

THE MIDDLE MOUNTAIN FOUNDATION

The Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust



from Thompson & West History of Sutter County 1879

FALL 2012

It Seems We All Love The Sutter Buttes

By Mike Hubbartt

The approaching autumnal cooling and rains signal the start of another hike season for the Middle Mountain Foundation to provide public access into the Sutter Buttes' mysterious and magical landscape. This year it also signals an upcoming and important election, and an opportunity to call attention to those issues which will influence our votes.

We did just that at a public forum for the supervisor candidates just prior to the June primary election. Each candidate who was running for a slot on the fall ballot expressed a position to protect the Sutter Buttes!

The unity of their public declarations, it seems, should be reassuring to us all. Right?

Let's examine a little history.

Since the Middle Mountain Foundation was incorporated in 1989, Sutter County has gone through two General Plan updates that have articulated an unequivocal policy to "preserve the Sutter Buttes as an important agricultural, cultural, historical, and ecological resource."

The Sutter Buttes land owners have always wanted to be left alone to conduct their farming and ranching operations as they see fit, unencumbered by restrictive zoning and ordinances.

A voter initiative in 2010 labeled *Measure V* that could have opened up several thousand acres on the south side of the Buttes for supervisors to approve commercial development was resoundingly defeated by 69% of Sutter County voters.

It seems that all segments of our community love the Sutter Buttes and want to protect what we have now. So what's the problem?

The problem is that in spite of this consensus, the county's policy to protect the Buttes is subject to interpretation. Planners and supervisors approve subdivisions and variances that are consistent with zoned parcel minimums. Land use designations do not distinguish the Sutter Buttes' majestic and irreplaceable landscape from the rest of the county's farm lands.

In the last twenty-three years that we have been speaking out at County supervisors' meetings, public presentations, and sending letters to the newspaper, four significant property subdivisions have been approved in or around the Buttes. These were approved by politicians who publicly profess to protect the Buttes!

Clearly, we need to stay involved with this political process so that the county's vision and policy of protecting a natural landmark is not eroded away by the appeal of short term economic gains for a few who see the Sutter Buttes open space as an



Sutter Buttes Panorama

(Photo by K. Morrison)

opportunity for development.

Come walk with us in the Buttes this fall and enjoy a historic landscape, and be assured that we are working behind the scenes to preserve this experience and this landscape for you.

Your participation in our outings is a demonstration of your support, and we thank you. But your contribution of an MMF membership or a cash donation or a personal effort to assist our work projects are needed to keep the Sutter Buttes from being subdivided into numerous home sites.

Mission

The Middle Mountain Foundation works to protect the land and natural resources of the Sutter Buttes and the surrounding region for present and future generations.

Values

- ◆ Protect the natural, cultural, geological, historical, and scenic qualities of the Sutter Buttes.
- ◆ Identify prime agricultural lands and natural areas that preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the region surrounding the Sutter Buttes.
- ◆ Build partnerships with landowners, community leaders, and developers to balance conservation with economic growth, flood protection, and water quality to help plan better communities.
- ◆ Respect landowners' rights and provide information to those who want to conserve their land.
- ◆ Increase public awareness of the Middle Mountain Foundation's dedication to education, interpretation, and land conservation.
- ◆ Maintain an efficient, effective, and sustainable organization.

The Middle Mountain Foundation acknowledges the following contributors and individuals:

Eleanor Knox, Pete Sands, Mary Spilman Crane, Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County, Our Members, Our Volunteers, Our Advisors, and our Hikers!

In Honor of

Donations received in honor of:

Mike Hubbartt, A. W. Micheli, Margit & Pete Sands, The Middle Mountain Foundation, and the Sutter Buttes

In Memory of

Donations received in memory of:

William Baggett, Mark Cooper, Carroll E. Cox, Jr., Jerry Fuller, Robert Jenkins, Geoff Kauffman, Ray Keesling, Conway Lanford, Ivan Lemoine, Alma McFadden, Alan Meyer, Alphonse Micheli, Eason Nelson, Norbert Reherrmann, Robert L. Skaggs, Richard Storm, and Bill Thomas

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President's Message

By Kathy Larsen

At the beginning of this year, I indicated that my goals included strengthening the organization, creating opportunities for local residents to appreciate the beauty of the Sutter Buttes, and continuing to work with landowners to preserve the land for future generations.

We have had significant success in strengthening the organization these past months. A grant enabled us to hire Mike Darnell as our Executive Director. We also have changed the job description of our office staff person to "Foundation Assistant." In addition to general clerical duties necessary to keep the organization functioning smoothly, the person will be the focal point for our committees, work with our volunteers, facilitator for our speakers' bureau, and work with us on achieving accreditation.

We are joining the California Council of Land Trusts, so the next step is working our way through the standards required for accreditation. The Board is being apprised of the requirements of accreditation in strategy sessions in order to direct the focus of our activities toward completion of the process.

In the early spring, geologists from the United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.), familiar with the interpretative program of Middle Mountain, suggested that we submit an abstract to an international volcano conference in Spain, which had, as a focus, using protected volcanic areas to provide "opportunities to communicate the wonder of earth-forming processes, as well as the appreciation of scientific and conservation values." The intent is to promote the importance of opening up volcanic landscapes to the public, and to demonstrate to managers of these areas innovative and effective practices to use for public education. Our abstract outlined the many activities in our interpretative program that promote understanding, including our education program for local students. Not only was our abstract accepted for publication, but we were asked to present at the conference. Unable to send a speaker, we did submit a poster that discussed the methods we use to facilitate an interpretative program that educates and promotes good stewardship of the land.

Once again, our school program has been successful. We brought in over 1,200 local school children this winter and spring in standard-based hikes. Teachers report that the information imparted can easily be incorporated into their curriculum. As always, the silent walk, the wildlife, and the landscape itself create an impact on students that they carry home with them. Virtually all teachers indicate that they will be returning for hikes next year. Thus, we are always looking for guides. If you or anyone you know would be interested in working with the school program, please let us know. Contact Kathy Larsen, Director of the Education Program, through our Foundation office.

In an effort to reach out to the local population to encourage them to experience the Buttes, we successfully hosted our annual Sunset Serenade. Our interpretative program offered a wide variety of hikes and activities for all levels of interest and ability, and a picnic with the Sutter County Historical Society brought in people who might not necessarily have come into the Buttes on a hike. Other events are in the planning stage and will be announced as we complete preparations.

Our speakers' bureau offers a variety of talks about the Buttes. Presentations to local groups have been well received. If your organization would like one of our speakers to talk to your group, contact the Foundation office.

Our land trust activities continue to be active. We are negotiating with a Sutter Buttes landowner on an oak woodland land protection agreement in the interior of the Buttes. We are also working on a significant agricultural land protection agreement in Sutter County.

These have been a busy few months for Middle Mountain Foundation. Changes in our organization, increased funding, and success with our land trust activities promises increased viability. We welcome your help and support as we continue with our efforts to preserve the Sutter Buttes landscape.

Conservation Easements

For many landowners, property is more than real estate. It is a legacy, a part of the family heritage. It can help to protect agricultural land, open spaces, and animal habitats. A conservation easement is a legal agreement a landowner makes with a nonprofit land trust or government agency that permanently restricts the type and amount of future development while continuing to use the land for farming or ranching. The areas included/excluded are defined by the landowner.

- ⇒ The landowner continues to own the property.
- ⇒ The easement is a flexible document that can be tailored to the specific property and needs of the landowner.
- ⇒ The nonprofit land trust or government agency is responsible for insuring that continuing land uses are consistent with the easement terms.
- ⇒ The easement “runs with the land” and remains in place even after the land is sold or inherited.

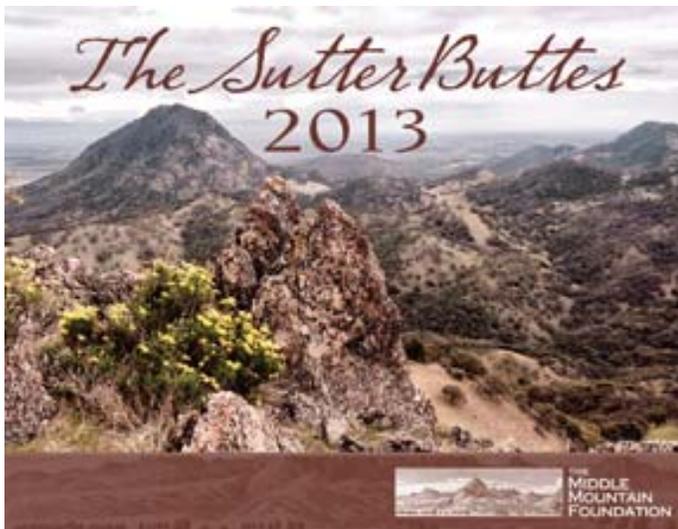
A conservation easement can help a landowner pass land intact to the next generation; reduce estate taxes by excluding the easement value from the taxable value of the estate; reduce property taxes by reducing the value of the property; and provide an infusion of cash for farming or ranching operations.

For more information, leave a message for Mike Darnell, Executive Director, at 530-755-3568.



North Butte

(Photo by K. Morrison)



SUTTER BUTTES 2013 CALENDARS

These beautiful full-color calendars are available at the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County, PIP Printing, Sunsweet Gift Shop, Corner Bike Shop, and Walgreens in Yuba City; The Brick in Marysville; and various other retail stores around the area. And they are available on our website (www.middlemountain.org). Check the website for locations in Chico, Fair Oaks, Oroville, and Sacramento. More locations will be added throughout the fall. Don't miss out on a year of enjoying these images, as well as having a keepsake for future years.

MMF Announces Partnership with 1% for the Planet

Middle Mountain Foundation is a new nonprofit partner of 1% for the Planet, an alliance of over 1,380 member companies in 43 countries that give one percent of revenues to environmental causes.

Middle Mountain Foundation is now eligible to receive donations from 1% member companies, placing them among a diverse, global network of environmental organizations. 1% member businesses fuel this non-profit network through their annual contributions, which totaled over \$22 million in 2010. Partnership with 1% greatly expands the potential pool of funding to which Middle Mountain Foundation can look to for support.

Newly approved Middle Mountain Foundation contributes to a healthier planet by working to protect the land and natural resources of the Sutter Buttes and surrounding region for present and future generations.

Over 2,300 non-profits worldwide are included in the 1% network, and over \$70 million has been funneled to its nonprofit partners to date. “The intent of 1% for the Planet is to help fund these diverse environmental organizations so that collectively they can be a more powerful force in solving the world’s problems,” Yvon Chouinard, founder of 1% for the Planet.

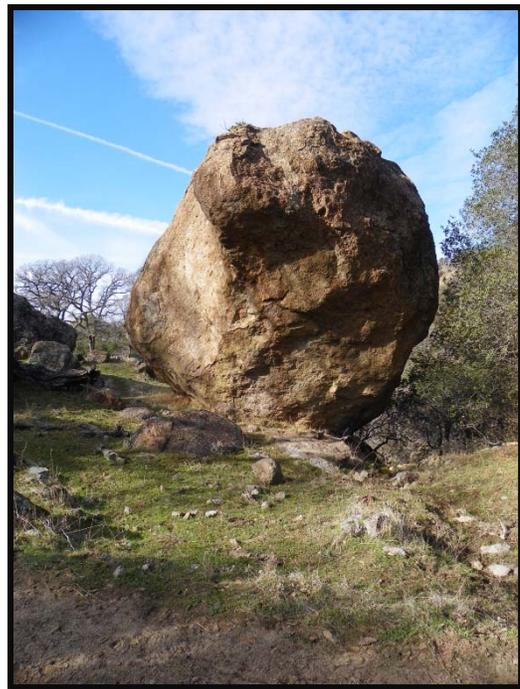
“The Middle Mountain Foundation is the only regional land trust working to protect the Sutter Buttes, prime farmland, and other natural resources in the tri-county area. Member companies who support the Foundation will benefit from helping to protect irreplaceable landscapes and the most productive farmland in the world,” Michael Darnell, Executive Director, Middle Mountain Foundation.

Business Sponsors/Supporters

The Middle Mountain Foundation would like to thank and acknowledge the generous support of the following sponsors. Their donations—financial, time, and space—help to make our work possible.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| American Cancer Society | Lyon Books |
| Appeal-Democrat | Morehead Land LLC |
| Avid Reader, Davis & Sacramento | Mountain Sports |
| Bidwell Bar Association | New Earth Market |
| Bird in Hand | Pacific Western Traders |
| The Brick Coffee House | PIP Printing & Marketing Services |
| Comcast Cable, Yuba City | The Sacramento Bee |
| Community Memorial Museum | Sierra Gold Nurseries |
| Corner Bike Shop | Sperbeck’s Nursery |
| Davison Drugs | Stephen’s Farmhouse |
| EconoLodge, Yuba City | Sunny 101.5 |
| Family T-Shirt Factory | Sunsweet Gift Outlet |
| Feather Falls Casino | Sutter Buttes Dusters |
| Gold Country Bank | Sutter Orchard Supply |
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| Harkey House Bed & Breakfast | TOR Broadcasting |
| Harshbarger ACE Hardware | Walgreens—Yuba City |
| KKCY Country 103.1 | Wild Birds and Gardens |
| Klotz Mobile Detail | Wild Birds Unlimited, Sacramento |
| KUBA Radio 1600 | Yuba Sutter Disposal, Inc. |
| Lake Oroville Visitor’s Center | . |
| Live Oak True Value Hardware | |

About 1% for the Planet: Started in 2002 by Yvon Chouinard, founder and owner of Patagonia, and Craig Mathews, owner of Blue Ribbon Flies, 1% for the Planet is a growing global movement of over 1,350 member companies in 43 countries that donate one percent of their sales to environmental organizations worldwide. Each day, more than one new business joins the 1% for the Planet movement. As a network, the 1% community has become a frontrunner in funding the work of environmental groups around the world. To learn more about 1% go to: www.onepercentfortheplanet.org.



Huge Rock in Bragg Canyon
(Photo by K. Morrison)

Middle Mountain Interpretive Program

The MMF Interpretive Program events provide access to the privately owned Sutter Buttes' interior. Guides share its unique origin and history and examine with you a natural ecology that has become increasingly rare in our time. The different events and diverse guides each offer a singular experience in the Buttes.

A typical day in the Buttes begins by 8:00 am and ends around 3:30 pm (*unless otherwise noted*). Events are scheduled and will proceed in all but the most severe weather conditions. Participants of **all events** should be prepared to expect uneven footing, stepping over rocks and boulders, crossing streams, and hill climbing.

Some events are acceptable for smaller **children**, but many are not. All of our outings are educational experiences. We find that no outings or events are appropriate for toddlers. We suggest that hikes rated 3 or 4 **MAY** be suitable for children 12 or older, but it depends on the child and the hike. Please **inform the hike coordinator** when making your reservations if you are considering bringing children to an event or hike.

Open Events: Reserve a date for the open events (pages 6 & 7) at mmfhikes@yahoo.com or call Karen at 530-671-6116. Cost for open events is \$35 per person *unless otherwise stated*. Prepayment is expected. The fee is used to pay the guides, reimburse the landowners, and for liability insurance. Any remainder is used for our conservation and education work.

Charter Events: Organizations or groups of ten or more may schedule a charter outing by contacting

Margit at sandsmp@comcast.net or 530-846-5142. The cost for charter hikes is \$300 minimum for the first ten people, and \$30 for each additional person.

Note: Guides do not carry change. If you have made arrangements to pay the day of the outing, do so with a check or money order made out to the Middle Mountain Foundation (or MMF).

General Event and Hike Ratings

Event Ratings are a guideline to help you to choose an outing that matches your fitness and ability.

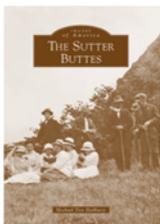
- 1 = Easy:** One to three miles and less than 300 feet elevation gain/loss.
- 2 = Moderate:** Two to five miles and generally less than 600 feet elevation gain/loss.
- 3 = Challenging:** Four to six miles with the possibility of multiple elevation gains/losses of 600-900 feet.
- 4 = Difficult:** Four to seven miles and/or elevation gains/losses, likely in excess of 1000 feet.
- 5 = Strenuous:** Six to eight miles with multiple and significant elevation gains/losses.

MMF Web Store

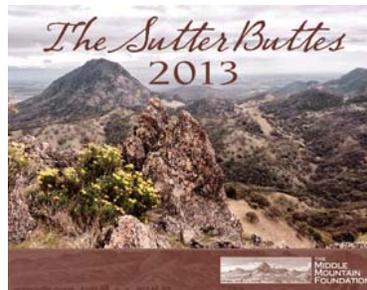
The Middle Mountain Foundation Web Store is located at <http://www.middlemountain.org/body/merchandise/index.html>. The purchase of these items is another way to support our efforts in the Sutter Buttes.

In addition to the items below, we will also have some shirts, hats, and maps at local festivals and fairs.

“Inland Island: The Sutter Buttes”
by Walt Anderson



“The Sutter Buttes,”
by Michael Hubbart



Sutter Buttes
2012 Calendar

Previous year's Calendars are also available on the website for collectors (2007-2011).

And now we have an oversized (9" x 4") Sutter Buttes Postcard for sale on our website:



The Sutter Buttes
The World's Smallest Mountain Range

Photographers & Artists' Outing: This event is designed for artists and photographers of all levels. We will caravan/carpool into the Shaeffer Ranch in the interior of the Buttes. There will be several guides so that you may choose different locations and levels of hiking for your professional quality photos. Bring food and water. Meet by 7:00 am. Rain will cancel; occasional showers won't.

1
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2

Saturday, November 3

Wild Nature in the Buttes: Learn about the exciting diversity of animals and plants in the Buttes, and the fascinating adaptations that allow them to survive here. Your leader will be Gene Trapp, Professor Emeritus of Bio. Sci. at CSU Sacramento. Bring food and water and wear sturdy boots with ankle support. Walking sticks are very helpful.

3

Saturday, November 10

Hike Events: These outings will each cover a broad outline of information about the Sutter Buttes in general and a property in particular. Detailed "meet and greet" information will be sent upon registration.

Buttes Transect Hike—Higher: Traverse the craggy central volcanic core of the Sutter Buttes. This is a very strenuous, "aggressive," and physically demanding hike that requires strength, stamina, and good, solid boots. Our hiking route climbs steeply to a natural ridge that will provide expansive panoramas of the Buttes and beyond. Total will be 7-8 miles with about 1900 feet of elevation gain and 1200 feet of elevation loss. Only register if you are in top physical shape. Cost is \$60—we are accessing two properties. Bring food and water. Meet at 7:30 am. Limit is 15.

5

Sunday, December 2 Saturday, February 2



Hikers on the High Transect, February, 2011
(Photo by Brian Hausback)

Buttes Transect Hike—Lower: Traverse the craggy central volcanic core of the Sutter Buttes—mostly on old wagon/maintenance roads. This is not as strenuous and physically demanding as is the higher transect hike, but will involve significant climbing and will be a long day. You will need good, solid boots; a walking stick will be helpful. Total will be 6-7 miles. Only register if you are in very good physical shape. Cost is \$60—we are accessing two properties. Bring food and water. Meet at 7:30 am.

3

Sunday, December 2 Saturday, February 2

Gentle Stroll: This is a leisurely stroll especially suited for casual walkers and nature lovers. Prepare for some moderate climbing and uneven ground. Bring food and water.

1

Monday, November 12

Ridge Ascent—Bragg Canyon: This hike will take you through the old central lakebed of the Sutter Buttes Volcano, with an ascent of the walls of the upper canyon; the route will vary. Only register if you are in top physical shape. Cost is \$45. Bring food and water.

4

Saturday, November 24 Saturday, January 5
Saturday, January 26

Ridge Hike—West Shaeffer Ranch: The Shaeffer Family will host hikers on their ranch on the north side of the Buttes. Hikers explore this ranch that has been in the same family since 1860, with views of North Butte, Peace Valley, and the old Titan Missile site. Bring food and water.

3

Saturday, November 17 Saturday, December 8
Sunday, January 13

Ridge Trek—Bragg Canyon: Steady climbing on uneven ground and frequent stops to examine the natural elements provides an excellent view of the Sutter Buttes. Cost is \$45. Bring food and water.

3

Saturday, November 17 Saturday, December 15

Ridge Trek—Dean Ranch: Steady climbing on uneven ground and frequent stops to examine the natural elements provides an excellent view of the Sutter Buttes. Bring food and water.

3

Sunday, October 28 Sunday, January 20

Summit Ascent: One of our most challenging treks, this route is a steep, 1,000-foot push straight up North Butte; off trail with no easy switchbacks. Only register for this hike if you are in very good physical shape and don't suffer from vertigo. Bring food and water. Limit is 15.

4

Saturday, November 10 Sunday, November 18



Great Artists and good sports on this stormy day!
(Photo by K. Morrison)

THE MIDDLE MOUNTAIN FOUNDATION

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Editor—Karen Morrison
Printing—PIP Printing

In this issue: We All Love the Buttes; President's Message; Conservation Easements; 2013 Sutter Buttes Calendar; Partnership with 1% for the Planet; Business Sponsors/Supporters; Middle Mountain Interpretive Program; MMF Web Store; Interpretive Program Schedule; Open Event Information

Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County Events

1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City 95993
530-822-7141

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| September 28 | Chinese American Exhibit Opening, 6:00–8:00 p.m. |
| October 16 | Volunteer Appreciation at 10:00 a.m. |
| October 30 | Ornament Workshop, 10:00 a.m. |
| November 15 | Ornament Workshop, 10:00 a.m. |
| November 24 | Last day to see Then & Now exhibit |
| November 29 | Decoration Day, 9:00 a.m. |
| November 30 | Hors d'oeuvres Workshop, 1:00 p.m. |
| December 1 | Trees & Traditions Gala, 5:00–8:00 p.m. |
| December 16 | Children's Program & Open House, 1:00–3:00 p.m. |

Hiking sticks, and the Sutter Buttes Calendar, Books, and Postcard are available for sale at the Museum!

Contact Us

The Middle Mountain Foundation is a group of dedicated individuals who work on a part-time basis, most of us volunteering our time. You can reach us:

- On our website: www.middlemountain.org
- By mail: PO Box 3359, Yuba City, CA 95992
- Alison Cannada, Foundation Assistant, 530-755-3568 or middlemountain@yahoo.com
- Mike Darnell, Executive Director, 530-755-3568 or mike@middlemountain.org
- Karen Morrison, Open Hikes Coordinator, mmfhikes@yahoo.com or 530-671-6116
- Margit Sands, Charter Hikes Coordinator, sandsmp@comcast.net or 530-846-5142

Telephone calls and email messages will be returned as soon as possible and our mail on a weekly basis. Please leave detailed messages or requests for information. We appreciate your patience and understanding and, especially, your interest in the Sutter Buttes and surrounding regions.

The Middle Mountain Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit organization; Federal Tax ID #68-0204641.