

The Signpost

November–December, 2015



Dear Park Professionals,

Happy Fall! I hope this message finds you well and enjoying some respite from a record-breaking, and in some cases, harrowing, Summer Season. However, with these glad tidings, I must announce that this is one of my last messages to you. In September, I officially hung up my Smokey Hat and retired my badge; I am a Ranger no longer. I've moved from my position as Chief Ranger in the City of Santa Cruz to Training and Safety Specialist with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. While it was a difficult decision to leave the field and to leave my team, I am thoroughly enjoying my new role and the opportunity I have to support others in the field. But rest assured that my heart remains behind the wheel

of a Ranger truck and wearing the green and khaki of our proud tradition.

This also means, that come January, the Presidency will be vacant. The organization will be seeking both President and Vice President as well as chairs for several districts. I encourage all of you who may even be considering a run, to reach out and contact the Board. You are needed and your experience is valuable.

Finally, while a may be vacating my Presidency, I will not abandon my duties as Conference Chair! Your conference Planning committee is hard at work and has already confirmed some fantastic courses. Topics include:

- Legal Update and CA Prop 47
- Gang Updates
- Illegal Marijuana Cultivation
- Rangeland Ecology
- Bat Biology
- Trail Building
- Diversity in Parks
- Parks and Technology
- Beer Interpretation (Yes! You read that right!)
- A panel discussion on the future of the Ranger profession
- And many, many more.

A final schedule will be out at the end of November 2015, and will begin taking registration in mid-December 2015. If you'd like to volunteer, please email your region representative.

Yours in solidarity,

Heather Reiter

Outgoing PRAC President

California NWF Director, Beth Pratt

Submitted by Region 5 Director, Candi Hubert

How did you become involved with the National Wildlife Federation?

NWF is one of the reasons I became an environmental leader—I avidly read Ranger Rick as a kid so it's just so wonderful to be working for an organization that influenced me at an early age to get involved in conservation.

Tell me about the effort to build a crossing at Liberty Canyon? How did this idea come about?

It really does take a village. A multitude of partners have been working this wildlife corridor for years, from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy putting aside land, to the National Park Service conducting research, to elected officials like Senator Fran Pavley advocating for its protection. South Coast Missing Linkages Project identified this linkage “as one of the highest priority linkages to conserve in order to sustain ecological and evolutionary processes” in California’s South Coast Ecoregion, in light of existing land use pressures and in the context of climate change. This linkage was also identified by the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, which was commissioned by Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife with support from the Federal Highways Administration.

The specific need to get animals across the road was underscored by the NPS’s ongoing Santa Monica Mountains Mountain lion study, which they have been conducting since 2002. It clearly demonstrates the road acting as barriers to travel for these animals and has documented twelve deaths since the study began.

How did the Partnership between NWF and the Santa Monica Mountains Fund happen?

In 2012, I had just begun writing a book about California wildlife, called “When Mountain Lions are Neighbors,” which will be out early 2016. I read about P-22 living in Griffith Park and was incredulous, how could a mountain lion be living in Los Angeles? I wanted to learn more for the book. Jeff Sikich, one of the biologists working on the NPS study, took me on a field trip to Griffith

Park and told me about the plight of P-22 and all mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains. I was so inspired by P-22’s story, and the work Jeff and the other researchers were doing, that I asked him at the end of the trip, “How can I and NWF help?” He responded, “Well, there is this little wildlife crossing we need to get built...” I joke with Jeff that he defined my work for a decade that day.

Tell me about the journey of P22 who has been in the news quite a bit?

P-22 is the poster child for the campaign because he demonstrates the plight of urban wildlife so well. He made a remarkable journey—crossed two of the busiest freeways in the country—to find a new home and he now lives in the middle of Griffith Park in the smallest known home range ever recorded for a mountain lion of 8 square miles (their typical territory is 250 square miles). And he shows that coexistence with cougars is possible even in urban areas—10 million people visit Griffith Park annually and he’s hardly even seen. But he’s not a success story as he’ll probably never have a mate and he’s trapped on an island surrounded by roads and urban areas. He’s long past the age when a mountain lion finds a mate, so I think he’s just resigned himself to remaining a lonely bachelor and dining on deer alone.

What I love about P-22 is he has inspired the world to care about the plight of urban wildlife. We can all relate to being lonely and dateless, or having to deal with awful traffic. It’s not just an LA story, or a California story—if he does something like take a nap in a crawlspace in an area home, I get a call from the BBC. We’re going to build what could be the largest wildlife crossing in the world in the most populated area in the country because of P-22 and his story—and Steve Winter’s now iconic photographs of the cat for National Geographic. I can’t thank Steve enough—he has been incredibly generous in allowing us to use those images and it has made this campaign possible. A picture really is worth a thousand words and P-22 in front of the city lights of LA says it all.

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California NWF Director, Beth Pratt

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What is the current status on the mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains?

I am continually amazed we even have mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains given all the challenges they face in this urbanized area. But they are somehow hanging on. The NPS is conducting such important work with their study, led by Seth Riley and Jeff Sikich. What they are finding is that the genetic diversity for these cats is lower than normal because of inbreeding—we don't want it to get to the low bar of the Florida panther which is on the verge of extinction.

They estimate there are about 15 mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains, and although they are not seeing birth defects yet, the population is still extremely vulnerable and we are just fearing one too many losses will lead to the downward spiral. Last month we lost three cats in the area—significant in this small population. Being killed by automobiles is just one threat, rodenticides are taking their toll, and also conflicts with other cats given their inability to move as freely as their more rural cousins.

They are essentially living on an island, one created by freeways, and we need to ensure they have the room they need to roam—and to find genetically diverse mates. The Huffington Post recently did a story on the campaign and I loved their headline as it expressed the need accurately and humorously: “Wildlife Mating Bridge Could Bring More Sexytime To California Cougars.”

What do you want the public to understand about the importance of building wildlife crossings?

For the crossing at Liberty Canyon, it's pretty simple. If we want mountain lions to have a future in the Santa Monica Mountains, helping them navigate roads is essential. But it's also about connecting an ecosystem for all wildlife. Mary Ellen Hannibal in her book, *The Spine of the Continent*, said it best: “Nature doesn't work without connection.” Stand-alone protected areas are not sufficient and animals are disappearing even within national park boundaries, the best-protected places on the planet. Creating corridors and green spaces is key to wildlife conservation

and wildlife crossings over or under roads play a big role in that.

How can people help in this effort? How is this campaign going so far?

In my 25 years in environmental leadership, I've never seen such an outpouring of support and I've worked on some amazing wildlife projects in both Yosemite and Yellowstone. Most people are inspired by this effort and want to help—they want mountain lions on the landscape. And this campaign really is just about raising the funds needed—there is no “bad guy” to fight. Caltrans wants to build it, the land is already protected—we just need about \$30 million. We've already secured \$1 million with a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy, and private donations are starting to add up. Rainn Wilson did a fun PSA for us to help promote the text-to-donate fundraising option.

What do you see as the future for mountain lions in Southern California?

Let me quote Christy Brigham, the National Park Service's Chief of Resources in SAMO, “We are not going to be able to keep lions in the Santa Monica Mountains unless we all think it's a good idea.” It's evident most think it's a good idea, so I am hopeful the magnificent cats will have a future here.



Mt. Tamalpais, Diversity and Staff Engagement

By Teresa Baker *

I recently spent time on Mt Tamalpais with Ranger Matt Cerkel with the Marin Municipal Water District. I wanted to get a different perspective of the mountain and his opinion on matters of diversity in outdoor spaces.

I have made countless trips to Mt. Tam and very seldom would I see people of color. This too was once a reality for Matt, but he is starting to see a change, more families of color are out on the trails, especially along Cataract Falls, a popular waterfall hike on Mt Tam

As Matt and I patrolled the mountain, it became very clear to me just how much pride Matt takes in his job. I felt his viewpoints were that of an ambassador, as he talked about his day to day interactions with the public and the environment.

Matt, what is the most satisfying part of your job? I love sharing my passion for the park with others. I've spent over 20 years, so far, protecting Mount Tam and I want to share what I've learned in that time.

Matt, in your opinion, what can state parks do to draw more diverse families to Mt. Tam?

While I don't work for the State Parks I have a few ideas based on my 25 years in the parks profession and the observations I've made in that time. First, I think state parks should make sure that fees for day use and camping do not price some families out of the parks. Maybe they should also establish several fee free weekends a year to encourage new visitors to the parks.

State parks should also partner with city, county and other local park agencies, especially where there is little or no state park presence, to let the public know what state parks can offer them. This could be part of a larger outreach program to reach all Californians. State parks could follow the lead of GGNRA/GGNPC and have Roving Ranger Stations <http://www.parksconservancy.org/learn/roving-ranger/>. These Roving Ranger Stations could be sent to community events, fairs, farmers markets, etc. and bring the state parks to the people. State parks could also learn from

New York City's Urban Park Rangers who have a very successful outreach program, including camping with the ranger program <http://www.nycgovparks.org/programs/rangers/explorer-programs>. State parks could also continue and expand their Hewlett-Packard grant program of bringing youth from urban and underserved schools to state parks for day use and overnight activities. State parks could also partner with REI or another outdoor equipment vendor to have camping or outdoor gear available to rent at low cost for those who might not have the proper gear and/or are new to the parks. The state parks through podcasts and in-park events could also have staff teach outdoor ethics (along the lines of Leave No Trace-Outdoor Ethics) to new visitors.

I also think state parks should make an effort to get their rangers and other uniformed employees out of their vehicles and on to the trails and into the campground to be available to the public and help them enhance the visitors experience. A real effort should be undertaken to improve customer service <http://parkleaders.com/visitor-experience/>. The move the state park is considering to a park police model is likely a move in the wrong direction. Visitors want park rangers who can keep them safe and protect the park, but they also want park rangers that are approachable, friendly and knowledgeable. A move to a park police model or rangers who will only do "law enforcement" may actually create barriers. I've been a park ranger-peace officer for 20 years and it is possible to be both a professional law enforcement officer and approachable, friendly and knowledgeable, uniformed representatives of the park.

Finally, state parks should reform their hiring practices and view their seasonal positions as a stepping stone to permanent positions. They should also reach out to high schools and college students statewide to recruit for seasonal and permanent positions to help create a diverse workforce that represents the state and its people. Young people of all backgrounds should

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Mt. Tamalpais, Diversity and Staff Engagement

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see state parks (and other parks) as a desirable place to work or have a career.

Matt, what would you like to share about the watershed that the general public is not aware of?

What I like people to know about the MMWD's Mount Tamalpais Watershed is how it played a key role to shaping all future land preservation and park formation in Marin County. The Mount Tamalpais Watershed is the keystone for all land preservation in Marin. Marin would be a very different place today if MMWD didn't act 100

years ago to preserve and protect Mount Tam.

Having shared the park through the eyes of a ranger, I now have a different appreciation for the beauty of this place. I encourage everyone to hike the trails and take time out to chat with the park staff as you happen upon them. I'm sure you'll walk away with a different impression as well.

Thanks Matt.

*Teresa Baker is the founder of the African American National Parks Event and will be a presenter at the 2016 California Parks Training Conference in Santa Rosa

Park Rangers Association of California

Valor and Life Saving Award Nominations

Public safety personnel are routinely charged with handling emergency situations, and may be called upon at any time to put their own personal safety at risk. Park Rangers and other park professionals fight wild land fires, conduct search and rescue operations, apprehend criminals, provide emergency medical services, and perform other duties to ensure the safety and welfare of the public they serve.

Periodically, park professionals will face emergency situations that are so extreme that by engaging in the emergency, they not only jeopardize their personal safety, but risk their own lives. In other instances park professionals may also act with great skill during a rescue or in rendering emergency medical care that their actions directly lead to saving a persons life.

There is nothing more precious than human life. There is nothing more noble than saving or attempting to save human life.

The Park Rangers Association of California would like to recognize those park professionals that go above and beyond. Anyone may nominate a park professional for an award. Nominees do not need to be Park Rangers or PRAC Members. The nominee need only be a uniformed park professional working for a park or open space

agency in California, Oregon or Nevada. Nominations are currently being accepted for:

The Medal of Valor, our highest award, may be presented to any park professional who risks his or her own life to an extraordinary degree in saving or attempting to save the life of another person, or sacrifices him or her self in a heroic manner for the benefit of others. This award recognizes the recipient's demonstration of unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger. The heroic act does not have to be related to the recipient's official duties nor occur at their official duty station.

The Medal of Honor may be presented by the Association to individuals whose actions are admirable, but do not rise to the level required for the Award for Valor.

Life Saving Award may be present by the Association to an individual whose direct actions and superior service lead to the saving of a life.

If you are aware of any uniformed park professional that you feel is deserving of recognition please go to www.calranger.org for more information. Nominations are due by December 31, 2015 for incidents that occurred in calendar year 2014-2015.

Under the Flat Hat

By Matt Cerkel

After my last article I got some feedback and I realized there may have been some misunderstanding about my idea to revise Public Resources Code section 4022, in regards to the use of the ranger job title and “derivations thereof.” Currently, 4022 restricts the use of any ranger job title to peace officers, employees of State Parks and Cal Fire. However, 4022 currently grandfathers agencies using the ranger title prior to 1990. My proposal would revise 4022 to apply only to the title “park ranger” and would eliminate the grandfather clause. Because there are no provisions of any state codes besides PRC 4022 authorizing “rangers” or “forest rangers” as peace officers and there are at least ten state codes that authorize or imply that “park rangers” are peace officers, why not change PRC 4022 to apply only to the job title of “park ranger.” This way non-sworn rangers can remain rangers, but all “park rangers” would be sworn peace officers. I acknowledge some may not like this proposal, but it would allow everyone currently using the ranger title to continue to use the title and would bring much needed clarity to the profession.

Another area that should be addressed is clarification of the sections of the various state enabling acts to grant local park and land management agencies the power to enforce rules and regulations in their respective jurisdiction. In some cases these powers are only implied and in many cases very vague, using such language as “uniformed park employee,” but not stating if such an employee is a public officer/code enforcement officer (836.5 PC/829.5 PC) or a peace officer (830.31(b) or 830.6 PC). The exception to the rule is Water Code section 71341.5, which was enacted in 2004 and is quite specific. In most cases these sections also make no reference to the level of training an employee must have before being granted law enforcement powers (making detentions and arrests-including

issuing citations (853.5 and 853.6 PC)). Currently, for rangers in California performing law enforcement duties, the training ranges from not even PC 832 to the full POST Basic Police Academy. To reduce liability, increase safety and improve the overall training rangers receive prior to performing law enforcement duties, a new state-wide law enforcement training standard should be developed for any new park employee, sworn or non-sworn, whose duties include law enforcement. Perhaps something could be modeled after the POST Specialized Investigators’ Basic Course. I’m shocked California still only requires 40 hours of training for many peace officer positions and has no written training standard for code enforcement/public officers, it is a recipe for disaster and creates a huge liability potential. Another training need that would need to be addressed is the need for ongoing training. Many law enforcement skills are perishable and need to be continuously refreshed, regardless of level of authority. A standard for perishable skills training needs to be developed for all park employees with enforcement duties, to help improve safety and reduce liability.

Switching gears, in August the Bend Bulletin newspaper had a great article on USFS wilderness rangers called “A day on the trail with a wilderness ranger” <http://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/3420695-151/a-day-on-the-trail-with-a-wilderness#>. All rangers can take some lessons from this article and many of the duties can apply to rangers in all settings. The article describes the wilderness ranger job as combining “about a dozen jobs, including customer service, trail maintenance and rule enforcement.” The reporter describes the “job is to make sure people are doing the right thing” and to ensure the visitors “follow the rules,” not necessarily “to be a cop.” The ranger interviewed stated “his goals are to educate and communicate with people coming into the wood.” Even when giving a warning he

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Under the Flat Hat

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makes it clear that people are not in trouble. He just wants them “to know the rules and what they can and cannot do.” The ranger stated “our number one goal is to help our visitors succeed.” The reporter stated “the presence of wilderness rangers appears to encourage people to follow the rules.” In my mind this approach conforms with many of the ideas of the nine Peelian Principles of policing: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/nyregion/sir-robert-peels-nine-principles-of-policing.html?r=0> , especially the following:

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.
3. Police must secure the willing co-operation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
4. Police seek and preserve public favor not by catering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.
5. Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

6. The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

The job of rangers is to protect the parks and its visitors and to prevent “crime and disorder” in parks. For rangers, educating and helping the park visitors and enforcing the law can go hand-in-hand. The presence of rangers in the parks and educating the visitors is the lowest level of the enforcement spectrum and deters crime and disorder. Providing quality customer service, including taking the time to talk with visitors, utilizing your expertise, providing immediate assistance (when possible), following up when needed, and focusing on what you CAN DO for the visitors makes sense and in most cases makes the typical park enforcement contact easier. Things we can do to prevent disorder include routinely and frequently patrolling the park, its facilities and trails, getting out on foot or bike as much as possible, by keeping the park looking clean and maintained. This includes replacing or repairing damaged or vandalized signs or facilities, removing graffiti in a timely fashion, picking up litter when you find it, and ensuring visitor facilities are clean. If your park looks like it is maintained and patrolled you are less likely to have enforcement issues compared to parks that don’t appear to be looked after. It might take more work on the front end to make a park looked cared for, but it’s easier than trying to prevent the “disorder” once it has become established. The goal of park law enforcement should be to gain the voluntary compliance of visitors when possible, and to issue citations or make arrests when necessary.

Natural Resources Communication Workshop Announced

The Natural Resources Communication Workshop, sponsored by the *Western Section of The Wildlife Society* and the *Department of Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management at California State University-Chico*, will be held from January 11-15, 2016 in Chico, CA. The week-long workshop is designed to help natural resource workers more effectively communicate with general as well as technical audiences through personal presentations using good visual aids, especially computer-generated PowerPoint images. Since many of the problems in natural resources management are people-oriented, more effective communication can significantly improve many management programs.

The hands-on workshop is practical-oriented and enhances participants' communication skills in planning, preparing, presenting, and evaluating presentations. A variety of topics are covered including selecting communication strategies for specific audiences, creating computer-generated graphics, avoiding PowerPoint presentation "pitfalls," and handling equipment problems. A special session entitled "Verbal Victories" provides hints for handling difficult, or even hostile, audiences.

Participants in the 2016 workshop will not only learn professional tips for using PowerPoint, but also will gain exposure to Photoshop Elements (a great digital photo editing program).

The workshop's instructor is Dr. Jon Hooper, a Certified Wildlife Biologist (CWB) and Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) who has taught communication workshops for 40 years in locations around the country. Jon is a member of PRAC and coordinates the Parks and Natural Resources Management Option at California State University, Chico. He holds degrees in environmental communication and wildlife ecology. Dr. Hooper will be assisted by

Ms. Kim Rubin, who has experience as a tour guide and environmental interpreter. She has 16 years of experience facilitating the Natural Resources Communication Workshop.

The initial deadline for applications is October 30, 2015 (Friday). Late applications are accepted (such applicants will become participants if the workshop is not yet full; otherwise, they will be placed on a waiting list in case of cancellations). The registration fee is \$795. The workshop is limited to 16 participants. Since more applicants usually apply than there are spaces available, the registration fee is not due until an applicant has been officially accepted into the workshop (this occurs shortly after the October 30 deadline).

Since the workshop has a limited capacity, all applicants will be contacted after October 30, 2015 to notify them if they have been accepted. Instructions on paying the registration fee will be provided at that time. Payment must be received before applicants will be fully registered. Failure to make timely payment will result in alternate applicants being selected.

Applying for the workshop is easy. On letterhead, applicants should describe: (1) their current position within their agency/organization, (2) how they would use the training, (3) any special reasons why they feel they should be chosen as a participant, and (4) if they already have official agency/organization approval to attend. Applicants should include their address, phone number, fax number, and email address with their application.

Submit applications to: Dr. Jon K. Hooper, Dept. Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management, Calif. State University, Chico, CA 95929-0560. For more information, contact Jon by calling (530) 898-5811, faxing (530) 898-6557, or e-mailing jhooper@csuchico.edu.

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SUBMISSIONS CAN BE MAILED TO DAVID BROOKS, 560 HILLCREST DR., BEN LOMOND, CA, 95005. INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE SUBMITTED BY TELEPHONE AT (831) 336-2948.

Submission deadlines ARE THE 15th of FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, AUGUST, OCTOBER, AND DECEMBER.

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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:

(1-24 PERSONS—6 MAILINGS)..... \$100 _____

25 PERSONS—12 MAILINGS)..... \$150 _____

STUDENT.....\$20 _____

ASSOCIATE..... \$35 _____

SUPPORTING..... \$100 _____

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