

KERN RANGER STATION
Year-End Report
1993

Summary

I was on duty at the Kern Ranger Station from June 17 to October 13. I was flown into the station this year. The high country was snow covered, but the Kern Canyon was snow free with very high water in the Kern river and tributaries. Due to heavy snowpack, wet meadows and the "wet year" Meadow opening dates, I did not have my stock brought in until the end of June.

During the season, I patrolled 888 miles of trail. (598 miles were patrolled on stock and 290 miles on foot. I contacted 1,023 visitors this season. (130 Day Hikers, 557 Backpackers, 102 Day Riders and 234 Stock Users with 530 head of stock, 12 llamas and 10 burros.)

Most of the local passes were snow covered until mid July. Most spring visitors came in from the south, Sequoia National Forest, or the east from Cottonwood Pass and Inyo National Forest. The creek crossings in the Kern area were difficult and/or hazardous until late July. Most of the group trips seemed to wait until August and low water before venturing into the backcountry. August was the busiest month with groups coming over Franklin Pass and down the High Sierra trail headed towards the Hot Spring or Mount Whitney. There was an increase in stock "day use", especially in the spring when our meadows were not open. The meadow opening dates and the opening postponements (Upper and Lower Funston meadows and Coyote meadows) were known to most stock users who came into the area. This information getting to the users is very important and I was glad to find that it was being given out. (3/4 of the permits I see are from Forest Service Offices) These dates seemed to be accepted by the stock users and many planned day rides into the area while camping nearby on Forest Service land. In General the overnight stock use and grazing within the Kern area was low. Some favorite stock areas showed little or no use. (21" Camp, Cow Camps, Middle Rattlesnake etc.)

A total of 55 Firerings were worked in the Kern area this year. There were 20 obliterated. Lo Lyness (Little Five) and I met at Forester Lake in late August to clean pits and rehabilitate sites. Adding rocks to fire pits and burning foil and leaving trash in the pits is still a problem. Some food and trash was left in the "bear boxes" occasionally, but Junction Meadow was the worst with about 20 lbs. of trash and discarded food. This may have been from a stock trip last fall. A lot of trash gets thrown down the pit toilet at the Hot Spring camps, though the pit toilet at Upper Funston meadow remains almost trash free. This may be because the toilet is farther away from the camp sites at Upper Funston.

I saw 12 rattlesnakes this summer and visitors reported seeing another 9. I also saw 3 kingsnakes and many racers.

There were 2 medivacs by NPS helicopter. 1 medevac by private helicopter (private land) and 1 medivac by commercial stock. Minor first aid for blisters to three visitors. One search to locate an overdue hiker in the upper rattlesnake area. He had come down to the Kern Canyon and I located him at the Kern River/Rattlesnake Junction. A dog was bitten by a rattlesnake on Forest Service land. (the owner was from a F.S. trailcrew) The dog survived and after eye surgery is now fine.

I used 10 non-rechargeable radio batteries during the season. (2 were duds) I also tried using a small solar charger with 2 rechargeable batteries. Although they were fine to "Listen" with, they were unpredictable and I couldn't count on them to have enough power to send, but it helped me save on non-rechargeable ones. I'd like to try it again next season and work out the bugs.

Fishing was poor or impossible during the spring with all the high water and fast current. This lasted through to August until the river dropped quite a bit, then it was "fair" to average, but not as good as last year. (Could this be due to the vast clouds of mosquitos which were at an all time high and lasted through to September?)

There were no low flying aircraft to welcome me into the Kern Canyon this spring, compared to last year. There were a lot later on in the summer, but many were impossible to see through the trees. The new flow chart is very helpful in identifying military aircraft. It would be good to have some information on helicopters for the station.

I see mostly Forest Service permits in my area. This year most of them had no destinations written down or even location numbers. They only had entry and exit points, which were generally Forest Service locations. This made it very difficult to know if these users should be within the Park or not. I mainly went by their knowledge of the area and the honor system. I spoke to Bill Diesman, F.S., and he said they were trying a new system to speed up the writing of permits. They are not using Forest Service locations, other than entry and exit points, but any entry into NPS should be written in. This is apparently not always being done by the various offices. He said to get the office code number, in the lower right hand corner, so he'll know which office to contact about the problem. Most of these people are not getting any NPS rules and information either, which could lead to problems.

I found a lost private mule and kept for 2 days until it was taken out by Golden Trout Pack Station.

The Forgotten repeater was on the blink a few times this season. It kept life interesting.....is it my location, my battery or radio.....the repeater....is dispatch not picking up backcountry 2 tonight???? Luckily it was soon figured out and repaired, so we could quit guessing and then I generally knew it must be my battery or location!

RESOURCE

The beaver dam at Upper Funston meadow once again diverted water out of the Kern river and through the main stock camp and through the meadow. I broke up part of the Dam in early July and was able to stop the flow into the meadow. The meadow was not able to open on the July 1 date. it opened on July 25. I observed one beaver swimming in the pond. Six more trees were fallen by beaver. The dam was not repaired by the beaver, but there is still large logs that will probably divert water next year.

The beaver dam metropolis, north of the upper drift fence of Lower Funston meadow is still active and very extensive. The trail in this area was boggy than last year. I released some water (15 locations) and the trail dried out. It dropped the level about 1 foot. This was in early July and by mid-August all the brakes had been repaired and the trail was boggy again. I've never observed a beaver in this area, but there are a lot of trout in the ponds. There are also a lot of newly girdled trees along the river.

NPS Kern Canyon Beaver survey was conducted in mid-September by Cindy Schultz and Brian Mckean.

Due to high water and a natural log jam on the Kern river. Lower Funston meadow was flooded this spring. Water, 3 inches to 3 feet was flowing across the entire meadow. It opened on July 25 instead of July 1.

Due to snowmelt and standing water, the meadows in Coyote Canyon were also opened later than scheduled. The lower meadow was opened on August 15 and the upper junction meadow on September 1.

The meadows in Rattlesnake canyon opened on schedule, but had low to moderate use. Mostly due to Franklin Pass being impassable to stock, due to snow, until the end of July. All the meadows looked good this year with the extra water and lower use. The Large pasture at the Kern station never needed irrigation water this season. I kept water to the small pasture all summer.

Meadow monitoring: (September 7 through September 20) I conducted residual biomass monitoring on 8 meadows in the Kern Canyon and Eric Morey monitored the 3 meadows in Rattlesnake Canyon.

A bat study was conducted in mid-August by Jeannine Koshear.

Fish & Game did a fish study in Early August.

Rockslide study by University of Arizona in early July.

Wildwater samples (Soda spring, Hot spring and Cold spring)

One bear was reported by a visitor in August. It caused no problem and left the area quickly. No bear problems were reported. I saw bear tracks on the trail near Rattlesnake Junction in October. They headed down canyon and were on the trail for 1 mile, but I never got to see the bear.

A bald eagle was sighted several times flying up and down canyon. As far north as Big Arroyo Canyon and south to the Kern Lakes in F.S.

KERN TRAIL CREW: Projects and Assists

The trail crew were flown in this year and never based out of the station. The crew did a lot of much needed work in Rattlesnake Canyon, including rock and log - waterbars, checks, steps and fill. A big improvement. The heavy rain storm on August 28th damaged some of the work in the lower "Jumps" section of trail and more water diversion work is needed. The upper switchbacks and jumps were under snow, so they still need attention. There is some blasting that could be done to the slick rock section to roughen it up and make it safer.

There is a ten foot section of trail near cow camp which is very boggy. It needs attention. A pit toilet was put in at Forester Lake. The crew rerouted the trail near the Forester Lake junction. The trail now stays on the north side of the creek, instead of crossing over and back. This now keeps it out of the meadow and creek. Great work! The trail to Forester lake and Little Claire Lake needs to be "wheeled" and new milages determined for a new sign since the junction has moved.

Covote trail was opened by Jim Harvey and me. Downed trees and pruning. It will need the sluff area dug out and widened next year. It will also need the regular waterbar maintenance and rocking.

The Kern Canyon trail was in pretty good shape. It had a lot of water running over and down it this spring. I cut out 4 trees after the crew moved north and did some pruning. The boggy area near the beaver metropolis by Laurel Creek needs an answer and solution. The bridge approaches (Kern Suspension Bridge, Big Arroyo Bridge and Kern Hot Spring Bridge) could all use some fill work. (VIP Projects?) A new pit may need to be dug at the Hot Spring Camps. I replaced the toilet seat this year. A tree fell on one of the hitchrails at Lower Funston meadow. It needs to be repaired and the other rail could use new uprights. (VIP project or?) We should have a hitch rail at the secondary camp at Lower Funston meadow.

Jim Harvey helped me at the Kern Station before he was able to bring the trail crew stock into the backcountry on Aug. 1. He helped with firewood, museum cataloging, ditchlines and covered at the station when I was out for training. I helped move his stock to Cold Spring camp. Then at the end of August I helped take stock out to Mineral King.

LOCAL PROJECTS - by Kern Ranger

R.S. Drift Fence Repair & pasture Fences
Erected 1 new sign at Hot Spring
Took down Willow Meadow Cut off sign (I think this should be replaced)
Removed 4 rolls of telephone wire
Removed nails from trees
Put a back on the R.S. woodbox (to discourage nesting of woodrats)
New screens on both doors
Rebuilt outdoor sink supports
Repaired 2 broken water lines
Cleared nine needles from R.S. roof & reset loose nails
Reset loose stove pipe anchors
Repaired public pasture gate and rails
Updated bulletin boards
Cleared and readied camp for the Sorarsis Trip
Replaced toilet seat at the Hot Spring
Worked the "Rat's Nest" out of Mitch's tail! (Major accomplishment)
Museum cataloging of historic items at the Kern Station

PROJECTS FOR 1994

New Hitchrails at Lower Funston
Continue repairs to drift fences
Major repair to boundary/drift fence. Golden Trout Creek
Wheel mileage for new Forester/Little Claire sign

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

6-17 Found an Emergency message that had been left at the Kern R.S. on 6-10-93. Relayed to Sierra District.

7-16 Private Medevac. from Brown's Private Land. Relayed message for Tony Brown to move up the date of private helicopter flight due to sick child. Through Fox.

8-1 Dog bitten by a rattlesnake on F.S. land, belonging to F.S. employee. Relayed information through Sierra District. first aid and information delivered about medicine delivery.

8-2 to 8-3 Medevac. Upper Funston Meadow. Lucy Whisler. 57. sore and swollen knees with a history of knee and back surgeries was flown out to the east side.

8-5 Medevac. Cold Spring Camp. a boyscout fell off a log at a creek crossing and injured his wrist and was flown out to Visalia.

9-29 Potential Medevac. Snake Camp. a 16 year old male fell on rocks while fishing. He hit his head. left hip and lower left back. Monitored overnight and he was able to ride out with his group the next day. (Packed by Golden Trout Pack Station)

8-17 Search, Overdue backpacker. Delton Hughes. Was expected to be in Upper Rattlesnake. was found on the Kern River at Rattlesnake junction. Sore knee. Recontacted on 8-18. first

aid for irritated eye. radio'd Sierra District to notify family of new exit date.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

6-21 Verbal Warning. Man wanted to bring his dog into the backcountry. He was discouraged and camped on F.S.

6-28 Verbal Warning. stock group wanted to go to closed meadow to graze. explained the dates and sent them to F.S.

9-19 Verbal Warning. stock group at Lower Funston. camp improvements. explained rules and they dismantled their work.

9-20 Verbal Warning. Llamas entering Hot Spring Meadow. explained rules and directed to a campsite.

8-16 Stock group with a Dog. came to R.S. for grazing area information. sent to F.S.

9-15 Verbal Warning. Golden Trout Pack Station. tying stock to trees. explained rules and they set up a hitch line.

10-4 Verbal Warning. 2 backpackers were escorted through the closed Willow Meadow Trail by the Fire Monitors. I met them near the Hot Spring. They did not know their route went through a closed area and it was written up as their route. Warned but they did not get the info when they got their NPS permit.

10-9 Verbal Warning. two backpackers with a dog were planning on hiking up Covote Trail. explained rules and they picked a different route on F.S.

VISITOR ASSISTS

6-22 Loaned tools to a fisherman to repair fishing pole.

6-28 Gave food to hungry backpacker.

7-10 Minor first aid for blisters

6-27 Arranged phone call for stock party with a lame horse to have Golden Trout Pack Station to bring in an extra horse.

7-16 Confused French Backpacker wanted to get a permit from me at the station. helped plan a day hike route through the park so he could get to Mineral King for a permit and continue his hike north.

7-29 Loaned shoeing tools to private stock group.

8-16 Directed private stock party with a dog to a F.S. campsite.

8-20 Directed stock party to grazing areas. New to the area

8-24 Confused backpacker had missed the Forester Lake junction and was 4 miles down Rattlesnake Canyon. I turned him around. put his backpack on my mule and radio'd Ranger Lyness to contact his party to explain his delay. Dropped off his pack. happy reunion.

9-4 .Advised Day Riders out of Mineral King (Private) not to try Shotgun Pass. They headed back from Franklin Pass.

9-14 Delivered message to Henry Brown. from private land about his helicopter flight. relayed answer back to Fox.

9-17 Delivered message to Henry Brown. flight delay.

9-21 Radio'd Sierra District with information of a potential medical problem of a backpackers friend. They had split up at Moraine Lake.

9-25 Took a report of a lost, private. mule. Had left the private land. I found the mule the same day and radio'd Sierra District to leave a message at Golden Trout Pack Station and the owners home. Brought gear to R.S. Took care of mule until 9-27 when Golden Trout Pack Station led it out.

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER AGENCIES

6-17 to 10-13 Maintained Angler Survey box at the Kern R.S. Gave out forms during the summer. Fish & Game Dept.

6-30 to 7-5 Univ. of AZ, Rockslide Study. Due to continued closure of Lower Funston Mdw., they based out of the Kern R.S. Helped them with area info. maps, photos etc.

8-10 to 8-11 Lost Fish Samples in Cooler at Forester Lake. Fish and Game. Dispatch asked me to deliver a message to the other Fish and Game crew being packed by Mineral King Pack Station. Clint Woods-packer. Left Upper Funston and delivered message to the packer at upper Rattlesnake camp. Then delivered message to Fish and Game the next morning at their camp 2 miles up canyon.

8-22 Erected F.S. "Blasting Warning" sign for the trail crew working on the Golden Trout switchbacks. Inyo F.S..

8-30 Inyo F.S. employee. Bob Olin and son stayed at the R.S. overnight and used the Admin. Pasture.

9-7 Loaned the "dirt boxes" to the F.S. (For Mules.) Trail work.

9-12 to 9-16 F.S. sponsored Sorarsis group based at Lewis Camp, use of Admin. pasture.

9-18 Seismic Crew. picked up their food resupply from the private land. They picked it up from the R.S.

ASSISTANCE TO CONCESSIONERS AND COMMERCIAL PACKERS

6-24 Golden Trout Pack Station. helped packers Sonny Ward and Kenny James get their pack strings across the bridge and to locate the camp on private land.

7-1 Golden Trout Pack Station. Loaned shoeing tools

7-10 Golden Trout Pack Station. Loaned shoeing tools and held horse for shoeing.

7-11 Same as above and loaned a shoe. it was replaced later

7-12 Golden Trout Pack Station. Returned 17 head of stock to F.S. camp which were "lost" and standing in the Station Yard.

9-12 Golden Trout Pack Station. loaned halter. It was returned.

9-16 Golden Trout Pack Station. stored Barley at R.S. for Sorarsis trip. helped pack stock.

9-30 Golden Trout Pack Station. Helped reload mule.

10-5 Mineral King Pack Station. Don Bedell and Packer Dave arrived after dark off Coyote trail. They stayed at the R.S. and allowed 1 night in pasture.

FIRES

8-12 Helicopter 552 spotted a smoke south of the park boundary near Leggett Creek. human caused. F.S. brought in slurry bombers and did helicopter drops. Smoke and Ash were falling around the Kern R.S. I watered down the roofs. (45 acres) I advised 2 backpackers and 2 stock users not to try to go through it that afternoon. They waited until the next morning to head south.

8-30 Fire, 1 mile south of the park boundary. NPS responded. I wrapped up 2 x-cut saws for helitack to pick up.

8-27 or 28 Willow Meadow fire, Lightening caused PNF. Area later closed to travel on 9-11-93. opened to travel on 10-13-93. 200 plus acres and 38 trees down across the trail at last count.

It was another great year in the Kern Canyon. Thanks for all the help and Support from Sierra District.

Cindy J. Wood

Kern Ranger Station
Tool Shed Inventory '93

6 Gallons of Blazo
1 Gallon of Paint Thinner
3/4 Gallons of White Paint
1/2 Gallons of Grey Paint
10 Gunny Sacks

1 Homelite Super XL Chainsaw
1 Homelite XL Chainsaw
2 Quarts of Bar and Chain Oil
NO Bar Tip Grease
~~6~~ (8 oz.) 2 Cycle Oil (32:1)
2 Gallons of Chainsaw Mix

2 Tanks of Propane (Did any go in on the Demob Flight?)
Wide Variety of Hand Tools, X-cut saw etc.

Wish List items for the Spring of 1994:

2 New Chains with correct size Files (Leroy has measurements)(70 & 81 links)(7/32")
1 Gallon Regular Gas
2 or 3 Tanks of Propane
6 (3/4 ") Dayton's or Unions for water line repair
1 Needle Nose Pliers
Bar Tip Grease (Dispenser is at Station)
5 Gallons of Blazo
1 Gallon of Brown Semi Gloss Paint
1 Gallon of Russet Stain
1 Trowel
1 new "Mountain Maytag"
1 Broom
2 Cleanser
1 White Out
1 Duct Tape
Tags and stick on Tags (approx. 2" x 6")
Maps: 15 min quads of Kern Peak(2). Mineral King(2). Mt. Whitney(1)
Generators (2) for small Peak 1 Lantern, #22A7991 for Model # 222B

Kern Ranger Station
Stock Supplies '93

4 Bags - Barley
1 Bag Alfalfa Pellets
2 Camp Salt
2 Clear Eyes
4 Wound-Kote (Blue Spray Lotion)
3 Gall Salve
1 Large Box of #5 City Head Nails
Plenty of Fly Wipe
2 OOTH Shoes
13 OOPL shoes
16 OPL Shoes
3 1 PL Shoes
6 2PL Shoes
2 new Rasps
1 Shoeing Kit and Chaps
3 Used Halters
2 Used Cinches
1 Extra Saddle(riding)
1/2 Pint Soap
1 Set Bridge Boxes(Great Condition)
Rivets and Burrs, Repair Leather etc.

Wish List Items for Spring of 1994:

1 50 Lb. Salt Block - Mineral
10 OPL Shoes
2 Camp Salt - White

Kern Ranger Station - End of Season 1993
Food List

There is Plenty of:

Garlic Powder
Salt
Pepper
Worcestershire Sauce
Tobasco
Onion Salt
Lawry's Seasoning Salt
Lemon Pepper
Vanilla (8 oz.)
Baking Powder (20 oz)
Baking Soda (1)
Chili Powder
Instant Ranch (5)
Kool-Aide Packets
Honey
Trail Mix (3 lbs.)
Tang (1)
Sugar (4 lb)
Corn Meal (3 lbs.)
Instant Tea (1)
Coffee (new, 2 lb.)
Coffee Filters (lg. & Sm.)
Cooking Oil (1/2 Gal.)
Syrup (1/2 Gal.)
Quaker Oats (2)
Flour (3 lbs.)
Instant Pudding (9)
Instant Boxed Breakfast cereal
Instant Potatoes
Bisquick (4 lb.)
Instant Milk(Way Too Much)
Mac & Cheese (10)
Brown Rice (1 box)
Dry Beans, peas, lintles etc.
Hot Choc. Mix
FOIL (lots)
Top Ramin (15 to 20)
Gravey Packets (23)
Lipton "Trailside" Noodle Dinners (30)
Peanut Butter & Jelly

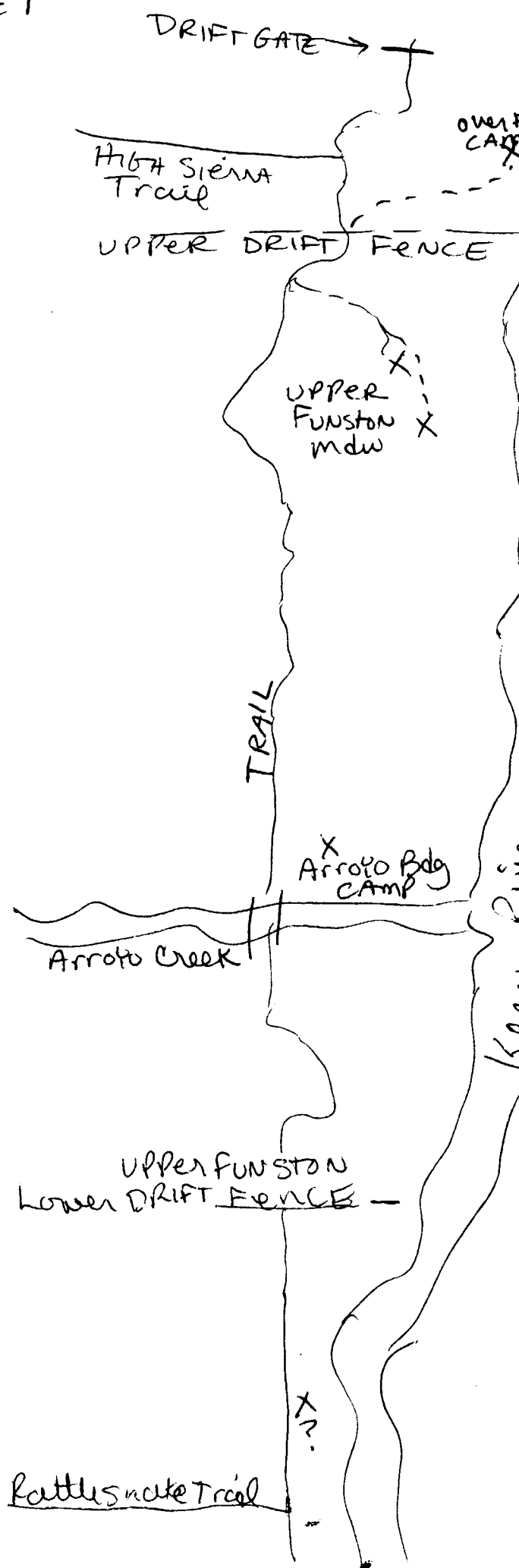
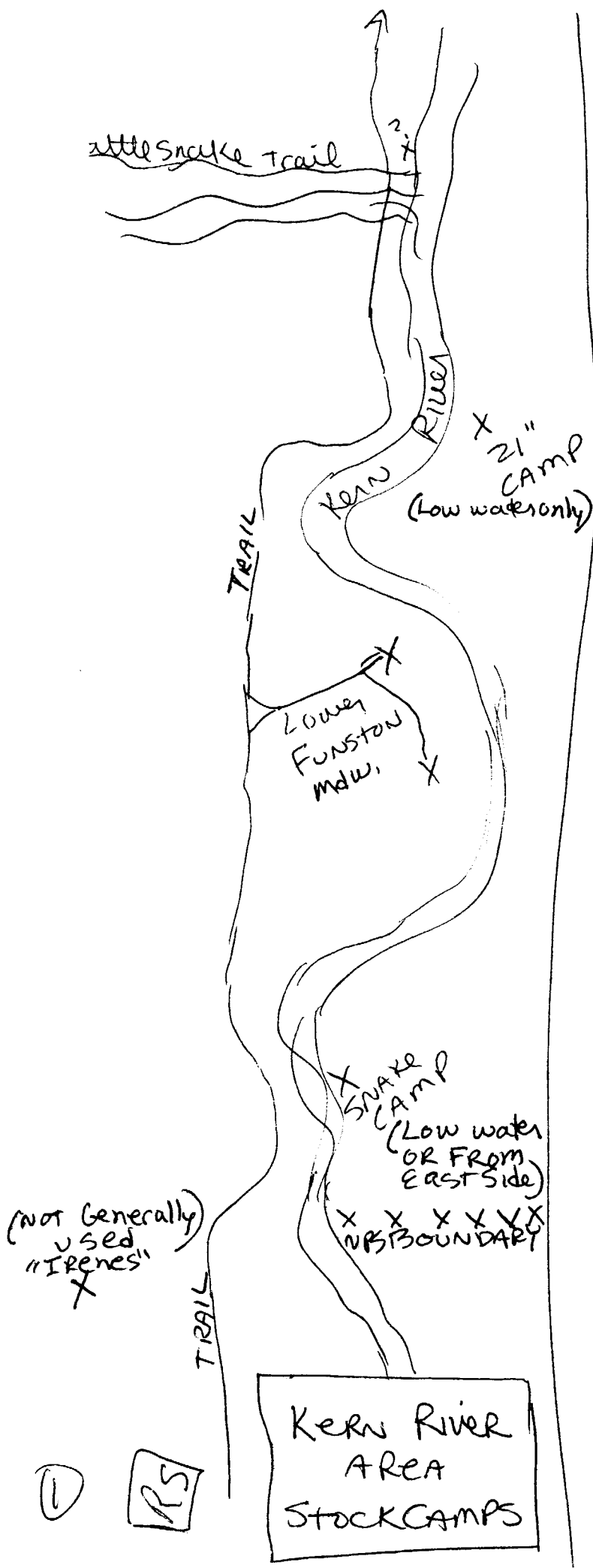
Other Items:

8 Toilet Paper
5 NPS Paper Towels
2 rolls Paper Towels
3 1/2 Boxes of Kitchen Matches
4 Sm. Boxes of Camp Matches
1 1/2 Large bottles of Dish Soap
Plenty of Garbage Bags
1/3 Gallon of Liquid Laundry Soap
Sm. & Bus. size Regular Envelopes
2 Shampoo & 1 Conditioner
3 Bars Dial Soap, 2 Lava & Misc.
1 Quart Peppermint Snapps
50 Med. Ziplocks
Plenty of Sandwchich Ziplocks
1/2 Box Large Ziplocks
2 Bottles Salad Dressing
11 (sm. - 1cup ea.) Real Fresh Milk
1 Reg Real Fresh Milk - Lo Fat
1 Box Shredded Wheat Cereal
1 Box Saltines (Lg.)
1 Stove Top Stuffing
2 Hot Salsa
1 Med. Salsa
1 Chili Sauce
1 BBQ Sauce
10 Hot Chili
5 Pork & Beans
2 Spagetti with Meatballs
6 Refried Beans
1 Mushrooms
4 Evaporated Milk
3 Whole Green Chilis
2 Lg. Green chili Enchilada Sauce
3 Fruit Coctail
5 Apple Sauce
1 Pears
2 Pineapple
1 Peaches
4 Corn
5 Green Beans

Food List Continued:

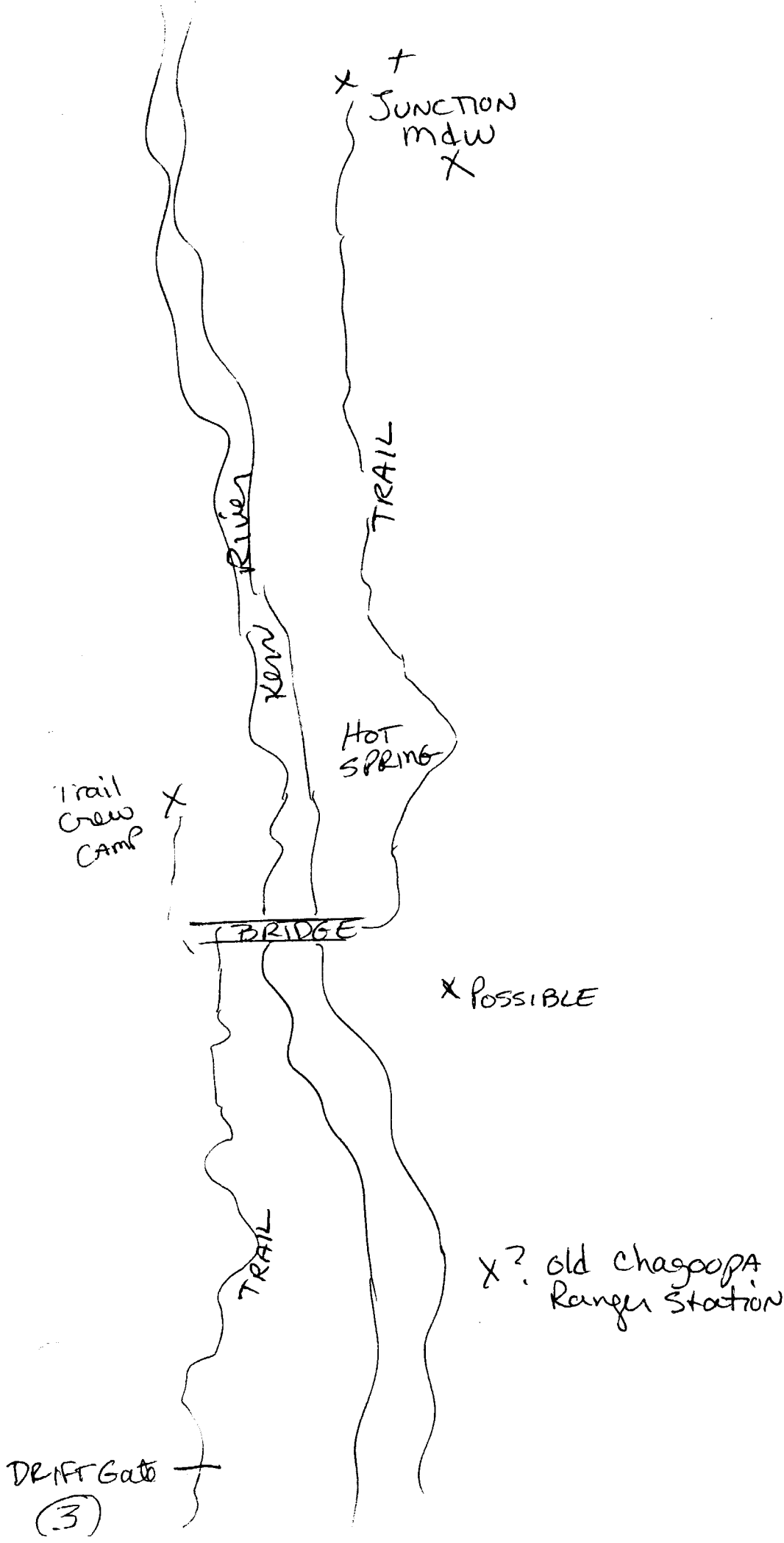
3 Tomato Paste
1 Whole Tomatoes
4 Tomato Sauce
9 Tomato Soup
5 Mushroom Soup
4 Vegetable Beef Soup
4 Large Spagetti Sauce
7 Spam
1 Shrimp
1 Clams
2 Roast Beef
4 Salisbury Steak
17 Tuna
2 Sliced Beef
1 Large Can Pumpkin

Insect Repellent
Sun Screen
Solarcane
2 Mink Oil
Hand Lotion
Corn Starch
Baby Powder & Ointment
Which Hazel & Cotton Balls
Aspirin
Pepto Bismol
Thera Flu Packets(12)
18 Ex-Lax & 24 Anti Diarrhea
Ebsom Salts
Cinnamon Candies
Tea Bags
100 Tums



Kern River
AREA
Stock Camps

PAGE 2



X +
JUNCTION
mdw
X

River
KERN
TRAIL

HOT
SPRING

Trail
Crew
CAMP
X

BRIDGE

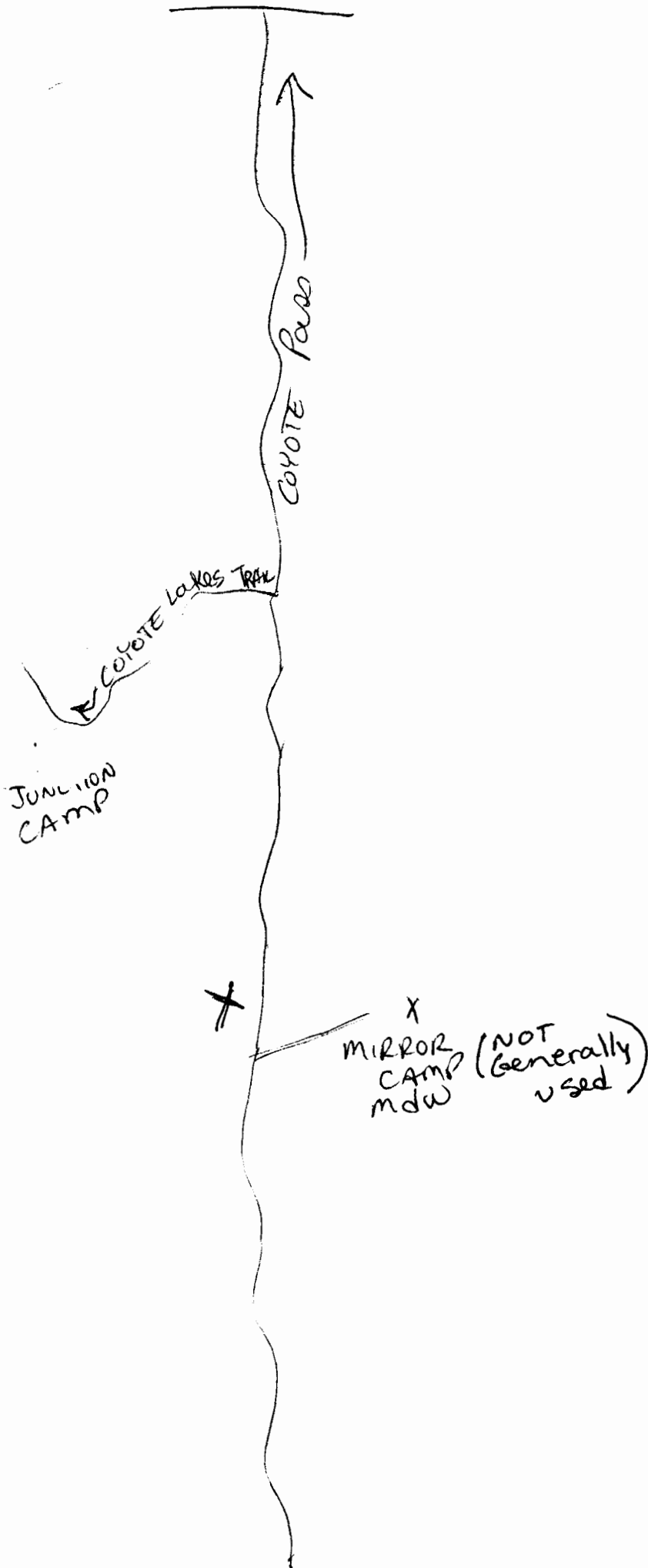
X POSSIBLE

TRAIL

X? old Chagopa
Ranger Station

DRIFT Gate
(3)

COYOTE TRAIL Stock Camps



Hidden
mud X

(Rough Access)
not Generally
used By Public
Bedell used
Some

Lower Rattlesnake - UPPER DRIFT FENCE #2

(NOT Generally
used -
old CAMP X

TRAIL

COW CAMPS

Lower Rattlesnake - Lower DRIFT FENCE #1

(?) X
old CAMP

Rattlesnake Trail

RATTLE SNAKE
CREEK
STOCK
CAMPS

TRAIL →

Fence #

Creek

Rattlesnake

Fence #

①

②

Rattle Snake Creek Stock Camps

MK
FRANKLIN PASS

BIG ARROYO

SHOTGUN TRAIL
(?) X

SODA CR →
LOST CYN →

Lake
CLAY

X X

X
Forester
lake X
X

BIG ARROYO
Creek

Hidden
mdw
+

(3)

Willow mdw
cut off

