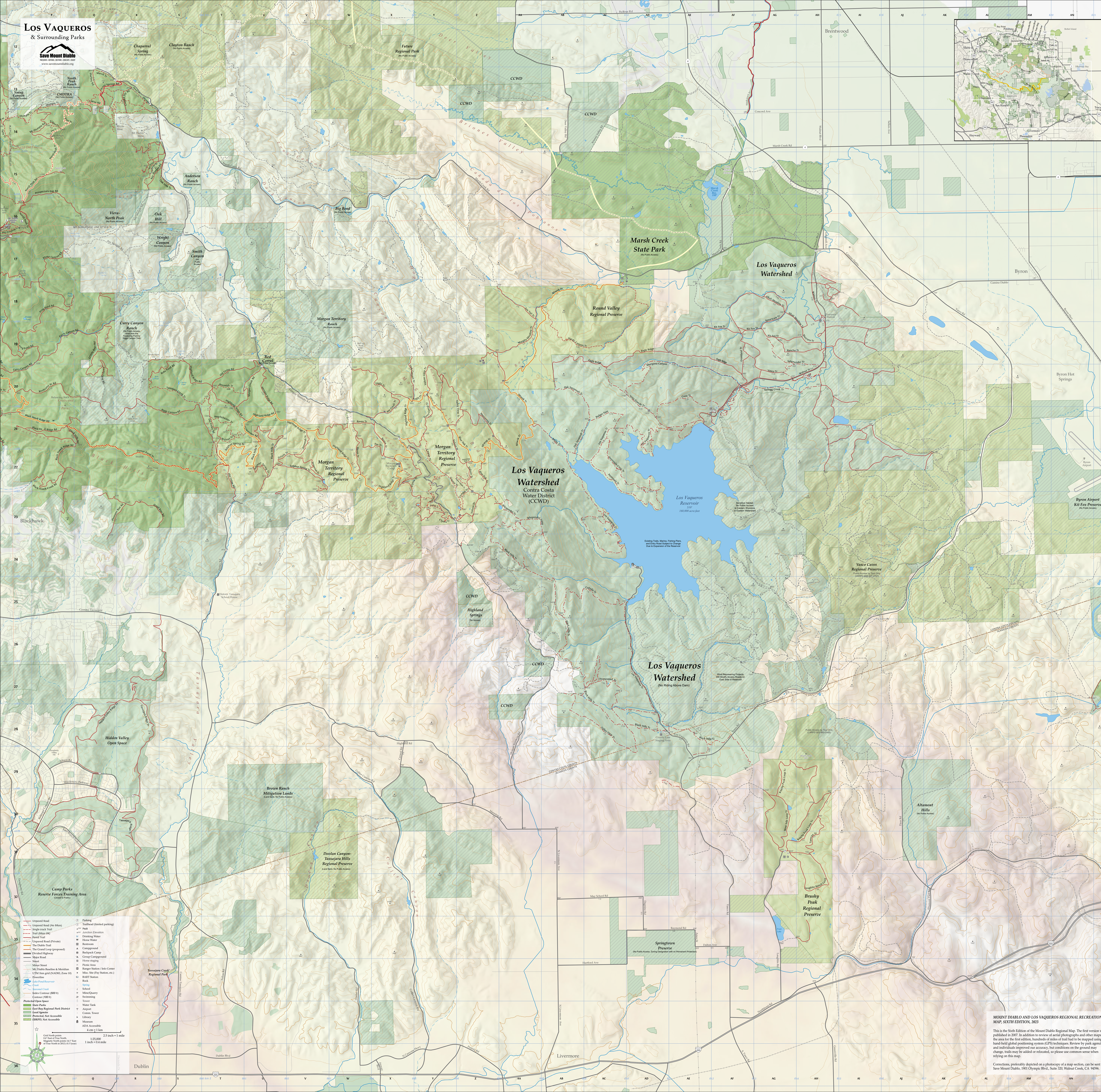

MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK AND OTHER PRESERVES

Established in 1921, Mount Diablo State Park is one of California's oldest state parks. The mountain's summit is also a State Historic Site and a registered National Landmark. While the earliest visitors had to make a long, arduous journey to the park by stagecoach, these days more than 350,000 people visit Mount Diablo every year and many more use the neighboring parks and preserves.

Today, Mount Diablo State Park and over 50 other preserves make up a regional open space system of nearly 160 square miles that are traversed by about 700 miles of public trails – primarily held and managed by public agencies. The East Bay Regional Park District, which owns and manages many of the nearby parks, expanded into Contra Costa County in 1963. Another large public landowner, the Contra Costa Water District, opened the Los Vaqueros Watershed in the early 1990s. Most recently, the East Contra Costa Habitat Conservancy funded the addition of significant protected properties to the system. These agencies, together with Save Mount Diablo and other friends of the mountain, continue to expand and protect natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

MOUNT DIABLO – HISTORY, GEOLOGY, AND NATURAL DIVERSITY

The "Devil" Mountain

The reference to "diablo" or devil can be traced back to 1805, when Spanish military troops pursued escaping Native American captives north past the mountain. At a willow thicket near present-day Buchanan Field in Concord, the soldiers caught up with a group of Chupcan people and surrounded them. During that night, the people escaped unseen and unheard. Angry and confused, the Spanish believed their captives could only have escaped with the help of the devil and called the site "Monte del Diablo" or "Thicket of the Devil." Later, English-speaking newcomers mistakenly assumed the word "monte" meant "mountain" and applied the title to the prominent nearby peak. A linguistic accident thus gave California its "Devil Mountain."

What Makes a Mountain

On a clear day, visibility from Mount Diablo's summit extends nearly 200 miles. In fact, Mount Diablo has one of the largest viewsheds in the western United States. Situated on the boundary between the Bay Area to the west and the Central Valley to the east and rising to 3,849 feet, the mountain's north peak offers outstanding views in all directions.

Mount Diablo was largely formed under the sea, but as a result of plate tectonics and movement along nearby faults, it was pushed up from the ocean floor. It continues to rise even now; geologists estimate its growth rate at about two millimeters a year. At the same time, erosion from wind and water continues to expose ancient rock, shaping the mountain we see today.

Natural Resources

Because Mount Diablo has one of the most varied climates and collections of habitats in California, it is home to over 280 species of animals and 650 species of flowering plants, some of which are rare or endangered. Mount Diablo State Park alone hosts 10% of California's native plant diversity. The location and geography of Mount Diablo account for much of this diversity. The rich variety of terrain and soils, together with climatic influences from both the coast and Central Valley, create optimum conditions for nature to flourish.

THE DIABLO TRAIL

Helping to popularize the Diablo Trail was the one of the reasons for the creation of this regional recreation map. The Diablo Trail was originally conceived in 1988, as acquisitions by the State of California, the East Bay Regional Park District and Save Mount Diablo began to connect Mount Diablo State Park with Morgan Territory Regional Preserve across Riggs Canyon.

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In 1993, Save Mount Diablo proposed the 31-mile multi-use Diablo Trail to showcase the regional cooperation that has preserved lands across Mount Diablo from Walnut Creek to Brentwood and Livermore. The Diablo Trail stretches through six different open spaces: Shell Ridge Open Space, Diablo Foothills Regional Park, Mount Diablo State Park, Morgan Territory Regional Preserve, the Los Vaqueros watershed, and Round Valley Regional Preserve. The Diablo Trail is an arc along the southern half of a circle of open space including more than 120,000 acres of protected open space.

Using the Diablo Trail

The Diablo Trail is an overlay trail, piecing together many shorter length trails. It includes several single-track and narrow sections, but the entire length is multi-use and open to hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. Although the trail has been designated, for much of its length it is not referenced on trail signs, thus the need for this map.

Day Hikes on the Diablo Trail

Sections of the Diablo Trail can be accessed for day hikes from a variety of staging areas along its route. The simplest place to begin is at the south end of Marshall Drive in Walnut Creek at the entrance to Shell Ridge Recreation Area. The Trail ends at the Round Valley Regional Preserve Staging Area on Marsh Creek Road near Brentwood. However, overnight parking is not currently allowed at either location, so you will need to be dropped off and picked up at each end.

Note that if you access the trail via Mt. Diablo State Park, you will have to pay an entrance fee.

Backpacking the Diablo Trail

At present, given the locations of campgrounds, the Diablo Trail can be backpacked in three to four days or less. It is a rugged trail in many places and ideal for mountain biking. Information on conditions and camping in Mount Diablo State Park is available at (925)837-2525. Camping reservations can be made by contacting Reserve California at (800) 444-7275 or via www.ReserveCalifornia.com

Reservations for the Morgan Territory Regional Preserve Backpack Camp can be made by calling 1-888-EBParks (1-888-327-2757, option 2). Check availability for Morgan Territory or Round Valley Regional Preserves before you call at ReserveAmerica.com. Please note that there is no authorized overnight parking available in Morgan Territory or Round Valley Regional Preserves.

Diablo Grand Loop Trail

The past decade has been important for land conservation in the Mount Diablo area. The final gaps in a broad, sweeping loop of protected open space have been protected, stretching from Round Valley to Black Diamond Mines and back to Mt. Diablo State Park. It is our hope that one day a 60 -70 mile Grand Diablo Loop Trail will be completed and will circle north from the Diablo Trail back to the mountain through Marsh Creek State Park and Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. Most of the route for this trail has already been mapped. Although the trail corridor is complete, not all lands are yet open to the public. Another milestone was the acquisition of the first protected corridor underneath Interstate 580 near Altamont Pass. Eventually, we hope the Diablo Trail will pass through these or similar tunnels on its way south through Altamont Pass and into the rest of the Diablo Range.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Although every effort has been made to accurately represent the trails and features on this map, Save Mount Diablo is not responsible for the condition of the trails or features. Every visitor or recreational user should assess their level of fitness and use common sense at all times.

Enjoy your visit but remember that natural hazards exist throughout this trail system. They include steep and uneven terrain, sudden and dramatic changes in climate or weather, ticks, poison oak, high fire danger during the dry season, cattle, rattlesnakes and other unpredictable wildlife. Watch children at all times. Never use the trails alone. Always carry food, water and warm clothing.

Although individual parks and open space districts each have their own rules (which you should check beforehand), the following general rules and regulations apply:

Trails and open spaces are generally open daily during daylight hours, but may be closed due to high fire risk during the dry season, during severe winter weather or for other reasons.

Camping, overnight usage and open fires are allowed only in designated areas.

Bicycles and horses are allowed only on designated trails; bicycles are generally limited to fire roads or road-width trails. Cyclists and equestrians are not allowed above Los Vaqueros Dam in the CCWD watershed.

Dogs are to be leashed at all times and may be prohibited in certain areas to protect wildlife habitat. Dogs are prohibited on trails at Mount Diablo State Park, and are not allowed at Round Valley and Vasco Caves Regional Preserves or in the Los Vaqueros watershed.

Swimming or wading is permitted only in designated areas.

Fresh water is available at limited locations along the trail system, and mapped water sources may not be available. Trail users should plan accordingly.

Wildlife should be enjoyed from a distance and should not be fed.

It is against the law to remove or disturb plants, animals, and geological, archaeological and historical objects.

Hunting, firearms, weapons, fireworks and alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited.

Please respect private property. Unless designated as a public trail, trespassing on private property is prohibited.

Sponsored by:

Concord CALIFORNIA

Save Mount Diablo

PRESERVE • DEFEND • RESTORE • EDUCATE • ENJOY

MOUNT DIABLO AND LOS VAQUEROS REGIONAL RECREATION MAP, SIXTH EDITION, 2023

This is the Sixth Edition of the Mount Diablo Regional Map. The first version was published in 2007. In addition to review of aerial photographs and other maps of the area for the first edition, hundreds of miles of trail had to be mapped using hand-held global positioning system (GPS) techniques. Review by park agencies and individuals improved our accuracy, but conditions on the ground may change, trails may be added or relocated, so please use common sense when relying on this map.

Corrections, preferably depicted on a photocopy of a map section, can be sent to: Save Mount Diablo, 1901 Olympic Blvd., Suite 320, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Special thanks to all of those involved in this map edition, including: East Bay Regional Park District, California State Parks, East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, Mount Diablo Interpretive Association, Contra Costa Water District, Cities of Concord, Livermore and Walnut Creek, Contra Costa County GIS staff, Livermore Area Recreation & Park Department, Malcolm Sproul, contributors to the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Editions, and the staff and volunteers of *Save Mount Diablo*.

Cover photo by Al Johnson.
Map created by GreenInfo Network *www.greeninfo.org*

For emergencies call 911. You can contact specific dispatchers directly by dialing:
Contra Costa County Fire [Medical and Fire] - (925) 933-1313
San Ramon Valley Fire [Medical and Fire] - (925) 838-6691
East Bay Regional Park District - (510) 881-1121