

PRAC SIGNPOST

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY
MARCH 1985

P. O. BOX 28366, SACRAMENTO, CA 95828

WALNUT CREEK RESERVE OFFICERS TAKE TO THE PARKS ON BIKES



In June, the Walnut Creek Police Reserve Officers began a new patrol program for parks and trail areas using specially equipped mountain bicycles. Staffed by volunteer officers, this program is in effect during both daytime and evening hours, with special emphasis on weekends.

The policing of community parks, open spaces and recreational trails by traditional patrol procedures has been problematic. Walnut Creek has nine City-maintained community

parks, 2400 acres of open space area for public recreational use and a 13-mile bicycle and jogging trail system. Access to areas other than parking lots required foot patrol, which was neither efficient nor cost effective.

Previous police programs to enhance police presence in the "hard-to-reach" areas have included an off-road motorcycle program and a mounted horse patrol. While both programs have been successful, they are only being used on a limited basis due to related program costs. The bicycle patrol has provided an additional support to meet the needs of these areas.

Reserve police officers ride the 15-speed bicycles in pairs. The mountain bicycles were chosen for this program over traditional 10-speeds for their comfort, traction, ease of control and durability. The tire design decreases flats due to road hazards and unpaved surfaces.

The bicycles have been equipped with water bottles, portable radios, and hand microphones, rear racks with carrying bags, and a baton holder. First aid and miscellaneous small equipment items are stored in the carrying bag. The cost of each equipped bicycle (without the radio) is about \$400.

The officer's uniform includes a safety helmet, cotton pullover shirt, riding shorts, tennis shoes, and a duty belt with a badge. The officer's name is on the right pocket of the shirt, the City decal is on the left pocket, and 2 1/2"-tall "POLICE" lettering appears on the back. The uniform is black with white lettering.

Officers now patrol the parks to enforce such things as parking and liquor violations. Trails adjacent to residential areas are patrolled for burglary prevention and maintenance of safety for bicyclists and joggers.

In addition to park and trail patrol, the bikes have been used by regular police officers during evening hours for undercover patrol work in high crime areas. They are faster than a car in congested areas and are not recognized as a normal mode of police transportation. Several enforcement actions have already been greatly enhanced by the quietness, speed and maneuverability of these bicycles.

Park and trail users who are initially surprised to be sharing the space with bike-riding police officers, have expressed strong approval of the program. Both officers and citizens appreciate the one-to-one contact that the bicycles produce. And the participating officers also enjoy the exercise they get riding through the beautiful Walnut Creek park and trail system.

(Walnut Creek City News; Reprinted by Permission of Sgt. Ross S. Sutton, WCPD)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS: Jeff Ohlfs has just received a permanent appointment with the Federal Government. He will be working for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, assigned to the San Francisco Field Office. He hopes to turn this into a job with NPS soon. David Lucchesi has left Los Gatos City Parks for a job with the Utah State Parks.

Are you an active member-
 The kind that would be missed?
 Or are you just contented
 That your name is on the list?
 Do you attend the conferences
 And mingle with the flock?
 Or do you stay at home
 To criticize and knock?
 Do you take an active part
 To help the association along?
 Or are you satisfied
 To only just belong?
 When the business
 session comes around
 Do you pretend to be sick?
 And leave the work to just a few
 Then talk about the 'Clique'?
 Think this over member,
 You know right from wrong,
 Are you an active member,
 Or do you just belong?

(Signpost, Daniel Boone Council, Boy Scouts of America)

QUESTION: All members wanting to see job information in the Signpost should make their names known to the Editor (13923 Malcolm Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070)

ON THIS DATE IN HISTORY...

Hot Springs National Reserve created
 April 20, 1832
 John MUIR born April 21, 1838
 Arbor Day, April 24.
 Eastern National Parks & Monuments
 Cooperative Association incorp-
 orated May 2, 1948
 Crater Lake National Park created
 May 22, 1902
 Sierra Club founded May 28, 1892



October 1984 • Scouting

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Ms. Laurie Smith of the Coalition to Preserve Our City Parks (Los Angeles) contacted PRAC through Doug Bryce regarding a plea for assistance. It seems that the LA city Parks System has about 350 parks, which total 15,000 acres and only 22 Park Rangers to cover it all. Law Enforcement problems have gotten way out of control as a result.

PRAC's policy has been to support efforts for Parks Departments throughout the state to become professionalized for the benefit of both the rangers and especially the public.

PRAC responded with a resolution (enclosed) which stated PRAC's support of safe parks and adequate staffing to the Commissioners of the Department of Parks and Recreation and this resulted in the Commissioners agreeing to put in budget requests for 20 additional Park Rangers. PRAC has offered continued support to the LA City Parks System as they struggle for further measures such as proper training and equipment for their rangers in order to make their parks the safe recreational areas that they once were.

John Ramirez
 President, PRAC

Editor's Note: The San Jose City Council voted 10-0 on February 19, 1985 against allowing the city's 19 park rangers to carry firearms. The council moved for increased "police presence" in the city's parks.

The council directed the rangers "to concentrate more on nature and less on police work."

"Seventeen of the 19 park rangers want to carry sidearms because, they say, they are constantly confronted with dangerous situations while patrolling city parks. However, the police department and the city manager's office oppose their request." (San Jose News, 2/20/85)

December 14, 1984

Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles

Honorable Mr. Mayor:

The Park Rangers Association of California, an organization of municipal, county, regional, state and federal park rangers, has passed the following resolution:

Whereas, Citys and counties of the State of California are experiencing an alarming rate of crime in their parks and,

whereas, the public who pay for parks should be able to safely use them and,

whereas, park rangers, because of the unusual nature of their job that includes both protecting the park resource as well as the visiting public and,

whereas, police agencies are strapped with lack of funds with few officers to handle park problems and,

whereas, police agencies place a low priority on park law enforcement,

Be it resolved,

That the Park Rangers Association of California actively supports the concept of a ranger force for the city of Los Angeles that will exhibit a high degree of professionalism, and that the City of Los Angeles consider the role of the park ranger to be one that includes both visitor protection and education and

be it further resolved

That the Park Rangers Association of California urges the City of Los Angeles to see that every ranger be trained and equipped to adequately protect the visitor.

John E. Ramirez
President

Dec. 14, 1984
Dec. 14, 1984

PARK PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH UNITY

THE FOLLOWING IS A COPY OF THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY LAURIE SMITH, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE "COALITION TO PRESERVE OUR CITY PARKS," AT THE DECEMBER 14, 1984 HEARING BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE L.A. CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS:

According to the "RAP II" report done by the L.A. City Department of Recreation and Parks in 1983, 50% of the people who would normally frequent our city parks stay away because of lack of security and maintenance.

We represent a coalition of homeowners associations and park user organizations composed of approximately a quarter of a million people, who have become increasingly disturbed by the crime and deterioration which is presently occurring in our city parks, and by the almost total lack of control of the situation by the department which has a charter responsibility to provide clean and well-maintained parks that are safe to use.

I would like to detail what is happening in Griffith Park, where our group began, because it is an example of what is happening to some extent in all our city parks:

Basically there are two things happening in Griffith Park: The first is the actual physical destruction of the park taking place due to vandalism. This involves the wholesale stealing of plants, the chopping down of trees and park railings to be used as firewood, littering and illegal dumping, and the stealing and destruction of park property of every sort, from sprinkler fittings to toilet seats.

Just as quickly as the Department can replace or repair stolen or defaced items, just as quickly these same items are again stolen or defaced. It is a matter of but days in many cases - months at best. I have compared the situation to a sieve, through which are continually flowing the physical components of our parks, and our tax dollars along with them. We have reached the stage that all new landscaping and structures being installed in city parks are designed with inevitable vandalism in mind, as opposed to considering their aesthetics and convenience for the normal park users.

So - the first thing we have taking place in Griffith Park is its gradual, but steady, physical destruction.

The second thing that is happening in the park is crimes that make the park dangerous, or at best unpleasant, to use:

Virtually every fire which starts in Griffith Park is a result of arson.

Many people go into the park to take drugs; there is also drug dealing in some areas of the park.

The bearing of fire arms and other weapons into the park is common. All of us who use the park on a regular basis have seen this. The deer population has been almost totally killed off by these people, although their use of weaponry is not limited to animals.

What is termed "lewd conduct in public" is rampant in many areas of the park, and is rarely prosecuted unless the police are specifically called in to do so. The "anything goes" atmosphere which this has set we feel led to specific cases of young children, residents of the Fern Dell neighborhood, being sexually assaulted in that park.

Burglary is rampant in many of the parking lots. Runners frequently leave one person to guard their cars while the others go off on the trails. The membership of the Griffith Park Men's Golf Club dropped from 900 to 450 because members were tired of having their expensive equipment stolen out of their cars. Further, muggings have occurred directly on the golf courses as well. And our Senior Park Ranger's own car was stolen from where it was parked in front of the Ranger Headquarters.

Robberies occur in the park. The thieves have become so brazen as to even approach the large groups of Sierra Club hikers.

There are vagrants of all sorts actually living in the park.

Equestrians have been harrassed in numerous ways, and many female equestrians are frightened to ride alone.

There are 75 reported rapes a year in Griffith Park.

On a recent police crackdown done at the behest of the Friends of Fern Dell, a child molester/kidnapper was caught in the act; the police captain in charge said that he suspected the man had used the park before for the same purpose.

There is gang activity in certain sections of the park.

Three of us present here today, myself included, have come upon dead bodies in the park.

A month ago two women were murdered in the park, totally separate incidents.

And according to Captain Robert Taylor of the Northeast Division of the L.A.P.D., crime in Griffith Park has had a 25% increase between 1983 and 1984.

Thus you have the picture of what is happening in Griffith Park today. And I must reiterate that the same general picture is prevalent in all of our city parks in varying degrees. Griffith Park, being the largest, is like a macrocosm of the 349 other park sites scattered throughout Los Angeles.

Yet in response to this deplorable state of affairs, we find only sporadic law enforcement taking place. The police are called in when a particular major crime occurs, but they do not provide regular patrolling of the parks as that responsibility has been chartered to the Department of Recreation and Parks.

As for the so-called "minor" crimes, such as the stealing of plants, they are not even prosecuted at all, even though they are the cause of the physical destruction of our parks. And the "minor" offense of littering in city parks, also unprosecuted, is costing taxpayers five to eight million dollars a year. Why are these crimes unprosecuted? The reason is very clear:

The park rangers have no authority to write citations (other than for illegally parked vehicles), nor to perform arrests (other than citizens' arrests, for which the police must be called anyway), nor to bear arms. Therefore, in spite of valiant efforts to the contrary, they are virtually ineffective when it comes to confronting criminal activity on their own. Their only viable alternative is to call in the police. But with serious crime at its current level in Los Angeles, it is unrealistic to think that the police can respond to vandals chopping down trees in Griffith Park. The second page of our proposal details such "non-police" type crimes. And the de-facto result of the situation which I have just outlined is that most of these crimes are simply left unprosecuted. Thus, over the years various elements in our society have discovered that they can get away with things in the parks that they can't so easily get away with in the rest of the city, and therefore these people return to the parks again and again to commit their crimes with impunity.

To put the problem into greater perspective, one must understand that we are talking about 15,000 acres of park territory, stretching across the entire L.A. basin - and all of this being patrolled by but 22 park rangers at present. Griffith Park alone is the size of the city of Beverly Hills. It is no wonder that there is no authority presence in our parks.

Having learned all this, we came up with our proposal. Let me state clearly that this proposal is in no way a criticism of the present ranger staff, which is doing its best under impossible conditions, and which is greatly appreciated by park users.

Basically, the proposal asks for three things: More rangers, the patrolling of the back trails of Griffith and other like parks by an equestrian or similar unit; and the formation of a back-up patrol of rangers of a new classification: Professional rangers, graduates of ranger academies, who are trained both as naturalists and peace officers. The kind of rangers we find in our state and national parks. These rangers, as limited-status peace officers, would be authorized to issue citations, perform arrests, and bear arms. They should be in constant radio contact with the other rangers, and park employees out in the field, so that they can be called upon in time of need. The basic concept of our proposal is to insure steady, year-round patrolling, and thus create a real authority presence in the parks. We feel that this will not only serve as a crime deterrent, but will also stop the physical deterioration of the parks which is largely due to that criminal activity.

Lest anyone be frightened by the idea of some rangers carrying weapons, let me just say that many park employees are today illegally bearing arms, out of fear, and the knowledge that indeed there is no authority presence in the parks. Further, some citizens who use the parks a great deal have also begun to illegally carry weapons. This is a far more dangerous situation than having duly trained peace officers securing the parks for us.

I would like to add that the request for city park rangers to become limited-status peace officers is not unusual - rather, it is the norm. L.A. is probably the last major city to still be without such rangers.

Further, today's rangers are no longer able to provide one of their prime functions, that of naturalist, because the activity of vandals and criminals demands most of their attention. Nature centers have been closed, and school-oriented programs abandoned. If proper security were to be reestablished, it would be feasible for these naturalist activities to begin again in our parks.

Recently we discovered that Jim Hadaway, General Manager of Recreation and Parks, had made virtually the same proposal in 1980 that we as citizens came up with independently in 1984. Extensive studies were done at that time, and endorsements from the L.A.P.D. and the Park Rangers Association of California were sought and received. The proposal passed the Recreation and Parks Board, only to be vetoed by the Mayor due to philosophical differences. The exact problems which we are now encountering were happening then, as detailed in Jim Hadaway's report. At that time the state of affairs in city parks was described as "urgent." Four years later the situation has only intensified, and to make matters worse we have less rangers than they did in 1980!

Your Department has sought to fulfill its charter responsibility to this city, but its hands have been tied. Instead the Department has been forced to cater all its efforts towards the dictates of vandals, and cannot provide a safe environment for normal park users. It has been forced to sit back and witness the demise of our city parks, unable to do what it knows it must in order to turn the tide of destruction. We, too, have been witnessing this demise; this proposal is our attempt to reverse the situation.

Today, as before, your Department is in favor of your proposal, which is really their proposal. The L.A.P.D. stands ready to endorse it if their opinion is formally requested by this Board. The Park Rangers Association of California has again leant their strong support to this concept; and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy voted unanimously in favor of it. What more will it take for us as taxpayers and citizens of this city to convince our government that it has a responsibility to provide us with well-maintained parks that are safe for all to use?

John Ramirez
Park Rangers Association of California

Dear Mr. Ramirez:

This is a belated note to thank you for coming through for us at the eleventh hour! Your endorsement of our park ranger proposal was most helpful, and contributed to the fact that we have already won a partial victory: The Commissioners of the Department of Recreation and Parks have agreed to put in budget requests for 20 additional park rangers for the city; also they are in the process of considering our other request, which is that of creating a new classification of rangers so that professional rangers can be hired from outside the civil service system. Ultimately we hope that we will win this point as well.

At present we are trying to garner political support from Mayor Bradley (till now our main opposition) and city council members. I shall keep you informed of our progress, and I will take you up on your offer for help down the line if we need it to convince politicians that there is a big difference between professional rangers and those who are essentially maintenance people and gardeners who have been working their way up the promotional ladder in the city.

Thank you again for your help!

Laurie Smith

PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA	
Income/Expense Financial Statement 1984	
Income	
Memberships	\$ 1110.00
Annual Conference Proceeds	316.00
Cop and t-shirt sales	60.00
Transferred from savings	400.00
Interest income	11.23
Income total	\$ 1937.23
Savings account	600.00
	\$2537.23
Expenses	
Executive manager	\$ 250.00
1984 Conference gifts	41.40
Executive board operation (postage, printing, phone)	343.00
New PRAC registration brochures	100.00
Publications (Cal Ranger, Signpost)	391.93
Purchase of caps and t-shirts	692.40
Bank service charge	46.74
Transfer to savings	1000.00
	\$2865.47
	(\$328.24)
Balance January 1, 1984	\$1232.20
Expenses above income	-303.14
Balance December 31, 1984	\$ 929.06

March 7, 1985

Bruce T. Baker

Bruce T. Baker, Treasurer

Proposed Budget

Fiscal Year 1985

Park Rangers Association of Calif.

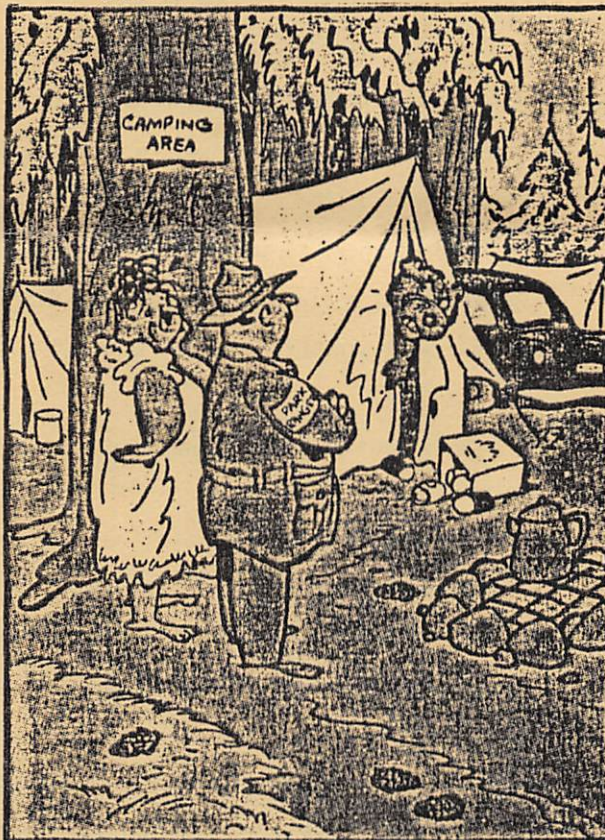
March 7, 1985

Income	
Membership dues	\$1350.00
Annual Conference proceeds	150.00
T-shirt sales	50.00
Interest income	30.00
	\$1580.00

Expenses	
Executive Manager	\$ 175.00
Annual conference	80.00
Executive Board	350.00
Publications	420.00
Bank service charge	50.00
Training	500.00
	\$1580.00

Bruce T. Baker

Bruce T. Baker, Treasurer



"I just assumed it was Roscoe...He's like that until he's had his coffee."

7-5-81 S.J. [unclear]

Sign observed in backroom of a park headquarters:

"Have You Been Rude To A Tourist Yet Today?"

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. To some of you, the name may summon up visions of men in uniformed fatigues building an Army barracks. Others may picture a dam under construction or a dredge on the Mississippi River.

The Corps of Engineers is all of these--and a whole lot more. How many of you know that the Corps is probably the country's leader in operating a Federal outdoor recreation program?

The history of the Corps dates back to March 11, 1779, when Congress formed the Army's engineers into a distinct branch--the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

These early engineer officers were pioneers in the construction of military fortifications, surveying, and building roads, canals, and railways.

California's connection with the Corps dates back to the mid-1840's when "the Pathfinder," Lt. John C. Fremont, an Army engineer, returned from the West with an amazingly accurate map of his journeys.

Some of these early engineers were also leaders in conservation and joined with concerned citizens in preserving the areas that later became known as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Sequoia National Parks.

One of them, Captain John H. Barlowe, was the leader of an 1871 expedition which discovered Mammoth Hot Springs. He campaigned vigorously for Federal legislation, passed in 1872, to have Yellowstone set aside as a public park.

From 1907 to 1914, Corps engineers were instrumental in helping to complete the 51 mile-long Panama Canal.

Civil Works, primarily flood control and navigation, is what the Corps of Engineers is most famous for. These types of water improvements date back to 1824, when they were directed by Congress to remove snags and sandbars from the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

Flood Control got its start with the Corps in 1917 when Congress passed the first Federal flood control legislation. It authorized \$45 million for work on the Mississippi and Sacramento Rivers. However, the Flood Control Act of 1936 was the true beginning of a Federal commitment to flood control as the Corps was given nationwide responsibility for planning and building flood control dams.

The Corps of Engineers entered the recreation business when the Flood Control Act of 1944 was passed. It authorized recreational facilities in Corps reservoir areas and permitted the operation and maintenance of them. Thus, the "Reservoir Ranger" was born--the forerunner to today's Corps Park Ranger.

The Corps currently has over 400 water resource development projects and over 4,000 recreation areas. Uniformed Park Rangers and Technicians administer the approximately 11 million acres of land and water areas at each of these Corps parks.

These parks encourage public use of their facilities up to the maximum carrying capacity--if this use is consistent with ecological and historical values.

Fish and Wildlife Enhancement is also an important function at Corps parks with about one-third of the land dedicated to fish and wildlife habitat.

Although recreation-resource management was once a very minor part of the overall Corps program, today it's one of the largest.

The Sacramento District is the area headquarters for 13 Corps parks in northern and central California. These recreational areas experience more than 9 million visitors each year who use facilities for camping, fishing, picnicking, and boating.

The Corps of Engineers only has proprietary jurisdiction over its park lands. Therefore, its Rangers enforce only those Federal regulations that pertain to infractions against park lands or facilities (i.e. littering, vandalism, illegal campfire). It surprises many when they find out that the Corps Ranger does not carry a firearm or have arrest capabilities. He/she relies on law enforcement contracts with local county sheriff offices for the bulk of the "heavy" law enforcement.

The Corps Ranger is primarily a resource manager patrolling park lands to inform the public of the regulations and why they are in existence. Rangers work closely with local communities and other government agencies in managing park lands.

Rangers also provide community services such as water safety programs, fair exhibits, first aid training, and interpretive programs about the parks.

-Perry Crowley, Chief of Interpretation
Lake Sonoma, US Army Corps of Engineers

IN THE NEWS

Ranger Trampled By Elephant

An India Forest Ranger suffered broken bones after he was trampled by a rampaging herd of elephants (San Jose News, 1/29/85)

Ranger Killed In Arson Fire

Florida Forest Ranger Marco A. MIRANDA died while battling the series of fires plaguing the state in January. (San Jose News, 2/4/85)

P. O. BOX 28366
SACRAMENTO, CA 95828-0366



Jeff Ohlfs
13923 Malcolm Ave
Saratoga CA 95070

SPECIAL NOTICE TO VALLEY REGION MEMBERS

13923 Malcolm Avenue
Saratoga, CA 95070
April 1, 1985

Dear Valley Region Member:

On behalf of PRAC's Officers, I want to challenge you to accept the vacant Valley Region Representative's position.

You are probably telling yourself you're too busy. I say what you put into it; you and PRAC will get out of it. Any of your time is more than anybody is getting now.

Your next question is: I wouldn't know what to do. Neither did I when I took the old Northern California Rep. position. All that PRAC requires is that you meet with your fellow officers quarterly; you attempt to recruit and inform rangers/agencies, in your region, about PRAC; and you hold a yearly training/social gathering of region members. The Valley Region currently has 13 members. We leave the details and any other ideas to your creativity; but, we'll be there for assistance.

The Valley Region includes the counties of Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Glenn, Butte, Sierra, Nevada, Yuba, Sutter, Colusa, Yolo, Placer, Solano, Sacramento, El Dorado, Amador, San Joaquin, Calaveras, Alpine, Tuolumne, Mono, Mariposa, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, and Fresno.

Need I comment, from personal experience, that such a position looks great on your application?

So, what do you say. Accept this challenge and enjoy the fun of meeting your fellow California rangers.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Jeff
Jeff OHLFS
Signpost Editor

PARK PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH UNITY