

Ventana Wilderness Watch

Volume 4, Number 1 Spring 2003

Newsletter of The Ventana Wilderness Alliance

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Congressman Sam Farr with VWA Directors

*Tom Hopkins, Jon Libby, Gordon Johnson, Sam Farr
Nikki Nedeff, Paul Danielson, Boon Hughey*

WILDERNESS BILL VICTORY CELEBRATION

On December 19th the VWA board, joined by other local and statewide wilderness activists, honored Congressman Sam Farr with a celebratory dinner at Los Laureles Lodge in Carmel Valley. Although the date for the event was set by the Congressman two weeks earlier, after his Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act of 2002 passed both the House and the Senate, it was on the date of the event that President Bush signed the Big Sur Act into law.

VWA President Jon Libby named Congressman Farr a Wilderness Champion and presented him with an original Tom Killion wood cut print of the Ventana Double Cone.

Among the seasoned wilderness activists who joined us in celebrating the new Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness additions were: Vicky Hoover, chair of the Sierra Club's California Nevada Regional Wilderness Committee; Jay Watson, Regional Director of The Wilderness Society; Steve Evans, Conservation Director of Friends of the River; and Traci Van Thull, Campaign Director of the California Wild Heritage Campaign.

VWA Publishes Print Newsletter Design Editor *Desperately* Needed!!

Beginning with this issue the Ventana Wilderness Alliance will be printing and mailing out the Ventana Wilderness Watch.

There are several reasons for this change but the overriding reason was to reach more VWA members and supporters.

But, it is now obvious that we need a VWA member to step up to the plate and volunteer to be the newsletter design person. Someone who has the experience, computer power and software to produce a professional looking piece which can go to the printer electronically and in a timely fashion.

This volunteer position will entail a quarterly newsletter with content input and editing from board members and others.

Please contact the VWA "head office" if you will be able to do this.

Telephone 831.423.3191 or email jon@ventanawild.org

Thanks to Joy Greenberg

VWA member Joy Greenberg deserves a big thank you for her tireless efforts with editing the past electronic editions of the Ventana Wilderness Watch.

Joy will continue assisting with the VWV as one of our pool of editors. Thanks Joy!

Paul Danielson Becomes VWA Advisor Kelsey Jordahl joins VWA Board

Rev. Paul Danielson has stepped down from the VWA Board of Directors to become a VWA Advisor and to pursue his interest in the cultural heritage of The Ventana; watch for notice of his trips. Thanks Paul!

Dr. Kelsey Jordahl, a research geologist at MBARI and head of the VWA Wilderness Volunteers has been elected to become a member of the VWA Board. Welcome Kelsey!

This newsletter, in addition to more information on all items in this newsletter, is available online at the Ventana Wilderness Alliance Website:
www.ventanawild.org

Black Cone Trail Project

The VWA Trail Crew is gearing up for a productive spring season on the Black Cone Trail in preparation for the arrival of the contract US Forest Service Sierra Trail-Shots crew who will be re-grading the tread. This tread work is being paid for by the VWA through the generous contributions of the VWA membership. Our volunteer effort will entail cutting out deadfall trees and brushing the 14 mile trail corridor from Arroyo Seco to Black Cone Camp, and everyone who is up for some strenuous but healthy backcountry work is welcome to pitch in. We have 2 more tentative trips planned on the following dates:

April 3 through 6 April 18 through 21

For more information or to reserve a place on any of these outings, please contact:

Boon Hughey at boon@ventanawild.org
Telephone 805.466.2312

Ventana Wilderness Alliance

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*The Ventana Wilderness Alliance is an IRS 501(c)(3)
tax-exempt organization.
Dues and donations are tax deductible.*

Ventana-Wild Email Listserv

One of the many benefits of VWA membership is subscription to the ventana-wild email listserv, where important announcements are made and some very informative, insightful, and at times lively discussions take place regarding all aspects of the northern Santa Lucia mountains. If you are not currently subscribed to the ventana-wild listserv but would like to be, please contact list manager: Gordon Johnson gordon@ventanawild.org.

Willow Creek Clean Up Project

The Ventana Wilderness Alliance has undertaken a stewardship project to restore the wilderness qualities of the Willow Creek drainage which was added to the Silver Peak Wilderness by the Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act of 2002. The first phase of this project is to remove several tons of trash and other refuse left on abandoned mining claims and by illegal human habitation. These trash deposits were discovered by VWA volunteers in 1999 while field checking the area for the wilderness campaign.

In the summer of 2002, the VWA secured grant funding from the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute Employee's Conservation Action Fund to undertake archeological and biological studies of the project area to complete the NEPA process with the Forest Service. Local consultants have been hired to perform these studies which should be completed by the end of 2003. A hazardous materials survey of the project area was completed by the Forest Service in 2002.

While the remainders of the studies are under way, the VWA will develop a specific plan to remove the trash from the wilderness. This plan will most likely rely on a team of hardy VWA volunteers to package and transport the trash to a staging area where the trash can be loaded on to trucks and transported to a suitable disposal site. The most notable challenge to this process, in addition to the sheer volume of trash to be handled, is the need to transport all the trash across Willow Creek to reach the existing wilderness trail.

Once the preliminary clean up plan is completed, a second round of fund-raising will raise the money required for the hard costs of the clean up. It is expected the planning and fund-raising efforts will run concurrently with the archeological and biological studies now under way and the clean up work will begin in 2004.

Indians-Arroyo Seco Road

The Indians-Arroyo Seco Road is closed to vehicle traffic, by locked gates and recent landslides, between the Arroyo Seco and Memorial Park Campgrounds.

The Los Padres National Forest is proposing to conduct an Environmental Assessment, during 2003, on removing the landslides and performing road maintenance. See their Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA list) at:

www.r5.fs.fed.us/lospadres/news/sopa/sopalst.html

Annual VWA Membership Gathering

Saturday, May 31, 2003 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

The annual VWA Membership Gathering is coming up, and everyone is invited to an afternoon of fun, feast, and friendship. We've chosen the beautiful Monterey Pines Picnic Area at Jacks Peak Park in Monterey this year, and look forward to seeing all of you there!

As those who have attended past Gatherings know, the annual VWA Gathering is a great opportunity to meet other VWA folks, get the latest information on VWA projects, eat great food, and talk backcountry until the sun goes down. It may be safe to say that at no other time or place will one ever find a group of people more affection for and knowledgeable about the northern Santa Lucia mountains. Talk about a good time with like-minded folks! The VWA has enjoyed some important accomplishments over the past year and it's time to celebrate! We'll enjoy a delicious lunch, update the group on current projects, answer questions, tell stories, and squeeze in a late-afternoon hike along the beautiful trails of Jacks Peak Park.

Lunch will be pot-luck, with the main courses as well as non-alcoholic beverages provided by the VWA. Please bring a favorite side dish, desert, or whatever else to share.

Please RSVP by telephone 831.423.3191 or by e-mail to vwa@ventanawild.org

Thinking like a Mountain: A Wilderness Stewardship Workshop

The VWA is developing a workshop designed to promote the good stewardship of our wilderness areas. All VWA members, and other interested parties, are invited to attend these sessions. Dates and locations have yet to be determined.

The workshop will focus on exploring wilderness stewardship issues and actions and the development of personal wilderness values:

- History of the 1964 Wilderness Act.
- Principals of Wilderness Stewardship
- Leave No Trace Practices and Wilderness Ethics
- Low-Impact Trail Maintenance
- Managing Campsite Impacts in Wilderness

For more information contact:
Gordon Johnson telephone 530.945.2143
or e-mail gordon@ventanawild.org

Reward Fund of over \$30,000 Established to Capture Killer of California Condor

The VWA and several other conservation groups have announced that a reward fund has been established for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who shot and killed condor AC-8 which was found shot on February 13, 2003 on a large ranch in Kern County.

After receiving pledges from many conservation groups and a \$25,000 pledge from Wendy P. McCaw Foundation of Santa Barbara the reward fund currently stands at \$31,500. The Wendy P. McCaw Foundation supports animal welfare and wildlife protection efforts and has supported condor protection efforts in the past.

The California condor is listed as an endangered species and is protected by both federal and state law. Killing a condor carries a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000. The law enforcement division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is investigating the recent killing and the agency pledged an unspecified reward for information. The conservationists' reward fund will be paid out in its entirety through the end of 2004 to anyone whose information leads to the conviction.

Anyone with information regarding the shooting should call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 916-414-6664 or the California Department of Fish and Game's CalTIP Program at 1-888-dfg-caltip.

Groups Participating in the Reward Fund are:

Wendy P. McCaw Foundation
Center for Biological Diversity
Friends of the Animals
Environmental Defense Center
Kern Chapter, Audubon Society
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Ventana Chapter, Sierra Club
Helping Our Peninsula's Environment

VWA Tee Shirts Now Available

Ventana Wilderness Alliance tee shirts are now available to members who renew at the \$50 level or higher.

Contact the VWA "office" for details:
831.423.3191 vwa@ventanawild.org

Ventana Wilderness Alliance Spring Calendar

Details: <http://www.ventanawild.org/events/vw042003.html>

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|--|-----------------------|
| Garland Park Hikes | April 5, 6, 12 and 13 |
| Black Cone Trail Work | April 3-6 and 18-21 |
| Earth Day | April 22 |
| Pine Valley Weekend Backpack | April 18 |
| Garland Park Trail Days | April 19 |
| Steinbeck Watershed Century | April 19 |
| Garland Park Wildflower Walk | April 20 |
| Garland Park Walk | April 26 |
| Glen Devon Ranch Hike | April 26 |
| Garland Park Hike | April 27 |
| Mitteldorf Preserve Hike | May 18 |
| VWA Jacks Peak Gathering | May 31 |
| National Trails Day Little Sur Trailwork | June 7 |

Hike leaders needed for more summer and fall trips
Contact Vince Manning, vince@ventanawild.org

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Ventana Wilderness Alliance



Wild Rivers Workshop Participants at the Arroyo Seco River

WILD RIVERS WORKSHOP

It was a full house at the Ventana Wilderness Alliance sponsored Wild Rivers Workshop held Saturday, February 1st. Leading the workshop was VWA member Steve Evans, Conservation Director of Friends of the River. The workshop began in the Museum Room at the Garland Regional Park in Carmel Valley with a classroom session that covered the national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In addition to learning about these two important wild river protection acts, workshop attendees discussed the status of and need for river protection in the northern Santa Lucia Mountains.

In the afternoon, the workshop took a short hike up the Indians-Arroyo Seco Road, then went on to Sycamore Flat and the Clark gravel mine to view examples of man's impact on rivers. In addition to VWA members, other workshop participants represented the Carmel River Watershed Council/Conservancy, Arroyo Seco River Alliance, Garrapata Creek Watershed Council, California Native Plant Society, Big Sur Land Trust and the Monterey County Planning Department.