

# The Signpost

May - June  
1992

## Cultural Diversity in Our Parks

by Larry Baird  
Moreno Valley Parks & Recreation  
Advisory Committee

At the recent Park Ranger Conference, I attended several seminars. One of the most interesting and useful dealt with dealing with people from different cultures.

We meet different cultures and notice differences but often don't understand the reasons for those differences.

A good example is the Japanese tourists. The entertainment industry has stereotyped these folks as picture-taking souvenir-buying zealots, but why?

At the conference we learned that it is a custom before a journey, all the person's friends have a party and gives gifts. Another party is held after the trip and the tourist is expected to show pictures of where they have been. The traveler also brings back gifts for their friends of equal value to those they received before the trip.

So, what appears to be a unique and sometimes comical behavior is an important part of Japanese life.

By understanding the diverse peoples in our parks we become better prepared to serve them.

## The Conference Is Coming

That's right, the next PRAC—CSPRA Annual Conference is now in the planning stages. The site and dates are selected, March 3-7, 1993 at the Santa Clara Biltmore. All the other details need to be worked out. Details such as session topics and themes, speakers and touring sites. This is your opportunity to get involved and be part of a great event.

If there a subject that has been overlooked at past conferences, now is the time to bring these ideas up.

If anyone is interested in helping, contact Doug Bryce at (916) 383-2530 or drop a line to P. O. Box 292010, Sacramento, CA 95829-2010.



# From the Presidents' Desk

## "Region 5 and Beyond"

By Christopher W. George

One of the hardest things for me as a supervisor is to deal with individuals who often have problems within my agency. Like most, I often wish that things could run smoothly and people would get along. Unfortunately, I know that this is not realistic and problems do occur with people.

Even within PRAC problems arise which often causes pain and disharmony. Such is the case with Region 5. Region 5 has been of special interest to PRAC due to all the new interest in park ranger programs and the expansion of ideas and formats. Region 5's membership has been growing at a considerable rate mainly due to the hard work of PRAC Vice President Jeff Ohlfs and until just recently, Director Brent Mason.

It is often difficult to be so dedicated to a profession like ours because it requires large amounts of time and energy. Often the people elected to the position of Board Member for PRAC get bogged down with issues and problems in their own agency that at times seem overwhelming. (I can attest to this myself!) With drive and dedication, we extend our boundaries in an attempt to broaden our own abilities and to assist other rangers and agencies. This is where PRAC comes into play. Every Board Member of PRAC requires a commitment to work together for the common benefit to the association. Often "the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." We all have intentions of going that extra mile and doing well, but for one reason or another this may not occur.

This has been the case with the current developments in Region 5. Brent Mason has been very supportive of PRAC and his commitment to the ranger profession is unquestionable. However problems developed and I believe this was mainly due to a lack of communication on both parts. I believe that Brent's intentions outweighed his abilities to perform the additional duties that required to act as Director. Brent was able to do what he could, but it may have overwhelmed him.

It's difficult to convey such messages to people who I know, that are committed to serve. Due to the strain of these problems, a decision was made for Brent to step down from his position. After Brent heard of the decision he conveyed his mixed emotions, but understood the reasoning. He communicated that his support of PRAC was continuous and his support for the park rangers in his community was undaunted. For this I am grateful. I know that Brent will continue to create a name for himself in the southern area as well as the park ranger field throughout California.

So why write this? Well, for me I want everyone to know that we need to address the needs of all our members regardless of the area or region they may be in. When a part of us has a problem, we all have a problem. I want everyone to know PRAC does care for all your interests and concerns. We are committed to serving you our members, more professionally than we have ever done before. Often we need to sacrifice to achieve, but in the long run we will continue to grow together.

So what of Region 5? Well, a temporary director is being appointed until the next elections take place. Region 5 will continue, as well as the remaining regions of PRAC.

# HIV-AIDS Update

CAL/OSHA has been enforcing compliance with universal precautions for blood borne pathogens for the past three years, using existing laws and regulations. CAL/OSHA will continue to do so until a California Blood-borne Pathogens Standard is in effect, possibly by August or September 1992. Employers and employees in work places where there is occupational exposure to blood or specified body fluids should currently be in compliance with the Center for Disease Control.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standard on Blood-borne Pathogens was released December 2, 1991. Blood-borne pathogens are microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans. These include the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immune-deficiency virus (HIV) which causes AIDS.

The regulations affect employers who have employees with a job related duty to respond in an emergency in a manner that requires patient care.

Employees in this category include: police, firefighters, EMTs, ski patrollers, lifeguards and rangers. The regulations require employers to educate their employees to minimize exposure, make Hepatitis B immunizations available at no cost, provide protective equipment for use in emergencies, such as gloves, masks, etc.



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# IT'S NO DAY AT THE BEACH FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## "THE AGENCY IS STRESSED FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT"

By TOM KENWORTHY, WASHINGTON POST STAFF WRITER  
(REPRINTED FROM THE WASHINGTON POST NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION, APRIL 13-19, 1992)

A panel commissioned to examine the National Park Service on its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary has determined that the agency is so weakened by internal problems and so overwhelmed by outside pressures that it is on the verge of being unable to perform its job of protecting the nation's natural resources.

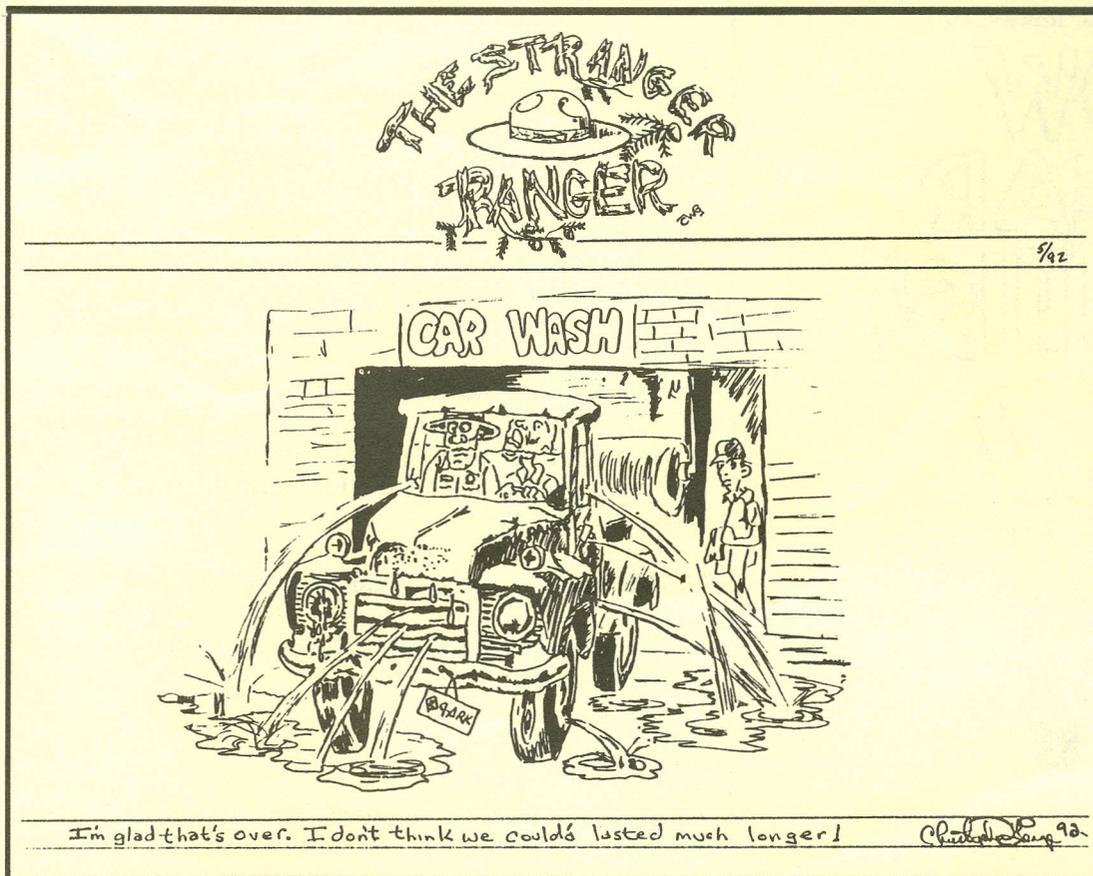
The extraordinarily candid and critical appraisal by a 14-member committee of Park Service officials, conservationists and academics, has created an enormous stir in the agency. Implicitly at least, the 55-page report is an indictment of the senior leadership of the Park Service and its parent, the Interior Department.

"Today the ability of the National Park Service to achieve the most fundamental aspects of its mission has been compromised," concludes the report that was formally presented to National Park Service Director James M. Ridenour last week. "There is a wide and discouraging gap between the service's potential and its current state, and the service has arrived at a crossroads in its history."

Many of the concerns expressed in the report have been expressed before. For example, it is no secret that while the number of park visitors has increased 25 percent in the past nine years, the agency's budget has stayed flat in constant dollars. Or that congressionally sponsored "park barrel" projects such as the expensive

"Steamtown" railroad history project in Pennsylvania, drain resources from traditional park activities. Or that some parks are struggling to cope with outside pressures such as proposals to drill for oil and gas on the outskirts of Montana's Glacier National Park.

But the report is the most sweeping and comprehensive look at park service operations in many years. It is particularly critical of how the agency treats its employees, who are increasingly called on for sophisticated tasks of inter-



preting and protecting park resources but who "confront an organization that repeatedly frustrates their development, professionalism and initiative."

The report is the final step in a lengthy examination of the service's problems and potential that was guided by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. It sprang directly from a 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary symposium last fall in Vail, Colorado, during which several hundred Park Service employees and outsiders rigorously examined the organization's performance and openly complained about a lack of forceful leadership at the top and in the upper levels of the Interior Department.

As government-sponsored documents go, the "Vail Agenda" is exceptionally frank and unforgiving.

It portrays an agency hobbled by budgetary problems, poor pay, morale and training. It depicts the Park Service as increasingly ill-equipped to defend itself on Capitol Hill, protect the park resources from external threats, cope with huge increases in visitors, conduct scientific research and interpret its parks and sites for the public.

The report represents a major challenge to Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan Jr. and Ridenour, who oversee a budget of \$1.4 billion, 12,000 employees and 359 parks, historic sites, monuments, battlefields and other properties. Both men pledged during the Vail conference that they would not shy from implementing the findings and recommendations.

Despite those pledges, park service employees say there is considerable anxiety in the agency about whether senior officials have the stomach and political will to overhaul the service.

"The excitement this is generating inside is extraordinary because it tells it like it is," says one Park Service official who requested anonymity. "The question is, what next? The issue here is the absence of leadership."

Ridenour, who has been briefed on the report,

says that he has begun to implement some of the recommendations, such as creation of a strategic planning office, and that he is confident he will receive the political support of Lujan and other senior officials.

"It's a very good report," Ridenour says. "It doesn't hold back any punches. It really gives us an outline for where they think we should be going."

### Among the finding:

- Park Service employees are extraordinarily dedicated, but the agency is hurt by a lack of educational standards, poor training, "eroding professionalism" and "politicized decision making."

- The Park Service is not living up to its mandate of educating the public and interpreting its sites, in part because of budget problems and in part because of a lack of staff professionalism. "The Park Service is in danger of becoming merely a provider of 'drive through' tourism, or perhaps merely a traffic cop stationed at scenic, interesting or old places," the report says.

- The Park Service must be more aggressive in defending its park environments against threats from activities outside park boundaries. Particularly in the Rocky Mountain West, parks face pressure from commercial and recreational development and such resource extraction activities as mining and logging outside their boundaries.

- The Park Service has lost control of its destiny by not exercising stronger leadership particularly on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers increasingly divert scarce resources to pet projects with little nation value. "The Park Service is variously seen as run and overrun by Congress, the White House, the secretary of the Interior, private interest groups or public interest groups," the report says.

- The Park Service has almost no scientific and research capability to back up its resource protection policies. "The National Park Service is extraordinarily deficient in its capacities to generate, acquire, synthesize, act upon and articulate to the public sound research and scientific information," the report concludes.

# HOLD YOUR HORSES

by Keith Willis

LAKE KAWEAH PARK RANGER

(REPRINTED FROM PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT FOR THE ARMY CORPS  
SACRAMENTO DISTRICT, APRIL 1992)

What exactly does a park ranger do? You wouldn't believe all of it.

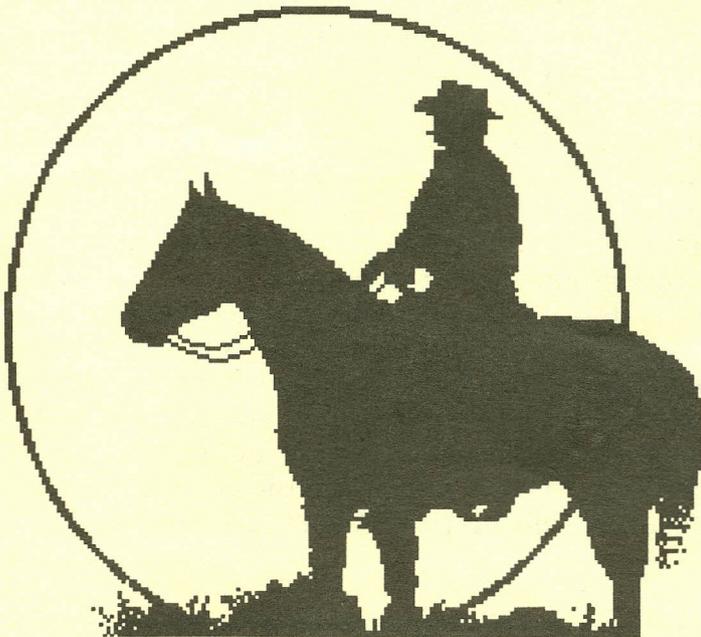
Some weeks ago, after a day of quiet rangership at Lake Kaweah, I received a phone call at quitting time. Our campground hosts reported that they had a panicked man in need of assistance.

He had been riding horseback on the north side of the lake, and his valuable horse had gotten wedged in a 12-foot deep rock crevice. His 9-year old daughter was with the horse by herself, looking after the animal. They were between Horse Creek Campground and the Slick Rock Recreation Area (both aptly named, it suddenly seemed)

The campground hosts and I discussed the situation, trying our best to visualize it, then decided to call for help.

But whom do you call for a steed stuck in the rocks? Is a AAA card good for horses?

We first tried Pat's Towing, but couldn't make contact.



We then tried the nearest sheriff's deputy, but couldn't reach him. It was his day off.

We went back to calling tow trucks, but without luck.

I tried the sheriff's office in Visalia, the largest town in the county, while the campground hosts called 911.

Finally we located the local deputy, and he volunteered to come out and help, even though it was his day off.

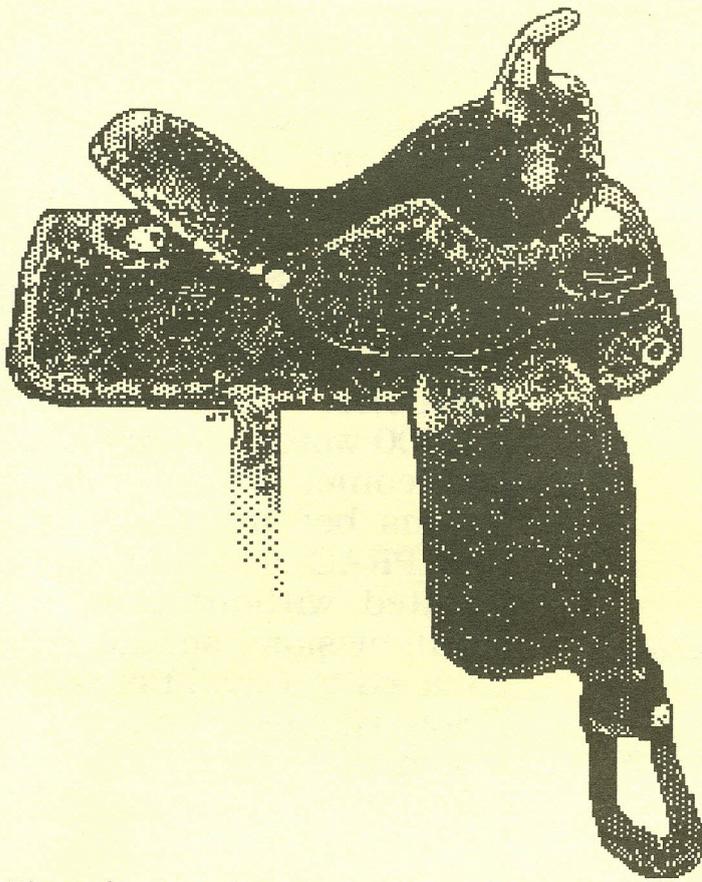
He first scouted the Kaweah River bank in the area to see if his vehicle could cross the river. It couldn't.

He then called some local horsemen, and they said they'd get there as soon as they could.

Meanwhile, the hosts and I opened a gate at Slick Rock and drove to the general area of the rock-bound equine. The deputy with us, we walked to the river's edge. We could see the horse on the opposite shore, wedged in a large rock crevice that opened toward the river.

The horsemen arrived well after dark, showing up with three horses and a supply of rope. They parked their vehicles and horse trailers at Slick Rock's beach, then saddled up, mounted their noble beasts, and crossed the river to the scene of distress.

Their first try at pulling the horse out ended with the horse upside down, on its back, hooves sticking straight up in the air, motionless. All observers on our side of the river assumed that the horses' time had come. (A camera here with a long lens and really strong flash would surely have won next years Corps photo contest—open category, of course.)



It was lying motionless, and appeared dead. We assumed that this time for sure the end had come.

The cowboys took the ropes and hobbles of the expired animal. It then bounded to its feet and pranced around, as ready for a quarter-mile track. The cowboys heaved another sigh of relief.

The cowboys headed back across the river, and loaded their horses in trailers. The deputy thanked them for their work and, it is believed the rider who temporarily lost his horse when it got in the wrong groove will host a party for the heroes.

The weary horse with skinned-up legs was given some painkiller and loaded in a trailer with its companion horse for the ride home.

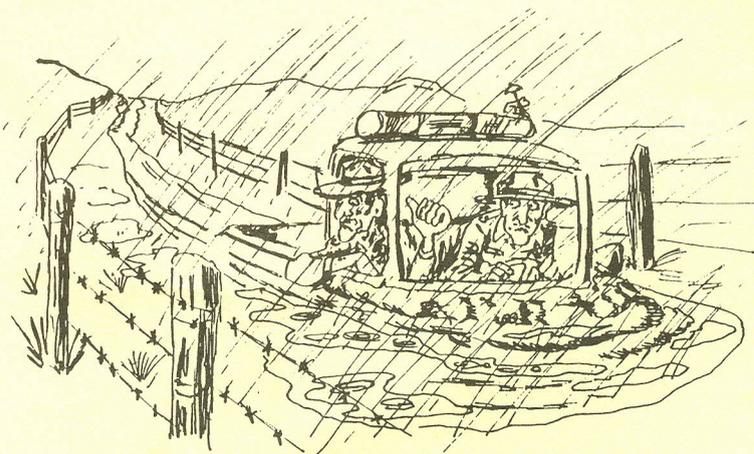
By then it was about 9:30 P.M. The campground hosts, the deputy and I called it a day—and a night—and headed for home.

The riders on the other side of the river didn't give up, and gave the horse another big pull. This brought the animal to life, kicking and snorting as the three-horsepower yank brought it partway out. The beast was now hanging about halfway up the crevice wall.

The horse was no longer wedged in the narrow bottom of the fissure, and the owners of the \$2500 horse heaved a sigh of relief.

The cowboys kept working, and several more heroic tries accomplished the incredible. The prized animal came sliding up and out of the deep crevice.

## THE STRANGER FRANGER



Try Reverse! Leroy.

Chick Deery '92

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David Brooks  
City of Santa Cruz, Water  
Department  
(408) 336-2948

Office Manager

Doug Bryce  
Office (916) 383-2530  
Fax (916) 387-1179

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Park Rangers Association of California  
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