



THE SIGNPOST

Signpost Newsletter

First Quarter 2025

President's Message:

When you read this, we will be just over a month away from our 2025 California Parks Training Conference. We have many great sessions planned for the attendees. Our keynote speaker, Donald Forgione, will discuss the “Ranger First” philosophy on March 18th. He and I recently discussed PRAC and the conference on his Tailgate Talks podcast (see link below). On the same day, Captain Dan Willis (ret) will present on first responder and employee wellness. We will also have a four-hour training on Search and Rescue, an 8-hour Title 22 First Aid refresher course, and an 8-hour Basic Trail Maintenance course.

The deadline to book your room is February 21st, so please set that up soon if you haven't already.

To learn more about the conference and to find links to registration, bookings, and payment, visit the conference page: <http://www.calranger.org/2025conf.html>.

This issue of *The Signpost* features a new section called “Codes to Know,” which will discuss the various state laws park rangers should know. I hope you find it informative, and I look forward to seeing many of you in Reno.



- Tailgate Talks podcast: <https://sites.libsyn.com/460908/park-ranger-association-of-california>
- Conference Schedule: <http://www.calranger.org/download/prac25conf.pdf>
- Conference Registration: <http://www.calranger.org/download/prac2025reg.pdf>
- Conference Registration Payment:
<https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/RHB9XJ4NNUQBG>
- Conference Hotel: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/rnomtup-pra25-69f6e610-7f95-4650-8b17-14bf122c0552/>

President,
Matt Cerkel

Introduction to Our New Nevada Regional Director By Celia Walker



My name is Celia Walker, and I am a Park Ranger for Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space in Nevada. I have been working with Washoe County for 11 years and thoroughly enjoy my job and the daily life of being a Park Ranger. I grew up in Sacramento, CA, and have lived in Ukiah and Fallbrook, CA, before moving to Boise, ID, and then down to Reno, Nevada, where my home has been since 2008. I have been



married for 20+ years, and we have a 13-year-old daughter and a 19-year-old son. We enjoy hiking, camping, traveling, and exploring new places as a family.

On my professional side, I graduated from CSU Sacramento with a Recreation Resource Management degree and decided that I wanted to become a Park Ranger while working for California State Parks as a Senior Park Aid. Life had different ideas, and I ended up in many different jobs including owning my own business, a restaurant supervisor, an animal control officer, a high school librarian, a swim coach, a crew supervisor for California Conservation Corps, and about a dozen other job experiences.

I took the long way around but finally ended up where I wanted as a Park Ranger with Washoe County. I oversee twelve parks in my district, including horse arenas, an archery range, a sports complex, trailheads, and a nature preserve.

The aspect that I like best about being a Park Ranger is that every day is different; the good outweighs the bad, and I can make a positive change in people's lives through their experiences in the outdoors.

I am looking forward to being involved in PRAC, meeting new people, and gaining new perspectives through outside agencies.

Park Closures

By Norma Saldaña

It's that time of year again, when we hear "Red Flag Warning" all over the news. Perhaps your weather app alerts you on your phone or you see it on social media. Over the last few weeks in Southern California, we have felt firsthand the devastating impacts of these conditions. Fires have ravaged over large swaths of open spaces, burned homes and buildings.



Red Flag Warning Alert. Source: Fox News.

But does this warrant the closure of open space areas? This wouldn't be the only time that landowners close open spaces. Previous adverse weather conditions in Southern California have predominantly been focused on significant rain events due to the large clay content on the trails which make for muddy conditions. This makes it difficult for first responders to access trails and can be damaging to the tread of the trail and damage vegetation. In nearby Arizona, several Phoenix trails closed during an Excessive Heat Warning issued by the National Weather Service. The dry and hot weather conditions are no joke.

And when warranted, trails may close briefly during the hottest parts of the day or for a longer stretch of time. Water, or lack thereof isn't the only cause for concern. Let's not forget about Hurricane Hilary (downgraded to Tropical Storm), which also prompted closure of coastal areas due to its strong wind gusts and the [first ever tropical storm watch in California](#). And speaking of the coastline, what about California King Tides?

There are many reasons that may warrant a closure. But *how* do agencies go about closing trails and open spaces that they manage? From public notices posted on trailheads, e-mails sent via distribution lists, or closing parking lots. What are others doing to keep people off the trails when hazardous conditions are present? Some of the agencies across California manage thousands of acres of open space—while others only a few hundred. Undoubtedly, closure methods vary based on the size and resources available to do so in a timely manner.

If a full closure isn't warranted, what other measures are put in place to keep both staff and visitors safe? What activities may be prohibited? If you visit Chino Hills State Parks during a rain event, park trails are closed. Did you catch it? *Park trails*? That means that paved areas may be open and can be walked on. Sometimes it's not all or nothing, there



may be some parts that are deemed more environmentally sensitive or pose a greater risk due to trail conditions.

The screenshot shows the 'Alerts' page for Chino Hills State Park. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, FIND A PARK, WHAT'S NEW, JOBS, PROGRAMS, and EXPLORE, along with a search icon. On the right side, there is a vertical menu with categories like 'Just for Kids', 'Recreation', 'Rolling M. Ranch Campgrounds', 'School Programs', 'Scouting Programs', 'Special Events: Permits & Facilities', 'Trail Etiquette & Safety', 'Volunteer Opportunities', and 'Spring Wildflowers'. The main content area displays three alerts:

- 3 HOURS AGO | INLAND EMPIRE STATE PARKS**
● PARK CLOSED MONDAY, JANUARY 20
 Chino Hills State Park will be temporarily closed to the public from Monday, January 20, through Wednesday, January 22, due to a new Red Flag Warning issued by the National Weather Service. This closure is necessary to ensure public safety during the heightened wildfire risk.
 The park is expected to open on Wednesday, January 22. Campers with reservations during the closure period will receive a cancellation notice with additional information. We deeply apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate visitors patience during these closures. We will provide additional updates the Red Flag Warning is extended.
 Share
- 3 DAYS AGO | INLAND EMPIRE STATE PARKS**
● PARK OPEN!
 The park is now open! We are no longer under a red flag warning. All trails and park facilities are now open.
 Share
- 7 DAYS AGO | INLAND EMPIRE STATE PARKS**
● CHINO HILLS STATE PARK CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE (1/12/25)
 High wind conditions continue to impact Chino Hills State Park, prompting another temporary closure to ensure safety and reduce wildfire risks.
 The Red Flag Warning issued by the National Weather Service remains in effect, with strong winds and low humidity creating dangerous wildfire conditions. To protect both the park and the surrounding communities, Chino Hills State Park will remain closed through Thursday, Jan. 16. During this closure, all trails, facilities, and access points remain closed to the public.
 This proactive closure helps minimize the potential for wildfires in a park bordered by residential neighborhoods. We understand the importance of maintaining public safety during these conditions and appreciate your cooperation as we work to protect visitors, staff, and nearby homes.
 Weather conditions are being monitored closely, and updates about park operations will be provided as soon as they are available. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we navigate these red-flag conditions.
 Share

Park Alerts page from Chino Hills State Park indicating several recent closures as seen on 1/19/25.

As we all know, conditions are subject to change and each closure event may be unique. If there's one thing we know as park rangers, it's best to plan ahead. Don't be afraid to ask



Staff for more information. There may not be any signs when you get to the trailhead, as someone before you may have turned it over. Or perhaps the wind knocked it down. The City of Phoenix also has a [“Take a Hike. Do It Right”](#) page on the City website to inform visitors of how to plan ahead, like Leave No Trace principles, but with specific language to prepare visitors of Arizona’s dry weather conditions.

For those that don’t close during a Red Flag Warning, perhaps prohibitive activities may include limits on gas powered tools that may cause incidental sparks while performing maintenance. In January, the Pasadena Fire Chief activated [Red Flag Warning and Parking Restrictions](#) within the city.

-  **Watch the Weather:**
Yes, “It’s a dry heat” – but Arizona’s temperature can be deceiving and deadly. Hike when it’s cool outside, try early mornings and evenings when there’s more shade.
-  **Dress Appropriately:**
Wear proper shoes, clothing, hat and sunscreen.
-  **Bring Water:**
Hydrate before you go. Have plenty of water, more than you think you need. Turn around and head back to the trailhead before you drink half of your water.
-  **Keep in Contact:**
Carry a mobile phone.
-  **Team Up:**
Hike with others. If hiking solo, tell someone your start and end times, and location.
-  **Be Honest:**
Do you have a medical condition? Asthma, heart problems, diabetes, knee or back problems? Don’t push yourself! (Even trained athletes have been caught off guard by getting dehydrated on Arizona trails.)
-  **Don’t Trailblaze:**
Enjoy the Sonoran Desert’s beautiful and undeveloped landscape, but please stay on designated trails.
-  **Take Responsibility:**
Don’t be “that person” – the one who wasn’t prepared, shouldn’t have been there for health reasons or ignored safety guidelines. Be the responsible hiker, who takes a hike and does it right!

City of Phoenix: Take a Hike Do It Right.

Though, this isn’t anything new—the Pasadena City Council unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Public Safety Committee to implement the proposed restrictions on parking within the urban-wildland interface (UWI) on days of extreme fire hazard, also known as Red Flag days since 2009.

The Irvine Ranch Conservancy created the [Orange County Fire Watch program](#), managed



by Irvine Ranch Conservancy Staff in an effort to reduce wildfires through education, early reporting and deterrence. With proper training, volunteers provide an extra set of eyes on these spaces and provide information to park visitors about why certain activities may be prohibited or why trails may be closed. For those fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers, what else can volunteers do to help during these closures? Are they also prohibited from performing certain activities?

What happens when an incident occurs during these conditions? Rain versus red flag warning conditions provide different sets of challenges that may limit response time for staff. Is there a plan or protocol to evacuate the trails safely, if they do remain open? Is it recent? What's the practice to alert the visitors on the trail? Do trucks have PA system to broadcast? Will first responders have access to these spaces? Are they familiar with alternative access points that may not be marked on official public maps? Do staff have the tools and equipment necessary to respond? Perhaps chainsaws to quickly cut and move large tree branches now blocking the trails after a strong windstorm? 4WD capabilities or trucks or even ease of access to tools you already have—but back at the office that's 30 minutes away from the trails.

Well, there's never a better time like the present to think about these things. It's important to ask these questions and be prepared. What are you doing to stay safe? And better yet, as a visitor, what can you do to stay more informed?

Codes to Know

By Matt Cerkel

In this new section of *The Signpost*, I will discuss various laws relevant to park rangers, and I may also discuss case law in future issues.

The first law that rangers should know is Public Resource Code section 4022, which defines who may use the ranger job title in California. Per the Code, only State Parks, Cal Fire, and peace officers may use the ranger, forest ranger, or park ranger title. The exempt agencies



that were using the job title prior to 1990 are Federal agencies.

Impact: Any agency that has established a ranger or park ranger program in California since 1990 is legally required to appoint their rangers as peace officers.

PRC 4022.

(a) The titles of ranger, park ranger, and forest ranger, and derivations thereof, may only be used by persons who are peace officers under Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, employees of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or employees of the Department of Parks and Recreation classified as State Park Ranger (Permanent Intermittent). Any person, other than a peace officer or employee of the Department of Parks and Recreation, as described in this section, or employee of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, who willfully wears, exhibits, or uses any authorized badge, insignia, emblem, device, label, title, or card of a ranger, park ranger, forest ranger, or a derivation thereof, to identify the person as a ranger, park ranger, or forest ranger, or who willfully wears, exhibits, or uses any badge, insignia, emblem, device, label, title, or card of a ranger, park ranger, or forest ranger, which so resembles the authorized version that it would deceive an ordinary, reasonable person into believing that it is authorized for the use of a ranger, park ranger, or forest ranger, is guilty of a infraction.

(b) Subdivision (a) does not apply to positions and titles of agencies of the United States government or to any local agency which is officially using any title specified in subdivision (a) as of January 1, 1990.

(Added by Stats. 1989, Ch. 351, Sec. 1.)

https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PRC§ionNum=4022.&article=1.&highlight=true&keyword=%22park%20ranger%22

If a local agency park ranger is a peace officer, Penal Code section 830.31(b) grants them their authority. The exception to this is park rangers working for a Municipal Water District. Municipal water district park rangers are given authority by Penal Code section 830.34(d).

830.31.

The following persons are peace officers whose authority extends to any place in the state for the purpose of performing their primary duty or when making an arrest pursuant to Section 836 as to any public offense with respect to which there is immediate danger to person or property, or of the escape of the perpetrator of that offense, or pursuant to Section 8597 or



8598 of the Government Code. These peace officers may carry firearms only if authorized, and under the terms and conditions specified, by their employing agency.

(b) A person designated by a local agency as a park ranger and regularly employed and paid in that capacity, if the primary duty of the officer is the protection of park and other property of the agency and the preservation of the peace therein.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 795, Sec. 1. (SB 1466) Effective January 1, 2013.)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN§ionNum=830.31.&highlight=true&keyword=park%20ranger

830.34.

The following persons are peace officers whose authority extends to any place in the state for the purpose of performing their primary duty or when making an arrest pursuant to Section 836 as to any public offense with respect to which there is immediate danger to person or property, or of the escape of the perpetrator of that offense, or pursuant to Section 8597 or 8598 of the Government Code. Those peace officers may carry firearms only if authorized and under terms and conditions specified by their employing agency.

(d) Persons employed as a park ranger by a municipal water district pursuant to Section 71341.5 of the Water Code, if the primary duty of the park ranger is the protection of the properties of the municipal water district and the protection of the persons thereon.

(Amended by Stats. 2004, Ch. 799, Sec. 1. Effective September 27, 2004.)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN§ionNum=830.34.&highlight=true&keyword=%22park%20ranger%22

Impacts and notes: Both sections define the park ranger’s primary duty and lets the employing agencies decide whether the rangers are armed. Therefore, all other California laws and peace officer requirements apply to any park ranger granted authority from PC 830.31(b) and PC 830.34(d). It should be noted that the Penal Code does not mention other ranger titles being granted peace officer authority or powers. This differs from Public Resources Code section 4022. The practical impact of this is despite what PRC 4022 states about peace officers, per the Penal Code, only park rangers are peace officers since actual peace officer authority is granted by the Penal Code, not the Public Resources Code.

The final section I will cover in this article is Penal Code section 830.10.



830.10.

Any uniformed peace officer shall wear a badge, nameplate, or other device which bears clearly on its face the identification number or name of the officer.

(Amended by Stats. 1989, Ch. 1165, Sec. 38.)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN§ionNum=830.10.&highlight=true&keyword=badge

This is a simple law, if you are a uniformed peace officer you must wear a badge, name plate/tape or an identifying number. If you wear a cloth or embroidered badge on polo shirts or Class B or C uniforms, you must also display your name or ID number.

In the next issue, I will discuss the laws of arrest for peace officers, public officers and private persons.

Under the Flat Hat

By Matt Cerkel, President





Many of you know my fondness for this statement:

“Park rangers are protectors, explainers, hosts, caretakers, people who are expected to be knowledgeable, helpful, courteous and professional: people who find you when you’re lost, help you when you’re hurt, rescue you when you’re stuck, and enforce the law when you or others can’t abide by it.”

In 2020, I wrote a proposed description and mission statement for my employer. While it was not adopted, it reflects my philosophy on what the park ranger program should strive to do. Feel free to use it. This philosophy is reflected in how I train new rangers when I serve as their field training officer.

The Park Ranger Program

Mission Statement:

The Marin Municipal Water District’s Park Ranger program provides protection, safety, and security to the district’s watershed lands and the patrons who enjoy them. This is accomplished through the presence of highly visible peace officers trained as wildland firefighters and emergency medical technicians on the district’s watershed lands. These rangers focus on the quality of life and natural resource protection issues and enforce laws when necessary.

The Park Rangers:

Marin Municipal Water District’s rich and diverse watershed lands, including the Mount Tamalpais Watershed, are protected by the Marin Municipal Water District’s Park Rangers. As full peace officers, wildland firefighters, and emergency medical technicians, park rangers are prepared to protect the district’s watershed lands and those who use these great natural resources from all kinds of dangers.

Each day, regardless of weather, park rangers patrol nearly 22,000 acres of district watershed lands by vehicle, boat, UTV, ATV, bicycle, or foot. Each ranger is responsible for a portion of the watershed as part of the district’s Ranger Stewardship Program. Through the Stewardship Program, each ranger has “ownership” and provides stewardship of a particular area of watershed lands and is the district’s point of contact for issues in that area.

Additionally, several park rangers reside on the watershed lands and provide a 24-hour presence. The park rangers respond to emergencies and special events anywhere and anytime.



Search and Rescue

Park rangers organize wildland search and rescue operations on district watershed lands in conjunction with Marin SAR and the Marin County Sheriff. These missions include searching for lost persons and rescue operations for persons in wild and remote areas. Search and rescue operations often lead rangers into remote, wild areas on watershed lands and neighboring jurisdictions when requested. Their knowledge of emergency medical services and land navigation is frequently critical to the success of a mission.

Emergency Medical Services

All district park rangers are Emergency Medical Technicians. The rangers respond day or night and, in all conditions, to various medical emergencies on district watershed lands and neighboring jurisdictions. Due to the remote location of the watershed lands, the rangers are often the first EMS responders on the scene when emergencies occur. Rangers work closely with Marin County Fire Dept. and other EMS providers to provide seamless emergency medical care to those using the district watershed.

Law Enforcement

Park rangers are fully sworn peace officers with the same level of authority as a deputy sheriff or a city police officer. When necessary, the rangers make arrests and issue citations for violations, infractions, misdemeanors, and felonies that occur within District watershed lands, including failure to pay entry fees, vandalism, illegal fires, weapons violations, fish and game violations, resource protection violations, dogs that are not on leashes, bicyclist and vehicle violations, illegal camping, swimming in public drinking water, and drugs or alcohol violations. The park ranger program aims to protect District watershed lands and provide park visitors and their families with a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. Park rangers have primary jurisdiction in all Marin Municipal Water District watershed lands.

Park rangers may also perform law enforcement services off district watershed lands and zones of impact. They do not have primary jurisdiction over parks outside of district watershed lands. Rangers also have concurrent jurisdiction over what is known as the Zone of Impact, an area located just off District watershed lands that may affect watershed lands or are affected by watershed activities. An example would be a trail in a neighboring park that continues onto watershed lands, or a non-district roadway surrounded by district watershed lands.



Professional interaction with visitors and a balanced combination of education and enforcement by our park rangers help to accomplish this goal. Each day, regardless of weather, a ranger may patrol their assigned areas by vehicle, boat, ATV, UTV, bicycle, or foot.

Wildland Fire Protection

Wildland fire protection, including prevention and suppression, has been a traditional role of the park ranger's job. The district's rangers supplement the Marin County Fire Department's response to the district's watershed land. The ranger patrol trucks also serve as Type 6 or 7 fire engines that can quickly respond to the entire watershed. The rangers have also been trained to use high-performance portable fire pumps in roadless areas accessible only by boat or foot. Each ranger is trained and equipped for immediate response to outbreaks of wildfires.

Education/Outreach

As the district's ambassadors on the watershed, the park rangers promote an understanding of watershed lands and the proper use of natural resources. They teach adults and children how to avoid life-threatening situations while fostering natural resource protection and responsible use of district watershed lands.

Ranger Stewardship Program

The Marin Municipal Water District Park Rangers are organized so that each Ranger has ownership and provides stewardship of a particular area of the district's watershed lands. The attached map identifies each ranger and the territory they cover.

Rangers are available by email (see below) if you want to communicate a concern or an issue or point out a problem along their section of the Watershed. Rangers will acknowledge your email and respond as soon as possible.

Rangers are peace officers with the authority to deal with crime, disorder, and other enforcement issues. They can also be informed of maintenance concerns or any other situation relating to the enhancement or quality of the watershed.



From The Archives
The Signpost May-June 1997

<https://npshistory.com/newsletters/prac/signpost/1997-3.pdf>

Ode to A Park Ranger
By Russ Hauck

Russ Hauck was PRAC's 10th President, from 1996-1997, Park Ranger Supervisor of City of Glendale Parks. The following was presented at the March 1997 Training Conference.

I started my day in the usual way
putting on my uniform and belt;
I climbed in my truck and counted on luck
to be kind for the day I'd be dealt.

The radio sings with multiple things
which one should I choose first;
Problems here, problems there, I really don't care
I guess I'll start with the worst.

"There's a transient down" said the camp host with a frown
as I walked up to check out the site;
"I'm not sure he's breathing or if his heart's beating
and it looks like he's been here all night."

I gave him a nudge, but he didn't budge
with a harder one he woke with a jar;
My mind was at ease as he started to wheeze,
I won't have to do CPR.

He rose to his feet smelling far less than sweet
I searched him, my hand in a glove;
I asked him some questions, he replied with suggestions
I'm physically not capable of.



He had a real attitude this cantankerous dude
and an evil sinister laugh;
His eyes were shifty, is he fifty-one-fifty?
No, just fifty-one-forty-nine-and-a-half.

So, he picked up his stuff, walked off in a huff,
turned, looked and shook his clenched fist;
I said, "Have a nice day!" as he shuffled away
I thought "I spent four years in college for this?!?"

I'm back on my way to continue my day
to see what I might see;
I stir up the gravel and continue to travel
wondering what's in store for me.

Communing with nature is quite an adventure
it's entirely what you make it;
Maybe they were communing, but it looked more like mooning
when they came out of the bushes naked.

I yell "STOP" as they near, "You can't do that here;
There are families, and young and old folk;
Besides, I've a notion you'll need Calamine lotion
'cause those bushes are poison oak!"

So, off the trail and down to the jail
I carted this birthday suit pair;
Booked and confined, one cried and one whined
as I drove off leaving them there.

Now back on patrol, I continue to roll
my eyes searching for suspicious activity;
There are those out there who are likely to share
in this less than noble proclivity.



As I continue to scan, my eyes soon land
on a group with something to hide;
My eyes then fix on an assorted mix
of plastic baggies all open wide.

"I'm not real clear why you're doing that here"
I state as I whiff their strong odor;
"But we all know that's not oregano
and that stuffs not good for your motor."

So back to the station with a stack of citations
and an envelope full of their dope;
A piece of advice to each of these guys:
"Next time use your hemp to make rope."

The next call I'm sent on is a mountain biker who went on
a trail that's a challenge to all;
Needless to say, he didn't go all the way
before the terrain caused a spectacular fall.

I pick up the skin· that once was his chin
as I shift into medical aid mode;
I hope he's learned his lesson and won't again soon be messin'
'cause the road rash is more abundant than road.

I do a quick patch job with an alcohol swab
and a package of four-by-four gauze;
I question his sanity, ignoring pain-induced profanity
"Was this challenge for some worthy cause?"

He says "There's no limit to life while I'm in it
and man's quest to control the earth's elements;"
I scoff "When all's said and done, Mother Nature's the one
and you might as well try juggling elephants."

I arrive for my lunch with the service club bunch



to speak of my profession's worth;
Of mammals and bees, and flowers and trees,
and commitment to protecting the earth.

I put on a show to let them all know
of all the good things we do;
I speak of our mission and of our ambition
To the environment we must all be true!

My message is strong, and it isn't too long
'til they listen not making a sound;
They seem to have learned, when my attention is turned
to a table where sits the group's clown.

He raises his hand, I acknowledge the man
he says, "I've a question and I must ask it...
What can you do about Yogi and Boo-Boo
and have you recovered the pic-a-nic basket?!"

The rest of my day goes the usual way
with a little of everything;
Interpretation, education, information, incarceration;
What will my next contact bring?

A lot of the time it's not hardcore crime
that seems to demand our attention;
It's thoughtless actions and other infractions
that arise and are worthy of mention.

"Pardon me there, but were you aware
it's illegal for you to pick poppies?
You didn't know? You will now, though,
Sign here, press hard, three copies."

My next assignment is to work on refinement
of people's respect for the land;



The method I like is leading a hike
and discussing the objects at hand.

I've prepared a talk on the red-tailed hawk
in flight they're as majestic as religion;
But in this urban lair, the city slickers don't care
you might as well talk about pigeons.

Interpretation is a celebration
of what nature has to offer;
But it's real hard to try when supplies you must buy
and there's no money left in the coffer.

It's quite an obsession this chosen profession ·
and the giant reward that one gets;
For blood, sweat and tears over so many years
and only being paid in sunsets.

From jacking up hoodlums to preserving rare woodlands
and checking the daily fire index;
From high mountain rescue to planting of fescue
to spraying for harmful insects.

The most peaceful of trails to riotous jails
to relocating an errant bee hive;
From smelly old skunks to smelly old drunks
to patrolling God's country by four-wheel drive.

From fallen trees to infectious disease
to contributing to an Environmental Impact Report;
From flowers with pistils to gangsters with pistols
to testifying in Superior Court.

We're enforcers, we're teachers, we even fix bleachers
we fight fires, build trails, protect nests;
The tools of the trade - a field guide, a spade,



and even a bulletproof vest.

We're underpaid, we get teased, our budgets get squeezed
and we face our fair share of danger;
But with not one bit of sorrow, I'll be back tomorrow
for another day in the life of a ranger.

Copyright 1997

Russ Hauck

Note: Russ allows use of his copyrighted © March 25, 1997, poetry, but with conditions.

Contact me for his e-mail to get details on use this prose. Jeff Price, webmaster@calranger.org



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