



A Shout Out by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

I would like to give a shout out to the 2003 conference planning team. This year's conference was, with out a doubt, the best ever. The team spent countless volunteer hours gathering speakers, vendors, and sponsors, arranging food and music. I would also like to give a shout out to the Registration Team. They started on Sunday and stayed at the registration table through Wednesday answering questions, solving problems and making sure everything went smoothly. The student volunteers also deserve a shout out for all the hard work they put in helping the team behind the scenes.

A giant shout goes out to all the people who attended the conference. We could have had the best location, prices and meals, however with out attendees a conference will never be a success. A big *chicka-rocka, chicka-rocka, chicka boom* shout goes out to Amy Lethbridge. The weather tried to prevent Amy from having her campfire by the lake. She adapted and overcame and had the best campfire program ever at the hotel. It was a huge success!

Last but not least, a shout out to the Glendale boys. The tighter you pack it, the better the explosion, just ask George!

So, off goes my hat to the 2003 Parks Conference, the people who were involved, the conference attendees and the speakers of each session.

Region 5 Update by Don Webb

The convention was great! Met a lot of new friends and made a lot of contacts. I think that the networking with all of us was outstanding.

As I stated, my first goal as a director will be to improve officer safety. We all have a job to do and even those who don't enforce the laws are subject to confrontation. I went to the session on "Medical Calls From *%\$%\$." Even there I learned (or reinforced) safety measures. When approaching any call, take the time to access the scene from a distance. Move in and access again. It may only be for a few seconds, but it could save your life. In our profession, the time you take to be prepared is well worth the trouble. As most of just don't carry guns, our less than lethal weapons are basically for defense. When was the last time you cleaned and prepped your baton or asp? Clean and check for flaws every week if this is your primary defense weapon. Will your OC work when you press the button? Check it every month.

When was the last time you practiced or reviewed your verbal skills? Your command presence is everybody's number one weapon.

All of this is very basic however, it is something most of us forget on a regular basis.

I am working on some training classes for this next year. If you have requests for special training, let me know. If you know someone who does a class that you think is good, pass on the info and I will see what can be done.

Once again, it was great meeting all of you and I hope to be a little more involved the rest of this year. In the mean time,

Be safe out there!

From the President's Desk

It is hard for me to believe that summer is just around the corner but here it comes. Before we know it, Memorial Day weekend will be here, marking the start of the busy summer season for many parks. As we gear up for hordes of visitors in our parks, I would like to update the members on what is going on with your organization.

The 2003 Parks Conference is now behind us and I am pleased to say that it was a tremendous success. It was one of the best conferences ever with record attendance. I saw many of you at the conference and those who were there seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. All events went as planned, with only a few minor changes to accommodate for the weather. For several people, the 2003 Parks Conference was their first conference to attend. For a first conference, they sure picked a good one. Our conference would not have been a success if it had not been for the hard work of our dedicated Team Tahoe consisting of CSPRA and PRAC members, as well as our colleagues from Nevada State Parks, Douglas County Parks (Nevada), and Washoe County Parks (Nevada). Our planning team was a diverse group of people with a mix of job titles from a variety of agencies from across 2 states. My flat hat goes out to the entire planning and registration team that helped make this conference a huge success. I would also like to thank our sponsors of the 2003 Parks Conference that made it possible for us to present a quality conference through their support: the California State Parks Foundation, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, Royal Robbins, State Park Peace Officers Association of California, 4 Wheel Parts, Peace Officers Research Association of California, Air-Kwik, and the Santa Clara County Park Rangers Association. I would also like to thank all of the presenters, student volunteers, agencies and others that contributed to the success of our conference by their donations of time, personnel, or other resources.

I am sorry if you missed out on the 2003 Parks Conference but don't worry, planning has already begun for the 2004 Parks Conference which will be held in Anaheim. Amy Lethbridge has volunteered to serve as the PRAC chair for the 2004 Parks Conference. If you are interested in helping plan next year's conference, please contact me and I will get you in touch with Amy. The 2004 Parks Conference committee will have its work cut out for them to present a conference to match the best conference ever.

On the membership front, our membership numbers are at the highest levels they have ever been at and continue to climb. I am challenging the board and all of our members to recruit as many new members as we can. The goal I have set for PRAC is to reach at least 300 members by the end of 2003. I have been working with our colleagues in the State of Nevada to get them involved with PRAC and create a way to help serve their interests as well. The 2003 Parks Conference has shown us that we have more in common, than not, and that we can accomplish much more working together. Since Nevada does not have an organization quite like PRAC, I have extended an invitation for them to join us. I have offered to work toward the creation of a Region 6 of PRAC that would encompass the State of Nevada and give Nevada members a seat on the board to represent their interests and plan training workshops to fill their needs. My challenge to our Nevada colleagues is that they recruit at least 20 members from their state. I will then send a ballot out for a vote of the membership seeking a bylaws amendment to create a 6th region for Nevada with a Region 6 Director. I hope to have a ballot out to the membership sometime this summer.

*The other news out there is AB 630, which deals with removing the grandfather clause from 4022 of the Public Resources Code (Park Ranger-Peace Officer job title legislation). The PRAC board unanimously voted to remain neutral on this issue. Due to the diverse membership PRAC represents, neutrality seems the most prudent course of action. Taking sides on this issue in the past has only divided the membership. We polled the members at the general membership meeting at the conference to see if the members wanted us to take a mail vote of the membership to give direction to the board to either oppose or support AB 630. After a discussion among the members, a poll was taken to see if the members present desired the issue to go to a general membership mail vote. Nobody present at the meeting voted to have the issue taken to a general membership mail vote for PRAC to take a position on AB 630. The board will continue to watch the issue and provide information to our members, the public, and agencies on park rangers as is consistent with our association goals. Members are welcome to submit articles to the *Signpost* and the PRAC Net sharing their personal opinions on AB 630. Information sharing is another goal of PRAC. Wherever this legislation goes, PRAC will be there to provide quality training for our members and promote the park profession. We are, after all, an organization for any person with uniformed park experience working for a city, county, special district, state, or federal agency.*

That's all for now. I hope you all have a safe and sane start to your summer season. I know we will all be forced to do more with less but we should always try to have fun!

Stay safe,

Mike Chiesa

The Tighter You Pack It, The Better The Explosion

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

The words from a mountain man keeps replaying over and over in my mind when I think about the 2003 conference "The tighter you pack it, the better the explosion." The 2003 conference was so packed with great sessions and training's that it was just explosive. For the first time PRAC had training's that fit our *standards* domains with completion certificates available on site. All the sessions were so exciting that most had standing room only. Everyone was anxious to receive the knowledge and training that was available that the conference attendees waited until the evening hours to sneak away to the casino.

The stay at the Embassy Suites was just magnificent. The rooms were spacious and comfortable and the daily breakfast buffet was fit for royalty. The happy hour provided alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages that would wet anyone's whistle. Even the food that was served at the luncheons and banquet was superb.

The drawing prizes were the best I have seen in a long time. They were so great that we raised close to \$1,000 in ticket money alone that will go towards next year's conference. I can't say enough about the conference merchandise. The shirts, sweatshirts and hats made such a fashion statement that even Joan and Melissa Rivers would give their blessing.

The best part of the conference however, was the camaraderie between park professionals. It was nice to see rangers sharing ideas with maintenance folks, students seeking knowledge from seasoned veterans and smiles between old friends.

If you missed the 2003 Parks conference you missed a great event.

PRAC Attends Park Advocacy Day

by John Havicon

The first annual Park Advocacy Day was held on April 7th. Park Advocacy Day is a day, organized by the California State Parks Foundation, to show support for and lobby to the legislature on issues pertinent to State Parks. This year's issue was specific to the state budget cuts and how some parks are being sought by developers and special interest groups for "non-mission" use proposals. Volunteers, from all over the state, attended training sessions prior to Park Advocacy Day, to learn how to lobby our legislators. On April 7, we were organized according to the districts we lived in and given appointed times to talk with our Senators and Assemblymen. There was over 100 volunteers, including several PRAC members, with which we managed to stop by all of the legislation offices.

With the looming State budget shortfall of \$35 billion, California State Parks have negotiated a \$35 million cut to their agency. State parks is expected to recoup \$20 million of this loss by raising entry fees and other special use fees. To cover the remaining \$15 million, They have eliminated 90 positions in administration, shifted some OHV funds and bond funds, and reduced park operations to bare

bones throughout the state. The goal of State Parks is not to close any parks. If they are forced to close parks, they will not be able to generate enough funds to keep the parks operating. State legislation is looking at an additional 10% cut to all state agencies, including State Parks. With this additional 10%, on top of the \$35 million cut, State Parks is expected to close over a hundred parks.

The goal of Park Advocacy Day was to educate legislators and to gain their support. Some do not realize that the parks are a legitimate revenue generating source for the state. In 2002, 85.2 million park visitors contributed \$2.6 billion in spending in our local communities. It was figured that for every \$1.00 spent on State parks, it generates \$2.35 to the State's general fund.

Park Advocacy Day will be an annual event and we look forward to being part of it again, next year. Many issues involving State Parks also involve our local agencies, including this budget crisis. PRAC will continue to serve as a partner to the State Parks and The California State Parks Foundation.

2003

PRAC Honorary Lifetime Member Award

The Park Rangers Association of California is pleased to announce that the 2003 recipient of the Honorary Lifetime Member Award is Bill Orr. Bill is the founder and director of the National Park Service Seasonal Law Enforcement Ranger Academy through Santa Rosa Junior College. The Honorary Lifetime Member Award is the highest honor PRAC can bestow upon individuals who have performed distinguished service toward the goals of the association.

Bill started his career with the NPS in 1950 as a Seasonal Park Ranger at Devil's Tower National Monument in Wyoming. Bill worked his way up through the ranks and through many assignments retiring as the Chief Ranger for the Western Region of the NPS in 1980. His responsibility covered in excess of 33 NPS areas in the Western United States. As Chief Ranger he was senior ranger in many regional matters including law enforcement.

During his service as the Chief Ranger, he pioneered the concept of a Seasonal Ranger Law Enforcement Academy. Bill fought for the program against great political resistance. Many people felt that the only people who should be commissioned as law enforcement officers were those that graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. Bill protested that the seasonal ranger forces were the



backbone of the NPS because during peak seasons, they comprise approximately 60% of the Ranger personnel. Bill's practical proposal for a Seasonal Law Enforcement program precluded them from service of arrest warrants and investigation of major crimes, thus differentiating them from the FLETC trained law enforcement park personnel. Based on this premise, Bill began the groundwork for the Seasonal Law Enforcement Program in 1977 and presented the first class in the spring of 1978 through Santa Rosa Junior College.

His successful program was emulated throughout the United States and accepted by FLETC as the training model for the Seasonal Law Enforcement program. The program Bill created helped establish a professional training standard not only for NPS Seasonal Law Enforcement Rangers but for several local agencies in California as well. 105 classes have graduated from the program Bill created at SRJC.

PRAC is honored to recognize Bill for his distinguished service devoted toward the goals of PRAC which includes establishing professional training standards for park rangers, providing professional training for rangers, educating agencies on the problems rangers face in the field and accenting the need for training. Bill's dedication and commitment are an example to all.

Thank You

May I take this means to express my sincere appreciation to the Park Ranger Association of California and especially to President Chiesa for presenting me with the Honorary Lifetime Member Award for 2003. This award comes at the culmination of over 50 years either with or for park rangers, primarily in the area of training. My intense interest in training goes back to my first permanent appointment with the National Park Service at the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina. This was essentially a highway patrol assignment. I was given a patrol car, map, fire tools, citation book and first aid kit and sent out on patrol! I was my own FTO.

This is when I decided that if I got the opportunity to improve the training for rangers, I would certainly try and do so. Fortunately, many opportunities came my way in virtually every position and every park or office, to which I was assigned. The last on was the regional office position in San Francisco, when I started the Santa Rosa Junior College Ranger Academy in 1978.

We have just completed 25 great years and graduation 2590 students. I am extremely pleased that PRAC has found this effort worthy of bestowing the Honorary Member Award on me.

Thank you very much.

Bill Orr

EMS Safety

by Pam Helmke, Park Ranger
City of San Jose

Oxygen Regulator Flash Fires

The last several years several firefighters and EMS personnel have been seriously burned as a result of oxygen regulator flash fires while conducting routine equipment checks.

Several of these events have occurred with regulators that were retrofitted with brass inserts due to earlier problems.

The flash fires occurred when oxygen tanks were being checked during start of shift equipment inventories. The injured persons were typically opening the post valve to check cylinder pressure. In one case the injured person was attempting to remove a regulator from the post valve.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) makes the following recommendations to reduce the risk of similar incidents:

- Use an oxygen regulator constructed of materials having an oxygen compatibility equivalent to that of brass.
- Ensure that the cylinder is placed in an upright position, and that the cylinder post valve is pointed in a safe direction (away from the operator) and opened and closed before the regulator is attached to the cylinder
- Ensure that when opening a cylinder post valve with the regulator attached, it is opened slowly and pointed away from the operator and other people.
- Ensure that all staff are trained in and aware of safe handling procedures pertaining to oxygen systems
- Ensure that oxygen systems (cylinders and regulators) are stored in a cool area free of dirt, oils, and grease

- Ensure that oxygen re-filling stations and maintenance areas where oxygen equipment is serviced are in a locked, air-conditioned room that is clean and free of dirt, oils, and grease.

- Ensure that any component added to the regulator, such as gauge guards, are installed so they do not block the regulator vent holes.

AED Battery Rupture

During a routine equipment check a firefighter was injured when the lithium battery pack located in the rear of the unit either exploded or ruptured. The AED was not functioning properly during the daily equipment check. The unit's message system indicated the battery pack should be replaced. The pack was removed and checked. The firefighters noted it had an expiration date of 2004. They replaced the battery in the unit and turned it on. The unit exploded or ruptured blowing out the back of the AED and releasing white acrid smoke. The force of the explosion threw one firefighter out of the door and another into the wall. NIOSH reports that there has been 3 other similar incidents where the battery pack either exploded or ruptured that were un-witnessed and the damage was contained by the unit's soft carrying pack.

All of the incidents involved the lithium based battery packs from Medtronic Physio-Control Lifepack 500 AED's.

NIOSH and the FDA recommend the following procedure to improve safety:

- Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services, and other users of AED's should follow the manufacturer's instructions to replace any battery pack immediately when the unit indicates a low battery or replace battery message.

Updated information on these and other safety issues can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>.

Off and Running

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

As rangers and park professionals it seems as if we are always running in different directions. We can go from digging a ditch to leading a nature walk to writing a citation, all in the same day. Running in different directions however is not my ideal of exercise. For exercise I like to run. I realized last year that when I run for myself I enjoy it more. I don't race against the clock or try and run endless miles. I like to run at a pace so that I can enjoy my surroundings.

Many times I will either go on a run before work or just after my shift. Running in my own park gives me a sense of well being. A while back I asked my superintendent if I could do a running patrol. He explained that I could not because risk management considered it exercising and did not want the potential liability for getting hurt on the job.

He did however tell me that I could go on a foot or bike patrol for however long I wanted. Go figure!

Well, being the resourceful ranger that they pay me to be, I asked if I could do a running nature program. Since it was considered a program that involved the public and the interpretation of the natural resources it was approved. I now have a program that is titled "Run with a Ranger." We meet on Saturday mornings and run between 3 and 6 miles depending on the group. We run, walk and sometimes stop to talk about the flora and fauna and all ages are welcomed. Isn't being a ranger great? My next step is to incorporate a training routine into the program in which I can start charging visitors to attend.

So slow down, smell the flowers and run with a ranger!

In the Spotlight: Henry David Thoreau—Part II

“His Legacy from the Poet-Naturalist to the Writer-Scientist”

by Steve Carlin

Most people are familiar with the name, Henry David Thoreau and know something about his historic stay at Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. Maybe you swam once in Walden Pond on a hot summer day or remember having to read one of Thoreau's books in high school. But there is much more to Thoreau than his legendary sojourn at Walden Pond. Thoreau is often described as being an author and a philosopher with his book *Walden* (first published in 1854) being regarded as a masterpiece of philosophical reflection. During the 1960's and the early 1970's as conservation of our natural resources became more popular and important to Americans, Thoreau became the icon of the American Conservation Movement. Some regarded Thoreau as America's "Father of Conservation" and "First Ecologist." With such titles, Walden Pond, itself figuratively became "the Cradle (or the Birthplace) of the American Conservation Movement" and *Walden* became "the first book about what would later be called ecology." How do such titles get bestowed and how historically accurate are they?

America's "Father of Conservation"—historically one may find it difficult to pinpoint a specific individual as being the father or the founder of this movement especially when so many influential individuals were living and conversing with one another over the same period of time. For example, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, George Perkins Marsh and John Wesley Powell—who today are all regarded as famous environmentalists themselves - all lived during Thoreau's most productive and formative years. Not only did they live in the same era but often corresponded through letters and/or visited with each other. Local historian, Richard Smith stated "Thoreau wouldn't claim himself as being the father of anything. Muir was starting a movement, Thoreau was not."

The "First Ecologist"—Thoreau's post-Walden life experiences have generated the second title of America's "First Ecologist" even though the word "ecology" was not to be coined until after Thoreau's death in 1862. Thoreau up to his death studied intensely nature, specifically the seed dispersal and the growth pattern of local forests and prolifically recorded his findings.

"Most of Henry Thoreau's work after Walden has never been published. When he left the pond, he said he had several more lives to live. One of these was a life in science, about which we know very little. Thoreau's 354-page manuscript on *The Dispersion of Seeds*, his 631-page manuscript on wild fruits, his more than 700 pages of notes and charts of natural phenomena in Concord in the 1850's, and his 3,000 pages in twelve notebooks on aboriginal North America remain unknown to the general public...." (Robert Richardson Jr.)

Thoreau did originate the concept of "succession" which was to later become a cornerstone of modern ecology. Historians often consider Thoreau as being "one of the first ecologists and one of the pioneers of ecology." The Industrial Revolution (1820–1870) was in full swing in his day as the Erie Canal, planned manufacturing cities (such as Lowell, Mass.) and railroads were being built. He was concerned about society trying to "improve" the land and saw no balance between man and nature. Not even with Thoreau's amazing foresight could he have imagined the scale to which this imbalance and man's destruction of nature was to reach. He stated in 1850, "Fifty years from now people will believe as I do."

But, how did Thoreau see himself and how did his contemporaries see him? Thoreau considered himself a "man of science" or a "naturalist." The term "scientist" does not come into use until after 1862. Thoreau considered himself a naturalist as he was seeking a better understanding of nature (how it worked and why it worked) for personal and spiritual reasons.

The term "poet-naturalist" seems to be more commonly used by his contemporaries to describe him up to his death and beyond. Bronson Alcott, referred to Thoreau as "our poet-naturalist, our seer of the seasons." One of the first biographies to be written about him was completed by Ellery Channing in 1873 and was titled: *Thoreau—The Poet-Naturalist*. In Thoreau's eulogy given by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the term is used along with:

"The scale on which his studies proceeded was so large...we were the less prepared for his sudden disappearance. The country knows not yet, or in the least part, how great a son it has lost. It seems an injury that he should leave in the midst of his broken task, which no one else can finish...His soul was made for the noblest society; he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home."

Emerson recognized the tremendous effort Thoreau had been putting forth over the last decade of his life for "his broken task" was the extensive research and the completion of all these unfinished writings on natural history. Thoreau wrote shortly before his death "I have not been engaged in any particular work on Botany, or the like, though if I were to live, I should have much to report on Natural History generally." Richardson states "Walden is the acknowledged masterpiece of Thoreau the poet-naturalist; and *The Dispersion of Seeds*, even in its rough-draft form, is the culminating work of Thoreau the writer-scientist."

Story continues on page 7.

John Muir

(1838 - 1914)

by Denise Edwards

Father of Americas National Parks; Founder Of The Nation's Conservation Movement; Nature Lover; Poet-scientist; Literary equal to Emerson and Thoreau; These are just a few of the many fine titles that are used to describe John Muir. He was a legendary wilderness explorer, writer, inventor and conservationist who dedicated his life to nature and the preservation of the natural beauty of the land. Robert Underwood Johnson once said: "He was not a dreamer, but a practical man, a faithful citizen, a scientific observer, a writer of enduring power, with vision, poetry, courage in a contest, a heart of gold, and a spirit pure and fine."

Although Muir was born in Dunbar, Scotland in 1838, he grew up on eighty acres of farm land in Wisconsin where his family relocated to in search of spiritual freedom. Despite his need to help with chores on the farm, Muir found time to tinker with scrap wood and metal and built a variety of inventions and time saving devices including waterwheels, barometers, compasses, saws, and an alarm clock that tipped his bed up on end.

When it was time for Muir to enroll at the university, he decided to study botany and geology. Although he only lasted two years at the school, his studies lasted a lifetime. Muir spent the next eight years exploring Americas natural beauty, working on and off in factories as one of the first "efficiency experts" of the era. Eventually, his travels led him to the Sierra Nevada. Muir devoted much of his career to this region and many of his famous writings come from his inspiration from this mighty range in the heart of California. He immersed himself in the wilderness; exploring the land. "I drifted about from rock to rock, from stream to stream, from grove to grove. Where night found me, there I camped. When I discovered a new plant, I sat down beside it for a minute or a day, to make its acquaintance and hear what it had to tell....and when I discovered a mountain or rock of marked form and structure, I climbed about it, comparing it with its neighbors."

Muir's travels took him all over the world, from Alaska to Russia and India, to Australia to Japan, but his influ-

ence is most felt closer to home in the Yosemite Valley. His experiences and his love for nature began to make him think about the agriculture and the farming and the grazing. He noticed that delicate mountains meadows were being destroyed by grazing and thousand-year-old forests cut and burned. He recognized the need for establishing parks and preserves to protect the land as well as to provide "fountains of life" for the people. First, Muir set forth on a crusade to publish writings in favor of conservation, urging government to take a stand in providing for this preservation. He wrote articles and papers, he lobbied the legislature, he visited lumber camps, and influenced the public to recognize the fate of the future of our land. Muir's work played a major role in the development and philosophy behind our National Park system.

In 1880, at the age of 42, Muir married Louie Strentzel. His adventurous travels and unrelenting need to fight the environmental battles of the time, where overcome by his desire to settle and have a family of his own. Muir continued his efforts to educate on conservation through writing books while he raised his family on his farm in Martinez. *The Mountains of California, Travels in Alaska, and Our National Parks* are a few of the first books to defend the natural riches and wonders of America.

Muir's achievements remain unmatched. His writings and philosophies about the rights of nature, the need for preservation, and the personal joy and energy that can be obtained by experiencing nature were all used to influence the creation of the Forest Service, to found the Sierra Club, to establish a newborn National Park Service and to provide the public with the opportunity to discover nature's beauty.

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings, Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

John Muir

In the Spotlight

Continued from page 6

Thoreau's and in turn, Walden Pond's present intercontinental fame around the world owes a lot to his family's effort to posthumously publish many of his writings, especially on these two passions of his life, the history of the Indians and of natural history. In addition, much effort is still being put forth today as researchers are working to get the rest of his virtually unseen writings, such as Thoreau's "Indian Notebooks," published. With all the historical research that has been done and is to be done, Thoreau's legacy and his collections of titles will undoubtedly grow. From his legendary stay at Walden Pond to his

scientific studies, the eyes of an increasingly complex and environmentally threatened world will continue to look to Thoreau for "simplicity" and will be inspired to look to nature for the "tonic of wildness." For maybe in fifty years from now people will believe as he did.

Steve Carlin, NEPRA Board and Conference Committee Member is the Visitor Services Supervisor at Walden Pond State Reservation and wants to give special thanks to Thoreau historians Thomas Blanding and Richard Smith for their insight and expertise.

**Park Rangers Association of California
Board Officers 2003**

President

Mike Chiesa
(707) 847-3245
FAX: (707) 847-3325
E-Mail: president@CalRanger.org

Region 1 Director

Denise Edwards
(707) 847-3245
FAX: (707) 847-3325
E-Mail: region1@CalRanger.org

Region 2 Director

Lee Hickinbotham Jr.
(650) 617-3156 ext. 1633
FAX: (650) 858-2659
E-Mail: region2@CalRanger.org

Region 3 Director

Don Pearson
(530) 644-2545 ext. 307
FAX: (530) 644-1003
E-Mail: region3@CalRanger.org

Region 4 Director

Walt Young
(310) 858-7272 ext. 102
FAX: (310) 858-7212
E-Mail: region4@CalRanger.org

Region 5 Director

Don Web
(760) 244-1007
FAX: (760) 244-2744
E-Mail: region5@CalRanger.org

Past President

John Havicon
(916) 875-6672
FAX: (916) 875-6632
E-Mail: pastpres@CalRanger.org

The Signpost Editor

David Brooks
(831) 336-2948
FAX: (831) 335-1178
E-Mail: newsletter@CalRanger.org

Scholarship

Bill Hendricks
(805) 756-1246
FAX: (805) 756-1402

Executive Manager

Todd Kellog
Office: (707) 847-3077
FAX: (707) 847-3077
E-Mail: execmanager@CalRanger.org

WebMaster: Jeff Price

(805) 278-9201
E-Mail: webmaster@CalRanger.org

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EMAIL:
prangerd@ix.netcom.com

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P. O. Box 153
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Park Rangers Association of California
P O Box 153
Stewarts Point, CA 95480-0153
(707) 847-3077 FAX (707) 847-3077