

FSVA REFRESHER TRAINING JULY 2021

Introduction by Andy Smith & Bob Romano

Andy introduced a new recreation tech, Blake Conrad – cell: 909 361-8008, who will be assisting Andy with the volunteer program. Continue to send correspondence to Andy and he will forward to Blake as needed.

Bob advised FSVA has been operating all during the pandemic with the exception of about 3 months last year.

We are at highest level of fire danger – currently no fires (not even in commercial developed campsites like Lake Hemet), no smoking unless you are in a vehicle, no shooting. If you hear shooting, call dispatch to advise – DO NOT CONFRONT. Never make contact if shooting, drugs, or alcohol is involved. Shooting will be allowed during hunting season in the fall.

Idyllwild ranger station is still closed and not expected to open before the fall. Calls are being answered during normal business hours and permits are available at the kiosk out front as well as by requesting in advance (allow at least 1 week notice). Applications are available online on our website under the Forest Information page: <https://www.fsva.org/forest-information>

Back to Basics – Patti Hudson & Rick Wilkerson

Review of new procedure for going in/out of service – we no longer notify dispatch. We discussed the process and the checklist is available in the volunteer section of our website, view here: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58b35a9ac534a56dc37be063/t/60f7538ce0137d358c273f0c/1626821517477/0-Volunteer+Handbook+-+Daily+Checklist.pdf>

Why permits? Permits are required to enter the wilderness. *(NOTE: our FSVA website was updated subsequent to this meeting to match the forest service that now says required instead of recommended.)*

- Safety – permits let FS know who to call, where to search during emergencies
- Funding – they advise how many people use the trail/wilderness
- Solitude – ensures wilderness is not overrun and people can have a good experience
- Protection – land can only sustain so many visitors
- Education – permits educate on the guidelines and rules for the forest

Discussion of best ways to encourage visitors to act appropriately with questions/answers.

- When explaining permit requirement, advise examples of how permits have helped –
 - girl scout group out during fire, used permit to call number listed and found out they had already returned. Saved sending out emergency crew.
 - permits provide a checklist of people we need to get out during a fire.
- Why can't we hand out permits? Copy needs to be filed in office, quota system easier to control if at office
- If they don't have permit while in backcountry, advise next time they are here get permit and give reasons. If they are close to trailhead, turn them around by saying “I can't give you permission to go forward”. If they ignore you, let it go.

- Ask them why they are here, involve their needs and try to use that information to come up with examples or reasons for appropriate behaviors
- Dogs off leash – advise rattlesnakes, dog safer on leash since they are food for predators, they may encounter horses, other dogs, and people who don't like dogs sharing trail with unpredictable results
- Quota system – advise it is needed because 20 million people surround our forest and our area is highly susceptible to overuse
- Maps – Avenza Maps is a good resource that can be installed on phones, it is free and features maps from professional publishers like the Forest Service, National Park Service, etc. San Bernardino National Forest also has a free app that can be downloaded. DO NOT SUGGEST ALLTRAILS – this has lots of inaccurate information as it is created by hikers and users that may or may not have any accurate information. Carry some of our free maps from the ranger station and offer them if needed.
- How to approach – stand besides them as part of their group instead of in front, remove sunglasses to appear more open/friendly, establish a rapport before launching into a discussion of what they are doing wrong (such as asking where they are heading, do they need maps or directions, do they have water)

Steps for Authority of the Resource

1. Initiate the contact with a friendly chat, stand side by side
2. Give an objective statement about the issue, avoid value-laden terms
3. Explain the consequences of the actions, focus on impacts to the natural resources
4. Tell them what can be done to improve the situation, give them an alternative

10 plus Essentials to Carry in Your Pack

Rick discussed the essentials you should have when going out on patrol which includes:

- Radio and extra batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Extra clothing including rain gear
- Sun Protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Maps, compass (navigation tool)
- Signal Mirror
- Whistle
- Extra food
- Water filtering device or tablets/extra water
- Headlamp/flashlight
- Emergency blanket/Shelter (even a large garbage bag as shelter)
- Knife
- Fire starter
- Trowel

Patrolling with Covid-19

Patti advised carry a mask and use it when the trail is too narrow to allow for social distancing or whenever you feel it is necessary.

Radio Training

Hands-on radio training of both the Bendix and the Tera radios was provided. Refer to Section 6 of our Volunteer Handbook for more information.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58b35a9ac534a56dc37be063/t/60b44c919be8071299544fc8/1622428822361/0-FSVAVolunteerHandbook.pdf>

Nature Talk – Birding by Robin Roberts

Robin discussed local birds and birding techniques. She recommended the following apps for your phone:

- Sibley Bird Guide
- Merlin
- eBird

Refer to the following “Becoming a Better Birder” handout she provided.

Becoming a Better Birder

Why study birds?

- It's fun! It can be done with people of all ages and backgrounds throughout the world.
- You can watch birds anywhere and at any time.
- Active birding combines outdoor exercise with mental exercise.
- It can be a relaxing or thrilling sport depending on your approach.
- Birders make new friends instantly.
- Birds connect us with nature quickly since they are around us everywhere.
- Appreciation of birds fosters interest in being good stewards of their environment.

Getting started

- Start looking and listening for birds where ever you find yourself.
- Look for movement up and down. Look on snags, posts, fences, wires and under eaves.
- Study the bird's appearance, behavior, flight pattern, foraging technique
- Listen to song. Note pitch, tone, trills, ascending, descending. Create a mnemonic.
- Note time of year, habitat and geographic location.
- Try to get to know the commonly seen birds in your area for comparison.
- Use good quality binoculars since it is much easier to observe the details.
- Use field guide, app, bird checklist to help ID bird.
- Join local bird group. Learn from others more experienced.
- Practice, practice, practice and HAVE FUN!

Building your skills

Observe the bird thoroughly before it disappears!

Size - Compare to a familiar bird for size reference - hummingbird, sparrow, jay

Shape -Shape can help narrow down the options- doves, woodpeckers, songbirds, raptors

Color and special markings -Note overall color of bird but remember lighting can impact the colors you see. Blue feathers are created by the refraction of light so a blue bird may look grey or black without light. Iridescent coloring on hummingbirds appear black if the light isn't refracted. Study special markings from head to tail - eye ring, cheek pattern, stripes on head, mustache(malar), wingbars, streaks or spots on chest, rump, vent color, tail feathers

Breeding plumage - Remember a lot of birds get a totally new look during breeding.

Juvenile plumage - Juveniles usually look different than the adults for a period of time. Shape and length of bill/beak- This will give you a clue into what the bird eats. Is it long and spear like (Great Blue Heron), conical (House Finch), Hooked (Hawk), Small and pointed (warbler, vireo)

Shape and length of tail - Is the tail long or short? Is it wedge shaped or squared off?

Foraging Behavior- Where is it foraging?

- Climbing up and down tree or starting at bottom winding its way up (Nuthatch vs Creeper)
- Drilling in bark (Woodpeckers, Sapsuckers)
- Eating pine cones (Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Chickadees, Jays)
- Perched from snag (Hawks)
- Flycatching from snags or other perched spot (variety of Flycatchers)
- Gleaning insects from leaves in trees (Warblers, Chickadees, Finches, Vireos)
- Scratching in ground (Quail, Towhees)
- Aerial pursuit of insects (Swallows, Swifts)
- Diving, dabbling, skimming over water, probing in mud (Ducks, Cormorants, Shorebirds)
- Hopping vs Strutting on ground (Robins vs Grackles)

Flight Style - Watch the bird in flight

- Straight flight (Robins, Crows)
- Dipping (Woodpeckers)
- Soaring (Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawks, Ravens)
- Teetering while soaring (Turkey Vulture)
- Bouncy or undulating (Chickadees, Finches)

Song- Try to find the bird that is singing. Listen for pitch, tone, rhythm, trills. Try to come up with mnemonic or comparison. (Mt Chickadee- Oh Sweetie or Cheeseburger, Olive-sided Flycatcher - Quick Three beers, California Quail - Cuidado) Listen in morning!

Habitat/Season - Noting the habitat, geographic location and season will help a lot in identifying birds. Some birds will be seen in wide range of habitats while others are restricted

Chaparral - Manzanita, Coffeeberry bushes, Great Basin Sage, Scrub Oak (Spotted towhee, California Towhee, Oak Titmouse, Wrenit, California Thrasher,etc)

Pinyon Pine/Juniper - Pinyon Pine trees, juniper bushes (Pinyon Jays, etc)

Oaks/Pine Forest - Black Oak, Coulter, Sugar, Jeffrey (Variety of woodpeckers, sapsuckers, Oak Titmouse, Mt Chickadees, nuthatches, warblers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, etc)

SubAlpine - Lodgepole, Limber (Clark's Nutcrackers, Green-tailed towhee, Canyon Wrens, Swifts, Mt Chickadees, Woodpeckers, etc)

Lake /Marsh - (Bald Eagles, Osprey, Great Blue heron, Ducks, Grebes, Shorebirds, Double-crested Cormorants, Red-winged and Tricolored Blackbirds)

Meadows - (Western Bluebirds, Juncos, Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, Western Kingbirds, Loggerhead Shrike, etc)

Happy Birding!!!

Robin Roberts

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