

**ROARING RIVER
END OF SEASON REPORT 2002
Ranger Alison Van Dusen**

This was my first season as the Roaring River backcountry ranger, an excellent opportunity for me. Cracker John and Steve (or sometimes called Pete), are the two horses that work with me. Overall an uneventful season, with typical visitor contact, no major EMS or SARs, I was busy learning the area, doing general maintenance, some resource work, and daily visitor contacts.

General Statistics

Meadows use nights for Steve and John.

Lucky 5	JR 11	Scaffold 5	Austin 12
Big Wet 10	Lower Grasshopper 8	Upper Ranger 3	Middle Ranger 3
Sugarloaf 2	West Roaring River 4	False Cement Table 10	Grand Palace 1

Horse miles: 370 Hiking miles: 353 Visitor Contacts: 600 plus 157 at Whitney 1 day

Stock Parties: 31 with 236 stock Violation Notices: 3 Written Warning: 2

Fire Rings: cleaned: 71 reduced: 10 removed: 13

Trash was found, seems daily. On a few occasions bigger items would be discovered: food left in food storage box or grill left at a stock camp.

There were no low flying aircraft, but certainly heard lots of aircraft flying over. Several visitors commented on the unfortunateness of the natural quiet being insulted.

I had no major medical calls, 2 bug bites that happened hours or a day prior to my observation.

Drift fences were in good shape. I replaced 3 cross beams at gates, and next season would like to add protection to some trees with wires around at False Cement Table, Scaffold and Sugar Loaf. A few post will need to be replaced at Big Wet, Upper Ranger, and Sugar Loaf.

I assisted trail crew with clearing down trees on Avalanche Pass, Cloud Canyon and Ranger Lake, plus I learned and moved some BIG rocks, and helped with a new hitching post.

Stock Use

I do think it is important for there to be a ranger presence utilizing stock in this area. Other stock users in the area seem to relate and appreciate the visibility and one learns to appreciate what is involved being a stock user. It requires a lot of time and work to care for 2 horses and to rotate them between the different meadows. There are some days where it requires 3 to 4 hours to walk to a meadow, find the horses, return to the ranger station and then saddle them up. For me, realizing that the care of the horses and the rotation of meadows is apart of the job, was reassuring. I suggest next year to have a 3 week or so break from the horses. Possibly late July or early August when I bring them out for new shoes, leave them at the NPS pack station. This would require checking with the packer, probably Rex, if he would feed and water the horses with his stock.

It would be advantageous if the stock could be trained to an electric fence. The reason for this is I could retain them with a bit more comfort level in the Ranger Lakes area and Sugar Loaf. Presently I do not overnight in the Ranger Lakes area with stock, it is a VERY long day return in the dark trip. The few nights I stayed at Sugar Loaf I had them tied to the hitching post for 6 hours during the night. I'd prefer

not to do this. An other reason to train on the electric fence is this past year I did not stay overnight at Sugar Loaf because another stock party was using an electric fence, and I was concerned Steve and John may cause some trouble? The question is who would do the training?

Steve became fairly ill. My previous stock experience and not receiving training did not prepare me. Fortunately monitoring and walking, he slowly recovered. There was thought he may not survive, I'd prefer to know before hand the proper way to put down a horse.

Next year I would like to attend the Yosemite Horse School. I have worked 7 seasons, at 4 different parks, with stock in a variety of capacities, with minimal training. I have been fortunate that, generally speaking, working with the horses has gone smoothly, so my inexperience has not been tested.

On the performance appraisal, one of the standards needs to be changed to care and horse use.

Commercial Pack Station

Overall I found Charlie Mills operation to be satisfactory. He and Judy have intentions to follow the regulations and to do the their best. I do have concerns/questions. They have an agreement with (not sure who, possibly Eric Morey) to write backcountry permits for their stock led or supported trips. This past summer they wrote permits for other stock users and backpackers. I think, but not positive that the stock users were acquaintances, they were helping out? They have attended some sort of permit writing training, though maybe only their first year? They are required to call in the permits after they have written them. Unfortunately the one time he does not, it is a major violator but we missed them because we did not locate the permit. We decided it was a party without a permit. A lot of effort both in the front country and myself was expended trying to locate this party, which never happened. Another aspect which concerns me, both because he does write permits and he is a frequent user is food storage. He does use coolers, but does not hang them or put into bear box or approved bear panniers. They may use a couple of heavy duty straps? A letter was sent to him reviewing the food storage policy, what is acceptable and that he does write permits, so he needs to be clear what is acceptable.

I utilized them to shoe the horses.

Resource Contributions

Catie Karplus came out at the beginning and end of the season to monitor and teach me about the meadows in the Roaring River area. I learned a lot, she is knowledgeable and patient. We spent 4 days both at the start and end of the season. She noted that the popular meadows her season, Cement Table and Austin, were not this season, Big Wet and Ranger were.

Richard Theil and his weed crew came out looking for bull thistle. Rats they found it. I spent 3 days assisting with their work. The two largest area of infestation was NE of Scaffold, and meadows about 2 miles west of the ranger station leading to Sugar Loaf creek.

Questions I'd like feed back on: What is the policy on ducks/cairne in the backcountry? On maintained trails and classic off trail routes? Next question: Near copper mine pass is a shrine of sorts at the sealed opening. A wooden board upon some rocks displays a variety of ore samples, plus there is a white tarp in meshed in the earth. Leave these, try to haul out the tarp, is it historical? Next year I hope to get a picture.

Is Sylvia Haultain going to be able to provide this station with a digital camera?

Ranger and Lost Lakes area

I believe this is the 3rd year since this station did not have consistent long term coverage. I came to this area about 6 times, average 2 times a month. SCA Cheryl Yaussi came to the area 3 times. From my perspective it seems having more coverage would be beneficial for the following reasons: *) I consistently made contact with multiple parties which included large groups and organized groups, *) I consistently was reducing and removing fire rings, *) I consistently made contact with parties that did not have permits, typically claiming the info they received (it seemed to be they called some NF office,

next year I hopefully can make my questions more pointedly) said not required since starting in the national forest, *) I wrote 2 violation notices for improper food storage.

From the Roaring River Ranger Station it takes $\frac{3}{4}$ of a day to reach the area. Presently it is not practical to use horses, though I did using Sugar Loaf as a layover location. The grazing in the area is not close to the ranger station and there are no drift fences to help retain the horses. This would be a good place to use electric fence. As mentioned previously there would be some advantages/luxury to have the horses trained on electric fences for retaining the horses overnight.

There were two large and possibly critical trees, which have fallen near this ranger station. The trees were used for station set-up. If the 2003 season is not planning on having full time coverage, ie not setting up the ranger station, I recommend taking the time to re-organize, remove and set-up a temporary cache I believe would be useful. Ideas which come to mind are: *) the tarp is rotted, a new tarp was put in place at the end of the season, could be packed out, *) caching a tent, sleeping bag cooking stuff and water filter for staff coming to patrol the area, *) There are two large (stand about 4') propane tanks, seems they could be put to use else where, ie fly to Roaring River. *) there is some sun damaged plastic which could be hauled out and *) maybe an inventory by container could be written up. *This station does not presently have a hand pump water filter.*

Maintenance

The status of the cabin is generally very good. New screens were brought in, and I painted them, and the back door I replaced the screen (bear tore it up). The water system worked very well, at the end of the season some of the black hose was replaced, holes were made from wear on the river bottom. Metal pipe is exposed along the way to the river, I wonder if work should be started on burying it? Trail crew removed some unused metal pipe stuck under rocks in the river. These pipes I imagine are trash from previous water set-ups. Who would be the right person to ask, maybe Ned since he spent some time out there? Soon the cabin could use a paint job, possible project for boy scouts or sierra club? *The front door could use a screen door, dimensions are with Jim Gould.* The screen door would allow so much more light, and keep out flies, mice and other crawly stuff. The previous 2 Roaring River Rangers have requested new beds. A suggestion from Catie Karplus is a wooden frame similar to the bench in the main room. If 2 were made, then for those with partners could make a full size bed or 2 single. Excellent idea! *Again, Jim Gould has the dimensions.* If the miracle of new beds occurred, then a box spring and very lumpy saggy mattress needs to be flown out. There are 2 director type chairs in the cabin, without canvas, so not usable. *Either buy new canvas or have some made.* I would be willing to sew if a machine was made available to me. The tight fit is 20" plus thick seam to be pinched in chair, so maybe 23 X 16. The director chairs are the only "guest" chair plus there is a light weight metal chair, will back haul the director chairs sometime if unable to make them usable.

The bulletin board in front of the cabin was replanted, was leaning on the fence. Work was done on the drift fences, but no major work. Next year some post will be dealt with.

SIGN REQUEST FOR ROARING RIVER AREA

Also comments on signs

Sign Request

- 1) Bear Box with an arrow >, this will be planted at Commanche meadow. There is one at Sugarloaf which is a post with 2 signs for both directions and about 2 ½ from the ground.
- 2) There are two passes which need signs and both need to be two signs for each direction of travel along the crest between kings and sequoia.

Kings Canyon National Park
Elizabeth Pass 11,375 elevation

Sequoia National Park
Elizabeth Pass 11,375 elevation

Kings Canyon National Park
Sillman Pass 10,180 elevation

Sequoia National Park
Sillman Pass 10,180 elevation

Please make similar to other pass signs.

Sign request submitted by Jim Gould around 10/22/02

- 3) The trail coming in from Sunset Meadow needs an Entering Kings Canyon National Park and the other typical verbage about permits, guns and pets. This sign is for the Seville Lake trail.

Comments about area signs

- 1) There are a few junctions with multiple signs on multiple post, any reason not to consolidate to one post? Area: ranger station Roaring River and junction to Ranger Lakes
- 2) Down hill from Colby Lake is a sign, it is an older one metal with red lettering. It is not at a junction, states mileage to Roaring River ranger station and to Big Wet meadow. I think this should be removed.
- 3) At the National Forest and Kings boundary on the Seville Lake Trail and Rowell Meadow are the wooden signs, should these be removed or left leaning against a tree?
- 4) At Elizabeth pass there is a registration metal box. I would like to remove it, comments please.