



# Impacts of One Park on Another

by Steve Hogue

For several decades, students at California State University, Chico and Butte College have done more than merely observe Labor Day weekend, they have re-invented it on a local level.

Chico has gained the reputation as a “party” town, due of course to many students’ drinking behaviors. Depending on who you ask, the reputation is either welcomed or despised. Regardless of opinion, the fact remains that this party mentality definitely carries over into the City of Chico’s Bidwell Park and Bidwell State River Park on Labor Day

weekends.

Traditionally, on Labor Day weekend, visitors (a vast majority of whom are students) pour into Bidwell Park on Friday afternoon to begin a four day drinking binge. Bidwell Park’s four rangers keep busy issuing citations for having either open containers of alcohol or glass beverage containers (both are prohibited in Chico parks). At night, calm generally reigns in Bidwell Park as the Chico Police Department, with the assistance of other nearby agencies, create “party patrols” to deal with over zealous Labor Day celebrations. The process repeats itself on Saturday and Sunday. On Monday, peace at last in Bidwell Park. For Bidwell State River Park, though, the annual headache of all headaches begins.

This year brought out 25,000 people who decided to tube down the Sacramento River on Labor Day at the same time. Alcohol is permitted, but controlled. Numerous agencies, from law enforcement to search and rescue, patrol the area. Future restrictions on the River have been discussed due to the enthusiasm of this year’s crowd.

The last time restrictions went into effect at the River Park, Bidwell Park was affected. The State had decided to require a vehicle entry fee to deter an overload of visitors on Labor Day. The idea worked. Unfortunately, the potential River Park visitors went to Bidwell Park, a fee-free park. The visitors created the worse gridlock ever seen. Had there been an emergency, ranger, police, and fire vehicles would not have made it to their destinations. The City of Chico then created stricter parking rules for Bidwell Park.

This year, even before the hassle of Labor Day, the Chico Park Department decided to keep the road leading to the popular swimming holes of Bidwell Park closed to motor vehicles (a 4 mile stretch of road which is normally closed on Mondays, but in the past has been opened on holidays). Despite this, the number of alcohol related citations in Bidwell Park jumped several hundred percent. The City of Chico overall is trying to deal with the number of alcohol related incidents throughout the entire city. Further restrictions on the River will bring a huge influx of alcohol related problems to Bidwell Park. One item being looked at by Chico is adopting an ordinance per 22651 (o) of the Vehicle Code which will give the ability to remove vehicles parked in areas they are not supposed to as opposed to a simple parking cite. Given the fact that Chico’s ranger staff will likely not grow by next year, it is probable that the Chico Police Department will be called in to assist with controlling festivities that are diverted from the River Park. At any rate, the passage of Labor Day has brought quiet to Bidwell Park (as I’m sure it has many other parks, too) and a much needed reprieve until the next season.

## Your Ballots Count!

Don’t forget to vote in the upcoming election for PRAC Board Officers.

A few of the Regional Directors as well as President terms are up. You need to send in your ballots to get your Board on board for the new year.

This is your organization and your vote does count! If you have not done so, mail it in today.

# From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Members,

I want to keep you updated on some of the things going on with the board and the committees. Unfortunately, our board meeting was planned for September 11. Half of the directors could not make it to the meeting location, San Diego because of the immediate flight restrictions. We set another date to meet on October 30.

The 2002 conference is coming along well. We had to move hotels due to some deception of meeting space of the original hotel. We also had to change the conference dates. The new dates are Monday, March 04 to Thursday, March 06, 2002. The new hotel is the Handlary Hotel in San Diego. The hotel is located central to San Diego and will make it easy for our off site training and events. It's very clean and comfortable and the staff is very accommodating. The rooms will cost \$84.00 per night. I think you will be pleased with our choice.

Kim Duclou and Ronilee Clark are doing a wonderful job at putting the conference together. The theme, "**Bridging Borders - Partnerships Beyond Our Borders and Beyond**" will tie together how different agencies, organizations and countries work together to reach their goals. The breakout sessions will include our four tracks: Interpretation, Operations, Resource Management and Public Safety. Additionally, there will be a fifth, "Bridging Borders" track. That will be intertwined within the four tracks, specifically connected to the theme. Mark your calendars, this is going to be a great conference.

I am please to tell you the board unanimously voted to endorse the Parks Bond bill, AB 1601, sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League. If approved by the Governor, the \$2.6 billion bond act, to provide funding for state, local and urban parks, coastal watersheds, clean beaches, habitat protection, air and water quality projects, and preservation of agricultural land and historical and cultural resources, would be on the March ballot I have written to Governor Davis, on behalf of PRAC to encourage him to sign this bill.

PRAC will once again be attending the Bay Area Environmental Education Resource Fair, also known as the BAEER Fair in Marin County. PRAC will have a booth set up for distributing information about our organization. The BAEER Fair is a great place to see a variety of resources available, sit in on some training seminars and make new connections. If any members are interested in helping out with the booth, please let me, or Mike Chiesa know. The BAEER Fair this year is January 5, 2002. You can find information about the BAEER Fair at [www.aeoe.org/conference/other/baeer.html](http://www.aeoe.org/conference/other/baeer.html).

That's it for now. You can as always get a hold of me at [onbelay@innercite.com](mailto:onbelay@innercite.com) or (916) 875-6672.

Stay Safe,

*John Havicon*

President

## Time To Recruit

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

As a past recipient of the PRAC Scholarship, I was disappointed to hear that there were not any recipients this year. I was even more disappointed and saddened to hear that not one even person even applied.

Its not only the scholarship applications that are low in numbers, its the amount of applicants for permanent and seasonal positions as well. Is it a lack of interest in the Park profession or is it a lack of knowledge of what we actually do?

I think that as Park professionals we need to get out of our Parks and into the schools and job fairs to educate and promote the best job in the world. I would like to submit an idea to the PRAC board and also to all Park agencies. We should look into having a representative of PRAC from each region visit the local colleges or Universities in their region and promote the Park Ranger Association. Elaborate on the benefits of being a member as well as the opportunities, scholarships and jobs that are out there.

Its time to recruit. Take an hour out of your day to help preserve the future of the Park professional.

# Fishing Accessibility for the Disabled in Bidwell Park

by Steve Hogue

The Chico Park Department is in the midst of planning a new accessibility project on Bidwell Park's Horseshoe Lake. The project will be made possible by a pending grant, donations, and volunteer labor.

Local disabled activist Hollie Vinson approached the Park Department to discuss her vision of a handicapped accessible fishing pier at Horseshoe Lake. Hollie was instrumental in getting a handicapped accessible trail constructed around the World of Trees in Bidwell Park's Cedar Grove (Established in 1888, Cedar Grove was among the first forest experiment stations in the U.S.) and is currently one of the nicest spots to visit in the park.

Horseshoe Lake is used annually for the "Hooked On Fishing, Not on Drugs" fishing derby. Children fill the banks of the lake for their chance to catch some of the 11,000 pounds of catfish planted each year. Only a portion of the lake's edge is handicapped accessible, but even that accessibility makes it difficult for a wheelchair-bound person to actually fish effectively. The plans for the fishing pier call for a 6' x 60' walkway leading to a 10' x 20' floating platform to be constructed. A path, topped with crushed rock, will lead from disabled parking to the pier's walkway.

The cost of the project will be approximately \$110,000. The City of Chico has applied for an \$82,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to assist with the project. Chico has met the grant's guidelines and is on the Board's next agenda. While the grant is pending, it appears more on the likely side that Chico will be awarded the grant. However, the grant is a matching grant. Chico was able to consider a recent accessibility project at Horseshoe Lake, as well as volunteer labor, donated funds, and remaining city match funds, as the match to the pier project. Chico also had to create a lease agreement with the State of California. The lease would last for 25 years and would require the area discussed to continue to be used for the purpose stated in the lease. It would also permit the State to maintain the pier in the event Chico does not live up to the agreement. Since it is next to impossible that the stipulations would ever need to be enforced, the lease is pretty much just the red tape that comes with governmental work.

When the project is completed, the WCB, the City of Chico, and all of the people involved with the project will be thrilled with the outcome.

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## Legislative Update

by Jeff Gaffney

The first year of the legislative session has come to end and we have been successful in gaining some tremendous benefits. I have tried to include the major bills and a brief summary. Please call if you have questions or would like a more complete list.

AB 1082 Allows peace officer park rangers to negotiate for safety retirement.

SB 90 Raises the retirement cap for safety members to 90%

AB 616 Creates 3 new miscellaneous formulas for Cal PERS members, 3% @ 60, 2.7% @ 55, and 2.5% at 55 (this has to be negotiated, but is a tremendous benefit)

AB 196 Makes any blood borne pathogens a presumptive illness for peace officers workers comp claims

SB 448 Rewrites the firemen's rule to allow emergency workers to sue for injuries sustained while attending to an emergency where the conduct that caused the injury to the emergency worker violated a law or regulation and

is not the conduct that necessitated the emergency workers response.

We will be moving forward on a number of fronts with legislation in the upcoming year, if you have ideas or requests please forward them to me. Any questions and please feel free to call or e-mail: (408) 828-8360 or [gaffer@pipeline.com](mailto:gaffer@pipeline.com). To check or track any bills use [www.sen.ca.gov](http://www.sen.ca.gov).

On another front, a number of agencies are hiring rangers and actively recruiting. Contact the agency you are interested in working for and they may just be hiring.

Santa Clara County is currently looking for park rangers and offers 3% at 50 retirement along with generous benefits. Starting salary should be \$3613 per month with a 5% pay raise in December 2001 [www.sccjobs.org/cat7/bulletins/t09.htm](http://www.sccjobs.org/cat7/bulletins/t09.htm) Speaking of December I hope everyone has happy holidays and things have slowed down in the park.

Be safe and keep the faith.

# Interpretive Methods Training

by Paul Ferreira  
Supervising Naturalist & IMT Coordinator

“Ronnie has been extremely disruptive all during the nature walk, hitting other kids and throwing rocks when the naturalist turns away. He’s also been blurting out, “This is boring!””

Does the above scenario sound familiar? How would you handle this situation? For twenty-three years the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has presented the Interpretive Methods Training (IMT) program for professionals from around the country and abroad. During this time hundreds of rangers, naturalists, historians, guides, and other educators have learned the skills and techniques that have proven to be successful in resolving situations such as the one posed above.

In April 2002 EBRPD will again be offering the IMT to the profession at-large. Knowing that you or your organization or agency is involved with interpretive programs, public information services, or resource management efforts, I feel this program would be beneficial to you and your staff. The dates of next year’s session have not yet been finalized, but are expected to be April 7-12, 2002. The cost of the program which includes lodging, meals, transportation during the training, and all training materials is a reasonable \$650.00 per person. I hope you’ll share this information with interested staff members. If you’re interested in attending or sending a staff member to this program, please contact me as soon as possible.

If you’d like additional information about the program, I can be reached by phone at Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont, (510) 795-9385, by fax, (510) 795-8012, or e-mail, [chvisit@ebparks.org](mailto:chvisit@ebparks.org). However, don’t delay as space is limited and reservations will be taken only on a first-come, first-served basis.



## No Smoking in Playgrounds; A Breathe of Fresh Air for Children

by John Havicon

Governor Davis recently signed a new law, effective January 1, 2002, to keep smokers out of children’s playground and sandboxes. Health & Safety Code 104495 prohibits cigarettes, cigars and tobacco related products from being used within a recreational area specifically designed to be used by children that has play equipment installed or a sandbox designated for use of children under 5 years of age. The law also prohibits disposing of cigarette, cigar butts within a playground.

The basis of the law is to protect children from secondhand smoke. It suggest that secondhand smoke is responsible for 3000 nonsmoking adult deaths and increases the risk of respiratory tract infection in children.

The law also has a subsection for any person who intimidates or threatens another for trying to seek compliance of the law. The law is an infraction, with a \$100 fine.

# Region 2 News

by Jeff Gaffney

I have heard a number of problems across the state in regards to the issue of law enforcement tools for park rangers. I have submitted a recent letter to our management and I have passed the POST study along to Doug Bryce for anyone who wants copies. The IACP study is posted on the internet. I hope this is helpful, please call with any questions.

Law enforcement has been in the Park Ranger job description since the role of the ranger was being created. As Park Rangers we are the first responders and more often than not, we are the first public safety officers on the scene. Having that responsibility requires us to be trained and equipped to proficiently deal with all of the incidents and problems we encounter everyday. As park professionals, we feel we are adequately equipped in every area except law enforcement.

The duty of law enforcement goes one step further to include protecting the people. Protecting the people from the park, the park from the people, and the people from themselves and each other. Law enforcement occurs through a simple verbal reminder, the issuance of a citation, or physically intervening to protect the parks and the park visitor. We are often called upon for mutual-aid requests by outside agencies for assistance, whether for medical, fire suppression, or law enforcement. We are typically the primary officers for incidents that occur in the parks, but sometimes we are the primary back-up for other public safety officers in our parks (game wardens, city police, deputy sheriffs, and other park rangers). The major role of the park ranger has been and continues to be one of law enforcement.

Image has often been identified as the primary reason that park rangers do not currently have the tools that they need to meet their obligations as public safety officers. Currently if Park Rangers are challenged with force or violence they must give thought to artful persuasion or retreat. Visitor safety as well as employee safety are put in jeopardy, lack of the proper tools to do our jobs has created a false sense of security in the public for the Park Ranger presence.

National and California State Park Rangers widely considered to be the most professional organizations in the country were provided with the tools to fulfill their law enforcement duties over 30 years ago. These agencies are most often identified with the Park Ranger role (Yosemite, Yellowstone, Big Sur, Hearst Castle, and Point Lobos to name a few). History has shown that the image of the Park Ranger has not been diminished in the public eye by the tools provided to them in their law enforcement role. Parks are not a sanctuary from crime, National Parks maintain a Federal courthouse and jail in Yosemite Valley that most people don't identify with the Park Ranger role and yet it remains a vital part of the job.

The Park Ranger position was created because of the specialized philosophy for law enforcement in parks. A Park Ranger uses education and interpretation as primary deterrents to crime in the parks, a more pro-active approach to diminishing crime in the parks. Park Rangers and deputies sheriffs/police officers have been identified as two different classifications of public safety officers because of this difference in philosophy.

We have included a Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST is the agency that regulates and trains all peace officers in the state of California) Study that was done in 1968 on crime control in the California State Parks that is still valid today. Also included is a study on park law enforcement completed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in November of 2000 (<http://www.nps.gov/refdesk/documents/IACP.pdf>). The recommendations and conclusions are very similar in the two studies that are almost 30 years apart, showing that not much has changed in this field.

Adequate tools and training have become an industry standard nationwide for park rangers in the law enforcement role. This equipment is also important because it provides the necessary level of protection to the public, the parks, and the park staff. To provide this level of professionalism and safety in law enforcement these tools are needed, much the same as we need a chainsaw and all the appropriate safety gear to cut down a tree. Park Rangers need to be adequately trained and equipped to professionally carry out the wide variety of duties assigned to us as public safety officers.

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