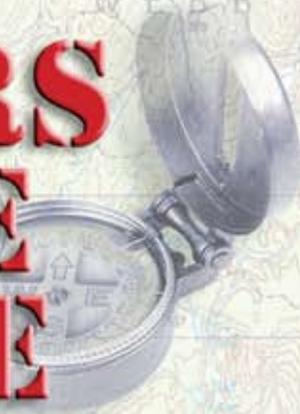




RANGERS TO THE RESCUE



Compiled by Lieutenant Chris Liebelt

Editor's Note: *These are actual accounts about DEC Forest Rangers and their work.*

Dehydrated—Essex County

During August, an experienced group of hikers planned to hike the Northville-Placid trail from Long Lake to Lake Placid. On the second day, nine miles into their hike, a 41-year-old member of the group began to experience mild nausea and felt tired. The group decided to take a break at the Seward Brook lean-to to give their companion some rest. It was late afternoon and the hiker wisely decided to spend the night in the lean-to hoping his illness would abate. He felt somewhat better in the morning and hiked for approximately five miles. When he reached the lean-to at Duck Hole, his condition took a turn for the worse and he could not continue. His nausea was severe and he was very weak. Another group hiking the trail arrived at the lean-to and called the Forest Ranger Dispatch Center in Ray Brook. Ranger Joe LaPierre was delivered to the scene by helicopter and determined an immediate evacuation was necessary. The subject was flown directly to the hospital and was treated for severe dehydration and electrolyte imbalance.

Close Call—Lewis County

Forest Ranger John Scanlon was on routine patrol in Lewis County on a day when weather conditions were just right for a wildfire. Sure enough, during mid-afternoon, a radio call went out reporting a fire in the town of Watson. The fire had started when a wind gust blew burning debris from a residential burn barrel. The fire spread quickly. By the time Ranger Scanlon arrived, the fire had spread into the woods and consumed more than an acre of forest. The fire was headed for the owner's home and barn, making a bad situation potentially disastrous. Local fire departments responded and rapidly helped Ranger Scanlon set up an effective pump system. Decisive action by Ranger Scanlon and the fire departments brought the fire under control quickly, and additional property loss was prevented.

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Signal Shot—Washington County

Diane Litynski planned on spending the day enjoying the views of Lake George from the top of Buck Mountain. Ms. Litynski hiked to the summit by mid morning. She spent some time there looking out over Lake George and the surrounding area, and started her climb down the mountain. During her descent she became disoriented and lost the trail. Bad weather was approaching quickly and she decided to stop and call for help. Forest Rangers responded and began searching for her. Forest Ranger Laczko contacted the subject by phone and, using landmarks and his knowledge of the area, was able to determine her general location. Other Rangers were called in to search that area. When Ranger Laczko arrived in her vicinity, he contacted her by phone a second time. He fired a signal shot, and Ms. Litynski described where the sound came from. Using that information, rangers located her a short time later. She was unhurt and required only an escort out of the woods.

Back Country Tip

Campfire Safety

If you feel a campfire is necessary in the back country, keep it small and safe. Use a stone fire ring to contain your fire. If a safe fire ring is available, use it instead of building a new one. Remove all flammable material, like leaves and sticks, from a three-foot radius around the ring. Avoid placing your campfire over shallow tree roots or under low, hanging branches. Keep your fire away from your tent or other flammable objects. Burn only dead and downed wood. Do not burn garbage or start your fire with liquid fuel. Make sure your fire is completely out before you leave the site. If you built a fire ring, wait for the stones to cool off and return them to where you found them.