

1989 EVOLUTION VALLEY RANGER REPORT

Randy Morgenson

I spent too much time this summer working on the cabin, but it needed it. Mouse nests were cleaned out. The old Edison Co. storage box was dismantled and parts of it made into other things. Large accumulations of unnecessary things were disposed of, then unnecessary shelves torn out for more room. Some mouse-proofing of cupboards was accomplished, a little painting was done (ran out of paint & didn't get more until late in the season), new shutters were constructed (both summer & winter sets), ect., ect.

For this reason, and a project rearranging trail signs, and a late season project blocking an abandoned McClure Meadow trail and planting signs directing hikers away, and five medevacs, and mapping vegetation and yellow-legged frogs, and completing other Sierra District reports, and cutting an abundance of firewood, and the usual unpredictable happenings, firesites were somewhat neglected. They are clean, but I didn't do much work digging out the charcoal and reducing them in size. That will be a project for next year. There are no belly-high castles in the Evolution region, and I hope no firesites above 10,000 feet (did try to keep control over that). The discouraging thing is that this work is endless. Campers add rocks because they like their own arrangement; and as sites fill with charcoal, and with dirt used to put the fires out, another layer of rocks is added. In 1986 Surie rebuilt every firesite in Evolution Valley to three-rock standards. All that work is buried.

What follows are my observations and suggestions, not particularly in order of importance.

Some needed changes in our written grazing regulations sheet:

1) Add: Stock travel not allowed more than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from maintained trails unless authorized.

2) Add: No stock travel to Darwin Bench/Canyon from the John Muir Trail.

3) Add: For Evolution Valley meadows there are variable opening dates; contact park HQ before trip.

4) Is day-travel with stock to Martha Lake okay or not? If it is not, write it on the regulations sheet.

5) Instead of just stating no grazing at Evolution Lake, the sheet should read no grazing (or camping with stock) from the base of the switchbacks below Evolution Lake (the practical reality), over Muir Pass, to 10,000 feet in Le Conte Canyon. In upper Le Conte Canyon there is grass on a lakeshore at 10,800 feet and a small wet meadow at 10,200 feet but neither should be grazed as they are too small, too fragile, and too near water.

6) Our regulation states burros and walking mules are allowed one night at Evolution Lake. Add llamas to that. And decide how many. Twenty would seem too many for Evolution Lake. We should set a limit. Two walking mules for one night. Four burros or llamas for one night. The meadows at Evolution Lake are lakeshore, and the area is hemmed-in by mountains. During July and August and early September it is an unusual night when there are not at least a couple of groups of hikers camped in the few sites. The Chief Ranger's September 6 memo to the Superintendent on the subject of managing high lake basins applies to Evolution Lake, though we can probably stick with our present policy so long as we establish limits for the animals allowed.

7) Where a regulation states no grazing (or grazing for one night) does this mean stock are not allowed to be there or just not eat grass? Is it okay for a stock party to camp there (e.g., Evolution Lake) if the animals are tied and not allowed to roam about eating grass, or is it our intention not to have stock overnight in certain areas, realizing they have their effect on the place even if they aren't eating grass. Our wording should clarify this. A Sierra Club burro party camped two nights at Evolution Lake, but didn't turn the animals loose to graze the second night. Yet the animals were there, walking about, tied somewhere, defecating... What is our intention? And if the regulation works this way for a burro party can a horse and mule party with 12 head similarly camp at Evolution Lake? Clarify the regulation. It could say, no camping with stock.

8) Another clarification: After G. Rowell and National Geographic Magazine we should clarify what a walking mule is, or perhaps since few pack stations (or none) rent them anymore we should drop this designation. Where walking mules are allowed we could change to a two head limit (seldom did a party have more than two walking mules). Currently walking mules are allowed one night at Evolution Lake. How many mules? And can one man riding one horse not camp and graze because he is riding and it is a horse? I'm sure that is not what is intended. (One man on a horse rode north on the Muir Trail and did not camp at Evolution Lake for that reason.) A simple two head limit would be more reasonable and clear.

Other things regarding meadows and grazing:

I think we can move beyond monitoring meadows and manage them more. I suggest we consider moving away from the grazing of meadows and encourage the grazing of drier woodland areas between them. I think Le Conte Canyon and Evolution Valley are two places where this could work, successfully protecting the principal meadows without pinching the stock users. It would take fences above and below the selected meadows so stock parties could camp there yet keep their stock out of that meadow. This could easily be done for Big Pete and McClure Meadows where one fence already exists at each.

Big Pete Meadow: The western wooded portion is on the list of protected (closed) meadows, while the eastern portion is open to grazing. This does not work. Stock wander and graze in the supposedly-protected western portion. That very wet and lush tall-grass part of the meadow east of the closed portion is also worth protecting. With Deschampsia, sundews, wildflowers it is a very beautiful place. There is a fence below the meadow and we could protect the entire meadow starting 1990 by requiring stock parties who camp at Big Pete put their stock below that fence. There is also woodland forage above Big Pete and if an upper fence were built that could be used. A gate at barrier rock would keep stock from going over Muir Pass.

We could also fully protect McClure Meadow without inhibiting stock user's ability to camp there. There is a fence below the meadow, and a good site above it. Stock parties could camp at the meadow and put their stock either above or below. The morning wrangle would not be much more of a chore than it is now.

Backcountry rangers have for years been advocating protecting McClure Meadow from stock grazing. It is a very special place and numerous comments by hikers support this. I would like to see our management policies support this. With several meadows and abundant woodland forage in Evolution Valley we can surely preserve one ungrazed meadow. Over 95% of the visitors are hikers and they have little opportunity to see an ungrazed meadow. The arguments for this protection may not be based on grazing-damage data, but the argument for grazing (tradition) is certainly emotional and not based on factual data. In any case, perhaps the quest for data to support our actions gets over emphasized. After all, our emotions distinguish us. Art and poetry and music are from and to the human heart, as is, for many, our relationship with the land. There has been a good deal of philosophical and emotional response to landscapes embedded in the conservation movement from the beginning.

All the meadows in Evolution Valley were grazed this summer, and they all looked it. Yet Franklin Meadow apparently was not, and in October it was a place of knee-high grasses, ripe and open panicles drifting on the moving air, luminous-bronze in the backlight. It was a very different place and a very different emotional experience of a mountain meadow, and entirely consistent with what one might rightly expect of national park backcountry. It was a garden. I sometimes wonder whether range management concepts are any more applicable to our business than timber management concepts. The difference between a grazed meadow and a logged forest may only be one of scale.

If we fenced and closed McClure Meadow, after a couple of seasons there would be little surface evidence of grazing and it would be a very different meadow, grasses growing through their natural cycle all season. Again, instead of just doing the monitoring project and adding studies of species changes, as valuable as these may be, we could give these meadows more protection. Manage, not just monitor.

For the stock user this means asking him to change some habits, to think more of grazing woodland forage rather than prime meadows, and even think of carrying supplemental feed. But it does NOT mean a first step toward excluding stock from the backcountry.

This would be a change in management position. We need not continue the assumption that if stock are here they have to be allowed to graze some of the park's most beautiful meadows. And we need not prove long-term ecological changes before increasing our meadow protection. We can

protect them on our own long-term tradition (The Yellowstone Campfire) of protecting particularly beautiful places. Finally, this would be recognition of the difference between mountain meadows as very special places (gardens), and pastures. There was hard grazing in the NW corner of Evolution Meadow near the one good stock camp, and by summer's end the meadow looked like a close-cropped pasture. With fences above Evolution Meadow and below McClure Meadow, parties could camp at either and graze neither.

New fence needs would be one upstream from McClure Meadow to give full protection to that meadow (a fence exists downstream) and one upstream from Evolution Meadow to give full protection to that meadow (one exists downstream). We can also consider whether the fence in Goddard Canyon below Franklin Meadow is really necessary. Its purpose is to keep stock in Goddard Canyon from going to Florence Lake, Yet there is another fence 1-1½ miles further downstream.

Regarding the meadow monitoring as we backcountry rangers have done it in the recent past -- recording plant maturation stage and soil moisture -- I wonder if this is as useful as it once was. (What is done with this information?) We have now established opening dates for various grazing areas, and the validity of these dates can be verified each spring -- that much is useful.

However, as I recall, part of the original plan was for rangers to assess use during a season based on grazed forage, hoof prints, trampling, knowledge of amount of use, ect. and determine when a meadow had enough for that season. Working with Sierra District, a meadow could be closed for a month or for the rest of the season. We have not been doing this. We have only been recording moisture, plant growth stage, and sometimes hoof prints, at various times through the season, then returning this information at season's end. What are we learning from this and what do we plan to do with what we learn? To my knowledge we are not using this to manage meadows, we are just collecting information. Perhaps a review of this for the benefit of backcountry rangers would be useful.

In the absence of a request, I did not photograph any meadows for the repeat-photo project. Perhaps all that has been done in this area. I would be happy to that next year if given instructions re what is wanted.

The most obvious recent lodgepole growth in McClure Meadow is on south side, about mid-meadow. An early photo shows the forest out to the creek at that spot, which was removed in the 1960s. Much of this area is a little higher and drier than other parts of the meadow -- may we have been fighting natural succession?

Many of the check dams on tributary streams in all these Evolution Valley meadows are undermined or collapsed yet I do not see a need to rebuild them as I see no particular evidence of active erosion.

On two occasions this summer packers from Muir Trail Ranch camped in Evolution Valley without being aware of park regulations. In early August a packer camped at McClure Meadow with tents pitched and a campfire burning right on lush meadow grass. In mid-September a packer arrived planning to spend two nights at Colby Meadow. I allowed it because I did not think the four head for an extra night would do any damage and Evolution Meadow had received a lot of use. But she told me she was not aware of our one night regulation. Is there a problem with the Muir Trail Ranch and our regulations? Perhaps next spring a gentle reminder of our minimum impact and grazing regulations would be appropriate including that we expect all employed hands to be advised. In fact, all pack station owners should be told we expect all packers to know our grazing regulations and minimum impact camping and stock-handling regulations. One of our problems with commercial stock parties is that individual packers do not always know.

Other Topics:

I was told some managers would like to see California DWR move their auto snow sensor from Dusy Basin to Bench Lake. There are a couple of things that should be considered. DWR likes to put these things right on one of the course sampling points, and at Bench Lake the course is right across a lush, dense-sod meadow with a small stream. I do not think we should allow them to dig in a meadow, and put their anti-freeze-filled pillow next to running water. We might also consider whether it is better to have it in Dusy Basin where there is considerable change from human presence and where there is a heavily used trail to the site, rather than at the Bench Lake course where there is comparatively little effect from human activities. DWR has a very poor record of behaving themselves in the mountains. They tend to believe everything takes a back seat to their work. An auto-sensing station at Bench Lake would increase their helicopter and stock use to that remote and little-disturbed area.

If there is a problem with snow surveyors (DWR) taking dogs into the park backcountry, hire a couple of commissioned summer rangers for a couple of weeks to patrol the Kern at snow survey time; if surveyors have dogs, cite them and send them out of the park. If they refuse to leave, arrest and fly them out. Disrupt their data collection once and that should end the dogs.

For USGS and their 7½ min. quads:

I do not think the snow on the north side of Lamark Col is a glacier (surely they have a geologist who would think it fun to go look), partly because there is a trail under it.

USGS should remove labelled campsites from these maps. We do not have established campsites, and these features are not permanent; we sometimes close and eradicate them.

On Mt. Darwin quad: left edge at 4117 UTM where John Muir Trail leaves the map, red letters read, "Piute Creek 3.6 mi." Wrong. This should read, "South Fork San Joaquin River 3.6 mi." (if the mileage is right).

I found no asbestos in the attic of the McClure R.S. There appears to be none in this cabin.

There is apparently no rare plant list for Evolution Valley. If the Evolution R.S. had a list, with descriptions or pictures, of known sensitive/threatened species, rangers could look.

There is always discussion about how to make hikers aware of park regulations and no-trace camping techniques. We seem to have pretty much won the battle on litter but there are other struggles. Large firesites, and in the wrong places, is one that comes to mind. Another is where people defecate, the amount that is not buried, and the amount of toilet paper on the surface of the ground. If we are going to change this we are probably going to have to reach people at trailheads and with better hand-out literature. I do believe our minimum impact and regulations sheet is difficult to read and should be re-written -published. The print is too small and everything is too crammed and our regulations are mixed with the forest service messages. I'm not surprised that what is there does not stick with folks.

I wonder whether making hikers watch a video would engrave the message. And it seems a bit high-tech and expensive as an approach. Perhaps there is a role for an interpreter where wilderness permits are issued, giving some kind of talk/demonstration and handing out better literature that duplicates and reinforces the speel.

There is so much park-wide work to do rerouting trails out of bogs and meadows, then filling and revegetating the old treads, I think we need continuous funding for an annual revegetation crew. This would be a professional crew, over the years learning and improving. There is lots of this work in the Evolution region, documented and photographed by Surie in 1986. Some of it was inspected by Superintendent, Chief of Maintenance, et. al. in September 1989. There was talk of having a CCC crew start the trail reroute in Evolution Basin in summer 1990. I strongly encourage this. The work desperately needs to be done. At the same time, the old trail treads in McClure Meadow, abandoned in mid-1960s, need to be revegetated.

The old trail treads in Evolution Meadow, abandoned at about the same time, show pretty good recovery and receive little use. A revegetation project there would be disruptive. Best to leave it alone. The same is true in Colby Meadow. But the old trail in McClure Meadow has not recovered much and is still maintained by free-roaming stock (mostly) and hikers (some). It needs revegetation work, signs posted for hikers, and probably stock kept out of the meadow as the only way to keep them off.

The best campsite for a CCC group working in the basin would be at the base of the Evolution Lake switchbacks, where Darwin Creek reaches Evolution Creek. This is a large site, they can have a fire, it is a long-established site where they won't create new impact, it is off the trail but within sight of it though they can hide if they want to, and is less than two miles and 800 vertical feet from Evolution Lake, about a 30 minute walk.

In 1986 Surie also documented and photographed needed trail work in McGee Canyon (ruts to fill and some revegetation), and on the trail to Darwin Bench and through Darwin Canyon (ruts, bogs, revegetation). That documentation should still reside in Sierra District. I echo the need for this work, though I add that we should consider doing some work up to Lamark Col; not build a trail, not make it easier or more accessible (surely not raise the quotas), but rough in a route that most hikers might stick to rather than roam all over the hillside as at present. Right now there is more damage being done to flowering plants than needs be. Something to think on.

Thoughts on what might go into new backcountry cabins:

- 1) On a mouseproof foundation, perhaps on above-ground piers.
- 2) Metal shutters and door-lock shield as at Crabtree.
- 3) Shingle roof, not tin, though perhaps tin underlayment so hikers can't chop through with ice-axe.
(Has been done.)
- 4) Maybe a small front porch as at Rock Creek, but not too big for it then invites public camping.
- 5) A wood closet so wood isn't stacked in living space.
Could be part of front porch.
- 6) Also, important, need storage closet for tools, gas, supply boxes, ect. In every cabin this stuff just floats around inside, in the way. This could be an inside closet or something attached to the outside.
- 7) Cupboards for dishes, 3-month food supply, books, ect.
With mouseproof doors!
- 8) If there were a large-volume drip water-filtering device, perhaps not so worried about locating right beside good water, which isn't possible everywhere.
- 9) Bob Kenan's photovoltaics for power; talk to Bob.
- 10) Maybe fold-down (hinged) bunks attached to one wall.
- 11) A skylight? (With winter shutter) Or does this break the roof integrity?
- 12) 1/2 or 2/3 ceiling for loft/storage, with ladder.
Means an insulated roof, a good idea anyway.
- 13) Is an inside sink with drain into a sump better than tossing water outside? It takes up room.
- 14) Consult all those with cabin experience for what should go into a cabin. Alden has lots of cabin experience, and in another park.

- 15) Consider site selection and orientation very carefully. Consult rangers who have lived there. Don't build in midst of prettiest spot; accessible but a little out of sight is best. Spend some time exploring the area for the best spot. Don't automatically assume existing spot is best. Consider sun vis-a-vis windows and door.
- 16) If we replace Crabtree cabin let state DWR have no part of it. It should be all NPS and they operate under NPS permission and supervision. There've been too many years of DWR misuse of the park backcountry and backcountry cabins. Also consider buying out their interest in Rock Creek and Tyndall and assuming total control. Those two cabins are now 40+ years old. Do we want them to turn 50 and be historic structure? It might be worth replacing cabins before they become historic structures so we retain our options to alter them, move them, whatever.

Insects are chewing on the McClure cabin rafters, sawdust sifts down, and it may not be archival anyway since it sits on the ground and settles. Rangers have been battling the door sticking on the floor since at least Carl Moseley (early 1960s). A candidate for replacement?

Regarding Chief Ranger's September 6 memo to Superintendent titled Wilderness Management. I support the concepts which Doug has outlined in this memo. I particularly support management recognition that while grazing "can be defended biologically, this unnatural situation seems consistently judged to be an unacceptable intrusion upon the aesthetic values in these places". High time.

I have thought for a couple years it is time to go beyond monitoring meadows to giving them more protection. Our management policies should include a greater recognition of the special nature of these mountain meadows, and that protecting them from grazing, by sheep and cattle in those days, was one of the motives in establishing these national parks. Our policies also could give greater recognition to the distinction between mountain meadows and pastures (c.f., distinction between old growth forests and selectively cut forests). These meadows are not pastures. Their grasses and sedges are not feed. Managing for sustained yield is not our business. Managing for natural processes is our stated business, and as Doug says, a grazed meadow is an unnatural situation.

A meadow where each year the grasses go through their natural cycle undisturbed is quite different from a meadow which has been grazed. In fact, in philosophy, and in beauty. I feel that in recent years we have gotten unduly focused on the standard of long-term ecologic change, which sounds too much like sustained yield. Obviously we need keep a watchful eye on this, but we need also recognize the short-term biological change that occurs with grazing, and admit it is not consistent with our Prime Directive. I submit that eating two-foot high grasses down to within two inches of the ground is a change in plant physiology, not just scenery.

Aesthetic values are inextricably mixed with this short-term biologic change since backcountry travelers tend to enjoy the unaltered scene over the altered. Admittedly, aesthetics is a slippery concept, but maybe more in line with the NPS traditions and organic act than sustained yield. A grazed meadow is an undeniably altered meadow. Whether we see that may depend on how fine our vision. There is more to these mountains than The Grand Scene. That Grand Scene is composed of the details.

We have made a commitment to stock users to allow them to visit these mountains. But that need not mean they can graze any meadow they want, as much as they want, until we can prove with facts and data they are causing long-term ecologic change. In any case, Doug is right, these proposals need not pinch the stock users. They can change some of their grazing habits and we can provide better meadow protection, based on the policy of letting meadow grasses go through their natural cycle each year so visitors have an opportunity to see and appreciate that, and stock users can still visit these mountains.

Doug is right about something else. Stock users have been disproportionately vocal, and hence influential, in our planning process. There is no doubt in my mind that were everyone who gets a wilderness permit allowed to vote, yea or nay, on the question of stock in the mountains, stock would be gone. Stock users are a small minority. Perhaps in an alleged democracy this is the way it should be done.

I hope we have a Chief Ranger and Superintendent willing to stand for greater protection for more mountain meadows as wholly consistent with NPS mission, to resist pressures for use, and to resist the argument that we need prove and document this long-term change thing before we can regulate use. That is not the only standard available to us. And I would add that with Doug's proposal for "high lake basins" there be consideration given to my proposal for prime valley meadows (discussed earlier in this report) as a package approach to a changed meadow management policy.

Should any of this planning move forward it would seem there is a role for the backcountry rangers. I can't imagine anyone in the administration who knows the back-country as these people do, yet they are out of the planning and decision-making loop.

One role would be to help decide which meadows and lake basins to protect, and I'm going to start that process right here. I have for many years advocated no stock at all be allowed in Lake Basin, and by this I mean from the Middle Fork of the Kings River through Lake Basin, over Cartridge Pass to the South Fork of the Kings River. I also include the old cross-country route from Horseshoe Lakes to Marion Lake, which should be prohibited right now since it is far from a maintained trail.

Lake Basin is unique in the parks. It is the only large, classic, alpine and sub-alpine lake basin which sees little visitation and shows very little sign of use, even though many years ago the Muir Trail went through it. The area has recovered very well from that early use, and there is little sign of any stock use. I have been there numerous times and seldom seen anyone. There are small places where this kind of experience is possible but I know of no other place of this size. Lake Basin provides a quality of experience on a scale that doesn't exist anywhere else in the park. If any backcountry place deserves attention as a Special Management Area, this is it. If we do anything to increase human use there we will have diminished something we can't replace. I believe the backcountry management plan should state unequivocally the trail between the two forks of the Kings River will never be touched, and that all stock are prohibited. This, with next year's group size limitation on cross-country travel, should keep the place as it is, a place with unequalled opportunity for solitude and the experience of a natural, largely unaltered High Sierra landscape. I do not use the word unique lightly. I truly believe there is not another place in the parks like this.

As a final word on this subject of people in the back-country, why not codify our minimum impact requests in the Compendium? So there is some strength behind them and we can enforce them. Tying stock to trees, pitching tents in a meadow come to mind. There's been more than once when I would have liked to have said to a camper, it is against regulations to have your tent there, rather than, it is against our minimum impact guidelines.

THE JOB

It seems time for management to take a more professional approach to the backcountry ranger job. We are assigned a daily 8 hour shift, yet the reality is day and night availability 7 days a week. While speaking with the chief ranger this past spring he expressed some interest in remote duty pay for backcountry rangers, and approached the personnel officer, who found regulatory reason for denying it. Yet when we are asked to work outside our paid shift, who asks the personnel officer to consult her books? Who asks whether a required daily radio check with Sierra District four hours before the work shift starts, or four times on a lieu day, has regulatory support?

On the September morning when I was told my shift would begin at 11am I was also told the helicopter would stop at McClure Meadow early that morning to deliver supplies and pick up trash. And the day the helicopter came to McClure Meadow to haul away Sierra District and personal supplies was my day off. On our own time we are expected to be available to our employer.

I found it not very practical to set off on a patrol to Piute Creek or Wanda Lake at noon so pretty much did the job as in years past. Yet it was probably a mistake to work mornings when the shift was 12 noon to 9pm. I should have been out of uniform, off the radio, away from the ranger station, and certainly contacting no visitors. That is difficult to do and certainly not very practical but there seems no good reason to continue giving all the unpaid time we have in the past.

I cannot patrol to Piute Creek and back, and provide visitor service or do any work, in 8 hours. I could be out of uniform for the extra hours (didn't do that this year though I'd said I would) but there are a couple of problems with that. One is that I am going to or returning from government business in a place I might not choose to be were I truly on my own time. (The personnel officer wrote to the chief ranger that all of our commute occurs on government time, leaving us ineligible for remote duty pay.) Another problem is that if a hiker goes by looking for a ranger he won't recognize me as one. There is a real service in having a backcountry ranger always recognizable and available, but it can't be expected that employees will provide that service in excess of 8 hours for free.

It has been said that backcountry rangers should take a little compensation time on their own to adjust for these unavoidable extra hours. Has the personnel officer been consulted about this? What is this thing called FLSA?

There is an enormous amount of unpaid overtime all backcountry rangers work during daily patrols. And living in a ranger station is being continuously on-call and available to the public, which is as NPS wants it. People arrive at any hour. They have opened the door and walked into the cabin while I was bathing. Meals are regularly interrupted. Shelter is expected during storms. It goes with the territory.

The reality of the job is that it is unworkable to set an 8 hour shift and expect no work outside those hours. Things can arise at any hour, and much of our area of responsibility cannot be covered in an 8 hour shift. Nor did it appear to work well to set a shift, then tell us to work any shift we wish. One solution would be to establish a mid-day shift, say 10am to 7pm, with a couple of hours paid standby time on each side of it. (If standby pay is less than full pay, anything in standby time which generates paper -- run sheet, 343, citation -- would be at full pay.) This would not cover everything but it would be an improvement. (There would still be all those visitor contacts on the trail and at the ranger station, outside those hours.)

I have been told this could be cost-prohibitive. Unless I misunderstand what I hear of the parks' budget, the safety budget has increased about \$20,000, about \$10,000 will be spent to go to a parade in Bishop, and Sierra District created a new GS-9 position. Money appears to be available.

If money for standby pay cannot be found, I suggest that for 1990 there be a decision made about the backcountry ranger shift and no work be asked or expected outside those hours without pay. No radio calls, no helicopters, no hiking anywhere, no employer visits, no visitor services. And I suggest there be established a system of recording and paying overtime for all those extra hours when a ranger unavoidably provides visitor services outside the paid shift. To continue to fail to do these things is certainly unprofessional, and probably illegal.

Projects for backcountry rangers have increased in recent years. It would help if the district could look carefully at the entire list and give up some stuff. It would simplify my bookkeeping if I could give up counting people (permits show the use), and miles, mules, and fire-sites (which strike me as just numbers gathering).

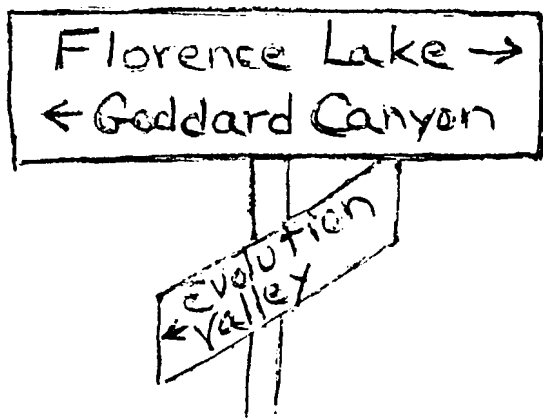
It should be approved for backcountry rangers to be in town periodically on paid time for fresh food since the alleged resupply system is unreliable. And it is very expensive to fly a helicopter to a backcountry ranger station with a 25-pound box of food.

We need get into the mountains earlier than the last few days of June. Our season should start about June 1. By mid-June rangers should be settled into their stations and getting around checking on conditions. Hikers are certainly out there.

I would be interested in seeing the comments of those who read this. I have never known what anyone thinks about these annual reports.

New Sign Requests:

- 1) One sign, "Fires Prohibited Above 10,000 Feet in Kings Canyon National Park."
To be placed at the bridge at the junction of Goddard Canyon trail and John Muir Trail. Deliver to Kings trail crew to be packed to the site.
- 2) For same junction of Goddard Canyon trail and John Muir Trail two signs on one post:



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When looking at the Florence Lake (right arrow) sign on its post, the Evolution Valley (left arrow) sign should be on the right side of the post with the arrow pointing toward the reader.

Deliver this set of signs also to Kings trail crew to be packed to the site.

END

Report composed to R. Strauss' Death and Transfiguration, October, 1989.