

1989 Little Five End of Season Report

RR PROJECTS

- Worked w/scout troop at R.S. lake, firepit rehab + obliteration
- " " 3 outward Bound groups, site & FR rehab at Big S#1, 2, 3, including major rehab. of large packer camp at Big S#3
- Rehab'd stock camp @ Long Lake
- Rehab'd and closed two sites close to water/trail, one @ Little S, one in Long Lake
- Looked in Big Arroyo for old phone line; found and sent out 1 roll
- Maintained sites at Little Claire L. & Forester L. each month
- Cleaned up large can dump (4 sacks full) @ Columbine L.
- Hauled out lots of old metal + glass from Lower Big Arroyo, Lower Lost Chyn
- Cleaned/maintained/rehab'd many old sites in Lower Big A. & lower Lost
- Installed new sign @ Lost Chyn. junction
- Took pictures of remains of stone house + of treehouse on Chagoopa
rehab'd several sites too close to water in upper Lost Chyn.
- Installed ^(helped) & remodeled electric fence @ LSRS
- Clean-up + rehab @ Moraine Lk. following fire, planted signs closing camp area
- Worked w/trailcrew on lower Big S reroute

OTHER RANGERY STUFF

- Gave food to two parties who lost food to bears
- elayed for DAVE OWEN, who had injured stock, to get info. from vet about treatment; also gave him food
- Gave a talk to Sierra Club party of 23 @ campfire
- Reunited 2 people with their respective separated parties

DOCK USE

In general, stock use was light in the area - lighter, I believe, than last year. I only contacted 3 private parties. Mineral King Pack Station continues to use Long Lake and Big 5 #3 for their trips. I only know of 3 trips they made into Long Lake - they kept the camp clean, and this amount of use seems acceptable if they only stay a night or two. To my knowledge, there were animals overnight at Little 5 only twice, once when MKPS packed for a Sierra Club group and stayed two nights. I had to chase the stock out of the closed stringer - it is impossible to keep them out. A burro party stayed here one night and I also chased them several times. There are many deep hoofprints throughout the stringer.

Chagoopa Plateau and Big Arroyo receive very limited use at this time, as does Soda Creek. No concerns about these areas.

Big Five continues to be of concern: all meadowy areas are wet for most of the season. As of 9/1, areas in the meadow above Big 5 #4 which were saturated in June were still saturated. There is mechanical impact over about 50% of this meadow, and over 25% of the high meadow near the top of the drainage. There is an astounding amount of horse manure near the camp the pack station uses, and significant resource damage where the stock trail goes through very wet meadowy areas. Stock use should be limited in this drainage.

Meadows in all drainages on the east side of the Divide are very wet. It is my opinion that these are all very poor places for stock camps, and use here should either be eliminated or limited.

FOOT USE

Use patterns haven't changed significantly over last year. Sawtooth Pass is very heavily used, and Columbine Lake is overused. Little Claire Lake received light use, while Forester Lake is heavily used and abused. Hands-and-Knees Pass and Glacier Pass are well-used, and the myriad use-trails continue to proliferate.

A noteworthy element of use in this patrol area is the high degree of dispersed use: other than Columbine & Forester Lakes, I have seen no place where visitors concentrate in high numbers. There is, therefore, a high expectation of solitude here, which - in my opinion - is to be nurtured and preserved. (See section on bear boxes)

TRAILS


The trails here are in worse shape than any area I've seen in Sequoia. However, the trailcrew continues to do small reconstruction projects which help a lot. The joining of the Hockett & Kaweah crews in August is an outstanding idea and allowed for 3 good reroutes (in the first mile above the Lost Canyon / Big 5 junction in Lost Canyon) to be built. The fall project crew was smaller than anticipated, so they were only able to complete the top half of the Lower Big 5 reroute. The work is excellent, and (if the project continues next fall) the new trail will be a vast improvement. With a full crew and 2 or 3 more projects in this area, the whole trail from Soda Creek to Little 5 could be redone - it needs it!

The CCC work in Big Arroyo, Blackrock Pass trail, and Sawtooth trail

is all in good shape and holding well.

The two highest priorities for work should be given to the boggy stretches $\frac{1}{2}$ mi. below Little S (on the Big S trail) and at the CCC camp in Lost Canyon (about 2 mi. above the junction.) Also, Lower Big Arroyo needs brushing, it's on Billy's agenda for next year.

STATION

The tent-frame is in good shape. The fly has a rip in the front that needs repair, and needs new ties affixed to the doorway where they've ripped out. I'm sending out the lid to one of the food boxes for repair - needs to be welded where it's cracked. One of the storage-ans leaks, which isn't real good - I'll try to protect it for the winter. The trailcrew dug a new privy for me in August & cut enough rounds for next season. Because it burned the heat shield & singed the tent, we moved the Sims stove away from the canvas, using a new, longer piece of stovepipe. The new configuration of stovepipe keeps the stove from drawing well. According to Billy Hancock, it would draw better if the horizontal piece were angled out:  Evidently there are flexible corner pieces. If it was possible to get these, we'd need a new bottom pipe of 15"-17" by 3" in diameter, and the new connectors.

BEARS

The bears have discovered the East Side of the Divide, possibly because of the presence of boxes at lower elevations. There were incidents in 9 Lakes Basin, throughout Big Arroyo, Little 5, Big Five #1, Lost Canyon, and Columbine Lake. I believe there are at least 3 different bears in my patrol area, though visitor observations are so poor it's hard to know.

The first incident at the R.S. lake occurred only a few nights after my arrival. I saw a sow and cub the next day, and chased them, yelled, threw rocks etc. numerous times in the next month. They periodically appeared during the day, but didn't disturb the cabin until about July 20. A bear came in to the tent a total of 4 times. After the first time, we installed an electric fence. Which didn't work. Until I put up another ground and connected the two hot wires. No further problems after that. After the first few weeks, I had no reports of food being taken here: I was very impressed both with the counter-balancing I saw and with visitors' willingness to chase the bear(s) away. I had many reports this summer from people who successfully chased a bear away (from sites throughout the patrol area) and had no further problems.

I have 3 major concerns as far as bear problems go:

- ① The tent: while the electric fence seems to work, I find it at best unaesthetic and irritating, at worst, totally obnoxious. I'd hate to see it as a permanent fixture here. I don't know all the ramifications of a wood structure here, but a small cabin ~~there~~ would be less intrusive and more aesthetic than fiberglass and wire all over the place. In my humble opinion. Alternatively, I may be willing to try keeping all

food tightly locked up and the tent open in hopes that the bear(s) will knock around some and then give up because there's no food available.

② Bear boxes: My reluctance to bring in bear boxes stems from my desire to keep use dispersed. Currently, there is rarely a night when more than 2 parties camp in any given area, even at the Station Lake. If we put in bear boxes, use will inevitably concentrate at the boxes. Given the fact that many people succeeded in defending their food, I wonder about the urgency of ^{bringing in} boxes. If we decide to go with boxes, I suppose one at the Big A. patrol cabin, one here, one @ lowest Big S, and one somewhere in Lost would be reasonable. Again, people use sites throughout Lost Canyon - there is no one heavy-use spot where a box would make sense, and I'm not sure where a box would be most useful. It would be helpful to review all the reports from this area to see where the most incidents occurred.

③ Trailcrew: Currently the crew sacrifices valuable man-power by leaving someone in camp on bear watch every day. This seems a terrible waste. I strongly advocate investigating the new boxes Yosemite's crews are using - they are evidently easy to pack on stock, bearproof, and insulated. Otherwise, maybe each camp should have one of the big powder boxes like the camps @ Hot Springs & Harvey Meadow have.

Perhaps we can get 4 boxes, and start with one in Big Arroyo & one at Big S #

SENSITIVE PLANTS:

Found "phacelia oregones" on the #ST, no problems with this population. Unable to locate any other species.

WILDLIFE

I saw an Osprey at Little Claire Lake & Forester Lake in July. Sandy is

fairly sure she saw one at Forester in August, so it may be wintering there. 3 visitors reported seeing a Red Fox near Long Lake. I am inclined to wonder if it wasn't a coyote, but both descriptions sounded like a fox. 2 visitors reported a fresh mountain lion kill in Upper Kern-Kaweah, and trailcrews reported lions in Milestone and Redwood Meadow.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Found & reported a hand-tool in Upper Kern-Kaweah. Also found flakes at sites in Lost Canyon & Chagopa, previously reported by Rob Hayden.

PEAK REGISTERS/USE :

Local peaks show 2-4 parties a year signing the registers. Of these, about half are affiliated with SEKI - CCC, rangers, trailcrew, Bearpaw tent camp. Several parties attempted Black Kaweah, only two signed the register as of the end of August.

SIERRA CLUB :

I am concerned about the number of Sierra Club groups using this area. In one week I contacted 3 different parties. From 8/5 to 8/26, 7 groups came into this patrol area. One night I had 40 Sierra Clubbers here. I talked with one leader about my concern, and he said part of the problem may be lack of co-ordination between sub-groups: i.e. the stock-supported trips are co-ordinated by one person, the "knapsack trips" by another, and so on. He said there is an effort made, usually, to be sure groups don't

end up in the same place at the same time - but I had a stock group and a knapsack group. It seems like it might be worth contacting the Club to ask that: 1) closer scrutiny be kept to insure that this doesn't happen; and 2) someone monitor the number of groups using an area during mid July - late August. 8 parties just seems like a LOT for a 6 week period, especially when 7 are in a 3 week period at the peak of backcountry use.

I am also concerned about group size: the stock-supported trip was a party of 23, moving slowly and spending 2 nights each in several places. That's just too big a group, in my opinion. One member of the party told me the Sierra Club WANTS large groups for their back trips because "they're big money-makers". This is NOT a good reason for maximizing backcountry impact! How is it that the Club is allowed to reserve almost ~~all~~ the entire day's trailhead quota?

DOLPH AMSTER is head of outings and can be contacted at the S.C. office on 730 Polk St., S.F., CA. JIM WATTERS is head of knapsack trips.

UNMAINTAINED TRAILS

Stock trails in the Big 5 and Long Lake drainages are creating considerable resource damage where they go through bogs. (See photos) It seems very inconsistent that according to The Plan, stock are allowed only on ~~maintained~~ trails, yet there is tacit acceptance of stock use on these ^{type} ~~unmaintained~~ trails. It would be preferable to either (1) close those trails to stock; or (2) reroute & maintain those trails.

FIRE LIMITS

In the Kern drainage, the fire limit is 11,200'. It has been generally agreed by rangers in this area that this is far too high. This is particularly true on the east side of the Great Western Divide. I have taken photos of the upper ends of the drainages in my patrol area to illustrate this, but here are the effective treeline elevations:

Long Lk. drainage : 10,400'

Little 5 " : 10,500'

Big 5 " : 10,400'

Lost Canyon : 10,200'

Soda Creek : 10,400'

Above these elevations, in each drainage, there are a few ^{small} stands of trees, mostly foxtail pine. Foxtail tend to have sturdy branches well above the ground, and drop little by way of dead-and-down for burning. I have been generous in my estimates: at Long Lake, Big Five #3, Ranger Station Lake, and Upper Lost Canyon, dead and

down wood is in meager supply, and - by the end of the summer - non-existent within the camping perimeters.

I strongly urge that the fire limits be lowered. Barring this, I believe the upper lake above the Ranger Station in the Little 5 drainage should be closed. There are 3 small stands of foxtail pine at this lake, each with only 3 or 4 mature trees. All the large down logs have been severely mangled; there is no dead and down wood; fires have been built repeatedly right on the meadow; the small foxtails have been butchered. Pictures speak more eloquently than words can; there is far more wood at Hamilton Lake and 9 Lakes Basin, both of which have been closed to fires.

Lowering the fire limit should affect neither stock users nor backpackers adversely. Most backpackers are surprised that fires are allowed at all. Stock parties can easily stay

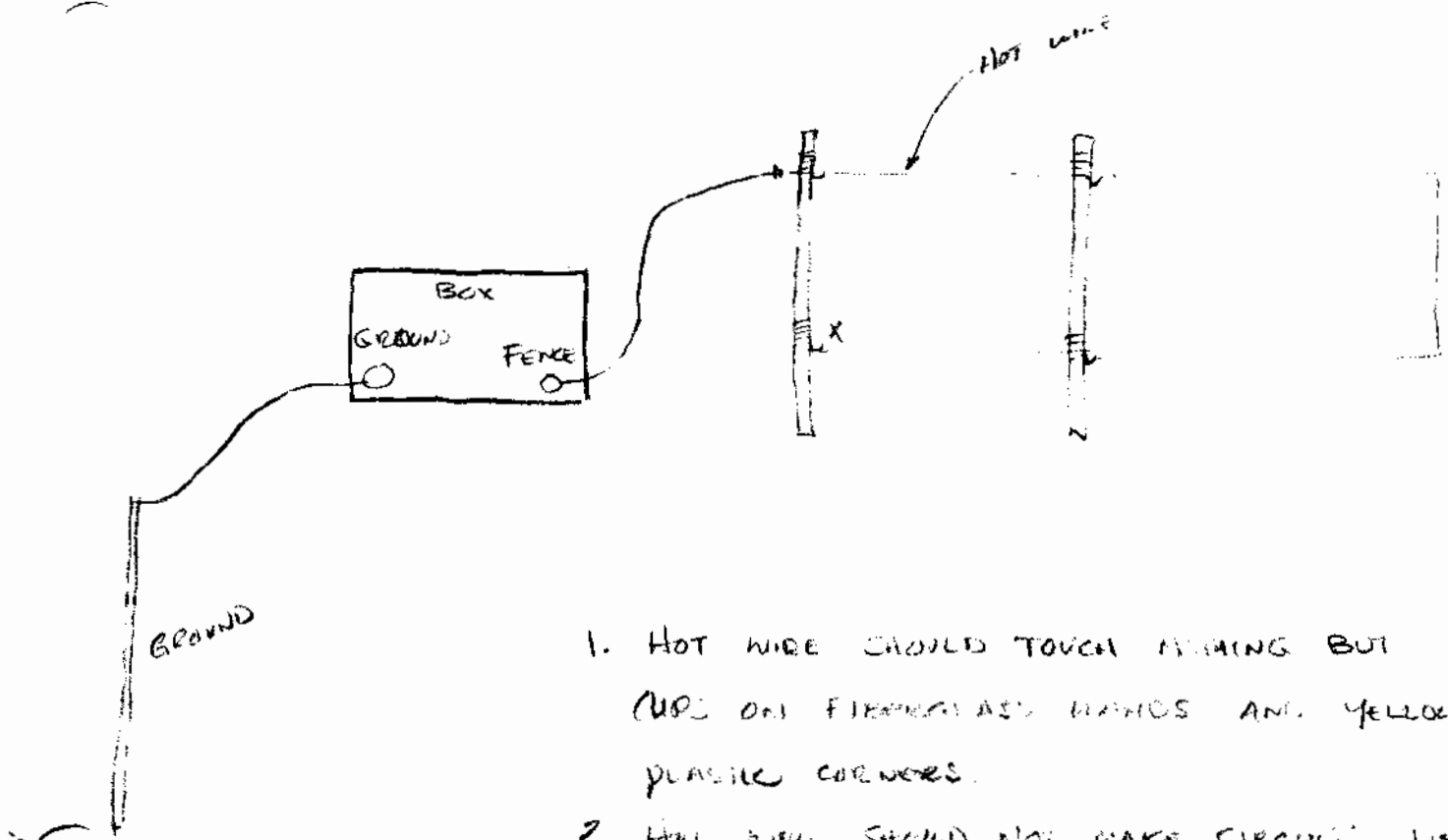
at the lake below Long Lake, in the lower $\frac{3}{4}$ of Lost Canyon, (below 10,000') in the lower Little Five Lakes, in the lower Big Five Lakes. (In addition, the upper meadows are fragile & would benefit if stock parties camped a little lower.) And if backpackers can do without fires without complaining, I see no reason that those stock parties wishing to camp at higher elevations can't practice the same minimum impact ethic.

11,200' is - quite literally - in the rocks throughout my patrol area. It makes little sense to have a limit which is not a limit at all - there is, essentially, no fire limit on the east side of the Divide, and sub-alpine areas are receiving no protection from the pillaging saws and axes of fire-lovers.

SIERRA CLUB TRIPS TO L-S AREA

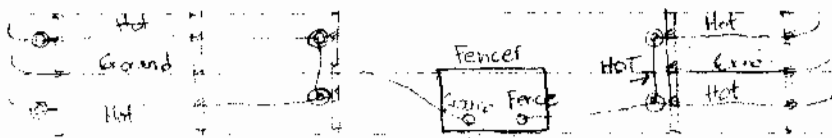
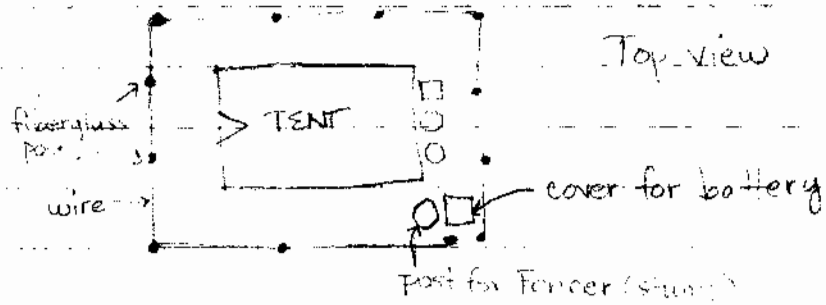
GEOGRAPHIC INDEX

NO.	TITLE	DATE	TYPE	PAGE	NO.	TITLE	DATE	TYPE	PAGE
89246	Deer Creek Trail Maintenance, Trinity Alps, CA	7/12-22	Service	113	89194	Up Bear Creek, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	8/6-13	Burro	91
89247	Meteor Lake Trail Maintenance, Klamath Forest, CA	7/12-22	Service	114	89223	Big Five-Little Five Lakes, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/6-15	Highlight	108
89103	Castle Domes Loop, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	7/13-22	Backpack	70	89134	Big Arroyo, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/7-18	Backpack	75
89104	Fourteen Lakes Natural History, Sequoia Park, Sierra	7/15-23	Backpack	70	89135	High Sierra Meadows and Mountains, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	8/10-19	Backpack	75
89106	Northern Yosemite Natural History Leisure Trip, Sierra	7/16-22	Backpack	70	89205	Graveyard Lakes, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	8/12-19	Family	94
89167	Midnight Lake, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	7/19-27	Base Camp	85	89136	Sawtooth Ridge, Yosemite Park and Toiyabe Forest, Sierra	8/13-20	Backpack	75
89109	Red Mountain Basin Lakes, Sierra	7/21-29	Backpack	71	89195	Over Hell-for-Sure-Pass, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	8/13-21	Burro	91
89253	Mt. Whitney One-Week Trail Maintenance, Sierra	7/22-29	Service	114	89266	Yosemite Park Revegetation and Trail Project, Sierra	8/13-24	Service	117
89111	Ionian Adventure, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	7/22-30	Backpack	71	89138	The Mono Recesses, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	8/17-26	Backpack	75
89112	Lots-of-Lakes Leisure, Emigrant Wilderness, Sierra	7/22-30	Backpack	71	89139	Yosemite's High Sierra Wilderness, Sierra	8/19-26	Backpack	75
89254	Third Annual Clair Tappaan Lodge Family Trip, Sierra	7/22-30	Service	115	89140	Bear Lakes High Route, Sierra Forest, Sierra	8/19-27	Backpack	76
89286	Trinity River, CA	7/23-28	Canoe	122	89141	Nine to Five Lakes, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/19-27	Backpack	76
89204	Rocky Basin Lakes Family Base Camp, Sierra	7/23-29	Base Camp	94	89143	Palisade Basin Loop, Inyo Forest/Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	8/20-27	Backpack	76
	Kings-Kern Divide, Sequoia and Kings Canyon Parks, Sierra	7/23-30	Backpack	71	89144	Red and White Lake, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	8/20-27	Backpack	76
	Mt. Whitney Loop, Sequoia Park, Sierra	7/23-30	Backpack	71	89145	Beginner-Leisure Family Backpack, Ansel Adams Wilderness, Sierra	8/21-29	Backpack	76
89115	Rock Creek Ramble, Sequoia Park, Sierra	7/23-30	Backpack	71	89146	Majestic Mineral King, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/21-29	Backpack	76
89118	Huckleberry Panorama, Emigrant Wilderness, Sierra	7/24-30	Backpack	72	89196	Over the Goddard Divide Family Trip, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	8/21-9/2	Burro	91
89256	Piute Canyon Trail Maintenance, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	7/26-8/5	Service	111	89147	Thunder Mountain, Kings Canyon and Sequoia Parks, Sierra	8/24-9/3	Backpack	77
89119	Rosy Finch Lake, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	7/28-8/5	Backpack	72	89148	Big Five Lakes, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/26-9/3	Backpack	77
89120	Buck Lakes Leisure, Emigrant Wilderness, Sierra	7/29-8/5	Backpack	73	89149	Kaweah Basin, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/26-9/3	Backpack	77
89123	Women's Beginner Backpack, Ansel Adams Wilderness, Sierra	7/29-8/5	Backpack	73	89152	Peakbagging in Evolution Country and the Palisades, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	8/27-9/4	Backpack	77
89124	Le Conte Divide, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	7/29-8/6	Backpack	73	89153	White Divide Peakbagging, Sierra Forest and Kings Canyon Park, Sierra	8/27-9/4	Backpack	77
89125	Wheeler Peak, Great Basin Park, NV	7/30-8/5	Backpack	73	89224	The Glacial Basin Route, Inyo Forest, Sierra	9/3-15	Highlight	108
89168	Donner-Tahoe Discovery and Photography, Sierra	7/30-8/6	Base Camp	85	89154	The Indian Lakes, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	9/6-14	Backpack	78
89169	Northern Yosemite, Sierra	7/29-8/6	Base Camp	85	89155	Big Bird Lake, Kings Canyon and Sequoia Parks, Sierra	9/6-15	Backpack	78
89126	Up and Over the Great Western Divide, Sierra	7/30-8/6	Backpack	73	89156	Tahoe-Desolation Wilderness Loop, Sierra	9/8-16	Backpack	78
89193	Margaret Lakes Family Trip, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	7/30-8/6	Burro	91	89206	Tuolumne Meadows Toddler Adventure, Yosemite Park, Sierra	9/10-16	Family	94
89127	Kern Arena, Sequoia Park, Sierra	7/31-8/9	Backpack	74	89225	To the Crest of the Sierra Nevada, Sierra	9/10-17	Highlight	108
89128	Minarets Loop, Inyo Forest, Sierra	8/3-11	Backpack	74					
89129	Lost Trail to Tablelands, Kings Canyon and Sequoia Parks, Sierra	8/5-13	Backpack	74					
	Natural History Along the Great Western Divide, Sierra	8/5-13	Backpack	74					
33	Sequoia Peaks and Basins, Sequoia Park, Sierra	8/6-13	Backpack	74					



1. HOT WIRE SHOULD TOUCH NOTHING BUT CLIPS ON FIBERGLASS HANDS AND YELLOW PLASTIC CORNERS.
2. HOT WIRE SHOULD NOT MAKE CIRCLES, JUST END IT AT LAST SPOT (x)
3. USE RE-ROD OR FENCE POST FOR CORNERS. BEST IN A WIRE AREA
4. METAL CLIPS NEED TO BE SLEND TO SLIDE IN. LONG END NEEDS TO BENT TO HOLD WIRE

LITTLE 5. ELECTRIC FENCE

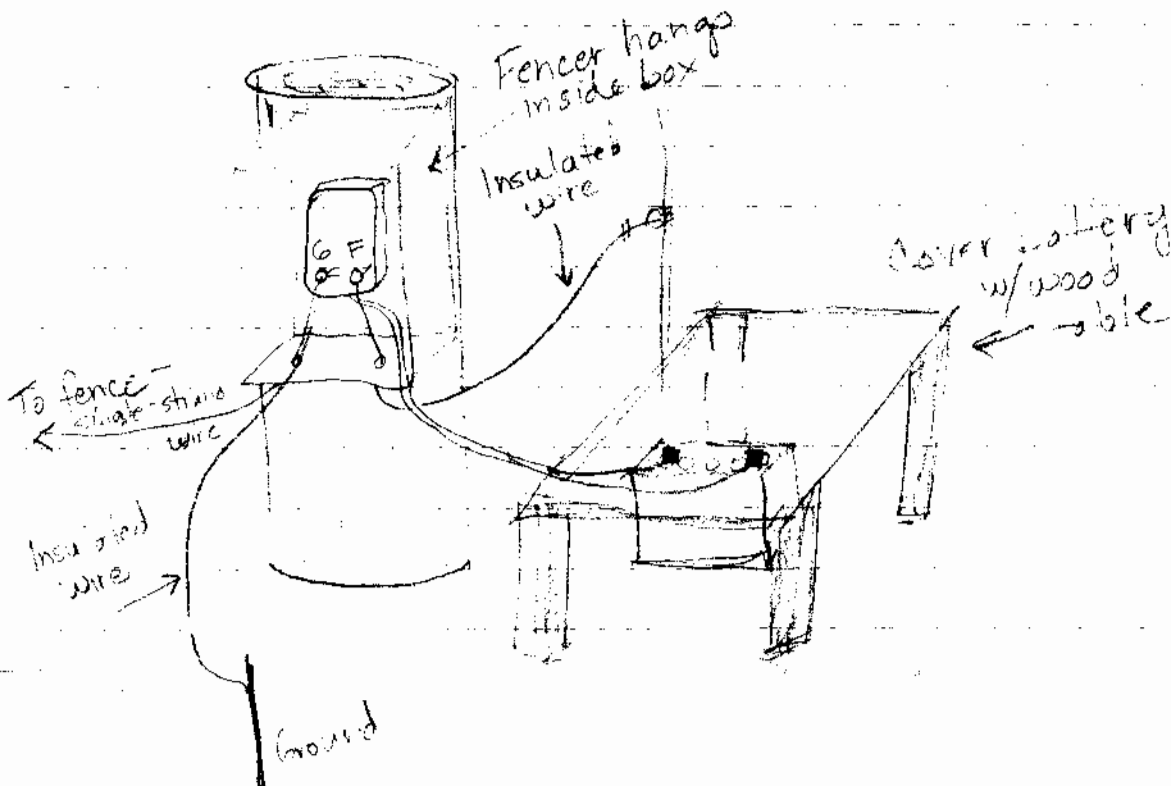


Hot wire must be continuous loop



Battery - leads connected to terminals with hose clamps, WIRE to POSITIVE

Ground - rebar in sidewalk Attached with hose clamp



memorandum

DATE: Sept. 21, 1989

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

SUBJECT: Video on Minimum Impact

TO: John, Tim, Backcountry Meeting

In the last 20 years, we've come a long way in educating the public to reduce human impact in the backcountry. However, we seem to have reached a plateau: backcountry rangers all see certain problems recurring unabated despite the efforts at the trailheads and our signs. The message just isn't reaching some people. People don't read their M.I. sheets, and their eyes glaze as they filter out the litany at the trailheads.

Therefore, I propose that we create a Minimum Impact Videotape which visitors would be obliged to watch before getting a permit.

It should be short, to the point, and - above all - humorous and entertaining. It should address:

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 1-80)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
5010-113

- choosing a campsite (NOT on grass, well back from water & the trail, established sites whenever possible)
 - fires (keep small, don't add rocks, no trash, no foil, use existing pits, don't hack up standing trees, consider NOT HAVING A FIRE)
 - Sanitation (digging "catholes", far from water, F.P. disposal, no soap ever in water)
- I don't think it needs to deal with bears, water, or fire closures - people are highly motivated to know about these things, so they listen.

I believe a video would be an effective tool because we are such a visual society, largely addicted to T.V.; and this type of audio-visual presentation will capture people's attention, even against their will!, if it's entertaining.

Jeff Keay - NPS Resource Mgt, Yosemite - was involved in the production of a video on bears to educate the public. He'd be a good contact person to get information about how to go about producing something.

If we can reach that last portion of backpackers who have yet to fall in with the minimum impact program, we can make a quantum leap forward in our ability to protect this resource.

Lo Lyness

Little T Ranger