

LENAPE TRACKING CLUB

of

Central New Jersey



COMMON SCENTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1991

VOL. 16 No. 1

DATES TO REMEMBER

GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1991

ANNUAL DINNER
SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1991

TED 1991
SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1991

CERTIFICATION MATCH
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1991 (tentative)

TRACKING TEST
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1991 (tentative)

WHO'S WHO**OFFICERS**

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Tracking Experience Day	Fran Wilmeth	
Tracking Test Secretary	Martha Hamil	
Newsletter	Pat Etchells	

; FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK: ;

As this is being written, we are two weeks into the new year. The weather has not been favorable for tracking, at least not for dogs with four inch long legs like my Jackson. He tires quickly trying to get through six inches of snow. After the snow came the ice. My dog yard is still covered with two inch thick frozen slush. I am eagerly awaiting the January thaw.

We're working on plans for the January 31st membership meeting at Joanne and Ralph MacKinnon's. Several assistants at past Tracking Experience Days have suggested we review their assignments and go over procedures used when starting the new trackers in the field. We will also present the nominating committee's slate of officers and accept nominations from the floor. Plans for future tracking tests will also be on the agenda.

Remember the annual awards dinner is March 23rd at the Coach and Paddock. We have awards to give out this year, as several members earned Ts.

TED will be the next big event on April 27th. I've already had a request for information even before any publicity is out. We always need (and get) a good turnout of members for that one.

I will be speaking at the April meeting of the Burlington County Kennel Club on the kinds of things they need to do to put on a tracking test again. They haven't held a test for five years, but some new members are interested and are trying to get the Club to hold test again. It would be nice to have another test in our area so we wouldn't have to travel to New York State, Massachusetts or Maryland to find a tracking event. This fall we had three TD tests nearby - Philadelphia Dog Training Club, Berks County Dog Training Club in Pennsylvania and our own test in New Jersey. Only Philadelphia offered a TDX test. Compare this to the Midwest Tracking Association where they had 14 TD events and 21 TDX events during the fall. For the year they had 30 TD events and 39 TDX events. For some reason tracking is much more popular out there. But those of us who are involved know what a great sport it is. Let's come up with ideas for stimulating more interest in our part of this country. That can be our challenge for 1991 along with getting more titles on our own dogs.

Keep those noses down and happy tracking!

Fran Wilmeth, President



FRAN WILMETH finished Schipperke **Joy's** CD title at Lehigh Valley.

Send news to PO Box 326, Lebanon, NJ 08833)

and new members who want to help should attend, as we want to get some uniformity and set some guidelines as to the way we start our the beginning trackers. For directions, call Joanne at 908-735-7793.

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PLAN AHEAD FOR SUCCESS

Reprinted from Cross Tracks, July, 1990, by Barbara Ford

What can I do to make sure my tracking dog succeeds on any type of terrain or in different weather conditions? Do I need to carry an anemometer, thermometer or soil moisture measuring device to assist me in tracking? Most of us have asked ourselves questions such as this after a day of tracking under difficult conditions.

No, you don't have to carry instruments in the field, but it would help before tracking to learn about some of the ways terrain, vegetation, weather and human factors can help or hinder your dog's performance. Here are a few points about each of these that you may find to be of interest.

WEATHER:

1. A drying wind on sunny days will disperse scent quicker than on damp, still days.
2. Cloudbursts will wash out a track. Learn to observe clouds and avoid getting caught in a storm.
3. Dampness such as dew, light rain and snow increases the scent-holding capacity of a site.
4. Overcast skies reduce the amount of incoming solar radiation, which reduces the rate at which evaporation decreases the scent. Dust, pollen and industrial emissions act in the same way to screen the sun's rays. However, strong winds, high humidity and atmospheric instability act to decrease the amount of scent remaining on the ground.
5. Differences in temperature create differences in air density and atmospheric pressure. This, in turn, causes vertical and horizontal air movement which affects the rate of evaporation of your track. Slopes, inversions and valleys and dips are examples of conditions which produce differences in temperature.
6. Heavy dew will suppress evaporation of the scent for a length of time.
7. Wind speed not only controls the stability of the air but the evaporation rate of scent from the ground. Wind speed also increases at a faster speed going around hills and up and down slopes. The evaporation rate is affected by terrain and vegetation as well as wind speed.

TERRAIN:

Topography plays an important role in local surface temperatures by the way steepness of slope and surface cover influence temperature. It also affects the track scent.

1. Hills can cause the wind to blow the scent in many different directions and the wind accelerates on a hillside, leaving no scent for the dog.
2. Ditches and dish-shaped areas in fields will cause the scent to settle over a broader area and show no direction to your dog. He will waste a lot of energy trying to find the apex of the scent.
3. Windbreaks such as tree lines can help or hinder your dog's ability to stay on the track. The track is either protected by warm pockets of air and settles all over the area because of lack of wind, or the tree line can act like a tube of air traveling at increased speed. Either way the dog will be all over trying to find the out-leg.
4. Soil texture and color may increase or decrease evaporation according to exposure to the sun, shade and other weather elements. Soil will also act as a sink for scent if the track is laid on it under ideal conditions (wet, shaded areas, deep furrows). It may be a poor scent-holder if it is hard, compact ground or just plowed or harrowed fields. The scent would be baked off the ground.
5. Plant temperature is controlled by the width and density of the foliage as well as the type of plant. This in turn affects the rate of evaporation of water from the plant as well as the track scent.
6. Scent laid in a tree area will cling to the leeward (opposite side from which the wind is blowing). The dog may become confused in these areas.
7. Leaves that are more numerous and complex in design (wider) will collect more scent and hold it longer. A good example of this is hay fields in full bloom compared to a new field with short vegetation.

HUMAN:

There are many ways that we may influence the scent and affect the dog's ability to find the track. Not only are the natural elements working against the dog, but we sometimes do too.

1. We wear shoes for style and forget to use shoes that help our feet to breathe. This also lets out the foot odor so our dogs can follow it. We sometimes put water repellent material on shoes to protect them from water. This will frequently prevent the shoes from emitting odor, and the chemicals may restrict the dog's olfactory sense.
2. Wearing excessive amounts of perfume will turn off not only the dog but your tracking friends as well.
3. Your body might be under stress when you are taking medication, and you may not be emitting the normal amount of body odor.

4. Walking different speeds will increase or decrease the body particles dropped on the ground. Part of the track may be heavily scented and other areas may be only lightly scented.

What does all the above mean to you and your tracking? After arriving at your track area and before the track is laid, you should think about two things. First, think about what you are trying to achieve for the day with your dog and then think about the vegetation, climate, terrain and human factors present on the site and how they could affect this success. A few minutes spent thinking about some of these factors may help you to anticipate problems and make it easier for you to accomplish your tracking goals.

MARKING TURNS

Reprinted from Cross Tracks, October, 1990

Most beginners, and even some old timers, have trouble remembering where they make their turns. To solve this, many trackers place small flags at their turns, but this causes two problems. For one, the flag has the track layer's scent on it and the dog naturally stops to smell it. The all-too-obvious turn stake can be seen by the dog at a distance and the dog may start tracking the flags and not the scent. Dogs and handlers are making known, training turns not not unknown, blind, Test turns.

Placing artificial turn markers also requires you to go back and retrieve them. At a popular Midwest site, they leave ribbons on bushes which are cheap enough to leave behind, and now the site looks like a Christmas package that they have to clean up.

Stage door right enters our new students telling me about the use of CHALK to mark turns. No, I don't mean school board chalk and writing the direction of the turn on grass blades or in the sand. What I mean is powdered chalk in a squeezy bottle that carpenters and rug cutters use in a Chalk Line tool to make straight

lines. All you have to do is make your turn and give it a little squirt and you have marked your turn.

Think of it. You can mark a turn that cannot be seen at a distance by either you or your dog, and it doesn't have your scent on it. Yet, it is clearly visible and easier to recognize than most natural turn markers you might find.

On a bottle I have, red and yellow chalks are permanent color. I don't know about the environmental impact, but I would think that natural white chalk would be the safest to use and easiest to see. Due to moisture on grass and dew, the powder does not just blow away and it takes rain to wash it away, and I don't think you should have to worry about going back to clean it up.

Chalk is a powder and the dog can sniff some of it up his nose just like pollen and natural dust, and I don't know if chalk might have any long- or short-term problems. It is a new idea to this tracker, though, and if you think it will help you track, you might want to give it a try.

CORRECTION to the NJFDC meeting report (Page 4, November/December issue). Although some pet registries do not have unique numbers, TATTOO-A-PET does.