



The CSPRA

Wave

Newsletter

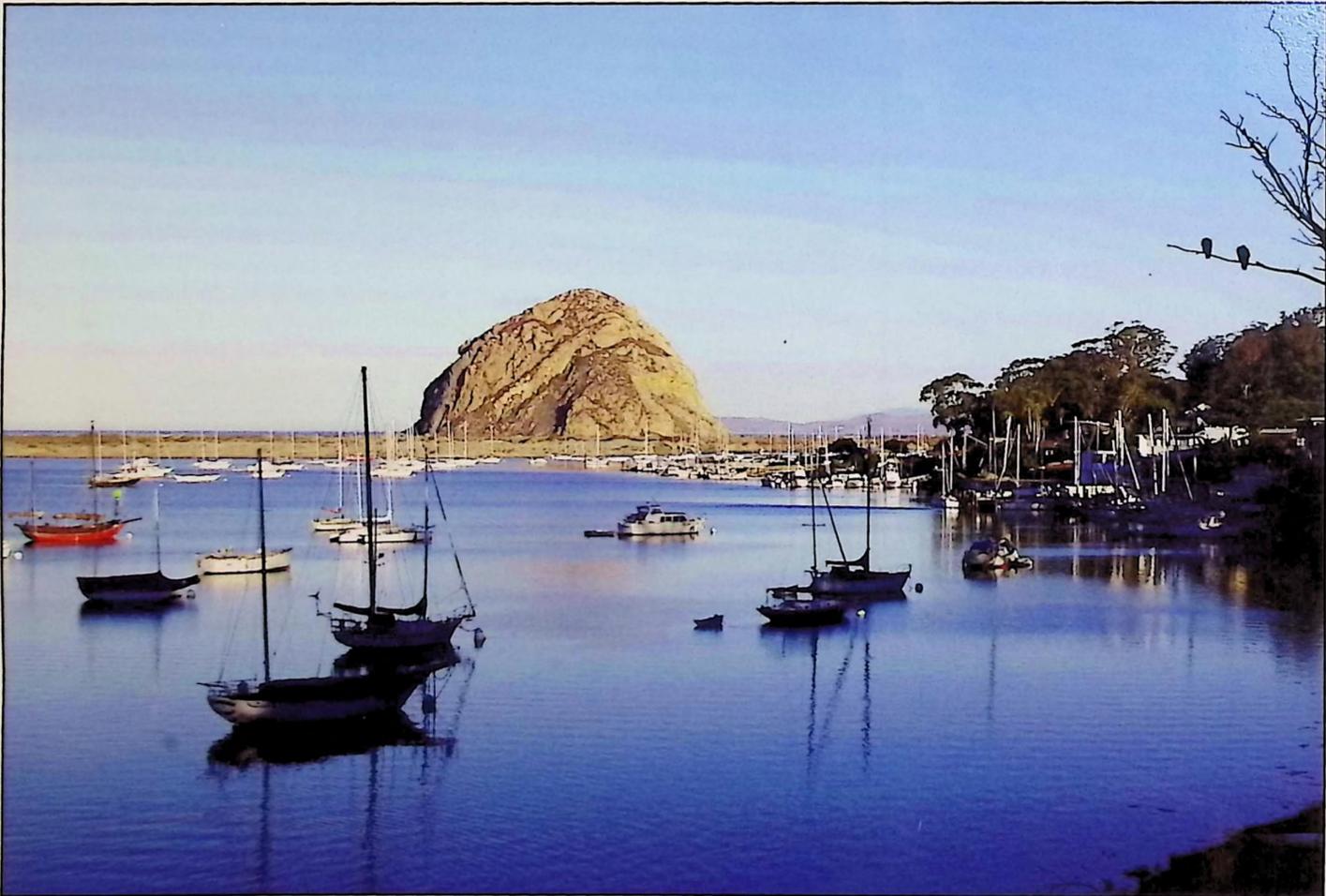
VOLUME 16, NUMBER 4

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2016

"...to support, protect, and defend the integrity of State Parks for present and future generations."

Meeting in Morro Bay





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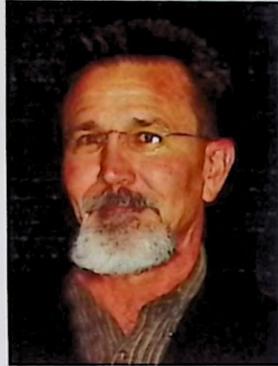
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Morro Bay, by Miles Standish

President's Message



by Victor Bjelajac, CSPRA

It was great to see so many folks at the CSPRA Membership Meeting in Morro Bay. I had the opportunity to speak with many long tenured CSPRA members and the pleasure was all mine. Thanks go out to all CSPRA members for continuing to support our efforts for the care and protection of the special places in California we call State Parks.

Thanks to the current board and membership for developing another great CSPRA program at Morro Bay and DPR staff in the district for being such welcoming hosts. Special thanks to "Petey" Weaver (Jean Rhyne, Mike Lynch and Jennifer Reeves) for sharing a bit of her wisdom and good humor with us and collectively, thanks to all the folks that supported the publication of Harriett "Petey" Weaver's book, *Me and the Mother Tree*.

It was great to have Director Mangat available to speak and listen to CSPRA members and it is encouraging to have active dialogue with the department as we move forward.

I have reflected on my role as an officer within CSPRA for the last four years and am proud of all the work that the board and membership have accomplished. CSPRA, from an organizational perspective, is in the best shape that it has been for awhile. The excellent work of the board in managing fiscal matters, reporting actions and activities, gatherings, and developing and acting on member concerns as they relate to protection of California resources has been outstanding. It has been a pleasure working with the CSPRA board and being allowed to

represent the organization in dialogue with the Department, outside agencies and other organizations.

I am sure that CSPRA will continue to thrive as we go forward and am pleased that we have such a talented slate of candidates running for vacated board and officer positions.

I did not tally the years of Department and CSPRA experience gathered together at the General Executive Council in Morro Bay (about 60 CSPRA members) but it had to be over 1,500. That represents a lot of thinking about all things "Parks" and I believe that we need to continue to tap the wisdom that we all have. As we continue in changing the way we bundle and manage our parks we must listen to those that have walked the path before us.

The fiscal and regulatory climate we are working in today is different than in the past and it is clear that we will never be completely funded from our visiting public or from general funds. This reality necessitates us, CSPRA and the Department, to look for support from organizations with the same vision that we all hold for protecting our resources and making them available for the enjoyment and awe of future generations. I believe that CSPRA will continue to assist the Department in attaining resource protection goals and welcome members to lend their support and collective wisdom in shaping the way we accomplish our unwavering vision for parks as special places, for protected resources, as well as places for reflection and respite.

It has been a privilege serving CSPRA membership, having the opportunity to meet and speak with folks who have shaped and are shaping our parks system has been both, meaningful and lasting. Thank you all for the privilege and I will see you in the Parks. *President-elect Mike Lynch takes office on Jan. 1st.*



Morro Bay Membership Meeting

Morro Bay Memories

by Pat Clark-Gray

District Interpretive Specialist

The CSPRA Annual Membership Meeting and Retiree Rendezvous was held in early October at Morro Bay State Park. Activities included a guided hike of Morro Rock with Morro Bay docents and a tour of the sailing ship San Salvador. For the ship tour we were greeted by the Education Coordinator who told us about their educational programs. Their staff were working with our PORTS staff to do distance learning programs to school groups. They also had volunteers at each port to answer questions and provide interpretation. The ship gives participants an idea of what life was like at sea, what the sailors ate and what types of jobs they had.

A highlight for me was attending the evening campfire program because **Jean Rhyme**, an Interpreter at the Mojave Sector, had been a seasonal employee in the Monterey District. I was so happy to see her do an outstanding Living History program portraying **Petey Weaver** who



Outgoing Board Members **Matt Bellah**, **Cindi Whitehead**, **Brian Cahill**, **Victor Bjelajac** and **Jeff Price**

was the first female State Park Custodian (Ranger). I felt like I had known Petey personally and Jean looks so much like the young Petey in the photographs. We were the first people to get **Harriet E. "Petey" Weaver's** book *Me and the Mother Tree* and I look forward to reading the book. I bought extra copies as I plan to have this book as my next Book Club selection.

Jeff Price gave a detailed report from the "Threats to Parks" committee. There

was also an update on the Department's Transformation Process. At the luncheon we were welcomed by **Nick Franco**, SLO County Parks Director (and former CSP Superintendent). Guest Speaker Director **Lisa Mangat** talked about the Transformation process and answered questions. **Dr. Jarrell Jackman** received the Honorary Ranger Award. He was the Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation for 25 years.

The group also had an insiders tour by Interpreter **Rouvaishyana** of the Morro Bay Natural History Museum. It was fun to be able to go to the basement and see the extensive natural history collection and the outstanding natural history library.

We hope you can attend the next CSPRA Annual Meeting at **Fort Tejon State Historic Park** on **Sept. 25 - 29, 2017**. Possible activities are a Ridge Route vehicle tour, and visits to the Ridge Route Museum, Hungry Valley SVRA, and Tomo-Kahni (a spectacular Native American site).

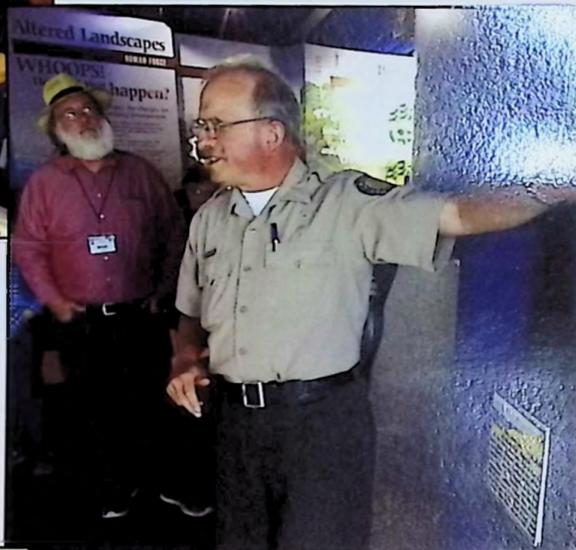


State Parks Director **Lisa Mangat** and Honorary Ranger **Dr. Jarrell Jackman**

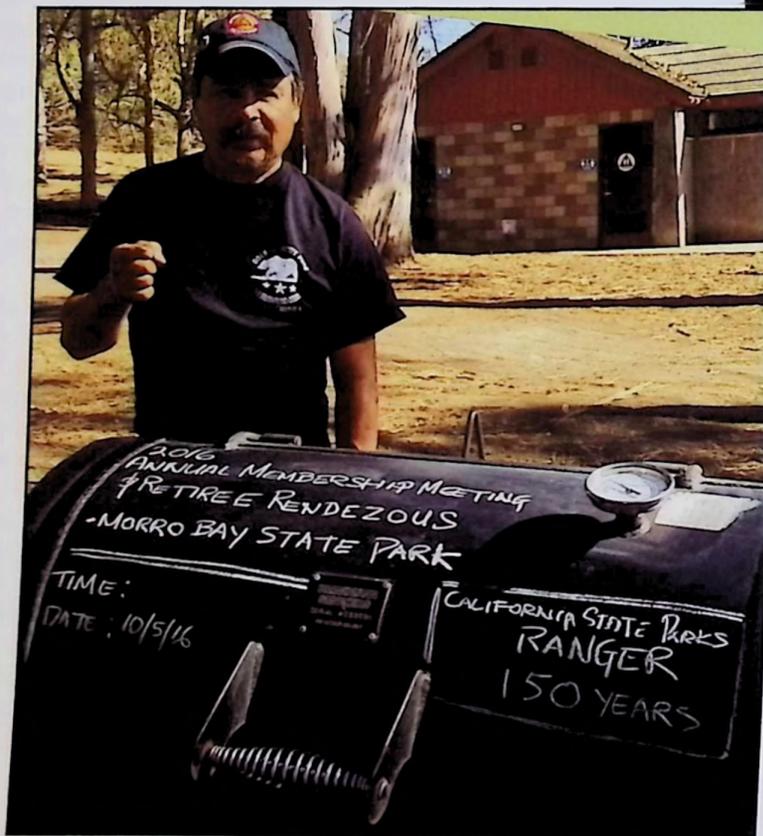
Morro Bay Membership Meeting



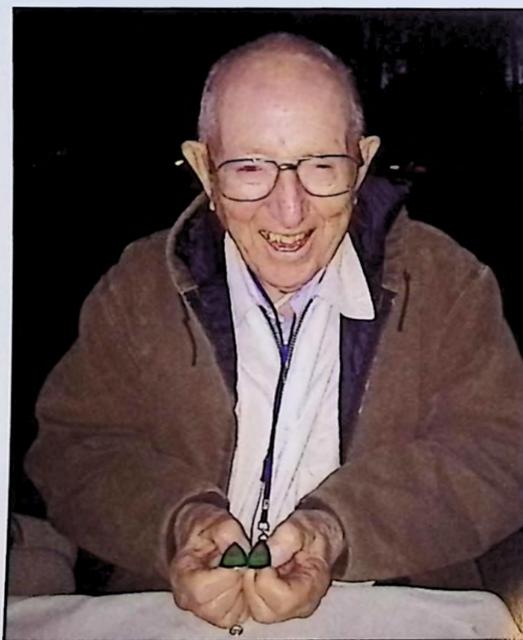
Mike Whitehead snaps a photo of the breakfast crew.
L to R: Jeff and Peggy Price, Sean and Cher Dowling



Morro Bay Interpreter Rouvaishyana guides a tour of the Natural History Museum

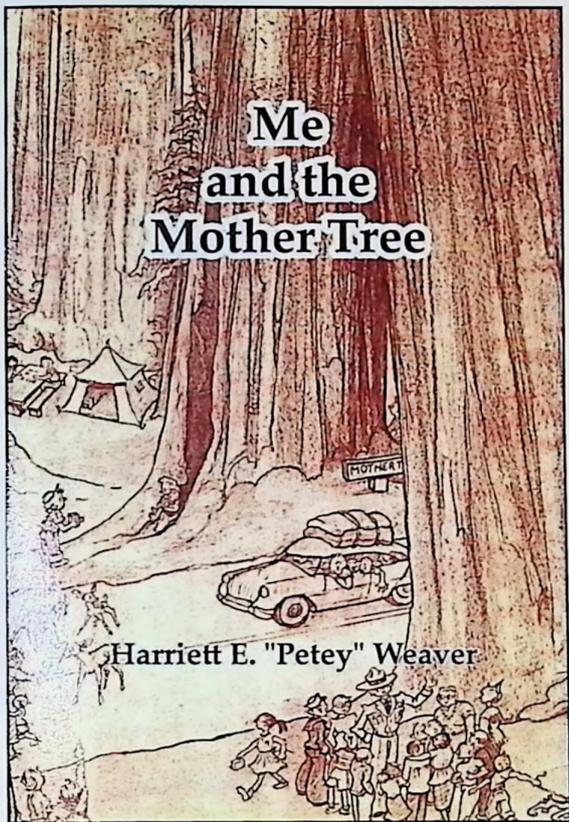


Newly-elected Board Member Frank Padilla fires up the BBQ



CSPRA Charter Member Jim Davis attended from Hawaii. Jim is holding 10-year and 40-year CSPRA membership pins to commemorate his Charter Membership of more than 50 years

Harriet "Petey" Weaver



Me and the Mother Tree

By Harriet "Petey" Weaver

\$10 + \$2.99 shipping

Petey Weaver's 404 page biography of her career in California State Parks.

Petey Weaver is considered the first woman park ranger in California State Parks. In *Me and the Mother Tree*, she recounts in vivid prose her 20 years working at what was the beginning of the California State Park System. She brings to life the early parks, some of the inimitable park visitors, and the rangers and other park personnel who operated, protected, served, and educated the public. During her park career, from 1929 to 1950, Petey served in four parks; Big Basin, Richardson Grove, Pfeiffer Big Sur, and Seacliff State Beach.

"A charming memoir by California's first woman park ranger, who served in the earliest days of California State Parks." Rodi Lee, historian and author.

"I love this book. Petey Weaver was an exceptional writer. For those who didn't live through the Depression and World War II, when many females working in our country were undervalued, this book serves as a vital time machine." Jennifer Reeves, filmmaker.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

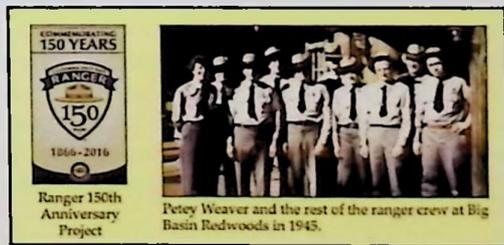
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|---|---------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Me and the Mother Tree</i> Book | _____ @ | \$10 each | = \$ _____ |
| 2. <i>California State Park Rangers</i> Book | _____ @ | \$10 each | = \$ _____ |
| 3. <i>History of CSPRA - 50th Anniversary</i> | _____ @ | \$5 each | = \$ _____ |
| Shipping/handling | | | = \$ <u>2.99</u> |
| Total..... | | | = \$ _____ |



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Meet the New CSPRA Board

President M.G. "Mike" Lynch



I am proud to have been elected CSPRA President. I will work hard on behalf of CSPRA and CSPRA members during my term in office.

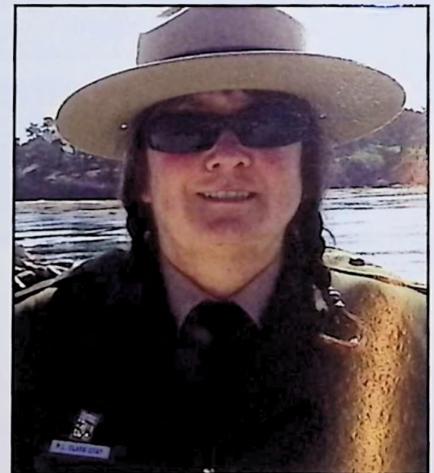
A bit about me. My park career started in April of 1972, as a PI Ranger in the Sonoma District. I finished my career (as a RA) in September of 2015, having worked as a ranger, supervising ranger, superintendent and my last year as a Park and Recreation Specialist in the Interpretation and Education Division.

My other organizational experience includes founding and serving as first president of the State Park Peace Officers Association of California (SPPOAC) and serving in a wide variety of positions in many other groups, including Treasurer of the Western Interpreters Association (WIA), CSPRA representative to the International Ranger Federation (IRF), CSPRA Officer (VP, Treasurer and Director), Secretary and Board Member of the Placer County Historical Foundation and two terms as National President of the U.S. Section of the International Police Association (IPA), the largest international police organization in the world. I am currently a Director on the Auburn Area Park and Recreation District Board of Directors and a Commissioner on the Placer County Local Area Formation Commission.

Starting in 1990, I was the originator and chief organizer and promoter of a wide variety of California State Parks anniversary events, including the 125th anniversary of the California State Park Ranger in 1991, the Resources Agency/California 100-year Anniversary in 2000, the State Park Lifeguard 50-year anniversary in 2000, the 35-year Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation anniversary in 2007, the K-9 Program 50th Anniversary in 2009, the Firearms Program Anniversary in 2011, the State Parks 150th Anniversary in 2014 and the Ranger 150th Anniversary in 2016.

Secretary Patricia Clark-Gray

I have been a member since the 1980s and I have previously served on the CSPRA board. I have attended many CSPRA conferences and helped coordinate the Interpretive tracks. I also have been a regular contributor to the WAVE throughout my career. I started off my career as a Park Aid at Folsom Lake and met my husband Ken Gray who was a Ranger. Then I worked as a Park Interpretive Specialist for the California State Railroad Museum Project. My first permanent position was as Ranger Trainee at Lake Perris SRA. Then I moved and became the Unit Ranger at the State Indian Museum. Later, I did a Training and Development assignment as an Interpreter at the State Capitol as the Volunteer Coordinator. During this time, I job-shared various positions with my friend Shana Avalos Watkins and tried to balance my career and motherhood. Then when my husband Ken transferred, I changed classifications to a State Park Guide at MSHP so I could work part-time. Later, I became a Regional Interpretive Specialist for the Monterey District which is my current position. My various classifications help me represent all classifications in the department.



I continue to work as I feel my corporate memory is valuable during the transformation efforts. I am on the Transformation Leadership Team, Volunteer Team, and am the Change Agent for Monterey District because our department needs to modernize and improve. However, we need to continue to do things we do well. Where we excel, is our dedicated and passionate employees in the field and at Headquarters. We need to invest in these employees, especially our seasonal employees. In my career, working with our amazing volunteers has been the best part of my jobs. We will continue to need these volunteers and our partners. Like many of you, I have concerns how the transformation will impact a department that I have served for over 35 years. I feel that CSPRA needs to represent all our employees and be active in the process to transform our department to be prepared for the next decade.

Thanks for your support!

Meet the New CSPRA Board

Carl Chavez

I retired as Northern Division Chief in 1998 after 33 years, with assignments starting in Bodie SHP, Pt. Mugu SRA/Leo Carrillo SB, Pismo SB, Morro Bay SP., Chief Ranger Montane Area, Manager Plumas-Eureka SP, Superintendent Eel River District, Northern Region Director and Northern Division Chief.



I founded both the Plumas-Eureka and Humboldt Redwoods Park Associations and authored *A Pathway Through Parks* and co-authored *A Year in Bodie*. Presently I am President of the Board of Directors of the Feather River Land Trust, the fastest growing land trust in Northern California, that has preserved over 44,000 acres in the Feather River watershed in Plumas, Lassen and Sierra Counties. Additionally, the FRLT has successfully provided an outdoor environment setting adjacent to all 14 schools in our region through its nationally recognized *Learning Landscape* program.

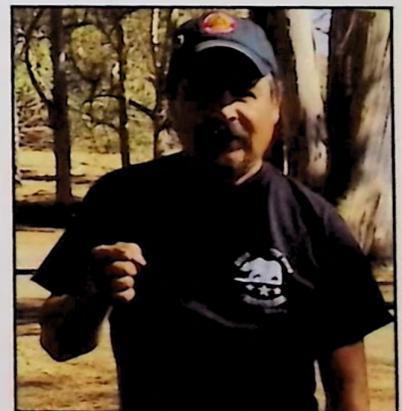
While I have only followed CSPRA activities from afar in recent years I felt that with all the efforts to look forward with the *Parks Forward* initiatives it wouldn't hurt to take a look backwards on occasion from an "Old Timer" to get a perspective how we operated back then and could again if it were warranted. I attended my first GEC in Fresno in 1968 and as Supervising Ranger at Morro Bay in 1973 helped organize that GEC. I reside in Graeagle where my wife Margaret and I have lived since retirement. I still volunteer at the Plumas-Eureka SP museum for the organization I started in 1976.

Frank Padilla

I retired from State Parks March 2005, but have continued to work for State Parks as a Retired Annuitant for the Natural Resource Division as a Fire Management Specialist. I have been involved with CSPRA for many years as a conference co-chair, provided lectures and training at our annual conference and smoked some delicious Tri-tip for a Rendezvous or two.

My intention is to push for more ways to get Rangers and other park staff to re-connect with our most important customer: the people. For without them we have no future. It's time to re-evaluate who we truly are.

It will be an honor to be part of CSPRA for you.



Meet the New CSPRA Board



Kim Preston

After 34 years with State Parks as a Ranger and then District Administrative Chief of Northern Buttes District, I had the privilege and joy of retiring with my health and sanity intact. It was a great career, and I am grateful for all the experiences and friends that State Parks provided.

Inspired to assist the recovering community, I teach Kundalini Yoga for Addictive Behaviors, and enjoy creative outlets in jewelry and making Mongolian hats, among other things. Volunteering and giving back to the world in good ways has been fulfilling.

I've been a Boy Scout leader for 20 years and currently serve as Unit Commissioner for Troop 29 in Oroville. I continue into my 13th year as an Archaeological Site Steward for Northern Buttes District. The State Parks Mission guided me throughout the years of my career and I look forward to upholding that Mission in service to the CSPRA Board of Directors.

Ann Meneguzzi

In 2014, I retired following a more than 35-year career with State Parks. After joining California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) in 1981, I participated regularly in annual meetings and gatherings through the years. In fall of 2014, I was elected to the CSPRA Board of Directors. Since my election to the Board, I have been an active Director in various CSPRA concerns.

Among my actions:

- 2015 & 2016-Park Advocacy Day Team Leader at the State Capitol
 - 2015-Senate and Assembly offices visited after Park Advocacy Day so that all legislators were contacted about significance and value of State Parks. ◦ Arranged the Coastal Cuisine Caravan for 2015 Retiree Rendezvous & CSPRA Board at Big Sur.
 - 2015-Initiated CSPRA's joining the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs (FWOC) which gave CSPRA a large group of allies for Park advocacy issues.
 - Attended Federation of Western Outdoor Conferences in 2015 and 2016. On behalf of CSPRA wrote and submitted resolutions that were adopted by Federation delegates without dissension.
- Adopted Resolutions: 2015-Washoe Meadows Restoration; 2016-Park Heritage Protection.
- 2015-Organized CSPRA field trip to Washoe Meadows SP to examine five restoration alternatives.
 - Wrote stories for WAVE that reported actions and events. Also wrote articles about CSPRA activities for FWOC's magazine Outdoor West.
 - Raised funds for the Anniversary Committee by operating State Park Memorabilia tables at events including the 2014 Yosemite Grant Commemoration, 2016 Cadet Graduation in Paradise, the Galen Clark 150th in Yosemite, and others. Collected funds have subsidized special CSPRA projects such as the recent publication of Harriet 'Petey' Weaver's memoirs.
 - Negotiated a sizable lodging discount at the Inn at Morro Bay for CSPRA's 2016 Conference & Retiree Rendezvous.
 - At the May 2016 World Ranger Congress at Rocky Mountain NP, received an Appreciation Award from the event organizer, Association of National Park Rangers, for fund raising activity which helped pay for Congress registration swag.
 - Successfully solicited significant donations during the Jr. Rangers Help campaign last spring. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as a CSPRA Board Member for the past two years. I look forward to another term and will be diligent in carrying out my duties and working to make our Association more effective.



Ikh Nart

Training Sister Park Rangers in Mongolia

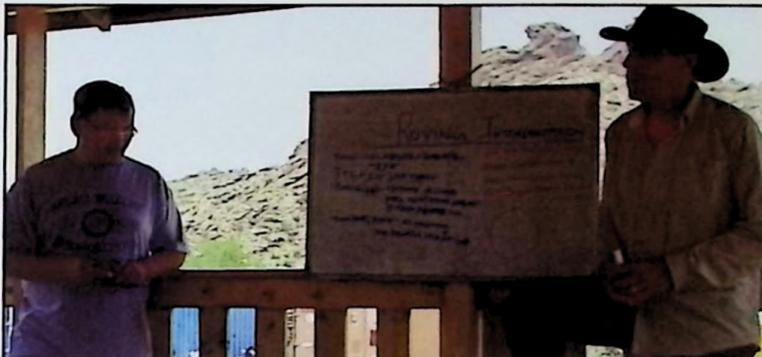
by Steve Bier, Ranger,

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

This year's Ikh Nart Sister Park Ranger Training took place from July 22nd to August 3rd, 2016 with Dr. **Mike Wells** (Retired District Superintendent Colorado Desert District), **Mark Jorgensen** (Retired Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Superintendent), and **Steve Bier** (working toward retirement State Park Ranger Anza-Borrego Desert State Park) presiding. As requested by the Ikh Nartin Chulu Nature Reserve Management, our training centered around interpretation, the Roving interpretation method, and a review of Public Resources available in the park of interpretive value.

Our friends at Ikh Nart were very excited to have us visit and shared many stories of their grand tour of the States during the World Ranger Congress in Colorado. We also met two of our newest Sister Park Rangers who were not able to make the U.S. trip, but were able to attend a day of Roving Interpretation, conducted around a traditional Mongolian Barbeque (HoreHouk).

During our stay we also assisted with some archeological survey follow up, using the parks new Drone that was provided by funds from the United Nations Development Plan(UNDP). We also visited some new Pictograph sites and a nearby source location for some of the flake materials that we find scattered thru the park. As always, wildlife was abundant, although Argali numbers in the park were down. We had great views of both white and black tailed Gazelles, Ibex all through the hills around camp, and a few Argali Ewes and lambs as we toured the area. We were told that because the area was so green, many of the Argali were scattered about the landscape and did not need to come to water near camp. We also saw more Cinereous vultures and active nests than at any other prior visit. Cinereous vultures sport a 9 foot wingspan and take up about the same airspace as a Condor which casts quit the shadow



*Ikh Nart Park Manager **Angaa Sukh Amgalanbaatar** translates as Ranger **Steve Bier** explains the art of roving interpretation*

as they pass overhead. We assisted a visiting professor from Mongolia University in collecting specimens of Fairy Shrimp, Clam Shrimp and Triops found in the ephemeral backcountry ponds and toured the many park projects funded by the now expired UNDP including a new Park Interpretation/Administration Ger, a community-built developed campground, an illegal mine rehabilitation project, and new park signage along a recently added parcel that extends the protections of the Reserve into a nearby lake bed important to migrating Gazelle and Argali. We also had the chance to assist Mongolian veterinarians with a field necropsy of a deceased Argali lamb that

we encountered near the camp.

Thanks to the wonderful donations from park staff and volunteers and volunteers **Phil Roullard** and **Callie Mack**, we were able to provide an IPAD, 2 laptop computers, binoculars, 2 GPS Units and many pairs of uniforms to help outfit our ranger staff. We were also able to supply some small multi tools, sewing kits and school supplies. Per the Sister Park Agreement all materials donated were provided by the generosity of private citizens and travel arrangements and lodging were purchased with private funds by the participants. No State time, State funding, or State resources were used or provided during this visit.



*Ranger Investigator **Anand**, retired Anza-Borrego Superintendent **Mark Jorgensen**, Mongolian University Professor **Nara**, Ikh Nart Park Manager **Angaa**, retired Colorado District Superintendent **Mike Wells** and Anza-Borrego Ranger **Steve Bier***

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs

CSPRA Goes to Washington

Ann Meneguzzi
CSPRA Board Member

Beautiful Puget Sound was the setting for the 2016 Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs (FWOC) Conference. The gathering took place September 16-18 on Bainbridge Island near Seattle. CSPRA members **Mike and Patsy Lynch, Rodi Lee, and Ann Meneguzzi** joined over 50 attendees from other clubs in several western states. The Conference theme “*Climate Change, Water Uncertainty, and Resilience through Conservation*” was explored in presentations, seminars, and discussions from Friday evening to Sunday noon. For a scheduled Saturday presentation **Ann Meneguzzi** brought and showed the film *Over Troubled Waters*. This documentary explores the history of and current troubles facing the San Joaquin-Sacramento Rivers Delta which is largest estuary on the Pacific coast of California. Ann introduced the film and led a lively after-film talk about detrimental alterations to natural river flow.

Later Saturday afternoon individual clubs gave annual activity reports. **Mike Lynch** updated the gathering about CSPRA’s doings this past year. Mike told of CSPRA’s joint commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the First Park Ranger Galen Clark with NPS rangers in Yosemite National Park. Mike reminded all at the Conference that Yosemite Valley was then a California State Park. Thus there was a



Ann with friends from the CA Alpine Club



Sylvia Milne photo

dual importance for both NPS and CSP rangers at the Yosemite celebration of Galen Clark being appointed ‘Yosemite Guardian’ in 1866.

Resolutions were submitted by individual clubs for consideration in advance of the Conference. These resolutions focused on public land use, its protection, and related topics. On Sunday morning, submitted resolutions were presented to Federation of Western Outdoor Club delegates for approval or rejection. This year more than fifteen proposed resolutions were discussed, argued, and sometimes amended before FWOC delegates voted to adopt or reject each resolution. CSPRA’s resolution on Park Heritage Protection (co-sponsored by the California Alpine Club) was approved as submitted without dissent or modification. This is the second year in a row that CSPRA’s resolution has been adopted by the Federation of Outdoor Clubs without any argument! (See elsewhere in this issue for the Park Heritage Protection Resolution) During

FWOC’s annual business meeting following the resolution consideration, **Ann Meneguzzi** was elected to serve another year as a California Vice-President for the Federation.

Meeting park-loving people from clubs throughout the West was

great fun during our time on Bainbridge Island. Attendees share an enjoyment of recreation in beautiful outdoor landscapes and realize that attention is needed to keep our parks and natural areas safe. Islandwood, the Conference location, provided delicious meals and comfortable rooms set in gorgeous, wooded grounds. Conviviality was pervasive at Conference sessions as well as during meal and relaxation times.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs was established in 1932 for “the Mutual Service and Promotion of the Proper Use, and Enjoyment and Protection of America’s Scenic Wilderness and Outdoor Recreation Resources”. CSPRA joined the Federation in 2015 to gain a stronger public voice in our efforts to protect parks. Our membership in the FWOC gives us allies who make our voice stronger. Member clubs share common values about enjoying nature and protecting public lands. Attending these annual gatherings is a vital way to keep up connections with these partners. And it’s also an opportunity to see and explore scenic places like Bainbridge Island. At the Bainbridge Island conference site, we enjoyed beautiful surroundings, comfortable lodgings, and delicious meals. All the while, we had interesting conversations, made friends and learned more about what we treasure. Find out about FWOC at: www.federationofwesternoutdoorclubs.org

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs

Park Heritage Protection

FWOC Resolution 2016-3, submitted by California Alpine Club and California State Park Rangers Association

BACKGROUND: In early 2016, a well-publicized contract dispute over usage rights to historic place names in Yosemite National Park outraged that park's visitors and fans when it led to the renaming of popular venues. Delaware North, the departing concessionaire, claimed ownership of the original names of various lodgings and retail service sites even though those facility names predated that concessionaire's 23 year presence in Yosemite NP. During its 23 years as the NPS contracted concessionaire in Yosemite, Delaware North operated various lodging & business facilities such as the **Ahwahnee Hotel, Yosemite Lodge, Curry Village, and Badger Pass Ski Area.**

These famous names predate Delaware North's presence as the concessionaire for visitor facilities in Yosemite. Often there has been an historic significance to the existing and well-known names. Unknown to the NPS, Delaware North trademarked the historic names at some time during its tenure as concessionaire.

When Delaware North lost the facilities operating contract to another company, it claimed to "own" the customary names and demanded to be paid \$51 million to transfer the trademark rights to the popular historical names. The NPS is seeking to have Delaware North's trademarking of the pre-existing Yosemite facility names declared void.

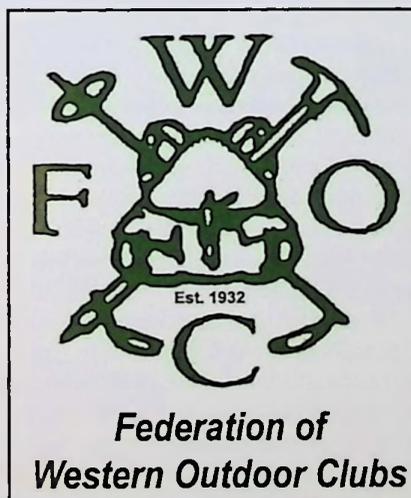
While the contract dispute continues to be fought in court, new signs with unfamiliar names have replaced the ones park visitors have known and used since establishment. Park visitors are confused and angered by the loss of what was there before. The popular view is that these iconic park names were hijacked and that the trademark claim is a violation of the public trust. People believe that Yosemite is a national treasure and the facilities there belong collectively to the people of the United States.

This contract dispute over Yosemite facility names has drawn attention to the importance of protecting familiar park names from being claimed by businesses contracted to provide services in parks.

RESOLUTION: The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs supports California Heritage Protection legislation and other measures that prohibit state park concession, contractor and others from the ability for a concessionaire or contractor to claim a trademark, copyright or other ownership interest in any name associated with a state park unit or feature.

FURTHER RESOLVED: The FWOC Executive Committee is authorized to support in the name of FWOC other similar legislation, state, federal or local, that protects the iconic names associated with national, state or local parks and other protected natural and cultural sites from concession and other business entities being able to copyright or trademark these names to the exclusion of the agency owning, managing or operating these protected areas.

The California Heritage Protection bill, AB2249, was signed by Governor Brown in September.



CSPRA To Review Bodie SHP Threats

by Jeff Price, CSPRA Threats Committee

At the October 6, 2016, Annual Membership Meeting in Morro Bay, we discussed current threats to structures at Bodie SHP.

CSPRA will soon be revisiting threat issues at Bodie once again, but this time we will be addressing internal threats from lack of funding, maintenance and protection. We are hearing from members that many historic buildings that were to be kept in a "state of arrested decay," are not being properly cared for and some are already falling down due to neglect . . . looks like we may need to resurrect SAVE BODIE! but from a different perspective.



Photos showing current deterioration for several prominent structures at Bodie SHP

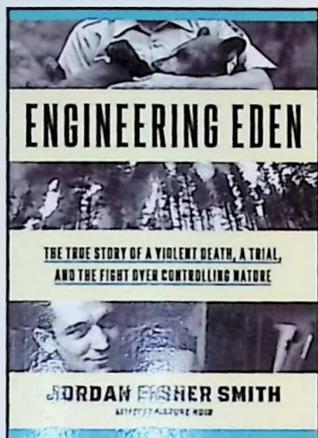


Book Review

ENGINEERING EDEN

The True Story of a Violent Death, A Trial and the Fight over Controlling Nature

by Jordan Fisher Smith (Crown, 2016)



Many of you have enjoyed *Nature Noir*, Jordan Fisher Smith's first book (2005) about his years as a ranger at Auburn State Recreation Area. His new book, *Engineering Eden*, was released this year. It is also available as an audio book from Blackstone Audio as a CD or a downloadable MP-3.



Book Review by David Gessner, *Wall Street Journal*

While Jordan Fisher Smith has sometimes been accused of being a nature writer, his newest work shows that the label has never quite fit. One does not usually associate a genre that celebrates butterflies and acorns with such an intensely reported, rousing and ambitiously envisioned book as *Engineering Eden*. This is a book that, while it brims over with descriptions of beautiful places and provides a primer of environmental thought over the past century, weaves together a dramatic court case in Los Angeles, a grizzly-bear attack, and a surprisingly fascinating debate over what constitutes the word “natural” when it comes to national parks, as well as enough characters, complete with back stories, to fill a Leon Uris novel.

Mr. Smith cuts between these subjects as if he were writing a long, braided essay; the overall effect is a little like watching the best narrative television, with each thread creating suspense. He quotes both Darwin's observation that plants and animals are “bound together by a web of complex relations” and John Muir's that “when we pick up one thing in the universe we find it hitched to everything else.” Connectivity is both his theme and method.

Given this, we could begin with any thread, but the thread that Mr. Smith chooses is a court case in 1975 in which a charismatic lawyer, Stephen Zetterberg, represented the Walkers, a couple from Alabama who lost their son in a grizzly-bear attack in Yellowstone National Park. The suit was filed against the United States, more specifically against the Park Service, and contended that the service had been negligent. To prove his case, Zetterberg had to educate the judge about conservation and about how we have chosen to manage our national parks, which gives Mr. Smith the chance to do the same for his readers.

Book Review by Dave Van Cleve, retired Colorado Desert District Superintendent and author of *Have a Nice Day Job*

Thank you, Jordan Fisher Smith, for a magnificent book. I tell people there are rangers who retire and write a book (okay, one lifeguard too), and there are also writers who spent part of their lives as rangers. Jordan is in the latter category. I really enjoyed reading and thinking about the discussions about whether park managers should “let nature take its course” or intervene to help create and sustain a desired condition in the parks they manage. This issue has been bandied about for decades and continues to provoke serious thought today. This is an important work that bears your attention. It is a short distance indeed from the controversial policies of the National Park Service to issues that should be high priorities for State Parks (prescribed burning, climate change adaptation, forest restoration, and what happens when one protected species [mountain lion] is eating another [desert bighorn sheep]. What do you manage for in that case?

Obviously, the hook here is the encounter between a grizzly and a human, with an unfortunate but predictable outcome. Mr. Smith, however, takes the reader behind the curtain into the inner workings of the National Park Service to discover the backstories that created the conditions for this tragedy and many others. These include the wrangling over grizzly bear management policies between scientists and the Park Service, and between respected scientists themselves. The coverage of the history of the Park Movement, the evolution of scientific thought, and the application of science to real-life management decisions all add value to this book. Most intriguing and thought-provoking is the analysis of the biggest argument in park resource management – whether to let “nature” take its course, or whether park professionals should intervene to help create and sustain desired conditions in parks. Mr. Smith spent innumerable hours with victims, their families, scientists, and park managers to create this meticulously researched and splendid work.



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CALIFORNIA STATE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION

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