

1997 Parks Conference Info

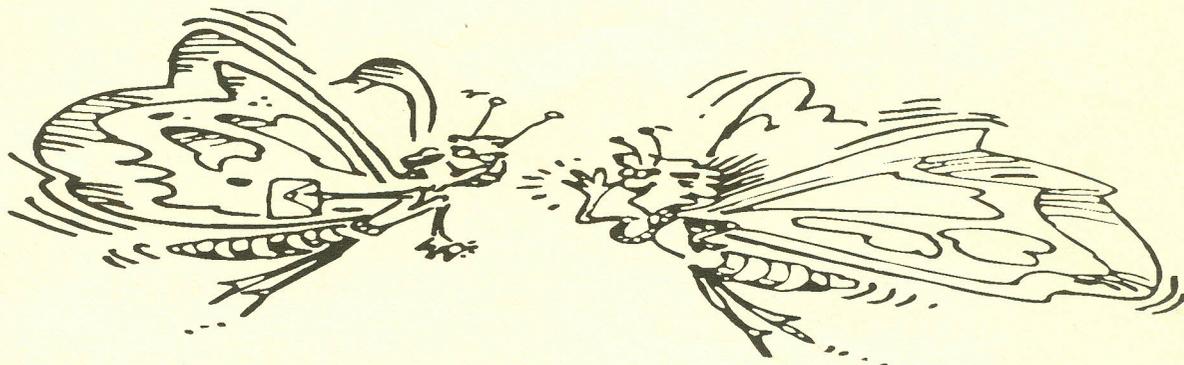
by Bruce Weidman, City of Walnut Creek
Operations Track Coordinator

A Call For Shows "Most Unusual..."

Rangers have always been noted for telling some great tales, so here's your chance to spread a little conversational charm by sharing with us your "Most Unusual..." We are hoping to focus on interesting projects (trails, events, or pouring a 12 by 12 concrete slab over an inaccessible hilltop!). These can be presented via slide show or through a short discussion. However, since rangers tend to be braggers and jokesters, you could talk about the time a ranger started a piece of heavy-duty equipment and couldn't shut it off, or about the time a fellow ranger was trapped in an outhouse because your patrol vehicle was jammed against the door! A nature program gone awry? Glue on the patrol bicycle seat? Stories are out there, and we want to hear yours. Be prepared to boast. If you're going to present a short slide show, please forward to me your name, park, subject and length of show, so we can be sure to include you. If you're gonna brag for a minute—just show up.

The **Silent Auction** will be seeking items for donation. Many of us have craft, art or hobby skills which could produce interesting items or artifacts for the auction. If you would like to donate such an item, please call Joe Mette at (916) 324-0312. If you are interested in helping gather items from the corporate or business sector (and I could use the help!), please give me a call, fax or note. We'll need to coordinate our contacts.

Bruce Weidman
Sugarloaf Ranger Station 2161 Youngs Valley Rd. Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Phone: (510) 944-5766, FAX (510) 256-8303



Monarch Butterflies

by Sandy Ferreira, Region 1

On Saturday, November 16, 1996 Region 1 hosted a Monarch Butterfly Workshop. It was held at Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont which serves as an over-wintering site for the Monarch Butterflies. A special thanks to Jan Southworth, Naturalist with East Bay Regional Park District who presented the workshop and Researcher Bobby Gendron, who demonstrated the correct procedures in "tagging" monarchs.

For those of you who are not familiar with this procedure, let me explain. Once you catch or collect the monarch butterfly, you gently remove a small portion of the scales located on the top portion of the left wing. What is left is an opaque area. A very small "tag" with an identifying number and a 1-800-number to the

Monarch research division in San Diego is gently placed on the wing and folded in half. Using your thumb and index finger, you can press the tag in place. Once "tagged," the monarch is released and then flies away. This tag is used to track the migratory route and other information.

At the end of the workshop, participants had the opportunity to purchase milkweed seeds which are specific to these butterflies. If you would like any information on butterfly gardening or which types of plant materials will encourage butterflies in your park or garden, contact Jan Southworth at Coyote Hills Regional Park (510) 795-9385, she is an excellent resource.

Pay Your Dues Today!

From The President's Desk

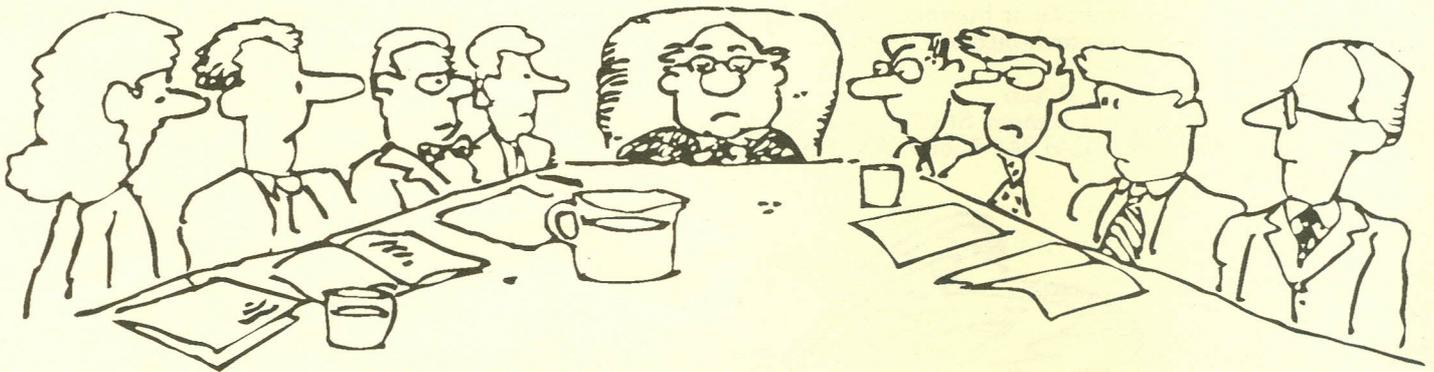
1997 starts my last year as President of this wonderful organization. Over the last two years we've accomplished some good things and even branched out into some new areas. But we still haven't made any real progress in the most important park of our organization—our membership and their participation. So I would like to issue each and every member of PRAC a personal challenge. I would like each of you to invite one other person from your agency to join PRAC.

Think about it, we could double our membership in less than a year! I have mentioned before there is safety and strength in numbers. PRAC's collective voice is just beginning to be heard in Sacramento. We've lent our support to some important legislation and have had a positive impact. But we need to be more active, more visible and work together if we are going to continue to have an effect. An example of where we missed the boat was November's Proposition 218. This mini Jarvis-Gann bill will most likely have a negative effect on park systems across the state.

To change tracks a bit I would like to thank Sandy Ferreira who graciously stepped in to fill the vacant Region 1 directors chair, Dave Sloane our out-going director for Region 3 and Paul Pettit our Director from Region 5. Like all of the Directors, these three have worked hard for the Association and deserve a rousing round of applause for their efforts. Most importantly I would like to thank all of our members who have participated in the Association over the last year.

I hope each of you have had a wonderful holiday season, I hope to see you in Concord in March.

Pam Helmke



MROSD Rangers Join PORAC

by Ken Miller

We did it. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Rangers formed an association and joined PORAC. One of our reasons for joining included the Legal Defense Fund that will provide defense for individual officers against administrative discipline, and civil and criminal charges. For me personally the possibility that I may strike someone with the Asp baton and be held liable for it is reason enough to join. Another reason for joining is to keep up with all of the Peace Officer issues throughout the state. Court rulings and code changes are going to affect our jobs so we might as well stay as current as we can on the issues. The coverage is not cheap but neither is the alternative of losing all of your personal finances in a lawsuit. Our agency joined PORAC and so can yours.

The qualifications are that the members must be peace officers within the State of California and that the membership must be 50% of the eligible persons plus one additional. I'll keep you posted on how things progress. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Ranger Forums Held in Region 4

by Russ Hauck

Twenty-two Park Rangers representing thirteen different agencies recently met in a round-table format to discuss issues faced by park rangers today. Two different meetings were held, and both were deemed to be a success. Many issues were discussed including the need for arming, citation authority, the pros and cons of working under a police department or a parks and recreation department, trends, and the future of the profession.

The most apparent observation of those in attendance was the great diversity between agencies. There are agencies that share a border that are vastly different. These forums provided an opportunity for these agencies to get a better understanding of each other's program. Based on the success of these gatherings, this will become an annual event. Those of you in Region 4 (and nearby agencies in Region 5) should plan to attend next fall.

Bullet Proof Vests

by Lawrence Baird

I read with interest, the articles in the last PRAC newsletter relating to the shooting of Ranger John Havicon and being saved by his vest. In addition to working as a ranger for fun, I have made my living selling law enforcement supplies including protective apparel for over 25 years. During that time I visited a factory that manufactures protective products and have done my best to learn all I could so that I could share that knowledge with my clients and select which types of products I would handle. I am not writing this material in order to market my products. In fact, I am all but retired and presently operate a small mail order business. I am writing this to share what I have learned so that my fellow rangers will have the information necessary to make a wise decision when acquiring their protective products.

First, let's dispel the myth of "Bullet Proof Vests". That term belongs right up there with "Cop Killer Bullets". You can die from any bullet, and "Bullet Proof Vests" aren't! Just as "There was never a horse that couldn't be rode, and never a cowboy that couldn't be throwed" there are always going to be weapons that will defeat what ever type of armor you are wearing, and there are so many variations of bullets and other objects that will defeat the armor normally worn by law enforcement. Good judgment dictates that I don't reveal those here, you will just have to take my word for it. There are several different brands of vests on the market and all adhere a standard rating system. Unless you have the results of the tests these rating systems can be somewhat confusing. They will indicate that a vest will stop a 9mm, but that will be only from the most common 4-5 inch barrel. Put it in a carbine, and the vest will probably fail due to increased muzzle velocity.

The best rule of thumb in purchasing a vest will be, if you are armed, to get a level of protection that will stop the

bullet from any gun you may carry, as so many officers are disarmed and shot with their own weapons. Note that the higher the threat level, the thicker and heavier the vest becomes, so the next thing to consider is comfort.

You will find vests that simply cover your front and back, while others will either extend to the sides or completely wrap around your body. The more coverage, the less comfort and of course in the summer, the hotter the vest will become. One manufacturer seals their vest panels in plastic, so that makes the vest even hotter. Comfort level is one of the most important factors because so many departments will specify a threat level when purchasing and not consider comfort, so unless there is a regulation requiring the wearing of the vest, it will probably be left at home. With the wrap around models there is a restriction in movement, so this is another factor to consider. The best way to deal with the summer heat is to get a "net" type undershirt and wear that next to your body so that air circulates behind the vest.

Buying a vest is no different from buying a car. You have to decide what you want it to do and how much comfort you need.

I consider the last factor to be price. Here, just like a car, you can get a stripped down model that will do hardly more than a leather jacket for a few hundred dollars. The top of the line with all the gadgets will cost nearly one thousand dollars. If you are going to invest in protective apparel, remember your life is on the line and all the money in the world won't help you if your vest fails when you need it.

The Elder Statesmen of Parks

by Ken Miller

Often times when we work in parks it is easy to get caught up in the usual day to day tasks and forget about the big picture. I recently took a few minutes to reflect on the whole park philosophy and came up with some good insights.

We who work in parks are fortunate to work in special locations. Our job site must be important to someone if they went ahead and designated it as a park. Park workers should all take a moment at least and reflect on the people who sowed the seeds for the park movement within our country. Without these people we would not have our profession. Certainly there are the politicians such as Teddy Roosevelt, Frederick Law Olmsted, Stephen Mather, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and many others who made the political decisions that helped form the National Park Service and the resulting park philosophy in our country.

I say go one step further though. Let's give credit to the authors who through their skill and knowledge helped to educate people to the importance of their outdoor world and how people are linked to the environment. How about Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and John Muir. In more modern times how about David Brower, Edward Abbey, and John McPhee. I certainly do not agree with all of the authors opinions, but I do give them credit for getting the park and environmental message out to the public at large. Were it not for these authors and politicians we wouldn't have the national, state, and local park systems that we have now. Give these people credit, read (or reread) their works, and take some time to reflect on the big picture of why we work in parks.

PRAC Aids L.A. City Park Rangers In Quest For Safety

L.A. City Rangers recently went to their City Council requesting permission to carry firearms while on duty to increase officers safety. The following letter was sent by PRAC to members of the City of Los Angeles Public Safety Committee in support of the L.A. City Rangers. (See related story on page 6.)

Ms. Laura Chick, Chairperson
Public Safety Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Ms. Chick,

The Park Rangers Association of California is asking for your support on the Los Angeles Park Rangers safety issue coming before your committee on October 28. As you are aware, the park rangers are requesting permission to carry firearms to increase public safety when performing their law enforcement duties.

Today's park rangers are highly educated, deeply committed and extensively trained public servants. They have been given the responsibility to protecting our most cherished public lands and providing for the safety of park visitors. Within the City of Los Angeles park system rangers have handled over 15,000 calls for service over the last year and the majority of those calls, over 10,000 responses, dealt with gang or narcotic issues. In this same time period Los Angeles park rangers removed over 300 illegal weapons from park lands.

The Los Angeles park rangers have performed these duties with great skill and dedication. They have placed their personal safety on the line as they have made all of these contacts while unarmed. Over the last six months four Los Angeles Rangers have been assaulted in the performance of their duties. I urge you to support the Los Angeles Park Rangers and provide for their safety by supporting their request.

California's park rangers are facing violent crime in our parks on a daily basis. They place their lives in jeopardy to protect our children and provide safe recreation areas. The Park Rangers Association of California, founded over 20 years ago to establish professional standards for rangers across our state, strongly supports increased safety equipment for the Los Angeles City Park Rangers.

If I can provide any additional information or comments on this vital issue please feel free to contact me through the association offices at (800) 994-2530.

Respectfully,

Pamela Helmke, President

One of PRAC's goals is to support its' membership on important issues such as ranger safety. If your agency has important issue that could benefit from the Associations' support please contact your regional director. PRAC can provide letters of support or speakers for public forum.

Ranger I

(\$1,945-\$2,364 a Month)
(Salary under review)

Perform a variety of tasks in the operation and maintenance of an outdoor recreation facility at Don Pedro Lake in the foothills of central California.

Qualifications: Three season (minimum of 90 days each) in park operations, park security and emergency response experience required. **Education:** A minimum of an Associate of Arts degree in park management, police science or related fields required. A Bachelor of Science degree in outdoor recreation, natural resource management or related field is highly desired. **Necessary special requirement:** Possession of a Red Cross Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) card. Must have the ability to obtain, within one year of employment, a First Responder Certificate, have the ability to complete an

approved wildland firefighting course and must furnish own hand tools. Excellent fringe benefits. Written exam required. At time of appointment, physical exam, drug screen and a valid California driver's license required. Applications accepted beginning 8:00 a.m., Monday, January 20, 1997 through and including Friday, January 31, 1997 at 4:30 p.m.

For more detailed information on job qualifications and to obtain a required employment application, contact:

Turlock Irrigation District (T.I.D.)
333 East Canal Drive
Turlock, CA 95380
(209) 883-8253

California Parks Conference 1997

by Sandy Ferreira

As I was going through my briefcase the other day, I came across this article that was written some time ago by Ranger Pat Sotelo at Livermore Parks and Recreation. As I paused for a moment to read it, the theme of next years conference "*Parks—Renewing The Human Spirit*" suddenly became quite clear. Sotelo illustrates some key points of how important our parks are and how they renew and refresh the human spirit in each one of us if we only take a moment and explore the beauty of our natural resources.

Quiet!

by Ranger Pat Sotelo

Reprinted from the Valley Wilds, November 1990

Published by the Livermore Area Recreation & Parks District

One of the most important and perhaps most frequently overlooked features of a secluded nature park is the blessed and welcome lack of NOISE.

Recent scientific research has discovered that noise has many negative effects on human health. It raises the blood pressure, increases stress, weakens the immune system, and is a direct cause of sleep disorders.

May we suggest a radical prescription? Turn off the radio, turn off the television, step out of your car and take a walk through the park. You don't even have to walk very far, just deep enough into the woods to escape the constant reminders of civilization.

Take a deep breath. Did you ever notice the different smell in the air? Try walking from the open, dry grassland into the shaded woodland. Can you feel the difference in temperature and humidity?

Listen carefully. You'll begin to notice the often subtle sounds of nature: the sigh of the cotton woods as the wind rushes through the quaking leaves, the gentle babbling of water in the nearby creek, the chattering of the squirrels, the trilling chorus of the tree frogs at dusk.

Don't forget the birds who provide the mood music for your stroll. Listen to the gently rapping of the woodpecker, the tittering of the chickadees, the liquid beauty of the meadowlarks song, the raucous gossip of the magpies, and the far-off cry of the hawks.

Let your thoughts wander. Within a very short time you'll be amazed at how relaxed you've become. Then a truly wonderful thing starts to happen. Your body becomes turned to a new reality, the reality of nature. There is indeed another world out here, a world to which most of us have a mere passing acquaintance. But one can begin to understand the subtlety of nature, of the drama that is playing out right under our very noses, if we take the time to watch, to listen, to feel the rhythms of a mysterious yet welcoming world.

Nature doesn't have to be experienced on a grand, exalting, life-changing scale to leave its mark on your soul. There are only so many Grand Canyons and Yosemite's and Yellowstone's to knock us out with their sheer beauty and grandeur. Yet each of these parks is increasingly beset by the problems of too many people, too much "busy"ness, and too much noise! Nature is sometimes best appreciated on a small scale, where it weaves its magical webs and draws you in, one small strand at a time.

Look at that flash of feathery blue in the golden-leaved sycamore. Listen to that bird singing as if all the universe were listening. Look at the sky! Look at the clouds sailing across the blue canvas like a procession of billowing, white sails. Have you ever seen a painting to match its beauty?

Go ahead, then. Take a walk in the woods. Stop, look, listen, feel. How wonderfully quiet everything is. Have you noticed? Let's take a walk. How about today? How about right now?



Happy
Holidays!

City of Los Angeles Park Rangers Seek to be Armed

by Russ Hauck

(See related story on page 4.)

On Monday, November 4, the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee heard a proposal to arm the City's Park Rangers. This hearing followed years of preparation, discussion, research, ride-alongs by City Council members, meetings with homeowners groups, and as much other legwork as could be accomplished. The proposal was supported by the union representing the Rangers, and the Park Rangers Association of California, both of whom had representatives in attendance to speak in favor of the issue.

The proposal was opposed by the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Los Angeles Police Department which was severely chastised and reprimanded by the committee for not having anything more substantial in opposition than not wanting it.

After lengthy discussion by the parties concerned and the opportunity by members of the audience to speak on the issue, the three members of the committee expressed their opinions with one remaining opposed. The other two indicate that where they had initially been opposed to the proposal the presentation by the parties in favor of the proposal had caused them to lean the other way in support of it. The final outcome of the hearing: the issue was tabled for 30 days. The parties were instructed to come up with one proposal for how to proceed with the rangers remaining unarmed and another proposal for how to proceed with arming the rangers.

The issue will eventually reach the City Council regardless of the vote by the committee; however a vote in favor obviously presents the issue in a better light to the full council.

Stay tuned!!



Training Opportunity at Santa Rosa Ranger Academy

Space available for class
beginning January 6, 1997 and
graduating February 21, 1997

Contact

Bill Orr, Director, Ranger Academy
Santa Rosa Training Center
609 Tomales Rd.
Petaluma, CA 94952
Telephone (707) 776-0721

...in conclusion

by Dave Sloane

As 1996 comes to a close so does my term as Director for Region 3 of the Park Rangers Association of California. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work on the Board of Directors with rangers from across the state. It has been both a pleasure and a learning experience.

The main benefit that I received from my PRAC membership has been the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with rangers from other agencies. As a member of a two ranger force in the City of Roseville it is not often that I get a chance to work in team situation with other rangers (due to alternate schedules). As a director in this organization I have had the opportunity to work in a team situation and to get a perspective on the direction that the ranger profession as a whole is heading toward.

At times it appears as if our profession is polarizing. Some agencies are becoming more and more law enforcement oriented while others are moving away from law enforcement responsibilities. For those agencies getting more heavily involved in law enforcement there are often struggles to acquire equipment which is necessary to do the job in a safe fashion. Some agencies are caught in that scary middle ground created by administrators whom are more concerned with perceived liability than employee safety. Agencies that do not perform law enforcement duties are faced with other struggles. In an era of tight budgets and downsizing many such agencies are not replacing staff that leave.

Whatever type of agency that a ranger works for there will be obstacles to overcome, ways to improve the ranger program, and new challenges in the future. As members of PRAC, we can usually look within our own organization to find someone or some agency that has already faced those same challenges. We can learn and benefit from their successes and hopefully avoid their mistakes. Working together as a team, we the membership of PRAC, can help improve each others ranger programs and the ranger profession a whole.

Smitty's Book Report

I have been serving on the Castle Rock State Park General Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee developing the general plan for the park. Castle Rock is (almost) surrounded by other public and private lands. Lands that belong to Santa Clara County, Mid Peninsula Open Space District, and a local water district. The reason I mention this, is that I have just read a new book that I would like to share with you this time, and the topic fits right into what we are trying to accomplish at Castle Rock. We want to spare the park and the park resources, and still allow recreational use. A typical park paradigm. This issue's book review deals with conserving California's biological diversity. The book, **Our Own Hands** (University of California Press), mentions several times that parklands are not meeting the challenge of protecting California's biodiversity. Many out there believe that state parks, as an example, are not functioning as "core" areas, safe from practices that have adverse impacts. They question the State's management policies that allow heavy recreation within the system that have use as a high priority, like state recreation areas, and beaches. Beaches, as an example, that have sensitive dune vegetation. I know that a lot of park agencies think nothing of biodiversity in their management programs. Most counties, open space districts and municipalities are guilty in this respect. You can also add water districts to that list. The book underlines the problem that most of the threats to diversity comes from outside the parks and not from within. Chapter 4, as an example, covers the threats to biodiversity in California, including habitat conversion, water use, commodity use (including recreation), logging and grazing, pollution, and global degradation of the atmosphere. Also it just boils down to too many folks!

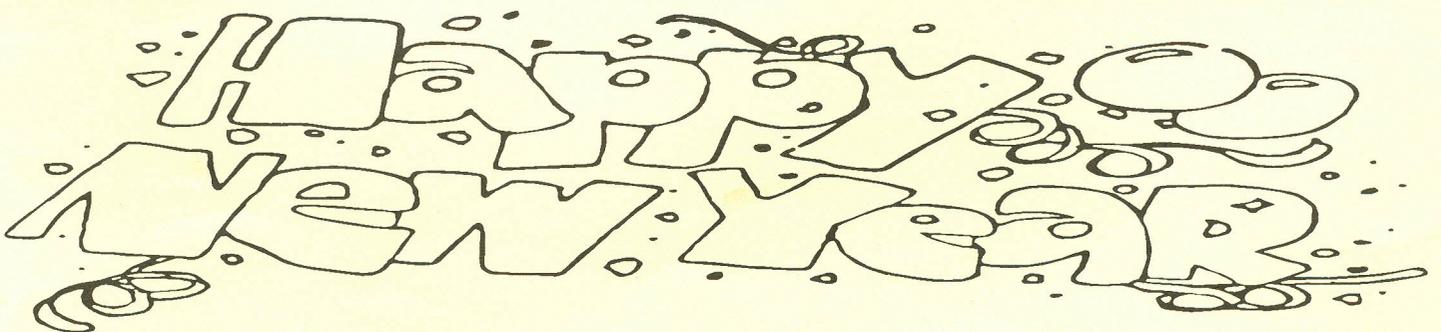
In **Our Own Hands**, seems to champion parks, but realizes that there is too little money to purchase lands. However, the authors point out that we seem to have money to purchase and develop campgrounds, and manage people, but little money to set aside for ecological management. They also point out that the land base for protected parks is much too small. Part of the problem, as I see it, is that we sometimes have confusing management practices when it comes to resource management. I remember as a backcountry ranger, trying to educate a young man who had a dog in the wilderness that it was not allowed in a national park,

but was in the national forest. He was standing fifty feet from the boundary. This also leads me to Castle Rock and the surrounding public lands. It seems to me, if we are going to have the chance to meet the challenge of protecting biodiversity in parks, that we also need to get together with neighbors, both public and private, to help us do it. I don't think that we can no longer have one management plan for one side of the fence, and one for the other side. We have to get our collective acts together. For the benefit of humankind. My gosh, I just sounded like Mayor Willie Brown! I hope Elvis Grbac will forgive me.

The book covers what biodiversity is, why we should have it, and the need for action. It spends time talking about how diversity is lost, and what the status is today. It covers what the threats are, what the barriers are (including politics). The authors made the book very easy to read. It is not "textbooky," even though they throw around a lot of statistics and facts. It is park management, however, that should help lead the way toward this preservation. We get to educate parks visitor through our interpretive programs, and should make plans to go to schools to reach young people. Remember, don't forget the high schools. Those people are the product of uneducated, as well. This book reminds us that EVERYONE needs to be reminded that the environment is important. One of the recommendations was that all students be required to take a course that focuses on the biosphere that emphasizes the laws that govern its behavior, and our dependency upon those laws. Knowledge on this subject is as vital today as any subject we are required to take to our survival and welfare. Just as important as basic math, English or cultural studies (pp237). Amen! At less than fifteen dollars, it is a book for your library.

Jenson, Deborah B, Torn, Margaret S, and Harte, John, **In Our Own Hands, A Strategy For Conserving California's Biological Diversity**, University of California Press, Berkeley CA, 1993, 302 pages. Cost, around 10 dollars.

Hope you all have a good Thanksgiving and a happy holiday season ahead. Now is the time to ask Santa for a couple of books and start getting professionally ahead. Remember, reading is a part of your job!



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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

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(> 25 persons—12 mailings) \$100 _____

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