



SPRING 2016

Notes from the 6 March & 11 April 2016 Board Meeting

Annual General Meeting

There will be a BCTA Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 14 May 2016 at the Comox SAR Hall, 3001 Moray Ave. Courtenay, B.C. at 18:00 hrs. (6:00 pm PST).

BCTA members unable to attend in person will be able to participate via teleconference. Call in Number: 1-877-353-9184 ID: 7181728. *Please call in a few minutes early to check in, then select mute on your phone to eliminate background noises - unless you are polled for voting or wish to speak.*

Agenda and details will be posted on the BCTA website under Members Only.

Tracker Callout List 2016

The BCTA Tracker Callout list of certified Trackers and Advanced Trackers is being updated. This list will be provided to EMBC/ECC to identify those members who have volunteered to be readily available as a Tracker or Advanced Tracker for a SAR operation anywhere in BC. Members can apply to be on the list by checking it off on their membership form. You must be a current BCTA member in order to be on the Callout List. Applicants will be screened by the Training Committee and the BCTA Board of Directors. Individuals will be notified to confirm

their commitment and Tracker or Advanced Tracker certification level, before their contact information is provided to EMBC.

The BCTA does not provide tracking services. Individuals will not be called directly by EMBC/ECC. Their SAR Group will be called with a mutual aid request for trackers named on the list. So, members should make sure that their SAR group is aware of their availability.

BCTA Memberships

The new membership year begins 1 May. You can apply for or renew your membership using the 2016 application form available on the website (on-line fillable), or when you sign in for a course.

The 2016/17 membership fees remain the same for the 5th year in a row: \$15.00 for 1-year and \$40.00 for 3-year memberships. Saves you a bundle on course tuition, be the first to know about upcoming courses, access the Members Only link, and you have a say in the Association by being able to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting.

On the membership form you can also apply to have your name included on the Mutual Aid Tracker Call-Out list.

Questions? Contact Darlene Berry at: secretary@bctracking.org

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Training Committee

2016 Spring Courses coming up:

Pencil in these dates on your calendar!

Detailed course announcements and application forms are posted on the BCTA website. <http://www.bctracking.org/Calendar.html>

LAST CALL: Salt Spring Island - Track Aware 15-17 April Coordinator: Judy Burch

Princeton – Track Aware/Basic & TK1 Advanced 29-31 April Coordinator: Randy Rorvik

Remember: 1 May - new membership year begins...

Comox Valley – Tracker & Advanced Tracker 6-8 May Coordinator: Karla Blain

Comox Valley – BCTA Instructor Course 13-15 May Coordinator: Darlene Berry

Terrace – Track Aware - In Planning 3-5 June Coordinators: Jonathan Currie, Stephanie Maclean

Fall Courses In Planning:

Tumbler Ridge – Track Aware 23-25 September Coordinator: Brandon Lewis

GSAR groups wishing to host a BCTA Tracking course - please see: www.bctracking.org > courses > How to Host a Course ([Here](#)) and contact your Regional Director.

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Tracker Recertification and Refreshers

Tracking is a perishable skill.

Once an individual is certified by the BCTA, they are encouraged, but not required, to take a refresher or upgrade course within the next two calendar years.

If you identify yourself and are tasked as a tracker on a search, SAR Management or a Team Leader may ask to see your Tracker badge & certificate, and your SAR logbook in order to verify your stated specialty.

Individuals do not lose their tracker certification if they do not take a refresher or upgrade. However, if BCTA Instructors have not seen you demonstrate your capabilities on a course, during In-House Training and/or on SAR Operations, after two years, the Association cannot verify and support your continued expertise as a Tracker if you are required to provide expert input to a SAR Review, a Coroner's Inquest, WorkSafe BC Investigation or testify in a court of law.

In any case, it is very important to always keep your training and your SAR logbook up to date, including local, in-house training and exercises.

Also – it makes it much easier for you to look up and remember where and when you took a course!

Instructor Recertification

At the 6 March BCTA Board of Directors teleconference, it was approved that in order to remain in good standing, instructors need to teach a minimum of two courses (40 hours) over a two year period, or one course (20 hours) and provide 20 hours of local in-house tracker training, or they must take a refresher Instructor course in the third year.

All Instructors must be current BCTA members. All instructors will be required to sign a Volunteer Letter of Support when they are certified. This will assist with applying for grants and helps us meet the requirements of the Canada Employment Act with respect to volunteers.

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2016 Training Plan

The 2016 Training Plan has been approved by the BOD and will be posted on the website under Instructors Only. In a nutshell, we plan to conduct up to 10 Track Aware/Tracker/Advanced Tracker courses plus two instructor courses.

Annual EMBC Training Task Number

EMBC has again provided the BCTA an Annual Training Task Number for courses. This provides us with WorkSafe BC and Liability coverage for GSAR Certified students and instructors while on a course. It does not provide coverage while travelling to and from a course. It does not cover non-GSAR Volunteers. They will have to sign a liability waiver and sign in as Convergent Volunteers.

BCTA Training Booklets

Randy Rorvik (Princeton SAR) will be placing orders for printing BCTA course booklets. In preparing for a course, all Regional Directors and Lead Instructors need to work with the Course Coordinators to determine the number and titles of booklets required for each course, and pass that on to Randy so booklets can be printed and sent out on time for the course.

Logbooks and Training Records

It is important that all students bring their GSAR logbooks to tracking courses and local training, and have them signed by the Lead Instructor or SAR Group Training Officer. This is your permanent record of training. The BCTA provides badges and certificates only when a student successfully achieves a level of certification. A novice log sheet is available from the instructors in cases where students forget to bring their log books. However, this information must be transcribed to the individual's log book and signed by their Training Officer when they return home.

Questions? Contact Win Koch at:

training@bctracking.org

or your Regional Director

BCTA Newsletter Spring 2016

BCTA Communications Committee

Remember that the updated website changes include a new Protected Members Only link. The old Yahoo private membership link has been replaced. Current BCTA Members will be e-mailed a group user name and a group password to enable them to access files and documents not open to the general public. This includes all agendas, minutes of meetings, financial statements and official correspondence. The aim is to be as transparent as possible so that current BCTA Members have access to all the Association's documents. It will save sending large e-mail files by acting as the go-to location for BCTA documents, meeting agendas, minutes and attachments, etc... The group password will change at the beginning of the new membership year.

For comments or questions about the website, contact John Semenech at webmaster@bctracking.org

Newsletter.

For those that prefer the Reader's Digest version, this BCTA Newsletter will summarize the results of meetings and goings-on in the Association.

The BCTA Newsletter will be e-mailed out on a quarterly basis and copies will be available on the website.

To contribute articles, information and pictures, especially for the "Tracker Tales" section of the newsletter, contact Win Koch at: communications@bctracking.org

Tracker Tales



As always, Tracker Tales and pictures from your SAR or tracking experiences are welcome.

Excerpts about Tracking from “The Demon-Haunted World” - by Carl Sagan 1998

Carl Sagan’s book makes for some interesting reading when he compares long-standing tracking techniques employed by hunter-gatherers over thousands of years, with the modern scientific method. - Editor

“Every time a savage tracks his game he employs a minuteness of observation, and an accuracy of inductive and deductive reasoning which, applied to other matters, would assure some reputation as a man of science.... The intellectual labour of a good hunter or warrior considerably exceeds that of an ordinary Englishman.” Thomas H. Huxley from “Mr. Darwin’s Critics (1871).



“The small hunting party follows the trail of hoof prints and other spoor. They pause for a moment by a stand of trees. Squatting on their heels, they examine the evidence more carefully. The trail they examine has been

crossed by another. Quickly they agree on which animals are responsible, how many of them, what ages and sexes, and whether any are injured, how fast they are travelling, how long ago they passed, whether any other hunters are in pursuit, whether the party can overtake the game, and if so, how long it will take. The decision made, they flick their hands over the trail they will follow...and off they lope... they continue at champion marathon racing form for hours. Almost always they’ve read the message in the ground correctly. The (prey) are where they thought, in numbers and condition they estimated. The hunt is successful. Everyone feasts.



“According to anthropologist Richard Lee: How did they do it? They scrutinized the shape of the depressions. The footprints of a fast moving animal display a more elongated symmetry. A slightly lame animal favours the afflicted foot, puts less weight on it and leaves a fainter impression. A heavier animal leaves a deeper and broader hollow. The correlation functions are in the heads of the hunters. In the course of the day, the footprints erode a little. The walls tend to crumble. Windblown sand accumulates in the floor of the hollow. Perhaps bits of leaf, twigs or grass are blown into it. The longer you wait, the more erosion there is.

“The galloping herd hates the hot sun. The animals will use whatever shade they can find. They will alter their course to take brief advantage of the shade from a stand of trees. But where the shadow is depends on the time

of day, because the sun is moving across the sky. In the morning, as the sun is rising in the east, shadows are cast west of the trees. Later in the afternoon, as the sun is setting towards the west, shadows are cast to the east. From the swerve of the tracks, it's possible to tell how long ago the animals passed. This calculation will be different in different seasons of the year. So the hunters must carry in their heads a kind of astronomical calendar predicting the apparent solar motion.

“To me, all of these formidable tracking skills are science in action.



“Not only are they expert in the tracks of animals, they also know human tracks very well. Every member of the band is recognizable by his or her footprints: they are as familiar as their faces.” – Laurens van der Post

“Is this really science? Does every tracker in the course of his training sit on his haunches for hours, following the slow degradation of an elongated foot print? They observed their fathers and other accomplished hunters during their apprenticeships. They learned by imitation. The general principles were passed down from generation to generation. The local variations - wind speed, soil moisture – are updated as needed for each generation, or seasonally, or day-by-day.



“There is no hint in Kung tracking protocols of magical methods – examining the stars the night before or the entrails of animals, or casting dice, or interpreting dreams, or conjuring demons, or any of the myriad other spurious claims to knowledge that humans have intermittently entertained.

“Here there is a specific, well-defined question: Which way did the prey go and what are its characteristics?”

The !Kung San people of the Kalahari - Wikipedia

Hunting could take days of tracking, attacking, and following a wounded animal. The Jul'hoansi had rituals to prevent arrogance amongst male hunters. When a man killed an animal, he would not take it directly into the settlement, but would leave the body and return as if he was unsuccessful. An older man would inquire about his hunt and remark upon his failure, at which the hunter must avoid credit and accept humility. Through a long process, eventually, likely the next day, a group would go "see if some small animal was nicked by an arrow." Upon finding the hunter would be reassured of the little value of the kill which is finally returned. Additionally, the kill may belong not to him, but to the person who gave him arrows (a man or woman), who then followed rules on how to distribute the meat to everyone in the group. Upon returning from a successful hunt, if the kill is transportable, it would be brought back to the village. The

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!Kung promote the belief of community well-being and so the village elders or "those of mature years" will allot meat to the members of the group. Also believing in the betterment of other tribes, if the kill is too large to move or there is a surplus of meat, word will be spread to villages that are close by to collect meat for themselves.



If you want to eat – you need to know how to track game when there are no grocery stores or refrigerators around! - Editor