



Inside Track on the Trails Workshop

by Bill Trunick

"Watch your dimes." "Hand me the Abney please." Do you have earth stakes to hold this jute?" These are just a few of the comments I overheard at the trails workshop on October 19,

held at Foothill Regional Park in Windsor. The workshop was held in cooperation with Sonoma County Regional Parks and the Park Rangers Association of California.

The workshop was well attended with over twenty people attending. We had people from Ukiah on the north to a ranger from Escondido in the south. Others included representatives from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Marin Municipal Water District, West Valley College, and Sonoma Regional Parks.

The four instructors were kept busy supervising the work, instructing, answering questions, giving helpful hints and personal insights. Each of the participants received a guide of over 20 pages of text, vocabulary, charts, and a bibliography to help them remember their experience.

We had four break out sessions in the afternoon which was the hands on part of the workshop from 1-5pm. The sessions were: Surveying and Flagging the Trail; Waterbar Maintenance and Installation; Cutting the Trail Tread; and Trail Restoration.

The surveying and installation session covered the equipment and procedure to lay out a trail with an ideal slope. We used abneys, clinometers, and a slope board to measure out a re-routing of an existing trail to a location with a more gradual slope and better vistas.

The waterbar maintenance and installation session had teams install 4x6x8 boards along the trail where evidence of erosion marred the trail. Grade dips and inside ditching techniques and applications were shown and explained by the instructor, Russ Harrison. Russ works for Sonoma County Regional Parks in the Central Division. Luckily we had some rains so the digging was not as hard as it could have been in order to get the 5-inches of the waterbar into the ground for proper installation.

(Story continues on page 3.)

1995 California Parks Conference

This years CSPRA—PRAC Workshop becomes the California Parks Conference with the addition of State Park Peace Officers Association of California, California State Park Superintendent's Association, the State Park Maintenance Supervisors Association and the League of California Non-profit Association.

The lovely California Wine Country will host the 1995 California Parks Conference, March 6-10, 1995. The location of this fun and informative gathering will be at the Santa Rosa Doubletree Hotel. The festivities will begin on Monday, March 6 with a golf tournament and tours. The information will start flowing on Tuesday morning March 7, with keynote speaker, sessions and workshops presented by experts in the fields of park operations, interpretation, resource management, and public safety. The theme of the conference is California Connections and the keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Carlos Schwantes from the University of Idaho. Dr. Schwantes will discuss cultural landscapes and the connections among and between culture, the land and parks. The wine should start flowing at the conclusion of each day's sessions, and at the banquet on Thursday evening, with speaker Bill Dempsey of the Nature Conservancy. His topic is "Making Friends with Old Adversaries." In addition to the numerous one hour sessions, there will be two panel discussions. One panel is considering predator/bear management and includes an archaeologist expert on prehistoric bear distribution in California. The other panel will discuss private land trusts and parks.

Come to Santa Rosa in March and remake friends with old acquaintances. Travel to the world of famous wineries, redwood groves and rugged costal seascapes, and join in with other park professionals to learn and share ideas.

From the President's Desk

By Pam Helmke

It is with a bit of trepidation and a great deal of enthusiasm that I begin my tour as president of this association. I must admit that I am a bit worried about what waits ahead for me. My predecessor was a bit too eager to vacate the position.

I would like to begin by thanking our retiring board members who have worked so hard over the last few years. In particular, our past president Bob Donohue deserves our greatest thanks. He has given many hours and driven hundreds of miles over the last two years to speak to many government agencies trying to protect park ranger positions. I would like to personally thank Dave Lydick, who has given so much of his time to PRAC. Bill Trunick and Ron Slimm will be completing their terms and have earned a well deserved rest. Each of these people have worked hard over the last two years to make PRAC a more vital organization and they deserve the thanks of our entire membership.

Beginning in 1995, the Board will be composed of returning members Ken Miller from Region 2, Kelly Bryne from Region 4; new members Chris Bramham from Region 1, Dave Sloan from Region 2, and Paul Pettit from Region 5. I hope that each of you will take the time to welcome them and offer your support.

1995 will bring new and exciting challenges to all of us. I wish each of you a prosperous new year and look forward to working with the board and the membership to make PRAC a stronger, more active association.

Dues Reminder

It is the first of a new year and that means that all memberships need to be renewed.

That's right. **Dues are Due!**

Everyone should have received a renewal notice a few weeks ago. If you don't remember where it got to just use that form on the back of every *Signpost*.

Be sure to renew today so you don't miss out on issues of the *Signpost*, workshops or other events. It even supports your profession!



Trails Workshop News

(Continued from page 1.)

The cutting of trail tread session was taught by the local trail master, Ted Kerfoot. Ted has worked for the California Conservation Corps for over 15 years. Ted had his teams recutting the tread and backslope of a trail that was not up current standards. Picks, McCloeds, shovels, and rock bars were actively used to get the trail properly shaped.

Trail restoration was guided by Mark Ortiz, also formerly of the CC.C. The teams roughed up the soil, planted seed, put straw over it and then put jute netting on tip to hold it all in place on the slope.

Although it was not the intent of the workshop to make people expert trail makers, everyone left with a bit more knowledge and respect for the entire process of building and maintaining trail.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Mike Faaborg, park Ranger IV for his help with Sonoma County Regional Parks co-sponsoring the workshop. A special thanks to Russ Harrison and Ted Kerfoot, and Mark Ortiz in putting in many hours of planning meetings to make this workshop the success that it was. Thanks also to all those who attended for your enthusiasm and participation.

Park Law Enforcement & Ranger Institute February 26 – March 2, 1995

The park Law Enforcement and Ranger Institute is a program of the Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources of Michigan State University.

The Institute is a practical education program designed for visitor and resource security personnel, administrators and policy makers. The inclusion of both law enforcement and ranger in the Institute name reflects the involvement of certified and non-certified personnel in enforcement, education and management concerning visitors and resources.

The Institute has basic and advanced sections. The basic section is designed for those relatively new to

recreation law enforcement and security. It is also excellent for administrators and policy makers who supervise certified enforcement or ranger personnel, but do not have that background. The advanced program is for those with more experience or those who have the basic program. We recommend that both be taken in a two-year sequence.

The basic and advanced program begins Sunday, February 29, 1995 with registration from 6:00 – 7:00 PM and a welcoming reception following. Education sessions are Monday through Thursday (2/27 – 3/2) ending with a recognition banquet Thursday evening. MSU's newly renovated Kellogg Center for Continuing Education in East Lansing, Michigan,

a 167 room hotel and conference facility, will be the Institute location. The scenic 5,000 acre MSU campus surrounds the center and provides many opportunities for recreation.

Enrollment is limited for the basic and advanced section. Tuition is \$350 for each program. Registration must be received by February 5, 1995.

For further information, contact Chuck Nelson at (517) 353-5190 or FAX (517) 432-3597. Don Watstein, the PLEA Liaison for PRAC can also provide more information and answer questions at (805) 584-4445 or FAX (805) 526-7648.

Low Angle Rescue Training – This Spring!

In April of 1995 PRAC and West Valley College will be presenting an 8 hour field and classroom session on low angle rescue. The location will be somewhere in the south San Francisco Bay Area. Topics will include patient packaging, equipment, and raising and lowering systems. More information concerning the exact date and location will be in the next *Signpost*. By the time you read this article the date and location will most likely have been set so give me a call for more information and to sign up. Class size will be limited to twenty so sign up soon. See you there. Ken Miller (408) 866-1240.



Politics in Parks

by Ken Miller

Boy oh boy what an exciting topic. ZZZZZZ. Politics are certainly not why I choose to work in parks but I do have to deal with them on a daily basis at work. I'm sure that the rest of you have to as well.

If you work for a government agency or even a large private organization you will have to deal with the politics. I find the politics usually unpleasant and also find that they often times influence the decisions that I have to make at work. It also seems that the decisions made due to political pressures are not the choices that I personally would like to make.

I recently had the opportunity to hear Mallory Smith, a Public Affairs Officer for the National Park Service, speak on dealing with political pressures when working in parks. She made some interesting points and shared some coping mechanisms

that I think are worthwhile for PRAC'S members.

Politics and political pressure can come in many forms. There are politics between management and field staff, from a board of directors or park commission, city council or county board of supervisors, private special interest groups, and from the state and federal level on up to the President of the United States. I'm certain that there are politics in everyone's agency from at least one of these levels. Mallory shared a story about working with assistants to a politician who told her flat out that their only job was to make the politician look good. They were only interested in park matters if it made him look good. I personally would not enjoy working in those conditions.

How do you cope with working with people who do not share the same

agenda that you have? Communication is the key. Invite higher-ups to your park to spend time with you and familiarize them with issues that are important to you. They can also share issues with you that are important to them. Do not be surprised if they don't take you up on the invitation. At least you have established an open door and you are in a better situation than if you hadn't offered an invitation.

Use tactical communication techniques for clear communicating between political levels. Get training in **Verbal Judo** or **Verbal Victories** that allow you to stick to the issues and to be flexible. Try to not take work stresses and politics home with you. Realize that politics in parks are a fact of life due to our democratic government system. There is no avoiding them so you might as well learn to work effectively with them.

Crime In Parks Prompts New Policy Rancho Simi Decides to Arm Rangers

by Lt. Don Watstein,
PLEA Liaison

The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board has decided that its Simi Valley and Oak Park Rangers will carry handguns as they patrol the parks in Simi Valley and Oak Park.

The purpose of providing rangers with guns is because they may encounter a situation where deadly force is required for their survival.

For more information, contact Lt. Don Watstein.

California Park Conference

(CSPRA-PRAC Conference)

March 6-10, 1995
Doubletree Inn
Santa Rosa, California

We will be joined by the:
State Park Peace Officers Association of California, State
Park Maintenance Supervisors Association, California
State Park Superintendents Association, League of
California Non-Profit Association

Teens become temporary rangers

Local camp combines hard work with the outdoors

By Steven T. Jones

Reprinted from the Auburn Journal, July 17, 1994

Amid the towering pines and forest plant life near Foresthill, they joked and laughed, worked and sweated, this dirty band of teenagers in work boots and hard hats.

Today, the project was building a "guzzler," — a water storage facility and trough for wildlife — deep in the forest. Yesterday, it was hydrology and soil sampling work. There are many jobs to be done in the forest. and over the last week, they did most of them.

The group of four girls and 11 boys are all Placer County residents, all interested in careers as rangers, firefighters, field scientists, or related pursuits — as long as it means being outdoors and working hard.

Even after being together for just six days, they oozed camaraderie, a closeness developed through working together on projects every day and living together in U.S. Forest Service barracks in French Meadows.

They were brought together by the Options Career Camp, a program in its second year that was held over the past week. It is co-sponsored by Placer County Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Services and the Forest Service.

The program was conceived and is led by Debbie Di Ianni, the prevention specialist with Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Services. The idea is kids need viable career options and goals if they are to avoid destructive behaviors.

"What we're trying to do is provide some opportunities for youth," she said, "It's getting their juices going and getting them thinking about what they want to do."

In an age when budgetary shortfalls mean decreased career counseling for students and when corporate downsizing and computerization cuts off many traditional mainstream career

opportunities, Di Ianni said the program fills a void.

And unlike many such vocational programs, Options Career Camp doesn't target dropouts or "high-risk" teens. Instead, it simply seeks young men and women who want a forest for an office, like Heather Wiegiers.

"This is what I want to do for a career," this 16-year-old Roseville resident said as she shoveled dirt away from the guzzler.

Wiegiers — a tall, blonde dubbed "Smiles A Lot" by her fellow campers — said she has always loved the outdoors and wanted to be a ranger, and last week's exposure to life in the forest only multiplied that desire.

Like many others at the camp, 17-year-old Rocklin resident Shane Marshall wants to be a firefighter, one of the "hot shots" or "smoke jumpers" that does battle with ranging blazes that feed off forest fuel.

"I'm really interested in firefighting, and I've learned a lot out here," Marshall said, particularly referring to Monday's fire training. "Everyone has been real willing to come together and learn something."

Kim Gundestrup also wants to be a firefighter. Despite projects and lessons everyday this 17-year-old Roseville ball of energy wanted more.

"I like working. I wish we had more to do. I like to challenge myself and not sit on my butt. You get a good feeling when you work really hard, to the point of muscle failures. And I like the woods," Gundestrup said.

While some, like Zak Gulling of Dutch Flat, used the camp as a means of gauging if life in the forest was for them, others, like Jason Brown, used it as a catapult into a lifestyle they know they want.

Brown, an 18-year-old recent high school graduate from Rocklin, has his sights set on a forestry or wildlife management program at a four-year university. He appreciated the honesty from rangers that while their jobs are rewarding, they are not always easy.

"Everyone's been realistic about it not being a steady job. You get thrown around a lot," Brown said.

Karen Durand, who helps coordinate the Career Options Camp for the U.S. Forest Service, said such programs are of great benefit to the organization.

"There's a lot of different jobs out there, and I don't think people know everything we do," she said.

The program is free to participants, who must apply and win acceptance, and costs the county about \$2,000. But Di Ianni said that is a small price to pay for exposing county teenagers to careers about which they might otherwise lack information and access.

"In a county like Placer, this is an employment opportunity right in their backyard," Di Ianni said.



Membership Builds Strength

by Patty Walker

There are about 150 members currently in PRAC. What does this mean in terms of a human organization? What effect does PRAC have in the larger scheme of things?

Well, figure every city and county has a parks and/or recreation department. There are several special districts or other agencies. The number of state and national parks in California is also quite high. So the total number of park rangers, open space rangers, or park maintenance workers in the state would presume to be a fairly large number. Yet the membership of PRAC stays low. When one talks to the tax paying public, they still don't have an idea what our job is that they are paying for. The people running the political process don't have a clue either as witnessed by repeated cuts and budget shrinking. As the job of park rangers becomes more complex, it gets harder to describe what we do in easy, thirty sound bites. It is still understood what lawyers, roofers, and secretaries do. How do we get across what it is we do?

Most park people I talk to about PRAC are astonished that it even exists. There is something in park work that makes you think you have to go it alone and there is no help out there. How does PRAC build a network out to the outposts of the park world? (There certainly seems to be a network for everything these days—surf the Internet lately?) How does one build an attitude in the general public work force of understanding and support for the park rangers/workers?

Well the answer to all these questions is you! (How did you know I'd say that?) We know that you are already converted or why else would you be reading this? What is needed is more, **more more: more** ideas, more energy,

more directions and movement. In short, **PRAC needs you to find more new members.** Just like that obnoxious commercial, "I talked to two people, they talked to two people and they talked to two...." If everyone reading this was able to get two new members before the March conference, PRAC could grow and get stronger. Think about what your job was when you started this crazy road. Think about what it is now. Wouldn't you like to share those trials and tribulations with someone new at the conference? Remember the ripple effect: new members can and do revitalize any human endeavor. There is most definitely power in numbers.

Think about what you get out of PRAC now. Do you want that expanded? Are there other changes you would see? Use this time in the new year with the new officers coming on board to send forth your ideas and problems. Solutions are good too, if you have them. Think about how new members with new energy could help PRAC.

How do you want PRAC to be in the next millennium? Now is the time to start looking forward to that. What are parks, park rangers, maintenance workers and supervisors going to look like then? What sort of public support will there be? Or will we all be working on contract? These subjects and just plain survival are what PRAC stands for now and in the future. How it happens and with how much vitality depends on the membership. Maybe if we get this membership drive rolling, we can get the PRAC car to where you want to go! Go get your two new members now before the March Conference!

Remember—It's Not Just A Job! It's A Profession!

Top Ten Reasons to Join Park Rangers of California

(David Letterman never had it so good!)

- 10) Best available (& affordable) training related to the field of park work.
- 9) Annual conferences packed with information, solutions and ideas to take back to work.
- 8) Officers to call for professional help and representation at council meetings, budget meetings, and other timely advice.
- 7) A newsletter filled with information about park problems, solutions, legislative watch, job notices and even some fun stuff.
- 6) Student support and scholarships.
- 5) Lively events like picnics, ranger games, (no not reindeer games!) and campouts.
- 4) Information on the latest equipment, their proper uses and rules.
- 3) Wild parties at breakfast by the Lake Sonoma Rangers. (Sorry guys! It was fun!)
- 2) (*Can I really stretch this out??*) Best darn bunch of folks to dance with I ever met.
- 1) David Letterman isn't a member so you can still steal his stuff!

Phew! I made it! Send in your top ten list of reasons to belong to PRAC. We'll print them here for everybody's use in the membership drive. Thanks!!

A Park Ranger's New Year Resolutions

From Kelly Bryne, City of Los Angeles

As a brand new year approaches us, it is time to reflect on our personal and professional lives and resolve to better ourselves. Park Rangers across the state already do a fine job but a little improvement couldn't hurt. Here is my list for 1995, feel free to add or delete, and have great year.

1) I resolve to become more involved with PRAC (Park Rangers Association of California and the creators of this newsletter). This is a hint, especially those of you in Region 4. Take a look on the directory on the back and give your regional director a call. You don't have to volunteer any time, just bring in one new member or become a member yourself. (Major hint to those in the City of Los Angeles!!)

2) I resolve to try and get along better with my co-workers. (But this doesn't mean I'll drop the harassment suit.)

3) I resolve to not bad mouth my

General Manager. (This may not last as long as I would like.)

4) I will work to better myself as a Park Ranger by getting more involved with professional organizations such as PRAC (see #1).

5) I will eat right and exercise daily. (The old standard resolution and should last two weeks longer than #3.)

6) I will phone or write my regional director of PRAC with ideas on how to improve the association and I will volunteer to help out. (See back of newsletter.)

7) I resolve to be patient with the tax paying park patrons who complain they never see you at the park, want you to solve all their problems, and then sue you when you arrest them for breaking the laws of the park.

8) I resolve to not let it bother me when I see a homeless woman

feeding herself out of the garbage can, a stray dog in the park obviously beaten by a previous owner, teenagers who don't give a damn about anyone's life and transients so mentally ill they can't give a damn about anyone's life. But I also will work to try and improve these conditions in my own little way, no matter how little support I get from the powers that be. (So much for resolution #3.)

9) I resolve to start my Christmas shopping before December 24, 1995.

10) Last but not least, I resolve to try and make PRAC a stronger statewide professional organization. PRAC already offers a newsletter, workshops and a fantastic yearly conference. (This year in Santa Rosa in March.) With your help, PRAC can also offer a job bulletin, affiliation with other professional organizations and whatever else you want as members.

Happy 1995 and good luck with your New Year resolutions!

A Word From The Editor

It has been asked if there is any other way to get articles to me without the bother of finding a postage stamp and a mail box.

The answer, in short is "Yes, Yes, Yes!!"

1) There is always the telephone for those short—"must get it published" articles. 2) We also have a FAX machine. BUT the problem with this is that I must know that a FAX is coming so that my computer is up and running or my answer machine goes nuts. (Sounds like squelch on the radio!)

There is also a third option for you computer hackers out there.

3) E Mail!

I can be reached at three commercial services. The preferred way is on American On Line (AOL) were I regularly dial in. There is also CompuServe and eWorld where I also have accounts.

Here are the addresses;

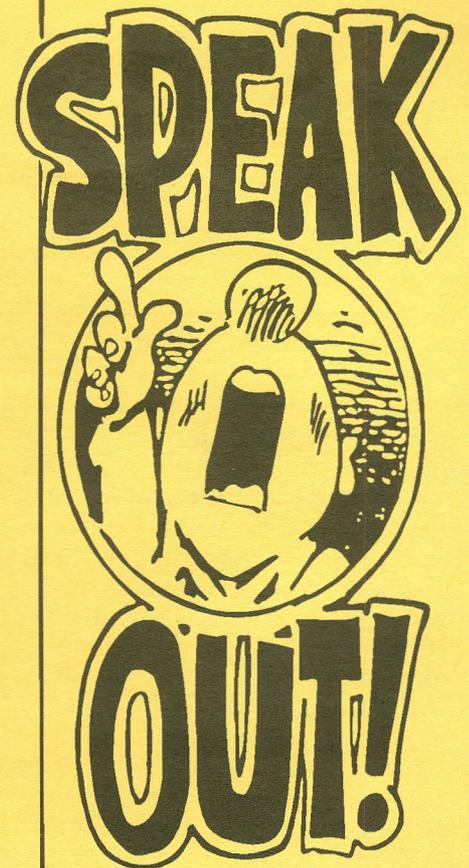
American On Line: DavidB8480

CompuServe: 76516,3440

eWorld: DavidB695

For everyone out there with an Internet connection, use the AOL address.

Thanks and good writing. (Happy New Year!)



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Submissions should be mailed to David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Dr., Ben Lomond, CA, 95005. Information can also be submitted by telephone at (408) 336-2948. Submission deadlines are the last day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

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Membership Application

name _____

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home _____ work _____

Employer or School _____

Job Classification or Major _____

Voting Membership

Regular \$35 _____

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Agency:

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(11-50 persons—5 mailings) \$70 _____

(50+ persons— 10 mailings) \$90 _____

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