



# *THE SIGNPOST*

## Third Quarter 2024

### President's Message:

In this issue, we have updates on our 2025 conference, which will be held at the Whitney Peak Hotel in Reno from Sunday, March 16th to Thursday, March 20th, 2025. This includes the announcement of our keynote speaker, Donald Forgione, the retired director of the Florida Park Service and host of the Tailgate Talks podcast. And we honor longtime member and past PRAC President Pam Helmke with the 2025 Honorary Lifetime Member Award.

Also, in this issue, we explore the parks of San Francisco, World Ranger Day, and share an update on Washoe County's journey toward citation authority, followed by reflections on my 30 years in the profession, looking back at what's changed and what remains the same.

Finally, this issue also brings an update on Senate Bill 1058, which authorizes Park Ranger Peace Officers to receive 4850 Workers Comp coverage. It has wide bipartisan support in the Legislature. If approved and signed into law by the governor, it would be a big step forward for rangers in California. Our issue this quarter also includes a peek at a piece from The Signpost archives about the role of park rangers.

Hope you all have had a safe summer season.

President, Matt Cerkel



## California Parks Training Conference March 16th-20th, 2025

By Matt Cerkel, President



Our 2025 California Parks Training Conference will be at the Whitney Peak Hotel in Reno, NV, March 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>. I'm excited to announce that Donald Forgione, the retired director of the Florida Park Service and host of the Tailgate Talks podcast, will be our keynote speaker. <https://tailgate-talks.com/about/>

As always, we will have our three domain tracks: Park Operations/Resource Management, Public Safety, and Interpretation. We also have tentatively scheduled an 8-hour Title 22 Public Safety First Aid refresher course and an 8-hour Basic Search and Rescue Operations course, each with two two-hour sections on Tuesday and Wednesday and a four-hour field session on Thursday. We hope to set up a similar 8-hour Basic Trail Maintenance course. These courses can help you earn your PRAC Ranger Certification.

The room rate will be \$125 per night, and the regular registration fees will be \$300 for PRAC members (including agency membership) and \$350 for non-members. Reservations will be available for booking in mid-September; look for an announcement in PRACNet.

If you or your organization has any individuals who would like to present on a topic or if you have any questions, contact one of our committee members.

2025 Conference Committee

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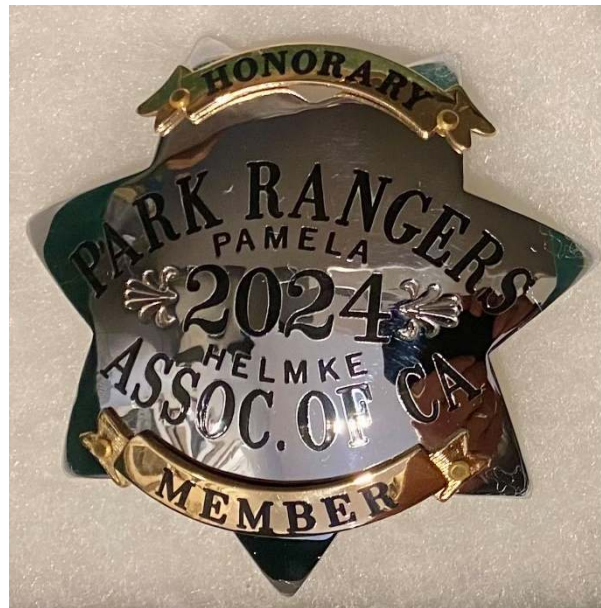
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**2025 Honorary Lifetime Member: Pam Helmke**  
**By Matt Cerkel, President**



The Park Rangers Association of California recognizes Pam Hemke’s commitment to the Park Ranger Profession in California by awarding her our 2025 Honorary Lifetime Member.

Pam served as a park ranger for 36 years before retiring in December of 2023 as the Supervising Park Ranger for the City of San Jose. Pam has also been a longtime PRAC member, playing many roles for the organization, including being a regular contributor to *The Signpost*, serving on both the Conference Committee and Training and Standards committees, serving as a Regional Director, and serving two terms as President: 1994-1995 and 2011-2013.

Pam has been a tireless advocate for the profession. She played a key role in saving the park ranger program in San Jose when it was faced with elimination due to budget cuts. She has also strongly advocated for the professionalization of park rangers here in California. Looking through PRAC’s record, this is not the first time the organization has recognized Pam. In 1994, Pam Helmke got an award for all her hard work for PRAC.

Thank you, Pam, for your service to the City of San Jose, the park ranger profession, and the Park Rangers Association of California. This award is well deserved.



## Getting to Know You: San Francisco Park Rangers

By Richard Weiner, Southern California Regional Director



The San Francisco Park Ranger program is one of the oldest park ranger programs in California, established in 1874 servicing over 800,000 residents. The program covers Marina slips, neighborhood parks, recreation centers, tennis/pickleball courts, soccer fields, clubhouses and a family camp in Yosemite. Since the program covers such a vast variety of locations, the ranger program is a 24-hour, seven day a week program.

This July, I was privileged to take a tour of the city’s parks and have as my guide Marcus Santiago, Deputy Chief Park Ranger. We started our tour going under freeway bridges, which the city of San Francisco has utilized in various ways. There are walking paths, volleyball courts and peaceful places to rest along the way.

Since the San Francisco area was once occupied by the military, many of these buildings are dormant but some have been updated with modern facilities. San Francisco is in the process of renovating these areas to make them into usable public areas including parks and beaches. New areas such as the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, India Basin Shoreline, Treasure Island and other will be added to the list of the 230 parks.

San Francisco Parks has a multitude of recreational parks for sports and leisure. It also contains world famous landmarks like Coit Tower, Conservatory of Flowers, Palace of Fine Arts, Union Square and many others. Museums include the DeYoung, Legion of Honor and the California Academy of Sciences. More than 24 million visitors put Golden Gate Park on their San Francisco bucket list. Golden Gate Park is the [third most-visited city park](#) in the country.



## Facts About the San Francisco Parks Department

1. Staff:

Chief-1

Deputy chief-1

Sergeants-7

Full-time rangers-57

Part-time rangers-12

Dispatchers-5

Administrative staff-2

2. The largest park is Golden Gate Park (1017 acres).

3. Parks:

Neighborhood parks-230

Playgrounds-179

Recreation centers-82

Soccer fields-59

Tennis courts-151

Basketball courts-72

Pickleball courts-93

Skate parks-8

and a small craft marina and yacht harbor.

4. Basic training: PC832 plus a 4-month in-house academy and field training course.

5. Specialized training: ATV, bike.

6. Patrol vehicles: SUV, trucks, ATV, UTV and e-bikes.

7. Specialized uniforms: ATV, bike and Honor Guard unit.

If your agency is interested in highlighting your area in a “Getting to Know You” feature for The Signpost, please e-mail Richard Weiner [richard@calranger.org](mailto:richard@calranger.org)



# World Ranger Day, 2024 By Michael Warner, Northern California Regional Director



Figure 1: World Ranger Day Group Photo.

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, East Bay Regional Parks District and the International Ranger Federation hosted a World Ranger Day celebration at the Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline in Oakland, California. One hundred and thirty representatives from thirty agencies and four associations from throughout the state of California and from the country of Japan attended the event held in the shadow of the San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge.

This celebration was held in conjunction with many others around the world. The first World Ranger Day celebration was held in 2007, and has been celebrated every year since on July 31<sup>st</sup>, the anniversary of the founding of the International Ranger Foundation. World Ranger Day honors all park professionals who work for and care for parks and protected lands, it also commemorates those who have died in the line of duty. Between June 2023 and May 2024, one hundred and forty rangers and other park professionals died in the line of duty.



Figure 2: Officer George (left) and McGregor (right)



This year was also a significant anniversary for the East Bay Regional Parks District’s Park Police Department as well. 2024 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the line of duty deaths of Officer Paul F. George and Officer Kenneth L. (Scotty) McGregor. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1974, Officers George and McGregor were flying around the Carquinez Strait near Port Costa, California when they collided with a power line strung across the strait.

Ceremonies for the event included speeches from representatives from the East Bay Regional Parks District, International Ranger Federation, the Ranger Foundation, and a Keynote Speech from the Chief of Police at the Military Ocean Terminal Concord. A flag presentation by East Bay Regional Parks District Police Chief was conducted for the families of the Officers George and McGregor. San Ramon Police Department provided a color guard for the ceremonies as well. At the conclusion of ceremonies guests participated in group photo, luncheon, and tour of the Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline or East Bay Regional Parks District’s Police Department Helicopter, Eagle One.



Figure 3: Jeff Ohlfs, Speaking on behalf of the International Ranger Federation.

The Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline opened on October 21, 2020. The 22.47-acre park at the foot of the eastern span of the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge was named after Judge John Sutter, former director of the East Bay Regional Park District who first proposed a park at this site in 1967. The shoreline park has a long history tied to railroad, shipping, and motor vehicle transportation throughout the Bay Area. It also provided spectacular views of the San Francisco skyline and bay front habitat. The Bridge Yard Building, once a maintenance shop for the Key System, an interurban electric railroad in the east bay, now serves as an event center for hosting large events like World Ranger Day.



World Ranger Day is important for us all to take pause and remember those who came before us and reflect on our own legacy as we move forward in an ever-challenging world. According to the International Ranger Foundation, there are approximately 286,000 rangers in terrestrial sites globally, which is only 35% of what is required. Meanwhile, 60% of rangers report that they do not have sufficient resources to complete their job.

Associations and events like World Ranger Day renew our motivation and our commitment to our work. It shows we are not alone in our struggles.

Thank you to the East Bay Regional Parks District and International Ranger Federation for hosting this year's event. Next year's local event will be held in Southern California. More to follow soon.







**WORLD RANGER DAY 2024**  
**ROLL OF HONOUR**  
 Recognising Ranger Deaths in the Line of Duty  
 Causes of Death - June 2023 to May 2024



**ANIMAL ATTACKS**

(36 deaths)

Any death of a ranger due to attack from wild animals.

India	Santosh Dundi	Bear
Tanzania	Taiko Olesalei Marau	Buffalo
Tanzania	Samuel Edward Nassari	Buffalo
India	Ravi Raj	Buffalo
India	Robin Basumatary	Buffalo
India	Apurba Momin	Buffalo
Botswana	Sterling Montosi	Elephant
Zambia	Josephat Singoyi	Elephant
Zimbabwe	Bernard Magisambiti Musimeki	Elephant
D R Congo	Mahangako Bazirake Celestin	Elephant
India	Ramchandar	Elephant
Sri Lanka	S. Sridaran	Elephant
India	Atul Kalita	Elephant
Thailand	Jongrak Jongsri	Elephant
Thailand	Wallop Burapha	Elephant
India	B. Girish	Elephant
India	Rumban Kumaran	Elephant
India	Prashant Pal	Elephant
India	Chankanta Das	Elephant
India	B. Raju	Elephant
India	Pakkam Vellachali Paul	Elephant
India	H.H. Venkatesh	Elephant
India	Thankachan	Elephant
Nepal	Dhan Bahadur Ban	Elephant
India	Ramesh Chandra	Elephant
India	Abdul (Ali) Qayam Miyan	Elephant
India	Sudhakar B Atram	Elephant
India	Atul Kalita	Elephant
India	Rithay Subba	Elephant
India	C.M. Balan	Elephant
India	Biren Rabha	Elephant
India	Kuleshwar Boro	Elephant
Kenya	Simon Lorunyi	Elephant
South Africa	Sphamandla Phihwayinkosi Mthembu	Hippo
India	Prakash	Insect bite
Zambia	Obvious Mushitala	Snake bite
India	Pawan Kumar	Tiger



**HOMICIDE**

(38 deaths)

Any death at the hand of another person or persons with intent. This also includes cases if the deceased was off-duty but killed because of their ranger work.

Angola	Francisco Joao Vontade	Poachers
Bangladesh	Md Sajjaduzzaman Shahjahan	Soil poachers
Benin	Gnami Kouga Innocent	Conflict zone death
Cameroon	Amawissa Haman Jean Paul	Conflict zone death
D R Congo	Mulopwe Majondo Saidi	Conflict zone death
D R Congo	Banze Mupafu Eurasmie	Conflict zone death
D R Congo	Djibril Mutambala Kabengano	Conflict zone death
Ethiopia	Millyon Tolom Lokare	Poachers
Chana	Daniel Kyel Bobson (Robert)	Timber poachers
Chana	Titus Avoka Zasalyande	Unknown assailants
Honduras	Luis Hernan Baca Valladares	Unknown assailants
India	Amalendu Halder	Poachers
India	Rajbir Ahmed	Poachers
India	Imran Yousaf Wani	Timber poachers
India	Mati (Mathy) Handsah	Poachers
Kenya	un-named	Cattle herders
Mexico	José Ángel Pelcastre	Timber Poachers
Mexico	Ventura Ojeda	Timber Poachers
Mexico	Florentino Castro	Timber Poachers
Mozambique	Lucas Martinho Vinte	Poachers
Mozambique	Harish Chandra Pandey	Poachers
Nicaragua	Sergio Julian	Land encroachers
Nigeria	Idris Mohammed	Poachers
Nigeria	Musa Yusuf	Unknown assailants
Nigeria	Peter Ayemhoba	Conflict zone death
Nigeria	Julius Adeola Adedokun	Conflict zone death
Peru	Ricardo Aaron Zapata Ruiz	Motorcycle theft
Peru	Victorio Dariquebe Gerewa	Unknown assailants
Philippines	Alejandro Traya	Unknown assailants
Sudan	Garang Ruay	Unknown assailants
Thailand	Sangworn Nuanthip	Unknown assailants
Ukraine	Serhiy Volkov	Conflict zone death
Ukraine	Ivan Romachenko	Conflict zone death
Ukraine	Oleksandr Hlushenko	Conflict zone death
Ukraine	Andrii Mykhaylenko	Conflict zone death
Ukraine	Serhiy Zabolotny	Conflict zone death
Ukraine	Andrii Burakov	Conflict zone death
Vietnam	Nguyen Kim Anh	Unknown assailants



**DEATH IN SERVICE**

(20 deaths)

Any line-of-duty incident or illness resulting in death related to working conditions.

Argentina	Silvio Ariel Schuquel	Unexplained
Benin	Aziz Abdel Soumanou	Unexplained
India	Chitralal Tossa	Heart failure
India	K. Venkadesh	Heart failure
India	Prabin Boro	Respiratory problem
Kenya	Enock Ntaiel Mpetti	Aneurysm
Panama	Delvis Abdel Mojica Gomez	Unexplained
Peru	Pedro Antonio Saldaña Cárdenas	Heart failure
Peru	Jailer Edinzon Jota Coquinche	Dengue fever
Peru	Elver Castillo Ávila	Heart failure
Peru	Angelo Tentes Antonio	Heart failure
Thailand	Mor. Akham Chuvannakert	Aneurysm
Thailand	Wuttipat Sriota	Aneurysm
Thailand	Pansak Jaimongkol	Heart failure
Thailand	Warawut Kanprachum	Heart failure
Thailand	Yuthana Rabbat	Heart failure
Uganda	Brian Gigo	Unexplained
Venezuela	Synthia Virginia Lamas Vegas	Aneurysm
Venezuela	Andres Joendy Gomez Vasquez	Heart failure
Venezuela	Urbaneja Martinez Richard Antonio	Heart failure



**OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS**

(31 deaths)

Any death recorded due to occupational hazards such as firefighting, drawings, falls, equipment failure and other such incidents

D R Congo	Alex Masungi Ndonga	Drowned
Kenya	Rakol Sengeny	Drowned
Kenya	Simore Karkar	Drowned
Tanzania	Mkwabi Ndelembi	Drowned
Tanzania	Ezekiel Kilusu	Drowned
India	Rajesh Meravi	Drowned
India	Aloki Devi	Drowned
India	Harish Chandra Pandey	Drowned
Tanzania	Alphonse Boniface Olomi	Drowned
India	Raisuddin Ahmed	Drowned
Thailand	Khomsin Kating	Drowned
Kazakhstan	Serikzhan Toktassyn	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Alexey Gubayev	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Maksim Fominykh	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Konstantin Nachynonov	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Alexander Sidorin	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Meirangul Zhilyenbayeva	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Viktor Sidorin	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Sergey Puzyryov	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Pyotr Grazhdankin	Firefighting
China	Un-named forest guard	Firefighting
China	Un-named Forest station chief	Firefighting
Vietnam	Tran Van Khien	Firefighting
Vietnam	Truong Thi Lan	Firefighting
India	Rajendra Singh Kuree	Firefighting
Kazakhstan	Sayat Nurzhigitov	Firefighting
Zambia	Adamson Zimba	Firefighting
Zambia	Edward Sambwa	Friendly fire
India	Yogesh Naika	Pesticide poisoning
India	Ranjan Kumar Sethi	Electrocuted
Pakistan	Abdul Jabbar Sakna	Electrocuted



**VEHICLE ACCIDENTS**

(15 deaths)

Any on-duty death due to vehicle accidents or involving other forms of transportation.

Benin	Bio Cnaworogul Gilbert	Motorcycle accident
Chile	Jarol Rodriguez Jimenez	Motorcycle collided with truck
Cote d'Ivoire	Tiekoura Célestin	Car collided with bus
Cote d'Ivoire	Lt. Zazan Gregoire Richmond	Motorcycle accident
India	V Raganathan	Road traffic accident
India	Saif Ali Rehman	Electric Vehicle crash
India	Basdev Baitha	No details
India	Shallesh Ghildiyal Kumar	Electric Vehicle crash
India	Parmod Kumar Dhyani	Electric Vehicle crash
India	Rajkumar	Bike hit by truck
Pakistan	Zeeshan Shah	Jeep plunged into gorge
Pakistan	Afaq Ahmed	Jeep plunged into gorge
South Africa	Johannes Chengeredze	Hit & run
Tanzania	Bryson Elisha	RTA on patrol
USA	Benjamin Charles Sapper	Truck left the road

Total number of lives lost - 140 from 37 countries (June 2023 to May 2024)



# WORLD RANGER DAY 2024 ROLL OF HONOUR

Recognising Ranger Deaths in the Line of Duty  
Deaths by Region/Country - June 2023 to May 2024

**THIN GREEN LINE**  
Rangers protecting nature

## AFRICA Region (42 deaths)

Angola	Francisco João Vontade	Attacked by poachers
Benin	Bio Gnaworogui Gilbert	Died in motorcycle accident
Benin	Aziz Abdel Soumanou	Died during official visit
Benin	Gnami Kouga Inocent	Shot by unidentified individuals
Botswana	Sterling Montsozi	Trampled by elephant
Cameroun	Arawissa Haman Jean Paul	Attacked by separatists
Cote d'Ivoire	Tiékoutra Célestin	Car collided with bus
Cote d'Ivoire	Lt. Zazan Gregoire Richmond	Motorcycle accident
D R Congo	Mulopwe Majondo Saidi	Killed in militia attack on his post
D R Congo	Banze Mupafu Eurasme	Rangers attacked by insurgents
D R Congo	Djibril Mutambala Kabengano	Died in attack by armed group
D R Congo	Mahangalo Basirake Celestin	Killed by elephant
D R Congo	Alex Masungi Ndonga	Drowned trying to save tourists
Ethiopia	Millyon Tolom Lokare	Shot by poachers
Chana	Daniel Kyel Bobson (Robert)	Shot escorting timber poachers
Chana	Titus Avoka Azasiyande	Shot by unknown assailants
Kenya	Rakoi Sengenye	Missing presumed drowned
Kenya	Simore Karkar	Drowned
Kenya	Enock Ntaloi Mpetti	Aneurysm while on duty
Kenya	Simon Lonuyei	Killed by elephant
Kenya	un-named	Killed in clash with cattle herders
Mozambique	Lucas Martinho Vinte	Attacked by poachers
Mozambique	Harish Chandra Pandey	Killed by poachers
Nigeria	Musa Yusuf	Limited details
Nigeria	Idris Mohammed	Shot on anti-poaching patrol
Nigeria	Peter Ayemhoba	Stoned to death by bandits
Nigeria	Julius Adela Adedokun	Stoned to death by bandits
South Africa	Siphamandla Piliwayinkosi Mthembu	Killed by hippo
South Africa	Johannes Chengeredze	Hit & run incident
Sudan	Garang Ruay	Abducted and hung
Tanzania	Mkwabi Ndelembi	Drowned while chasing poachers
Tanzania	Ezekiel Kilusu	Drowned while chasing poachers
Tanzania	Bryson Elisha	Vehicle accident while on patrol
Tanzania	Alphonse Boniface Olomi	Drowned moving poached cattle
Tanzania	Taiko Olesael Marau	Attacked by a buffalo
Tanzania	Samuel Edward Nassari	Killed by buffalo
Uganda	Brian Cigo	Unexplained sudden death
Zambia	Josephat Singoyi	Elephant attack
Zambia	Obvious Mushitala	Snake bite
Zambia	Edward Sambwa	Tripped & accidentally shot himself
Zambia	Adamson Zimba	Shot in friendly fire incident
Zimbabwe	Bernard Magisambiti Musimeki	Killed by elephant

## ASIA Region (74 deaths)

Bangladesh	Mid Sajjaduzzaman Shahjahan	Run over by soil poscher truck
China	Un-named	Head forester killed firfighting
China	Un-named	Forest ranger killed firefighting
India	Chankanta Das	Attacked by elephant
India	C.M. Balan	Trampled by own elephant
India	Rajbir Ahmed	Attacked by timber poachers
India	RFO Prakash	Suspected insect bite
India	Raisuddin Ahmed	Drowned whilst on duty
India	Mati (Mathy) Handsah	Shot dead by poachers
India	Yogesh Naika	Accidental pesticide poisoning
India	Santosh Dundi	Killed by bear
India	Imran Yousaf Wani	Shot at timber checkpoint
India	Ravi Raj	Attacked by gaur (buffalo)
India	H.H. Venkatesh	Killed trying to tranquillise elephant
India	B.Cirish	Trampled by elephant
India	Irumban Kumaran	Killed by elephant
India	Thankachan	Trampled by elephant
India	Sudhakar B. Atram	Killed during elephant incursion
India	Rajkumar	Bike hit by speeding truck
India	Ramesh Chandra	Killed by elephant
India	Atul Kalita	Killed trying to relocate elephants
India	Ranjan Kumar Sethi	Electrocuted by trap wires
India	Robin Basumatary	Killed by buffalo
India	Pawan Kumar	Killed by tiger while on patrol
India	Ramchandar	Attack by wild elephant
India	V. Ragunathan	Road traffic accident
India	Rithey Subba	Killed by elephant with calf
India	Chitralal Tossa	Heart attack whilst on duty
India	Rajesh Meravi	Drowned on patrol
India	Prashant Pal	Killed by elephant
India	Harish Chandra Pandey	Found in lake after 2 week search
India	Saif Ali Rehman	Killed when EV on test hit tree
India	Shallesh Chlidiyal Kumar	Killed when EV on test hit tree
India	Parmod Kumar Dhyani	Killed when EV on test hit tree
India	Aloki Devi	Drowned in canal following EV crash
India	Basdev Balitha	On duty incident
India	B.Raju	Trampled by elephant

India	Pakkam Vellachail Paul	Trampled by elephant
India	Abdul (Ali) Qayam Miyan	Trampled by elephant
India	Prabin Boro	Respiratory attack on duty
India	K. Venkadesh	Heart attack during patrol
India	Apurba Momin	Killed by buffalo
India	Biren Ratha	Elephant attack
India	Kuleshwar Boro	Elephant attack
India	Rajendra Singh Kusre	Heart attack after all-night firefighting
India	Amalendu Halder	Boat patrol attacked by poachers
Kazakhstan	Serikzhan Toktassyn	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Alexey Gubayev	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Maksim Fominykh	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Sayat Nurzhigitov	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Konstantin Nachinyonov	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Alexander Sidorin	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Meirangul Zhienbayeva	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Viktor Sidorin	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Sergey Puzryrov	Died in massive forest fires
Kazakhstan	Pyotr Grazhdankin	Died in massive forest fires
Nepal	Dhan Bahadur Ban	Killed by elephant
Pakistan	Abdul Jabbar Sakna	Electrocuted by falling powerline
Pakistan	Zeeshan Shah	Jeep plunged into gorge
Pakistan	Afaq Ahmed	Jeep plunged into gorge
Philippines	Alejandro Traya	Shot in back by unknown person
Sri Lanka	S. Sridaran	Trampled by elephant
Thailand	Warawut Kanprachum	Heart attack following patrol
Thailand	Yutthana Rabbat	Heart attack whilst on patrol
Thailand	Sangworn Nuanthip	Killed whilst on patrol
Thailand	Jongrak Jongrui	Killed trying to relocate elephant
Thailand	Pansak Jaimongkol	Heart attack whilst on patrol
Thailand	Mor. Akham Chuvannaket	Aneurysm during patrol
Thailand	Wallop Burapha	Elephant attack
Thailand	Wutipngt Sriolta	Brain aneurysm on patrol
Thailand	Khomsin Kating	Drowned
Vietnam	Nguyen Kim Anh	Body found with multiple gunshot
Vietnam	Tran Van Khien	Killed during firefighting efforts
Vietnam	Truong Thi Lan	Killed during firefighting efforts

## CENTRAL AMERICA Region (6 deaths)

Nicaragua	Sergio Julián	Shot by armed settlers
Honduras	Luis Hernán Baca Valladares	Clubbed by persons unknown
Mexico	José Ángel Pelcastre	Illegal loggers attacked patrol
Mexico	Ventura Ojeda	Illegal loggers attacked patrol
Mexico	Florentino Castro	Illegal loggers attacked patrol
Panama	Delvis Abdell Mojica Gomez	Cause not stated

## EUROPE Region (6 deaths)

Ukraine	Serhyi Volkov	Hit by Russian artillery on patrol
Ukraine	Ivan Romanchenko	Hit by Russian artillery on patrol
Ukraine	Oleksandr Hlushenko	Hit by Russian artillery on patrol
Ukraine	Andrii Mykhaylenko	Hit by Russian artillery on patrol
Ukraine	Serhyi Zabolotny	Hit by Russian artillery on patrol
Ukraine	Andrii Burakov	Hit by Russian artillery on patrol

## NORTH AMERICA Region (1 death)

USA	Benjamin Charles Sapper	Fire truck accident
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## OCEANIA Region No Ranger Line of Duty Deaths

## SOUTH AMERICA Region (11 deaths)

Argentina	Silvio Ariel Schuquel	Cause not stated
Chile	Jarol Rodríguez Jiménez	Motorcycle collided with truck
Peru	Elver Castillo Ávila	Heart attack whilst on duty
Peru	Pedro Antonio Saldaña Cárdenas	On duty RTA & heart attack
Peru	Ricardo Aaron Zapata Ruiz	Ambushed by motorbike thieves
Peru	Jalier Edinzon Jota Coquinche	Dengue fever (died during medevac)
Peru	Victorio Dariquebe Gerewa	Murdered by unknown persons.
Peru	Angelo Tentes Antonio	Heart attack on patrol
Venezuela	Andres Joendy Gomez Vasquez	On duty heart attack
Venezuela	Synthia Virginia Lamas Vegas	Aneurysm
Venezuela	Urbaneja Martínez Richard Antonio	Heart attack

## The Unknown Ranger

Total number of lives lost - 140 from 37 countries  
(June 2023 to May 2024)



## Washoe County’s Journey Toward Citation Authority By Andy Brown, Nevada Regional Director



In the spring of 2022, while attending Larimer County’s “Ranger Excellence School” in Estes Park Colorado, I learned that back home in Reno a County Commission meeting had taken place. This wasn’t just any meeting. An item on the agenda that I took special interest in had been heard for the second time – the passage of an update to the chapter of Washoe County Code that governs parks, including the designation of Park Rangers and District Park Managers as “Parks Enforcement Officers.”

When I returned to Reno, the excitement of the news was brief. While we had been victorious in a decades-long mission to obtain the ability to issue citations for common code violations in our parks, management quickly realized that there were now more questions than answers, and this wasn’t going to be a turn-key decision.

Soon after the passage of Chapter 95, Parks management assembled a small team of subject matter experts within our division (including me). Our first task was to seek advice, make connections and get as much information from our local and regional partners as possible to begin to build our new citation authority program from the ground floor. Little did I know at the time, but my connection to PRAC, and the partnerships and allies that I had made while being a member and serving on the board would come into play in a major way.



Some of you may recall the email that I sent to PRACnet in June of 2022, seeking advice and input from the membership. First – I want to acknowledge that many of you responded, and all your input was taken to heart. From Carson City to OC Parks, many of you were willing to share your internal workings and policies, which I brought back to our team to mull over. Much of the foundational language for many of the newly created policies, such as our uniform policy, our Ranger Code of Conduct, and training standards - even our fine schedule were influenced by the data that you all contributed. I can't thank everyone from PRAC enough for your valuable input.

The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners identified us as the “who.” Once we had the “what” figured out, we needed to get the “how” addressed too. We had aging radios, no dispatch and very little field equipment. Our uniforms were not-so-uniform. Park Operations Superintendent Colleen Wallace-Barnum decided to hold off on implementing our new authority until we were truly ready. She was the one who began the crusade and she wanted to affirm that the program would be set up for success.

Our own Regional Animal Services department had also recently undergone policy renovations which we quickly realized could be easily adapted to Parks, adopted by our Risk Management, DA's Office and County Management without a fuss. Policies that we were seriously lacking before – use of force and OC spray for instance - so we sought them immediately as our best local resource. Armed with the policies I had gathered through PRAC, and working with management at Animal Services, Colleen set out to draft our new policies.

Meanwhile, I focused on my mission to sort out our training. One of our ten rangers, “Red” Muratori, was a subject matter expert on staff training from his years in the Marines. He was enlisted as the creator of our training “jackets,” where our professional development could be tracked. As the training coordinator, I established the initial trainings necessary for our staff to get the program off the ground – de-escalation, OC training, report writing, self-defense/DT and ICS-100.

With a six-month deadline before our new ticket books would be ready, I scrambled to assemble the trainings, which were also made available to the City of Reno's new squadron of park rangers, as well as rangers from Carson City Parks and Recreation. Through some horse trading, I was able to arrange for several new Animal Control officers to attend our de-escalation training provided by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office in exchange for our team to get OC-certified through the Animal Control in-house trainers.



By March of 2024, nearly two years after the law had been changed, we were finally getting closer to our goal of implementing the citation program, but a few major details needed to be addressed. We still had no dispatch, though I was able to secure all new radio equipment for our fleet of patrol vehicles and portables for our team to carry. As a newly promoted supervisor, I worked with my fellow District Manager Bryan Harrower to ensure that any missing elements in the ranger uniforms were addressed.

Our team received a great deal of professional development in a short period of time. We finally had good communication gear and work-issued cell phones. We had covered significant ground, but still needed to address staff safety, document tracking and a plan for a dispatch.

After meeting with our safety coordinator, we were equipped with the “Alert Media” virtual dispatch app. While still not an actual connection to our local dispatchers, it’s better than nothing - and a lot cheaper than the \$20k per year the sheriff’s office was asking for our participation on their channel. I had been a ranger back when we still used call signs on the older radios – something that was neglected and replaced by cell phones many years ago – so I re-implemented the ranger-to-ranger radio network so that we could work as our own dispatch.

Instead of buying pricy software, Parks Management developed a document tracking system from scratch that will work with our current system being for taking payment for park reservations. This will enable us to maintain our own secure records and documents, including the four different types of notices that Washoe County Park Enforcement Officers can now issue: written warnings, “NCP’s” or Notice of Civil Penaly, exclusions and misdemeanor citations.

We’re now armed with new ticket books. We have yet to issue any, but we’ll be ready as soon as we complete one final training step: scenario-based training. As an alumnus of RES, I have seen the immense value in using live training scenarios. I’ve insisted that all our rangers attend RES as a “required” training in our program, so we’re sending two per year to Larimer County each May until all current staff have taken the training. I highly recommend it for anyone who is looking for a crash-course style academy. Thanks to our new partners at Animal Control, we’ll be refreshing our DT training this fall/winter.

As the program develops and lessons are learned, I may return with a follow-up. In the



meantime, I'd encourage anyone out there who may be looking for advice on standing up a new citation program in your own agency to reach out to me with any questions by email at [Region5@calranger.org](mailto:Region5@calranger.org). Don't forget that PRACnet is also your friend!

### **Under the Flat Hat By Matt Cerkel, President**



In the last issue of The Signpost, I looked back at the path that led me to become a Park Ranger and ended my article with the following: "Early in my career as a park ranger, my mentor told me that if you remain a park ranger long enough, you'll see everything go in cycles. Looking back over the past 29 years, I now genuinely see he was correct. In my next article, I will discuss the changes I've seen in our profession and how it is often cyclical." <https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/2024-2.pdf>

One thing has not changed: the most recognizable symbol of the profession remains our iconic flat (campaign/Smoky Bear) hat.

We continue to be "protectors, explainers, hosts, caretakers, people who are expected to be knowledgeable, helpful, courteous and professional: people who find you when you're lost, help you when you're hurt, rescue you when you're stuck, and enforce the law when you or others can't abide by it." How we do this remains a point of spirited debate.

It should have been settled law in California in 1990 with the creation of Public Resources Code 4022, which defined the title of Ranger or Park Ranger as being restricted to employees of Cal Fire, State Parks, and Peace Officers, except Federal employees and local agencies using the Ranger or Park Ranger title before 1990.



But the debate continues about park rangers being peace officers. This has led to agencies stripping their park rangers of their peace officer powers. In 1996, it was the City of Palo Alto. <https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/1996-1.pdf> In the early 2000s, there was the Marin Municipal Water District, Casitas Municipal Water District, and United Water Conservation District. MMWD suspended their rangers’ peace officer powers in 2003 and removed the authority in 2004. However, by 2006, they realized that the public officer model was not working, so they started the process of restoring peace officer authority and completed the process in 2009. CMWD and United Water followed a similar but longer path to the restoration of peace officer powers in 2017 and 2019.

Now it’s Sonoma County Regional Parks stripping away the peace officer powers from park rangers.

I first wrote about the issue in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter edition of *The Signpost* in 2023 <https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/2023-3.pdf> I ended by writing that:

“I would encourage the administrators of Sonoma County Regional Parks to take a step back from this ill-conceived “concept” that would ultimately diminish their rangers, decrease protection of their parks and safety of park visitors, and cost the taxpayers more for a lower level of service. They should also be more open and honest about their motives with their employees and the public. There is still time to do the right thing, and I hope they take advantage of that for the sake of the parks, the park employees, and visitors.”

Sadly, as I expected, the management of Sonoma County Regional Parks moved forward with their plan, which was primarily based on false and misleading information and omission of vital information.

Here is a link to the letter I wrote in opposition to the Board of Supervisors: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NHfxU49JmW1IVhcUy5PQiSlf\\_pY3frSj/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NHfxU49JmW1IVhcUy5PQiSlf_pY3frSj/view?usp=sharing)

Sonoma County Park Rangers took a unanimous vote of no confidence in the management, and the decision had strong opposition, no public support, and came without a public hearing on the issue. Yet four members of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors still approved what can only be called a “bill of goods” that undermines not only their rangers, but rangers statewide.



It also strips their rangers of peace officer powers after more than 40 years, ignoring the intent of Public Resources Code 4022, and eliminating five of the ten vacant ranger positions to help pay for the new Sheriff's contract. What's more, it also replaces 22 peace officer positions with five contracted peace officers from the Sheriff's office to cover 60 parks and 18,000 acres.

This change ultimately means the taxpayers will pay more for less, and the parks and the public will be less safe. This plan will fail, and just like MMWD, CMWD, and United Water, at some point in the future, Sonoma County will reverse course and restore peace officer powers to their rangers. But long-term damage has been done.

<https://www.savetherangers.org/>

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sonoma-county-parks-rangers-no-confidence/>

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sonoma-county-regional-parks-rangers/>

The change in Sonoma County does not help with another issue that has not changed in the past 30 years: the public's confusion about what a park ranger is and whether they have any authority. To many park visitors, anyone who works in a park is a park ranger, and many visitors continue to falsely believe that law enforcement and public safety duties are new to park rangers. As a profession, we need to inform the public and elected officials better what rangers do.

We also need to be better at keeping statistics on what we do and the types of calls of service we respond to. When I started my career at MMWD, our Chief Rangers believed that the less the main office knew about us, the better; this resulted in the program going from 13 rangers to six from 1995 until 2016. In 2016, a new Chief Ranger was hired and started to inform the agency's leadership team of what the ranger program did and backed it in numbers. This restored one ranger position and created two new ranger trainee positions.

Finally, what hasn't changed is the need to standardize the profession in California. In 2001, PRAC first rolled in the certification program <https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/2001-3.pdf> and we revised it last year. It's a step in the right direction, and perhaps combined with ranger academies in Santa Clara and Orange counties, we finally have a chance to have a statewide standard for park





rangers.

Combined with a revision to Public Resource Code 4022 that would only restrict the term “Park Ranger” to peace officers, thus allowing the term “Ranger” or variations of rangers to be used in non-sworn ranger positions. I first proposed this in 2009, and it remains the best compromise. <https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/2009-5.pdf>

On the other hand, I have seen many changes in the past 30 years, and I’ll start with the need for park rangers. Visitation to our parks is significantly higher now than in the mid-1990s. Outdoor recreation has become a vital part of many Americans’ lives, but with its increased popularity has come increased impacts on park resources. This means our jobs of protecting the parks and the people are more vital than ever.

Another change I’ve seen, although it is still a work in progress, is that both the park visitors and rangers have become more diverse. Park Ranger programs now have a workforce that more closely reflects their communities. Having both park visitors and rangers that reflect their communities can only be a good thing.

When I started as a park ranger, our standard uniforms were green jeans, polyester uniform shirts, a green jean jacket, a heavy parka-type jacket, leather duty belts, and maybe an internal carrier for body armor. Now we have much better choices: lightweight cargo pants, better fabric for our uniform shirts, softshell jackets that you can hike in comfortably, more ergonomic nylon duty belts, and external carriers for body armor.

Although not developed for park rangers, the emergence of the tactical or “tacticalool” market for backpacks, gear, and hydration systems has benefited us by allowing us to use now backpacks and other gear that is functional and professional in appearance. Our choices in this type of gear wouldn’t have been imaginable in 1995.

If you have wildland firefighting as a duty, there have been many changes, too. We’ve gone for heavy double layering for PPE clothing to a single layer. We now have wildland-specific goggles, seeing the transition from army surplus web gear and packs to ergonomic packs specifically designed for wildland fire. Even lighter-weight wildland boots are now available.

I’ve seen a lot of changes in EMS, too. AEDs and tourniquets were not commonly carried in the mid-1990s. NARCAN was not a thing yet. As an EMT I could only administer oxygen.



Now, I can also administer low-dose aspirin and epinephrine to a patient's blood glucose and oxygen saturation. The choices for EMS gear and bags have also benefited from the tactical gear market.

I have seen a lot of technological advances, too. When I started my career, the public use of email and the internet was in its infancy. Drones (UAVs) in everyday use would have been the stuff of science fiction. There were no smartphones, and cell phones were just coming into common use. The amount of information we now have at our fingertips would likely have overwhelmed many of the old-timers in the ranger ranks when I started my career. Now, I'm an old-timer, but I've been good at adapting to new technology and change.

The areas of professional development have also greatly expanded in the last 30 years. There were no PRAC Ranger Certification Standards, NAI's Certified Interpretive Guide training was decades away from development, and the idea of Position Task Books for firefighting and rescue positions was just starting to be considered. I believe the profession has gone from the old idea of generalist ranger being a "jack of all trades" to being a "multi-specialist."

Finally, in the past few years, one of the most positive developments I've seen is that of the "Ranger First" philosophy. Mark Caughlan, Chief Ranger for Wyoming State Parks and Past President of the Park Law Enforcement Association, explains it like this "Park professionals have seen many changes and increased demands for service over the last decade. But our Core Values have not changed: our duty to serve and protect natural resources and visitors with a "Ranger First" philosophy remains a priority. The title 'Park Ranger' is commonly used to cover a wide variety of responsibilities.

To unionize this, the "Ranger First" philosophy was established to provide a more authoritative influence of the park ranger while simultaneously promoting voluntary compliance among visitors. Since its inception, the "Ranger First" attitude in action has improved accountability on both sides: the park rangers and the visitors of the spaces they protect. I firmly believe education and idea sharing allows us to be more effective park rangers and ultimately leads to a more positive interaction between park rangers and visitors." We should all adopt this philosophy and encourage our agencies to adopt it too.



**From the Signpost Archive**

**Lest We Forget: The Role of the Ranger**

**By Miles Standish, State Park Ranger, Santa Cruz District (retired)**

***As presented at the International Ranger Federation Congress, Kruger National Park, South Africa.***

Starting with this issue of *The Signpost* I will be sharing articles from the archive (which can be found by googling The Signpost site: [npshistory.com](http://npshistory.com)). The article comes from the January-February 2001 issue <https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/2001-1.pdf>.

In the fall of 1999, I put the following question on the Australian International Ranger bulletin board: What is a ranger? The answers I got back were quite varied and mostly emphasized the many functions of rangers throughout the world. Answers included teacher, interpreter, maintenance worker, administrator, emergency medical technician, rescued, law enforcement officer, curator, resource manager, historian, and a plethora of other professions.

The message I really got back from my question was that a ranger did many things throughout the world.

Maybe I asked the wrong question because what I didn't get back was what I was hoping to find; a common theme on what makes a ranger a ranger and not all those other professions. One could argue, I suppose, that because rangers "do it all," that is the common theme. But that can't really be true. A small city/town manager might be said to be the same kind of "jack-of-all-trades," but I doubt anyone would call him/her a "ranger." So, what makes a ranger a ranger?

What is the common, unifying mission that we all feel, but apparently find so hard to define? Going back into history, we find that the Oxford English Dictionary first lists the word "ranger" in the role of a "forest officer" or "gamekeeper" in the Rolls of Parliament in 1455. This definition is not to be confused with the definition of ranger as used in the military sense (1670) or a wanderer (1593). Thus, the oldest concept is one of preserving resources with legal authority. The earlier definition holds up as you examine the profession throughout the world and down through history. The two main characteristics being: 1) some legal authority (king, government, non-governmental organization, body



politic) has recognized the need to preserve a natural resource, and 2) a person/group is given the commission to protect that resource.

Whether you call them rangers, wardens, guardians, foresters, gamekeepers, commissioners, protectors, or whatever, the basic mission is the same: to protect and manage a natural resource. If you doubt this basic mission concept, apply this simple test: if the resource disappeared overnight, would the job still exist? Although the word appears to have been first coined in England, there is evidence that goes much further back in history for the need and commissions to protect natural resources.

The Greeks and Romans practiced forestry (the planting and cutting of trees) and had laws keeping people from cutting trees and hunting in religious areas. After the fall of the Roman Empire there was a long period where there didn't seem to be much concern for the protection of natural resources. But by 1165 the deforestation of Europe was so severe laws were enacted in Germany forbidding further forest removal. Virtually all of the forests of England seen today are planted. The problem became so severe in some countries trees grown for shipbuilding purposes were protected upon pain of death. Only if a tree fell due to natural causes (a windfall) were commoners allowed to use it for fuelwood.

Game protection also goes back well before medieval Europe when kings and nobleman protected their hunting grounds and had gamekeepers that hunted poachers caught on their private preserves. With the "discovery" of the "New World" in 1492, the natural resources of the New World were often thought to be boundless and considered more as something to conquer or a hindrance to growth than something to conserve. However, by the early 1800s the loss of natural resources in the U.S. began to become a concern to some early environmentalists.

In 1864, the U.S. Congress enacted a law to preserve the Yosemite Valley and entrusted the area to the State of California. On May 21, 1866, Galen Clark was appointed as the Park's first "Guardian" by an eight-member Commission established to manage the park. Although not officially called a "ranger," Galen Clark may well have been the first ranger to be officially appointed in the United States. Around the beginning of the 20th Century, the United States Government began to recognize the need to protect natural resources as a national mission, and two organizations were born: the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service. Although the two organizations differ in their approach to the protection of natural resources, they both share the mission and employ rangers. In addition, archeological and historical resources were added to the basic mission of protection thus



expanding the ranger's commission with the creation of historic parks. Law enforcement and the role of the ranger is a very contentious issue in the U.S. and many countries around the world.

On the world bulletin board, I recently read the comment by a ranger that "the day they slap a gun on my hip is the day I resign." I once had a chief ranger that had a similar attitude: he once said to me that if I ever had to issue a Notice to Appear (Summons, ticket, etc.) I had failed in my job as a ranger. My own wife has often asked me if I had known if I was going to be a peace officer (police officer) back when I applied to be a ranger in 1968 (at that point, California State Park Rangers had not been issued firearms) if I would have continued to become a ranger. I've thought long and hard about this issue, and I've come up with two thoughts that seem to apply.

The first thought is that almost all law enforcement is the attempt to get people to voluntarily play by the rules (sometimes called laws). To gain compliance, there are basically two choices: 1) convince people that obeying the law is the right thing to do and gain their voluntary compliance, or 2) provide a penalty sufficiently detrimental that compliance is preferable to having to pay the penalty. Obviously, as you drive down the road and note that 99.99% of all of the other drivers know it is in their best interests to obey that law, and they willingly comply. But there is always the exception and summon has to be ready and willing to deal with that possibility. "Protected areas" are just the same. We have rules for the protection of the area's resources, and we need people to obey our rules willingly. Our best method for gaining compliance? Interpretation. That old tried and true method of letting our visitors (and the public in general) know how great their "protected areas" really are and how we must strive to protect them for future generations to enjoy. Sometimes, the message is subtle (please don't pick that flower; it is an endangered species) and sometimes very pointed (pick up that snake, and you might die!).

The result of our efforts is always the same: we protect the resource. The hard part is when you don't get voluntary compliance. For example, you run into a wood poacher with automatic weapons (my first felony arrest). Do you walk up to the suspects and give them a nature walk? Tell them that it was naughty of them to cut down those 50 trees to sell as firewood and see if they will voluntarily replant the area? Hmmm. Or, how about the time you are on foot patrol by yourself hours away from help, and you run across a paramilitary group target practicing with automatic weapons? These are actual situations I have encountered in my present park and have lived to talk about. My point is that there are



going to be situations where you are not going to get voluntary compliance, and not only is a higher level of enforcement going to be necessary, but you may have to defend your life (or someone else's) with force. Some rangers may have doubts concerning this concept, but there are rangers in Kenya and South Africa that know that defending the resource is often a life-threatening profession.

My second thought is that there is a great deal of confusion regarding law enforcement and rangers by the very nature of how law enforcement has developed and how it is perceived by the public. First, we need to understand the fundamental difference between law enforcement and military force. I bring up this issue because the term ranger has been (and still is) used by military forces. Law enforcement is simply the minimum force necessary to get a population of people to obey the law. Sometimes, that minimum force is quite extreme but still necessary. Military force, on the other hand, is the force necessary to subjugate one group's will to another's. There is no law involved except the adage: might makes right. I know there are people that will disagree with this simplistic distinction between the two concepts, but I bring up this point to make clear that the ranger's mission is not one of subjugation but rather to gain compliance with laws that protect resources.

The other point I need to make is a more subtle distinction. Most law enforcement is social in nature. What I mean by this is that laws are normally minimum rules by which a society governs itself. Some laws are inherently understandable and widely accepted (rape, murder, theft, etc.), but a great deal of law is not easy to understand (it's illegal to drag a piece of string behind a train in Illinois). Most general law enforcement officers (Sheriffs, police, state troopers, etc.) are in the business of enforcing social laws: laws that govern social behavior.

Unfortunately, this concept becomes a bit muddled when you talk about a park ranger (as opposed to a forest ranger, watershed ranger, game ranger, etc.) because the park ranger's mission is to protect a given park's resources and to serve and protect the visitors coming into the park.

And herein lies a conundrum: which is more important? The park's resources or the people in the park? Park rangers have always been torn over this dual responsibility, and the issue can be very touchy when it comes to the development of facilities for human use in parks. I won't get into a discussion of the park ranger's dual role except to make the point that



the same test I proposed earlier still applies: if the resource disappeared tomorrow, would the ranger still have a job?

The role of the ranger is really very clear, but frequently not well understood by even rangers themselves: we are here to protect our resources. Sometimes, that protection is for the perpetuation of the resource for the future use (the role of a forest ranger), for present use (a watershed ranger), the perpetuation of a species (a game ranger), the preservation of historical artifacts (historic park ranger) or to preserve a vignette or glimpse of a specific time (wilderness ranger). Different “protected areas” have different missions, but the basic role of the ranger remains the same. Rangers are the thin green line that protect many of the world’s most precious resources. May we never forget our role.

### **Exciting News for Park Rangers: SB 1058 on the Horizon By Kyle Roberson, Northern California Regional Director**

We’re thrilled to share some fantastic news with the park ranger community! Senate Bill 1058, authored by Assemblymember Ashby, is making its way through the legislative process and is poised to pass. This groundbreaking bill promises to bring much-deserved recognition and support to park rangers across California.

SB 1058 expands the benefits of 4850 leave (an enhanced temporary disability benefit) to include peace officer park rangers employed by counties and special districts, as defined under Penal Code § 830.31(b). This means if these park rangers experience a work-related injury or illness they will be eligible for up to one year of paid leave, which would bring crucial financial stability during recovery.

This benefit mirrors the enhanced leave already available to other public safety personnel and underscores park rangers’ critical role in maintaining public safety and preserving our natural resources.

The bill initially faced challenges due to broad and vague language regarding the coverage of park rangers. During our numerous meetings with Capitol staff, it was evident that the opposition was concerned about the extensive categorization of park rangers statewide. This skepticism was influenced by past legislative failures, such as Assembly Bill 346 in 2019, which aimed to extend 4850 leave to police officers in school districts and community colleges but failed after too much confusion was created in identifying which officers would be qualified.



Our Association took proactive steps, engaging in educational discussions with key stakeholders and effectively demonstrating the vital role of rangers in public safety, including firefighting and law enforcement duties. Through these efforts, we secured an agreement that peace officer park rangers do provide essential first response services. As a result, the bill’s author agreed to amend the legislation.

The revised bill aims to include a specific provision to Labor Code § 4850 —new subsection (13)— stating, “Peace officers under Section 830.31 of the Penal Code who are park rangers employed on a regular, full-time basis by a county or special district.” While we continued to advocate for the inclusion of peace officer park rangers under Penal Code § 830.34(d), Capitol staff explained that the current language, which covers approximately 200 park rangers across the state, was the language that opposition had consented to support given the fiscal uncertainties of the year. In the interest of maintaining the negotiated support, the bill’s author elected not to attempt additions of our peace officer park rangers employed by water districts.

The bill has made streamlined movement through the legislative process with widespread support, passing the Senate with a unanimous vote of 37-0 and the Assembly with an impressive 70-0. It highlights the strong bipartisan consensus on supporting those who dedicate their careers to protecting California’s parks and public lands.

SB 1058 marks a significant advancement in acknowledging our park rangers’ dedication, bravery, and professionalism. The bill has gone through the Engrossing and Enrolling process and is now on the governor’s desk.

Please take action to encourage the Governor's passage of this important legislation to increase protections for peace officer park rangers!

Go to <https://www.gov.ca.gov/contact/> and look for the comment webform.

Select TOPIC "An Active Bill"

WHAT SPECIFIC BILL? • "SB 1058 - Peace officers: injury or illness: leaves of absence"

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR MESSAGE? "Leave a Comment"

Then click on NEXT. The second page will ask you to select "Pro" or "Con" then you may compose a message subject and message line. You of course, may enter whatever you wish, but here is a template you can start with or submit as-is:

MESSAGE SUBJECT "Pass SB 1058!" MESSAGE





Dear Governor Newsom,

I urge you to support and pass SB 1058. This bill is essential for extending the benefits of paid leave to peace officer park rangers who are injured or become ill while performing their duties. Ensuring these dedicated professionals receive the same protections as other public safety employees is a crucial step toward recognizing their vital role in our communities. Your support will help provide them with the security they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
(Your Name)



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Thanks for reading! Please [let us know](#) if you have ideas for what you would like to see in future issues of *The Signpost*.