

## McClure Ranger Station: End of Season Report 1994

George Durkee

*Go tell the Spartans, you who read:*

*We took their orders, and are dead.*

Inscription to the Spartan dead at

Thermopylae, c. 480 BC

### Stats:

Visitors Contacted	1100
Miles Hiked	680
Citations	1 (dog)
Warnings	40 (camping on veg.; unclean camp etc.)
Medivacs	5
Rescues	1 (gnarly, Mt. Darwin)
Searches	2 (Monarch Divide, Mt. Goethe)
Grazing nights observed	100 (McClure to Darwin Cr.)

### OVERVIEW

A drought year. Came in June 10 via Florence Lake and found the cabin in good shape--no sign of any major mouse infestation over the winter with some evidence that a martin was checking the inside of the cabin occasionally... . Nonetheless, I used a backpack pump to spray the entire downstairs with a solution of Clorox and water. In spite of reassurances by the park safety officer regarding Hanta virus, the McClure cabin is a hazard due to a 50 year accumulation of mouse feces. Most of it is extremely difficult to get to because of wire mesh put up to prevent mice from getting into the cabin. The attic should now only be cleaned by someone in full Hazmat gear. I consider it unsafe and will not do it. Jack Vance told me he hopes to restore the cabin in '95. This project should be encouraged.

Although the number of small parties was probably about the same as in past years, the number of scout groups was down considerably. This significantly reduced the hassle index. There were also few law enforcement contacts this year.

In mid-September I did boundary patrol in the Kettle Dome area during hunting season. Although shots were heard for several days, no hunters were contacted near the boundary nor were signs of poaching or intrusion seen. A series of heavy storms with snow after 9/21 effectively closed the area to hunting activity. These same storms also kept most people from any more hiking. After 10/3 there were no more hikers in the McClure area because of 2 ft. of snow on the ground.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This year I've pulled about 10 previous year end reports for the McClure area and did a literature review. Hard as it is to believe, each year shows some of the **SAME** recommendations for the

area. It should be noted that 2 of us (Morgenson and myself) have each spent over a cumulative year (Randy 2 years!) in that area. There is one recommendation that stands out year after year (since Graban in 1977):

1) CLOSE MCCLURE MEADOW TO STOCK USE! (Graban, Gustafson, Durkee, Brennan, Scattaregia, Morgenson). "McClure Meadow is one of the most unique examples of an alpine meadow in the Sierra. Even after twenty years of fairly strict grazing regulations, it still shows much evidence of poor recovery... in the summer heat--even a week after a stock party leaves--the entire meadow smells like a corral. [this] is a major source of complaints by hikers." Durkee, 1981

The National Park Service seems embarrassed to make management recommendations based on esthetic grounds. Park visitors have an absolute right to view meadows in all stages of maturation: from the first green shoots to the "knee-high grasses, ripe and open panicles drifting on the moving air, luminous-bronze in the backlight." (Morgenson, 1989). They do not get this moving experience if the meadow has been browsed to putting green length and smells like a corral.

At the same time, it would probably be acceptable to increase the allowable grazing above Colby Meadow (in consultation with the meadow specialist) to 2-3 days.

2) Get rid of the old Soil and Moisture check dams (circa 1960) from McClure & Colby Meadows (Durkee & Morgenson).

3) Limit cross country travel to group size maximum of 6-8 (Durkee, Scattaregia, Morgenson). The Ionian Basin has become a major destination by Sierra Club groups (4 trips), Scouts and private hiking clubs. There are not more than 3 camping spots in the entire basin and none can sleep more than 4 people without damage to vegetation.

**McClure Ranger Station, 10/94**

Sign Request for Piute Creek Entrance on John Muir Trail  
(Consolidates 3 signs, replaces broken wooden entrance sign.)

Entering Kings Canyon National Park  
Wilderness Permit Required  
No Pets or Firearms  
Hunters Must Camp Outside Park

Also a sign for Evolution Lake reroute:

Restoration Area  
Please Stay on Trail

**McClure R.S. Needs for 1995:**

No White Gas is needed (20+ gal. on hand)

Handle for 8 lb. sledge hammer

Colander

Mop & Handle

1 Gal. Kerosene

New 2 Mantle Coleman Lantern

2 good, sharp cutting knives

2 generators for Coleman Model 426E 3 burner stove

2 pillows

2 mattress covers

Left at Station:

2 sleeping bags (1 fiberfill, 1 very light)

HEPA filter face mask

First Aid Kit

Oxygen (one tank)

New backpacking Foam pad