



# ***THE SIGNPOST***

## **Second Quarter 2023**

### **President's Message:**

Where is the year going? It's hard to believe the conference was three months ago now!

Our 2023 Conference at Rush Creek Lodge was an overwhelming success. We had many great speakers, including the retired Director of South Carolina State Parks Phil Gaines and our keynote speaker Armando Quintero, the Director of California State Parks. The massive amount of snow made the event unforgettable. But the great news is that the silent auction and raffle raised over \$3000 for PRAC and the conference fund. When we started planning the conference in 2021, we started with \$9217.09 in the conference account and after the final bills were paid the account now has \$15,014.63. The board approved the transfer of \$1000.00 into our general fund and another \$1000 into our scholarship fund. I would like to thank my co-chair Mike Warner, all our speakers, the attendees, and the staff at Rush Creek Lodge for such a successful event.

### **2024 Conference**

Our 2024 Conference will be held in the Ventura area. The conference committee for 2024 is [Candi Hubert](#), [Richard Weiner](#), and [Norma Saldana](#). If you are interested in presenting or have ideas and suggestions, please contact them.

### **Regions**

At our general membership meeting at the conference, a reorganization of the regions



was approved. PRAC now has three regions, Northern California, Southern California, and Nevada. The two California regions have two director seats. Northern California has directors 1 and 2. With Southern California being served by directors 3 and 4. Nevada is served by director 5. During even years Vice President, Directors Seats 1, 3 and 5 shall be elected. During odd years for President, Director Seats 2 and 4 shall be elected. The President and Vice President will be elected by the voting members of PRAC regardless of region. The directors will be selected by the voting members of their given region.

Here's a link to a [map of the new regions](#).

### **New Director**

After the conference, the Board selected Kyle Roberson, the Chief Ranger with Cosumnes Community Services District's Park and Recreation Department, to serve as Northern California Region Director 2. Welcome, and thank you for volunteering to serve on our Board.

### **Scholarship**

During the conference, one of our long-time members donated \$1000 towards our scholarship fund and the board approved the transfer of another \$1000 towards the scholarship fund. PRAC has two Scholarships up to \$500.00 available annually. If you have any aspiring park rangers among your full-time or seasonal staff let them know about this scholarship! Here's a link to learn more [PRAC scholarship](#).

### **World Ranger Day 2024**

This year's World Ranger Day event for California will be hosted by Point Reyes National Seashore at their Ken Patrick Visitors Center at Drake's Beach. Ken Patrick was a National Park Service Park Ranger (Protection) murdered by poachers at the Seashore in the summer of 1973. As part of the World Ranger Day, ceremonies will be awarding two rangers with PRAC's Valor Award and one Ranger with PRAC's Honor Award.

President,  
Matt Cerkel

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## **2023 PRAC Honorary Lifetime Member: Shelton Johnson**

On May 24, 2023, PRAC President Matt Cerkel traveled to Mariposa to present Park Ranger Shelton Johnson his PRAC Honorary Lifetime Member Award. PRAC selected Shelton for the award for his contribution to the Park Ranger profession for his ongoing work in Yosemite National Park. Shelton has become the voice and image of the Park Ranger in Yosemite, the birthplace of the Park Ranger profession. Shelton has brought to life the story of some of our earliest Park Rangers: the Army's Buffalo Soldiers of the 4th Infantry and 9th Cavalry, who protected both Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks in 1899, 1903, and 1904. PRAC is honored to add Shelton Johnson to our select group of Honorary Lifetime Members. Congratulations Shelton!







## **Redding Police Dept. Establishes Park Ranger Program by Eddy Gilmette**



Greetings to all California Park Rangers and to the Park Rangers Association of California! My name is Eddy Gilmette and I have been a police officer for the Redding Police Department for eighteen years. I am now enjoying my new assignment as a Redding Police Park Ranger!

The Redding Police Department is a municipal police department consisting of approximately 122 sworn peace officers, 16 Community Service Officers, and other support staff. These men and women are responsible for serving over 95,000 people in approximately 65 square miles of incorporated areas. The City of Redding lies within the County of Shasta, which shares common areas with State Parks and BLM lands. The City of Redding itself has over 40 parks, along with miles of walking and hiking trails and adjacent government lands for public use. Redding has an influx of approximately 300,000 visitors on a yearly basis to tour the Sundial Bridge and Sacramento River Trails. The Redding Police Department responds to numerous calls for service and proactive patrols within the city limits and beyond. On several occasions, the Redding Police Department assists other neighboring agencies with calls for services, including the Whiskeytown National Park Rangers.



Recently, our Redding City Council unanimously voted to establish Park Rangers within the police department to help enhance the safety and quality of our parks, trails, and other public areas. The Redding Police Department selected four officers headed by a supervisor for this new Park Ranger Team. This team consists of: Sergeant Aaron Hollemon, Officer Jason Rhoads, Officer Doug Moore, Officer Matt Bruce, and me. The Park Rangers are tasked with patrolling over 40 city parks, trails, and surrounding areas to help enhance the beauty and accessibility of these areas. The team can offer resources and other means to clean up illegal camping and other wrongful uses of our parks systems. Additionally, the team has been granted a river boat to help patrol over eight miles of the Sacramento River, which runs through the heart of the City of Redding.

In October of 2022, the Redding Police Department joined the Park Rangers Association of California as an agency and two of our Park Rangers attended the 2023 Parks Training & PRAC Conference in Yosemite to gain new ideas to improve our city parks. The Redding Police Department looks forward to a long-term partnership with the Park Rangers Association of California to learn new ways to improve the safety and quality of life within our city. We continue to strive to make our community parks a safer and better environment for present and future generations.

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## **An Introduction and the Cosumnes CSD Park Rangers**

**by Kyle Roberson**





Hello PRAC Members! I have just been appointed to the Northern California Region Director 2 vacancy and wanted to take a moment of your time to introduce myself. I, and my agency, are very new to the profession of Park Rangers and have quite the journey ahead of us. I work for the Cosumnes Community Services District as Chief Ranger leading a novice, but phenomenal, team of two Park Rangers and four Park Ranger Assistants. My District is a special government district spanning 152 square miles and is responsible for the parks and recreation in the community of Elk Grove, as well as fire protection services for the communities of Elk Grove, Galt, and portions of Sacramento County.

The District's park ranger program had been in place for approximately 18-months before my employment and has been absorbing duties one piece at a time. Our program began with limited enforcement directives and a strong desire to provide interpretive programming. But with the fact that we are rangers in an urban environment, many of the duties given to us keep pulling the program deeper into public safety. We are now re-launching the program with the full-time Park Rangers as sworn peace officers, so my time thus far has been spent developing the operations manual, junior ranger program, interpretive programs, and culturing supportive relationships with partners and allied agencies.

I stepped into my current role with the District after 14-years as a State and municipal police officer, bringing with me extensive experience in the public safety aspect of our profession, but lacking in experience with interpretive programming. When I learned of the PRAC, I sought out guidance and expertise through the association's website, directory, and of course at the 2023 conference. The merits of the Association immediately proved themselves as a robust network of dedicated Rangers driving the professionalism of the trade forward. In the position as a Director, it is my hope that my journey of professional development in the diverse Park Ranger field, coupled with my expertise in law enforcement, will serve to benefit the Association and its membership.



## Under the Flat Hat By Matt Cerkel, President



What defines a profession?

Perhaps it is “any type of work that needs special training or a particular skill, often one that is respected because it involves a high level of education” (Cambridge Dictionary).

Or perhaps it is “a profession is a type of career or occupation that requires specialized education, training, and knowledge in a particular field. Professionals typically have a set of ethical and technical standards they are expected to follow and maintain throughout their careers. Examples of professions include **doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, architects, teachers**, and others. Professions often require a license or certification to practice legally and are typically regulated by a professional association or governing body” (Java T Point).

Characteristics of a profession:

1. Specialized body of knowledge.
2. Occupation in which specialized training is required.
3. Prolonged training and formal qualifications.
4. Ensures competent performance of individuals within its ranks.





5. High level of individual responsibility and accountability.
6. Relatively high degree of autonomy.
7. A common culture and values present among members.
8. A code of ethics.

Do Park Rangers fall within the definition and characteristics of a profession? Perhaps subgroups of Park Rangers do, but it is currently difficult to see how we as Park Rangers are a profession. If you read and compare various Park Ranger job descriptions and training requirements, you'll see there is often little consistency besides the job title.

Here are some samples to illustrate this issue:

#### MARIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT PARK RANGER I

##### DEFINITION

Under supervision, participates in the patrol, protection, environmental, historical, cultural interpretation, maintenance, and visitor assistance, enforcement, and compliance activities of watershed areas; enforces Marin Municipal Water District regulations, state and federal laws; and to do related work as required.

##### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The class of Park Ranger I is an entry-level position, designated as a peace officer responsible for enforcement of Marin Municipal Water District regulations, state, and federal laws and protection of property and persons on Marin Municipal Water District watershed lands. This class is distinguished by the responsibility and authority associated with designation as a peace officer under the laws of the state. Incumbents normally advance to the class of Park Ranger II after a minimum of two years' experience at the entry level providing they have demonstrated that they possess the required skills to perform satisfactorily at the higher level and are assigned more responsible and difficult duties...

##### TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE:

Completion of two years (60 semester units) of study from an accredited college or university including a minimum of 21 semester units satisfying the General Education Curriculum standards as identified for colleges and universities





accredited by the Western Association of Colleges and Universities. Courses which meet this requirement include natural/social sciences, language, humanities, and mathematics. (Students in their second year of college may apply, but they must satisfactory complete the college requirement before they can be appointed.)

Possession of a Basic Law Enforcement Course Certificate of Completion issued by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)

Or

Completion of the twelfth grade or its equivalent. Possession of a Basic Law Enforcement Course Certificate of Completion issued by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). One year of experience in the protection or general operation of watershed management, resource protection, recreation, park or land management or similar public safety assignment.



Experience or training in wildland firefighting, Emergency Medical Technician practices and law enforcement is desirable.

## MARIN COUNTY PARKS PARK RANGER

### DEFINITION

Under general supervision, performs a variety of public contact, enforcement and grounds and facilities maintenance work related to the operation and maintenance of County parks and recreational facilities for public use; and performs related work as assigned.

### CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is an experienced park maintenance and operations class, capable of performing the full range of public contact, operations, enforcement, and maintenance work independently. Judgment and initiative are exercised within established County policies, procedures, and guidelines.

This class is distinguished from Supervising Park Ranger in that the latter is the first supervisory level in this class series, responsible for assigning, supervising,



and inspecting the work of others. It is further distinguished from Open Space Park Ranger in that the work of the latter focuses on patrolling and preserving the natural habitat of flora and fauna found in open space lands rather than the operation and maintenance of developed parks and recreational areas.

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS & LICENSES

Two years of experience in park and/or landscape maintenance or development. Experience in dealing with the public is desirable. Training and/or education in park or resource management, horticulture, environmental studies, or a field related to the work may be substituted for the experience outlined above on a year-for-year basis to a maximum of one year.

#### Certificates and Licenses

- Possession and maintenance of a valid California class C driver's license and a satisfactory driving history as obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Possession of or ability to obtain within one year of appointment certificates in standard first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Ability to successfully complete POST Certified PC832 Powers of Arrest training or department approved similar training within one year of the date of employment.
- Possession of or ability to obtain a Pest Control Applicator Certificate is highly desirable.
- Specified positions may require the ability to obtain a Certified Pool Operator certificate.

### MARIN COUNTY PARKS

#### OPEN SPACE PARK RANGER

#### DEFINITION

Under general supervision, patrols and maintains large land areas under the Open Space District's jurisdiction including construction and maintenance of roads, trails and built structures; educates the public and enforces laws, ordinances, codes and regulations to ensure the protection of open space lands and environmental resources; and performs related work as assigned.

#### CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is an experienced open space patrol and maintenance class, capable of



performing the full range of patrol, public contact, enforcement, and maintenance work independently. Judgment and initiative are exercised within established County and District policies, procedures, and guidelines. Incumbents are additionally assigned the responsibility for construction and maintenance on general Open Space features or technical design and construction of trails and trail structures.

This class is distinguished from Supervising Open Space Park Ranger in that the latter is the first full supervisory level in this class series, responsible for assigning, supervising, and inspecting the work of others. It is further distinguished from Park Ranger in that the work of the latter focuses on the operation and maintenance of developed parks and recreation areas rather than the patrol and preservation of the natural habitat for flora and fauna found in open space lands.

#### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS & LICENSES

Any combination of education and experience would provide the knowledge and skills listed below. Typically, equivalent to two years of experience in the protection, conservation, operation, or maintenance of open space, forest, or park areas. Training and/or education in park or resource management, forestry, horticulture, environmental sciences, or a closely related field may be substituted for the experience outlined above on a year-for-year basis to a maximum of one year.

#### Certificates and Licenses

- Possession of a Class A California driver's license may be required for some assignments.
- Some or all positions in this classification may require possession of a valid California driver's license. Employees who drive on County business to carry out job-related duties must possess a valid California driver's license for the class of vehicle driven and meet automobile insurability requirements of the County including review of a recent DMV history. The County will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant with a disability upon request. If a driver's license is required, at the time of the selection interview by the appointing authority, applicants will have to furnish a recent DMV driving record.
- Possession of or ability to obtain within one year of appointment designated certificates in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).



- Ability to successfully complete POST Certified PC832 Powers of Arrest training or department approved similar training within one year of the date of employment.

## EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT PARK RANGER

### GENERAL FUNCTION

Under general supervision, performs advanced level semi-skilled and unskilled maintenance and other tasks on Park District properties and facilities in support of the operation, development, and resource protection of the Park District's parklands and trails; and performs related duties as assigned.

### CLASS CHARACTERISTICS:

This is the journey level within the park operations series. Employees within this class are distinguished from other classifications in the series in that this classification performs the essential tasks of Park Services Worker and Park Services Attendant in addition to a variety of advanced level semi-skilled maintenance on Park District properties and facilities.

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

*Any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:*

Education: Equivalent to the completion of the twelfth grade,

#### **AND**

Experience: Three years of recent experience in landscape/park facility maintenance, construction, or a related field which demonstrates the ability to perform the duties of this classification and provide quality customer service.

Substitutions: College level education in a related field or successful completion of related classes at a trade or vocational school, may be substituted on the basis of one year of completed college level education or trade/vocation school classes equating to one year of experience up to a maximum of a year of experience.

License or Certificate: Possession of a valid Class C California Driver's License is a condition of initial and continued employment in this classification.





## CITY OF NAPA PARK RANGER 1

### DEFINITION

Under immediate supervision, performs duties involving the operation, maintenance, and preservation of parks and designated open space areas; plans and performs a wide variety of light maintenance and development tasks; provides visitor information services, educational outreach, and enforces regulations and policies.

### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Positions in this class are flexibly staffed. Appointment to the higher class of Park Ranger II requires that the employee meet the qualification standards for the classification. Advancement from one level of a flexibly staffed classification to the next level of a flexibly staffed class series will be enacted in conjunction with documentation of attainment of requisite experience, knowledge, and abilities and will be subject to department need and approval by the Department Director.

Park Ranger I incumbents perform entry level work interpreting and applying applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances. Incumbents perform the full range of public contact, operations, enforcement, and maintenance work independently. Incumbents maintain contact with the public utilizing recreational areas and must exercise tact, diplomacy, safe work practices and sound judgement.

General supervision is provided by the Parks, Trees and Facilities Supervisor with functional oversight provided by the Senior Park Ranger. Park Rangers may exercise functional supervision over part-time staff and volunteers as assigned.

### Education and Experience

Any combination of experience and training that would provide the required knowledge and training is qualifying. A typical way of gaining the requisite knowledge and abilities required for this position would be:

#### Park Ranger I:

Graduation from high school, plus advanced education equivalent to 60 semester college units preferably in park management, forestry, or natural resources highly desired.



A minimum of one year of experience in the operation, management, protection, and interpretation of a park, forest, private reserve, public recreational, or historical area.

**Special Requirements:** Possession at time of hire and continued maintenance of a California Class C driver's license is required. Possession of, or ability to obtain within six months of employment, Red Cross Certificates in First Aid & CPR. Must be willing to work evenings, nights, holidays, and weekends and may be required to work overtime.

## **LIVERMORE AREA RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT PARK RANGER**

### **SUMMARY**

Under direction, performs a variety of duties involving the enforcement of land use laws and regulations and serves as a Peace Officer under the California Penal Code. Performs a variety of routine general maintenance for District parks and open space areas and facilities; ensures areas and facilities are available for use and consistently maintained in a safe and clean condition. Provides resources and information to patrons; and performs related work as required.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:**

The Park Ranger is responsible for performing duties involving the enforcement of land use laws and regulations, serving as a Peace Officer under the California Penal Code; performing general maintenance tasks; and providing resources and information to patrons. Performance requires the ability to work independently with initiative and discretion within established guidelines. This classification is distinguished from the Chief Ranger in that the latter has overall administrative and operational responsibility for open space programs and services.

### **Licenses and Certifications:**

- At time of appointment, and maintained throughout employment possession of:
  - California Driver's License, with a satisfactory driving record,
  - American Red Cross First Aid, CPR, and AED certification,
  - California Penal Code 832 certification.



- Completion within one year of hire and maintain certification throughout employment:
  - Emergency First Responder or higher certification,
  - Basic Wildland Firefighting certification.

## SAN MATEO COUNTY PARK RANGER I

### DEFINITION

Under general supervision, provide a variety of public services to preserve, protect and enhance the natural, historical, recreational and educational resources of the County; manage trails, picnicking, camping and boating facilities, and education programs; perform general facility maintenance; conduct interpretative and educational programs, assist the public in taking full advantage of the facilities and grounds; and perform related duties as assigned. Staff work in one of two areas: Parks and Marina.

### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Park Ranger I is the trainee level in the Park Ranger series. Under immediate supervision, incumbents perform routine maintenance work on County facilities and equipment used in and around the parks and marinas owned by the County. They provide information services to the public on County parks and marinas. Park Rangers I learn how to operate and maintain motor vehicles, power tools and other equipment. They also learn County and Departmental policies and procedures as well as recreational practices and regulations which relate to parks and marinas. Incumbents are trained in park and boating safety and emergency response procedures. This class is flexibly staffed with Park Ranger II and after completion of on-the-job training and demonstrated competency Park Rangers I are expected to promote to the II level. Failure to promote to the II level will necessitate termination of employment in this class.

#### Education and Experience:

Any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to qualify is:

#### Education:



All options of Park Ranger I: Thirty semester units in park management, biology, ecology, resource conservation, environmental education, environmental sciences or a closely related field.

**Experience:**

**Park Option - Level II:** Two years of experience in park management, forestry, natural resources conservation or a closely related field.

**Marina Option - Level II:** Two years of experience in marina support or maintenance or general boating experience.

**Licensure/Certification:**

- Possession of a class C California driver license or equivalent.
- Acquire within the first six months of employment a Red Cross First Aid Certificate.
- Acquire within the first six months of employment a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Certificate.
- Acquire within the first year of employment a POST 832 Law Enforcement certificate.

**Additional Licensure/Certification for the Marina Option:**

- Acquire within the first six months of employment a U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Class Certificate or equivalent.

As you can see there is a lot of variety in these job descriptions and duties. Being a Park Ranger at one agency does not mean you would be qualified to even apply to be a Park Ranger at another agency. Some Park Rangers are peace officers, some are public officers and others have no enforcement duties. All these Park Ranger positions share some job characteristics, but based on the significant differences it is hard to say these Park Ranger positions are part of a profession based on the definitions and characteristics listed earlier.

PRAC is trying to address this and move the Park Ranger career towards becoming a true profession. PRAC first established its Generalist Ranger Certificate Program in 2001 and recently rolled out a revised application process. The PRAC standards are minimum skills needed for the professional park ranger in California. The standards cover the following domains:





1. Interpretation
2. Resource Management
3. Maintenance & Operations (Park Stewardship)
4. Fire Management and Search and Rescue
5. Emergency Medical Services
6. Law Enforcement

The revised standards also established two certificates:

Generalist Ranger Certificate-Public Safety which is for Park Ranger-Peace Officers.

Generalist Ranger Certificate, which is for non-sworn Rangers.

The only difference between the two certificates is the law enforcement training standards. The non-sworn certificate requires completion of the PC 832 course (40 hours), while the Public Safety version requires at least 176 hours of academy-based law enforcement training. This would also allow someone to update their certificate to the public safety standard later.

The program is free, and any uniformed park employee may apply. PRAC membership is not required.

Here's a link to PRAC's certification program

<http://www.calranger.org/certifications.html>

I will be applying for the public safety certificate once I complete my HazMat First Responder Awareness Training.

I would encourage Rangers statewide to complete the certification process and encourage their employers to consider adopting the standard. This certificate program combined with the new South Bay Ranger Academy could be the first step towards establishing a state-wide standard for Park Rangers and making it a true profession in the state.



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