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# Land and Lake Newsletter

Updates on Bruce Peninsula National Park and Fathom Five National Marine Park

## Wildlife Forensics

Submitted by Shawn Parries, Park Warden
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With the sheer number of crime drama television programs that are dedicated to "Crime Scene Investigation", almost everyone has seen at least one fictionalized portrayal of good-looking criminalists pouring over a puzzling array of evidence in order to solve a grisly murder. Many of the techniques portrayed in these shows are based in reality and, while exaggerated or simplified for television, they are used by law enforcement agencies around the world to solve real life crimes. But did you know that national park wardens are trained in utilizing forensic techniques during the investigation of natural resource violations?

The flora and fauna in national parks are protected, but poaching, unlawful harvest, and firearm violations are still a reality. Discharging a firearm, however, can leave a great deal of information behind for an investigator. Marks left behind on shell casings and bullets after firing can be traced back to a specific firearm, for instance. Examining carcasses or gut piles can also reveal a number of clues: insects on carcasses can give important time-of-death information, examination of wounds can help determine cause-of-death, tissue samples can be collected for DNA analysis to determine the species, sex or even individual identity of a particular animal. Furthermore, boot-prints, tire-marks and even garbage left behind at the scene can reveal much about potential suspects.

In addition to ensuring that visitors have a safe and enjoyable national park experience, park wardens are tasked with providing law enforcement support for the protection of natural and cultural resources in the national park system. Now that you know a little bit about some of the forensic training that local park wardens are receiving, you'll have a better idea of what they might be up to when they're poking around in the bushes or crawling along the shore of one of the local lakes. It's CSI: the fish and wildlife files!

Park wardens conduct a training exercise in decompositional analysis.

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