

YEAR END REPORT

KERN RANGER STATION

1997

Cindy J. Wood

6-12-97 to 10-11-97

I was on duty at the Kern Ranger Station from June 27, 1997 to October 15, 1997. I rode in from Lewis Camp Trailhead on June 26th and camped at Willow Meadow, Forest Service, and arrived at the Kern Ranger Station on June 27th. The Kern Trail Crew had already been at the station for two weeks and had moved on the the Hot Spring Bridge Camp, so most of the opening chores were completed.

A. General Observations - Statistics

During the season I patrolled 633 miles of trail. I patrolled 396 miles on stock and 237 miles on foot. I contacted 828 visitors this season. (396 Backpackers, 71 Dayhikers, 14 Hunters, 23 NPS, FS & Earthquake Researchers, 4 Rafter & 7 Kayakers, 68 Dayriders with 119 Head of Stock and 252 Stock users with 472 Head of Stock, 6 Burros & 0 Llamas.)

No arrests or citations this season. Verbal Warnings and education for food storage, bears in the area, foil and trash in firepits, proper stock camping and fire safety.

There was one Medivac by helicopter on June 29, 1997. A CEDU School Student was flown out of upper Coyote Canyon to Ash Mountain and transported by Ambulance to Kaweah Delta Hospital. He was a diabetic and was vomiting, dehydrated and possibly ill due to high Altitude Sickness. I later heard that he had food poisoning.

The regular First Aid assists during the season included: Blisters, splinters, sunburns, minor burns, scrapes and cuts.

No SAR's

BOLO- Juvenile, Hot Spring area, August 13, 1997. I gathered information from visitors and learned that he was in the Tyndall area, contacted 316 and HQ. On August 14, 1997, HQ told us he had hiked out Shepards Pass and was back with his family.

One "Near Search" for a missing inexperienced Backpacker. He was reported lost by his two friends. He showed up at the station before the Lost Person form was completed. (2 hours) He had gotten off trail at Little Whitney Meadow, F.S., and lost his way until he found some people to ask about the trail location.

A. General Observations - Statistics Cont.

One "Near Medivac" for a woman who was pushed down and stepped on by a packmule in the F.S. She wanted to be checked, but refused any further medical assistance. She had stock and said she would ride out if she didn't feel better. I later learned that she recieved a cracked rib.

Four Medical assists to private stock: One with a cut leg from falling down in the rocks along the trail, One with a severe rope burn, One with a wire cut on leg and the disposal of one mule that died from strangulation on the private land.

Weather Summary: The Kern River and local creeks were high again this spring. The creeks were passable in late June to most travellers. The Kern River was crossable to stock by late July. Farewell Gap held snow until August, but it was passable to stock in late July. Franklin Pass was snowcovered through August. It was shoveled out by Mineral King Pack Station and was passable to stock in mid-August. Coyote Pass was clear of snow at the end of June. The Kern River rose several times during the summer due to heavy rains in the backcountry. It was higher in the fall than I had ever seen it.

B. Use Patterns

Backpacker use was steady this summer with September being the highest use month. Early hikers came in from the South, mainly out of Lewis Camp Trailhead and Jerky Meadow in the R.S. From the East over Cottonwood Pass and Trail Pass. In August the main use was from Mineral King.

Stock Use was Steady all summer, but many groups had to shorten their trip or turn back due to the trail closure of the "Bog" area 1/2 mile north of Upper Funston Meadow in the Kern Canyon. The "Bog" was not passable to stock until August 1, 1997. It was a hazard and inconvenience to Backpackers also. During September and October more stock groups came through the Kern Canyon to reach the high country.

Mineral King Pack Station was under new management this season and had only a few trips to Forester lake and little impact on the backcountry.

Private stock trips were back up to average use. Commercial trips from Golden Trout Pack Station were average use. They also had two more groups of rafters and kayakers who were spotted to Junction Meadow to do the Kern River. All made it through the Park without problems, one man was later flown out of the Forest Service Land with a cracked rib from Painter's Camp.

B. Use Patterns Cont.

Aircraft: Low Flying Military aircraft flights did occur in the area again this summer. It was a "Low" year with several very low, loud inner canyon flights. Planes included: F-16's, F-18's, F-15's and 2 engine planes. There was also one inner canyon night flight that was very loud.

The Park Helicopter was used more at the Kern R.S., due to the reroofing project at the station to supply the Historic Preservation Crew.

Rafts and Kayaks: Two private groups came into the Kern Canyon to Raft or Kayak the Kern River from Junction Meadow and south to the Forks of the Kern.(F.S.) Both trips were in early July when the river was running high. Most gear was packed in by Golden Trout Pack Station to Junction Meadow. Two people did hike in from Shepards Pass with their kayaks. All involved were very experienced and had no difficulties while in the Park. One rafter was later flown out at Painters Camp, F.S., by the Tulare Co. Sheriff's Department Helicopter. He had cracked ribs.

Kayaker Report: He reports two rough spots, one bad rapid with a log at the bottom, class 3-4, approx. 5 miles north of the Hot Spring. The other bad rapid, class 3-4, is 3 miles north of the Hot Spring.

Rafters Report: Many portages due to downed trees and logs. This group used a kayaker as their spotter for safety.

Hunting Activity in the Forest Service South of Farewell Gap during bow season was observed. I spoke to six hunters and observed 5 camps along the trail. Fall activity near the Kern R.S. during rifle season was low. Three camps were observed along the F.S. trail to the south during my ride out to Lewis Camp Trailhead. This was surprisingly low since we had had a snow a few days earlier with lower temperatures that was causing the deer to move to lower elevation. It would be best if the ranger could stay in the area until the end of the hunting season. Fewer bears were observed this year. No poaching signs were observed during the season, but there was a dramatic decrease in bear sightings compared to the last few years.

C. Natural Resources

Rattlesnakes: I observed 7 rattlesnakes this year. Most sightings were at or near the station. Visitors reported seeing three others along the trail. Very low sightings this season.

C. Natural Resources Cont.

Bears: I observed only one cub this season. The cub was two miles North of the Hot Spring. Very few prints were seen on the trail. One bear with a cub was reported 1/2 mile Northeast of the station near Snake Camp in June. Visitors reported two bear sightings North of the Kern Hot Spring. (Last year I sighted 15 bears. Is this a normal change of territory or other natural cause? Or is there a possible poaching problem? There were very few sightings in 1992 and 1993, but a steady increase from 1994 to 1996.)

Beaver: No observations this year. The dam at Upper Funston Meadow was not rebuilt, but there was some beaver sign on trees near the river. The beaver dam metropolis, north of the upper drift fence for Lower Funston Meadow showed no new activity or dam repairs. The area was mostly dry with grass and reeds filling in the old pond areas. Duck sightings were low in the area again.

Grey Squirrel sightings were common, but chipmunk and ground squirrel sightings were low again this summer.

Meadows; The only meadow area that did not open on schedule was the "Maze" area of the Kern Bridge Camp Meadow. The area and trail was flooded by the Kern River. Stock use was steady, but some areas were not used or lightly used, such as; Rattlesnake Canyon and Coyote Canyon. Snake Camp and 21" Camp were not used. Upper and Lower Funston Meadows received the most use this season.

Meadow Monitoring: Four exclosures were used in the area this season. The new exclosures went in at Middle Rattlesnake and the Lewis Camp Big Pasture. The exclosures at Upper and Lower Funston Meadows were put up. All areas were monitored.

Earthquake Seismic Study: Monitors were installed for the summer. One 1/2 Mile North of the station and one at Junction Meadow, both were taken out in October.

Fire: One lightning caused fire was reported by Helicopter 552. The fire was near Coyote Pass. It burned less than one acre and burned itself out within two days.

D. Cultural Resources

Archeological sites, historic sites and structures: The sites near the station were checked during the summer. All the historic items in the station museum collection were inventoried and accounted for. None of the missing items from '95 were found or returned.

D. Cultural Resources Cont.

Historic Preservation Crew: Thor Riksheim, Leroy Winters, Darwon Knight, Mike Fitch and VIP - Betsy Edwards spent a lot of time and patience on repairs to the Kern Ranger Station this summer. Work began on the project on July 24, 1997 and completed on October 13, 1997. Sugar Pine shakes, 40" long, were handmade for the project. The porch was lowered and the porch uprights brought to plumb. Some rafter ends were spliced and all ends were treated to prevent further rot. Roof rafters were pulled back into place and supports were strengthened and added. The wiring for the new florecent lights were run in conduit through the attic. Septic bugs were flown in and put in the sump to try and combat the slow leach problem. New linolium was installed in the shower room to prevent wood rot and damage to the foundations. The new roof looks great and is very solid. There are new green X's on the ceiling to show where the snow support posts should now be located in the fall. Thanks for a great job and the lessons in shake making. The Kern Station was a living history museum this summer and of great interest to many visitors.

E. Backcountry Facilities

The solar system was heavilly tested this season. It routinely ran 6 to 10 hours a day, charging radio batteries(2 chargers), 2 drill chargers, 1 phone charger and 2 lights. Things went well in July and August with the meter always showing a full charge. In September and October the meter usually showed a low battery and a blinking red light. It only rarely hit Medium charge. This may be due to the continuous use and the change in the charging hours available in the fall. More shadows hit the panels in the fall and the incoming volts is greatly reduced. The system shut itself off automaticly once. We quit using any power for the last few days so the system could recharge, it was at medium when the system was disconnected.

The new HT 1000 radio batteries take about two hours to recharge. I normally had the radio on during the day and on pager at night, I usually had 24 hours use of each battery before recharge was needed. When wearing the radio, I often realized that my body was blocking the radio so it would not receive.

The Forgotten Repeater was unreliable this season. It seems to be a power storage problem? It's worst in the morning, at night and on cloudy days. There is usually power to talk to other backcountry rangers, but it is impossible to reach Ash Mountain. On June 29th, when I tried to radio out for information concerning the ill diabetic juvinile in upper coyote canyon, I could not radio out. I tried from all the "Good" radio spots near the station and continued to try every 15 minutes or so as

E. Backcountry Facilities Cont.

I rode to their camp. After gaining 1,500 feet, I was able to get Dispatch. Dispatch turned me over to Ash Mountain Fire. They could not copy very well and my transmissions were lost after two words. Meanwhile I was receiving fine and felt I had very good "hits" off of the repeater. They luckily understood the problem and asked me for yes and no answers etc. I was not able to ask my medical questions, but I was able to get the location and basic information out on the ill juvenile and he was flown out. When the helicopter arrived, I was able to talk to them on the local channel without any problems.

The forgotten repeater now picks up more traffic than before: Cedar Grove & Grant Grove. Is this a further drain on the system?

The trail crew opened the water system at the Kern Station this spring. They did not rake the ditches or shovel out the cistern before turning the water in. This leads to many problems with dirty drinking water, it can silt in the hot water tank and the irrigation ditches flood over and cause erosion. It took a week to correct all the problems. One day was spent correcting the repairs to the big pasture fence. (Broken wires had been nailed solid to the posts, wires were crossed and staples left on the ground where they were a hazard to stock)

Drift Fences: Routinely the trail crew puts up the drift fences in the spring and the ranger drops them in the fall. This year they only put up the ones that they wanted to use to hold their own stock. This inconvenienced some visitors and caused A UO hours on my patrols. Some fences may have been put up haphazardly by visitors (or Trail Crew?) and caused more work hours to take down, repair and replace. If the crew is not going to do their customary work then they need to advise the area ranger.

New gate posts were put up in Rattlesnake Canyon, as needed. Some of the square holes are too small for the rails to slide through. They either need to be enlarged or slimmer rails found.

All drift fences, except the Golden Trout Boundary/Drift fence, need a few new posts and continued yearly work. They have not been properly repaired in the last few years, more trees have fallen and they need attention.

Pit Toilet: A tree fell on the pit toilet at Upper Funston Meadow. It broke off one side of the privacy wall and smashed part of the cone and seat. I cut the tree off, repaired the privacy wall and reset the seat. It should be checked next year to see if it is sturdy enough.

Signs: The Willow Meadow Cutoff Trail in Rattlesnake Canyon

E. Backcountry Facilities Cont. (signs)

needs a sign. Many people use and look for the trail. The only time it has a sign is when it is closed due to fire. Please Replace. The sign committee did not like the wording which was on the old wooden sign that used to be nailed to a tree at the junction. Please decide on proper wording and replace as soon as possible. (It was taken down in 1994)

The "By Pass" trail sign, at the Kern Suspension Bridge, as presently worded, gives the impression that Coyote Trail is in the Forest Service and not the Park. This gives some visitors the idea that it is ok for them to take dogs and weapons on the NPS Coyote Trail. It should be reworded and replaced. By Pass to "Sequoia National Forest" or "Golden Trout Wilderness".

The "To Protect this Fragile Meadow" sign at the Kern Hot Spring is a good sign and is in a good location at the south end of the meadow. There should also be a duplicate sign at the North end of the meadow.

F. Trails

The Trail Crew were the first NPS people into the canyon again this year. They had been at the Kern station for 2 weeks and had already moved to the Hot Spring when I arrived. I did not see them until they rode out in the fall.

The crew logged the trails, but did not do any general maintenance to waterbars, pruning etc. They did not dig out the sluff area on the Coyote Trail again this year and left a hazardous stump which was impassable to pack stock and dangerous for riding stock. I dug out and widened the trail, which needs to be done yearly and dug out the stump. (3 hours plus travel time)

The crew did a great job on the North Approach at the Big Arroyo Bridge. They rebuilt with rock and crushed granite and planned in a spillway for the overflow. They replaced some of the broken planks on the long boardwalk in the Kern Canyon and the boardwalk in Rattlesnake Canyon East of Cow Camp.

No work was done in the "Bog" area, 1/2 mile North of Upper Funston Meadow, to improve the muddy bypass or to divert or drain water from the area. A few stock parties made it through the area in June, but it was closed after the trail crew took their stock through it on their way to Rattlesnake Canyon. I checked the situation and built 2 small rock dams to divert water from entering the "Boggy Reroute" and cleaned out 2 of the waterbars on the "Old" trail and diverted all water off the trail. It had been running down approx 200 feet of trail.

F. Trails Cont.

I figured the area would need 3 days to a week to dry out and be passable to stock. Unfortunately the trail crew took all their stock through the area 2 days later. They got their stock through, but they destroyed the area and it had to be closed until August 1st. They camped at the Hot Spring overnight, but did no work at the Bog and headed to Tyndall leaving behind a problem and closed trail. Rain at this time had gone over my rock dams and more water was going into the bog area. They could not cross Tyndall Creek due to high water and they stayed approx. a week at Junction Meadow, which has a 1 night grazing limit.

The Kern Trail has always been a high priority to keep open and passable. I do not understand why no attempt was made to work on this problem area. It has been a problem area for 3 years and gets more hazardous every year. Stock users and backpackers complain about the area. Tim said he had no plans to work on it at all, because when the Hot Spring Log Bridge ever gets replaced....they will move the bridge back to the old site, 1 mile downstream, and then it won't be a problem. I suggested moving the trail out of the meadow and taking it through the rocks or a boardwalk or a causeway.....The bridge may stand for another 10 years or so.

Problem Areas: The long boardwalk has 1 plank broken out. The short boardwalk has 3 planks with loose spikes on the East side, they will flip up if a horse or person is not in the center of the walk.

Remove the large flat rock from the trail 1/2 mile north of the Kern Station.

Lower Rattlesnake below cow camps- the trail needs water drainage work by the culverts. The culverts need fill dirt over the metal.

The Hot Spring Log Bridge needs 1 foot of fill dirt on the East approach.

Annual widening of the sluff area on the Coyote Trail needs to be continued.

Water bar cleaning and overhead pruning needs to be done on all trails.

Drift Fences and Pasture Fences need annual repairs and posts.

The tree leaning over the hitchrail at Lower Funston Meadow should be removed.

THE BOG.

G. Camp Areas

A total of 60 fire pits were cleaned in the Kern area this season. 10 were obliterated. The Hot Spring camps and Upper and Lower Funston Meadows were the most heavily used this season. Trash and food is still being left in the food lockers and foil, cans and glass are being burned and left in the fire pits. Rocks are routinely added to fire pits.

Firewood availability close to camps is lowest at the Hot Spring camps. This is mainly due to it's regular high use and desirability as a campover spot for most backpackers. One tree was purposely girdled near the upper food locker. This occurred in the spring before the station opened.

H. Permit System

As usual the NPS permit holders were much better informed and educated than those with FS permits. Most FS permit holders received no NPS information. Many stock users did not receive grazing information or trail closure information and were unhappy when they found out they had to change their route. Most had heard of the impassable bog from other sources.

I. Inventory

Kern Ranger Station:

- 2 Flashlights (D cell)
- 2 Headlamps (D cell for shower & reading light)
- 1 Headlamp (AA)
- 2 White gas lanterns (1 large & 1 small)
- 1 White gas two-burner stove (Old)
- 1 Folding oven for coleman stove
- 1 Roll up table
- 1 Station guitar
- 1 Oxygen pack with jumbo tank and 2 extra full tanks
- 1 New orange first aid pack with blood pressure cuff etc.
- Epsom Salts
- Alcohol
- Witch hazel
- 3 Hydrogen peroxide
- Visine
- Sunblock (4-6)
- Insect Repellant(6)

M. Recommendations

Replace the Willow Meadow Cut Off sign in Rattlesnake Canyon.

Continue the use of "Alternate Route Maps" during trail closures.

Address the "BOG" Problem.

More Radio batteries would be helpful for long patrols.

Add another "Protect this Fragile Meadow" sign at the north end of the Hot Spring Meadow.

Change Wording and replace the By Pass sign at the suspension bridge.

Improve the Forgotten Repeater for reliable communications.

Rangers should be in the backcountry earlier at most stations. Visitors are often in the Kern Canyon in April & May. Time is needed before steady visitor use to accomplish "Spring Opening" chores; Station Opening, Trail Patrols and Trail Condition Reports, Campsite Clean Up, Check for early use Resource Damage or Educate "Early" users and stop the problems. (Early grazing, Poor Camping Techniques, Resource Damage, Littering etc.) This is also the best time for Station Repairs, Repairs to Drift Fences & Pasture Fences etc. before the steady flow of visitors and most available time is spent on visitor contacts, assists, information, education and patrols. There is always work to be done during any slow visitor use period. This is when projects finally get done, more time can be focused on wildlife observations, rare plants and other special projects.

I. Inventory Cont.

Kern Ranger Station - Office Cupboard:

CFR
Citations
Courtesy Tags
Lost & Found
Angler Surveys
Forms & Medical Run Sheets
Envelopes & Paper
Carbon Paper, Paper Clips
Stapler, Sissors, Ruler
Sharpening Stone
Snow Seal - 1/2 can
Thumb Tacks
Plastic Coating Sheets
Coleman Mantles & Generators
Tent Repair Kit
Fishing Pole Repair Items
Tape, Rubber Bands, Pens & Pencils
Key for Angler Survey Box
Key for Gun Locker
Gun Locker

Other Items:

Solar Setup with 3 Batteries
Inverter, Amp Meter and AA Charger with 4 Batteries

Museum Collection at the Kern Ranger Station:

This includes all old items marked with a SEKI # and items found by the Historic Preservation crew in 1996. Do Not remove anything from the Station. (Inventory yearly on sheet in cupboard)

All Historic Sites on the 300 acre "Lewis Camp" site are protected and surveyed. Do not remove anything from the area.

I. Inventory Cont.

Kern Ranger Station - Tool Shed Inventory

4 Gallons Coleman Fuel
1/2 Gallon 50:1 Mix (Echo)
3 Tanks of Propane
2 Gallons of Bar Oil
2 Gallons Grey Floor Paint
2 Gallons White Enamel Paint
3 Gallons Woodland Brown Stain
1/4 Gallon Paint Thinner
1 Pint Linseed Oil
1 1/2 Pint Neatsfoot Oil
3 Cans spray Paint (1 brown, 1 blue, 1 green)
1 Can WD 40
1 Bottle Bubble Leak Detector (for Propane lines)
2 Lubricating Compound Slyde
5 Tubes Roof Cement with Gun
2 Cans old Glazing compound and points
1/4 Roll of clear plastic
1 Echo Chainsaw with 1 extra chain, file guides & tools
grease gun and 1 pair of chaps
1 New pit toilet seat
1 roll window screen
4 Gunny Sacks
2 Wash Tubs
1 Mountain Maytag
1 Wash Board
3 Galvanized Buckets
10 Rolls smooth fence wire
2 Wheelbarrows (1 with metal wheel & 1 with rubber tire & air pur
2 Lawn chairs
2 Directors chairs
3 Garden Hoses
1 Sprinkler & 2 nozzles
4 Round shovels
1 Pitchfork
1 Peevey Log Roller
1 Leaf Rake
1 1/2 Asphalt Rakes
1 Stock Rake
1 Crosscut Saw (4 foot)
1 new pruners, 2 old pruners
2 Hatchets
2 Large double-bit axes, 1 small double-bit axe
1 Polaski
1 Pick
2 Post Hole diggers
1 Sledge Hammer

1. Inventory Tool Shed Cont.

1 Come-a-long
1 Asphalt bar
2 Splitting Mauls (1 old, 1 new)
2 Large Crowbars, 1 small crowbar
8 Paint brushes
2 Rollers & 2 pans
3 Funnels
2 Hacksaws with 1 doz. blades
4 Files (8" & 10")
2 small cement pointing trowels
2 small cement rectangular trowels
5 Putty knives - various sizes
3 Tin snips
5 Crescent wrenches - various sizes
1 Set open end wrenches
1 Vice Grips
3 Hammers
1 Ball pean hammer
1 Pipe cutter
1 Key hole saw
3 Carpenter saws
1 limbing saw, 3 folding limbing saws
1 Small pulley
1 Wire brush
3 Metal splitting wedges
3 Fiberglass Chainsaw wedges
2 plyers
2 Fencing plyers
1 Needle nose plyers
2 Channel locks
10 Screwdrivers (phillips & straight)
1 Glass cutter (extra glass panes in R.S.)
1 12 foot tape measure
1 50 foot tape measure
1 Combination square
1 Old level
1 Brace with bits
4 Monkey wrenches
Nails: 4D, 6D & 8D
Bolts, washers and screws of various sizes
8 eye bolts, 6 eye screws
3 Rolls teflon tape & 1 roll metal plumbers tape
Lots of 3/4 " Plumbing Parts: nipples, unions, compression
foints, elbows and plugs. Some pipe for repairs, but it would
need threading to be used. Some 2" parts for drainline: Nipples,
elbows. Extra pea traps and drain pipes. 3/4 " Valves and
faucets. New faucet washers - various shapes & sizes.

I. Inventory

Cont.

Supplies Under the South End of Porch:

18 Old, 8' Tongue & Groove boards
2 short 2x4's
4 short 1x boards
5 Gallons shingle & floor oil
4 Boxes of chinking rope
3 4x4 posts
2 sets of dirt boxes

(There is no longer anything stored under the North end -
Do Not remove the new rock wall.)

Other:

The History Boys found a bundle of flooring (tongue & groove)
in the attic. This can be used in the future to repair the
broken flooring by the sink in the station.

I. Inventory Cont.

Tack Room:

4 Bags of rolled oats
3/4 Bag of alfalfa pellets
1 1/2 Blocks of mineral salt(50 lb)
2 Blocks of white salt(50 lb)
1 Mineral Camp block(10 lb)
**1 Shoeing Kit - MINUS Hoof Nippers - they were sent out to
the corrals for repair in '96....Replace.
1 Shoeing chaps
1 Anvil
1 Extra, new, Hoof rasp
10 OPL Shoes
2 1 Shoes
3 OOPL Shoes
5 2 Shoes
2 Old cinches
3 Old halters
1 Bridle with nylon reins
1 Set of good bridge boxes
4 sets of Dirt Boxes (some ears are bad)
Rivets & Burrs, some snaps, buckles & rings
2 Strips of repair leather
2 Old extra saddle pads
1 Easy boot
1 Gall salve
1 Nitrofurazone Dressing
1 Clear Eyes
1 Corona
1 Wonder Dust
1 Caustic Powder
1 Pint of Surgical Scrub
8 Tablets of Butte
1 Veterinary Liniment (old)
2 1/3 Blue Lotion spray
3 Pints of hydrogen peroxide
1 Roll-on Fly repellent
1 Fly repellent base
4x4 pads, needles(28), 4 large syringes, 10 small syringes,
1 vet wrap, 1 stretch gauze wrap, 1 tube of banamine, 1 tube of
phenylone, 2 Bactoscrub - surgical scrub sponge - brush,
* 2 1/2 Bottles of Penicillin in the first aid cabinet in station.

Horse First Aid Kit Includes: 1 Bactoscrub-surgical scrub
sponge-brush, 1 vet wrap, 1 blue lotion spray, 1 wonder dust,
1 clear eyes, 4x4 pads, 1 roll-on fly wipe

Wish List for Spring of 1998:

Hoof Nippers, 1 Box of #5 Cityhead Nails, 2 Roll-on Fly Wipe,
Shoes - Depending on stock, Butizine Tablets, Penicillin Pills(?)
Oil for Leather, a few repair buckles, conways etc.

L. Needs for Next Year

Station:

2 Propane Tanks
Snow seal
6 Black Government Pens
1 Duct Tape
10 Rolls of TP
2 Rolls of Medical Tape
D and AA Batteries
1 Steno Pad
2 Large Lined Pads
Low Flyer Report Forms
Stock Use Sheets
1 Box 2" Fence Staples
2 Gallons of 50:1 Mix
2 Gallons of Coleman Fuel
2 Gallons of Brown Enamel Paint
1 Gallon of Paint Thinner
10 Spikes (10 to 12")
Glass Cleaner
1 Handle for a Square 5 Gal. Water Bucket
1 Box of #5 Cityhead Shoeing Nails
2 Roll-on Fly Wipe
Shoes--depending on stock

Equipment:

Larger Tent (4 person)
2 Additional Sleeping bags if available
Hoof Nippers for the shoeing kit

M. Recommendations

Kern Ranger Station - Top 5 Issues/Projects

1. The Bog: Located 1/2 mile north of Upper Funston Meadow. Find a solution to this 3 year old problem that worsens every year and has become a danger to people and stock.

The Kern Trail is an important trail and is also the High Sierra Trail. It should not be closed to stock due to one bog area until August 1st, as it was this summer. It is also a hazard for hikers. Hikers and stock are causing resource damage and multiple trails as they try to avoid and skirt the bog in the reroute area and find themselves in other swamy areas. Stock will try to jump logs and lunge into other swamps to avoid the "creek" that flows down the trail. They also trip and lunge due to exposed underwater roots and holes. Hikers go off trail to avoid the water and mud and cause multiple trails. They use logs to bypass some of the swampy areas, stock users follow these trails and cause resource damage when the animals sink and lunge only to be blocked by impassable logs and do more damage turning around or make other trails trying to get through the area.

Trails have been taken out of most meadow areas in the past years to protect the meadows from damage. It is now time to move this trail up and out of the meadow.

2. Forgotten Repeater: Unreliable Communications in the Backcountry. The solar set up or the battery storage seems to be the main problem.(?) As in past years, the repeater "wears out" and communications end. Beware of having an emergency or medivac on a cloudy day or at night.... If there's a fire in the area the fire crew is sure to run it down to nothing with their reports..... Wait for the sun to hit the repeater & maybe you'll be able to get out at 1100 Roundup.....if the trail crew didn't use up all the power at 0800 checkin..... Don't overuse it at the 2000 Gossip Hour or there won't be any power in the morning or for emergencies....

I think everyone who routinely uses the forgotten repeater has gotten used to this during years of trying to work around the backcountry. New fire crews and others will "chat" and waste power that may be needed later, since they aren't used to the limitations. They'll use sentences instead of one or two words. This may be normal with other repeaters, but with the normal dead zones, and low power etc. I have gotten used to not using the repeater unless necessary. Sending out notes when possible instead of the radio, etc.

Do the other repeaters have this problem? What's the solution?

M. Recommendations Top 5 Issues/Projects Cont.

3. Historic Hot Tub Repairs: The pipe that feeds the tub has eroded through. It is broken at the top as it enters the tub. The hole is about 1" wide x 6" long. Visitors have used plastic, tree bark and a rock to stem the leak and make it useable.

The cement around the tub has broken up some and needs to be capped. (2'x4' area) Photos were taken this year and turned in.

During the springtime, the natural Hot Spring pool is covered by moss and is undisturbed and natural. This pool is located 5 feet east of the tub. During the summer, visitors will remove the moss and are in the natural pool. I have found mole skin and litter in the pool. How can this be prevented? Is it a health or sanitation issue? What are the negative impacts on the natural pool? Should the natural pool be covered in some manner to protect it?

4. Kern River: Rafter and Kayaker use. Is this trend going to continue at it's current rate or is it going to increase? Is there any need or plans to have Special Use Permits? Is there anyway to notify the local rangers when a group will be on the river?

I have met 4 groups in the last 2 seasons. These groups were well equipped, had all safety gear and were very experienced. They had some trouble with portages over logs with rafts. One person was injured by an oar and flown out from Forest Service land. If less experienced or poorly equipped visitors use the river, what future rescues, injuries and problems may we see. Other parks have special permits, boat and equipment checks, etc.

Due to the distance to the headwaters at Junction Meadow from any trailhead, it may keep the use limited to those willing to pay a high cost for transport of their gear by stock or to the few who are able to hike in with their raft or kayak and equipment on their backs.....but it may be a issue to ponder.

5. Signs:

a. Willow Meadow Cut Off Trail. This sign was taken off of a tree at the junction as ordered in 1994. It has not been replaced. Many people use this trail and it needs to be signed on the Rattlesnake Canyon end. It is signed near the Lost/Soda Jct. in Big Arroyo.

M. Recommendations Top 5 Issues/Projects Cont.

b. The By Pass trail sign by the Suspension bridge as currently worded gives the impression that the Coyote Trail is in the Forest Service and not the Park. This gives some people the idea that it is ok to take dogs and weapons on the Coyote Trail. It should be reworded & replaced. The wording could be...By Pass to "Sequoia National Forest" or "Golden Trout Wilderness Area".

c. "To Protect this **F**ragile Meadow...." A Duplicate sign should go on the North end of the Hot Spring Meadow. This is where the footpath leaves the main trail to take you to the hot tub. The existing sign is on the South end and blocks the old abandoned access trail. Visitors from the North need this information and it should help to protect the area.

USE AND IMPACTS IN THE KERN AREA PRIOR TO RANGER
START DATE - 1997

It is impossible to document as the Kern trail crew were in the station and the Kern Canyon for at least two weeks prior to my arrival.

Often early stock users have put up the Administrative Pasture fences and grazed the pastures. Other Drift fences may have been put up by visitors using the area earlier than the opening dates allow. They were poorly put up and not correctly repaired

In the past, visitors have camped at the station, used the beds on the front porch, firewood and the firepit and left trash.

The only obvious visitor impact was at the Hot Spring Camps. Someone had purposely girdled a small, 6 " tree. It was girdled at a height of 4 1/2 feet. It is located next to the upper bear box.

Prior Impacts by the trail crew: With the crew having new leaders in the past few years who are not familiar with the area or station opening procedures there have been some problems. Incorrect water and ditch openings, lack of fence repair and incorrect repairs or not putting up fences at all cause a lot of extra work for the ranger. The Ranger should go into the backcountry before or at the same time as the trail crew. This would also give the Ranger time to go over NPS rules, Meadow Regulations, Opening dates etc. with the crew before they move on. This worked well in the past.

As a new ranger in the Kern Canyon in 1992, I learned a great deal from Steve Moffit and Jim Harvey. They taught me how to open the cabin and water and ditch systems. They showed me where the hidden camps were along the trail. I worked and repaired fences and posts and learned their standards for work and repairs. They taught me a lot and showed me where and how to graze stock etc., where the historic sites were and old trail locations. None of this is written down, it is best and easiest to learn it on site.

Now the situation is reversed and the Ranger needs the time to help the new crew get to know the area, the standards, talk over priority trail projects, talk about stock issues with the new packer, station opening - the correct way and answer any questions about where they should and shouldn't camp, graze etc.

Or, perhaps an experienced person should go in with them... Steve Moffit, Jim Harvey and Tyler Johnson know the Routine and could help the new crew get back on track.

V I S A L I A T I E
LOC

**Man, 40, hurt
during raft trip
on Kern River**

JOHNSONDALE — A 40-year-old Sacramento man suffered a possible broken rib while rafting the Kern River.

Rudy Meyers was pulled from Painter's Camp near the river by a Tulare County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue helicopter on Friday morning.

Meyers' friend, Rolan Arnsons, left Meyers Thursday afternoon — after his injury — to get help.

Sheriff's officials said darkness late Thursday prohibited a helicopter rescue until Friday.

Meyers was transferred to Sierra View District Hospital.

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——— WATER LINE
 ——— TRAIL
 ||||| FENCE
 T VALVE

Irrigation Ditch ———
 RIVER & CREEK ———
 SITE ●
 Boundary ———

1997
 Kern R.S.
 CINDY WOOD
 - 312
 1997

Low Flying Aircraft

Date	Time	AGL	my Location	Description	DIR OF FLIGHT
7-14-97	1455	400' ^{INNER} CANYON	Lower Funston - Kern CYN	Grey F-18 2 slant tails	SOUTH down Kern Canyon
7-14-97	1456	1,000 Ft	Lower Funston Kern Canyon	military Grey	S & veering low Just So. of Fun
7-14-97	1455 1455	500' ^{INNER} CANYON or less Tree Top Level	BY Darwin Knight @ Kern R.S. (VIP)	Grey Jet Numbers-Letter on Tail Very Loud -	South down Kern CYN Scared BA & Stock
8-13-97	0840	1,500	Kern R.S.	Jet white w/ dark wing tips - DK Grey, or Red	OUT OF SOUTH NORTH-U Kern Cyn
8-17-97	1605	1,500	Kern RS	Grey F-18	NORTH-U Kern Cyn
1st Pass					
8-19-97	1304	1,000 ^{or less}	1/2 mile East of COYOTE PASS	2 Engine Grey Plane	OUT OF COYOTE PASS CIRCLED COYOTE LA
2 Pass			" "		
8-19-97	1307	2,000	" "	2 Engine Grey Plane	Circled Back From Coyote Pass - North then out SE over Coyote Pass
8-30-97	1425	1,800	Lower Funston	white Plane w/ Blue wing tips # tail / 1 Blue Pod under wing	S to N UP Kern CANYON
8-28-97	1442	2,000	Kern R.S.	white Helicopter with Blue TAIL	S to N UP Kern CYN
9-22-97	1052	1,800	Kern RS	Grey F-18	OUT OF SOUTH Sweepover of turn E UP GOLD TROUT
9-23-97	1214	#1 2,500	Kern R.S.	F-15's Dark Blue (2)	SOUTH to N UP Kern Canyon
	2 seconds Later → #2	1,000			
9-23-97	1523	#1 800	Kern RS	med-Dark Grey F-15's with white on tips of tails	S to N up Kern Canyon
	3 seconds Later → #2	500			