

# The Signpost

March-April, 2014



## From the Redwoods

Greetings, Rangers and Uniformed Park Professionals! I am very pleased to be able to now introduce myself as the President of PRAC. This organization has given so much to me over my career and I feel blessed to be able to give back. My eleven year career has taken me on a tour of local park agencies in the Bay Area before landing me in Santa Cruz as the Chief Ranger for the Parks and Recreation Department. It's been quite a ride filled with hard fought victories and crushing losses that were made ever more difficult during the financial crisis that rocked nearly every park agency in California. However, I am feeling very optimistic. We've seen budgets slowly expand, positions filled and the words "status quo" and "cautiously optimistic" have been heard from more than a few City Managers. We are, little by little, recovering. But that shouldn't surprise any of you. We're park rangers, after all; it's what we do. I believe we can now begin to rebuild stronger, more diverse and more flexible agencies using the lessons of these last hard years. To my mind, the future has never looked brighter and I want to bring this same optimism and energy to PRAC so that we can begin to mirror the same growth that we have just now started to see in our own agencies.

It is my pleasure to have been of service to the public for over a decade, and now I look forward to be of service to PRAC. If you attended the Conference in Yosemite, I hope we were able to connect. If not, feel free to drop me a line at [president@calranger.org](mailto:president@calranger.org). And as always, make sure you email your region director with your training needs.

*Heather Reiter*

PRAC President,  
Chief Ranger, City of Santa Cruz

## Calendar of Upcoming Events for 2014

March 3-6	Annual Parks Conference 2014 ParksConference
March 5	General Membership Meeting 11:30 am
April 1	Scholarship Applications for 2014 available Contact Scholarship Committee Scholarship Information
April 10	Board Conference Call
April 15	Articles Due for May <i>Signpost</i>
May 15	Tracking Class Download Flyer (.doc)
June 2	Deadline for Scholarship Applications

# Old Dog and Some Old (New) Tricks

## Beach Clean Up

### Patrick Boyle Region 1

We have a couple of beaches that are popular with the pallet burning crowd. With a beach located 10 minutes from the local college this should not be a surprise. The bottles cans, miscellaneous clothing, along with the occasional burned couch, bed, or other household items are just a nuisance. The hardest part of trying to keep things clean is the burn piles full of pallet nails and metal hardware from whatever they were burning.

We used to send out the JAWS Crew (Juvenile Alternative Work Service Crew) out with shovels and some screens to try and clean up these piles. Dumping sand into the screens and emptying the screens into garbage cans to haul off the beach was a labor intensive effort. We sent a lot of sand,



burned wood, and nails to the landfill and that became a costly endeavor. A typical pallet has over 120 nails holding it together. No one burns just one pallet.

We tried using small magnets trying to get the nails out, another time consuming job. That is until recently. Lonny Copple, one of our new employees who transferred over from the Aviation Division, came up with the ski magnet. He took a magnet from an old street sweeper that was decommissioned and mounted it on skis so it would glide across the sand. What would take hours to accomplish we can now get done in half the time. We can glide the ski magnet over the burn piles and then rake out the piles and go over



the area a few more times to get the majority of the metal debris. We then dump the debris we collect with the magnet into the metal recycling bin instead of the landfill. It is also a great tool to give to volunteers on beach cleanup days. At the moment we pull it across the sand by hand but we have also towed it behind an ATV with success. The only downside is scraping the nails off the magnet. So I guess the next step is to develop an electromagnet for the skis. We loaded up a 5 gallon bucket full of nails, bottle caps, and hardware in about 20 minutes.

It just goes to show that after 20 years on the job we can work smarter and not harder. Now if I could only figure out how to use that thing they call a cell phone.



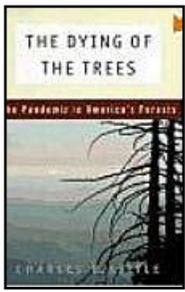
## From the Bedside Table

# The Dying of the Trees

## The Pandemic in America's Forests

By Charles E Little

Well I should have probably saved this one for around Halloween because it is more of a scary story than a fairy tale. Think on the scale of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. Maybe this is the “alarm,” and the warning bells have been going off for the forest for a long time. This book was written in 1995, and it broke my heart then. Almost 20 years later I have the same feelings, along with a touch of anger that many things have not changed since my first reading. In fact some things have actually gotten worse.



Charles takes us across America, from the Appalachians to the Sierras, and even down to the Desert, showing us that no forest is immune to the stresses we have unleashed on them. I too suffer from the “Kawaski Effect.” After reading this book I cannot

look at a forest the same way ever again. There is still beauty and magic in the forest but now there is also a great sadness. We have destroyed over a third, and some estimate closer to one half, of the planet's forests. They are still under fire today with cutting operations, pollution, ultraviolet rays, and adventitious pests and diseases. The trees just can't adapt quickly enough to the rate of changes and number of stressful factors they are encountering. The following passage from the end of the book sums up the story better than I can....

*“I see a world of dying trees: dying because the trunks have been bored into and the leaves have been stripped by adventitious pests; dying because fungi are girdling their bases and branches and turning their leaves to black corpses; dying because their shrunken roots can no longer absorb enough nutrients and water to keep them alive; dying from the direct effects of too much ozone in the troposphere and not enough in the stratosphere; dying because neighbor trees have been clear cut, allowing unwonted cold and heat and drying winds into their precincts; dying because of being bathed too often in the sour gases of industry; dying because the weather patterns have changed and they cannot adapt quickly enough to them; dying, in fact, because they are dying.”*

Charles takes us on a journey in our own backyard. It is happening here in America. We are losing entire species of trees. This is a depressing book that reads like a train wreck. You just can't put it down in the hope of a happy ending. One can only hope we come to our senses soon, before we go over the edge we seem to be standing on.

I promise the next book will be a feel good story. But you really do need to read this book. (As should every policy maker in our political system.) Not to scare you, but to inform you, and make you think about our resources and lifestyle in a different manner. Hope you get a chance to a little rainy day reading. (Better do it while you can it's looking pretty dry out there.)

A new ethic is required—a new attitude toward discharging our responsibility for caring for ourselves and for the earth. We must recognize the earth's limited capacity to provide for us. We must recognize its fragility. We must no longer allow it to be ravaged. This ethic must motivate a great movement, convincing reluctant governments and reluctant peoples themselves to effect the needed changes.

*Aldo Leopold*



# Park Rangers Association of California

## Training Seminar



### Introduction to Tracking

### Locating, Preserving and Interpreting Track and Sign

**Course Description:**

Park Rangers and other uniformed park personnel are typically the first persons contacted for a missing person in our parks and open spaces. Tracks and signs left by the missing person are often overlooked or destroyed by first responders during the early phase of a search. This course will provide participants an introduction into locating, preserving, interpreting and following tracks and signs left by missing persons. While the course is focused towards the missing person incident, the skills gained in this course can be applied to tracking fugitives in parks and open spaces.

This training meets or exceeds the SAR Awareness Criteria for the Fire-Rescue Domain of the Park Rangers Association of California's Professional Standards and Training Certification Program.

**Required Equipment:** wide brim sun hat, small field-style notebook and pencil, small roll of flagging tape (any color except black, tan or gray), small pocket or signaling mirror (3"x5" or slightly smaller is ideal). Due to the remote location please, snacks and beverages for the day. Lunch will be provided at the training site.

**Strongly Recommended:** small digital camera (smart phone cameras will do), walking or hiking sticks, four rubber bands

**Date/Time:**

Thursday – May 15, 2014

0900 to 1730 hours

*Rain on May 15<sup>th</sup> cancels this course*

**Location:** (Google Map Link: <http://goo.gl/maps/O6yH7>)

Santa Teresa County Park

Muriel Wright Center

298 Bernal Road

San Jose, CA 95120

**Cost:**

PRAC MEMBER – \$40.00 per participant

NON-PRAC MEMBER - \$50.00 per participant (includes 1 year regular membership)

**The Course Instructor:**

Kim Aufhauser is a faculty member in the Park Management Department at West Valley College in Saratoga, CA. After 16 years as a National Park Service ranger, including over five years in Yosemite, he now teaches students the skills to become rangers. Subjects include wilderness living and survival skills, technical rescue, and wilderness first responder. Kim provides EMS training to local SAR teams. He has served as the Emergency Services Coordinator for West Valley College and Special Advisor for Emergency Management to the State Chancellor's Office. He holds an undergraduate degree in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University and a graduate degree in Experienced Based Leadership Training and Program Development from Prescott College. Kim is a long time member of the Park Rangers Association of California and was awarded the Associations Honorary Life Time Membership Award in 2002 for his service to the Association and to the parks profession,

**For more information please contact:**

Pam Helmke, President, Park Rangers Association of California

Office 408-277-5254 Cell: 408-201-2886



**Park Rangers Association of  
California**

**Introduction to Tracking**



**REGISTRATION FORM**

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_ Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Payment may be made by Check or Credit Card

Checks should be made payable to: Park Rangers Association of California

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