THE SIGNPOST

Dear Members and Supporters of the Park Rangers Association of California,

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In This Issue:

2019 PRAC/PLEA Conference Update
March 4 - 7, Ventura Beach

By Candi Hubert, PRAC Vice President/Region 5 Director/Conference co-chair

Our upcoming 2019 Conference is just two months away. Richard Weiner and I visited the Camarillo Airport to coordinate with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office for the field trip scheduled for Monday March 4th. Everyone who attends is in for a real treat! We'll start at 11am with a Search and Rescue Helo Operations demonstration.

This will be a hands-on demo and cover survival at sea and land.

At noon, the sheriffs will be providing a barbecue for us at the hangar. This will be a fantastic time to not only eat great food, but also ask questions and network with other agencies.

After lunch, they will have a k-9 demo and review their enforcement operations. They will be bringing several dogs to show us. After the canine demo, all of us will have an opportunity to use their **hands-on simulator** for the following scenarios:

- Armed and unarmed subjects

- Pepper spray usage

- Taser usage

All participants can try this, either fully armed or using whatever their agency equips them with. All equipment will be provided, no need to bring your own. It's a great opportunity to see how prepared you are for a real-life situation. I hope many of you will join us. Did I mention this is a **FREE** field trip included with conference registration?! Make sure to sign up for this when sending in your registration forms! If you already sent in your registration form and would like to add on the field trip now that you know how exciting it will be, please email candi.hubert@gmail.com. We hope to get a headcount as soon as possible.

Stay tuned for the upcoming conference schedule and program which will be posted on the PRAC website and announced on the pracnet google group.

Candi Hubert
PRAC Vice President/Region 5 Director

Under the Flat Hat

Notes from PRAC President Matt Cerkel

In my last article, I wrote about the loss of ranger positions at China Camp State Park. Towards the end of the article, I inadvertently implied legal improprieties by the Friends of China Camp (FOCC), the non-profit group operating China Camp State Park. That was not my intent and I am sorry for that. There have been legally

questionable actions in parks run by other organizations, due mainly to lack of State Park oversight and guidance.

In 2017, FOCC was put to the task by California State Parks: they told FOCC to find their own employees to staff the park. This is despite the fact that FOCC, in its operating agreement with State Parks, provides funding to State Parks for up to 1 ½ ranger positions, 1 full time park maintenance worker, 4 park aides, and 2 maintenance park aides. I found it foolish that State Parks is passing up funding for 2.5 full-time positions and up to six seasonal positions at no cost to taxpayers. As a park supporter and as a taxpayer I find this decision by State Parks to be questionable, at best.

FOCC understood if State Parks would not be patrolling China Camp, they needed to arrange for patrol. This led FOCC to hire private security for China Camp. Otherwise there would have been no patrol presence at China Camp, except for periodic road patrols by the Sheriff's Office. I was told by a State Park Ranger that I have known and worked with for many years that State Parks instructed their on-duty rangers not to respond to ANY call in China Camp. There is an exception for this in the operating agreement with FOCC in that State Parks will provide up to 24 ranger call outs annually when at least one ranger is residing in State Parks employee housing at the park.

Based upon my personal observations it also appears that State Parks did not properly notify the Sheriff's Office when they pulled the last ranger from China Camp. For a period after the transition at China Camp, I overheard multiple calls for service on the Marin County Sheriff's primary radio channel for deputies to respond to China Camp. These calls included a possible armed robbery, a fraud case and a lost hiker call. In these calls the responding deputy would request State Park rangers respond to China Camp. In all three calls, State Parks dispatch first told the Sheriff dispatchers that rangers would be responding, and then later would update that no rangers would be responding. In the case of the lost hiker that responding deputy

could not access the fire roads and two County Open Space Rangers with 4x4s and a deputy with a 4x4 who was contracted to another agency were requested to respond. After the lost hiker call, I had a conversion with the Sheriff's sergeant responsible for the China Camp area and he was not aware of the operational changes at China Camp. These facts indicate the Sheriff's Office was not aware of change. Fortunately, the situation has since been resolved.

It seems to me State Parks is shirking their responsibilities and as I stated in the last "Under the Flat Hat", "I hope the next Governor replaces the current Director of State Parks with someone who is passionate about parks, has a background in park management and park protection, views parks as something more than a source of revenue, and would…provide proper oversight". I have the privilege of knowing several great State Park Directors and hope that California State Parks can one day have a great Director, one who truly cares for the parks and those who work to protect the parks and visitors.

It makes me sad to see the once great California State Park System continue to deteriorate. If I could make recommendations to the State Park Director, they would include the following:

- Work with cooperating groups, the Governor and the Legislature to identify someone to champion State Parks in Sacramento. An unintended consequence of term limits was the loss of long-term supporters and champions in the Legislature. The end result has been no one to carry on the State Parks cause in Sacramento.
- Establish a secure funding source. Look at work other State Park programs have done and find funding models that work in California. Without a secure, dedicated long-term funding solution, State Parks will continue to languish.
- Change the State Park Peace Officer classification to Park Ranger-Peace Officer, Lifeguard-Peace Officer, and perhaps a Park Police classification. Commit the Park Ranger-Peace Officer classification to the multi-purpose ranger model that I have previously discussed (Public Safety [Law enforcement, EMS, SAR and Fire], Interpretation, Hospitality, Maintenance and Stewardship.) Assign the Park Police classification only to urban parks and parks with high law enforcement call volume. Ensure all three classifications have the same basic law enforcement training but ensure the Park Ranger classification gets the support and training to be effective and successful multi-purpose rangers. Most state park units need multi-purpose rangers more than strictly law enforcement rangers. For example, a multi-purpose ranger would place emphasis on patrolling and protecting the actual park rather than the state highways or county roads that pass through the park. Multi-purpose

rangers would be willing and able to make vehicle stops and other enforcement actions on roads but understand the park is their primary jurisdiction. After all, per the Public Resources Code, rangers are the designated State Park employees that "protect the state park system…from damage and preserve the peace therein." That should be the focus of all State Park Peace Officers.

- Encourage and support employees of all classifications who wish to become supervisors or managers to attend the National Association of State Park Directors State Park Leadership School. This would allow for better networking with other state park agencies and would allow employees to bring new ideas back to California State Parks.

- Provide the needed staff and support to ensure the success of State Park units managed by cooperating groups or non-profits.

- Provide seasonal employees a living wage. I first brought this up to a Deputy State Park Director at the 2014 Parks Conference in Yosemite. To date there has been no real change. Often Park Aides and Park Interpretive Specialists get paid less than people who work in fast food positions! Seasonals carry the State Parks through the busy season and are key to successful park operations. They are often the source of great full-time employees, but State Parks doesn't recognize this based what they pay them.

- Establish a seasonal Park Ranger Assistant program. These seasonals would bridge the gap between Park Aides and Park Rangers. They would be non-sworn employees that would work closely with Rangers and could handle many of the Ranger's non-sworn duties during busy periods. Think of them as the Community Service Officers of the parks.

- Establish a reserve Park Ranger-Peace Officer/Seasonal Park Ranger Program. These reserve officers would be required to complete the same law enforcement and specialized training as a full-time ranger and would be eligible to work up to six months a year. They could help fill in during busy periods and at special events. They could also help fill gaps in staffing, such as at China Camp. They would be multi-purpose rangers. When permanent openings occur, they would be eligible to apply as entry level State Park Rangers. They would be able to hit the ground running much quicker than a Ranger Cadet.

I want to see State Parks and other park systems and their associated park ranger programs succeed and flourish. I'm rapidly approaching 30 years in the profession and I can truly say I'm more passionate about the profession than ever. To me, that says something about the profession. For me, the ranger profession is a calling and something I'm willing to speak up for and defend, especially when agencies act in

manner that threatens the parks, those hired to protect the parks, and the people visiting them.

How China Camp State Park REALLY operates

By Martin Lowenstein, Executive Director, FOCC

In August 2016, when I became the first employee of Friends of China Camp (FOCC), China Camp State Park was staffed with California State Park (CSP) employees, whose salaries FOCC reimbursed to CSP, and FOCC was running a $150,000 annual operating deficit. In 2017, CSP asked FOCC to find its own employees to staff the park. Today, FOCC operates China Camp with two administrative employees, a maintenance worker, two park ops aides, a janitorial service, and private security. For 2018, the operating deficit will be less than $15,000. For the first time ever, China Camp is on the verge of being financially self-sustainable – a feat accomplished without public monies.

Security is paramount to FOCC. At the recommendation of the Marin County Sheriff's Office, we contracted with Barbier Security Group to provide an agent 32 hours per week, working Thursdays through Sundays. The agent assigned to China Camp received his ranger training through the National Park Service. This contrasts with our former part-time CSP ranger who worked 20 hours per week on Mondays, Tuesdays, and alternating Wednesdays. All things being equal, I would always take a CSP ranger over private security. But all is not equal. I have private security scheduled precisely on the days and times when it's most needed, and when necessary, a deputy from the Marin County Sheriff's Office can be on site in 10 minutes.

Cultural and natural resource protection is also a priority. FOCC Board Member John Muir has worked for the National Park Service for over 25 years and is a Curator of Small Craft. As an expert in historic building documentation, preservation and maintenance, he keeps an eagle eye on the 150-year-old Chinese shrimping village in the park. In addition, FOCC's small army of VIPPs (Volunteers in Parks Program Volunteers) log thousands of hours each year maintaining trails and managing invasive species. And yes, CSP provides oversight.

China Camp enjoys unprecedented community engagement that has garnered record volunteerism and record donations in 2018. FOCC takes its job seriously, and we hear regularly from the public that China Camp has never looked so good.

Using ArcGIS Online for Public Information

By George Durkee, Cartographer, Yosemite National Park

During California's recent catastrophic fires, many of you probably kept up-to-date by looking at online maps provided by CalFire or Office of Emergency Services. Both are now using a terrific and easy to set up platform for getting information to the public. ArcGIS Online (AGOL) is a service provided by ESRI – the folks who make mapping software such as ArcGIS. AGOL allows anyone with an account to present maps and information both to the public and privately, within an organization.

AGOL is distinguished from a regular web page because it allows you to show spatially projected maps and data. On top of a base map of the terrain, you can bring in data that has coordinates associated with it and it'll show on the map at those locations. Photos taken with a GPS enabled cell phone are a good example. When you take a photo, the coordinates can, if permission is activated, be embedded in the "header" of the jpg and made to show on a map at the photo point. In addition, there's limitless availability of publicly available geospatial data like roads, trails, census data, vegetation coverage, fires – both ongoing and historic – and pretty much anything else you might want to know and illustrate.

If the information you want isn't already publicly available you can also create your own data, upload it, and share it with the public or within your workgroup. AGOL and associated apps make it fairly easy to create what are called GeoForms. Using them, you can have people in the field gather information – recording wildlife sightings, for instance – fill out a popup form on their phone, then upload to your AGOL map where it's displayed and shared.

Alternatively, information can also be entered directly on your web map by clicking a map at a location then filling out the form that pops up. That form can also be configured to attach a photograph or other file to the record. This allows for public

input – crowdsourcing – of wildlife sightings, plant locations, garbage, hazardous areas on a trail & etc. The resulting records become part of a database that can be analyzed as with any data set. Even more fun, you can use symbology to emphasize different aspects of that data set.

I've used this approach to crowdsource where people travel in an area in an attempt to narrow down priority search areas on two cold-case searches. The areas where people haven't been become higher priority search areas on the theory that well-traveled areas would be likelier to have found a relevant clue.

I've also used AGOL to capture the historical knowledge of retiring NPS rangers. We all know it takes years to develop a sense of our patrol areas. How do we capture at least some of the geographic knowledge of long-time employees and make it available to new ones? Where are the hidden out of bounds camps? Poacher camps? Places where a person misses the trail and gets badly lost? That may only happen once every 10 years but having such knowledge recorded can be critical to inform future operations in the same area, however infrequent.

Once you understand the basics of how AGOL, online maps, and data work you can start imagining uses for it in your area. And it's not just maps. ArcGIS Online has a huge variety of ready-to-go templates for different presentations. There are three main types:

1. Emergency Operations
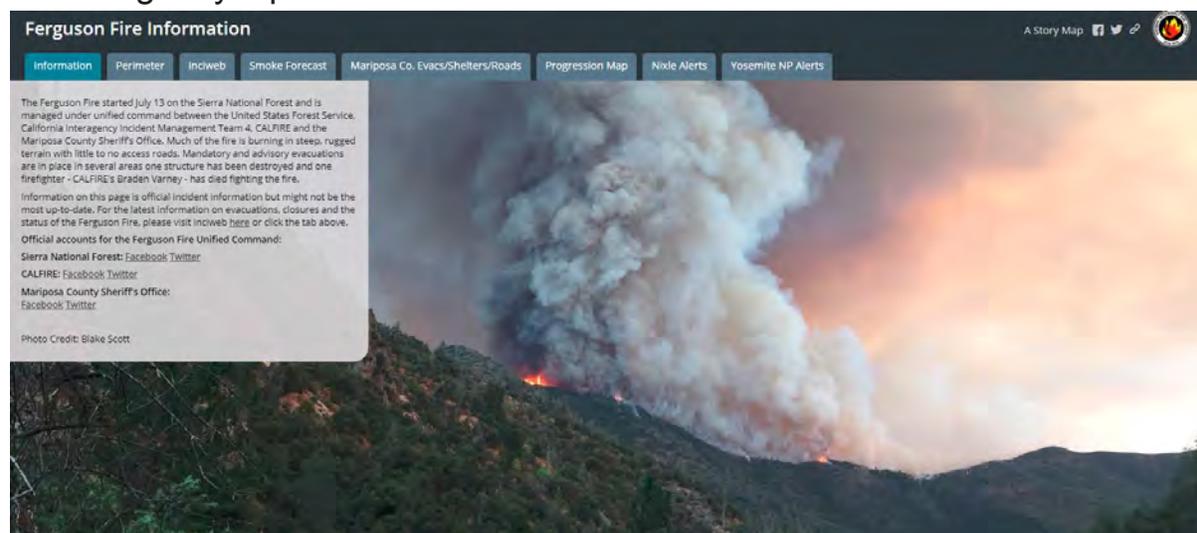
Fire has recently started making great use of AGOL. Initially, these maps showed the fire perimeter from publicly available server links updated daily. When you create such maps, you just include the link to that site and it updates as new information becomes available.

This year, our GIS emergency services work group began to design and advocate for showing road closures and evacuation zones on public maps. We were concerned that both were only shown in text-based lists, usually on Facebook or

Nixle alerts. This made it very difficult for many people to understand if they were in or near an evacuation zone, especially if they were new to an area or renting a vacation cabin.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on the Ferguson Fire adapted our approach and created a one-stop information page for that fire. That fire, of course, is no longer active but you can get a good idea of what is possible from their still available template.

Later other major fires in California implemented this logical use of AGOL. These are not too difficult to build. I've set up a template for Tuolumne County which can be deployed in about 30 minutes of being notified of an incident.

2. Story Map
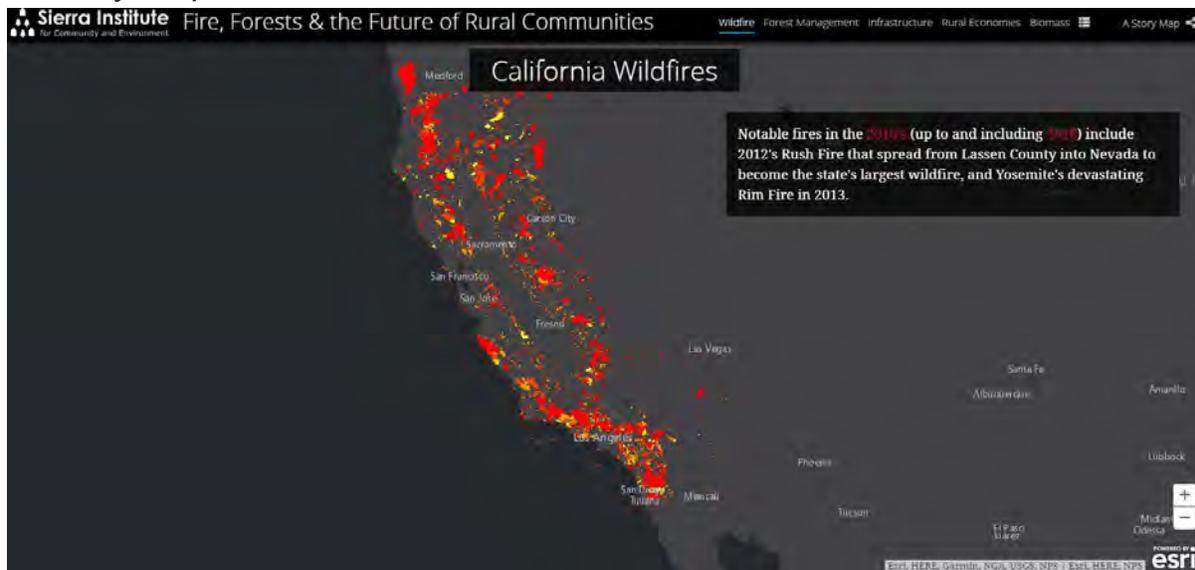
 Another extremely cool use of AGOL are called Story Map templates. Using any of a large selection you can use a combination of maps, text and photos to illustrate a story of map-based information. Here are examples to give an idea of what's possible:

Fire, Forests & the Future of Rural Communities
Atmospheric Rivers

3. Tour Map:
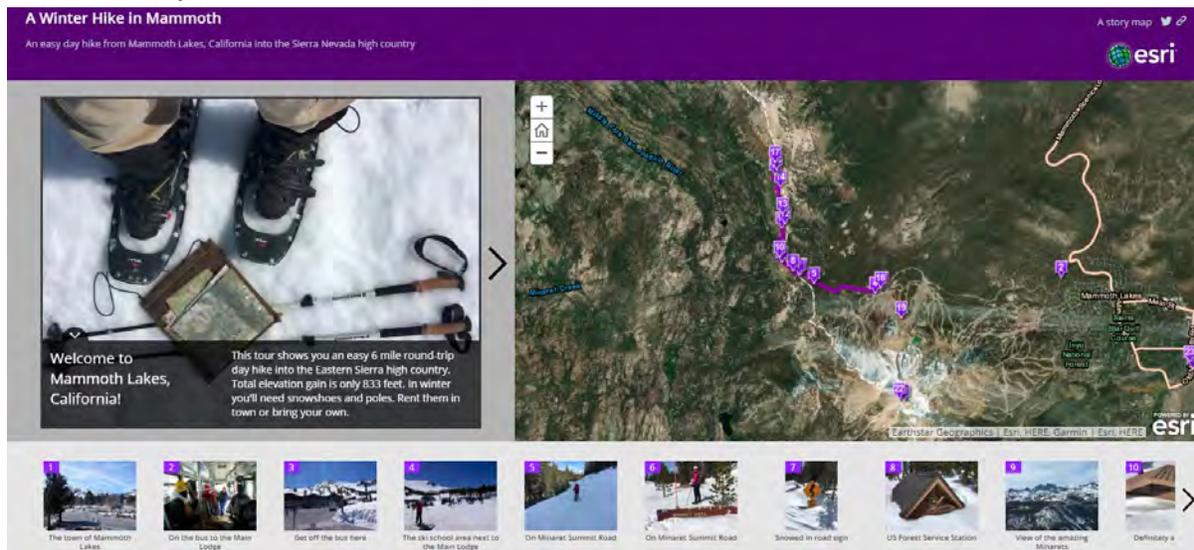
These can be a nature walk, where you can participate virtually by viewing the text, map and pop-up photos or by having the nature walk appear on your phone or tablet. With GPS enabled, your location is shown and points can be clicked for more information about what you're seeing or experiencing. A Tour Map can also be a personal story of your own hike, ski or bike ride. You can create your own free ESRI ArcGIS online account to then show your travels to the public or just friends. For instance:

[A Winter Hike in Mammoth](#)
[Mt. Langley](#) (a good example of what an individual can do and post for friends)

Resources

Those are just some of the basics to give you an idea of the potential for using and publishing AGOL maps, either for your park or, individually, for family, friends and the interested public. So, now what? How do you go about building one?

The first thing you or your organization need is an AGOL account. For a non-commercial personal account, it's free though limited in some features (e.g. only one login per account, so no shared editing. Also, some online content is subscription based and requires account credits to pay for them). An organization would need a full AGOL account on a yearly subscription basis. An explanation of services is [here](#).

There are all sorts of great ESRI instructional material and How To videos online. Just search, for instance, "Creating an ArcGIS Online Map" and scroll through the various links, narrowing the search for the type of map you want to present (e.g. story map, tour map, emergency operations etc.).

The absolute best overall free course is the ESRI MOOC (Massive Open Online Class) [Do-It-Yourself GeoApps](#). It's free, fully online and covers pretty much

everything about AGOL. You're also provided a full-featured AGOL account during the class. The next class starts **February 6, 2019**.

Check with your local college for on campus or online classes. As luck would have it (*shameless self-promotion ahead*), each Fall I also teach a fully online class through Columbia College in Sonora, CA. It usually starts in early October and lasts 4 weeks as a 1-unit class. Check ArcGIS Online: Building a Web Map (CCTIS-66) at www.gocolumbia.edu. This class also comes with an AGOL full-featured account good through the Spring semester!

If you're interested in other ArcGIS classes, I also teach four classes in the Spring. Two are fully online:

- GEOGR or CCTIS 64: ArcGIS: Creating a Basic Map
- GEOGR or CCTIS 63: GIS and Making Maps: The Essential Skills. In this class, we'll cover the basics of creating a map using ArcGIS 10. Students also get a 1-year licensed installation of ArcGIS 10.6 and, if requested, an AGOL login through the college.

The above two classes are somewhat in flux and may be combined. The CCTIS 63 class was developed using a discontinued ESRI product, so I'll probably combine both. If you're interested, [write me](#) and I'll tell you the latest plan.

I also teach two two-day (Friday/Saturday) on campus classes on Fire Incident Mapping and Search and Rescue (SAR) Incident Mapping. Both are extremely useful for learning how to organize information from SARs or fires, presenting it to provide more effective planning as well as a constantly updated common operating picture within the ICP. In the very near future, our work group will release an online app for SAR planning.

The amount of new tech available can be overwhelming. You may not immediately need to learn how to do something. Just remembering a certain technique or hardware exists, though, allows you to later use it to enhance how you or your agency make information accessible. I'm always available to advise anyone on GIS solutions to agency needs. Write me at: gedurkee@sonic.net.

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