



Mountain Lion Seminar Held in San Jose

by Pam Helmke

The San Jose Park Ranger and PRAC recently co-hosted a very informative session on Mountain Lion/Human Interactions at Prusch Park in San Jose. The day-long session was presented by Bill Clark and Steve Torres from the California Department of Fish and Game. They were assisted by local experts Tim Muligan and Dairnen Simpson, Wildlife Management Specialists from Santa Clara County Vector Control District and Henry Coletto, the Wildlife Officer for the Santa Clara County Sheriffs Office.

The morning sessions provided the participants with an over-view of mountain lion biology and natural history along with a brief discussion on California lion management practice over the last 100 years. During the afternoon, the speakers concentrated on techniques for investigating contacts between lions and humans, and discussed case histories for recent lion attacks including two fatal attacks.

The session drew over 40 participants from 19 departments across Northern California. Park Rangers, Park Public Safety Officers, Police and Sheriffs Officers were all represented. Post session surveys and comments reflected the superb quality of instruction provided by the instructors. PRAC hopes to be able to provide a similar session for the Southern California Regions in the fall.

FINANCIAL PLANNING
Workshop Coming This Fall

by Kelly Byrne

In this day and age, you are kidding yourself if you plan on retiring on your retirement plan alone. (Unless you like sleeping on a park bench.) Rangers are not at the top of the highest paid careers but if budgeted correctly, you too can have a comfortable retirement, or college fund or new house or whatever you use money for.

Jamie Fleming is a certified financial planner who is familiar with budgeting a civil service employee's salary. A former cop who knows how to speak to people rather than at them, she will share the basics and then some of getting your finances together. This is not a sales pitch and the sign up fee will benefit PRAC.

Keep watching the Signpost for the upcoming date in the fall. The place will probably be Griffith Park Ranger Auditorium or call your Region Four Director.

Low Angle Rescue Wrap-Up

by Ken Miller

On April 20th. fifteen people spent a full day learning and reviewing their low-angle rescue skills. Kim Aufhauser of West Valley College shared his large amount of knowledge and experience with the group.

In the morning we packaged patients, reviewed knots, and saw a slide show documenting equipment failure in rescue systems. In the afternoon we did a quick review of raising and lowering systems and ran through scenarios where teams had to set up and operate the systems. The training was high energy, informative, and very practical for anyone who could be setting up or involved in operating the systems. The course was a success and I hope that PRAC can offer it again in the future.

Everyone got a large packet concerning the equipment failure information. If anyone is interested in getting a copy of the packet give me a call.

From the President's Desk

Twenty years ago or so, a group of park rangers sat out on a lawn in a Cupertino yard. They discussed ways to develop a professional organization for California's park rangers. From their ideas, dreams and hard work a new professional service organization, the Park Rangers Association of California, began to develop and grow.

Over the years, PRAC has had good times and bad. There were periods where it seemed the organization would cease to exist. Through all the ups and downs, PRAC hung on and association held together by dedicated, caring park professionals. PRAC is now approaching its' 20th birthday and, as the ad says, "we're still going." There are now some 150 members from a variety of agencies throughout the state. We continue to offer quality professional support to members with special needs and offer scholarships and job hotline services. None of this would have been possible without the vision and tenacity of our "Founding Fathers."

Who were those "Lawn Rangers" of 20 years ago? Sitting on that lawn near Stevens Creek County Park were **Tom Smith** (West Valley College & NPS), **Raleigh Young** (Santa Clara County Parks), **Jerry Lawrence** (Palo Alto Parks), **Walt Cacace** (City of Santa Cruz), **Pat Hayes** (City of Fremont), **Rich Wilkens** and **Bill Lawrence** (San Mateo County Parks). Next time you see one of our founders, take a little time to stop and thank them for their effort and commitment. Without their energy and guidance, PRAC wouldn't be here for you.

Pam Helmke

Sparing a Thought for David Douglas

by Phillip Sales

The image of a mighty Douglas Fir on the California coast came to my mind when I visited a former church in Lambeth, London this past summer. The church has been converted into the Museum of Garden History by the Tradescant Trust. Among the exhibits was a display about the plant hunters who voyaged from Great Britain in the last century in search of exotic new plant species. Among them was a Scot, David Douglas (1798 to 1834), a dedicated plant hunter who travelled to Canada, the Eastern United States and the West Coast in search of plants for the Royal Horticultural Society. In his short plant hunting life which lasted only eleven years he made several trips to the North American continent. He travelled alone and often on foot. It is perhaps difficult for us today to think of what this country looked like back then. No roads, few settlements and lots of uncharted territory. Douglas' treks across the continent brought several new species of plant to Europe including *Arbutus menziesii* (Madrone), *Lupinus polyphyllus* (Lupin), *Ribes sanguineum* (Red Flowering Currant), *Cornus nuttallini* (Western Dogwood) and of course the Douglas Fir.

He spent the last five years of his life in the Pacific Northwest, where he survived almost drowning in a canoe mishap, and near starving when he and his Native American guides were forced to eat most of the plant specimens they had collected. His last journey was to Hawaii where he went to recuperate. Unfortunately, while in Hawaii, he met a terrible death by falling into a pit in which an enraged bull was already trapped. So next time you travel up the coast and the trees flash past, spare a thought for David Douglas and the courage and spirit of adventure that introduced this tree to Europe.

As a postscript, the Museum of Garden History's graveyard contains the grave of another plant hunter, the infamous Captain Bligh, whose concern over his cargo of Breadfruit plants led to the Mutiny on the Bounty.

Access to Science Center Education

Some of the most exciting and innovative science education takes place in the education and interpretive programs of parks, reserves, nature centers, museums and other science center settings. Participants are awakened to new worlds of study and enjoyment, and inspired toward further inquiry. With the passage into law of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, all programs that serve the public regardless of how they are funded must be fully accessible. Still, students with disabilities are generally exposed to fewer inspiring science experiences and are less likely to develop an interest in science that they might pursue as a career. With the goal in mind of encouraging the career development in the sciences of students with disabilities, the National Science Foundation has funded a project called Access to Science Center Education.

The targeted audience for the project are rangers, educators, naturalists and interpretive staff throughout California and beyond. The goal is to increase participation and quality of services of visitors with disabilities.

The project is being administered by the California Aquatic Science Education Consortium (CASEC), a consortium of 85 organizations, many of which are science centers. The project will produce a Resource Book that will be available free of charge to all science center educators, and will hold a conference, *Access to Science Center Education* on July 31, 1995 in San Diego, California. It will be held as a pre-conference to the National Marine Educators Association Conference. The resource book and conference will each feature topics of program access, including interpreting the ADA, assistive technology, successful model programs, access to trails and to field experiences, career paths of scientists with disabilities, language and sensitivity issues, existing curricula, instructional strategies and more. For more information about the conference or to request a copy of the resource book, please contact: Jill Shinkle CASEC (805) 893-2739.

Feral Cats in Parks

by Bill Trunick

We have been having problems with feral cats in some of our parks. There has been some misinformation being used by people and groups that are striving to persuade others to their point of view. To remove any emotions from the feral cat vs. natural wildlife debate we obtained some points drawn from scientific studies and field observations by UC Davis.

1) Cats are capable predators. They may affect populations not only of their prey (songbirds, quail, fieldmice, etc.) but of native predators that depend on these prey. (Note, this is true of feral cats and domestic cats that are allowed to roam free outside.)

2) The "catch, neuter, release and feed" programs will not reduce feral cat populations. It does reduce the reproductive capacity but like most mammals, populations are limited by survival. Most kittens of feral cats do not survive to adulthood. Releasing neutered cats will reduce reproductive capacity, but only a few reproductive cats in a population or newly abandoned cats maintain high populations densities.

3) Feeding feral cats, whether neutered or not, will increase local populations of cats. A dependable food source is one of the most important factors in promoting high densities of predators. This artificial food source for cats gibes them an additional advantage over native predators such as hawks and owls which have to rely on only the uncertainties of fluctuating natural food resources.

4) Feral cats at a study site near Bodega Bay ranged of a mile in a single day. Thus a feeding station may increase the risk of predation for birds nesting anywhere with that distance of the station.

5) In Wisconsin, Dr. Stanley Temple estimates that each year in that state, cats kill 19 million songbirds and 140,000 game birds.

The researchers, Peter G. Connors PhD. and Victor Chow PhD. closed their letter with "Decisions concerning domestic or feral cat populations should not be made on the basis of cats alone. Our native wildlife, many of them fascinating, beautiful, or rare, deserve to be protected at least as much."

San Jose Rangers Issued Body Armor

by Pam Helmke

Over the next several weeks Park Rangers in the City of San Jose will be fitted for protective body armor. San Jose Park Rangers working for the Department of Convention, Cultural and Visitor Services (C.C.V.S.), are unarmed and by department policy handle only low level law enforcement contacts. The San Jose Police Department operates a Park Police Detail to back up Park Rangers and provide high level law enforcement services when necessary.

Due to the recent budget cuts and staff reductions San Jose's Park Rangers are often required to work alone in isolated areas of the City. Although violent crime is rare in San Jose's regional parks, the Department, under Director Ellen Oppenheim, has been responsive to the rangers concerns on officer safety issues.

Park rangers met with the Director several months ago and requested that the Department consider issuing body armor to provide an extra margin of safety for uniformed staff. The Director quickly recognized that the rangers had a valid request. Management and field staff worked together to develop a workable policy for issuing, maintenance and wearing of the Department issued body armor. Body armor will be provided to all full and part-time park rangers.

Bicycle Patrol

by Dave Sloan

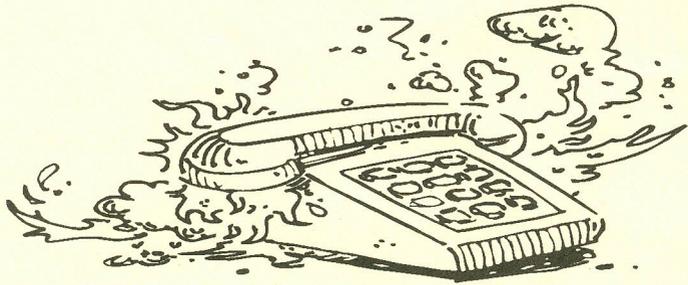
Having just recently completed the POST course on bicycle patrol, I would like to recommend it to anyone who has the chance to attend. The 24-hour course covers the following topics: Proper riding techniques, apprehension techniques, bicycle maintenance, and health issues. The adoption of a bicycle patrol program can prove to be very productive for a ranger program. It can also be a valuable public relations tool.

Instructors taught stair climbing and descension, which can be a little unnerving at first. Riding techniques are used to travel quickly yet maintain energy for the call one is responding to. Pace lines are used for aerodynamics when there is more than one ranger traveling together. Safety consideration when travelling in traffic are covered as are ranger safety issues specific to bike patrol.

The most enjoyable part of the course are the apprehension techniques that are covered. The ranger learns "stealth" techniques for approaching a suspect from the rear. Various slides and panic stops are also covered. For felony situations a take down technique, using the bicycle, is also taught.

Bicycle maintenance and health issues are important topics covered by the course. The ranger learns the major components of the bike as well as how to keep it in good working order for safety. The bikes are relatively easy to maintain and, once purchased, inexpensive to operate.

(Story continues on page 5.)



Hazardous Materials

by Ken Miller

Hey everybody wake up!! Hazardous materials are out there whether you want to acknowledge them or not. Hazardous materials are transported by one out of every twenty vehicles and there's no reason that they couldn't end up in your park or you could become involved in an incident involving them. Dunsmuir and the upper Sacramento River come to mind.

Hazardous materials are defined as any substance or material in a quantity or form that poses an unreasonable risk to life, environment, or property.

I'm not saying that rangers should go out and take care of a hazmat incident on their own. What I am saying is that the stuff is out there and each of us might have the misfortune to be first on scene of a hazmat incident.

There are a number of things rangers can do to prepare themselves for a hazmat incident.

Knowledge is always a good thing to have. Put these items in the back of your mind for the future. The most common hazmat accident involves transportation. Initially many incidents are not reported as hazmat, so what you think might be a simple medical call could be a hazmat. The responders speed of response is often the cause of their injury. **Don't get the tunnel vision that is common at emergencies.** Four agencies are typically involved at a hazmat incident. More agencies means more confusion. I bet most of you have been involved in a confused multi-agency incident. Five gallons or less of a hazardous material do not have to be labelled as a hazmat. A package truck can be full of all types of hazmat and not be labelled as long as there's not more than five gallons of one type. The stuff can still hurt you.

Rangers can do some specific things to protect themselves from hazmats. A first should carry the Department of Transportation hazmat guidebook in their truck. It's small and cheap. Learn to read the D.O.T. placards from the book. Binoculars are also a must. **Finally be aware and use your brain.** When approaching something that you suspect may be hazmat remember uphill, upstream, and upwind. When you come upon a hazmat notify the appropriate response agency and give them good information about the incident. A rangers job is not to take care of the incident but to notify the appropriate agency and not to become a victim themselves. **Be aware and be safe.**

City of Los Angeles Is Hiring, Finally!

by Kelly Byrne

It has taken a long time coming but the city of Los Angeles is finally hiring Park Rangers. Summer time is coming and a few more bodies can certainly help, not that the hiring will be done for the summer of '95 but I'll settle for summer of '96. Park Rangers will be Peace Officers under Penal Code 830.31b and will also receive training in firefighting and environmental education.

If you have been reading the *Signpost* articles from the Region 4 Director the past year then you realize some of the challenges working for a large city. Heck, unless you have been asleep the past year you probably think of Los Angeles as the disaster capital (L.A. has four seasons: floods, fires, riots and earthquakes) that presents new problems for a Park Ranger. So unless you like challenges, don't apply.

Contrary to popular belief, L.A. does have rural areas. The city also has beaches, mountains, museums, senior centers, urban and suburban parks. There is a diversity of culture in the city of Los Angeles that is second to none. This is the main reason I love L.A.. If you like looking at people who all look like their from the same family, don't apply. L.A. is rich in culture and anyone who tries to tell you different is quite ignorant about L.A.

The main reason people would want to work in L.A. is where else can you ski (snowboarding is my choice), and surf all in the same day. Or go hiking and see an off Broadway play all in the same day. Or watch movies being made and be paid \$25 an hour for off-duty rate (another of my favorite reasons to work in L.A.). Think about it, the move may be for you.

**For more information on the City of Los Angeles
Park Ranger position call the Personnel
Department at (213) 847-9760.**

Job Hotline is On-line

PRAC has new member service, the Job Hotline and it is now up and available. Just dial the regular 800 number listed on the back of every *Signpost* (800) 994-2530. You will hear a list of options. Just follow the instructions. That is all there is to it.

Well, not quite. In order to list jobs on this Hotline, we need to know about the jobs that are available. If you know of any jobs or expect to have openings don't forget this service. Just contact Doug Bryce at the same 800 number.

Smitty's Book Report

"Wildlife and Recreationists, coexistence Through Management and Research" Edited by Knight, Richard L., and Gutzwiller, Kevin J. Island Press, Covelo, Washington, 1995

When I first received this book from Island Press my first thoughts were that it just might be "over my head." Some academic volumes seem to sometimes do that to me. They sometimes come across as if the authors are trying to impress people by using as many fancy scientific words and terms as they can. So much so, that you spend most of your reading time looking up words in the dictionary. This is certainly not to say that this type of publication is unwarranted. I guess it all boils down to the audience that you are writing for. As I crept deeper into the depths of this book, I found that it was written and edited for people like you and me. Easy to understand. The text is an edited text. Different people responsible for each chapter. The list of contributors is long, and at a glance, distinguished. The authors come from colleges and universities all over the world, as well as the Fish and Wildlife Service, and other state agencies in the United States.

The book deals with the impacts that recreation has upon wildlife populations. We all like to see wildlife when we visit parks. It is one of those things that will show people what parks are all about. This book tells us that sometimes we may be doing wildlife more harm than good.

The first part of the book lays the ground work in general terms. The human dimensions of human/wildlife management. The book then enters into specifics, like the effects of recreational disturbances on wildlife populations. As I read more deeply into the content of the book, I began to realize that park visitors, that we encourage to come to our parks, can be a huge impact on the lives of birds and other wildlife on our public lands. Part three of the text includes case studies that illustrate the problems of wildlife management and recreation use. It is also im-

portant to glean through the references at the end of each chapter. I found them interesting, and there are resources there that could be used by field level people.

Wildlife and Recreationists, is uniquely put together in a sense that each chapter ends with management alternatives, and a section called "knowledge gaps." The "knowledge gap" section is the first such section I have ever seen in all the books I have read. This sections tell us what we need to know beyond what is presented in the book in order to successfully meet the challenges presented.

It also has dawned on me that this book would make an excellent reference for the serious interpreter. It is this level of park management that might be the salvation of wildlife in America. The book contains great stuff to pass on to visitors. It might make them think twice about sneaking up to a quail nest to take a picture that could cause the mother bird to flush and never return! The book also brought across the importance of having knowledge about what you manage. Do you have a resource inventory of your park? Do you know when some recreational activity might impact nesting birds in your park? This book could open your eyes toward being more sensitive on how you manage your lands. The bottom line is that this book should be in your library.

Just a note about Island Press. If you are not on their mailing list, you should be. It is the only nonprofit organization in the United States whose principle purpose is the publication of books on environmental issues and natural resource management. Island Press is supported through grants by several large foundations. Island Press is located in Covelo California, a small town in Mendocino County.

Be professional. Increase your knowledge. Read!

Bicycle Patrol

(Continued from page 3.)

Rangers must keep themselves in somewhat decent shape to ride on patrol. Nutrition, conditioning, and stretching are all stressed.

The original purchase of quality equipment is essential. Accessories such as the following make the bike an effective tool: a high power headlight/spotlight, equipment bags, and water bottle holders (it is easy to get dehydrated on a bike). Uniforms may also need to be modified when on bike patrol. Shorts, comfortable footwear, sun block, and most importantly a helmet are recommended.

After only a very short time on patrol the ranger will realize that people in the parks are not expecting to see a ranger on a bike. Suspects will not realize that you are

there until you are right next to them. The people that are using the parks legitimately will be more likely to feel comfortable approaching you to discuss park issues or just say hello. Park visitors like seeing a ranger on a bike.

The bikes can be use for bicycle led interpretive programs as well as other public relations programs. School kids enjoy demonstrations of bicycle patrol techniques. When they see a ranger wearing a bike helmet it encourages them to wear one also.

While I do not ride every day, I thoroughly enjoy my time on a bike. I have found it to be productive and rewarding. I get exercise and I get to talk to park visitors whom I probably would not be exposed to if I were on patrol in vehicle. I would encourage any ranger to attend bike patrol training and incorporate it into their program. Getting paid to ride a bike is not a bad deal at all. Just don't go over the bars!

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Local (916) 558-3734
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Fax (909) 657-8496

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DavidB8480@aol.com
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P O Box 292010

Sacramento, CA 95829-2010

(800) 994-2530 FAX (916) 387-1179

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