



British Columbia Tracking Association

Fall 2011 Newsletter

Tracker Rendezvous 2011

It's only August – but time is flying! This newsletter is out early because it's coming up to that time again – a Tracker Rendezvous! This year the Annual General Meeting of the BC Tracking Association will take place at Gardom Lake Bible Camp, just south of Salmon Arm on Saturday 24 September at 6:00 pm (did anyone catch the error in the summer newsletter?). It will be held at the same time as the UTS Tracker 1 and Tracker 2 Courses scheduled for that weekend.

For those planning to attend only the AGM, extra places will be set for dinner prior to the meeting. The cost is \$15 and advance booking is required. Please let Roger Meunier, the course coordinator know that you will be there for dinner before the AGM. Contact information and directions are available in the course announcement on our web site.

As required by the constitution, the agenda is being sent to BCTA members via e-mail, along with the financial statement and a special resolution to amend the constitution. Annual elections for the Executive and Regional Directors will also take place. Come on out and have a say in YOUR Tracking Association. Better still – volunteer to help run it!

For those unable to attend in person, a teleconference will be available. Details will be provided in a Members Only E-mail.

We Need More Courses!

Due to low registration and lack of volunteer hosts and coordinators, we have already had to cancel two Advanced UTS and one Novice course this summer. This means we are falling behind the budget in spending the SAR New Initiatives Fund advance we received to reimburse members attending courses. This is unfortunate, because unspent funds will have to be returned at the end of the fiscal year.

You may be asking why can't we simply increase the amount which can be reimbursed to the members? The simple answer is that the NIF Contribution Agreement requires us to live up to the budgeted amounts which were allocated based on the reimbursement policy.

The National SAR Secretariat has advised us that we can request a carry-over to the next fiscal year, however it must be well substantiated and there is no guarantee that it will be granted. Continued...

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We are again applying for a BC Lotteries Community Gaming Grant.

One of the reasons we were rejected in the previous applications was that the Association had no past record of running courses for which we were requesting future grant funding. It's a bit of a chicken and egg thing – we have to show that we have successfully run a full program, before they will consider giving us a grant to run more courses. Consideration of the amount we can request is partially based on our past budgets. We have to be able to show how much we have spent and how many courses we have run.

This is a tough order, since we have only been actually running courses since April 2011 and the Grant application is due at the end of August.

We will be applying for the grant anyway, but will have a much better chance next year, if we can successfully run more of the NIF-funded courses during the rest of this year.

As requested in the Summer Newsletter, what the Association really needs now is to continue to get the word out to BC SAR Groups that they can offer to host Tracking courses this fall. Personal contact and word of mouth is still our best means of getting the word out. Talk to your training officer or SAR Group executive and point them to the BCTA website link How to Host a Course. Talk to your local RCMP or Police Detachment, Parks and Conservation about our courses. Regional Directors will take it from there and help organize a course.

If we don't use it – we lose it!



Win Koch with Terry Grant aka "Mantracker" during his recent visit to Comox Valley GSAR.

August 2011 Board Meeting Highlights

Financial Statement: In the first quarter report (April – July) to NSS the Association has spent \$22,600 of the Contribution Agreement funds and provided \$18,200 volunteer hours- in-kind.

Training Course Announcements:

23-25 Sep Salmon Arm

UTS Tracker 1 & 2. Links and details are available on the BCTA Website <http://www.bctracking.org>

BCTA Tracker Certification is awarded when a student clearly demonstrates their capabilities during evaluations. It is not automatically granted upon completing a set number of hours of training or number of courses. Any tracker training or operations may be logged, but certification can only be granted following evaluation at a sponsored course.

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Membership: As of July 2011, there were 104 members, of which 46 have pre-paid for three years.

Policy Committee: Two policies were formally adopted:

1) A student either registers directly with UTS or through the Course Coordinator, depending on what arrangement the host made with UTS.

2) **PEP Policy 5.13 WorkSafe BC** is adopted by the BCTA. As the Association courses are run under a PEP Training Task Number, we must ensure that any accidents or injury to GSAR PEP Volunteers are reported, so that the member is covered by Worksafe BC.

BCTA Hats and T-Shirts Roger Meunier will have hats and T-shirts available at the September AGM/UTS course. Please place an order with him for pick-up at the course!



Tracker Tales

Fernando Moreira is the most sought-after tracking instructor in the United States. In 1988, he was awarded the distinguished title of *World's Best Tracker*. His certifications, merit letters, and commendations would fill an oversized notebook and include such honors as the American Red Cross Real Hero Award (2005, 2006), Rescuer of the Year (2001), Excellence in Search and Rescue Medal (1999), and recent

nominations for the Jefferson Award (2005, 2006) and the America's Most Wanted All Star Award (2006, 2007).

Anything that moves will leave some kind of *sign* that shows its journey across terrain. Animals, people, and machines all leave sign. It is an established fact that the average adult male leaves at least one clue every 18 to 20 inches. A trained and highly skilled tracker can detect and follow this sign, often when the untrained person sees nothing at all.

“If it moves over the ground it must leave sign. A tracker is able to identify and follow sign,” says Moreira to a group of sheriff deputies who recently participated in his P.O.S.T. certified course on Crime Scene and Evidence Preservation. For many law enforcement officers, it's an entirely new learning experience—one that is life-changing because anyone can benefit others using Moreira's skill set.

During his travels to different counties and states teaching the art of mantracking, Moreira offers his services at an affordable cost to ensure that volunteers are properly trained. ***“I feel volunteers should not have to pay too much for their own education in order to help save a life. After all, they are already spending their own money to purchase equipment, food, gas, and maintenance expenses.”***

“For those who think that distinguishing a single footprint from another and following it is a simple task, I recommend they go to a local park and try it. ***If you can follow a single set of tracks for a distance of one mile in less than 30 minutes, then you are***

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exceptional indeed. A tracker who has developed and practiced these skills can easily do that and much more. Just imagine being able to tell your SAR Coordinator not only a subject's direction of travel, but also his or her approximate speed, height, weight, and **mental attitude, as well as other various** tendencies. Pretty cool, huh?" Moreira quips as he adjusts one of the straps of his tactical vest and checks the contents of his rear pouch.

Consider a crime scene: A common myth is that the subject (or suspect) has left several clues, making the initial search effort rather straightforward. In actuality, however, most scenes are contaminated because first responders have other priorities during their response efforts. Their main concern is to save a life, examine a corpse, put out a fire, set up a barrier, and so on.

Tracking a suspect takes a professional like Moreira, who knows ***the procedures of documenting crime scene evidence: making sketches of sign, completing a track report for each set of tracks, establishing a perimeter, recording all personnel who have entered the scene, processing and photographing, and marking trails and tracks with flagging and GPS coordinates. This is the stuff that solves cases and puts offenders behind bars.***

"Taking really accurate notes has its advantages because they [notes] may be used in court years later. Your careful documentation can lead to a conviction," remarks Moreira, recalling just such a case.

There was the 1998 high-profile case against Siaso Vanisi, who brutally

murdered campus police officer George Daniel Sullivan. Moreira discovered key evidence that ultimately led to a conviction and sentencing that may not have been possible otherwise. The judicial system is still talking about that case!

Although many believed it was impossible to track a fugitive on concrete and asphalt, Moreira managed to re-trace Vanisi's movements from the crime scene, through the city of Reno, along sidewalks, across the university campus, over parking lots and busy streets, and eventually to Vanisi's residence.

In fact, it was during the courtroom trial when Moreira amazed everyone. The presiding judge decided to put Moreira to the test with a little demonstration. During a court recess, the judge took the jury outside, and, for the next several minutes, walked around on pavement to see if Moreira could validate his skills. When asked to come outside and re-trace the judge's steps, Moreira did just that—right down to the last print. Officials who witnessed the demonstration were so impressed, Moreira was deemed an expert witness by the court system.

One favourite tracking case from Moreira's repertoire deals with the armed robbery of a U-Haul truck from Reno, Nevada. On a November evening in 2004, the Nevada Highway Patrol initiated a routine traffic stop with two subjects, only to be met with gunfire. As the subjects sped away, they continued to fire at the officer, who was able to take cover, radio dispatch, and request backup. Nearly 20 minutes into the pursuit, the subject's vehicle crashed into a guardrail near Lake Tahoe. One

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subject was apprehended while the other fled the scene on foot, running into thick brush and a heavily forested area. An APB (all-points bulletin) listed the subject evading capture as armed and dangerous.

Moreira and the county SWAT team were assigned to track the subject, who now had been at large for nearly 6 hours. A background check of the subject revealed prior military training and evasive tactics. Somehow, the subject became privy to the information that a tracker had been called to assist in the search, so he began using several methods to throw searchers off the trail—removing his shoes and walking in socks, stepping on rocks and logs instead of the forest floor, doubling back to leave false clues—anything to aid his escape.

Although he traveled through heavy vegetation that did not leave prints, Moreira was able to successfully track his movements, leading the SWAT team into position and surrounding the subject just 3 miles from the crash site. He surrendered and was taken into custody without incident.

Another case involved a child molestation. The FBI contacted the Washoe County Sheriff's office regarding a divorced male with federal warrants who was wanted for pornography and child abuse in another state. He had crossed the Nevada state line and abandoned his vehicle in a remote mountain area.

Once Moreira was assigned to the case, he was able to identify faint traces of the subject's prints and began to track sign for more than 2 miles. As he got closer

to where the trail was leading him, he could smell a campfire. Tracking carefully into the camp, Moreira noticed the fire was still warm and contained a melting pot of plastic and paper. He was so intent on his find and so focused on the evidence in front of him that he forgot to look up. There, in a tree just a few yards away was the subject, who had hanged himself after attempting to destroy a collection of incriminating photographs.

Moreira has this to say to those who are interested in Search and Rescue training: ***“Tracking is a specialized skill that needs to be a part of every SAR organization. The tools required are few to none; this skill is successful where modern technology has been known either to fail, or at least create unnecessary complications. There is much to learn in order to become a competent and reputable tracker.”***

“In my experience,” says Moreira, “I have taught and used the art of mantracking successfully countless times to assist agencies in need. If you have the dedication and time, I strongly suggest you become involved and make a difference. Together we can save lives.”

America's Most Wanted: Staying on Track and Learning from the Best
By Mark Withrow, DABCHS, CHS-V and Roger E. Rickman, DABCHS, CHS-V
Courtesy of Dr. Robert O'Block
<http://www.theforensicexaminer.com/archive/spring08/12/>

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Tracking Hazards

Can you identify this common hazard to searchers? (Answer on last page)



BCTA NIF Reimbursements

The Spring 2011 Newsletter provided an initial outline of what reimbursements are available for BCTA members through the NSS SAR NIF Contribution Agreement. As a result of some issues with claims submitted and paid during the first calendar quarter, the following information is provided to update and hopefully, clarify the reimbursement claims procedure.

All BCTA reimbursement claims forms **for each type of sponsored course** are located at: www.bctracking.org > Members Only > Files > Expense Forms. Members need to ensure they select the correct form, fill it in correctly (including their BCTA membership number) sign it and mail it in with receipts. Please read and fill the claims form carefully, print clearly and provide your correct, complete mailing address. All this is to ensure that it claims can be reviewed quickly and reimbursements can be mailed without delay.

In House Track Aware/Novices (includes Advanced students attending

to brush up on their skills). Novices and Advanced students attending In House courses sponsored by the BCTA must pay a tuition fee of \$50 which is **not** claimable. Students may elect to pay the optional fees for meal packages and accommodations. Non-members will be charged \$100 for a BCTA sponsored In-House course. If they complete a membership form upon registration, the tuition fee can be reduced to \$65.

Association members are entitled to claim reimbursement for transportation for a single trip from their home to the training location and return, if they live more than 40 km one-way from the training location, up to a maximum of 500 km round trip at the rate of 50 cents/km (maximum claimable \$250). Multiple round trips cannot be added together. Cost of ferries may also be claimed, with original receipts. Extra mileage may be allowed for travel from the classroom to the field training area. Car-pooling is encouraged. Only the driver may claim the mileage. **Accommodation and meals are at the student's expense and are not claimable.**

Tracker 1, 2 and Sign Cutters attending BCTA sponsored advanced Universal Tracking Services (UTS) courses must pay the UTS tuition (\$US 175) and may elect the optional meal packages and accommodation when they register for the course. BCTA Members will be able to claim reimbursement for the UTS tuition of \$175 (Cdn), plus transportation for a single trip to the course location and return, if they live more than 40 km one-way from the training location, up to a maximum of 500 km round trip at the rate of 50 cents/km (maximum \$250). Multiple

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round trips cannot be added together. Extra mileage may be allowed for travel from the classroom to the field training area. Car-pooling is encouraged. Only the driver may claim the mileage. **Accommodation and meals are at the student's expense and are not reimbursed.**

Train the Trainers attending BCTA sponsored UTS TTT courses must pay the UTS tuition (\$US 175) when they register for the course, plus any optional meal and accommodation packages they may select. Members can claim reimbursement for the UTS tuition of \$175 (Cdn), plus transportation if they live more than 40 km one-way from the training location, up to a maximum of 500 km round trip at the rate of 50 cents/km. Cost of ferries may also be claimed with original receipts. Car-pooling is encouraged. Only the driver may claim the mileage. If no accommodation package is offered, **shared commercial accommodation** can be reimbursed up to \$125 per night plus taxes for two people, or campsite fees, etc. with receipts. **Meal packages** during the course can also be reimbursed. In return, the BCTA will expect certified trainers to sign a letter of support, hours-in-kind, to volunteer to instruct at In-House courses.. These letters will be required for future grant applications.

BCTA/UTS Certified Instructors assigned by the Training Committee as instructors on BCTA sponsored In-House courses at the instructor: student ratio of 1:6 will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals and accommodation, within prescribed limits. Instructors will volunteer their time for travel and

instruction, and will not be compensated for their hours. This is how the Association can offer the lowest possible tuition rates to In-House students.

Course Coordinators for groups hosting BCTA sponsored In-House courses, may be reimbursed for training manuals, hall rentals and other costs associated with organizing and running a course. Details will be provided by the BCTA Regional Director when a sponsored course is requested.

How to Host a Course is available on the website. Groups wishing to host a tracking course should contact their BCTA Regional Directors.

If you have questions, comments, suggestions or ideas, please drop us a line and we'll make sure they get addressed or passed on to the appropriate Board member or Committee, or published in the newsletter!

Send to: President@bctracking.org

BCTA Executive 2011:

President: Win Koch

Vice President:

Tania Walter Gardiner

A/Secretary: Peggy Shelley

A/Treasurer: Win Koch

Regional Directors:

SE: Jerome Liboiron

SW: Gerald Wolfe

Central: Dwaine Brooke

NE: Vacant

NW: Roger Meunier

VI: Peter Wilson

Contact information at:

<http://www.bctracking.org>

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Nominations Wanted Treasurer

The BC Tracking Association Society requires a volunteer to fill the Executive position of Treasurer within the Association Executive. The duties include keeping the financial records necessary to comply with the Societies Act, to render financial statements when required and to complete reimbursement claims.

For further information or to nominate a suitable volunteer, please contact President@bctracking.org

All nominees/volunteers must be BCTA members in good standing and will stand for election at the 24 September 2011 Annual General Meeting in Salmon Arm. The term will be for a period of up to two years.

Nominations Wanted Secretary

The BC Tracking Association Society requires a volunteer to fill the position of Secretary within the Association Executive. The duties include conducting the correspondence of the BCTA, issuing notices of meetings, keeping minutes of meetings, have custody of all records and documents except those of the Treasurer, and keep a register of members of the BCTA.

For further information or to nominate a volunteer, contact President@bctracking.org

All nominees/volunteers must be BCTA members in good standing and will stand for election at the 24 September 2011 Annual General Meeting in Salmon Arm. The term will be for a period of up to two years.

Nominations Wanted BCTAS Regional Directors

The BC Tracking Association Society requires volunteers to fill the positions of Regional Directors throughout the Province of BC. The duties include: liaising with GSAR training officers and trackers within the region, providing tracking training materials and advice, facilitating tracking training, assisting other Regional Directors and providing reports, as required. Directors are voting members of the Executive Board of Directors and play a great role in furthering Tracker Training in BC.

For further information or to nominate a suitable volunteer, please contact President@bctracking.org

All nominees/volunteers must be BCTA members in good standing and will stand for election at the 24 September 2011 Annual General Meeting in Salmon Arm. The term will be for a period of up to two years.

We would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF)



Government
of Canada
National Search
and Rescue
Secretariat

Gouvernement
du Canada
Secrétariat national
Recherche et
sauvetage

Canada

Answer to Tracking Hazard: Poison Ivy.