

CRABTREE SEASON END REPORT 1985

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The high country in the Crabtree area was clear of snow in early June this year. I patrolled Crabtree, Tyndall and Rock Creek areas, moving from one area to the next every few days.

Mount Whitney in the Crabtree area was the center of most activity: two medivacs, maintenance projects, reporting low flying jets and many visitor contacts make Mount Whitney the busiest area of my patrol.

In the Rock Creek area emphasis was on visitor contacts and working with the many stock groups that visit that area. I spent a lot of time trying to convince Dennis Winchester to go along with park regulations. In the Tyndall Creek area I did a lot of campsite rehabilitation and patrols to the various upper Kern basins.

Animal sightings in the area were about normal; no Bighorn Sheep were reported as being seen in the Mount Williamson and Mt. Langley areas this year. I feel that those herds are doing fine. The Bears were only a minor problem this year, very few bear incidences compared to the previous year. Coyotes, deer, eagles, golden trout and people were common. The people were quite abundant during the three middle weeks of August, of course many incidences came up concerning these two legged critters, keeping the park service busy.

There were five medi-vacs in the area; four of them were initiated by me and one by Pete Lewis and 'Hopper' of the trail crew. Two park rescues reported to Inyo Co. Sheriff's and the forest service were handled poorly on that side (not reported to the park and hours of delays for victims), they should have reported these to the park immediately, but as it was we had to wait for hikers to report them to me. Inyo has been told to call the park at first notice in the future.

On cleanup it was the ongoing job of cleaning camps, firerings and any people trash left by careless campers. Spreading the word to visitors on "minimum impact" is probably the backcountry rangers most important job.

This part of the report will deal with specific problems and ways of working to solutions for these problems .

LOW FLYING MILITARY JETS:

Low flying jets have been a serious problem for many years. Most every park worker and visitors in the Kern River drainage encounters the illegal, low flying military jet. These illegal flights happen almost daily in this area.

I have talked with pilots , visitors and other rangers on this subject, almost all agree that the jets are a nuisance and a hazard, but the pilots and a few visitors think that the military needs this space, I disagree, these parks are to allow us to experience nature in a peaceful atmosphere and the jets disturb this greatly.

Many visitors experience danger in the way of rock fall and fright associated with these jets. Mount Whitney is the worse place for low flying jets. On my many visits to Mt. Whitney I have observed continuous violations of the three thousand feet low flying regulation. On one occasion a low flying jet only fifty feet above the mountain frightened many and almost caused a serious tragedy where a little girl almost fell to her death from fright caused by the jet.

The jet problem needs to be solved and the park must work to this end, another season of this kind of harassment is too much to be tolerated.

FOIL- On cleanup the biggest problem is foil in the firepits . I believe almost everyone having fires is not obeying this rule, probably 90%. My thoughts are that the park should mention on the rule sheet that any offender will be give an automatic citation.

STOCK USERS:

Many of the stock users do not do what the park and the High Sierra Stock Users Assoc. ask. Many users do not rake up and bury their manure near camp and tie animals too near camp; many do not graze their animals in the best places but will use

camps to satisfy other needs. A lot of effort went into working with Charlie Morgan and Dennis Winchester this season. It seems that Charlie is willing to cooperate more and Winchester not so much, maybe the 100 dollar citation Winchester got will help him remember that we are serious about the few livestock rules that we do have.

Winchester grazed the Lower Rock Ck. lake meadow too much and also the Penned Up Meadow. My hope is to get him to use the meadows below the crossing more. Charlie Morgan has agreed to do this ^{again} next year.

The CCC trail crew at Crabtree did a lot of good work. They did an excellent job in redoing the badly damaged Mount Whitney trail from trailcrest to Crabtree. Pete Lewis is a master trail builder and 'Hopper' also is very talented at his trade. The CCC corp members, as a working group, are the best that I have ever seen. They do an incredible job on both quality and quantity, they built 3600 feet of rock wall this summer, a CCC record.

This season I put up two campsite closure signs: one on the west shore of Upper Rock Creek Lake and the other on the northwest side of the JMT crossing one mile above the Crabtree station.

More trail work needs to be done with meadow erosion control; the wet meadow areas between Crabtree and the base of the switchbacks need this work. The CCC crew could keep busy another season around here. The trail from trailcrest to the summit of Whitney also has several bad spots, these spots could be potential hazards to hikers on this very busy section of trail. Another trail improvement would be a rerout of the JMT across the creek from the ranger station. This one mile section would be easy to build and would : take impact away from the ranger station (which is a lot), eliminate two dangerous creek crossings in high water and avoid going through two very wet meadows.

The weather this summer was very warm and sunny. The first storm came the day after labor day and dumped about one foot of snow at crabtree. A few minor storms brought about two inches each time.

The cabin at Crabtree was broken into three times, once in the spring and again in the summer and fall. The door needed to be replaced once. Tyndall creek cabin was also broken into one time. My suggestion is to put in metal door jams and to have a ranger doings intermittent patrols in the spring and in the fall.

All cabins are in excellent condition. Tyndall needs a new door jam and the roof ~~needs~~ will need to be replaced in a few years.

I would be happy to do the same patrol next season or a combination of Crabtree and Tyndall. ~~It~~ is GREAT to work for the SIERRA DISTRICT!!!



OLD OUTHOUSE COMING DOWN
"MT WHITNEY



EQUIPMENT FAILURE



REHABILITATED SITE^S



MT. WHITNEY HUT