



## I'm So Excited

by Lee Hickinbotham

I'm so excited and I just can't hide it. But I got to! I got to!

Have you ever been so excited about something that you just wanted to go out and tell everyone that you know? That's how I feel about the 2003 Conference that is being held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in South Lake Tahoe. I am so excited about all the sessions that are going to be offered; the dinner on the lake aboard the Dixie Queen; the live campfire program following the dinner; the banquet & dance; and the trainings on the last day that will meet some of the PRAC standards. I'm also so excited that is being held at the Embassy Suites. Have I mentioned the free breakfast and free drinks during happy hour? Which are included with the cost of the room!! How exciting!

I am excited to know that a large majority of members have been sending out emails, letters and phone calls requesting conference packets. I am excited to tell you that very soon the website will have available an opportunity for you to order your conference t-shirt, PRAC hat and the all-new PRAC/CSPRA joint logo hat ahead of time. This way, prior to the conference, you can be as excited as I am!!

So join me, jump on this bandwagon and be excited about our 2003 conference in South Lake Tahoe.

I'm so excited and I just can't hide it, but I got to, I got to.

## Thanks for the PRAC Scholarship!

*I have the honor of being this years Thomas A. Smith Scholarship recipient and would like to seize this opportunity to thank PRAC for its generosity. I would also especially like to thank the PRAC Scholarship Committee for taking the time to carefully review each application that was sent to them. Scholarships such as this one not only provide determined students financial benefits, most importantly they acknowledge these students efforts to be successful in their chosen educational fields.*

*The sum of \$500 that I have received will enable me to pay for my enrollment fees at West Valley College for the 2003 Spring semester. At the end of which semester I will graduate with an Associate of Science in Park Management. The rest of the money will help me purchase necessary textbooks, which typically exceed the cost of enrollment at community colleges.*

*I highly encourage students to apply for the 2003 scholarship!*

**Marion Noble**

## PRAC Seeking Volunteers for BAEER Fair

The Bay Area Environmental Educational Resource Fair (more commonly known as the BAEER Fair) will be held at the Marin Civic Center in San Rafael on February 15, 2003. PRAC has attended the last three years where we have set up a display. I am seeking some volunteers from the Bay Area, who would like to attend and represent PRAC at our booth. The fair starts at 10:00 AM and last to 4:00 PM. This is a fun event with several environmental agencies, resources and products and a good place to make new connections. Any members interested in spending 2 to 4 hours at the booth please contact me, John Havicon, at (916) 875-6672 or [onbelay@innercite.com](mailto:onbelay@innercite.com).

# From the President's Desk

*Greetings Fellow PRAC Members.*

*Now that winter is upon us, we are keeping busy with the holiday season and dealing with the problems winter can bring to our parks. As this year comes to an end and we look forward to a New Year, PRAC too is going through some changes. As you know, Doug Bryce is stepping down after over 22 years of dedicated service to the organization. When this year ends, so does Doug's career as executive manager for PRAC. We will be holding a luncheon to honor Doug on Wednesday, **December 11** in Sacramento. I hope you can join us there to thank Doug for his years of service and to say farewell. Just as an old year passes and a new one comes in, we welcome our new executive manager Todd Kellogg to the PRAC family. Todd started in his new position in October to give him a chance to work with Doug on the changing of the guard and learn from Doug's vast knowledge of the organization. Todd will be working closely with the board to take PRAC into 2003. Good luck to you Doug in your future endeavors and welcome aboard Todd, I look forward to working with you.*

*PRAC has also hired a new webmaster and internet support person: Jeff Price. Jeff is working on designing and maintaining our new web site, [www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org) and he is helping to enhance our web presence. We have also initiated some new e-mail addresses to make it easier for people to reach the PRAC officers, committees, and other support staff and volunteers. Look on the back of this Signpost to check them out.*

*With 2003 just around the corner, that brings us ever closer to the 2003 Parks Conference at South Lake Tahoe. The committee has put in many long hours to help make this one of the best conferences ever. If you can only go to one conference in your life, this will be the one to go to. The location is wonderful and the sessions and field trips are going to be outstanding. It will also be a great opportunity to meet Todd and Jeff. We have tried to keep members posted on the progress of conference planning so you know what you have to look forward to. Registration packets will be going out the first week of January so look for it in your mail.*

*With such a great conference coming up at **South Lake Tahoe March 31- April 2**, it is easy to just think about that and forget that we need to start planning for the 2004 Parks Conference. The first step in conference planning is to pick a venue location. The 2004 Parks Conference will be held in somewhere in Southern California. If you are interested in helping plan the 2004 Parks Conference, please contact me.*

*I had the pleasure of attending the Region 2 picnic back in September. Pam Helmke and Teri Rogoway did a great job putting it together. We had a good turn out of members from Regions 1, 2, and 3. It was good to get a group of park professionals together in an informal setting. Thanks to Pam and Teri, thanks to all that attended, and I am sorry for those that were unable to attend.*

*I hope to see you at one of the upcoming PRAC events and for sure at the 2003 Parks Conference at South Lake Tahoe. Happy holidays to all and have a safe winter.*

**Mike Chiesa**

## A Shout Out

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

It's time for another shout out. I want to give a huge shout out to the 2003 Conference planning team and also to the new members of the team; the rangers from Douglas County, Nevada County and the Nevada State Park Rangers. Everyone involved has been working diligently to make sure that this will be one of the best conferences ever.

The team has been attending meetings on their days off in Sacramento and Tahoe while dedicating countless hours to the logistics of putting on a conference and has been consistently ahead of schedule.

So, off goes my hat to everyone involved with the 2003 conference planning team!!

# Dumpers Corner

by Ken Miller

I don't know how many other agencies have a problem with illegal dumping but we certainly have a few trouble spots. One area in particular is so bad that we refer to it as *Dumpers Corner*. It is a remote spot on a dead end road just a few miles from the county dump. Many people find it easier to dump their trash instead of paying to use the dump. We never know what will find next at *Dumpers Corner*. Unfortunately we've only caught one person dumping over the years. Here's a story of someone the corner caught on its own.

A neighbor notified a resident ranger of a pick up truck that had gone over the side at the corner. The ranger went out and found a large 80's Power Ram pick-up with its rear wheels over the side and a large pile of wood debris that had been dumped out of the bed. The ranger requested that CHP respond to take an accident report and I also responded. The driver said that he had gotten lost on the way to the dump and was turning around when the truck went off of the road. He dumped the wood out of the truck so he could get the truck back onto the road. I found the situation rather interesting and asked that my supervisor also respond. When I arrived the driver ran up to me,

extended his hand for a handshake, and burst into an explanation of what had happened. My officer safety warning bells went off. I backed away, refused the handshake, and told him to wait. Apparently the driver had done the same for the resident ranger and CHP officer. Both of them also refused the handshake and told him to wait. The tow driver and my supervisor both arrived. We all heard the drivers story about what had happened. He was very interested in what would happen to him. After reviewing the situation all of the officers agreed that no matter how suspicious everything seemed, the driver could be telling the truth. We told him that things did look very suspicious but we'd take his word for what had happened. We did tell him that all of the wood needed to be picked up or he would be ticketed for dumping. The tow truck pulled the truck out and the driver moved the truck into position to pick up the wood. It's hard to believe but the driver almost drove the truck off of the road again. So, there may be some truth to his story. The weird part is that the drivers nose kept getting longer the more he spoke with us. Only the driver knows for sure if *Dumpers Corner* caught someone dumping illegally.

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## Fill 'Er Up?

by Steve Hogue

In August, agency members of the California Park and Recreation Society (CPRS), working with the National Park Service, were able to apply for an anticipated 80 available vehicles to be donated by Global Electric Motors (GEM), which is a subsidiary of Daimler Chrysler.

Due to the number of requests for the vehicles, CPRS and NPS made a request to GEM that they donate 750 vehicles. In the end, GEM agreed to donate 350. My

agency was awarded two of the vehicles, which we will receive in November.

The donated vehicles will be white, long bed utility vehicles. The news of the new electric trucks has been met with great enthusiasm in my agency, as they will be ideal for usage on minor maintenance projects throughout our parks.

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## Website Transition

PRAC is in the process of making several cyberspace transitions this year.

Beginning in October 2002, new member Jeff Price assumed Webmaster duties for PRAC's internet site. Jeff is following in the footsteps of Doug Bryce and grandson Kyle, who admirably maintained an internet presence for us over the past years. Thanks Doug & Kyle!

We are also making the transition to a new, more powerful and roomy internet location and we are changing the domain name for PRAC. As of press time, Jeff was setting up the new "[www.CalRanger.org](http://www.CalRanger.org)" website for us. It will be in design and test mode for a few months, as the Board reviews content and approves changes. We hope to have the new site active in late November.

Jeff retired last May after a 31 year career with State Parks. Most recently he was serving as the Chief Ranger

at Marin District. He and wife Peggy will be moving to Oxnard, to be near parents, children and 4 grandchildren in Ventura County. You may have met or worked with Jeff at a California Park Conference, as he has worked behind the scenes representing the California State Park Rangers Association on many past conferences and the current one at South Shore Tahoe. He has designed, developed and maintained many non-profit and park support organization websites for the past five years. CSPRA has used Jeff as their Webmaster for the past 3 years. Now that he has retired, we have asked him to work with PRAC in setting up a new Website and e-mail system for us. If you would like to contact him, Jeff's new organizational e-mail address will be [webmaster@CalRanger.org](mailto:webmaster@CalRanger.org).

Please welcome Jeff to PRAC and his new position as Webmaster.

# “I’ve seen the needle and the damage done!”

by John Havicon

The author of that famous tune wasn’t talking specifically about the needle when he wrote it but the contents inside. As rangers we need to be concerned with both, the needle and the contents. We find them everywhere, in playgrounds; between the boards of picnic tables, in restroom sinks, hidden in toilet paper rolls; in transient camps. We find them when we search people and search purses and bags. I personally hate the idea of being stuck by a hypodermic syringe. The good news is that according to the Centers of Disease Control the chance of being infected by a bloodborne pathogen via a needlestick is very small. The risk of infection from Hepatitis B Virus, (HBV), is 6 to 30%, (0% if you have been vaccinated), Hepatitis C Virus, (HCV), is 1.8% and Human Immunodeficiency Virus, (HIV), is 0.3%. There still is a chance and we should continue to do protect ourselves the best way possible. The following is some suggestions to follow to help protect and prevent needlestick injuries:

- Get your Hepatitis B vaccination. CDC Studies, (from 1985 to 1996), have shown a 90% reduction in infection of HBV to healthcare workers since the introduction of the vaccinations. HBV vaccinations should be available to you, at no cost, if you are a full time peace officer. You can also request it through your doctor or healthcare provider.
- Handle needles carefully. Don’t try to recap needles. Don’t try to break off or bend the needlepoint. Believe it or not, this is how most needlesticks occur.
- Place needles in a puncture resistant container. There are some commercial containers that are available to hold a single syringe, (“Sharps Shuttle,” “The Stickit,” “Sharp-Trap,” “The Vault”). I carry a couple of these in my glovebox.

- Do not throw needles in the trash. Needles are treated as hazardous materials and should be disposed in that manner. Most fire stations and ambulances have a needle disposal program and won’t have a problem with you stopping by to dispose a couple of needles.
- When searching a person, ask them if they have any needles or sharp items on them and where. If possible, have them remove the items. Search methodically and search as if you are expecting to find a needle. Visually inspect the person’s clothing prior to physically searching and look for shapes that look like a syringe. Front pants pockets can usually be pulled inside out from the top of the pocket, emptying the contents.
- When searching other items, such as purses or bags, never blindly reach into an area that you cannot see. Empty all contents prior to searching. Use a flashlight or a mirror to look inside.
- When checking camps, again expect the possibility of finding needles. Be careful in, around and under bedrolls and sleeping bags.

If you are stuck by a needle, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Report the exposure to your supervisor and the department that manages exposures. Prompt reporting is essential and in some cases, postexposure treatment may be recommended and it should be started as soon as possible. Postexposure treatment for HBV should begin ASAP, preferably within 24 hours and no later than 7 days. Postexposure treatment for HIV should begin within hours rather than days. If your department cannot respond fast enough, consider going to a clinic or your healthcare provider and get a baseline test and possible treatment.

Announcing the 2003 California Parks Conference  
*“Honor the Past, Imagine the Future, Enjoy the Journey”*

**SAVE THESE DATES** Monday, March 31st to Wednesday, April 2nd, 2003  
Embassy Suites, South Shore Lake Tahoe  
Check <cspra.com> or <prac.ws>

Please join us at Lake Tahoe for a fun, informative and energizing time at the California Parks Conference. This is an opportunity for park professionals and career students to learn new skills. The high quality training sessions, field trips and POST courses will take advantage of one of the most beautiful, diverse and inspiring places on earth.

**To Receive a Free Conference Registration Packet:**  
call (800) 749-8749, or write PO Box 191269, Sacramento CA 95816-9998, or e-mail your mailing address to <parcs2003tahoe@yahoo.com>



Packets are mailed directly to all PRAC and CSpra Members  
Sponsoring Partners: Park Rangers Association of California and California State Park Rangers Association

# Harold Parker State Forest

From Past to Present

by Catherine S. Lambert in cooperation with Barbara Buls

*this article is reprinted courtesy of NEPRA*

Harold Parker State Forest comprises 3,500 acres lying 20 miles north of Boston, Massachusetts in the towns of North Andover, Andover, North Reading and Middleton and is estimated to be within a one-hour drive of 3.5 million people. Its history is notable, its current uses extensive and its continued preservation essential.

History reveals that what is now native people occupied Essex County more than 9,000 years ago. The Pennacooks inhabited the area and their artifacts have been discovered in at least two archeological sites within the forest. The women of the tribe harvested crops consisting of varieties of squashes, beans and corn, while hunting was a male occupation. This continued until horrific rates of mortality occurred as a result of a mysterious plague introduced by European traders in 1615 and 1616. This decreased the native population from Cape Ann to Cape Cod from approximately 100,000 to just over 5,000. Though there was interaction and extensive trade between Europeans and natives, adult Europeans never contracted this deadly plague. It was at this time that European farmers began to settle in Massachusetts. In 1646, John Woodridge purchased Andover from Cutshamache for \$30 and an old coat. As the European population grew, lands were cleared by early settlers for predominately agricultural use.

It is important to note that in 1758, the Jenkins family of Malden purchased a 400-acre parcel of land in Andover, which abuts what is now forest property, from Peter Osgood. In 1765, Samuel Jenkins erected a house on the property, which still stands today. Samuel Jenkins grandson, prominent landowner William Jenkins (1796-1878) and his wife Mary Farnum (1796-1891), were staunch abolitionists and used this house as a station on the Underground railroad. Since the farm was prominently located on the Boston-Haverhill turnpike, it became an important stop on the slaves escape route from the South to the freedom in Canada. Escapees were often hidden under loose floorboards in the attic or inside the fireplace. Frequent visitors to the house include such important figures as noted abolitionist and philanthropist, William Lloyd Garrison, American negro reformer and diplomat, Frederick Douglass and the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe. This continued until 1863 and 1864 when the Emancipation Proclamation was passed and the Fugitive Slave Law annulled. The soapstone boulder marking William Jenkins grave at the Spring Grove Cemetery in Andover reads He lived to see the fulfillment of his great desire, the abolition of slavery in America. His house is still occupied today and is located on the west side of Jenkins Road.

During this period and into the early twentieth century, much of the farmland was abandoned due to movement west in search of better agricultural soil. Farming gave way to the manufacture of textiles, paper, shoes and wood

products in the region. In 1836, William Jenkins entered into a 14-year agreement with Yeoman Addison Flint and stonemason Michael Flannelly to quarry Blue Soapstone on property west of Jenkins Road, which is now part of Harold Parker State Forest. Blue Soapstone, the softest of all building stones, was quarried for a variety of uses including door and window moldings, large sinks and fireplace mantles. Products from this quarry were also used in buildings on Summer St. in Boston, monuments in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, the burying ground in West Parish and in William Jenkins house and grave. Although the quarry was profitable, the treasurer of the company absconded sometime in the 1840s and was never heard from again. Work at the quarry soon discontinued due to the lack of funds. Partially finished stones still exist at the site.

A stones throw from the quarry one can find another historically significant site located within Harold Parker Forests bounds. William Jenkins constructed and operated a sawmill on a branch of the Skug River. The mill may have been used in part for the stone quarry, and certainly wood was milled there. It stood until 1895 when much of the area was ravaged by forest fires, mostly caused by coal and wood-burning steam engines and the area was left in waste-land condition. Forestland that was left was indiscriminately cut for white pine.

The 1900s saw the demise of the nearby textile mills and it was then that the ideas of land preservation surfaced. Most of the forest property was acquired between 1914 and 1938. Harold Parker, after whom the forest is named, understood the importance of preserving land and was instrumental in acquiring the first forest properties. He was born in Charlestown, MA on June 17, 1854 and graduated from Harvard College in 1875. He served as chairman of the first State Forest Commission from 1908-1911. The commissions purpose was to survey the state and purchase the burned and cutover lands at a maximum price of \$5.00 per acre for reforestation and improvement. As Chairman, Parker dreamed of a system of lake and forest reservations stretching across the entire state of Massachusetts. When he died suddenly in 1916, the land that had been acquired that year was later named in his honor.

During the depression era of the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) was established. Men and boys throughout the country worked to improve and develop forests. In 1933, the CCC set up two camps at Harold Parker Forest. They built forest roads and trails, planted red and white pine saplings, built recreation and administration structures and established spillways to create nine man-made ponds. Many of the Forest dams, facilities, and trails are a result of their dedication. By 1938, Harold Parker State Forest contained 2,879 acres of pre-

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# Harold Parker State Forest

From Past to Present

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vious waste-land, not all of which was contiguous. The CCC disbanded in 1940; however only a small crew was left to maintain the Forest. It is presently maintained by the Department of Environmental Management, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Harold Parker State Forest has as much to offer now as it did then. It is an oak-hickory climax forest type, which also includes birch, hophornbeam, white and red pine, and beech as well as a diverse and rich understory. Evidence of granite quarrying can be seen at various sites within the park, and a prominent glacial erratic, deposited by melting glaciers, is located near the Jenkins Road entrance to the soapstone quarry. (The trail that winds past this glacial erratic is part of the Bay Circuit Trail, a 200-mile continuous greenway from Massachusetts South Shore to the North Shore.)

The land is rich with wildlife such as coyotes, deer, beavers, fox, several species of hawk, many amphibians and small mammals. Hunting for pheasant, turkey and deer is prevalent and permitted in season. Fishing is another

popular pastime for visitors. Bass, perch, bluegill, chain pickerel and catfish are found in the parks eleven ponds. Interpretive programs are offered seasonally including an annual fishing festival, weekly hikes, kids nature study and visiting wildlife professionals. All programs are free and open to the public.

For a nominal fee, the public may use the area at Berry Pond for swimming and picnicking. Restrooms, water fountains and changing areas are available at the new comfort station. In addition, Harold Parker Forest offers 90 campsites in a family campground, which is open from mid-April to mid-October. Each campsite has its own grill, picnic table, and fireplace. Hot showers and flush toilets are available at one of four comfort stations within walking distance of the campsites. (There is a swimming beach on Frye Pond for campers.)

Do not pass on the opportunity to visit this exquisite forest. Recreational opportunities abound, as do the flora and fauna found within the forest. Whether you fish, bike, hike, camp, canoe or swim Harold Parker State Forest offers something of interest to you.

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## We Are on Our Way

by Lee Hickinbotham

The Standards Committee has some exciting news. We are very close to a start date when we can begin accepting documentation for the Standards Certificates. We have the Challenge form completed, a certificate template in place and now we are just working on a place to house all the documentation.

We also have trainings lined up that will meet the Interpretive and Fire standards. The next interpretive skills training will be held in Southern California **November 21-25**. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in cooperation with the National Association of Interpretation is hosting this training. At the completion of

this forty-hour training, you will be issued a PRAC Interpretive certificate. If you miss the training in November, the same training will be offered in Northern California early next year.

A 32 hour State Red Card course is in the process of being put together for both Southern and Northern California early next year. We will also have some trainings to offer at the 2003 conference in South Lake Tahoe.

So please be patient, at least until the beginning of 2003. In the meantime please start getting all your documentation ready to send. If you have any questions, please contact your region director or myself.

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## Subject Disturbing at Lake Piru

by Chief Ranger J. Withers

While patrolling, Park Ranger Sheryl Maniss received a call via radio to report to the entry kiosk to handle a problem with a park patron. Upon arrival, she was advised that a visitor was upset with a neighboring picnic site in the day use picnic area. Her complaint was not with the proximity of their location, which was only a few feet from where she was barbecuing, but rather with her picnicking neighbors who were breaking wind loudly. The patron was offended and extremely upset. Ranger Maniss con-

tacted the disturbing parties and attempted to identify the flatulent culprit. Since this was the first time she had ever encountered this type of incident, she was unsure how to begin. This sort of problem had never been covered in her in-service training and had not been defined in her local ordinances. After contacting the disturbing group, no one would confess to be the phantom wind-breaker. Ranger Maniss asked them to be considerate of the nearby picnic sites and then she left to a chorus of laughter coming from surrounding areas of the park.

# On Moving Earth and Stopping Time

by Rob Hicks Riverside County Parks Interpreter

edited and submitted by Tom Ash

Humanity is busy.

Whether it be developing relationships, beginning a family, constructing a community, building a business, or creating a nation, Homo sapiens are always up to something.

Although we are arguably the most industrious creatures in this planet's history, we may be one of the most troubled. From bench clearing sports brawls to common use of antidepressants, examples of modern human stress levels abound. Stress is considered another part of daily life with stress management courses and meditation rooms available for a suffering public.

Besides long lectures and dark, poorly decorated rooms, many people choose outdoor recreation as their remedy for the common affliction of stress. Factors of fresh air, vitamin-D, and cardiovascular exercise are among the many health benefits that draw people outside to parks and open space.

Along with these measurable benefits to physiology which in turn affect the psychological state of the visitor, there are experiences that are difficult to quantify, and yet are universally felt. A hilltop view of distant snow-capped peaks. The sound of chorus frogs breaking the silence of dusk. The smell of sage following a rainstorm. These experiences influence us in ways that are perhaps impossible to measure, yet important to recognize.

Recently, while walking on a favorite trail, I had an experience that affected me both subtly and intensely. Looking at the ground before me, I noticed what appeared to be a grasshopper crossing the trail. Upon closer inspection it turned out to be a large caterpillar straddled and carried by a wasp. A thread-waisted wasp of the order *Ammophila* was hauling a paralyzed creature many times its size to a pre-dug chamber in the center of the trail for the purpose of feeding its young.

Before she could lay her egg on the doomed larvae, she had to compensate for the extreme size of her catch by excavating the chamber to a larger size. The caterpillar lay motionless nearby. I inched a bit closer and stood a tad more still. The wasp made multiple forays in and out of the pencil-thick burrow. Upon exiting with a leg full of sediment, and while flying a foot distant from the nest, she released her load and used her momentum to scatter the grains inconspicuously over the ground.

Once the lair was enlarged to her satisfaction she dragged the hapless prey into the darkness. All was quiet for forty seconds as the next generation was placed upon its first meal. Emerging, the new mother immediately began burying her egg and its temporary companion in the sandy, chaparral sediment.

Burying this macabre stage was a laborious affair. After scraping and kicking sediment into the hole for half a minute, she would enter and exit the nest (or tomb depending) to remove particles that did not meet her strict standards. Once each buried load met these qualifications; she would disappear into her subterranean nursery. Although unseen for another minute, she was heard vigorously vibrating her wings and creating that universally known buzzing sound of the insects.

These loud disappearances were a mystery until her final few loads. Now visible near the opening of a nearly filled and finished nest, her ingenious technique became obvious. By grasping a small pebble in her mouthparts and holding it to the ground, she smoothed and compacted each load numerous times with the forward force of her beating wings. The analogy of a tractor or steamroller seemed oddly appropriate.

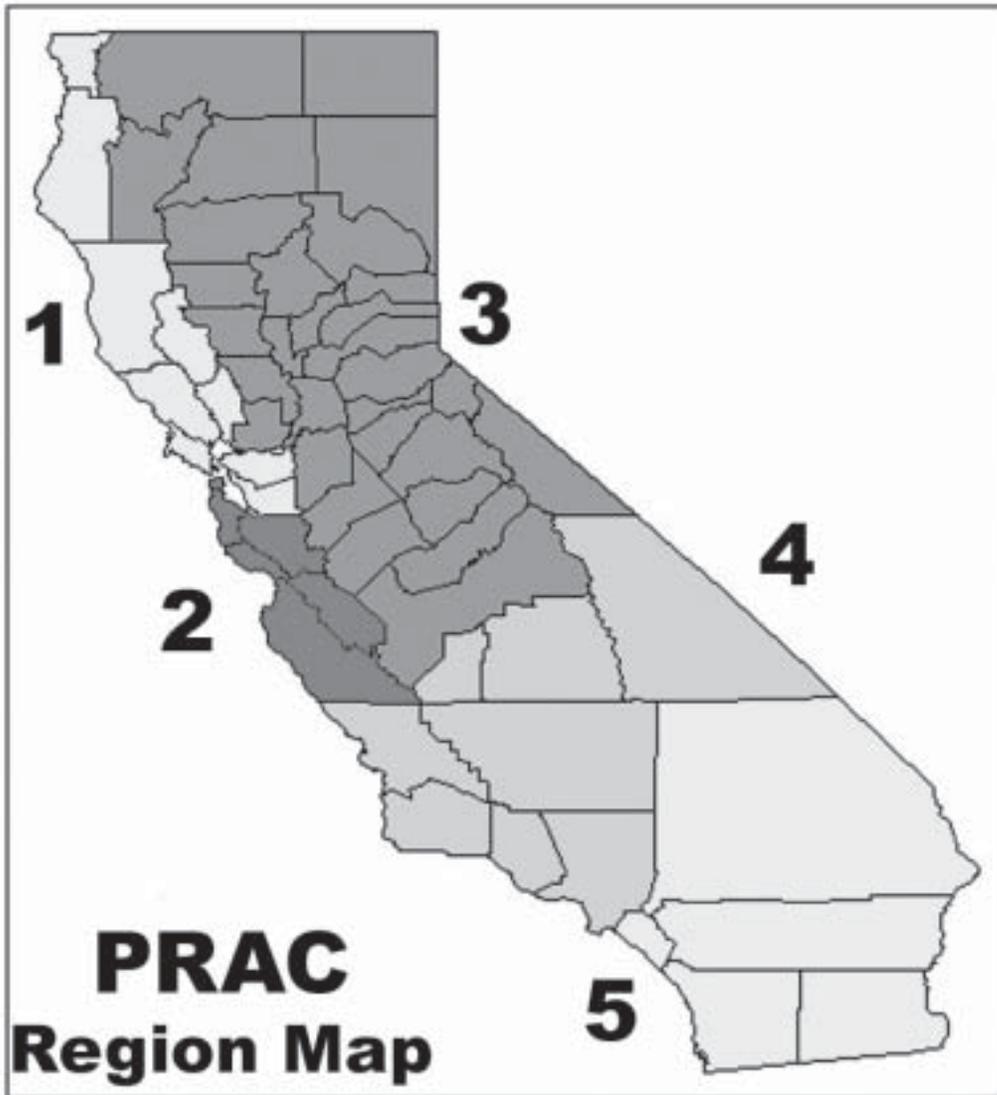
With the last load divested of undesirables and compacted with care, she put the finishing touches on her work by kicking and scraping sediment of all sizes haphazardly in a three-inch radius circle around the now sealed chamber. After thirty minutes of dragging, digging, and dumping that required numerous resting breaks, she simply tucked her legs, beat her wings and flew away.

How did the observation of such a scenario influence me? Was I simply passing time? Are such experiences important? And why are we protecting to promote them? The questions are difficult and intricate, yet compelling and exciting.

My imagination could attempt to answer such questions by speculating about the influence of nature observation on human ingenuity. From a wasp utilizing a rock, to an acorn woodpecker storing seeds, there are countless examples of animal-induced inspiration. Yet contemplation, and the ideas produced by it, can be stymied by elevated levels of stress.

For a brief time watching the mother wasp, I was focused on the exertions of an insect and all else faded away. John Muir once said "*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.*" Mr. Muir was meditating. Not cross-legged and chanting strange sounds, but by becoming immersed in the moment of observation.

In a world of many responsibilities and very busy schedules, a moment of relaxation and enjoyable focus can do more than lower our blood pressure. With our minds free from the stresses of what we might or might not do, we are able to experience our surroundings and ourselves on an intimate level. *Creativity. Imagination. Peace of mind.* These are the invaluable benefits of the moment.



# PRAC Regions

**Region 1:** Alameda, Contra Costa, Lake, Napa, Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties.

**Region 2:** Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties.

**Region 3:** Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba counties.

**Region 4:** Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, and Ventura counties.

**Region 5:** Imperial, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Riverside counties.

## Greetings from PRAC's New Executive Manager

*I have been working with the California Department of Parks and Recreation for the past sixteen years and I am currently the Office Services Supervisor for the north sector of the Russian River District. I am also the acting secretary of the Fort Ross School Board, which is the local elementary school that both my children attended and where my son is now in 8th grade.*

*I have a strong interest in the environment and I am active within the local preservation and restoration communities such as Stewards of Slavianka, a cooperating association for Russian River District State Parks, and Fort Ross Environmental Restoration. When I'm not too busy parenting or working, I spend time on my musical hobby, playing in a band, song writing and recording.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to work as the Executive Manager of PRAC. I look forward to learning about the association and meeting the members. I will work hard to keep PRAC running efficiently and professionally.*

*Sincerely,*

**Todd Kellogg**

# So you want to marry a park ranger?

Submitted by Ken Miller

The first thing a ranger's wife must learn to do is smile and nod when new acquaintances and co-workers say, "Your husband's a park ranger? That must be so wonderful!"

Don't say what your thinking, which is: "Yeah, it's just great if you like having owl pellets and desiccated snapping turtles in your living room, not to mention the interesting road kill in your freezer." Don't say: "It's great being married to a guy wearing a Smokey the Bear hat, especially if you don't want a social life because his schedule is subject to change monthly. And the only thing you can count on is that he won't have weekends or holidays off."

When most people are snuggled in their beds (or thinking about it), your husband comes home from work tired, cold and wet (or hot and sweaty, hungry) and ready to tell you about the latest outrage from management or a drunken camper.

Sure, there are compensations. Like dinner table conversations about the medical he did that day on the guy with the nick in his jugular or the reason pelagic birds have tube noses. There's also pride in knowing yours is the only kid in grade school who knows the California Penal Code numbers for drunk in public or indecent exposure.

There are almost no boring office parties. What few parties there are, are barbecues where instead of talking about their cubicle location, the guests talk about what their last CPR patient had to eat before collapsing of a heart attack. (I remember one lady ranger saying she would

never forget the taste of pickles from a mouth-to-mouth she did.)

And then there's the reduced child care costs. You take care of the kids on Saturdays and Sundays. He takes care of them on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, thus cutting child care days you need to pay for. Of course, when the kids are small you sometimes find yourself getting up at two in the morning, taking your wedding picture off the wall, and holding it up to the guy in the living room, snoring in the recliner while an ancient black and white movie flickers on the TV screen. Yep, he's the one you married!

But the biggest rewards are the survival mechanisms you learn. Like dealing with your infant's emergency yourself because your ranger husband is working on an island to which the only phone cable has been cut by a passing ship and you don't have access to a ship-to-shore radio. Great communication skills are learned when you need to explain to your eight year old that Daddy can't come to his birthday party because his supervisor waited until after the invitations were delivered to tell Daddy he couldn't have the day off after all.

Another skill I'll bet you didn't know a ranger wife needs is catering. I can now cook a complete Thanksgiving dinner (OK-so the dressing was "Stove Top") and drive it 30 miles to a ranger station for my husband and his six co-workers before the gravy gets cold. (Martha Stewart, eat you heart out!)

So, you want to marry a park ranger? You better be like me, and think the reason pelagic sea birds have tube noses really is great dinner conversation.

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## New Tobacco Law

by Steve Hogue

Many agencies throughout California received a memo from the California Department of Health Services regarding a new Tobacco law which took effect as of 1/1/02. I also realize that many times, memos do not make it to the people that they should.

As of 1/1/02, the new Health and Safety Code, section 104495, has been available to enforce. The new law makes it a \$100 fine to smoke tobacco-related products within playgrounds and tot lot sandbox areas. This section also makes it illegal dispose of tobacco-related waste within same areas. Interestingly, the law also makes it illegal for one to "intimidate, threaten any reprisal, or effect any reprisal" as retaliation for being reported by another for violating this new law.

The intent of the law is two part. First, it will stop children from observing and copying this type of behavior that

they see adults doing. Second, it will make it less likely that children will pick up and ingest cigarette butts. Since the responsibility for enforcing this law falls upon local jurisdictions, these intents are obviously only as good as the effort made by our own agencies.

In my community, one large park area near the downtown center was designated as "Children's Playground" in 1911. Over the last few years, the area has turned into a haven for miscreants who want nothing more than to vandalize and loiter. Many of these individuals have habitual smoking habits which have ended up causing them \$100 each time they were caught, as my department and the local police department has chosen to strictly enforce the law. While some of the people still loiter in the area, many have moved on to greener pastures. (Well, at least to areas where they don't get cited for smoking.) So there is some success that can be achieved with this new law.

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