



The TELOS Times

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Wildland Fire Endangers Lost Coast Trekkers



Trapped by a wildland fire burning across their path on the Lost Coast, Telos trekkers work their way through burnt and

A recent trek by Telos residents 25 miles down California's Lost Coast in southern Humboldt County, turned into an unexpected challenge when a wildland fire broke out just south of their camp, in the middle of the night.

Telos had arrived at the mouth of Randall Creek in the early evening, after a hard 7 mile hike down the rocky coast, and had made camp near the fresh water provided by the creek. The area was small, but Telos offered to "squeeze in" three hikers who arrived at dusk. They declined the offer, and instead camped a few hundred yards south, but later revisited Telos' camp to obtain water. All were from Sacramento; one was a wildlife biology senior at the University of Davis.

Not long after dark, Telos' weary residents said their goodnights, and turned in to recuperate their bodies for the challenges of the next day. Although a strong northwest wind was blowing, Randall Creek was sheltered, and everyone fell asleep under clear skies, abundant with stars.

Shortly after 3:00 AM, our camp was accosted by one of the three fellow trekkers we had met, yelling "emergency!" "emergency!" and asking if we had a radio with which we could report a wildland fire that had broken out in their camp. We later learned that these "friends" had been lucky to escape with their lives. They had awakened to flames licking at their tent, hastily escaped, had saved much of their gear by throwing it down a bluff to the sandy beach below, but had lost one pack, and its contents to the fire.

The never before needed VHF radio Telos carries for emergencies was used to contact the US Coast Guard. After contacting the California Department of Forestry, collecting information, and being assured of ours, and our friends' safety, the Coast Guard assigned Telos a frequency and call sign and emphatically stated we were to call back for further assistance if the situation worsened. It was extremely reassuring to know that our residents would be supported by the resources of the US Coast Guard if necessity required!

After assessing the fire, which was growing exponentially in the strong wind, wilderness staff awakened the Telos residents, and their team leaders were instructed to prepare their teams to hike. Knowing that the fresh water would rapidly become undrinkable when the fire reached the creek, all residents were instructed to pump full their water bottles. To assist others, Jason (Placer) took it upon himself to single-handedly pump every water bottle full, not



Alex (Shasta) warily watches a wildland fire burning towards Telos' camp on the Lost Coast trek.



Safely south of the fire, Telos greets a crew of firefighters hiking into the wildland fire.

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just for Telos, but for our newfound friends as well, who sought refuge in our camp. Altruistically, he pumped water well over one hour in the middle of the night!

As Telos watched helplessly, the fire, driven by strong winds, moved on three fronts away from the beach. The north front was only a few hundred yards away from Telos. Fortunately however, its progress was slowed by the fact that it was moving into the wind. And the wind, was also keeping the smoke and ash away from Telos' position.

At 4:30 AM, it was decided that the situation was safe enough to allow residents to go back to bed on a sandy area of beach, an area free of anything burnable. A fire watch was posted and, despite the excitement, the group returned to sleep. At dawn, our three friends left going north, to their vehicle.

At 8:00 AM, the fire reached Telos' position. With its only transportation home still three days south, a strategy to cross the northern flank of the fire into the burnt out area was developed, and further, back through the southern flank into the unburned area beyond. The team



With surf licking his heels, Jason (Placer) ducks through a hidden passageway that

leaders were instructed how, and given the challenge of safely leading the trek through both the burning and burnt out areas.

Emergency responses were planned if the wind shifted direction. Too, several rattlesnakes, pushed by the fire had been spotted near camp, and they posed yet another danger with which the leaders had to contend.

The strategy worked! Within one hour, Telos had crossed through the fire area, and into the unburned area beyond the fire's southern flank. CDF resources had begun to arrive during the exodus, and residents were treated first hand to bomber attacks, helicopter water drops, and fire crews responding with hand tools to the fire.

One crew briefly interviewed Telos on the origins of the fire, collected information, then bid us safe farewell.

At that night's debriefing, 8 less eventful miles later, Telos residents and wilderness staff congratulated the three team leaders —Jason (Placer), Rogelio (El Dorado), and Deven (El Dorado)— for the superb manner in which they handled their duties during the fire. None had

either under, nor over reacted to the situation! Their jobs as team leaders were to keep their charges safe, together, and reasonably comfortable, and they had done just that.

That night, Telos residents again fell asleep under windy but clear skies, abundant with stars. But this time, they took to sleep with them something more: Another memorable wilderness experience, one that will probably be told and retold throughout their lives.



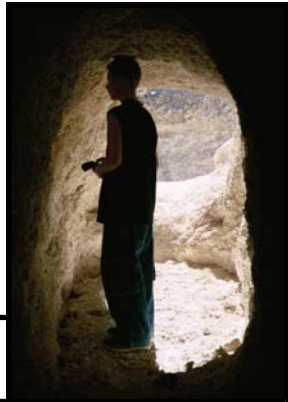
The place fisherman call the most treacherous point on earth, due to upwelling currents from two parallel oceanic canyons -each deeper than the Grand Canyon- Telos hikes past the abandoned Pt. Gorda lighthouse, established in the early 1900's, after 88 persons perished in a



Telos trekkers hike a rugged portion



Brian (Trinity) examines a buoy on the Lost Coast that broke its moorings in a



Hoping to discover an overlooked gem, Ray (Shasta) examines a hard rock mine in

2001 Death Valley Essay Contest Winner

Death Valley was a very wonderful trip! I liked it because it has more interesting shapes and colors of rocks than anyplace I have ever been. I very much liked the sand dunes and museum, the crystals we found, and the caves, ruins, and mines we explored.

The first day, we explored a ghost town with old stores, buildings, and a bottle house made entirely of mud and bottles. Later we hiked in the mountains.

The second day we explored old mines, and ate lunch with "James," who is buried near one of the mines. We saw a cozy house, made out of a cave, and saw other homes which were falling apart.

The third day we hiked several miles in Gower's Gulch, where we climbed a peak, ran along ridges, and chased lizards.

The fourth day, we went to the sand dunes, saw animal tracks, hiked up and down dunes, and climbed the lowest peak in America. That day we ate hot dogs for lunch, and afterwards, took showers and swam at a resort.

On the fifth day, we camped somewhere different, slept on the ground rather than in tents, hiked in the moonless dark, and climbed another peak.

Then the next morning, we ate breakfast, packed, and split for home.

-Rogelio (El Dorado)

Jason's (Placer) essay was voted second. Rogelio earned \$25 for his entry, Jason earned \$15. Traditionally, the first place winner has his essay published in the Telos Times.

From thousands of feet above, Brian (Trinity) watches the gathering storm whip up a sandstorm on the floor

Let's Take Care of Our Employees

At the request of our association, this writer and staff Chuck Greenwood recently attempted to address the Industrial Welfare Commission at the State Capitol on the issue of overtime.

But interestingly, appearing before us on the agenda was a representative of the shearers association. He pleaded with the IWC for a "living wage," and reported that on average, shearers only earn \$621 per week.

This writer notes, that of the rate paid to group homes, the state only authorizes \$359 per 40 hour week, *including all taxes and benefits*, to be paid to Child Care Workers.

Its time to stop neglecting the people whom care for the state's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children! Its time they received a "living wage!"

Voices From the Past

Telos has recently heard from several former Telos residents:

Matt M. (Placer) who had previously earned his Airframe and Mechanic's license, has obtained a new job in passenger jet maintenance with America West Airlines.

Chris B. (Yolo) has taken a job at a local hospital as an Emergency Room Technician.

Martin H. (San Joaquin), after much hard work, earned a 2.25 GPA and full credits at school's end in 9th grade at a mainstream high school.

Jude S. (El Dorado) graduated high school, and is holding down a job.

Ricky R. (Sacramento), now 25, failed Telos' program when he was 15. Recently, he visited to let us know that even though he failed, he benefited greatly from the Telos program, and of all the places he was assigned in his youth, says now, that Telos was the program that touched him the most.

Steve A. (Yolo) is a two year post-graduate, is doing well in school, has not had any additional trouble with the law, and wants to come visit.





An overworked, mistreated, malnourished, tormented Lost Coast trekker, trying to grin you into believing he

The Value of Wilderness Programming

Recently, Rogelio (age 13) brought this writer a poem he had copied from the book he was studying in literature at school. Rogelio has earned his Green, Blue, and Gold Peak Awards in our wilderness program, and is working toward earning his Diamond Peak Award. Doesn't the fact that he was touched by this poem he discovered, say that he is connecting his wilderness experiences with other issues of life?:

...What if a child shall cry "I have never known Spring! I have never seen Autumn!"

What if a man shall say "I have never known silence fraught with living, as in a swamp or forest!"

What if the eye shall never see marsh birds or muskrats?

Does not the heart need wilderness?
Does not the thought need something to rest upon not self-made by man, a bosom not his own?

Remembering "Tall" Paul Gessler, MSW

Returning from the Lost Coast, we sadly learned of Paul's sudden passing during our absence. Paul served as the Social Worker for Telos during several of our early formative years. He was affectionately called "Tall Paul" by our residents, due to his being so tall that he had to duck to go through doorways. Paul's life was one marked by service to others. He served at boys ranches in North Dakota and Washington years before moving on to boys homes in California. After leaving Telos, he became a medical social worker at Snowline Hospice here in El Dorado County. A crowning achievement of his career, was his facilitating the founding of the successful Gold

Country Retirement Community in nearby Placerville. Paul leaves behind his wife, Abigail, and a daughter, Sarah, to whom we send our heartfelt sympathies. Many of our boys were touched by Paul, and our program still reflects his efforts. His passing leaves the world a little emptier for us all.

Study of Organizations Like Telos Completed

The ink barely dry, Telos has received a just released copy of a continent-wide study completed by the University of Idaho, in which Telos was one of the organizations studied. Entitled 'Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare,' the study pursued answers to 15 research questions about the mental health treatment of teens through wilderness programming, including costs. It provides an engrossing overview of the wilderness treatment industry, including its development and common practices. One interesting fact, is that Telos is only one of 16 organizations identified in North America that serves court referred youth. Also of interest, the daily cost of such programs ranged up to \$664!



Deven (El Dorado) explores a "cozy house, made out of a cave" in Death Valley.



Mike Anderson Elected 2000 Staff of the Year

Mike earned a B.A. in Criminal Justice from CSUS in 1995, and then went to work for Telos as a graveyard staff a short time thereafter. He earned a promotion to graveyard supervisor, and then moved to swing shift supervisor when an opening presented. Mike recently became a trainer for Professional Assault Response Training, a position which ties nicely to Mike's historic interest in the martial arts. He serves as the "captain" of Telos' emergency response team, and also, serves as a trained Accreditor for the professional association to which Telos belongs. Mike richly deserves the peer recognition signified by this 'Staff of the Year' award! Congratulations Mike!!