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Audio Guides to the Outdoors

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Title: New Diablo Field Guides Put a Naturalist in Your Pocket

Art: High resolution photos available for download at this link

<https://www.yousendit.com/download/VnBwSXQ5RkVrWS92Wmc9PQ>

until 4/27/11. After, please contact Beryl Anderson at banderson@savemountdiablo.org.

Caption: Hikers looking towards the Summit Loop in Mount Diablo's Back Canyon

Credit: Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com

April is Earth-Day month, which neatly coincides with prime wildflower season on Mount Diablo. Amid the stolid oaks and startlingly green grass, waterfalls froth, buttercups gleam, and globe lilies' first, spearlike leaves have pierced through the duff. The honeyed scent of ceanothus wafts over brushy hillsides. There's no better time to get outside and enjoy your own backyard.

Before you go, though, you might want to check out some new tools for outdoor exploration pioneered by the nonprofit organizations Save Mount Diablo, Mount Diablo Interpretive Association, and California State Parks Foundation. Over the past three years, these nonprofits have created *Audible Mount Diablo*, a series of electronic field guides you can download to an iPhone, iPod, or other mp3 player.

Modeled after the best museum audio guides, *Audible Mount Diablo* combines lively interviews and music with the rush of wind and the chirps, howls, and growls of wildlife. Some segments are meant for the car ride to the trailhead; others for stops along the trail. Experts heighten visitors' appreciation of the sights and sounds, tell tales of the mountain's past, and suggest what to look for around the next bend. In the iPod and iPhone versions of the tour, photographs pop up to help identify plants and animals.

Human voices on the tour include such well-known local naturalists and raconteurs as Seth Adams, Gary Bogue, Ken Lavin, Mike Moran, and Beverly Ortiz—and ranger Carl Nielson. For a historical perspective, actor Carl Magruder reads short excerpts from *Up and Down California* by 19th century botanist William Brewer. Former *Sierra* editor Joan Hamilton hosts.

The tours include

—“Introducing, Mount Diablo.” Sixty minutes of short takes on the mountain’s natural heritage and human history, including such topics as tarantulas, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, the Whitney Geological Survey, coal mining, early tourism, and native peoples.

—“Grand Loop Tour.” Twelve stops on a strenuous 6.8-mile-long circumambulation near the top. Topics include views, history, birds, flowers, and conservation. Features Seth Adams of Save Mount Diablo.

—“Mary Bowerman Tour.” Nine stops on a gentle and spectacular 1-mile-long hike that focuses on geology and history. Features former Mount Diablo Interpretive Association president Ken Lavin.

By the end of 2011 Save Mount Diablo and the California State Parks Foundation plan to offer a fourth option, “Curry Point: Gateway to Diablo’s Southside.” Featuring Save Mount Diablo’s Seth Adams and Malcolm Sproul, this tour will explore the ecological riches of the mountain’s wild southside ridges and canyons.

“These tours are great aids to exploring Mount Diablo,” says Save Mount Diablo’s Julie Seelen. “Hikers can take them on the trail, but anyone taking a Sunday drive to the summit can listen to ‘Introducing Mount Diablo’ and learn more about the flora and fauna of the mountain while enjoying the incredible views.”

The tours are all free at www.savemountdiablo.org (click on “Activities,” then “Hikes and Trails”) or www.mdia.org (click on “Audible Mount Diablo”). From these websites, you can sample the tours and learn how to download them to your computer or mp3 device. You can also download a GPS-enabled version of the Grand Loop tour at [EveryTrail](#).

Says host [Joan Hamilton](#), “The mission is simple: to help people see and hear (and care) more when they take a walk in nature. *Audible Mount Diablo* will delight those who already know and love the mountain while using the latest technology to help reach a new generation of nature lovers and conservationists.”

Save Mount Diablo Preserves natural lands through acquisition & cooperative efforts; Defends Mount Diablo and its foothills from development threats through land use planning & public education; Restores habitat, wildlife and creeks & build trails; so we can Enjoy Diablo's parks and its wildlife. When we were founded in 1971 less than 7,000 acres around Mount Diablo’s summit had been preserved. Since then by working with our partners natural open space around the mountain has increased to 100,000 acres. However, another 80,000 acres are still at risk of development.

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Sample files attached:

1. (Audio only) An mp3 file of "Devils Pulpit," from the "Grand Loop Tour." (Can be played on any mp3 device or on your computer.
2. (Audio and photos) An m4a file of "Devils Pulpit," from the "Grand Loop Tour." (Can be played in QuickTime on your computer or on your iPhone or iPod.)

For more information regarding the guide contact Joan Hamilton; for Save Mount Diablo contact Beryl Anderson.