

of Miguelito Shale. The contact is below the surface. The trail curves around to the right and in about 100 feet you are walking on more of the gray/orange sandstone. Notice how well it is cemented. Continue up the trail (which is just to the left of a small gully) to STOP #5.

STOP #5. You are standing on the seaward edge of Terrace #3. Inland it extends to the base of a steep hill which is the remnant of its original cliff. The flat terrace across the deep ravine to the south is also part of Terrace #3. A walk-in campsite is in the grove of eucalyptus trees. The ravine, which is the headwaters of Corallina Creek, has eroded into Terrace #3 since it was uplifted about 200,000 years ago. The same gray/orange sandstone seen earlier is exposed in the shallow gully just north of the trail. Notice that there is only about 12 inches of soil over this well cemented impermeable sandstone. This hard layer extends under all of the surface of Terrace #3. Face eastward (up the trail). Off to the right is a large clump of shrubs called wax myrtle. It is a water-loving plant often found along creeks. Here it is getting enough water from the surface of the shallow hard sandstone. The groundwater flowing through the wax myrtle continues down the gully to "Poison Oak Spring" and "Railing Spring". Ahead and to the left of the trail is another clump of wax myrtle also on a concentration of groundwater perched on the sandstone.

Continue up the trail. At the base of the eroded cliff of Terrace #3 is a junction with 2 trails. On the left, a branch of Valencia Peak Trail leads down to the Visitor Center. ~~The sign is misleading - ignore it.~~ You may wish to use this trail on your descent from Valencia Peak. On the right is Badger Trail (no sign) which leads to the walk-in campsite referred to at STOP #5. The middle trail leads to the Peak climbing diagonally across the eroded face of cliff #3. At the first switchback is STOP #6.

STOP #6. To the south, Coon Creek enters the ocean between the green irrigated field on P.G.&E. property and the coastal scrub plants in the State Park. The second point south of Coon Creek is Point Buchan (see page 10).

The canyon immediately south of this stop is being cut by Corallina Creek. Note that the canyon is deeper through Terrace #3 than it is through Terrace #2 and #1. This is because Terrace #3 has been eroded for a longer time than have the lower terraces. Keep in mind that each succeeding terrace up from the ocean is older and has been subjected to longer periods of erosion. Terrace #1 is almost uninterrupted along the ocean front whereas only patches of Terraces #2 and #3 remain. As you will see, the higher terraces are even more eroded (see map page 10). Continue up the trail. It curves around to the east and then switches back to the south. STOP #7 is at the switchback.

STOP #7. This stop affords a good view to the west and north. Locate Sooner's Cove. Terrace #1 south of the cove has a flat surface but the same terrace north of the cove is covered with sand dunes. Note the "hummocky" appearance. These dunes are made up of sand which has blown south from the Morro Bay sandspit. You can see a small part of the Morro Bay estuary behind the spit. The valley immediately below you is called Reservoir Flats. It is a natural depression which the ranchers used as an irrigation pond. It is an ancient stream bed dating back to the time when Terrace #2 was being eroded at sea level. Present Islay Creek is located a short distance to the north.

Continue up the trail which makes several switchbacks before reaching the top of the hill.

STOP #8. This stop is at the western end of a long narrow ridge which extends up the trail to the east. The ridge is the last remnant of Terrace #5.

Note - Terrace #4 is missing from this western face of Valencia Peak. It was completely obliterated during the cutting of Terrace #3. See the map on page 10 for locations of remnants of Terrace #4 in the northern part of the Park.