Appendix G
Role-Playing Scenarios

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Law Enforcement and the "Authority of the Resource"

by Dr. George N. Wallace

According to Webster, "authority" means "the power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior." Wild nature can be said to have its own authority. Nature has her own rules, operates in certain ways, and has certain laws; there are consequences when we violate that order. Wilderness areas are among the few places on earth where we have agreed to allow nature, for the most part, to operate on her own terms. Desirable behavior is more likely to occur if people understand how their actions affect the way nature operates.

Much of the undesirable behavior which managers must deal with in the wilderness is behavior that disrupts the natural order or the ability of others to experience wild nature. All too often in dealing with visitors who are causing some sort of impact to soil, vegetation, water quality, wildlife or the experience of others, we tend to focus on the authority of the agency. By this we mean the visitor ends up thinking about laws, regulations, badges, and the ranger's presence rather than focusing on the natural authority inherent in the requirements of a healthy ecosystem.

The "Authority of the Resource Technique" (ART) attempts to compensate for this tendency. It transfers the authority (or that which asks a person to think or behave in a certain way) from the manager ranger or agency, to those things in nature (resources) that have their own requirements. Where Hammit and Cole (1987) and Hendee et al. (1990) have rightly emphasized the need to explain the reasons for wilderness regulations and the expected behavior, the AR technique goes one step further and asks the ranger/manager to subtly de-emphasize the regulation and transfer part of the expectation back to the visitor by interpreting nature's requirements.

On the next page, compare the two styles of addressing visitors whose dog is running free in a wilderness area which requires dogs to be on a leash. The ranger/manager approaches the visitors and their dog on the trail.

Authority of the Agency

Ranger: Hello my name is Jack Russell and I'm a ranger with the Rio Blanco District (pause or small talk). I'm going to have to ask you folks to keep your dog on a leash.

We have regulations that all dogs are to be kept on a leash unless you are in camp and the dog can be controlled.

Visitors: That dog has to be on a leash all the time in town. You would think that up here where he can't hurt anything that it wouldn't matter. Besides, he doesn't range very far unless he's on to a rabbit or something. (chuckle)

Ranger: Well, your dog may be well behaved but many aren't and I have to enforce the regulation that says dogs must be on a leash for everyone. This is just a warning notice, but if the dog is seen running around again I will be forced to give you a citation. The fine would be $25. Do you have any questions, or is there anything I can help you with?

Visitors: No. I don't believe so.

Ranger: Wee, I won't bother you anymore. You folks have a nice day.

Authority of the Resource

Ranger: Hello. How are you today? I'm Jack Russell, the backcountry ranger in this unit. (Uniform, name plate and shoulder patch can speak for themselves, or the agency can be identified.)

Visitors: Fine, thanks.

Ranger: (after some more ice-breakers) I noticed earlier that there was a dog running free in the aspen stands where the trail crosses that saddle (turns and looks at the aspen in the distant saddle).

Visitor: Yeah, that was probably Rocco here (gestures to the dog).

Ranger: Well, this is the time of year when mule deer are dropping their fawns. (points at the bench above the saddle where he has seen several fawns) and they are very vulnerable to disturbance. We have found that dogs that are running free often put a lot of stress on the does and their fawns. This is just one of several reasons for the regulations that asks visitors to keep their dogs on a leash (if the regulation clearly exists): or, we would feel better if folks could keep their dogs on a leash unless they are in camp and the dogs stay in camp with them.

Visitors: Ok, thanks for the reminder.

Ranger: That's quite alright. He is a nice looking dog. Is he full-blooded Australian? (Return to small talk or questions the visitors might have).

I had the privilege of working periodically over several years with David Hawkins, former director of the Mountain View Center for Environmental Education in Boulder, Colorado. As we trained teachers, we listened, watched, and analyzed the language and actions that teachers used. Hawkins and his associate Marie Hughes taught me to look and see if teachers and pupils appeared to be "face to face" or "shoulder to shoulder" as they talked or worked. They maintained that in every face to face relationship there

exists a certain amount of tension. If, on the other hand, both people turn and share an interest in something in the world around them, and their attentions focused on this third thing (deer, aspen, saddles or the special qualities possessed by an Australian Shepherd), the relationship is more authentic and less threatening to the person who may know less. He felt that it was possible to teach-in this case, without the coercion of authority-that the authority lay in the "stuff" which both people found interesting.

Perhaps the original inspiration for developing this concept comes from Freeman Tilden as well as philosopher Martin Buber. In his book I and Thou, Buber also describes how concern or care for the progress or development of another person (much as a ranger hopes that wilderness visitors will move to higher levels of respect for wilderness resources) often best occurs during mutual and reciprocal interaction with some interesting phenomenon in the world rather than by directly confronting the person. Tilden's (1957) first principle of interpretation seems based on this as well.

Before we get too far into the wild reaches of philosophy, let's try another example of a manager/ranger who is dealing with an undesirable behavior but using only the Authority of the Resource Technique this time. In this case, our backcountry ranger notices a group of backpackers washing dishes in the inlet of a small mountain lake. After opening conversation the ranger brings up the issue with the goal of influencing future behavior rather than writing a citation:

> **Ranger:** We have noticed that on several occasions lately, people have washed or bathed directly in the stream or the lake. Researchers tell us that even small amounts of nutrients, like those found in most soaps, are enough to change the growth of aquatic plants. Normally, in these high lakes, there aren't many nutrients to begin with (squats looking into the water, possibly picking up some rocks or plants from the bottom). Once the number of water plants increases above normal, lakes like this may experience changes in temperature, clarity, and the amount of oxygen available. Then, other organisms that live here now begin to change as well. We would like to keep those lakes as crystal clear, cold, and as natural as possible, so we are asking campers to carry water for washing, bathing, or packstock back to camp. Also, by pouring leftover water on the vegetation near camp, it is possible to help it recover a bit.

On again, the ranger in our hypothetical example had shifted the focus away from himself as an authority figure representing the agency and focused the visitor's attention on the resource. He has used the undesirable behavior—washing the dishes in the lake inlet—to create an opportunity to talk about water quality, the nutrient cycle and the changes that can be set in motion by a series of seemingly innocent acts. Washing dishes in an inlet is something that many people would not consider harmful. If so, it may be an example of wilful noncompliance. The ranger can change that be revealing the authority

of their resource. The best reason for not washing dishes in the lake is not because there is a regulation on the back of the map or a ranger asks you not to. Ideally, once the visitors understand how the lake and stream function and might be affected by their actions, they respect the integrity of those systems and act accordingly. Tilden speaks to this issue of presenting the "whole picture" in his fifth principle of interpretation. Concepts that unify the workings of nature and our bonds with the natural world are those that reveal the authority of the resource.

Another aim of the ART is to remove the tension that often occurs when teacher and pupil or land manager and land user are face to face-one supposedly knowing more than the other. Like Tilden, we wish to get past "instruction" to that which he chooses to call, in his fourth principle, the "provocative." It is especially appropriate for use with wildland visitors that are causing natural resource or social impacts that they may not be fully aware of.

The ART message in each case can be viewed as systematic. It has several sequential parts that can be described and later practiced.

Step 1. Give An Objective Description of the Situation:

After opening conversation, the manager or ranger simply makes an objective statement about the visitor's actions as they were observed. Any reference to the agency, the regulations, or the visitor as a violator is to be avoided at this point. Example:

> **Ranger:** I noticed that there was a salt black left near the campsite at Darby's Meadow.

It is important to avoid value laden terms. Phrases like "you really shouldn't." "Don't you know that it is harmful to ..." or "it's against Regulation 32(a), under the...." don't need to be used.

In fact, the above statement is made without attributing the act directly to the party in question even if it is highly likely that they did leave the salt. This is done for two reasons. First, someone else could have left it behind. Since a backcountry manager cannot and should not attempt to keep track of all the details of any group's actions, there is often some question as to exactly what happened. Secondly, it is a matter of diplomacy and tact to avoid the implication. Languages like French and Spanish, for example, hardly ever choose to assign blame to an individually choosing rather to use reflective verbs that say "it left itself" (was left), "it broke itself on you" (was broken), etc. We are doing the same here and at no loss to the message.

Step 2. Explain the Implications of the Action or Situation that was Observed:

It is here that the manager/ranger attempts to reveal the authority of the resource or interpret what will happen in nature if the action is continued. This may also be thought of as including social impacts or what will happen to the interaction that others are having with nature if the action continues.

> **Ranger:** In places where salt has been left behind in the past (ranger turns toward the area in question), deer and elk return repeatedly to the site, and it begins to look like an artificial salt lick, compacted and denuded of vegetation. They continue to paw at the ground afterwards, which is their habit at naturally occurring salt licks. It also tends to sterilize the soil in the immediate area. Other visitors frequently complain about finding these sites in a wilderness area.

Once again, the most important implications of leaving salt behind are not that it is against the regulations or that the outfitter's special use permit may be put in jeopardy (authority of the agency). The implications are that it is an unnatural occurrence which can cause impacts. The "authority" lies in the behavior of the elk and the nature of soil organisms, or what happens to soil macropores, roots, water infiltration, or the recovery period when a site is compacted. This part of the message should be interesting. The ranger/manager should demonstrate interest in the topic rather than impatience with the offender. It is an opportunity to employ the art of interpretation and help people see the subtle workings of all things wild or, as Holmes Rolston puts it, "to let them in on nature's show." Instead of threatening the individual "face to face" with your power to constrain or alter their activities, you help them, "shoulder to shoulder," acquire new knowledge. Lawrence Kholberg (1974) suggests that this approach allows the offender to self-test their existing values or attitudes and to move them to a higher level of principled thinking.

Wilderness users typically have high levels of education and assign a high value to wilderness (Hendee et al. 1990. p. 1568). In keeping with these facts, the ART always uses the positive expectation which assumes that once the person understands what is happening in nature, or in the wilderness experience of others, that they will want to stop what is recognized as undesirable behavior. This brings us to the last step.

Step 3. Tell Them How You Feel About It and What Can (Should) Be Done to Improve the Situation:

When the person using the Authority of the Resource Technique is both interested in and concerned about what is happening, it is acceptable to state how you feel about the implications or probable results of the undesirable behavior. Since you are wearing the agencies's uniform, the visitor can assume that what you say is also a statement of how the agency feels and what actions are desirable in the agency's eyes.

> **Ranger:** I'd (we'd) feel a lot better id the deer, elk, and animals did not become accustomed to man's salt in the wilderness. We are (or the "agency is") asking all packstock users to place their salt on a board, log or other surface that keeps it off the ground when it is offered to the packstock, and to be sure and carry all salt out with them when they break camp.

Bolton (1979) describes communication techniques, like "I messages" which are similar to the AR Technique. Authors of such techniques tell us that once a non-threatening ("shoulder to shoulder") atmosphere has been established, it is natural and effective to include a more personalized expression of concern like that which is seen in the first sentence of the statement above. Each person, however, who deals with undesirable behavior in the field must use their own judgement in deciding how to express the right to mixture of their own feelings, the agency's position and the position of others who may be concerned (fish and game or other wildlife officers may also be concerned about abandoned salt blocks).

The manager or ranger must make a decision in this third part of the message whether or not it is necessary to cite the regulation per se. This can be debated and depends on several things. The National Park Service is fairly consistent in its use of certain regulations. In other agencies, there are still a great many inconsistencies in where, how and if regulations are used. This may always be the case since there is great diversity in size, location, and management needs between units in the National Wilderness Preservation system. Many times a ranger will see undesirable behavior (type of fuelwood being burned, hunters who leave flagging behind, locations that are more appropriate for picketing horses, etc.). Managers may still wish personnel to make contracts and use techniques similar to the ART even if specific regulations do not exist. In fact, wilderness management guidelines ask us to minimize regulations in the wilderness.

Finally, it is important to qualify all of the preceding. Although by their very nature, wilderness and backcountry areas are the most logical places to try a technique like this, the ART may not always work or be appropriate. There are times when the manager must move to other, more traditional levels of law enforcement. It may be necessary to use more of the "authority of the agency." Although an Art approach will probably work for most wilderness users whom studies show, are well educated and supportive of the wilderness concept, there will usually be a small percentage of users who exhibit undesirable behavior that is clearly illegal (poachers, marijuana growers, motorized entry, etc.) Cases that clearly involve more than unavoidable, uninformed, unskilled, or even careless behavior may require that those techniques which emphasize enforcement over education or interpretation be taught to most commissioned law enforcement officers. Also, if management problems are not sufficiently reduced, after a period of using Art-type approach with the majority of visitors, it may be necessary to create or emphasize existing regulations and enforce them to a greater degree.

It is good, however, to expect the best of people when we can. Combining interpretation with law enforcement to reveal the authority of the resource seems to be a good place to start. We hope for long term changes in peoples' respect for nature in general and an intrinsically motivated stewardship of the wilderness in particular. Such changes are likely to last longer when we help people to test their own beliefs and values and arrive at a more principled wilderness ethic of their own accord.

References

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SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS WILDERNESS WORKSHOP LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PERSONAL SAFETY

As the facilitator you have the option of taking part in the role playing exercise as the person the wilderness guard is to contact or to assign both roles to members of the group. The role of the wilderness guard should be given to a first year ranger and the contact should be a returning / experienced ranger. The role of the public should be acted out based on similar contacts the ranger has experienced (playing "devils advocate" is okay too!).

Three scenarios are in the folder. Try to assign the roles to different participants for each scenarios. An hour has been allotted for the three scenarios so try to limit each one to no more then 10 minutes. This will allow for some discussion and critique. You chose only two to allow for more time.

Scenario1

Weekend Backpacker:

Friday evening finds you and your family (2 small children) at Shoe Lake in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. You've been looking forward to treating your family to a backcountry excursion for weeks. The weather is cool and it looks like rain when you arrive at the trailhead. You notice a sign on the bulletin board regarding Wilderness Regulations in your hurry to get going you don't take time to read them. While setting up camp it begins to rain lightly. Realizing you don't have enough fuel for your stove to heat enough water for the family meal you build a nice campfire. Surely there's no fire damage in this weather and besides it's getting pretty cold! Feeling as if your weekend trip may flop you are feeling defensive when the wilderness ranger arrives.

Wilderness Ranger:

The first evening of your backcountry tour finds you at Shoe Lake in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. As you are finishing up dinner you notice/smell smoke rising from a campfire located on the bank of the lake. The Wilderness regulations are clearly posted at each trailhead leading into the wilderness.

Make the necessary contact:

References: 36 CFR 261.52(a)

36 CFR 261.58(a)

Scenario 2

Horseperson:

This is your first wilderness horsepacking trip. You and your friends have limited packing experience. You heard from another friend about a nice weekend trip along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. You are aware of the vegetation damage that horse grazing can cause so you brought along hay for the animals! Wanting to minimize the damaged area you've tethered all the horses in one location! (50 ft. from trail).

Wilderness Ranger:

After hiking the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail all day you are about to locate a camp for the night. Just south of the Louisiana Saddle you come across a group of six horsemen with three pack animals. They are camped approximately 50 ft, off the trail. Their horses are tethered to tress and you notice a couple of hay bales.

Make the necessary contact

References: 36 CFR 261.58(f)

36 CFR 261.58(t)

36 CFR 261.58(e)

Scenario 3

Dayhiker:

You and your friends wanted to get away for the day and have a good time. You decided to hike up to Summit Lake. You brought along a couple of playmate coolers of cold beer to enjoy after the hike. You also brought along your new handgun in case you have a chance to try it out. You found a nice sunny spot on the bank to prop cans up and decided to target practice. You are intoxicated and you have a bad attitude towards authority.

Wilderness Ranger:

You arrive at Summit Lake in the Clearwater Wilderness during the afternoon and are amazed at the number of occupied sites. While trying to discreetly locate a spot to camp you hear gunshots echoing out of the lake basin. You locate the site of the disturbance down by the water. Upon entering the site you are greeted by the occupants (who appear intoxicated). Several empty beer cans are scattered around the camp and others have been used for target practice.

Make the necessary contact

References: 36 CFR 261.10