



# Institute for Canine Forensics

est. 1997

Non-invasive Remote Sensing of Human Remains  
Specializing in Historic and Pre-contact Burials



**Some Day I Will Join The Big Dogs**

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# Cracks

are good

When burials or disturbed burials are freshly paved over to make roads, concrete pads, or walkways the scent cannot rise to the surface. The only way the scent can escape is along the edges of the solid surface where it meets the porous soil and can be released into the air column. Only when cracks have formed or the material is damaged does it allow scent to pass to the surface.



*Echo works the edge of the sidewalk following scent. Jett follows the scent into the street.*



*After following the cracks Jasper finally alerts in the location he thinks has the most scent. He worked the area next to the sidewalk following the scent and it took him into the street. I stood in the street wearing my orange vest to keep him safe from any traffic.*





We actually train and teach the dogs to work cracks. We use historic cemeteries where plots are covered with concrete and over time cracks develop. In the picture above there are 5 known burials. We teach the dogs to run the cracks to find the strongest location and then alert. The scent is concentrated in and around the cracks and not as dispersed as it would be with just soil covering it.





Several years ago we participated in a blind search / study to see if the dogs could find burials under cracked asphalt. Prior to this study, we had very little experience searching the top surface of asphalt or concrete, we only had experience working the edges where it met the soil. We were given a long section of asphalt road that was in poor condition containing many cracks and repaired patches. We were not told what section of the road had a known burial or if there were more than one. We were also not told before we searched that they had ground-truthed burials two years prior to our working it. This was NOT double-blind as we knew there was at least one burial.





Three of our certified dogs participated in this exercise, all of them working without knowledge of what the other dogs had done. The dogs were observed and documentation was taken by an unassociated person on where they each alerted. When all the handlers finished working the dogs all alert information and locations were discussed. All alerts were close to the burials, some were in different locations and some alert areas were duplicated by all dogs. All burials that were known and ground-truthed had been identified by our dogs. During the several hours it took for all the dogs to work the sun had changed position and the wind had shifted a small amount. This would account for the slight difference in where they pick up the scent.

Also in this study, we worked a newly paved large parking lot with suspected burials under it. Our dogs had no alerts on top of the asphalt and did not want to even work it, they had some interest in areas on the edges where the asphalt ended.

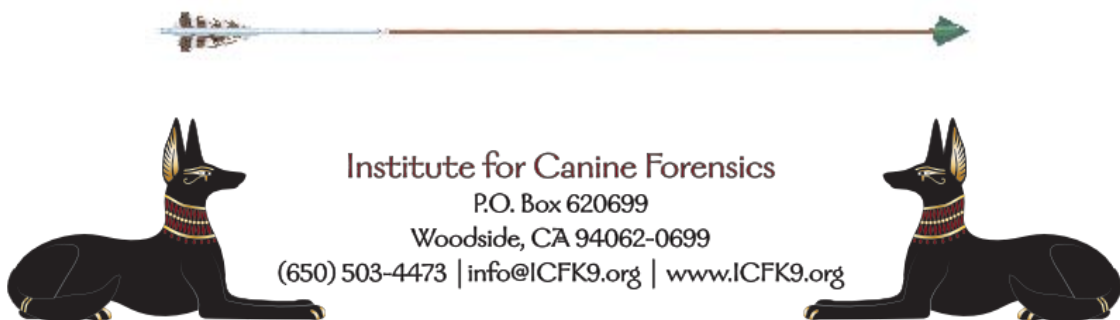
This exercise gave us more of an understanding of how scent travels under solid surfaces and what criteria work best for this kind of survey.





Another technique for working roads is to remove the asphalt layer where new utility trenches are going to be dug. Having the dogs work the open area can help decide if this area is clear for trenching.

~Adela~



We are happy to talk with you about your project and how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials. Call, email, or check us out on facebook or our website. (You can find past newsletters there, too.)

Please feel free to pass this newsletter along to anyone who might be interested.

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