California Parks Conference
by Dave Sloane

Another ranger conference is behind us. Conferences always make me feel better about my career and my membership in the Park Rangers Association of California. The conference was an opportunity to see old friends, exchange ideas with other agencies, and get some training.

Many of the rangers attending work for agencies that seem to be going through some transition. Roseville has already experienced some of those same transitions. Hopefully those rangers were able to gain some insight after hearing of Roseville's successes and failures.

Another ranger conference is behind us. Conferences always make me feel better about my career and my membership in the Park Rangers Association of California. The conference was an opportunity to see old friends, exchange ideas with other agencies, and get some training.

Working for a such a small agency (Roseville only employs 2 rangers), I rarely get the chance to work and deal with other rangers. Usually I work by myself. Rangers in Roseville do work in teamwork situations but it is usually with police officers. Conferences give us all an opportunity to work with other rangers. We meet new people who become valuable resources for the present and the future.

Along with all of this interaction we exchange ideas. Sometimes we meet rangers who have already found successful ways to deal with problems that our agencies are currently dealing with. One ranger from Southern California was able to give us some information on a Business and Professions Code section. This will help us be more effective now that Roseville's alcohol ordinance is changing.

Conferences also have some worthwhile training each year. While rangers' duties vary greatly from agency to agency, there seemed to be a wide variety of topics covered at the sessions. Attending workshops and being introduced to new ways of doing things always seems to motivate me.

The one disappointment that I had at the conference was the low turnout at the PRAC general meeting. It would be nice to have some more participation. We can only get out of PRAC what we put into it. A larger number in attendance might have generated new and better ideas regarding: topics for workshops, ways of generating revenue, and methods of increasing membership. As a director (region 3) I would be glad to hear from any member who had positive suggestions on the above items.

Now that the conference is over, it is time to start thinking about the busy Spring and Summer that I am sure we will all be facing. Hopefully we all gained something from the conference that will help us be more effective this year. Hopefully next year's conference will be even bigger and better. I can't wait!

West Valley College Park Management Program Twenty-Fifth Anniversary
by Ken Miller

The Park Management Program at West Valley College has been training students in the field of parks and recreation for twenty-five years. John Nicholas and Tom Smith combined their dedication to teaching and love of the outdoors to start the program in the spring of 1970. The time was right for starting the program as it was the beginning of an environmental era. The 1980's were different in that the environment seemed a little less important to most but not for the park management students. The 1990's are half over and the program is still producing highly qualified graduates. The program has produced literally hundreds of park professionals who work at all levels of federal, state, and local park agencies. Through the years the program evolved with the changing needs of agencies by keeping in touch through an advisory committee of career people. The program also continues to provide in-service trainings for park agencies.

To celebrate the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary there will be a reunion Bar-B-Q at Sanborn Park in Saratoga at 4:30 PM on Thursday May 11th. The cost is $12 which needs to be paid in advance. Mail money to either Kim Aufhauser or John Nicholas at West Valley College, 14000 Fruitvale Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070. John can be reached at (408) 741-2110 or Kim at (408) 741-2403.

I hope to see you at the reunion and wish the program success for another twenty-five years.
Memorandum to PRAC

Dear Pam:

Congratulations on your presidency and another successful annual conference! It will definitely remain a memorable conference—if not for the excellent sessions coordinated by Bill Trunick and his troops, at least for the weather!

I want to thank you and the PRAC Board for electing me as your honorary member this year. I am deeply grateful and will cherish the recognition for years to come. It is an honor to be considered in the same company as Doug, Smitty, Bill Mott, Dan Dustin and the other recipients over the years.

The mid-80s were rough times for PRAC. We only accomplished our goals of rebuilding the organization with an incredible amount of energy and dedication from numerous individuals. They too deserve recognition. If it were not for the likes of Tom Hofsommer, Dave Lydick, Glen Kinney, Chris Crockett, Annette Coleman, Bruce Baker and others, PRAC would not be here today.

It is hard to believe that PRAC will be celebrating its 20th anniversary next year. The founding fathers probably never dreamed it would last this long. I trust the conference committee will plan something special for this event in Ventura.

Good luck with your tenure as President. It is sometimes a roller coaster ride, but I think you will find it an incredible experience—rewarding, frustrating, and challenging. If nothing else I can attest that it will increase your dedication and love for the park ranger profession and PRAC.

Thank you again for the wonderful award. I will display it proudly!

Best Wishes,

Bill Hendricks
Conference Was Great, So Where Were You?
Kelly Byrne; Region 4 Director

The California Park Rangers Conference Committee is to be commended. You did a wonderful job, and although I'm sure you'll hear gripes about cost, schedules and probably even the weather, you did a great job. Thank you for the effort. (However next year I would recommend shuttle boats be on stand-by in order to get to the conference center.)

For those of you who were too cheap, too lazy or just too ignorant to attend, you missed it. There was something for every aspect of the Ranger profession—including P.O.S.T. certified telecourses, Resource Management materials, and Interpretive ideas. There was also an equipment display room and a friendly bartender down the hall.

As you read this article, which I'm assuming you'll continue, I ask that you become involved in solving an age old problem. Apathy. Yep it is happening as you read. I can understand how Rangers might not call me up and volunteer their time. I can even understand how someone might want to help but is unsure of how to help or is too shy. (Don't even think of telling me your too busy, if I can find time, anyone can find time.) But my biggest concern is that there are Park Rangers in the State of California who in this day and age think that they cannot get into any type of legal, administrative or civil trouble. In the last issue of the Signpost, I promised that the Regional Directors would have information regarding forming a working relationship with the Peace Officers Research Association and the Legal Defense Fund (PORAC/LDF). All anyone had to do was attend the general meeting of PRAC on Wednesday at 1000 hrs. This time was too early for happy hour and too late for the excuse of “my alarm didn’t go off.” But few showed, so either all the surveys were wrong and everyone has PORAC/LDF or you need another chance. Luckily the Directors are a patient group. You will be receiving another questionnaire regarding PORAC/LDF, fill it out and send it in so we can offer this benefit to those who don’t have it. If you have questions, call me.

Coming up this year will be two workshops in Region 4. I hope to offer one on Photography and another on Financial Planning for the individual. I have recruited experts in these fields and although not your usual Ranger workshop, they should be fun and very informative. If you have ideas for workshops, give a call. One idea was Search and Rescue for the Southern Region and if we can round up the insurance, I may give it a try. Please do more than read the Signpost, give a call and get involved. (Or at least return my phone calls.)

Smitty's Book Report
by Tom Smith

All of us that were at the Santa Rosa conference, were a little disappointed when the individual who was to talk on the “Wise Use” movement was not able to appear. I was anxious to hear what they had to say. For those of you who might be in the “dark” the past few years, there is a “movement going on throughout the United States that can be called an”environmental backlash movement.” This “backlash” is aimed at all the environmental laws and is heavily funded and organized by corporations with vested interests in preventing any further environmental gains from happening. Bills are already in Congress now that the foxes are in the environmental henhouse. Bills that could open the National Parks (or any park, for that matter) to mining, oil, timber harvest, hunting, off-road vehicle use, etc,etc).

I picked up a book the other day that should be required reading by all of us in the outdoor recreation profession. The book, Let the People Judge, Wise Use and the Private Property Rights Movement, is edited by John Echeverria and Raymond Booth Eby. The book is printed by Island Press. The book collects the writing of numerous people, from conservationists, to scholars and business people, on the wise use movement and the issues that fuel this debate. The book contains an assessment of what the Wise Use movement is, including it's agenda, players, and tactics. It also evaluates the conservation communities response. Included are proposals for reaffirming environmental strengths and how to broaden support for the environment. It should be a “primer” on how to face these kinds of issues.

If you do not think that this issue will effect you, you have another thing coming! You will find it a quick and easy book to digest, and would be an example of our own “wise use” in taking the time to read it.

Echeverria and Eby, etal, Let the People Judge. Wise Use and Property Rights Movement, Island Press, Covelo, California, 1995 $27.50

Next Issue of Signpost, we will take a look at another new book in the field, Wildlife and Recreationists.
Little bits of stuff
by Patty Walker

In the park, all around, everywhere I look are little bits of stuff.
There was a piñata here, someones’ fast food lunch there, even some auto parts.
Little bits of stuff.

Funny how most of it is white.
Stands out so I can see it to pick it up.
I wonder why white so much.
Does it make litter more sanitary to toss?
Or do gremlins just spread this stuff when I'm not looking?
Little bits of stuff.

Its the rangers endless puzzle you see.
How visitors can bring so many things for a picnic.
They bring BBQs for cooking, salads for salading, and plastic dinnerware for eating.
All this to feed many hordes of people who come to their party.
Then they might be bored in the park(!)
There is football, baseball, frisbee and volleyball.
There is card games and board games and running around the tree games.
There is pool games and water fights games.
Even miss the ranger with the water balloon game.
Even some people play go for a hike and see nature game.

At the end of the day, all their stuff goes back into the car.
They pack their BBQs and kitchens.
The games go back in, the wet kids get in, and the ranger waves goodbye.
Everyone has gone and so is their stuff.

But the next morning, there is all this little bits of stuff!
Where does it come from?
Did the park visitors leave it?
Maybe, the ranger says, some makes more of little bits of stuff!

There certainly (rarely) is less each evening.

Maybe someday the visitors will leave and there will be no little bits of stuff!

Maybe then the ranger could do something else in the park other than pick up little bits of stuff,
Honorary Lifetime Membership Award

for Bill Hendricks

by Pam Helmke

The Honorary Lifetime Membership Award is presented by the Board of Directors in recognition of distinguished service devoted to meeting the goals of our association. Those goals include the establishment of statewide professional standards for park rangers, professional training, communication and education. Bill Hendricks was chosen by the Board of Directors to receive our association's highest honor at the annual conference at Santa Rosa in March.

Bill Hendricks has provided PRAC with many years of outstanding service and dedication to the association and its goals. He began his career as a seasonal ranger for the Army Corps of Engineers and progressed through positions as a seasonal and permanent ranger at East Bay Municipal Water District and the Marin Municipal Water District. While working as a Park Ranger Bill continued to expand his own education and shared his knowledge with others by organizing and teaching workshops for PRAC.

Bill has also served as a Regional Director and stepped forward to run for President during one of PRAC's more turbulent periods. Under Bill's leadership PRAC's membership increased and more high quality workshops were offered to our membership.

After his term in office, Bill left California for the University of Utah to obtain his Ph.D. in recreation. While away he maintained his membership, chaired the scholarship committee and returned to speak at the annual conference in Yosemite. Bill has now returned to California where he has accepted a teaching position at Cal Poly, SLO with the Recreation Administration Program. Bill has also become a successful author on recreation subjects and still chairs our successful scholarship committee.

Park Ranger, educator, association officer, past president, and author, Bill Hendricks has definitely provided distinguished service to the association.

Cal Ranger Foundation

Board Meeting Update

The Cal Ranger Foundation Board met at the Santa Rosa Conference on Wednesday, March 8. Present were President Rick Parmer, Vice President Tom Smith, and Directors Bill Hendrick and Mary Angle Franzini. Absent were Inez Cook and Executive Manager Doug Bryce. After the motion was made to accept the minutes, Rick presented the President's Report. Rick reported on the “audit” that was conducted by the State EED representative on the Executive Manager’s Workmans Compensations payments. As a result, the Board decided that a CPA that specializes in non-profits be hired upon approval of the CSPRA and PRAC boards, and that Inez Cook, with a Foundation Board member present, and the CPA, design an accounting method for accounts receivable. In the absence of Inez, there was no treasurers report.

By-Laws Change: Rick directed that members to go through the by-laws as to what changes we can make, i.e. things that do not seem to work very well. This will be placed on the agenda at the May meeting.

New Business: The Executive Manager’s new contract was tabled until the meeting with the CPA has taken place.

Tom Smith has written a book about his seasonal career with the National Park Service. Tom offered to give the Foundation all profits from the sale of the book when, and if, it gets published.

Bill Hendrick suggested that the Cal Ranger Journal be brought out of moth balls and again be published. Tom suggested that we use the proceedings of the annual conference for a yearly Cal Ranger publication. In this way, all those that could not attend would have a chance to attend through the publication. Many professional organizations do this. There was a great deal of discussion about whether or not we could get speakers to submit a paper on their presentations. It was hoped that we could get them to do so by pleading professionalism.
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