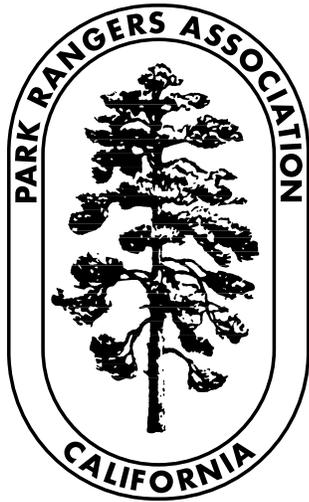


The Signpost

November – December, 2007



California Parks Conference Hold the Days !!!!

Looking to schedule your vacation or training days for 2008 then make sure you save **March 30th through April 4th** for the California Parks Conference at the Embassy Suites in South Lake Tahoe.

Scheduling for all of the session is still in the works but we have a lot of exciting stuff coming your way; Narcotics Updates, Wilderness First Aid, Remote Sensing in Resource Management, the Environmental Impact of Marijuana Groves, GPS and GIS just to name a few. Other features for the 2008 Conference include an Emerald Bay Dinner Cruise, a visit by Mark Twain, and snowshoeing with much more coming.

If you've attended the California Parks Conference in the past, you know what fantastic opportunities present themselves. First and foremost is the chance for you to meet and network with other park professionals from the western U.S. that allow you to exchange ideas, thoughts, and information. Set a personal goal to meet at least one new person from an agency you are not familiar with during each day of the conference. Name tags make it easy to spot the different agencies. Introduce yourself to someone during the luncheons or social events and

get to know more about them. The personal connections you make at each conference will open your mind to new ideas, create new friendships, and help you develop your network of professional resources for those times when you may not have the answer. You may not be able to attend the conference every year but try to attend whenever time and opportunity permit. You'll be glad you did.



From the President's Patrol Truck

THE CONFERENCE IS COMING! THE CONFERENCE IS COMING!!! Do I have your attention? That's right the conference is coming in six months. You are probably thinking, six months, why is he bothering us now. This is the time of year when a lot of agencies start looking at upcoming trainings for the next year. This is also a good time to put in your request for time off. Remember that the 2008 conference will be the first week of April. If you haven't heard PRAC will be going back to the Embassy Suites Hotel in South Lake Tahoe in 2008. Now on to business.

In September the Board met in Sacramento for our quarterly meeting. We had a full agenda and many of the items had to be tabled because of a lack of time. One of the first items of business was to vote in the new Region 6 director. I am happy to introduce Marie Fong as our acting Region 6 Director. Marie is temporary because Region 6 is up for election this year. Marie has accepted the Region 6 nomination for 08/09 and is running for that position. Marie comes to the Board from Washoe County Parks in Reno Nevada. She has a great personality is very enthusiastic to be on the board. Marie has already suggested some upcoming training that I think Nevada as well as California will be excited to attend. Speaking of trainings I hope many of you were able to attend the trainings that were being offered in the other regions recently. We had a Search and Rescue training in Region 1, Low angle Rescue training in Region 2, as well as Fire Awareness in Region 4. For more information on trainings go to the website at www.calranger.org or contact a director near you.

Other items of business included giving our office manager Marcia Joyce a \$500 a year raise, approving new software for our newsletter editor David Brooks, looking into liability insurance for the Association as well as having a consultant audit the books. The Board voted to have an audit done every two years and/or when there is a change in the office manager position and when a new president is elected. The audit is a process that is done by every organization for the protection of the Association and its Board members. One of the items that were tabled is the nomination of an Honorary Ranger. The board is accepting nominations for an Honorary Ranger. If there is someone who stands out and has gone above

and beyond the call of duty and has helped to promote the Park Ranger position please let me know. The Board will review all nominations for the Honorary Ranger and vote at the next meeting in November.

On a separate note, recently I attended training in Internal Affairs. This was a two day training offered by PORAC (Peace office Research Association of California). The training was offered to anyone that might be representing their union and/or Association members in a Internal Affairs investigation. It was a very eye opening and informative training. Instead of writing another two pages telling you about the class I am just going to give you some bullet points to consider.

If you are informed that you are being investigated, before you answer any questions that could lead to "punitive action" the department must tell you:

That you are under investigation for misconduct.

The name of the investigator(s).

The nature of the investigation (specific enough to help you decide whether you want representation).

Constitutional Rights (if matter may result in the filing of criminal charges).

A "Lybarger" warning that orders you to talk or face disciplinary action for refusing.

Other rights before an interrogation starts include:

The right to request the representation of your choice.

The right to get/use your own tape recorder.

The right to review any notes or tapes of prior interviews.

All the above bullet points were provided to me by Rains, Lucia & Wilkinson LLP. You can also obtain this information or get info on this and other trainings at www.porac.org.

until next time...

Lee*

Ranger News and Updates

by Matt Cerkel

Well we have all survived another summer in the parks and now we are moving into the fall season. For those of us with wildland fire duties the fire season should be wrapping up with the next month of so, except maybe for Southern California.

As I take stock of the past summer, I dealt with some interesting and at times serious calls. The most serious call I was involved with was a three year old with a rattlesnake bite. Other medical calls involved the typical park type medicals, slip and falls, mountain bike crashes, twisted ankles and such. Once during the summer I had back to back medicals, just as I was clearing a mountain bike crash when a call for an injured trail worker came in. Needless to say that was a busy day. During the summer I also found one small marijuana grow (50 plants) in a border area between Marin Municipal Water District and Marin County Open Space District lands. I actually found it by smell. I was checking a water tank for vandalism when the evening breeze in an area known as Windy Ridge carried the strong odor of marijuana plants which I followed to its source, the grow site. Most recently I was involved in my first hazmat incident when a chemical delivery truck leaked and our Ranger Station was used as the command post.

Some of my co-workers have been dealing with an interesting issue. We have a park user who is hearing impaired and has a service dog which alerts him when it is off leash. This is allowed even with our leash law because of ADA. The problem is his wife, who does not have a disability, walks the dog off leash when he is not present.

From what I heard she claims its ok because it's a "service dog" and she is "training it." This could be a sensitive issue, especially with ADA. I'm sure were not the only rangers who have dealt with this type of issue. While researching the service dog issue in parks I found a great article in the May 2007 issue of *The Yankee Ranger*, the newsletter of the New England Park Ranger Association. The article is called "Service Animals for People with Disabilities in Parks: Essential Information for Rangers," I have included it in this issue of *The Signpost*. (See page 6.)

In other ranger news, Park and Open Space agencies in the South Bay were quite busy from late August through early September with large wildland fires: The Stevens Fire which burned in the Stevens Creek area on Midpeninsula Regional Open Space lands and the Lick fire at Henry Coe State Park. Around the state the NPS has had multiple raids on large scale marijuana growing operations. Most, if not all large NPS parks in the state have seen recent raids, and one raid in the Santa Monica Mountains also included MRCA lands and was a joint operation with the MRCA rangers. I recently learned the 2008 California Parks Conference will have session on the environmental impact of marijuana gardens. This would be a good session to attend especially if your agency is dealing with or could deal with this issue. In job news both Sacramento County and the City of Long Beach are currently recruiting for Park Rangers. In training news please remember the Basic Search and Rescue Management course is Wednesday November 7th, if you wish to attend please contact me at region1@calranger.org, space is limited.

"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

John Muir

Guardabosque: Keeper of the Forest (Park Ranger)

By Park Ranger Marie D. Fong

Every park ranger comes to the field with a similar background, complemented by a myriad of valuable skill sets; throughout a ranger's time in the field that skill set continues to grow through a combination of experiences, trainings, and opportunities; which are often driven by a ranger's personal level of commitment and desire to develop further expertise. While overwhelming schedules and increasing demands often limit formal training opportunities, this leaves potentially dangerous knowledge and skill gaps. As park usage and demographic trends change, additional skills are often needed to ensure that park rangers continue to provide an excellent level of public service; including law enforcement, emergency management, public outreach and education, and much more.

A continued evaluation of my personal skill set has left me feeling a persistent lack of a very valuable skill: bilingualism with an emphasis on the Spanish language. With the barrier of speaking a single language on many occasions I have been sorely incapable of providing some of the services the job demands. Combined with a fear that one day my lack of communicative abilities will place my staff, the public, and/or myself in a dangerously irreversible situation has pushed me to attempt to learn Spanish. With time for classes being limited, alternative educational sources are proving valuable: structured and portable field reference books such as Spanish for Law Enforcement (Living Language) and Quick Spanish for Law Enforcement (Dees David) are helpful, as is the fee based website, spanishonpatrol.com which caters lesson plans to a range of law enforcement and public safety personnel including park rangers and wildlife officers. The U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice has recently produced a free online training program Español for Law Enforcement: An Online Training Tool, designed to aid law enforcement officers in obtaining a applicable, working knowledge of Spanish through English translations, phonetic spellings, pronunciations of Spanish words, and situational based application involving interviews, crime scenes, motor vehicles, and domestic violence. This interactive, audible material can be obtained at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij.

In addition to protecting the safety of personnel and park visitors it is notable that many agencies, local and national, have taken steps to encourage or require that all new hires fluently speak English and Spanish, some often preferring a third language. The statistics mirror this ever changing trend; Spanish is the second most common language in the United States where, according to the 2005 United States Census, Spanish is spoken most frequently at home by about 34 million people over the age of five. With more than 41 million Hispanics, the US is the fifth largest Spanish-speaking community in the world. In 2000 the Census Bureau listed the state of California first with the highest state-wide percentage (39%) of non-english-language speaking residents. While neighboring Nevada,

not only showed the highest rate of population increase in the decade, but also showed the highest percentage increase (193%) in Non-english language speaking residents. Understanding that the idea of bilingualism is often controversial especially in the United States it can be difficult to approach this need. An example of an agency that has meet this need after recognizing the inherent dangers of any language barrier is the park ranger staff of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Melanie Dickens outlines the issue in the article,

Park Rangers Take Spanish Classes

This communication problem became clear a few years ago, when two Hispanic men were reported shooting at each other at the swimming area of a park. Millwood ranger Robin Grooms said that by the time rangers were called in, the dispute had moved to the park entrance.

"Our rangers walked right into the middle of it," Grooms said.

The language barrier made it a difficult situation even harder to control, but Grooms said that the rangers did their best until county deputies arrived.

"Luckily the situation did not get as serious as it could have, but we want to be more prepared," she said.

To get prepared, Grooms called Cossatot Technical College. The college staff not only helped develop a program for the rangers' needs, they also found an instructor...

After only four classes, the students have learned much more than they expected. Besides teaching basics, much of the lessons are catered especially to the needs of the rangers and other personnel...

"I've had instances where I couldn't get a visitor to comply with my request to stop unsafe actions because I couldn't speak Spanish. That was kind of embarrassing," said ranger Titus Hardiman. "The course we're taking will help me to communicate with visitors who can't speak English..."

If undertaking a new language is too daunting, do not underestimate the resources provided by many local communities; knowing how to access emergency translators from your agency, exterior agencies, community outreach programs, local universities, or elsewhere could be a skill that saves lives. Decidedly, a pieced together, informal method is incomparable to formal linguistic training, but still provides a platform. If you would like to learn basic skills, emergency scenario vocabulary, basic questioning skills, investigative terminology and more through bi-weekly email lessons, "Spanish for Guardabosques," please email me at region6@calranger.org.

More on Two and Three Wheels

by John Havicon

In May of 2004, I wrote an article regarding California's laws on the various motorcycles, pocket bikes, scooters and mopeds driven on California's streets, parks and bicycle trails. Since then, the state legislature has made some additions to the laws that are worth re-visiting. These new laws provide us a clearer explanation for the pocket bikes and direction on enforcing laws regarding them.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles divides 2 or 3 wheeled motorized vehicles into 7 categories:

1. Motorcycles; Cycles with engine displacement over 150 cc's (cubic centimeters)
2. Motor-driven cycles; Motorcycles with less than 150 cc's,
3. A "pocket bike" is a two-wheeled motorized device that has a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, and that is not designed or manufactured for highway use, [CVC 473(a)]. "Pocket bike" does not include an off-highway motorcycle, as defined in Section 436.(b)
4. Mopeds; Cycles with a motor and fully operational pedals for human propulsion or no pedals, if it is an "all-electric" cycle. Capable speeds no more than 30-mph.
5. Motorized bicycles; A bicycle with a motor to assist peddling. Capable of speeds no more than 20-mph
6. Motorized scooters; A motorized device that has handles and can be stood upon or may have a seat.
7. Motorized skateboards; Skateboard with a motor and no handles

[Mopeds and motorized bicycles are hard to differentiate between and the California Vehicle Code makes a poor effort to separate them. The best I can figure is that if it looks more like a motor-driven cycle with pedals, it's a moped and if it looks more like a bicycle with a motor, it's a motorized bicycle.]

Motorcycles, Motor-driven cycles and Mopeds

- Motorcycles and motorized-bicycles require registration, [CVC 4000(a), CVC 5030, CVC 5037]
- Motorcycles and motor-driven cycles used for off-highway purposes only, must have an off-highway registration, [CVC 38020]
- For roadway use, a valid driver's licenses needed, with a M-1 endorsement for motorcycles and motor-driven cycles and mopeds. An M-2 endorsement for mopeds and motorized [CVC 12500(b)]. The minimum driving age for these is 16 years
- A DOT approved motorcycle helmet is required [CVC 27803(b) 3].
- For on-road use, All are required to be equip with brakes, a rear view mirror, a horn, headlights and tail-lights, license plate lights and turn signals (exceptions on some older models).

Motorized Bicycles

- No license requirement, [CVC 24016(b)(3)].
- Must be 16 years old, [CVC 24016(b)(4)].
- A bicycle Helmet required, [CVC 24016(b)(1)].

- All are required to be equipped with brakes, a horn, headlights and taillights, side and rear reflectors [CVC 24015(a)and(b)].

Motorized Scooters

- Class C or driver permit required [CVC 21235(d)].
- Must have a brake [CVC 21235(a)].
- On roadways, with speed limit greater than 25mph, must be operated in Class II bicycle lanes. On roadways with speed limit less than 25mph, riding in bicycle lane is not required [CVC 21235(b)].
- Must ride as close to the right curb as possible except to pass or turn left [CVC 21228].
- A bicycle helmet is required, [CVC 21235(c)].
- Operator must be at least 16 years old [CVC 21235(d)].
- Speed limit is 15-mph [CVC 21235(d)].
- No passengers [CVC 21235(e)].
- Cannot operate on a sidewalk [CVC 21235(g)].
- Unlawful to attach to vehicles [CVC 21235(j)].
- May be operated on a bicycle trail, path or bikeway if local laws permit it [CVC 21230]

Motorized Skateboards

- Illegal to operate in California, except on private property, [CVC 21968].

Pocket Bikes

- Operation permitted on private property only.

A pocket bike, gas or electric, shall not be operated on a sidewalk, roadway, or any other part of a highway, or on a bikeway, bicycle path or trail, equestrian trail, hiking or recreational trail, or on public lands open to off-highway motor vehicle use (CVC 21720).

CVC 21721.(a) A peace officer, as defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, may cause the removal and seizure of a pocket bike upon the notice to appear for a violation of Section 21720. A pocket bike so seized shall be held for a minimum of 48 hours.

(b) A violator of this section shall be responsible for all costs associated with the removal, seizure, and storage of the pocket bike.

(c) A city, county, or city and county may adopt a regulation, ordinance, or resolution imposing charges equal to its administrative costs relating to the removal, seizure, and storage costs of a pocket bike. The charges shall not exceed the actual costs incurred for the expenses directly related to removing, seizing, and storing a pocket bike.

(d) An agency shall release a seized pocket bike to the owner, violator, or the violator's agent after 48 hours, if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The violator or authorized agent's request is made during normal business hours.

(2) The applicable removal, seizure, and storage costs have been paid by the owner, or any other responsible party.

Service Animals for People with Disabilities in Parks Essential Information for Rangers

by Marcy Marchello, DCR Universal Access Program Coordinator

Search and Rescue dogs have long been standard working partners with rangers. Rangers know how these animals train, work and perform and what to expect of them on and off the job. But what about other service animals? Sometimes these animals, as part of the public, can become factors in situations that require involvement and even enforcement.

Basic Definitions

To begin addressing what can become a surprisingly complicated topic, it is important to know some basics about how the law defines service animals and those they serve. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law which defines the individuals that it is designed to protect.

Under the ADA, a person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as: sleeping, eating, walking, hearing, seeing, taking care of oneself, working etc. The law also protects those who have a record of such impairment and those who are regarded as having such impairment. It is also wise to keep in mind that many people have more than one disability and not all may be visible. Typically people using service animals would have a disability severe enough to require additional support in order to function in the world with a greater degree of independence. More often than not service animals are dogs but any animal may be used as a service animal including monkeys.

The ADA defines service animals as animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are considered working animals not pets.

While the law comfortably stops here in describing these animals, out in the world there are a baffling array of associated terms and functions. "Assistive animal" is generally understood to be synonymous with service animal. If someone says, "This is my seizure dog or mobility dog," it will be apparent what medical purpose the animal serves. What about companion animals? Therapy dogs? Social or facility dogs? Emotional support or comfort dogs? Where do pets end and service animals begin? To complicate matters for enforcement, there is no standard certification or proof of service animal training. This is intentional under the ADA to allow people with disabilities to train their own animals. Service animal vests can be easily ordered on-line by

anyone. You need to know how to quickly assess a given animal's status.

Basic Law and Toiletry

Service animals, by federal law, are allowed anywhere that is open to the public provided they are not a direct threat. "No pets" or "no dogs" policies should be modified to accommodate access for persons with disabilities. Service animals cannot be denied access unless they are out of control and their owner is ineffective in regaining control or the animals poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Health hazards, allergies, and fears of dogs or other animals (perceived threat) are not considered valid reasons for prohibiting service animals or not serving their owners. Most service animals are usually regularly cleaned and trained to "go" on command precisely because their job is to support their owners in public places. Being able to refer someone to an accessible area for a service animal to relieve itself is very helpful but not required by law.

Determining Service Animal Status

Through basic observation, it will often be obvious whether an animal is a service animal. It should be under control and behaving well as part of a team with its owner. It may be performing an obvious task that serves a medical purpose. It will likely be on a leash, but not always, particularly if its owner is missing one or both arms or hands. The animal's status may also not be clear at all. A service animal may not be working actively or it may present in a non-standard way. If you have reason to question a service animal's function, there are three key questions you can ask that will clarify the situation.

If you can't tell if someone has a disability, you can ask, "Do you have a disability?" This allows you to find out without being too personal. The individual may tell you what their disability is and they may not. Either way you won't violate their privacy if you ask the question in a general fashion.

For further clarification you can ask, "Is this animal a pet?" You can also ask if the animal is a service animal, but that can be too leading a question if you have serious doubts. You can dismiss an animal on the grounds that it is a pet, however consider the owner first. They may be confused themselves about terminology and its legal aspects and even their rights and responsibilities as a service animal owner, particularly if they have a mental disability. Others may have trained the animal themselves and be operating without the most informed

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Service Animals for People with Disabilities in Parks

Continued from page 6.

understanding of the law. If you are unsure if they understand the difference between a pet and a service animal try using “service animal.” You can also ask “What tasks does this animal do for you?” To get to the heart of the matter if there is confusion over terminology.

For the record, companion animals are a legitimate service animal used for people with psychiatric disabilities to alert them of potentially harmful behavior or remind them when to take medicine. Therapy animals, also known as social or facility animals, are not typically on duty in a park situation—these are animals trained or otherwise, that provide friendly animal contact for people in institutions. Service animal protection rarely applies to them out in public—they are not service animals in the assistive sense of the term. Emotional support or comfort animals are also in this category, though they may serve an important function in keeping people calm. To be a service animal, the animal must have been “individually trained” to meet the specific needs of an individual with a limiting disability. This too is a question you can ask—“Was this animal individually trained to assist you?”

It is not considered appropriate to ask for a demonstration of the animal’s job. This is because even though the animal may not appear to be working, it may be on duty—paying attention to sounds to communicate to its owner or for symptoms of a seizure for example—or simply resting while not on duty, which is also allowed. Demonstrations may distract the animal from its job or cause unnecessary stress or confusion.

In general it is best to trust service animal status. Proof on paper is not required and as one service animal owner says: “Proof should be in the behavior of the team”. If the animal is under control and behaves as part of a team with its owner you can feel reasonably confident about its status. Based on context and the former questions, if you reasonably discern that the service animal title is being misused and the owner is not willing to readjust their stance, you will be taking your chances with the law if you dismiss the animal.

How the Laws Apply

Various federal, state and local laws apply to service animals. There is often overlap so the law that allows the greatest protection for the person with the disability is usually applied. In Massachusetts, both service animals (by the federal ADA law) and service animals in training (by state law) are allowed at public facilities. Be sure you are aware of the laws that apply to your jurisdiction both for dogs and animals in general, as well as service animals. Some may be quite outdated (a muzzle law would be a good example of this) or contradic-

tory if applied in current situations to service animals now protected by the ADA. Some states have laws that pertain to service animals, others do not.

Complaints filed regarding treatment of an individual with their service animal in a park are likely to be filed citing a specific state or local law, if not the ADA. Individuals and their service animals must be complying with the cited law in order to be protected by it. State or local laws typically concern leash or muzzle use or certification requirements.

However, if state or local law requires a specific leash or muzzle restraint, or certification or licensing, and the individual with the service animal does not comply, they cannot be denied access. This is where the ADA, as the law providing the greatest protection to the person with the disability and which does not require these components overrides state or local law.

It is the person with the disability or the animal’s trainer—not the animal - that is protected by the ADA. If a service animal is with someone and its owner is not present, technically it can be required to leave an area where animals are not allowed. It is worth questioning further in such situations to be sure the person with the disability or the trainer is not elsewhere on site and returning soon before you require the animal to depart.

Park Rule Enforcement Issues

The most confusion regarding service animals that have come up in Massachusetts State and Urban Parks recently involves animal and owner behavior and/or specific park restrictions on dogs. Typical examples might be:

- A person in a wheelchair comes weekly to play fetch with her service dog on a swimming beach where no dogs are allowed. The animal does not obey her very well, splashing other beach users and running out of her control.
- A person with four therapy dogs cooling them off in a waterfront area where dogs are not allowed. Because they are therapy dogs, the owner insists they deserve privileges other dogs aren’t allowed in the park.

How, as a park ranger responsible for enforcement, do you balance the requirements of the ADA with park rules? How do you respond appropriately and effectively to situations like those above?

First, you can expect service animals to be under control and you can expect them to obey park rules within reasonable context. You know you should modify "no pets" or "no dog" rules to allow service animals in areas where

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Service Animals for People with Disabilities in Parks

Continued from page 7.

people are allowed public access. The same respect with which you would approach any park visitor is of course applicable to people with disabilities. Still, some finessing or creativity may be required to arrive at a balanced and hopefully peaceful resolution.

The dog in the first scenario above, if determined to be a service animal, can and should be allowed on the beach if it is on duty and under control. Service animal privileges do not however apply to off duty service animals. There is a difference between playing fetch repeatedly (pet behavior) and a dog returning an item that has been dropped or blown away (service animal behavior). The woman can be asked to remove the animal if it is violating the "no pets" rule since it is a pet in this context. She can be referred to another location where her animal's behavior would be less disruptive, such as a dog park or a more rural dog watering spot, bearing in mind that she will need a referral that is wheelchair accessible. She can also be asked to leave if she is unwilling to remove the pet or unable to get it under control. The dogs in the second scenario are not considered service animals and should be given no special privileges.

Wildlife Concerns

Questions also come up regarding dogs on beaches or in other locations where wildlife is vulnerable. If the area is off limits to the public, this also applies to the individual with the disability and their service animal. If the area is off limits to animals but open to public access, the service animal is technically allowed but it would be worth exploring with its owner some options. They may be willing to make an accommodation on behalf of wildlife.

Explain the layout of the protected areas and ask if they would stay closer to the water and away from the high tide line for nesting shorebirds. Ask if the service animal would be distracted and lunge at birds or small fuzzy fast moving chicks. If the owner is cooperative yet unsure, maybe the service animal's behavior with birds could be tested (or simply noticed) in the parking area if any gulls are around. If the individual is with others, perhaps they could walk together and leave the service animal behind in a shaded vehicle. The best solution might also be to refer them to another beach where there are not protected nesting areas. Treating the owner respectfully can go a long way towards an amicable solution. If the service animal is simply denied access, the legal burden of justification for not allowing a lesser restriction is likely to fall on the enforcing officer or the park system as an entity.

Emergency Protocol

In a general emergency situation strive to keep the service animal with its owner. Check both the person and the animal for any instructions for emergencies. The animal may be wearing a metal canister or have instructions attached to the service animal vest. The owner may have instructions in a wallet with an emergency contact person for the animal. It is also possible that no instructions will surface and you will have to make the best decision you can in the circumstances.

Service animals can ride in ambulances provided they are not a direct threat or interfere with the functioning of the ambulance and staff. Service animals are not supposed to over react in emergencies but if emotions are heightened some may be protective or anxious. They should not behave aggressively. Keep in mind that it may be the animal's job to jump or bark to alert its owner.

If the animal is behaving reasonably but there is no room in the ambulance or sterility is essential due to infection, make sure the service animal is on its way to the hospital at the same time with a family member or park staff. Never send a service animal to a dog pound. As a last resort, contact a service animal program or a vet to house the animal temporarily and make sure all relevant information is delivered to the victim.

In a large-scale crisis, evacuation or rescue operation, keeping the animal with their person minimizes stress on all parties in an already stressful situation. Anxiety may diminish if the animal remains next to its owner. Keeping them together also avoids the difficulty of housing and feeding an animal that has been separated from its owner. In an emergency shelter situation, service animals should be allowed even if pets are not.

Conclusion

This essential information should provide the necessary guidelines for rangers to act with care and authority in situations involving service animals. Further resources are listed below. This article was written in consultation with Carol Christopherson of Florida Service Dogs, who is a former military police officer with a disability and service animal and who also has experience with service animals on both sides of the law. Julie Shaw, of Disability Solutions for Independent Living Inc. and a key writer on legislation in Florida concerning service animals, reviewed and assisted with editing. Marcy Marchello works with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to coordinate accessible outdoor recreation opportunities and provide park staff with the information they need to serve people with disabilities as part of the general public.

This article originally appeared in the *May 2007* issue of "*The Yankee Ranger*," the newsletter of the **New England Park Ranger Association.**

Dealing with Death in a Park

by Park Ranger Sara Girard

Our parks are known as places to relax, play sports or gather with family and friends. They are generally thought of as happy places for both the public and the park's employees. Unfortunately, parks can sometimes be sad places when they are the scene of a death. If you work in a park long enough, there is a very good chance that you will eventually encounter a dead body. Believe me, it is an image that will be burned into your memory that you will never forget.

Deaths in parks occur in a variety of ways. I have encountered suicides in my park that include hangings and self-inflicted gunshot wounds to the head I also have first-hand knowledge of accidental drowning in park lakes and fatal falls from steep cliffs. I know rangers who have seen deceased persons in their parks as the result of heart attacks and car crashes. In 2004, in an Orange County wilderness park, a mountain biker was killed by a mountain lion. It is also not unheard of to have a homicide occur in a park, or even having a homicide victim's body dumped off in a remote section of a park.

The impetus for this article was the death of a 14-year-old cross country runner who suddenly collapsed and unexpectedly died during a high school competition in an Orange County park this past September. While this tragedy directly affects the victim's relatives and friends, it also caused emotional stress on park employees due to the victim's young age.

No one expects to find a suicide victim along a peaceful hiking trail, but I was involved in a case where a man hung himself from an oak tree in a camping park. A park grounds-keeper assisted the sheriff's personnel with cutting the rope that held the body. Days later, the grounds-keeper volunteered to escort grieving family members to the location. Through all this he felt he was helping and handling the situation. But, two weeks passed and he confronted me with the fact he was having nightmares about the incident and having trouble not thinking about it. I called the sheriff's department who immediately sent a crisis counselor to speak with the employee. After counseling, the employee recovered.

In another case, a ten-year-old was swept away at a dangerous creek crossing during a flash flood. The body was missing for days. When it was finally found miles down stream in a county regional park, the victim was hardly recognizable. The night grounds-keeper working alone discovered the body. He thought it was trash collected in an eddy. To his horror, he accidentally discovered the remains of the missing boy. He talked about the incident without emotion for some time. Several weeks went by before the employee approached me requesting time off work. He just could not get thoughts of that little boy out of his head. So, we contacted the Employee Assistance Program and the employee spoke to a grief counselor. Feeling better after counseling, the employee returned to work a short time later.

Many years ago, in the early days of my ranger career, there was a suicide that occurred in the late evening at a neighboring wilderness park. The victim tied a rope around his neck and leaped off a tall nature center building. The rope severed through the victim's neck and caused a decapitation. Volunteer naturalists found the head the next morning, but didn't see the body. They mistakenly concluded that the head was just a silly prop used in the previous evening's campfire program. It didn't occur to them that it was real. Needless to say, the volunteers and a couple employees who assisted with the case took a stress-related leave of absence until they could function normally at work.

I am sharing these real life stories not to be morbid, but to have you and your crew prepared for such situations. Seeing a dead person in your park is emotionally stressful. It will catch you off guard when you find a dead body, or have someone report it to you. Some people handle morbid situations better than others, but it is definitely something that you and your employees need to talk about.

Make sure that your department offers debriefing and counseling to help employees in these serious matters Perhaps your local police department can make arrangements to offer this assistance. Either way, grief counseling should be immediate and mandatory for all employees dealing with death in a park.

Native Red Foxes Living in Valley; Public's Help Sought

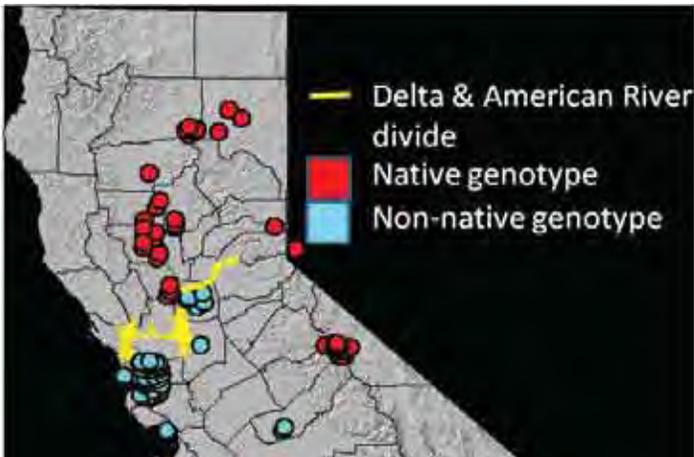
Sylvia Wright, UC Davis News Service
Submitted by, David Moskat

Contrary to onetime scientific opinion, red foxes living in the Sacramento Valley are not an artificially introduced species that threaten local ecosystems, according to a UC Davis researcher.

Ben Sacks, an expert in canine genetics and a researcher in the School of Veterinary Medicine, has new findings suggesting that these animals are natives, and close cousins to the native Sierra Nevada red fox.

In other low-elevation parts of the state, red foxes are indeed nonnative, invasive and threaten several endangered bird species. Some ecologists and biologists have called for the nonnative animals to be killed in these areas to preserve the delicate balance of those ecosystems.

Fox Distribution



Distribution of native and non-native red fox genotypes in California, 1905-2006 (Sacks and colleagues, unpublished data), illustrating apparent American River-Bay-Delta divide between native and nonnative valley red fox populations. Native specimens from the mountains are Sierra Nevada red fox; those from the valley are Sacramento Valley red fox.

Sacks, who has been studying the foxes for the past 10 years, is reaching out to the public for help in reporting all sightings of red foxes in the Sacramento Valley and in the high elevations of the Sierra Nevada and Cascades mountains. He is requesting that anyone who sees any evidence of red foxes in the area, either alive or dead (such as roadkill), tell him about it online.

“It’s important that we collect public data as well as continue our own research,” said Sacks. “Getting this well-rounded stream of information will help us learn more about how the Sacramento Valley red fox interacts with its local environment.”



This adult red fox, a California native, was photographed hunting ground squirrels in a freshly disked field near Woodland, Calif. (Ben Sacks / UC Davis photo)

Specifically, Sacks and his team are interested in understanding how the Sacramento Valley foxes, whose ancestors evolved in cold mountainous climates, adapted to the warm flatlands of the valley.

Experts Seek Help From Rangers!!

Ben Sacks is interested in the extremely rare Sierra Nevada red fox. He is **highly** interested in sightings of these animals at high elevations, and is urging Park Rangers to be on the lookout. For more information on these animals and how you can help Sacks and his team, email him at bnsacks@ucdavis.edu.

In addition, Sacks and the School of Veterinary Medicine have set up a Website where the public can report their sightings: <http://foxsurvey.ucdavis.edu>.

The site also has helpful tips and photos for distinguishing red foxes from gray foxes and coyotes.

Do you Hike? Backpack? Kayak? Or just like Maps???

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- TIGER/Line - All 2003 data is available.
- GeoNames - All USGS place names are available for searching. The data can be used to find appropriate DRG's.

Also, lots of information is available on Cartography and other GIS related topics.

Submitted by David Moskat

Native Red Foxes Living in Valley

Continued from page 12



Red Fox, Gray Fox or Coyote?

Red Fox

- White tip on tail
- Black behind ear tips
- Nearly body length tail
- Body color varies: cross, silver, black possible, but the tail tip always white.



Gray Fox

- Black tip and line on tail
- Orange behind ear tips
- Nearly body length tail



Coyote

- Black tip on tail (usually)
- Orange behind ear tips
- Tail much shorter than body

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