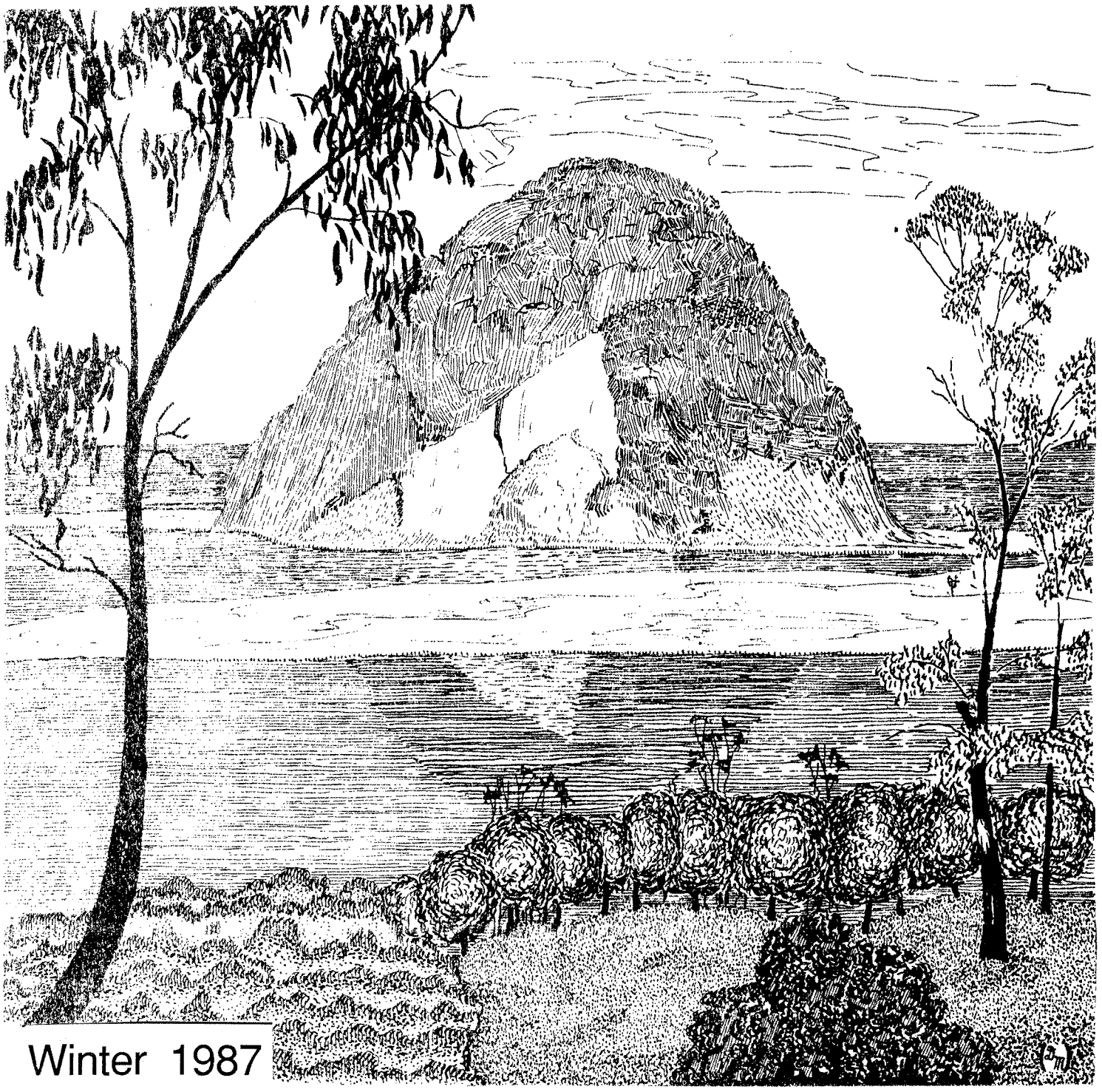
The California Ranger

A JOURNAL FOR PARK PROFESSIONALS



Winter 1987

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Inside this issue, you will find several articles that may be of interest in the general day-to-day operation of any organization. They include the fine article by Richard C. Knopf and Richard Schreyer on the problems of bias in decision making, and the table by H. A. Damminger and Edward L. Waddell on completed staff work. In my past experences working as a field ranger, I've always been amazed at the changes in the character of a park bought about by even small changes in operational plans. Something as simple as keeping the gates open an extra hour after sunset for fishermen can and often will affect the operation from staffing to house cleaning. Knopf and Schreyer's article on "The Problem of Bias in Recreation Resource Decision Making" helped give insights into the complexities of decision making. The article on completed staff work by Damminger and Waddell, simply stated, shows one how to get his/her work DONE!, and to how to move paperwork effectively.

Milt Frincke's and Jeff Jone's articles are, as you will see, on a different level. Milt Frincke's article on "Constructive Dissent", can be used by many management teams as an alternate manner in which to view those who do not fit into their "game plan" yet are excellent at getting the job done. As Milt points out; it takes courage to stand up and point out a flaw in the system; the dissenting view should be given in (and often is) the spirit of cooperation. Management must consider this type of action as helping rather than hindering. After all, it is the responsibilty of the team member to point out to his/her boss that the train's getting ready to jump off the tracks! The article on "Jumpsuits, Spit-shined Boots, Collar Insigna & Snappy Salutes" by Jeff Jones is an insight into where we may be going or where we have come from. I had hoped to use it as a "Point - Counter- point feature, but I was unable to line up an opposing view in time. With luck we may receive a response from our readers. I know that Jeff covered some points that rang home for myself, yet I can still remember the parties going on till dawn in my training group and wishing that I could issue a demerit to someone or something rather then having to sleep in my car to get away from the all-night din.

And finally in this issue we welcome the start of our first feature article, "The Historian's Corner," which will in the future carry Mike Murttz's byline. We at the California Ranger are looking for feature writers. If you have an area of interest such as: interpretation, management, resource management, fire management, etc., and would like to contribute on an ongoing basis, please drop me a line.

Well, as I close, I would like to remind all of you of the upcoming G.E.C. in Ventura this year and urge you to attend if possible. I would also like to welcome Bud Getty, Bettina Townsend, and Sid Brown as new members of the Board and say good-bye to Ken Gray and Milt Frincke.

Edward L. Stuckrath

21600 Big Basin Way
Big Basin Redwoods State Park
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

The California Ranger

A JOURNAL FOR PARK PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME V NUMBER II WINTER 1987

§§

The Problem of Bias in Recreation Resource Decision Making

Richard C. Knopf
Principal Research Forester
North Central Forest Experiment Station
U.S. Forest Service
and
Richard Schreyer
Associate Professor
Utah State University

Over a half century ago, German biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy began to worry that his fellow scientists had lost a " sense of the whole " as they went about the task of studying the natural world. Scientists of the day had become increasingly specialized, and so were the studies they were conducting. The studies had become so focused and narrow, it seemed, that nobody was paying attention to the mutual interactions that occur among all living things. Nature was being dissected into parts, and the parts were being studied as if they existed independently of one another. As far as von Bertalanffy was concerned, this way of doing business was exorbitantly wrong. Justice was not being done to the real character of nature as a dynamic system of interlocking parts.

In response to his frustrations, Professor von Bertalanffy began to promote an orientation toward " system thinking. " In system thinking, the world is conceived as a " collection of elements standing in interaction with one another " (von Bertalanffy, 1968). The world can be dissected into parts, von Bertalanffy argued, but it must be done in a way that retains information about the dynamics of interaction among them. System thinking emphasizes the interconnectedness of things. It suggest that the world , and our actions within it, cannot be understood by investigating various pieces of events in isolation. It recognizes that any one action produces waves of reaction that permeate far beyond the circumstance at hand. Good science can only be accomplished, von Bertalanffy argued, as the world becomes represented not as a collection of independent parts but as a collection of events defined by the forces of actions and counter-actions.

More recently, systems thinking has been found to have profound relevance to social planning and public policy analysis (Forrester, 1971a). Trough its emphasis on the whole, systems thinking has forced policymakers to account more exhaustively for the consequences of change. In short, systems thinking has forced policy makers to evaluate change in terms of impact upon the whole over time.

Systems thinking can help us to see that some of our best-intended actions are producing deleterious consequences. Consider, for example, the problem of world hunger. Most of us comfortably feel that we are helping to solve the world hunger problems by sending food overseas. However, such an action - - if it is the only action taken -- can result in greater long-term suffering (Forrester, 1971b). Greater food supplies to impoverished areas provide temporary relief. But what are the consequences of relief? Greater population densities, increased drain on natural resources, more pollution, even lower food production, and greater levels of starvation. Systems thinking forces us to preceive the limitations of our perspectives and allows us to generate strategies that are more likely to deliver the results we are searching for. In the case of world hunger, systems thinking has allowed us to discover a strategy for bringing about real change through appropriate management of the technological - human - political - economic - natural complex.

In many ways, we in recreational land

management are so absorbed in the immediate problems of our days we fail to step back and look at the whole. As with the hunger example, we may be taking actions that seem right but that eventually work out against the very people we are trying to serve. By taking on a systems perspective, which moves us above the daily problems at hand, we begin to realize that we have developed a pattern of decision making that has tended to benefit certain segments of society more than others. Our purpose here is to synthesize some of the important equity issues that can emerge as land managers intervene more aggressively in the management of recreation behavior. Although many issues cannot be easily resolved, we hope that increasing sensitivity to them will help eliminate an inadvertent tendency for systematic bias against certain classes of recreationist.

For Whom are Decisions Being Made?

We begin by considering the process by which most recreation resource allocation decisions have been made. Resources have been allocated according to demand, and demand has been defined in terms of expressed patterns of use (Driver and Brown, 1975). The protoypical planning scenario follows a seven-step sequence (Douglas, 1973). First, inventory potential supply-- to understand the kinds and amounts of different recreation opportunities that can be generated. Second, inventory existing supply -- to determine current levels of available opportunity. Third, monitor the kinds and amounts of use currently at the resource -- to gain a measure of existing demand. Fourth, compare existing use with past use--to gain a measure of developing patterns of demand. Fifth, on the basis of these patterns, project the character of future demand. Sixth, compare the anticipated demand against the capacties of existing supply--to determine where the gaps lie in needed services. Seventh, initiate a program to develop supply to meet anticipated demand. Although this process seems logical and intuitive, the results may not be. To the extent that this planning process occurs independently of assessments of who benefits the most from the process and what kinds of

"We in recreation land management are so absorbed in the immediate problems of our days that we fail to step back and look at the whole."

opportunities are being favored, concerns about equity must certainly be raised.

So who benefits from our traditional approaches to decide on needed opportunities? Clearly the needs of those using the resource at present are being attended to. But what about those who are not? What about those who would benefit from a totally different package of opportunities? What about those whose needs are not being gratified because the present flow of services has no relevancy to them?

In effect, making resource allocation decisions on the basis of expressed demand only affirms the status quo. It results in a choice to ignore latent demands for the resource, that is, demands

could be serviced but at present are not. It ignores those who could benefit from a complete reconceptualization of what is to be supplied in the outdoors. While we diligently strive to accommodate the needs of those who appear at our gate, we inadvertently exclude those who might like to be there but for some reason are not.

Latent demand for a particular resource does not pose a problem if people can freely choose among an array of alternatives that relate to their recreational needs. However, when certain segments of the public have different abilities to gain access to opportunities relating to their needs, the question of equity emerges. For example, we as policymakers should consider the gross under representation of ethnic group members in wildland recreation and wonder if our traditional ways of structuring outdoor opporttunities are sufficiently encompassing (Washburne and Wall, 1980).

The problem of latent demand of social succession is-- a common sociological feature transpiring in many outdoor recreational areas as a result of our traditional management practices (Clark, Hendee, and Campbell, 1971 ; Schreyer and Knopf, 1984). Social succession refers to the systematic evolution in the character of the users within a setting over time. Quite frequently, the changes are unwittingly induced by management action. The prototypical scenario involves the following sequence: escalating numbers of visitors to a setting, construction of new facilities and other support services to a accommodate them, and subsequently arrival of a whole new generation of clientele who are attracted by the support services rather than by the original character of the environment. This translates into a progressive shift from more primitive-focus values to more socially oriented, urban-centered, facility-dependent values. Another scenario might evolve this way: increasing numbers of visitors, greater provisions for visitor safety, and subsequent arrival of a new clientele who are attracted by a risk-free environment (Sax, 1980). This involves a progressive shift from those oriented towards risk and spontaneity to those oriented towards safety and predictability (Mc Avoy and Dustin, 1981).

"It seems as if we have built in a systematic bias in the way in which we have been allocating our scarce resources."

In either scenario, a new form of latent demand is being generated to the extent that the original user groups are suffering an erosion of experience. If alternate environments capable of delivering the values are readily accessible elsewhere, these evolutionary processes are little cause for concern. There is a problem, however, if succession-induced change is tending to reduce the availability of certain types of recreation opportunities in general (Dustin and Mc Avoy, 1982). Elsewhere we have concluded that this may be the case (Schreyer and Knopf, 1984). In that same paper, we analyzed the social-psychological dynamics of behavior to draw some conclusions about who is most likely to be impacted by such an erosion of opportunity. Our conclusions: those who would suffer the most are those who are most keenly attuned to the unique qualities of an outdoor experience. So recreation managers, in their attempts to serve as broad a clientele as possible, may be foreclosing opportunities for those who would benefit most from what outdoor environments uniquely have to offer.

Such short comings of our traditional ways provide convincing testimony to the need for broader perspective in evaluating the consequences of decision making. It seems as if we have built in a systematic bias in the way in which we have been allocating our scarce resources. Clearly, certain values have been favored over others. But from the equity perspective, the most fundamental question is not whether the values being favored by management action are more or less appropriate than the ones falling by the wayside. Rather, the

prime concern is whether management -- by allowing the traditional allocation procedures to unfold -- is failing to recognize consciously who is being provided for and why. To the extent that we are failing, we are being undemocratic: all classes of users are not having equal input into the decision-making process.

The Complexities of Intervention

Emerging out of such concerns are pleas for policy makers to overrule the forces of expanding use pressures so thar specialized minority, resource-centered experiences can be maintained (Sax, 1980; Dustin and Mc Avoy, 1982). These pleas, merging with an increased concern of growing demand, are setting the stage for a more active and interventionist model of recreational management (Lime, 1976; Jubenville, 1978; Lucas, 1983; Mc Avoy and Dustin, 1983). Strategies for behavioral intervention have been so exhaustively discussed that general classification systems for control mechanisms have been developed (Lime, 1976; Mc Avoy, this volume). However, little has been done to nourish thinking on real consequences of various intervention strategies. Our systems perspective, however, tells us that an apparent solution to a problem can breed a host of secondary impacts that can foster unexpected forms of discrimination (Peterson, 1983).

Let us consider, for example, one of the most dramatic forms of intervention -- that of limiting access to the resource (Greist, 1975). The most non-differential system for distributing access to a rationed resource is through use of a lottery. Under a lottery, all interest groups would enjoy equal probability of gaining access. Yet this very asset becomes a major shortcoming in that the resource may not be allocated to those needing it the most. Those who preceive no substitutes would be treated no diffferently than those who perceive many acceptable alternatives. thus, a lottery -- which at first seems incontrovertibly fair -- fails to deliver real equity in terms of servicing demand.

Rationing by imposing entrance fees would provide just such a mechanism for allocating resources for those valuing them the most (Peterson, 1983). In effect, the potential users would be asked to put their money where their wills are; those with less intense motives would voluntarily screen themselves out. However theoretically plausible these arguments, the discouraging reality is that putting the resources up for bid biases allocation toward those with the ability to pay.

Distributing access rights on first-come, first-served basis at first seems like a logical strategy for a culture accustomed to it for most cultural and indoor recreation opportunities. The critical difference, however, is that outdoor recreational resources are frequently more distant and require longer planning horizons. The first-come, first-served strategy then would favor those who would have lower costs associated with showing up at the resource and finding it full. Included would be those portions of society with abundant leisure time and those who live close to the resource. The strategy also tends to favor those who can plan their leisure time spontaneously -- to take full advantage of changing information about the availability of opportunities. All these shortcomings could be overcome by implementing a reservation system, but this strategy is riddled with its own forms of inequity. It creates bias against those with occupations that do not allow people to plan ahead. It also creates bias against those who are unwilling to plan ahead because they treasure unstructured life styles.

Others have proposed that rationing through some assessment of merit would help ensure that the resources are distributed to those valuing them the most (Wagar, 1940). But the initial appeal of screening users according to demonstrated skills, knowledge, or motivation becomes diminished as one considers how the process exerts a bias against those with lower educational aptitudes and against those not having access to the right media or training opportunities at the right time. Still others have proposed the use of measures to make access difficult physically, thereby ensuring use of the

resource only by those with the strongest motivations (Robinson, 1975). This technique exerts a bias against those physically fragile or disabled and discriminates against those with less disposable leisure time.

So rationing -- which at first sems to be a straightforward and logical response to concerns about inequity -- becomes highly complex as the various techniques are evaluated in terms of their impacts upon the whole. Even the noblest efforts to build nondiscrimination into a rationing system by mixing various techniques will leave certain interests under represented (Stankey and Raden, 1977).

The problem of systematic bias is not confined to the rationing issue -- it creeps into virtually every form of intervention available to policy makers. Elsewhere, we have demonstrated how the imposition of heavy-handed rules and regulations to control behavior is more likely to impact on the satisfactions of the veteran users of an area (Schreyer and Knopf, 1984) . Veteran users, who have learned how to gratify their needs through pathways defined by a history of self-determined use, are more likely to perceive new controls as goal-blocking controls. We have also argued that heavy-handed behavioral control gives advantage to the people who carry quite generalized recreational needs -- that is, needs that can be met under highly variable circumstances in a broad range of environmental conditions. Their needs can be met anywhere at any time, regardless of whether controls exsist or not. Those who require more freedom to create specialized environments or behaviors in order to have their needs gratified would more likely be impacted by the institution of controls. While these concepts are complex, our point is simple: the imposition of behavioral constraint, if not prudently designed, can systematically discriminate against veteran users with specialized recreational needs. Ironically, these are the very interest the controls are often designed to protect.

Even more favored and seemingly benign indirect controls available for inducing behavioral change (Lucas, 1983; Mc Avoy, this volume) harbor their own kinds of equity impacts. Consider, for example, the seemingly innocuous strategy of site reinforcement -- which includes actions such as surface hardening, fertilization, barrier construction, vegetational management, and pathway development. The point of such actions is to deter continued degradation of the natural environment so those who treasure its attributes might be benefited. However, as we noted earlier, such improvements invite a broader range of visitors to make use of the site -- triggering a chain of social successional processes that could well lead to the displacement of the natural environment-oriented clientele that management intended to serve.

As a second example, consider the highly acclaimed strategy of using information as a means to redistribute use (Lucas, 1981; Roggenbuck and Berrier, 1981). Although it seems that information would benefit everyone, it in fact becomes useful only to those who have the time and financial resources to secure the identified alternatives. Also, the pursuit of alternatives becomes particularly expensive for those who are experiencing a disproportionate erosion of certain kinds of nearby opportunities. Thus, strong reliance on information as an intervention technique tends to exert a bias against the poor, the inadequately moble, the less resourceful, and perhaps against the urban populations who have experienced a disproportionate erosion of nearby natural environment-based opportunities. They are people who are less capable of acting upon the information given.

Our illustrations emphasize the need to develop a systems perspective in evaluating the impacts of particular management actions. Each form of intervention strategy -- be it heavy-handed or light-handed -- is laced with its own set of negative impacts on equity. Often, these impacts become clear only as one evaluates the larger impacts upon the whole, over time. Any intervention strategy, before it is enacted, must be evaluated from this broader perspective. And the evaluation must be concerned less with the

matter of producing expedient behavior change and more with the issue of who gains advantage from the action and who gets excluded or disadvantaged.

Other Sources of Inequity

Since the early writings of J. V. K. Wagar (1951), analysts of outdoor recreation policy have been convincingly weaving arguments about the erosion of rights. We have much to be grateful for in having a literature base that sensitizes us to the problem of opportunity erosion and that promotes the concept of managing for diverse clientele groups.

But precisely what is the literature sensitizing us to? It is our impression that virtually all the outdoor recreation policy literature that focuses on the exclusionary issue dwells upon concern over the erosion of opportunities to recreate in primitive settings (Sax, 1980; Dustin and Mc Avoy, 1982; Schreyer and Knopf, 1984). Virtually non-existent in the mainstream policy analysis literature are concerns about excluding the poor, the uneducated, the disabled, those of minority heritage, those oriented to urban amenities, and other groups grossly under represented in outdoor recreation (noteworthy exceptions include Hunt and Ladd, 1977). This prompts us to wonder, then, what is the real thrust of calls for more active behavioral intervention. Is our literature base truly centered on the question of equity in resource allocation? Or is it centered upon a concern for environmental protectionism? If the focus were squarely upon matters of equity, broader revelations would be made and attention would be directed toward all forms of discriminatory effects exerted by traditional management practices.

"The question becomes, then, how much should we as stewards of public resources pay attention to the existing arguments for rights and equity? Could these arguments in fact be cleverly disguised ways of maintaining elitist uses of our resources -- of promoting environmental protectionism? Do we have a protectionist minority trying to hide their specialized interest behind the cloak of public interest and ethical responsibility?"

The question becomes, then, how much should we as stewards of public resources pay attention to existing arguments for rights and equity? Could these arguments in fact be cleverly disguised ways of maintaining elitist uses of our resources -- of promoting environmental protectionism? Do we have a protectionist minority trying to hide their specialized interest behind the cloak of public interest and ethical responsibility? Does the general public really care about primitive experiences any more than they care about other kinds of opportunities that are being foreclosed through discriminatory practices of management Shouldn't debate be revolving around a more fundamental issue -- what does the public want, and who is being excluded from the existing opportunity structure?

These kinds of questions point out our need to do much more thinking about the problems of bias and equity in recreation resource decision making. We should be sensitive to the directions the prevailing orientations of our field are taking us; yet as we take on a larger system perspective, we can't help but recognize that untold specialized interests are not being adequately represented there. Without such broader perspective, we may continue to allocate scarce resources away from the interests that have been under-represented in the literature, our public forums, and thus our collective consciousness.

Conclusion: Being Sensitive to Bias

Where does our discussion leave the outdoor recreation policy maker? It seems as if we have produced more confused scenarios than clear provocative conclusions. It seems as if we have

done little more than place policy makers in a rather uncomfortable position, trapped between two conflicting cross-currents of responsibility. On the one hand, we press them with the need to recognize minority interests and strive for the equitable distribution of resources across all interest groups. On the other hand, they are faced with the reality that they cannot be all things to all people and that the expressed demands of the masses at times have to overrule the needs of the specialized few.

Although this no doubt is a perplexing posture to be in, it is a posture far more appropriate than the posture of tradition -- which exerts systematic bias in the allocation of resources through its failure to evaluate the real consequences of decision making. Clearly, as we begin to analyze our actions from the broader view of systems perspective, we will encounter complexity. But as was true for the early scientists jolted by Professor von Bertalanffy's perspectives, the complexity yields a more realistic representation of reality and cause-effect relations. We begin to see more clearly the kinds of interests that are not presently being represented in our decision making processes, and we begin to see what groups fall into disfavor as we enact our policies. We hope that systems thinking will provide the perspective that will allow forms of minority interests to become represented in decision making. We also hope that it will give perspective as we struggle with determining the appropriate roles of public policy in dealing with these interest. Certainly, the public will be better served by a more informed basis for decision making.

Literature Cited

Clark, R.N., Hendee,J.C., and F.L. Campbell. Values, behavior, and conflict in modern camping culture. Journal of Leisure Research, 1971, 3, 143-159.

Douglas, R.W. Forest Recreation. N Y: Pergamon Press, 1975, 332 pp.

Driver, B.L. and P.J. Brown. A social-psychological definition of recreational demand, with implications for outdoor recreation resource planning. In Assessing Demand for Outdoor Recreation. Washington, D.C. : USDI Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, 1975, 63-88.

Dustin, D.L. and L.H. Mc Avoy. The decline and fall of quality recreation opportunities and environments? Environmental Ethics, 1982, 4, 49-57.

Forrester, J.W. World Dynamics. Cambridge, MA.: Wright-Allen Press, 1971a, 316 pp.

Forrester, J.W. Counterintutive behavior of social systems. Technology Review, 1971b 68, 275-303.

Griest, D.S. Risk zoning -- a recreation area management system and method of measuring carryng capacity. Journal of Forestry, 1975, 73,711-714.

Hunt, J.D. America's Outdoor Recreation areas -- Playgrounds for the Affluent. Paper presented at 1969 Rural Sociological Society meeting, San Francisco, CA. Logan, UT: Utah State University Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, 1969, 31pp.

Jubenville, A. Outdoor Recreation Management. Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders, 1978.

Ladd, F.C. City kids in the absence of . . . In Children, Nature and the Urban Environment, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report NE-20. Upper Darby, PA: Northeast Forest Experiment Station, 1977, 77-82.

Lime, D.W. Principles of recreational carrying capacity. In Proceedings of the Southern States Recreation Research Workshop, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report SE-9. Asheville, NC, Southeast Forest Experiment Station, 1976, 122-134.

Lucas, R.C. Redistributing Wilderness Use Through Information Supplied to Visitors. USDA Forest Service Research Paper INT-277. Ogden, Utah: Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, 1981, 15 pp.

Lucas, R.C. The role of regulations in recreation management. Western Wildlands, 1983, 9, 6-10.

Mc Avoy, L.H. and D.L. Dustin. Indirect versus direct regulation of recreation behavior. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 1983, 1, 12-17.

Peterson, G.L. Rationing and redistributing of recreational use of scarce resources with limited carrying capacity. In S.R. Lieber and D.R. Fesenmaier (eds.), Recreational Planning and Management. State College, PA: Venture Publications,1983, 286-302.

Robinson, G.O. The Forest Service: A Study in Public Land Management. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, 137, 337 pp.

Roggenbuck, J.W. and D.L. Berrier. Communications to disperse wilderness campers. Journal of Forestry. 1981, 79, 295-297.

Sax, J. Mountains without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Presss, 1980, 237 pp.

Schreyer, R. and R.C. Knopf. The dynamics of change in outdoor recreation environments -- some equity issues. Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration, 1984, 2, 9-19.

Stankey, G.H. and J. Baden. Rationing Wilderness Use: Methods Problems and Guidelines. USDA Forest Service Research Paper INT-192. Ogden, UT: Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, 1977, 20 pp.

Von Bertalanffy, L. General System Theory: Foundations Development, Applications. New York: George Braziller, 1968, 289 pp.

Wagar, J.V.K. Certified outdoorsmen. American Forest. 1940, 46, 490-492, 524-525. And, Some major principles in recreational land use planning. Journal of Forestry, 1951, 49, 431-435.

Washburn, R. and P. Wall. Black and White ethnic differences in outdoor recreation participation: An analysis of the 1977 National Outdoor Recreation Survey data. In The Third Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan. Washington, D.C. : USDI National Park Service, 1980, 106-117.

About this article

The piece "The Problem of Bias in Recreation Resource Decision Making" was submitted by Jeff Price for publication to the last editors of the *California Ranger.* After reviewing it, it seemed as if it were a note-worthy and timely issue for the readers of the *California Ranger*.

Jeff was granted permission from Dr. Gene Lamke, Director, San Diego State University, Institute for Leisure Studies to reprint any or all of this article.

Gene Lamke is the author of " Management of Human Behavior in Outdoor Recreation Settings." Available from San Diego State University for $3.75, Department of Recreation, San Diego CA 92182.

In memory of Raymond Linder

Recently with the death of Ray Linder in a traffic accident at Big Sur, many of us lost a friend and a teacher. Ray was a wonderful person who will be missed by many, and certainly by myself.

Ray had a deep love for his work and the central coast area. I feel that a simple poem written by another man who also loved this area takes away some of the pain that comes with this passing.

A Journey Ends

I have seen death too often to believe in death.
It is not an ending . . . but a withdrawal,
As one who finishes a long journey,
Stills the motor,
Turns off the lights,
Steps from his car
And walks up the path
To the home that awaits him.

Don Blanding
West of the Sunset, 1928

ed.

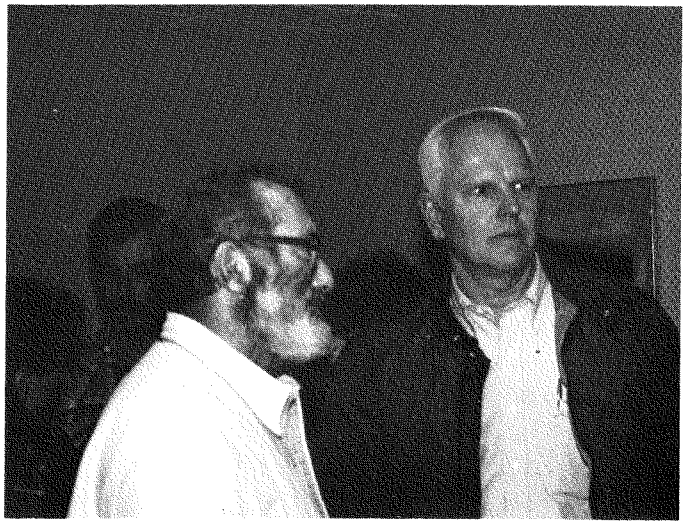
CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT

Milton M. Frincke

To dissent and oppose a popular or established point of view should not be construed as an act of disloyalty; neither should it be construed as a negative action. Quite the contrary, it may be a very positive step in reestablishing basic values and in bringing an organization back in line with its primary mission and its long-established principles and precepts. It may also lead to exciting new discoveries and programs. When asked how he discovered the theory of relativity, Albert Einstein replied, " I challenged an axiom"

Passive resignation to ideas or policies which one believes are or could be inimical to the long-term best interest of the organization is a negative action and could be ultimately very destructive. Adaptation to policies which one believes are destructive to the organization's mission is not what enlightened management or positive, dynamic leadership expects of dedicated, loyal employees. On the contrary, upbeat, positive-thinking management welcomes dissent from creative, innovative employees who on their own initiative offer constructive dissent which they believe to be in the best interest of the organization. For employees to remain silent on important isssues, which they feel strongly about and on which they differ from management, could actually be construed as an act of disloyalty. The seeds of new ideas and constructive programs are borne by people who are willing to speak out on important issues facing the organization. To merely "go with the flow" and "not make waves", is not what being a meaningful part of an organization is all about. If management believes otherwise, they need lessons in good management practices and leadership.

The constructive dissenter can be a resourceful person in crisis situations, using initiative and innovative ideas to solve problems quickly and effectively. The constructive dissenter is also able to keep the near-term goals as well as the long-term mission in mind and creatively solve problems without having to defer to supervision which may not be available for consultation and advice. In these



ALEX WIESS AND MILT FRINCKE, AT CONCORD G.E.C.

situations, when manuals are not available, we should remember that they are provided for direction and guidelines in routine situations and cannot always be relied upon in a emergency or crisis situation. Indivividual resourcefulness, frequently characterized by the constructive dissenter, cannot be replaced by a manual. Organizations that have tried to cover every known situation in a manual have been doomed to failure, and are destructive to employee morale.

There is a poem which goes as follows:

" **One ship drives east and another drives west**
With the selfsame winds that blow.
'Tis the set of the sails and not the gales
Which tells us the way to go."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

The direction and force of the winds may come from on high, but always keeping the mission in mind, there is much room for maneuvering within the confines of any organization. Set your sails and go for it. Set your sails according to the basic organizational tenets, principles, and mission;

according to your personal set of values, conscience, sense of propriety, and management style and let the winds blow as hard as they will, and from whatever direction.

Individual differences, styles, and personalities are what make an organization dynamic and healthy. Necessary rules and regulations serve as guidelines of conduct within the organization, but without dynamic, innovative, and creative-thinking people, the organization will flounder and fail. To deny people the right to creative thinking by binding them up in red tape can spell the death knell of any organization. There must be a forum for them to be properly heard.

Management must provide a positive and creative environment for people to work in if optimum performance is expected. Management by intimidation, fear, and power gesturing went out with the sweat-shop era. Vindictiveness on the part of management as a tool to control constructive dissent is an act of immaturity and ignorance and will only lead to management failure.

People cannot be expected to adapt to a system that runs contrary to their own value system or that which they perceive to be best for the organization to which they have dedicated their working career. Granted, people have a choice - passively adapt to what they believe is wrong, rebel and be fired, or constructively dissent and hope to bring about positive change. The mechanics and forum for the latter should be available in any dynamic organization which places value in individuals and their creative potential. There is nothing more constant than change, and what better place to encourage it than at all levels within the organization? We have all seen change that has been dictated from without, and it is frequently done out of total ignorance of what is truly needed. Encouraging constructive dissent from within makes for a happy camp. Working together on issues critical to the organization, in an atmospher of mutual concern and advocacy of what is best for the organization, is a very positive and constructive thing.

Where there is an abundance of dissent, management would be well advised to engage in some self-evalution and introspection to determine if their course is, indeed, a sound one, one that can withstand outside scrutiny and examination and one that they can remain comfortable with. To do otherwise is sheer arrogance, and arrogant leadership is destined for ultimate failure. History is fraught with examples of this.

Much dissent comes from the most loyal and enlightened employees who believe they have an obligation to speak out on certain issues. These are not the "non-conformists" in the usual sense. They are not trouble makers. They are frequently the most loyal of employees and certainly the most courageous. They see it as their duty to speak out, whether their remarks are solicited or not. These

" Management by intimidation, fear and power gesturing went out with the sweat shop era. Vindictiveness on the part of mangement as a tool to control constructive dissent is an act of immaturity and ignorance and will only lead to management failure"

people are aware of the exigencies of politics but believe issues of principle and integrity should transcend party politics, issues that may very well affect the basic integrity and moral fiber of an organization. Management must provide the atmosphere and forum where this type of dissent can be heard, ideas communicated and issues discussed all for the welfare of the organization.

Dissent in the formative stages of decision making is particularly important in the management process. Management should be sensitive to the need to hear input from all levels in order to make the best possible decisions. This should be particularly encouraged since it may avoid dissent later when it is more cumbersome to deal with.

When issues needing to be discussed are brought out and "put on the table," they are much easier to deal with than waiting until there is an undercurrent of discontent which can ultimately be destructive in many ways to an organization. The voice of constructive dissent heard early can avoid many

problems later.

The organization that loses its sense of mission will inevitably falter and become totally ineffective. Reacting to "brush fires" and political proclamations is in the realm of administration and may have nothing to do with the basic mission. Constructive dissent often helps to keep an organization on track and healthy in terms of performing its mission.

If management wants to be emulated then they must demonstrate by actions, not just words, a sense of mission and dedication to the basic tenets of the organization. Leadership must be inspirational, worthy of following, exemplary in deeds leading to accomplishment, and non-abusive of power.

"The organization that loses its sense of mission will inevitably falter and become totally ineffective"

Good management and leadership do not give excuses for failures. They encourage and openly consider constructive, dissenting views. Employees who are willing, in a professional way, to challenge management are of far more value to the organization than those who are timid or might court management out of fear or for some perceived personal gain. Management when challenged should be able and willing to justify their position on issues and give logical reasons behind their decisions. If mistakes are made, they should be freely acknowledged - to err is human.

Good management requires team work, high morale, a sense of mission, dedication to ideals, loyalty and a sense of accomplishment. Encouraging constructive dissent will go a long way toward achieving this ideal model.

Note ! As used in this article, the terms management and leadership are meant to be considered at any level within an organization.

Milton M. Frincke
September 18, 1986

Milton M. Frincke is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Parks Foundation of Monterey County and the Point Lobos Natural History Association, and until recently he served as a board member of the California State Park Rangers Association.

Mr. Frincke was professionally involved with the California Department of Parks and Recreation for over 33 years. He started as Seasonal Naturalist at Humbolt Redwoods State Park in 1949, and ended his career in 1982 as Deputy Regional Director for the Department of Parks and Recreation working out of the Monterey office.

His education includes a B.S. in zoology from Western Louisiana University in 1947 and Graduate Studies at UCLA in Geography and Resource Conservation, 1947-1949.

At present he is actively involved with programs for gifted children, the Sierra Club, Save-the-Redwoods League, and the Sempervirens Fund.

THE CALIFORNIA RANGER is published three times a year by the California State Parks Association (CSPRA) and the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC). Both organizations are tax-exempt corporations. CSPRA IRS # 23-7088236. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily express the views of the editor or the organization. Manuscript guidelines may be obtained by writing : Edward L. Stuckrath, Editor, P.O. Box 1219, Felton, CA 95018

TRENDS & ..... OBSERVATIONS

Viewpoints and opinions of park professionals.

Jumpsuits, Spit-shined Boots, Collar Insignia & Snappy Salutes

an opinion

JEFF JONES, SPR I
Santa Cruz Mountains District

A few months ago I declined an opportunity to lead an interpretive class for the cadet group currently at the Mott Training Center. I was going to let it go at that, fully realizing that my absence would largely go unnoticed. However, as the weeks went by I decided that perhaps the reasons I had for not teaching, after many enjoyable years of doing so, might be of interest to others.

It's the current point system which bothers me. For those of you unfamiliar with the the present arrangement, here is a summary:

-All new Cadets are first assigned to the Training Center.

-Points are earned based on test scores, field practicals, participation, attitude, etc.

-Points can be lost through a demerit system for such things as tardiness, uniform violations or other behavior deemed inappropriate. Training Center staff, instructors.

-One month prior to the end of the training cycle the points are totaled and the Cadets are ranked based on points earned.

-Based on point ranking ,Cadets then choose their first assignment from a list of statewide vacancies

JEFF JONES RANGER, SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS DISTRICT

-Cadets then continue to earn points for the remainder of the training cycle. At the conclusion a new ranking is determined based on grand totals. This final ranking would be used to break ties in the future if two competitors for a lateral transfer had the same amount of seniority.

As it stands now, because of scheduling considerations which are not always flexible, the enforcement aspect of the training accounts for the overwhelming majority of the points earned toward the ranking which determines first assignments. Interpretation and resource management, as well as other important elements, are not covered until the last portion of the program.

I decided not to teach under this arrangement because it conflicts with some of my fundamental attitudes about education, self-motivation, co-operation, and creativity. I think our Department needs employees who are vital, independent yet interdependent, creative and questioning thinkers. Yet, a new employee's first training experience rewards only excellence in conformity. It pits one Cadet against another for a prize which is all out of proportion in importance compared to the contest. A first assignment location and all that it means to a new employee and his/her loved ones is dependent on memorizing the vehicle code, climbing an six -

foot wall and wearing a baseball cap properly. Now, I know I am being facetious, and let me state clearly that I fully recognize and support the importance of quality enforcement training as well as the other components of the full Cadet program. I am also not against competition or personal accountability for learning the material presented. Let points be earned and let there be rewards for those who who score highest. But let the prize be a weekend for two at the Highlands Inn, or the pistol grips of your choice, or a pair of binoculars, not something as critical as a first assignment location. It is a mixed message that says the job is one of a generalist and then organizes the training so only the enforcement aspect carries such critical weight.

I have a great deal of respect for the Training Center staff and I am sure they are running a quality program. Even under the present guidelines. However, I thought that in previous years, without this element of heavy competition, the center staff was doing a fine job training new employees. The only reason for imposing the point system as presently organized that I can discern is control. But it verges on a jumpsuits - spit-shined boots - collar insignia & snappy salutes- type control. Somehow I thought we were different than that.

Jeff Jones has been a California State Park Ranger for the last 15 years, having worked in the following areas: Marin, Russian River, Sierra, and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Jeff has taught interpretive classes at Asilomar off and on for the last 10 years.

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS ?

NAME;_____

OLD ADDRESS_____

_____

NEW ADDRESS_____

_____

Send to Doug Bryce:
P.O. Box 28366, Sacramento, CA. 95820

THE HISTORIAN'S CORNER

It is with pleasure that the California Ranger welcomes Mike Murtz as its first column writer. Mike will be writing the the "HISTORIAN'S CORNER," which will, as the title indicates, focus on items of interest in parks past. Please look for Mike's byline in the next issue.

To kick things off, here are a few items from our past history you may find of interest ! ed.

"Our parks and preserves are not merely picnic places, they are large storehouses of memory. They are guides and councils to the weary and faltering; they are the bearers of wonderful tales to those who will listen; a solace to the aged; an inspiration to the young. And if all of this is true at present, what will it be in the future, when the congestion of an ever-increasing population in those days has changed everthing in California? These state parks will be one of the most priceless possessions of our people."

The California Conservationist
State Park System Natural Playground
January, 1936

" There is the constant problem of balancing the preservation of natural conditions with the provisions of facilities for public use in keeping with the highest values. Obviously parks are intended for human enjoyment, but there is always danger of over development, of passing the point of diminishing returns, so that satisfaction sought by many are lost to all because of excess in development and use. Many a great landscape carries in its beauty the seeds of its own destruction."

Newton B. Drury
Chiefly Speaking
News and Views
January, 1958

Several years ago Bob Culbertson, who was my supervisor at the time, posted a single page on the read file at Sunset State Beach. The information presented was of great help to me and many others working at the Pajaro Coast in developing, presenting, and implementing staff work.

It is presented here in hopes it will prove to be of interest and help to others. *editor.*

Excerpt from Personnel Information Bulletin, Office of Assistant Administrator for Personnel, Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C., August 1953

COMPLETED STAFF WORK
HOW TO DO IT

Study of a problem and presentation of its solution in such form that only approval or disapproval of the completed action is required.

1. Work out all details completely.
2. Consult other staff officers.
3. Study, write, restudy, rewrite.
4. Present a single, coordinated proposed action. Do not equivocate.
5. Do not present long memoranda or explanations. Correct solutions are usually recognizable.
6. Advise the Chief what to do. Do not ask him.

Evaluation of staff work:

If you were the Chief, would YOU sign the paper you have prepared and thus stake your professional reputation on its being right? If not, take it back and work it over; it is not yet completed staff work.

HOW TO GET IT

Assignment of a problem and a request for a solution in such a way that completed staff work is readily possible.

1. Know the problem.
2. Make one individual responsible to you for the solution.
3. State the problem to him/her clearly, precisely; explain reasons, background; limit the area to be studied.
4. Give the individual the advantage of your knowlege and experience in this problem.
5. Set a time-limit; or request assignee to estimate completion date.
6. Assure assignee that you are available for discussion as work progresses.

Evaluation of adequacy of assignment:

If you were the subordinate, would YOU consider the guidance, given at the time the assignment is made and as the work progresses, to be adequate for readily completed staff work? Adequate guidance eliminates wasted effort, makes for completed staff work.

The "How To Get It" chart was conceived and developed by H. A. Damminger, Chief, Industrial Mobilization Division, Office of Programming, Munitions Board, and Lt. Col. Edward L. Waddell, USA, Command and General Staff College. Army Information Digest, January 1953.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

9/24/86

Dear Ed,

I enjoyed reading the recent California Ranger you edited. You and others put a lot of work into it.

Please allow me a comment, though, on the style of print or type face. I found it very difficult to read. please use something more "readable" for future editions.

Sincerely,

Bill Krumbein

Annadel State Park
6201 Channel Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

9/16/86

Dear Ed,

Thanks for putting out the latest issue of California Ranger. The coverages of the speeches and issues from the CSPRA Convention were appreciated. Kudos. HOWEVER - the dot-matrix print is TERRIBLE. I waded through the articles because I fervently wanted to read them, but (I) had a headache at the end. Please change the type to give more "air" to the letters. The thick, black, blobby type puts too much strain on my eyes.

Craig,

Craig Burke

Angel Island State Park
P.O. Box 318
Tiburon, CA 94920

Right you are! If things have worked out properly, this issue of the California Ranger will have been printed with a laser writer. And it will show a marked improvement in the type face. I publish the California Ranger on my desk top with an Apple Macintosh computer and Ready, Set, Go! (desk top publishing) software. I knew the font (type face) used last was going to cause some problems; but neither I nor the association could spring for a laser printer. Since the last issue we have been able to make contact with a firm that will print my program (this issue) on their laser printer. IF, I did everything right this issue will look better; if not, please try not to shoot. I will not know which way it will go until we run the program at the printers. We will get it right next time if I failed!

Edward Stuckrath

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

Rick Parmer, President
Mike Whitehead, Vice President
Bettina Townsend, Treasure

DIRECTORS

Syd Brown
Gar Salzgeber
Bud Getty

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Installations	Denzil Verardo
Ways and Means	Jeff Price
Nominations, Honorary Members.	John Mott
Education and Training	Fred Jee
Retired Members	Joe McCall
CALIFORNIA RANGER	Edward Stuckrath
NEWSLETTER	Steve Horvitz
SPPOAC Interpretive	Donna Pozzi
Executive Manager	Doug Bryce
Environmental Issues	Gar Salzgeber

HONORARY MEMBERS

Harriet Allen	Edward Dolder	William Goodall	Joseph Knowland *
Phil Geiger	Percy French *	James Whitehead *	William Penn Mott, Jr.
Earl Hanson	Verna Dunshee *	Newton B. Drury *	Harriet Weaver
Pearl Chase*	Claud Look	Josephine Read	Harry Blaisdell, Sr. *
Walt Disney*	Everett Powell	Bertram Dunshee*	Joseph Houghteling
Howard King	Vern Whitaker	Joe Stone	Dr. Harold Biswell
Ansel Adams*	John B. DeWitt	Catherine Stone	

* deceased

PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

OFFICERS

John Ramirez, President

Cliff Lindquist, Vice President

Annette Coleman, Treasure

Maxine Ramirez, Secretary

Bill Hendrix, Coastal Rep.

Charles Tello, Southern Rep.

Doug Bryce, Executive Manager

Tom Hofsommer, Valley Rep.

Ed Stuckrath, CAL RANGER - Editor

Chris Crockett, SIGNPOST - Editor

P.O. Box 28366
Sacramento, CA 95828

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 1123
Sacramento, CA