

CRABTREE 1987, REPORTS and DATA ETC.

by: Dario Malengo

Crabtree Ranger, 1987

SEASON END REPORT, CRABTREE MEADOWS 1987

During the summer I patrolled the upper Kern River areas north of Rock Creek. In the fall Rock Creek became part of my patrol area.

At all times during my four months at Crabtree Meadows there were visitors in the area. Most of visitors came in late July and in August.

There were five medical evacuations in the area. I was involved in three and Ash Mt. personnel, two. Three of the five were pulmonary edema. The one I was involved with was very serious, where the patient was loosing consciousness. Perhaps mentioning something about the seriousness of Altitude Sickness on the Rules Information sheet would be helpful, along with pre-cautions.

Is pulmonary edema more common now, and does the water situation keep people from drinking enough water? Are the two related? Doctors say to drink alot of water up here, but people are drinking less because of the nusiance of treating water and the bad taste of treated water.

I think our water information needs to be revised , to something more workable. Alot of people drink the water; Edrink the water. We tell the public not to drink the water. Maybe we could give more helpful information by telling the people to use caution but that water from springs and side drainages is probably safe and to definitely treat water from heavily used main drainages.

The situation with the bears improved this summer with the addition of the Bear Boxes. I quit getting incidences almost immediatly. Problem with them is that people leave their food behindin them and there was one incident wher a group lost all of their food to th eft.

Some of the stock users in the area did some resource damage with their stock. Mostly it was from commercial users with large numbers of stock.. Twenty animals loose in a meadow turn it from a beautiful park meadow to something far less natural. I think the park needs to put more restrictions on the size of groups and to make stock groups pay per nights grazing. Afterall, everyone owns the grass resource and only a select group are using it. Heavy stock use changes the visual beauty of an area, something we are supposed to protect.

There is no comparison to the impact left by the average backpacker as compared to the average stock group. The stock groups trample the area, leave manure and generally leave many different signs of their presence. Small groups leave alot less signs. The reasons are mostly because of number but having time to be attentive to the animals is what also makes a big difference. Generally the abusers are not taking time.

Rainbow pack station left alot of impact from their camps this summer but both of the Rainbow groups that I talked to did alot better afterwards. I think the rangers of the areas should meet with the packers before the season starts and explain to them what is acceptable. I feel that the result of this meeting would make things better.

This year I had to rebuild the outhouse on Mt. Whitney. The winter storms must have overthrown the old one. This year I stacked more stones on top and around it.

We had to service the "Honey Bucket" twice this season. Having Joe for the helicopter pilot sure helps. It should not need service until late next season now.

Mount Whitney gets over a hundred visitors a day during the summer, one day three hundred signed in! Hilda Crooks signed in at 91 on September sixth!

The Hut on Mount Whitney is in good repair, with two doors. One is open for emergency use for the public (with old emergency sleeping bag), and the other room is locked and available for park rangers equipment.

This year a complete rescue cache was installed in a metal lock box (5-51 ke) with all the basics: sleeping bag, pad, stove, water, first aid equipment etc.

All ranger stations in the area are in good repair. Some one inch lumber would make some necessary shelves at Rock Creek. With existing materials Tyndall Creek can be made into a full loft on top of the rafters and give the cabin more warmth, keep out mice better and make better storage. Also a outside metal door and an inner dutch door would make the cabin more secure and liveable.

The most serious problem in the Mount Whitney area are the Low Flying Military Aircraft. As mentioned in my "Jet" report this is a problem daily, all summer long. They disturb the peace for all that are here, wildlife and human and infringe on the rights of every citizen.

The people in park administration and politicians need to be aware of how intense the impact is from these military jets in Sequoia National Park. I feel that it would be helpful to get documentation from Mt. Whitney on video-recording and show the people who need to become aware of this.

#### On Campfires and firerings-

Repeated cleaning of the same firepits makes me think that we need to educate the public better on 'How To Have A Fire'. I think two things would be helpful: one to keep all existing firerings maintained and second to add a few more sentences to the rule and information sheet on 'How To Have A Fire' Example: use existing firerings and leave them as they are, do not add rocks and soil, let fire burn out or use water- Foil does not burn and is a serious rash problem--

The Rules and Information sheet should have a little more explained

on it. Perhaps it should be a full sheet instead of only half a sheet and visitors applying for their permits should be made to spend 5 minutes reading it, and they should be accountable to know what is on the sheet before leaving the ranger station with their permits.

The weather was mild this season with very little storm activity, and Crabtree is a delightful area to work!

Information from log:

Firerings-140

Miles Traveled-1241

Visitors Contacted- 1574

Low Flying Jets Reported- 45

## AIRCRAFT OBSERVATION REPORT

The Crabtree area gets alot of airplane activity. The main problem with the airplanes over the park is that they disturb the "natural quiet", (Paul Fodor, 1987). Of the different types of airplanes the military fighter and bombers are by far the most numerous and the most noisy.

I called into dispatch forty three Low Flying Airplanes this season, forty one of them were military. Mount Whitney is the focal point for these flights, more occuring here than anyother place by far. On my average visit to Mt. Whitney, I will observe at least three low flyers, some within fifty feet of the mountain. Th is is difinetly a serious problem for Sequoia National Park. On the average day during the summer season more than one hundred hikers and climbers visit this mountain. The Park Service needs to get more serious in trying to control this problem. These visitors are United States and World citizens whose rights are being violated daily.

The military jets disturb the "natural quiet in an annoying and unnervir way, so that the visitor does not get a true "wilderness experience" in this part of the park. All people visiting this area pay an enormous physical price to get here, and to have that experience altered by the jets is unfortunate.

They are violating the 3000 foot above ground level rule daily. The many types of jets that I have observed this season are: B-1 Bombers, F-4 Phantom, A-7, F-16's , F-14's , F-18's, F-15's, T-38's and more... They fly in the early morning, late <sup>in</sup> the evening and at night. There is no time when they do not fly.

<sup>Are they</sup> ~~They are~~ in violation of the park rules; ~~No~~ Weapons and a Motor Vehicle in the backcountry? ~~Are~~ <sup>they</sup> also committing mutiny, refusing to obey direct orders(3000 foot rule). They are the organization that is supposed

to protect us from lawlessness and yet they commit the grossest violations.

My suggestion to the Park Service is to get some real documentation , like a video recording from the summit of Mt. Whitney and to use this evidence through proper Park Service and political channels to get the jets out of the park. Good to see that something has started politically on this and I hope that those of us involved in this follow through and accomplish our task.

*Dario Malenya*  
Crabtree Ridge - USNPS

#### PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND DANGERS OF LOW FLYING JETS

Complaints- I receive many complaints on the Low Flying Jets. I tell the visitors to write the park Superintendent, Alden Nash and their Senators.

- see 343 with visitor complaints from Mt. Whitney Register

Dangers - The main dangers are : Falling rock or ice from jet noise ( In 1983 while climbing with another friend on the Mountaineers Route, on Mt. Whitney a large piece of ice fell due to jet noise and barely missed us.) documented ,Crabtree Rangers log, 1983, also another danger is fright associated with noise(In 1985 a mother complained to me on Mt. Whitney that her 7 yr. old girl nearly took a fatal leap due to fright associated with jet noise., see Crabtree log, 1985)

#### ADDENDUM ON LOW FLYING JETS

The number of 43 reported Low Flyers represents about 10 per-cent of the total Low Flyers. Due to the largeness of the patrol area, high mountains and tree cover I am not able to see most of the offenders. I only call in the ones I can definitely see lower then 3000 feet AGL. D.M. '87

#### ADDENDUM TWO ON LOW FLYING JETS

Daniel Bacon, a volunteer helper spent about two weeks on Cal Tech peak gathering data and trying to get photographs of the jets. His information is presented here.

Crabtree Year-End ~~1988~~  
1987

entered  
11-18-88  
JMK

STOCK USE SUMMARY AND DRIFT FENCE STATUS

1. Reporting Cards: No stock use reporting cards were handed in to me this summer.
2. STOCK USE NIGHTS: In the Crabtree Meadows Area(Whitney Ck. drainage) I recorded 350 Stock Use Nights and 50 burro
3. Commercial Operations: Three main outfits used this area. Rainbow, Cottonwood and Rock Ck. I did not notice any problems with Rock Ck. but Cottonwood and Rainbow repeatedly left messy camps.
4. Private Users: The use of private livestock was usually restricted to small groups with few stock. The one exception was the Charlie Morgan group with 8 people and 20 animals and stayed one week at Nathan's Meadow.
5. Over Use Areas: All of Upper Rock Ck. was overgrazed: Pinned Up, Stringer Lower Rock Ck Lake and Nathans. In the Crabtree area Upper Crabtree and Strawberry were heavily grazed.
6. Mount Whitney Trail: Rainbow was the only pack group to use the Mt. Whitney trail to trail-crest. See Crabtree Rangers recommendations for closure to former limit of 1 mi. east of Guitar Lk.
7. Rock Creek: An effort needs to be made to get stock <sup>to</sup> graze the Lower Rock Ck. meadows more, to take pressure off of Upper Rock Ck. Dennis Winchester and Co. are the biggest contributors to this.
8. Drift Fences: Harvey's Meadow has wire fence in poor condition, needs repair. Crabtree Meadows has one swinging gate on the So. end. Rock Ck. has no fences but possibly could use one to keep stock from upper Rock Ck. Two fences have been proposed (C. Morgan) but one should be adequate.