

Tracking Notes

Part One

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Tracking Notes

Introduction

This is presented as a guide to locating and documenting the tracks of Sasquatch, Bigfoot, Forest People, or whatever name you choose to call them. It is also specific for the geographic area and mountain terrain of Western Maryland, South Central Pennsylvania and north Central West Virginia. Although I would be fairly sure the information presented would be similar for the entire mid-Atlantic region with the exception of the deep south and far north.

My belief is that the Forest People are a type of human (much like us in some respects but in others not at all) and should be treated as such. I have experienced interactions that use complex thinking and tactics intended to confuse and misdirect. They appear to have many physical and sensory advantages to make this easy to accomplish. My thought is always that they act in the same manner as very well trained soldiers. They use terrain and cover to their best advantage, conceal their trail, and will mess with you anytime they want, especially at night. Like soldiers they look out for each other as well as co-ordinate actions to achieve common goals. This may not be the best analogy, but given my background and training it makes sense to me.

I also lean towards the late Dr. Ivan Sanderson's thinking that there is not only good evidence that these creatures exist worldwide but that there are probably four to six different and distinct species as well as regional variations or sub-species. Just look at the physical differences between witness descriptions of sightings in the Pacific northwest and the mid-Atlantic mountains if you want an example.

If you have followed the recent advances in genetic research in the field of early human anthropology, you will know that there is now a great deal more knowledge out there now. This new information shows that at least five of the six known species of early humans that lived at the same time interbred with each other. Two of these species are only known from their DNA. This begs all sorts of questions about our evolution and history.

It is so very important in doing this kind of research that you go into it and

continue doing it with an open mind. Use critical thinking skills and apply scientific method when and where you can. There are plenty of folks out there that have theories, ideas, or “beliefs” some of these are good some are just plain absurd, use your critical thinking skills to decide what you accept and what you do not. Although there are some very knowledgeable researchers out there, there is no such thing as an “expert” there is simply just not enough information yet to make any firm conclusions.

Too little attention is paid to Native American beliefs and information on the Forest People. Most natives naturally accept that they are here and have traditions of dealing with them for centuries. The general cryptozoological research community should be listening more to what they say. This is also true of most indigenous peoples around the world.

This information is based on twelve years of my own ongoing research as well as information contributed by other dedicated researchers in the field. What you will find, should you continue to read, is just about tracking, what speculation you will find is based on educated guesswork and known human and great ape behavior patterns.

As far as that background mentioned above, I was a trained and experienced combat tracker in the military (among other things), have done some law enforcement tracking as well as some SAR work. I have also worked in archeology, both experimental and field work.

The Significance of Tracks

Tracks are simply the most common as well as the best evidence for the existence of the Forest People. There are plenty of tracks out there if you learn to see them and they have the potential to give us lots of information. I find it amazing that skeptics can accept a single partial human track as evidence in a capital criminal case but can happily ignore a trackway of seventeen inch tracks of the same size and conformity with a measurable step and stride. To me this is evidence that can't be denied. Tracks imply a behavior pattern which can be verified by other tracks found at different times and places. A trackway can tell us approximate height, weight and speed of travel. Body imprints, handprints, polish spots on trees, all tell us what our hairy friends were doing and sometimes even why they were doing it. Good observational skills and proper documentation techniques are important to build up information that over time allows us learn more and

see predictable patterns.

Also keep in mind that found evidence, wherever it occurs, is largely consistent with evidence found anywhere else in the world.

Some Basic Stuff to Keep in Mind

Pay Attention

Your attitude when conducting research should be one of relaxed attention. If you go into the woods with an aggressive or confrontational demeanor you will mostly be ignored, or aggression will be returned to you and you will become entertainment for them. It is important to pay attention to *everything* in your environment when you are in the woods doing research. It is also important to not discount anything that you may find, what may seem inconsequential or just plain weird to you may be of importance to another researcher that has more or different information. Always keep in mind that there is more going on in the woods than is evident, some of those things can be dangerous.

There is Always More Than One

If you should be in close proximity such as a in a close range sighting or near vocalizations; always remember that there will be at least two Sasquatch working together, possibly more. Always keep this in mind and be aware of your surroundings.

When you are focusing on documenting a track or other bit of sign keep in mind that you may be being watched from afar or at closer range.

You Can't Sneak Up on a Sasquatch

Except for some rare circumstances (outlined below) it is impossible to sneak up on a Sasquatch. They just have more awareness of their environment and better senses than you do. Add to this the fact that they will be working together to monitor your actions, and you really have little chance to sneak up on one.

Nocturnal/Diurnal

I think that Sasquatch are both depending upon conditions, mostly available light, this is why I track moon phases and weather patterns. Anytime I have had a daytime sighting or other evidence that points to daylight activity there

has been little moonlight or overcast conditions the night before. I suspect that this has something to do with how their eyes work. They seem to have very good night vision but much better if there is a little light to work with. As mentioned above there are two conditions where it seems to be possible to surprise a Bigfoot, both in visually confusing circumstances. The first is in windy conditions with sunshine and leaves on the trees, things are moving and the light is shifting constantly, plus any noise you are making is not as noticeable. The second is during heavy rain with some fog, again visually confusing with noise masking.

Know Your Local Wildlife

In any environment that you are in know your local wildlife and try to be cognizant of said wildlife's behavior patterns. Partly this is for safety, bears, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, etc. can be detrimental to your health. Other animal patterns, such as deer movement, crows being annoyed, etc. can tell you what is happening. For example a whitetail deer's vision is keyed to movement and a behavior known as "stotting", bouncing up and down on the front legs and snorting, is done to try to get something to move to tell the deer to run or not. If the deer is not looking at you and doing this you should pay attention to the area the deer *is* looking at.

If you can, get local information on predator to prey ratios. This can be difficult as in many places this information is not even tracked by wildlife professionals, but you may be able to get information from hunting reports as well as your own direct observation. Any ecosystem that is healthy should have just enough predation to keep populations in a good balance. In our specific case this means pay attention to large game, deer and turkeys in my area. If you have good healthy populations of prey animals, low known predators, and reasonably accurate hunting totals, *something* is eating those prey animals that aren't being taken by "normal" means and keeping the system balanced.

A note on camouflage and concealment;

As I said above it is not likely that you are going to sneak up on a Bigfoot, but if you make a little effort to camouflage yourself and use some basic concealment methods the local wildlife will be less aware of your presence.

This allows you to observe animal behavior without being noticed that just may show you that you are not alone in the woods.

Safety

Anytime you go out in the woods you should be prepared for emergencies. Carry a good first aid kit and know how to use it. Your first aid/emergency kit should contain enough gear to keep you safe if you are trapped out of doors unexpectedly overnight. Understand land navigation and carry a compass and map, even if you are using a GPS system. A smartphone will work for navigation and communication in less wild areas, but a satellite based GPS unit will mostly work anywhere. An emergency locator beacon is a good idea as it will work anywhere as well if you get into serious trouble. If you are in a group, two way radios can be a big help.

Bear spray will work on bears, of course, but also on mountain lions and aggressive canines. In many areas a firearm is a good idea as well, especially in areas with feral pigs. Do not carry a firearm unless you know how to use it, get some training if you feel the need to carry. In areas with poisonous snakes, snake boots or chaps are a very good idea.

Always, always, carry a good knife and a way to make fire.

The Rabbit Hole

When you jump down this rabbit hole at some point you may say, just like Alice, “curiouser and curiouser”. If you pay attention you will see things that often make no sense, point you in different directions or simply confuse and confound. Some researchers out there ignore things that make no sense or do not fit into their preconceived notions of what they think should be.

Everything that you encounter in the out of the way places of the world has a bearing on the perception of whatever your chosen mystery is. We simply do not know enough to make the broad assumptions and conclusions that many out there making a living as “Bigfoot Experts” would have you believe.

Which brings us to one of the most basic and important tools you can use.

Scientific Method and Critical Thinking

The principles of scientific problem solving, known as Scientific Method, are sound and should be adhered to as much as possible in Bigfoot research.

Here is a basic overview if you are not familiar with the process. Keep in

mind that this is a general overview, different disciplines in science modify scientific method slightly to suit their particular needs, but the basic principles remain the same.

Hypothesis- a working assumption, a possible answer or an educated guess to answer a question. In biology and anthropology, the disciplines that apply most to what we are doing, your hypothesis is formed mostly by observation of physical evidence or behavior patterns.

Prediction- what you expect to be true if your hypothesis is correct. Use your observations to predict a pattern of behavior that is repeated.

Experimentation- experiment by making observations to ascertain if your hypothesis is correct or not; note that “correctness” is always subject to interpretation.

Modification- adjusting your hypothesis to fit the information gained by experimentation or rejecting your hypothesis as incorrect due to the results of experimentation or observation.

Given the elusive nature of the subject we are studying applying scientific method can be problematic. What is really important is to document anything you find, even things you think may not be evidence, accurately and consistently. If you do this you will detect patterns that will allow you to formulate reasonable hypotheses for experimentation. If the idea of using scientific method intimidates you just keep in mind that this is the same thought process that you use to solve any complex problem, you just do it without thinking of the documentation process.

Example

On a sixty foot tall bluff overlooking a walking trail I found a track-way of thirteen inch tracks close to the edge of the bluff. Two weeks later I observed another track-way of thirteen inch tracks in the same area.

Hypothesis- That a Bigfoot used this spot to over-watch an area with regular and consistent human traffic for some undisclosed reason.

Prediction- My assumption was that this was a regular habit and that I would continue to find tracks in this area.

Experiment- The first part of my experiment was to simply continue to visit

the area to see if I would find more tracks. The second part would be to try and determine if it was possible to watch the walking trail from the bluff without being observed. Not being able to be observed or noticed during daytime could be an indication that this was a daylight activity and not a nocturnal activity for some other reason.

Modification- No modification to my hypothesis was needed. After eight months of observation I found tracks on a regular basis, and still do, a single individual leaving thirteen inch tracks with an average step length of about thirty-eight inches. Daytime use is indicated by my experiment of sitting on a rock on the very edge of the bluff and being unnoticed by anyone on the trail below, even when I kicked my feet and swung my camera around. This was done in early spring with few leaves on the trees and in the summer with a full leaf canopy. The tracks are further back from the edge of the bluff than I was and give all appearance of using available cover for concealment.

The above is a rather simple application of scientific method, it was easy to do, and it can be much more complicated than this. Thinking in this manner, though, should be a major tool in your research arsenal, with practice it will allow you to effectively use the data you are gathering in the field and make more efficient use of your time and resources.

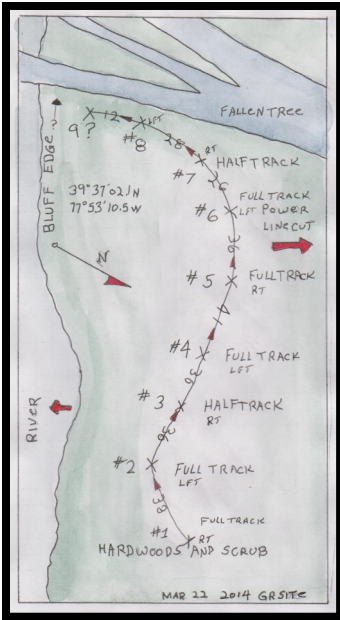


Cross section of the area in question, it is very difficult to get up onto the top of the bluff, steep and lots of thorns.

Occam's Razor

John of Occam was a fourteenth century monk/philosopher who came up with a method of problem solving that is elegant yet simple and very useful in many applications. As originally written Occam's Razor has two parts;

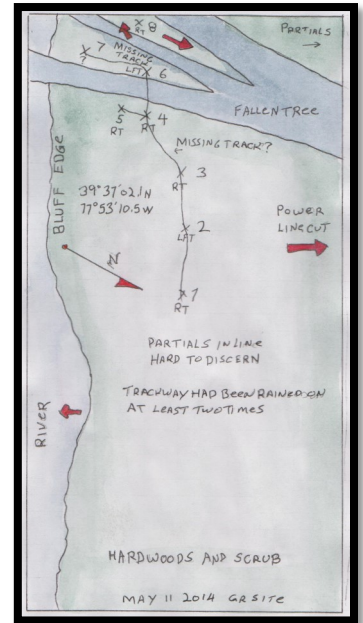
The Principle of Plurality- Plurality should not be posited without necessity.



Map of trackway found in March of 2014.

The Principle of Parsimony- It is pointless to do with more what is done with less.

To make the above easier to understand in modern terms **“the simplest explanation is usually the correct one.”** I personally really like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s explanation of Occam’s razor by his famous character Sherlock Holmes; **“When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth”.** It’s called a “razor”



Map of trackway found in May of 2014



Trackway goes from the white and black marking stick to the left of center. The bluff edge is on the left.



13 inch print you can make out the large toe

because it allows you to “shave” facts down to the bare minimum to see the truth no matter how unusual the truth appears. This is a very important principle to keep in mind when pursuing Bigfoot research.

To be continued.