



VENTANA WILDERNESS WATCH

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Ventana Wilderness Alliance

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Sandstone Rock Formation at The Indians

Photo: Gero Heine | www.geroheine.com

Milpitas SIA
Plan Approved!

Special Map Insert
Cone Peak Trail Network

The Man
Behind the Maps
Jack Glendening

Protecting the Northern Santa Lucia

VENTANA WILDERNESS WATCH

Newsletter of the Ventana Wilderness Alliance



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*The mission of the
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
is to protect, preserve and restore the
wilderness qualities and biodiversity
of the public lands within California's
northern Santa Lucia Mountains
and Big Sur coast.*

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ON THE COVER



VWA member and award-winning photographer Gero Heine has traveled the world to photograph wildlife and landscapes. He captured this image on an April afternoon at the Milpitas Special Interest Area. See more of his work at www.geroheine.com.

President's Message

This past winter saw several changes in the VWA staff that marked the growing stability of the organization as a professional staff-led nonprofit working to protect wilderness qualities and biodiversity in the Ventana backcountry and Big Sur Coast.

Late last year our first Executive Director, Paul McFarland, completed his VWA employment commitment and returned to his beloved eastern Sierra. Membership Director Mike Splain was then selected to become our second Executive Director and Board Member and Secretary Richard Popchak moved from his board position to become our Development and Communications Director.

Paul McFarland brought to the VWA a host of professional skills and extensive conservation experience garnered during his decade leading Friends of the Inyo in the eastern Sierra. With Paul's leadership, the VWA board established a structured annual strategic planning process that is updated quarterly. This planning process ensures that we continually maintain current achievable goals to implement our mission. Paul also readily shares valuable contacts in the public land conservation world, most notably with the National Forest Foundation, which has made several grants to the VWA in support of our trail and wilderness stewardship programs. Paul will continue to actively advise the VWA to support our staff transition and insure that the dramatic organizational and programmatic gains made during his tenure will continue.

All of us who have had the privilege of working with Paul know that the ongoing success of the VWA will be forever indebted to Paul for his inspiring leadership. We extend our sincere thanks for his dynamic contribution as our first ED. Paul, his wife Yvette, and their two young sons have returned to their home in Lee Vining on the shores of Mono Lake, following Yvette's completion of a Master of Education program at UC Santa Cruz.

Longtime VWA member and volunteer Mike Splain, who has served for several years as our Membership and Development Director, was enthusiastically selected by the VWA board to be our new Executive Director. Mike has completed his undergraduate degree in Evolutionary Biology at UCSC and began working full-time in his new role in mid-April. Please join me in thanking Mike for his years of behind-the-scenes service and congratulate him on his new job as VWA Executive Director.

To fully support our professional staff there is an increasing need for active volunteers to fill essential roles in the VWA leadership. In January, the board added two seats to the VWA Board of Directors for a total of nine seats. These seats need to be filled with new folks who are committed to the VWA core mission and who have some time to make a difference. There is also a need for additional volunteers across our organization and, in particular, in our major programs, including the Trail Crew, Wilderness Stewards and the Youth in Wilderness program. If you have the interest and some time to commit to keeping Big Sur and the Ventana backcountry wild now and for future generations, please contact me at tom@ventanawild.org or Mike Splain at mike@ventanawild.org.

Together we can ensure that these wild lands remain wild.

IN MEMORY

John Scholz of Huntington Beach made a generous donation in memory of his dear friend, **RUSSELL BLACK**. It is earmarked for a Youth in Wilderness project to install directional signage in the backcountry.

Phil Wagner, Mary Blackler and Martin Kendrick all made generous donations to the VWA in memory of **GREGORY YOUNG**.

Milpitas SIA Plan Approved | *Come Celebrate at The Indians!*

by Dennis Palm

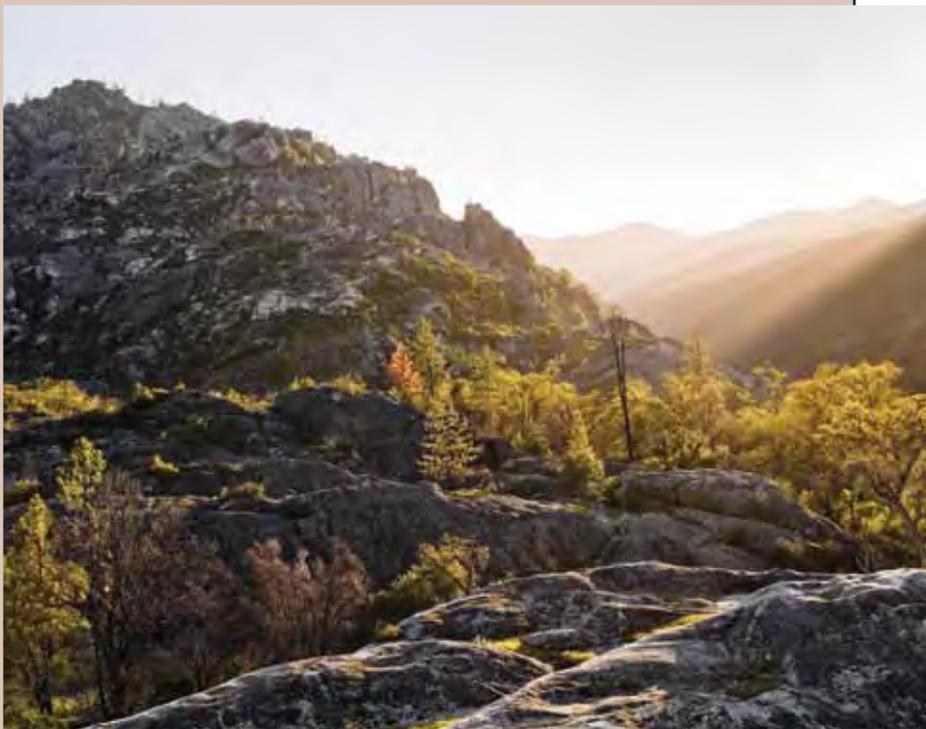
Monterey District Ranger Sherry Tune, US Forest Service, approved the Milpitas Special Interest Area Collaborative Management Plan on February 8, 2012. This is a significant step in the protection of the unique cultural, natural and scenic values of an area designated as a Special Interest Area by the Forest Service in 2005.

The Milpitas SIA (MSIA) contains approximately 9500 acres located in the upper watershed of the San Antonio River, much of which is within the Ventana Wilderness. It is approximately 17 miles from Mission San Antonio near the border of Ft. Hunter Liggett.

The LPNF Plan of 2005 describes the desired condition of the MSIA:

“Protect the scenic nature of the area, which constitutes the cultural landscape and is an important part of the cultural values, and the cultural sites. Minimize the numerous unimproved dirt roads that cross the savannahs, bisecting cultural sites, using physical barriers compatible with the scenic values. Control off-road vehicle use, camping, and fires to protect cultural sites. Where appropriate, enhance the sites through public interpretation. Where needed, provide a suitable combination of public education and regulations to protect the rock outcrops and other aspects of the setting where the area is being damaged by various recreation activities.”

Due to decreases in funding and personnel, the Forest Service has been unable to develop a management plan for the MSIA to achieve the desired condition. The Ventana Wilderness Alliance facilitated and funded an agreement between Los Padres National Forest and Mountain Heritage Associates to create a comprehensive management plan for the area with input from the Salinan people, recreational users, and the local community.



Late afternoon sun illuminates the ridges above the Arroyo Seco.

The VWA wishes to thank our funding sources — Patagonia, Tides Foundation, Fernandez Family-Pave the Way Foundation, and many individual donors. Also, this project could not have been completed without the efforts of Doug Stephens, Mountain Heritage Associates; Bob Strickland, Archaeologist, Monterey Ranger District; and Barry Peckham, Recreation Officer, Monterey Ranger District (retired).

The VWA will celebrate the signing of the MSIA Plan at our Spring Gathering on the Milpitas on May 12, 2012. In the morning, an interpretive walk is scheduled to the historic Encinales Adobe, also known as Indians Ranch. A potluck will commence at the Indians Guard Station at 12 noon.

A presentation will follow with Terry Jones and Betty Rivers, co-authors of *Walking Along Deer Trails* and *An Addendum to Harrington's Northern Salinan Place Names*. Both publications speak to the prehistoric and cultural values of the Milpitas. Also present will be Kathryn Klar, Ph.D., a Harrington biographer and co-editor with Terry Jones of *California Prehistory*. Our friends from the San Antonio Valley Historical Association also will be joining us.

There will be an afternoon interpretive walk to a proposed restoration project area and the wildflowers of the Santa Lucia Meadow.

Bring something to share for the potluck and a chair or blanket for a wonderful day on the magical Milpitas!

Please RSVP to VWA@ventanawild.org to receive complete event details.



Natural wonders abound in the Milpitas backcountry.

Volunteer Spotlight | Jack Glendening

In this edition of Ventana Wilderness Watch, we get to know local explorer and mapping expert Jack Glendening. Some of you may know of Jack through his excellent collection of online and interactive maps of the Ventana and Silver Peak, available at www.ventanahiking.net. Jack has graciously allowed the VWA to use his research in a mapping project to support our fundraising (see pages 4 and 5). Born in New Hampshire and raised near New York City, Jack got started in hiking by spending many a summer day exploring the White Mountains of the Granite State. It was there that he learned to appreciate rocky ridges above the tree line and the views they afford. Jack's educational pursuits eventually brought him to the West. After earning his Ph.D. in Atmospheric Science in Seattle, Jack came to Monterey to teach and conduct research at the Naval Postgraduate School and later the Naval Research Laboratory. He is now retired. Flying aircraft is one of Jack's passions. He flies both power planes and sailplanes (gliders). Jack used to spend more time flying than hiking. But on the very day that the Basin Complex Fire started (6/21/08), he had a fire of his own while aloft in his self-launching sailplane. This type of plane has an engine and propeller which is used for takeoff. Jack safely executed an emergency landing that day but the incident took him away from the sport due to complications in restoring his craft.

These days, Jack spends considerably more time hiking and "GPS-ing." We were fortunate to catch up with Jack when the rainy March weather prevented him from taking a planned trip to Lost Valley.

Q: What prompted you to start your Ventana/Silver Peak trail mapping project?

One day I tried to reach Cook Spring Camp using a map with a trail line leading there from the Carrizo Trail. As Ventana-knowledgeable folks know, there in fact is no such trail. So I then tried to bushwhack to the camp using my GPS. Ultimately I gave up (which turned out to be a good thing since the camp is not at that mapped location so I'd have arrived to find zilch). I've hiked trails in New Hampshire and Colorado using maps that can be trusted. I was quite startled to find that Ventana maps can lie so egregiously. I decided that was worth rectifying since current technology makes trail mapping relatively easy.



Q: How do you use technology in the backcountry?

People likely think of me as a technophile because I have a technical bent and use a GPS in my hiking. But I don't usually carry a cell phone, don't own an eBook reader or iPad or even a TV. On the other hand, I'm not adverse to using technology which makes my hike more enjoyable or more interesting. I was exposed to GPS capabilities early in its development because GPS has been revolutionary for glider pilots – it's very important to know exactly how far one is from an airport! Having that experience, I think of a GPS as I think of my 4WD vehicle – it extends my capabilities, allowing me to do things I otherwise couldn't. For unmaintained trails, I have found a GPS very helpful in keeping me from going off on a wrong tangent, since often one finds multiple possible "trails" and having to investigate each takes time and energy. As a bushwhacker who dislikes brush, I often use Google Earth to map out a "least brushy" route before going out since better routes are more easily seen from above than amidst the brush. I can then go further than I would otherwise be able. Since I do a lot of solo hiking, I carry along an emergency beacon, just as I carry a space blanket. I carry my cell phone when I lead a group hike.

Q: Of the maps and tools you've created, which is your favorite?

Because it's the most unique and took more intellectual skill, it's my "route metrics" calculator. It provides the distance and cumulative elevation gain between any two trailhead/intersections in the Ventana and Silver Peak areas. I haven't seen anything like that elsewhere and find it really helpful in planning my own hikes. (Please see: http://ventanahiking.net/route_metrics.html)

Q: Why is your mapping work important to you?

I think it's important to improve wilderness accessibility so more people can experience it and value it. Those who don't experience it are unlikely to value it; and if unvalued, it is more likely to be lost. Working to maintain trails does that. So does providing accurate maps of trails which are minimally maintained, encouraging people to go places they might otherwise hesitate to attempt. I hope to increase "natural" trail maintenance, i.e. keeping brush down by simply having more people walking the same route.

Q: Is there any place for which you have a special affection?

Yes, but I'm not going to tell you what it is! Some people like to keep a special place secret, so it is "their" place. I'm not quite that secretive so I've put my "special" place on my trail map. But I don't tell folks how special I think it is – they will have to discover that for themselves.



Jack Glendening on the Miller Canyon "trail."

Discover the Benefits of Giving Wisely

Did you know there are creative ways to support the Ventana Wilderness Alliance? Ways in which the VWA, you and your loved ones all benefit at the same time?

Such giving techniques are called “planned gifts,” because with thoughtful planning, you create win-win solutions for you and the VWA.

For example:

- You can make a gift that costs nothing during your lifetime.
- You can give stock and realize larger tax savings.
- You can donate your house, continue to live there, and get a tax break all at the same time.

www.legacy.vg/ventanawild

We encourage you to consider supporting the VWA through planned giving. For more information, please see our Planned Giving pages at the above link or contact Tom Hopkins at tom@ventanawild.org.

Youth in Wilderness Program | *Continued Growth*

by Morgan Harris

The spring season of the Youth in Wilderness Program is in full swing and we are excited about our expanded partnerships and looking forward to increased opportunities for youth across the Central Coast. In 2011, we built on our previous successes and continued to provide meaningful wilderness opportunities for local youth and young adults. We expanded the number of students we served by 350% in the year 2011, adding three new educational partners and three additional trips. This included a wide variety of outdoor adventures: a 5-day stewardship trip with high school students from San Diego, wilderness education for elementary school students in King City, and backcountry wilderness experiences for high school students from the Salinas Valley.

We continue to develop new programs for students of all ages and backgrounds. The 2012 season will include further educational and experiential initiatives for local elementary, middle and high school youth. In addition, our partnerships with both the UC and CSU system provide stewardship adventure and service learning in the Ventana Wilderness with service donated at a value of over \$33,000 in 2011.

In an effort to keep wilderness accessible to everyone, our trips are provided at low to no cost. To help ensure that we are able to continue inspiring the youth of California, please consider making a donation to the Youth in Wilderness Program. Your contribution will allow us to keep providing fun and memorable outdoor experiences to youth, many of whom would otherwise not have the opportunity.



Students from the Bakari Project having a great time on the Cruikshank Trail.

Youth in Wilderness Partners

Salinas Community School | Rancho Cielo Community School
Rancho Cielo Wildfire Suppression Program | Pacific Ridge School | UC Santa Cruz | CSU Monterey Bay | Cal Poly Sierra Student Coalition | The Anacapa School | The Bakari Project Police Activities League Seaside (PALS)

Youth in Wilderness Funders

Fernandez Pave the Way Foundation | Tides Foundation
Arkay Foundation | Save the Redwoods League | Community Foundation Santa Cruz County | The Applewood Fund California State Parks Foundation. **In addition, hundreds of individual supporters have contributed time, gear and financial resources towards the success of the program.**

Endangered Species at The Milpitas

Two endangered species have recently been discovered in the Milpitas SIA; the Arroyo Toad and the San Joaquin Kit Fox. Neither of these animals has been reported from this area before and reports were filed for both species with the California Natural Diversity Database of the Department of Fish and Game. The toads were photographed and attempts are being made to photograph the kit fox. Keep your eyes open when you are in the area for it is certainly unique in many ways!

Reports of sightings can be filed at: www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

EVENTS

May 12, 2012

VWA Spring Gathering
Email vwa@ventanawild.org
for details.

June 2, 2012

National Trails Day
Special Trail Event
Email Betsy@ventanawild.org
for details.

Please like our fan page on [facebook](#)

FireScape Evolves

by Mike Splain

Despite the recent departure of Monterey District Ranger (and FireScape initiator) Sherry Tune, FireScape Monterey remains in full swing. A collaborative partnership between 27 organizations, agencies, universities and local community groups, FireScape Monterey moved toward its goal of “protection of both life and property affected by wildfire and healthy resilient ecosystems through collaborative stewardship” with two workshops in Big Sur on March 13th and 14th. Attendees included representatives from CalFire, the US Forest Service, Sierra Club, Coast Property Owners Association, the UC Big Creek Reserve, and, of course, Ventana Wilderness Alliance. As a newly-elected member of the FireScape core team, Mike Splain represented the VWA at the first workshop, which focused on strategies for protecting FireScape values (fire adapted human communities, healthy watersheds, native biodiversity, cultural resources and aesthetic, natural and wilderness qualities of the northern Santa Lucia Mountains). VWA Development Director Richard Popchak participated in the second workshop and leant his valuable first-hand knowledge of the landscape to an extensive “case study” discussion of potential treatments on public lands in the Cone Peak environs. Among stakeholders with varying priorities, one bit of common ground that has emerged is the value of public trails to scientists, emergency personnel and local economies. As many of us already know, backcountry hand lines and fire breaks often double as hiking trails. This co-mingling of purposes may well become a win-win situation as FireScape evolves. The next FireScape Monterey workshop series, entitled “Setting Benchmarks and Monitoring Success,” is scheduled for April 24th and 25th in the Carmel Valley area. For more information, please contact Mike Splain (mike@ventanawild.org / 831-423-3191.)



VWA members enjoy the view from a firebreak / “hiking trail” atop Prewitt Ridge.

Photo: Mike Splain