

DARIO MALENGO, 3-1-5

ROCK CREEK, 1991

6/10/91-9/30/91

COVER SHEET

Miles Hiked: 1003

Visitors Contacted : 1588

Stock Nights: 665

Stock Users: 122

Medical Evacuations: 6

4 self initiated

1 Calder Reid (Forest Service ranger)

1 Cottonwood Pack Station(horse)

Verbal Warnings:17

Citations: 0

Firerings Worked: 160

Rehabilitated:95

Removed: 65

Sacks Trash: 15

Eric Here is a copy of the report
I sent Alden Nash, maybe Randy
will be interested...?

Hope to meet you soon Dario
- My Sierra District Equipment should
be blowing out to Ash Mt. on Monday.

Larry Bancroft

May 91

Case by Case Restrictions

SEASON END REPORT, ROCK CREEK, 1991

working for Sierra District and being the Rock Creek ranger was a delightful experience. The station is located in a nice and quiet place, and the cabin and all facilities are all in good condition. The creek sings nearby and a spring from the meadow provides good drinking water.

Besides the Rock Creek patrol I shared with Julie McDonald and Lo Lyness the Crabtree and Mt. Whitney patrol. Of course, Crabtree was very busy and after Julie left Crabtree I divided my time between Crabtree and Rock Creek.

The campers through the Rock Creek area camped mainly at Upper Rock Creek, Mitre Basin and Lower Rock Creek. For the most part campers camped near the bear boxes. This actually helps keep the area cleaner by concentrating use, with other areas receiving little or no use.

The stock use at Rock Creek is mostly by commercial packers, with a few private groups also using the area. The problem with stock here comes mainly from Cottonwoods' repeated use of the same camp and same stringer meadows at Lower Rock Creek Lake. Cottonwoods' trips are usually from three to four days long. With the two day grazing limit it means that I have to check on them for three consecutive days to find them in violation. This is a difficult thing when covering a large patrol area. My guess is that they do violate this often. See case incident #101459-

The solution to this grazing problem is to make Upper Rock Ck. a one night limit, or to make the wet stringer meadows off limits to stock. The people working there seem to be willing to work things out, but Dennis Winchester seems to be the stubborn one. He will get away with whatever he can as long as we let him. Changing these regulations will force him to choose new areas better suited to grazing, ie Lower Rock Creek.

Also, use of the Mitre Basin should not be allowed for stock. The

trail(hikers trail,not maintained) is dangerous for stock and riders. People have been injured there(medi-vac 1984) . A older couple from Independence who rode up there this season says that it is not safe. See case incident# 101459-

New signs have been installed at six locations. An error in the Army Pass sign must be corrected and a "NO FIRES ABOVE 10,800 FEET" must also be made. It would help if we could standardise the fire regulations.

All campfire sites have been changed to the sunken down with an open front.type firering. This type is more durable, eaiser to dig out and looks nicer. All firerings in the Rock Creek , Whitney and Wallace drainage are of this type.

I constructed a new outhouse on Mount Whitney. An open top with a windscreen on three sides and the front open. I also hung a new door on the hut. Cleaned and organized the ranger side of the hut and secured the rescue cache (contains overnight gear,food, stove and first aid equipment with oxygen). Continuing maintenance is necessary for the security of these supplies.

The east room of the hut is open for whoever needs it. Although controversial,as long as the hut is there,it should be maintained. My opinion is that the hut is obsolete and a hazard to visitor safety and should be removed.

The Larry Stevens search ended with finding his body in the Rock Creek gorge . An impossible route according to the team that found him. I had little to do with the search, only being involved on the first day. I missed him by one day coming into the park. I was on Army Pass on the fourth and he came in on the fifth.

No bear incidences occurred this season at Rock Creek, Wallace Creek or Crabtree. The bears were present but never bothered campers. I observed a large brown colored bear foraging below the Rock Creek station this fall. The bear boxes work well. They are not obtrusive to the wilderness and help a lot to keep the area clean. The park must put in a box at Wheelbarrow camp on Bubbs Creek. Also we must get the Forest Service to take care the problem east of Kearsarge Pass. If we take care these two areas the Bear Problems in Kings backcountry will be solved.

We need to revise the information on the wilderness handout sheet. A lot of the information is obsolete (whole page of counter balance) and we need to include some new information on HAFE and a few other dangers in the Parks, ie Rock Creek Gorge, Mist Falls, Big Arroyo and a few others.

Military Jets continue to violate what this park is all about. The reporting system does not work. We need to expose them by media and put pressure on congress. A video with sound should be made from Mt. Whitney and used to show the public this problem. The park has never tried this way and I believe that this is the obvious next step.

All air traffic over this park should be stopped. It is not only disturbing to the peace, it is dangerous to hiker and climber safety as well. Between 1984 and 1987 I recorded on 10-343's two incidences involving visitor safety from Low Flying Jets (one involving falling ice on the mountaineers route and another where a young girl almost leaped over the side of Mt. Whitney from fright).

As I was hiking out of Crabtree for the last time this season, a camper was playing his flute; this music was quite perfect for this parting. Then, the drone of a prop. plane covered up this beautiful music for the next five minutes. The flute player paused and continued his music later, but the peace was broken and this should not be so. The park is where people come to find peace. This air traffic issue is the most important issue in this area,

and hopefully we can do something about it.

I look forward to continuing this work next season.

Dario Malengo

Rock Creek Ranger, USNPS