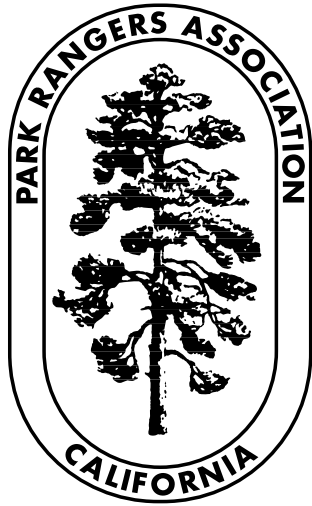


The Signpost

September - October, 2008



2009

Conference Committee

We are in the planning phase for the upcoming **2009 Parks Conference**. The Parks Conference will be held at the beautiful Cambria Pines Lodge in Cambria, CA March 9-12.

Topics for the conference include Resource Management, Resource Maintenance, Interpretation, Public Safety, Fire Training and Law Enforcement. Interesting and fun outings are planned for your learning pleasure and entertainment.

This is your opportunity to let us know what you think! We need committee members to help plan events and learning tracks.

If there is a training you would like to see offered, a topic for discussion you would like to see included or if you have an expertise you have to teach join the **2009 Parks Conference Committee**. Don't be shy. Contact Ranger Sara Girard at region5@calranger.org or Ranger Nick Franco at NFranco@HearstCastle.com.



Changing of the Guard

by Marie D. Fong

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the PRAC Board to thank *Executive Manager* Marcia Joyce for all the years of dedicated service she provided to the members, Board and interested visitors of PRAC. Marcia has been there to help settle many a paperwork mystery, organize new members, mail the *Signpost* to an ever changing group, point curious non-members in the right direction, and so much more. She will be missed as she moves on to new and exciting adventures.

Replacing Marcia at PRAC's home office will be Betsy Anderson, our new go-to person in the home office. The mailing address will remain the same however the telephone and fax numbers have changed:

Telephone (707) 884-3949

FAX (707).884-1945.

Please join me in wishing Marcia Joyce farewell and welcoming Betsy Anderson to PRAC.

From the Oval Office in The Double Wide..

It has been an amazing fire season in the Northern California areas. It has been said we are experiencing a 100 year fire weather/behavior experience. The fires broke out after three years of below-normal rainfall dehydrated much of California's forests and woodlands, making them prone to wildfires. Spring 2008 for California was the driest on record for many locations; for example, San Francisco registered only 0.007 inches (0 cm) of rain out of a normal of 6.18 inches (16 cm) from March to May. As vegetation turned into bone-dry tinder in early June, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a statewide drought for the first time in over a century. Dry thunderstorms and lightning, rarely seen on the California coastline in June, rolled onshore on the weekend of June 20 and 21. The storm unleashed 5,000 to 6,000 dry lightning strikes across Northern and Central Coast, igniting more than 800 fires. The same thunderstorms also caused fires in Oregon. High daytime temperatures facilitated the spread of the fires and the number of wildfires skyrocketed in the days after the thunderstorm.

A heat wave commenced on July 7th, with temperatures in inland locations, such as the Central valley soaring

above 100F (38 C). Lake Berryessa recorded a high temperature of 109 °F (43 °C), prompting weather agencies like the National Weather Service to issue high fire danger warnings. These near to record-breaking temperatures concerned many firefighters, who feared that the high heat, low humidity, and high-elevation winds could make fire-fighting more strenuous.

Fire Safety Stand Down Ordered For August 1st.

In an effort to draw attention to wildland firefighter safety, the National Multi Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) is requesting that all geographic areas take one hour during the operational period of August 1st to emphasize safety practices. Here is the memorandum that NMAC has issued:

Two fatalities occurred over the weekend in two separate Northern California fires. A recent spike in accident/injury trends has also created concerns for firefighter safety. To date we have exceeded the number of deaths in wildland fire operations for 2008 that we experienced during all of 2007. In an effort to draw attention to wildland firefighter safety, NMAC is requesting that all geographic areas take one hour during the operational period of August 1st to emphasize safety practices.

(Continues on page 2.)

From the Oval Office In The Double Wide..

(Continued from page 3.)

Firefighter safety is and continues to be our first priority. The commitment to and accountability for safety is a joint responsibility of all firefighters, managers, and administrators. Individuals must be responsible for their own performance and accountability.

Suggested areas of emphasis are:

Primary means of safe wildland fire operations is through aggressive risk management.

Consistently evaluate fireline tactics and adjust tactics as environmental and human factor conditions change— Review Risk Management Process in the IRPG, Page 1.

Exercise extreme caution when working in timber canopy areas— assume every tree has some level of hazard associated with it. Review “Principles Of Hazard Tree Risk Management” at: http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/shwt/http/training_education/s212/ht-risk-mgmt.pdf

Driving standards and limitations need to be applied and enforced. Drivers should not be exceeding 10 hours behind the wheel driving time (state CDL limitations may be more stringent). This applies to all drivers including agency employees, ADs, and contractors. Every effort should be made to avoid driving between 2200 and 0500 hours.

Dehydration and Fatigue— constantly monitor firefighter’s water and electrolyte intake to avoid dehydration episodes. Dehydration and long work hours coupled with poor air quality all impact fatigue— monitor and provide

rest opportunities for firefighters and support personnel.

Avoid complacency in aviation operations and reinforce the aviation risk assessment process to increase awareness of flight hazards and risks, attention to risk mitigation, and to assert added attention to the following topics:

Controlled Flight Into Terrain/Obstacles (especially Helo External Load)

Hot, High, Heavy

Maintenance Support

Acceptance of High Risk as a Normal Operation

Interagency Aviation Risk Assessments can be found at: http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/av_safety/Systems_Safety/av_risk_mgt/index.html.

For additional wildland fire safety information, please refer to <http://www.nifc.gov/safety.html>

We ask that every fire manager take this time to emphasize firefighter safety and appropriate management of risk. We appreciate all the efforts of every firefighter and support personnel. Let’s do everything in our power to return everyone home safely this fire season—NWCG

With this kind of start to an already unpredictable Fire season in the southern area, we could be in for a long and busy season.

David Updike

A Busy Summer for Rangers

by Matt Cerkel

I'm not sure how it been in other parts of the state but the rangers of Marin County have had a busy summer. Having been a ranger for Marin Municipal Water District on Mount Tamalpais for 13 years and 4 years as a seasonal for them before that I can say this is the busiest summer I can remember. I have heard similar comments from State Park and National Park Rangers, including my wife who is an interpretative ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore. I like to hear from rangers around the state and determine if this is going on statewide.

All the rangers I've talked to about the unusually busy summer in Marin have agreed on what's likely behind it. Simply it's the price of gas. At over \$4.00, a gallon or more people are traveling less, instead of driving out of state they might go to Yosemite. Instead of Yosemite, they might stay local on a "Stayaction." Simply economics can have a huge influence on our visitation and use patterns.

In June, there were two suspicious wildland fires in two days on Mount Tamalpais. The first occurred off Ridgecrest Boulevard on Mount Tamalpais State Park. It was fought by MMWD rangers and fire departments personnel from Marin County, Stinson Beach, and Southern Marin. The next day and about a half mile away a second fire occurred near the popular Cataract Trail on MMWD's Mount Tamalpais Watershed. MMWD rangers located the fire that was approximately a third of a mile from the nearest fire road. Beside MMWD rangers, firefighters from Marin County, Stinson Beach, Bolinas, and CALFIRE responded along with several CALFIRE aircraft. Since these two fires in June there have been several unattended campfires found in the same general area. We are actively looking for illegal campers to prevent further fires.

In mid July, MMWD had one of the most dramatic rescues to ever occur on Mt Tamalpais. The entire MMWD ranger staff was involved in the rescue. The article in the local newspaper stated, "A hiker who fell more than 50 feet was plucked from the Mt. Tamalpais wilderness early Thursday in a dramatic eight-hour rescue involving more than 30 firefighters, park rangers and others. The unidentified woman in her 60s was taken to Marin General Hospital with a serious neck injury, fire officials said.

The rescue began at 4:17 p.m., when authorities received a 911 call from the hiker's companion, who hiked an hour-and-half to find cell phone service. The two were trekking deep in the middle fork of the Swede George drainage on the north side of Mount Tamalpais between the High Marsh Trail and the Helen Markt Trail above Alpine Lake. During the hike, the woman lost her footing and fell down a nearly vertical slope, fire officials said. "She tumbled head over heels and landed in a tree upside down and fell out of the tree and came to rest by the creek," a spokesman said.

Henry 1, the Sonoma County sheriff's rescue helicopter, was dispatched but was unable to help lift the woman from the creek-bed with a 200-foot rope due to the depth of the canyon and density of the trees. The Marin County

Search and Rescue Team, Marin County firefighters and Marin Municipal Water District park rangers hiked for more than an hour to reach the woman.

It took rescuers three hours to carry her to Alpine Lake, where Marin Municipal Water District rangers took her by boat to Bon Tempe Dam. She was transferred to an ambulance at 12:20 a.m."

This rescue was an outstanding team effort of the MMWD rangers, Marin County Search and Rescue and the Marin County Fire Department (MCFD). Everyone involved did a great job and help in a very difficult rescue. Additionally, what was learned from the rescue will improve the responses from MMWD, MCFD, and Marin SAR.

The week after the rescue incident, there were two medical aids that illustrated the need to "Train like you fight and fight like you train." The first was a vehicle versus bicyclist. On a narrow county road on Mt Tam, a cyclist and a SUV collided and the cyclist then went off a 30-foot embankment resulting in femur and other injuries. MMWD rangers once again were the first on-scene. Rangers, MCFD firefighters, and paramedics provided patient care, an MCSO Watershed Deputy provided the LZ for the medical helicopter from CALSTAR and a MCFD seasonal firefighter and I set up the haul system off the MCFD Type 3 Engine. It's the first time I had the opportunity to set up a haul system outside of training and it went as smoothly as it had in the past training.

The next medical call was the most difficult call of my career and one I hope none of you ever have to experience, the death of a coworker. I was at the Ranger Station about 10 minutes from going off-duty and another ranger, Phil, was there on his meal break. We heard the third on-duty ranger, John, contact the Fire Dispatcher for a medical response for an unresponsive person down approximately a 1.5 miles from the Ranger Station. My co-worker and I begin an immediate response. While en route we hear from the ranger on-scene that it's an MMWD worker down in cardiac arrest and CPR is in progress. I immediately realize that it's likely our longtime Watershed Service Aide, Tom Longman (our equivalent to a Park Aide/Ranger Assistant/Fee Collector). When Phil and I arrived on-scene, we observed John performing CPR on Tom. I update the responding units from the Ross and Marin County Fire Departments. Phil began assisting John and they transitioned to two person CPR. After updating the responding units, I assist John and Phil by hooking up an AED to Tom. We did everything right and "fought like we trained," but sadly it was one fight we didn't win. I've done CPR before and lost the patient, but it's VERY different when it's someone you know. Tom Longman while not officially titled Park Ranger was in every other sense a Park Ranger. He was the face of the Mount Tamalpais Watershed for many visitors, loved his job and always seemed to have a smile on his face. Tom will be sorely missed by his co-workers, the two ravens that visited him at our fee collection station and the visitors to the Mount Tamalpais Watershed.

PRACnet Milestones

Nine Years of Message Service

by Jeff Price, PRAC Webmaster

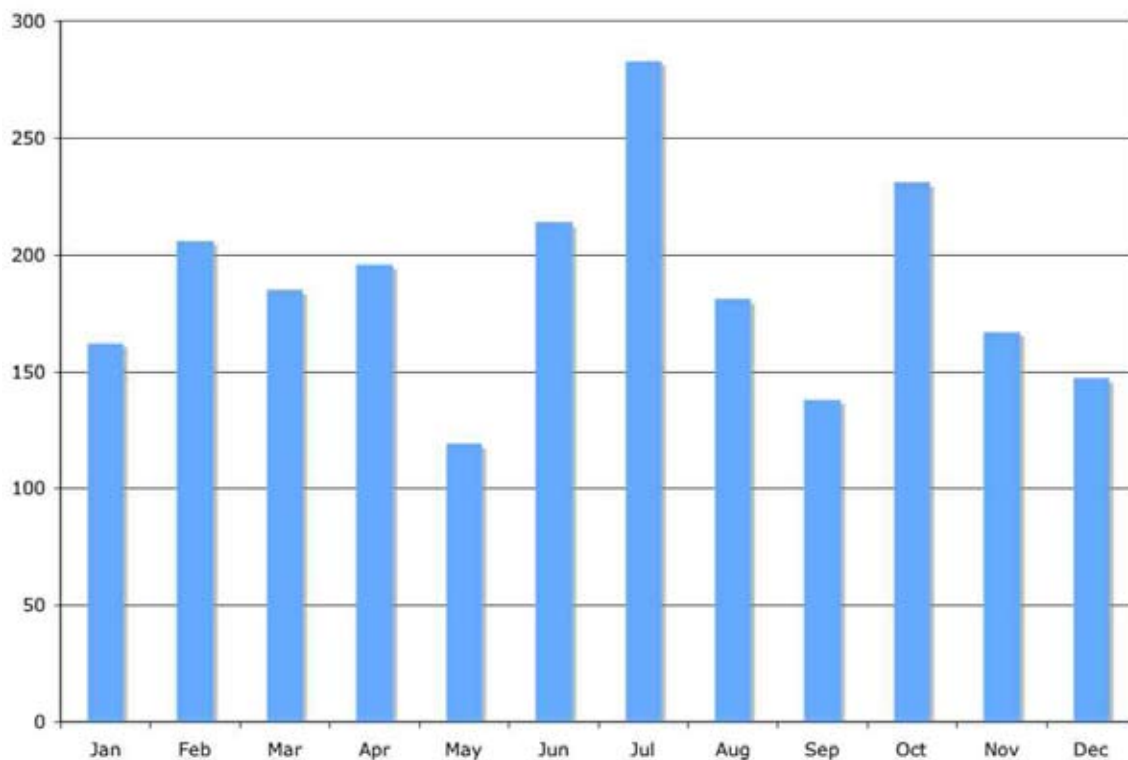
We recently passed a few interesting milestones with PRAC's members-only, e-mail list server, known as PRACnet.

This e-mail list server is open to members of Park Rangers Association of California. It was formed in April 2000 to promote the interchange of information, thoughts and opinions regarding the park profession in California and Nevada and the programs, activities and policies of PRAC.

PRACnet recently entered into its ninth year of service to members. We also saw the 2,500th message posted in July 2008. As of August 2008, the list server boasted 148 active, retired and student subscribers. We average about 150 message posts per month and subjects run the full range of items from research to requests for help to alerts on legislation or information on political activity affecting Rangers. If you are a member but have yet to join PRACnet, you may do so by e-mailing a request for subscription to webmaster@calranger.org.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2008	21	21	9	5	8	33	23					
2007	22	15	45	19	8	23	27	6	11	25	8	4
2006	8	42	14	19	21	17	22	27	11	13	23	22
2005	15	35	9	16	7	13	21	20	11	10	18	22
2004	63	16	1	10	10	5	86	5	30	21	4	7
2003	19	16	44	49	33	17	16	31	29	77	54	67
2002	5	7	47	54	12	18	35	56	14	26	19	15
2001	9	54	16	19	5	85	35	19	26	47	19	18
2000				5	15	3	17	17	6	12	22	6

Total PRACnet List Server Messages by Month, 2000 to 2008



Region 5 BBQ 2008

by Ranger Sara Girard

World Ranger Day in Region 5 found eight Orange County Rangers enjoying the sun of the afternoon at Irvine Regional Park. All geared up and ready for the great softball challenge we shaped our gloves, conditioned our arms, stretched and got our bat swings down.

As the afternoon went on we threw some balls and made many practice swings. Someone volunteered to pitch, giving the fielders fly balls to catch and grounders to stop. Everyone got their time at bat, some better than others and like they say it's about having fun not how great a hitter you are.

The afternoon turned into early evening and after some snacks and cool drinks we decided the great softball challenge would have to be revisited another time. Region 4, where were you? The remaining champs of PRAC Softball 2008, Region 5.



“Sierra Autumn” Fall Photo Exhibit

We want to see your best fall photos at Bartley Ranch this October!

Bartley Ranch Regional Park, a Washoe County Regional Park located in Reno, Nevada, will be presenting a photographic exhibit within the Western Heritage Interpretive Center, October 1st through October 31st 2008. The “Sierra Autumn” exhibit photos displayed will reflect autumnal images in and around the Sierra Nevada.

The exhibit, in its thirteenth year, is free to the public, and we anticipate several thousand to attend. We are looking for photographers to enter two framed, wired, and ready-to-hang photos that best represent their views of “Sierra Autumn”. There is no fee for submitting your work. There will be a “People’s Choice Award,” as voted by visitors to the exhibit, and an “Artist’s Choice Award,” as voted by participating artists.

If you are interested in participating in the exhibit please contact Park Ranger Marie D. Fong at 775.828.6659, mfong@washoecounty.us or write to Bartley Ranch Regional Park 6000 Bartley Ranch Road Reno, NV 89511.

Marie D. Fong

PRAC

Scholarship Opportunities

by Marie D. Fong

I would like to remind all members that the Park Rangers Association of California offers two \$500.00 scholarships, the Thomas Smith and the Bill Orr Scholarships, each year to its members. PRAC. begins accepting Student Scholarships applications February 1st; all applications and supporting materials must be received prior to September 31, 2007.

This is an excellent opportunity that some full-time, professional Rangers might not need, but as some of us have very large seasonal staffs and volunteers who are comprised of aspiring college students this is a great opportunity to share with them. Students who are members of PRAC, enrolled in a program of study in parks and recreation management, resource management, forestry or a related field and enrolled in 6.1 semester units or the equivalent, during the Fall Semester are eligible for consideration.

To view eligibility and selection guidelines, and to download the application form, log-in to the members-only section at calranger.org. For more information contact me at region6@CalRanger.org or any other board member.

*"To me a lush carpet of pine needles
or spongy grass is more welcome
than the most luxurious Persian rug."*

Helen Keller, author and activist

Upcoming in your Mailbox.....

by Marie D. Fong

In an effort to assist its members in gathering pertinent information from other agencies, PRAC maintains a **Ranger Directory**. This directory was designed to help a searcher find information such as: who employs rangers in the State of California and Nevada, what are their qualifications, training levels and duties.

The first directory was compiled from replies from 76 agencies that indicated their employment of rangers. Since that time we have added additional agencies to bring our total to 124. This directory available at calranger.org, is free on the internet. You can request a printed copy for \$10.00 each at the address listed below.

Now is the time to update this directory since many agencies are changing hiring procedures, training opportunities, and duties are ever shifting. Please check the directory to see if your agency is represented. If you are not yet included please download and complete the single page questionnaire available at calranger.org and mail it to:

Park Rangers Association of California
Ranger Directory Addition
P.O. Box 153, Stewarts Point, CA 95480

In an effort to keep the directory as accurate and beneficial as it has been, updates to existing agencies are underway. If your agency is already included, the contact listed on the directory will receive an e-mail or letter requesting any updates or changes to be completed. Once the process is complete we will spread the word to all the members.

Please feel free to continue using the directory through out the process.

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Submission deadlines ARE THE LAST day of JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.

email:
prangerd@ix.netcom.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____		
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____
PHONE _____		
HOME _____	WORK _____	
Email Address _____		
Employer or School _____		
Job Classification or Major _____		

Voting Membership

REGULAR.....\$50 _____
RETIRED.....\$35 _____

Non-voting Membership

AGENCY:
(1-25 PERSONS-6 MAILINGS)..... \$100 _____
25 PERSONS-12 MAILINGS)..... \$150 _____
STUDENT.....\$20 _____
ASSOCIATE.....\$35 _____
SUPPORTING..... \$100 _____

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