



# Ventana Wilderness Watch

Ventana Wilderness Alliance

[www.ventanawild.org](http://www.ventanawild.org)

Volume 6 Number 1, Spring 2005

## Fall Gathering at Brazil Ranch

*VWA Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Wilderness Act*

October 30, 2004 was a beautiful fall day to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. The VWA, co-hosting with the US Forest Service, Ventana Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Brazil Ranch Environmental Center, put on a celebration to be remembered that day for over 120 people! Congressman Sam Farr gave the keynote address and the other speakers were USFS Region 5 Wilderness Manager Peter Keller and Los Padres National Forest Deputy Supervisor Gene Blankenbaker. Following a catered lunch attendees took tours of the Brazil Ranch buildings (formerly owned by Alan Funt of "Candid Camera" fame) and hikes on the ranch with exquisite views of the Big Sur coast. ▲🌲



Jon Libby kicks off the event.

## VWA Volunteers Log Thousands of Hours!

We're proud to announce that, due to the unflagging effort of scores of dedicated members, the VWA logged well over 2,000 hours of volunteer time toward wilderness stewardship in 2004. All of the donated time can be attributed to both the ambitious Willow Creek cleanup effort, with 1,222 hours, and the ongoing activities of the VWA Trail Crew, with 1,021 hours for the year. With the USDA Forest Service valuing volunteer time at \$17.19 per hour for accounting purposes, the VWA helped

keep them in the black by the amount of \$38,557 for the calendar year 2004. Just doing our part!

The VWA board would like to express our sincere thanks to every-

one who showed up and pitched in during 2004. As those who have joined in these efforts can attest, we always have good fun while we get a lot done. ▲🌲

**Remember, the VWA is an all volunteer organization. We have no paid staff and could not function without our dozens of dedicated volunteers. Please join us for trailwork, gatherings**



Volunteers from the Big Haul at Willow Creek

Photo: (Mike Splain)

# VWA Volunteer Profile

## Dave Knapp

Trail Crew Leader Dave Knapp is a self-described “computer geek” who lives in San Luis Obispo with his 7-year-old son Joshua and his girlfriend Sandy. He applies his technical skills as an employee of Cal Poly State University in SLO. Dave has been an avid hiker since his father took him for an overnighter in the Desolation Wilderness at the age of 12. Besides spending time with Joshua and Sandy, Dave enjoys home brewing beer and playing handball at a championship level.

The Ventana Wilderness Watch (VWW) caught up with Dave shortly after he led a successful trail crew trip along the San Antonio trail.

### VWW: Dave, how did you learn about the VWA?

I was searching on the web for the nearest hiking spots to Atascadero and happened upon the VWA Forum Board. I asked for a good 3-day loop in the Ventana Wilderness. It turned out that Boon responded with a couple of hikes for me to try. The first one went well due to the detailed trip report that Jon Libby (I think) wrote. On my second hike into the Ventana, I managed to miss a turn-off and was lost for a few hours. After that I decided that I needed to become a little more familiar with the trails before going out alone.

### VWW: What is your volunteer role with the VWA?

I work mostly with the trail crew part of the VWA. I've been going on trips for about three years now and late last year I started leading trips. I've been on trail maintenance trips on the Salmon Creek, Buckeye, Skinner Ridge, Black Cone, Stone Ridge, Vicente Flat, Arroyo Seco, North Coast Ridge, Little Sur, Gamboa, and San Antonio trails. I still have a lot of trails to see for the first time.

### VWW: What's the best part of doing trail work?

For me, there are really three best parts of doing trail work. The first one is being able to see the difference you've made

in the trail. The second is having others recognize and appreciate the work you've done on the trails. The third (and perhaps most important) is meeting people from all walks of life and getting to see their perspectives and learn things from people that I wouldn't normally get to meet.



Dave Knapp at work.

### VWW: What goals do you have for leading future VWA volunteer efforts?

I think that the VWA continues to make a real difference in the condition of the trails in the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses. I look forward to obtaining specialized crosscut saw training (and certification) that allows us to do more technically demanding work. I also would like to work towards getting more volunteers to become qualified trail crew leaders. We are already working on formalizing the training necessary to be a trip leader. As far as the trail work itself goes, I plan on continuing the work in the Southern Ventana.

### VWW: What are some of your favorite places in the Santa Lucia Mountains?

The view from the north side of the Prewitt Loop is spectacular, as are the views from the Black Cone trail near Pine Ridge Camp. I'm also partial to the Cook Springs/Trail Springs area. I hiked that area just before it burned, so I remember what it used to look like. It is quite a shock to see how it looks now, just five years after the fire.

### VWW: Have you ever had any unique wildlife viewing opportunities in the Wilderness?

Once during a family reunion in Lake of the Woods, Minnesota, we did an overnight canoe trip. I was able to see a bald eagle in the wild...which was really cool. Locally, I like to surprise out-of-town visitors by taking them up Highway 1 to see the elephant seals near Piedras Blancas. I tell my visiting friends and family to look out for zebras. They always seem to look at me like I'm crazy, but it's funny when they see the zebras near San Simeon and find out I wasn't kidding!

continued ⇨

### 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.

### Newsletter Production

Design, Chad Jordahl  
Printing, Pilot Printing  
Special assistance,  
Lynn Piquett & Peggy Dilfer

**VWW: What would you say to someone who is interested in joining the VWA trail crew but is hesitant to commit to a trip?**

It really depends on the exact reason for their hesitancy. For people who think they don't want to work and then stay overnight, I would suggest they try a day trip and see how it goes. For people who are worried about being out of shape, I'd suggest that they also try a day hike and take it at an easy pace. Our three rules of trail work are be safe, have fun, then do the work you feel comfortable with. There is never any pressure to do more work than YOU want to do.

**VWW: What is your favorite piece of backpacking gear and why?**

My current favorite piece of gear is my Hennessey hammock because it's light, pretty easy to set up, and extraordinarily comfortable. I love being able to put my feet up after a day's work. The only difficult part can be finding a place to set up in areas burned by the fire of '99. Check out this web link:  
<http://www.hennesseyhammock.com>

**VWW: What is your idea of backcountry haute cuisine?**

I still haven't been able to try to make Betsy's (Betsy MacGowan) pudding pies, but I have all the stuff and hope to make it soon. Her topping of shredded and toasted coconut is the finishing touch that really makes it gourmet.

**VWW: Any special trips planned in the future?**

I'm hoping to be able to work some on the eastern part of the Gamboa, the eastern part of the San Antonio trail, and also the Carrizo trail out of Cook Springs. If anyone has any questions about the VWA Trail Crew or future trips, I may not know all the answers but I know the people who do! It's best to reach me by email - [dknapp1@gmail.com](mailto:dknapp1@gmail.com) ▲🌲

## VWA Board Adds New Members

At the January 2005 quarterly meeting of the VWA Board of Directors, three new directors joined the Board: David Jacobs, Dennis Palm and Rich Popchak. We look forward to the diverse experience and energy with which they are attending to their new responsibilities.

They replaced retiring board members Gordon Johnson, Kelsey Jordahl and Nikki Nedeff. A big "thank you" goes to Gordon, Kelsey and Nikki for their years of service to the VWA and we wish them well in their new ventures. ▲🌲



David Jacobs, Rich Popchak and Dennis Palm

## VWA Listserv Is a Must

### *Sign up to get all VWA announcements*

The VWA listserv is an efficient way for the VWA to communicate with all VWA supporters and also a way for VWA supporters to share information which is relevant to the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses and the Northern Santa Lucias with one email address.

If you are not currently signed up to the listserv, we encourage you to do so. This is our most efficient way to share information on upcoming events with all VWA supporters. We carefully monitor the listserv and there is now no spam, messages are monitored to stay on topic, and the volume of email traffic is much lower than in the past.

For more info and to sign up, see: <http://lists.igc.org/mailman/listinfo/ventana>.

The listserv administrator is Mike Splain and he can be reached at: [mike@ventanawild.org](mailto:mike@ventanawild.org). ▲🌲

## Challenge Grant

### *VWA is Challenged to Raise Black Cone Trail Funds*

An anonymous donor has put up a \$1,000 matching grant towards the completion of the Black Cone trail treadwork. This is a challenge grant and will match, dollar for dollar, all donations toward this project up to \$1,000. Send your donation today and double the impact of your tax-deductible donation with this matching grant. If we do not reach the \$1,000 match, we will lose some of it. Please help us take advantage of this generous offer. Every \$5, \$10 or \$20 counts so please be generous!!

Send donations to: VWA Black Cone Challenge Grant, PO Box 506, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

For more information, see: <http://www.ventanawild.org/projects> or contact [tom@ventanawild.org](mailto:tom@ventanawild.org) ▲🌲



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### VWA Turns Five

#### *Come Celebrate on May 15*

2005 marks the fifth anniversary of the Ventana Wilderness Alliance and we will gather at Jacks Peak County Park in Monterey on Sunday, May 15 to celebrate together. Once again this VWA gathering will include BBQ, potluck, guest speaker, hiking and more. So mark your calendar now for May 15! Details will be forthcoming via the VWA Listserv. If you are not currently receiving VWA listserv messages see the article on the previous page for details. ▲

### **Breaking News:**

Big Sur Grazing Decisions  
 Withdrawn by USFS. For details see  
[www.ventanawild.org/projects/grazing](http://www.ventanawild.org/projects/grazing)



### Ventana Wilderness Alliance

Date	Event
April 22	Earth Day
April 23	Hikes in and around The Indians
April 24	VWA Board Meeting at The Indians
May 7-9	Carrizo Trail Long Weekend Worktrip
May 15	Annual Gathering at Jacks Peak Park
June 4	National Trails Day

See [www.ventanawild.org/events](http://www.ventanawild.org/events) for details.

## Logo Products & Gift Memberships

### *Give a Gift Membership and Receive VWA Logo Products*

Gift memberships at or above the \$50 level will receive, as a token of our sincere appreciation, your choice of either a VWA logo T-shirt or a VWA logo Nalgene water bottle! Shirts are high quality 100% organic cotton “Beneficial Ts” by Patagonia and shrink a bit upon washing, and bottles are one-liter lexan with a wide mouth loop-top. Be sure to specify which you would like and shirt size if applicable (S,M,L or XL). Shirts are now available in men’s short and long sleeve and women’s short sleeve. Photos of logo products, with the Tom Killion woodcut of the Double Cone, are shown at: <http://www.ventanawild.org/join.html> ▲