

# GRIST

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## Challenging, Innovative Rope Trail

The Owl Trail at Stony Acres (PA) has proven that creatively designed rope trails have exciting potential for sighted people as well as for the visually handicapped. Robert Kauffman, former Instructor of Recreation at East Stroudsburg State College (PA), currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland, explains how this trail, which he helped to implement, differs from others.

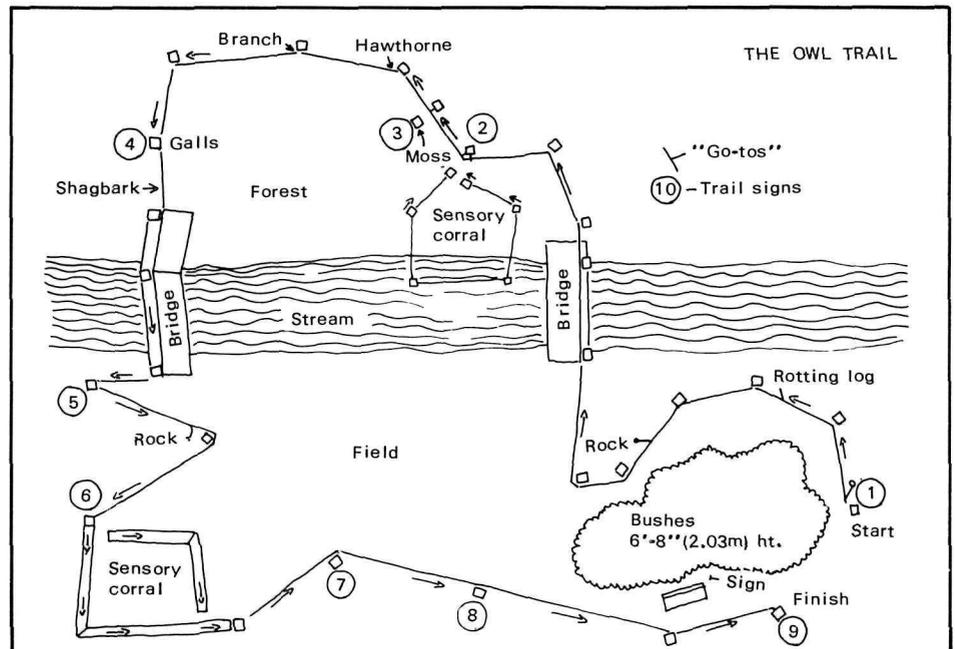
The 600 yard (540 m), self-guiding trail provides a wealth of contrasting environments—field and forest, land and water—to help stimulate visitors' non-visual sensory awareness. But it is the use of special devices that prompt interaction with the natural environment that makes this trail challenging and distinguishes it from other similar ventures.

At the trailhead is a sign explaining the purpose of the trail as well as how to use it and what experiences may be expected. There is a bench for those waiting. The trail ends where it starts for a higher return of blindfolds and better user orientation.

Before being blindfolded, users are introduced to the first raised letter sign, located on a post, which reads: "feel this." Interpretively, this invites users to feel the sign while it provides them with the experience of reading block letters with their fingers.

Next to the first sign is a "go-to" rope leading to the ground. Not only does this introduce users to the "go-tos" before being blindfolded, it also reinforces the idea that they should kneel, bend over, and crawl along the trail where appropriate. Both the trail sign and the "go-to" help acclimate users to the trail.

Owl Trail is challenging in many ways. Users must utilize their non-visual senses; they must think and be



imaginative. For example, the trail sign "sun" (sign #7) requires users to employ their non-visual preception to sense the radiation from the sun. Ten yards (9 m) farther along the trail, the sign "north" (sign #8) requires them to make the connection with the previous sign that the sun is always in the southern part of the sky. Since users are blindfolded, it makes little difference which way they point, only that they make the logical connection.

Bridges are only eighteen inches (.46 m) above the stream. But, with the sudden realization that they are on a structure with an edge, most people proceed with extreme caution, sharpening their senses to make it across safely. If someone's judgment is amiss, safety rails prevent a mishap. Remember, you don't need a stream to have a bridge along a trail.

Trail signs are made out of one-half inch (1.25 cm) plywood, cut to sizes appropriate to the message on them. Lettering is two inches (5 cm) high and

one inch (2.5 cm) wide and constructed from 1/4" x 1/4" (.625 x .625 cm) round molding. The letters are glued and tacked to the plywood with wire braids.

There are two sensory corrals on the trail. The first is for experienced trail users who roam freely within its four-wall confines. The environment here is relatively undisturbed; there are such items as rocks, trees, moss, shrubs, and water. The difficulty of the corral is indicated to users on the entrance sign. The trail design enables those who have not read the main sign, or who are not interested in the advanced skill, to circumvent the corral easily.

Compared to the first corral, the second is rather plain. Again, users can experience the corral or circumvent it by following the railing. While the simple natural elements in this corral provide some stimulation, its plain format allows for staff experimentation.

Another device to help participants

(continued on p.16)

# Coping

## GRIST

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Membership in the Park Practice Program includes a subscription to all three publications and selected back issues in vinyl binders with indices and all publications for the calendar year.

The initial membership fee is \$80; annual renewal is \$20. A separate subscription to *Grist* is \$15 initially, and \$7.50 on renewal. Subscription applications and fees, and membership inquiries should be sent *only* to: National Recreation and Park Association, 1601 N. Kent Street, Arlington, Va. 22209.

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Articles, suggestions, ideas and comments are invited and should be sent to Park Practice Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Division of Park and Recreation Technical Services, Washington, D.C. 20243.



## Outwitting Summer's Insects



The National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda (MD) offers suggestions for coping with summer's insects.

- When buying a repellent, check the label for its use against specific insects and carefully heed application instructions and precautions.

- Shake or spray a small amount from the bottle or pressure can onto your palms and then apply it thoroughly to wrists, neck, ears, face, and other exposed skin as if you were washing yourself. Do not apply it close to the eyes or lips.

- Use enough repellent to make an even film over the skin, since insects quickly find and bite untreated spots.

- Reapply repellents as you perspire, since most repellents lose their effectiveness when the surface to which they have been applied becomes wet.

The Agricultural Research Service states that Deet, listed on some brand labels as N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide, is the best all-around repellent for protecting most people against insects. Although the effectiveness of any repellent varies from person to person, Deet

repels more kinds of biting insects, ticks, and mites than other repellents.

Other measures can also help protect against insects:

- Wear slacks or long trousers tucked into the tops of socks or boots in tick-infested areas.

- Keep your campsite or picnic area clean and free of food litter.

- Before pitching a tent, clear the area of dead leaves, twigs, and loose stones.

- After you have been in an area infested by chiggers, take a hot soapy bath as soon as possible. If you do this within an hour, you can kill most of the chiggers before they attach themselves to your skin.

Some people are highly allergic to the venom from certain insect bites and hardly dare step outside their doors during the summer months. But they can now take heart, since the Food and Drug Administration has approved various serums which counter the reaction to insect bites. If you are allergic to venom from insects, check with your doctor for a prescribed injection or other medication.

# Ingenuity

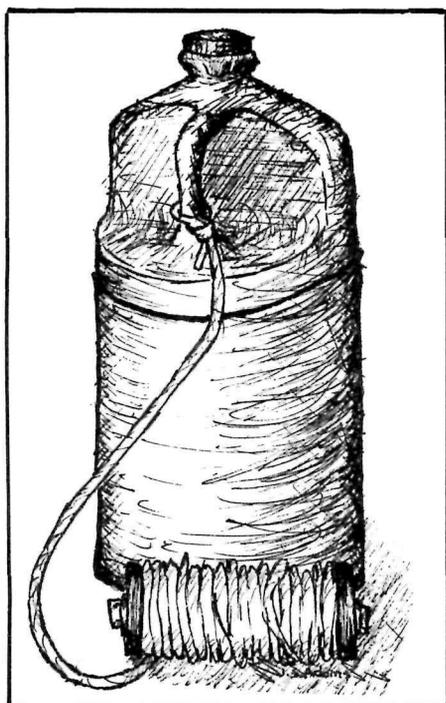
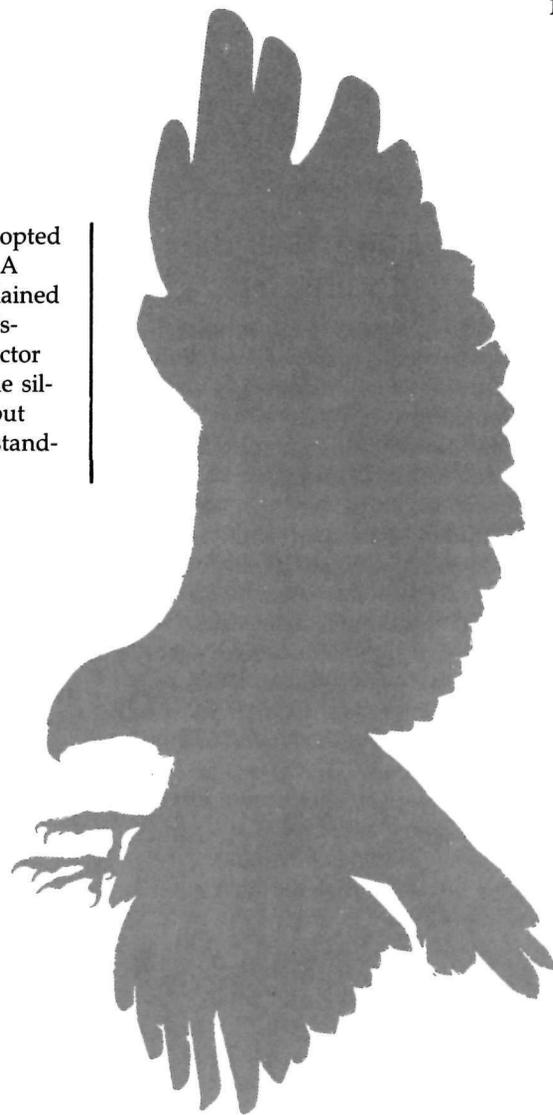
## Predator Silhouettes on Picture Window Protect Birds

Until recently, birds from the nearby botanical gardens flying into the windows at the Alan Bible Visitor Center caused quite a problem at Lake Mead National Recreation Area (AZ, NV). Some of the creatures suffered shock but subsequently recovered; others died from broken necks. Naturally, this caused a great deal of concern and comment from visitors who witnessed such accidents. Then Seasonal Technician Dee Butler came up with a good idea.

Mrs. Butler suggested placing silhouettes of avifaunal predator species, such as buteos, eagles, or falcons, on each window. She recalled that a 1948 study by behavioral scientists Lorenz and Tinberger discovered that both outline and movement were significant in producing fear reactions in and thus deterring, prey species.

Aside from discouraging birds from flying too near the windows, Mrs. Butler felt that the silhouettes would also offer increased opportunities for interpretive comments regarding the roles of predator bird species found in the desert.

Mrs. Butler's suggestion was adopted and proved to be a great success. A handout was prepared which explained predator/prey relationships and discussed the predator recognition factor for prey species. Not only have the silhouettes reduced bird accidents, but visitors are gaining further understanding about desert ecology.



## Marker for Boating Accidents

When boating accidents or drownings occur, there often is no way to pinpoint their exact location. Without some sort of marker, recovery of valuables or a body is difficult. Rescue boats tend to drift in the wind. Witnesses all seem to indicate different directions or angles.

Floyd W. Lang, superintendent of Codorus State Park (PA), has sent a sketch of a buoy that can help solve this problem. He recommends that the device be carried on all patrol boats covering large bodies of water.

Employees at Codorus State Park make these buoys out of recycled material, except for the cord. They use any kind of floatable plastic bottle having at least a one gallon (3.8 l) capacity, and attach to it enough cord to reach the bottom of the deepest portion of their

lake. To fashion a spool, they place a bolt through large washers, using a piece of small copper tubing as a spacer. When this device is dropped overboard, the spool runs to the bottom and only utilizes whatever cord is necessary for that depth. For highest visibility, the bottles are painted bright red or orange.

All of the patrol boats in the park, as well as the concessionaire workboat and the Pennsylvania Fish Commission patrol boat, carry several of these buoys. Whenever a boat is involved in any type of rescue, a buoy is dropped immediately upon arrival at the site. This leaves a permanent marker on the exact accident location—an invaluable aid should divers be needed later for recovery. After the rescue, if no personal items or life has been lost, the buoy is picked up, rewound, and put back in the boat for future use.

# Maintenance



## Dustproofing for Helicopter Landing Sites

A dustproofing agent for helicopter landing sites has been developed that is easy to apply, environmentally safe, and non-corrosive. Polybinder, a ligno-sulfonate, wood pulp byproduct, mixes easily and can be stored in vented metal containers for several years.

Polybinder is mixed with water in a 1:1 solution and a single treatment can last for as long as 8 months. The heliport can be used immediately after treatment, but the manufacturer recommends allowing the solution to cure up to 2 hours. Polybinder requires no special application equipment. Existing pumps, folda-tanks, and hoses work well. Polybinder penetrates and binds the soil, forming a surface that withstands heavy traffic and adverse weather. It can be repaired with a light retreatment.



For further information, contact Polychem International, P.O. Box 554, Bakersfield, CA 93302, telephone (805) 327-0645.

## Property and Maintenance Checklist

Roy Andes, park ranger at Sequoia NP (CA), has developed a property and maintenance checklist to monitor conditions in the Pear Lake Ski Hut. The checklist is given to a designated representative of each party using the hut, in exchange for a driver's license or passport that serves as a deposit. Part of the checklist is filled out immediately upon arrival at the hut and indicates the con-

ditions in which the cabin is found. At departure time, the party again evaluates the hut's conditions on the checklist. The driver's license or passport then is returned to the party representative upon receipt of the returned checklist.

The checklist should prove particularly effective since the representative's signature on the affirmation statement holds him or her criminally liable for any misrepresentations on the checklist. Andes received a \$25 NPS incentive award for his suggestion.

### PEAR LAKE SKI HUT—CHECKLIST

Arrival (date and time)	Departure (date and time)
-------------------------	---------------------------

**Party members:** (Provide names, addresses and either date-of-birth, driver's license #, or passport #):

As leader of this party, I hereby affirm to the Kaweah District Ranger, that I examined the Pear Lake Ski Hut upon both our arrival and departure, and that I have correctly represented the condition of the hut in this checklist; and further, that the names, addresses and other information of all members of my party are complete and correct.

Signature & date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print name & address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date-of-birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's license (state and number): \_\_\_\_\_  
 (May substitute passport # for driver's license) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total nights:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome to Pear Lake Ski Hut. To help keep the cabin in good shape please fill out this checklist upon your arrival at Pear Lake. Then, before you leave please restore the hut to the best condition possible and repeat the checklist. Rate each item: "E" (excellent), "G" (good), "F" (fair) or "P" (poor). You may also make written and other comments where appropriate. When you return the key, return the completed checklist—including names and addresses of all party members. Thank you for your cooperation. We hope you enjoy your stay at the ski hut.**

Checklist	Arrival	Departure
<p>Floor swept of all food and trash            Table tops scrubbed            Counter tops washed            Coleman stove: washed clean            Coleman stove: burns properly            All trash &amp; garbage is packed out            Doors are closed tightly on white metal cabinets            Shelves in metal cabinets are clean            Dishes and silverware are clean            Dishes and silverware are properly stored            All food not in cans is stored in metal cabinets            Partially used food containers are opened one at a time            Contents of all shelves and cabinets are well organized            Pots and pans are clean            Pots and pans are stored upside down on shelves            Oil heater clean on exterior (including drip pan)            Oil heater: both valves shut off            Oil heater: one half full of fuel            Number of Coleman lanterns at hut (actual number)            Lanterns are clean and well functioning            Windows and doors are all locked            Sink is clean            Cabin contents generally neat and orderly            Toilet seat is disinfected            Toilet paper is packed out            Chemical toilets are changed when full            Toilets stored outside have marmot-proof rocks covering lid            Exterior is free of litter            Rescue equipment is unused and stored away</p>		
<b>Other comments:</b>		

## Table for Pool Deck

After several tables and umbrellas were damaged when gusts of wind tipped over tables and carried the umbrellas into a nearby swimming area, Harry J. Bennett, from Harmonie State Park (IN), designed this sturdy pool deck table. Constructed of 2" (.05 m) penta-treated wood, the top is 52" (1.32 m) in diameter. Seats are attached and the table is adapted for use with fiberglass umbrellas purchased at any pool supply store. Materials for one table cost \$75.00

Our thanks to Park Manager Steven B. Merrill for sharing this useful and attractive structure with GRIST readers.



## Auxiliary Power Source for RVs

Auxiliary power sources often come in handy in remote camping areas. Clinton Engines Corporation developed a compact, light-weight, 750-watt generator which delivers 6.25 amps of continuous power for items requiring 110-volt AC electrical power. It can also be used for charging 12-volt batteries. Economical to operate, the 3 hp. gas engine has a 1¼ qt (1.875 l) fuel tank and can be factory-fitted with an optional 2½ gallon (9.5 l) remote tank.



Use of a pre-mixed oil/fuel mixture provides lubrication on each piston stroke and eliminates the need to operate the unit on level ground. The engine has only 3 moving parts, making maintenance simple. The generating unit features class F insulation, fused circuit protectors, and 2 NEMA receptacles.

For further information, contact Clinton Engines Corporation, Clark and Maple Streets, Maquoketa, IA 52060.

# Safety

## Standard Boat Safety Checklist

Upon the suggestion of Chief, I&RM Eldon E. Kohlman, of Amistad National Recreation Area (TX), the southwest region of the National Park Service has adopted a regionwide boat safety checklist.

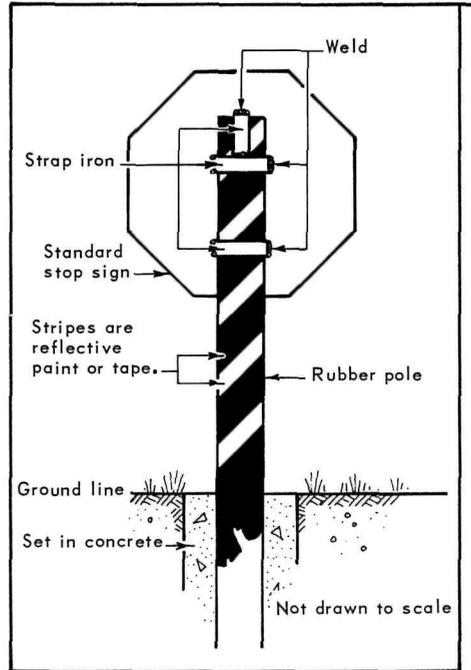
Use of this standard checklist assures that each boat and its equipment meets the current standards of both the National Park Service and the U.S. Coast Guard. Boats passing inspection are issued a special NPS decal, color coded for each new year.

The easily recognized decal enables the ranger conducting boat inspections to spot quickly those boats currently in compliance with safety requirements and to wave them through the inspection station. This saves time and lessens congestion at the boat launching areas. The system also lets the ranger concentrate his or her efforts on those boats which haven't been inspected and helps improve public relations with park visitors.

Other park and recreation systems might find this idea useful in upgrading their boating safety programs.

## Safety Cartoons

Preventing accidents to both visitors and employees is a serious concern in all park and recreation areas. David H. Huntzinger, chief park interpreter at Lake Mead National Recreation Area (AZ, NV), developed a humorous safety montage to convey the potential hazards of the area. Selecting the most frequent causes of visitor accidents or deaths at Lake Mead, Huntzinger developed cartoons depicting visitors involved in these dangerous predicaments. Each cartoon has a catchy limerick that helps readers retain the safety message. The cartoons were combined into a montage, then produced as a metal photo and installed in the restrooms. For this suggestion, Huntzinger received a \$25 NPS award.



## Stop Sign with Rubber Post

Susan E. Churchill, park technician at Sequoia National Park (CA), received a \$25 incentive award for her suggestion for a stop sign with a rubber post. The post is permanently installed in the ground and painted with reflective paint or tape for high visibility. The stop sign easily slips onto the top of the post and is removed at closing time to prevent vandalism. Churchill states that cars would most likely sustain less damage by hitting a rubber post rather than a larger metal one.



The original montage has 12 cartoons in the style as the one above, signed "Aguzlar," with an appropriate limerick under each.

There once was this fellow named Reed,  
Who did a very dum deed—  
He overloaded his boat.  
Now this is no joke;  
For now it sits on the bottom of Lake Mead.

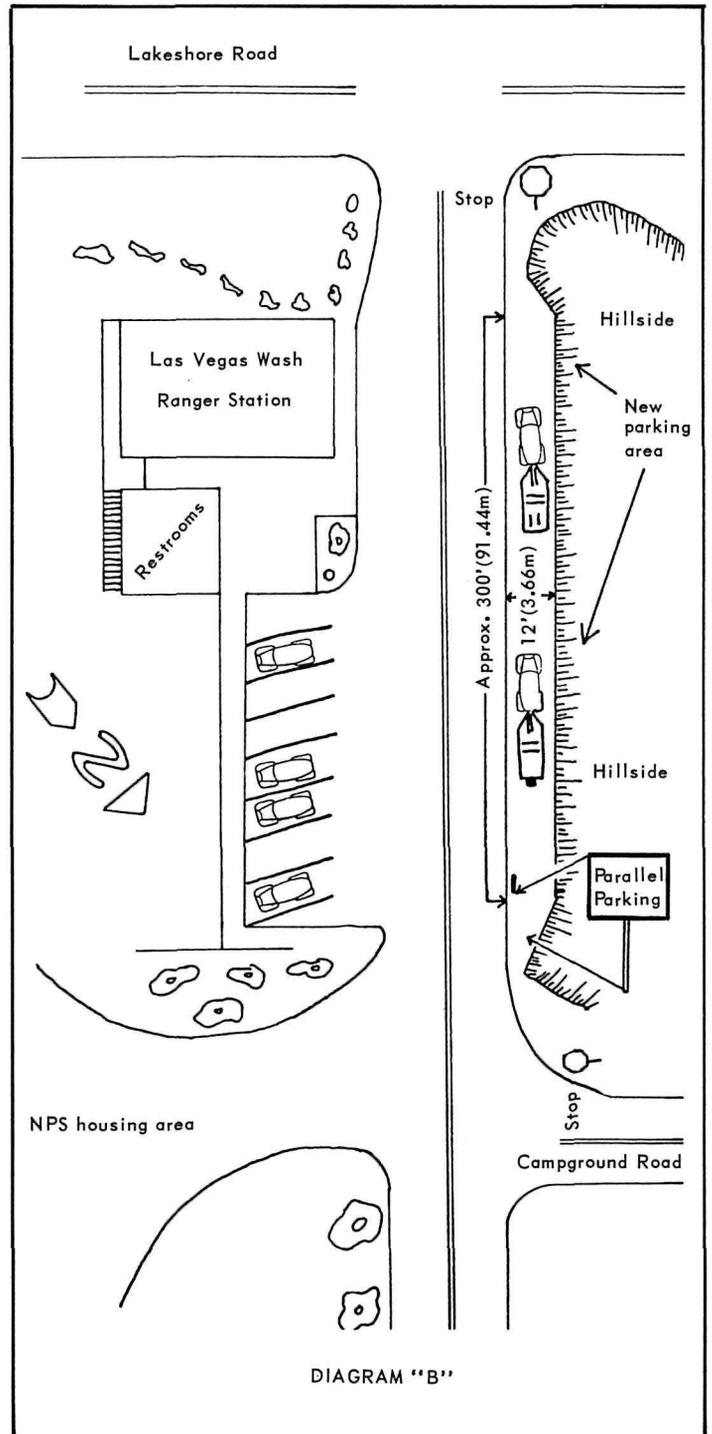
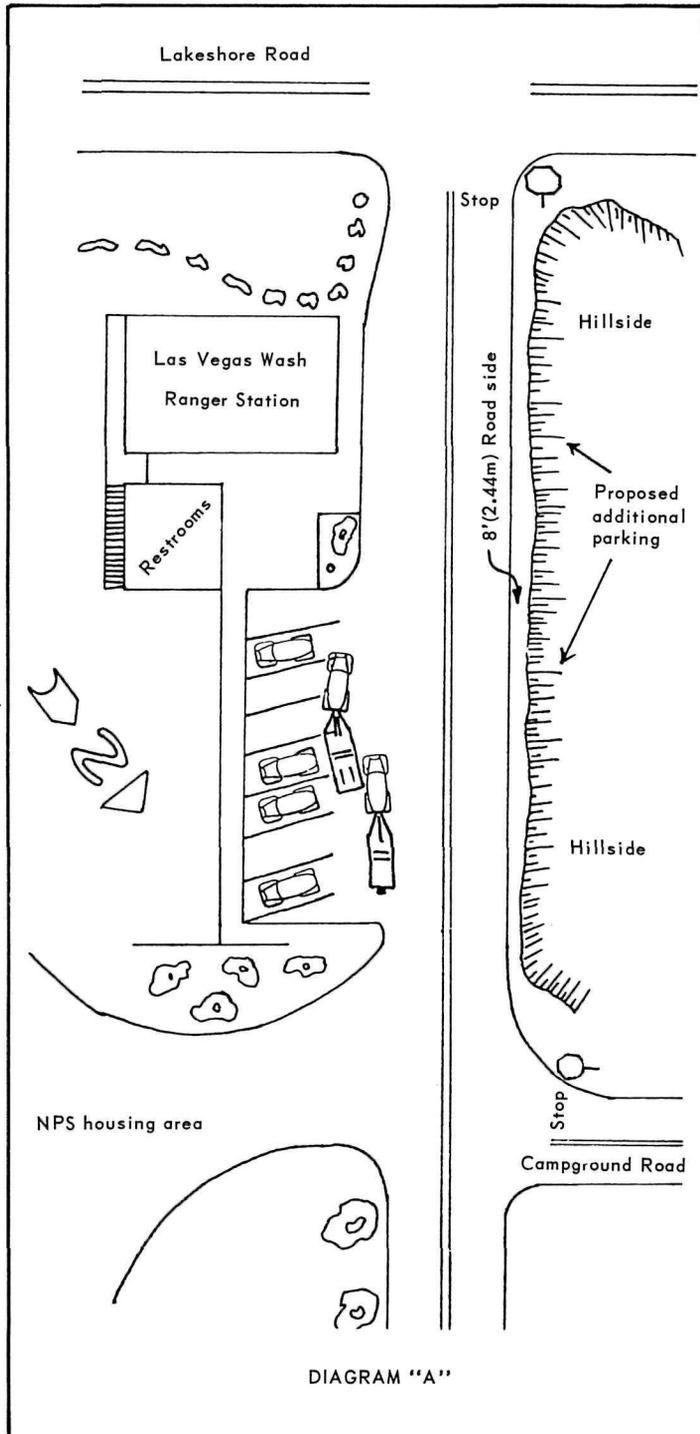
# Parking Spaces for Boat-Pulling Vehicles

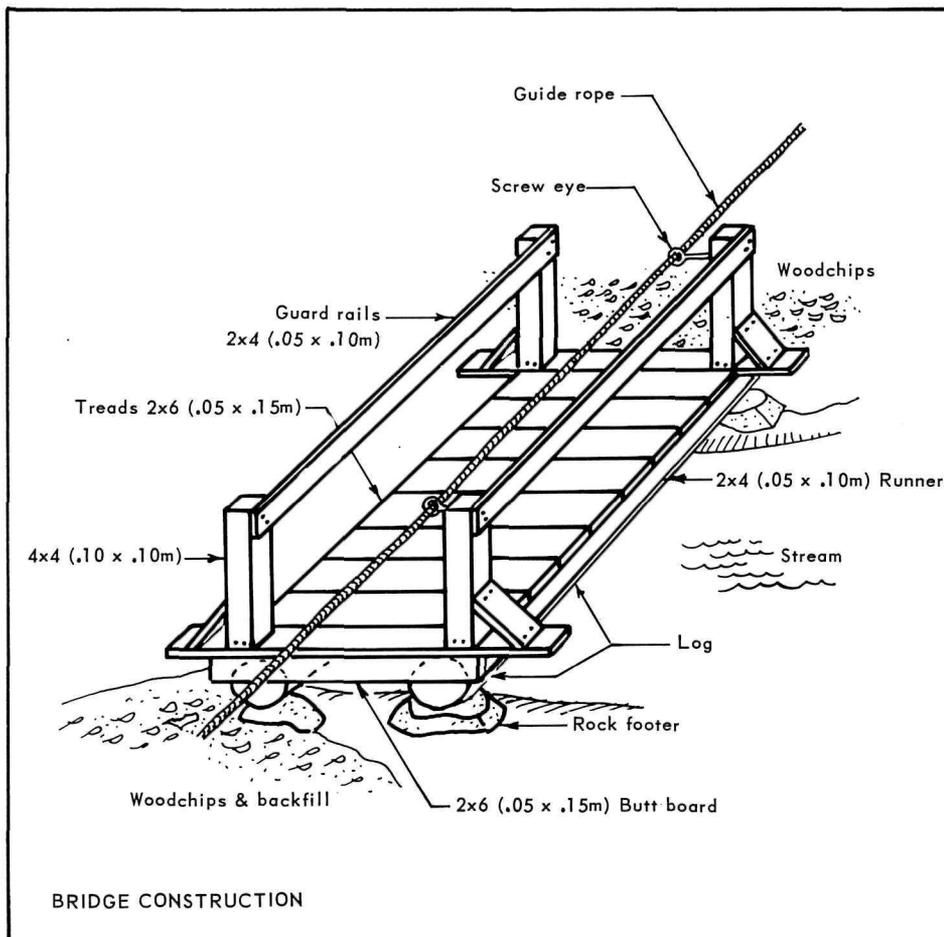
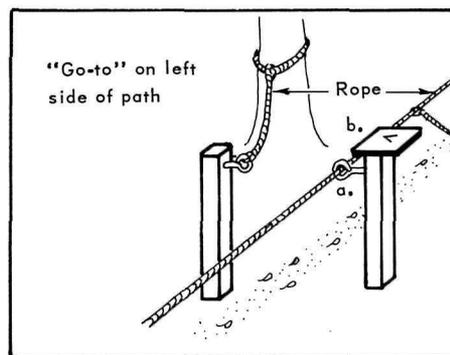
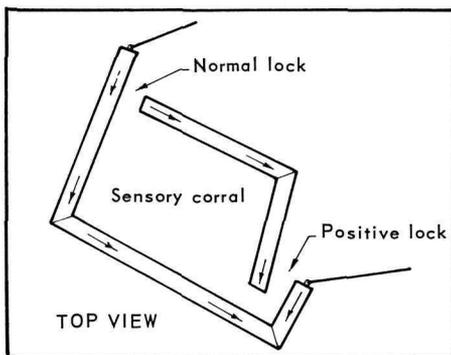
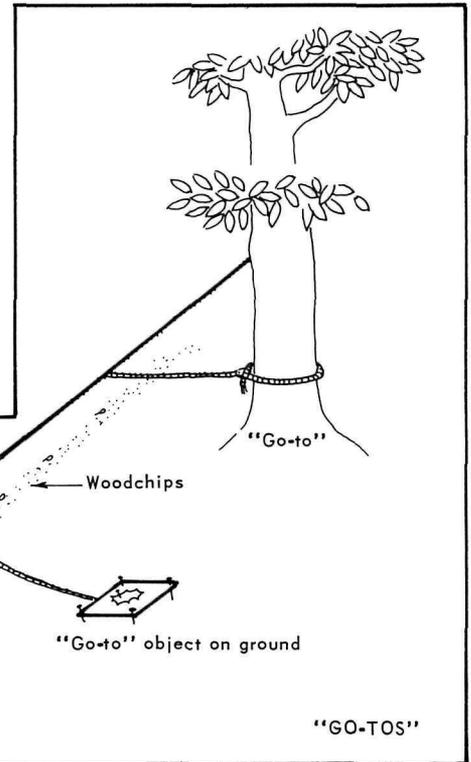
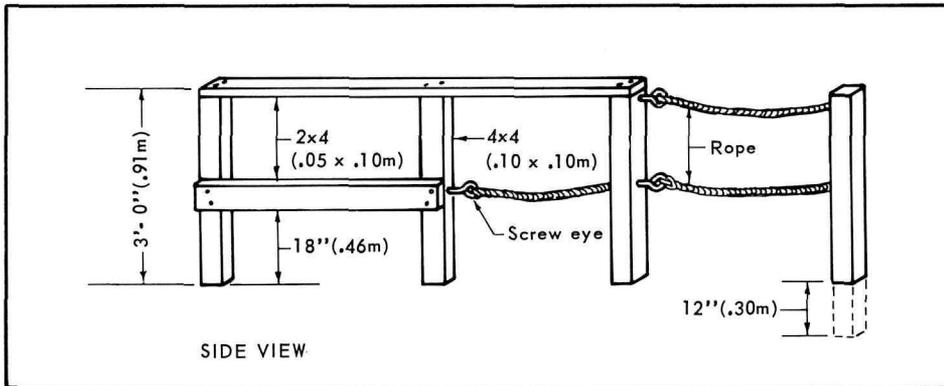
Parallel parking spaces for vehicles pulling boats, trailers, etc. is a new safety feature at Lake Mead National Recreation Area (AZ-NV). Ken C. Garvin, park ranger at Lake Mead, saw a need to expand parking facilities to ac-

commodate these vehicles as increasing numbers of persons made "one last stop" at the ranger station before departing the area for home. After the west side of the road was selected as being most conducive to expansion, the road shoulder was widened 4 feet (1.22 m). This allowed approximately 300 feet (91.44 m) for parallel parking, leaving

room for visibility and safety at the intersections. A sign informed visitors of the designated parallel parking area.

Garvin received a \$50 NPS incentive award for this suggestion.





### Challenging Innovative Rope Trail (continued from p. 9)

focus on and interact with the environment is the "go-to." This is nothing more than a rope which connects the guide rope to an object located adjacent to the trail.

On traditional rope trails, objects not brushed against are objects not experienced. "Go-tos" connect users with off-trail experiences. One end is tied to the guide rope, the other to the object. The beauty of the "go-to" is that when the object shows signs of wear or abuse, the "go-to" can be removed altogether or simply moved, allowing the object to recover.

For additional safety, John R. Weber of the Architectural Transportation Barriers Compliance Board suggests a form of tactile cueing to alert participants to any upcoming hazards along the path. Weber recommends tying a knot, or a series of knots, in the guide rope just before such obstacles as a step onto a bridge or an exposed tree root. This physical warning or cue is a simple and effective safety precaution that requires minimal effort and will not detract from the visitor's trail experience.