



Summer 2017

Upcoming BCTA Courses

For the most current course details, see the website: www.bctracking.org > Courses > Course Calendar.

The Course announcements are also posted on the BCSARA website Training Calendar.

Vanderhoof 11-13 Aug

Track Aware & Tracker.

Port Alberni 22-24 Sep

Track Aware, Tracker & Advanced Tracker (depending on numbers registered).

A Note on Registering for a Course:

We do try to accommodate host GSAR groups that want to provide the full range of tracking courses. However, unless there are sufficient registrations at each training level, this is not always possible. We require a minimum of 12 Track Aware students so we can provide at least two instructors. We also require at least 4-6 Tracker and/or 4-6 Advanced students so that they can form tracking teams for sign-cutting training and we provide at least two Tracker and Advanced Tracker instructors.

Therefore, it is very important that all course registrations be submitted by the two-week deadline before a course. In the event that there are too few registrations at any level, it may be necessary to cancel that training level and notify the applicants in a timely manner. Of course, any tuition fee paid will be refunded.

Also, timely submissions of registrations enable us to make the best arrangements for cost-effective instructor availability, and for the host group coordinator to arrange catering and accommodations, where those are available. We don't want the host group to be billed for any unnecessary extra expenses.

The BC Tracking Association is a non-profit society. We try to provide a 6:1 student : instructor ratio, but availability, time and distance are important cost factors. Host Groups that provide catering and/or accommodations also need to know how many are attending so that they can plan for those costs.

You can help by submitting your registration by the two-week deadline, thereby enabling the BCTA and the Host Group to plan courses efficiently and keep your costs down to a minimum.

Paying by INTERAC e -Transfer

Some host GSAR groups may be willing to accept registration payment via INTERAC e-transfer. If it isn't stated on the registration form, please check with the host coordinator if that is an acceptable form of payment to them. Also check with your own bank or credit union for fees and conditions. BCTA Membership will accept INTERAC e-Transfer for membership fees. This can save you writing a cheque and mailing it in. Simply attach your completed fillable PDF forms and e-mail - along with your security answer - to the appropriate address, and then send them your

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INTERAC e-transfer. That will also serve as your receipt.

Sorry, we can't accept PayPal, Debit or Credit cards. Old-school cheques or INTERAC e-transfer only. Course fees are due upon registration at least two weeks before the course start date. New or renewal memberships are also due two weeks before a course start date. This enables us to arrange for the required instructors and make their travel arrangements, and also to set up course lists and sign-in sheets in the BCTA membership data base.

Recent Courses



Comox 12-14 May.

Congratulations to Dylan Baker – Campbell River and Bronwen Beedle – Comox Valley for achieving Tracker certification!

The weather threatened all weekend, but held off when we were out in the field. The SAR hall was great for classroom work. The short Friday night motor vehicle accident scenario was great, got the cobwebs dusted off and demonstrated to the students new to advance tracking how to properly approach the scene and make assessments. Saturday morning the new Tracker students were taken to a tree farm and taught short cuts prior to joining the “seasoned” trackers in the afternoon – that was valuable. The

main, large tracking ground allowed students to work with large cuts, different terrain, and varied ground. Having two field coordinators worked well, especially with the teams spread out over the large area (840 acres!).



TTT Princeton 19-21 May.

Congratulations to the front row: Dylan Baker, Campbell River; Jon Coutts and Ron Steinke, both from Terrace SAR - our newly minted Tracking Instructors!

Many thanks to Randy Rorvik and Princeton SAR for hosting the Train the Trainer Course. The next Instructor Course is being planned to be held on Vancouver Island next spring.



Parks Canada - Prince Albert 13-15 June

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At the request of Parks Canada in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, the BOD approved a contract to provide Parks Canada Rangers with an introduction to Track Aware and Tracker training. Jeni Christie and Darlene Berry presented the course. Expenses were completely paid for by Parks Canada.

The course was offered to Prince Albert National Park employees and nearby SAR groups. There were 16 students in total – 4 of them being SAR members and the rest Park employees. This was a 24 hr course; 3 days - 8am to 4pm. The students were sent the TA Booklet as pre-reading prior to the course. We used the Park Headquarters meeting room for classroom presentation which was equipped with a laptop and projector, and whiteboard. The field work was done at their woodlot, a 15 minute drive away, with varied terrain, bush, birch trees, there is little underbrush in Northern Saskatchewan. We did a combined Track Aware and Introduction to Sign Cutting course. Wednesday morning was the TA PPT and then into the field for step-by-step for the afternoon, open ground across a road, grass field and dirt/debris. Thursday was back in the field for step-by-step, completing the sign from the day before and aging, in the morning. After lunch and a new line was given that took them step-by-step into the forest. We then returned to the classroom and played the BCTA video, which was a great segway to present the 1st half of the Tracker Intro to Sign-cutting PPT. We gave them the Advanced Tracking booklet as homework on Thursday night to prepare them for sign-cutting scenarios the next day. Friday morning in the classroom we went over the Action Plan segment of the Intro to Sign-cutting PPT and then we did a short sign-cutting scenario at the headquarters parking lot for the morning. After lunch we did a larger scenario at Red Deer Trail, a popular hiking trail, close by. There was no night tracking as it doesn't get dark until about 10:30pm and the employees work day

ended at 4pm (even though some were keen to come out for night tracking). The mosquitoes were relentless and abundant!!!

Overall the timing of classroom instruction and field work went very smoothly. There was an immense amount of information to go through from the basics to advanced sign-cutting techniques in 3 days. We needed to ensure that the Parks staff would be able to effectively conduct a search for lost people as part of their job.



Terrace 23-25 June

Congratulations to Oscar Reyes, Princeton SAR, on achieving Tracker certification!

Although we didn't get the final student turnout expected, the enthusiasm and willingness to learn more than made up for lack of numbers. A number showed skills beyond their training hours. With the Tracker class down to only two students, they each had to think more of the big picture and make smarter cuts. They were able to move sign quicker and covered more ground. Once again, the Onion Lake area proved to be a great field training location, despite being well out of town. The weather was perfect and some cloud cover Saturday evening helped get the night tracking started.

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As always, Tracker Tales and pictures from your SAR or tracking experiences are welcome. Please send them to the Editor at: communications@bctracking.org

Training Materials Updates

Following the Train the Trainer instructor course in Princeton, the Track Aware and Tracker power point presentations were tweaked, and are now available on the web site under the Instructors Only menu. There is also a new fillable course report form and several additional training aids.

Work is progressing on an update to the "How to Draw a Track" video using the new BCTA tracking card.

Great Hat Web Development is putting some final touches on the Instructor App, including the Expectations and Assessment in a digital format.

BCTA Board of Directors

We regret to announce the resignation of Randy Rorvik from his position as Director, Central Region. We wish to sincerely thank him for the outstanding contributions he has made to the BCTA – particularly in hosting some of the best-attended tracking courses for the past many years.

A volunteer is now needed to assume the position of Acting Director Central Region. Duties and responsibilities are outlined in the BCTA By-Laws available on the website under membership. Please contact Darlene Berry at: secretary@bctracking.org

Tracker Tales



<http://www.tacticaltrackertraining.com/Testimonials.html>

April 2016 Nakina, NC – On April 11, 2016 Mary Jane Smith was reported missing, by her husband. Mrs. Smith was last seen at her residence on Manley Smith Road in Nakina around 1:40 pm. Mrs. Smith has Dementia and wandered away from her residence. A Silver Alert was issued for Mrs. Smith and a command post was established at Happy Home Baptist Church in Nakina. Columbus County Sheriff's Office along with Columbus County Emergency Management interviewed citizens in the community for additional information to assist in locating Mrs. Smith. Nearby abandoned properties were also searched for her. On April 12th around 9:00 am, Columbus County Sheriff's Office contacted the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office in reference to providing additional resources to assist in locating Mrs. Smith. Brunswick County Sheriff's Office Tracking Teams were deployed and began searching the area around the residence at approximately 11:00am. Brunswick County Sheriff's Office helicopter was later deployed, when weather conditions permitted. The Brunswick County Sheriff's Office Tracking Team was able to establish a track that they believed Mrs. Smith traveled, in a large wooded area behind the residence. The helicopter team searched the area just ahead of the tracking team. At around 1:00pm, the helicopter team spotted Mrs. Smith approximately 200 feet down the track in the direction where the tracking team was headed. The tracking team approached Mrs. Smith, provided her with a coat and some water, and assisted her out of the area. Mrs. Smith was transported by EMS to a local hospital for evaluation. However, she had no apparent serious injuries.

Officer Casile Garner PD.

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Training pays off already. I responded to a call where a suspect fled into the woods. A K-9 team responded and started the track while I provided cover. We were about 50 yards into the woods and the K-9 Officer was not confident that the dog was on the track. I noticed a track trap ahead and went in front of the dog team. The track trap was empty so I ran my likely lines. I noticed a disturbance in the moss covered soil where a small section of the moss was turned over. The moss was approximately 12 inches across and a silver dollar size portion was turned over in the middle. The track was made by the quarry's toe digging into the hill as he attempted to climb up. The track was less than two hours old and the area is not commonly traveled. I followed the line and located a footprint consistent with the type of footwear the quarry was reported to be wearing. We followed the track line and came up on the quarry trying to make his way to a car. After a short chase the suspect ran into a store where we apprehended him in the storage area. Had we not been able to positively identify the track of our quarry, we would not have been able to close the time / distance gap and capture him.

Aboriginal Trackers

<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/aboriginal-trackers>

With mounting evidence and stories circulating about their seemingly miraculous ability to find people, Aboriginal trackers' abilities became legendary in the minds of white Australians. To the British people who had arrived in Australia after its establishment as a British colony in 1788, who were unfamiliar with the Australian landscape, these skills were remarkable and seemed almost magical.

The first recorded use of Aboriginal trackers in Australia took place in 1834 in Western Australia, near Fremantle, when two trackers, Mogo and Mollydobbin tracked a missing five-year-old boy for more than ten hours in very rough country. In

1864, the Duff children were lost for nine days in the Victorian Wimmera and the community was hampered in the search by heavy rain. Within a day of 'black trackers' being brought in, the Duff children were found, and amazingly, still alive.

Tracking



skills

Paul Raffaele, *Aboriginal tracker Teddy Egan and son*. Image courtesy of Paul Raffaele.

Aboriginal people have developed exceptional tracking skills based on their hunter and gather life which includes the ability to track down animals, to identify and locate edible plants, and to find sources of water.

Indigenous Australian children learn to recognise the tracks of animals as soon as they are old enough to notice. Traditionally, as soon as children learn to walk, they learn to track their mother's and sibling's footprints as well as learning hand signs so people know when to be quiet or careful. To this end, people walking together in the bush do so in single file. The ground also makes a good drawing board and children learn the patterns and shapes which represent the tracks of common animals.

An experienced tracker can read the ground like a storybook. If the tracks are those of a mammal, he can probably tell you, from the size and 'weight' or depth of the tracks, its gender and approximate age. If the animal is a female, he will know by the spacing of the hind legs whether or not it is 'parapu' (carrying young). He will usually be able to tell you the species of a lizard and not only which way a snake is travelling, and its size, but how fast it is

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moving and whether it is harmless or venomous.
Pat Lowe, Hunters and trackers of the Australian desert, 2002

Trackers also need to know whether tracks are fresh, otherwise they might be wasting their hunting time. At the end of a day, however, a good hunter needs to be able to find his way home using the shortest route possible - not in the tedious zigzag way he tracked his prey. This acute sense of direction is inseparable from acute powers of observation and good memory.

Aboriginal guides in colonial exploring expeditions

As more and more European settlers came to the new British colony, the demand for land for farming and housing became greater. To meet the demand, some British settlers became explorers and it was common for such groups to include Aboriginal people as guides. The guides would use their knowledge of the land and their tracking skills to lead the party through unfamiliar country, find horses and party members who had strayed, and locate food and water.

The Aboriginal guides would also take on a diplomatic roles. They acted as ambassadors for the travellers as they passed through different tribal areas and making the group's passage as peaceful as possible, sometimes handing over their responsibilities at tribal border areas.

Explorers who worked with Aboriginal guides as part of their expeditions included Major Mitchell, who relied on the services of the Bathurst man known to the party as 'John Piper' to cross the Great Dividing Range.

Another well-known explorer was Edward John Eyre (1815-1901) who, together with his Aboriginal friend Wylie, was the first man to cross southern Australia from east to west, travelling across the Nullarbor Plain from Adelaide to Albany. About 1000 km short of Albany, Eyre and Wylie survived near starvation after seven days by finding a native

waterhole and killing and eating kangaroos. Wylie was rewarded with a pension and returned to his country in Albany.

In contrast, the party led by Robert Burke and William Wills, from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria in Australia's far north, did not include Aboriginal guides. The account from the sole survivor, John King, records the explorers' hostility at offers to trade food for handkerchiefs from Aborigines along the Darling River. Oral history from Aboriginal descendents records the horror of the tribespeople at the expedition's caravan of oxen, bullocks, camels and horses drinking waterholes dry and removing all the heavy grinding stones from camp sites. Both the leaders of the expedition, and many others, died on this ill-fated expedition.

The Native Police forces

By the early 1800s, Aboriginal guides were also used to track down convicts and other criminals who had escaped into the bush, known as 'bushrangers'. It was a natural progression to use Aboriginal guides to track down Aboriginal people as well.



W.S. Smith, *Horsemen including blacktrackers.*
Image courtesy of the State Library of New South Wales.

The first experiments with Native Police commenced in Victoria in 1837. In 1842, the Port Phillip Native Police Corps was established. The

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Corps included white officers and black troopers. The Corps provided a deterrent to Aboriginal attacks on pastoral properties as well as later policing the gold diggings and escorting gold to Melbourne.

The Corps operated for eleven years until it was disbanded. When it was disbanded, some of the Native Police were absorbed as trackers into the Victorian police.

A similar Aboriginal force was established in New South Wales in 1848 by Governor Charles Fitzroy. This force was under New South Wales' control until 1859, when Queensland became a separate colony and took over command. The Queensland force continued until 1900.

Many police forces established unofficial relationships with Aboriginal trackers. The most famous use of trackers was the party who assisted Victorian Police to track down the notorious bushranger Ned Kelly in 1878 and 1880. Ned Kelly was said to be more afraid of the Aboriginal trackers than anyone else.

Aboriginal trackers in films and books

Stories about trackers are often used to explore the relationships between Indigenous and white Australians and, in turn, how these groups relate to the land in which they work and live. Aboriginal trackers are also immortalised in oral histories as well as fictional accounts such as Ion Idriess' *Mantracks* and in the detective series of Arthur Upfield's *Bony*.



David Gulpilil in a scene from *The tracker* by Rolf DeHeer. Image courtesy of Vibe Australia.

Walkabout, by Nicholas Roeg, tells the story of two white children lost in the Australian desert, who are rescued by a passing Aboriginal tracker. *The Tracker*, by Rolf de Heer, and *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, by Phillip Noyce, also feature Aboriginal trackers in their stories, based on life stories.

John Romeril's *One Night the Moon*, tells the story of an Aboriginal tracker who searches for a lost child despite being told by the child's father that his help is not wanted because he is Aboriginal. It is based on the true story of tracker Alexander Riley, who served in the New South Wales Police Force from 1911 to 1950. Tracker Riley, as he was known, received the King's Medal in 1942 for his work on a serial killing case. His grandson, Michael Riley, made a documentary called *Blacktracker*, which tells Tracker Riley's life story.

Famous Aboriginal trackers - yesterday and today

The first Aboriginal man to receive the Albert Medal for Bravery (the highest award possible for police officers) was a man known as Neighbour, who was awarded the medal for rescuing a police officer from the flooding Wilton river, in the Northern Territory in 1911. Neighbour rescued the policeman, who was clinging precariously to some

pandanus palms in the middle of the fast-flowing water, whilst wearing heavy chains around his neck. Neighbour went on to work as a tracker with the Northern Territory Police.

Until 1900, many Aboriginal men and some women worked as police trackers, often on a casual basis or sometimes for longer stints. Often they were only paid a few shillings with rations supplied to their families. Trackers were employed full-time by the Northern Territory police until the late 1980s when they began to be phased out. Northern Territory artist Long Tom Tjapanangka worked both as a stockhand and police tracker for years before commencing his artistic career.

Yuendumu man Teddy Egan is probably the best known tracker in Australia today. In 1967, he assisted in the capture of an escaped murder suspect after two police officers were wounded in the pursuit. In 2000, he helped Northern Territory police to recapture an escaped prisoner. Egan says that tracking humans is much easier than tracking animals, because 'people make too much mess.' He was also one of four trackers used by Barrow Creek police to try to find missing English tourist Peter Falconio.

The Australian police still occasionally call on the services of Aboriginal trackers, particularly in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. In 1980, several Aboriginal trackers joined the search for missing baby Azaria Chamberlain after she disappeared from a campsite near Uluru.



Recognize these hazards?



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