



# Ventana Wilderness Alliance

## Advocacy Accomplishments

### First Decade Advocacy (~2000-2009)

**Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act** – VWA's founding objective added 51,758 acres to the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas and 2,715 acres to the Pinnacles (now Hain) Wilderness.

**Ventana Resources Inventory** - VWA surveyed state and federal lands to identify watersheds worthy of protective designations, resulting in three state Wilderness proposals and numerous Wild and Scenic River proposals.

**Limekiln State Wilderness** – VWA worked closely with Assemblymember John Laird to designate Limekiln State Wilderness and improve management standards for all state Wilderness areas.

**Arroyo Seco–Indians Road** – With the help of partner organizations, VWA thwarted an effort to reopen Arroyo Seco–Indians Road to motorized vehicles, thus protecting a proposed Wild and Scenic River and National Recreation Trail corridor from severe degradation.

**Heli-Hunting SUP** – VWA spearheaded the defeat of a Special Use Permit application proposing helicopter transport of private hunting parties to and from federally designated Wilderness.

**Big Sur Coastal Grazing Allotments** – VWA secured permanent elimination of two coastal grazing allotments and greatly reduced stocking rates and season of use on five others.

**Don't Bomb Big Sur** – Alongside several partner organizations, VWA successfully defeated a proposal for a practice naval bombing range on Fort Hunter Liggett.

**Los Padres National Forest Plan Revision** - VWA actively participated in Forest planning by submitting comments, attending public meetings, and advocating for Wilderness values and resource protection, including a Milpitas Special Interest Area recommendation that was included in the final Forest Plan revision.

### Second Decade Advocacy (~2010-2019)

**Milpitas Special Interest Area (SIA)** – VWA provided funding, data, and expertise to guide the Milpitas Special Interest Area Collaborative Management Plan, which protected biological and cultural resources in the region surrounding the Wagon Cave Plains and Santa Lucia Memorial Park.

**Milpitas SIA Road and Camp Inventory** - VWA conducted an exhaustive baseline inventory of non-system roads and dispersed camping impacts throughout the Wagon Cave Plains.

**Abandoned Mine Inventory and Analysis** – VWA inventoried and analyzed numerous abandoned mines to identify environmental threats and hazardous conditions. This advocacy resulted in two separate bat-friendly gating projects on the Grizzly Mine complex, the designation of the Old Murry Mine as a Superfund site, and a subsequent clean-up.

**South Coast Ridge Visitor Impact Inventory** - VWA conducted an exhaustive baseline inventory of dispersed camping impacts throughout the south coast region, including Prewitt Ridge, Willow Creek, Alder Creek, San Martin Top, Plaskett Ridge, and South Coast Ridge Roads.

**FIRESCAPE Monterey / Strategic Community Fuelbreak Improvement Project** –VWA staff and volunteers participated in the FIRESCAPE “all lands” planning process and submitted comments and objections emphasizing shared community responsibility and primitive tools in the design and maintenance of Wilderness fuelbreaks.

**Trail Access and Easements** – VWA has compiled data, maps, and other critical historical records to support and defend easements and ongoing access to public trails.

**Los Padres National Forest Ranger District Realignment** – VWA advocated against an agency proposal to enlarge the severely-underfunded Monterey Ranger District to include portions of the Santa Lucia Ranger District.

**Archaeological Site Steward Program** - VWA organized and funded renewal of the Partners in Preservation program to train volunteers to monitor known archaeological sites on the Monterey Ranger District.

**Fishing Derby** – A sportsmen’s club once hosted a fishing derby at its private inholding along the Arroyo Seco. Due to permit violations, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) relocated the derby, unwittingly placing part of it within designated Wilderness. VWA alerted CDFW, recommended alternatives, and the derby was moved to a more appropriate location.

**Adler Ranch** - VWA advocated for preservation of Bixby Mountain and the 1,200-acre Adler Ranch as an undeveloped wildland corridor and supported its ultimate transfer to the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County.

**Conservation Partner Advocacy Support** - VWA maintains mutually supportive relations with a myriad of conservation partners throughout the western states, signing on to letters supporting enhanced wildlife corridors and protections, and opposing the likes of lead ammunition and fishing tackle, Wildlife Services predator eradication, and mountain biking in Wilderness.

**Land Transfers** – In an effort to identify and permanently protect inholdings and edge-holdings, adjacent to or within federal Wilderness, VWA advocates for a perpetually sustainable Land and Water Conservation Fund and informs and supports the work of organizations like the Wilderness Land Trust.

**SOPA Monitoring** – VWA monitors quarterly updates to the Los Padres National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) and comments on actions that threaten Wilderness qualities and biodiversity.