

## **A MESSAGE FROM CPOA FOR THOSE WHO LIVE NEAR THE LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST AND/OR ANDREW MOLERA STATE PARK**

You are encouraged to attend the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council meeting on Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in the Big Sur Lodge conference room in Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park.

Among other issues, two important pieces of legislation will be discussed at this meeting.

A bill introduced by Assemblymember Bill Monning (AB 2074<sup>1</sup>) would create a new Andrew Molera State Park Wilderness. A concern with this legislation is that the wilderness would encompass part of the Big Box Firebreak that was used to protect Big Sur from the Marble Cone Fire in 1977 and the Kirk Fire in 1999. This would make it impossible to use motorized equipment to maintain a critical portion of the Big Box Firebreak.

- Here is a link to a map of the proposed state wilderness  
<http://www.ventanawild.org/images/stories/proposedmolerawilderness.jpg>

A bill introduced by Congressman Sam Farr (HR 4040<sup>2</sup>) would convert the Monterey Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest to a new entity called the Big Sur Management Unit of the Los Padres National Forest. Congressman Farr has stated that the change would enable the management unit to better control expenditures in its budget.

A concern is that, as currently written, both pieces of legislation impact whether fuelbreaks can be created, maintained, and/or used before and during wildfires. Past federal legislation has moved Ventana Wilderness boundaries in a way that appears to have blocked the maintenance and use of existing firebreaks.

- Here are links to maps of two 2002 wilderness expansions that were critical for Big Sur, the Little Sur expansion (<http://www.ventanawild.org/news/se03/littlmap.jpg>) and the Coast Ridge Road expansion (<http://www.ventanawild.org/news/se03/coastmap.jpg>). The Little Sur expansion included an existing portion of the Big Box Firebreak inside the Ventana Wilderness, blocking it from being maintained with motorized equipment, and apparently blocking it from being used during the Basin Fire in 2008. The Coast Ridge Road expansion blocked a Forest Service firebreak improvement project by moving the wilderness boundary to only 100 feet from the Coast Ridge Road (the improvement project was to reduce fuel for 1,000 feet). There were other expansions to the Ventana Wilderness that appear to have blocked maintenance of firebreaks.

Specific to AB 2074, CPOA asks for your support of the position that the bill be changed to ensure that the Big Box Firebreak, including by Andrew Molera State Park, will be maintained, year round, in a condition that will result in a high probability that the firebreak will serve to stop the spread of wildfire under extreme fire conditions.

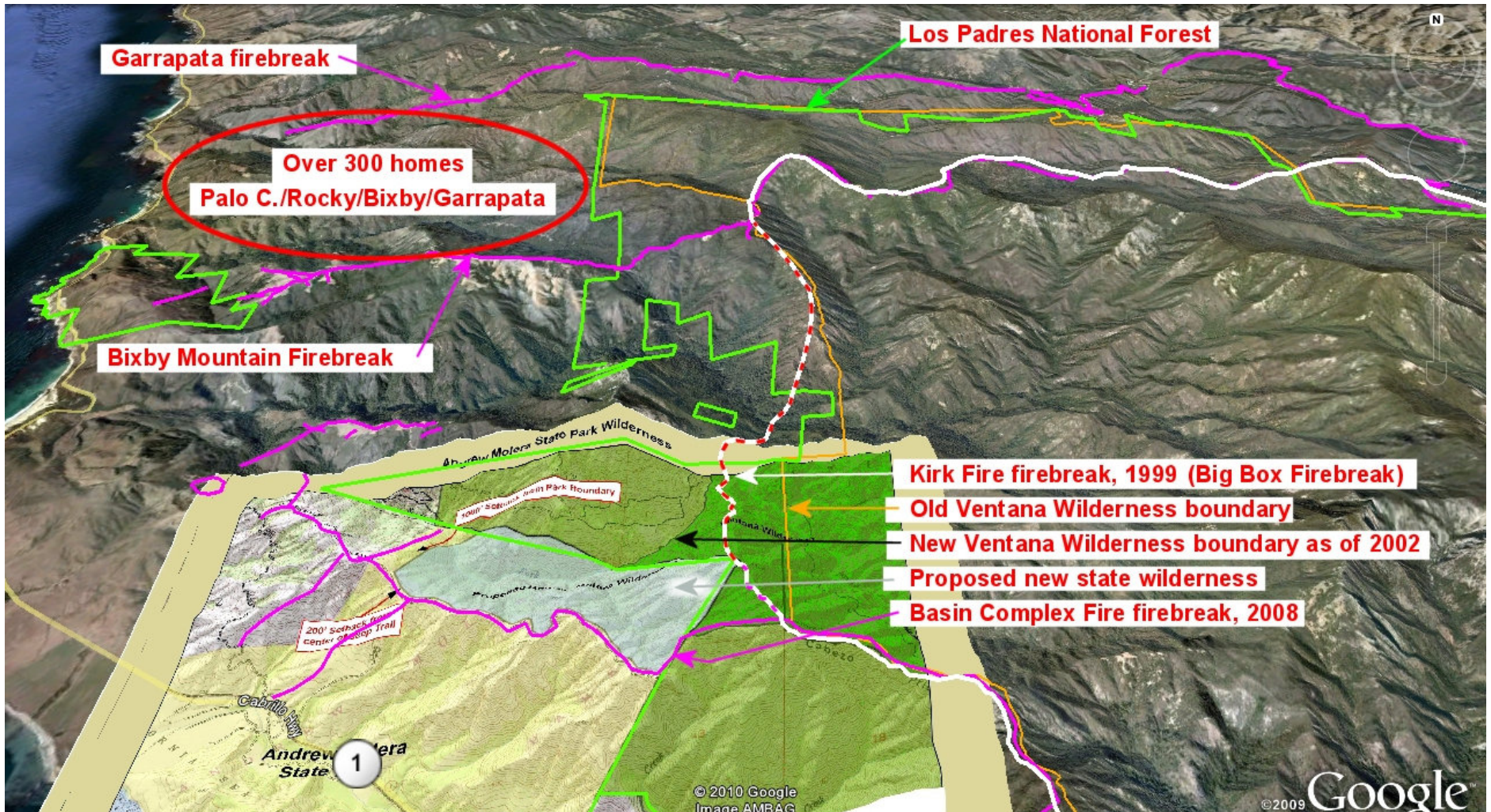
Specific to HR 4040, CPOA asks for your support of the position that the bill be changed to ensure that firebreaks that were not included in the Ventana Wilderness when it was created in 1969 will be maintained, year round, in a condition that will result in a high probability that the firebreak will serve to stop the spread of wildfire under extreme fire conditions.

These changes to the bills would help protect the lives and homes of those who live near wilderness, and would protect the lives of firefighters who are stationed on firebreaks to stop wildfires.

Please inform yourself on these issues, and come to the meeting to ask questions and tell Assemblymember Monning and Congressman Farr what you think about their legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/asm/ab\\_2051-2100/ab\\_2074\\_bill\\_20100218\\_introduced.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/asm/ab_2051-2100/ab_2074_bill_20100218_introduced.html)  
<sup>2</sup> [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h4040ih.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h4040ih.txt.pdf)



The white line shows the historic Big Box Firebreak. The red-dashed portion was used during the Kirk Fire in 1999 and the Marble Cone Fire in 1977, when it was outside the Ventana Wilderness. The red-dashed portion **was not used during the 2008 Basin Complex Fire**, when it was inside the Ventana Wilderness (bright green area). The short purple-dashed portion of the Big Box Firebreak was started by hand crews during the Basin Fire, but stopped where Andrew Molera State Park crosses the Big Box Firebreak. As a result, the Bixby Mountain Firebreak **became the only firebreak between the Basin Fire and hundreds of homes in the greater Palo Verde area**, which fortunately held thanks to the efforts of CAL FIRE firefighters and others. There was no backup firebreak. The Monterey County Community Wildfire Protection Plan ([www.firesafemonterey.org/mccwpp.html](http://www.firesafemonterey.org/mccwpp.html)), at pages 72-73, recommends that the Big Box Firebreak be maintained at all times. The proposed Andrew Molera State Park Wilderness would likely block implementing that recommendation. The Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits use of motorized equipment in wilderness, until a fire is approaching, which can be too late (as it appears happened during the Basin Fire). State law is similar. All purple firebreaks are from the 2008 Basin Fire. Based on best available data. See <http://bulk.resource.org/gao.gov/88-577/00004BA1.pdf> for how firebreaks were **intentionally left out** of the Ventana Wilderness when it was created in 1969 (pages 93, 95-96 in Adobe Reader).