



Spring 2012

Spring Courses are Happening!

The 2012 Tracker training season is off to a great start with 34 students attending the first course in Naramata, followed by the first BCTA GSAR Tracker Instructor course in Vernon. Check out the calendar on our website www.bctracking.org for courses being scheduled near you!



Naramata – Hosted by Pentictin SAR



**BCTA 2012 GSAR Instructor Course
- Hosted by Vernon SAR**

A first for the Association was the GSAR Tracking Instructor course held at Camp Tillicum, 20-22 April, hosted by Vernon Search and Rescue. Nine members attended and received their initial certification to become BCTA GSAR Tracking Instructors.

The Training Committee made the decision early in the year that it was time for the Association to go ahead and trial a GSAR Tracking Instructor course, focussing on how to instruct Tracking for British Columbia GSAR volunteers, incorporating Emergency Management BC/Provincial Emergency Program components into the traditional tracker training program..

This was a watershed weekend, as it brought together experienced trackers and instructors, with newer members eager to promote the learning of ancient tracker skills and knowledge to a new generation of Search and Rescue Volunteers.

The intent was not to re-invent tracking as it has been traditionally passed on by many experts in the field. Rather, it was to build on training philosophies and practices that have worked successfully for many years, and for many trackers, and to add a layer of current GSAR operational procedures to make the training more specifically applicable to GSAR Operations.

The fundamental goal is to infuse GSAR volunteers with the skills and practical training which will make them more effective searchers in the field. To train them to see and understand what the untrained searcher will often miss.

There are many ways any individual can learn to become a competent tracker. Our goal is to make GSAR Volunteers competent specialist trackers within the framework of GSAR operational procedures as practised in BC.

Thus, this first BCTA GSAR Tracking Instructor Course.

The new syllabus provided to the students included a detailed pre-course package, an adult-education focussed program, and a DVD

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Instructor's manual containing course materials, draft training standards, lesson plans, power point presentations, videos and course administrative materials.

Recognizing that this is very much a work in progress, round-table discussions were also held to work on developing not only the course materials, but also to refine many of the details of how to best conduct a GSAR Tracker Training programme.

The work will continue with another cadre of BCTA instructors, ready, willing and capable of providing a high standard of Tracker training for GSAR Volunteers throughout the province.

Skill and knowledge are of very little value, if they cannot be passed on effectively.

Liability Insurance.

There was no formal Board meeting since January. However, one important item of business was conducted via e-mail. As of 1 April, the BCTA has Non-Profit General Liability insurance in addition to Directors' and Officers' insurance, obtained at a reasonable price from The Co-Operators. This is one of the very important aspects of being a registered, non-profit, volunteer society that provides GSAR training.

On a number of occasions, the host SAR groups and the Association have been asked to provide proof of liability insurance in order to rent a facility to conduct courses. This will provide the Association, the host group, students and instructors with additional protection while attending BCTA sponsored courses.

Training Task Number 2012

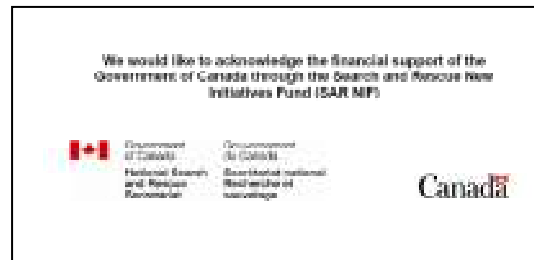
In addition, as an Emergency Management BC recognized GSAR training group, the Provincial Emergency program has provided the Association with a training Task number, which will provide WorkSafe BC and additional liability coverage to **registered EMBC GSAR volunteers** attending courses. Non-GSAR students will have to sign a liability waiver when attending courses. Should an accident or incident occur during a tracking course, it must be reported in accordance with WorkSafe BC and PEP Safety policy. This will ensure SAR volunteers receive appropriate benefits should it result in time off work.

Tracker Video

Thanks to the SAR NIF Contribution Agreement, the Association now has its own 10-minute Tracker Video produced by Third Wave Communications (the folks who produce the Call Out SAR TV series), under the coordination and direction of Bart Bjorkman, Chair of the Training Committee. The video will be part of the new course introduction and will also be a useful promotional tool.

It can be viewed by clicking on the headline at the homepage www.bctracking.org

The video plays out a search and rescue operational tasking utilizing trackers, with voice-overs of key learning points. The video has been made available to EMBC/PEP, JIBC and hopefully will be shown during SAR Manager Courses and annual Regional Reviews. It has also been shown to some RCMP detachments across the province.



Annual General Meeting – Elections Coming Up!

The Association Annual General Meeting will be held in September or October during one of the scheduled courses. Elections will be held for Executive and Director positions, as follows:

President (Win Koch, completed 2-year term)

Secretary (Vacant)

Treasurer (A/Treasurer Alison Rose has been nominated by the Board)

Director VI (Peter Wilson completed 2-year term)

Director SW (Vacant)

Director SE (Jerome Liboiron completed 2-year term)

It is essential that nominations (including self-nominations) be received by 1 August for each of these positions, so that we may continue to carry on with GSAR Tracker training in BC. Self-nomination (volunteering to be nominated) is permitted. For further information or to

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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 2012 Annual General Meeting. The terms will be for a period of two years. Details of each of the positions are as follows:

President

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the Society and shall supervise the other members of the Executive and Regional Directors in the execution of their duties. The President will normally call and preside at all Annual, Board and Extra-Ordinary meetings of the BCTA Society.

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.

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. Currently, Alison Rose has been nominated to the position of Acting Treasurer, pending the Annual General Meeting.

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.

BCTA Executive and Directors 2012

President: Win Koch
Vice President: Bart Bjorkman
Secretary: Vacant
A/Treasurer: Alison Rose

Regional Directors:

SE: Jerome Liboiron
SW: Vacant – Contact Peter Wilson
Central: Kelly Carnochan
North: Dwaine Brooke
Vancouver Is.: Peter Wilson

Committee Chairs:

Membership: Peggy Shelley
Training: Bart Bjorkman
Communications: Win Koch
Policy: Dwaine Brooke

Contact information at:

<http://www.bctracking.org>



Hey! I found a signature print!!

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Tracker Tales

This was the news story...

Kamloops Daily News

April 2, 2012

RCMP deployed personnel, dogs and a helicopter Monday afternoon to find a Swiss woman who left Sun Peaks under "odd" circumstances Monday morning.

In the end, the subject, a 24-year-old Swiss Sun Peaks employee, was found safe late Monday afternoon under circumstances rescue workers called "convoluted."

The situation began at 4 a.m. Monday when the subject left the Sun Peaks residence where she'd been staying while upset. Police did not suspect foul play, according to rural RCMP Staff Sgt. Doug Aird, but they were concerned.

"She was planning on heading back to Switzerland, but the circumstances of her taking off at 4 a.m. were odd. And we're looking into the reason why she was doing that," said Aird on Monday morning, adding alcohol was not a factor.

When last seen, the subject had started walking a bush trail that led to Whitecroft eight to 10 kilometres away. "There was a friend that followed partway through the bush trying to get her to come back but she wouldn't listen to him calling her," said Aird.

Police suspected she'd received a ride from a passing motorist when police dog units confirmed she reached a road by about 5:30 or 6 a.m. Search and Rescue was deployed to help since "eight to 10 kilometres through the bush at night is not a short piece for anyone," said Aird.

At around 5 p.m., the subject was found close to where she began, said Search and Rescue coordinator Laurie Harder. "She didn't make it far from Sun Peaks," he said shortly after Pedrenie was found.

Harder said rescue workers were unsure if she'd been to Whitecroft or had stayed in the bush the whole time. She was "a little cool" but not hypothermic, he said.

Then there's the rest of the story....

You might find this interesting when explaining to TKA students, why tracking is important and not to give up because helicopters and dog teams arrive on the scene. As with most reported stories, there are some inaccuracies in the above news article.

The actual facts are that an RCMP dog team placed the subject on a hard frozen gravel road on the edge of Whitecroft Meadow which is a hayfield chopped into small acreages about 400 metres from the Whitecroft village. From there after many hours of searching by an RCMP helicopter, 2 dog teams, 1 tracking team, and 3 ground search teams, we were no further ahead in determining a direction of travel until a ground search team leader with a little past experience working with a tracker, picked up and protected a footprint on the ice along a creek. He called in the tracking team who confirmed the print and then placed the subject on the paved road. All too often you hear searchers start to give up trying when they see hi-tech and dogs arrive but there are still many situations where trackers can make a difference.

The subject was suffering from medical issues and could not tell us where she had been but she is now safe and receiving the necessary care.

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A Brief History of Tracking In B.C.

By Mike Neeland

Prior to the 1980's, there were very few SAR groups in BC that employed trackers in the field. Those that did, received training at the local level by the use of hunters and trappers who saw the similarity between animal and human sign.

I was lucky to be in one of these groups. My mentor was a long-time hunter named Dick Beatle. We were tasked with locating a lost hunter west of Quesnel. After a successful search with Dick, I was hooked for life!

In 1982 Universal Tracking Systems, later to become Universal Tracking Service (UTS), made its first trip into the interior and held a Track aware class at Mount Lolo – a radar station east of Kamloops, and the following year at Baldy Hughes, a radar station south west of Prince George.

The UTS instructors were Joel Hardin, Al Eastman, Al Pratt, Jerry Darkis, Stan Robson and Marvin Martin. They were all either US Border Patrol, Special Deputies or Sheriffs.

Moving back in time and place to El Cajon, California, Joel Hardin, Ab Taylor and Frank Heile were Border Patrolmen along the US/Mexican border. Their job was to cut for sign of illegal entry into the US from Mexico, follow the sign, locate the Illegals, and transport them to a muster point, from which they were returned south across the border. Often, this process was repeated many times - the trackers were soon able to identify the subjects by name from the sign they left when they tried to enter the US again.

One day, the Border Patrol members were coming off shift and noticed a group of Search and Rescue volunteers on a task at a local park. They asked the SAR Manager if they could be of any help. The SAR Manager briefed the Patrol Members and they cut for sign of the subject. A line of sign and direction of travel was determined, and the subject was successfully located.

The SAR Group was impressed and they approached the Head of the Border Patrol and arranged for some of his members to conduct tracker training. So, the seed was planted for tracking to become a SAR specialty.

The use of the stick to find sign was developed by SAR, and is now a recognized tracking tool and basic tracking technique. In those days it was not used for tracking – just for moving brush and stuff out of the way.

Moving forward to the early 1980's, the classes at Mt Lolo and Baldy Hughes were long on field work and short on classroom time, because the visual and audio components of the classroom presentations were only in the development stage.

Lines of sign were laid on whatever the local area had to offer. Sometimes it was a gravel parking lot, as in Port Alberni, or an active gravel pit south of Sumas on the Nooksack River.

By the late 1980's and early 90's, several of the more senior trackers in the BC interior and northern communities decided to start their own training programs and the "In House" tracking class was born.

The single sheets of tracking information that had been developed by UTS over the years, were copied and stapled together 10 copies at a time at the Stores Office of Cariboo Pulp and Paper. For me, it was a labour of love – it had to be.

Classes were fairly simple back then because there were plenty of Track Aware novices and only a few senior trackers – so a single class for the both were the norm.

But, soon there were more UTS classes to be had and this generated more advanced trackers who also wanted to be involved in the In House classes.

The senior In House presenters lobbied UTS for permission to host a split Novice and Advanced class. UTS reluctantly agreed, with the proviso that "the needs of the Track Aware Novices would be fully met before the advanced students were split off to do tracking scenarios."

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In the mid-90's, a group of BC trackers and UTS, met with Jon Heske from the Justice Institute of BC (JIBC) to discuss the possibility of a formal Train The Trainer (TTT) class so that everyone would "be on the same page" when it came to Tracker training in BC. This was addressed again at a UTS class in the hills west of Kamloops.

Thirty-two of the senior trackers in BC met with UTS and Stewart MacDonald from the JIBC to finalize an agreement to conduct JIBC/UTS TTT courses. The first course was held at the Youth Correctional Centre on the Vedder River south of the Army Base in Chilliwack.

It was agreed that funds permitting, JIBC would sponsor two UTS TTT classes per year so that more Trackers would have an opportunity to attend in different areas of the province.

Unfortunately, the UTS TTT concept was abused by some students who used it as an opportunity to attend a JIBC sponsored course and get a free UTS class. The TTT instructional content was lost to practicing tracking scenarios, instead of learning how to instruct and present a tracking class. Neither UTS nor JIBC ever issued TTT certification to those who attended the class.

The last JIBC/UTS TTT course was held in Prince George in the fall of 2008. Only 11 of the 18 registered Trackers showed up and there was much dissatisfaction with the course content. Also, the course could not be used for Advanced Tracker re-certification.

In 2009, a meeting of the SAR Training Steering Group, consisting of PEP, BC SARA, RCMP and JIBC, decided to end support for contractor provided Tracker training. Reasons given were that JIBC had no control over course content and there were limited funds for SAR specialty training. This was formally announced by JIBC and funding for Tracking courses ceased in April 2010.

The BC Trackers Association had been in existence for some time. It was an informal group of trackers dedicated to furthering Tracker Training in BC. However, in order to apply for funding and grants, they needed to be formally established as a Registered Society.

This was done in 2009, and called the British Columbia Tracking Association Society. Applications were made for Community Gaming Grants and the National SAR Secretariat New Initiatives Fund (NIF). In 2010, the Association was formally recognized by Emergency Management BC as a Volunteer Search and Rescue Tracker Training Group and was provided a Training Task Number.

Also in 2009, the Association and UTS signed an agreement, which basically continued the previous agreement with JIBC for TTT classes and In House training.

In April 2011, the Association received a SAR NIF Contribution Agreement (NIF CA), which would provide funding for Tracker Training for one year. In addition, the CA required the Association to develop GSAR Tracker Training Standards and supporting training materials.

The first BCTA sponsored UTS TTT was held in Duncan in April 2011 and 13 BCTA Instructors were certified. This was the first Tracking course and TTT since the fall of 2008 in Prince George. In House courses and UTS Advanced courses were held, but due to lack of courses during the previous two years, and the late confirmation and announcement of funding, only about half of the NIF CA proposed courses were conducted.

The draft BCTA Training Standards and instructional materials were slowly introduced during the 2011 courses.

The NIF funding was due to expire end of March 2012. Because there were fewer courses than planned and budgeted for, a request was made to use some of the NIF CA funds to produce a professionally-made BCTA Training Video. This was approved and the project was taped and completed between November and March 2012.

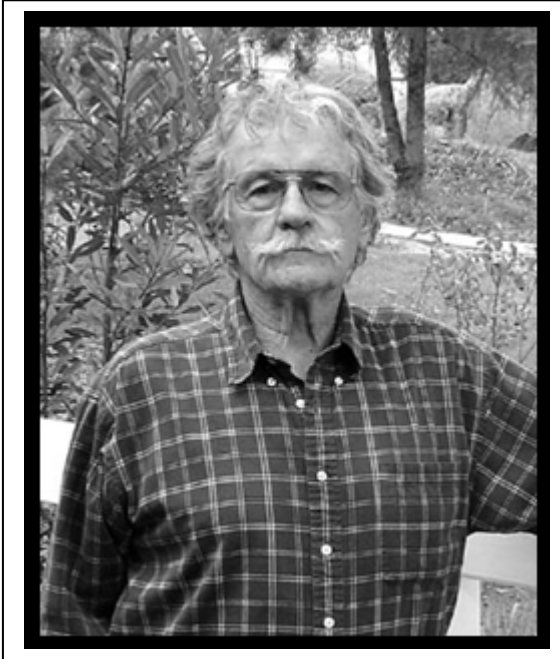
Also, a request was made and approved to extend the NIF CA for a second year – thereby providing funding to subsidize courses in 2012. The first BCTA GSAR Tracking Instructor course was held in Vernon in April – and that's where we are NOW!

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Ab Taylor

By Nancy Slaff

For The Alpine Sun Feb 23, 2006



Founder of Hug-a-Tree faced murder, movie stars, in long border career

Two days had passed, adding to the fear that all was not well. Starting with zero and trying to achieve something close to heroic, an off-duty fireman reported he had seen what appeared to be a Border Patrol vehicle in a ravine, almost buried by brush.

Hiking through deep chaparral in the nearby Anza mountains, they found the concealed vehicle and tracked several footprints to a nearby cabin. Inside, handcuffed together and shackled to a wood stove lay the bodies of Border Patrol Agents George Azrak and Theodore Newton, both shot in the back of the head.

The date was June 15, 1967, and will live forever in the memory of retired Senior Border Patrol agent Albert "Ab" Taylor, who found the abandoned vehicle and tracked the sign to the cabin. After FBI agents took the investigation, an informant led to the arrest of the four suspects nearly one month later. None were given the death penalty.

A man gifted with excellent tracking abilities and a sense of purpose, Taylor is not one to take praise for his accomplishments. "My life certainly has had its sad moments and happy moments," Taylor recalls with grim irony.

Another tragic event involved the search for Jimmy Beveridge, lost near the Palomar mountains in 1981. Little Jimmy, age 11, had gone hiking with family members when he became separated. After days of futile search and rescue efforts by other agencies, Jimmy's grandfather called Ab Taylor, a renowned tracker, and asked for help. By the time Taylor was called, three days had passed. Taylor located the body — Jimmy's young life was lost to the harsh mountain environment.

Following his retirement from the Border Patrol, he founded Hug-A-Tree, a personal devotion aimed at teaching children how to survive before they become lost. Simply put, go to the nearest tree...and stay there. Of course, it is best to carry water, and a whistle, and lots of other survival items, but very often people, certainly children, take off on a hike not thinking that a loss of direction may lurk around the next hillside.

Over the years, Taylor and friends took that program to international levels, traveling all over the world. He trained other search and rescue groups so they, in turn, could visit schools in their own areas and teach children to save themselves by...staying put.

His devotion to Hug-A-Tree overshadowed the sometimes thankless, and certainly political, aspects of civil service life. But he has no regrets for his time on the border. His innate tracking expertise was honed in the patrol, along with the reward of working with other highly skilled agents, many of whom involved themselves in successful citizen searches.

Border Patrol life was not without fun and adventure, taking, for instance, the night he was assigned a civilian ride-along. Perching a star light scope out their Jeep window, they waited quietly for the large group expected to complete its nighttime journey over the nearby hillside.

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While waiting, he gave the naive passenger his version of all the expertise necessary to be a successful Border Patrol agent, and how to snare those wayward folks who head north across the border. At this moment, the San Diego County Sheriff's ASTREA helicopter flew overhead, circled, noted the Border Patrol vehicle and decided to illuminate the area with its searchlights for the next five minutes. Of course, all hope of surprising any illegal-type folks disappeared.

Then, in front of the same passenger, Taylor alighted from his vehicle to cross the then-uncompleted I-805 near Chula Vista, tripped, and fell down the construction embankment, where he lost his hat. So much for heroics.

On another occasion, a Back Country rancher pleaded with him to help herd a few dozen cattle back into their corral. Rounding up cattle, or tracking immigrants with cow hooves taped to their shoes, or tracking those who tried walking backward across the border was just part of a day's work.. Sometimes, they had to pry human beings out of dummy gas tanks. Nothing has changed, he mused: the same tactics, with different people – and a whole lot more of them, too.

Taylor eventually went on to greater things, including a movie made after his life: *Borderline*, starring actor Charles Bronson. A definite highlight in his life, it began as an idea created by actor Robert Redford who asked a friend to do a screenplay on the subject. The writer was introduced to Taylor who acted as consultant and a bit actor, along with some of his fellow agents. The story line evolved from his experiences, including a plot and scenes developed around the Azrak/Newton tragedy. Born in Texas, Albert Snow Taylor joined the Border Patrol in 1949, his first assignment near the Imperial Valley. He was ultimately given Senior Agent in Charge authority at the old El Cajon location.

He retired in 1979, founding and developing the Hug-A-Tree-Foundation. Although his heart is still there, and his memory of Jimmy Beveridge never falters, he no longer has the time or energy to maintain this important program. A few years ago, he made the decision to turn it

over to the National Search and Rescue Association.

He said he still owes a debt of gratitude to people like Mountain Search and Rescue's Lois McCoy whose strength and fortitude guided him over not only mountains, but mountains of problems.

Also involved was Tom Jacobs, who, Taylor said, did much of the writing involved in the education elements of the concept. And much of this would not have transpired without the Hug-a-Tree partnership with his wife, Lillian.

Evidence Search



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k7587875 www.jotosearch.com

This cigarette butt and the shoe impression were found at a crime scene and used in the criminal investigation – leading to a positive identification of a suspect.