiking boots or strong/ tough/ sturdy shoes with good tread. Note: Hiking/walking sticks are a great idea for all participants!*

## Haunted Buttes | Dean Place

Experience the true wonders of the historic Dean Place on a moonlit night. Not for the faint of heart or for those under 12. **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Saturday, October 19. Time: 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

## Shaeffer Ranch Hike | Shaeffer Ranch

Hikers will explore the historical Shaeffer Ranch 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. Dates: Sunday October 27; Sunday January 12; and Sunday February 9.**

## North Butte Summit | Dean Place/North Butte

The Summit Ascent on the Dean Place 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: Sunday, October 27; Sunday, November 10; Sunday, December 8; Sunday, December 15; Saturday January 11; and Saturday, February 1.**

## Geology | Dean Place

Learn about the exciting volcanic origins of the Sutter Buttes, a small-mountain range with Volcanologist, Dr. Brian Hausback. Hiking the varied terrain of the Dean Place, he teaches us about the Buttes' 1.6 million years of geological history. **Hike Difficulty Level: 4 Boot. Date: Saturday, November 16.**

## Moonlight Stroll | Dean Place

Experience the change from daylight to evening on the Dean Place. Watch the moon rise and hike by its light as you walk among the shadowy oaks and wander the rolling hillsides. 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 illuminated, shadowy oak groves and alluring hillsides. **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Saturday, November 16. Time: 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

## Vines and 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 \$10 to be paid separately on hike day to Cordi.) **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot (with gentle climbs and descents). Dates: Sunday, November 17, and Saturday, December 7.**

## Brockman Challenge | Brockman Ranch

Prepare for a six-mile strenuous and steep ascent between the tallest of ridge tops of the Brockman Ranch. The trail is narrow and traverses a precipitous incline with an elevation gain of 1,000 feet. At the hike's midway point, enjoy views deep into the core of the Buttes as well as from mountain range to mountain range across the valley. **Hike Difficulty Level: 5 Boot. Date: Saturday, November 23.**

## Sacred Manner | Dean Place

Walking in a sacred manner with Stan Padilla on the Dean Place, you will learn a respectful reverence for life and the special place that the Sutter Buttes hold for local Native Americans. This is a quiet and contemplative day and a unique perspective on the Middle Mountain. **Hike Difficulty Level: 2 Boot. Date: Sunday, November 24.**

## Dean Ridge | Dean Place

Hike the rocky ridges of the historic Dean Place, a working-cattle ranch, owned by the same family since the 1890s. This invigorating hike rewards you with unforgettable interior views of the Sutter Buttes as well as vistas across the valley below. **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 - 4 Boot. Date: Sunday, November 30.**

## Tres Picos | Dean Place/North Butte

Our Tres Picos adventure on the Dean Place 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 approximately 15 hikers. Cost: \$45. **Hike Difficulty Level: 6 Boot. Date: Saturday, December 1. Time: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

(cont. on next page)

### Birds in the Buttes | Dean Place

Come share the uncommon opportunity to bird in the Sutter Buttes. You will explore various habitats on the Dean Place while looking for both resident and migrant birds and also have the opportunity for photography or use of a scope (if you bring your equipment). Definitely bring your binoculars! Please note, this is a slow, mostly level hike, that does not cover the range of territory of other hikes nor the depth of interpretation. It truly is a bird watching day. Hike may be limited to 15 participants. Beginning birders welcome! **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 Boot. Date: Saturday, December 14. Time: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

### Brockman Canyon | Brockman Ranch

Hike into the central core of the Sutter Buttes via Brockman Canyon. Be prepared for a steady climb on uneven ground with stops to enjoy the view and learn about your surroundings. Lunch is typically on a ridgeline where Snow Mountain, Shasta, Lassen, Diablo and Sacramento are all visible on a clear day. The return hike is largely downhill, so please consider your knees! **Hike Difficulty Level: 3 - 4 Boot. Dates: Saturday, January 4, Sunday January 19, and Saturday, February 8.**

#### HIKE CANCELLATION POLICY

- **Cancellations Up To Two Week (14 days) Prior to Hike Date:** Refund of hike payment, less processing fee of \$5, or certificate (voucher) for a comparable-cost future hike to be applied with reservation within one year of issuance.
- **Cancellations Between Less Than Two Weeks and 72 Hours Prior to Hike Date:** Certificate for a comparable-cost future hike to be applied with reservation within one year of issuance.
- **Cancellations Within 72 Hours of Hike Date:** No refund or hike certificate issued.



## 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).

## 2024-25 WINTER SEASON HIKE SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	HIKE NAME	RANCH	BOOT
10/19/2024	SATURDAY	HAUNTED BUTTES	DEAN PLACE	2
10/27/2024	SUNDAY	SHAEFFER RANCH	SHAEFFER	3
10/27/2024	SUNDAY	NORTH BUTTE SUMMIT*	DEAN PLACE & NORTH BUTTE	5
11/10/2024	SUNDAY	NORTH BUTTE SUMMIT*	DEAN PLACE & NORTH BUTTE	5
11/16/2024	SATURDAY	GEOLOGY	DEAN PLACE	4
11/16/2024	SATURDAY	MOONLIGHT STROLL	DEAN PLACE	2
11/17/2024	SUNDAY	VINES AND VISTAS**	CORDI WINDERY & SHAEFFER	3
11/23/2024	SATURDAY	BROCKMAN CHALLENGE	BROCKMAN	5
11/24/2024	SUNDAY	SACRED MANNER	DEAN PLACE	2
11/30/2024	SATURDAY	DEAN RIDGE	DEAN PLACE	3 to 4
12/1/2024	SUNDAY	TRES PICOS*	DEAN PLACE	6
12/7/2024	SATURDAY	VINES AND VISTAS**	CORDI WINDERY & SHAEFFER	3
12/8/2024	SUNDAY	NORTH BUTTE SUMMIT*	DEAN PLACE & NORTH BUTTE	5
12/14/2024	SATURDAY	BIRDS IN THE BUTTES	DEAN PLACE	3
12/15/2024	SUNDAY	NORTH BUTTE SUMMIT*	DEAN PLACE & NORTH BUTTE	5
1/4/2025	SATURDAY	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN	3 to 4
1/11/2025	SATURDAY	NORTH BUTTE SUMMIT*	DEAN PLACE & NORTH BUTTE	5
1/12/2025	SUNDAY	SHAEFFER RANCH	SHAEFFER	3
1/19/2025	SUNDAY	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN	3 to 4
2/1/2025	SATURDAY	NORTH BUTTE SUMMIT*	DEAN PLACE & NORTH BUTTE	5
2/8/2025	SATURDAY	BROCKMAN CANYON	BROCKMAN	3 to 4
2/9/2025	SUNDAY	SHAEFFER RANCH	SHAEFFER	3

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

Note: The approximate number of hikers per hike is 20 unless otherwise stated.

## MIDDLE MOUNTAIN INTERPRETIVE HIKES

PO Box 3613  
Yuba City, CA 95992-3613

Non Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Permit No. 93  
Marysville, CA  
95901

Return Service Requested

**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
- Hope Spencer, Open Hikes Coordinator,  
[info@middlemountainhikes.org](mailto:info@middlemountainhikes.org) or 530-370-4777
- Laura Lush, Charter Hikes Coordinator,  
[lushinthebuttes@gmail.com](mailto:lushinthebuttes@gmail.com) or 530-301-7371
- 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: Maris Wagener 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>.