



california state park rangers association

REPORTER

W-E

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News from North, East, South & West

November 1971

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

The year 1971 is rapidly coming to an end and with it will come elections to determine your slate of officers for 1972-73.

The new member of the California State Park Rangers Association will undoubtedly take a great deal of interest and I hope that we will see many of them running for offices as your representatives.

I have recently been asked whether or not the admitting of the Ranger Trainee, Seasonal Rangers and Maintenance Men, to full membership, who are not members of California State Employee Association, might not violate our constitution and by-laws. A check with our Parliamentarian, Kirk Wallace, indicates that there is no conflict. There is however, a conflict with our Mutual Recognition Agreement between California State Park Rangers Association and California State Employees Association, which states that "California State Park Rangers Association will require as a condition of membership, that all persons eligible for membership in California State Employees Association, be members of California State Employees Association". There are two ways to solve this problem and discussions have indicated that there is a feeling that the Mutual Recognition Agreement be dropped. I understand that a resolution to this effect is underway at this time and will be presented at the General Executive Council meeting in March.

Many of you read in the October 22, 1971 issue of the California State Employees Association newspaper and the October issue of Landmark, that the California State Employees Association was going to appear November 4, 1971 before the State Personnel Board and plead the case of increased salaries for Park Rangers. California State Employees Association was fully aware that the State Personnel Board had, on October 5th, notified all employee organizations and State Agencies that salary hearings would not be held in November as previously announced. To me, California State Employees Association is putting up a big smoke screen, as they had ample time to kill the October 22nd article and publish a retraction to the article in the Landmark.

The Department has requested the State Personnel Board to schedule an examination for State Park Ranger V.

The Employee Development Appraisal is being proposed as the sole examining device for this examination.

In my opinion, this is a most important change in the examining process that has occurred in many years. The Employee Development Appraisal process will permit the Department to better evaluate past, present and future performance of those being tested. I have always supported the Employee Development Appraisal as being superior to the parochial written and oral examining process.

Have a nice Thanksgiving.

Wesley E. Cater
President

The best time to start thinking about your retirement is before your boss does.

* * * *

Fellow Rangers:

Many of us have been patting ourselves on the backs since the very beginning of the environmental uproar. Our tailgate signs ("Conservation is our Business", "Parks are Forever - with Your Help", etc.) encourage all who read them to follow our example. We are the leaders, and our followers are all the citizens of this state and country. Our success as leaders can only be measured by the actions of our followers. If we create a positive reaction in our followers, we are successful leaders. So far, the decision making bodies of our government have reacted very cautiously to the growing awareness of the need for environmental reform. Our lawmakers do not take very seriously the demands of a citizenry which continues to litter, vandalize, and abuse the environment.

Therefore, it seems evident, that we have failed to communicate satisfactorily with our followers. The problem lies in our attitude of "do what I say, not what I do". It is time for us to do more than just wave signs and talk about being leaders in the field. If our commitment is sincere, and not just faddism, then we need action. We must insist on the use of ecologically sound principles at all levels.

If we, as leaders in the business of conservation, perpetuate programs such as the use of plastic trash can liners, then our followers will continue to abuse the environment. As long as our followers are abusing the environment, the lawmakers will continue to offer a meager 2% of the national budget to conservation of natural resources.

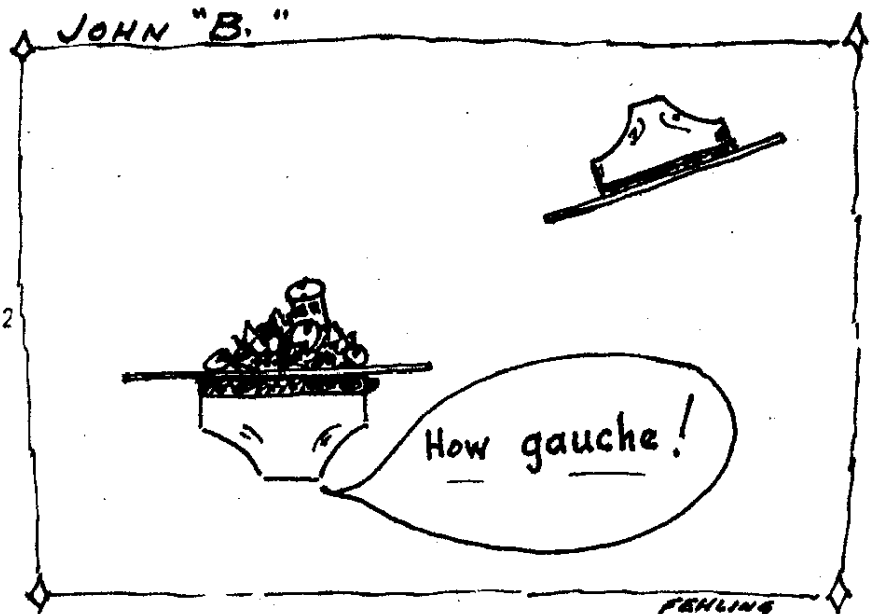
So let's not congratulate ourselves on the economic battle we are winning by using the plastic liners, when in reality we are losing the war!

RENE S. AVANT
State Park Ranger I

FOR SALE

- 1 Stetson size 7 1/8 long Oval
- 1 Dress Jacket size 38-40
- 1 Dress Trouser size 30-31
- 1 Dress Trouser size 31-31
- 1 Dress Trouser Summer weight 30-31
- 2 Dress Shirts Long Sleeve 14 1/2
- 2 Dress Shirts Short Sleeve 15-15 1/2
- 1 Belt 32"

Don Engler
Tomaes Bay State Park



Mott Says Californians Still May Find Peace in State Park

It's no accident that a California state park is a safe place to go, according to William Penn Mott Jr., director of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

"We are ahead of problem situations and we'll stay ahead," Mott said. California's park system still is a sanctuary where one can find peace, Mott said. Californians spent 46 million days at the parks last year.

Recognizing the potential of parks as a source of trouble, the California

Legislature passed a law in 1968 making park rangers responsible for all law enforcement problems in their jurisdictions.

The State Personnel Board created a new park safety and enforcement series in early 1969, with the Department hiring law enforcement specialists in each of the 6 districts and headquarters.

Jack F. Smyre, a 25-year-veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department, heads the new law enforcement unit to

develop a statewide program on enforcement and public safety in state parks. He is training the park rangers in effective law enforcement with stress on prevention of serious anti-social activities.

Mott indicated park rangers won't necessarily be carrying firearms.

"They will be well trained in the use of firearms and other law enforcement equipment, and the equipment will be readily available if it is needed," he said.

Are you going places, or just being taken?

SPECIAL PROGRAMS for groups, on request. Contact Visitor Center desk.

Programs, Demonstrations Special Events

YOSEMITE JUNIOR RANGERS - Grades 3 - 6: inquire at Visitor Center. 50c per day charge.
BACKPACKING DEMONSTRATIONS - throughout the day at Happy Isles Trail Center.
INDIANS IN THE YOSEMITE ENVIRONMENT - Visitor Center flower garden.
RANGER DEMONSTRATION of climbing, mountain rescue & fire control techniques. At Le Conte Memorial.
YOU WANT TO BE A RANGER? Ages 13-17 (or 8-12 grades). 3-Day course includes overnight pack trip. \$3.00. Register at Visitor Center by 6 p.m.
ECOLOGY FLOAT TRIP from Camp 7 amphitheater to Yosemite Lodge (2 mi.). For swimmers. Bring raft or inner tube and wear tennis shoes.
THE ART PLACE, Curry Village. For people, paint & pleasure Don Peterson Exhibit Hans Wehrli metal sculpture. Reception, Sat. Aug. 14 7-10 p.m. Pottery Demonstrations, and classes afternoon & evening Strings & Things - Yosemite through creative arts & crafts
YOSEMITE ADVENTURES-Ages 5-8., Visitor Center wildflower garden.
SCENIC BIKE RIDES with Naturalist - Yosemite Lodge Bicycle Stand - Curry Village
COFFEE HOUSE - the place to meet. Lower Pines (Camp 14)
EVENING STROLL with Ranger. Leaves from Yosemite Lodge amphitheater
YOSEMITE MOUNTAINEERING SCHOOL. Meet at Mountain shop (next to post office).
MOVIES in the Visitor Center "Beaver Valley" "Nature's Half Acre" "The Living Desert"
EVENING CONCERTS - Church Bowl

Members of an Ecology Float Trip on the Merced River disembark to study the nature of the river's bottom. Bruce Fincham and Mark Forbes, of the naturalist staff, direct the float trip activities.



YNHA Photo

Park Symbols

Throughout the many federal recreation areas, a system of identification symbols is being implemented. Some of these are in use now in Yosemite and those you may encounter here are



Gas Station



Parking



Bicycle Trail



Autos



Picnicking Site



Trailer Sites



Drinking Water



Food Service



Campground

If you find any of these with a red diagonal slash, it means the activity is prohibited.

Free Valley Shuttle Bus

An innovative system of shuttle bus transportation operates in Yosemite Valley which allows the visitor to park his car and forget it.

Now, he may use free transportation around most of the Valley, and for shorter place-to-place hops. The shuttle cars are operated at National Park Service expense; Yosemite Transportation Systems own and operate the vehicles.

Experience Pioneer Yosemite Travel

Bret Harte once wrote, "Lunatics had not yet reached such depth of imbecility as to ride of their own free will in a California stage".

It appears that Bret didn't reckon with the curiosity and adventuresome spirit of the many visitors at the Yosemite Pioneer History Center who not only ride of their own free will but also pay seventy-five cents for the chance.

As part of the living history demonstrations at the Center, there is a fine old stage coach which, in the 1800's, transported park-bound visitors from El Portal, the end of the railroad, to the Valley. It now makes short and exciting trips around the Center and the Wawona Hotel between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. each day but Monday.

Save This Article For Last . . .

Did you ever try to take a picture and have someone walk in front of the camera just as you snapped the shutter?

With so many people, life gets to be like that. We forget to look and see if we are walking into someone else's picture.

While you are here in Yosemite, take the time to go outside yourself. Sit on a rock and watch yourself. Are you helping others to enjoy their stay here in the Park? Or does YOUR park experience make it difficult for others to enjoy the re-creation which so many of us seek in the natural environment.



YOSEMITE
GUIDE



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The Association is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the interpretation of the natural and human history of Yosemite in cooperation with the National Park Service.

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On Nov. 17 - 19, 1971 District 3 held their fall Area Manager Conference in Yosemite. What made the meeting so special was the National Park Service and U. S. Forest Service also participated in the 3 day event. As various members of the three agencies summed up the meeting it was apparent that each had a better understanding of the others problems, that a feeling of kinship was developed, and that we should do it more often. Each of us learned from the others views which included an Area Managers discussion of operations, After a no host dinner at the Ahwahnee Hotel, Dr. Donald Field, Sociologist for the NPS, addressed us on research he is doing on park visitors. A panel discussion on common problems was moderated by Ranger Carl Anderson, DPR. The USFS led a talk on "Snowmobiles." We toured valley facilities and heard Mr. Alan Coleman of the Curry Co. discuss a "Businessman's View." Mr. Wm. Jones, Chief Naturalist of Y.N.P., discussed Interpretation and we concluded with Mr. Lew Albert's views on "Law Enforcement". The Chief of Visitor Services and Public Information of the NPS generated a most lively discussion.

Following are articles from the Visitor Guide in Yosemite. This is just a sampling of the services offered visitors by the Naturalists and Rangers each summer and winter.



With the de-emphasis on the automobile, cycling is becoming an appealing way to see the Valley, as indicated by the number of cyclists joining Mary Dodd on her regular Tuesday and Thursday cycle-tour. Along the way, Mary stops for chats about the scenery and the environment. See the schedule inside under "Programs, Demonstrations, Special Events".

FIRE

A New Dimension In Park Management

Park visitors over the past year have been aware of certain burned areas in the forests near Wawona, in the Valley, and along the Big Oak Flat Road. This evidence of fire resulted from purposely set blazes.

The burning of certain forested and meadow areas represents a new concept and marks a radical departure from the traditional ways of managing the park and is another step in Yosemite's program to re-establish conditions as they were about

100 years ago, before the arrival of modern man.

Then, wildfire was a frequent visitor to Yosemite. It exerted its influence throughout the park but especially in the lower elevations. Ecologists tell us today that fire caused by lightning and set by Indians occurred in most places in the vast mixed conifer forests on the average of every seven to eight years. In one intensively studied area north of Yosemite it was

(Continued on page four)



YNHA Photo

Fire, now, is used as a management tool by park resources people. Wildfires, either caused by lightning or set by the resident Indians, were commonplace in the park a hundred years ago. In more recent times,

all fires were suppressed, resulting in an abnormal growth of underbrush and trees, unaesthetic and unnatural. Fire, reintroduced into the forest system under controlled conditions, scientists call a "prescription".

Fire

(Continued from page one)

determined by tree ring analysis that between the years 1452 and 1912 there were 221 distinct fires that covered the area. That is one almost every two years. The frequency of these natural fires kept the fuel on the forest floor at a low level; the fires were always very light and undergrowth was kept to a minimum.

Early travelers described the forests of Yosemite as open and parklike. Wildflowers were more abundant, and many plants that were favored by wildlife were also favored by the wildfires. Unfortunately, these relationships were not completely recognized until the successful suppression of fire had caused a drastic response from the forest environment.

Today, the environment's response to the removal of wildlife is seen as an explosion of growth in the forest understory. Instead of relatively open, aesthetically uplifting and natural forests, one is too often confronted with dense thickets of trees that are neither natural nor uplifting. Wildlife habitat has diminished; the vigor

and health of the mature trees are reduced, and some trees such as the giant sequoia and sugar pine are actually in jeopardy. Forest fuel conditions have reached such proportions that wildfires today are disastrous once they get the upper hand.

The most natural way to correct this situation and re-establish the pristine appearing forests is to work with the vital process that has been removed - in this case, fire. Fire is now being reintroduced using what scientists call a "prescription." This simply means putting fire back into the forest system on our terms. In each prescribed fire, small trees are being purposely killed, and large amounts of accumulated potential fuel consumed. Correcting the situation will not be done easily. It will take time and patience. El Capitan Meadow responded almost immediately, but the forests will take longer. The dead trees must cure for four to five years, and then another fire will be set to "clean up" the forests. After that, a long-range burning cycle will be put into effect.

We stand today at a new threshold in the management of park resources-one that is ecological in nature. Prescribed burning is a vital part of this effort to "manage for naturalness."

PRACTICAL POLLUTION

By all means we must be practical in considering our pollution problems. After all we are told by the automobile manufacturers, "We could have a smog free safe car right now but it wouldn't be practical." The power companies say, "Yes, we could have clean power generators but it wouldn't be practical." Why even a Park Ranger has said, "Yes sir, Mr. Public, plastic bags are not biodegradable, however, it would not be practical not to use them."

Okay, plastic bags are not in the same league as the automobiles and the power generators. However, the use of plastic bags do pose an environmental threat. As Ranger Paul Johnson has pointed out, garbage wrapped in plastic is prevented from returning to the earth. Even if the plastic bag is ripped open, its presence will delay the decay of the garbage. Now sometimes incineration is an answer to waste disposal but if large quantities of plastic are present noxious fumes will be released. The pollution problem from plastic bags becomes much more serious as more and more people use them. Its the old numbers game. One or two won't hurt but millions will.

There is even some evidence that plastic bags are not all that "practical". Huntington State Beach, with over 450 garbage cans, does not use plastic garbage can liners. Jim Greene, from Heart Bar, reports "plastic sacks-----usually split open when picked out of the can". Apparently some units are able to get along with out the luxury of plastic bags and the units that do use them often find themselves picking up a pile of garbage. Perhaps the "good old days" weren't so bad. I understand that there was clean air to breathe and that our rivers ran pure.

We can't leave this discussion at this point. The use of plastic bags is just one element of a much greater and serious threat to our environment, throw-away technology. Our natural resources are being used up at an alarming rate. A great deal of these resources are utilized to create goods that do not decompose and have a limited use life. When the articles are discarded they will not decay and return to the soil. They represent a dangerous break in the cycle of dust to dust - ashes to ashes. They are our resources locked up and thrown away. Now we are having a hard time even finding a place to throw them.

Some people spend their spare time working for a better environment. As employees of the Department of parks and Recreation, it is our job to work for a better environment. We have an obligation to the taxpayers to be leaders in the field of environmental protection. It is our duty to understand the nature of the ecological problems that threaten our society and to seek solutions. If a Sierra Cluber or a Boy Scout asks for a plastic bag to pick up trash, we should hand him a reusable gunny sack. This is known as leadership.

Ranger Jerry E. Henderson
Huntington State Beach

* * *

As Winston Churchill once said, "The feel of the hangman's noose around the neck is a powerful stimulant to thought."

* * *


Dear Neil:

If my information is correct, I understand that the CSPRA has now activated an "Environmental Issues Committee". Certainly, this is within the scope of a professional organization whose history of concern and action towards protecting and enhancing the environment predates most of the recent converts.

This is the kind of action that bespeaks real professionalism and I offer my appreciation to those members of CSPRA who have taken this step to put our money where our rhetoric is.

Regards.

Sincerely,


J. WHITEHEAD
Superintendent
District 6

10-22-71

Dear Wes,

As I sit here in my easy chair watching TV I'll try to get a word of thanks down on paper providing my bruised, banged, and beat-up fingers can hold this pen long enough and my aching back can hold me up.

You know, Wes, building a home on undeveloped land gets into a bit of physical labor. And I promptly found out that I'm not the man I was around 30-40 years ago. Yep, it puts a strain on the old boy. But, I'm enjoying every minute of it - even when I smack a thumb for the third time in less than an hour!

My thanks to all those good people who saw to it that I had some good power tools to work with. Believe me, they are seeing a lot of use. So far, they have assisted in building a 12' x 30' front porch, a 6' x 8' back porch, a 12' x 22' garage, and a pumphouse. Of course there were, and will be, a lot of smaller jobs. Boy, am I getting a workout! And so is the wife, for that matter. She pounds nails and slings paint to beat the band, but not so good with a pick and shovel. Guess she needs more training.

As you may well imagine, I think of the retirement dinner, letters, cards, pictures, etc., and those who came. And that's one of the reasons I'm writing you. One of the letters is from you. In it, you gave me credit for what I did about the law enforcement program. My thanks to you, sir. I had been interested in an in-service training course for many years, then in 1954 I got the ball rolling while at Donner and got Sgt. Ed Freeman, who had been an instructor at the California Highway Patrol Academy, to put on a program. And I caught hell for it! It scared me so much that I put on classes at Turlock and Millerton. Still got chewed a little. Then finally came the break-through by the push from California State Park Rangers Association. So we now have a recognized program and I'm satisfied. Being human, however, I appreciated your recognition of my efforts. So, thanks again.

Another reason I wanted to write to you is to see if I can get back into the California State Park Rangers Association folds. You see, I haven't paid my dues which were to have been paid September 1. In case I can, I'm enclosing a check for the year. Incidentally I never did find out if I pay by the calendar year or from date of retirement.

Best of luck to you and California State Park Rangers Association.

Darrell Knofler
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