

Search and Rescue Man Tracking

Introduction to Human Tracking
for the
Search and Rescue Volunteers



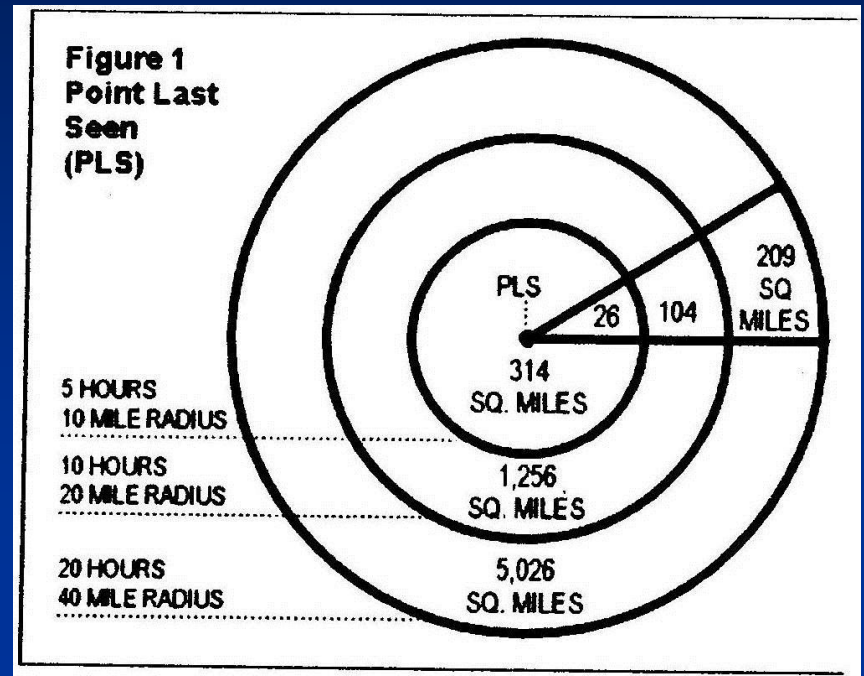
Why do we Track

- To follow the most available clues on a search. Foot prints.
- There are over 1500 foot prints per mile.
- Determining direction of travel can reduce the size of the search area.



Subject's Point Last Seen

- Determining direction of travel
- How long can it take for us to get there ?
- How far can the subject travel ?
- How can we reduce the search area ?



Determining direction of travel

- Carefully search the PLS for footprints.
- Verify subject's foot print.
- Use clues gathered from the reporting party's profile of the lost person.



Sign

- Sign is all evidence, not limited to footfalls, of a person's passage or presence.
- Broken branches
- Left open gates
- Tire tracks
- Kicked over rocks or bent grass
- Day old camp fire.
- Lack of sign lets you know that the person was not in your area, just as important as finding a clue



Easy to see

- Easy to see signs might include
- Discarded clothing
- A lost hat
- A water bottle
- Candy wrapper
- Foot prints/sometimes
- What else ?



Harder to see sign

- Broken twigs
- Bruised Vegetation
- Compressed leaves and soil
- Rock or pebbles kicked over
- Compressed areas
- Toe or heel only imprint



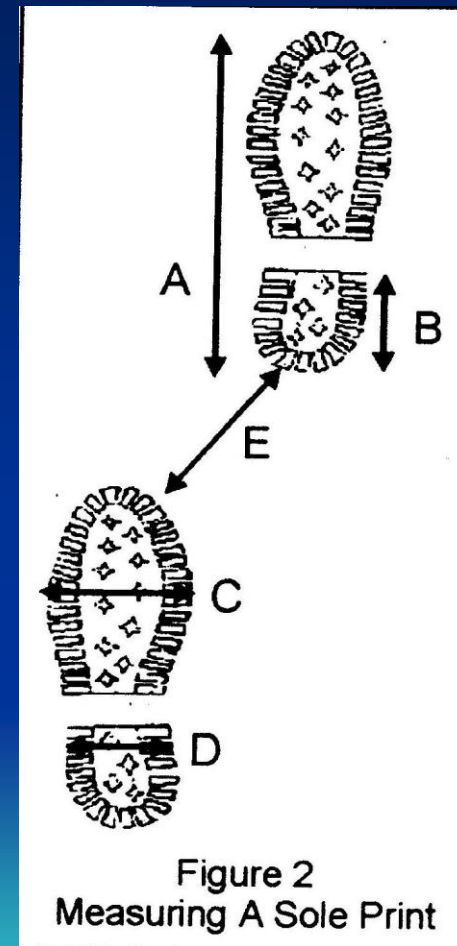
Basic Tracking Tools

- Paper /Pencil
- Measuring Device
 - Ruler or Tape Measure
- Marking Tape/ Flagging
- Tracking stick
- Tracking card if available.




Document the foot print

- Draw it to know it
- Camera use, download and print out for use by other searchers.
- Take Measurements
 - Overall length
 - Length of heel
 - Width at the ball of the foot
 - Width of the heel

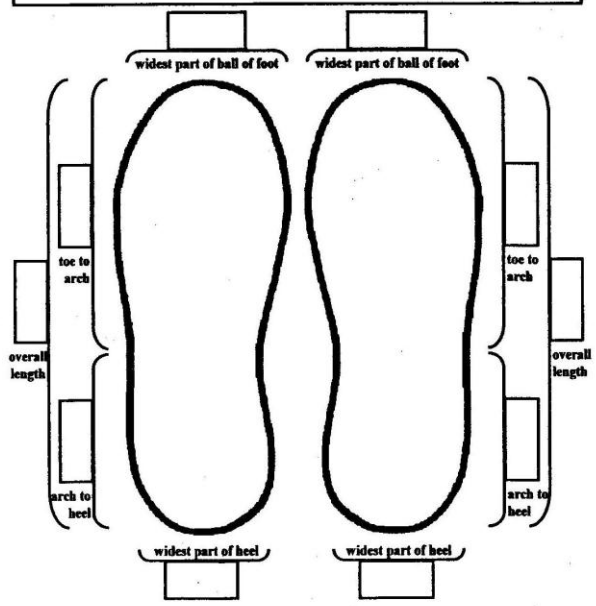


Tracking Card

- Has space for valuable information
- Available in the QRV
- Use to sketch the print on.
- Only sketch what you see,
- If a better track appears up ahead fill it in as you go

 **NCSSAR TRACKING CARD**
www.ncssar-nc.org

DATE:	TIME:	SUBJECT:
LOCATION:	BASIC TYPE:	PATTERN:
GROUND:	COMPASS HEADING:	STRIDE (toe to heel):
REMARKS:		



12/1/2008

Proper procedure

- After you document the track
- Mark it on your GPS
- Write down the UTM numbers in your note pad to have them ready to transmit their location, description and size back to I.C.
- Using proper radio protocol contact I.C. Using the 5x5 format transmit location and other information.
- If a direction of travel can be determined, report heading.
- I.C. will tell you what to do. It might be to continue your search or protect the track until a tracker shows up.



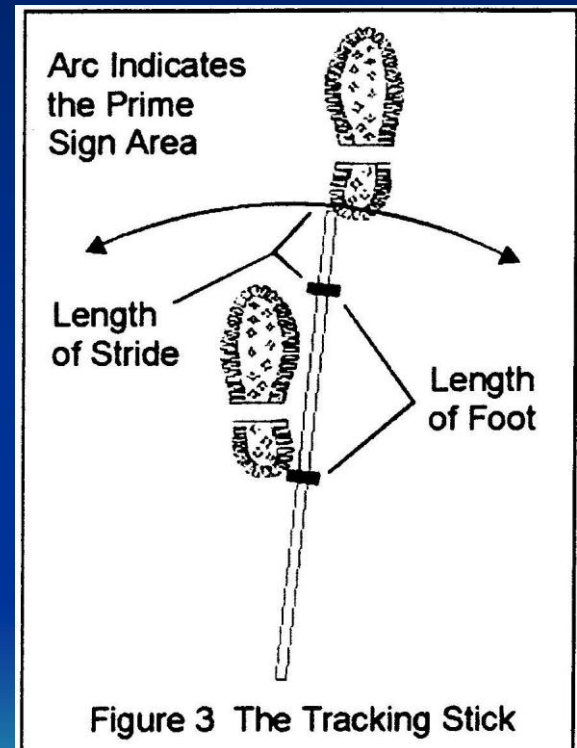
Reasons for detailed drawing of the foot print

- Commits it to memory so you can identify a smaller part of the print when you need to.
- Helps you to remember it so you can communicate to others about it
- Allows other team members to know what to look for.
- Possible use as evidence



Tracking Stick

- Is used to measure the length of stride.
- Stride is the distance between toe of first print to the heel of the next print
- Mark stride on the tracking stick.
- With a sweeping motion it helps find the heel of the next print.
- Helps to train the eye to gauge distance between tracks



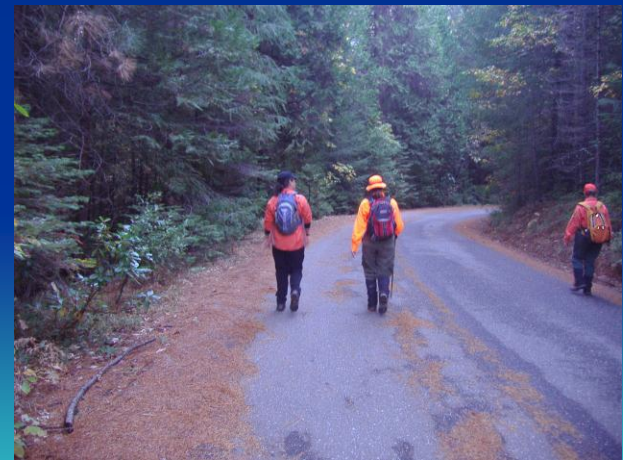
The way you look at a track

- Lighting, try to put the track between you and the light source.
- Vary the angle you look at the ground.
- It is hard to track in the noon day sun.
- Some times stepping back and looking from afar helps
- Looking far away from time to time rests the eyes.



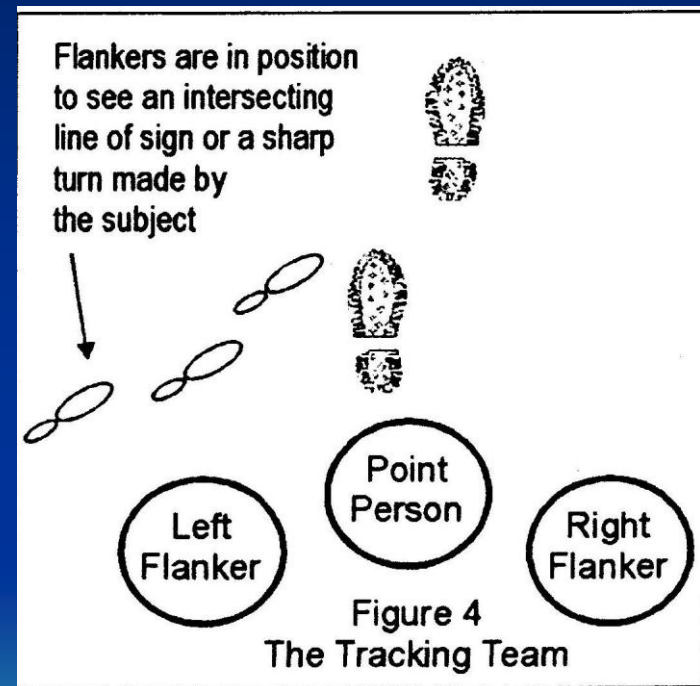
Tracking Team

- 3 person team consisting of a point person and two flankers
- Point person is Team leader
- Change positions at least every 30 minutes



Tracking team

- Point person follows prime sign.
- Flankers remain slightly behind point so as not to contaminate sign
- Flankers watch for change of direction
- Flankers look for interference from other persons foot prints
- Team works together to confirm the prime sign if needed.



Marking the track

- Never touch the Track
- Never walk on the tracks you are following. You may inadvertently create false tracks and will need to go back to the last positive confirmed track.
- Mark the last known print by placing a popsicle stick or flagging tape at the heel.
- Protect from environment if needed.

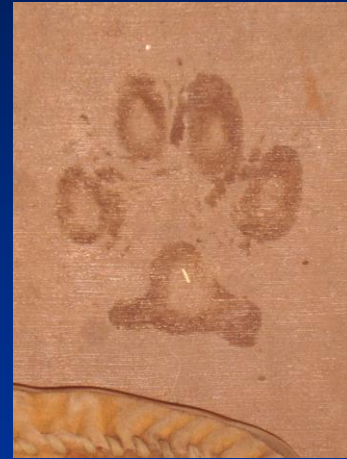


Track traps

- From a sand dune to an ant hill. Track traps are place in the environment that is smoothed out to enhance what we see
- Like wet sand or mud, dirt roads gopher mounds



Track traps



Being Track Aware

- Clue awareness begins the moment you are called out.
- All clues are considered evidence.
- Once a track is destroyed it is lost forever.
- Move slow and work with all your senses.
- If something catches your eyes, ears, nose, or sense of touch, don't be in a hurry, check it out. It caught your attention for a reason.
- An untrained person stepping on a good sign is unfortunate. A tracker or searcher doing the same is inexcusable.
- Always be aware when searching.



Tracking is Awareness

- Tracking is retraining the eyes so that you will begin to see what otherwise has been invisible to you
- Patience and concentration
- Be safe, always look around don't stay focused on the ground for too long.
- Too much talking reduces awareness.



Sign Cutting

- A second three person team takes off from the prime sign. To cut a perimeter, usually following the landscape in an effort to discover sign up ahead.
- When the sign cutting team positively id's the track up ahead then they become the step by step point team.
- Leapfrogging like this can save time and or help find the lost line of sign.
- The sign cutting perimeter can be a couple of yards to a couple of miles depending on terrain.



Summary

- We are all Ground Pounders
- A ground pounder could be assigned to a tracker or tracking team.
- A track aware ground pounder would be valuable in assisting a tracking team.
- On a real search, finding a clue you might otherwise overlook could mean the difference between life or death of the search subject.
- You might be the one that redirects the search.
- Stay focused

