

## Ranger Lake 99 Year End Report - by : Bob Kenan

This season I was stationed at Ranger Lake from June 23 through Sept. 4. At that point, due to Catie going back to school, I moved to Roaring River and worked there until my season was over on Oct. 8. It was another fabulous season with the park and an extremely productive one. I had a very active hiking season covering approx. 900 miles and I made around 700 visitor contacts. A lot of campsite cleanup work was done throughout the season and many firerings were reduced and removed. Also, one citation was written this season for a camping violation. This citation was for a tent set up five feet from a lake near Big Bird Lake.



My gear was packed in by Horse Coral. This was my third season being stationed at Ranger Lake. After building the floor and making all the station improvements last season, this season I was able to enjoy the station comforts from my previous work. The station proved to be extremely comfortable and functional. This report will be an effort to explain the work that was done this season and hopefully offer some insights and suggestions for next seasons Ranger Lake operation.

Ranger Lake area once again had a lot of visitation. The focus again this season was to patrol the high impact areas which include: Ranger Lake, Lost Lake, Seville Lake, Commanche Meadow and Sugarloaf Meadow. I made an effort to patrol Seville and Lost Lake on weekends, when these areas are the busiest.

### **Ranger Lake**

Ranger Lake is a very popular camping destination for backpackers. While at Ranger Lake I would make the rounds to the campsites either in the early evening or in the morning. Park visitors in this area are coming here from primarily two different loop trips that include: Silliman Pass - Ranger Lake - Roaring River - Elizabeth Pass or Horse Coral - Seville Lake - Lost Lake - Ranger Lake and out to Lodgepole over Silliman Pass. Only one stock group came to Ranger Lake this season. It was two people with three head and they stayed only one night.

### **Seville Lake**

Seville is the most heavily used lake in the area. Horse Coral Pack station continues to spot in numerous groups here during the season. But, in talking to Nancy and Jonsey, they are making an effort to send more trips into Lost Lake in order to reduce the concentrated impact of Seville Lake. A regular weekly patrol and cleanup of Seville Lake is necessary to keep this area in good shape.

### **Horse Coral Pack Station**

Nancy and Jonsey run one of the best pack stations that access the park. They are extremely conscientious about minimum impact and running a tight ship. Usually in this area they operate by spotting groups in and not staying overnight. Their packers this season were Jeff (Nancy's son) and Dennis. I made contacts with them on numerous occasions throughout the season.

There was an abandoned injured horse this season that was left by a stock group near the park entrance. Jeff rode in and helped the horse to get out to the pack station. They nursed the horse for a few days, but he later died. This was a big effort on Jeff's part to try and help this injured animal, as this really was not his responsibility.

### **Outward Bound**

I made several contacts with Outward Bound this season. When they were in the area, I would always make an effort to visit with them. Ranger talks were given to the groups on a couple occasions. I met the new Chief Instructor, Diego, at Ranger Lake. We discussed potential service projects for their trips later in the summer. Also, Catie and I got some other service project ideas together and relayed this information to them. To my knowledge, none of these projects were ever completed by them in the area.

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

### **Mitchell Peak**

I was on Mitchell Peak twice this season doing cleanup work. I have worked the last three seasons on Mitchell cleaning up litter from the old Forest Service lookout. At this point, most of the litter is cleaned up, but future Ranger Lake rangers should make an effort to get up there once a season, as there is still some pieces of litter on the summit.

### **Ellis Meadow**

While hiking through Ellis Meadow earlier in the season, I discovered garbage from an old camp on the west side of the meadow. Also, there was an old pasture fence that was down on the ground in this area. (refer to photo in back of report) I made two trips back here later in the season to do the cleanup work. One trip was made from Ranger Lake and the other was made from Roaring River. I coiled up the barbed wire and the other garbage was organized, put in gunney sacs and prepared to go out. This other garbage included: cast iron camp stove, rusted cans and misc. rusted metal. The total weight of this garbage is approx. 350 pounds. I **recommend** flying this garbage out next season if possible. Refer to the back the report for the map showing the location of this stockpiled garbage. The old trail to Ellis Meadow from Sugarloaf Meadow is littered with trees and very difficult to access with stock. Also, the 200 lb. barbed wire dump that I discovered and organized last season was packed out this season by Rex and VIP David Karplus. Good job guys!

### **Ranger Lake Station**

There were three special projects completed at the Ranger Lake Station this season which included: 1) stabilize floor foundation, 2) add additional hardware cloth around perimeter of station, 3) secure hazard tree with safety cable and add new pulley system in tree for a mechanical advantage for raising the station tarp.

1) At the beginning of the season I added additional rocks to further stabilize the floor foundation. This was done by taking off four of the plywood panels and then adding the rocks under the floor frame. After this was done, I painted the floor before setting up the tent.

2) When I arrived this season, marmots had gotten under the floor and were significantly munching away at the plywood. At the end of the season, I added more hardware cloth around the perimeter of the station. This wire material extends approx. two feet out from the side of the station

floor and is covered by dirt. This project was done on Sept. 4, my demobe day from Ranger Lake as Rex packed in this material. On Oct. 7, I hiked up to Ranger Lake at the end of my season to check it out and the marmots had not gotten under the station floor.

There is a hazard tree that is leaning right over the station. This 50 foot tall lodgepole is rotting and cracked. It is a hazard for the investment that we put into the station floor along with being potentially dangerous for anyone inside the station. During the season, I hiked in the cable and clamps for this project. At the end of the season, Eric (511) hiked in and climbed the tree to secure the cable. (refer to photo in back of report.) Using crampons taped to his boots and a safety rope, Eric climbed 20 feet up the tree. Also, while up there he added another cable and pulley system around the tree for a permanent mechanical advantage system for raising the station tarp.

### **Big Bird Lake Cleanup**

On August 12, I met Catie (5-1-11) at Big Bird Lake for a firering cleanup project. The past two seasons, Catie and I have made an effort to remove all firerings at Big Bird Lake. This season she decided, since it is slightly under 10,000 ft., to build a couple three rock firerings and remove all the other firerings. The idea being that backpackers are going to continue to build firerings here. It will be easier for rangers in the future to keep these three ring firerings reduced and remove all other firerings that are built in this area.

### **Park Repeater System**

Throughout the season we had problems primarily with the Gould repeater. It would work intermittently, but never was reliable. This created a significant problem for Rick (115) at Rae Lakes. The problem with the repeater is that it would not trip Park Ridge. We could always hear Gould in the backcountry, but Grant Grove could not hear the traffic off of Gould. This resulted in George (116) having to relay for Rick throughout the season. This unreliable repeater also created a situation, that in case of an emergency in the Rae Lakes area, communications were not available.

### **Telescopic Antenna**

This season I used a telescopic antenna for the first time while at Ranger Lake. I requested the antenna last season, because there had been so many times while hiking around the area in previous seasons, that I was unable to hit the repeater. Eric made a special order for the antenna

for my MT 1000 radio. The antenna improved my transmitting and receiving capability significantly by an estimated 30%. The small "rubber ducky" is just not a very good antenna with our repeaters.

The first part of Sept., while at the trail crew camp at Grand Palace in Upper Cloud Canyon, I did a radio test using my radio and theirs with the "rubber ducky" antenna. Using my radio, I was able to hit the repeater every time and with their radio I could hit the repeater only intermittently. They were having trouble transmitting from that location for the previous two weeks that they were in that location. I reported this to 551 and soon after he sent in the more powerful antenna and they had no more problems transmitting from that location the rest of the season.

I do **recommend** that all rangers in Kings Canyon backcountry have the telescopic antenna for next season. Certain rangers were having trouble transmitting this season from locations where there should have been no problem hitting the repeater.

### **Trail Crew Camps**

Over the past couple of years the trail crew camps in Cloud and Deadman Canyons have been improved. There is one large Knaack metal box at their camp in Upper Ranger Meadow. This season, two large Knaack boxes were flown into their camp in Upper Cloud Canyon.

### **Trail Work**

The trail crew did an excellent job this season and got quite a bit of work done. Areas that really need to be worked are the Colby Pass trail and Upper Ranger Meadow. The Colby Pass trail from Upper Cloud Canyon to Colby Lake is eroded and hard to follow in many places. In Upper Ranger Meadow there is a half mile stretch of trail that is deeply eroded. Thought should be given to pulling this trail out of the meadow and rerouting up on the side of the hill.

Also, on the Silliman Pass trail at the base of the switches on the east side of the pass there is a large Western White Pine that has fallen across the trail. The tree is approx. 5 feet in diameter and will need a "come a long" to wench the cut portion out of the trail since it is so large.

### **Roaring River**

I filled in for Catie (5-1-11) at Roaring River from Sept. 5 through Oct. 8. Along with this being an extremely enjoyable time to be in this area, I got a lot of work done in the process. Also, Roaring River continued to be busy with park visitor through the end of Sept.

Rex packed my gear out of Ranger Lake on Sept. 4 and I hiked out to Horse Coral that afternoon. The next morning Catie and I rode into Roaring River with my supplies. Catie rode out the next morning after showing me

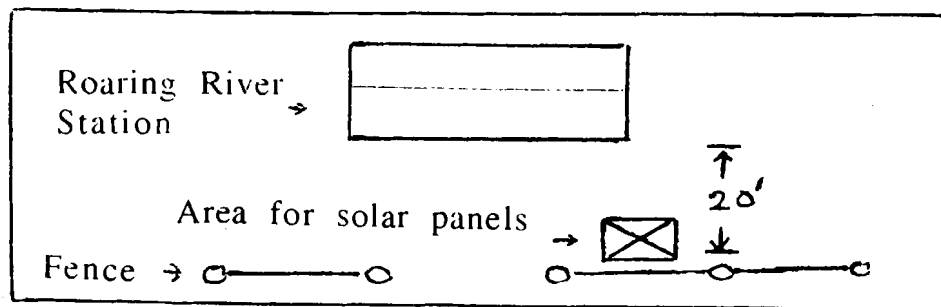
how to close down the station water system. Work accomplished while at Roaring River included the following:

- meadow monitoring
- drop fences
- area campsite cleanup
- station closing
- hunting patrol - opening day lookout
- prepare winter firewood

### Roaring River Solar

The new solar unit at Roaring River was not fully charging the batteries when I arrived at the station. VIP David Karplus had done the installation at the end of the season and had to leave before he was able to completely work the bugs out of the system. For the first week I was there, even though the batteries were not charging fully (always on low charge) all of the loads were working. The refrigerator, the lights and the park radio battery recharger were all functioning properly. I went on a patrol and was gone from the station for an overnight trip. When I got back to the station, someone had been in the station and accidentally left the lights on. From that point, the refrigerator stopped working and the system never charged up enough to run the lights for more that fifteen minutes before it would shut off.

In order to trouble shoot this system a multi meter is needed to check the output of the panels to make sure they are working and wired properly. Also, these batteries need to be tested to make sure that it is not a battery problem. Quite possibly, the only problem is that the panels just aren't getting enough sunlight. When I arrived they were getting only two hours of direct sunlight, and by the first part of Oct. they were getting less than that. I do recommend that the panels be moved approximately 25 feet away from the station to the location shown below. This is an area that gets twice as much sunlight as the current location. A simple movable stand could be made out of 2 by 4's for having the panels on the ground. (Refer to diagram below.)



This movable stand would also allow the panels to be moved around to get the maximum amount of sunlight as the sun changes direction throughout the season. With all of the trees around this station, the

moveable stand would be the way to maximize the amount of sunlight that the panels receive throughout the season.

### **Colby Lake Medivac**

My first day at Roaring River was Sept. 5. Catie hit the trail in the morning and I had all day to organize the station. At 1955 hours I turned on the radio for the evening radio monitoring to hear some traffic about an injured person at Colby Lake. Eric (511) then called me to inform me about the situation. 55-Barnaby (trail crew) was at Colby Lake with and injured girl. Reportedly she was slipping in and out of consciousness after taking a fall and hitting her head. It took me about an hour to organize my medical pack and by 2100 hours with headlamp I took off for Colby Lake.

At 12 midnight, as planned, I made radio contact with 55-Barnaby. He informed me that 55-Mike was in Upper Cloud at the base of the switches prepared to hike up to Colby Lake with me. Since I was right in that area, five minutes later I made contact with 55-Mike. He offered to carry some supplies, which helped me enormously, since I had a forty pound pack with the jumbo oxygen container. At 0215 hours we arrived at Colby Lake and easily found the patient. The patient, Chelsy, was with the Thatcher school group, as there were a lot of people around looking after her. She was in her sleeping bag resting and warm. We immediately took her vitals as she appeared to be stabilized and doing fine. We then applied the cervical collar and administered some oxygen. Then we told her to get some sleep and we were then all able to get some rest for a couple of hours.

Chelsy actually never did loose consciousness and was not in nearly as bad a shape as the initial report sounded. She had slipped and fallen down and hit her head. She had become disoriented for a while and had a lump on the back of her head. Certainly, the medivac was needed.

At 0515 hours I established communications with dispatch through the command channel. I was very relieved that command allowed me to transmit after climbing around in the dark on a ridge to try and hit Palmer to finally realize it was not working. Dispatch informed me that HP 40, the CHP rescue helicopter was enroute to Colby Lake. I went back to the camp and we got organized and ready for the helicopter. They landed at 0600 hours and by 0640 hours we had Chelsy loaded up and HP40 off for St. Agnes hospital in Fresno.

This was an exciting incident and was great to be able to work together with the trail crew. 55-Barnaby, who had recently gotten his EMT, did a good job of seeing the need for the medivac and looking after the patient. 55-Mike helped me in a huge way by lightening my load up the Whaleback. Since he had recently been working this spotty trail, he was

real familiar with it and able to help direct me up to Colby Lake in the dark.

### **Ranger Lake Station Needs**

The plywood floor needs to be covered. The marmots are munching away on the top of the floor. I recommend using a 1" by 10" pine boarding for this project. The floor should then be painted with a primer and then two heavy coats of a brown exterior latex. Part of the station closing every year should include painting the floor to protect it for the winter. With this done, this floor would last for many years. Needed for this project is the following: 8 ft. lengths of 1" X 10" pine (enough to cover 15 sq. ft.), 1 1/4 inch sheet rock screws (a couple boxes for attaching the floor, hand drill and bits (for predrilling the holes for the sheet rock screws), 2 gallons of primer and paint brushes. Currently at the station are 2 gallons of brown exterior latex for the floor.

Also, the bear boxes at the station should eventually be replaced with Knaack boxes. The bear boxes are a hazard, as using them so often, it would be very easy to smash your fingers while closing them. One big Kaack box for next season would be nice. For additional station needs refer to the back of the report.

### **Roaring River Station Needs**

The solar at the station when it is working properly will always be limited due to all of the trees around the station. Running the lights and recharging the park radio battery are the two most important functions for this system. I **recommend** that the refrigerator be replaced with one that works strictly on propane. The existing refrigerator runs on propane, but also requires electricity to operate. Also, the park radio battery recharger should be replaced with a DC unit. The current AC unit requires an inverter, as this is very inefficient.

The Roaring River station really needs to be painted. There are numerous places where the old green color of the station is showing through the current brown color of the station. It's going to require a lot of sanding and priming the problem areas before adding the new coat of paint. This is a big job that hopefully next years Roaring River Ranger can get some help with.

The tung and groove ceiling in the station over the woodburning stove needs to be repaired. The panels have separated in places. They need to be pulled together and sealed with some wood puddey. Refer to back of the report for the other station needs.



## **Conclusion**

The Ranger Lake area will continue to be a popular destination for park visitors in the future. Along with the area being such fine and diverse highcountry, it is extremely accessible from either Lodgepole or Horse Coral. Over the last couple seasons, this station has been improved to the point that it should be considered as a prototype model of how to do a tent frame station right. Now that these station improvements have been made, hopefully funding will continue in the future to keep this station operating every season.

# End of Season Statistics 99

## Firerings

cleaned	60
removed	25
reduced	20
rebuilt	5

Litter collected	450 lbs.
Citations	1
Verbal Warnings	10
Visitor Contacts	700
Visitor Assists	10
Miles Hiked	900
stock observations	20 groups

① 4" foam

### Ranger Lake Station Needs for 2000

- ① •glass globe for propane lantern  
Coleman #5154B700
- ① •tarp - 20' x 30' (black)
- ① •3/8 inch mainline rope - 200 ft. nylon
- bailing wire - 20 ft.
- ② •propane high pressure hoze - 10 ft. *for lantern*
- 5 peg bars for tent frame
- propane stove - Coleman two burner
- ① •black plastic (heavy) - 20' x 10'
- year end report copy's - 98, 99, 2000
- literature for bulletin boards - Commanche, Seville, Lost and Ranger Lks.
- plastic bags - 20 large
- tp - 15
- small nails - 50 (1 inch galv.)
- blazo - 2 gals.
- 1st Need filter
- Fix All Plaster (for floor)
- AA batteries - 20
- carpet - 10' x 10'
- stainless coffee pot
- 100 nylon cord
- gaskets for Coleman stove (for the knobs as they start to leak gas)
- captains chair canvas seat and back
- Knaack box - 3' wide by 5' long
- ① 1.5" sheetrock screw

### Roaring River Station Needs for 2000

- wire for solar panels - 50 ft.
- multi meter
- DC park battery recharger
- all propane refrigerator
- 2 x 4s for solar stand - # 8 fters
- brown paint and sandpaper for station
- headlamp
- day pack
- cervical colar - 1 large
- propane cannisters- 20  
(only two at station left due to solar going out)

• PLYWOOD PATCH  
FOR FLOOR

- TRIKE D - 15 MIN
- UNDER KERN - MT. W. H. T. W. - 15 MIN