

BEARPAW MEADOW RANGER STATION
2004 END OF SEASON REPORT
NINA WEISMAN

The Bearpaw Ranger station was staffed from June 24 until September 27. This year the effective season was a few days longer than last year. This was helpful, as the backcountry is very busy in June and it's much harder to get set up for the season when arriving right before the Fourth of July.

General Observations:

This season I contacted more than 1600 hikers on the trail, off trail, and at the ranger station. There were again few dayhikers, although occasionally a runner training for a race would appear then run back. I contacted many concession packers who work in my patrol area, but there were very few private stock parties.

The High Sierra Trail continues to get considerable stock use for camp resupplies and various spot trips, Outward Bound resupplies, and the occasional private trip. The Cedar Grove Pack Station handled the twice weekly resupply trips and this year they were able to keep their stock overnight at Wolverton so they didn't need to overnight their stock in the backcountry. This was much easier for them and the backcountry benefited from reduced overnight stock use. I saw Horse Corral packers more often this season, on various spot trips for backpackers, and at Outward Bound resupplies. All of the concession packers I met this season were courteous and professional and did a very good job. They were always very helpful. There were a couple of private stock parties in the patrol area. I wasn't able to personally contact them but we communicated through trailhead rangers or other backcountry rangers about appropriate campsites. Two groups stayed at Lone Pine Meadow, one stayed at the Bearpaw campground. A couple of concession stock trips traveled through Cliff Creek and stayed overnight at Redwood Meadow and Pinto Lake. The Hockett Trail crew had some stock in the admin section of Redwood Mdw. early this summer, as usual.

There were no citations issued this year although there were a few warnings and one letter sent for a bag of trash left by a Boy Scout troop. I think that the excellent job done by the trailhead rangers helped keep compliance high this season.

There was one significant medical this season requiring a medivac near Tamarack Lake. The visitors had a cell phone and contacted dispatch directly. A parkmedic flew in on the helicopter and evacuated the patient. There were a couple of minor assists where visitors requested band-aids or moleskin.

There were no SAR's in my patrol area this season either. There was one instance where I assisted a hiker with a sore knee by carrying her backpack from Hamilton Lake to Bearpaw where she rested for a few days and was later able to hike out on her own.

This was an extremely dry year in the backcountry. The winter was rated as a dry one and there wasn't much precipitation during the summer. There was some worry as to whether the water system at Bearpaw would last through the season but there was plenty until I left at the end of September, even though the creek stopped flowing before I arrived in June.

Use Patterns: This season was just as busy as previous seasons, with August again being the busiest month by far. There were many large groups in August, including many Boy Scout troops, Sierra Club trips, and other organized groups. We had the usual concession pack traffic for resupplying the High Sierra Camp and maybe a little more stock use than in some past seasons. Cedar Grove Pack Station and Horse Corral Pack Station were the main concessions using the Bearpaw Patrol Area. There was some administrative stock use at Redwood Meadow at the beginning of the season when the Hockett Crew is based out of there in late June. A few private trips went through Cliff Creek, over Blackrock Pass, and over Elizabeth Pass and one went over Kaweah Gap. There were some researchers who came through the area, Hassan Basajic who was photographing glacial features in the area, and Heather Dumais who was monitoring air quality and installing a passive ozone monitor. The park tree crew and some reveg employees came out to Bearpaw for a week to finish up the hazardous fuels reduction project. I assisted them while they removed some trees, shrubs, limbs and made burn piles in the area. These piles are about 10 feet wide and high and are covered with paper. There are about 45 of them in the Bearpaw area. They are very unsightly but the plan is to burn them this fall and I expect the area will look good by next season. Many military aircraft continue to fly over the park daily, hourly, etc., but mostly stay above the allowable ceiling while over my patrol area. There were a few small private aircraft out sightseeing but this year they stayed quite high.

Natural Resources:

As usual, there is still quite a healthy bear population in the Bearpaw area. At the beginning of the season, there were a couple of bears that were hanging around the ranger station, high sierra camp area. After a few weeks of heavy hazing, they mostly stayed out of the developed area and passed by on the outskirts. Bears were seen at Hamilton Lakes, Tamarack Lake, and the camping areas west of Bearpaw on the High Sierra Trail but I did not hear of any incidents. Many bears were also seen in River Valley and Cliff Creek drainages. The only incident in the patrol area was when a bear ripped up the blivets the crew was using on the Granite Fire. There was no food involved, I think the bear just enjoyed ripping them up. I feel that the low incidence of bear incidents is directly related to the excellent job being done by the Lodgepole trailhead office and subsequent reminders from field rangers.

There were many other wildlife sightings including Golden Eagles, Pine Martens, Coyotes, snakes including Mountain King, Rubber Boa, and Garter, and many different birds. A few mountain lion tracks were reported and (b) (7) and I saw evidence of a recent deer kill below Blackrock Pass in Cliff Creek. Lion sightings were down from last season, though.

The meadows were much drier than last season, although the boggy areas in Lone Pine Meadow were still quite wet. Redwood Meadow was extremely dry at the upper end with large expanses of sand and a lot of evidence of ground squirrel tunneling. Also, the coneflower, *Rudbeckia californica*, was extremely abundant in the meadow this year. The norm for really dry years seems to be an abundance of coneflower and sand. Pinto

Lake meadow looks as it usually does, but turned brown much earlier in the season. Lower Bearpaw Meadow looked healthy although it dried out earlier than usual also.

The populations of sensitive plants seemed relatively unchanged from past seasons.

The abundance of cheatgrass on the High Sierra Trail did not seem affected by the drought; it's all over the place and just went to seed earlier than usual.

Cultural Resources:

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (B) I've heard of petroglyphs but have never seen them or gotten a good description of where they are. The buildings in the Redwood Meadow area are historical and are maintained well by the Hockett trail crew each season. (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (B)

Backcountry Facilities:

The patrol cabin is still in fairly good shape although some of the paint needs retouching and one of the burners on the stove stopped working. The solar energy system is working really well this year and the addition of one more solar panel really helped keep the batteries charged up. The shutters were more difficult to put up this season due to warping from the weather and because the threaded sleeves are pulling out of the wood. Next season, if possible, a secondary method of securing the loose shutters should be attempted.

The only fence in the area is around Redwood Meadow and the Hockett trail crew keeps it maintained well.

All the existing signs in the area are in good shape.

Trails:

There are two trail crews that work in the Bearpaw patrol area, the Kaweah crew and the Hockett crew. They again did an excellent job and were very helpful. Whenever a newly fallen log or rock debris was reported, they attended to it as soon as they could and kept the trails in great shape. A couple of times they had to make special trips, out of their usual order, to fix problem areas that were reported or to prepare an area for a stock trip. They always cheerfully offer assistance with any projects I may have and monitor the radio and communicate with me frequently. I am highly satisfied with the personnel on both crews and feel very lucky to have them working in my area. All the trails are in good shape except for the Elizabeth Pass trail which, short of a huge project, continues to be steep, loose, and hard to follow. The trail crew maintains a set of cairns in the problem spots which really help visitors to keep to the correct route.

Camp Areas:

The Bearpaw campground is still the busiest camping area in the patrol district. The numerous piles of firewood left by the fuels reduction project were somewhat reduced, but the fire restriction cut that short mid-season. This kept the firerings easier to keep clean. I painted the two pit toilets this season and they are looking much better. The bear boxes are holding up although the hinges are showing wear.

The High Sierra Camp continued in its excellent tradition of having five great and helpful employees, especially manager Carolyn Pistilli. Having the guests get wilderness permits really keeps everyone in the backcountry well informed about minimum impact practices. This should definitely be continued. The camp area looks good and they keep it well maintained. There is some talk about bearproofing the kitchen/dining room building and I think this is an excellent idea as there are many odors emanating from this building and it could be very vulnerable to bears if they wanted to get in.

Hamilton Lakes is probably the second most popular campground in the area. It often had in excess of 30 people camping there on a given evening. There is still a tendency for people to camp too close to water at times but a new sign in that spot is helping. I removed the parachute cord that was delineating the old revegetation area as the vegetation has recovered well and a few trees have fallen making the area less hospitable to campers.

Tamarack Lake fared well this season. I found a couple of fire rings in this area but broke them up early in the season and only had one recurrence. I continue to find occasional can and glass dumps and haul them out.

Buck Creek camping area sees a lot of use and the bear box there needs to be repaired or replaced as both hinges are broken. There is a possibility of getting one in with the trail crew resupplies next season when they are camped at Buck.

9-Mile and Mehrten Creek camping areas get heavy use but are patrolled regularly by the trailhead staff and myself and are in good condition.

Redwood Meadow gets frequent use by hikers doing the Blackrock/Kaweah Gap loop. Most have canisters and I did not receive any reports of bear incidents there this season.

The Cliff Creek camping area continues to get heavy use by people doing the Blackrock Loop and hikers entering the area from Timber Gap. Unfortunately, many campers were very messy there this year and I attribute that to some inexperience at the Mineral King trailhead and virtually no patrols by them in this area.

Pinto Lake had many illegal fire rings this year. I broke up at least 13 this summer. There has been a fire restriction there for many years and there are numerous signs. I feel part of the problem was poor information to hikers entering from Mineral King. The bear box there is in good shape, as is the meadow.

Permit System:

This year the Lodgepole trailhead did an *excellent* job. We finally had the much needed 3 trailhead rangers and they provided the visitors with accurate information and did a great job cleaning campsites and patrolling the backcountry. They communicated extremely well with the backcountry rangers and we were informed of all large groups, potential problems, and their patrol itineraries. This information made the season's work

much easier and helped us keep our areas under control. We definitely need to always have at least 3 paid trailhead rangers to adequately maintain the backcountry.

Unfortunately, the Mineral King Trailhead operation did not compare with the Lodgepole operation. There were only 2 paid rangers, and they did not hike much at all and never made it into my patrol area. There was a volunteer who likewise never made it over any of the northern passes. Subsequently, their knowledge of the areas they wrote permits for was very limited and many hikers had incorrect information. There was virtually no communication between the trailhead and the backcountry rangers. I was very disappointed by their contribution to backcountry protection. (Please see comments about Cliff Creek and Pinto Lake). When the operation had 3 paid rangers who hiked often and were trained and effective in delivering an accurate minimum impact talk, you could see the difference in the hikers' behavior and in the condition of the backcountry. I strongly suggest that the MK trailhead staff be required to attend the backcountry training at the beginning of the season to familiarize themselves with park policies and also so that the backcountry rangers can meet them and discuss pertinent issues! I also suggest the hiring of 3 rangers who are good hikers and who express an interest in resource protection.

Inventory:

The full inventory of station items is on file both at the Bearpaw Ranger station and at the Lodgepole Ranger Station. There are two large propane tanks and two small ones at the station. This is about 3 weeks worth of propane.

Need for next season:

- Lightweight tarp, such as silicone impregnated nylon
- Titanium cookware
- Z-rest
- Lightweight pack
- Warehouse items;
 - Various types of glues
 - Lg. green rubber gloves
 - Ace bandages
 - Floor wax
 - Pencils
 - Thumb tacks
 - Rubber bands
 - Duct tape
 - Scotch tape
 - Paper towels
 - JB weld
 - Seam grip
 - Super glue
 - Paper towels
 - Moleskin
 - Eyewash
 - Athletic tape

5 zest soaps
4 fix-a flats
Small trash bags
Twin mattress covers

Recommendations:

As mentioned earlier and in past seasons, I believe we need 3 paid trailhead rangers at all the trailhead locations in the park. The job is just not done well with fewer employees. Also, they should be required to attend the yearly backcountry training.

Some additional method should be devised for securing the shutters onto the Bearpaw Ranger Station as the bolt system is showing wear and tear.

I would like to fly in a new bear box to Buck Creek with the trail crew if possible next season.

We need more signs at Pinto Lake prohibiting fires and better information at the trailheads.

Everything possible should be done to keep funding for the backcountry as it has been steadily losing coverage for many years now. The cutting of stations and shortened seasons has denuded the backcountry ranger presence and coverage. With such large patrol areas, the absence all season of the only employee really has an impact. The visitors, however, are keeping their numbers up. On my last day at Bearpaw, Sept. 27, I contacted 21 people!

I think the \$15 wilderness permit fee needs to be addressed. I received quite a few comments and complaints about it this year. People feel that after paying to get into the park, then paying for a campsite, the additional fee is just too much. Also at issue is the inequity of the flat fee. There are many solo hikers that spend only one or two nights in the backcountry and they should pay less than larger groups that have much more impact on the resource.

2004 End Of Season Report

Bench Lake Ranger Station

and

Monarch Divide Ranger Station

*Roxanne Everett (ranger)
Kings Canyon National Park*



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| General Summary..... | 1 |
| Visitor Services | |
| 1.0 Visitor Statistics..... | 1 |
| 2.0 Law Enforcement Incidents..... | 1 |
| 2.1 Areas of Concern in the Future..... | 2 |
| 3.0 Search, Rescue and Medical Incidents..... | 3 |
| 3.1 Medical Incidents..... | 3 |
| 4.0 Service Incidents..... | 3 |
| 4.1 Food, Fuel and Other Good Stuff..... | 3 |
| 4.2 Information..... | 4 |
| 4.3 Miscellaneous Assists..... | 4 |
| 4.4 Visitors..... | 5 |
| 4.5 Visitor Suggestions..... | 5 |
| 4.6 Hiker Statistics..... | 5 |
| 4.7 Visitation Trends..... | 7 |
| 5.0 Ranger Stations – Condition and Maintenance..... | 8 |
| 5.1 Bench Lake Ranger Station..... | 8 |
| 5.2 Monarch Divide Ranger Station..... | 9 |
| 5.3 Resident Rodent Populations/Problems..... | 10 |
| C. Wilderness Protection | |
| 1.1 Campsites..... | 10 |
| 1.2 Trails..... | 11 |
| 1.3 Fire Rings..... | 12 |
| 1.4 Drift Fences/Food Lockers..... | 12 |
| 2.0 Meadow Management | |
| 2.1 Meadow Opening Dates..... | 12 |
| 2.2 Residual Biomass..... | 12 |
| 2.3 Meadows of Concern..... | 13 |
| 3.0 IBP/Concession Contacts and Comments..... | 13 |
| 4.0 Signs..... | 13 |
| 5.0 Bear Incidents/Encounters..... | 14 |
| 6.0 Wildlife Observations..... | 15 |
| 7.0 Resource Impacts/Issues..... | 15 |
| 8.0 Minor Resource Projects Completed..... | 16 |
| 9.0 Fire Ring Data..... | 17 |
| 10.0 Campsite Inventory Data..... | 18 |
| D. Recommendations | |
| 1.1 Areas of Greatest Vulnerability..... | 18 |
| 1.2 Other Recommendations..... | 18 |
| 1.3 Staffing the Monarch Divide Ranger Station..... | 19 |
| E. Equipment Needs..... | 19 |
| F. How to Patrol the Bench Lake Area..... | 20 |
| G. How to Patrol the Monarch Divide Area..... | 20 |
| H. Closing Remarks..... | 21 |
| Appendix A. GPS Coordinates..... | 22 |
| Appendix B. Needs List..... | 23 |
| Appendix C. 2004 Campsite Inventory..... | 25 |
| Appendix D. 2002 to 2004 Campsite Inventory..... | 28 |

General Summary

This year my season was split between two extremely beautiful areas: Monarch Divide and Bench Lake. I had a very productive and rewarding season at both of these duty stations. This was my second year at Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks thus I was able to perform my duties at the expected high level of competence. I covered my patrol areas efficiently, had many rewarding and useful visitor contacts, stayed healthy, and completely enjoyed living in the Sierra high country.

The weather in August and September was challenging at times. August had about 2 weeks of rain, sleet and lightening while later in September (just in time for demobilization) I received 4-5 inches of snow and bitter cold temperatures. I awoke on September 20th to find that it was 6 degrees (6:30 am) just outside my tent. The next morning it was 10 degrees. Visitation dropped dramatically during this period. The wet and cold weather was somewhat difficult for me at the Bench Lake station as I did not put up the large canvas tent this year. Instead, I was living out of a four person dome tent because of a construction project on the platform that was planned for later in August.

The basic time line for my duty stations was as follows (this does not include patrols to other areas):

- 6/25 - 6/26 Hike to Bench Lake Ranger Station through Paradise Valley and Woods Creek
- 6/27 - 7/2 Bench Lake Ranger Station mobilization and set up
- 7/3 - 7/4 Hike to Cedar Grove through Woods Creek and Paradise Valley
- 7/5 Hike up to the Monarch Divide Ranger Station on the Copper Creek Trail
- 7/6 - 7/31 Monarch Divide Ranger Station
- 7/1 - 8/4 Hike to Bench Lake Ranger Station through Simpson Meadow, along the Middle Fork and JMT
- 8/5 - 9/21 Bench Lake Ranger Station
- 9/22 Hike out Taboose Pass to trailhead for end of season

B. Visitor Services

1.0 Visitor Statistics

| | June | July | Aug | Sept | Total |
|------------------|------|------|-----|------|-------|
| Visitor Contacts | 40 | 323* | 294 | 79 | 736 |
| Miles Patrolled | 26 | 179 | 164 | 108 | 477 |

* This figure includes the 262 visitor contacts I had on July 4th, 2004 hiking between Upper Paradise Valley and Cedar Grove. Of these 262 contacts, only 10 were overnight visits so that for the month of July I only contacted 71 overnight visitors. All other visitors I contacted this summer were overnight visitors.

2.0 Law Enforcement Incidents

Although I am not a commissioned law enforcement ranger, I did give verbal warnings to several users. In addition, Debbie Brenchley was conveniently on scene with me near the Bench Lake Ranger Station to issue a citation to two hikers who I had contacted and who did not have a permit.

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

- **Permits:** Three parties did not have permits. Two of them had come over Taboose Pass. Of those parties, one was the party that received a citation and one was caught late in the day and left the next day (as I had requested – this was a day earlier than he had planned). The third party had come over Kearsage Pass and was leaving the park via Taboose Pass when caught. There were also two or three other parties without permits but these were either PCT or JMT long distance hikers that I allowed to continue after giving them the park's rules and regulations plus a verbal warning for the future. All parties visiting the Monarch Divide/Granite Basin area had permits.
- **Food Protection:** Two parties did not have bear canisters where they were required. One of these parties was an individual who had gotten separated from his brother who he had had a big argument with (I believed him) and would use bear boxes the remainder of the way; the second party was a group of two who had come over Bishop Pass and was exiting via Sawmill Pass when caught. Although most of the PCT, and especially JMT, hikers had canisters I did contact a few of these users who did not have them. I was surprised at the number of these users who did not know how to adequately hang their food properly. I posted a sign at the Bench Lake trail junction that detailed proper food storage and gave directions on counterbalancing food (more on this sign later) and this seemed to be of help. No food storage violations were noticed in the Monarch Divide area.
- **Camping:** Two parties were camped in the meadow that is near the stream and across from Bench Lake Ranger Station but moved without incident once asked to do so. Another party of four moved, after some argument, off of vegetation around Bench Lake. In the Monarch area, a party of nine (French people) were camped within 20' of a stream in the Granite Basin meadow but also moved without incident.
- **Dogs/Campfires:** No parties were caught with dogs or campfires this year.

2.1 Areas of Concern in the Future

in 2002, probably the biggest area of concern is insuring that visitors understand where and when they need to carry bear canisters. Although I was generally in areas that did not require canisters, I encouraged their use for all visitors at all locations. Additionally I tried to contact as many visitors as possible who were going into bear canister required areas. My objectives were (1) to make sure that visitors had canisters where required (2) that hikers who were exempt from this requirement and chose not to carry them (PCT/JMT through hikers) knew to camp at the bear boxes. (I often provided the locations of those boxes) and, (3) they knew how to counterbalance properly if this was their method of food storage. Although the above information show "incidents" that I encountered, the numbers do not show how many individuals (and there were many) without canisters who were prevented from camping illegally. A ranger at the Bench Lake Ranger Station can do a good job filtering out those who are either ill informed (or ill equipped) of the canister regulations, make sure that they camp at the appropriate locations and take the proper precautions. Similarly, a ranger at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station can make sure that visitors know how to counterbalance properly when they are not carrying canisters.

I saw an increased number of "park" people using the backcountry this year (especially on the Monarch Divide). Most of these people carried canisters on overnight trips but I noted that a few of these people did not. In one case I talked to an individual who was using an Ursack for food storage and thought that having the sack tied to the tent constituted a 24 hour watch. This person had the attitude that many of the rules were for visitors and not for those of us who work in the backcountry. (Unfortunately, I think that this is not an uncommon attitude). I believe that all people who work for or in the park need to be re-educated on the bear canister issue. For the record, I always carried a canister on overnight trips regardless of where I hiked.

An additional important area of concern regards the continued building of illegal campfires (above 10,000'). It is difficult to estimate how many visitors are building fires but I certainly broke up and rehabilitated many illegal campfire rings this summer. Areas that I consider the biggest problem areas for illegal campfires in the

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

Bench Lake area include: Woods Lake, Striped Lakes, Twin Lakes area, especially the area along the trail at what is frequently referred to as Ansel Adams tarn, and the JMT crossing at the South Fork. For Monarch I felt that the biggest problem areas are: Volcanic Lake basin and State Lakes. Again, information distribution combined with visible ranger presence can help curb this practice.

3.0 Search, Rescue and Medical Incidents

I assisted with two medivacs this year but did not participate in any searches.

3.1 Medical Incidents

The medical incidents that required EMT attention over the summer were:

| Date | Location | Type | Evacuation |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 7/27/04 | Horseshoe Lake | Sprained Ankle | Stock |
| 8/02/04 | Middle Fork near Devils Washbowl | Dislocated Shoulder | Helicopter |

The Horseshoe Lake medical was challenging for me as I met the packer enroute to the scene so rode a horse the rest of the way – and I have very limited riding experience. I felt that it was good that I rode along with him and was on scene at Horseshoe Lake as the commercial packer was unsure where to find the patient and was not well prepared to spend the night once we got there (as we needed to do). I believe that my presence prevented resource damage as he surely would have had a fire. Additionally I think that my presence kept him on his toes with managing stock in a fragile area.

The second medical, along the Middle Fork trail near Devils Washbowl, was interesting in that I came upon it several seconds before the rescue helicopter arrived. I was able to help direct the helicopter to the right location in an area that was extremely difficult to find a good landing zone. Debbie Brenchley (and some other personnel) flew in on this flight. I was able to start the patient assessment prior to her arrival and later assisted in an unsuccessful attempt to relocate the shoulder.

In addition to these incidents, there were several encounters (Bench Lake station) where I provided information, supplies or food, and advice to help visitors continue their journey in health and comfort (for example, sore ankles, blisters, dehydration, shortage of electrolytes, etc).

And finally, in early September, a hiker coming in to the Bench Lake station reported that an elderly man had fallen and “broken” a hip in the Le Conte area and was “walking” back to that station for assistance. I was able to report as much relevant information as possible to dispatch and expedite the assistance that was needed in what turned out to be a challenging scenario for several individuals.

4.0 Service Incidents

I had many visitor assists in my patrol areas. I provided hikers with supplies, gave them a wealth of information, and assisted in multiple other ways.

4.1 Food, Fuel, and Other Good Stuff

Hikers frequently requested additional food or other supplies:

Food: About half a dozen hikers arrived at the Bench Lake Ranger Station and indicated that they needed more food than what they were carrying to get to their next food drop (frequently south of Mt. Whitney). I had far fewer hikers asking for food this year than I did in 2002. I think that part of the reason is that one of

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

the stations I was at, the Monarch Divide Ranger Station, is not along a major through trail like the PCT/JMT. Another reason is that the weather, during the normally busy month of August, was very wet and so fewer people were out on the trail for extended periods of time. I did not have any hikers asking for food or supplies at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station.

- **Fuel:** Two hikers stopped in at the Bench Lake Ranger Station asking for fuel (1 white gas, 1 butane).
- **Other Supplies:** Two hikers at the Bench Lake Ranger Station needed moleskin while another needed to fix his boot that was falling apart. I was able to help these hikers. Another hiker begged me relentlessly for my camera battery, but I refused on that one. I did not have any similar requests at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station.

With supply requests, I first determined if the hiker(s) had enough supplies to safely make it out to a trailhead (e.g., Cedar Grove, Onion Valley, etc.). In all cases, people had enough food to safely exit the backcountry but not quite enough to get to their desired destination. There were few enough of these cases that I was able to provision all of these parties with the minimal amount of food required to get to their next food drop or store.

Twice visitors came to the Bench Lake R.S. with extra food and left some with me. For example, one private packer, who had shortened his trip, left a good five pounds of exceptionally fresh produce! Unfortunately, this was a rare occurrence – Bench Lake R.S. (and Monarch Divide R.S.) is far enough in that very few hikers have extra food when they arrived.

4.2 Information

I gave information to hundreds of people. Common information requests included:

- food storage regulations and advice: bear canister information, bear box locations, bear safety practices
- campsite locations
- trail conditions, alternative hiking routes, cross country route information
- weather forecasts
- presence of problem bears – where these were and how to act

I frequently gave advice to hikers on Leave-No-Trace (LNT) techniques. A few hikers (Bench only) stopped by to inform me that they were changing their plans and wanted to verify that their permits were still okay. And one party inquired about transportation from trailheads (buses, shuttles, etc.).

I believe that I would have had more visitor contacts and visitor feedback at the Monarch R.S. if I had been there a little later in the season. (I was there in July.) I only had one visitor come in to the station the entire time that I was there and that was just for trail information.

4.3 Miscellaneous Assists

Following is a sampling of specific events that gives a flavor of my visitor assists this summer:

- I contacted dispatch to make one phone call for a visitor that came to the Bench Lake R.S. with a change of plans.
- In August and September I had numerous people stopping by the Bench Lake R.S. because of weather. Everyone wanted the weather forecast, but a very large number of these people wanted to know specifically where they could camp. I found that during the unsettled weather (heavy rains in August and bitter cold and snow in September) I was able to help a lot of people simply by taking them to sites that met their needs. Although weather was warm and mostly clear while I was on the Monarch Divide, I still provided a similar service to a couple hikers in that area who wanted help in finding the right site.

4.4 Visitors

I had a large number of visitors just stopping in to chat with me and say hello. They were always happy to find the station staffed, even though several of them did not realize it was there until they saw the ranger station sign along the trail. (Of note is that neither the Monarch Divide R.S. nor the Bench Lake R.S. is shown on most maps that visitors in the high country carry. While the Bench Lake R.S. is noted on the park map brochure given to visitors entering the park, Monarch is not.) Some of the visitors asked about previous Bench Lake rangers or rangers at other stations. A few of the visitors just wanted someone to know that they were in the area.

- **Staff & Researchers:** I had many park staff or park researchers stop in to both stations - especially at the Monarch Divide station. In addition both of my supervisors were able to make ranger station visits which were both useful and supportive. Ned Kelleher came for a night to the Monarch early in the season while Debbie Brenchley made overnight stops at both the Monarch and Bench Lake stations. Furthermore, at Monarch Divide there was also a trail crew and a carnivore research crew stationed nearby for the bulk of my time in that area.

4.5 Visitor Suggestions

As in 2002, the most common suggestion from visitors was to be clearer with regards to bear canister regulations. I think that across the board this has gotten better, but people are still somewhat confused about where or when they need to have them. This year I also received numerous suggestions for having more bear boxes. I got mostly positive feedback from these people once I explained the reasons we do not place the boxes in more locations. (Although one hiker thought that we should just hire a crew of people to go up and down the trail to empty the boxes of excess trash!)

5 Hiker Statistics

I contacted 736 individual visitors to the areas I patrolled (as shown in the table at the beginning of this report). All of these were polled about their plans and itineraries

Tables on the following pages summarize hiker' plans.

Visitor itineraries that were seen in the Bench Lake area:
June 26 – July 3 & August 3 – September 22, 2004)

| Itinerary | Number Of Hikers |
|--|-------------------------|
| • JMT Hikers: | |
| ○ Entire JMT: | |
| ▪ Southbound | 154 |
| ▪ Northbound | 41 |
| ○ Section of JMT: | |
| ▪ Southbound | 103 |
| ▪ Northbound | 29 |
| • PCT Hikers: | |
| ○ Entire PCT: | |
| ▪ Southbound | 0 |
| ▪ Northbound | 12 |
| ○ Section of PCT: | |
| ▪ Southbound | 1 |
| ▪ Northbound | 14 |
| • NOT hiking PCT/JMT: | |
| ○ Bench Lake Area | 11 |
| ○ Lake Basin | 12 |
| ○ Sierra High Route | 6 |
| ○ Loops starting and ending at Cedar Grove | 17 |
| TOTAL NUMBER POLLED | 400 |

It is very clear that the overwhelming majority of the hikers in the Bench Lake patrol area are hiking the John Muir Trail (JMT) -- in fact, 207 people identified themselves as hiking the *entire* JMT or PCT. Another 147 hikers said they were hiking a section of the JMT/PCT. Of those that were hiking a shorter section of the JMT/PCT only 4 people were out for less than 5 days. The majority of those that were out for about a week, 28 were going between Bishop Pass and Kearsage Pass. In fact, for JMT section hikers, the most common entry/exit points were Kearsage Pass / Onion Valley (to the S) and Bishop Pass / South Lake (to the N). This was true for both northbound and southbound section hikers.

- Most of the non-JMT/PCT hikers came in via Taboose Pass:
 - All of the non-JMT/PCT visitors (11 visitors) that were spending *less* than 5 days in the park were generally either climbing peaks in the area or going to Bench Lake.
 - The hikers spending *more* than 5 days in the park included people doing unusual one-way trips, frequently involving Cartridge Pass and/or the Sierra High Route. (I saw an increased number of parties going over Cartridge Pass this year. I also saw an increased number of visitors that were doing loops out of Cedar and along the Middle Fork.) Several parties used Sawmill Pass for one end of their hike. I did not see any visitors that were planning to use Baxter Pass at either end of their hike.
- There were 42 visitors who had used Taboose Pass for either entry, exit or round trip portions of their trip. This included 13 visitors that were hiking a portion of the JMT/PCT.

Visitor itineraries that were seen in the Monarch Divide area (including Middle Fork to PCT):
(July 5 – August 2, 2004)

| Itinerary | Number Of Hikers |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Overnight Visitors | |
| o Granite Basin | 12 |
| o State Lakes | 6 |
| o Volcanic Lakes | 7 |
| o Loops starting and ending at Cedar Grove | 3 |
| o One way hikes through the Granite Basin area | 10 |
| | |
| TOTAL NUMBER POLLED | 38 |

- I saw most of these visitors (including those doing longer loop trips) while I was in the Granite Basin or Granite Pass area. I saw only 11 hikers on my overnight backpack patrols (7 of these were when I spent the night at Lower Tent Meadow). I did not see anyone (other than the CCC trail crew) on my longest backpack trip from Granite Basin, up along Dead Pine Ridge and out via Lewis Creek trail.
- I saw two separate parties of two that were doing aggressive 45 day trips (one way). One included the Sierra High Route and one was strictly along the trail.

Visitor itineraries that were seen between Cedar Grove and Paradise Valley:
(June 25 and July 4, 2004)

| Itinerary | Number Of Hikers |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Overnight Hikers: | |
| o Rae Lakes Loop | 7 |
| o PCT hikers hiking out for resupply | 11 |
| o Paradise Valley | 4 |
| • Day Hikers: | 276 |
| | |
| TOTAL NUMBER POLLED | 298 |

- Most of the day hikers were going to Mist Falls (no numbers on this).

4.7 Visitation Trends

Aside from the hiker statistics discussed above, there were several other hiking and camping trends in the patrolled areas:

Bench Lake Ranger Station:

(June 26 – July 3 & August 3 – September 22, 2004)

- The heaviest use in the Bench Lake R.S. area tended to be in the morning and in the late afternoon. Most visitors preferred to hike over Pinchot and Mather Passes by noon and visitors coming over Taboose Pass generally did not reach the Bench area until late in the day.
- As in 2002, there seems to be little increase in visitation in the Bench Lake area over holiday weekends or over weekends in general. It seems that a large number of people who take a one week vacation arrive in

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

that area mid-week since they often start their trip from Bishop or Kearsage Passes. A few groups of strong hikers, however, do show up occasionally for a long weekend of "peak bagging".

In good weather, almost all JMT/PCT hikers who planned on camping within a 5 mile radius of the Bench Lake ranger station aimed for Lake Marjorie. I made a big effort to direct these hikers to pleasant and appropriate camp sites in this general vicinity. Similarly, in cold or wet weather many JMT/PCT hikers would cluster at the South Fork crossing and I made an effort to ensure that these users were also appropriately dispersed.

- Palisades Lakes and Twin Lakes are also popular camping places. An area along the east side of the trail near a tarn commonly referred to as "Ansel Adams tarn" (just north of Twin Lakes) also saw heavy use. Bench Lake gets heavy use, though this is generally from visitors coming up from Taboose Pass rather than from hikers on the JMT/PCT.

Monarch Divide Ranger Station:

(July 5 – August 2, 2004)

I was not at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station long enough to notice long term trends but I did notice the following:

- Visitation was low for most of my stay at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station, but that it was picking up rapidly at the time of my departure (i.e. late July, early August).
- Early in the season almost everyone I saw was cutting their trip short because the mosquitoes were bad.
- Most of my contacts were early in the morning or later in the afternoon. This makes sense as most people leaving Cedar Grove for Granite Basin hike up in one day thus arriving in the late afternoon. Similarly, people hiking out prefer to get an early start.
- Everyone that I talked with had used the Copper Creek trail for at least one direction of their hike.

5.0 Ranger Stations – Condition and Maintenance

Generally, both the Bench Lake and Monarch Divide Ranger Stations are great shape. Previous rangers have done a good job maintaining gear and improving both camps.

5.1 Bench Lake Ranger Station:

(June 26 – July 3 & August 3 – September 22, 2004)

I performed quite a few minor, intermediate and larger maintenance tasks at camp this summer, including the following:

- **Tent Platform:** Pete Clum, Trapper and myself worked for several days to put boards (and then stain them) on the tent platform. Previously the exposed plywood was starting to show some wear and warping a bit. It now looks great!
- **Pit Toilet:** Trapper and I dug a new pit toilet and filled in the old one. The new toilet area is in a good spot (away from camp, water, etc.).
- **Knaack Box:** A new Knaack box was flown in this year. Pete Clum and I rearranged many of the other boxes in the camp and I had two older ones that were in poor shape sent out. Thus the overall footprint of the camp is at about the same level.
- **Minor Repairs:** I performed many minor repairs around camp including patching the brittle yellow tarp (more large patches needed), maintaining rodent screening around tent platform base, etc.

The following list briefly reviews the condition of various important camp systems:

- **Tent & Tarp:** The tent is still in good shape, though I did not use it this year. (I used a four person dome tent but sent it out as the screening was defective. Hopefully it can be returned to the manufacturer.) The

yellow tarp, however, is in terrible condition. There are some very large holes and tears in it (up to 5'-0" long). It is also very brittle so that every time it is handled some part of it rips more. There is a newer large heavy gray tarp that is in great shape; however, to use this tight to the tent, a hole will have to be cut for the stove pipe (which is easy to do but may compromise the ability to have it way up in the air like the 2001 ranger preferred). The gray tarp is also extremely heavy and difficult to work with.

- **Solar / Electrical:** The system worked well and no additional parts/work is needed; plenty of power to drive battery recharger, fluorescent lights, etc. Once up and running I had no problems, but I did have a difficult time early in the season to get it to hold a charge. It is possible that the batteries, sitting dormant in 2003, took longer to charge than normal. We might want to consider setting the system up even if no ranger is stationed there for the summer.
- **NPS Radio:** (b) [REDACTED]
(7) [REDACTED]
(F) [REDACTED]
- **Pit Toilet:** The new pit toilet is in great condition but I did have one animal problem at the toilet location this summer. A bear that was frequenting the area knocked off the toilet seat and/or batted around one of the buckets on a few different occasions. And once, late in the season, a bear came through, dug up the old pit toilet and made a huge (and smelly) mess. In addition to bears, I also had a hatch of flies in the toilet. (I believe this is because the toilet seat does not fit snugly thus allowing light/air into the hole). Fortunately, sprinkling ash in the toilet seems to resolve this problem.
- **Wood Stove:** I did not use the fold-up wood stove at all this year. The stove, however, is fairly flimsy if not unsafe. A better, more solid or tight wood stove, would be good for this camp. This fold-up stove worked fine in 2002 but we found it a bit shaky/fragile. In 2002 we definitely felt like we needed someone near it at all times, especially on windy days.
- **Pellet Stove:** This stove has not been used for a number of years. It appears to be in decent shape but is starting to show signs of rust. We should consider sending this out so it stays in working condition for future use.
- **Propane Stove:** The new cast iron propane stove is in great working shape. There is also a white gas stove at camp that is in good condition.

The accompanying "Needs List" (Appendix B) provides more details on what equipment is needed at Bench Lake R.S.

5.2 Monarch Divide Ranger Station:

(July 5 – August 2, 2004)

Thanks to Ned Kelleher and Bob Kenan the Monarch Station was all set up for me when I arrived, so that I did not need to do much maintenance.

- **Pit Toilet:** The only ranger station maintenance that was needed was a new pit toilet. After digging the new pit toilet I found that I had a marmot digging and living in it for several weeks. I had to continually fill in the holes it dug but by the end of my stay the marmot appeared to have moved on leaving the toilet in fine condition.

The following list briefly reviews the condition of various important camp systems:

- **Tent Platform:** Bob Kenan added planks to the tent platform floor and it looks great. As yet no stain product has been added to the planks. This should be done in 2005 to help preserve the wooden planks. (It may have been done in 2004 after I left.)
- **Tent & Tarp:** The canvas tent (identical to the one at Bench Lake) is in good shape. There was not a tarp at this station and I believe that one should be there to reduce the UV damage to the tent.

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

- **Solar / Electrical:** The system worked well and no additional parts/work is needed for the solar system; there was plenty of power to drive the battery re-charger. Unfortunately, the wiring was not long enough to get fluorescent lights in the tent and this would have been useful. The only aspect of the solar system that definitely needs some attention is the metal box that holds all the components. The box needs to have a hole drilled in the side of it to accommodate the heavy wires that lead to the solar panel. The set up in 2004 had the wires squeezed under the lid of the box and this was causing damage to the wire bundle (i.e. the outer casing was wearing away and exposing the wires). I kept the lid loosely closed and used a small tarp to cover the box, but this was only a temporary fix.
- **NPS Radio:** (b) (7)(F)
- **Wood Stove:** I did not use a wood stove at Monarch and do not recall seeing one.
- **Propane Stove:** The propane stove worked great the entire time that I was at the station.

The accompanying "Needs List" (Appendix B) provides more details on what equipment is needed at Monarch Divide R.S.

5.3 Resident Rodent Populations/Problems

The only rodent "problems" I had the entire summer were while I was at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station and they were fairly minor. A marmot came inside the tent one time when I was gone, left a few droppings and knocked over a couple of small unimportant things. I believe that this was the same marmot that was living in the roots of the tree directly in front of the tent. Another (or same) marmot also frequented the toilet area and continually dug increasingly larger holes next to the toilet and/or knocked over the toilet paper burn bucket. I had to reinforce the toilet structure several times and be extra careful of burning toilet paper, but these were not easy things to resolve. I also had a mouse or two that came into the tent at night but I think that these were just passing through not living in the tent. One night I had an especially annoying mouse that would not leave, but eventually it found its way out and let me sleep the rest of the night in peace.

Other than the above, I did not catch (or need to catch) a single mouse or other rodent. I credit this to (a) keeping a clean camp while cooking, (b) preparing, eating and storing all food outside (not in tent), and (c) wonderful luck! Additionally, I was diligent about straining all dishwater to prevent distribution of food bits (even if it was going into the sump at Monarch). I did have a few ground squirrels and chipmunks around both camps but they never went inside the tents nor did they hang around picnic tables or stove areas while I was eating.

C. Wilderness Protection

1.1 Campsites

As mentioned earlier, most visitors on the JMT/PCT who camped in the Bench Lake area frequented Lake Marjorie. As such, Lake Marjorie is showing signs of heavy use. Sites at Marjorie are small, rocky, and are usually too close together and/or too close to the water. In short, Marjorie is in terrain that really cannot handle such high use. In order to help manage this area, I did a campsite inventory of the Lake Marjorie basin (from Bench Lake R.S. to Pinchot Pass) in 2002. This helped me to direct and disperse users to camping areas that were appropriate for their party. I looked at the same areas this year (2 years later) and this information is provided in Appendix D. I also inventoried 20 more campsites: 10 in the Granite Basin area and 10 in the Bench Lake area. This information is provided in Appendix C.

Campsites in other basins are also located at or near lakes. Bench Lake, Twin Lakes, and Woods Lake all have heavily used campsites that are near both trail and lake. For the Monarch area, Granite Lake, State Lakes, Grouse Lake and Volcanic Lakes are heavily used. Unlike Lake Marjorie, however, these lakes have

appropriate places to camp, have adequate space, and more areas with durable ground cover. Still, all these lakes have heavily impacted areas that need to be monitored. These impacts are covered below in the "Resource Impacts/Issues" section.

The stock camp at the SW end of Bench Lake is worth special note. This small area has very little feed and is located in a wet meadow on the lakeshore. The placement of this stock camp should be reconsidered, and either closed or relocated.

I also took GPS coordinates of all the stock camps in both the Bench Lake and Monarch Divide area. This data is listed in Appendix A.

Finally, Ned Kelleher asked me to check the elevation of the stock camp at Grouse Meadows (Monarch area) using my GPS. I later found out that elevations with GPS units are not entirely accurate unless you have an altimeter which, unfortunately, I do not. Still, I took four readings at that camp and all four showed the Grouse Meadow stock camp to be above 10,000'. The *lowest* elevation that I obtained at Grouse was 10,228' which means that campfires at that location are illegal. (There was a huge fire pit that I took apart at this location. This camp is located on the eastern side of the meadow and the GPS coordinates are listed with other stock camp coordinates in Appendix A.)

1.2 Trails

The JMT/PCT trail and the Bench Lake trail are both in excellent shape. Other than blocking off an occasional shortcut at a switchback and moving a few random rocks, neither trail needed much attention this year.

Unlike the other trails in the Bench Lake patrol area, the Taboose trail is somewhat obscure in places. Coming from the trailhead, the trail is in excellent shape through Inyo NF. The trail deteriorates immediately upon entering the park. Shortly after reaching the pass and dropping down into the Taboose basin, an abandoned/unmaintained but well-used trail veers off directly down to the South Fork. (I spoke with several parties that mistakenly went down the wrong trail to the South Fork.) At this junction, the main trail is quite faint and obscure as it meanders S through the meadow basin. In 2002, we spent a good amount of time delineating the trail in the meadow, but it is easy to miss the correct route. Worse yet, parts of the main trail in the meadow have become severely eroded, especially in steeper places. Additionally, there are numerous sections where multiple parallel trails have started appearing. This entire section was bad in 2002 but I noticed that it was considerably worse this year. I believe that this area needs some serious attention.

The Copper Creek Trail to Granite Pass and down to Simpson Meadow is in great shape. The trail along the Middle Fork is also in fine shape although it is a rocky and tedious footbed. The trail to State Lakes and around and up to Horseshoe Lakes is also decent although I thought that the more northern trail on the State Lakes loop was a little bit sketchy. The Lewis Creek Trail was in good shape to the Kennedy Pass area (where trail crew was working when I arrived).

The trail that I thought needed the most attention in the Monarch Divide area was the Dead Pine Ridge Trail. The entire trail from just west of Volcanic Lakes until the Kennedy Lake area was faint at best (both the trail up on the ridge and the trail following Kennedy Creek). Route finding was easy enough but I really tried to follow the trail and it was literally impossible. I am sure that I was on the trail less than 25% of the time (and had no idea where it was exactly). Trail crew was working in the area shortly after I did this trip, so hopefully the trail is in better shape than when I was there.

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

It is worth mentioning that the old JMT trail up to Cartridge Pass is in pretty decent shape for an unmaintained trail. The Secor guide says not to bother looking for the trail. Wrong!! It is totally worthwhile to find this trail! Almost everyone that I talked to was able to find and use this trail. Although it is faint in a few places and has some debris blocking portions, it is still the easiest way to get up to the Cartridge Pass area. The most difficult part is finding the start of the trail. Once on the trail it is fairly straight forward to follow. I took a GPS coordinate of the beginning of the trail (from the South Fork) for future users. (GPS coordinates are listed in Appendix A.)

1.3 Fire Rings

In the past, in the Bench Lake region, the only area where camp fires were permitted was SW of the JMT on the South Fork of the Kings River. However, this area was not really legal and so this year I removed the ring and rehabilitated the surrounding area. I also removed quite a few other illegal campfire rings (above 10,000', too close to water/trail, etc.).

Similarly, in the Monarch Divide area, I did not visit many areas where campfires were legal and permitted. (A few exceptions were Lower Tent Meadow or areas below 10,000' north of Granite Pass.) Although I removed several illegal campfire rings above 10,000' in much of my patrol area, I had expected to find more than I did. Most of the campfire rings were near lakes, especially in areas like Volcanic Lakes. I also reduced a number of rings in permitted areas.

My fire ring removal work is summarized under "Fire Ring Data" later in this report.

1.4 Drift Fences/Food Lockers

There are no drift fences or food lockers in the Bench Lake patrol area.

The Monarch Divide patrol area has one drift fence at the lip of Granite Basin (on the Copper Creek Trail). There were also a few drift fences north of Granite Pass. All of these drift fences were in good repair when I was there in July.

The only food locker (bear box) in either of my patrol areas was at Lower Tent Meadow (Monarch area). It was in good shape and empty of trash the two times that I passed through the area.

2.0 Meadow Management

2.1 Meadow Opening Dates

I was absent from the Bench Lake area for most of the beginning of the season. (I got the Bench camp ready in June and immediately left for Monarch. I did not return again until August.) Therefore I was unable to adequately monitor these meadows this year. Based on what I saw in the area and at Monarch, I think that the meadows could have opened a week, maybe two weeks, sooner than anticipated meadow opening dates.

Opening dates for the Monarch patrol area were as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Glacier Valley | 7/15 |
| Lake of the Fallen Moon | 7/15 |
| Shortys Meadow | 7/20 |
| State Lakes | 7/20 |

All other (unlisted here) meadows were the same as the anticipated opening dates.

2.2 Residual Biomass

I was not asked to do any residual biomass collections anywhere in either area this year.

2.3 Meadows of Concern

For Bench, meadows of concern include those in the Woods Lake Basin and at Twin Lakes. Both areas are used by both hikers and stock and have an abundance of highly impacted camps near water, illegal campfire rings, built up rock walls, and trash. Both Woods Lake and Twin Lakes have fragile meadows that cannot sustain heavy grazing and, thus, should be monitored closely in subsequent years.

For Monarch, meadows of concern include Grouse Meadow, Shortys Meadow and the meadows around Volcanic Lakes. Based on the size of the stock camp and numerous stock amenities (e.g. huge picnic table and hitching rails), I suspect that Lake of the Fallen Moon Meadow could be a meadow of concern. I did not see any stock groups here or find any unacceptable impacts but the site was being occupied by the carnivore crew for most of my stay at the Monarch station and they kept a very clean camp.

I hiked through Simpson Meadow on my way over to the Bench station. Simpson looked good with no inappropriate impacts. The cabin looked tight with no obvious damage. I did not go inside the cabin, however.

The 'Resource Impacts/Issues' section below provides more information on some of the lakes and meadows mentioned above.

3.0 IBP/Concession Contacts and Comments

Though most visitors arrived by foot, I did have a few stock users enter the Bench Lake patrol area. All non-administrative stock users, except one man with 2 horses, were IBP contracts. All contacts were pleasant and cordial. Groups were generally treating the wilderness with respect and abiding by park rules and regulations.

Mountain Sobek contracted out with Southern Yosemite Mountaineering twice this year for a trip between Florence Lake and Cottonwood Pass. High Sierra Pack Station was used to carry food and gear for both trips. Both of the groups that passed through were well organized, polite and left clean camps. (They camped at the South Fork crossing and at Ansel Adams tarn. I checked both camps after each group had left.) The packers also did a great job cleaning up the area before they left. I filled out an IBP form on this group each time they came through.

At Bench Lake, I also spoke with another IBP packer (from the east side) and he generally did a good job as well. I filled out an IBP form on this packer with some additional comments.

I saw no stock violations take place while I was at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station but did have one stock concessioner ask me if I was leaving the next day, which I was. (I told him that I would be back and forth between the two stations.) The feeling with this contact led me to believe that they might have been waiting for me to leave.

(For detailed information, see Stock Usage form submitted with meadow management notebook).

4.0 Signs

All signs in the Bench area are generally in good repair. Two exceptions are the wooden boundary signs at Sawmill and Taboose Passes. These are structurally sound but have a lot of graffiti inscribed into the wood. These signs are barely legible and the white paint is mostly gone. However, they are still interesting, weather-worn artifacts.

Many of the trail signs present incorrect or conflicting mileages and this generated a large number of visitor complaints. I recommend that many of these be replaced with signs which simply indicate the destination (with arrow) but do *not* list mileages. Examples of these include:

- JMT: Sign at South Fork crossing with incorrect mileage to Mather and Pichot Pass (off by 1.6m)
- JMT: Sign at Bench Lake junction (technically correct but confusing when used in conjunction with popular maps)
- JMT: Sign to Taboose Pass (off by 0.6m)

Other suggestions for improving signs include:

- Taboose Trail: Consider sign at abandoned trail junction ½-way down from pass. A simple sign just stating "Trail" and an arrow would help keep hikers from going inadvertently down to the South Fork.
- The wooden signs at Taboose and Sawmill Passes have routed letters filled in with white paint. The paint is flaking away, making them difficult to read. It might be possible to chip away some of the remaining paint and repaint in the letters.
- There is a great new sign at Sawmill Pass next to the wooden one. A similar sign should be placed at Taboose Pass. The new sign at Sawmill is easier to read than the wooded one and provides more information of NPS regulations for people coming in to the park.
- The Twin Lakes stock camp (also called the ghost camp) is difficult to locate since it is not where you would expect it to be and does not have a good user path to it. A sign (again with an arrow) stating "Stock Camp" would not only be helpful for people finding the camp but would prevent stock groups from going to other places around Twin Lakes or the tarn nearby to the north (Ansel Adams tarn).
- The sign board at Lower Tent Meadow is an eyesore and should either be removed altogether or improved to provide information to visitors. Currently the largish wooden sign board (an information board format that would hold about 4 letter sized notices) is badly splintered and is not being used whatsoever. The campsite at Upper Tent Meadow is very difficult to find. I had a few visitors ask me where it was located. I believe that a small sign marking the location of this camping area would be appropriate.

The NPS boundary areas I patrolled showed no signs of illegal or inappropriate use.

5.0 Bear Incidents/Encounters

Although I did not have any serious bear incidents, I had numerous bear sightings in both of my patrol areas. (I saw 11 bears this year.) The bears appear *not* to be intimidated by human presence and there exists a potential for future problems. I am unaware of any of the bears getting a food reward.

Some of the bear incidents that I had this year include:

- One bear came repeatedly into the Bench Lake R.S. camp at night or in the early morning and would half-heartedly hit the food boxes. Another morning there was a bear within two feet of my tent. (Volunteer Pete Clum also saw this bear in camp at least once while he was there in July.)
- I believe that it was the same bear that I saw walk right into the Bench Lake R.S. camp in the middle of one day. The bear slightly displaced an unoccupied bivy bag of a botanist that was staying at the ranger station and knocked the toilet seat lid onto the ground. It then went over to a campsite at Bench Lake. There it chomped on someone's eyeglass case before leaving.
- Late in September while Debbie Brenchley was doing a supervisory site visit to Bench, a "mottled" looking bear was spotted. We later discovered that it had dug up the recently abandoned and filled-in pit toilet. It made a huge mess of it and apparently rolled around in it. It appeared that the bear then went over to the newly dug toilet to knock off the toilet seat lid, chew into the toilet paper (minimal loss) and make somewhat more of a mess. Great way to impress your supervisor!

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

- Several visitors reported seeing a small bear at a low elevation in the desert portion of the Taboose Trail (in Inyo NF). Additionally, there were several large piles of bear scat at low elevations on this trail in the Inyo. I saw only one bear close to the Monarch Divide R.S. It came very near camp before passing on without incident. It did not react in the slightest way when I yelled, banged pans or threw rocks.

I saw a few other bears on the trail (mostly at Monarch), but these always ran quickly off.

6.0 Wildlife Observations

I had several other good wildlife observations this summer. Among my favorite observations were:

- I saw numerous deer all through out the summer. Most of the deer that I saw were at Monarch. While I was there I saw several spotted fawns either near or at the station. Later in the summer, in Taboose Meadows, I saw two fawns nursing.
- I saw one White-Tailed Jackrabbit in the Bench Lake R.S. camp.
- Probably the best wildlife sighting that I had the entire summer was at the Bench Lake R.S. where on August 9th I saw a Long Tailed Weasel chase, catch and later carry off a Golden Mantled Squirrel. It was a fairly long sighting (about a minute) because I accidentally scared the weasel before it had a chance to carry the squirrel off. The entire sighting was less than 6' away. (This sighting was reported to the Carvivre Crew.)

Unusual wildlife observations aside, there was also an abundance of the more commonly seen animals: multiple deer throughout both areas, but also the expected assortment of yellow-bellied marmots, ground squirrels, alpine chipmunks, and birds, mostly Clark's nutcrackers but also the occasional raptor (especially later in the season).

7.0 Resource Impacts/Issues

- **Trash:** Most trash was small and scattered, often accidental or small remains of foil, etc. found in campfire rings. Twin Lakes, Striped Lakes, Woods Lake, Marion Lake, Grouse Meadow (Monarch area), State Lakes and Volcanic Lakes each had a lot of purposefully left trash. This year I located one old can dump just upslope from the Marion Lake camp. I found a second one along the JMT about 1-1/2 miles north of the South Fork crossing (GPS coordinate in Appendix A). (These are in addition to the two can dumps that were found at Woods Lake as well as one can dump at Bench Lake in 2002.)
- **Ansel Adams Tarn Camping Impact:** An area just east of the trail next to Ansel Adams tarn (slightly north of Twin Lakes) has received much camping impact (see photo-from 2002 report but no change since then). The area is entirely devoid of ground vegetation along a strip about 200' in length. The area has been used heavily for stock. I broke apart several fire rings in this location. It would be good to find some way to contain the use to a smaller area – even with stock the impacted area does not need to be so large.





- **Twin Lakes Stock Camp:** The Twin Lakes stock camp (or ghost camp) still has large pieces of firewood that need to be hauled out (see photo-from 2002 report but still no change). (b) (6) and I scattered much of the wood in 2002 but some of the pieces are quite large and difficult to handle. Additionally, scattering many pieces of this girth and length has a negative visual impact in an area that is supposed to be wilderness.

I thought that the most impacted site in the Monarch Divide area was at State Lakes but the most trash that I picked up was in the Volcanic Lakes area. Grouse Lake and surrounding meadow were more intermediate with impacts and trash. Granite Lake, surprisingly, was lightly impacted. (There was a lot of evidence of previous camp fire rings at Granite Lake but I did not see a single ring there.)

I did see a few low-flying aircraft this summer (both patrol areas) but, for the most part, they did not negatively impact the wilderness setting (more info. available on request).

8.0 Minor Resource Projects Completed

- **Bench Lake Ranger Station Platform:** Pete Clum (who carried up 6 ½ pounds of wood screws), Trapper and myself worked for several days to put cedar boards on the existing platform. We also put two coats of a protective seal on the boards. The platform now looks great!
- **Bench Lake Snow Course:** Debbie Brenchley and I removed many small trees on the Bench Lake Snow Course so that taking sample cores in winter will be possible. (The trees that were there were hindering these surveys.)
- **Campsite Inventory:** As well as the campsite inventory data of 20 new sites for 2004, I also looked at all the campsites that I inventoried in 2002 for changes and to see if the work done at those sites was still holding. See Appendix D for this information.
- **Bear Sign:** Several people were misinformed and somewhat unprepared to be camping in an active bear area when they showed up near the Bench Lake R.S. and Bench Lake. (Historically this has not been a problem area with bears rarely seen.) Many of these people were hanging their food from trees improperly and/or did not think that bears were a problem in the area. Therefore, I put up a sign at the Bench Lake junction that restated the park's policy on proper food storage and more importantly, included a page that showed how to counterbalance. Virtually every hiker that passed by (including JMT/PCT hikers) read this sign and I received many positive comments on it. I really think that this sign might have prevented the Bench Lake bear(s) from getting any food this year.
- **Carnivore Crew:** I spent one day (and one night) with the carnivore crew at Lake of the Fallen Moon Meadow. Very fun and educational but I did not get to see any weasels on this trip.
- **Leave No Trace Talk with CCC Crew:** I hiked from Granite Basin to the Kennedy Pass area (via Dead Pine Ridge) to give a LNT talk with the CCC trail crew that was working in the area. I found the crew to be very friendly, open and receptive. Afterwards I hiked out on the Lewis Creek Trail and back up Copper Creek the next day.
- **GPS Coordinates of all Stock Camps:** I took GPS coordinates of all stock camps that I passed by during the summer. I took a few other GPS coordinates as well. These are listed in Appendix A.
- **Giant Ring:** This really wasn't that big of a resource project but is worth mentioning. Early in the season I found a 25' diameter ring of rocks that had a north arrow in the center. This ring was located in the basin

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

just below and to the west of Goat Crest. (See Appendix A for the GPS coordinate.) The ring appeared to have been in the area for a very long time (10-15 years +/-) and was visible from several points along the ridge east of Granite Pass. Some friends were with me at the time its discovery and they called it a fairy ring. Other people thought that it was used to communicate with aliens. Personally, I think that the hobbits did it. Sarah Cowell and I were able to break apart the ring and scatter the rocks in about an hour.

- **Clean-Up Trips:** While at the Bench Lake R.S. I was able to make longer backpack trips, about once a week, to other areas for clean-up. Areas covered were Upper Basin, Lake Basin including Marion Lake, Twin Lakes, and Woods Lake. Considerable clean up was also done at Striped Lakes, South Fork and Bench Lake. At Monarch Divide R.S. I did one overnight clean-up trip to State Lakes and regular clean up trips to Granite Lake, Shortys Meadow, Grouse Lake and Meadow and Volcanic Lakes.
- **Completed all 2004 SC Tasks:** Lock inventory for Bench, radio map for both areas patrolled and other minor tasks were completed as required.

9.0 Fire Ring Data

Fire Rings Removed – Bench

| Location | Fire Rings Removed |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Ansel Adams Tarn | 3 |
| Bench Lake | 2 |
| Lake Basin | 1 |
| Lake Marjorie Basin | 3 |
| Marion Lake | 2 |
| Palisades Lakes | 1 |
| South Fork | 5 |
| Striped Lakes | 4 |
| Taboose Meadows | 2 |
| Twin Lakes | 2 |
| Upper Basin | 2 |
| Woods Lake | 3 |
| Totals | 30 |

I reduced 2 other campfire rings along the South Fork (below 10,000'). I also reduced the large one on the JMT/South Fork crossing 4 times before finally removing it.

Fire Rings Removed - Monarch

| Location | Fire Rings Removed |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Granite Lake | 0 |
| Grouse Lake | 1 |
| Grouse Meadow | 1 |
| Kennedy Pass Area | 1 |
| Shortys Meadow | 1 |
| State Lakes | 2 |
| Volcanic Lakes | 2 |
| Totals | 8 |

reduced 3 campfire rings at Lower Tent Meadow as well as 1 along Kennedy Creek.

10.0 Campsite Inventory Data

I did an inventory of 20 new campsites this year (10 at Monarch, 10 at Bench) as well as looking at all the Lake Marjorie sites I had done an inventory on in 2002 (for comparisons). The inventory of the 20 new campsites is found in Appendix C. The 2002 Lake Marjorie campsite inventory with 2004 remarks is found in Appendix D.

D. Recommendations

1.1 Areas of Greatest Vulnerability

- **Woods Lake** does not get enough patrol coverage. Its fragile vegetation has been heavily impacted by visitation over the years. There are always illegal fire rings and an abundance of trash as well. Furthermore, it is likely that multiple visitors come over Sawmill Pass without permits. I visited Woods Lake once during the summer, but did not see anyone during my time there.
- **Bench Lake** stock camp is not appropriate in its current location (SW end of lake). There simply is not adequate grazing at the present spot. A better location would be adjacent to a meadow about ½ mile west from the Bench Lake Ranger Station.
- I felt that **Volcanic and State Lakes** do not get enough coverage. Half of the campfires and almost all of the trash that I found during my stay at the Monarch Divide R.S. were found at these two lake areas. By contrast, Granite Lake, Shortys Meadow and Grouse Lake/Meadow seem to get more coverage as they are not as far off the main trail.
- The camping area east of the trail and adjacent to **Ansel Adams tarn** is heavily impacted and the **Twin Lakes (ghost) stock camp** is difficult to find. Signing the ghost camp could lessen the load near Ansel Adams tarn thus allowing it to recover somewhat.
- The **Twin Lakes (ghost) stock camp** still shows signs of the heavily use it received in 2001 by the trail crew. Large pieces of firewood need to be either removed or relocated. Pieces are numerous and large enough that scattering them is difficult and unsightly.

This year I located two more **can dumps**: one just upslope from the large campsite at Marion Lake and one along the JMT about 1 ½ miles north of the South Fork crossing. An effort was made to carry some of this back to the ranger station (so it could be flown out at the end of the season) but there is too much volume for rangers to carry all of it out. Additionally, two can dumps were found in 2002 at Woods Lake and one at Bench Lake (see 2002 report for locations). These can dumps might make a good project for a volunteer group.

1.1 Other Recommendations

- Many **PCT thru-hikers** pass through Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks before backcountry personnel are in place. We should consider having some backcountry rangers deployed earlier in the season.
 - The **Bench Lake and Monarch Divide Ranger Stations** do not appear on many maps (including some provided by the NPS). All NPS literature should show these ranger stations on maps. If these stations cannot be funded on a regular basis, then a small note indicating this can be placed on the map (e.g., "Intermittently Staffed", etc.).
 - We could still do a better job getting information on **proper food storage** to all backcountry users. Besides providing information on bear canister requirements, better handouts showing bear box locations would be useful. I was surprised to find that several visitors had shipped home their bear canister because they thought there were bear boxes all along the JMT in SEKI. Frequently these people did not know how to counterbalance their food and were relying on poor hanging techniques. (I think that my sign at the Bench Lake junction really helped a lot of these folks.)
- The **Monarch Divide Ranger Station** has poor visibility. I only received one visitor at the station this year. There is a good ranger station sign on the trail but you do not see the station until you are nearly up to it. It might help if people knew that there was a ranger station at Granite Basin before they left on their trip.

Again, better maps or handouts showing the station location would be useful. Trail head sign boards could also mention the presence of the station. (As a side note - not only is it not possible for visitors to see the station from the trail but it is also not possible for rangers to see the trail from the station. At the Bench Lake R.S. I could frequently see hikers going by and easily catch up to them which increased the number of my visitor contacts. This was not possible at Monarch.)

- The **Bench Lake Ranger Station** should be staffed on a regular basis (every year). This station fills a long gap between Rae Lakes and Palisades stations; it provides needed visitor assistance and patrol coverage to a large and sensitive area of our park's wilderness. The Bench Lake region is one of the stellar alpine assets of the whole National Park system and the SEKI budget should simply include funding for this station as a required part of the annual backcountry management plan.
- The **Bench Lake Ranger Station** solar system took a long time to charge up. I believe this was due, in part, to the fact that it had not been charged up in 2003. We might consider setting up the system in years that this station is not fully staffed.
- The **Monarch Divide Ranger Station** needs to have the boards stained with a protective coating. The boards were placed on the platform this year (2004).
- The **Monarch Divide Ranger Station** solar system was housed in a metal box in 2004. This box needs to have a hole drilled in to it to feed the solar panel wires through. (Or find another acceptable way to store the solar system over the summer.) Wire casing was getting damaged from the pressure of the lid on the box.
- The **State Lakes** snow survey site is still in place. I noticed in the Monarch EOS report for 2000 that this was supposed to have been removed in October of 2000. I do not know if plans for its removal were changed or not but I found the site with a 20' (+/-) high narrow tower and some panels on the ground that were about 15' x 15' (+/-). It is barely visible from the trail, but an eyesore all the same.

1.2 Staffing the Monarch Divide Ranger Station

general, I support the need to have a ranger stationed at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station if only to have consistent NPS presence in an area that sees heavy stock use. I do think, however, that much of the coverage could be accomplished by trail and law enforcement rangers from Cedar Grove. Furthermore, while I was at the Monarch station, I did not see much in the way of visitation. I'm sure that this was partly due to mosquitoes keeping visitors away early in the season and partly due to the opening date of the meadows in the area - most of them were not open until later in my time at that station. (I was there from July 5th until the beginning of August.) For comparison, it would have been interesting to see visitation trends in the busiest month of August.

Despite my enjoyment of the area, I found that the dual position also had some logistical difficulties. Planning ahead of time was tedious and packing for the summer took me a very long time. I found that there were many, many things that I needed to have two of and this cost me more money early in the season than I normally would have spent. It also kept me running back to the store for yet one more thing. It is worth mentioning that this extra money and time spent could place a hardship on other rangers in the future.

E. Equipment Needs

I provided equipment needs lists for both Bench Lake and Monarch Divide Ranger Stations. The list for Monarch Divide includes what I think is necessary for that station to be fully staffed in upcoming years.

See Appendix B that accompanies this report.

F. How to Patrol the Bench Lake Area

Most visitors to the area were hiking on the JMT/PCT. In other cases, a few hikers came up to stay at Bench Lake for a few days or hikers would pass through the Bench area enroute to Lakes Basin or as part of the Sierra High Route. Of these the first group is somewhat easy to predict travel patterns; the others are a little more random.

Most visitation to the Bench Lake area, and especially the Lake Marjorie area, was usually in the early morning or sometime in the late afternoon. (At other times it was usually very quiet - so much so, that I would rarely see anyone on a hike to or from Pinchot Pass if I went in the middle of the day.) Most visitors in the area preferred to camp at Lake Marjorie rather than other locations, so many in fact, that one day in August I found 34 hikers camped at or near the lake. For this reason I tried to get to Lake Marjorie between about 4PM and 6PM – soon enough that I could help locate visitors to appropriate spots before they set up camp. This seemed to really reduce excess hiker conflicts and offer some degree of solitude for those who were in the area. Going to Lake Marjorie at this later time also gave me time to do other short patrols to other areas in the morning.

During the wetter weeks and during the cold snap, however, this trend was reversed. The evening hours at Marjorie were extremely quiet. Few hikers wanted to camp in the exposed areas at Lake Marjorie. For those times more visitors camped at South Fork or south of Pinchot Pass and so it was better to patrol most of the area around the station mid to late morning through early afternoon.

I tried to patrol Bench Lake every weekend as visitors on shorter trips frequented this area. During the weekdays this area was usually quiet with minimal visitation.

Usually had a hard time making contact with visitors who were camped at the South Fork. I believe that, except for wet periods, people generally did not hang around this area for long even if they were camping there.

Finally, many people would camp in the Bench Lake landing zone or in the meadow area just across from the station. It is difficult to see these areas very well from the ranger station. Therefore, it is useful to occasionally walk the short distance to check both areas if you have not been on patrol that day.

Fire rings reappeared often in the Twin Lakes/Ansel Adams tarn areas. Another area where fire rings are an issue are along the South Fork, but these are a little bit more scattered rather than appearing at exactly the same location over and over again. Both the Twin Lakes area and the area adjacent to Ansel Adams tarn are discussed more fully in the Resource impacts/issues and Recommendations sections.

G. How to Patrol the Monarch Divide Area

In general, I was not at this station long enough to notice many trends. I did, however, notice that most visitors showed up to the Granite Basin area in the late afternoon or left the area in the earlier part of the day. This makes sense based on the long steep trail from Cedar Grove. Thus, morning and late afternoon are good times to patrol in this area.

Granite Lake appears to be the most popular destination for people who come through the area so this is an especially important place to patrol. Several times visitors would stay multiple nights at Granite Lake and do many trips from there. I did not find as high of visitation at the other lakes in the area, but that could easily have changed later in the year.

H. Closing Remarks

I thoroughly enjoyed having the opportunity to stay at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station and explore a new area. I also thoroughly enjoyed my return to the Bench Lake Ranger Station. Ned Kelleher and Debbie Benchley did a great job working together to create this unique opportunity. Both of them were also very helpful and supportive to me. Many thanks! Many thanks, too, to Pete Clum and of course, my spouse, (b) (6), who were able to provide lots of volunteer help at Bench.

Appendix A. GPS Coordinates

All readings were taken with a Garmin eTrex GPS unit using NAD83. This unit does not have a built in altimeter so elevation readings may be off as much as 450' (according to the manufacturer).

Stock Camps:

| Name | UTM | Elevation | Notes |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---|
| Ansel Adams Tarn | 0375669 4086235 | 10,977' | Heavily impacted site, used frequently by stock and larger groups. Photo included above. |
| Bench Lake | 0369242 4090043 | 10,631' | Inappropriately sited for stock groups. |
| Deer Meadow | 0364331 4102127 | 8,967' | |
| Glacier Valley | 0358865 4086996 | 9,879' | |
| Grouse Meadow | 0358043 4079652 | 10,228' | |
| Lake of the Fallen Moon Meadow | 0356830 4086830 | 9,433' | Nice big log picnic table and hitching rail. |
| Shortys Meadow | 0356698 4084204 | 10,241' | |
| Simpson Meadow | 0354662 4093066 | 5,888' | Hitching rail and lots of lush green grass. |
| State Lakes | 03599818 4087630 | 10,435' | |
| Twin Lakes (Ghost Camp) | 0375327 4085631 | 10,622' | Large fire wood still at this location from 2001. Photo included above. |
| Woods Lake | Not taken | Not taken | |

Other Useful Coordinates:

| Name | UTM | Elevation | Notes |
|--|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Bench Lake Knoll Camp | 0372016 4090982 | 11,020' | This is a great alternative, although exposed, site for stock groups. Excellent grazing on the knoll. |
| Can Dump | 0370932 4095156 | 10,638' | This can dump was within 100' of the JMT (just west of it). It is located about 1 ½ miles north of the South Fork crossing. |
| Cartridge Pass Trail (start from S. Fork) | 0368958 4091140 | 9,642' | GPS coordinate for finding the beginning of the old JMT up to Cartridge Pass. |
| Rock Ring Location (25' ring at Monarch) | 0357723 4082151 | 10,694' | In case you wish to communicate with alien beings, this may still have some good energy. |

Appendix B. Needs List

h:

- Step Ladder
 - (2) Round cigarette lighter adapters for lights
 - (1) Large tarp for Canvas Tent
 - (1) Globe Replacement for Coleman Propane Light (#214A0461)
 - (1) Roll of Visqueen
 - (2) New replacement hinges for an older gear storage box. Will need to drill into metal to replace these.
 - (4) 5 Gallon buckets with lids
- An assortment of rags
- (2) Dish towels
 - (1) Roll aluminum foil
 - (8) Bolts with nuts and washers (I gave Debbie one of the size that we need)
 - (1) Bucket to burn t.p./small scraps in (have metal buckets but need a taller one as used at most stations.)

Office and File Needs:

- (10) IBP Forms
- (10) BIMS (Bear Incident Report Forms)
- (12) Daily Log Sheets
- (8) Wildlife Observation Report Forms
- (2) Color highlighters (magic marker type)
- (2) Black magic markers
- (4-6) Pens
- () Clear plastic document holders (8 ½ x 11)
- () Roll scotch tape
- (1) Record log book
- (1) Bird book

Medical:

- (4) Non rebreather masks
- (1) Roll or package of Moleskin

It would be good to consider replacing the wood stove as well. Current stove is very rusted and flimsy.

Needs List (cont.)

Monarch:

- 5 Gallon buckets with lids
- (1) "Rapid Washer" for laundry
- (1) Metal wash basin (about 3' in diameter)
- (1) Scale to weigh boxes and gear
- (1) Voltmeter (to check on radio battery charge)
- (4) Mouse traps
- (1) Large tarp to cover canvas tent
- (1) Folding chair (to replace broken one)
- (1) Pur water filter replacement
- 40-50' of wire (to run fluorescent lights to dc batteries)

Office and File Needs:

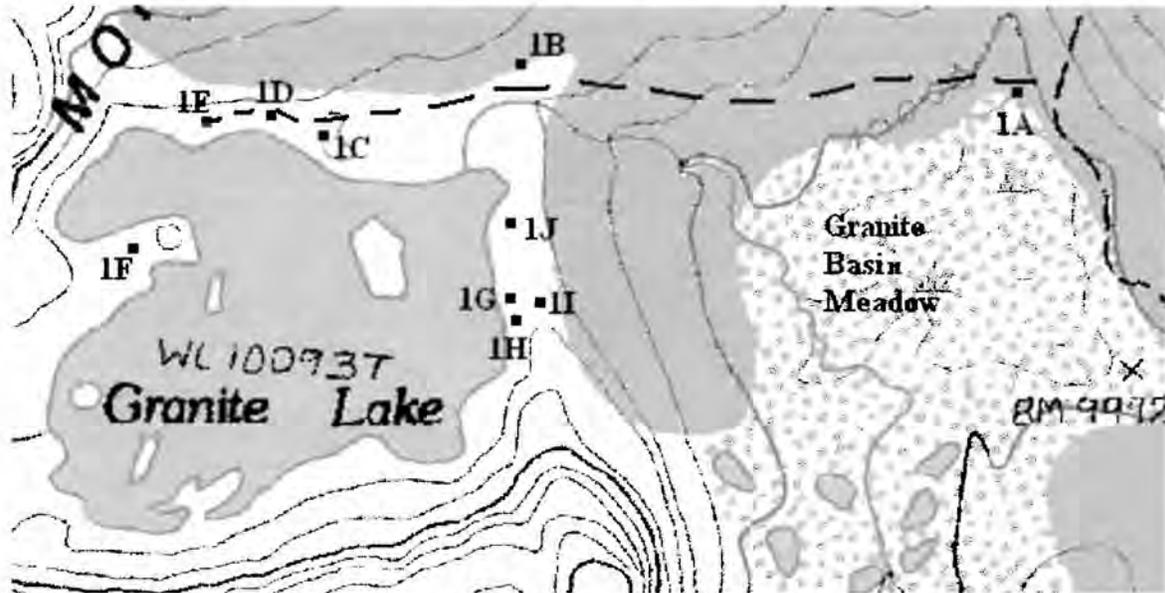
- (1) Bird book
- (6) AUO sheets

A digital camera was provided for my use at Bench during the summer. A similar camera would be good to have at the Monarch Divide Ranger Station as well.

Appendix C. 2004 Campsite Inventory Data

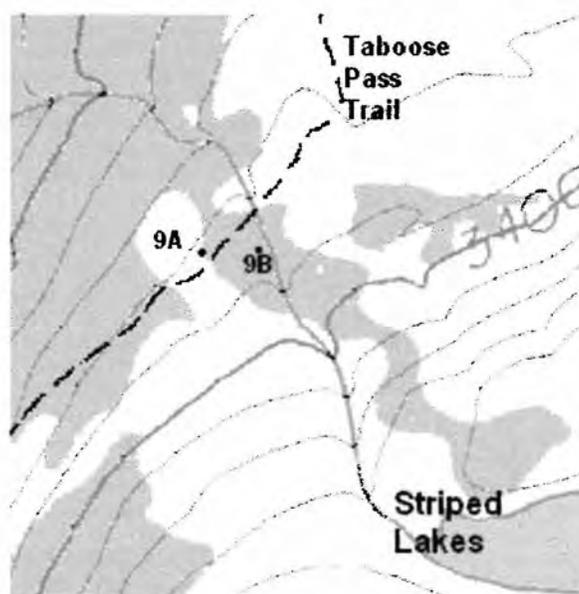
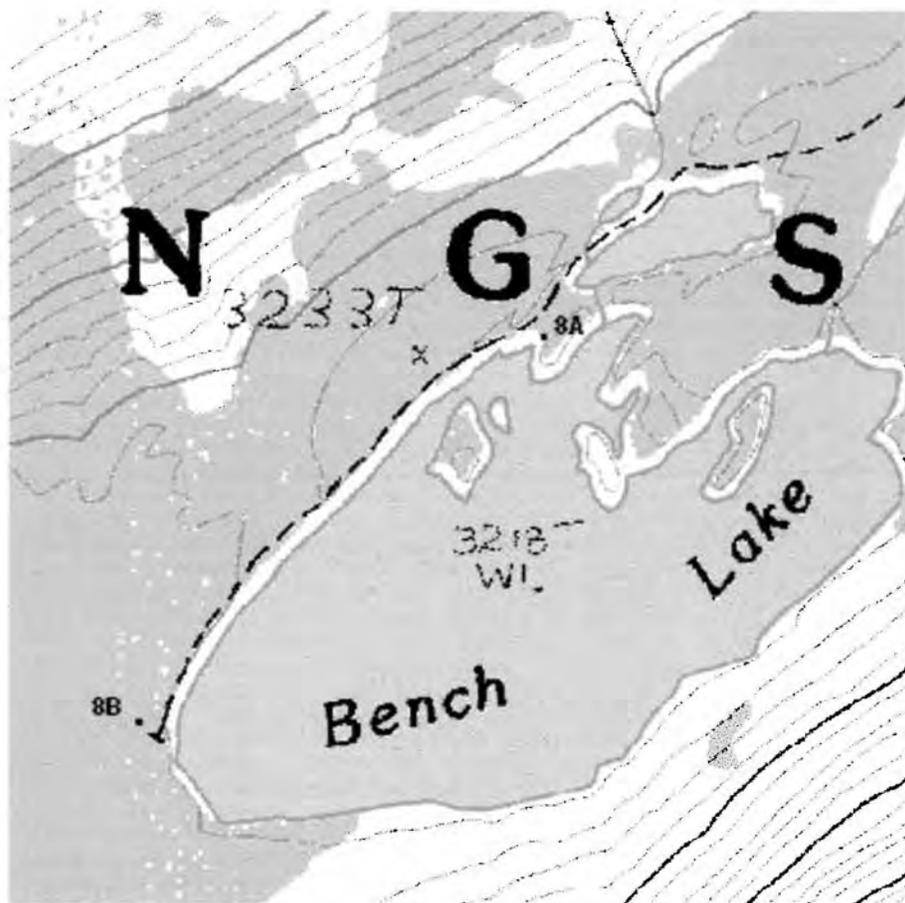
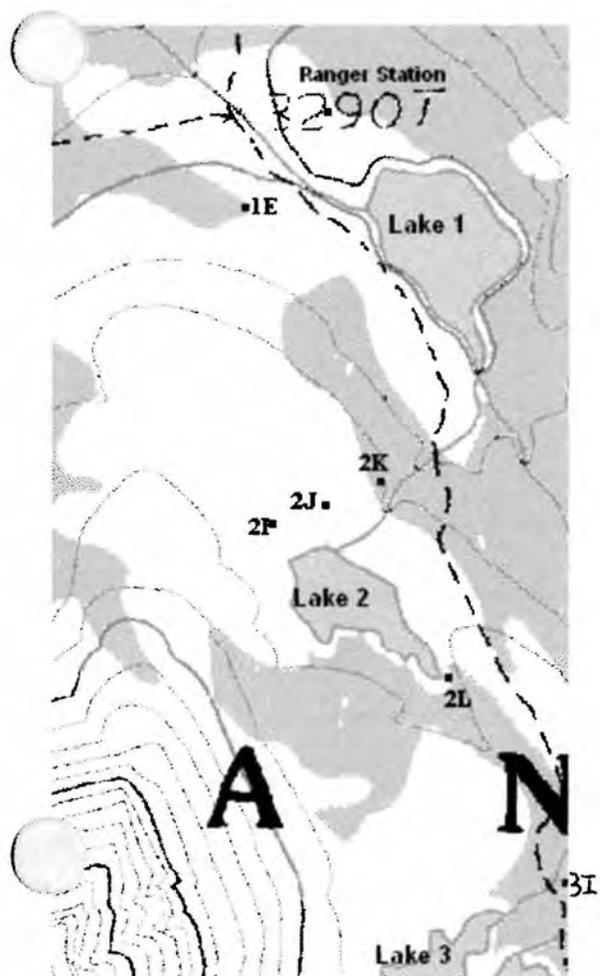
newly inventoried sites (2004) are listed here. I inventoried 10 campsites in the Granite Basin/Granite Lake area and 10 campsites in the Bench Area.

For Bench Lake area I retained the same numbering system that I used in 2002. Thus, for Lake Marjorie Basin the newly inventoried sites have numbers that follow those used in 2002. I also inventoried some sites at Bench Lake and in the Taboose Pass Trail area. This is the first year to inventory sites in those two areas. Sites at Bench Lake and Taboose Pass area begin with the numbers 8 and 9 respectively.



Granite Basin and Granite Lake Area

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | Level of Use/Impact | Notes (All of these sites were mostly clean and free of fire rings) |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1A | Group | 100+ | 80 | Low | Large, open spot suitable for groups. Some durable vegetation. |
| 1B | 6-8 | 100+ | 25 | Medium | Very visible from Granite Lake trail. |
| 1C | 3 | 100+ | 50 | Medium | Slightly hidden in rocks. |
| 1D | 5 | 100+ | 25 | Medium | |
| 1E | 3 | 60 | 10 | Heavy | Well used site at Granite Lake trail end. |
| 1F | 3 | 100+ | 100 | High | Slightly difficult to reach. |
| 1G | 2 | 80 | 100+ | Low | Somewhat exposed. |
| 1H | 2 | 80 | 100+ | Low | Somewhat exposed and near Site # 1G |
| 1I | 3-4 | 100+ | 100+ | High | Somewhat exposed. |
| 1J | 2 | 100 | 100+ | Medium | Somewhat exposed. |



2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

Bench Lake Ranger Station, Bench Lake and Taboose Pass Trail Area

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | Level of Use/Impact | Area: Lake Marjorie Basin Bench Lake Taboose Pass Trail Area | Work Done & Notes |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| 1E | 2 | 100+ | 60 | Medium | Lake Marjorie Basin | This is a new site directly across from the ranger station. |
| 2I | 2 | 150 | 300 | Medium | Lake Marjorie Basin | This is a very nice site (on the knoll across from the R.S). I removed a large pile of firewood but there was no fire ring. |
| 2J | 4 | 100+ | 150 | High | Lake Marjorie Basin | Good stock camp. Lots of horseshoes found here. Took a GPS reading of this site. |
| 2K | 3 | 100+ | 100+ | Medium | Lake Marjorie Basin | Tents would be visible from trail. |
| 2L | 2 | 40 | 100+ | Medium | Lake Marjorie Basin | This is a new site. |
| 3I | 2 | 100+ | 30 | Medium | Lake Marjorie Basin | This is a new site. |
| 8A | 6+ | 25 | 50 | High | Bench Lake | This site is fairly well hidden from the trail. |
| 8B | 6+ | 40 | 20 | High | Bench Lake | Bench Lake stock camp. Broke apart a fire ring and removed a lot of trash. |
| 9A | 2-3 | 80 | 15 | Medium | Taboose Pass Trail Area | Very visible from the trail. |
| 9B | 4-5 | 50 | 80 | High | Taboose Pass Trail Area | Hidden from trail. Broke apart a fire ring. |

Level of Use/Impact:

- Low – Little visitor use, many plants in campsite, will recover without further use
- Medium – Well used site with some plants and/or duff in site, may recover without further use
- High – Well used site without vegetation, exposed root systems, probably will not recover
- Heavy – Well used site without vegetation, evidence of high continuous use with no chance of recovery, difficult to close site

Appendix D. Lake Marjorie Basin – Campsite Inventory 2002 to 2004

This campsite inventory all camps have a number/letter. The number refers to which lake is most near the campsite; only Lake Marjorie is named. Lake 1 is the lake just south of the ranger station with Lakes 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 listed in order moving towards Pinchot Pass. Lake 5 is Lake Marjorie. Detailed maps showing most of the sites are provided.

The first five columns of the tables below are data from the 2002 inventory. The last column is from the 2004 inventory and notes changes, if any, that has occurred since the 2002 inventory.



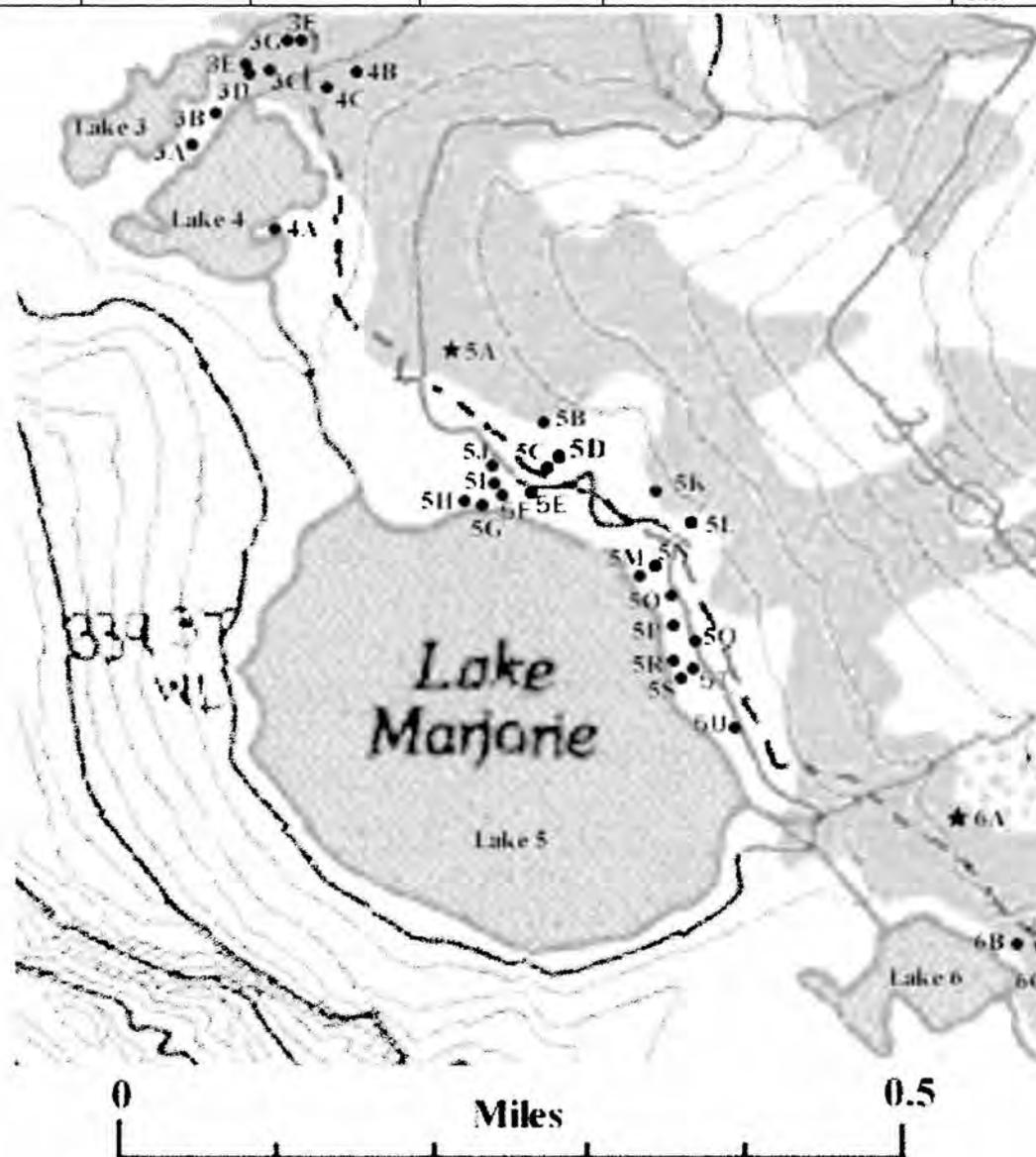
Lake 1

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | 2002 Level of Use/Impact | 2002 Work Done & Notes | 2004 Inventory |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1A | 2 | 100+ | 15 | Medium | Closed Campsite; Removed campfire, trash and rock wall | Site has returned and is now showing higher impact |
| 1B | 2-3 | 100+ | 20 | Medium | Closed Campsite; Adjacent to 1A; removed rock wall; evidence of past campfires | Site is still closed and work done is holding up well |
| 1C | 2-3 | 100+ | 30 | Medium | Close to 1A and 1B | No Change |
| 1D | 1 | 100 | 10 | Medium | Across trail from 1A | No Change |

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

Lake 2

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | 2002 Level of Use/Impact | 2002 Work Done & Notes | 2004 Inventory |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2A | 2-3 | 50 | 60 | Medium | Showing signs of expansion | Site is now showing high impact and has enlarged for 3-4 people |
| 2B | 2-3 | 6 | 50 | High | Closed this site using "rock bombs" | Site is no longer evident. Work done is holding up well. |
| 2C | 3 | 30 | 100 | Medium | | No change |
| 2D | 2-3 | 100 | 30 | High | Removed campfire ring | No change |
| 2E | 3-4 | 100 | 30 | High | Near 2D and expanding | No change |
| 2F | 2-3 | 30 | 100 | Medium | Closed this site | Site has returned and is showing medium impacts |
| 2G | 3 | 30 | 100 | Medium | 15' from 2F | No change |
| 2H | 3 | 40 | 50 | Medium | Removed rock wall | No change but did remove another rock wall from the site. |



2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

Lake 3

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | 2002 Level of Use/Impact | 2002 Work Done& Notes | 2004 Inventory |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | 3-4 | 30 | 150 | High | | No change |
| 3B | 3 | 80 | 100 | Medium | | No change |
| 3C | Bivy | 65 | 65 | Medium | | No change |
| 3D | 2 | 80 | 80 | Medium | | No change |
| 3E | Bivy | 80 | 80 | Medium | | |
| 3F | 2 | 100 | 20 | Low | Very visible from trail, probably used more as daytime rest area | No change |
| 3G | 2 | 100 | 35 | Medium | Removed campfire | Site is no longer evident |
| 3H * | 12 | 100+ | 100 | Medium | Best near-trail group campsite. Large durable area where people can spread out. Excellent views. (see directions) | No change |

Lake 4

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | 2002 Level of Use/Impact | 2002 Work Done& Notes | 2004 Inventory |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 4A | 3-4 | 40 | 75 | Heavy | Removed 2 campfires | No change |
| 4B | 3 | 75 | 100 | Medium | | No change |
| 4C | 2-3 | 50 | 25 | Medium | | No change |

Lake 5 (Lake Marjorie)

| Site Number | Tent Size (# people) | Distance from Water (feet) | Distance from Trail (feet) | 2002 Level of Use/Impact | 2002 Work Done& Notes | 2004 Inventory |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| * Best site in Basin | 3 | 150 | 75 | Medium | This is the best campsite in the Lake Marjorie Basin! See location directions. Removed campfire ring | Site is showing higher signs of use and can now accommodate 4 people. The increased use is appropriate at this location. |
| 5B | 4 | 175 | 100 | Light | Grassy site, removed campfire ring | No change |
| 5C | 2 | 100 | 15 | Heavy | Closed this site using "rock bombs" | Site has stayed closed with no new impacts |
| 5D | 2-3 | 115 | 30 | Heavy | Adjacent to 5C | Site has expanded and can now accommodate 3 people |
| 5E | 2-3 | 50 | 40 | High | Removed rock wall | No change |
| 5F | 4-5 | 25 | 80 | High | Removed campfire ring and rock wall | Removed another fire ring, otherwise no change |
| 5G | Bivy | 8 | 80 | High | Closed this site | Site is no longer evident |
| 5H | Bivy | 10 | 100 | Medium | Closed this site | Site is no longer evident |
| 5I | Bivy | 90 | 50 | Medium | Removed campfire and rock wall; campsite is hidden down in rocks | Removed another fire ring and another rock wall, otherwise no change |
| 5J | 2-3 | 80 | 60 | High | | No change |
| 5K | 3-4 | 100+ | 120 | High | Hidden from view but exposed to elements | No change |
| 5L | 4 | 100+ | 60 | Heavy | | No change |
| 5M | 2 | 15 | 100 | High | Closed this site using "rock bombs" | Rock bombs are still in place but a bivy site has grown around them |
| 5N | 2 | 50 | 80 | High | Closed this site using "rock bombs" | Site is no longer evident |
| 5O | 2-3 | 50 | 60 | Low | Slightly hidden | No change |
| 5P | 3 | 25 | 80 | High | Very hidden | No change |
| 5Q | Bivy | 80 | 100 | Medium | | No change |
| 5R | 2 | 15 | 130 | Medium | Closed this site using "rock bombs" | Site is no longer evident |

2004 End Of Season Report

Bench Lake Ranger Station

(b) (6) (volunteer)
Kings Canyon National Park



Kearsage Pass

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. General Summary | 2 |
| 2. Schedule & Hours | 2 |
| 3. Visitor Services | 2 |
| 4. Patrols | 2 |
| 5. Work Projects | 3 |
| 6. Wildlife | 3 |
| 7. Summary | 3 |
| Appendix A. Summits | 4 |
| Appendix B. Photo Gallery | 6 |

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

1. General Summary

During the latter part of the 2004 season, I joined my wife Roxanne Everett (ranger) as a volunteer at the Bench Lake Ranger Station at Kings Canyon National Park. Roxanne's End-Of-Season Report is very complete and readers should refer to that document for a complete overview of the 2004 Bench Lake season.

Previous Volunteer Experience at Bench Lake: Note that I spent all of the 2002 season as a volunteer at this station. I also returned for several weeks as a volunteer during the 2003 season.

2. Schedule & Hours

My 2004 volunteer schedule was as follows:

- **8/16 – 8/18:** Drive from Seattle to Grant Grove, and then around to the Taboose Pass Trailhead
- **8/19 – 9/13:** Projects and patrols out of the Bench Lake Ranger Station
- **9/14 – 9/18:** Hike out from Bench Lake through Rae Lakes to Onion Valley
- **Late Sept.:** Approximately 3 days of driving from Owens Valley to Grant Grove, then back to Seattle.

The elapsed time period is 37 days. Within that period, while at the Bench Lake Ranger Station, I averaged ~1.5 days per week off from work.

| 2004 | Aug | Sept | Total |
|---|-----|------|-------|
| Volunteer Hours (Backcountry) | 80 | 91 | 171 |
| Volunteer Hours (Driving & Frontcountry) | 30 | 35 | 65 |
| Total | 110 | 126 | 236 |

"Volunteer Hours (Driving & Frontcountry)" includes: (a) Driving time from Seattle to the Taboose Trailhead via Grant Grove (approx. 25-30 hours each way), and (b) Time in the frontcountry meeting with manager, sorting/packing gear in the cache at the end of the season, etc.

3. Visitor Services

Occasionally, Roxanne and I would patrol together, though normally we patrolled separately.

| 2004 | Aug | Sept | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Visitor Contacts | 77 (29 w/R) | 121 (6 w/R) | 198 (35 w/R) |
| Miles Patrolled | 50 (24 w/R) | 74 (10 w/R) | 124 (30w/R) |

These statistics show both my total count and also how many of those visitors/miles were with Roxanne. So, for example, the Sept. Visitor Contacts entry "121 (6 w/R)" means that I contacted 121 visitors total and 6 of those contacts were also with Roxanne.

Additional Visitor Contact Information:

- I performed 6 Visitor Assists this season. These were all minor issues (blisters, gear repair, hiker information, etc.).
- I did not participate in any major search, rescue, or medical incidents in 2004.

4. Patrols

I patrolled the following areas during this season:

- Bench Lake (frequently)
- Lake Marjorie & Pinchot Pass (frequently)
- Taboose Basin, including unmaintained trail down to South Fork (several times)
- Mather Pass & Upper Basin
- Off-Trail Lakes in the Pinchot Pass / Lake Marjorie drainage
- JMT from Bench Lake to Rae Lakes, then over Glenn Pass and out Kearsage Pass

In addition, we continued the exploration of summits in our patrol zone. See attached map & table for details.

5. Work Projects

I participated in the following work projects during the 2004 season:

1. **Tent Platform:** Roxanne, Pete, and I completed the Bench Lake Station tent platform by attaching the redwood boards, treating them, and re-attaching the screen (total screws used = 570). It came out great.
(My volunteer time on this project = 22)
2. **New Toilet Pit:** Roxanne and I dug a new toilet pit for the Bench Lake Ranger Station.
(Volunteer time on this project = 8+ hours)
3. **Trail Work:** I did a fair amount of light trail work sawing & lopping overgrown vegetation on the Bench Lake Trail and on the JMT from Bench Lake R.S. to well beyond Lake Marjorie.
(Volunteer time on this project = 16+ hours)
4. **Fire Rings, etc.:** I didn't focus on breaking up fire rings as much as in previous seasons. Number of fire rings removed = 4, number of rock walls removed = 2.

Best new gear at Bench Lake R.S. is the lightweight loppers & folding saw (followed closely by the nice new insulated drinking mugs)!

6. Wildlife

In addition to the usual animals (marmot, deer, clarks nutcracker, etc.), I observed several notable critters:

- **Pika:** Periodic pika encounters in the Pinchot Pass area.
- **Coyote:** Great coyote sighting in Taboose Basin (basin below pass on NPS side of boundary).
- **Bighorn Sheep:** Spectacular sighting of 9 male bighorn sheep near Rae Lakes.

These wildlife sightings have been reported elsewhere (either on wildlife cards or directly to NPS wildlife experts via radio/phone).

Summary

I had a wonderful time at Bench Lake R.S. this year, and helped Roxanne accomplish a lot of productive work. My only regret is that I couldn't join her for a longer!

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report

Appendix A. Summits

The following table and map show the summits that we have patrolled over the last few seasons. Names that appear in quotes are not official USGS names.

Summits Patrolled (listed north to south)

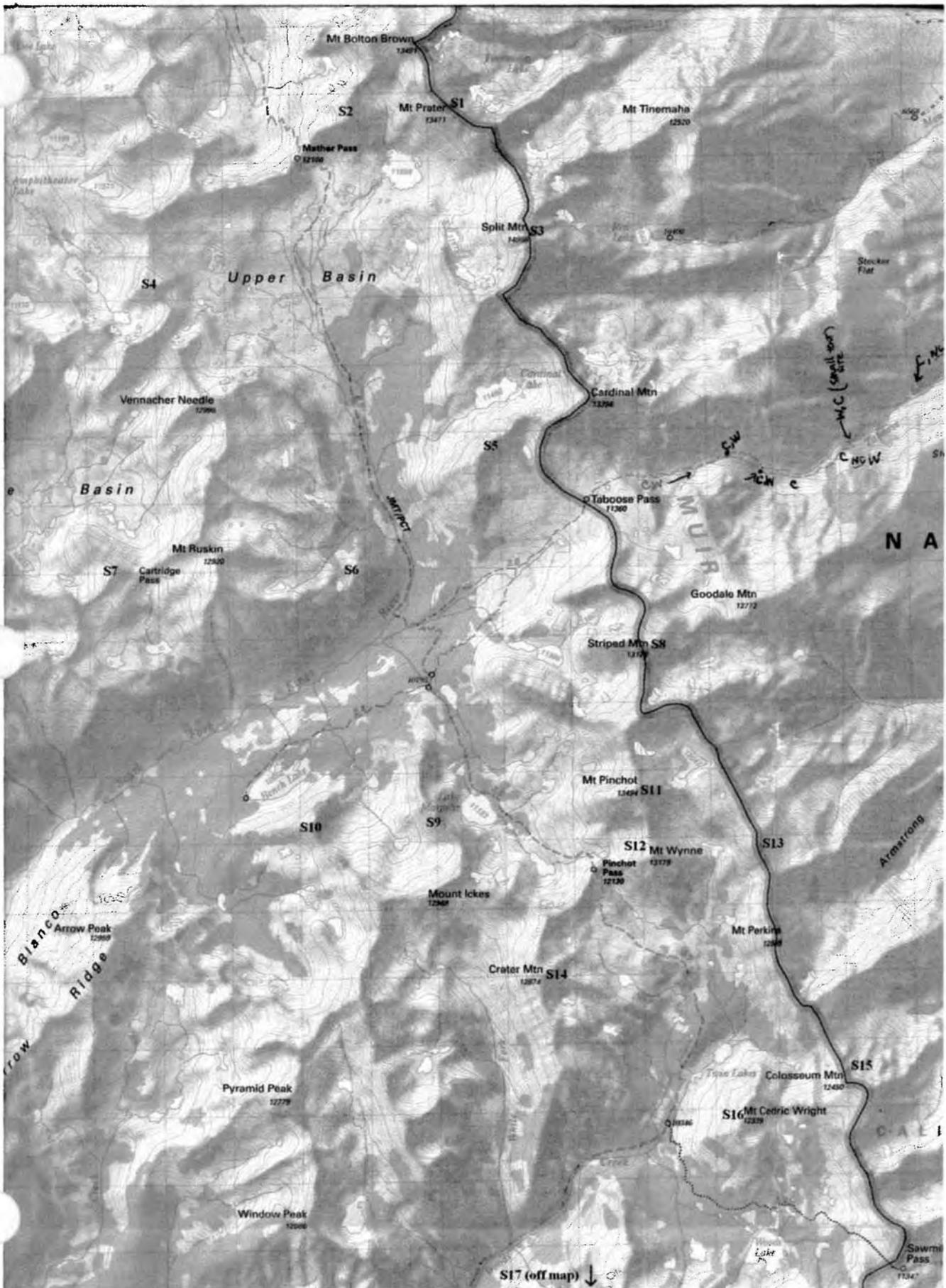
| Map Key | Year | Summit | Notes |
|---------|------|------------------------------------|--|
| S1 | 2002 | Mt. Prater (13471') | Sierra Club Register; 5-10 parties per year. |
| S2 | 2002 | Peak 13040'+ ("Mather Peak") | NE of Mather Pass. No register; few signs of visitation. |
| S3 | 2002 | Split Mtn. (14058') | Sierra Club Register; <i>average of at least 1 party per day</i> ; multiple climber paths on north slope route. |
| S4 | 2003 | Peak 12592' | W side of Upper Basin. Few signs of visitation. |
| S5 | 2002 | Peak 12851' | W of Cardinal Peak. Old square metal tin register with <20 parties going back to 1 st ascent (1945); few signs of visitation. |
| S6 | 2003 | Peak 11348' ("Ranger Roundtop") | Small but prominent round knob with a wonderful view. Small cairn, few signs of visitation. |
| S7 | 2002 | Peak 12175' ("Cirque Crest North") | W of Cartridge Pass. Old register in band-aid tin with <20 entries since 1975. No signs of visitation. |
| S8 | 2002 | Striped Mtn. (13120') | Sierra Club Register; 5-12 parties per year; few signs of visitation. |
| S9 | 2004 | Peak 12376' | Twin summits on ridge W of Lake Marjorie. Several small cairns; no other signs of visitation. |
| S10 | 2002 | Peak 12077' ("Bench Peak") | Minor summit S of Bench Lake; no register, few signs of visitation |
| S11 | 2002 | Mt. Pinchot (13494') | Sierra Club Register; 3-10 parties per year; climber trails evident. |
| S12 | 2004 | Mt. Wynne (13179') | Sierra Club register; ~10 parties in 2004 (register does not go back before that); signs of light visitation. |
| S13 | 2002 | Peak 12572' ("North Perkins") | Highest summit on ridge N of Mt. Perkins. No register; no signs of visitation. |
| S14 | 2002 | Crater Mtn. (12874') | No register; faint climber's path on ridge and near summit scramble |
| S15 | 2002 | Colosseum Mtn. (12473') | Sierra Club Register; modest signs of visitation. |
| S16 | 2002 | Mt. Cedric Wright (12372') | No register; climber paths in the loose sand/scree SE of summit |
| S17 | 2004 | Painted Lady (12,126') | Near Rae Lakes. Summit cairn; old illegible & chewed up notebook (carried out as trash); signs of light use. |

Note: We generally tried to determine how many "Parties" (not individuals) climbed the summit by looking at register entries. In some cases, each person in the party made a separate entry; other parties would have a single entry for the whole group. So there is some interpretation/judgment on our part as to the number of people/parties and the above statistics are approximate.



Roxanne on Mt. Wynne
(Mt. Pinchot in background)

2004 Bench Lake and Monarch Divide End Of Season Report



Appendix B. Photo Gallery



North From Painted Lady (Rae Lakes in foreground)



Rainy August



(b) (6) on Mt. Wynne
(Lake Marjorie in lower left)



New Bench Lake Toilet
("Residual Biomass")



South From Mt. Wynne
(Mt. Cedric Wright, Twin Lakes, etc.)



Taboose Pass from Owens Valley

--- end ---

Sierra Crest (Charlotte Lake)
End of Season Report
2004
Jane Weisenberger

General Summary

After a winter that delivered 40% less precipitation than normal, the summer brought extra moisture and cooler temperatures. One in four days were riddled with thunder and lightening storms, hail or snow. In July there were about two weeks of monsoonal storms. August heralded approximately two weeks of cold, powerful hail storms. September was christened with a chilling snow storm, which occurred twice more before the end of the month. These weather patterns certainly affected the numbers of hikers, as many decided to terminate their trips or chose not to initiate their planned trip. Even with all that precipitation, the number of people visiting the backcountry was substantial as the stats below indicate:

| | <u>Visitors Contacted</u> | <u>Miles Patrolled</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>June (5 days)</u> | 74 | 26 |
| <u>July</u> | 607 | 197 |
| <u>Aug</u> | 1037 | 205 |
| <u>Sept (24 days)</u> | 370 | 140 |
| <u>Totals</u> | 2088 | 568 |

VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor Use

During the months of July and August, Kearsarge, Charlotte Lake, Junction Meadow, and Lower Viddette were patrolled at least twice a week. Kearsarge, being the most visited camping location in the Charlotte Lake area, tolerated an average of 3 groups per night in July and 5 groups per night in Aug. There was an average of 4 people per group staying for 2 nights throughout July and Aug both.

Approximately 35% of all the backcountry contacts were campers hiking the Rae Lakes Loop. 30 % were hiking the JMT or PCT and 23% came over Kearsarge pass to visit Kearsarge Lakes or Charlotte Lake. Leaving approximately 13% of the hikers to travel into the lesser used areas of Gardiner Basin, Center Basin, Harrison Pass, and East Lake/Lake Reflection and to the Baxter Lake area.

There were approximately 10-12 Boy scout groups contacted, 10 Sierra Club groups, 2 College groups, 2/3 Corner round groups, 5 IBP groups, 8 researchers (non-NPS) and 4 church groups.

Law Enforcement:

Only one citation was issued this summer as I did not receive my commition until September. The citation was issued by (b) in July for two individuals having a bike in a wilderness area.

All visitors were asked not only if they had a permit, but to show their permit to the requesting ranger. They were also asked if they have a canister and if all their scented items fit in the canister. Visitors were asked if they have had or have heard of any bear incidences. They were given an explanation of the fire, trash (especially toilet paper),

bear activity and food storage regulations. Hikers were then asked if they had any questions or comments. A great deal of time was spent on each contact to ensure that the resources were properly taken care of and that the visitors were educated.

Violations: There were 128 visitors that were known to be in violation this year, including 19 which were stock related:

1. 39% food storage related (18% of these were people without canisters – 23 visitors)
2. 22% without permits (28 people- 12 groups)
3. 15% stock violation- 19 people (see stock use)
4. 9% camped on vegetation (12 people)
5. 8% food caches (10 people)
6. 4% fishing violations (5 people)
7. 3% Dog, leaving fire unattended, and bikes in wilderness (4 people)

Search and Rescues/Medicals

7 incidences were reported this summer- 3 resolved themselves

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Type</u> | <u>Evacuation</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 7/11/04 | ½ mile above Junction Meadow | Trauma- fall off 30' waterfalls- foot/ank fx | 7/12- helicopter in a.m. |
| 7/24/04 | JMT ½ mile north of sand flats | Vomit/confused at Glen- better p down- 3 rd party report | No treatment requested once encountered |
| 8/14/04 | Kearsarge Lakes | Fever, chills, weak | Helicopter |
| 8/14/04 | Charlotte Lake | HA, nausea, fatigue | No transport- monitored pt. |
| 8/24/04 | Charlotte Lake | HA, nausea, fatigue, dehydrated | Monitored- No transport |
| 9/3/04 | 1 mile north of Charlotte | 3 rd hand report-party no requesting help dehydrated, confused, fatigued | Continued upon feeling better-No treatment |
| 9/6/04 | Charlotte Dome | Missing climber | Hiked into camp |

On 7/11/04, at 2030, I received a report from a young man who ran to Charlotte from Junction Meadow. Women fell, possibly hurt neck, back, thigh and foot. I went down to incident location with 3 cylinders of O2, medical supplies and overnight gear. I stayed with her all night monitoring vitals every 2-3 hours. Administered O2 for pain as needed. Helicoptered her to UMC first thing in the morning.

On 7/24/04 I received a report that a woman was having "high altitude sickness" and was having difficulty getting off Glen Pass. I headed that direction, and within an hour, I encountered the woman and her boyfriend. The woman was no longer requesting medical attention as her symptoms had resolved. I took their name, number and a description of her symptoms.

8/14/04 there were two medicals, high altitude related. First was at Kearsarge. I hiked and assisted Park Medic (b) who had flown in. Patient was flown to Lone Pine. Second medical was with IBP group, Walden West Backpack Adventures. One of the leaders was experiencing an extreme headache and nausea that diminished somewhat with rest, hydration and food. Patient was monitored and she felt better in a day and a half and continued north on the JMT.

8/24/04 Patient came to my door and said he hasn't had water all day and was feeling really bad, didn't know how to use the water filter. He vomited on my porch after I gave him some water. Patient self administered Advil, rested and continued to slowly feed and hydrate himself. He was able to hiked out the following day.

9/3/03 hikers reported that there was a man on south side of Glen who claimed to be confused and dehydrated but was requesting no help. Several people saw this man, gave him food and water and helped him set up his tent to rest during the snow

storm. They told him to check with the Rae ranger when he got over there. Shortly after, I received a report that the man was on the north side of Glen and not requesting help.

9/6/04 received a report from dispatch that climbers did not come into camp last night as planned with other people in their party. I was at Junction Meadow and headed for Charlotte Dome. Climbers were reported to have arrived into camp shortly after I received the report.

Service Incidents

Visitor assists consisted of various messages being relayed to family members, via (b) (7)(F), for changing plans of exit dates or pick-up points. Other visitor requests consisted of calling a pack station to deliver an easy-boot for private party stock, calling a friend to bring a trailer for camels to the trailhead and notifying son not to deliver resupply secondary to snow storm. Assistance was also rendered for additional food, white gas, letting a camper use my hand coffee grinder, stove and a water filter.

Copious amounts of information was given when hikers were looking for routes, weather conditions, fishing, campsites, food storage lockers, day hikes Shorties cabins, information about the building of the JMT, etc...

Park Assistance-

I delivered a message to Ralph Wass about a message of a friend passing. I reported trail damage on the Kearsarge high trail and the south side of Forester Pass to (b) . During the 3rd week in September a trail crew worked on both areas. Also I spent 2 days looking for a trail crew radio that was lost in the Bullfrog Lake area.

Ranger Station

This year the cabin was thoroughly cleaned when I first arrived to the cabin. The stove, shelves above the books, both cabinets, all kitchenware, all shelves and the floor was washed. However, even after all this cleaning I still had a persistent cough and difficulty breathing that subsided whenever I left the cabin overnight. I decided that the floors needed another cleaning to get rid of allergens. This time I moved the beds and anything that was not connected to the walls; I bleached and washed the floor, especially the corners and edges of the floor where dust and dirt has settled over the years. Two days of cleaning resulted in breathing easier. I no longer had shortness of breath and slept well through the night after that. There were no mice in the cabin this year as was the case last year as well, so the allergens must have been from dust, and dirt that was very difficult to clean in years past.

The pit toilet will probably need to be moved sometime next year; it will tolerate one more season, maximum.

The Solar Panel is attached to the North side of the roof, which provided for very little exposure to the sun. An additional panel installed on the south roof would allow for better utilization of the solar batteries as well as provide more energy. During the two weeks of storms each month, the storage batteries were quickly drained and no energy was being stored. The wood stove was never used this summer although it was cold enough.

A core inventory was taken of the 3 locks at the Charlotte Lake RS: all were (b) (7).
Two of the belonged to the Cabin and one to the outhouse.

WILDERNESS PROTECTION

Bear Incidents

It was not enough to store food properly this year; groups had to have guards chase bears away so that the other hikers could cook the food. Bears were reported to have taken a pack out from under someone resting on it, taking a pack off of a young person who was hiking, nipping a guy in the shoulder, tearing a mans pants and taking an open canister of food that was sitting next to someone. Bears were tenacious and were rewarded many times for their tenacity. They reportedly stayed for hours in many camps that claimed not to have scented items improperly stored. Bears would eventually saunter away yet come back for repeat visits. These people often claimed that they yelled and threw rocks at the bears and still the bear persisted. These reports were not uncommon with nearly all visitors at the end of July and most of August. I wrote up many BIMs and then just wrote a general form that food is being gotten nearly every night and that a bear tech was needed, if available. I was told that some bear techs came through the area, but I was never contacted to meet with them.

Barrels outside of the Charlotte RS were broken into by a bear while I was on patrol. Extra "starving hiker" food was in that barrel and it was all eaten.-All incidences were reported on a BIMs form and some were additionally reported to bear management folks.

A possible explanation for the increased bear activity may be two-fold. First of all, this year was very low in precipitation possibly resulting in sparse vegetation for foraging. Secondly, bears were getting into the lexane canister at the beginning of the year and by the time the problem was rectified the bears were habituated and unafraid of people.

Wildlife

Pikas were seen frequently, as indicated on wildlife observation cards, during all alpine walks. Other observations included several king, gardener and rattler snakes as well as various big horn sheep sightings mostly in sixty lake basin. However, there were many signs of big horn in Gardener Basin, including dug up beds- 15-20, scat and tracks all over the basin. I saw 3 rams in 60 Lakes Basin near the pass going into Gardener. Coyotes were heard in Gardener Basin, and Charlotte Lake, they were seen at 60 Lakes and at Center Basin. Other observations consisted of a Pine Martin at Junction Meadow, two Wilson's warblers at lower Viddette Meadow and mountain lion tracks were possibly seen at the lower lake in Center Basin. Bear tracks and scat were seen all throughout the patrol area. Bears were seen on a regular basis along the Bubbs creek trail; mother and two cubs were viewed between Viddette and Sphinx Creek starting about mid July. Two large bears approximately 250 lbs. ea were also seen nightly, during July and August, at Kearsarge, Charlotte, Viddette or Junction and sometimes in Center Basin. The colors of the two previously mentioned bears were cinnamon and black. A brown 100 + lb. bear frequented both Charlotte and Kearsarge.

Resource Projects

Rehabbing fire pits above 10,000 feet, too close to water, or the trail was a regular task on most of my outings. This year I destroyed 87 fire pits, put ashes in old logs or rocks, hauled the trash out and made the area look natural by restoring it to look like the surrounding areas. 30 fire pits were cleaned this year by myself, however (b) and (b) cleaned the majority of the pits from Cedar Grove to Junction, East and Reflection. I was very grateful to the trailhead staff for taking the initiative and helping me with this area that is difficult to get to regularly. They took lots and lots of trash out of these areas too, including trash found on the ground, in fire pits and in food storage lockers. I was surprised how regularly they would clean the areas and how persistent they were.

Most of the illegal pits were in the Kearsarge, Bullfrog and Charlotte areas.

However, there were also pits built in Center Basin, Upper Bubbs, and Reflection and Viddette lakes areas as well. At the start of this season, there were pit built in almost every campsite at both Charlotte and Kearsarge.

12 campsites were rehabilitated by burying large rocks in the soil where the previous site was located. Natural covering was then spread around the area so as not to encourage camping. 4 sites were rehabbed at the Upper Bullfrog creek crossing, 2 sites at Junction, 2 sites at Charlotte and 4 sites at Bullfrog Lake.

Approximately 150-175 lbs of trash was extracted from the Charlotte patrol area. I took out 25 lbs with each of my 3 trips to the front country. Kings Canyon Pack station took out two loads of 25 lbs each and the rest was taken out by the Park

packers at the end of the season. This does not include the significant amount of trash that the trailhead took out this year.

Stock Use/Meadow Management

There were 173 stock observed (141 stayed overnight) in the backcountry this season. This made up 24 stock user groups of which 3 were administrative, 4 private and 17 commercial. Only 5 llamas were included in the stock count this year. A total of 372 stock nights were recorded with an average of each animal staying 2.6 nights.

Since it was a dry winter, all the meadows opened at the beginning of July except for Junction meadow. Junction experienced flooding secondary to a tree falling across Bubbs creek and diverting the flow. Since the meadow was extremely wet, no grazing was allowed until August 15. Because of this closure, East Lake (26%) and Upper Bubbs (47%) received most of the stock grazing nights. Upper Viddette was closed again this year secondary to over grazing impacts, and erosion. Although Junction was only opened for a little over a month, it appeared to receive heavy grazing during that time. It also received some grazing with deep hoof prints in the lower flooded section prior to being open. The meadow was opened August 15 although there was still one substantially wet section in the lower meadow.

Meadow Monitoring was conducted on September 14-16, 3 days cutting 4 plots. This was my first season at Charlotte and (b) came out to demonstrate how the RB should be collected. Junction Meadow was grazed to the ground in the core plot and the reference plot did not appear to be grazed. East Lake core was also grazed thoroughly; however there was no sign of grazing near the campsite, in the meadow or near the shoreline. Upper Viddette was closed, as mentioned previously, however we still clipped a core sample- no significant grazing appeared to have taken place. Shearing and erosion still appear significantly at UV and keeping the meadow closed next year is appropriate since the meadow has not recovered. Most of the Grazing took place at Upper Bubbs which was not "Clipped". Katie Karplus went to assess the area and will report further on the subject.

Education of Resources

This year I had the opportunity to meet with the Vegetation mapping crew as well as the frog and bird researchers. On 7/10 I met with (b) (6) to spend the day mapping the Reflection and East Lake drainage area. We identified many plants on the way and I learned not only how they do the mapping but also how to readily identify some trees.

On 8/10 I met with D. Boiano and Carrie. They were assessing several areas in the East Viddette and Center Basin areas for numbers and type of frogs and birds. Among other things, I learned how to differentiate the mountain yellow legged frog, pacific tree frog and the Yosemite toad while in the tadpole phase.

Concessions/IBP

Sequoia Kings Canyon pack station was the nearest packer, although Lovrins' employees were contacted frequently as well. Contacts were very good with Bryan Burner's employees, Mitch, Amanda, and Rodger. They all said they would bring out my trash whenever they came by Charlotte. They were always friendly and helpful. Burner wasn't quite as pleasant but he was fairly compliant. He did not seem to understand the "IBP thing". He carried it only once and after that he only had a copy of the clients permit; his employees never had the IBP. Burner also had a fire at the Charlotte stock camp 2 days after fires were declared prohibited in the Park. Burner confessed to knowing that the Park was "thinking about prohibiting fires", but claimed that he was unaware of the rule being instated. (b) (7)(F) had called and left messages at all the pack stations several days previous and he claimed that he didn't get the message. Burner said that he needs to be informed when we change the rules. I warned him not to have any more fires. Additionally, I had rehabbed the fire ring at Charlotte stock camp after reassessing the elevation and finding it to be 10,230 feet.

Besides that, Burner did a good job leaving the camps clean, manure was scattered somewhat, no trash in the fire pits, and he always used the upper Kearsarge trail instead of the one by Bullfrog.

Ralph and Maggie, from the park concessions pack station, were involved with two loose herding incidences at Upper Bubbs and East Viddette. On 7/10 there

on the trail. The rock wall was on a very steep section of Upper Kearsarge, 1 mile east of the sand flats.

A CCC crew was working from sphinx to Charlotte Creek when I initially hiked in, June 25th. They stayed only one more week before they headed to Fry Pan Meadow. They improved the trail with rock steps, water bars and clearing brush and down logs from trail.

Campsite Inventory

Twenty six sites were inventories and assessed as to tent capacity, size, proximity to water, food storage lockers and to the trail. Please see appendix for details.

Lower Vidette-2

Middle Vidette-6

Upper Vidette-3

East Lake-4

Gardener-5

Junction-6

Signs

This year the Charlotte patrol area was assessed for quality and needs of additional signs. I have written many sign request this year either to replace signs or add them as needed.

1. Information sign board to be put at Lower Vidette so it is consistent with the rest of Bubbs creek camp areas.
2. Information sign board at Charlotte at the Inlet so people will know about the food storage lockers- It should also say "NO FIRES". Many of the fire pits that are created are before to "no fires" sign.
3. Junction Pass- replace the wooden sign with a Kings Canyon NP entrance sign- "food storage canisters required" should be included on this sign
4. Viddette Meadows- 2 signs, one at each end of the meadow.- "No grazing in Vidette meadow"

As mentioned, last year, there is a large scrape in the junction grazing sign that may be repaired with flat black paint.

Recommendations

1. In order to preserve the fragile Upper Bubbs meadow and prevent the possibility of people getting stepped on while sleeping, by stock, at the Center Junction Camp, it is recommended to install a new fence just above upper vidette meadow. Upper Bubbs should be closed next year once the lower fence is put in. When the overgrazed areas have been restored, an area rotation grazing policy could be established. This would create less resource damage, and prevent the stock from wondering as far when grazing.
2. Have trail crew spend several days fixing the drift fence near Charlotte Lake Stock camp- many of the posts are barely standing.
3. Dig a new pit toilet sometime next season at Charlotte Lake Ranger station
4. Continue to keep Upper Vidette Closed to grazing secondary to the significant erosion and shearing that are still present in the meadow.
5. If Junction Meadow is going to continue to be flooded each year, we need to think about moving or adding a stock fence. Putting one just above the stock camp may be the most appropriate place.

Equipment needs

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Quantity</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Toilet Paper | 8 |
| Small lantern propane canisters | 12 |
| 65 gallon Propane tanks | 2 |
| Hanging file folders | 20 |
| File box- for archives | 1 |
| 3 hole punch | 1 |
| Binder- for Ranger Guide | 1 |
| Med Supplies: | |
| 4 x4's | 5 |
| Triple antibiotic packs | 20 |
| BP cuff for station | 1 |
| Provo Iodine Pads | 12 |
| Triangular Bandages | 3 |
| Maps: Sphinx Lakes | 2 |
| Whitney | 1 |
| Kearsarge peak | 1 |
| Aberdeen | 1 |
| Other: P-cord | 200' |
| Knack Box | 1 |
| D Batteries | 16 |
| Carbon filter for lg filter system | Need 3 but 1 would be good |

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Quantity</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Cork Screw | 1 |
| Torch lighter | 1 |
| Strike anywhere matches | 2 boxes |
| Thermarest | 1 |
| Backpacking stove | 1 |
| Backpacking pot/lid | 1 |
| Bleach | 1 Quart |
| Compos | 1 |
| Camera | 1 |
| Large Brown garbage bags | 12 |
| Clear garbage bags | 20 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Ranger Supplies

Blue Sierra Designs- 1 person tent
Small work gloves- size small
Pure replacement carterage- for hand filter
1 Qt sig fuel bottle
Sweet water filter
½ Qt sig fuel bottle
Pure water filter- hand filter
OR bivy
40' p-cord

Office Supplies

4 rechargeable batteries- HT 1000
Ticket book
Warning book
Recharger- backup
Camper food- 2 cashes
6 pens- Yea!!!
Stapler
Large Water Gun
Inverter- small and large one: 12V to 115V
3 Sunshowers- 2 broken/leak 1 works great

First Aide Kit

Lightweight BP Cuff/ Stethoscope
Paper thermometers/2
Aspirin 6/2 packs
Tylenol 3/2 packs
Glucose tube 10g
Alcohol swabs-4
Vionex 2
Betadine swab 2
Triple antibiotic 1
Epi pen 1 exp 03
Soft cling 4 x75
Micropore tape ¼ roll
Surgipad 2/ 4x8
Gloves medium (3 sets)
Sam splint
2 run sheets
Triangular bandage 1

First Aid Kit cont...

Ace bandage 1
 Pen 1
 4x4 1
 4x3 2
 2x3 2
 Band-Aids 7
 Butterflies 1
 Shears 1

Campsite Inventory

| Camp # | # Tents | Sizes | Water | Trail | Food Box | use | Comments |
|--------|---------|------------------|------------|----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 1-LV | 3 | 3/10x10 10x7 | 80' | 100' | 50' | H | |
| 2-LV | 1 | 10x10 | 150 | 60' | 100 | M | |
| 3-MV | 2 | 12x10 | 40' | 120' | 115 | M | |
| 4-MV | 4 | 3/10x10 8x10 | 30 50 | 65 40 | 70 40 | M M | |
| 5-MV | 2 | 2/10x10 | 100 | 100 | 300 | M | |
| 6-MV | 2 | 12x20 8x5 | 40 | 130 | 300+ | M | |
| 7-MV | 1 | 10x8 | 100 | 50 | 300+ | M | |
| 8-MV | 1 | 10x10 | 150 | 40 | 80 | M | |
| 9-J | 2 | 2/10x10 | 30 | 15 | 80 | M | |
| 10-J | 2 | 2/10x10 | 30 | 30 | 30 | H | |
| 11-J | 2 | 2/10x10 | 50 | 70 | 110 | H | |
| 12-J | 3 | 3/10x10 | 10/60 | 100 | 200 | H | |
| 13-J | 1 | 10x10 | 100 | 30 | 300 | H | |
| 14-J | 4 | 4/7x10 | 500+ | 150 | 300+ | H | |
| 15-UV | 2 | 2/10x10 | 30 | 300 | 300 | H | |
| 16-UV | 4 | 2/10x10 20x20 | 200 150 | 20 60 | 15 50 | H | |
| 17-UV | 2 | 2/10x10 | 30 | 100 | 300 | M | |
| 18-EL | 2 | 2/10x10 | 60 | 100 | 300 | H | |
| 19-EL | 2 | 2/10x10 | 60 | 300 | 300 | H | |
| 20-EL | 4 | 4/10x10 | 60 | 100 | 70 | M | |
| 21-EL | 3 | 3/10x10 | 80 | 120 | 130 | M | |
| 22-G | 1 | 10x7 | 100 | - | - | M | |
| 23-G | 1 | 10x10 | 50 | - | - | M | |
| 24-G | 1 | 10x7 | 150 | - | - | M | |
| 25-G | 2 | 20x20 | 100 | - | - | M | |
| 26-G | 1 | 12x10 | 40 | - | - | M | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

Solar System

When opening the cabin, setting the SS should be the number one priority to enable recharging your radio batteries. If it is not working properly, you may be able to get supplies shipped in with other resources that haven't gotten there yet.

There is a diagram to follow these simple directions

1. The wires are color coordinated, either RED(+) and BLACK(-) or
2. BLACK (+) and White (-)
3. Always label the wires, with duct tape, when closing; neg or pos

Starting the System:

1. Panels are in the shed- brackets on the roof
2. Attach to the roof on as much of a south facing angle as possible- need two people to attach panels
3. Attach appropriate wires from 12V storage batteries to the Battery section of the controller
4. There are several possible attachments for the Load section. I.e.: inverter, overhead light, triple cigarette outlet
5. Wires directly from panels attach to the PV section of the controller

- g. **Solar shower** set up- There is a platform up near the outhouse for Possible shower site. There are ropes and carabiner system for a shower set up in the Ranger equipment box.
- h. Set up **stock fences** taken down for the summer. Once the meadows open, the ranger should attach the end posts to the rest of the fence to prevent stock from grazing beyond the fence. Walk in both directions from the gait and fix the fence as needed. Charlotte is the only fence that needs work. The rest are in good shape.
- i. (b) (7)(F) [REDACTED] A map of **radio zones** has been created already, but you should continually update it.
- j. It's a good idea to become familiar with the **digital camera** if you are not already versed in it. You will be using it to photograph damage to the backcountry, incidence that may warrant pictures and natural resources. You will also be using it for meadow monitoring.

l. Locate the **food storage lockers** in your area by checking the map at the end of this guide and then going to the sites.

Once you have completed the above, the season will go much smoother and you can be more effective in your job.

2. Daily Rangering

- a. It is a good idea to create a **calendar of the season**. Try to schedule yourself for patrolling Charlotte and Kearsarge about 2 x a week. High frequency areas should be patrolled 70% of the time and overnight as needed or desired.
 - High use areas: Kearsarge is the largely impacted and the most used in this patrol area. Lots of fire rings in nearly all the impacted sites will occur at the start of the season
- b. Learn the **routine patrols** and then become familiar with the **routes** and passes that are popular with visitors. Popular routes include:
 - Gardener Pass/Basin
 - Sixty lakes
 - Center Basin/Junction Pass
 - Lucies Pass
 - Millies foot pass
 - Harrison Pass
 - Charlotte Creek
 - Glen Pass cut off to Charlotte

c. Charlotte Stock camp has been reassessed as being 10,200 feet. Sequoia/kings pack station in Onion Valley has be informed of this. In years past, **fires** have been allowed, but now they are not.

d. There are several **springs** in the area. It's a good idea not to publicize these areas because they are fragile, but they enable a Ranger to hike without bringing a water filter in most areas. The locations are in the appendix.

Visitor use

In 2004 there were 2088 backpackers contacted compared to 174 stock. The primary areas the stock parties stay are Junction Mdw, East Lk, and Upper Vidette campgrounds. UV and East got most of the stock this year because Junction was closed.

The majority of backpackers were contacted at Kearsarge Lakes. Firepits are a big problem at Kearsarge and Charlotte, especially at the start of the season. This probably indicates that the pits were made in the fall and spring before the summer. Here are some visitor use patterns from 2004.

VISITOR USE 2004

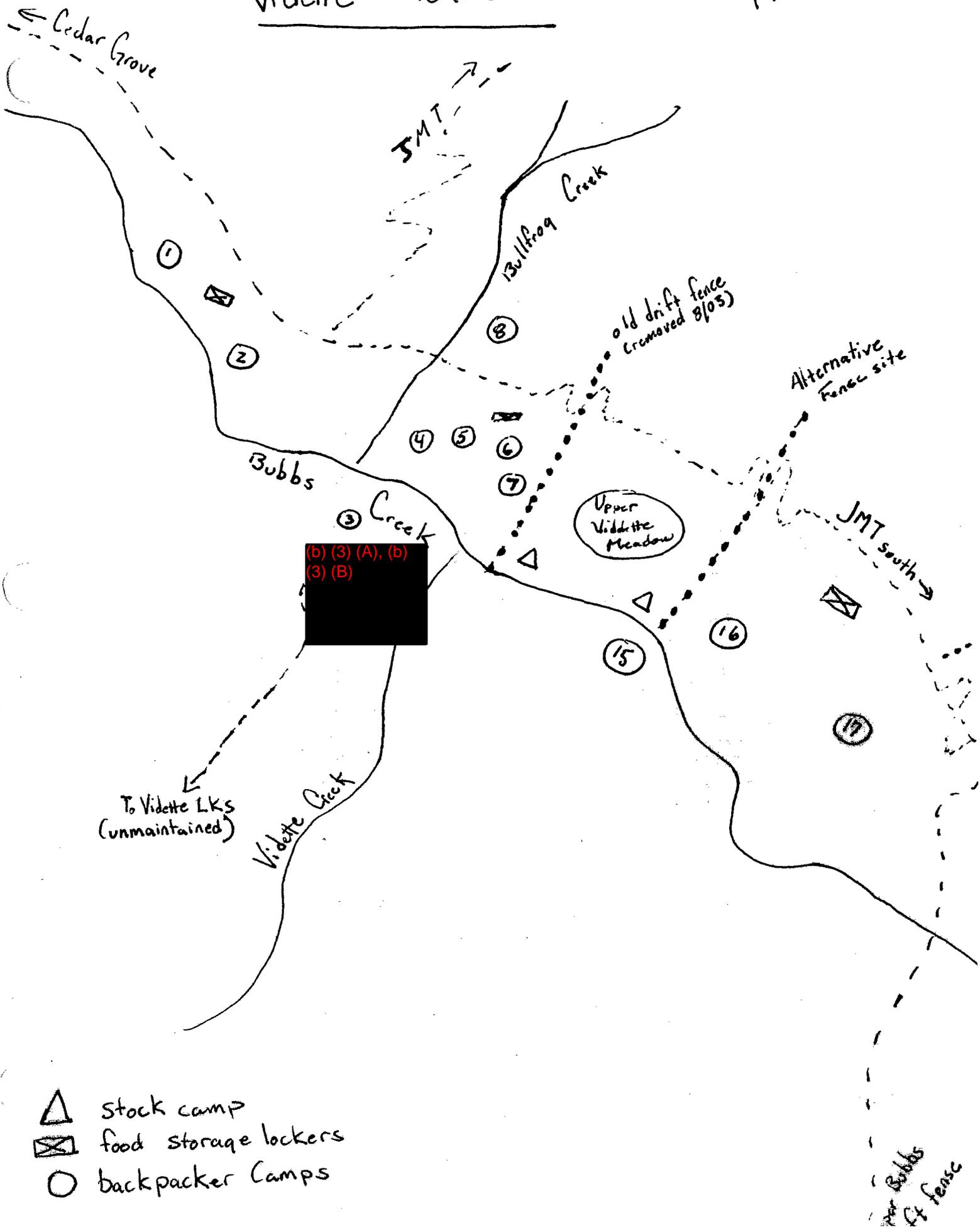
During the months of July and August, Kearsarge, Charlotte Lake, Junction Meadow, and Lower Vidette were patrolled at least twice a week. Kearsarge, being the most visited camping location in the Charlotte Lake area, tolerated an average of 3 groups per night in July and 5 groups per night in Aug. There was an average of 4 people per group staying for 2 nights throughout July and Aug both.

Approximately 35% of all the backcountry contacts were campers hiking the Rae Lakes Loop. 30 % were hiking the JMT or PCT and 23% came over Kearsarge pass to visit Kearsarge Lakes or Charlotte Lake. Leaving approximately 13% of the hikers to travel into the lesser used areas of Gardiner Basin, Center Basin, Harrison Pass, and East Lake/Lake Reflection and to the Baxter Lake area.

There were approximately 10-12 Boy scout groups contacted, 10 Sierra Club groups, 2 College groups, 2/ 3 Corner round groups, 5 IBP groups, 8 researchers(non-NPS) and 4 church groups.

Vidette Meadow

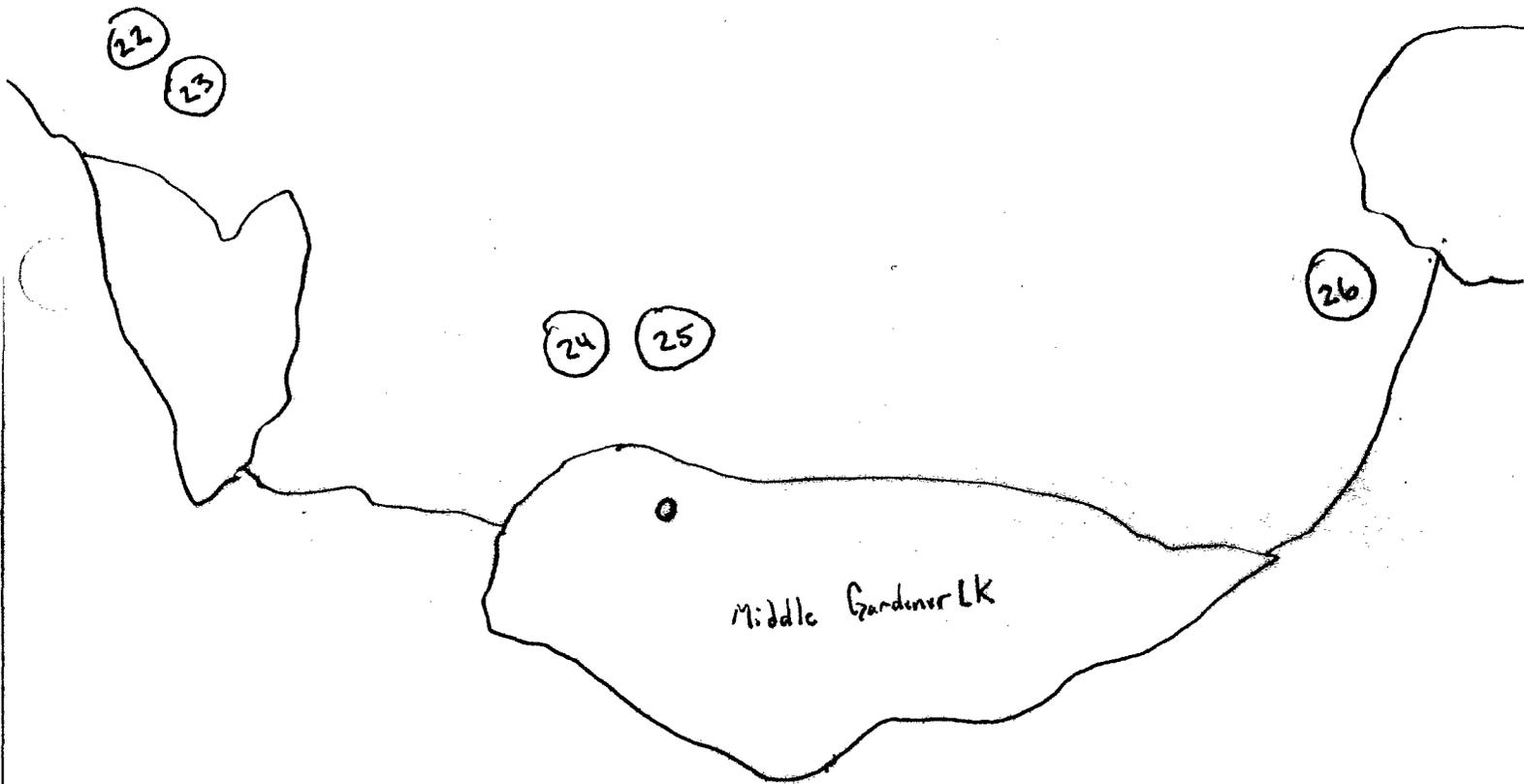
Appendix I



- △ stock camp
- ⊠ food storage lockers
- backpacker camps

Gardener Lakes

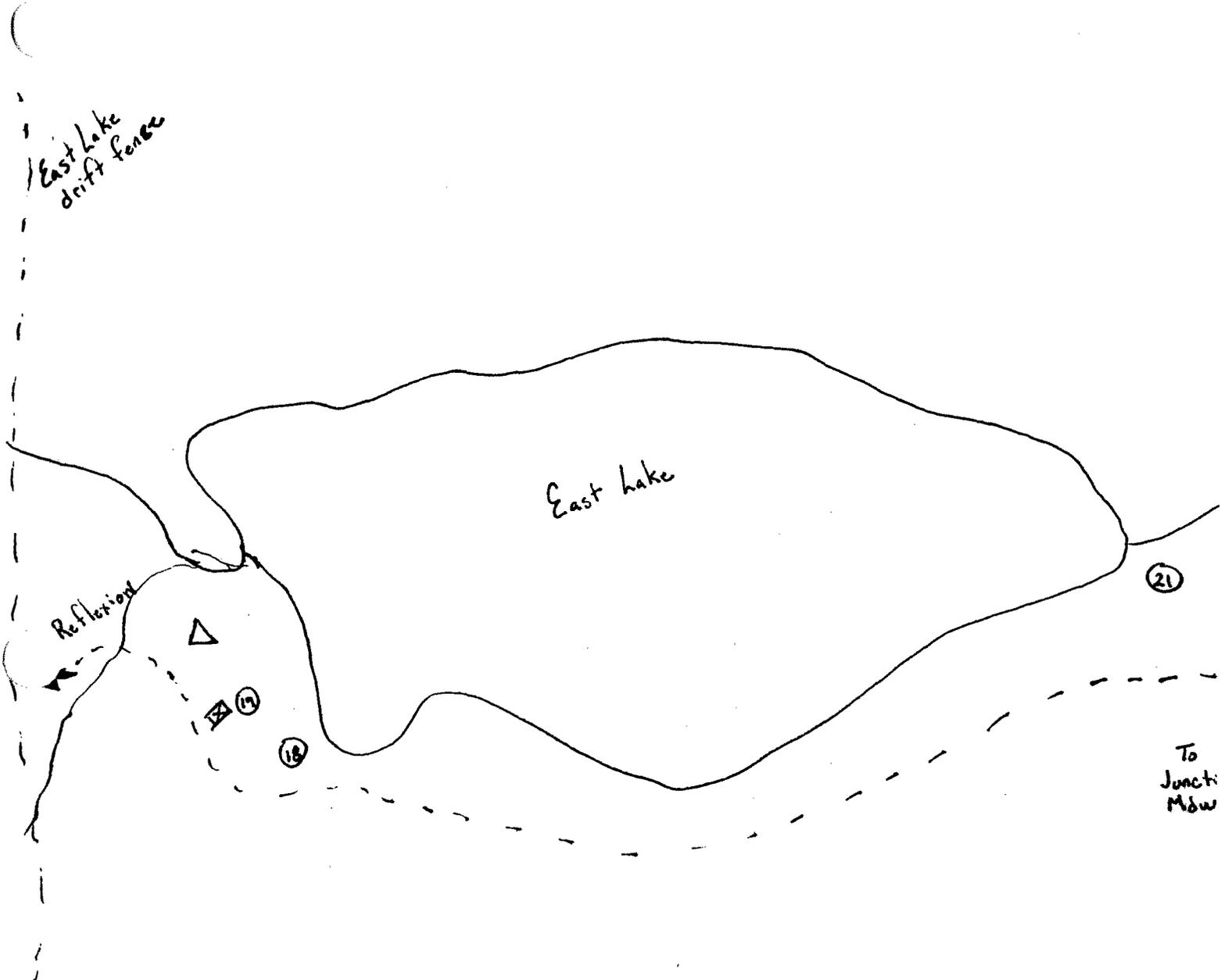
Appendix II



- Backpacker Camps
- No food storage lockers
- No Trails

East Lake

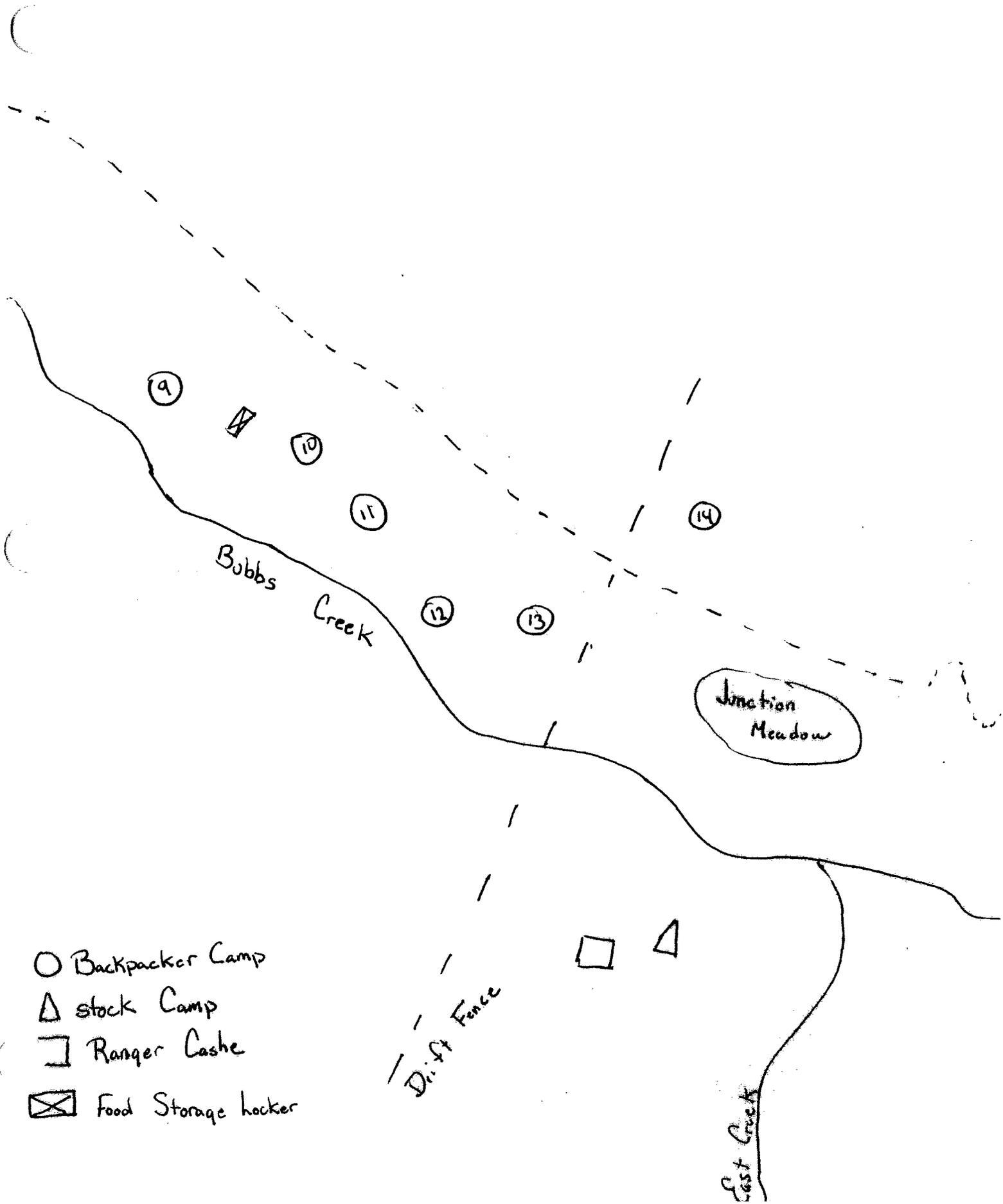
Appendix III



- ☒ Food Storage locker
- △ Stock Camp
- Backpacker Camp

Junction Meadow

Appendix IV



○ Backpacker Camp

△ stock Camp

□ Ranger Cache

⊠ Food Storage locker

--- Drift Fence

East Creek

Bobbs Creek

Junction Meadow

Radio Zones of

(b) (7)(F)

area

Appendix IV

(b) (7)(F)

○ areas tested this year
For details see Report: Radio Zones

(b) (7)(F)

(b) (7)(F)

Appendix VI

Solar System

When opening the cabin, setting the SS should be the number one priority to enable recharging your radio batteries. If it is not working properly, you may be able to get supplies shipped in with other resources that haven't gotten there yet.

There is a diagram to follow these simple directions

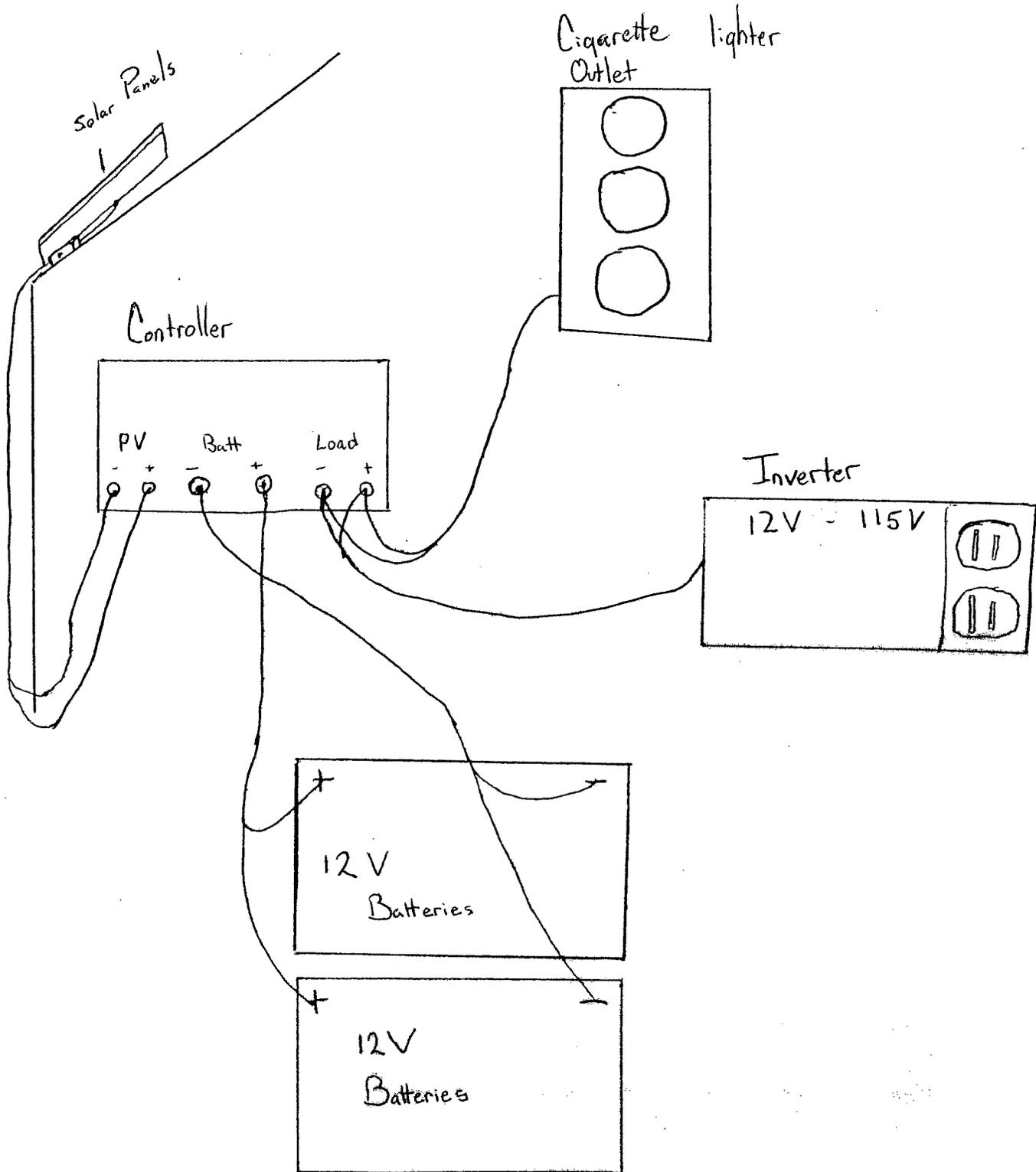
1. The wires are color coordinated, either RED(+) and BLACK(-) or
2. BLACK (+) and White (-)
3. Always label the wires, with duct tape, when closing; neg or pos

Starting the System:

1. Panels are in the shed- brackets on the roof
2. Attach to the roof on as much of a south facing angle as possible- need two people to attach panels
3. Attach appropriate wires from 12V storage batteries to the Battery section of the controller
4. There are several possible attachments for the Load section. I.e.: inverter, overhead light, triple cigarette outlet
5. Wires directly from panels attach to the PV section of the controller

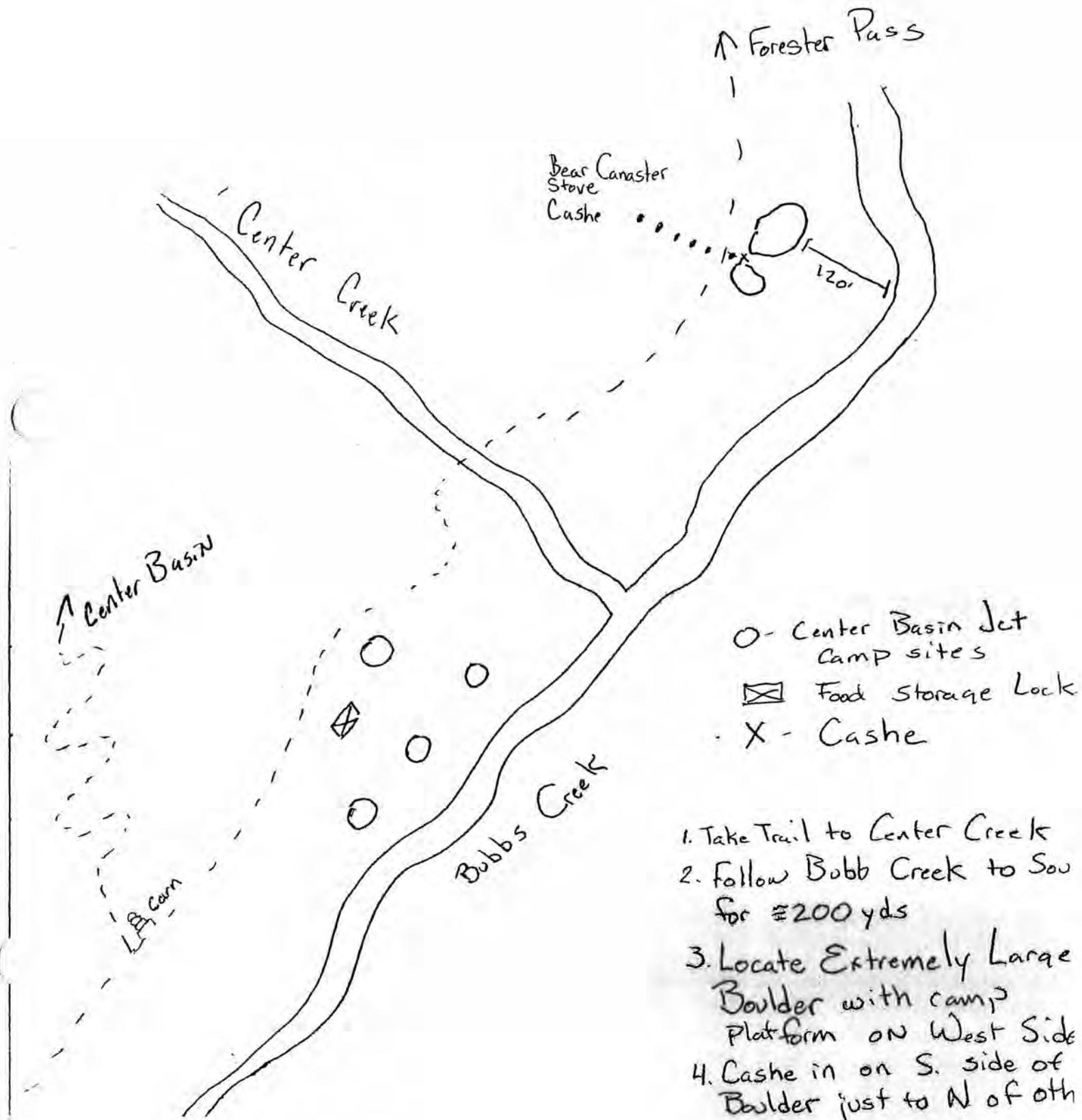
Solar System Diagram

Appendix VI



Charlotte Ranger's Cashe
AT CENTER JUNCTION

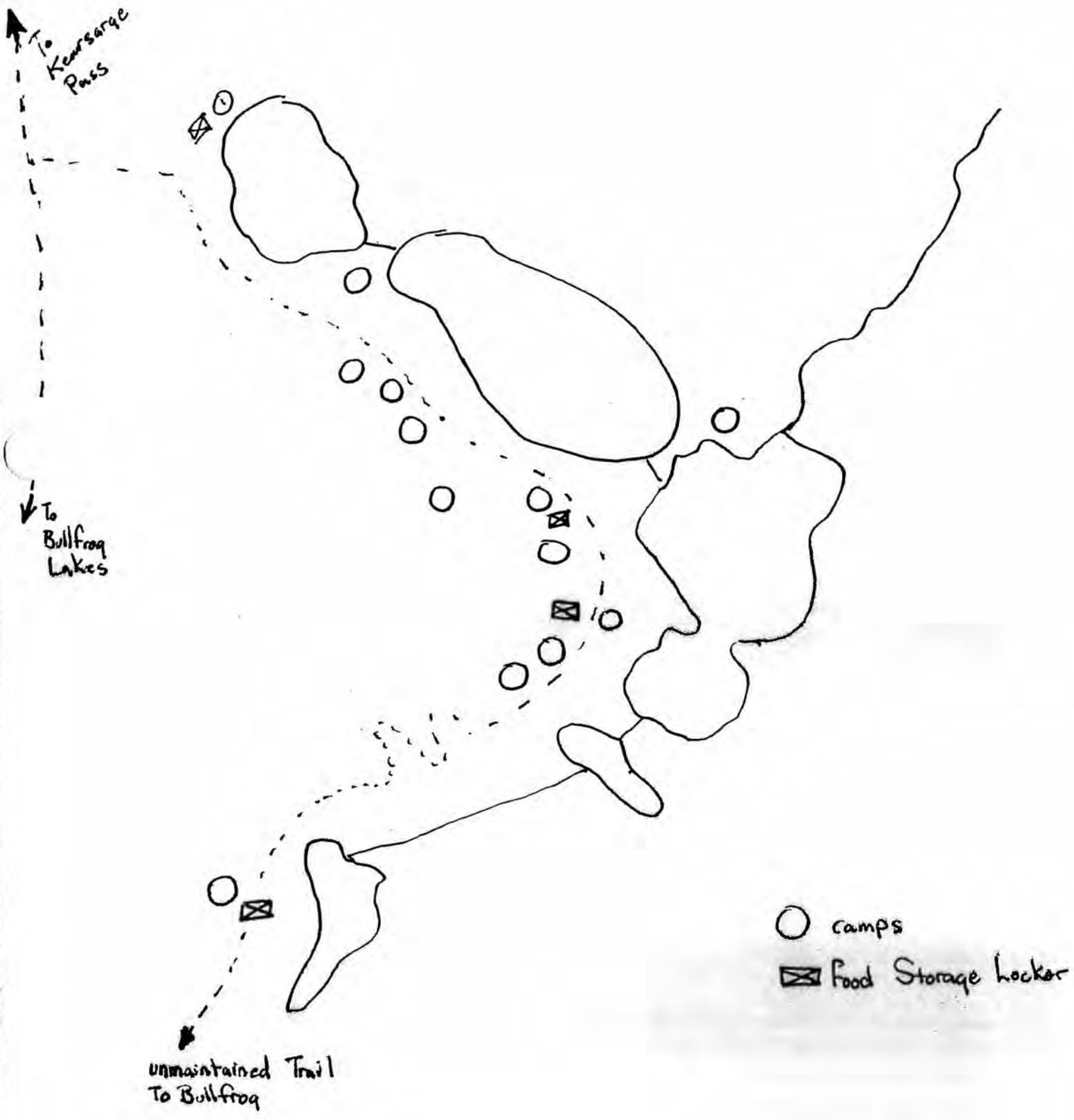
Appendix VII



- - Center Basin Jet Camp sites
- ⊠ - Food Storage Lock
- X - Cashe

1. Take Trail to Center Creek
2. Follow Bobb Creek to Sou for ≈200 yds
3. Locate Extremely Large Boulder with camp platform on West Side
4. Cashe in on S. side of Boulder just to N of oth

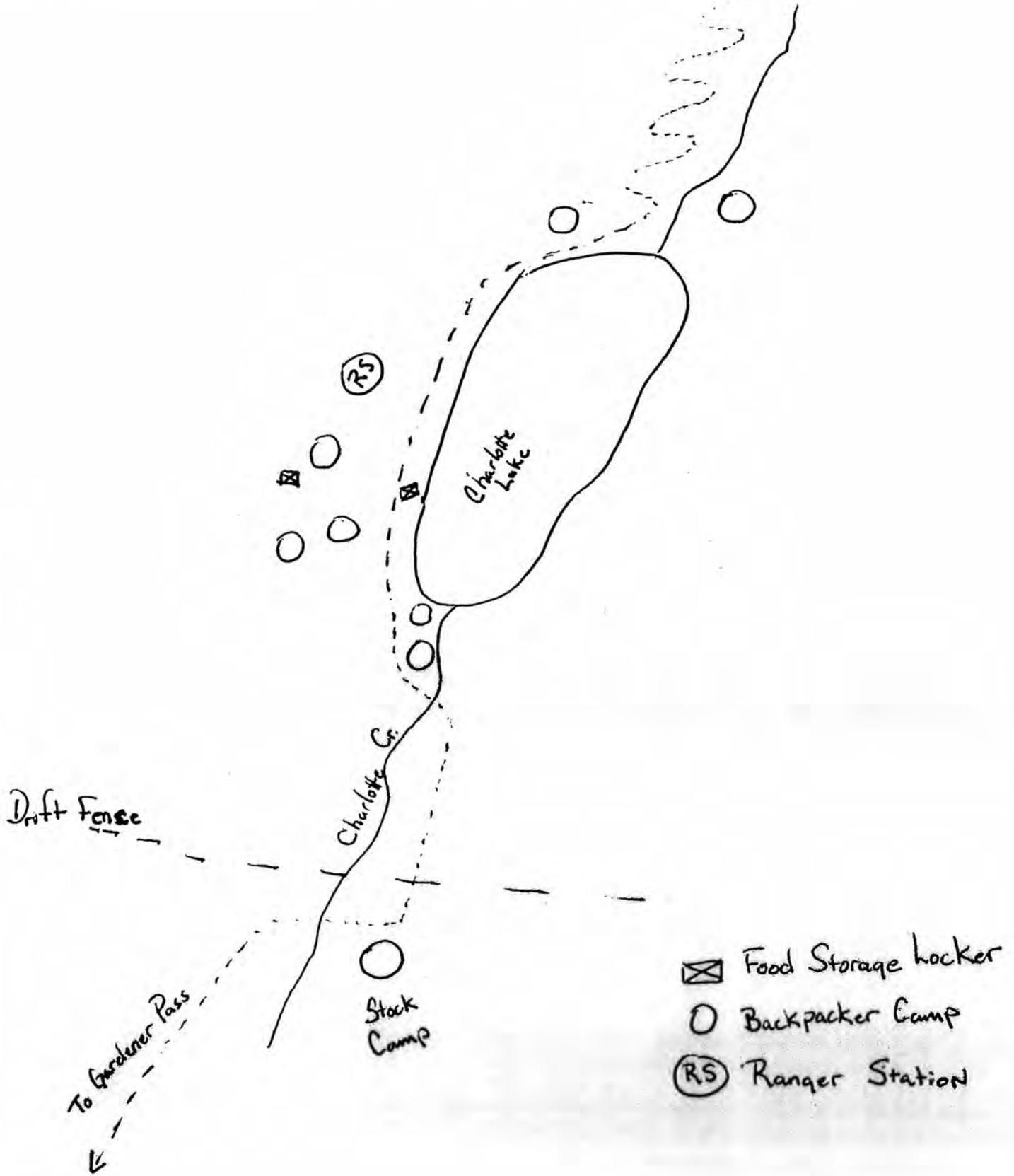
Kearsarge Lakes



Charlotte Lake

Appendix VIII

To JMT



IBP

Packer from Edison Lake

Mike Blasingame - Packer

Date 8/12

Stock - 6

High Sierra Pack Station 285-PACK
He had a permit with sweatstains on it

I couldn't read any thing.

- A piece of paper was taped to a permit saying that he was allowed on JMT
- There was no # on Permit and no Signature or Date
- Packer said he was having no Tires
- Jane Weisemberge Charlotte Ranger

IBP - Sovac Mountain Guide Service

PWR SEKI (b) (7)(F)

Date Entered 8-4 - 8-18

Stock 2 horses 4 mules

Itinerary - ~~Florence Lake~~ to ~~Whitney Portal~~
Pute Jct to Cottonwood pass

Hikers - 9

Guide: Jay Ericson

Date: 8/12 - tonight camped at Center Juntyon
going over forester tomorrow

(b) (6)

No fires on Trip

Lane Weisenberger Charlotte Ranger

BIMS

Ranger Reporting: J. Weisenberger
Charlotte 116

RP: Amy Draut

8/25/04 Location Lower Vidette Campground

No Food Taken

Bear: 250 lb Black

Action: Bear Came into Site 2 x 2 Hours

Each time bear seemed unthreatened by
yelling and clapping

2nd time bear was there he took the
Garcia Canaster and Amy found it,
200 yds away undamaged, in the morning.

LeConte Canyon Ranger
(Dave Gordon)
2004 End-Season Report

VISITOR USAGE/PATROLS (see Appendix III-"How to Patrol" for details)

| | <u>Visitor Contacts</u> | <u>Miles Patrolled</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| June (6 days) | - 43 | 34 |
| July | - 292 | 183 |
| August | - 552 | 205 |
| September | - 330 | 164 |
| Totals | - 1,217 | 586 |

As this was a "dry" season with snowpack less than 50% of normal, the backcountry was fairly busy at the onset. Bishop, Muir and Mather passes had some snow and/or ice until early to mid-July, but were not too difficult for hikers. Most of the summer was warm and dry with the exception of mild thunderstorms for the last week of June and first week of July, and heavy rain/thunderstorms for about nine days in mid-August. There was a winter-like snow storm September 18-20th, with snow down to the 8,000 ft level, temperatures in the low 20°Fs (at the Ranger Station), and about 12 inches of snow at Bishop Pass.

Contacts indicated the following approximate proportions of reported routes: 40% entire JMT (19 out of 20 going north to south); 40% N. Lake to/from S. Lake; 15% in and out over Bishop Pass; 5% miscellaneous (PCTers; loops starting or ending at S. Lake; cross-country routes; Simpson Meadow). Groups consisted of 12 boy scout troops, 3 Sierra Club outings, 4 school (College) groups, and 2 church groups.

Dusy Basin and LeConte Canyon were patrolled the most frequently followed by Palisade Creek/Lakes and the Middle Fork trail to Simpson Meadow. Cross-country routes, visited at least once, included Ladder Lake, Hester Lake, Ionian Basin, Palisade Basin, Echo Pass, Thunderbolt Pass, Southfork Pass, Knapsack Pass, Amphitheater Lake, Dumbbell Lakes, Potluck Pass, and Glacier Lake. Bishop, Muir and Mather Passes were visited several times each.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Compliance with Park regulations was excellent — all but one group had a permit, and most (98%) had food storage canisters, even though not required except for the Dusy Basin / Bishop Pass trail and Palisade Basin. Two citations were issued to parties having a dog in the backcountry, and they were told to leave the Park. Verbal warnings were given as follows: (3) for improper food storage (groups in Dusy Basin hanging food that did not fit in canisters at the start of a long trip); (1) for not having a permit (couple came to Ranger Station to try to get one after coming through Bishop the night before, after closing); (8) for tents set up on vegetation (usually asked to move their tents).

The quality of the information given at USFS Ranger Stations has improved greatly over the past few years. Food canister requirements are clearly spoken about and indicated on the permits, as well as the recent fire restriction.

SEARCH, RESCUE, AND MEDICAL INCIDENTS

No searches were conducted in the LeConte patrol area with the possible exception of looking for a kayaking group on July 1st & 2nd that had been seen by a helicopter two successive days in the same location, two miles downstream from the Palisade Creek confluence on the Middle Fork — the kayakers were not found by me, evidently having proceeded downstream.

Rescue/Medical incidents consisted of the following:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Type</u> | <u>Disposition</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1) 7/16-17 | Ranger Station | Ankle injury | TAR/Stock Evacuation |
| 2) 7/19 | Thunderbolt Peak | Knee/Rib fracture | Helicopter Evacuation - (b) (7) (F) |
| 3) 7/22 | Starlight Peak | Fibula fracture | Helicopter (Short-Haul) (b) (7) (F) etc |
| 4) 8/2 | Devil's Washbowl | Dislocated shoulder | Helicopter Evacuation - (b) (7) (F) |
| 5) 8/9-10 | Dusy trail-10,000' | Knee injury | TAR/Stock Evacuation |
| 6) 8/11 | Ranger Station | Dysnea ^{possible} - HAPE | Helicopter Evacuation - (b) (7) (F) |
| 7) 9/3-9/5 | Dusy trail | Hip/fingers injured | AMA - (escorted pt. to Bishop Pass/Inyo SAR escort to S. Lake) |

I did not participate in the two climbing SARs, nor the dislocated shoulder injury at Devil's Washbowl.

SERVICE INCIDENTS

Service to visitors was typical, consisting of the following: giving out food, sunblock, bug repellent, and fuel; taking trash or extra food; repairing boots, a stove, water pump; asking [REDACTED] or Dispatch to make phone calls for change of itinerary. Most service was in providing information on routes, pass conditions, campsites, fishing, weather, day hikes, etc. I retrieved a pack and gear for the injured climber on Thunderbolt Peak at a campsite below, and sent it out on [REDACTED] a few days later.

A frog research crew was at Lake 10,400' in Le Conte Canyon most of the summer, and on several occasions I assisted with frog/larva surveys and "electro-fishing" to remove trout from streams nearby. I also provided sleeping gear and meals at the Ranger Station to facilitate their traveling to/from South Lake, and allowed them to leave their trash.

I also assisted a carnivore research crew in the area with setting-up track recording sites and then with monitoring the sites (Dusy Basin, Upper LeConte, Palisade Creek) for carnivore prints. I helped with transporting their gear to/from the LZ on their mobilization and demobilization flights.

Trailcrew was in the LeConte area for over a month.

and I (and (b) (7) (F)) assisted in the reconstruction of drift fences in the area (cutting and erecting new posts; removing old wire; adding new wire).

RANGER STATION

A new roof was installed on the Ranger Station consisting of several sheets of new plywood, tar paper and steel roofing panels after the old aluminium roof and damaged plywood was removed. Drip guard edging was caulked and screwed along the periphery. Dave Weaver (b) (7) (F) assisted with installing the new panels, and Pete Clum (b) (7) (F) helped with the drip-guard edging.

Latches and locks were installed on the four window shutters, making them easily lockable. A new metal door barricade was modified to fit over the door and under the locking straps. The solar panels were connected to a new sunny, south-facing location. The trash barrel was unchained from a tree and attached to two sign posts embedded into the ground. The floor was painted (2 coats) with grey floor paint. A new propane stove was assembled and connected using a low pressure line to the outside tank.

Overall, the condition of the Ranger Station is considered good including the outhouse, storage shed and wood stove. No evidence of rodents were seen this summer (or from last winter).

In order to make the outside of the cabin more aesthetically pleasing, some kind of log-like facade could be attached to the outside walls.

STOCK USE/MEADOW MANAGEMENT

15 stock groups were observed in the backcountry (11 commercial, 1 private, and 3 administrative) consisting of 76 horses/mules and 2 llamas with a total of 42 stock-users/clients. This is about half of the stock seen at Charlotte Lake or McClure Meadow patrol areas in past years. Most of the commercial stock was from Rainbow Pack Outfitters, with one group each observed from the following: Pine Creek Pack Station, Rock Creek Pack Station, High Sierra Pack Station, and Mammoth Lakes Pack Station.

All meadows opened for grazing per "dry year" conditions on July 1st, although the passes were not stock-passable until the second week of July (Bishop Pass) to late July (Muir and Mather Passes), consequently most stock observed was late July and August. Rainbow Pack Station primarily used Ladder Camp/Meadow for their overnight spot trips, and Ladder Meadow received light grazing. Little, if any, (none detected, none reported) grazing occurred at Grouse Meadow. Luke Painter (b [REDACTED]) had his stock at and below Deer Meadow many nights while supplying the trail crew, but again, grazing seemed to be light. Big Pete

and Little Pete Meadows received the most grazing, although not excessive (light to moderate).

Per request from Sylvia Haultain (b [REDACTED]), a notice was posted at the Big Pete Stock Camp requesting stock users to keep their animals out of the closed, upper wooded portion of the meadow, and along with verbal instructions to the packers, there appeared to have been no grazing there. Additionally, many packers were asked to use Little Pete Meadow for grazing (releasing stock below the Big Pete drift fence) whenever possible — this worked well for stock coming from Evolution Valley, as that is the direction stock would tend to wander towards at night, while grazing.

Only Little Pete Meadow was monitored for residual biomass, as directed by Resource Management. The "reference plot" on the west side of the river was ungrazed, and the "core plot" near the main campsite received light to moderate grazing — no damage occurred.

IBP contacts and reports were mostly positive with stock camps left in good shape. On one occasion in mid-August several groups had been at the Big Pete stock camp in a short period of time and not all manure had been removed/scattered, but this was an exception to a otherwise clean stock camp.

A Mammoth Lakes Pack Station packer had stayed two nights at the Ranger Station during the mid-September snow storm waiting to resupply a stock trip that had cancelled, and although the four animals were tied to a highline with cinch straps, three lodgpoles were scraped or chewed (see IBP report - 9/22).

DRIFT FENCES

All four drift fences were reconstructed by trailcrew, myself, and I.L.T. Fence conditions, work completed, lengths and photos taken are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) <u>Dusy Creek</u> : good condition (new gate poles, many new fence posts, new wire on north side) | Gate (photo 81) N of Gate (photos 84-86) 70' S of Gate (photos 82-83) 65' |
| (2) <u>Big Pete</u> : excellent condition (new wire gate, many new fence posts, all new wire) | Gate (photo 74) E of Gate (photos 75-76) 90' W of Gate (photos 77-80) 200' |
| (3) <u>Ladder</u> : good condition (new wire gate, many new fence posts, new wire on east side) | Gate (photo 1) E of Gate (photos 2-4) 150' W of Gate (photos 5-7) 90' |
| (4) <u>Deer Meadow</u> : fair condition (new gate posts, several new fence posts, old wire) | Gate (photo 8) N of Gate (photos 11-12) 30' S of Gate (photos 9-10) 50' |

TRAILS (see Recommendations #2 & 3)

Trail crew was in the LeConte area for about a month and did a good job of removing downed trees / boulders blocking trails, and general drainage maintenance.

After they departed in mid-August, heavy rains caused erosion damage (deep rutting) of about 100 yards of trail on the Middle Fork just upriver from the 7,200' creek crossing — it is still stock passable with caution. Palisade Creek portion of the JMT and the Middle Fork trail to Simpson should be "brushed" next season.

SIGNS (see Recommendation #6)

"No Fires above this Elevation" signs were erected at the 10,000 ft level in Upper LeConte and on the Dusy Basin trail. The junction sign at the confluence of Palisade Creek with the Middle Fork (JMT/Middle Fork junction) was replaced with a new sign — the old one did not indicate Simpson Meadow. An old aluminum sign at the lip of Dusy Basin regarding fire restrictions was removed and flung out. All signs are in good condition, except for scratched graffiti on the JMT/Dusy Basin junction sign, which can be repaired with flat-black enamel model paint next season.

The two cross-country boundary passes (Southfork and Echo) that I visited this season are difficult class 3 passes that see little use, and in my opinion, need no signage.

BEAR INCIDENTS

For the first season in my twelve years as a Ranger, no reports or evidence of bears having gotten hikers' food (wrappers in stools or torn-up trash) or acting aggressively were noted in the LeConte patrol area! A small adult was seen at the Ranger Station on two occasions, as well as a large sow and yearling below Big Pete Meadow, but all scared away easily like truly "wild bears". Several reports of food having been taken by bear(s) in Evolution Valley and the South Fork of the San Joaquin were taken, and one report from a man who lost food to a bear at "Wheelbarrow Camp", north of Forester Pass (trail mix not placed in canister at night).

WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Two Long-tailed weasels were observed this summer — one at 12,000 ft, NE of Mt. Solomons. A Pine Marten was seen at the Ranger Station. Several packs of coyotes were heard (not seen) in Dusy Basin, Palisade Lakes and at Lake 11,593' in Ionian Basin. 23 Pikas were observed throughout the patrol area. My first Water Shrew was seen bolting out of a stream near the frog crew camp while "electro-fishing".

MINOR RESOURCE PROJECTS/FIRERINGS

Several campsites too close to water or trail were

(b) (7)
(F)

[Redacted text block]

(b) (7)(F)

[Redacted text block]

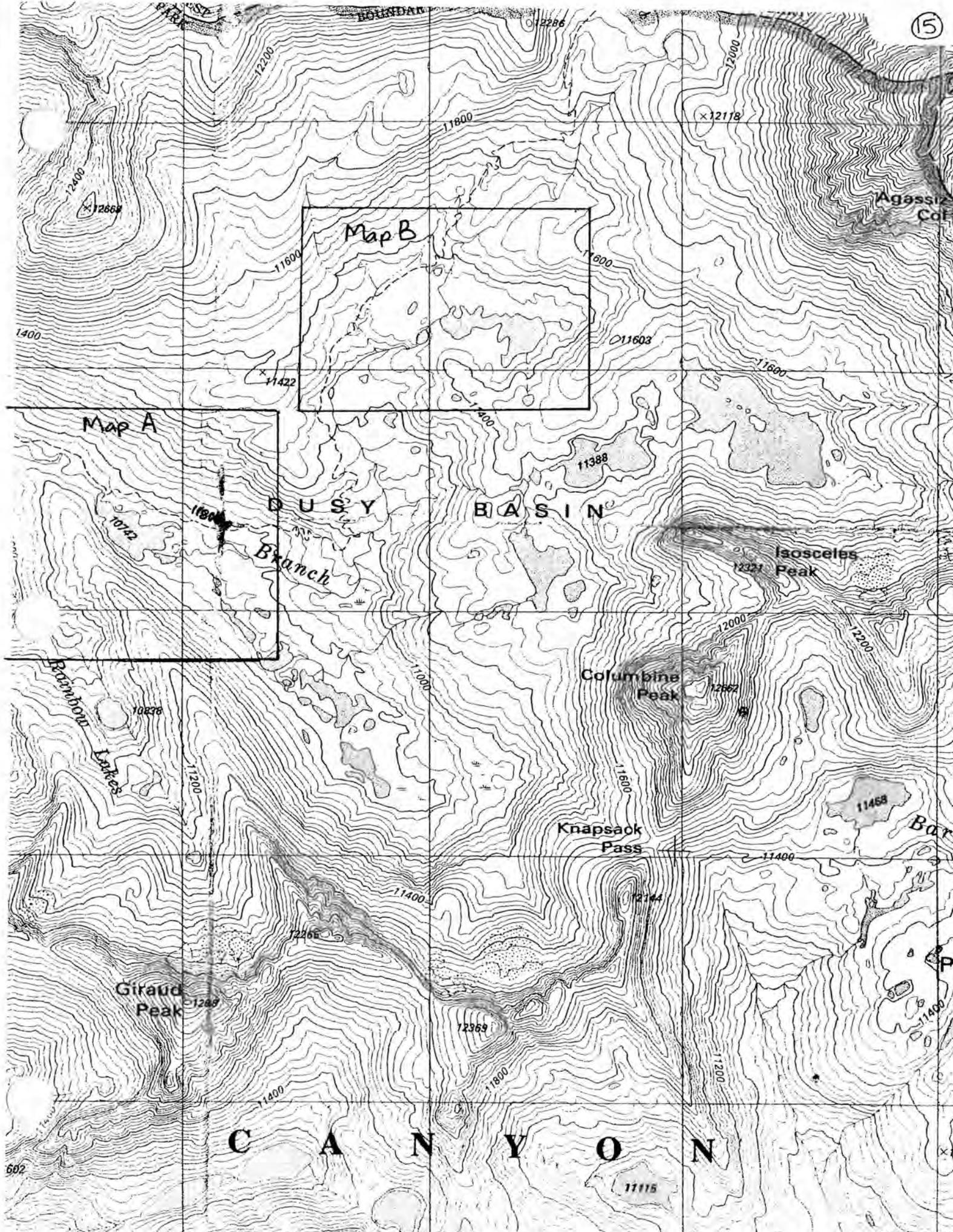
RECOMMENDATIONS

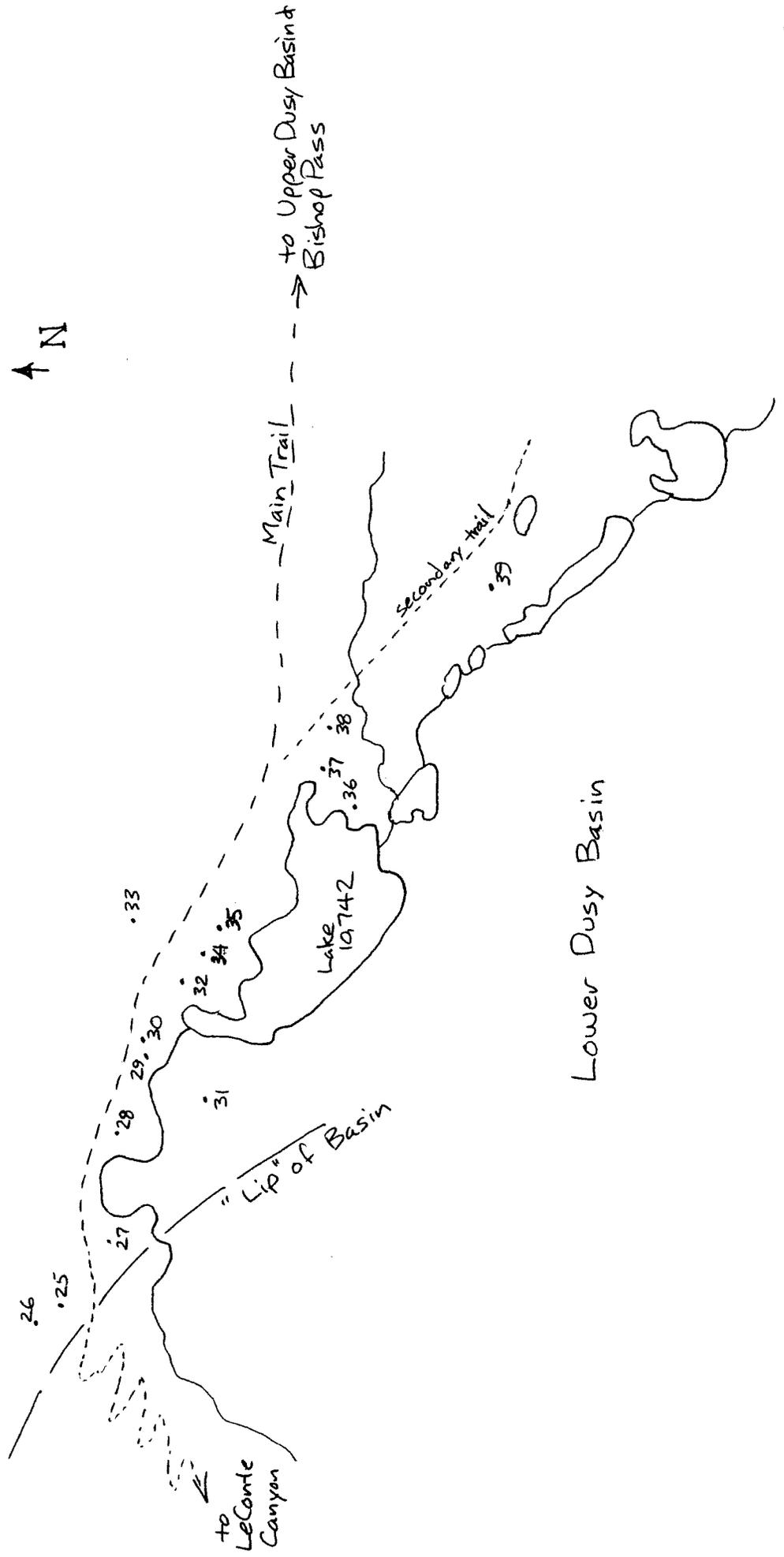
- 1) (b) (7)
(F) [Redacted text]
- 2) Consider rebuilding the Middle Fork trail bridge over Palisade Creek - fording creek is hazardous early season and probably most of a "wet" season.
- 3) Upper LeConte Canyon between 10,800 ft and Helen Lake has multiple trails along JMT, in part due to a confusing route in snow and/or high water - reconstruction of the trail to make it more obvious would make route finding easier, especially at stream crossings.

- 4) The bail amount for a "dog in closed area" violation is \$50⁰⁰ and is not enough of a deterrent — I think \$100⁰⁰ to \$150⁰⁰ would be more appropriate.
- 5) Stock-users wanting to camp at Big Pete Meadow should be encouraged again to graze below the drift fence where grazing capacity is greater.
- 6) Replace old fire restriction sign/post at Bishop Pass with black anodized sign at R.S.: "Fires Prohibited above 10,000ft in Kings Canyon National Park" — need sign post (ordered on "Summer 2005 Needs List").

Appendix I - Campsite Inventory (1 of 4)

| Campsite# | Photo# - Direction | | Size (ft x ft) | #Tents | | Distance from | | Use Level | Comments | |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|-------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | 1/2 | 2/3 man | Water | Trail | | | |
| Lower Dusy Basin | 16 | W | 25x15' | 2 | | 65' | 35' | L | firepit destroyed | |
| | 17 | N | | | | | | | | |
| | 26 | 18 N 19 SW | 15x15 | 2 | | 160 | 130 | M | firepit destroyed | |
| | 27 | 20 E 21 NW | 10x10 | 1 | | 50 | 40 | M | | |
| | 28 | 22 S 23 N | 30x20 | 1 | 2 | 120 | 40 | M | rackwall destroyed | |
| | 29 | 24 W 25 N | 10x10 | | 1 | 50 | 100 | M | | |
| | 30 | 26 E 27 W | 20x10 | 2 | | 50 | 75 | M | | |
| | 31 | 28 E 29 W | 30x10 | 2 | | 100 | 150 | L | | |
| | 32 | 30 S 31 N | 30x10 | 2 | | 60 | 60 | H | | |
| | 33 | 32 S 33 NW | 15x10 | 1 | | 200 | 150 | L | | |
| | 34 | 34 W 35 S | 10x10 | 1 | | 100 | 50 | M | | |
| | 35 | 36 S 37 NW | 15x15 | | 1 | 150 | 50 | H | | |
| | 36 | 38 E 39 N | 10x10 | 1 | | 50 | 250 | L | | |
| | 37 | 40 SE 41 N | 15x10 | 1 | | 100 | 200 | L | | |
| | 38 | 42 S 43 NW | 30x20 | 1 | 1 | 150 | 25 | L | | |
| | 39 | 44 W 45 W 46 W | 3 sites 10x10 ea. | 1 ea | (x3) | 200 | 200 | L | firepit destroyed | |
| | Upper Dusy Basin | 47 | NE | 40x40 | 4 | 1 | 70 | 200 | M | |
| | | 48 | NW | | | | | | | |
| | | 41 | 49 S 50 W | 10x10 | 1 | | 150 | 300+ | L | |
| | | 42 | 51 SW 52 N | 30x10 | 2 | | 100 | 100 | H | |
| | | 43 | 53 SE 54 NE | 20x10 | 1 | | 50 | 30 | H | |
| | | 44 | 55 SW 56 SE | 15x10 | 1 | | 40 | 50 | H | |
| | | 45 | 57 SE 58 NW | 10x10 | 1 | | 50 | 30 | H | |
| | | 46 | 59 SE 60 NW | 30x10 | 2 | | 150 | 50 | H | rackwall destroyed |
| | | 47 | 61 N 62 W | 2 sites 10x10 ea. | 2 | | 150 | 50 | M | |
| | | 48 | 63 E 64 E | 10x10 | 1 | | 100 | 100 | M | Rackwall destroyed |
| | | 49 | 65 SE 66 SW | 50x20 | | 3 | 100 | 100 | M | |

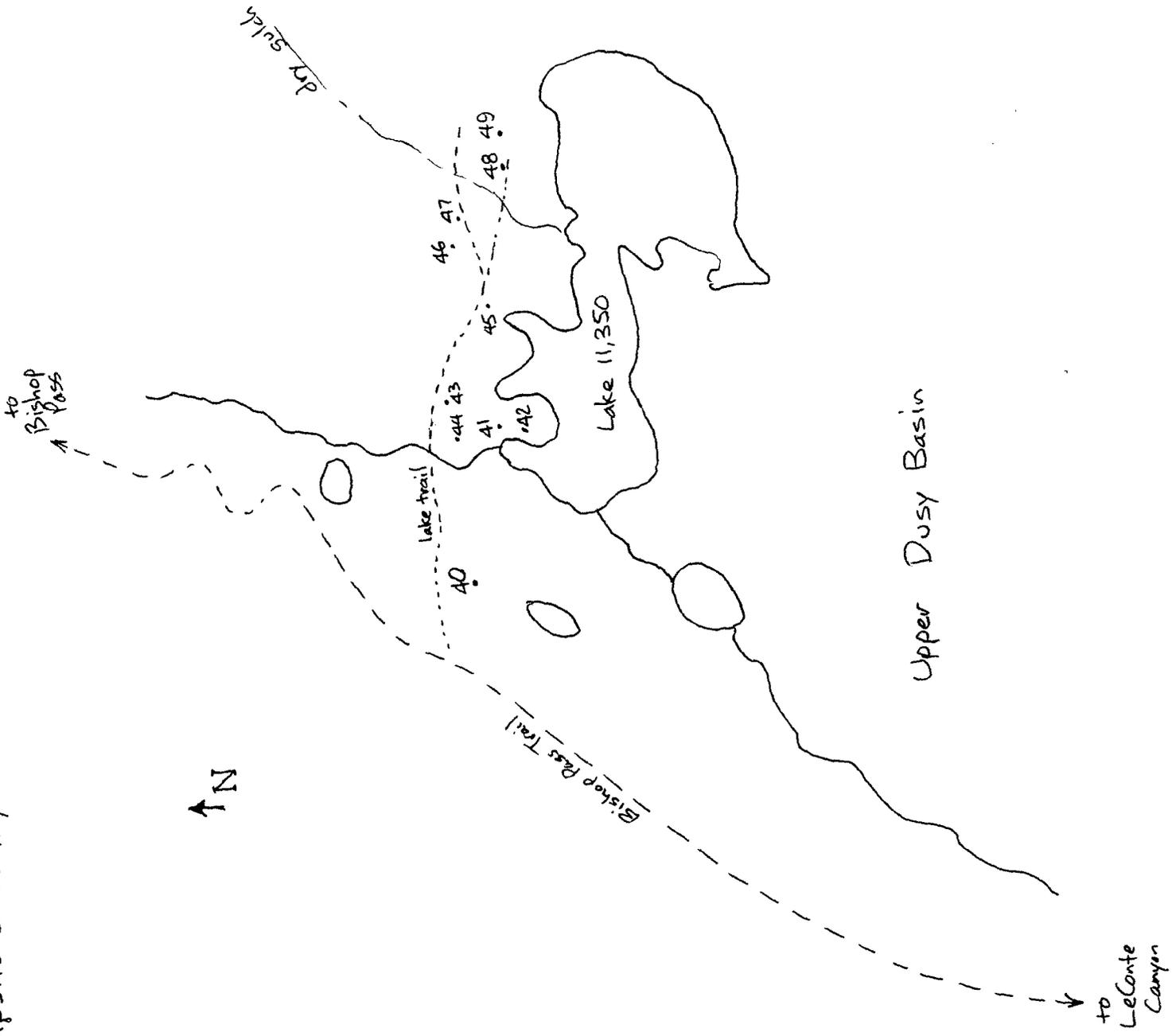




Lower Dusy Basin

Map B

mpsite Inventory



Upper Dusy Basin

to
LeConte
Canyon

to
Bishop
Pass

Appendix II - Photo Index (Card #1) (Card is in camera)

| Photo # | Date | Description | Photo # | Date | Description |
|---------|---------|---------------------------|---------|------|--------------------------|
| 1-7 | 8/16/04 | Ladder Fence | 59-60 | 8/17 | Campsite - 46 |
| 8-12 | " | Deer Mdw Fence | 61-62 | " | " - 47 |
| 13 | " | JMT/Simpson Mdw Sign | 63-64 | " | " - 48 |
| 14 | 8/17 | 10'000' Sign - Dusy Trail | 65-66 | " | " - 49 |
| 15 | " | Fireweed - Dusy Trail | 67 | 8/18 | Modified Door Barricade |
| 16-17 | " | Campsite - 25 | 68-69 | " | New roof on Ranger St |
| 18-19 | " | " - 26 | 70 | " | Trash Drum - new sit. |
| 20-21 | " | " - 27 | 71-72 | 8/19 | "Baah Sheep" |
| 22-23 | " | " - 28 | 73 | 8/20 | 10,000' Sign - Upper Lot |
| 24-25 | " | " - 29 | 74-80 | " | Big Pete Fence |
| 26-27 | " | " - 30 | 81-86 | 8/22 | Dusy Creek Fence |
| 28-29 | " | " - 31 | 87-89 | 9/21 | Stock-damaged trees |
| 30-31 | " | " - 32 | 90-92 | 9/22 | " " (patched) |
| 32-33 | " | " - 33 | | | |
| 34-35 | " | " - 34 | | | |
| 36-37 | " | " - 35 | | | |
| 38-39 | " | " - 36 | | | |
| 40-41 | " | " - 37 | | | |
| 42-43 | " | " - 38 | | | |
| 44-46 | " | " - 39 | | | |
| 47-48 | " | " - 40 | | | |
| 49-50 | " | " - 41 | | | |
| 51-52 | " | " - 42 | | | |
| 53-54 | " | " - 43 | | | |
| 55-56 | " | " - 44 | | | |
| 57-58 | " | " - 45 | | | |

Notes: ① - see Appendix I for campsite details
 ② - Photo Card ② - "Meadows" was sent to Sylvia Haultain (has separate photo log)

Appendix III - "How to Patrol" (draft)

General

As per protocol, most of my patrols (70-80%) were on main trails (JMT or Bishop Pass trail). Late July through Labor Day, when most incidents occur, I did day patrols or short overnights. While on patrol, I usually remove rocks, branches, pine cones for safety - "stumbler rocks" at night by flashlight or buried under new snow could cause an injury. Landing zones should be looked for while patrolling for future reference.

Early season, Moir and Mather passes should be monitored for snow/ice conditions and stock passability. All main trails should be checked for fallen trees or boulders and reported to (b) (7) (F). I also checked Echo and Southfork passes, although these are class 3 mountaineering routes that get little use.

Questions asked of visitors are somewhat dependent on the location of contact, but generally include the following after preliminary introductions:

- (1) is everyone O.K.? (healthy? any injuries?)
- (2) was a permit obtained? (Sometimes in lieu of asking to see the permit, I'll ask "who has the permit," or "where did you get the permit" to ascertain honesty)
- (3) have you had any problems with bears? (or have you seen any bears, or have you heard of any bear problems)

Appendix III - "How to Patrol" (draft-cont.)

(A) how are you storing your food? / does all your food fit in your canister(s)?

Additional questions are usually asked of cross-country hikers (see "cross-country routes")

Refer to campsite inventories (2003/2004-Appendix I) for specific campsites to look for and clean on patrols.

Securing the Ranger Station

On day patrols, I post the "day patrol" message next to the door, close all curtains, make sure windows are in locked position with wood in slider-channels to prevent opening, lock the storage shed and outhouse, disconnect the radio battery charger, lock the door, and turn-off the outside propane tank. On overnight patrols, I post the "extended patrol" message, and in addition to the above, also place locked shutters over all four windows and lock the metal door barricade in place with the straps).

Boy Scouts / Youth Groups

Some groups may require special attention in the initial contact to prevent future problems. With most boy scout groups, I'll cover all the basics of "minimum impact camping" (human waste disposal, toilet paper, trash, fires, food storage, bear contacts) and additionally request that

Appendix III - "How to Patrol" (draft-cont.)

noise levels be watched and that nothing is constructed (dams, rockwalls, furniture, firepits, pathways, etc.)

Stock Camps/Drift Fences

This year Big Pete and Little Pete Meadows received the most stock use, and the corresponding campsites should be checked regularly for cleanliness (esp. manure removal). I will also kick apart manure piles in the meadows to accelerate decomposition (grazing patterns can be monitored at the same time). Simpson Meadow also gets a considerable amount of stock use, but is also patrolled by other rangers.

Drift fences should be checked (monthly) to make sure wires are secure. A cache of fence nails at each fence facilitates resecuring nails that have popped out from stock, deer or bears.

Specific Areas

Muir Pass/Upper LeConte: Muir Pass should be visited several times during the summer as the hut collects trash inside and out. The latch should be inspected for function and the fireplace stuffed with large rocks to discourage use. Wood should be hidden well away from the hut. Rockwalls are often built at the pass and at Helen Lake and should be scattered. Early season extraneous trails develop between

Appendix III - "How to Patrol" (draft - cont.)

Lake 10,800' and the pass due to high water and/or snow - they should be disguised and the correct routes ducked where confusion exists (esp. creek crossings).

Dusy Basin/Bishop Pass: Dusy Basin is a high use (high "Bozo-factor") area requiring patrolling on a regular basis. The upper lake (11,350') towards the pass and lower lake (10,742') have the majority of the campsites (see Appendix I). Rockwalls get erected in the upper sites, and several firepits needed to be destroyed at lower sites (esp. sites 25 & 26). Many groups travel over Thunderbolt or Knapsack passes into Palisade Basin. Food storage is a big concern and canisters are required.

Palisade Lakes: As with Upper LeConte and Dusy Basin illegal firepits and rockwalls are sometimes erected.

Middle Fork Trail/Simpson Meadow: The biggest problem with this trail is the Palisade Creek crossing in early season (or high snow year) - a series of logs can be crossed about 1/4 mile upstream from the trail/ford if hazardous.

Kayakers run the Middle Fork starting at the confluence for about two weeks each summer (usually July), and could be a source of a SAR or abandoned gear. The trail about a mile each side of the Devil's Washbowl is susceptible to erosion (washouts).

Appendix III - "How to Patrol" (draft-cont.)

Cross-country Routes: Palisade Basin (Dusy Basin to Palisade Lakes) and Ionian Basin are popular cross-country routes. Less traveled are Echo Pass, Southfork Pass, Amphitheater Lake, Dumbbell Lakes, Ladder Lake and Hester Lake, but familiarization could be beneficial in a future SAR, as well as information for those asking about best routes. I try to ascertain a group's health, ability/experience level, and equipment to try and foresee a potential problem — Sometimes an easier alternative will be offered ("... you are only as capable as your weakest link.") I usually will write down the permittee's name, the route, dates and ask if someone will activate a search if they are delayed.

**End of Season Report
Little Five Lakes
July 8 - August 26, 2004
Paul Larson**

I hiked into Little Five on July 8th after healing from a foot injury sustained in May. Small amounts of snow remained on the north aspecting slopes and travel was not trivial. All streams and rivers were flowing but easily forded and were lower than normal for this time of year. Little Five shone significant signs of visitor use and the backcountry season was well underway by the time I arrived. On July 31st I sprained my right ankle on the east side of Glacier Pass. Although I continued to hike for the next 4 weeks, swelling and slight pain forced me to seek medical treatment. This action inevitably stopped me from heading back to my duty station for the remainder of the season. I hiked back in on Sept 22-25th to pack up the station and tie all loose ends.

A. General Observations

Contacts

Backpacker - (b)

There was a definite increase in backcountry users compared to the year previous. Even though the numbers don't reflect this volume was much higher. Late July through the end of August was the busiest time. Encountering 20-30 people per night camping in the Little Five area was not uncommon during this period. Early July also had heavy traffic but seemed to be more dispersed. Stock was mostly administrative having the Kern crew in Rattlesnake Canyon for two weeks in mid-July and the Hockett crew in Lost Canyon and the Big Arroyo in August and September. This is also the second year Mineral King Pack station was not in business adding to the lack of stock use in the (b) patrol district.

Law Enforcement

Educational talks and verbal warnings were again the primary means of dealing with resource violations. Camping on vegetation, improper food storage, illegal fire rings, and abandoned food and garbage are the big issues encountered and addressed. Although there were not any violations that warranted citations there were a few situations that called for action. These actions involved creating a small resource project (i.e. picking up garbage, restoring an impacted campsite) and having the visitor help. This way of dealing with violations improves the resource and allows the visitor too directly see the impacts they're creating and how to change there actions. Universal regulations between both park would also help curb impacts.

Medicals

Many minor medicals were seen this season. Sore knees and backs, cuts & scrapes, blisters, altitude sickness, and the mental factor were all dealt with. All patients were released after evaluation and information was given on my whereabouts if any of these problems continued. There were no medi-vacs in my patrol area this summer.

Weather

It was a typical Sierra summer. Long periods of sunny skies mixed with a few short low-pressure systems creating afternoon thunderstorms were the norm. Lakes and streams were very low early due to the poor snow pack this winter. Little Five's "Ranger Lake" ceased to flow the first week in August and continued to drop nearly 1 ft. before I left in September. Although water levels were extremely low the spring below the station continued to flow consistently throughout the season.

Fires

On August 8th, while hiking to Moraine Lake, I spotted a heavy smoke cloud in the Big Arroyo directly east of the (b) drainage. I notified (b) (b) (7) and they dispatched the parks helicopter immediately. The fire was at the 9,400-ft. level, approximately ¼ acre, and human caused. A small fire crew was planted and the fire was completely suppressed. There were no other fires in the (b) patrol district.

B. Use Patterns

Backpackers were the primary users in the patrol area this summer. Most were seen hiking one of several loop trips out of Mineral King or Crescent Meadow. The High Sierra Trail (HST) heading from Lodge Pole to Mt Whitney also sees a heavy amount of traffic. Most backpackers gravitated to the bear boxes and were the most impacted areas in the district. It is important to keep these areas clean to keep them from becoming larger. The heaviest use occurred from mid-July to late-August. Most cross-country travel occurred in (b) (7) basin, and Kaweah Peaks area. There was also an increase of people going into Kaweah Basin from the west heading over Pyra-Queen or Pants Pass compared to last year. Black Kaweah's Southwest Face (class 3-4) remains the most popular route climbed. Loose rock and difficult route finding plague this route and should be patrolled to familiarize the acting ranger of potential hazards and difficult sections to inform climbers. .

Stock use was mostly administrative and there was even less overall grazing than last year. The significant decrease in stock use is due to Mineral King Pack Station being in its second year of closure.

Military Overflights

Military overflights are the most prevalent intrusion in the backcountry. A constant roar detracts from the experience trying to be gained in these wild places. Most of these fighter jets are well above the predetermined 3,000ft. AGL but the amount of noise pollution is still staggering. The East Side of the park receives more low fliers but two were still reported around (b) .

8/04/04-1409, Two F-18 fighter jets 1,00ft AGL, Flying S to N above Big 5

8/04/04-1414, F-18 fighter jet 1,500 ft. AGL, Flying E to W above Big 5

C. Natural Resources

Bear Activity

For the second year in a row there were no bear incidents this summer. Bear boxes and food storage containers attributed to this. Education given by trailhead and backcountry rangers along with personal knowledge of the ever-smartening sierra bears have kept these animals wild in the

little 5 area. A universal rule should be considered between the parks to make regulations less confusing for backcountry users.

The Bear box in the Big Arroyo has been broken for the majority of the year. The key opening the locker has stripped the lock and has been temporarily rigged to be affective. The locker may need a new closing system.

Wildlife

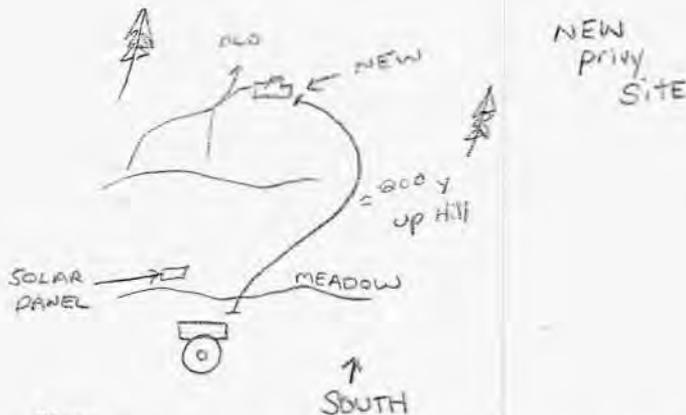
Normal populations of muledeer, raptors, and small rodents were observed. A family of owls' (5) took up residence in the Little Five area but were never identified. The Mallards at Moraine Lake had 5 young this summer and the night hawks seemed to blaze the sky there as well. Bear sighting were observed in the Timber Gap and Pinto Lake areas. The Big Arroyo also seems to be a hangout for black bear throughout the summer but decreases as visitor use increased.

D. Cultural Resources

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

E. Patrol Cabin

The ranger yurt at Little Five Lakes is in its sixth year of use and holding up very well. It is a formidable dwelling for the summer rangers and should still see many more seasons of use. Firewood remains west of the station and the privy was moved.



Signs

Temporary signs were placed in bear boxes informing the public on where to camp and specific problems in the area. It was difficult to gauge if these signs had an effect or not although impact seemed to be more concentrated at the established sites posted at the bear box.

F. Trails

The blow down of '03 that occurred on the HST near Moraine Lake is still on temporary reroute. Consideration on finding a more permanent and durable route should be highly considered. The switchbacks between the Big Arroyo and Little Five Lakes are short and fierce. This is definitely not a priority but is worth mentioning.

The Trail Construction Crew spent the first half of the summer in Rattlesnake Canyon rerouting a section of trail between Forester Lake and Little Claire Lake. Their work was outstanding to say the least. On more than one occasion park visitors have commented on the fine trails snaking through the backcountry and are pleased to see these improvements. Dave and crew should be highly praised on the work they accomplish and are a great asset to the park.

G. Camp Areas

Conditions

Bear Boxes are the most popular places to camp. This makes things easy for users to store food properly and concentrates impact instead of dispersing which seems to be the trend. This year I established 3-4 campsites at each bear box and maintained those sites specifically and renaturalized other less used areas. A map was posted on the box as where to find these sites and how many people or tents a specific place could accommodate. This seemed to curb the overall impact in these areas and lessen the constant fire ring removal. As long as these sites remained clean and void of trash they stayed manageable.

Fire Rings and Fire Wood Availability

Many illegal fire rings were dismantled this season most noticeably in Upper Big Arroyo, Spring Lake, and Ranger Lake. The difficulty in understanding the confusing the parks many fire regulations attributed to this. Establishing a universal fire regulation between both parks needs to be made. Dropping this fire elevation would allow the fragile ecosystem to grow uninhibited inevitably preserving it for future generations.

H. Permit System

This was also the first year that the \$15 Wilderness Use Fee was mandatory in the parks. Throughout the season I asked many visitors their thoughts on the issue. It seems that the majority of the users feel that the fee is great as long as the money goes back into backcountry programs and facilitates. (i.e. better trails, rangers, signs etc.) Locals seemed to be the ones most opposed to the wilderness fee. They use the park more often and the constant \$15 fee becomes expensive. Thought should be made to create a pass to help accommodate these people.

I. Needs for Next Year

- Propane
- White gas
- Sunblock
- TP
- Rubbermaid Storage Containers (assorted sizes)
- *No new pens
- *No new note pads
- *No new gloves

J. Recommendations

- Universal fire regulations
- Universal food storage regulations
- Mineral King trailhead rangers attend BC training in June
- Blow up Mt. Whitney shelter
- Solar training

Little Five Lakes Inventory 2004

Propane:

- 1- 7 gallon tank ¾ full
- 1- 3 gallon tank full

Oxygen:

- 3 full tanks

Batteries:

- 14 "D"
- 32 "AA"
- 6 "AAA"

Paper Towels:

- 5 bunches

TP:

- 7 rolls

Medical Supplies:

- 50 Ml disposable syringe
- 2- 4 1/2 x 147" stretch gauze
- 2- instant ice packs
- 1 -stethoscope
- 1- roll moleskin
- 3 -rolls stretch gauze
- 1- microshield
- 10-sting relief swabs
- 36- alcohol pads
- 8- small band-aids
- 6- butterfly closures
- 1 large roll gauze
- 1 30cc syringe (not sterile)
- 2 -3 yards 3x180" adhesive tape
- Full roll 2'x10' adhesive tape
- 2- SAM splints
- 2-wire splints
- Mosquito netting
- 2 musline bandages 37x37x52
- 1- emergency poncho
- 2- lip balm
- 3- packs acetaminophen
- 1- Tri-Buffered Aspirin
- 5- antibiotic ointment

Office Supplies:

- 6 NPS notepads
- 2 Skillcraft notepads
- 24 Skillcraft pens
- 1 Sharpe
- 3 black markers
- 1 pair scissors
- 6 paper mate pens
- 4 rubber bands
- 4 little clip things
- 2 pencils

- 13-Ibruprophine
- 3- tampons
- 5- packs earplugs
- 5- insect repellent
- 1-bottle afterburn gel
- 6-packs (5/pack) 3x1/8 steri
- 5-packs (6/packs) 4x1/2 steri
- 20-30 plastic gloves
- 3- smoke canisters
- 17- 2/pack aspirin
- 1-tweezer
- 18- 4x4 gauze pads
- 1- 2/pack antacid

White gas:

- 1/8 gallon

Pocket Rocket:

- 1 large full
- 1 large partial full
- 2 small

Burlap Bags:

- 0

Trash Bags:

- 4

MCCLURE MEADOW, 2004

A. GENERAL SUMMARY

I started the season as the McClure Ranger by hiking over Lamark Col on July 1, 2004. There was little or no snow left from a very light winter.

Other than bear incidents, this was a very quiet season. No major incidents occurred in this patrol area.

Visitation started to increase by the middle of July and stayed at a moderately high level until the end of August.

This was the year of the biting flies. From the middle of July to near the end of August the biting flies were a nuisance. The flies were only reported to be from McClure Meadows north on the John Muir Trail, and there were no flies reported to the south. I had never noticed these flies to be a problem in previous years. It would be interesting to discover their origins.

After the flies, yellow jackets appeared, also in numbers that I have never seen at this elevation before. Visitors complained and many were stung. I was stung twice. Fortunately, there were no serious adverse reactions.

This season I worked with and spent time with many other park employees. The carnivore crew arrived in August, led by Rebecca Green. They had plots in many far-off locations and covered many miles.

On August 27 the McClure fire started one-quarter mile south of the Ranger Station. It was caused by a lightning strike two weeks previous. The fire was monitored by crews for two weeks and burned a total of 50 acres. The fire burned

uphill to nearly 11,000 feet. It burned on both sides of the John Muir Trail, but was of little problem to hikers. At one point we flagged a route around the fire for visitors to follow, but this was only necessary for a short time.

On September 16th the vegetation crew arrived and stayed for 5 days. They hunkered down at the Ranger Station during the snowstorm on September 19th.

There was very little precipitation this season. The three storms we had only totaled about one-half inch of moisture. The creek levels are the lowest I've seen and the meadows are very dry. The low fuel moistures caused a fire ban park wide on August 27th.

B. VISITOR SERVICES

| 1.) <u>STATISTICS</u> | <u>JUNE</u> | <u>JULY</u> | <u>AUGUST</u> | <u>SEPTEMBER</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| VISITORS CONTACTED: | | 386 | 855 | 210 |
| MILES PATROLLED: | 4 | 157 | 209 | 171 |

2.) LAW ENFORCEMENT

There were fewer visitors than my previous two seasons as the McClure Ranger. There were no significant law enforcement incidents. No citations were issued and only a few warnings given to visitors.

Two warnings were given for tying stock too close to camp. One to Brian Bremmer of Pine Creek Pack Station and one to Yvone and Shane of Rock Creek pack Station.

Other verbal warnings were given to visitors for camping on live vegetation. They were asked to move camp to an unvegetated area.

No dogs were observed or reported in the McClure area, and all visitors checked had wilderness permits.

There were some inconsistencies from permit issuing stations. All East Side Forest Service stations gave out correct minimum impact information. People getting their permits from the Forest Service Station at Prather would not usually be given the Park Service minimum impact sheet, but only the Forest Service minimum impact sheet. Also most people with permits for the John Muir Trail issued in Yosemite would not have SEKI minimum impact information.

One common occurrence is that some people are still burning aluminum foil and foil packaging in firepits. Some are also adding rocks to enlarge firepits. These people are in the minority, but often these are the only signs of human presence left behind. The answer is to keep repeating ourselves about minimum impacts and leaving no signs from our passing to visitors, and also citations for flagrant violations.

3. SEARCH AND RESCUE AND MEDICALS

There were only two minor SAR's in the area, and both were of short duration.

On August 1st a person who had previously (2 months) broken his leg and was having a difficult time going over Muir Pass. After hiking toward this person, it was discovered from information gathered on the trail, that this person was able to continue with his trip unaided. Contact with the carnivore crew in Le Conte Canyon confirmed this and the search was called off.

The other SAR was on September 5 when Fresno County Sheriffs started a search for a couple one day overdue out of Florence Lake. I was notified by (b) to seek information at the Goddard Bridge. After talking to the trail crew and two visitors who saw this couple shortly before, near the Piute Bridge, we communicated this information to Fresno County, who shortly afterwards contacted the couple at the Blaney Hot Springs. In this instance, as in others, it seemed a little premature to start a search when people are only one day overdue, but this seems typical of Fresno County. At least in this year's search they kept their helicopter out of the park.

There were no medical incidents this season. We were fortunate in this because there are many people doing long and arduous trips in many remote and rugged areas. There seems to be an increase in mountain climbing, especially in the Darwin and Evolution Basins. The Mendel-Darwin-Huxley traverse is gaining in popularity due to its publication in climbing magazines. Also Lamark Col brings a lot of people into a rugged area, and there are many associated hazards with this route.

4. SERVICE INCIDENTS

The Ranger at McClure gets a lot of visitors seeking information. I answer many questions and talk to many visitors. Many are just seeking to pass the time and chat with the Ranger. I often relay messages through dispatch for them, and in one instance had to inform a visitor of a serious accident that happened to a family member.

Giving information about the country and routes is ongoing. Other services to hikers: nailing a hiker's boot soles back onto his boots; entertaining Thatcher school while they rested and sought information at the station (showing McClure Meadow's "pet" Yosemite Toad was handy); helping visitors make important decisions on routes;

drying out wet backpackers after a heavy thunder shower, and generally informing visitors to make their trip more enjoyable and safe.

Visitation use trends: North Lake South Lake, John Muir Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Lamark Col, Mount Goddard, Ionian Basin and Darwin Basin are many of the areas visited.

Evolution Lake is about the most heavily used area in this patrol. John Muir Trail hikers and North Lake South Lake hikers usually make Evolution Lake a destination for camp. Evolution Lake is suitable for this because there are many good campsites on the north end of the lake. It is also a good starting point for getting over Muir Pass.

Another heavily used area is at the Piute Bridge. Camps here are often filled. Many campers are also camped between the Piute Bridge and the Goddard Bridge and along Evolution Creek.

McClure Meadows gets a lot of use and there are good camps at the lower end, the middle just past the Ranger station (heaviest use) and the upper end. This year the upper end had most of the stock use so the lower end had less stock impacts than usual.

5. RANGER STATION

The McClure Ranger Station is in much need of repair. The sill logs are rotten (no foundation) and are causing the cabin to sink into the ground. This condition allows an open avenue to mice and marmots.

When I arrived July 1, the marmot family had obviously been living inside the cabin for months. They completely chewed up the plywood toolbox, scattering tools and hardware, and chewed up everything, including my supplies secured by Luke, the Kings Canyon packer, and in general made a complete mess of the cabin.

Mice were also a big problem this summer. I trapped 90-100 mice. This was double the number from last year. This is a serious health concern.

The reconstruction scheduled for 2005 is in serious need. Besides the sill logs, much general repair is needed to make the cabin more sanitary and livable.

I installed a new latch on the door and a new wood door jamb to make the cabin more secure from breakins. When Luke arrived with supplies the door had been broken into and left unlocked. A few food supplies were missing but obviously the cabin was too much of a mess for the intruders to remain. Luke replaced the locks as best he could.

The solar system is working well. The old batteries should be good for another season.

The new propane stove has made cooking and heating water much easier. This system is much safer than the old one and is also more economical.

The logs to replace the old sill logs are located from 15 to 100 yards away from the cabin. They are windfall trees from two years ago and have good solid wood.

The pit toilet is in good condition and has at least two more seasons use in the present location.

I nailed up pieces of wood in the holes that the marmots used to gain entrance. It probably won't do much good, because they just make new ones.

C. WILDERNESS PROTECTION

Evolution Valley and Basin make this area a destination for many users. The John Muir Trail and easy access from Florence Lake and Lamark Col make for heavy visitor use from mid-July to near the end of August.

There are many camp areas along the John Muir Trail from the Piute Bridge throughout Evolution Valley to Evolution Basin.

Areas off of the Muir Trail also get a lot of use: Darwin Basin, Ionian Basin, Goddard Canyon, Martha Lake and McGee Lake.

FIRERINGS

In my three seasons as the McClure Ranger, it has been a priority to eliminate all firerings that are not actively used. This required a major effort at first, but now only requires occasional maintenance to keep this trend going.

In the frequently used camps near trails all firerings have been rebuilt with only one layer of rocks. They are dug out and maintained at this level. Periodic maintenance is required.

Firerings Removed: 35

Firerings Rehabbed: 115

DRIFT FENCES

There are three drift fences in the area: one below the Goddard Bridge, one below Evolution Meadow and one above Evolution Meadow. The trail crew installed new posts at the lower Evolution drift fence this season.

BRIDGES

There are three bridges on the San Joaquin River. This year the trail crew replaced the Goddard Bridge.

FOOD LOCKERS

There are no food lockers in this area. In my opinion it would be helpful if we had storage lockers at the Piute and Goddard Bridges. They are controversial, but the

bottom line is that if we had them a lot of food loss from bears would be eliminated. Night after night people lose food from bears in this area. In my twenty seasons of experience dealing with food lockers, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. I will gladly discuss this with managers.

1.) MEADOW MANAGEMENT

Evaluating the meadows with (b) (7) in early July we decided to postpone the "Dry Season" opening dates to July 21st for McClure and to July 14th for Colby.

I completed the residual biomass study with Sylvia in September.

Evolution Meadow was closed to grazing this summer. It did Evolution Meadow a lot of good to get a rest. Sylvia and I agreed that not having any limits on the number of nights a party can graze is part of the problem. My suggestion would be to have a one-night limit for more than 12 head and a two-night limit for under 12 head.

The closed packer camp at Evolution Meadow should remain closed until recovery is complete. Sylvia and I found three suitable alternate stock camps (see Campsite Inventory, Site #'s 21 and 22).

MC CLURE MEADOW

McClure Meadow, as usual, gets a lot of stock use. This year Rock Creek Pack Station was the major user. High Sierra Pack Station also frequents McClure. This year most of the stock use was on the upper end. I recorded 96 stock nights use for McClure Meadow. A late season group used the lower end camp, their use is not recorded (on lieu days, 9/19 and 9/20).

COLBY MEADOW

Colby Meadow had several stock groups this season. The stock camp on the south side of the meadow was used mostly. Rainbow Pack Station used a small camp on the upper south side. I recorded 86 stock nights use for Colby.

UPPER COLBY AND DARWIN MEADOW

Darwin Meadow was used twice this season. Once early season by Tracey of High Sierra with light impacts, and once late by Pine Creek with little or no impacts. Once this meadow is dry, some use seems appropriate because stock here will naturally drift down canyon to gaze using many of the creek side and "pocket meadows" that normally get little or no use.

FRANKLIN MEADOW

The trail crew used this meadow. Luke has the statistics on this meadow.

2.) CONCESSION USE

Pack stations using this area were: Rock Creek Pack Station, High Sierra Pack Station, Rainbow Pack Station, Bishop Creek Pack Station and Pine Creek Pack Station. See I.B.P. use forms.

Many stock groups were given a variance to stay two nights in Evolution Valley this season, due to the closure of Evolution Meadow. Most concessionaires use good minimum impact measures.

There was one Sierra Club trip that was supported by Greg from Rainbow Pack Station. They camped at McClure one night and two nights at Evolution Lake.

Jay Erickson of Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides with ten people was supported by stock from High Sierra Pack Station with Mike as their packer. They traveled the John Muir Trail exiting at Cottonwood Pass.

3.) SIGNS

This year a Ranger Station sign was planted at the McClure Ranger Station. I will take this sign down at the end of the season.

All trail and high use access (Lamark Col) points are signed with basic park regulations.

4.) BEARS

I filled out many BIM's forms this season. Most of the incidents were down on the San Joaquin River and at the Piute Bridge, but there were several incidents in Evolution Valley. There were no incidents above Evolution Valley.

One problem with bear canisters is that it is only humanly possible to carry one canister, and visitors are re-supplying at the Muir Trail Ranch and at Vermillion Resort cannot fit all their food in one canister. The bear often ends up getting the extra. Note comment on food storage lockers under User Trends.

5.) WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Many commonly seen animals were recorded this season. Some of the more interesting ones were: the "pet" Yosemite toad that visited the watering hole at the Ranger Station almost daily for three weeks; a long-tailed weasel above the Ranger Station; a water pipit on Lamark Col, and a Great Blue Heron at McClure Meadows.

6.) RESOURCE IMPACTS

Piute Bridge – heavily used firerings need routine maintenance. Same for Goddard Bridge (removed log rounds in one area to discourage camping).

McClure Meadows – The camps just south of the Ranger Station get constant use. Visitors walking back and forth to Evolution Creek compact the grass by season's end. Discussing this with (b) (7), we agreed there is nothing we can do except to monitor area and make sure no one camps on the grass. Closing the two camps here would just adversely impact the other camps at the lower and upper ends of the meadow. In one small camp above here I was able to sink a rock in an inappropriate area to discourage camping.

Evolution Lake and Darwin Basin – Many good hard areas and resource damage is minimal.

Sapphire Lake – Limited camping due to the presence of grass near trail and lakeshore. Discouraging large groups here is helpful.

7.) RESOURCE PROJECTS COMPLETED

Creek Crossing At Ranger Station – Constructed a barrier to prevent water from running down the trail. Used large rocks and fill material.

Construction of a twelve foot long log water bar eliminated the muddy bog one half mile below McClure Ranger Station.

Due to multiple trails on the west side of Lamark Col (b) and myself agreed that a one best ducked route would be best. I completed such a route but by season's end I discovered that most of the ducks had been knocked down by well-meaning visitors.

In the short time the ducks were up I was able to notice an improvement. If we are to try and maintain this, we will need to add a sign (possibly hand-written) and also inform visitors when they get their permits.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reduce stock night numbers at Evolution Meadow.
2. No grazing at McClure Meadow or a twelve head limit. McClure Meadows is one of the gems of the Sierras and the yearly stock impacts do not go away, but only increase. With grazing above and below (with new limits) this does not exclude stock users. There are not good stock camps at McClure.
3. Bear Storage Lockers at Piute and Goddard Bridge.
4. Oppose any Forest Service efforts to improve Lamark Col trail for stock.

Recommendations made throughout this report were made from three seasons' experience as the McClure Ranger and thirty seasons' experience working in the backcountry of Sequoia Kings National Park.

E. EQUIPMENT

The equipment present at the McClure Station is adequate for next season.

NEEDS: 1 – 15 gallons propane

1 – 6” stovepipe (1 section)

1 – replacement cartridge for paint roller

1 or 2 – stainless steel cooking pots

PEAR LAKE END-OF-SEASON REPORT
SUMMER 2004
Ranger: Rick Sanger

Files auxiliary to this report (on computer disk turned in with report)

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| EOS report.doc | This document |
| Daily Log.doc | Daily log of activity |
| Inventory.doc | Inventory |
| Stockuse.doc | log of stock seen during season |
| Wildlife&Pica.doc | Wildlife observations and Pica sightings |
| Status.doc | Status of recommendations/projects made in past EOS reports |
| Radio Reception.doc | Results of radio reception testing |

A. General Observations

Station staffed from June 24 to Sept 29. The trail and most of the patrol area was clear of snow at the beginning of the season.

The cabin was used for backcountry ranger training at the beginning of the season, and for training UMC docs toward the end of the season.

Statistics:

| Month | Miles | Vtr. Contacts | Citations | Low Flyers | EMS | SAR |
|-------|-------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----|-----|
| Tot | 300 | 820 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Details:

EMS : Helivac ranger (me) due to fall

SAR:

- Assist in Gnewitch SAR at Dorst Campground
- Assist in evacuation of UCSC student

LE: (Bold indicates violation for which citation issued)

- no permit, followed up with letter
- campfire left burning, followed up with letter
- Numerous occasions for visitor education.

B. Use Patterns

My sense of the use from Wolverton is consistent with my observations from last year:

Most of use from Wolverton seems to be day hikers. I would guess the ratio is close to 3:1. Primary day hiking destinations are Heather Lake, and Alta Peak.

Stock use of the area is generally low. Most of the use is from the weekly re-supply of High Sierra Camp, which leaves Wolverton and proceeds over Panther Gap.

Big Bird and Moose Lake continue to be the primary destination for the more adventurous parties venturing beyond Pear and Emerald. The designated

campsites never were fully occupied, although it came close at Pear on one non-holiday Saturday.

Outward Bound continues to use the Tablelands and areas east for their patrols. The organization still effectively uses minimum impact techniques. I was invited to give several presentations to the students about the park service and my responsibilities. Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to have OB conduct service projects in the area. Future projects could include:

- Sweep for trash in trees behind station
- sweep for glass around station, especially behind station.
- rehab sites at Emerald: by campsite 10

C. Natural Resources

The meadows north of Topaz lake, which were so heavily impacted by experiments, have been cleaned up. All of the equipment has been removed from the area, and although some scars remain, they are minimal. I continue to find the occasional zip-tie and pipe section.

The tram over the Marble Fork remains in place, but the extra equipment in the area has been removed. The three met stations in the region remain. The three ISCO samplers remain at Emerald, Topaz and Marble Fork.

(b) (6) had frog cages in Topaz lake and in the uppermost lake in Buck Canyon (3546,40532). I monitored these for integrity and for Kitrid fungus. The cages had some effect in the disruption of the natural lake bottom, especially when handled in Topaz lake. It is certain that tadpoles escaped into Topaz lake in the beginning of the season, and likely that frogs escaped into upper buck toward mid-season.

Unfortunately, Big Bird lake was hit hard this year. I arrived there on Aug 31 and found a large campfire ring within 40 ft of lakeshore, lots of foil, toilet paper all over, egg shells, cigarette butts, and pistachio shells. Lorenzo (trail crew) said he found soap in a plastic container right by the lakeshore the day before. Nina said that an OB group found 38 (?) people there when they arrived.

Interestingly, about 5 parties commented on the noise generated by military overflights even though there were no "low flyers" this season.

I found "XXVII" carved into a rock at moose lake this year...wonder if it was done in 1927..

Recommendation:

See "Status" document for un-addressed previous suggestions.



D. Cultural Resources

General Maintenance: Pear Lake Ski Hut

Last year the tree crew cut down two trees on the west side of the cabin that threatened the structure. One of the trees was close to 500 years old...I counted the rings.

Recommendation:

See "Status" document for previous suggestions

E. Backcountry Facilities

Clivus: Pear Lake Ski Hut

The "liquid level problem" of last year seems to have been solved, probably by the installation of the air flow baffle and the vigor of the solar system powering the fan. The maintenance crew shoveled it down to about a foot depth and flew out close to 6, 50-gal barrels.

Mice: Pear Lake Ski Hut

Last year the trapping was heavy initially, but then died off to essentially nothing. This year started off equally heavy, but only died down moderately. Trapping stayed consistent at about 5 to 10 a week. Nina said Bearpaw was also noticeably heavier.

Recommendation:

See "Status" document for un-addressed previous suggestions.

Solar Power: Pear Lake Ski Hut

Three solar panels are temporarily mounted on the balcony until a permanent solar mount can be installed. The design has been submitted and approved and is waiting for materials to be gathered

Phoenix Composting Toilets

Mounting the broken solar panels under the eave at the Emerald comfort station seems to have worked quite well. The voltages at both Emerald and Pear look great. The batteries were topped off twice, the containers were mostly emptied by the maintenance crew. Although without chips the entire season, five bags of chips were flown to each station at the end of the season.

Recommendation:

It was *very* unfortunate that the ranger staff was not notified sooner of maintenance's intention to conduct flights in the area. This forced hasty coordination of events, and certain things were left un-addressed, and will remain so for perhaps another 5 years.

- trash from Pear and Emerald facilities was not hauled out
- old liquid batteries at Emerald still remain
- hazardous liquids are still being stored in both facilities
- Maintenance should be notified *early* that the current supply of chips *will* run out by the end of next season.

F. Trails

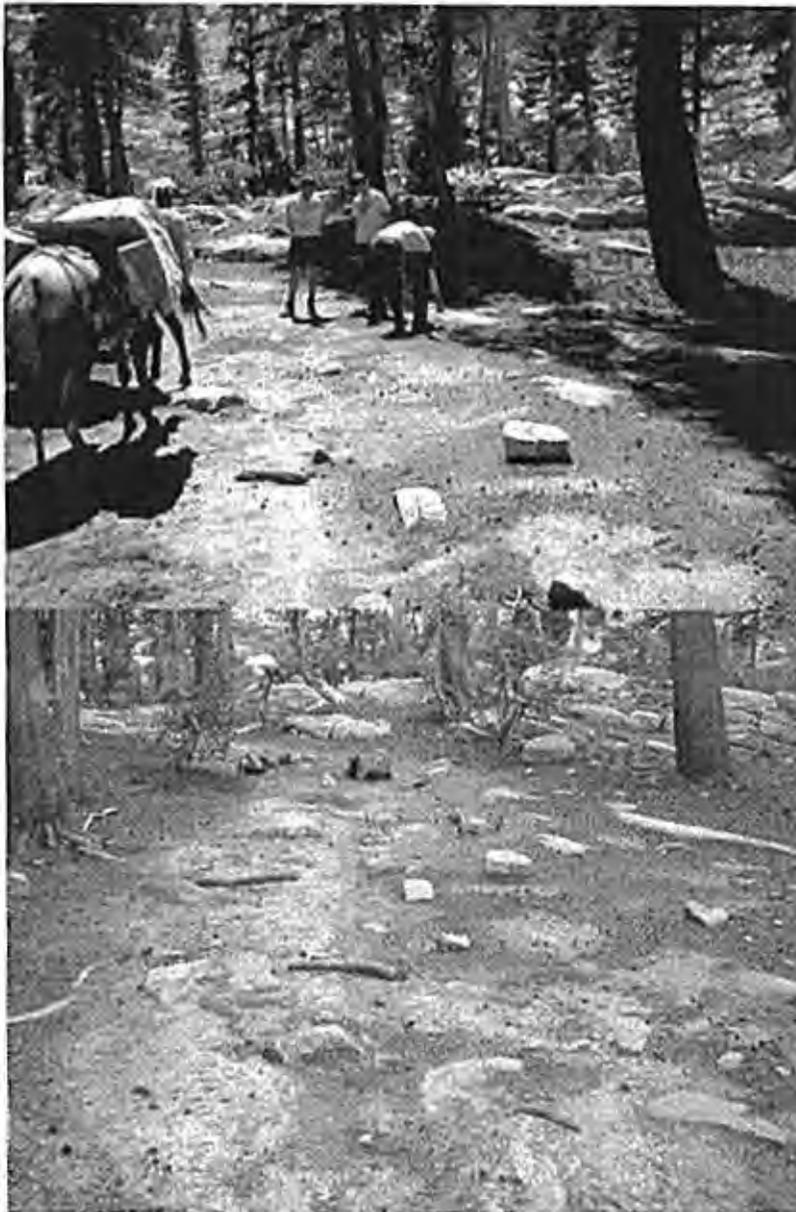
The pit toilet at Heather Lake is still problematic. It has been rebuilt (poorly), still fills with water at the beginning of the season, and *still* needs a new seat. Badly.

Recommendation:

I expect I can address these issues with the trail crew next season, who are going to be spending some time in the Pear area.

G. Camp Areas

The campsites rehab done last year with OB seems to be doing quite well (pictures below).. About two parties pitched their tent in the area up at Pear. I spoke with one of these, and, having come off the tablelands, did not see the signs to camp only in designated areas.



Before 2003
rehab

This year
(2004)

H. Permit System

In general, the trailhead staff did a good job at educating the visitors. In the few times I overheard them issuing permits, I felt the information was being presented faster than I, personally, could assimilate it. But I didn't have a lot of problems from visitor's misunderstandings. I cautioned the staff about recommending trips that were too ambitious, and one group brought a bear canister to pear/emerald thinking that it was required.

The staff was great alerting me to groups of particular concern.

K. Inventory

Please see auxiliary file.

L. Needs

| | |
|--|----------|
| adult nasal cannula | 1 ea |
| manila tags with string | 10 |
| black marker | 2 ea |
| phillips screwdriver, #2 head (medium size) | 1 ea |
| wrist rocket rubber band | 1 ea |
| BBQ-style lighter with long handle (for stove) | 3 ea |
| dish gloves, large size | 3 pair |
| work gloves, size large, leather | 1 pair |
| burlap bags (gunny sacks) for hauling trash | 15 ea |
| 9 volt battery for smoke alarm | 3 ea |
| mouse traps | 12 ea |
| duct tape | 2 rolls |
| hot pads for kitchen | 2 ea |
| small propane refridgerator! | |
| large trash bags | about 10 |
| lighting fixtures for compact bulbs | |
| extra compact fluorescent bulb, 12 v | 2 ea |
| light fixture for bathroom | |
| Dish towels | 3 ea |
| Kitchen sponges/scrubbies | 3 ea |
| Steno pad | 1 ea |
| Paper, lined 8.5x 11 | 1 pad |
| Chlorine for cleaning | 1 gal |
| | |
| | |

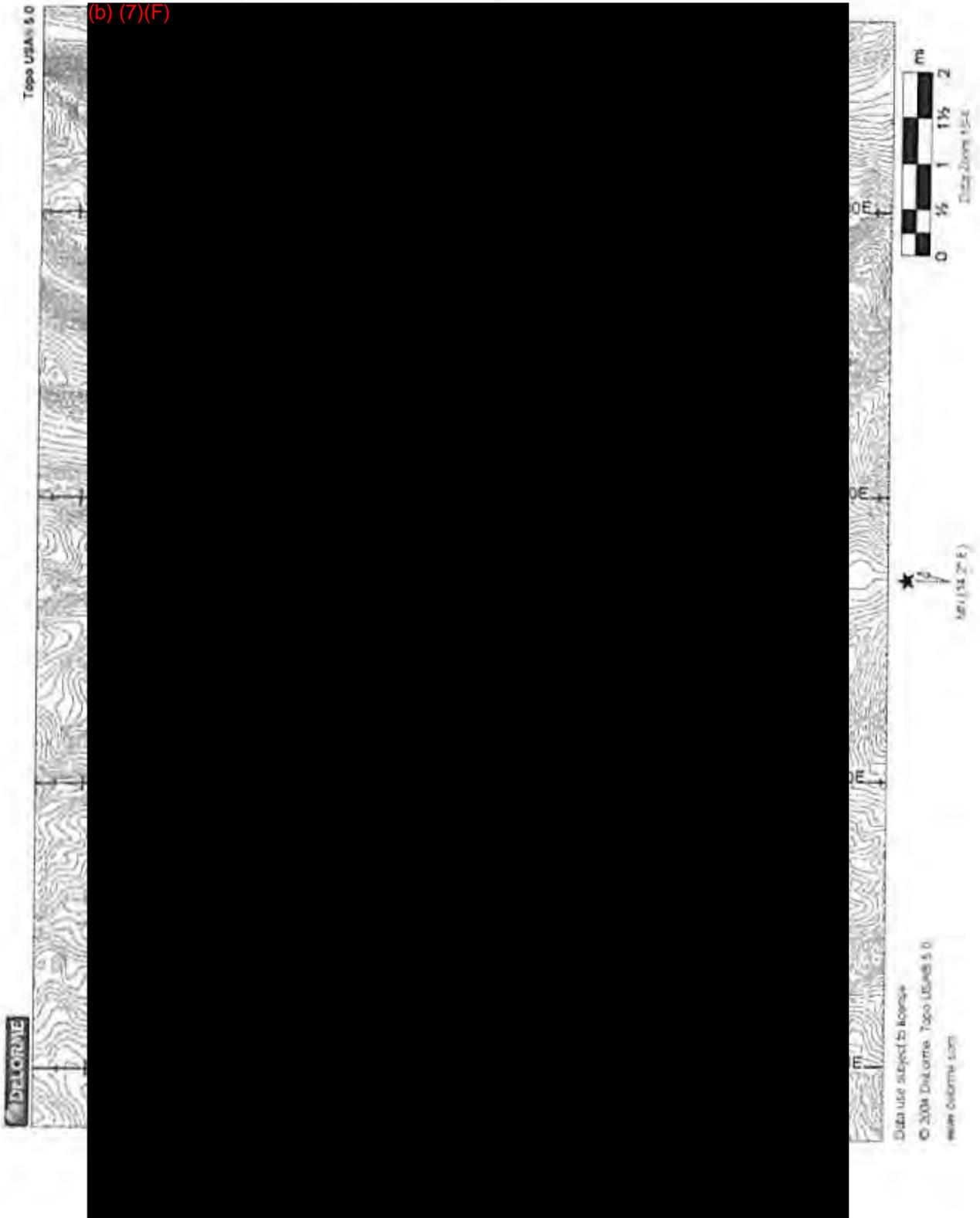
CLIVUS/PHOENIX NEEDS:

| | |
|--|---|
| Chips at Pear Phoenix | (currently enough for 1 season, 5 per season) |
| Chips at Emerald Phoenix | same |
| protective glasses for filling phoenix batteries | 2 ea |
| med-size funnels for filling phoenix batteries | 2 ea |
| distilled water for batteries | 2 ea, 1 gallon bottles |
| Mount for solar panel at emerald! | 1 ea |
| | |

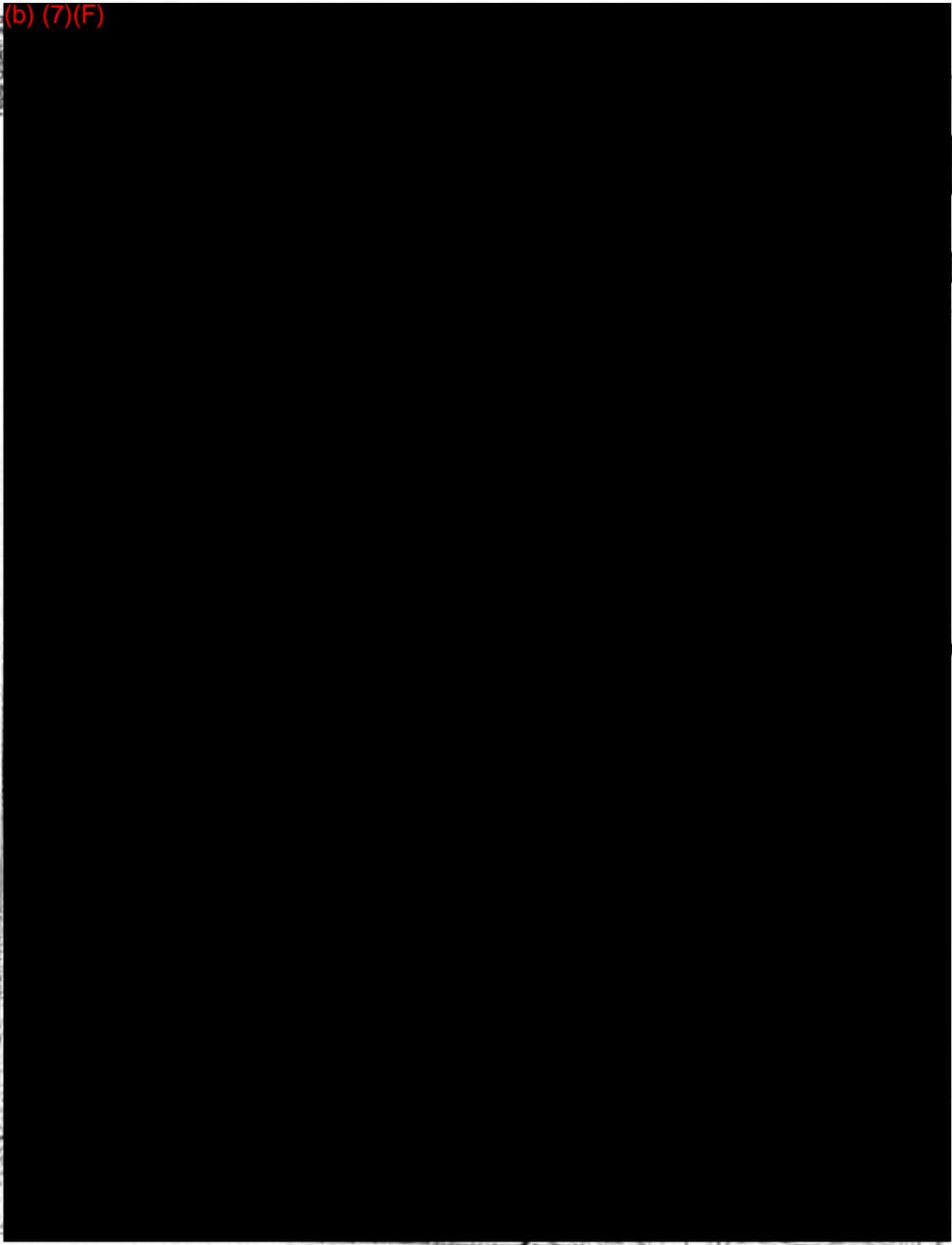
M. Recommendations

Recommendations have been made throughout this report in the appropriate sections. Previously made recommendations are tracked in a separate document called "status.doc"

Routes in 2003 (green) and 2004 (pink) combined.



(b) (7)(F)



MP/18.2" E1

DELORME

© 2004 Delorme, Topo 10000 5.0
www.delorme.com

Generalized radio reception (b) (7)(F)

**PEAR LAKE END-OF-SEASON REPORT
SUMMER 2004**

Ranger: Rick Sanger

Files auxiliary to this report (on computer disk turned in with report)

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| EOS report.doc | This document |
| Daily Log.doc | Daily log of activity |
| Inventory.doc | Inventory |
| Stockuse.doc | log of stock seen during season |
| Wildlife&Pica.doc | Wildlife observations and Pica sightings |
| Status.doc | Status of recommendations/projects made in past EOS reports |
| Radio Reception.doc | Results of radio reception testing |

A. General Observations

Station staffed from June 24 to Sept 29. The trail and most of the patrol area was clear of snow at the beginning of the season.

The cabin was used for backcountry ranger training at the beginning of the season, and for training UMC docs toward the end of the season.

Statistics:

| Month | Miles | Vtr. Contacts | Citations | Low Flyers | EMS | SAR |
|-------|-------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----|-----|
| Tot | 300 | 820 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Details:

EMS : Helivac ranger (me) due to fall

SAR:

- Assist in Gnewitch SAR at Dorst Campground
- Assist in evacuation of UCSC student

LE: (Bold indicates violation for which citation issued)

- no permit, followed up with letter
- campfire left burning, followed up with letter
- Numerous occasions for visitor education.

B. Use Patterns

My sense of the use from Wolverton is consistent with my observations from last year:

Most of use from Wolverton seems to be day hikers. I would guess the ratio is close to 3:1. Primary day hiking destinations are Heather Lake, and Alta Peak.

Stock use of the area is generally low. Most of the use is from the weekly re-supply of High Sierra Camp, which leaves Wolverton and proceeds over Panther Gap.

Big Bird and Moose Lake continue to be the primary destination for the more adventurous parties venturing beyond Pear and Emerald. The designated

campsites never were fully occupied, although it came close at Pear on one non-holiday Saturday.

Outward Bound continues to use the Tablelands and areas east for their patrols. The organization still effectively uses minimum impact techniques. I was invited to give several presentations to the students about the park service and my responsibilities. Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to have OB conduct service projects in the area. Future projects could include:

- Sweep for trash in trees behind station
- sweep for glass around station, especially behind station.
- rehab sites at Emerald: by campsite 10

C. Natural Resources

The meadows north of Topaz lake, which were so heavily impacted by experiments, have been cleaned up. All of the equipment has been removed from the area, and although some scars remain, they are minimal. I continue to find the occasional zip-tie and pipe section.

The tram over the Marble Fork remains in place, but the extra equipment in the area has been removed. The three met stations in the region remain. The three ISCO samplers remain at Emerald, Topaz and Marble Fork.

(b) (6) had frog cages in Topaz lake and in the uppermost lake in Buck Canyon (3546,40532). I monitored these for integrity and for Kitrid fungus. The cages had some effect in the disruption of the natural lake bottom, especially when handled in Topaz lake. It is certain that tadpoles escaped into Topaz lake in the beginning of the season, and likely that frogs escaped into upper buck toward mid-season.

Unfortunately, Big Bird lake was hit hard this year. I arrived there on Aug 31 and found a large campfire ring within 40 ft of lakeshore, lots of foil, toilet paper all over, egg shells, cigarette butts, and pistachio shells. Lorenzo (trail crew) said he found soap in a plastic container right by the lakeshore the day before. Nina said that an OB group found 38 (?) people there when they arrived.

Interestingly, about 5 parties commented on the noise generated by military overflights even though there were no "low flyers" this season.

Recommendation:

See "Status" document for un-addressed previous suggestions.

D. Cultural Resources

General Maintenance: Pear Lake Ski Hut

Last year the tree crew cut down two trees on the west side of the cabin that threatened the structure. One of the trees was close to 500 years old...I counted the rings.

Recommendation:

See "Status" document for previous suggestions

E. Backcountry Facilities

Clivus: Pear Lake Ski Hut

The “liquid level problem” of last year seems to have been solved, probably by the installation of the air flow baffle and the vigor of the solar system powering the fan. The maintenance crew shoveled it down to about a foot depth and flew out close to 6, 50- gal barrels.

Mice: Pear Lake Ski Hut

Last year the trapping was heavy initially, but then died off to essentially nothing. This year started off equally heavy, but only died down moderately. Trapping stayed consistent at about 5 to 10 a week. Nina said Bearpaw was also noticeably heavier.

Recommendation:

See “Status” document for un-addressed previous suggestions.

Solar Power: Pear Lake Ski Hut

Three solar panels are temporarily mounted on the balcony until a permanent solar mount can be installed. The design has been submitted and approved and is waiting for materials to be gathered

Phoenix Composting Toilets

Mounting the broken solar panels under the eave at the Emerald comfort station seems to have worked quite well. The voltages at both Emerald and Pear look great. The batteries were topped off twice, the containers were mostly emptied by the maintenance crew. Although without chips the entire season, five bags of chips were flown to each station at the end of the season.

Recommendation:

It was *very* unfortunate that the ranger staff was not notified sooner of maintenance’s intention to conduct flights in the area. This forced hasty coordination of events, and certain things were left un-addressed, and will remain so for perhaps another 5 years.

- trash from Pear and Emerald facilities was not hauled out
- old liquid batteries at Emerald still remain
- hazardous liquids are still being stored in both facilities
- Maintenance should be notified *early* that the current supply of chips *will* run out by the end of next season.

F. Trails

The pit toilet at Heather Lake is still problematic. It has been rebuilt (poorly), still fills with water at the beginning of the season, and *still* needs a new seat. Badly.

Recommendation:

I expect I can address these issues with the trail crew next season, who are going to be spending some time in the Pear area.

G. Camp Areas

The campsite rehab done last year with OB seems to be doing quite well (pictures below).. About two parties pitched their tent in the area up at Pear. I

spoke with one of these, and, having come off the tablelands, did not see the signs to camp only in designated areas.

H. Permit System

In general, the trailhead staff did a good job at educating the visitors. In the few times I overheard them issuing permits, I felt the information was being presented faster than I, personally, could assimilate it. But I didn't have a lot of problems from visitor's misunderstandings. I cautioned the staff about recommending trips that were too ambitious, and one group brought a bear canister to pear/emerald thinking that it was required.

The staff was great alerting me to groups of particular concern.

K. Inventory

Please see auxiliary file.

L. Needs

| | |
|--|----------|
| adult nasal cannula | 1 ea |
| manila tags with string | 10 |
| black marker | 2 ea |
| phillips screwdriver, #2 head (medium size) | 1 ea |
| wrist rocket rubber band | 1 ea |
| BBQ-style lighter with long handle (for stove) | 3 ea |
| dish gloves, large size | 3 pair |
| work gloves, size large, leather | 1 pair |
| burlap bags (gunny sacks) for hauling trash | 15 ea |
| 9 volt battery for smoke alarm | 3 ea |
| mouse traps | 12 ea |
| duct tape | 2 rolls |
| hot pads for kitchen | 2 ea |
| small propane refridgerator! | |
| large trash bags | about 10 |
| lighting fixtures for compact bulbs | |
| extra compact fluorescent bulb, 12 v | 2 ea |
| light fixture for bathroom | |
| Dish towels | 3 ea |
| Kitchen sponges/scrubbies | 3 ea |
| Steno pad | 1 ea |
| Paper, lined 8.5x 11 | 1 pad |
| Chlorine for cleaning | 1 gal |
| | |
| | |

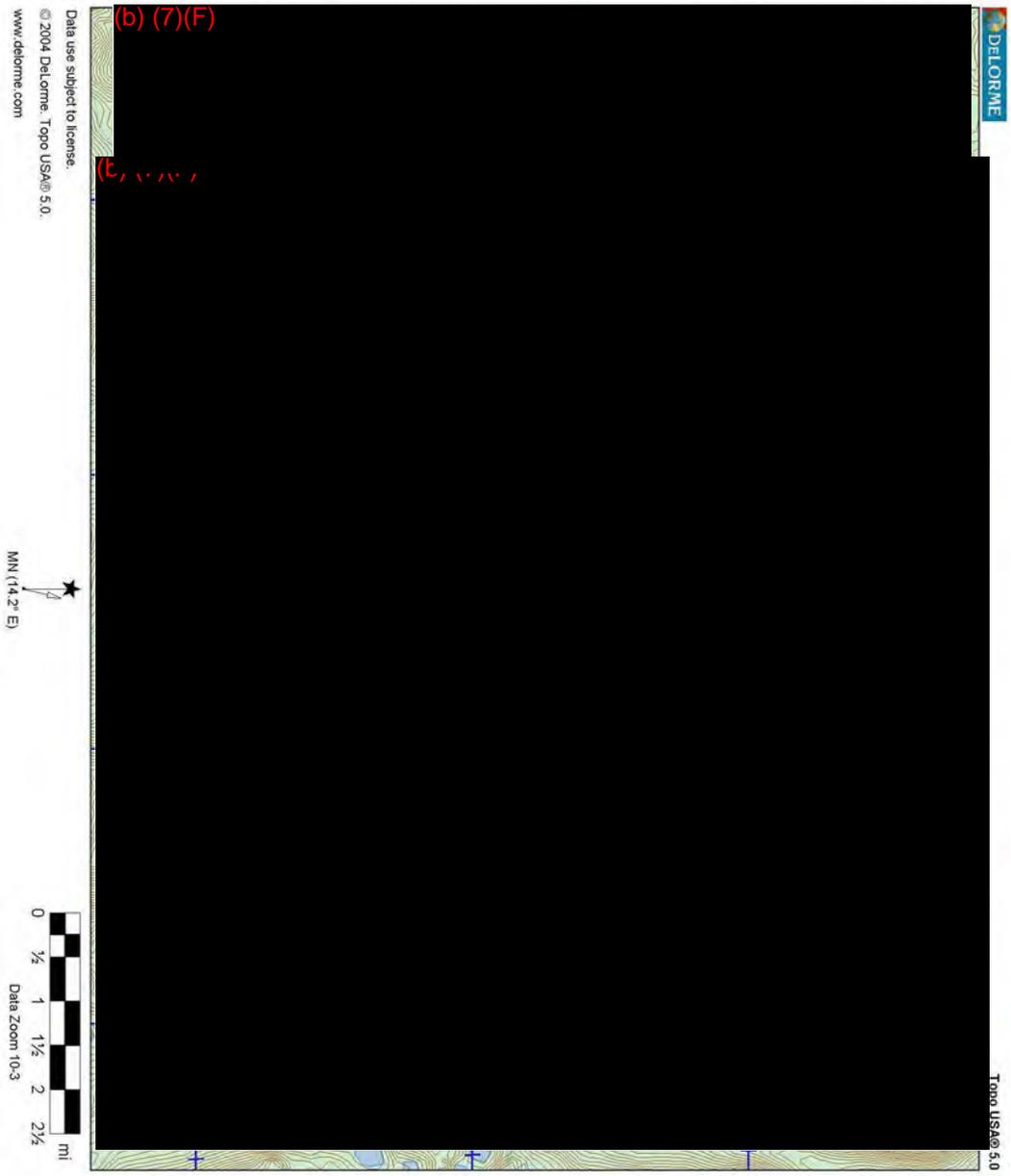
CLIVUS/PHOENIX NEEDS:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Chips at Pear Phoenix | (currently enough for 1 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| | season, 5 per season) |
| Chips at Emerald Phoenix | same |
| protective glasses for filling phoenix batteries | 2 ea |
| med-size funnels for filling phoenix batteries | 2 ea |
| distilled water for batteries | 2 ea, 1 gallon bottles |
| Mount for solar panel at emerald! | 1 ea |
| | |

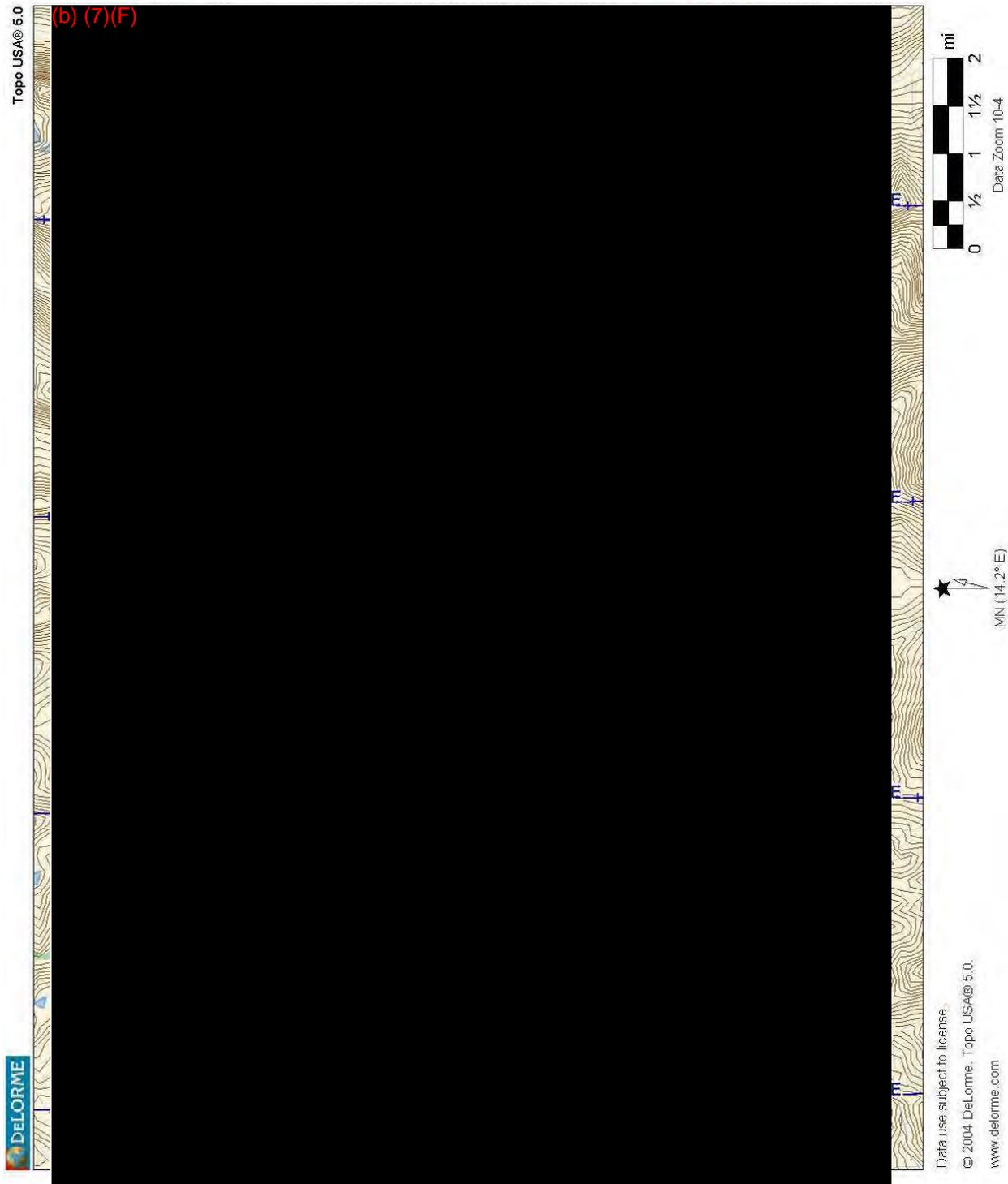
M. Recommendations

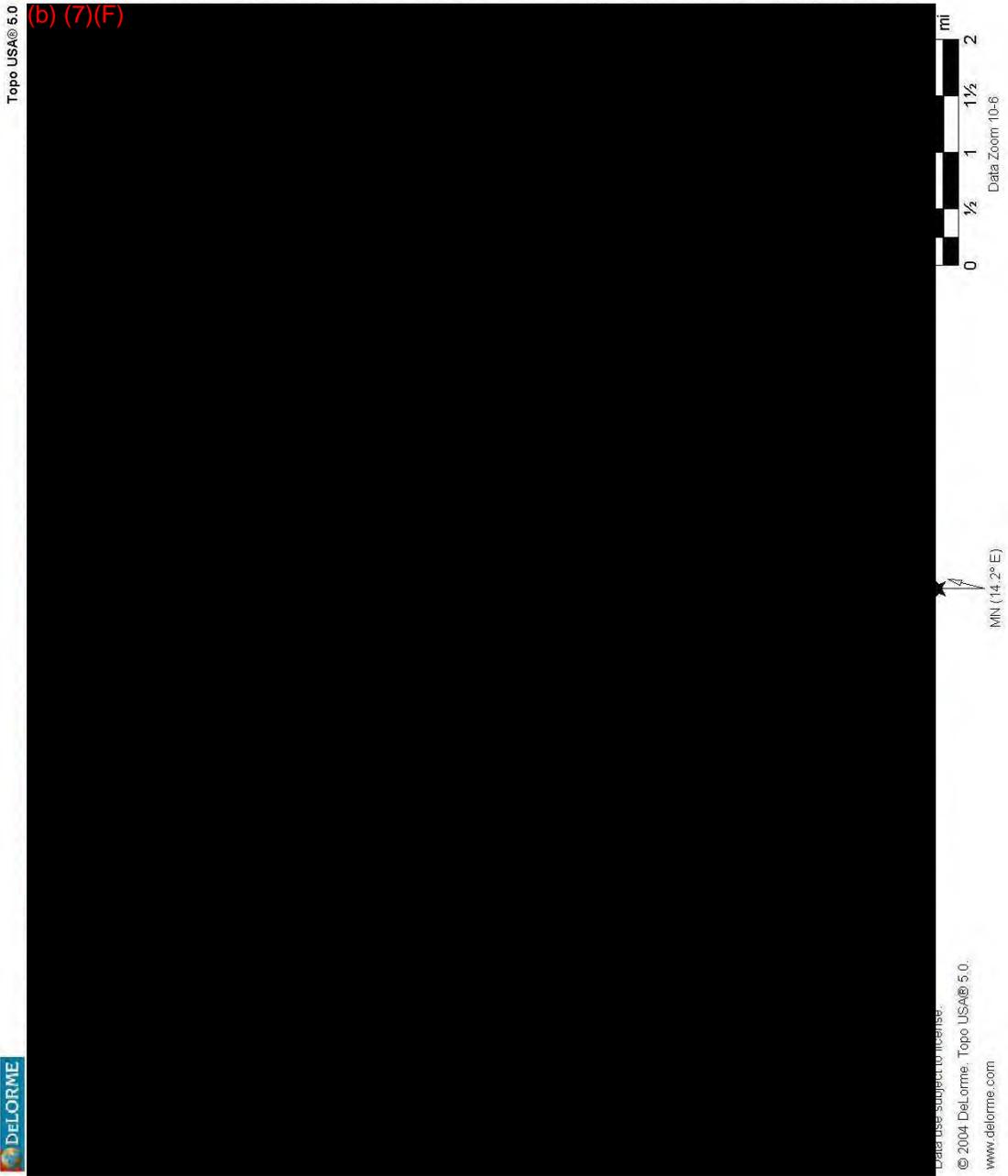
Recommendations have been made throughout this report in the appropriate sections. Previously made recommendations are tracked in a separate document called “status.doc”



Routes traveled at least once in '04

Routes in 2003 (green) and 2004 (pink) combined.





Generalized radio reception (b) (7)(F)

Sierra Crest: Rae Lakes
End of Season Report: George Durkee
9/30/2004

Summary

We arrived at the station from Onion Valley on 6/26. It was a moderate snow year with about 60% coverage on the north side of Glen Pass. The station was still standing (always a surprise) but a bear had broken into two of the outside storage boxes as well as torn the window off and entered the tent frame. Trash and rusted tools were everywhere. Clean up took two days and about 300 lbs. of trash was sent out as well as the wrecked storage box. A new Knaack box was sent in. Then, to add to the fun, a mule's worth of our supplies went into the river when our stuff was being packed in. Fortunately, the packer and mule were OK, though it was close. A successful tort claim was filed for about \$500 worth of food, books and equipment. Jerry Torres did an outstanding job of replacing the food he could from the Trails commissary.

A number of NPS people came through the area – rangers, researchers and bear techs. With one exception, none of them radioed ahead to say they were coming through the area nor even checked with me to see if I needed anything or if I could assist them with their project. This included a bear tech and an invasive plant crew from region. I might have been able to help both with advice had they bothered to ask.

In early August I removed about 400 lbs of old lumber that has been saved for possible future use but been there for decades. Evan on trail crew came over and we sawed it up to sizes that could be packed out. TJ packed it all out in September.

The season was normal after that. Visitation seemed about average, perhaps down very slightly with fewer Scout groups.

Statistics

| | June | July | August | September | Oct. | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Visitor Contacts | 88 (4 days) | 671 | 800 | 481 | closed | 2040 |
| Miles hiked | 20 | 170 | 154 | 143 | | 487 |

Medicals/SAR

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|
| Dollar Lake | July | Altered | Flown out |
| Rae Lakes | July | Laceration | T&R |
| Rae Lakes | July | Hasty Search: child | Found |
| Woods Creek | August | Torn Knee Ligament | Flown out: 111 |
| Rae Lakes | September | Asthma Symptoms | VMC consult, T&R |

I monitored one lightning fire which started in August in the small canyon west of Dollar Lake and burned for several weeks, reaching about 1 acre in size

Law Enforcement

For the first time in my SEKI career, I wrote no citations.

Warnings (tent on meadow, washing in stream, food storage; one guy with a holstered weapon about to enter the park over Kearsarge Pass): 95

In addition, according to the Road's End people, (b) (6) refused to pay the backcountry fee when he went into Sixty Lakes Basin on a climbing trip with a group from the southern California peak climbing group (they paid) (b) apparently threw a small hissy fit about the new requirement and threatened to challenge it in court etc. The permit issuer gave him a permit (writing "not paid" on the permit) but didn't call Jane or I to tell us he hadn't paid. I ran into the group and saw their permit but didn't know to ask for (b). (They came in from several different directions, thus several permits.) A letter to (b) might be in order and a word to the permit stations that when they have a problem that we can assist on, we should be radioed with the information.

It should also be noted that although backcountry rangers do not generate the sometimes impressive statistics often found in frontcountry LE summaries, our visitor contacts are without doubt not only far more numerous than frontcountry contacts, they are of several orders of magnitude better quality contacts. These "contacts" cited represent actual educational conversations with people. This is not reflected in our summary statistics and should be reemphasized: Backcountry rangers have the luxury of time – as well as an almost visceral need – to explain to park visitors why minimum impact camping is important to the health of their wilderness. We also take the time to make hikers more aware – and appreciate – what's around them as they trudge along the trail. We have 12 to 15 backcountry rangers repeating these messages again and again and again to over ten thousand wilderness users each summer. In my 35 years as a backcountry ranger I have seen the cumulative effect of these contacts and they have been spectacularly successful in making our visitors aware of their responsibilities in caring for their National Parks and wilderness. *Our successful efforts apply to 80% of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park and are central to the core mission of the National Park Service.* Such effort and success should not be trivialized by making management decisions based on incompatible statistical comparisons or on a hazy understanding of what it is we do out there.

Although we are both law enforcement rangers and both enforcing the regulations of the CFR, frontcountry and backcountry rangers are no longer doing it the same way, nor can we. I believe that an LE presence in the backcountry is critical to our ability to gain compliance with NPS regulations. What is increasingly worrisome is that a combination of factors is leading to abandoning 80% of the park to zero enforcement of wilderness regulations:

1. Increased emphasis of a law enforcement training standard that emphasizes the "interoperability" of all rangers will make it very difficult to find LE rangers for backcountry.
2. The extra money that a seasonal LE ranger costs that is seen as an unnecessary expense where LE statistics do not justify an LE backcountry ranger. Increasingly this money is seen as a source of money for frontcountry operations. As noted above, we don't and can't and shouldn't generate the same type of statistics. It is our long and short-term effect on compliance and visitor education that is critical to our duties and mission.
3. It is my direct experience from past years that a small but significant number of hikers quickly find out we have no enforcement powers and will take advantage of that.

Service Incidents

Visitor Assists (food, attempt to locate, messages, off-duty information etc.): 200

Resource Mngt. Assist:

Fish eradication crew (supplies, garbage, advice)

Meadow monitoring, Invasive species monitoring & obtaining a plan sample (Haultain)

UC Berkeley Frog Researchers (supplies, advice, garbage out; also observing Chytrid field lab)

John Wehausen & Bighorn Sheep Recovery Team advice sought on advisability of signing Baxter Pass trail; coordinating NPS sheep closure regulations with California Department of Fish & Game regulations (see Resource discussion below).

NPS Pika observations and 165 other wildlife sightings: Graber

PCTA (Pacific Crest Trail Association) Discuss NPS cooperation with minimum impact sheet for early-season PCT hikers.

Resource Management

Grazing opening dates were for a normal year. The trail crew was camped at Woods Creek crossing or was resupplied from there the entire summer. As such, that meadow received extremely high grazing use by NPS. Castle Dome meadow received moderate use with the entire meadow showing signs of grazing during the September biomass transect. White Fork meadow received no use and hasn't for over 5 years now. Baxter Meadow received about 20 animal nights from Onion Valley Pack Station (15 AUMs – approx.) and John Cunningham (14 nights on two trips).

Two research teams were in the Sixty Lakes Basin most of the summer: (b) (6) was back with his crew for the 9th season studying the Mountain Yellow Legged Frog. A UC Berkeley veterinarian was flown in for 3 days in August to set up a field lab analyzing MLF blood to help determine baseline health data for the frog populations and specifically determine susceptibility for the Chytrid fungus.

Two people from Danny Boyano's staff were also there continuing the 4th season of netting fish in the upper lakes there to reestablish the yellow-legged frog populations. The latter project has been dramatically successful and work was started on eradicating fish in Tulip Lake.

There are at least 3 small populations of the Mt. Lyell Salamander in Sixty Lakes basin, the largest numbering around 30 individuals. Not much is known of their population, distribution or habits in the Sierra. A UC student has started his doctoral research on them in Yosemite and SEKI this year which should allow a better idea on how rare they are.

Bighorn Sheep sightings were quite common this year, especially a group of about 12 rams in Sixty Lakes. Ewes and rams were seen early season in Gardiner Basin and I saw a group of 5 ewes and 3 lambs near Baxter Pass in early July. In September we watched a group of 11 rams descend from the shoulder of Fin Dome, butting heads often on the way. It is quite possible they use the open avalanche path just north of the lowest Rae Lake to cross the drainage to the Crest (they don't like traveling through forested country so this would be the shortest route to the Baxter/Dragon habitat).

As late as 1997, the CFR had a regulation limiting hiking and climbing in the Dragon/Baxter area. Such a regulation still exists on the east side of the crest in the USFS area, but seems to be gone from the CFR and the Superintendent's Compendium. I spoke with sheep researcher John Wehausen and he suggests that the Sheep Recovery Team revisit this matter and decide if such regulations are necessary and coordinate

between the agencies involved. We might at least want to look at the possibility of limiting numbers going over Baxter Pass during early lambing season (May until late July).

Bears

I did not hear of a single bear incident in the Rae/Woods & Twin Lakes area this year. There were bear tracks in Sixty Lakes and quite a lot of scat in the small drainage between the JMT and the 60 Lakes drainage showing at least one bear in the area most of the summer. However, there were no reported sightings or reports of campers having food threatened. All scat showed natural food and, as mentioned, about 98% of people are carrying canisters, including through-hikers.

Signs & Trails

A sign was put up at Dollar Lake showing the abandoned trail to Baxter Pass. Though Wehausen is not apparently bothered by the possible increased traffic into this area, it should probably be brought up with any NPS discussions on sheep management.

IBP & Concessions Use

All IBP & park Concession users followed regulations in the Rae area this year. Sobek Expeditions came through twice on stock-supported trips (6 head) doing the JMT from Florence Lake. This turned out to be a very popular trip and will likely be repeated in the future. The guides were very experienced and conscientious (contracted from Southern Sierra Mountain Guides). One guide service from the east side had a client fall and tear her ACL. The guide used a Satellite phone to call for a medivac. Several of the guide services contacted are routinely carrying Sat Phones now, which seems like a good idea. Three Corner Round and Cedar Grove pack station were in compliance with all regulations and cooperative.

Fire rings and Campsites

About half a dozen fire rings were removed in the Rae/60 Lakes area that had been built since the previous year. I met a member of the Pacific Crest Trail Hiker's Association and observed to her that I believed an increasing number of PCT hikers were ignoring NPS regulations because there were no rangers around when they come through in late May and early June. In addition, I told her I felt a significant number of PCT hikers were not well grounded in minimum impact philosophy. She thought it would be possible to send out a minimum impact sheet with the PCT permits that they issued. In addition, minimum impact sheets could be distributed at the spring PCT rendezvous held each spring prior to most people beginning the hike. I told her I'd contact her in the Fall and she could request I write such a minimum impact sheet through either the Wilderness or Sierra Crest office, if possible.

A campsite inventory was begun by Kings rangers. Once again I suggest consulting with Yosemite backcountry staff who have done such a project three times now and have established a protocol based on Parsons and Stohlgren's 1978 work. We need to decide what we want to use the data for as well as how to record and store it. The data I've seen from the other Kings rangers suggests we're not all doing the same thing or that it would be useful to others in the future.

Resource Projects

Dollar Lake was posted as closed to camping on the east side of the trail. All of the sites there are too close to water. They were removed and the area naturalized. Work was begun removing & naturalizing campsites closer than 50 feet to water on the entire Rae chain. Only about 10 were removed this year. This would be an excellent service project for a scout troop, taking only a few hours for a small group

Recommendations

1. Nothing I've seen this year makes me think there's any use for either the Baxter Creek drift fence or the White Fork drift fence.
2. I'm still on my *jihad* of getting as many of our backcountry records on the SEKI Network as possible. The same should be done with a representative sample of our photos. Pat Lineback thinks photos should go on the NPS Focus site. Pat has set up a subdirectory on the SEKI Network for us for us to use: **J:/share_docs/wilderness**. I'll be adding stuff to this as I can. Linda Mutch was going to check into the possibility of getting three to four weeks of funding to accomplish a large chunk of this. Bob Meadows makes the point that our station logs and year-end reports are the last large collection of uncollected resource data around. We need to do something to preserve this and make it more accessible.
3. Same as #2 above with the hope of putting together a map to graphically represent backcountry operations: patrol areas outlined with acreage of each; miles of trail per patrol area; SARs & Medicals mapped for the past 3+ years; sensitive meadow; meadows we do biomass transects in; sensitive species ranges (e.g. Bighorn Sheep, Mountain yellow-legged frog); maybe average the number of contacts per year (a small inset box would show such stats in each patrol area).
4. I talked to several local area people who hike a lot and were concerned with the total costs of the new permit fees. Perhaps we should make a yearly backcountry hiking pass available – something like \$20 per year.

Rae Lakes Station Need 2005

- 40 large plastic trash bags
- 1 Gal. White Gas
- 1 Gal. Kerosene for starting presto logs
- 2 boxes presto (?) logs
- 24 AAA batteries
- 2 New thick (e.g. 4 inches) foam sleeping pads

On Hand 2004:

- 2 Large Propane, Full
- 3 sleeping bags
- 1 large Eureka! Tent
- 1 Sierra Designs Mountain tent
- 4 TP
- 10 Paper Towels
- 4 small propane
- 1 Gal. White Gas
- 12 AA batteries
- 5 boxes matches
- Nomex pants & Shirt
- No AA recharger
- No NiMh AA batteries
- 2 Motorola Batteries '04 MT 1000
- 7 Presto (Kerosene) logs
- 2 boxes assorted food

One of the green boxes, the 50 Gal drum with the foam pads and the red box with the fuel & stove were sealed at the end of the season with caulk and might be a little hard to open in the spring.

Sierra Crest: Rae Lakes
End of Season Report: George Durkee
9/30/2004

Summary

We arrived at the station from Onion Valley on 6/26. It was a moderate snow year with about 60% coverage on the north side of Glen Pass. The station was still standing (always a surprise) but a bear had broken into two of the outside storage boxes as well as torn the window off and entered the tent frame. Trash and rusted tools were everywhere. Clean up took two days and about 300 lbs. of trash was sent out as well as the wrecked storage box. A new Knaack box was sent in. Then, to add to the fun, a mule's worth of our supplies went into the river when our stuff was being packed in. Fortunately, the packer and mule were OK, though it was close. A successful tort claim was filed for about \$500 worth of food, books and equipment. Jerry Torres did an outstanding job of replacing the food he could from the Trails commissary.

A number of NPS people came through the area – rangers, researchers and bear techs. With one exception, none of them radioed ahead to say they were coming through the area nor even checked with me to see if I needed anything or if I could assist them with their project. This included a bear tech and an invasive plant crew from region. I might have been able to help both with advice had they bothered to ask.

In early August I removed about 400 lbs of old lumber that has been saved for possible future use but been there for decades. Evan on trail crew came over and we sawed it up to sizes that could be packed out. TJ packed it all out in September.

The season was normal after that. Visitation seemed about average, perhaps down very slightly with fewer Scout groups.

Statistics

| | June | July | August | September | Oct. | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Visitor Contacts | 88 (4 days) | 671 | 800 | 481 | closed | 2040 |
| Miles hiked | 20 | 170 | 154 | 143 | | 487 |

Medicals/SAR

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|
| Dollar Lake | July | Altered | Flown out |
| Rae Lakes | July | Laceration | T&R |
| Rae Lakes | July | Hasty Search: child | Found |
| Woods Creek | August | Torn Knee Ligament | Flown out: 111 |
| Rae Lakes | September | Asthma Symptoms | VMC consult, T&R |

I monitored one lightning fire which started in August in the small canyon west of Dollar Lake and burned for several weeks, reaching about 1 acre in size

Law Enforcement

For the first time in my SEKI career, I wrote no citations.

Warnings (tent on meadow, washing in stream, food storage; one guy with a holstered weapon about to enter the park over Kearsarge Pass): **95**

In addition, according to the Road's End people, (b) (6) refused to pay the backcountry fee when he went into Sixty Lakes Basin on a climbing trip with a group from the southern California peak climbing group (they paid). (b) apparently threw a small hissy fit about the new requirement and threatened to challenge it in court etc. The permit issuer gave him a permit (writing "not paid" on the permit) but didn't call Jane or I to tell us he hadn't paid. I ran into the group and saw their permit but didn't know to ask for (b) (6). (They came in from several different directions, thus several permits.) A letter to (b) (6) might be in order and a word to the permit stations that when they have a problem that we can assist on, we should be radioed with the information.

It should also be noted that although backcountry rangers do not generate the sometimes impressive statistics often found in frontcountry LE summaries, our visitor contacts are without doubt not only far more numerous than frontcountry contacts, they are of several orders of magnitude better quality contacts. These "contacts" cited represent actual educational conversations with people. This is not reflected in our summary statistics and should be reemphasized: Backcountry rangers have the luxury of time – as well as an almost visceral need – to explain to park visitors why minimum impact camping is important to the health of their wilderness. We also take the time to make hikers more aware – and appreciate – what's around them as they trudge along the trail. We have 12 to 15 backcountry rangers repeating these messages again and again and again to over ten thousand wilderness users each summer. In my 35 years as a backcountry ranger I have seen the cumulative effect of these contacts and they have been spectacularly successful in making our visitors aware of their responsibilities in caring for their National Parks and wilderness. *Our successful efforts apply to 80% of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park and are central to the core mission of the National Park Service.* Such effort and success should not be trivialized by making management decisions based on incompatible statistical comparisons or on a hazy understanding of what it is we do out there.

Although we are both law enforcement rangers and both enforcing the regulations of the CFR, frontcountry and backcountry rangers are no longer doing it the same way, nor can we. I believe that an LE presence in the backcountry is critical to our ability to gain compliance with NPS regulations. What is increasingly worrisome is that a combination of factors is leading to abandoning 80% of the park to zero enforcement of wilderness regulations:

1. Increased emphasis of a law enforcement training standard that emphasizes the "interoperability" of all rangers will make it very difficult to find LE rangers for backcountry.
2. The extra money that a seasonal LE ranger costs that is seen as an unnecessary expense where LE statistics do not justify an LE backcountry ranger. Increasingly this money is seen as a source of money for frontcountry operations. As noted above, we don't and can't and shouldn't generate the same type of statistics. It is our long and short-term effect on compliance and visitor education that is critical to our duties and mission.
3. It is my direct experience from past years that a small but significant number of hikers quickly find out we have no enforcement powers and will take advantage of that.

Service Incidents

Visitor Assists (food, attempt to locate, messages, off-duty information etc.): 200

Resource Mngt. Assist:

Fish eradication crew (supplies, garbage, advice)

Meadow monitoring, Invasive species monitoring & obtaining a plant sample (Haultain)

UC Berkeley Frog Researchers (supplies, advice, garbage out; also observing Chytrid field lab)

John Wehausen & Bighorn Sheep Recovery Team advice sought on advisability of signing Baxter Pass trail; coordinating NPS sheep closure regulations with California Department of Fish & Game regulations (see Resource discussion below).

NPS Pika observations and 165 other wildlife sightings: Graber

PCTA (Pacific Crest Trail Association) Discuss NPS cooperation with minimum impact sheet for early-season PCT hikers.

Resource Management

Grazing opening dates were for a normal year. The trail crew was camped at Woods Creek crossing or was resupplied from there the entire summer. As such, that meadow received extremely high grazing use by NPS. Castle Dome meadow received moderate use with the entire meadow showing signs of grazing during the September biomass transect. White Fork meadow received no use and hasn't for over 5 years now. Baxter Meadow received about 20 animal nights from Onion Valley Pack Station (15 AUMs – approx.) and John Cunningham (14 nights on two trips).

Two research teams were in the Sixty Lakes Basin most of the summer: Dr. (b) (6) was back with his crew for the 9th season studying the Mountain Yellow Legged Frog. A UC Berkeley veterinarian was flown in for 3 days in August to set up a field lab analyzing MLF blood to help determine baseline health data for the frog populations and specifically determine susceptibility for the Chytrid fungus.

Two people from Danny Boyano's staff were also there continuing the 4th season of netting fish in the upper lakes there to reestablish the yellow-legged frog populations. The latter project has been dramatically successful and work was started on eradicating fish in Tulip Lake.

There are at least 3 small populations of the Mt. Lyell Salamander in Sixty Lakes basin, the largest numbering around 30 individuals. Not much is known of their population, distribution or habits in the Sierra. A UC student has started his doctoral research on them in Yosemite and SEKI this year which should allow a better idea on how rare they are.

Bighorn Sheep sightings were quite common this year, especially a group of about 12 rams in Sixty Lakes. Ewes and rams were seen early season in Gardiner Basin and I saw a group of 5 ewes and 3 lambs near Baxter Pass in early July. In September we watched a group of 11 rams descend from the shoulder of Fin Dome, butting heads often on the way. It is quite possible they use the open avalanche path just north of the lowest Rae Lake to cross the drainage to the Crest (they don't like traveling through forested country so this would be the shortest route to the Baxter/Dragon habitat).

As late as 1997, the CFR had a regulation limiting hiking and climbing in the Dragon/Baxter area. Such a regulation still exists on the east side of the crest in the USFS area, but seems to be gone from the CFR and the Superintendent's Compendium. I spoke with sheep researcher John Wehausen and he suggests that the Sheep Recovery Team revisit this matter and decide if such regulations are necessary and

coordinate between the agencies involved. We might at least want to look at the possibility of limiting numbers going over Baxter Pass during early lambing season (May until late July).

Bears

I did not hear of a single bear incident in the Rae/Woods & Twin Lakes area this year. There were bear tracks in Sixty Lakes and quite a lot of scat in the small drainage between the JMT and the 60 Lakes drainage showing at least one bear in the area most of the summer. However, there were no reported sightings or reports of campers having food threatened. All scat showed natural food and, as mentioned, about 98% of people are carrying canisters, including through-hikers.

Signs & Trails

A sign was put up at Dollar Lake showing the abandoned trail to Baxter Pass. Though Wehausen is not apparently bothered by the possible increased traffic into this area, it should probably be brought up with any NPS discussions on sheep management.

IBP & Concessions Use

All IBP & park Concession users followed regulations in the Rae area this year. Sobek Expeditions came through twice on stock-supported trips (6 head) doing the JMT from Florence Lake. This turned out to be a very popular trip and will likely be repeated in the future. The guides were very experienced and conscientious (contracted from Southern Sierra Mountain Guides). One guide service from the east side had a client fall and tear her ACL. The guide used a Satellite phone to call for a medivac. Several of the guide services contacted are routinely carrying Sat Phones now, which seems like a good idea. Three Corner Round and Cedar Grove pack station were in compliance with all regulations and cooperative.

Fire rings and Campsites

About half a dozen fire rings were removed in the Rae/60 Lakes area that had been built since the previous year. I met a member of the Pacific Crest Trail Hiker's Association and observed to her that I believed an increasing number of PCT hikers were ignoring NPS regulations because there were no rangers around when they come through in late May and early June. In addition, I told her I felt a significant number of PCT hikers were not well grounded in minimum impact philosophy. She thought it would be possible to send out a minimum impact sheet with the PCT permits that they issued. In addition, minimum impact sheets could be distributed at the spring PCT rendezvous held each spring prior to most people beginning the hike. I told her I'd contact her in the Fall and she could request I write such a minimum impact sheet through either the Wilderness or Sierra Crest office, if possible.

A campsite inventory was begun by Kings rangers. Once again I suggest consulting with Yosemite backcountry staff who have done such a project three times now and have established a protocol based on Parsons and Stohlgren's 1978 work. We need to decide what we want to use the data for as well as how to record and store it. The data I've seen from the other Kings rangers suggests we're not all doing the same thing or that it would be useful to others in the future.

Resource Projects

Dollar Lake was posted as closed to camping on the east side of the trail. All of the sites there are too close to water. They were removed and the area naturalized. Work was begun removing & naturalizing campsites closer than 50 feet to water on the entire Rae chain. Only about 10 were removed this year. This would be an excellent service project for a scout troop, taking only a few hours for a small group

Recommendations

1. Nothing I've seen this year makes me think there's any use for either the Baxter Creek drift fence or the White Fork drift fence.
2. I'm still on my *jihad* of getting as many of our backcountry records on the SEKI Network as possible. The same should be done with a representative sample of our photos. Pat Lineback thinks photos should go on the NPS Focus site. Pat has set up a subdirectory on the SEKI Network for us for us to use: **J:/share_docs/wilderness**. I'll be adding stuff to this as I can. Linda Mutch was going to check into the possibility of getting three to four weeks of funding to accomplish a large chunk of this. Bob Meadows makes the point that our station logs and year-end reports are the last large collection of uncollected resource data around. We need to do something to preserve this and make it more accessible.
3. Same as #2 above with the hope of putting together a map to graphically represent backcountry operations: patrol areas outlined with acreage of each; miles of trail per patrol area; SARs & Medicals mapped for the past 3+ years; sensitive meadow; meadows we do biomass transects in; sensitive species ranges (e.g. Bighorn Sheep, Mountain yellow-legged frog); maybe average the number of contacts per year (a small inset box would show such stats in each patrol area).
4. I talked to several local area people who hike a lot and were concerned with the total costs of the new permit fees. Perhaps we should make a yearly backcountry hiking pass available – something like \$20 per year.

Rae Lakes Station Need 2005

40 large plastic trash bags
1 Gal. White Gas
1 Gal. Kerosene for starting presto logs
2 boxes presto (?) logs
24 AAA batteries
2 New thick (e.g. 4 inches) foam sleeping pads

On Hand 2004:

2 Large Propane, Full
3 sleeping bags
1 large Eureka! Tent
1 Sierra Designs Mountain tent
4 TP
10 Paper Towels
4 small propane
1 Gal. White Gas
12 AA batteries
5 boxes matches
Nomex pants & Shirt
No AA recharger
No NiMh AA batteries
2 Motorola Batteries '04 MT 1000
7 Presto (Kerosene) logs
2 boxes assorted food

One of the green boxes, the 50 Gal drum with the foam pads and the red box with the fuel & stove were sealed at the end of the season with caulk and might be a little hard to open in the spring.

2004

COPY

Cindy J. Wood
5-31-04 to 9-27-04

I was on duty at the Roaring River Ranger Station from June 27, 2004 through September 24, 2004. It was my first season at Roaring River. I enjoyed getting to know the trails, passes, meadows and campsites in the Roaring River and Ranger Lakes areas.

A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS - STATISTICS

During the season, I patrolled 626 miles of trail. I patrolled 504 miles on stock and 122 miles on foot. I contacted 1,056 visitors this season. (601 Backpackers, 45 Dayhikers, 8 Hunters, 204 NPS, 8 ES, 2 F&G, 0 Rafters, 0 Kayaekers, 17 Dayriders with 40 head of stock, 150 Stock Users with 291 head of stock and 21 Administrative Stock Users with 134 head of stock and 0 Burros and 0 Llamas. Also 30 cows within the NPS boundaries.)

There were no arrests or citations this season. Verbal Warnings and Education for: Bears, Food Storage, Foil and trash in the firepits and bear boxes, Proper stock camping methods and meadow grazing rules, Fishing and Camping rules. Other Special Topics: Leave No Trace talks, Historic Preservation talks and local tours.

FIRST AID ASSISTS, MEDIVACS AND SARS

First aid assists during the season included: blisters, splinters, minor burns, scrapes and cuts.

Stock first aid assists included: scrapes, colic and lameness.

On 7-3, A member of the NPS "Weed Crew" reported that a friend ~~was expected to hike in and that he was overdue.~~ I did a Hasty Search of the trail junctions, made radio inquiries and then started a trail check back towards Cedar Grove. I met him on the trail. Everything was fine, he had just gotten a late start.

On 9-2, Assisted with a lame mule. Loaned some medicine and kept a load of gear at the ranger station so the mule could walk out empty. The gear was taken out later.

On 9-11, I assisted with a packer and his stock group with a "run away mule". It didn't seem to be caught and packed up. It took 4 of us about 2 hours to catch it. It was finally roped by Pick Clark of the group.

On 9-15, I got a call about a 18 year old woman with a sore knee near Colby Pass. I headed back to the station to gear up for a SAR. I headed out the next morning and met the [REDACTED] group near Big Wet Meadow in Cloud Canyon. The knee was a preexisting condition and the group turned back from a cross-country Milestone trip. They were requesting stock evacuation from Horse Corral Pack Station. The pack station was booked up and I offered to bring her out. She rode to the Roaring River Ranger Station that day and I packed her and her gear out to the Govt. corral the next day and drove her to Grant Grove. The other 3 members of her party hiked out over Avalanche Pass to Cedar Grove.

On 9-22, I assisted with a Colicky horse at the station. I loaned them some medicine in case it was needed on the trip out. The horse seemed to improve and got out ok, but I heard that it died later of unknown causes. (from Horse Corral Pack Station)

WEATHER SUMMARY

It was another dry winter and the creeks and rivers were low this spring. Many creeks on the Jennie Lakes Wilderness, FS went dry this summer and the creeks and Roaring River was extremely low by fall! We had some rain in early July, but otherwise it was dry.

B. USE PATTERNS

Since this was my first season in a new patrol area....I'm getting to know the various visitors. I saw more backpackers in July and August. There seemed to be alot of crosscountry trips from Deadman Canyon to Big Bird Lake and out to Pear Lake or Lodgepole. Many trips also circled from Deadman Canyon to Cloud Canyon. There was a steady use by Horse Corral Pack Station. Most of their trips are spotted in and the packer and stock go back out the same day. They also had trips into Cloud and Deadman Canyons. They also did a few trips out of the Wolverton area, since there is no longer a pack station there and Mineral King Pack Station was closed again this year. Private stock users tend to have their favorite spots, this year use was mostly at Austin Camp, Ranger Meadow and Scaffold Meadow. There were more backpackers using Avalanche Pass than I would have expected.

Roaring River Area, Silliman Pass

Assisted the NPS staff (Pres.), packed their gear out to Grant Grove.

Assisted NPS "Meadow Monitoring", Cattie Karplus, check meadows and monitoring plots. Assist with stock transport and pack out to the Sugarloaf boundary.

Colby Pass trip with Charley Mills from Horse Corral Pack Station. Check trail and ride over Colby Pass to Junction Meadow (on the Kern) and back to Gallats Lake area. (Was the pass really closed?) Then returned over Colby Pass, down the slick rock and steps. A very good trip.

Ranger Lakes area, Silliman Pass to JO Pass, Rowell Meadow to the Bell Canyon Entrance and back to Roaring River Station, I learned a lot of new trail, meadow locations ect.

Aircraft

This area has some overflights, but I did not see or report any Military Low Flyers.

The Park Helicopter was in the area for fires, the lightening caused "Ferguson Fire" and "Cloud Canyon Fire" and to work on the Palmer Repeater.

Hunting Activity

I closed the station and left the backcountry on the friday before opening weekend. I met many hunters on the Forest Service roads and at Horse Corral Pack Station. I was laid off, so we were unable to do any hunting patrols.

Commercial Use

Outward Bound did quite a few Backpacking trips through the area.

The Bearskin Meadow Diabetic Youth groups did quite a few trips and stopped in to check on rules, where to camp ect.

Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides did two trips for REI.

Horse Corral Pack Station was the only commercial stock use that I met in the Roaring River area this summer. I met with Charley and Judy Mills throughtout the summer, so I usually knew when trips were coming in and which would be drop offs and which were full service and where. This was helpful to spread out the grazing and keep use scattered around. They also try not to use the favorite grazing areas of the private trips...Scaffold, Sugarloaf and Austin Camp areas. They drop off a lot of trips at the Lakes and near

Sugarloaf Meadow and the rest of the stock out in the same day. This reduces a lot of stock grazing and also keeps the main stock camps near the meadows open for other stock users or large backpacker groups. I appreciate their helpful attitudes towards myself, to other user groups, the Forest Service and the Park Service.

C. NATURAL RESOURCES

Rattlesnakes: I saw one rattlesnake near Sugarloaf Meadow.

Bears: There was a Brown Mother Bear with twin cubs that I often saw at Scaffold Meadow. They were seen by a few visitors, but there were no problems. I also saw four bears in lower Cloud Canyon and two in middle Deadman Canyon. No visitors reported seeing these bears. I saw them in early July and then they drifted back off the trails as more people came into the mountains.

Butterflies: I saw some Monarchs, Mountain Fritillary, Pine Whites, Mourning Cloaks, and Alfalfa Butterflies.

Birds: Red Tailed Hawks and Ravens were seen. No Bald Eagles.

Fishing: The creeks and Roaring River were very low this year.

Meadows: The meadows opened on a "dry" schedule this year. I did not get to see most of the meadows before they officially opened. I was busy opening up the ranger station and putting up the lower fences. Jim Gould put up the top 3 fences in Deadman in late June and said that Ranger Meadow looked wet. Luckily most stock use moved in slowly and I asked Horse Corral Pack Station to wait on the upper meadows until mid-July if possible.

Use from all stock users was scattered to various meadows during most of the summer. Austin Trail Crew Camp was used the most and is favored by many private groups. One full service trip by HCPS also stayed here. Stock drifted south to graze at the lower meadow also. Larger groups of stock should be directed to larger meadows, but most groups get there in one day and don't want to push on to Ranger Meadow or Big Wet Meadow. This did give Sugarloaf Meadow a rest though.....

Deadman Meadow recieved no use this year.

Scaffold Meadow recieved the most use this season. Mostly Administrative, some private and some commercial. The trail crew cut out some downed trees in September, which allowed stock to drift down and graze in the lower meadow. This meadow gets use, but it is also located best for the ranger stock and limited 1 night a week used by the trail crew for part of the season. I felt it was better to save Lackey Pasture for NPS emergencies.(In late or need to get out early for SAR ect.) I feel Austin Camp Meadows should be saved for other users- private & commercial. Most other areas are too far away to be practical for "on call" ranger stock.

I tried to move the stock around as much as possible. This will increase next year as I came out more to do project work. My stock was used on sign projects, packing out NPS groups and visitors, bringing in supplies, solar batteries, barley, propane tanks ect.

In the fall, the trail crew moved back to the ranger station area. Instead of grazing at Scaffold Meadow, Rex grazed on the West Side of Roaring River, which had been requested of him in the past.... There is no real area to graze, just scattered dry grass. This caused the stock to break down the JR Pasture fence to try to get in there and to walk through the Backpacker camps near the station. The stock cause multiple trails, manure, bell sounds and fear to this prime backpacker location. This does not seem practical or desireable to me. I would rather see the stock continue to graze once a week at Scaffold....the meadow(especially the lower end) could handle this fine and the stock drifts out and grazes the dry hillsides over on that side. This choice of grazing seems to only aid in keeping the paper numbers lower on the Scaffold Meadow and is not fair to the other users. Apparently in the past, before the station fence was put in, the Govt. stock used to drift down the West Side to the stringer Meadow near the swinging gate.....this apparently was not wanted??so the station fence was added and now there is a different problem. Perhaps we could all talk about this?

No Repeat Meadow Photos were taken this year.

Meadow Monitoring: Catie Karplus came through and showed me most of the plot areas and meadow areas and camps in Deadman Canyon. I appreciate her help. We talked about what meadows were best able to handle more use and which needed a rest. I did meadow monitoring in September and returned the samples and gear to Sylvia. I got to see and get to know most meadows better as I dropped all the fences in the fall and re-evaluated them.

The "Weed Crew" was in to hunt and pull Bull Thistles at the station area, Williams Fire area and Sugarloaf.

The Sensitive Plant crew was in and some Vegetation Mapping Crews.

Fire Research was done near Comanche Meadow on the Williams Fire.
(spring and fall)

On July 6th, I found a small fire near Ferguson Creek. It was lightening caused. I radio'd it in and it was monitored and allowed to burn. Later, it was decided to put it out and the crew left on July 15. On August 3, I got reports that it was burning again. On August 4, I tried putting it out with dirt and a line, but had to call out and request a crew be sent in. The log was elevated and had 2 to 4 foot flame and was burning towards the trail. It was put out again and didn't come back.

The Cloud Forest is a very high altitude forest with very limited growth. Many of the trees are very old and have been put under protection. The forest is very beautiful?

It was a very dry summer in 1974. Many of the species in the Forest Service went dry and stocks and prices were very low. This is the first time I have ever known of that All Campfires were not allowed at all in the Backcountry. People did obey, but many complained about this rule. Especially when it got colder and snowed in the fall.

Cows: I saw cows in Comanche Meadow three times this year. The main damage these cows cause is to the trails. They cause multiple trails or make a one foot wide trail become a 20 foot wide trail. They seem to like to hang out at the main backpacker camp with the bear box at Comanche Meadow. I received numerous complaints and reports. There was also trampled ground, manure and multiple trails going to the Seville Lake Junction, Sugarloaf Entrance to Comanche, Comanche to Williams Meadow and out Kanawyer Gap. What's the answer to this problem? We don't have any fences on our boundaries although there used to be in the past.....?

D. CULTURAL RESOURCES

I've enjoyed learning some of the history of this area. There is a very interesting "Lackey-Barton Photo Album" at the station. So, there is some of the cow history, (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A). Also Indian sites and historic camps ect.

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A) Part of the shingled roof is missing and a lot is loose. The three roof rafters seem solid and with a little work this cabin could easily be stabilized before more internal damage happens. Apparently, it has been stabilized in the past and was decided to be kept as an example of (b) (3) (A), building style in 1978.

(b) (3) (A), (b) (3) (B) It is another of

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A) It's similar to the (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) in construction and it also has bars on the windows and shakes on the interior walls. Do we know more history on this? Early photos?

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A) from the old cow camp days. Some early photos are in the album. It has been rebuilt by the NPS crew...15? years ago or so. The marmots are digging under by the door and it is sinking and hard to open. It seems to be in good condition, the debris and needles need to be cleared off of the roof. I would need a rope and webbing for safety.

Arborglyghts: There are many Pasque Sheep Herder tree carvings in the area, I was able to locate some. The search continues.

I didn't know about the 30 tree when I was at IO Pass. so I'll have to return there in the future and get a photo of the carving.

I zeroxed all the material and old letters in the "historic file" that is at the Roaring River Ranger Station, I will give a copy to Tom Burge at the museum. I will also give him photos of the cabins and historic sites.

There is a historic rocking chair at the station that was packed into the area in 1948 on the back of a horse. There is a photo of it in the Barton-Lackey photo album. There is another old, rough built chair, but I don't know any history on it or the old table on the porch.

E. BACKCOUNTRY FACILITIES

Roaring River Ranger Station: Jim Gould hiked in and did some of the station opening chores. (b) (6) showed (b) (6) how to set up the water system. The solar could not be set up since the batteries were gone, but I packed them back in and redid most of the connections and it seemed to be charging ok. It did go to yellow quite a bit. (There's only 2 batteries, not three like most of the systems have.) (b) (6) packed (b) (7)(F) to catch the afternoon sun and hooked it to a separate controller that also came out of Ranger Lake. This helped keep the batteries up to full charge, even in the fall with less sun available.

The current propane refrigerator did not work well. It can not be used at all without an electrical hook up. I lost three food resupplies and had a lot of rotten food to burn up. It will be changed out next season. Great!!

Otherwise, things at the station worked well this year. I did basic repairs: fixed the shower drain, solar system, wiring, trimmed the bathroom door, so it will close, cleaned out the tool room, fixed a rack for horse shoes and did inventories.

~~The NPS riding saddles were chewed on by critters. The saddle log at the station invites this. What can be done or built to protect these expensive items? They seemed to mainly chew out the rawhide laces. I thought a saddle log with metal pipe legs might work or folding metal saddle racks that could be lowered for the winter? These could be on the side of the station. Ideas?~~

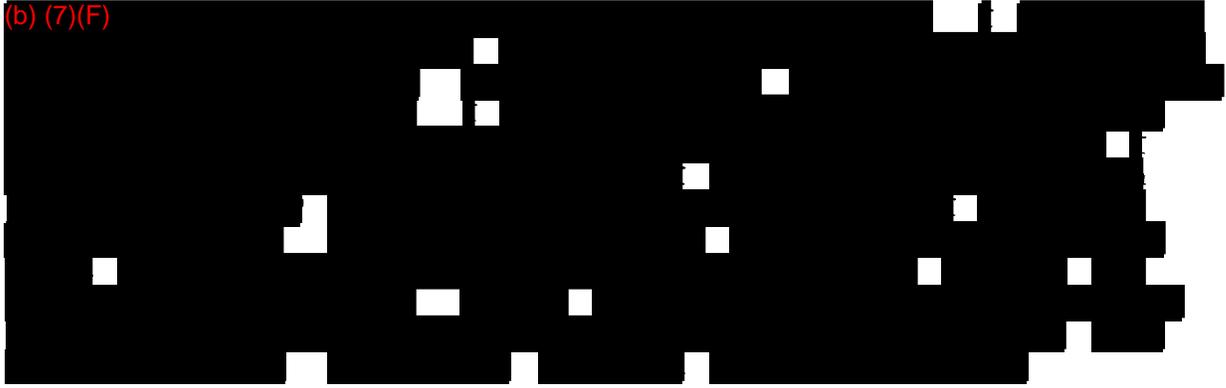
A screen door would be really great on the front door. (35 7/8 by 81 or 82 inches) It should be wooden and fit the rustic station. This could be packed in on mules in pieces or flown in with the new refrigerator next year.

Propane: I used 1 medium tank and 1 small tank this year. (two were only 1/2 full) I packed 3 tanks back in. 1 tank has an old valve and can't be refilled and 1 small tank is empty...but feels half full and has a lot of weight...? They are at the Ranger Office shed.

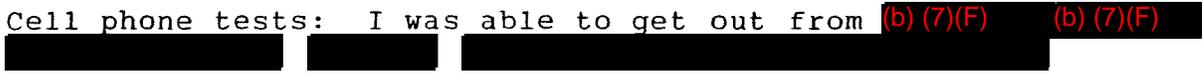
Backpacker Camp Pit Toilet: It needs a new outhouse seat. The enamel is peeling off of the old seat and is a hazard.

The old Ranger Lake "station" is gone, but the old plywood platform is still there and also many boxes of NPS gear in bear boxes ect. This is still an eyesore and may be what was complained about as a "stock camp" in the area that "moved bear boxes" ect. What is the future plan for this area? I agree that it should be cleaned up more and no blue tarps or loud colors should be used, since it can be seen from Siliman Pass. This could be a project for next year. If the platform was to be packed out, we would need a way to cut it into "packable" pieces.

(b) (7)(F)



Cell phone tests: I was able to get out from (b) (7)(F) (b) (7)(F)



Drift Fences and Gates:

The Sugarloaf/Comanche drift fence needs the most work. It needs 1 new gate post, brushing and repair. It could use 17 posts added. It also needs 10 posts added at trees and 5 drop posts at trees. This is a lot of needed work, but it is an important fence...to keep cows out and visitor stock in. The trail area fence and gate would stop most stock, but the upper end has many holes and is not set up very well as a "drop" fence. Perhaps the trail crew could help by cutting fence posts? This could be one big project or worked on over a few years.

The Swinging Gate fence below the station is in pretty good shape, it could use one post next year.

The Wire Gate fence below the station was repaired this year and is in good shape.

The 18 Pasture fence has 15 posts replaced and the SW corner rebuilt. It also needs 2 trees cut off the fence line.

Lackey Pasture fence needs a few posts. I added 6 posts this year. It also needs 2 trees cut off the fence line.

Moraine drift fence is a long fence. I did quite a bit of work on it this year. I replanted 10 posts. I did a lot of wire repairs and worked on drop posts. It needs about 10 more posts and 4 trees cut off the fenceline.

Grasshopper fence recieved a lot of work this year. It still needs 4 posts added. New drop sections were added this year.

Cement Table fence recieved a lot of work this year. 6 posts were added. It still needs about 10 posts reset or added. It needs some trees cut off the line.

Big Wet drift fence is in fair shape, it will need basic repairs.

Grand Palace drift fence is in fair shape, it will need basic repairs.

Austin drift fence needs brushing and 5 posts on the upper end. Stock broke through the lower end. It needs a Main post or another section of log fence added.

Austin (Groundhog?) fence needs trees cut off of the line.(5) It needs 14 posts added and many wire repairs and pruning.

The Grave Gate is in fair shape.

The Lower Ranger drift fence is in fair shape. It could use a few posts.

The Upper Ranger drift fence could use some work on the main post and wire on the upper end or post rails added.

A chainsaw with a 24" bar would be a great tool to help work on these fences. Posts need to be cut and larger trees cut off of the fencelines. It's easiest to work on them in the spring as they are put up, unless a major project is planned.

The most important fences for visitor stock seems to be Sugarloaf, Lackey Pasture, Scaffold/Moraine and Austin fence. These were "tested" and broken through by visitor stock this year and repairs during the summer.

The Ranger Station fence is in fair shape.

Signs:

I put up the new "Bell Canyon" sign at the Comanche Meadow Camp

I planted the "Williams Meadow/Kanayer Gap" sign at the Junction.

I Planted the new Bell Canyon Entrance Boundary sign and removed and packed out the old wooden boundary sign.

Is there a sign that needs to go to Silliman Pass?

Some of the junctions have signs on different posts....these could be combined if we could drill holes in the metal posts out in the field. Do we have a battery drill that could handle this?

The sign at the Seville Lake Junction is poorly placed and hard to read. Visitors have become lost here. The lower sign faces the wrong way.

The Sugarloaf Entrance sign should be moved so it is easier to be seen or the log should be cut out. The old wooden sign needs to be removed.

F. TRAILS

The Roaring River Trail Crew did a lot of great work this year. They had a large, 7 person crew this year and did work and stabilization work through the Williams Fire area. They cleared trees, cleaned waterbars and general maintenance to all of the trails. They did many rock projects, steps, walls and waterbars on the Whaleback. They completed a lot of much needed pruning. I appreciate Rex's help with the opening of the water system and packing in the extra solar panel. Thanks also for feeding stock at the Govt. corral and information on the Roaring River area.

I don't know if it was due to the extra dry year, but many trees fell across the trails all through the summer. This is another reason that I would like to have a 24" chainsaw at the station. I took the small stihl on trips, but it was too small to cut most of the trees and it was easier to use a folding saw on the small ones.

Problem area: There are 2 rocks that hit mule packs and try to shove the mule off of the trail. This also caused damage to the rock walls and corners of the switchbacks. These are located on the switchbacks below Colby Pass. One rock could be knocked off with a sledge or pin & feathers. The other spot may need the wall built fartherout, to allow a pack animal to pass more safely.

I'd appreciate any help with cutting fence posts, especially if there is any cedar we could split for posts!

G. CAMP AREAS

I cleaned 30 firepits this season and obliterated 4 fires.

The pit toilet at the main backpacker camp by the ranger station needs a new seat. The enamel is peeling back and it is a hazard.

The pit toilet by the sliding box camp is ok.

Many large groups, backpacker and spotted by the pack station use Sugarloaf Meadow camp. This is mainly to be able to use the bear box. It is often not available for stock use even though it is set up as the main stock camp. Perhaps another site in this same area could be found to be a secondary site. Or if a bear box were added at the Sugarloaf Creek Crossing camp, then large backpacker groups could use it. Many Commercial backpacking groups and beginner groups come through this area and want to use the bear boxes, because they have so much food to store at the beginning of their trips or because they are beginners and find this easier. The Bear Box sign added at Comanche Meadow has helped people find this site. It is often filled with groups and spot trips. What is the plan for these areas? More boxes? or?

The Knoll Camp near Scaffold Meadow has a bear box, but it is difficult to find. Even with the map on the station bulletin board, I usually have to walk people over to it or they get lost and go up the Avalanche trail. This has worked well for stock and for many large Backpacker groups.

Austin Trail Crew camp is a favorite among private stock users who know the area. It is a nice camp, but has no bear box.

The Lakes seem to get a lot of use, but people are doing pretty good about keeping the camps clean. I picked up some trash and cleaned fire pits. Thanks to the other folks who also helped clean up these areas during the season.

Trash, food and abandoned items are still being left in the Bear Boxes. Foil, cans, glass and trash are still being burned or hidden in the firepits. Rocks are still being added to the "Three Rock" firepits. This all makes cleaning the pits very time consuming. Continued education and Leave No Trace talks are a must!!

There are many Trail Crew boxes at stock camps in both canyons. These are currently locked.....if these could be used by visitors it would really help. Is this an option? Has there been problems in the past?

H. PERMIT SYSTEM

I was surprised to find out that the Roaring River Wilderness, FS, does not require permits for overnight use. It does require fire permits. I was glad to find that this was not a giant problem and that most people know about the area and get permits at Grant Grove. I was glad that Horse Corral Pack Station was still allowed to write permits this season. They get a few people that would otherwise not have gotten a permit or our information. They also get a lot of phone calls asking about the FS/NPS rules and permit requirements.

There are also a lot of people who hike into the Ranger Lakes/Roaring River area from Lodgepole and Cedar Grove. Most were well informed.

I am very glad that the wilderness "camping fee" is set at the same price for foot and stock visitors.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be better if the ranger could get into the area sooner to evaluate meadows, put up drift fences and open the station.

Continue drift fence work projects and repairs.

Is there a sign inventory for Roaring River & Ranger Lakes area? Update the forms or start a new inventory.....combine signs on one post at junctions if possible. Are there any other signs waiting to go up? Move the Sugarloaf entrance sign and remove the old wooden sign. Silliman Pass sign?

Cows at Comanche meadow and elsewhere in NPS....what's the answer? Any thoughts of refencing the boundary or adding gates?

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



Add a rustic wooden screen door to the Roaring River Ranger Station.

Ranger Lake Platform- removal or improvement.

Rebuild the Sugarloaf/Comanche drift fence and gate project.

It would be good to work through the end of September to allow time for meadow monitoring, visitor contacts, dropping fences and other projects. Hunting patrols could also be done on loop trips through Silliman and JO pass and back and from Avalanche pass and the Don Cecil trail. This could be combined with gear and supplies going in and out of the station or with patrols' with a supervisor or Cedar Grove stock Rangers.

Kitchen:

- 2 liquid soap dispensers
- 1 refill for above
- 1 large liquid laundry soap
- 1 large dish soap
- 1/2 small dish soap
- 2 scrub sponges
- 4 sponges
- 1 cleanser
- 1 window cleaner
- 4 spray bottles
- 6 green scrubbers
- 10 sos pads
- 2 metal trail crew scrubbers
- 1 large dish drainer and rack
- 1 extra small dish drainer and rack
- 1 murphy oil soap cleaner for wood walls
- steal wool
- 2 new dish washing tubs - plastic
- 1 old tub
- 0 Antifreeze for drains in fall
- 6 new hot pads
- 4 old hot pads
- 2 boxes kitchen matches

Added items in 04 - by C. Wood

- 3 fry pan set
- 1 strainer for pasta
- 1 set steak knives
- 1 set measuring cups
- 1 set serving utensils
- 1 D battery operated shower pump
- 1 new 5 gal. orange "shower water" bucket
- 4 sets of sheets
- 2 outside chair cushions for porch chairs.
- 3 repair sets for captains chairs
- 10 plastic bowls
- 1 potatoe masher
- 6 wall hooks 7 door hooks
- 3 new pillows & cases
- 1 new garden hose for laundry(75 ft.)
- 6 dish towels
- 1 extension cord
- 2 spoon rests
- 1 set tupperware containers
- 1 covered cake pan
- 1 shower drain cover
- 1 kitchen drain catcher
- 2 clothes lines & pins
- 3 steno pads
- 3 scotch tape
- 1 white out
- 2 tongs
- 2 8x10 brown tarps
- 1 roll romex for solar

- 3 gal. white gas
- 2 small white gas bottles
- 1 gal. bleach
- 1 gal. glass cleaner
- 1 backpacker stove and cook pot
- 1 spare seat for directors chair
- 1 NPS bear cannister
- 10 Toilet paper
- 3 govt. paper towels
- 5 blue propane cannisters for coleman lanterns
- 2 propane cannister lanterns
- 1 box small trash bags
- 1 oil lamp
- 1 Aladin oil lamp
- 3 gal. kerosene
- 1 two burner new black stove(needs hook ups)
- 1 small roll metal screen
- 1 roll fiberglass screen
- 4 pairs of leather gloves
- 1 med. size - North face pack
- 1 med. size - Gregory pack
- 3 cans ant killer
- 1 case or more of MRE's
- 2 old 1 gal. water canteens
- 1 dresser
- 2 good director chairs
- 2 folding camp chairs
- 1 army cot (?)
- 2 fedco bladder bags
- 1 wooden long back board
- 1 old hard hat
- 3 Oxygen bottles, 1 Regulator and Masks in orange rope bag
- 4 new screens & 6 old screens for windows
- 1 sponge mop & 1 old rag mop
- 4 McClouds
- 1 old mop bucket
- 1 sledge hammer
- 1 white gas lantern
- 1 small and 1 large double bit axes
- 1 pick with handle and 1 pick without handle

- 2 old shovels
- 1 asphalt rake
- 1 old carpenter saw
- 1 old 4 foot cross cut saw
- 1 extra cross cut blade
- 2 old aluminum sign posts
- 1 six foot cross cut saw(historic?)

Solar Set Up Includes

- 1 extra light (from Ranger Lake)
- 50 feet of 12 gauge wire
- misc. small parts/wire/1 electrical tape
- 1 extension cord
- 2 panels connected for RS roof & connects to Prostar 12 & outgoing
- 1 (b) (7)(F) [REDACTED]
- 2 XP 125 inverters(1 may not work?)(1 from Ranger Lake)
- 2 sunlyte gell batteries(old)
- 1 Motorola MT 1000/426 charger

- 1 old wooden handle ice axe
- 1 snow shovel
- 1 50 ft. old gold line
- 3 lg. metal splitting wedges
- 1 sm. rock hammer
- misc. cable
- 1 100 ft. tape measure

Lumber

- 6 1x2x 3ft.
- 1 1x12x4 ft.

- 2 nose bags
- 2 old lead ropes
- 1/2 can of Barley(1 1/2 bags)
- 1 full small can of Alfalfa pellets(1 1/2 bags)
- 3 small salt blocks
- 1 Electric fence kit
- 1/3 mineral block
- 1 bag of repair leather

INVENTORY IN BEDROOM CLOSET

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 extra mattress | 2 rain suits |
| 4 bath towels | 1 rain slicker |
| 2 therma rests | 3 new pillows |
| 1 bivy sack | 2 old sleeping bags |
| 2 smaller unknown tents | 4 sets of new sheets |
| 2 new chair cushions for porch | |

I left 1 tub of food in the store room(dry goods)
 1 set shampoo/conditioner
 1/2 oatmeal/almond liquid soap and 1 bar soap
 some food in shelves: spaghetti & noodles, olive oil & 1/4 reg oil
 and misc. to start with or pick up later.

ROARING RIVER RANGERS & ALTON STOCK INVENTORY IN TOOL ROOM

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 full shoeing kit | SHOES |
| 1 shoeing chaps | |
| 1 new rasp | 9 size 2 |
| 1 new nippers | 17 size 1 |
| 1 scale | 14 size 0 |
| 1 bell | 14 size 00 |
| 2 mane combs | 14 size 000 |
| 2 brushes | |
| 1 comb | 1 box #5 city head nails |
| 1 hoof pick | 1 box of rivets & burrs |
| 1 set slings | |
| 1 leadrope snap | |
| misc. keepers and leather items | |

0 penicillin
 5 syringes & many needles
 4 vet wrap
 1/2 gall salve
 1 Fura zone
 10 butte tablets
 3 uniprim powder(exp. 10-07)
 3 clear eyes
 2 wonder dust
 2 1/2 blue lotion spray
 1 butte paste(exp. 3-06)
 2 corona (1/3 full)
 0 banamine paste
 2 fly wipe concentrate
 1 roll on fly wipe & 1 spray bottle

VET FIRST AID KIT IN ORANGE METAL BOX FOR THE TRAIL

1 corona ointment tube
 2 uniprim powder(penicillin) exp. 2-06
 1 banamine paste (exp. 12-05)
 1 blue lotion spray
~~7 butte tablets (04)~~
 5 gauze pads
 1 vet wrap
 1 field dressing
 1 syringe
 1 clear eyes
 1 stretch gauze

WISH LIST FOR STOCK:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 banamine paste | 1 pint surgical scrub |
| 2 butte paste | 1 epsom salts |
| 6 surgical scrub/sponges | 2 mule snaps & 2 horse snaps |

- 1/2 roll of smooth fence wire
- 1 gal. 50:1 mix (04)
- 1 gal. gas (04) not mixed
- 1 small gas mix and 1 small bar oil for trail
- 1/2 gal. bar oil
- 2 2 stroke oil for mixing (50:1)
- some fence staples, but we need more!!
- 12 Please close gate signs with lag screws
- 8 misc. metal signs - old various
- 2 old canvas tarps
- 1 plastic gas can/oil with old gas/oil
- 1 wash pan - metal
- 2 laundry/water buckets - metal (from ranger lake)
- 2 2 stroke gas mix for 32:1
- 1 wd-40
- 1 starting fluid
- 1 thread compound
- 1 bar tip grease gun - full
- misc. plumbing repair and parts
- 5/8 " hose repair connectors
- 1 lubricating oil

good assortment of washers, screws, nails, bolts, hook & eyes, ect.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 wooden handled pruners | 1 thistle shovel |
| 1 alum. pruners | 1 pulaski |
| 2 hedge trimmers | 1 mini sledge |
| 1 hatchet | 1 asphalt rake |
| 1 come-a-long | 2 carpenters saws |
| 1 fence stretcher | 1 snow shovel |
| 1 drain snake | 1 post hole digger |
| 2 collapseable stock rakes | 1 small trail bar |
| 2 fire shovels | 1 old broom |
| 1 old shovel | 1 brace with a few small bits |
| 1 double bit axe | 1 carpenter square |
| 1 splitting maul | 1 10" level |
| 1 sledge hammer | 3 large splitting wedges |
| 2 hack saws & 1 doz. blades | 1 keyhole saw |
| 1 smooth plane | 1 full can of clothes pins |
| 4 colors of flagging | 1 draw knife |
| 2 metal brushes(1 lg & 1 sm) | 1 caulking gun(no caulk tubes) |
| 4 plastic chainsaw wedges | 2 funnels |
| 2 chainsaw chaps | 1 paint roller & handle |
| misc. files | 5 paint brushes |
| 2 extra large monkey wrenches | 1 crowbar |
| 1 small military shovel | 1 goggles |
| 1 old homelite saw-doesn't work? | 4 putty knives |
| 3 hammers | 1 tin snips |
| 2 new fence plyers & 1 old pair | 2 vice grips |
| 3 plyers | 1 needle nose plyers |
| 3 crescent wrenches(6", 8", 10") | 1 channel locks |

RRRS - TOOL ROOM - INVENTORY - 11/10/11

- 1 chisle
- 6 assorted straight screwdrivers
- 3 assorted phillips screwdrivers
- 1 srench
- 1 length orange webbing
- 1 short handled leaf rake
- 2 large grates for fire pit
- 2 small backpacker grills
- 1 old 50 foot black hose
- 1 new 75 foot blue garden hose
- 1 mountain maytag
- 1 ringer
- 1 wash tub - square
- 2 round wash tubs(1 for water trough in JR Pasture)
- 1 anvil
- 1 pipe vise
- 1 wheelbarrow with hard rubber tire

Propane

- 2 med. tanks
- 1 sm. tank

2 med. tanks that are 3/4 full

ROARING RIVER RANGER STATION - First aid & Office supplies

- 1 red roll up first aid kit (very basic)
- 1 blood pressure cuff with NO stethoscope
- basic first aid supplies
- 2 Alcohol

basic office supplies

- empty box of lamination sheets
- 0 steno pads
- 0 white lined pad
- 4 orange fire pads

- 0 black govt. pens
- 1 roll duct tape
- 8 sun screen
- 1 hole punch
- 1 old "lost & found" form book
- 1 old citation book
- 1 written warning book

many NPS info books, wildlife, mammal, reptile, birds, airplanes, flowers ect. I added the place names book this year.

- 1-2 Epipens
- 4-6 Oral Glucose
- 1 Oral airway set
- 1 Nasal airway set
- 1 Bag Valve Mask
- 1 Box of Bandaides
- Mole skin
- 1 Large First Aid Kit for the trail
- 1 Padded Oxygen tank bag & to hold regulator & masks ect.
- 1 pint of Surgical Scrub
- 6 Surgical Scrub sponges

- 3 Steno Pads
- 1 Lined White Pad
- 1 Box of Govt. Pens
- ! Box of Laminating Sheets(50)
- 1 Box Thumb Tacks
- 1 Govt. Calendar(05)
- 3 Boxes of Kitchen Matches
- 4 Scrub/Sponges
- 18 D size Batteries

- 1 Box Fence Staples - 1 1/2 long
- 1 Roll Smooth Wire
- 1 3/4" Shut Off Valve
- 1 Screen Door- wooden 35 7/8 x 81" for front door
- 1 Set Auger Bits for the brace with bits up to 1"
- 12 Spikes for hitch rails (10' or 12")
- 1 extra small straight screwdriver to use on the solar hookups
- 1 Case of Propane Cannisters(blue) for Lanterns
- 2 Collapseable Buckets for camping
- 1 9mm Gun Cleaning Kit
- 2 5 gal. Square Hot Water cans from the warehouse
- 1 set hinges for screen door
- 1 Compass

Folding saddle racks or Pipe bases to make a critter proof saddle rack area. suggestions?

- 1 Digital Camera with case
- 2 New Hard Hats with chin straps & easy adjuster
- 1 New Outhouse Toilet Seat
- 1 24" Chainsaw with 1 extra chain & files to fit!!

Thanks for a recent letter. I am a big fan of NPS. There is a lot of historic sites, and many of them are in need of projects to work on now, and I would like to see some work and continue to work on them and explore some more.

I appreciate all the help from many NPS employees, "Regular" visitors and many new ones for the help, information, stories, hints and stories on old trails, campsites ect. I hope to see you all next year.

.....Cindy J. Wood

I can be contacted at

(b) [REDACTED]
(6) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (A), (b) (3) (B)

2004 nominated to Register of Historic Places

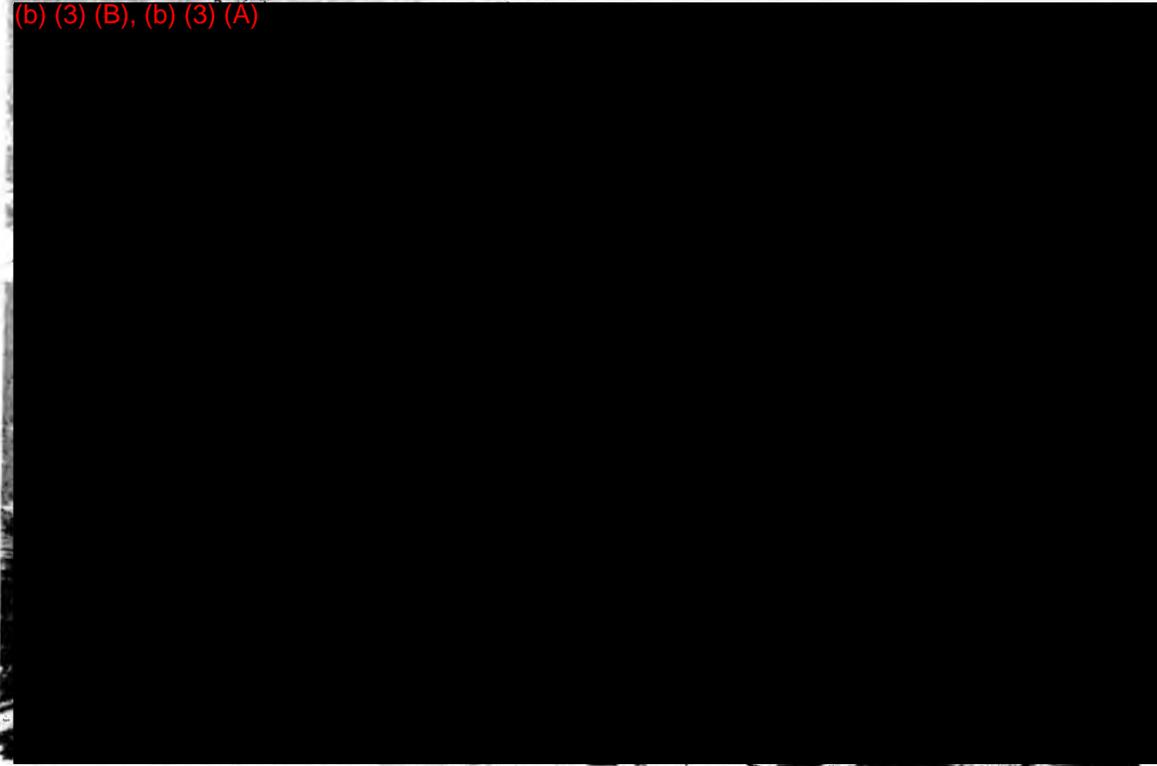
(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (B)

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

Back Rock view of Rock Fire place

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



(b) (3) (B) (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A) Front (South)
- 2004



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

West End - (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

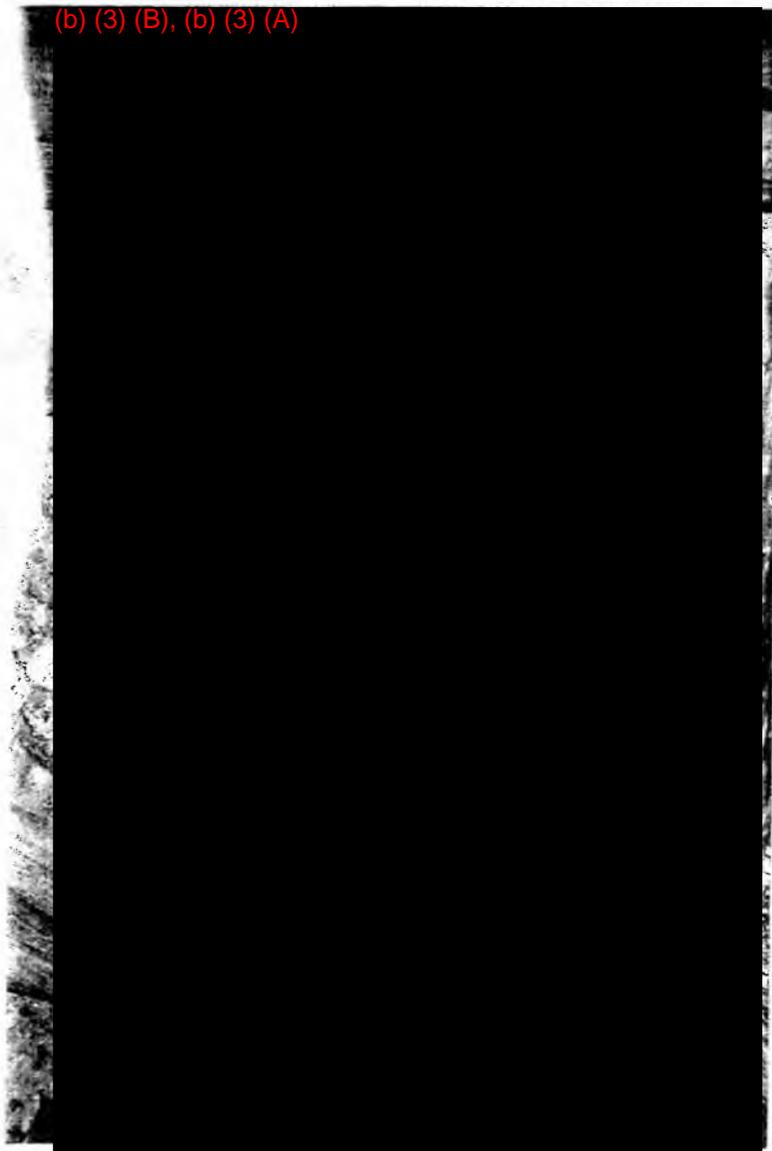
(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

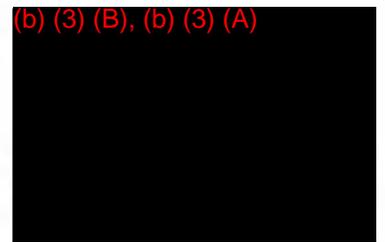
2004

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



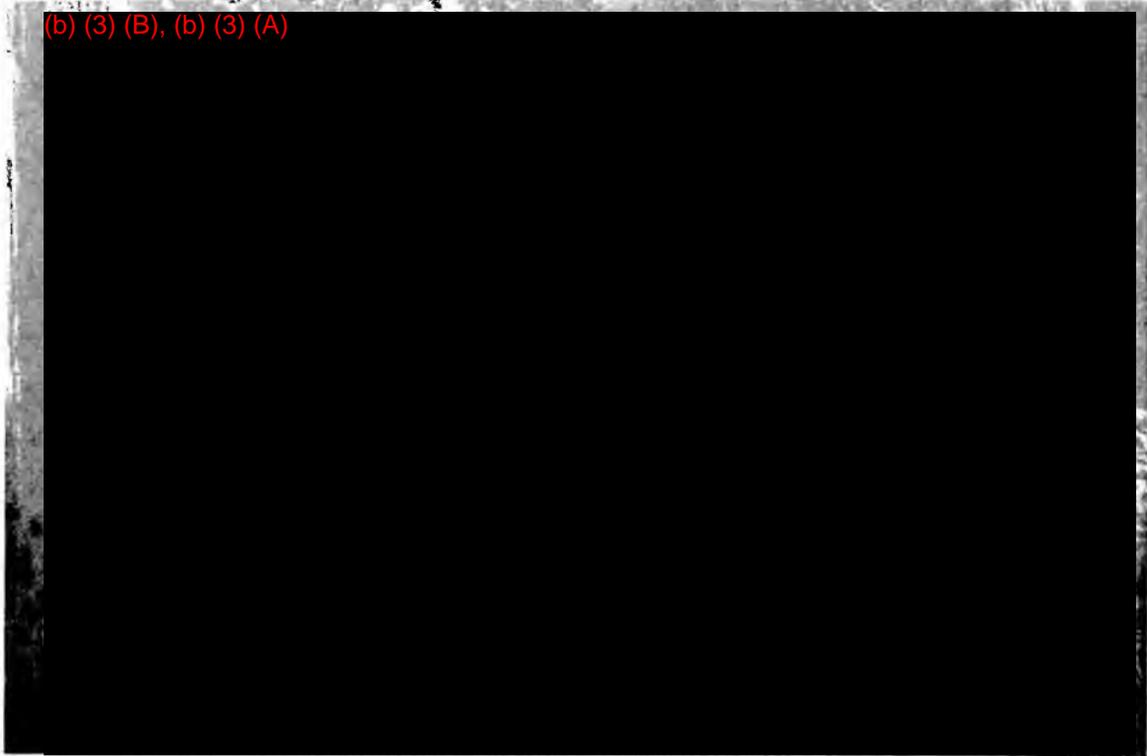
(b) (3) (B)

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



2004

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



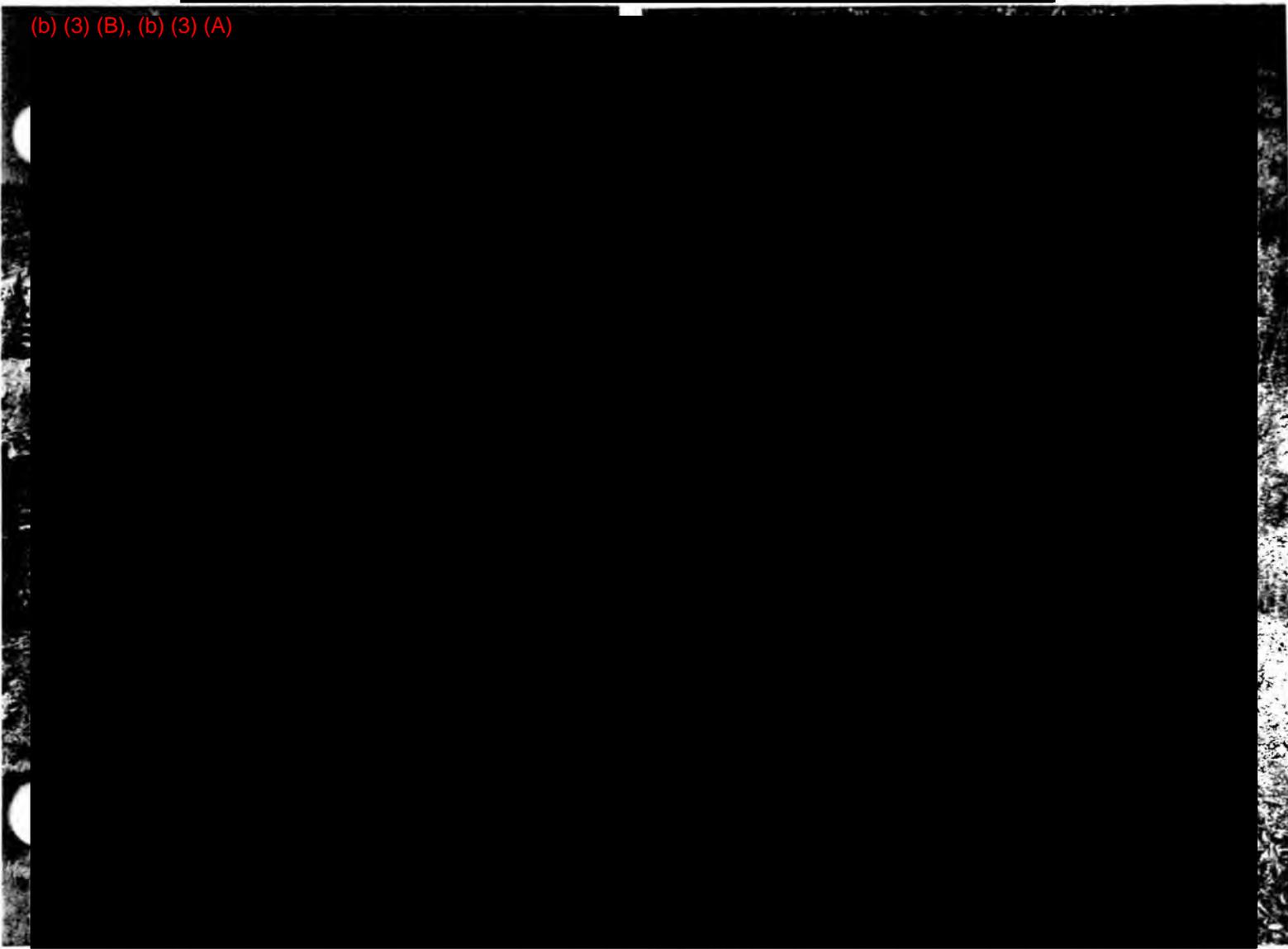
THE

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

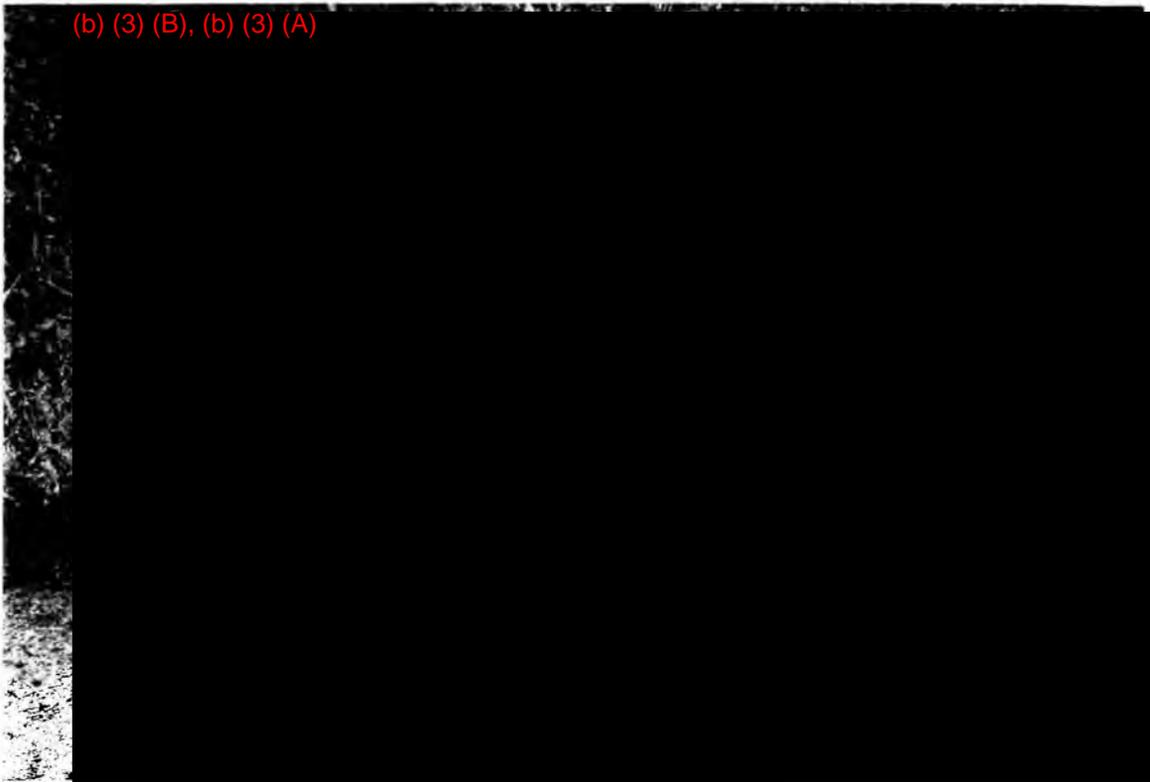
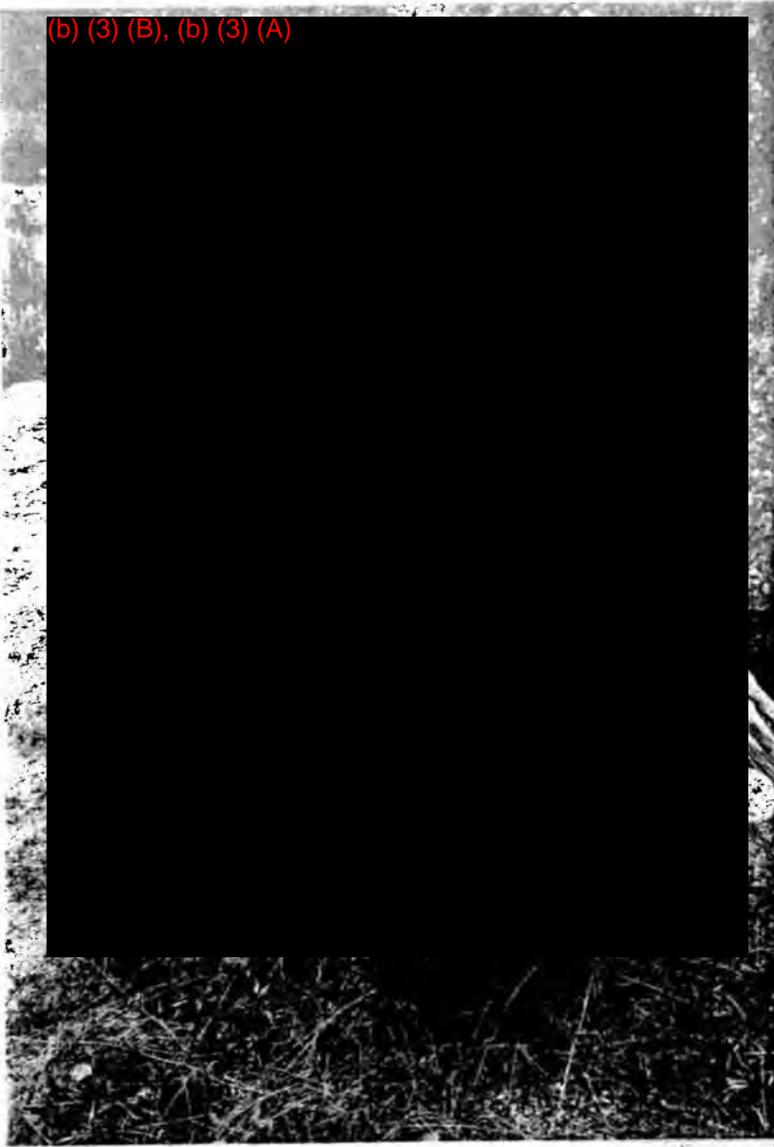


2004

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



Construction detail on Post

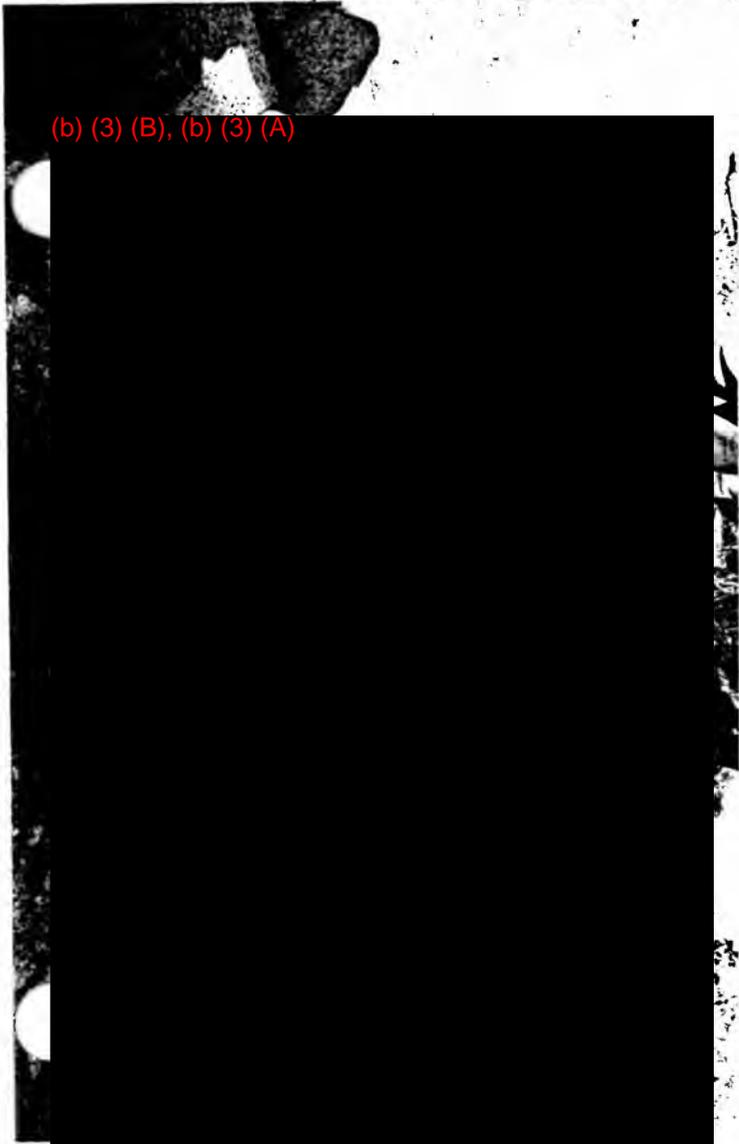




(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

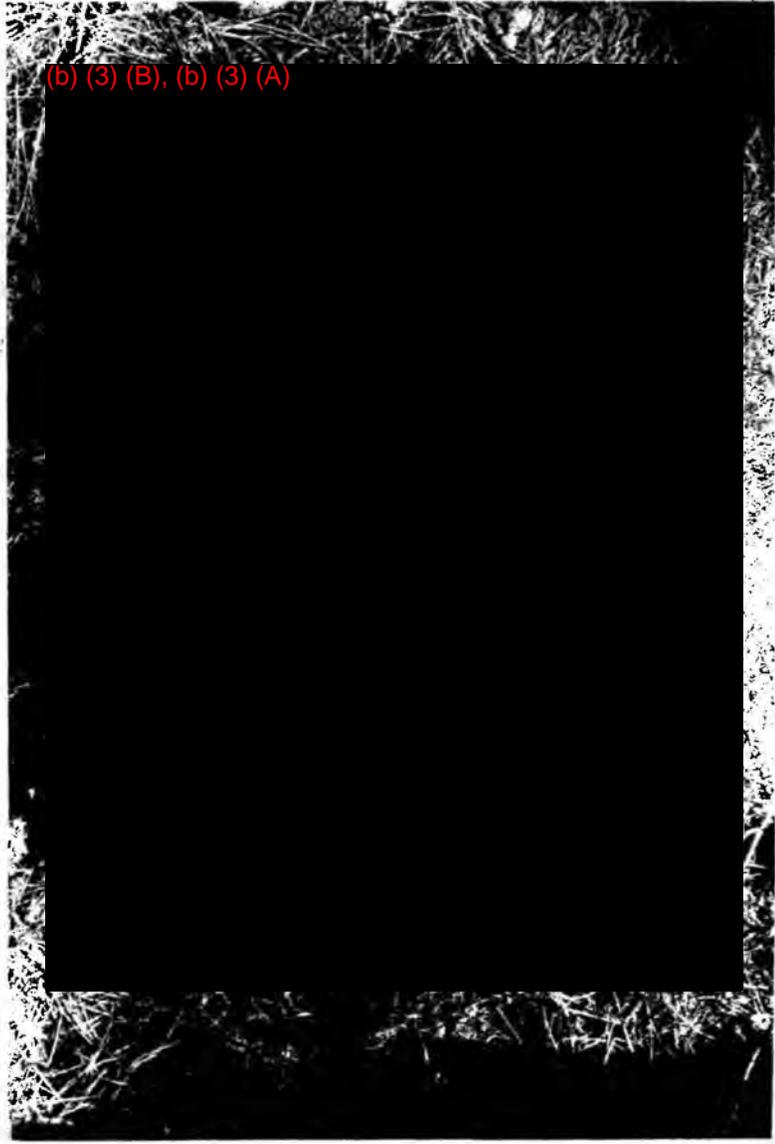
(b) (3) (B)

-2024



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

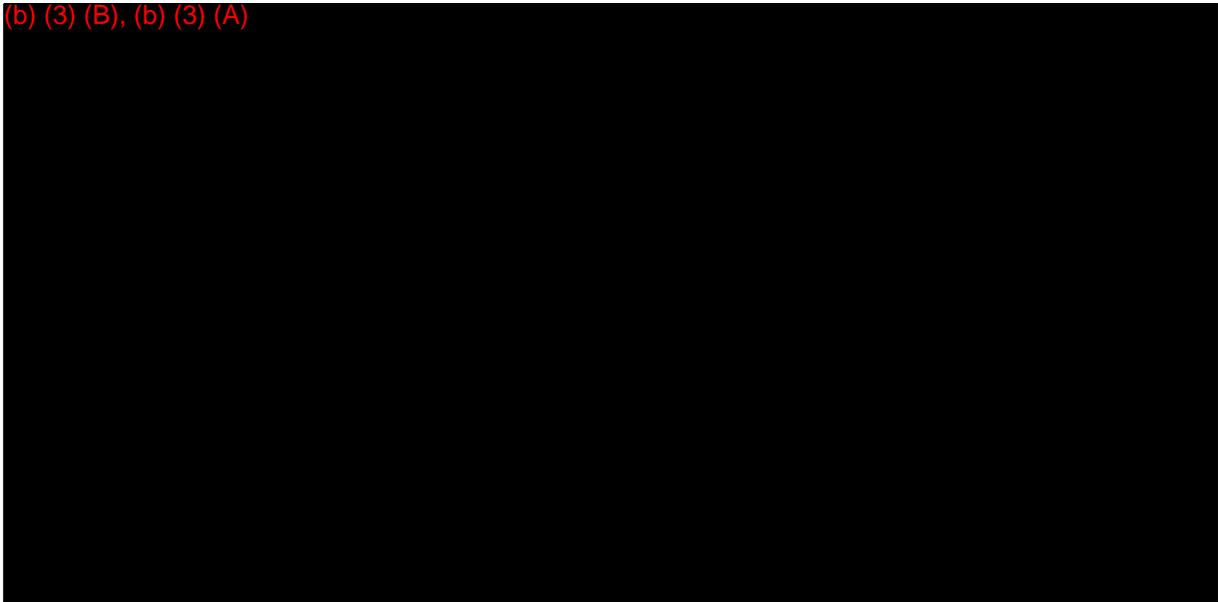
(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



Story 2

11

(b) (3) (A), (b) (3) (B)

[Redacted text block]

The [Redacted text block]

From old report



Little
Camp

Big wet meadow and the whaleback - 2004



Topping out at Colby Pass
Colby Lake and looking back



Cherley, mulligan Colby Pass



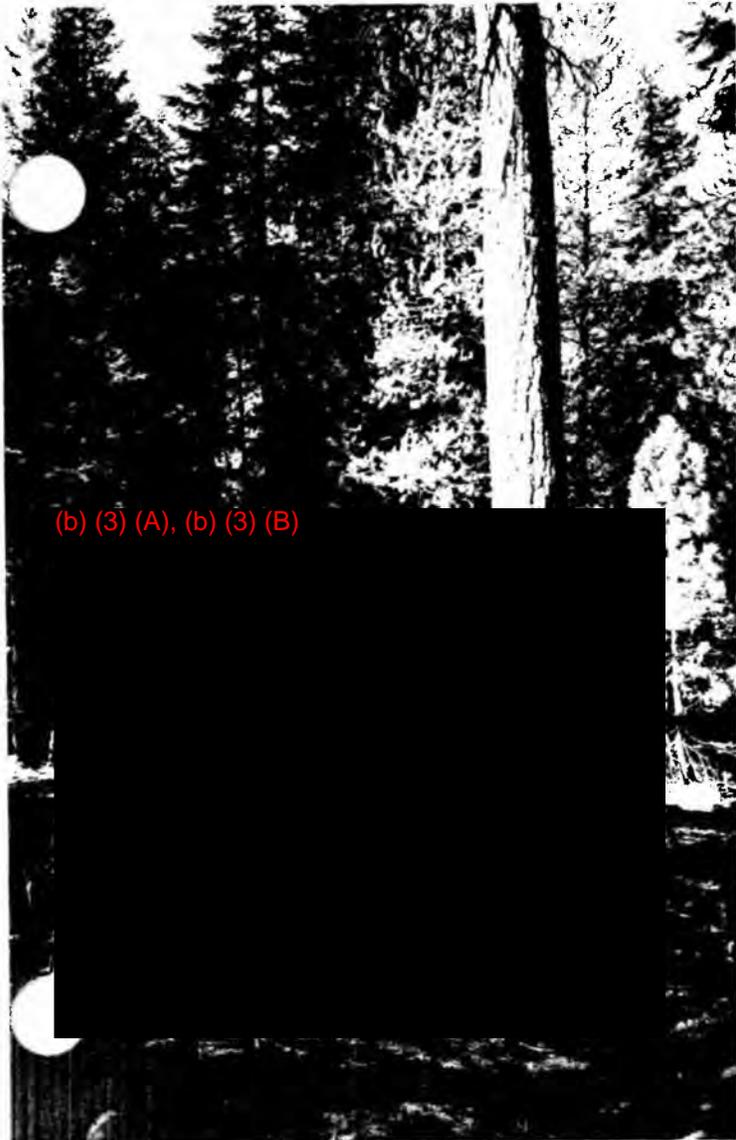
Campsite
near
Comanche
Meadow
and
near
Campsite
with
Boudou
2004



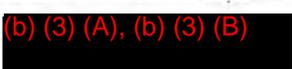
Cows in Comanche Meadow 2004



-2004



N.E. Corner



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



Historic

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

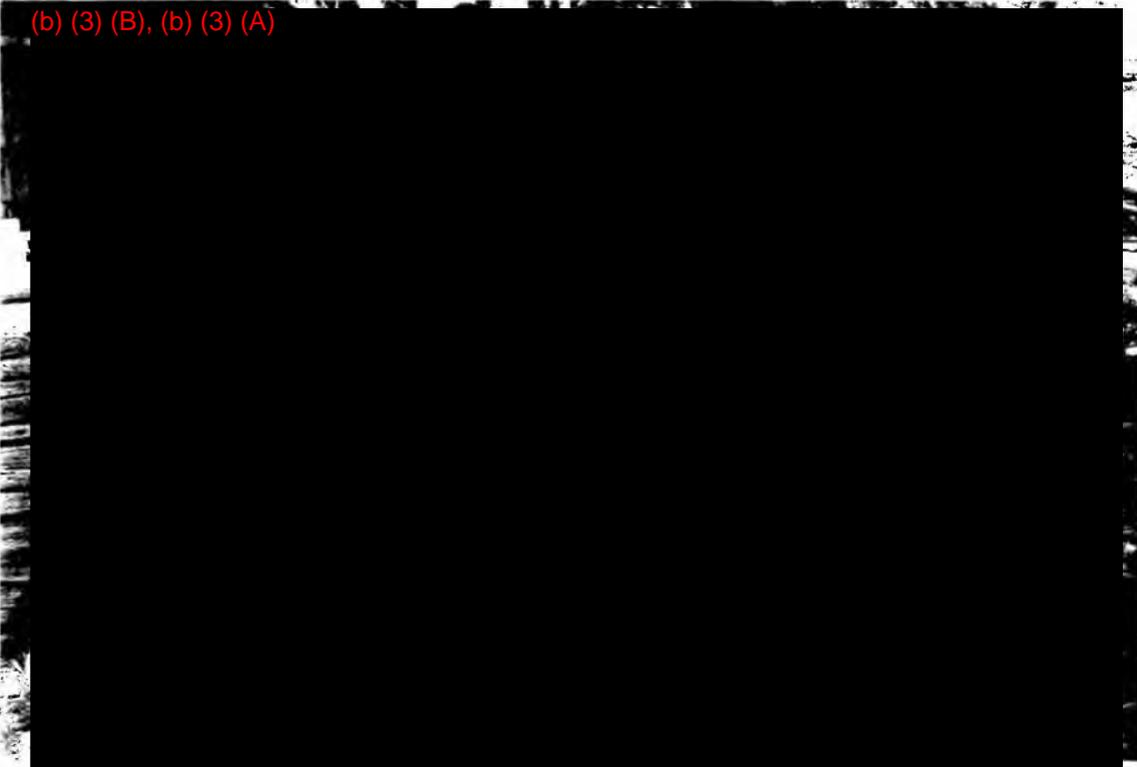


near

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

2004

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

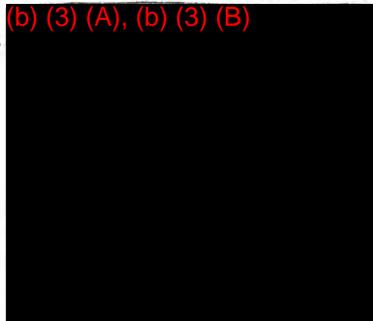


Hand carried
Sign at
top of ...

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



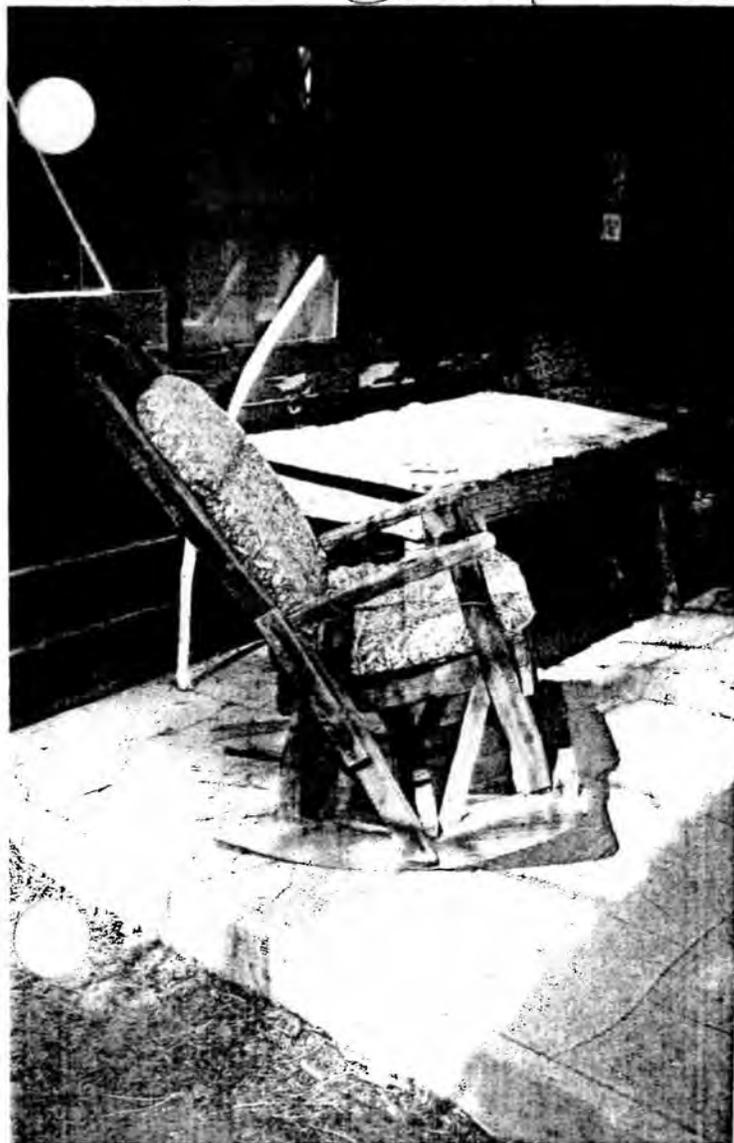
(b) (3) (A), (b) (3) (B)



1936

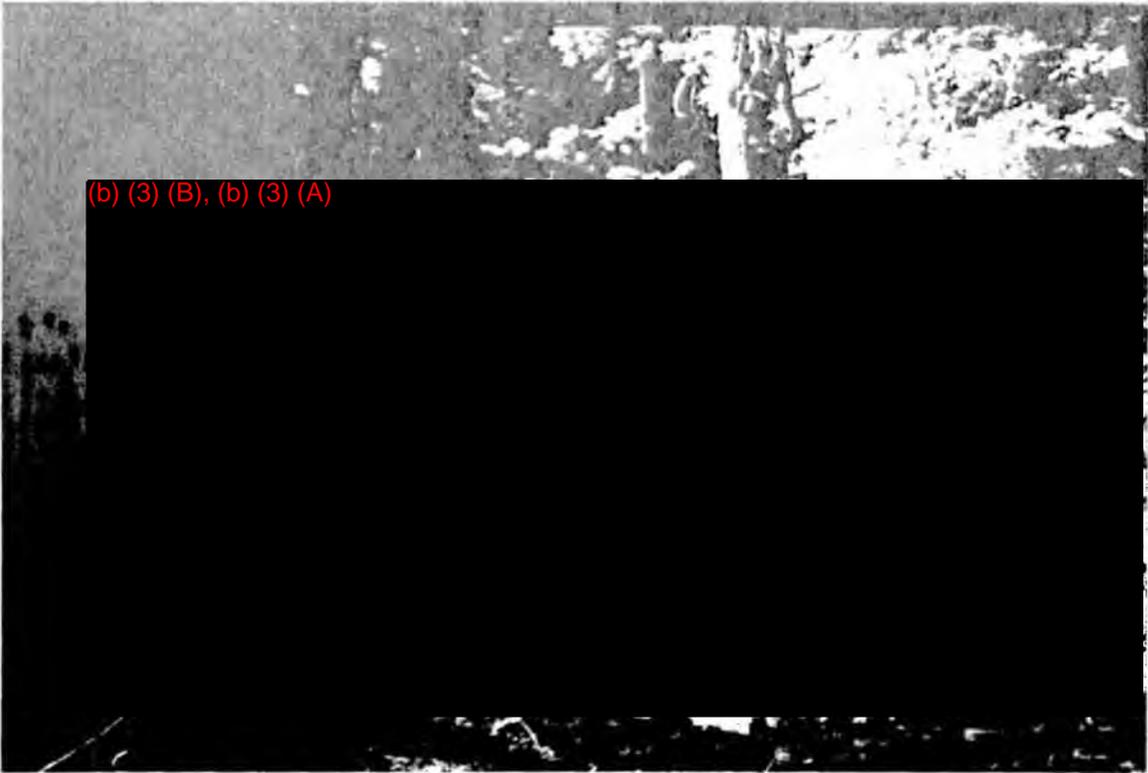


2004 - Cindy J. Wood

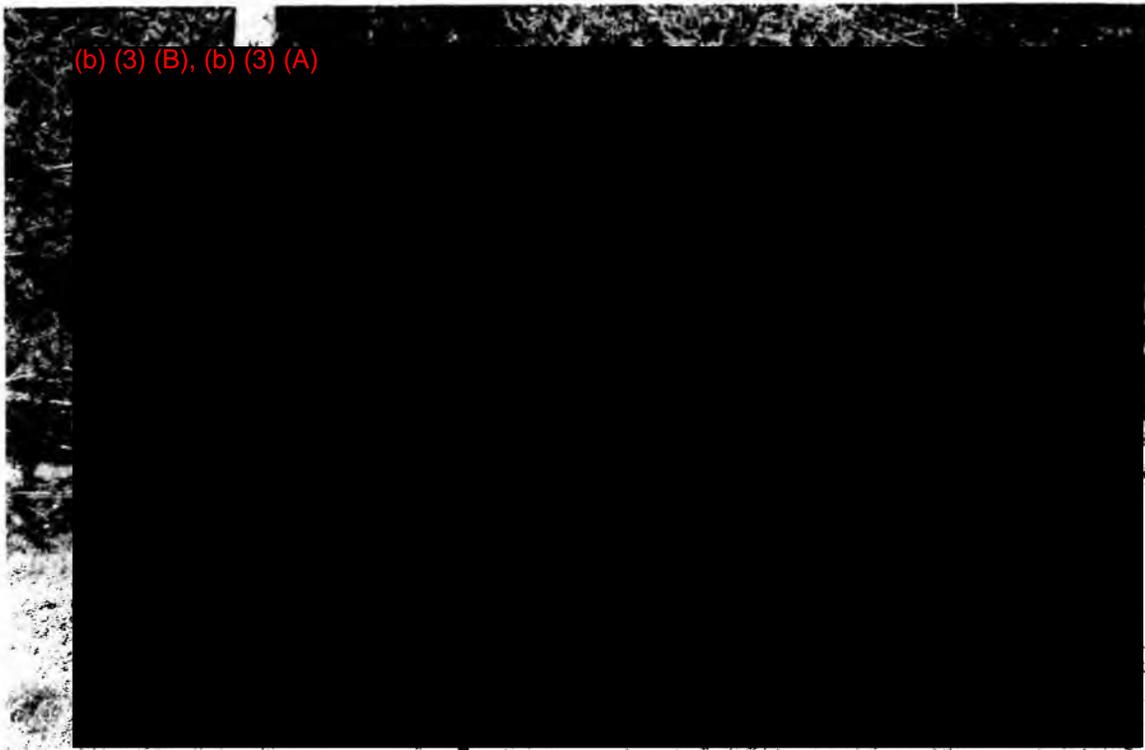


Front Porch at Roaring River Ranger Station





Historic Sign at (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

more info?

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

Interior of (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3)
(B),
(b) (3)
(A)

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

Cabinet

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

(b)
(3)
(B)

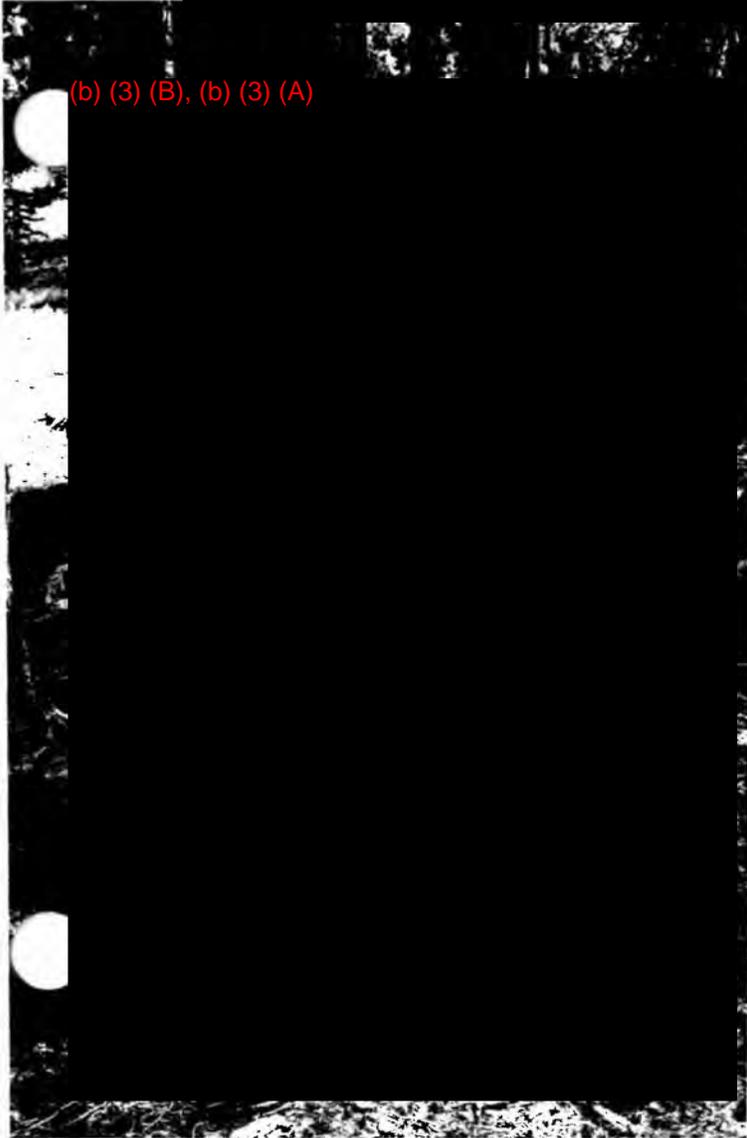
(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



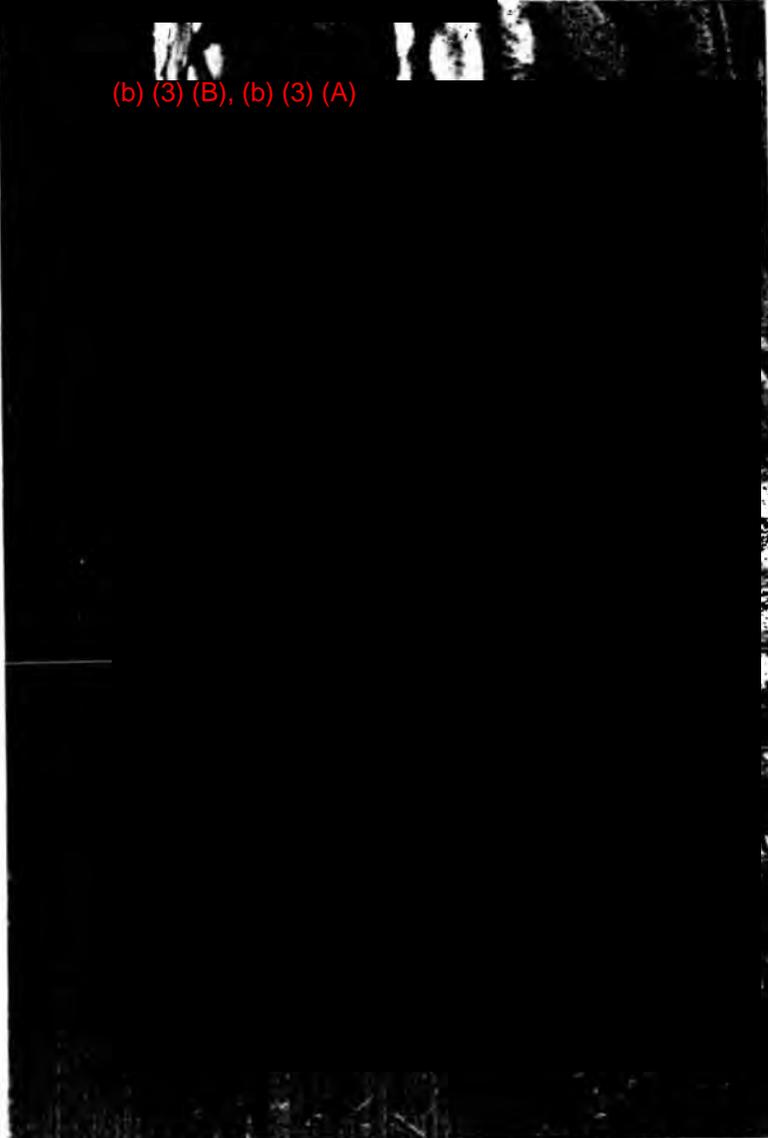
(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

Boundary

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)



MISS GATE 314 100 2021

MISS GATE 314 100 2021



Tree Carvings

(b) (6)

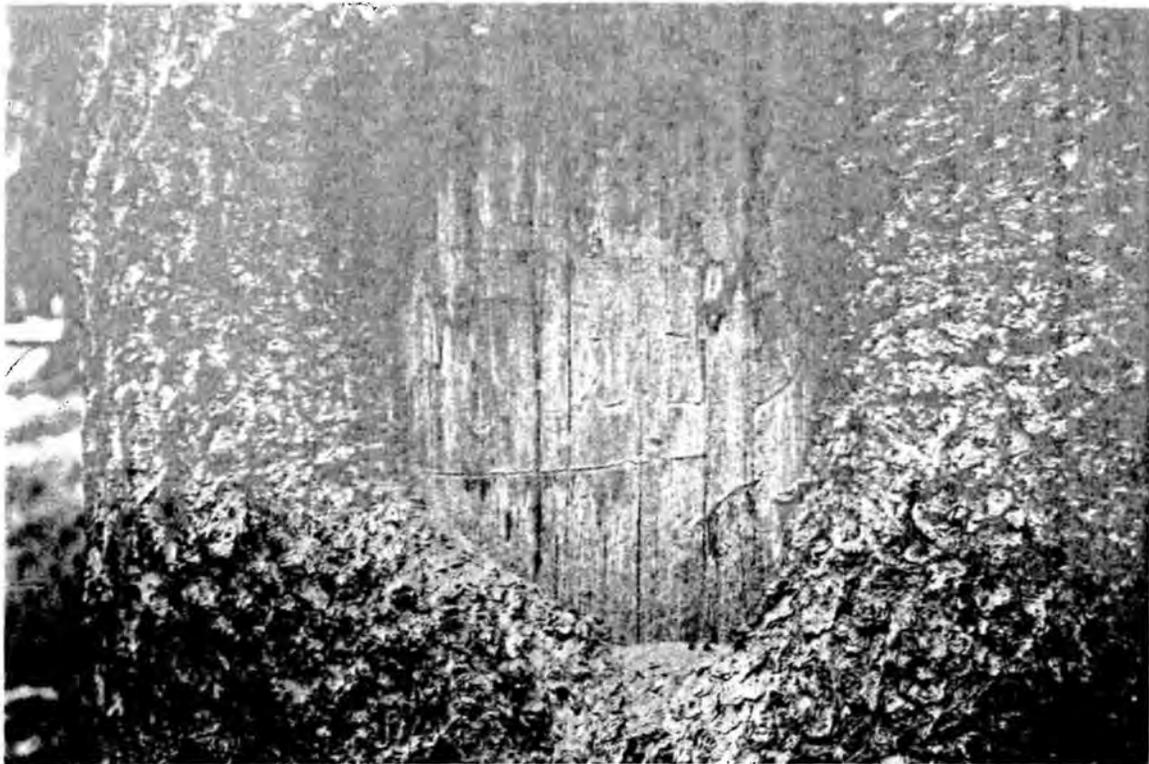
IN (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

"next to

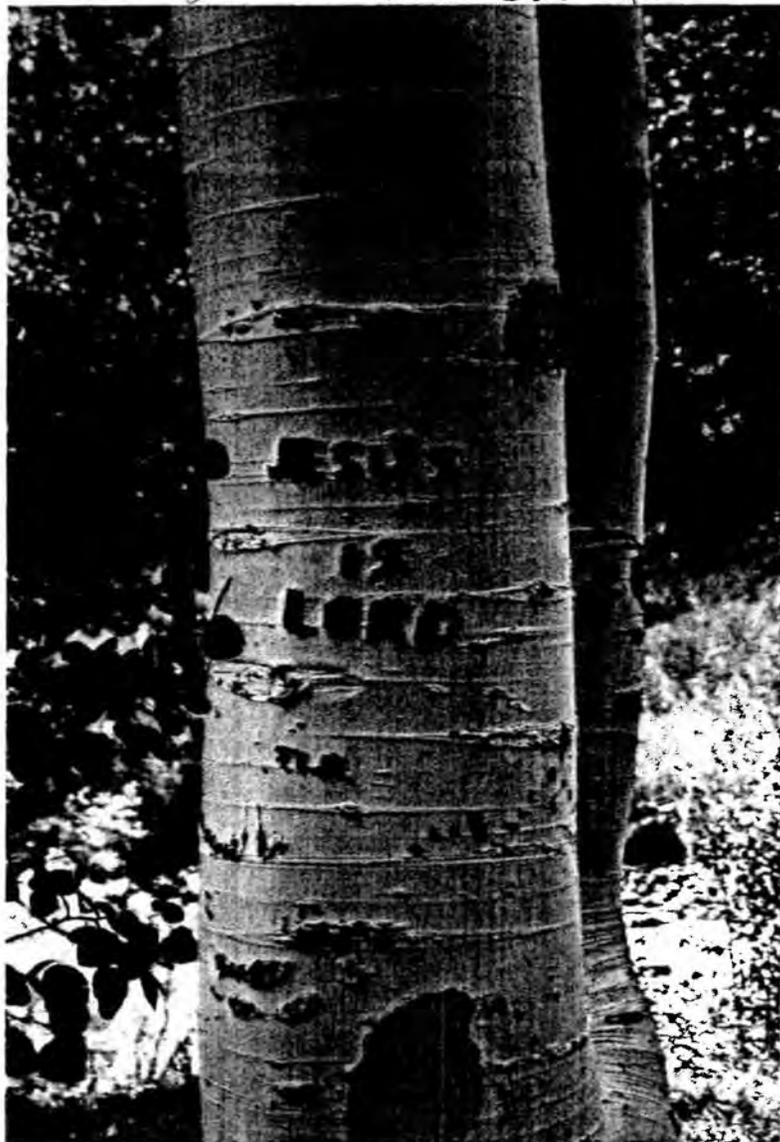
2004



↓ THE "Heart" tree near trail @ Grand Mtn, Dardara, Canyon



Tree Carving at Austin Meadow Creek Crossing Camp
IN Deadman Canyon



Tree Carving
at Deadman
Grave Camp
2004



old site on South Side of
Avalanche Pass. (?) 2004



old blaze on trees near
Bell Canyon Entrance - 2004.



"D.C."
414



Tree Carvings
near Cement
Table Meadow
in Cloud Canyon

"WV"

36

SELMA



L. 10-6
1918

Tree Carvings near Cement Table Meadow
CLOUD CANYON



"NM"
1944

Rock Creek Ranger Station
End of Season Report
by Laura Pilewski
Field Season: June 25 - Sept. 28, 2004

A. General Observations

The 2004 season was markedly busier than when I was a volunteer at Rock Creek in 1995. Visitation increased along with associated bear problems, littering and group size issues. Fortunately, this coincided with a new Kern subdistrict supervisory position. For the first time in over a decade, we had a liaison between the front and backcountry. This gave us immediate feedback on numerous incidents, SAR, and provided excellent communications between the pack station, trailheads and other administration. Furthermore, her presence in the field helped us cover more ground, and as a commissioned ranger, enforce regulations. It was invaluable to be able to speak one on one regarding issues instead of piling them up before we leave at the end of the season. Erika Jostad's hard work and efforts really benefitted the resource she cares so much about.

Statistics:

Once again, it is difficult to gather numbers that accurately reflect use in the backcountry due to our random nature of patrols (see L.Pilewski 2003). However, I contacted approximately 2,630 hikers (On one day, Jostad contacted 80 people in lower Rock Creek alone!) and 270 head of stock (two groups with burros and a few with llamas).

Stock use was heaviest late season. **Cottonwood Pack Station** was busy providing spot-trips all season long. They kept a clean camp on their "all expense" trips, but their clients that were spotted in were not always educated about rules and regulations. This has been a historical problem and I still feel that they would be more prepared if they received their permits in Lone Pine. This would also minimize future "finger-pointing" from the visitors versus the pack station. Overall CPS packers were all friendly and willing to assist us in the field.

Rock Creek pack station and administrative use caused the most impact to the resource. This is simply due to the fact that they did not provide their own feed and that meadows were extraordinarily dry this year. They all, however, left clean camps and for the most part (except for the NPS stock going above the drift fence) followed grazing regulations.

Leave-no-trace stock training was coordinated by Jostad and Ventura (Kern ranger). Field rangers met in the Kern to learn about stock practices such as rigging and packing animals and setting up appropriate campsites. This was a unique opportunity to learn about and discuss stock issues. This was also a great way to help us be able to relate to stock groups better to improve relations. Joe even trusted us to ride his animals in the rattlesnake-infested canyon (see photos)!

Citations: Two Boy Scouts of America groups (total of four permits) exceeded group size limits and received citations. Three parties (one of which were BSA) received citations for improper food storage. One possible citation is pending for improper food storage and littering. It was invaluable having commissioned officers Jostad and R. Pilewski nearby to issue all citations in the setting of where they happened. I'm a huge advocate of using education in lieu of

law enforcement, but in all above instances, the parties admitted to being knowledgeable of the regulations. In fact two of the three food storage violators had bear canisters and/or were camping next to a bear box. The BSA groups had appropriate literature on group size limit and the ½ mile rule and had been reminded of it at the trailhead.

Medicals: None!

Assists: I helped a minor whose friend was flown out of Wallace ck. (b) (6) SAR). I provided breakfast and supervision on his way out to Horseshoe meadow from Crabtree. I also gave out fuel and other supplies to visitors at the ranger station.

SAR: Before I was even “mobilized,” I had to head out and find an overdue hiker (b) (6) SAR). He did not return one evening to his base camp at lower Soldier lake so two of his friends hiked out to report him missing. The remaining two of his party hiked out shortly afterwards leaving camp behind. With only a water bottle and windbreaker in hand (b) (6) hiked to Iridescent lake, snow-covered Arc ps., Consultation lake, Trail crest, Crabtree ranger station (no note left), Crabtree lakes, lower Whitney ck., PCT south to Rock ck. and ultimately back to camp. Meanwhile, the helicopter, R. Pilewski, Walsh, and I combed the area all afternoon and evening only to find him back at camp at nightfall. (b) had no map and would only drink filtered water (his stated reason for dropping down to Consultation lake). During his extensive tour, he never mentioned to the 50+ hikers he probably passed and got water from, that he might be reported “missing.” He only asked directions to lower Soldier lake. Furthermore, when I escorted him to the trailhead with all his comrades’ abandoned gear, his “worried” friends and family were nowhere to be found. So, I brought him down to Lone Pine where I arranged a hotel room and treated him to dinner (as he didn’t even have a wallet). The photos he later sent of his expedition are quite entertaining!

The “**Mt. Russell**” SAR was instigated right upon my arrival to Crabtree (from Sky Blue that morning). Just as I set my pack on the porch, Rob (b) (7) and I get supplies together and head out for the search. Storm clouds were building (for the third day in a row). Given the weather and the technical nature of their route, prospects were grim. We combed the Arctic ck. drainage including up to Whitney-Russell Pass and around the shoulder to the east side by sunset. We returned to the ranger station by 2200 that evening and that night a game plan was made by the IC. Unbelievably, the climbers were found alive and well at Tulainyo lake by helicopter (b) first thing the next morning.

Weather: It was the driest season I have seen in my ten years in the sierra. By mid August, Siberian pass ck. was barely flowing (the spring in mid to lower Siberian pass Creek however, flowed all season). Army Creek practically disappeared until just west of the large sand flat. Rock Creek’s small branch in front of the cabin stopped flowing mid to late season. We only had a few short thunderstorm cycles, one of which caused the “Hot Springs” fire just south of lower Rock Creek along the Kern rim. It burned for a good portion of the summer, but only kicked up significant smoke a few times toward the end of the season.

B. Use Patterns

Hiker and stock use patterns were virtually identical to last years with elevated numbers. Over half the hiker parties were backtracking due to Whitney exit quotas (see Jostad 2003). This continues to put increased strain on the resource especially with regards to bears and proper food storage. Mt. Langley/Old Army pass areas were patrolled approximately once every pay period,

including holiday weekends. Only one dog was spotted from afar, leaving the park. This area should continue to be monitored closely for resource issues (see trails and Jostad 2003). Stock spot-trips seemed to have also become quite popular. These too need to be closely monitored for numbers and adequate minimum impact education.

Commercial users were pretty much the same as last year (Jostad 2003). IBP monitoring forms were filled out on most trips that came through the area.

Administrative. The demography crew conducted surveys near Cirque peaks while I was in the Kern. Two bat researchers stayed for a night in lower Rock Creeks. California Fish and Game conducted extensive golden trout surveys in the area. They, however, had a couple issues regarding group size (2 CA Fish & Game members with 15 BSA) and food storage (the 2 CA Fish & Game members did not have canisters). I believe that researchers should also go through minimum impact training like the general public before heading out, if nothing else to be well informed of area specific issues. The annual chief ranger/Dept. of Defense and Squad trips also passed through.

Aircraft. Low flying military aircraft, primarily FA-18's, continue to bombard the wilderness with noise. The most flagrant displays of dogfighting and circling peaks occurred on a constant basis (M-F) in the Miter basin. The number of reported deviations was in no way a reflection of the amount of traffic as my patrols were focused below timberline due to the bear problem. Ironically, this traffic increased after the Dept. of Defense trip. Perhaps, someone told them how beautiful the Corcoran pinnacles were.

But seriously, I do think Greg Fauth should be commended for not giving up on this issue. This year there was much more open discussion and military representatives seemed more sympathetic to this wilderness intrusion. This trip also provided a chance for our new chief ranger, J.D. Swedd, to become involved. It was a great chance to meet him and it's refreshing to have someone in his position still be an advocate of aesthetic wilderness values.

Overall, there were fewer blatant violators but on average all "commuting" military aircraft were flying at a much lower level with deviations occurring in the area of surrounding 13,000-14,000' peaks.

Hunting. Hunting camps were already appearing in the adjacent GTW before seasons' end. I wouldn't be surprised if poaching occurs along the boundary given the prevalent rumors in Lone Pine. This is unfortunate since the NPS is not fulfilling its duty to protect this resource which includes the endangered bighorn sheep.

C. Natural Resources

Wildlife: As Rachel Mazur and others have observed, Rock Creek is the power-spot when it comes to wildlife. Perhaps, this is due to it being a transition where the southern sierra meets the alpine zone or merely because it's a sanctuary from NFS land. Regardless the reason, I had the fortune to see my first mountain lion after having spent 10+ summers in the sierra. It's one thing to see its fresh tracks on top of yours or hear one crash through bushes. It's another to have one break its lanky stride, abruptly stop and look right at you from 100' away in an open meadow (right by your ranger station)! It was being taunted by a noisy coyote who wanted part of its deer kill. Ultimately, the trail crew helped me move the carcass away from the main hiking thoroughfare for the visitors' safety (see station log).

Other carnivores such as a pine marten (at the station), long-tailed weasels, coyotes and bears were seen by me numerous times throughout the Rock Creek drainage. The latter three were all seen above 11,600 ft. as well as at lower elevations throughout the season. A local trail crew member Major Bryant was rewarded on his day off with the sight of eleven bighorn sheep on the northwest slopes of the Miter. Another group of locals (from Lone Pine) is convinced they saw a wolverine frolic in the northeast meadow of upper Soldier Lake. Despite legitimate skepticism, I tend to believe their report. The only two bears I saw this season in the Rock Creek drainage were either jet black (and would have likely tried to obtain their counterbalanced food) or a 250+ lb. cinnamon colored bear neither with any semblance of a tail. Given the duration, location & source (I have been friends with these folks for 10yrs), I would be inclined to deem this a reputable sighting. I'll continue looking . . .

Deer were abundant in the Rock Creek area this year except when the mountain lion was about. Along with the expected resident bird life, I saw a pair of redheads at Funston Lake, a common poorwill and belted kingfisher at Rock Creek Lake and a Wilson's phalarope at Chicken Spring Lake. A small owl was seen in lower Rock Creek and I heard one while camped at upper Soldier Lake, but neither observation was adequate for identification. All pika calls/sightings were recorded. I found a rather large population of them south of Funston Lake along the park boundary. My favorite observation of these critters was triggered when a bouquet of "innocent" pink balloons floated just above the talus along Army Creek drainage. I sat back and listened to all the rodent alarm calls cascade from west to east in synch with the predatory balloons.

Bears: Bear activity was extremely high this year. I saw two different bears grazing early season, both of which ran away immediately upon an encounter. Unfortunately, that abruptly changed. After returning from training in the Kern, I learned a JMT through-hiker (who never even reached the JMT!) lost all of his food at New Army Creek junction. I found the admittedly textbook-looking branch ripped off the tree along with the torn, empty stuff sacks. After this big score, the bear hung around this area and wreaked havoc even ripping an unattended tent for a mere first aid kit that contained aspirin & Neosporin. This bear also obtained hung food at lower Soldier Lake, "penned-up" meadow, just below Sky Blue Lake (11,800') and Rock Creek Lake (See BIM's & citations). It almost obtained a tremendous amount of food from a group of eight that was spotted into Rock Creek Lake by CPS for approximately one week. But, miraculously, I contacted them that evening and camped there for two nights where the bear, indeed, harassed us for most of both nights. Consequently, the group left early (see IBP monitoring form).

Trail crew was also harassed by the same bear with only minor property damage. A much larger (250+ lb.) cinnamon colored bear, however, did rip apart an unattended tent only to return the following day where it was hazed by me, Jostad, and four other trail crew members. It never was seen again that season! That one was probably responsible for the Crabtree areas incidents given its description.

The small troublemaker was last seen on the Siberian outpost late August. I believe that the last week of hazing and the presence of the mountain lion scared it away. Before it left, its scat turned from wrappers to currant berries which gave me hope. This little guy caused me to focus virtually all my patrols in the immediate Rock Creek drainage. Surrounding areas went almost unpatrolled (Funston Lake, Siberian outpost, up Miter basin).

Vegetation . . . isn't as exciting to talk or write about although I love it, especially in salad form in the backcountry. Once again, goddess Sylvia Haultain helped supplement backcountry funding (for much needed gear) by forcing me to explore remote places along the southeastern park boundary for vegetation mapping purposes. Because of the large volumes of people and bears, trips were abbreviated but hopefully provided all necessary information.

Another fun project was collecting local samples that were lacking in the park herbarium. It made for a fun treasure hunt and helped me learn and key quite a few new plants with my new dissecting scope (remember, we don't have TV out here). Hulsea vestita and sensitive species such as Hackelia sharsmithii and Arabis pygmea locations were recorded.

Meadows. Although lower Rock Creek and "penned-up" meadows show signs of use, Nathan's by far is worse for the wear (see photos). Since most other areas were used for spot trips or had limited grazing from mostly burros and llamas, they showed significantly less impact. Nathan's, however, has large dust baths and areas of closely cropped and trampled vegetation. It appears that soils and plants were more easily disturbed or uprooted because of such dry conditions. Furthermore, not much moisture came in the form of summer rain to replenish the vegetation. This also concentrated grazing in sensitive riparian areas such as the boggy spring-fed area east of the trail in Nathan's meadow. Similar to a wet year, it was interesting to note how sensitive these high meadows are at both extremes in precipitation.

D. Cultural Resources

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

E. Backcountry Facilities

The **patrol cabin** continues to be mouse infested. Although some minor caulking was done along the west and north sides of the cabin (by Dave Yemm, trail crew, day off!), the rodents can still enter where the roof and ceiling meet the walls. Optimistically, with more work, the mice can continue to inhabit the attic while the ranger can live hanta-free downstairs. Otherwise, trapping is a continuous effort. The tongue & groove porch is still in need of repairs from last year's break-in.

Drift fence: Although nice and new in appearance, it was very tightly strung and difficult to set up without adding length in places. This problem could be alleviated if all posts (approx. 30 T-bars) were replaced with permanent ones. Furthermore, although meant to protect upper meadows, stock (esp. administrative) still travel around the uphill side. Perhaps extend it to Joe Devel peak!

Signs: All are in good shape. Old Army pass sign was replaced (it was MIA). It also now states "Bighorn sheep habitat" in hopes of instilling guilt to those who illegally escort dogs up Mt. Langley. Somebody has already tried to remove the sign.

A rehabilitation area sign was moved from a single campsite along the west shore of lower Soldier lake to the beginning of the use trail since all sites are inappropriate (& technically illegal) for camping.

An old Siberian outpost rehabilitation sign was removed as the majority of the trail is now vegetated in this area.

F. Trails

The construction crew was a welcome neighbor. In the short time they were present (Aug. 5- Sept 15) they rerouted 700' of the south side of Guyot Pass (see photos), placed 10 (?) checks just north of Guyot Creek, "ground-pounded" all area trails, installed a stock demonstration camp and helped me with numerous area projects. Furthermore, it was great to have more eyes and ears out there to let me and the Crabtree ranger know of any incidents. One member found some half buried food and garbage at Crabtree before a bear did. They helped pass along bear, fire and permit information to those who passed by when I wasn't available. All construction crew members kept a very tight camp, never lost any food despite bears constant appearances, and were a tremendous help in hazing the area bears. I, of course, accepted many dinner invitations under the guise of evening bear-hazing patrols as they were conveniently located near the lower Rock Creek campground.

Problem areas

Mt. Langley is becoming more popular every year for dayhikers and backpackers. I would place this as a high priority since it would be a proactive approach to mitigating damage in this fragile alpine environment. As the snow recedes, multiple new trails are formed. There is presently on single use trail that leads to a high point south of the summit at approximately 12,200.' But, from that point on it's chaos. Having seen the success of the monumental cairns built from Columbine lake to Sawtooth Pass, I think this too would be a perfect application. Either that or we could remove 28' from the summit so it's a "13-er."

The unmaintained trails to "**penned-up**" meadow and the "**all-expense**" camp at Rock Creek lake still show significant resource damage. Trail crew and I assessed these areas and agreed that a significant amount of time would be needed to blast and reroute these trails out of the meadows (which has been a resource management goal). It would be nice if a decision was made as to how to manage and protect these areas (see "Restoration crew," Jostad 2003).

From a visitor use stand point, **New Army pass and the Guyot pass trails** still would be a high priority. Although the construction crew wasted no time in addressing the most severe areas of Guyot Pass, the grades still remain quite steep along these two trails.

It would also be nice if the Kern crew could complete the **drift fence** as planned (see Backcountry facilities).

G. Camp Areas

Lower Soldier lake. This year I was shocked at the number of people that camped here. There were many nights where 30-40 people were present. Not only did this cause the bear box to fill up, but it also caused significant sanitation issues. In fact, I found that given the terrain, many people relieved themselves in the spring-fed willows along the east shore (without even burying it or packing out TP). Even the most ambitious person with good "control" must hike a long distance to be away from water and camp. Given the amount of youth and novice wilderness users, I'm skeptical that they follow appropriate rules.

Furthermore, the peninsula itself shows lots of wear and tear. Virtually no ground vegetation or downed wood is present. Illegal firepits still appear on occasion, but with frequent evening and morning bear patrols this year, this was less of an issue. I also strategically buried

some rocks in front of the perpetually scarred boulders in hopes that it may discourage future fires. We'll see. It seems to work for campsite rehabilitation (also done in this area near lake this year).

A rehabilitation site No camping-from here to inlet sign was placed along the west shore in hopes of eliminating rogue campsites that kept appearing along the "beach." In summary, lower Soldier lake needs to be monitored closely as use increases with the new changes in the permit system. **Lower Rock Creek crossing** has similar issues but on a much smaller scale.

Rock Creek lake's biggest users seemed to be the clients of CPS (both at the "all-expense" camp and the bear box). Next year, I would like to make a sign showing how the camp area stretches farther west. I had to tell many people this year to not camp between the trail and lake meadow (both <25' away). Trail crew helped me move some large rocks and logs to start rehabilitation but more work is needed next year.

Miter basin has seen an extreme increase in use since I was last here (as a VIP) in 1995. This has a lot to do with publications and the internet advertising it as a "quick" way (as compared with the PCT) to access Mt. Whitney. Numerous people ask me for directions, of which I'm hesitant to give. I'll answer specifics, but emphasize that it is a cross country route. The main camping area at timberline just below Sky Blue lake was significantly rehabilitated early season and no new firepits appeared (see photos). But, food storage here at 11,400' and at "penned-up" meadow became a significant issue this summer (see BIM's and citations). In addition to lowering group size for cross country travel, perhaps we should somehow regulate use in this area. Unfortunately, this could prove quite complicated. But, including a park itinerary on NFS issued permits should be mandatory for both safety and land-use management strategies.

Firewood availability. Generally speaking both campsites with bear boxes that allow fires are depleted of downed wood. Performing fuel wood inventories would help guide changes in restrictions. The emergency restriction that went into affect late summer was of huge benefit ecologically. Surprisingly, compliance was almost 100% with virtually no complaints. This shows promise for future changes in regulations. I think Californians are becoming more afraid of catastrophic wildfires and are generally less motivated to build campfires in general (it's more work).

Food storage. From what I could gather, four out of six parties that had their food stolen this summer were cited (one pending). The two that weren't "caught" appeared to have had their food hung while I was at LNT stock training in the Kern and helping with the stock demo camp installation. Missing even one day of patrolling the Rock Creek drainage made that much of a difference. I was able to figure out the bears' pattern by interviewing virtually every hiker. I knew I could relax a little when it wandered back to the east side. I was able to confirm with visitors' digital photos that one bear consistently went back and forth over Army and Cottonwood passes.

The yearling bear that caused virtually all the trouble was bordering on aggressive. It sniffed around tents constantly (even without the presence of food and with people present in them). It jumped on one person who sat up suddenly in his tent (no injury). The bear even bent the tent poles in half. He had unwittingly slept beside a backpack with food. Food storage literally became a safety issue. Amazingly, almost 99% of people had bear canisters, including

two that were cited. The main issue in this area now is surplus that won't fit in the cans. This needs to be emphasized at the trailhead before people start their trip.

Due to limited Whitney exit quotas, Rock Creek is seeing almost twice the use. Now, out of convenience, people are using bear boxes to cache food for their return trip. This, along with copious amounts of trash/food/fuel left behind, can sometimes leave boxes over half full with nobody even present. However, at this point, there is no way to enforce this issue. Literature and trailhead education regarding this matter is needed.

H. Permit Systems

Lone Pine trailhead rangers did a great job this year. All hikers seemed well-informed of the bear problem and fire regulations. It was also good to hear (b) (7) made it into the field frequently. Bishop, unfortunately, failed to give any stock-related information to a private stock party who was out for twenty days (Do we still have special packets of stock literature on the east side?). I do not have much feedback on wilderness camping fee collection as most parties did not receive envelopes or did not originate in the park. But, in general, my observations are similar to Rob's at Crabtree (see R.Pilewski 2004).

A few ideas I have about improving trailhead operations would be to have a base station radio and a more interactive approach to issuing permits in the form of displays and a leave-no-trace quiz (see appendix).

The Wilderness Office, as always, did an excellent job as our support team. Supplies, medicine, and important messages were always relayed in an efficient manner. Peter, Gary and Ben's hard work in the office setting had a direct effect on the wilderness resource.

In summary, it was a wonderful year working with all of the Kern rangers. Allison did an excellent job as a first-year ranger. Joe covered more territory than I've ever seen the Kern ranger explore. Paul helped me gather herbarium specimens. And, it's always a pleasure to learn from Erika and Rob, two people who have dedicated their careers to protecting and preserving this wilderness. I look forward to returning next year. In the meantime, here are a few suggestions for next season . . .

I. Recommendations

Local ranger projects for next year:

- Caulk/foam to mouse-proof cabin.
- Bury rocks/rehabilitate camps at Rock Creek Lake. & "waterfall."
- Reroute upper New Army Creek crossing above overgrown willows.
- Pick/photograph a potential route up Langley.
- Gather more herbarium specimens.

General:

Permits/trailheads:

- Continue to station NPS trailhead rangers in Lone Pine & Bishop and allow early season patrols into the park for area familiarity.
- Cease to allow Cottonwood pack station to issue wilderness permits as they are too busy and have no vested interest in going over all permit regulations.
- Make researchers go through the permit office to receive minimum impact regulations and any other pertinent area information (at least on a seasonal basis).
- Monitor increased visitation and use trends on Mt. Langley and in Rock/Crabtree areas in part due to new Whitney exit quotas
- Investigate possibilities of installing a base station radio at east side trailheads for improving communications
- Share INFS wilderness ranger patrol schedules (& call nos.) so we can facilitate communications, SAR and other incidents.
- Discourage food caching in bear boxes by including information in park and forest service literature and at trailheads.
- Complete specific park itineraries on INFS permits for visitor safety and wilderness management.
- Use new methods or ideas for education at trailheads (see appendix).

Maintenance/signs/trails:

- Create educational flyers and displays for stock demonstration camp.
- Find a permanent way to mouse-proof bear boxes by sealing holes.
- Complete drift fence (trails).
- Establish a restoration crew (see Jostad 2003).

Resource management

- Create a mandatory bear canister restriction for Rock Creek drainage (at least up to Sky Blue lake and Guyot Creek) and increase awareness of the importance of fitting all food in canisters or boxes at the start of trips.
- Make management decisions regarding Mt. Langley, "penned-up" meadow, and stock use trail at Rock Creek lake (also trails).

Ranger Division

- Continue spring training. Perhaps include topics about animal tracking, bear hazing and bird identification (Training was excellent this season. Keep it up!).
- Continue having a Kern subdistrict supervisor in the field.
- Staff field ranger stations through mid October to conduct hunting patrols as rumors of poaching continue to circulate. The NPS has an obligation to protect the resource (Wilderness Coordinator, ranger division).

J. Inventory

4 sm. propane tanks
Full supply of first aid equip
-field first aid kit in frontcountry
Radio battery charger
8+ gal. white gas
lots of sun screen, bug dope, tools
3 pr. sz. lg. asst. work gloves
1 ext. cord
1 water filter

lg. plastic bags & burlap
-enough for 2005
6+ rolls duct tape
6 TP
mirror
lg. plastic tub
clothespins
coffee cone & filters
lots batteries (except AAA)

K Needs for Next Year

10+ tubes gray mortar caulking
-see Dave Yemm
2 twin mattresses
for snow survey use
1 sm. propane tank
6 mouse traps
strainer (for sump)
BIM's forms
1Belt buckle Blake Diamond L28
Speed daypack
1 lightweight. tent
1Compass (good type w/declination)

Iso Pro fuel cans
20 sm. wastebasket sz. trash bags
1 sm. winch for hitching cable
Stock Demo camp sign &/or flyers
AAA batteries
Books: Place Names of the High Sierra
Field Guide to Mammal Tracking
by ...&Halfpenny (all
stations)
...Peaks & Passes by Secor

Appendix:

Having talked to numerous visitors and trailhead rangers over the years, I feel that we could better educate the public if we went about it in a more creative manner. Nobody likes being lectured especially after a long drive with little sleep. Trailhead rangers themselves get burnt out by mid season repeating the same things over and over again. Inevitably, some topic is forgotten. So, with the advent of the digital camera and easier to use (but not for me!) computer graphics, I think we can greatly improve our minimum impact sheet that people presently DO NOT READ thoroughly if at all. Given the comparatively small number of private stock groups, a separate package (with min. impact & meadow info, grazing card, etc.) could be created for them. And, maybe we could have two separate flyers for backpackers: one with generic minimum impact regulations and one with specific area information. It would be novel if we could at least include a little color on our flyers if our budgets allow!

If we think this quiz approach is too much, we could possibly use it for obtaining a “frequent backcountry user” card with regards to all generic, not area specific information. That could save visitors and permit issuers time and possibly paper. This test can also be geared to specific trailheads (i.e. marmots at Mineral King or “wag bag” use near Whitney). A small separate flyer could have a list where the visitor or ranger circles/writes all that applies to the permit itinerary (i.e. bear box locations, local campsite & fire restrictions, and trail/fire conditions). Perhaps, the written portion could be abbreviated and filled out as people are waiting in line (or at home with east side INFS reservations). A non-written portion with photos and/or real life displays(i.e. bear damaged items) could be displayed at the trailhead ranger stations. If we could coordinate this for all park and local forest service trailheads, it might benefit both agencies and save time re-inventing the wheel every year in each location. The following is just a quick brainstorm trying to include all issues on the current minimum impact sheet.

Backpacker Leave-No-Trace Quiz

Preparing for your trip...

T/F Everyone in my party either has a map& compass or will be with someone who has one at all times (a GPS alone is not adequate).

T/F We have a specific plan if someone gets tired, separated, lost or hurt.

Circle the correct answer:

I will **build/knock down** the hundreds of cairns/trail markers that people who don't know how to use a map build.

Maximum group size is a) 4 people, 2 elephants

b) 18 boy scouts with 2 permits*, 1 dog

c) 15 people, 20 head of stock (llamas, burros, mules or horses)

*affiliated groups may not travel or camp within ½ mile of each other if total group size exceeds 15 people/20 stock.

Selecting a cool campsite...

Circle things wrong with this beginner's trip

Picture #1: Show cartoon/photo depicting tent on vegetation, too close to water, with trench, rock windbreak, litter, etc. and possibly cartoon figures stating "Ahh, what a beautiful campsite," "I wonder why it's so cold & damp."

Picture #2: Show above cartoon/photo with damage (dead grass, trash, fish guts, TP, trench, a rock windbreak, etc. Then show two hikers commenting "Who would camp here? This place is trashed," "Yuck, I wouldn't even drink the water").

Pictures #3+: show photos of appropriate campsites

Sanitation...

T/F I am glad the trail crews build these pathways into the mountains. They hate when I'm lazy and cut switchbacks because it kills vegetation and ruins the trails.

Circle the correct answer:

I always leave my human waste..

a) above ground with my TP!

b) under a rock where a trail crew member might find it.

c) under the cover of some willows where the water drains into the lake that I and other visitors will be drinking out of for years to come.

d) 6" under the ground, 100' from water & trails.

Which is best?

a) Burying TP so rodents & marmots can dig it up, decorate Guitar lake and spread disease.

b) Burning TP so it starts a huge forest fire.

c) Packing it out in a zip-lock bag.

T/F Most backcountry illnesses are attributed to poor hygiene, but it is still a good idea to treat or filter my water.

T/F I will be drinking out of cool crisp mountain streams and lakes.

T/F I will be jumping into this same water after I am sweaty and covered with sunscreen and toxic insect repellent. And then, I'll wash my clothes and dishes there to.

T/F It is possible someone will be drinking downstream from me somewhere else. (Is this a good metaphor for all things I do in life?).

Lions & marmots & bears, oh my!..

T/F Most park wildlife is elusive and I'll be lucky to catch a glimpse of a squirrel.

T/F When a person feeds wildlife (from Rosy finches to black bears) they become addicted to our junk food and may never forage for healthy natural food again (just like us).

T/F This may become a safety issue for the next visitor who happens to have lunch near that plague-ridden rodent, west-Nile virus carrying bird, or aggressive hungry bear.

T/F I know the fishing regulations and have a California fishing license.

T/F The national park is one of the only wilderness areas in the world where you get to experience humility and leave all guns and weapons behind.

Circle the "scented" items (*circle all & show photos of bear damage to them*).

Food, soap sunscreen, repellent, garbage, toothpaste, lotion, first aid kit pills/ointments, me

T/F These vehicles had scented items in them (*show damaged vehicles*).

Choose proper ways of storing these items in the backcountry or trailhead.

- a) Bear boxes (negs: might be full especially if people leave things like trash behind in them).
- b) bear proof canister (self-reliant, flexibility in camping if I get tired, if there's bad weather, etc and can't make it to a bear box).
- c) Counter-balancing (a good last resort but bears may rip off branches-show photos & offer diagram of how to do properly if they don't have a canister).

The goal of storing food properly is to

- a) keep you from going hungry
- b) save a bear's life. Bears are not relocated. They are shot and killed (*show photo*).

T/F If every hiker lost one power bar a day from July 1st through September 30th, that would equal over two thousand bars!

T/F All of my food, trash, etc. fits into a bear canister (if false discuss options with trailhead ranger).

Fire!

Where campfires are permitted, the rangers work hard to clean out ashes. They are much easier to maintain if they are three-sided, aren't filled with dirt, and don't have tiny pieces of foil, plastic, or other trash (choose one that matches that description-show photos of good/bad examples).

Note: Fires must always be attended. Plastics emit toxic gases and foil doesn't burn completely.

PASS/FAIL question:

T/F The goal of this test is to educate people so that you and future generations can visit the same exact places and feel that they are the first ones to ever visit and, at the same time, leave it unimpaired for the wildlife that lives there year round (*include inspiring wilderness quotes, etc.*).

End of Season Report

Tyndall Creek Ranger Station
June 25-September 24, 2004
Alison Steiner

A. General Observations:

1. Statistics:

- Contacts:
 - Backpackers...1060
 - Dayhikers...0
 - Stock Users...67
- Stock:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Animals/Total Use | Llamas...5 |
| Nights...93/175 | Commercial...74 |
| Horses and Mules...65 | Private...5 |
| Burrows...23 | Administrative...14 |
- Law Enforcement:

No law enforcement was necessary at Tyndall this summer. Thanks to the Lone Pine, Lodgepole, and Cedar Grove trailhead rangers, backpackers were generally well versed in, and willing to comply with, park regulations. I witnessed no illegal fires (although I removed many illegal fire rings...see "Fire Rings/Firewood Availability"), met only one backpacker without a permit, and was impressed by both backpackers and stock users food storage efforts. Education proved the most effective means by which to correct the few "law enforcement" issues that arose in the district.
- Medicals:

Medically speaking, it was a relatively quite summer at Tyndall. I responded to only one "major" medical, a 48-year-old male (located south of Forester Pass) who was allegedly suffering from a bout of bronchitis. A helpful hiker reported the gentleman's condition to me at 1:05 pm on August 26; by 3:15 pm, I was in contact with the visitor and relaying information to (b) (7)(F). The gentleman's increased pulse and respiratory rate, spells of dizziness when standing, inability to walk more than a few steps without stopping to catch his breath, and incredibly loud and crackly lung sounds won him an immediate evacuation by (b) (7)(F) and (b) (7)(F). The only other medical that came to my attention this season was very minor. While I was staffing Crabtree Ranger Station, a young woman came to the door with a cut finger that "would not stop bleeding." When we removed the bandages, the cut had in fact clotted; therefore, the only action I took was to clean and re-bandage the wound.
- SAR:

There were only three SARs this season that involved the Tyndall ranger, and, of these, only one actually occurred within Tyndall's district. In mid-July, a SNARL employee was reported overdue. I was out of the backcountry during this time and know little about this SAR; thankfully, (b) (7)(F) was in the area and promptly responded. The other two incidents occurred on August 21 and 22. The first incident involved two overdue climbers in the vicinity of Mt. Russell. While (b) (7)(F) and (b) (7)(F) searched the Artic Lake/Whitney-Russell Pass area, I posted signs at the Crabtree trail junctions and staffed the Crabtree Ranger Station. The search was

resolved early on August 22 when helicopter (b) found the two climbers at Tulainyo Lake. Only hours later, the second search began. (b) informed (b) (7) of an elderly JMT hiker who was several days overdue. This search was quickly resolved when two hikers reported to me that they had seen this gentleman camped at the junction one mile northwest of Crabtree. (b) Brian made contact with this visitor.

2. Weather Summary:

In contrast to previous years, weather this summer was unpredictable and inconsistent. It rained, hailed, and/or snowed on nearly 30 days of the season! This stormy weather generally lasted for only a few days at a time, leaving the Tyndall bathed in sunshine the rest of the summer. Despite the numerous thunderstorms, however, Tyndall remained phenomenally dry. Creeks were easily crossable by early July, and the district's high passes were already safe for foot traffic when I arrived on June 25th. Forester Pass became stock passable by mid-July, and Shepherds Pass opened on August 10 (see "Stock Use).

B. Use Patterns:

1. Hiker:

90-95% of my contacts this summer were concentrated within the JMT /PCT corridor. In late June, I encountered the tail end of the Pacific Crest Trail traffic, and, by mid July, Tyndall was swarming with John Muir Trail hikers. From mid-July to Labor Day, encountering 20-30 people a day on the JMT was common. On Tuesdays, this number increased dramatically; I often contacted between 50 and 60 people on mid-week Forester Pass patrols. I attribute this Tuesday influx to the fact that people hiking from Kearsarge to Whitney generally begin their trip on the weekend, putting them in the Tyndall area by mid-week.

Hikers also entered the Tyndall area via Shepherds Pass; however, these numbers were minimal in comparison to JMT traffic (typically only one or two parties a weekend). The week before July 15 (when Mt. Williamson closes for the lambing season) is the only period during which Shepherds sees considerable traffic; on July 13, the trailhead parking lot had 30+ cars! I believe that Shepherds Pass should be a patrol priority (for both Forest Service and Park Service employees) during this time. I monitored use in Williamson Bowl after July 15 and, thankfully, noticed no hikers in the area. By this point, people had switched their interest to bagging Junction Peak and Mt. Tyndall or to fishing in Lake South America and Wright Lakes Basin. However, I am aware of two park employees that climbed Mt. Williamson after its closure; perhaps supervisors should discuss the importance of "leading by example" during training.

2. Stock:

In contrast to the last few years, stock use in the Tyndall area was minimal. Use was concentrated in the Wright Creek and Tyndall Creek drainages, with the first commercial use of the season (other than Three Corner Round in late June) occurring on August 16 with William Wyman's 8 burrows and the High Sierra Pack Station's 6 horses and mules mingling in the Tyndall Meadow. Other

commercial stock use consisted of several parties led by Rock Creek Pack Station, one party of 13 (all over 70 yrs. old!) with Brian Berner of Sequoia and Kings Canyon Pack Outfit, a snow survey trip out of Cedar Grove, and a second group from the High Sierra Pack Station. As far as I know, only one private party, three women and five llamas, passed through the Tyndall area.

I attribute this year's decline in stock use to the condition of Shepherds Pass. The pass was declared officially "open and stock passable" on August 10th (by (b) (7)). However, this statement was based primarily on snow pack near the top of the pass and not on the condition of trail leading out of The Pothole above Anvil Camp (on the east side of Shepherds). This portion of the trail suffered a severe blowout during last August's rainstorms and Inyo National Forest has not yet repaired the crumbling switchbacks. The first and only stock group to brave Shepherds Pass (from Rock Creek Pack Station) did so on September 18; all other stock parties avoided the blowout by either accessing Tyndall from Forester and Cottonwood Pass or by dropping spot trips at Anvil Camp. I suggest contacting Craig London for an opinion on the condition of Shepherds Pass.

3. Administrative:

There was little administrative use in the Tyndall area this summer. In late July/early August, (b) (7) (accompanied by her two sisters and supported by two horses) visited the Upper Kern, Milestone Basin, Wallace Creek, and the Wright Creek drainage. She encountered difficulty maneuvering her stock over a narrow portion of Forester Pass and, upon returning to the frontcountry, reported these conditions to (b) (7). Repairing this section of trail became the Kern crew's priority for the week that they were at Tyndall (see Trails). (b) (7) also reported the Lake South America trail as "stock unfriendly."

In early August, the Kern crew spent seven days in the Tyndall area. Their use accounted for nearly 100 of Tyndall Meadow's stock use nights (of which there were only 175-200). Although their camp was left in good condition, I noticed the park stock grazing in Tyndall Meadow's "restoration area." I suspect this grazing pattern is related to the stocks' memory of the meadow; it will be interesting to watch grazing patterns once the crew moves to their new Tyndall camp next year.

In late August/early September, the Kern crew moved to the upper Kern-Kaweah and camped directly above Gallats Lake (a new camp for this crew). I passed through this area in late September and believe that it was considerably impacted by the crew's lengthy two-week stay. Stock trails were numerous and well-defined (in fact in some areas more defined than the trail itself), pawing had impacted soil at the base of several trees, and the rolling area was 60 feet long and in places 20 feet wide (pictures are included with this report). In addition, the camp was no more than five feet from water. In order to reduce future impacts, I suggest that the crew shorten the length of their stay in this area or commute from a lower camp from now on.

4. Aircraft:

Although over-flights were common along many of Tyndall's trail corridors and cross-country routes, low flying military aircraft were not. During my three months of duty, I reported only one low flying aircraft, a large military prop plane flying over Bighorn Plateau at approximately 1500 AGL. I believe that the park's efforts to improve relations with military representatives have significantly lessened low flying incidents (at least in the Tyndall area).

C. Natural Resources:

1. Wildlife:

Mule deer, pikas, coyotes, bears, weasels, and pine martins dominated this season's wildlife observations. In late June, newborn fawns were "cached" throughout the area and coyotes, not surprisingly, were prowling Tyndall Meadow. By August, fawns and does were swarming the Tyndall Creek drainage, with the bucks spending most of their time on the higher plateaus. I observed two additional coyotes later in the season, one on Bighorn Plateau and the other (chasing a blue grouse) one-mile east of Mitochondria Lake. In late August/early September, I sighted a pine martin no more than 150 ft. from the Tyndall Ranger Station and two weasels in the Crabtree area. In addition, pikas were abundant throughout the Tyndall district, especially on the ridge west of the ranger station, along Milestone Creek, and in Kaweah Basin. The summer's most exciting observation came from (b) (6), who said she saw three bighorn sheep at Mahogany Flats (east of Shepherds Pass).

Bears were present, but not problematic, in the Tyndall area. I found bear tracks between the Tyndall cabin and Bighorn Plateau on July 1st and saw three bears along the Kern (two near the hot springs and one near the John Dean Cutoff) in mid-July. Although no bear incidents occurred within the district, I did fill out four or five BIMS forms on activity in the Rock Creek vicinity and north of Forester Pass. I heard several accounts of bears breaking into the new "Bear Vault" canisters and feel that these should not be approved next year. In addition, I believe that park regulations regarding food storage above tree line should be explained more clearly in park literature and that researchers within the park should be held to the highest food storage standards. In mid-July, a group of eleven Fish and Game biologists, who were scouring the Upper Kern for pure golden trout, appeared at Sheep Camp with only two to three canisters. Although they were well equipped to hang their food (therefore not breaking any rules), they were not prepared to properly store their food once camping above tree line (in the Lake South America vicinity). Had they been specifically asked to bring bear canisters or had park regulations more clearly explained that canisters are the only viable option above tree line (instead of stating that "all scented items must be stored properly at all times. Proper storage methods include bear-proof canisters (recommended as the best option), metal food storage boxes, and using the counter-balance technique to hang your scented items"), I am sure they would have complied. It is a shame that the park regularly misses opportunities to more fully protect the resource due to insufficient literature.

2. Vegetation:

I noticed no exotic plants within the Tyndall area this summer. (For stock impacts please see “Administrative Use” and for backpacker impacts refer to “Camp Impacts.”)

D. Cultural Resources:

1. Archeological Sites:

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

[Redacted]

2. Historic Structures:

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

[Redacted] I noticed several “strange” pieces of wood stacked next to the cabin’s fire pit and suspect that people are using its “filler planks” as fuel. (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

[Redacted]

There are several mining artifacts in its vicinity including an old bucket, square nails, cans, metal weights, and more. Is the park aware that this mine exists?

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

[Redacted] Photographs are included in this report.

E. Backcountry Facilities:

All of the facilities within the Tyndall area are in excellent condition! The patrol cabin faired well during the winter’s light snow and needed virtually no repairs this season. I assembled the Tyndall Creek/Kern River drift fence on July 15 without any problem, and (b) (3) (F) and (b) (3) (F) disassembled it on September 20, after the Squad Trip used the Cold Springs camp. The drift fence is missing several fencing nails, and I recommend that these be taken to the location next year with whomever assembles the fence. There are ample fencing nails in the attic of the patrol cabin.

Although all in good condition, signs within the Tyndall area seem to be abundant and, at times, unnecessary or unclear. I noticed two signs within the first half-mile of the Milestone Basin trail that appear to be incorrect and/or irrelevant. The first, located immediately after the first creek crossing, states, “Stock use by special permit only. See the nearest backcountry ranger.” My understanding is that Milestone permits must be obtained several weeks before the permit holder enters the backcountry. If this is the case, the sign misleads the visitor and proves inconsistent on the part of the park. I recommend that the Tyndall ranger be given the authority to issue such permits or that the sign be updated with accurate information. The second, a restoration sign, is located next to Milestone Creek in what may be a former stock camp. With the current limitations on stock use in Milestone Basin, this sign seems

unnecessary. Although I did not remove it, I recommend that, if there are no reasons for its existence unbeknownst to me, it be removed next year.

F. Trails

Repairs on Forester Pass received the bulk of the Kern crew's attention this summer. They spent four of their six days in the area widening a notoriously narrow section of trail directly below Forester's snow chute. Their completed project, a large, well-constructed wall, received numerous complements from hikers and stock users. Not more than a month later, another section of Forester blew out when a stock party crossed over the pass. With four feet of trail left only one foot wide, Forester Pass was declared impassible to stock. However, (b) (7) immediately addressed the issue by helicoptering the Kern crew to Forester; by the end of the day, the trail was repaired and a stock party successfully passed over the section. During my last few days at Tyndall, I was informed of another Forester blow out. Although the report was vague, there seems to be a section of trail (around the third switchback from the top) that is losing its filling. The packer who relayed this information to me claimed that Forester was still stock passable, but feared that the resulting hole would eventually become too big for safe stock travel. I recommend that this portion of trail be assessed immediately next year.

The numerous Forester Pass projects unfortunately overshadowed the general maintenance of Tyndall's trails. Out of the district's three downed trees, two were left uncut. The social trails that resulted around these trees will erode more quickly, lead to considerable resource damage, and prove inadequate for stock travel. In addition, the original trails were not properly restored or naturalized. It is a shame that user impacts are increased due to incomplete trail maintenance.

Problem areas within the district include the first few miles of the JMT north of Tyndall Creek, the trail west of Shepherds Pass, and the Lake South America trail. All of these trails are located in wet, vegetated areas and have experienced severe braiding and erosion.

G. Camp Areas:

1. Conditions:

Junction Meadow, Wallace Creek Crossing, the Frog Ponds, and Tyndall Creek Crossing are still the primary camping areas within the Tyndall district. These sites remained in good condition throughout the season due to frequent "garbage and fire ring" patrols. Only a minimal amount of trash (far less than I anticipated) was found cached in Tyndall's bear boxes. For the most part, people seemed to act responsibly, following the Leave No Trace ethics. In addition, I encountered nothing more than sporadic trash and infrequent fire rings in the Upper Kern, Kaweah Basin, and other off-trail destinations.

2. Sanitation:

Due to the low density of travel within the district, sanitation is not typically an issue of concern in the Tyndall area. The only noticeable problems this summer were toilet paper blooms found in the center of the Wallace Creek Crossing campsites. Tyndall Creek, the Frog Ponds, and Junction Meadow stayed relatively clean throughout the season.

3. Fire Rings/Firewood Availability:

Fire ring maintenance and removal proved to be an ongoing project. The four fire pits in Junction Meadow more closely resembled fireplaces at the beginning of the season. In late July, I worked with the Kern trail crew to considerably decrease the size of these pits, as well as their surrounding structures. Thankfully, these areas remained reasonably sized thereafter.

Illegal fire rings, not maintained fire pits, however, seemed to be the district's "issue of concern" this summer. Although I never discovered an illegal fire, fire rings (large, small, old, and new) proliferated throughout the backcountry. Wallace Creek Crossing was particularly hard hit by this phenomenon; I removed at least ten illegal fire pits throughout the course of the summer, several containing partially burned wood that had clearly been living only days earlier. Obviously, the available firewood in this area has not increased since the fire closure was instated two years ago.

I attribute the numerous fires at Wallace Creek to both the "young" nature of the regulation and to unclear signage at the campsite. I met several hikers who had anticipated sitting around an open campfire at Wallace only to be disappointed by this "new" rule; I also encountered several groups that questioned the "No Fires within 1200 feet" sign. They complained that "1200 ft." is not a distance that people can easily conceptualize. Why not put it in terms that hikers can relate to, such as "a quarter mile"? Or, why not simply state that fires are not permitted at Wallace Creek? Perhaps the best sign would be one not only stating that fires are prohibited, but also explaining why. In my experience, people are usually more willing to follow rules if they understand the park's concern and the value of their compliance.

4. Food Storage:

I was pleasantly surprised by food storage compliance this summer. Nearly everybody that I encountered on the John Muir Trail (95+%) was equipped with a canister, if not two! Those who were not carrying canisters (often the people visiting more remote areas of the district) seemed well versed in counterbalance techniques. It appears that in the past three years, attitudes toward proper food storage have improved significantly! (For more on food storage regulations, refer to "Wildlife.")

5. Impacts/Restoration:

Numerous sites within the Tyndall area proved heavily impacted and in need of restoration. I completed several minor projects this summer, including the replacement of a "fireplace" with a fire pit at Wallace Waterfall Meadow, the removal of an unofficial campsite in Junction Meadow, and the naturalization of several new sites near Wright Creek along the JMT (the Wright Creek sites, however, appeared to have been reused post-rehab and should be more thoroughly removed next year). My most significant project was the restoration of the Tyndall Creek Crossing campsite. Pre-restoration, the area surrounding the Tyndall Creek bear box (approximately 80' x 30') lay completely barren;

obviously affected by camper sprawl, all of the rocks, vegetation, and wood had been removed from the vicinity. In an attempt to encourage backpackers to camp in the more resource friendly sites behind this spot, I relocated the bear box away from the trail, placed hundreds of rocks (both large and small) within the area, and defined a user trail leading to the other campsites. I took note of visitor use after completing the project and, for the most part, was impressed with visitor compliance. I recommend that use patterns for this area be monitored for the next few years and that restoration be altered depending on visitor need.

H. Permit System:

1. Permit Compliance:

Permit compliance was astonishingly high this summer (99+%!?!). I met only one permitless person all season and did not feel that this gentleman deserved more than a verbal warning.

2. Permit Fees:

Of the people that I contacted this summer, approximately 95% of them had not paid (or even heard of) the new backcountry use fee. Because Tyndall traffic originates predominately from Inyo National Forest, there is an array of logistical problems that lead to the large numbers of ill-informed visitors (these issues are discussed below). All visitors beginning their trip in Cedar Grove or Lodgepole, however, were told about and paid the permit fee. Although few of these backpackers had serious complaints regarding the charge (except for one couple that adamantly opposed permit fees for backcountry use), most parties made one of two comments. First, people wanted to know that their fees were being used in constructive ways. If the park printed a small poster or sign listing the projects that backcountry fees fund and hung it in the trailhead offices, visitors would know how the park was using their money. The park does not need to spend any significant amount on this project (no formal brochures with high printing prices, etc...); a simple list would probably appease most people. Secondly, several visitors suggested that a "Frequent User" pass be created for backcountry fees. Although many argue that \$15 is not much for a backpacker to pay for their trip (an argument that is fundamentally flawed), frequent backcountry users (people who hike in from Bishop or Cedar Grove every weekend) complain that this fee adds up to a significant amount of money over the course of a summer. Offering a yearly pass (costing \$30) would acknowledge the park's commitment to keeping the backcountry accessible, therefore improving public relations, especially in local communities.

Charging backcountry permit fees for permits issued out of Inyo National Forest presents a different set of problems, both logistical and philosophical in nature. The logistical issues that keep eastside permit fees from being economically viable are:

1. The permit fee does not apply to those people who make reservations. Because 60% of Inyo permits are reservable, only 40% of backcountry users are even being asked to pay.

2. Out of the 40% of visitors who should be paying the permit fee, most likely no more than 5% are informed of it because:
 - Inyo's permit issuing officers, often young and inexperienced, are already overwhelmed with the amount of park information that they are supposed to dispense. In many cases, employees simply forget to mention the permit fee.
 - Many of Inyo's employees have no interest in engaging visitors in the arguments that frequently result from the topic of permit fees. Therefore, discussion of fees is often avoided.
 - Inyo employees have difficulty recognizing when a visitor's itinerary takes them into the park overnight. On many occasions, visitors do not even know whether or not they will be staying within the park's boundaries.
3. Out of the 5% of visitors who are informed of the "voluntary" eastside fee, perhaps only 1-2% will pay because:
 - Forest Service ranger stations cannot collect user fees for the park. Therefore, visitors who want to pay immediately are told they must mail their fee later. People, most likely, never go to this effort.
 - The eastside fee is unenforceable and, thus, still voluntary. People who disagree (even slightly) with the fee, as well as people who feel they are financially troubled by it, will not end up paying.

Ultimately, the park is probably paying more for fee envelope stamps than they are receiving from paid fees.

Philosophically speaking, eastside fees raise other issues, primarily relating to the consistency of park regulations. The problems include:

1. Only 40% of eastside visitors are (theoretically) being asked to pay the user fee. Why are visitors who make reservations exempt from this charge when they are using the backcountry no differently than people who receive walk-up permits? The argument that the park does not want to double fee backcountry users is insufficient because 1) visitors are double charged all the time (entrance fees, camping fees, backcountry fees, etc...) and 2) the reservation fee pays for the extra service that visitors are receiving when they reserve a permit, not for the use of the park's backcountry. In the end, people who receive walk-up permits are potentially penalized; for a single hiker, the user fee (\$15) is much higher than the reservation fee (\$5). How does the park explain and justify this situation?
2. Although the park attempts to charge hikers entering from eastside trailheads, JMT hikers, PCT hikers, and people entering from Sequoia National Forest are not asked to pay the user fee. Why are these backcountry users exempt from the backcountry fee when, often times, they are within park boundaries much longer than hikers entering over Kearsarge or Cottonwood Pass? To not universally charge all backcountry users (if the park is going to charge some people entering from non-park trailheads), makes the park's new permit fee system appear disorganized and inconsistent.

In the end, the park's attempt to incorporate forest service trailheads into the new fee system weakens their case for permit fees. The new regulations would appear more solid and honest if the park simply charged fees for people entering the backcountry from Sequoia or Kings Canyon trailheads.

I. Inventory:

Fuel:

1 can denatured alcohol
8 cans Coleman propane
4 can white gas
2½ small used propane canisters (pocket rocket)
1 large full propane canister (pocket rocket)
1½ small propane tanks
1 large propane tank
1 small container MSR white gas
4 MSR fuel bottles

Maps:

2 Johnson Peak (7.5 min)
1 Mt. Kaweah (7.5 min) (poor condition)
1 Chagoopa Falls (7.5 min)
1 Mt. Whitney (7.5 min) (poor condition)
1 Triple Divide Peak (7.5 min)
1 Mt. Brewer (7.5 min) (poor condition)
4 Mt. Williamson (7.5 min)
1 Golden Trout Wilderness
1 Olancho (15 min)
1 Marion Peak (15 min)
1 Cirque Peak (7.5 min)
1 Kearsarge Peak (7.5 min)

Books:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| CFR | Trees of North America |
| Challenge of the Big Trees | Sierra Nevada Natural History |
| | Knots and Slices |
| Place Names of the Sierra Nevada | Comprehensive Guide to Wilderness and |
| Discovering Sierra Birds | Travel Medicine |
| John Muir Trail Country | Mt. Whitney |
| Sierra Nevada Wildflowers | Starr's Guide |
| Sierra Trout Guide | A Sierra Nevada Flora |
| California Mammals | Giant Sequoias |
| National Geographic Birds | Technical Rescue Rigerr's Guide |
| A Field Guide to Airplanes | The Climbers Guide to the High Sierra |
| Geology of the Sierra Nevada | High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, and Trails |
| Medicine for Mountaineering | |

Cabin Supplies:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 gallon bleach | 3-4 cans spray paint | pens/markers/pencils |
| 4 small containers old motor oil | 1 Coleman 2 burner stove | 6 sets earplugs |
| 25 rolls toilet paper | 2 boxes matches | 3 smoke signals |
| 1 window glass panel | 35 qt. size Ziplocks | 2 extra locks |
| 1 gun locker | lots of trash bags | 2 radio antenna |
| 1 chimney sweeper | 1 sun shower | 2 compasses |
| 1 ancient ice axe | 1 spray bottle | large trash can w/ water filtration system |
| 1 small radio | 100 coffee filters | 1 old rescue rope |
| 4 burlap sacks | 2 pairs water shoes | 44 AA batteries |
| 3 bundles paper towels | 1 poop shovel | 2 chargers for AA |
| 2 boxes aluminum foil | 1 grain sack | 8 D batteries |
| 2 Scotchbrite sponges | 100 clear trash bags (patrol size) | 1 bendex radio battery |
| 1 other sponge | | 13 reusable AA |

Solar Equipment:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Multimeter | 50 zip ties | 2 battery terminal clamps |
| 7 PVC pipe fittings box connecters | small washers/bolts/screws | 2 fuses (15A) |
| 1 set solar instructions | 1 (old can) PVC cement | 1 charge controller |
| 4 3/8" screw ring terminal | green/red copper wire (20' each) | 1 inverter |
| | | 1 battery charger |

Tools (in attic):

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 screwdriver set | 2 splitting malls (no handles) | wedges for pilaski handles |
| 1 wratchet wrench set | 10 lbs. 16 penny common nails | 12 20 penny nails |
| 1 carpenter's saw | 20 3" lag screws | 6 ceiling hooks |
| 2 rock bars | 10 1/2" concrete anchors | 24 galvanized 1" roofing nails |
| 1 4' bow saw | 5 lbs. 4 penny box nails | 1 can washers |
| 1 3' bow saw | 24 1 1/2" wood screws | 1" brads |
| 2 racks | 1 can misc. nails | 1 lb. fencing nails |
| 1 tire pump | 1 can misc. screws | 1 lb. assorted finishing nails |
| 1 pilaski | 8' 1/2" electrical conduit | 1 small box small brads |
| 1 single bit axe (broken handle) | 2 lbs. 6 penny box nails | 2 hook latches |
| 1 gallon of paint (Western Red Cedar, penetrating oil finish) | 2 1' carriage bolts nail apron | 2 sheets 120 grit sand paper |
| 1 splitting wedge | misc. carriage bolts and lag bolts | |

Tools (in tool box):

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 hand drill | 2 claw hammers | 4 3" carriage bolts |
| 1 hacksaw | 50 ft. measuring tape | 1 4" straping hinge |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 2" hook | 1 roll flagging tape | 1 pair safety goggles |
| 25' rope (poor condition) | 1 gas pipe fitting | 12" bastard file |
| crosspeen hammer | 50' p-cord | 12" wood rasp |
| 1 wire brush | 1 pair gloves | 8" crescent wrench |
| 1 wire crimper | pry bar | wood plane |
| 1" cold chisel | assorted drill bits | butane torch (no butane) |
| 1 adjustable crescent wrench | scale | sharpening stone |
| 3" paintbrush | 3 ceiling hooks | 1/4" round file |
| 1/2" open ended wrench | star drill chisel | 6 crosspoint Phillips screwdrivers |
| tape for pipe fitting (2 rolls) | paint scraper | 6" whisk brush |
| 10' tape measure | 5 hacksaw blades | 1 can wood putty |
| pliers | 3 standard screwdrivers (assorted sizes) | |
| | 4 1" Phillips screws | |
| | 1 padlock assembly | |

First Aid Supplies (in "Ready Bag"):

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 pocket mask w/ oxygen inlet valve | 1 sam splint | 3 aspirins |
| 1 adult nasal cannula | 1 pressure eye bandage | 1 triple antibiotic ointment |
| 1 adult non-rebreather mask | 1 syringe | 1 large (12"x30") dressing |
| 1 microshield | 3 combine dressings | several pairs gloves |
| 1 tube glucose | 2 run sheets | 1 orthoglass splint |
| 1 pencil | 1 petrolatum gauze | 3 ibuprofens |
| 1 oxygen regulator | 3 4x4 gauze pads | 2 antiseptic towelettes |
| 2 4" compress bandages | 2 packages steristrips | 2 rolls cloth tape |
| 1 6-ply/4yds gauze roll | 2 3x3 gauze pads | |
| 1 3" ace bandage | 4 3x4 gauze pads | |
| | 1 roll gauze | |
| | 2 triangular bandages | |
| | 1 alcohol prep pad | |

First Aid Supplies (not included in the "Ready Bag"):

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 3 pressure eye bandages | rolls | 2 ace bandages |
| 4 sterile eye pads | 3 4x4 dressing sponges | 3 large sheets moleskin |
| 1 bottle (500mL) sterile water | 1 2x3 transparent dressing | 3 tubes Neosporin |
| 7 pairs sunglasses | 20 rolls athletic tape (assorted sizes) | 3 antibiotic ointments |
| 1 pair safety glasses | lots of bandaids | 1 iodine swabstick |
| 29 4x4 gauze pads | 1 package steristrips | 2 bactoscrubs |
| 36 2x2 gauze pads | 3 butterfly closures | 2 alcohol prep pads |
| 28 3x3 gauze pads | 2 triangular bandages | 3 benzakonium chloride towelettes |
| 2 3x4 gauze pads | 6 camouflaged muslin compressed bandages (37x37x52) | 4 ice packs |
| 5 yds 4 1/2" gauze roll | | 2 ortho-glass splints |
| 10 yds 3" gauze roll | | 3 cardboard splint |
| 2 5yds by 2" gauze rolls | | 3 sam splints |
| 12 6 yds by 1" gauze | | 3 adult nasal cannulas |

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 3 adult non-rebreathers | 9 aspirins | 1 syringe |
| 1 CPR mask | 5 ibuprofins | 3 menstrual pads |
| 1 oxygen regulator | 3 Tylenol | 2 sets trauma shears |
| 2 size-D oxygen tanks | 10 rolls Tums | 2 tongue depressors |
| 1 mini oxygen tank | 3 sting relief pads | 1 collapsible litter |
| 7 pair latex surgical gloves | 1 thermometer | 4 run sheets |
| 11 pairs of gloves | 8 sudafed tablets | |
| | 1 glucose gel (opened) | |

K. Needs for Next Year:

First Aid Supplies:

Pediatric nasal cannulas and non-rebreather masks
Butterfly closures
Steristrips
Aspirin
Ibuprofen
Triple Antibiotic Ointment
Alcohol Prep Pads
Iodine Pads
1 size D oxygen tank

Fuel:

1-2 cans denatured alcohol or fire starter
Propane tanks (1-2 small)
Propane canisters for pocket rocket stove

Maps:

2-3 Mt. Kaweah (7.5 min)
1 Chagoopa Falls (7.5 min)
2-3 Mt. Whitney (7.5 min)
1 Triple Divide (7.5 min)
2-3 Mt. Brewer (7.5 min)
1 Mt. Whiney (15 min)

Book Recommendations:

EMT Textbook
Geology of the JMT
Sierra Club Naturalist's Guide to the Sierra Nevada
Tracking guide/Mammal guide

Other:

Clothespins
Work gloves
Mousetraps
Masks (for cleaning cabin)

Cheese grater
Coffee cone
AAA batteries
Pencils and park pens
Burlap sacks
Paper towels
Sponges
Matches
Several rolls of duct tap

J. Recommendations

1. Fund the Tyndall ranger.
2. Contact Rock Creek Pack Station for information on the conditions of Shepherds Pass.
3. Revise park literature, making food storage requirements above treeline obvious.
4. Replace stock use sign along Milestone Creek.
5. Have trailhead offices emphasize the need for visitors to pack out their toilet paper.
6. Ask Yosemite trailhead rangers to include SEKI information with JMT permits.
7. Cut out downed trees along trail corridors and naturalize social trails.
8. Remove fire sign at Wallace Creek Crossing.
9. Stop charging eastside permit fees.

Crabtree Ranger Station
End of Season Report
by Rob Pilewski
Field Season: June 25 - Sept. 28, 2004

A. General Observations

This was the most productive and efficient season that I have been a part of since starting to work in the Kern Sub-district 13 seasons ago. The addition of the Kern supervisory field ranger has been a very positive change in sub-district operations. Having someone as knowledgeable, experienced, and motivated as Erika Jostad in this new position is invaluable to day to day operations in the sub-district. Erika's guidance and leadership resulted in more efficient handling of incidents and much improved communication between backcountry staff and the front country. Way to go Erika, and the powers that be who brought this position to fruition.

CONTACTS—Backpacker/Day Hiker-3,543

Stock-horses, mules, burros, llamas—220 (though more used the area)

It was a typically busy summer season in the Crabtree area with many user groups enjoying the area throughout the summer. When I think back to my first season at Crabtree in 1992 and compare to use today I would say that, overall, there is more visitation now. Stock use seems to be up the past 2 summers, and due to the exit quota on Trail Crest people are spending more nights on the Park side of the Sierra Crest.

I arrived at Crabtree on June 26th after 2 ½ weeks of training in the front country. Erika and Deb Brenchely put together some very worthwhile training that gave the backcountry staff an opportunity to discuss issues and backcountry management.

Conditions in the backcountry were very dry in late June. No snow was encountered and the streams were showing flow more indicative of mid- August. Subsequently, early season visitation was up with the area showing signs (illegal fire-pits, trash in bear boxes and at ranger station) of many visitors in the area prior to the rangers arrival.

LAW-ENFORCEMENT. Law-enforcement in the area focused on education and compliance. Often times violations are observed after the fact, and after the violator has left the area. This makes enforcement of park regulations difficult. There were 5 citations issued this summer at Crabtree. Citations were issued for exceeding the group size limit (2), a dog on Mt. Whitney, improper food storage, and one for not having a permit. These violations are typical for the busy Crabtree area. I was in the right place at right time to levy the appropriate level of enforcement. I think that for these violations issuing citations is important in gaining future compliance for these and future visitors to the area who will hear about enforcement in the area via other backcountry users and the internet (there are several websites devoted to the Mt. Whitney area, the JMT, and the PCT). The group size limit has been a problem with the Boy Scouts and hopefully word will get out that field rangers are enforcing the group size regulation. Several warning notices were issued for illegal fires (visitors are still having problems interpreting the confusing fire regulations in Sequoia Park). Numerous verbal warnings were

issued for leaving trash in bear-boxes, camping on vegetation and too close to water, for making campsite developments, for having stock tied up too close to camp, and for not removing manure from campsites. On the spot service projects are also utilized when appropriate to educate visitors on minimum impact practices for minor violations.

There was a break-in on the ranger side of the Mt. Whitney Hut. I conducted an investigation (see case incident for details and photos) on the break-in which occurred sometime in late fall or early spring. The metal shutter was opened and the reinforced glass broken to gain entry. The room is used as storage for rescue gear and maintenance tools. The room was vandalized and some of the food was taken, but no significant damage or theft occurred. I placed locks on the shutters and Thor replaced the glass to prevent further break-ins.

ASSISTS- Visitors received lots of help in the Crabtree area this summer. I documented 19 assists with case cards. These included giving out food and fuel to ill-prepared hikers, arranging for stock evacuation, and assisting with maintenance of problematic camping gear. There is a steady stream of visitors by the ranger station throughout the summer seeking advice on routes, campsites, places to get water, and minor medical advice. The Mt. Whitney area gets its share of novice backpackers and there is ample opportunity for the Crabtree ranger to educate visitors on appropriate minimum impact techniques.

MEDICALS- Minor medical advice is given out frequently at Crabtree. Examples include how to treat blisters, dealing with mountain sickness, and treatment of minor abrasions and sunburn. There were 3 medivacs from the Crabtree area this summer. I treated and arranged for the evacuation of a 16 year old boy suffering from altitude illness and diabetic complications at Wallace Creek. Helicopter (b) flew in directly to Mt. Whitney where a woman was reportedly suffering from cardiac chest pain. While they were on scene they picked up 2 more patients allegedly suffering from moderate to severe altitude illness. Welcome to the Mt. Whitney zone.... There was a group of doctors conducting a week long study on the summit of Whitney on altitude illness. It will be interesting to see what their findings are. Overall, it was a below average year for medivacs, especially for serious altitude illness at Crabtree, where we typically fly several people out a year.

I did respond to a 911 call from Mt. Whitney reportedly for a person suffering from hypothermia. I arrived on the summit at 2:00 AM and there was nobody to be found. I searched the area around Trail Crest and the summit to no avail.

SEARCHES- It was a busy summer for searches in the Crabtree area. Though none lasted more than a couple of days, there were 4 searches that I took part in. My first patrol of Mt. Whitney turned into a search for an individual who planned on hiking to Mt. Whitney and back from Soldier Lake. He ended up hiking over the wrong pass and spending the night out without gear before being located by the Rock Creek ranger. I searched 2 days for a misplaced frog researcher in the upper Kern before they were located at Lake South America. He was disoriented to where he should be, but OK. The most ominous search of the summer occurred on 8/21 when we were notified by the Inyo County sheriffs office that there was 2 climbers who were 3 days overdue from a climb of Mt. Russell. They were on a technical climb of the "fish

hook arete” route during a stretch of bad weather in the high country. The Rock Creek ranger and myself searched the Arctic Creek drainage and the area surrounding the SW side of Mt. Russell nearly to the summit before being turned back by weather and darkness. We turned up no clues and recommended focusing the following days search on the other side of the mountain in the Wallace Creek-Tulainyo Lake area. Climbers were inserted the following day and the lost climbers were located by (b) doing aerial recon over Tulainyo Lake. They were OK, but most definitely lost as their camp was at Iceberg Lake on the other side of the Sierra Crest. I conducted an overnight search of Mt. Whitney for a man reportedly in trouble and unable to continue. He was apparently able to self evacuate.

WEATHER– It was very dry this summer. We had a 10 day stretch of afternoon showers in mid- August, otherwise clear skies prevailed. Temperatures were near normal for most of the summer. Many water sources were dry by the end of summer.

B. Use Patterns

BACKPACKERS– The Mt. Whitney corridor receives the most use in the area. Backpackers who make Mt. Whitney their destination start their trip at many trailheads and funnel out over Trail Crest....if they can get an exit permit. Otherwise the visitors spend twice as much time in the park in order to exit a different trailhead. There is no question that the exit quota has resulted in a marked increase on the park side of the Sierra Crest, particularly at Crabtree and Rock Creek, though hikers on the JMT and PCT also bring much use to the area. Many international travelers are contacted along the JMT. The multitude of cross country routes in the area also get much use, particularly the Crabtree Pass-Miter Basin loop.

STOCK– Area meadows dried out nicely and opened to grazing and stock use as scheduled. Upper Crabtree receives the most use in the area. That meadow was showing the signs of lots of use by summers end. Many commercial stock users were contacted in the area this summer. Cottonwood Pack Station is the most frequent user, but they carry feed on almost all of their trips and very seldom graze their animals. Other stock users in the area were Rock Creek Pack Station, Pine Creek Pack Station, and High Sierra Pack Trains. Several private stock parties utilized area meadows, including 3 llama parties. 90% of stock use occurs at Upper Crabtree Meadow with the rest occurring at Sandy Meadow. Lower Crabtree Meadow and Strawberry Meadow did not see any stock use this summer.

ADMINISTRATIVE- The Kern trail crew spent 2 weeks camped at Sandy meadow while they worked area trails. The military overflight trip spent 2 nights at Upper Crabtree meadow and the Squad trip was in the area in September and camped at Sandy Meadow for 2 nights. The meadow monitor, Catie Karplus, spent several days at Crabtree looking over area meadows and setting up the RB plots at Upper Crabtree meadow. There were numerous researchers working in the area this summer. Surveys included mtn. yellow-legged frogs, bats, birds and Mt. Lyell salamanders.

COMMERCIAL- Lots of commercial use at Crabtree this summer. In addition to the aforementioned commercial stock users in the area this summer, there were also groups from the Sierra Club, Southern Yosemite Mt. Guides, REI Adventure trips, Mt. Travel SOBEK, SNHA, and Call of the Wild. IBP monitoring forms were kept on all groups contacted in the area. All

commercial users contacted carried the appropriate permits and were eager to comply with park regulations.

MILITARY OVERFLIGHTS-Military jets and all of the intrusive noise associated with them were observed almost daily in the Crabtree area. Several low -flyer deviations were reported in the vicinity of Mt. Whitney. Many visitors voiced complaints about the noise and the intrusion to their wilderness experience. This has been a concern to wilderness management since I started work in the park in 1992. Dialogue with the military over the years seems to have curtailed the very low flyers who used to buzz the Kern Canyon and the summit of Mt. Whitney, but the constant roar of military jets over the Sequoia Park wilderness is still a problem. If managing the “quietude” is part of wilderness management than more needs to be done to eliminate the jet noise. Greg Fauth has done an excellent job the past few seasons of organizing the military trip. Almost all of the jet noise is created by FA-18 Hornets commuting from Lemoore NAS to eastern California and Nevada. They claim to not use the airspace over the Park for maneuvers but on several occasions this summer I observed jets “dog-fighting” and flying in ways that did not appear to be part of any commuter route.

C. Natural Resources

BEAR ACTIVITY- A bear visited the ranger station one night in late July and rolled the locked trash barrels around before being chased off. A visitor lost a small amount of food to a bear at Lower Crabtree Meadow (citation issued). That was the extent of the bear activity at Crabtree. A bear was observed at Wallace Creek but no incidents were reported. The main bear activity was at Rock Creek this summer where the ranger had her hands full educating visitors and chasing bears. She did an excellent job. Most visitors are carrying bear canisters these days. The problem is that at the beginning of peoples trips all of the food does not fit and they are unsure what to do with the overflow. Stock parties are all carrying the bear-proof panniers which are great.

WILDLIFE- A wolverine and bighorn sheep that were observed in the Miter Basin by visitors and a trail crew member were the big wildlife sightings in the area this summer. A fresh mountain lion kill (mule deer) was observed along Whitney Creek. The pika survey continued this summer though it is difficult to know if their numbers are in decline. Please refer to the wildlife observations cards for a synopsis of wildlife sightings this summer.

VEGETATION- I assisted with a vegetation mapping project in the area this summer. Residual Biomass sampling was conducted at Upper Crabtree Meadow (new this year) and at Sandy Meadow. Exclosures were removed from Strawberry Meadow and Wallace Waterfall Meadow.

D. Cultural Resources

PREHISTORIC SITES- No new sites were observed this summer and I was unable to visit any inventoried sights due to a lack of time.

HISTORIC SITES-The Mt. Whitney Shelter (1909) is showing some wear and tear but still functioning quite well. Minor repairs were made throughout the summer and Thor did an excellent job of replacing the broken window. The lightening diffusion system is intact and in good repair. The NPS had a good presence on Mt. Whitney this summer.

E. Backcountry Facilities

RANGER STATION-The station is in good shape and should continue to be functional for years to come.

SIGNS- All signs in the area are in good shape. One new sign was placed at Lower Crabtree Meadow pointing the way to the stock camp. I do not see the need for any new signs in the Crabtree area for next summer.

F. Trails

TRAIL ACTIVITIES- The Kern trail crew performed maintenance on area trails in August. They did a fine job. Special thanks to crew leader Eric Davenport who helped to remove meadow exclosures and accumulated junk from Strawberry Meadow and Wallace Waterfall Meadow.

PROBLEM AREA-The trails in the Crabtree area are in fine shape. I do not see the need for any special trail projects in the area. The construction crew did a great job on some much needed work on Guyot Pass. Seasonal maintenance should continue on all area trails.

G. Camp Areas

CONDITIONS- Area bear boxes continue to see the most use. These areas are most impacted while other potential campsites retain their mostly pristine nature. Fire restrictions at Crabtree have dispersed use somewhat, but this area receives so much use that it is my opinion that concentrating use around area "campgrounds" is beneficial. The exception is Guitar Lake which receives way too much use. It is located in the high alpine lake basin and cannot sustain the amount of use it gets.

SANITATION-Guitar Lake is a mess. There is no way that this area can accommodate the amount of human waste that is produced by overnight use there. The solution?? Regulate the numbers (good luck!!), or ask people to carry their waste out with them. This might work. The USFS gave us some "wag bags" to try out this year. They seem to be working on the east side of Mt. Whitney, and they may be made required in coming years. I propose a trial season where we ask visitors who want to camp at Guitar Lake and above to use the bags and carry their waste out with them. This would be voluntary initially until we can see if this is a viable way of dealing with the problem. My sense is that some people would be willing to do their part in preserving the natural conditions in the park and, perhaps, a smaller number would change their itinerary so to not have to carry out their waste. In any case, I think that it is worth looking at, especially since they are doing the same on the east side of Mt. Whitney. We could do a controlled study where we ask visitors to report back on the use of the bags and monitor conditions in the field to see if conditions improve at Guitar Lake.

The pit toilet at the ranger station campground continues to work well in taking the pressure off of the surrounding area. Enough people use the pit toilet that other areas are much cleaner.

The "honey bucket" continues to serve its purpose on Mt. Whitney. I pulled one bucket in late July and the replacement bucket is currently full. There are 2 full buckets needing to be flown sometime in the fall. Helitak Fred did a great job last fall of taking care of the business on Whitney. I hope that it works out as well this fall.

FIRE-RINGS- Maintenance on the firepits is much less now that fires are not allowed at the bear box camps at lower Crabtree and the Ranger Station. I still maintain small fire-rings along Whitney Creek. I removed numerous firerings at Crabtree Lakes in the "foxtail belt" where downed wood is very scarce and only of the "ancient" variety. I did this as part of a resource project to remove and rehab old camps there. It came out quite well and the area looks more natural now.

FIREWOOD AVAILABILITY-A fuel woods inventory project was performed with Erika in early September in a repeat study which was first performed 2 years ago. Downed wood is still lacking at Lower Crabtree and the Ranger Station campgrounds and I recommend the restriction on campfires continues at these locations, as well as the Wallace Creek crossing of the JMT.

FOOD STORAGE- Food storage lockers continue to be functional at Lower Crabtree meadow and the Ranger Station. Mice are a problem at the big locker near the Ranger Station. Any suggestions?

H. Permit System

TRAILHEADS-Permit quotas do not protect the Crabtree area from impacts caused by excessive use. The volume of visitors is much too high to protect park resources from overuse. The exit quota on Mt. Whitney (Trail Crest) has increased use in the area. Permit issuers in the Lone Pine office did a good job of getting the appropriate park information to visitors planning a trip in SEKI.

ISSUING OFFICE-As always, Peter, Gary, and Ben did an excellent job of supporting the backcountry staff this summer. They were always helpful in acting as liaison between backcountry rangers and the USFS office in Lone Pine. Visitors to the area were well informed and kept up to date on area conditions. Compliance was good for the wilderness permit fee program, although most visitors originating trips on the east side were not given fee envelopes. Of those surveyed who were required to pay a fee there was a general consensus that \$15.00 was a bargain and people did not mind paying it. Many people qualified their response with "as long as the money is going toward wilderness management".

I. Communications

(b) (7)(F)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

J. Needs for Next Year.

- 6 Burlap sacks
- 20 small trash bags
- 10 rolls tp
- 2 pt
- 2 legal size writing pads
- 6 large trash bags
- Restocked file-box needs to be sent back in

Items left at Crabtree

- Full compliment of maps
- 1 carbon fiber bear can
- 1 gregory day and a half pack
- 4 small propane (full)
- 1 large propane (nearly empty)
- 1 ice axe
- 2 small stuff sacks
- 1 gun cleaning kit
- 4 small fuel canisters for pocket rocket stove
- 1 pt
- 2 books of violation notices

- 5-51 lock inventory:
- 1 at Crabtree RS
- 4 at Mt. Whitney shelter

K. Recommendations

1. Lower the group size limit for cross country travel to 8 or less in the SEKI wilderness. More than 8 causes lasting impacts in the trail less areas of the park.
2. Address the sanitation problem at Guitar Lake. See my suggestion earlier in this report.
3. Require bear canisters in the Rock Creek area up to Guyot Pass.
4. Continue to staff the permit office in Lone Pine with NPS personnel. Work toward better communication between this position and the backcountry rangers.
5. Work toward better itinerary information for visitors getting their permit from the USFS and traveling in the park. We need to be able to better track visitors in the park for wilderness management and user trends.
6. Staff backcountry stations sooner in June on dry years. There should also be a presence in the Fall to deter hunters along the boundary from hunting in the park.

Hockett Meadow Ranger Station
End of Season Report
2004

The Hockett Meadow Ranger Station was not funded for staffing in the 2004 field season.

The station was opened for use on June 25th by Meadow Monitor Catie Karplus, Mineral King Ranger Liz Hamilton and Rare Plant Surveyor Martin Oliver. Karplus and Hamilton assessed early season meadow conditions on the Hockett Plateau and stayed for two days. Oliver was surveying several rare plant populations in the area and stayed for one week.

Throughout the course of the summer the cabin was visited by several NPS employees including Kern Supervisor Erika Jostad, Kern Ranger Joe Ventura and Thor Rikshiem who leads the historic restoration crew. Thor conducted a follow-up to work begun in 2003 to weather and rodent seal the cabin.

The Hockett Trail Crew was based at Hockett Meadow for the month of July. They erected the fence for the administrative pasture. The majority of their grazing was done in Hockett Meadow and they used the fenced area adjacent to their camp for holding.

For approximately eight days in mid to late August, the station was staffed by volunteer Gail Bennett. Gail was a long time NPS employee, very knowledgeable of the Hockett Plateau. Gail made visitor contacts in the South Fork and Hockett Meadow areas and conducted an inventory of snow survey food. Gail observed a mountain lion walking the trail between South Fork Meadow and Sand Meadow on August 26.

Residual biomass sampling was conducted at Hockett Pasture, South Fork Meadow and South Fork Pasture by Catie Karplus in September.

The station was closed for the season and fences dropped on October 15 by Subdistrict Ranger Bud Walsh and Kern Ranger Joe Ventura who were supplying the Hockett and Quinn cabins for the 2005 snow surveys.

**END OF SEASON REPORT
KERN RIVER CANYON RANGER STATION
JUNE 25 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 28, 2004**

JOE VENTURA

A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

CONTACTS

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| BACKPACKERS- | 223 |
| SPOT TRIPS- | 2 |
| DAY HIKERS- | 32 |
| STOCK USERS- | 28 |

BACKPACKERS

The 223 backpackers I came across during my travels in my immediate patrol area; Rattlesnake, the HST, the Kern River Trail and Coyote Pass. It does not include contacts or visits with folks during my travels in the Inyo or Sequoia National Forests, which would probably be another 100 people.

DAY HIKERS

There were 32 day hikers, mostly individuals visiting from (b) (6) camp across the Kern River. A group of (b) (6) Camp sat out a rain storm at the station on their hike from Coyote Lakes, past the station en route to Little Kern lake.

SPOT TRIPS

Laura Storm a packer for Golden Trout Wilderness Pack Trains resupplied a hiking group from Thatcher School. They met at Lower Funston. Later in the season she spotted two hikers at Lower Funston, returning a week later to pick them up.

STOCK

28 people with 58 head of stock were observed. There were no indications of unobserved overnight stock use. On the other hand there was indication of day use by stock users visiting from Brown's camp, Coyote Lakes, and the Little Kern areas. They often left me notes at the station.

START OF SEASON

I rode out of Dan Shew's pack station on Friday, June 25th, 2004 with a saddle horse and two pack mules arriving at the Kern Station at 3 p.m.

Eric and his crew were camped there, and would be leaving on the 30th for the Hot Springs. They had the station opened up and the ditches running. During the next few days I organized the cabin and Eric

gave me a run down on the ditches and how to maintain them and the water to the cabin. He gave me instruction on the gas and wood stoves, how the sump tank worked, and how to shut the systems down at the end of the season. He reported that the hot water coil in the outdoor firebox was cracked and they dismantled the firebox to remove the coil and flew it out for repairs. There were notes left on the bulletin board indicating hikers had been coming through the area as early as Memorial Day.

After traveling nearly 600 miles on horseback and hiking about 100, I closed up the station and went out via Lewis Camp Trail Head on September 27th.

B. LAW ENFORCEMENT

There were no arrests or citations issued. Only one incident qualified for enforcement. On June 30th, group of 23 students from Chappel Hill University, North Carolina, were camped at the Hot Springs. It looked like a Hooverville; tents, equipment, and people scattered everywhere. The group was traveling on two permits issued out of Yosemite and were aware of the restrictions placed on them according to one of the permit holders. Both promised it would not happen again, they were leaving that day via the HST.

I reviewed the incident with the SRD and it was resolved with education and warnings. I revisited the area the following day and found no evidence of their visit.

Warnings and resource education were utilized in other incidents such as; improper food storage, camping on vegetation, and fire restrictions. Education included tours of the historic ranger station and Lewis Camp.

C. VISITOR ASSISTANCE

Visitors were provided with varied services and assistance throughout the season. They included:

- Water
- Stove Fuel
- Food
- First Aid Supplies
- Duct Tape
- Shoeing supplies

Bill Robertson of Porterville reported on Sept. 22 a lost mule. He was on his way out with a party of 4, and said that if it was found at the drift fence near the North pasture, to lead it to the park boundry and it would return to Dan Shew's Pack Station. The next day, I found the mule in the north pasture with my stock. As I was leaving to go out a few days later, I left him there and regrettably led him out with me at the end of the season, and left him with Dan Shew, where it promptly tore up some wood corrals. Afterwards, I got a call from Robertson thanking me and asked if I wanted to buy the mule. I said no.

MEDICAL/FIRST AID

There were no medical evacuations.

On July 11, I received a report of a female with a bad knee possibly enroute to the Kern Station from the Rattlesnake Creek area. It was reported that she hiked from M.K. over Franklin Pass and did not think she could go back out that way. I waited several hours and nobody showed up, so I saddled up and rode north. I found her and her husband and two teenage children camped at the bottom of the Rattlesnake trail. They inquired whether the trail to Lewis Camp was less difficult than the way they came. I gave them the information they wanted. She assured me she was fine, just tired and sore. Their plan was to rest a few days there on the Kern, hike to upper Rattlesnake, overnight, then go out. They did just that.

On September 5th I found (b) (6) camped at the Hot Springs. He was traveling alone on a long itenearary. He complained of a sore ham string. He wanted to go out the HST over Kaweah Gap, but we decided that with his condition he should go out Rattlesnake. He said he would. A few days later I found him 6 miles to the south at the backpacker camp on the Kern, and the Rattlesnake trail. His hamstring was still bothering him he said but if he traveled slow he was fine. I went out to Min.King, and returned to the station via Trout Meadow, on the 12th. I ran into Laura Storm going out, and she reported that (b) (6) had spent the night at the Kern Station, and went up Coyote Pass trail, going over Farewell. I rode up that trail on the 14th to check on his welfare, but found no sign of him. Several fire rehab members camped on the trail reported talking with him the day before near the Coyote Lakes trail junction. I rode to Coyote pass, into the Forest area and saw shoe tracks going in the right direction. I telephoned Len Dickey at Min. King and asked him to be on the lookout for (b) (6). He knew the individual, and would put a sign on the trail for him to report his safe arrival to the ranger staion. Dickey called me on the 18th, (b) (6) was out and fine.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

There were none.

On Sept. 1st Dixie and Bill (bat research crew) arrived at the station. They were concerned about their packer who was missing. The crew had contracted with Cottonwood Pack Station to pack them during their research travels down the Kern and out Little Whitney Meadow. They were camped at Upper Funston when Max, thier packer reported the stock had left. He went to search for them but had not returned by the next morning. I called Rob at Crabtree and he confirmed finding several head of stock. He later reported Max had arrived and with some parachute cord, was riding back to Upper Funston, bareback. He arrived the next day tired and hungry, the soles of his boots torn off, but in pretty good spirits. We put his horses in the pasture, and put a half roll of duct tape on his boots. Dixie and Bill conducted their research and they all left on Sept. 4th.

STOCK FIRST AID

Every year I always report basic cuts, punctures, and scrapes to the ranger's stock. This year was a little different, but thankfully ended the same.

Cate Karplus and I were diagraming new core and reference plots for the Funstons and Rattlesnake.

On the 29th we finished Upper Funston, and I rode ahead with out packs and equipment. Near the summit of the switch backs on the Rattlesnake trail and near Cow Camp, a real wreck occurred. I was riding Crackers, packing and leading Cowboy my horse, and Dutch was behind him. During a turn in the switchbacks, Dutch pulled back, pulled Cowboy over on top of him, and they both rolled down the side of the trail into the river. It didnt look good for either one of them. A large dining table size boulder in the middle of the river was keeping them from going on downstream. I climbed down to where they were, the horse thrashing and the mule simply quiet but scared. The horse was bleeding from a large gash near his jaw, and was tearing his legs up with all of his thrashing. I cut the packs off them and got the mule away from the horse. I found a narrow ramp that apparently the trail crew had used to reach the trail years ago when they placed steel bars to secure boulders and materials. The mule was calm, with only scrapes and cuts. Cate arrived and was a big help in getting the frightened horse turned facing upstream, and leading him back up to the trail. He was cut everywhere, but the most serious was his jaw. I administered Bute to both animals and dressed their wounds. I was prepared to go on and camp for the night, but Cate suggested I take the stock back to the station. She pointed out that they would be stiff and sore in the morning and it would be better to have that occur at the station in the small pasture where they could be monitored.

I arrived at the station about 9 pm and was helped by Nick Knutson, unpacking and doctoring the animals. I spoke with the Vet in the morning and he described a course of treatment. In about two weeks both were back to work.

FIRES

A lightning caused fire burned above the Hot Springs in late August. It was near the Rock Creek drainage, just above the canyon rim .It had little if any affect in the Kern Canyon. It reportedly had more smoke impact in the area near the Rock Creek Station.

On August 25th while patrolling on the Hockett Plateau, I found a fire burning near the west edge of lower Blossom Lakes. It appeared to be an old campfire that someone had made some attempt to put out, however it smoldered for several days. It covered an area ten foot square. A crew flew in and put it out. I was doing fine with a leather pannier filled with a few gallons of water at a time, but they did a great job too.

LOST STOCK

None reported except as noted in Visitor Assistance

An individual did report leaving an injured horse in the Little Kern Lake area, along with another horse to keep it company. He left his equipment and saddles in an old deer camp area and would return in a week or two with the packer. I checked several times for his stock with no results. I did find his saddles and equipment. The owner did return and collected the sound horse and equipment. I learned that the injured animal was not found at seasons end.

WEATHER

Hot and sunny throughout and the season. Several times it seemed like it would rain, but moisture never materialized. On September 19th I rode Upper Rattlesnake to take down drift fences. About 3

pm it began to snow, and it snowed until midnight. The next day was cold, and lots of snow on the ground until Lower Rattlesnake.

CELLULAR PHONE SERVICE

(b) (7)(F)



D. USE PATTERNS

BACKPACKERS

Access into the Kern Canyon began long before my arrival. Many backpackers are carrying their own food cannisters, or renting them from Mineral King or Lodgepole.

The majority of the backpackers were found using the Rattlesnake to Hot Springs, to Crabtree and Whitney trails. Others used the HST making Whitney their destination. The Kern Hot Springs was a popular spot, and only once did I witness more than two people waiting a turn in the tub.

My records reflect only about 28 hikers coming through the station area, excluding administrative staff.

STOCK USERS

Meadows opened in the middle of June. On my drive through Springville, I introduced myself to the staff of the Forrest Service office, and inquired of any permits they may have issued for entry into the Park. Only one permit issued to (b) (6) was on file. No one had a permit prior to my opening the station on the 25th. On my arrival at the station, it was obvious that there had been little stock use except for the trail crew and Nick their packer.

(b) (6) came through as scheduled, went to Sky Parlor and exited out past the station. One group went up to Junction Meadow and returned the same way. Only (b) (6) and his group made a loop and went out through Cottonwood pass.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Kern Trail Crew arrived at the Kern a week before me. They moved to the Hot Springs for several weeks, then up to the Middle Rattlesnake. They went onto Cold Springs and Sandy Meadow, returning to the Hot Springs for a week in early September.

Erica Jostad and Kay Anders visited, and assisted me with meadow monitoring. Erica also helped coordinate a flight to haul out old equipment and trash. (550 pounds of stuff)

The squad trip traveled through the station in late September. I had the pleasure of introducing the Superintendent to (b) (6), son of (b) (6). (b) (6) had 30 students from the CATE school camped at his property across the river. He invited Dick and John Austin to address the students.

COMMERCIAL

There is only one commercial packer (GTWPT) that regularly brings guests to the park. Mineral King Pack Station is closed, and I suppose an argument could be made that Cottonwood Pack Station travels in the Kern, (it did this year) but I would not think that would be a regular occurrence.

MILITARY OVERFLIGHTS

Most overflights were at high altitude, traveling east and west. Some could be seen, but all could be heard. There were two reported low flyers, one a military jet, flying south to north, well below the canyon rim. The other was a Lear Jet, black or dark blue, that flew the length of the canyon twice, from north to south, and again below the canyon rim. Both were reported.

While on the subject of the military, I had occasion to again assist on the military trip this year. These individuals are always interesting to be with and this year was no different. At the seasons end and while watching the WINGS channel at home I was surprised to see two of our most recent guests doing what they do best. I can only remember them by their call signs, "Broadway Joe" on flying the F-22 Raptor, and "Elmo" on being base commander of Lemoore NAS, and training F/A18 pilots at his facility.

E. NATURAL RESOURCES

BEAR ACTIVITY

I saw bears on three different dates and locations, two in the park and one near Big Kern Lake. There were no incidents of bears obtaining food from visitors or camps. But.....

While away from the cabin for a week, I was called on the radio by Tom McGinnis a staff person with G.S. He reported that a bear had broken into the station and made a mess. He offered to secure the cabin after learning that it would be several days before I could return. The bear had also gained entry into the grain barrel portion of the tack shed. When I did return to the station, the cabin was still secure, but it appeared that the bear had returned and broke into the tack shed again. I found it necessary for the remainder of the season to shutter the windows whenever leaving for the day. Repair materials were flown in on a scheduled flight, (the one that hauled out the trash) and repairs were made. All that is left is to construct two window screens. All the necessary material is on site. I am grateful to Tom McGinnis and his staff, for the outstanding job they did in not only repairing the cabin, but cleaning it. It had to be a mess. I apologize to Erica, for the bear got every bit of her food cache.

Possibly the same bear broke into storage barrels and a homemade bearbox at Henry Brown's camp during the same period of time. I made repairs as best I could and had Peter Stephens notify one of the owners.

WILDLIFE

The rattlesnakes were terrible this year, prompting me to sleep in a tent whenever I camped on the trail. Stock were spooked on three occasions and near Upper Funston, one struck at and missed the left front leg of my horse.

I spotted a large heron on the river near Laurel Creek, and Eric saw an eagle flying in the canyon near the Hot Springs.

F. CULTURAL RESOURCES

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

While there may be some sites, I am not aware of any known or significant locations that may be considered an archeological site. (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

Of the old Lewis Camp facility itself the only remaining artifacts are the concrete step that served as the porch for the old general store, and some foundation materials for the old suspension bridge across the river. Still in existence are the water ditches created by the owners in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The ditches run out of Coyote Creek and supplied water to the Ranger Station, through old camping areas, and to the two pastures. Those ditches work well, but require frequent attention when Coyote Creek begins to slow in late summer.

(b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

They have been there for years. A catalog exists at the station identifying each item. The items themselves, signs, jars, bottles, cans, etc., are not marked or numbered and there is no ready description or history of the object. All are extremely filthy, and on occasion are knocked off the mantle or shelves, by pack rats during the night. They should be inventoried and sent to the park museum for proper display. (b) (3) (B), (b) (3) (A)

G. BACK COUNTRY FACILITIES

PATROL CABIN

The cabin and tack shed are in good repair. Erica Jostad agreed, permitted and helped in disposing old food, trash, broken tools and equipment, old paint, and years of stuff that just needed to be hauled out. I took advantage of every person with room to haul something out with them during the season. Nick Knutson hauled out nearly 100 pounds of stuff. Thanks Nick.

There are two beds inside and two outside on the porch. There are three new mattresses, and one good old one. I chose to sleep on the good old one outside all season and found it to be quite comfortable.

The cabin is plumbed via Coyote Creek, to a sink in the kitchen and to a sink outside at the tack shed. A shower is constructed on the backside of the tack shed and it too is plumbed via Coyote Creek.

Whenever a fire is built in the rock fire box, hot water is then available in the shower as well as the two sinks. The hot water is stored in a 20 gallon steel tank. Because the tank is painted black and is outdoors it absorbs heat all day creating plenty of hotwater by the end of the day for several refreshing showers, without the bother of a fire.

The maintenance of the plumbing and ditches is detailed in a report written in the late 80's by Steve Moffitt. It is stored in a folder marked "opening and closing the station" and kept in the library cabinet.

By the end of the season the sump tank that the kitchen and shower drain to was almost overflowing. It may need some attention in the spring if the contents do not leach out.

The cabin is equipped with a four burner propane stove, with an oven. It works great. It is also furnished with a rather good sized propane refrigerator, fairly new. There is also a small wood burning stove in the middle of the cabin. It is fine for taking the chill out in mornings during September. Wood is stored on a shelf below the pantry and in a wood bin along side the kitchen table.

Do not hang clothing or equipment so that they come into contact with the walls of the cabin. The rats will chew them rather well. Lost a good uniform shirt.

The outhouse facility has a new toilet seat and pedestal. It almost looks like an RV toilet. The facility should be moved next spring, as the current hole is nearing it's capacity.

The toilet at the Hot Springs was moved this season.

The toilet at Upper Funston receive the old seat from the Kern Station toilet. The flooring for this toilet needs some carpentry attention, primarily reshoring to make it more stable and secure. Some old logs laid out in a 3'X4' square around the hole and securing the flooring to it would work. The privacy screen around the toilet is in disrepair. It will take 4-5 1x4s and 4 4x4s to straighten it up.

The privacy screen around the hot tub was repaired.

TRAILS

The majority of the trails traveled by me were in generally good condition. The exceptions would be Rattlesnake climbing out of the canyon floor, to the switchbacks. Many of the stairs or steps are getting a little tall making it difficult for both man and beast. A down tree just above the switchbacks lays at an angle up slope. Its bark falls onto the trail, making the footing dangerous. It requires cleaning every time I travel it. A large saw would help with the problem. The Squad Trip group reported several trees down between Rattlesnake and Upper Funston, after a storm had come through.

The Coyote Pass trail has several places that need attention. About a mile and a half up from the station is part that is mostly sand, or decomposed granite. Towards the end of the season, there is no trail, just a slope.

The Big Arroyo bridge approaches require some grading, and leveling. The bridge below the Hot

Springs could benefit from some type of gate that would check stock from crossing, yet easily passable for hikers. It would need to be visible from both sides of the river, so that person on horseback would not be in the middle of a bridge crossing with stock and then have to have to dismount on the bridge. If he or she saw it on approach, they could respond accordingly.

FENCES

The fences around the pastures at the Kern Station are in good repair. One portion does require some attention and that would be the area north of the large pasture gate along the trail up to the drift fence and gate.

The drift fences on the Rattlesnake could use some attention. If permitted or allowed, T-Posts could be flown in during a resupply flight, which could make repairs much easier. All the drift fences below Upper Funston were dropped, along with the fences on the Rattlesnake.

The Lower Funston Drift fence gate post on the east is rotted and needs replacement.

SIGNS

Signs instructing visitors to close gates were installed at all the drift fence gates. At Upper Funston a sign pointing to the toilet was installed. A new By-Pass sign was installed at the Park Boundary. At the north approach to the Hot Springs tub, a no grazing or camping sign was posted

PROBLEM AREAS

Laurel Creek and Rattlesnake Creek crossings in dry seasons can be difficult in the early season. I can only imagine what it would be like in a wet season. The trail crew might consider placing a pair of logs alongside each other on one side of the trail to facilitate a more sure footed crossing for hikers at both creek crossings. Other than removing debris, logs, boulders etc., from that portion of the creek that intersects with the trail, stock users may not have an easy go of it during a normal or wet year.

The trail between the Swinging Gate and Chagoopa falls is still tough for stock and hiker.

H. CAMP AREAS

CONDITIONS

The stock camps at Upper and Lower Funston were in good condition at seasons end. The meadows were in good shape. The area known as the Maze was grazed well, and towards the end of the season the stock were drifting further south.

Middle Rattlesnake camps were in good shape, but the meadows were quite short. Sky Parlor meadow had only one known stock group for one night. An inspection of Forrester Lake revealed little if any stock use.

Hot Springs camp areas were in fair condition, giving the use it receive this season. I am led to believe that visitor use was impacted towards the end of the season due to the fire restrictions enacted in late August.

At Lower Funston the approach to the upper camp is blocked by several large down trees, making access to the camp difficult and confusing. This resulted in several reroutes.

SANITATION

See BACK COUNTRY Facilities

FIRE RINGS

3 fire rings were removed from the camp located at the junction of the Rattlesnake trail and the Kern River trail. A total of 12 were removed during the season from Moraine Lake, Forrester Lake, Kern Canyon Trail, and Coyote Pass trail.

FIRE WOOD AVAILABILITY

There did not appear to be any shortage of wood supply at any of the camps.

FOOD STORAGE

The bear boxes help most visitors enjoy their BACK COUNTRY experience, and at the same time help prevent bear accessing camp food and the resulting issues of the learned and rewarded behavior. All the boxes located in my patrol area were checked regularly, and at the end of the season all were serviceable.

I. PERMIT SYSTEM

TRAILHEADS

Visitors were well informed by staff at Mineral King, Lodgepole, and the Wilderness Office of all pertinent park regulations and information specific to the visitors travel destinations. Gary often informed Rangers of groups that had potential for problems, which allowed us to prepare for their visits.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

(b) (7)(F)



K. INVENTORY

The Ranger Station is equipped quite well. Inside the cabin is a large box near the south wall. It contains a shoeing kit, a portable electric fence and oxygen bottles with bags.

The cabinets on the east wall contain the library, station logs, various manuals on appliances and equipment. There are also some blankets, first aid equipment and supplies. The office cabinet on the west wall contains pens pencils, markers, writing pads, envelopes (holy mail) tacks, pins, rulers, etc.

There is also:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 6 boxes of matches | ½ bottle of Clorox cleanup spray |
| 9 tp | 1 roll of duct tape |
| 4 pt | 1 roll of packing tape |
| 3 new mattresses | 4 folding chairs |
| 2 older mattresses | 2 directors chairs |
| 5 bedframes | ½ bottle of windex spray |
| 3 blankets | |
| 2 air mattresses | |
| 2 NPS day packs | |
| 6 bottles of propane | |

The kitchen is well stocked with stainless pots and pans, 2 cast iron skillets, a colander, stove top toaster, cookie sheets, cups, classes, plates, and silverware, all contained in rodent free cabinets.

The tack and tool sheds are also well stocked. After the bear had his way in the tack shed, some of the tack was destroyed. Please refer to needs for next year for replacement stuff. There are two gas saws, a Dubro (?), and an Echo. There is also an assortment of rakes, shovels, axes, mauls, hatchets, and rip and crosscut saws.

There are several containers of bar oil, but there is no gas mix.

Outside of the tool shed are 5 new rolls of fence wire and 2 partial rolls of fence wire.

L. NEEDS FOR NEXT YEAR

- One gallon of 50-1 chainsaw fuel
- A tool set (like at Hockett) that contains sockets, ratchet, and screwdrivers. I believe All-trade was the brand.
- Dust Masks
- Bottle of Bleach
- 2 Spray bottles
- 8' extension ladder
- 2 or 3 bottles of Neosporin
- 20 or 30 small trash bags
- 20 or 30 large trash bags
- Park flashlight
- 2 boxes of D cell batteries for flashlight and electric fence
- 1 box AA batteries
- 1 two burner propane stove (for backup)
- 1 manure rake
- 1 36" bow saw
- 2 horse brushes
- 1 curry comb
- 1 collapsible rake
- 3 bags of pellets
- 3 bags of grain
- 8 "0" size horse shoes
- 8"000" size shoes
- Box of shoe nails
- Box of Fence staples
- Bag of Plastic zip ties
- 50# block of salt
- Rasp for shoeing kit
- wheel barrow tire and wheel
- bicycle pump
- 3 tanks of Propane for the cabin

M. RECOMMENDATIONS

This summer Erica Jostad was selected to supervise the Back Country Rangers. Her exact title I am not certain of but Assistant Kern SDR she was. The position was created to better provide assistance, and direction to the rangers, monitor their activities and to simply make our jobs easier. That she did. She hiked hundreds of miles throughout the summer traveling to our stations to visit, getting our opinions on how things were going, and what could she do to help. In my case, one of her visits became an evening of mentoring, and it continued into the next day as we traveled together up to Coyote Pass. Ask yourself, she said, "If you don't do it, who will?" It certainly helped me to define my role as a Back Country Ranger. I am sure that my fellow rangers gave Erica similar positive reports, and would join me in recommending that she and the position continue to be funded in the future.

Joe Ventura

Date

**Sierra Crest: Rae Lakes
End of Season Report
9/30/2004**

Summary

We arrived at the station from Onion Valley on 6/26. A moderate snow year with about 60% coverage on the north side of Glen Pass. The station was still standing (always a surprise) but a bear had broken into two of the outside storage boxes as well as torn the window off and entered the tent frame. Trash and rusted tools were everywhere. Clean up took two days and about 300 lbs. of trash was sent out as well as the wrecked storage box. A new Knaack box was sent in. Then, to add to the fun, a mule's worth of our supplies went into the river when our stuff was being packed in. Fortunately, the packer and mule were OK, though it was close. A successful tort claim was filed for about \$500 worth of food, books and equipment. Jerry Torres did an outstanding job of replacing the food he could from the Trails commissary.

A number of NPS people came through the area – rangers, researchers and bear techs. With one exception, none of them radioed ahead to say they were coming through the area nor even checked with me to see if I needed anything or if I could assist them with their project. This included a bear tech and an invasive plant crew from region. I might have been able to help both with advice had they bothered to ask.

The season was normal after that. Visitation seemed about average, perhaps down very slightly with fewer Scout groups.

Statistics

| | June | July | August | September | Oct. | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Visitor Contacts | 38 (one day patrol for month) | 925 | 1030 | 370 (to 9/15) | closed | 2363 |
| Miles hiked | 9 | 205 | 240 | 110 | | 564 |

Medicals

| | | | |
|--|------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | Rae Lakes | possible HACE | Treat & Release |
| | Rae Lakes | possible HAPE | “ |
| | Rae Lakes | broken ankle | fly out |
| | Twin Lakes | twisted knee | horse evac, Cedar Grove |
| | Rae Lakes | deep laceration | T&R |

Law Enforcement

For the first time in my SEKI career, I wrote no citations.

Warnings (tent on meadow, washing in stream, food storage; one guy with a holstered weapon about to enter the park over Kearsarge Pass): 95

About half a dozen fire rings were removed in the Rae/60 Lakes area that had been built since the previous year. I met a member of the Pacific Crest Trail Hiker's Association and observed to her that I believed an increasing number of PCT hikers were ignoring NPS regulations because there were no rangers around when they come through in late May and early June. In addition, I told her I felt a significant number of PCT hikers were not well grounded in minimum impact philosophy. She thought it would be possible to send out a minimum impact sheet with the PCT permits that they issued. In addition, minimum impact sheets could be

distributed at the spring PCT rendezvous held each spring prior to most people beginning the hike. I told her I'd contact her in the Fall and she could request I write such a minimum impact sheet through either the Wilderness or Sierra Crest office, if possible.

Service Incidents

Visitor Assists (food, attempt to locate, messages, off-duty information etc.): 200
Resource Mngt. Assist:

Fish eradication crew (supplies, garbage, advice)

Meadow monitoring, Invasive species monitoring & obtaining a plan sample (Haultain)

UC Berkeley Frog Researchers (supplies, advice, garbage out; also observing Chytrid field lab)

John Wehausen & Bighorn Sheep Recovery Team advice sought on advisability of signing Baxter Pass trail; coordinating NPS sheep closure regulations with California Department of Fish & Game regulations (see Resource discussion below).

NPS Pika observations and 165 other wildlife sightings: Graber

PCTA (Pacific Crest Trail Association) Discuss NPS cooperation with minimum impact sheet for early-season PCT hikers.

Resource Management

Grazing opening dates were for a normal year. The trail crew was camped at Woods Creek crossing or was resupplied from there the entire summer. As such, that meadow received extremely high grazing use by NPS. Castle Dome meadow received moderate use with the entire meadow showing signs of grazing during the September biomass transect. White Fork meadow received no use and hasn't for over 5 years now. Baxter Meadow received about 20 animal nights from Onion Valley Pack Station (15 AUMs – approx.) and John Cunningham (14 nights on two trips).

Two research teams were in the Sixty Lakes Basin most of the summer: (b) (6) was back with his crew for the 9th season studying the Mountain Yellow Legged Frog. A UC Berkeley veterinarian was flown in for 3 days in August to set up a field lab analyzing MLF blood to help determine baseline health data for the frog populations and specifically determine susceptibility for the Chytrid fungus.

Again, two people from Danny Boyano's staff were also there continuing the 4th season of netting fish in the upper lakes there to reestablish the yellow-legged frog populations. The latter project has been dramatically successful and work was started on eradicating fish in Tulip Lake

There are at least 3 small populations of the Mt. Lyell Salamander in Sixty Lakes basin, the largest numbering around 30 individuals. Not much is known of their population, distribution or habits in the Sierra. A UC student has started his doctoral research on them in Yosemite and SEKI this year which should allow a better idea on how rare they are.

Bighorn Sheep sightings were quite common this year, especially a group of about 12 rams in Sixty Lakes. Ewes and rams were seen early season in Gardiner Basin and I saw a group of 5 ewes and 3 lambs near Baxter Pass in early July. In September we watched a group of 11 rams descend from the shoulder of Fin Dome, butting heads often on the way. It is quite possible they use the open avalanche path just north of the lowest Rae Lake to cross the drainage to the crest (they don't like traveling through forested country so this would be the shortest route to the Baxter/Dragon habitat).

As late as 1997, the CFR had a regulation limiting hiking and climbing in the Dragon/Baxter area. Such a regulation still exists on the east side of the crest in the USFS area, but seems to be gone from the CFR and the Superintendent's Compendium. I spoke with sheep researcher John Wehausen and he suggests that the Sheep Recovery Team deal with this matter.

Bears

I did not hear of a single bear incident in the Rae/Woods & Twin Lakes area this year. There were bear tracks in Sixty Lakes and quite a lot of scat in the small drainage between the JMT and the 60 Lakes drainage showing at least one bear in the area most of the summer. There were also tracks and scat from this year in Baxter Canyon from July or so. Both 60 Lakes and Baxter had sign as high as 11,000 feet in areas with no campers. However, there were no reported sightings or reports of campers having food threatened. All scat showed natural food and, as mentioned, about 98% of people are carrying canisters, including through hikers.

Signs & Trails

A sign was put up at Dollar Lake showing the abandoned trail to Baxter Pass. Though Wehausen is not apparently bothered by the possible increased traffic into this area, it should probably be brought up with any NPS discussions on sheep management.

IBP & Concessions Use

All IBP & park Concession users followed regulations in the Rae area this year. Sobek Expeditions came through twice on stock-supported trips (6 head) doing the JMT from Florence Lake. This turned out to be a very popular trip and will likely be repeated in the future. The guides were very experienced and conscientious (contracted from Southern Sierra Mountain Guides). One guide service from the east side had a client fall and tear her ACL. The guide used a Sattelite phone to call for a medivac. Several of the guide services contacted are routinely carrying Sat Phones now, which seems like a good idea. Three Corner Round and Cedar Grove pack station were in compliance with all regulations and cooperative.

Fire rings and Campsites

About 120 fire rings were taken apart in the Rae patrol area B most were old ones tucked away in little traveled areas. About 25% were built in the last couple of years. Most of the old ones were in the Woods Lake and Sixty Lakes basin.

A campsite inventory was begun by Kings rangers. Before this project gets too far established, we should consult with Yosemite backcountry staff who have done such a project three times now and have established a protocol based on Parsons and Stohlgren's 1978 work. We need to decide what we want to use the data for as well as how to record and store it. The campsites inventoried so far in the Rae Lakes area (about 60) show that perhaps 15 can be closed to use because they're too close to water or on fragile areas. This will be done next year.

Recommendations

Rae Lakes 2004

1. Although backcountry rangers have always collected data on various aspects of backcountry operations (year end reports; sign and building locations; meadow monitoring; a campsite inventory now underway; wheeling the trail for mileage; mapping radio dead zones; and an increasing number of digital photos) that data is not easily available to ranger division managers, researchers or b/c rangers. Much of it has been lost over the years requiring repeating the projects. I have discussed this issue with Debbie Brenchley, Gregg Fauth and Pat Lineback who all agree that it would be useful to consolidate and make more easily accessible existing and future data using ArcView and other software. Pat further suggests that part of such a database could be put online to make information on hazardous terrain (passes and trails in early season), meadow opening dates, trail conditions, bear activity and other information available to the public in an easily updatable format. This is currently being done by the USFS for the JMT, though using a different program base than Pat envisions.

It would also be useful to have some method to store and retrieve the collective knowledge of backcountry rangers B that is, assorted snippets of local knowledge that might be useful to both other rangers and managers. For instance, history notes on stations, locations of historical objects (Basque tree carvings, old cabin locations, graves); brief histories of specific projects (the whys of fence locations, grazing use patterns, hiker use patterns) and other knowledge that is lost when a backcountry ranger leaves (or forgetsY).

In addition, serious effort needs to be made to make the digital photos we take available and useable to park staff now and in the future. It is significant that, apparently, all of the photos taken by backcountry rangers in the 70s, 80s and 90s have been lost. According to Pat Lineback, a web based program is being recommended by Washington to begin cataloguing such photos in a searchable and centralized storage center, available on the network.

In short, it's time to begin giving serious thought to how to begin to store our knowledge of the backcountry both for our own reference and that of future managers. I suggest further discussion of my memo to Gregg and Debbie and discussions with Sylvia and Pat Lineback to begin to come up with a plan to accomplish this.

With Sylvia and the local rangers and pack station owners, review the need for the drift fences above Baxter Meadow and below White Fork. In my experience now and 12 years ago, they are not necessary both because of the low stock use for those areas and their intrusion on wilderness.

- 2.
- 3.