

LITTLE FIVE 1987 SEASON END REPORT
ROB HAYDEN

Season: June 26 - August 9
September 28 - October 7

Visitor Contacts: 807 (06/26 - 08/09)
51 (09/28 - 10/07)

Miles Traveled: 406 (06/26 - 08/09)
62 (09/28 - 10/07)

Campsite Rehabilitation: 138+

SEARCH AND RESCUE:

1. July 24, Goleta Boys Club member, D. KIRBY, lost for 22 hours in the Cliff Creek drainage. Found approximately one mile south of Redwood Meadow by Cliff Creek, July 25.
2. July 25, bruised femur; Nine Lakes Basin, Outward Bound student.

OTHER VISITOR ASSISTANCE (random cases):

1. July 14, possible lost person, RICHARD SEAMAN of Los Angeles Sierra Club Peaks Section; individual departed without notifying other members of party or leaving a note at Ranger Station; Little Five #3. Mr. SEAMAN was contacted at his residence.
2. July 23; settled dispute between three visitors and Goleta Boys Club; Little Five Lakes #3.
3. July 23; contacted Don Bedell through Dispatch that his client, NANCY JO NORDENSTER had been shorted two boxes of food at her Big Arroyo re-supply. Arranged for the remainder of the food to be delivered to Chagoopa Falls, Kern River.
4. Backpack, boot, stove, and camera repair.
5. Awl and other materials lent to stock groups for tack repair. Also, horseshoe nails provided.
6. Food and water bottle give-away.
7. Tent and tarp lending.
8. Messages relayed for Outward Bound and commercial packers.

9. Flora and fauna identification.
10. Trail and pass condition reports.
11. Archaeological and natural history talks.

WARNING AND COURTESY TAGS:

1. June 27; camped at closed campsite; Little Five Lake #3; MICHAEL HALL, San Diego, CA.
2. July 1; camping too close to water; Little Five Lake #3; RICHARD MICHAEL TEMPLETON, Redlands, CA and three others.
3. July 1; unlawful food storage, Little Five Lake #3; RICHARD MICHAEL TEMPLETON, Redlands, CA and three others.
4. July 1; no fishing license; Little Five Lake #3; TIMOTHY M. RICHARDS, Huntington Beach, CA.
5. July 1; no fishing license; Little Five Lake #3; GEORGE HANSON, Redlands, CA.
6. July 14; no fishing license; Big Arroyo/Chagoopa Plateau; CHRISTOPHER SMITH, Pt. Richmond, CA.
7. July 21; camped too close to water (and other problems); Middle Big Arroyo; BILL ALLEN (Athens, Georgia) New York City Y.M.C.A., and sixteen others.
8. July 23; unlawful food storage, camping too close to water, polluting the water; Little Five Lake #3; Goleta Boys Club, Goleta, CA (nine individuals).
9. July 31; camping too close to water; Columbine Lake, PAUL LONAC, San Diego, CA and one other.

WORK PROJECTS

1. Updated Little Five Ranger Station medical supplies.
2. Replaced siding, built a folding table, and made minor alterations to the Little Five Ranger Station.
3. Major clean up of the Big Arroyo cabin and area.
4. Participated in the Kern Beaver Survey with HAROLD WERNER and LAURA THOMPSON.
5. Helped RICHARD FERRELLI, Bearpaw Ranger, with placement of the Cliff Creek food storage box.

6. Minor trail maintenance throughout area: drainage; removal of logs and rocks, brushing, for example.
7. Removed numerous ancient can and bottle dumps from Big Five Lakes, Lost Canyon, and Soda Creek.
8. Removed nails and bolts from trees throughout the Little Five Ranger Patrol District.
9. Requested several new signs for confusing junctions.
10. Destroyed and dug out a myriad of firerings (see "Backcountry Site Rehabilitation Report" forms).
11. Obliterated rock walls and hundreds of unnecessary "trail ducs" from Cyclaman Lake to Kaweah Basin.

STOCK USE

1. **BIG FIVE LAKES:** Big Five Lake #3 and the two upper meadows between Big Five Lakes #4 and #5, simply stated, get too much use. This judgement is based on the overall condition of the area by the camp at Big Five #3, used almost exclusively by Mineral King Pack Station; and the condition of the upper meadows, which have hundreds of two inch plus deep hoof prints. (see photographs). What can we do? See stock use suggestions.
2. **BIG ARROYO:** This area seems to be in good shape and, at present, is used primarily by government stock. Private and commercial use may rise now that Kaweah Gap is open to stock. If stock use picks up, we will need to keep an eye on the already heavily impacted Big Arroyo Patrol cabin site.
3. **CHAGOOPA PLATEAU:** Presently, this area gets less use than the Big Arroyo, and primarily by government stock, only for several weeks a year.
4. **LITTLE FIVE LAKES:** Used almost exclusively by Mineral King Pack Station and use is definitely on the rise since 1984. The changes are evident in the condition of meadows and campsites. In addition, it seems that those who stay overnight at Little Five Lakes have a difficult time with keeping the stock out of the very wet closed stringer. The two hundred, two inch plus deep hoof prints there on September 28 speak for themselves (see photographs). What can we do?

5. LONG LAKES: Same story here as Little Five Lakes Basin. Use is up and meadows are wet until late in the season even in a dry year like this one. See Meadow Monitoring Data.
6. LOST CANYON: Mineral King Pack Station has pioneered new camps near treeline here this year. Too early to say what the outcome will be.
7. SODA CREEK: This drainage is used as a thoroughfare by the Mineral King Pack Station, however, the presence of "poison feed" discourages much overnight use.

STOCK SUGGESTIONS

BIG FIVE LAKES #3 CAMP - At the very least, get the Mineral King Pack Station more involved in maintaining this campsite themselves, since they seem to account for 95% of the use. The location is good because it is off the "beaten path" and few other visitors come across it. The present firering needs to be reconstructed away from the rock face and the two filled in mammoth firerings need to be obliterated altogether. The location where Mineral King Pack Station ties up their stock, needs to be rotated periodically, otherwise you end up with what is there now: a forty foot by fifty foot zone of mule poop, two -three inches deep. The following items were found at this camp on September 29th: remnants of horseshoes; scraps of assorted tack; broken liquor bottles; beer cans; tin foil; cigarette butts; cigar wrappers; chewing tobacco cans; wire; twine; ropes; grills; assorted cans; sausage and bacon packages; an egg carton; orange peels; men's underwear; used toilet paper (less than eight feet from water) and melted plastic.

UPPER BIG FIVE MEADOWS: The only realistic solution I can offer (and it may not be realistic to some) would be to give these meadows a rest for a year or two, only a temporary closure. They need it.

FOOT USE

Cross-country travel is on the rise as veteran backpackers tire of the well used trails. Now they are creating new ones into Kaweah Basin; over Milestone Pass; Hands and Knees Pass; from Upper Big Five Lakes to Upper Little Five Lakes; from Hands and Knees Pass to Columbine Lake via Cyclaman Lake, and many more. Glacier Pass, for example, has at least eight foot trails leading to it from the Sawtooth Pass trail. It's something we need to monitor. I see a marked difference in the following cross-country routes since 1984: Spring Lake to Hands and Knees Pass to Upper Big Five Lakes to Upper Little Five lakes. Also: Hands and Knees Pass to Cyclaman Lake to Columbine Lake, and the Milestone Pass route. There's no question that Glacier Pass is in worse shape.

TRAILS

This year much phenomenal work was done in the name of trails. A myriad of step-checks and water bars were put in from Upper Big Arroyo to Black Rock Pass; from the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin to Chagoopa Plateau and in the Lost Canyon and Soda Creek drainages. Various boggy areas were also tackled; most noteworthy, the infamous Soda Creek "bogs".

POSSIBLE TRAILS PROJECTS FOR NEXT YEAR:

1. Big Five Lakes Trail Junction to Big Five Lakes #1.
2. Big Five Lakes #1 to Lost Canyon.
3. Columbine Lake to Sawtooth Pass.
4. West side of Sawtooth Pass.

SIGNS

All sign requests have been submitted.

TRASH

300 pounds of trash was flown out by helicopter (or cached; see Appendix A "Trash Caches").

BEARS

Bears were not a problem in the Little Five Patrol District at least up to August 9th, however there was at least one report of a large bear taking food from visitors at the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin on September 1. Also, plastic and tin foil was found in bear scat at Little Five Lakes #3 on September 28. I suspect there were a few other "hits" at these two locations during August and September.

Traditionally, there have been no bear problems at Little Five, Long, and Big Five Lakes basins. This may change if the food storage boxes cause bears to look for people food in other areas.

WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

1. 350+ unusual wildlife sightings (some from 1985 and 1986) were submitted.
2. Little Five Lakes Bird List Relative Abundance (weekly) Summary.
3. Proposed changes to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Bird Checklist (more to come).

SENSITIVE PLANTS

1. *Asplenium septentrionale*, "Northern Spleenwort": looked for this population with Biological Technician, Sharyn Nakao at Columbine Lake, among the foxtail pines, in July and August, without success.
2. *Phacelia orogenes*, "Mountain Phacelia": looked for this population on the High Sierra Trail between the Big Arroyo and Chagoopa Plateau in August, without success.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

1. June 28; historic tree carving; .4 mile southwest of Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin.
2. June 30; obsidian flakes and tool; Spring Lake.
3. July 7; bedrock mortars/"slicks"; Cliff Creek.
4. July 14; obsidian tools; Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin.

5. July 19; obsidian flakes; .75 mile northwest from the Kern/High Sierra Trail Junction.
6. July 20; bedrock mortars, granite handstone, obsidian tools and flakes; Sky Parlor Meadow.
7. August 4; obsidian flakes, .4 mile southwest of Kaweah Gap.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Close Nine Lakes Basin to fires at the 10,000 foot elevation in extreme Upper Big Arroyo (see proposal, map and photographs).
2. Reduce the group size to 8-12 persons for cross-country foot travel, in order to protect pristine areas from heavy impact and curb further etching of cross-country routes.
3. Add to Wilderness Regulations sheet: "Construction of Trail Ducs is prohibited".

FUTURE WORK PROJECTS

1. A number of firerings need to be obliterated at the following locations:
 - Big Five Lake #3, south side
 - Lower Big Arroyo, one mile below the cabin
 - Lower Lost Canyon: a couple of camps need to be closed as they are too close to water.
2. Lower Long Lake stock camp firering needs to be re-constructed further away from water.
3. Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin Rehabilitation Project: the flat around the cabin has been denuded of trees over the years. Perhaps, young lodgepoles could be planted here in the fall.

APPENDIX A

TRASH CACHES

1. Lower Soda Creek: 20 pound can cache, located 100 feet west from Soda Creek - Big Arroyo Trail Junction, behind largest boulder.
2. Lost Canyon Trail Junction: grill and trash cache located 160 feet north from trail junction signs, behind two lodgepole snags.