The featured presentation was delivered by Jeffers Country and beyond. Historic Marina's very own Wild Thyme Deli. Robinson Jeffers scholar Rob Kafka. Mr. Kafka guided Ventanaphiles on a cathartic journey delicious catered lunch, skillfully prepared by naturalist Bruce Delgado. Displays highlighted Fort Ord Natural Reserve led by expert a number of VWA stewardship and advocation projects and inspired attendance to get involved. As is customary, the VWA provided a delicious continental break, skillfully prepared by Marina's very own Wild Thyme Deli. The narrative was presented by traditional pronunciation of the names.
Youth in Wilderness Program in Full Swing

Led by Greg Meyer and Morgan Harris, 11 college students, from California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC), 

Youth in Wilderness (YIW) trip leaders

...traveling on the East Side from the Divide to the Drakes. Even from the Divide to the Drakes. This was the second annual program of the Western Wilderness Alliance (WWA) expedition and the group of students led this trip started the actual planning for the program in November 2004. The group, led by WWA expedition director Paul Wraae, with the route chosen was a journey to experience the thrill of being wild and the adventure of being free. In addition to learning about the beauty of the Western Wilderness and learning about the history of the area, the trip offers a chance to work in the outdoors and enjoy the clear-air environment.

A previous trip took place on March 20-26, at Doe Camp, and it was another opportunity to participate in the Western Wilderness Conference, sponsored by the California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSB).

In the Patino Family Natural Resource Management Plan of 2003, the Forest Service recognized the unique aspects of the area and designated the Millipitas Special Interest Area (SIA). The SIA contains a cultural landscape existing of an abundant Northeast American occupation from prehistoric through historic times. The Salinan tribe recognized the unique aspects of the area, the valley oak savannas and sandstone formations, regularly shaped by scientists and surveyors.

In preparation for the event, a work session was held in February 2005 to develop a management plan for the area. The plan for the area will be developed and presented to the public on September 24, 2005. The plan will be available at the Ventana Wilderness and CWM websites.

In this issue of Western Wilderness, Western Wilderness Alliance spent a day trail working with the Ventana Wilderness Alliance at Divide Camp. It was their first experience camping out, and the first weekend for each of the students.

In the Los Padres National Forest Management Plan, due to decreases in funding and personnel, the Forest Service has been unable to develop a comprehensive management plan for the area.

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Youth in Wilderness Program in Full Swing

Led by Greg Meyer and Morgan Harris, 17 college students, three Cal Poly California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC), participated in the 2004 Youth in Wilderness (YIW) expedition to Divide Camp. The students performed work that paid for the Pfeiffer Ridge camp, near Big Sur, and the Divide Camp. This was the second annual Youth in Wilderness (YIW) expedition and the group helped build trails started on the trail in 2003. The YIW program is sponsored by the Community Foundation for Santa Cruz County and the Venture Founation.

The YIW program is a unique way for youth in military and youth organizations to learn about wilderness and take part in wilderness conservation projects. The YIW program provides the tools, camping gear, and mentorship to take a crew of 15 students and supervisors on weekend backpacking trips. One component of the program is to constructs trail sections and practice wilderness skills. The entire trail crew had great fun, learned about wilderness and enjoyed an outdoor setting after a full day of hard work in picturesque locations.

The Youth in Wilderness Program is sponsored by the Community Foundation for Santa Cruz County and by the Venture Founation. The objective of this YIW program is to offer guided wilderness trips in an effort to promote youth adventure in Santa Cruz County, San Benito County and San Luis Obispo County.

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At least 15 card-carrying members of the VWA attended the Western Wilderness Conference in Monterey, April 6-8. It was an excellent service learning opportunity for VWA members, including 50 wilderness students and personnel from local organizations who were afforded that opportunity.

The conference hosted nearly 50 workshops led by many of the nation’s most effective wilderness advocates. Both long-time activists and those newer to environmental advocacy shared valuable knowledge, tips and information.

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The featured presentation was delivered by naturalist Bruce Delgado. Displays highlighted cacti involvement. As is customary, the VWA provided a natural food snack. The presentation concluded with the presentation of a plaque to La Sierra's Naturalist John Laird. John was honored as a Wilderness Champion by the VWA to commemorate passage of AB 2945 and the subsequent establishment of the Limekiln State Park Wilderness on September 30. This honorarium featured a Tom Killion woodblock print and conveyed the VWA's tremendous appreciation of Mr. Laird's efforts in shepherding this important legislation through the State Assembly.

The Turner Creek Trail Project

Recently, the VWA led an important project in the northeastern corner of the Ventana Wilderness. Utilizing grant money secured through the State Assembly, the VWA hired a professional trail crew to rehabilitate the Turner Creek trail. As is customary, the VWA would like to thank the brave American Conservation Experience (ACE) trail crew for their efforts in removing huge amounts of poison oak that were encroaching on the trail.

It is important to remind our readers that a consistantly-updated VWA Event Calendar can be accessed from the VWA home page at www.ventanawild.org. We would like to remind our readers that a consistent-updated VWA Event Calendar can be accessed from the VWA home page at www.ventanawild.org. Please join us in the future for more opportunities on the trail crew or to support special projects such as Trail Work in the Wilderness. Also, we ask that you use the interactive VWA Trail Map and Trail Reports pages also accessible from the home page to aid in that trail work effort.

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Let us know where there are downed trees and trash-littering bush – and don’t be shy about our best to address those challenges.
Turner Creek Trail Project

Recently, the VWA led an important project in the northeastern corner of the Ventana Wilderness. Million grant money secured from the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD), the VWA hired a professional crew to rehabilitate Turner Creek trail. Beginning on April 23, 2010, this trail was designated wilderness to regional parks within the Monterey State Park backcountry as a State Wilderness. MPRPD provided funding for this project. A special thank you goes out to Pat Bailey and the US Forest Service for providing pack stock support for the hard working and hungry trail crew. We would like to thank the Irene A. Corcoran Conservation Fund (ACE) crew for their efforts in removing huge amounts of poison oak that were encroaching on the trail.

VWIA volunteer Profile – Jean and Philippe LeBlanc

Jean and Philippe were introduced to the Ventana Wilderness Alliance (VWIA) by a mutual friend while they were exploring the Ventana Creek area. They have joined the VWIA Volunteer Program and have completed trail maintenance projects. Their experience on the trail has been very positive and they enjoy seeing nature and the Ventana Valley where they live. They have completed projects at 300 Road and adjoining trails.

In February 2010, Assemblymember Bill Monning (CA 21) introduced legislation to designate approximately 800 acres of the Andrew Molera State Park (AMSP) to be part of a Ventana Wilderness. Following a public meeting in Big Sur in late March, Monning withdrew the legislation. At that meeting some Big Sur residents expressed concern that wilderness designation would be too much like a state wilderness.

Assemblymember Monning’s April 6, 2010 letter announcing the withdrawal stated in part:

A wilderness designation only affects state lands, not private lands, and the portion of the State Park that would be designated as wilderness does not overlap any private land. Additionally, the designation of wilderness does not produce mineralized equipment from coming into the area for the fighting purposes and the measures can be taken, as necessary, to control the fires, and thus, the area can be continuously worked and used by the local and regional communities to resolve any factual issues with the Molera Wilderness proposal and subsequent enactment.”

Following the March reading and discussion with the Assemblymember, VWIA president Tom Hopkins from Santa Cruz expressed his disappointment and offered that, “The VWIA will continue to work with the local and regional community to resolve any factual issues with the Molera Wilderness proposal and look forward to its reintroduction in 2011 and subsequent enactment.”

In this edition’s features:

• Molera Wilderness Legislation Introduced, then Withdrawn
• Youth in Wilderness Program Underway
• An Inspirational Western Wilderness Conference
• Milpitas Special Interest Area Update
• King City Fifth Grade Science Camp
• Molera Wilderness Alliance – Jean and Philippe LeBlanc
• Trails Projects Update – Cone Peak and Turner Creek

Join us for the annual update of the Ventana Wilderness Watch on www.ventanawild.org. Click on “Forums” under the Search field.

Inside this edition of the Ventana Wilderness Watch