

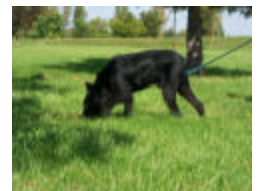


## TRACKING

### THE DOG'S NOSE ALWAYS KNOWS BEST!

#### What is Tracking?

In *Tracking*, a dog is taught to use its natural scenting abilities to follow a previously laid 'track' along which specific articles have been dropped. The object of the training is two fold. First, to precisely follow the laid track and second, to 'indicate' finding these articles by either laying down (or sitting) with the article between the dog's front paws.



There are many 'styles' of Tracking. Some dogs are taught to 'air scent' (i.e. lift their heads from the ground to smell the air that is carrying the scent). This type of Tracking produces dogs that are 'in a hurry' to get to the end of the track. Consequently, this style is primarily used in 'search and rescue' activities where time is of the essence. Other dogs are permitted to alternate between ground and air scenting and become comfortable at alternating based on where the scent is stronger (ground or air). Police K9s are particularly good at this style where, again, time is of the essence in apprehending the 'bad guy' and style is really unimportant compared to the objective.

**Deep nose Tracking** (Schutzhund style tracking), is the style we prefer to teach at *Spirit Ridge K9 Training & Rescue*. In this style of Tracking, the dog learns to **methodically** follow the footsteps of a person who previously laid the track while 'indicating' (by laying down or sitting in a certain manner) articles that have been left behind on the track by the tracklayer. The dog is slow, deliberate and precise in this style of Tracking. The terrains used to teach a dog to track vary in size and type as does the distance the handler can be from his dog. Eventually, the schutzhund trained Tracking dog will learn to track the footsteps of a tracklayer who laid the track two hours prior, with his handler being 30 feet behind, in the pouring rain! Now **that's** a challenge!

Beginner dogs are taught in a purely motivational way – there is no room for compulsion and corrections on the track otherwise we will 'lose' the connection and bond we need to work as a K9/handler tracking team. Although, who's kidding who, eventually all we are left to do is follow thirty feet behind and document whether or not the article indication happened where it should have! The dog, upon understanding what is expected of her, will take over the hard part of the job!



The nature of Tracking is such that the scent is always more powerful in the early morning – when the dew is present, helping keep the scent low and strong. Consequently, at *Spirit Ridge*, we start off beginner dogs in early morning classes.

**NEXT BEGINNER TRACKING CLASS STARTS SATURDAY JUNE 2, 2007 – AT 9AM**