Boy Scout Tracking

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“There is no hunting like the hunting of man and those who have hunted armed man for long enough never care for anything else there after”.

Ernest Hemingway
What is Tracking?

Tracking is the ability to follow signs to locate either material, animals or individuals.

Types of Tracking

Scent Tracking

Visual tracking
Canines have been used for tracking (locating game animals), ever since man has domesticated the dog. These dogs are trained to track a certain scent from point of origin to point of contact. In the 17th Century, Bloodhounds were specifically trained to track (hunt) man. Today, dogs are used to track people for many different reasons.
Visual Tracking

We use our eyes to locate physical signs of our search target in the environment that we are in.

Sign
What are some signs?

Transfer: material that has been moved from its original location and left in another location such as: sand or mud left on top of leaves, a gate, etc.
Displacement

Displacement: occurs when an object has been moved from its original location to indicate the direction of travel such as: stones, logs, or sticks that have been relocated by an animal's movement.
Flagging

Flagging: generally is vegetation such as branches, grasses, and etc. that have been moved from their natural location. It is usually shown by a distinct color change, broken limb, or etc.
Flattening: this is the actual compressing of material indicating downward pressure caused by the passage of either vehicle, man, or animal.
Disturbance

- Disturbance: movement by birds or animals that would indicate that something is out of place in their natural environment such as: flushing birds, chattering squirrels, and etc.
Individuals print: The actual measured length as well as the width of a suspect's footprint. Print also includes any distinct physical characteristics such as: barefoot, type of shoe sole (Vibram, Panama, Waffle).

Animal prints can also have distinct features.
Stride

- Stride: the distance between footprints of a normal person walking. The average stride is approximately 18-20 inches. Stride can also be measured in animals.
The Tracking Stick

The tracking stick is a useful aid to helping you locate animal or human tracks. They are easily made from any straight stick, fallen tree branch or a piece of doweling.

Most walking staffs, would make a great tracking stick.

**Important average stride measurements.**

- **HOUSE CAT** 7 INCHES
- **BOBCAT** 10-13 INCHES
- **LYNX** 12-14 INCHES
- **MT. LION** 14-17 INCHES
- **RED FOX** 10-14 INCHES
- **GRAY FOX** 8-12 INCHES
- **COYOTE** 13-16 INCHES
- **GRAY WOLF** 16-18 INCHES
- **BLACKTAIL**
- **RABBIT** 9-12 INCHES
- **WHITETAIL**
- **RABBIT** 10-15 INCHES
- **SNOWSHOE** 10-12 INCHES
- **COTTONTAIL** 7-12 INCHES
- **CHIPMUNK** 4-7 INCHES
- **RED SQUIRREL** 5-9 INCHES
- **GRAY SQUIRREL** 10-15 INCHES
- **WOODCHUCK** 6-8 INCHES
- **PORCUPINE** 6-10 INCHES
- **MUSKRAT** 3-6 INCHES
- **BEAVER** 4-6 INCHES
- **STRIPED SKUNK** 5-8 INCHES
- **RACCOON** 12-16 INCHES
- **POSSUM** 7-10 INCHES
- **BLACK BEAR** 18-20 INCHES
- **WHITETAIL DEER** 18-21 INCHES

**Animals Walk 95% of the time. 80% of animals are right dominant.**

Human strides are measured from the heel of one foot or shoe to the heel of the next.

Animal strides are typically measured from the toe of one track to the toe of the next.

Once the stride length is marked on the tracking stick and the mark placed in the heel of the track (toe for animals) the stick is then moved through an arc to the next track.
Reasons to teach tracking skills, to Boy Scouts.

- Woodsman ship
- Stalking
- Photography
- Hunting
- Survival
- Search and Rescue
- Merit Badge (Fish & Wildlife Management)
Six Elements of Tracking

1. What Wildlife can I see?
2. Who made the Tracks?
3. What was the animal doing when the tracks were made?
4. When were the tracks made?
5. Where did the animal go from here?
6. Why did the animal go through here?
Identify this Track!!!
DEER TRACKS
Using The Tracks To Determine
What Type Of Deer You Are Hunting

3-3-1/2 in.  Fawn

4 in.  Yearling Doe

4-1/2 in.  Adult Doe or Yearling Buck

5 in.  2-1/2 Year-Old Buck

5-1/2 - 6 in.  3-1/2 - 6-1/2 Year-Old Buck
Black Bear
Right Hind Track Cast

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So, go out and Track!!!