

United States Department of Interior
National Park Service
Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks

Division of Visitor and Resources Protection

**Roaring River
End of Season Report 1999**

Miles on foot - 198	Known Stock nights
Miles on Horse - 365	(Commercial 79)
Visitor Contacts - 728	(Administrative 283)
(backpackers 575 / stock users 153)	(Private 402)

VISITOR USE

There were a more visitors in the backcountry this year than last. The passes were all clear by mid july, and the rivers never got so high that they were difficult to cross. The mosquitoes in the canyons were bad in late June and early July, and the black flies were bad at Scaffold all year. There was a lot more private stock use because it was a normal year for meadow opening, and the meadows in the canyons opened for use a lot sooner.

Compliance was fairly good this season. When I was aware of violations, I felt I could gain compliance by educating the people in violation more effectively than I could by citing them. There were two cases when I found out about fairly blatent violations after the violators had left the backcountry. Both occured in Lower Ranger Meadow and the violators were stock users. One was a food storage violation. I recieved a note on August 21st that said a bear had gotten Teresa Bressoud's food, and she was out to Horse Corral. Later I talked with visitors who reported that they had talked with Mrs. Bressoud and she said her food was on the ground covered by a tarp, and she had left it there for the day while she went day hiking. The bears got three to four days worth of food including a cool bag containing meat. The second violation was a messy camp where it was apparent horses had been left tied to trees, a lot of small trash was scattered around, the metal was not removed from the ashes in the firepit, and a tarp had probably been pitched over the meadow. I believe that Jacob Hamstra's party were the violators in this case, but cannot prove it.

MEDICALS AND SAR

There were no major incidents in my area this season. One medical patient, a 65 YOM with a blood pressure of 200/100 and a very irregular heart rate was flown to UMC.

After I left Bob Keenan had a trauma medical at Colby Lake. A female with neck pain and deformation. EMT Barnaby Fischer from Trailcrew assisted Bob with the call. She was flown owt at first light the next morning

WILDLIFE AND NATURE OBSERVATIONS

There was only one bear incident all season! A bear got food from a stock party in Lower Ranger 8/20 or 8/21 (See details above). I had visitors tell me that the bear came into camps in upper Deadman for 4-5 days after the incident, but it didn't get more food and I stopped getting those reports within a week. No bears came into my camp when I stayed at Lower Ranger 9/1- 9/2 .

I found a population of Mountain Hemlock trees on the NE side of Palmer north of the Avalanche Pass trail. The largest tree was 2 + feet in diameter, and the population was at least 50-70 individuals.

There were 5-6 populations of Bull thistle, an invasive non-native weed, which I pulled out, and/or removed the flower heads whenever I could.

UTM coordinates:

Mt silliman 7.5 quad	
N 4067.25 , E 354.8	50-60 plants
Sphinx Lakes 7.5 quad	
N 4065.5, E 355.4	40 plants
N 4065.5, E 356.3	40 plants
N 4065.1, E356.9	80-100 plants
N 4064.9, E 356.9	20 plants
N 4062.9, E 358.75	15 plants

GRAZING

There was a lot more stock use this year than last because the meadows dried out sooner and opened earlier than last year. All meadows opened on time for a "normal" year.

In order to take pressure off Scaffold, I tried to spend more time up the canyons, and leave my stock in Lackey or JR when I was at the station. My stock made up for only 47 of the stock use nights in Scaffold this season.

TRAIL CREW

The trail crew stayed at Sliding Box camp most of the season. They did a lot of nice work up Moraine Ridge. They spent 2-3 weeks at Upper Ranger Camp working between Upper and Lower Ranger, and they spent the last 5 or so weeks at Grand Palace working between Big Wet and Grand Palace.

We had a really good working relationship this season. Rex helped Bob Keenan and

me get 250lbs of barbed wire and a stove out of the backcountry, and I helped them with some of the packing they needed in Upper Ranger. We also worked together to fix the Austin Drift Fence, which was in dire need of repair.

RANGER STOCK

I had John and Slinde this year. I also borrowed Rex's mule Ann for the last 5 weeks of the season. The horses were both good, but I hope to trade Slinde out for Sunny next season. The stock were no problem all season. They even stayed in Sugarloaf overnight without wandering.

AREA CONCERNS

Lackey

Problem: Lackey is a fenced in 1 acre meadow immediately adjacent to Scaffold Meadow. Currently there is no limit for nights or number of head in Lackey, but there is a 15head, 2night limit in the larger scaffold meadow. People can leave their stock in Scaffold for two nights, then move them to Lackey and back to Scaffold as often as they like. They can also split their stock up and leave 15 in Scaffold and the others in Lackey. The lack of limits in Lackey effectively eliminates the regulations for Scaffold, and makes them unenforceable.

My ideal solution for this problem is to make a 5 head, 1night limit in Lackey. I believe that this will prevent overuse, because only groups with five head or fewer could stay in Scaffold area longer than two nights.

Another possible solution is to have a 15 head 2 night limit for the whole of Lackey and Scaffold and any combination thereof.

Spot camps leaving food

I have had several groups, three of whom were brought in with stock assistance, leave food in the bearboxes at the junction, while they made short, 1-2 night forays up the canyons. This hasn't been a problem when sliding box is open, but the trailcrew and/ or their gear is often occupying Sliding Box Camp, so it is unavailable for visitor use. It is not legal to leave your food in bearboxes unattended for more than 24hours, but visitors are not receiving this message when they get their permits, and from their perspective it is a perfect way to see both Cloud and Deadman without having to carry really heavy packs. The problem is that the boxes are then full when other visitors come by to use them.

I recommend that the trailhead rangers inform people that they should not leave food in the bearboxes when they aren't camping there, and that we get in touch with the Cedar and Horse Corral pack stations and ask them to tell their customers, when they request that kind of trip. I also advise that they don't bring coolers in on their spot trips, because they fill up the bearbox and the rest of the food people bring in doesn't fit. Another possibility, for people who are being packed out as well as in, is to have the pack stations provide bear proof panniers for the customers to use. Jack Farmer has a way to turn bearproof panniers into coolers, and if the pack stations are

interested they can call him for more information.

Stock camps not storing food

This is a common problem in all areas. Commercial trips often leave a cook or packer in camp with the food at all times, but private parties want to have everyone go on day trips together. It is essentially not possible to counterbalance all of the food that people on stock trips bring, so they tend to store it improperly. This is especially true of private groups. I don't want to tell everyone to stay at the bearbox, because the only bearbox is at Scaffold, and that meadow is already overused. I recommend that the Grant Grove Visitor's Center (or SNHA) rent out bear proof panniers to the public, like Road's End rents out cannisters.

Station Concerns

Sink in Bathroom: There is a leak in the plumbing inside the wall on the drain pipes to the bathroom sink. Because of this, I have turned off water to the sink. There is no easy access to the pipes inside the wall.

Inverter: Using the inverter to charge radio batteries takes lots of power -- from 12V to 120V back to 10V. It would help power conservation of the solar system to have a charger that converts 12V DC directly to 10V DC to charge the radio batteries.

WORK ACCOMPLISHED (with help from...)

Haul out the 250 lbs of trash 5-1-12 found between the 2 creeks E. of Sugarloaf Xing (Keenan, Rex McCall, and D. Karplus and Stock)

Install the solar system and lights (D. Karplus and P.Hellweg)

Burn the big slash pile left from removing 3 trees last season (D. Karplus)

Tear out the broken hitchrail at grasshopper (Steve Nave)

Rebuild river side of Austin Drift Fence at the trail (Trailcrew)

Pack or send out at least another 150lbs of misc. backcountry trash D. Karplus, Stock and Helicopter)

Remove 14 trees from across trails

Pull up five populations of Bull Thistle (Steve Nave, Wendy from Trailcrew)

Replace the flagpole at the station with one which can be taken down in the winter

Raise the saddle rack (D. Karplus)

FUTURE PROJECTS

Remove unused upper end of Cement Table drift fence

Rebuild at least one of the Cement Table hitchrails

Haul out drill steel off the whaleback

Haul out the old signs at the Comanche junction

Haul out trash off Mitchell peak

Continue working on the mess in the yard at the station