



# SUMMER 2018

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Comox Valley 12 May 2018.**



Mike Neeland, "After 40 years in Tracking, it has been my pleasure to serve. Proud of all of you for stepping up. Thank you to Jeni for taking my position as President."

## **2018 Elections:**

**President:** Jeni Christie (Juan de Fuca)

**Vice President:** Dwaine Brooke (Kamloops)

**Secretary:** Darlene Berry (Re-elected Comox Valley)

### **Regional Directors:**

Motion was passed to reduce the Regional Director Positions and create a single

"Director Course Coordinator and Registration". This position is acting for one year and will be finalized under a special resolution at the AGM next year.

### **Director Course Coordinator and**

**Registration:** Randy Rorvik (Princeton)

**Membership:** Dylan Baker (Re-Elected)

### **Serving second year of terms:**

**Treasurer:** Darlene Berry (Comox Valley)

**Director Training:** Win Koch (Comox Valley)

**Lifetime Member:** Darlene Berry was nominated as a Lifetime Member for all of her contributions to the BCTA.

**BCTA.Minutes** posted on the membership website under Resources > File Library > Society Business.

### **Committees:**

BCTA members are encouraged to become more involved in the Association by joining one of these committees; please contact the Committee Chairs for details:

**Memberships** – Dylan Baker

**Policy** – Darlene Berry

**Communications** – Win Koch

**Training** – Win Koch (includes all BCTA certified instructors)

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

*By Jeni Christie, BCTA President*

At the AGM, Mike Neeland stepped down as President of BCTA. His illustrious career in tracking and Search and Rescue has spanned 35 years and his establishment of BCTA in 2009 shaped what tracking is today in BC. Not only am I thankful that he blazed a trail for BCTA but I am also immensely grateful to have Mike as a friend and a mentor. And so he passed the baton unto me and I can tell you that it was a bittersweet moment to accept the position as the new President of BCTA. As much as we are sad to see Mike step down he can take it easy now, if that's possible, knowing that he has created and left us a legacy.

Although tracking has been utilized by GSAR since the 1970's it was taught using the UTS template. The foundation of step-by-step and sign-cutting are the same as what was taught 40 years ago, but we at BCTA are striving to refine tracking theory and methodology specifically for GSAR in BC.

So, my mandate is simple – to create a greater awareness of how tracking is relevant and applicable within GSAR. But there is still much work to be done as we work to refine and standardize the instructional material and how it is delivered.

As we move forward your feedback as BCTA members and GSAR Volunteers is paramount, and we welcome ideas, input and critiques as to what we are doing well and what we can do better. Together we will continue to evolve what is GSAR tracking in BC and save some lives because that is essentially what it is all about – finding lost little Nellie.

## **TRACKER CALL OUT**

*By Win Koch Director Training*

Until now, BCTA members could opt in on the membership form to having their contact information provided to EMBC/ECC for mutual aid call outs when trackers are required for a task anywhere in the province. However, personal circumstances may change over the 1 to 3 years of your current membership.

Therefore, a new feature has been added to the BCTA Membership website for all members with Tracker or Advanced Tracker certification. When members log in to view their personal information, they can now select to opt in or opt out of being on the Tracker Call Out list.

To be on the list, you must be a certified Tracker or higher, and be verified/approved by the Director Training with input from the Training Committee. The list will be made available at least semi-annually to EMBC/ECC – before and after our usual training seasons.

A current list can be generated on-demand at any time, when requested by EMBC or ECC. So, say if someone becomes newly certified as a Tracker on a spring course, they can choose to opt in. Your SAR Group affiliation and personal contact information will be made available.

The agreement with EMBC is that Trackers on the list must be requested for mutual aid through their home SAR group. So, please inform your Group that you are on the Tracker Call Out list provided to EMBC/ECC.

## SPRING COURSES COMPLETED

### SALT SPRING IS. 13-15 April



**By Darlene Berry**

Salt Spring Island was the first Tracking Course of the year, held April 13-15 at Beaver Point Hall. We had 17 students attend, with 12 of them coming to a tracking class for their first time. Due to limited numbers registered, the Tracker level had to be cancelled. Students came from: Chemainus, Duncan, Gibsons, Heffley Creek, Nanoose, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Shawnigan Lake, Victoria and Salt Spring Island.

We had a weekend of mixed weather, rain can always be expected in early Spring! The students were enthusiastic, the food good and the hall accommodating; the outhouses, well - we won't even mention them!

The new Mix and Match was presented on the Friday night and very well received. Pictures were posted on the hall walls and students mingled, discussed and decided what Terminology went with what picture. It was a good ice breaker for the students to meet each other and discuss what they thought the picture presented.

Saturday the students followed lines of sign through grass, sand, mud, a playground, forest and contaminated areas. The night

tracks were through a forest with lots of moss and salal.

Sunday they returned to the night tracks and completed the trail. As they were done early, we had them sit in the warm hall, back to back, with one person being Command and the other the Team in the field and they had to describe the boot in their hand, and command was to draw it. It was good practice on radio procedure and an appreciation for describing details in as few words as possible. From the laughter in the room, I would say the students quite enjoyed the exercise.

Congratulations on becoming Track Aware:

**Anna Beltgens** - Cowican

**Rick Rollins** - Cowichan

**Janice Schuk** - Sunshine Coast

**Penny Simpson** - Cowichan

### Princeton 25-27 April



**By Randy Rorvik**

Course location was BC Wildfire Suppressions Camp set up perfectly as always. Thanks Nick! Thirty-four students participated. Delicious Meals catered by Legion Ladies. Weather was very warm on Friday when we laid the advanced scenario. Saturday morning awoke to light rain as we laid the novice lines of sign, with rain then rain showers throughout the morning. The rain didn't affect the novice sign as much as it did affect the advanced lines. The advanced team mentored the Trackers and Novice during the night tracking. Sunday, scenario was extended (which allowed for

# British Columbia Tracking Association

[www.bctracking.org](http://www.bctracking.org)

fresher sign) then brought all three lines back together with a successful finish. Advanced tried technology to communicate between teams. Issues with iOS/Android. Participants were asked to research options available.

Congratulations to the following who achieved their certifications!

**Dakota O'Donovan** - Nicola Valley Track Aware

**Jim McConnell** - Oliver Osoyoos Advanced Tracker

**Arnie Powell** - Princeton Advanced Tracker

## Comox Valley 11-13 May



**By Jeni Christie**

The course was based out of the Comox Valley SAR Hall. It was a central location and the classroom facilities were more than suitable. This was just a TK/AT course with only 11 applicants, 2 of which had to drop out last minute but we also had an extra student sit in - a SAR Tech instructor working out of Comox. He was curious as to what our tracker training entails and so we let him audit the class just for Friday evening.

Class started with the Part I: Intro to Sign Cutting PPT followed by a short scenario in

the field, a runaway teenager pursued by her boyfriend was the story, the scenario was started and finished on Friday.

We started Saturday am with the Part II: Action Plan sequence PPT and then went into the field. Saturday's scenario was located on Comox Lake by the Puntledge River Dam. It was hot and sunny, so this location was fairly treed and provided some shade so that was good - but the students were very tired by the time the scenario was completed at 17:00 on Saturday. It was a walk-away scenario where the elderly grandmother wandered off from her grand daughter. It was a good scenario overall although some areas were just trail and thick forest so it was a lot of looking for exit points along the trail, which is valuable as long as it doesn't drag on too long.

After supper was the BCTA AGM and then the students were thankful to not go back in the field on Saturday evening. Instead they stayed in the classroom and thoroughly filled out their ICS Forms and the task reconstruction map on the wall, followed by a debrief of the day.

On Sunday we started with a new scenario by Millard Creek not far from the hall. It was a possible abduction scenario where a teenage girl meets an online predator but then runs away and get help from a neighbour.

The students did well overall - some of the usual issues of lack of communication between teams and being slow in getting a task started. But it was a great weekend and the course critiques were positive.

Congratulations to the following for achieving Advanced Tracker!

**Lyn Edmondson** - Juan de Fuca

**Dylan Baker** - Campbell River

**Bronwen Beedle** - Comox Valley

## Campbell River 1-3 June



By Dylan Baker

Campbell River hall was a good facility, lots of classroom space and a projector was provided. Maybe some challenge running two sections at once as there is no classroom for a second group, but it could be made to work by using one of the vehicle bays.

Tracking ground Saturday morning was a school yard 2 min walk from the classroom. Good for what it was, but still a big grass field. Students reported they were much happier in the woods. Forested areas worked well in the afternoon, night and Sunday morning. Weather was fine, though hazards list should include sunburn. The biggest challenge was the late sundown for night tracking. So, a classroom exercise was added before heading to the woods at dusk.

Student mix was pretty heavy on the host group (8, vs 4 out of town), but it worked well enough. 3 students were on their 2nd class, the rest were on their first.

The class was positive, worked hard and had a great attitude. Students were very positive about mix and match. Field areas worked well. Snack was well-timed.



## MORE 2018 COURSES ARE ON THE CALENDAR!!!

**6-8 Jul Prince Rupert** - Track Aware

**10-12 Aug Vanderhoof** - BCTA Instructor Course – Train the Trainer

**14-16 Sep Kamloops** - Track Aware and Tracker

**14-16 Sep Terrace** – Tracker and Advanced Tracker

**21-22 Sept Tatla Lake** – Track Aware

**21-22 Sep Port Alberni** – Track Aware, Tracker and Advanced Tracker

**Dates TBA Oct Sunshine Coast** – Track Aware, Tracker and Advanced Tracker

Detailed course announcements and registration forms, course descriptions, How to Host a Course and BCTA Membership forms are available at: [www.bctracking.org](http://www.bctracking.org). Courses are also posted on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BCTrackingAssociation/> and the BCSARA website Training Calendar. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/BCSARA/events/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/BCSARA/events/?ref=page_internal)

## NEW Training Materials!

Thanks to Darlene Berry, Jeni Christie and Dylan Baker, and their dedicated work over the winter, we now have a new set of power point slides and training aids for both Track Aware and Tracker/Advanced Tracker classes.

For the Track Aware, it still covers the mechanics of tracking, but in place of the many ZZZ by PPT slides showing examples of tracking terminology, we now have a more interactive Mix & Match presentation which includes getting the students out of their seats and looking at posted pictures of the various tracking sign and trying to match them to lists of tracking terms.

The lexicon of tracking terms is now available on the BCTA Membership website and via the BCTA iOS Mobile App, including many picture examples you can click on and enlarge.

The BCTA Training Manuals and booklets are also available on the Membership website and all students are encouraged to read them before they come to a class. Hard copies will still be available, but now you can have your own copies on your tablet.

The tracking boxes demonstration has been expanded from showing sign in different types of soil and noting aging over the weekend, to include several boxes where the sign has aged over a week or so before the course. Students are asked to age the sign in sequence.

For Trackers and Advanced Trackers, the new PPT package is divided into two portions. The first explains the tactics and shows examples of sign-cutting on the Friday night, before heading out for a short scenario. The second part, on Saturday morning covers the Action Plan, including all

the things trackers need to remember, from ICS forms - Task Assignments, Subject Profiles, Track Reports, Clue Reports and Debriefings. It also covers working with dog teams, evidence searches and task reconstruction and debriefing.

Whew! That's a lot of new stuff! However, the expectations and assessment for BCTA certifications remain the same, in accordance with the BCTA Training Standards. A new significant change is that the Assessment form is now on an Instructor App. Instead of the previous Meets the Standard or Needs Improvement, it is now a 5-point scale. The instructor can look up an individual student's training records and previous assessments, to better focus on areas that may need emphasis.

Instructors will still provide individual, verbal debriefings towards the end of a course. The Instructor App will automatically add the evaluation and instructors' comments and recommendations, and it will magically (if the WiFi gods are willing) appear in each student's membership database within a few days of the course.

So, if you haven't had a refresher course in some time because "it's the same old... same old," maybe it's time you came out to see the new training in action!



## Tracker Tales



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

### **REALLY AGED FOOTPRINTS!**

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/mobile/sci-tech/oldest-human-footprints-in-north-america-discovered-in-canada-study-1.3863896>

Human footprints found on an island off the coast of western Canada date back to around 13,000 years ago, making them the oldest discovered in North America, according to a study published Wednesday.

The footprints are likely those of two adults and one child walking barefoot on clay on what is today a beach on Calvert Island, northeast of Vancouver Island, according to the authors of the study [published in the PLOS ONE journal](#).

A total of 29 footprints were found during excavation work from 2014 to 2016, said lead author Duncan McLaren, a professor of anthropology at the Hakai Institute and the University of Victoria.

The study suggests that humans were present on the Pacific coast of British Columbia about 13,000 years ago and that the area was ice-free well before the end of the last ice age on the continent some 11,700 years ago.

## When you don't want your enemies to track your moves



### **MTSU classes explore the art and science of mantracking**

<http://wmot.org/post/mtsu-classes-explore-art-and-science-mantracking#stream/0>

SMYRNA, Tenn. (WMOT) -- It's a common scene in detective movies and westerns - the bounty hunter kneels down and carefully examines the ground, then looks up and says something like, "They were here, moving fast, toward town."

It's not all Hollywood make-believe. Mantracking is the art of following another person through wild terrain by correctly interpreting clues left by their passing. Mid-state master tracker and forensic anthropologist Hugh Berryman says tracking is the first investigative tool man ever used. But attend a mantracking class and you quickly discover that modern life can make learning the skill challenging.

During one such recent class, held in Middle Tennessee and sponsored by the Forensic Institute for Education and Research and Education, instruction began with the 20 or so mantracking students being marched into

the woods for their first field exercise. Most immediately looked a little lost.

Instructors lined them up in two rows an arm's length apart and the instructor walked between them. The students watched closely as his boots hit the ground in front of them. But when asked to point out some sign of his passing, they struggled to see any evidence of it among the leaves, twigs and weeds at their feet.

Nashville based Master Tracker Levi Montgomery has been teaching these classes for years. He says initial frustration is typical.

"I've had several come up to me and say, I see where you're pointing, but I don't see anything," he recalled. "I remember those days. I thought the instructor was pulling my leg, saying, 'Look. It's right there in front of you,' and his finger is touching it, and I'm saying 'I don't see anything.'"

Most novices expect to see actual footprints, but Montgomery says that's rare. He says wild land tracking is about noticing and interpreting the tiniest of clues; a broken twig, a disturbed pebble, or maybe an overturned leaf. He says it requires practice and patience.

"Slowing my brain down enough and relax from inner city living and get out into the country and actually start determining the disturbance in the ground. What's the real natural lay of the ground and what's been disturbed; what's been brought in and changed?" he asked.

A couple of hours into the class things were going better, perhaps because the students had been divided into four person tracking teams. The team leader focused on the small clues left by each step. Flankers roamed to either side to ensure the direction of travel hadn't changed. The rear observer looked down the trail for more obvious signs of passage.

Student Jamison Peevyhouse sees real potential in the technique. Peevyhouse is

Emergency Management Director for Weakly County in West Tennessee.

"We've had many children, hunters and Alzheimer's patients walk off," he explained. "Typically, our approach has been to put massive amounts of manpower on the ground – boots on the ground – and just try to figure out where they went. Maybe we get lucky."

Peevyhouse says he won't have to rely on luck once he's formed a small tracking team; a team that can hit the ground running.

"They'll be on the scene first. And while everybody else is trying to glean information from parents and bystanders these six person or eight person teams will be out there searching the area trying to find where the track is actually at," he said.

Dr. Hugh Berryman was host for the class. He is director of the Forensic Institute for Research and Education at Middle Tennessee State University. Dr. Berryman says tracking is usually referred to as an art, but he believes it will someday be a science.

"There's certain things that we use in tracking to determine how long it's been since a person passed a certain area," he explained. "It has to do with insect activity, it has to do with plants and the way plants respond to damage, color changes and things like that. And I think there's all sorts of opportunities for research projects in that."

While the science of tracking is yet to be developed, Dr. Berryman says tracking students can expect a more immediate change in the way they see the world. He quotes a famous tracker.

"There's a story here. It's written in the ground,' and there is. I think when you come away from these courses you just cannot look at the ground the same way again. You'll look down and you'll see things you never saw before."

*(I wonder where we've heard that before? Ed.)*