

Focal Point

A publication of the Sacramento Chapter
of the California Lands Surveyors Association



October 2024

**The next Chapter meeting will be held at Logan's
Roadhouse in North Natomas on October 3rd!**

**Come join us to hear Kevin Akin tell stories of
Surveying in Alaska!**

President's Message

**Annette Hovorka, PLS
2024 Sacramento Chapter President**

Surveyors, Data, and October

October serves as a pivotal month for surveyors. As autumn settles in, we often find ourselves finishing up projects, looking forward to new projects, and reflecting on the years accomplishments.

During this time, many of us will focus on finalizing fieldwork before winter arrives. With the changing weather, we will utilize the remaining weeks to gather data critical to their projects. This data collection often involves getting those last few monuments, topographic features, and environmental conditions before weather conditions hamper efforts.

October also coincides with awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of data in environmental monitoring. International Day of Climate Action on October 24 encourages us to emphasize to clients how data collected and monitored by professionals can contribute to understanding climate change impacts. Accurate surveying and data analysis play a vital role in tracking changes in land use and natural resources, becoming a meaningful and repeatable process for establishing and contributing to sustainable practices.


Geographic Information Systems (GIS) , a favorite subject of mine, and data visualization tools allow analysis and present information effectively, making it accessible to stakeholders and decision-makers. These tools in the hands of surveying professionals can have a great impact on our futures and help communities move forward in meaningful way with a solid foundation.

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The **Focal Point** newsletter is a publication of the Sacramento Chapter of the California Land Surveyors Association. Check us out at <https://www.sacramento-clsa.org>

Who's Who in the Sacramento Chapter for 2024:

Annette Hovorka PLS	President
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Andrew Tapley PLS	Secretary
Laird Nelson LSIT	Treasurer
Cameron Clark PLS	Board of Directors Representative
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Sherry Toutges PLS	State TrigStar Coordinator
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You can post job ads in the Focal Point for \$100 and they will run for a maximum of 1 year. And, you can take home one of our attractive slate CLSA coasters for a \$10 donation!

Contact the Focal Point editor at alidade.nv@sbcglobal.net

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President's Message

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October is a traditional time of for reflection and remembrance. Let us take a moment to remember those coming before us and those who come after us. Both are worthy of our attention. When engaged in said activity, it can remind us once again about the importance of getting together and engaging in sharing. Our profession is dependent on such activities.

As always, I hope you feel encouraged to join us at the monthly meeting, adding to conversation and contributing to our on going story. This month we will hear a great story from our colleague Kevin Akin and his adventures in Alaska.

Annette Hovorka, PLS
2024 Sacramento Chapter President

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Carl C.de Baca PLS	Secretary
Morgan Thalken LSIT	Treasurer
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Sacramento Chapter, CLSA

Minutes for meeting of September 5, 2024

The 2024 Sacramento Chapter Vendor's Night was a resounding success! Held at the Round Table Pizza on Arena Boulevard in North Natomas, we had 3 vendors, Javad, Leica and CSDS, who made informative presentations and we raffled off donated items such as Hydroflasks, bottles of wine and some stronger spirits, as well!

In attendance for the event were the following: Dan Beaver, Carl C.de Baca, Adam Foster, Madison Gruginski, Annette Hovorka, Laird Nelson, Russ Smith, Andrew Tapley, Morgan Thalken, Sherry Zimmerman, plus vendor representatives Mike Woodel, Daniel Speziale, Russ Snell, Chris Dinger, Roger Perez, Sean Davis, Jon Tegan, Brandon Bickley & Stuart Rager.


Some chapter business was done before the vendor presentations go underway: the new slate of officers was elected for 2025. Annette Hovorka has graciously offered to stay on as chapter President for one more year! Laird Nelson is ascending to the Vice President role, Morgan Thalken is taking on the Treasurer duties and Carl C.de Baca will perform the duties of the Secretary. Andrew Tapley will stay on as our Board of Directors Representative and the 2025 alternate will be Carl C.de Baca.

The only other chapter business undertaken was to debate, vote and pass a motion to fund six scholarships of \$500 each this year. That motion passed unanimously, underlining the chapter's commitment to Survey Education!

During the Vendors' presentations, we heard first from Mike Woodel of Javad discussing the Javad GPS gear and their amazing radio modem gear. Next up we heard from Daniel Speziale of Leica who introduced their newest generation of total stations, survey controllers and other innovative hardware solutions, including a prism pole that can collect a point on a tilt, like some GPS units with IMU capability can. They also have metal detector foot for the rod that would allow for collecting a subsurface point. Wow. Finally we heard from a bevy of California Surveying and Drafting Supply representatives including Roger Perez and Sean Davis who show us the latest scanners, laser levels, and utility locating gear.

It was a great opportunity to see and hear about some exciting new technologies and a chance to let the vendors, who support us all during the year, have the floor with a captive (what – leave while there is still pizza and beer, are you kidding?) audience. Thanks vendors for a great evening!

-Editor's note: Enjoy the photos of the event on the following page.



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Rusty Combest Rest in Peace


I am very sad to report that an old friend has left us. Rusty passed away unexpectedly late last month. Some of you may recall the colorful Mr. Combest from his years at Wood Rodgers, both in Sacramento and in Reno. Rusty was an excellent surveyor and mapper and the freest of free spirits. He loved to hunt, to survey and to debate, though that often took some prompting and a libation or two. He was one of the finest people I ever knew and he will be missed by his family and his large group of friends. I offer a toast to his memory. Cheers Rusty, may the game trails lead you on forever.


-ED.


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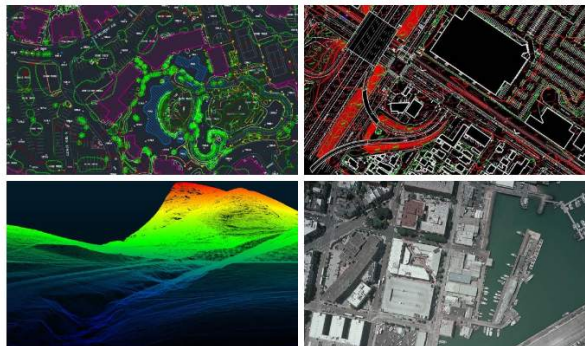
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The Rant Zone

By Kent C. Strait

The Misunderstood Corner Record

What is the highest and best (and some would say the only appropriate) application of a Corner Record as described in §8771? Here's my interpretation:

1. Replacing an endangered monument while maintaining its positional integrity,
2. Reestablishing a missing monument while demonstrating that it occupies its original position within reason. No. 1 is obvious and non-controversial. No. 2 is where the trouble starts... Reestablish how?

Generally speaking, **most** of us have an understanding that if principles of survey reestablishment, such as splitting improvements, using indirect geometric methods, or applying more than simple proration between two points, are used, then §8762 is triggered. How much can you prorate without crossing into the magic realm of material discrepancy? It is safe to say that if a Corner Record has a surfeit of both measured bearings and distances and record bearings and distances, that it has left simple monument perpetuation behind and travelled down the road to boundary retracement. And that is **NOT** a Corner Record.

Therein lies the problem. Mini-Records of Survey, as they are derisively called, (at least by me), are too common. Unfortunately, County Surveyors are neither empowered to reject such a travesty, nor to require a Record of Survey, so they can either accept the damn thing and move on, or accept it and go to DefCon 1 by reporting the preparer to the Board of Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists for failing to file a Record of Survey.

This all certainly begs the question: is the reason for these 8-1/2" x 11" masterpieces that Records of Survey have become too expensive to submit and process up and down the state? * If your boundary survey is weighted down by thousands of dollars of submittal/review fees and six months of lost time (optimistically), then the temptation to show your work on a Corner Record instead, must be great. But that doesn't make it right. We all know that the properly scoped boundary survey proposal that includes the cost of preparation and processing of a Record of Survey will lose most times to the fly-by-night survey proposal done by the Brand X guys. Maybe if the Brand X guys actually understood and abided by the provisions of the LS Act and the limitations on the uses of a Corner Record, the playing field would level itself a little bit. I know, I know – 'welcome to fantasy island'.

And enquiring minds want to know, how many corners should you be able to put on one record, anyway? As a friend of mine likes to say, they are not called "Corners Records".

**Records of Survey are an indeed an expensive endeavor. More and more local agencies seem heavily focused on recovering their costs even though taxpayers pay their salaries already. What gives? It's not like they use the fees they impose to directly bring on more staff. If that was true, a better approach would be to offer expedited reviews for that fee. That way, if it was critical for your project to get completed in a shorter period of time, you would pay extra for the agency to reach out for help, allowing your project to move through the line more rapidly. As things are currently, you pay beaucoup bucks to keep your same spot in the queue, and that's if you are lucky. But I digress.*

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LONG HOT SUMMER

In the grand scheme of disasters in the US, wildfires have become as impactful as floods. Oh sure floods hit cities and that is where the TV news reporters go, whereas for the most part, wildfires are scorching forests and individual residences, with the occasional Santa Rosa, Paradise or Lahaina thrown in, but in terms of devastation, cost to the taxpayer and human tragedy, wildfire is giving flooding a run for its money, literally. Some of us have been thinking that **the Flood Zone piece in the NSPS News And Views should be balanced with an ongoing piece on wildfire.** How to prevent it, how to come back from it, how to survey in the aftermath, what FEMA should be doing to help fund recovery surveys, and most importantly, what to do to protect landowners rights which are severely threatened when the monuments are destroyed. California has 14 significant wildfires burning right now, and yet only a handful of us are even talking about it. Los Angeles is the second most populated city in the US and it is currently ringed in fire. Oregon has seen over a million acres burned up this year, and fires are burning in Montana, Idaho and Nevada. Hell, Jeremy Renner had to evacuate his family due to threats from the Davis fire currently burning in Washoe Valley and up the east side of the Sierra. If an A-Lister has a problem with fire, America should listen up.

The point is, this problem is no longer a temporary inconvenience or a cyclical weather-related issue. Bad forest management, repeated drought cycles, human encroachment on formerly wild lands, and overuse of an increasing limited water supply have made western wildfires endemic - a regular occurrence. Tragic as they may be, wildfires are becoming predictable. Every fire in areas inhabited by humans comes with a cleanup where removing toxic burn remains trumps protection of land boundary monuments and once those monuments are gone, it is costly and difficult to reestablish their position. And there are nearly no local, state or federal policies specific to this problem. Like NSPS used to say about TrigStar, "It starts with awareness."



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