

## **MCCLURE MEADOWS 2003 SEASON END REPORT**

### **GENERAL SUMMARY**

After law enforcement and EMS training my season as the McClure Meadows ranger began on July 3, 2003. Hiking in from Florence Lake, I arrived at McClure Meadows on July 4, 2003.

Upon opening the door to the ranger station, I noticed that the interior of the station had again been ransacked by the local marmot population. They had apparently chewed their way into the cabin through the sill log. This will be discussed later.

Visitation was as usual, very light until the middle of July. Then use increased greatly, matching or exceeding the numbers recorded in the summer of 2002. John Muir Trail through hiker use has increased every season. Pacific Crest Trail use has also increased yearly. The majority of visitors are either doing the North Lake to South Lake loop or doing a out and back trip from Florence Lake

The John Muir Trail is the main corridor of use, with most hikers camping at the Piute Bridge, McClure Meadows or Evolution Lake. Darwin Basin gets the next highest level of use, and then Goddard Canyon, Martha Lake and Davis Lakes and the Ionian Basin.

Hikers frequently stop by the ranger station for information or just to chat with the ranger. Most mornings, when at the station, I have multiple visitor contacts.

Many camping areas are available Piute Bridge entrance to the park. The Piute Bridge area is one of the more heavily used, with as many as three to ten groups camped there on a given night. Above the Piute entrance, use is more widely dispersed with many good sites available near the upper two bridges.

In Evolution Valley, good camping sites are available at Evolution Meadow, McClure Meadow, Colby Meadow, and at the head of Evolution Valley near Darwin Creek and Meadow. The west end of Evolution Lake has many good camping areas and is used by many nightly. The east end of Evolution Lake is more limited for camping. Sapphire Lake has only a couple of good sites. At Wanda Lake, a few sites are available, but camping is limited and can be a problem if a large group is present.

Even with the high use the McClure patrol receives, the area is still looking about the same as in past years; the same camps are used night after night, year after year.

All fire pits have been rebuilt in the area. Unnecessary ones have been removed. All fire pits are built low to the ground with a minimum of rocks and an open front to allow for routine maintenance. Routine maintenance is needed about every three weeks.

**VISITOR SERVICES:**

MONTH	# OF VISITORS	MILES HIKED
JULY	327	181
AUGUST	741	246
SEPTEMBER	226	135

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

TWO CITATIONS FOR DOGS IN THE PARK

**SEARCH AND RESCUE:**

September 1, 2003----Overdue hikers-----Walked out Cedar Grove

**MEDICAL:**

One Helicopter evacuation----- Altitude related problems

There were only two law enforcement incidents that required citations - both cases involved a single dog within the backcountry. One of these involved a person who wrote for a permit for a friend and a dog. A permit was issued without mention of the dog not being allowed. After receiving his citation, he said he would challenge this action. I told him to leave the park. Afterwards, he was reported over-due, and a SAR was initiated. A day and a half later he arrived at Cedar Grove, although his intended destination was Florence Lake.

### **SERVICE INCIDENTS**

Assisting visitors is an on going job for the backcountry ranger. On a daily basis McClure Meadows this summer, I assisted visitors with information concerning the area, gave medical advice, relayed information, gave weather reports, and provided any kind of assistance needed to make the visitors' stay more enjoyable and safe.

Agencies doing survey work in the area included:

National Bird Populations

California Department of Fish and Game (deer studies)

Resources Management did two mammal surveys, one near Lake 11,106 and the other at the Piute Bridge. Few animals were sampled during these surveys.

Roland Knapp's group studying mountain yellow-legged frogs came through and reported that many of the lakes with frogs had Chytrid fungus. A map with their findings is included in this report.

Nate Stevens performed a study in which he photographed the Darwin and Goddard glaciers and compared the size with photographs from 1908. Nate's photos

reveal a large decrease in the size of the glaciers. Photocopies of the photos are included in this report.

## **RANGER STATION**

During Park Superintendent Dick Martin's visit, we discussed the need to restore the McClure Meadows cabin. The main problem is that the cabin does not sit on a foundation. The sill logs are rotten and if left for a few more years the cabin will deteriorate and not be salvageable. I showed Dick the problems, as well as the large holes the marmots have chewed through the sill logs. Besides needing a foundation the cabin needs much general repair so that it will be more accommodating and sanitary to the resident ranger.

According to a past ranger log (Randy Morgansen 1990), the cabin was built by the State Department of Water Resources in 1941-1943. The state should have a record of this, making the cabin available for historic funding.

I cleaned some old trash and unused equipment from the attic to facilitate viewing for reconstruction options. I would really like to return to McClure Meadows next year in order to participate in this project.

The cabin solar system is functioning well. The wood stove could use two new sections of six-inch stovepipe. The propane stove needs to be replaced with a different system using a regulator on the tank. This has already been purchased and will be installed next season. The pit toilet will possibly need to be re-dug next season.

## **WILDERNESS PROTECTION**

Evolution Meadow was not grazed until August 1<sup>st</sup>, when a large group from D and F pack station camped and grazed for three days. The animals managed to get into

the wet areas on the south side of Evolution Creek causing significant imprinting on the meadow.

McClure Meadow was not grazed until August third, when a Rainbow group came through with 14 head. These animals went up the valley and were found at Darwin Meadow the next day where they caused significant meadow damage. After Rainbow's trip, McClure Meadow was grazed seven more times, mostly with small numbers, but one night High Sierra Pack Station had fifteen head.

McClure Meadow is not a good meadow for grazing due to all the wet areas. There are no good stock camps on the north side of Evolution Creek, and the south side is very wet.

Colby Meadow has a good stock camp on the south side of Evolution Creek, but has only been getting limited use. If possible, it is a good idea to try to encourage groups to use Colby Meadow instead of McClure.

The IBP concessionaires were almost exclusively stock groups. Carol Lattimier's "Call of the Wild" went to Evolution Lake with stock support. Her group did a good job, as always, leaving no signs behind. The pack stations using the area also did a good job. In early season I gave Fletch, of Bishop Creek, and Justin, of H.S.P.S., verbal warnings about tying animals too close to camp. Bob and Justin from H.S.P.S assisted with trash removal from the McClure station, removing all of the trash I collected and all the station trash this season.

The trailheads and junctions are all well marked with signs. There are two NPS signs as you enter the park at the Piute Bridge (most visitors enter here). "Hell for Sure"

Pass has a sign that is in good condition. Lamark Col has an NPS sign. And Goddard Canyon has a sign at junction of the Goddard Bridge.

The two trailheads on Forest Service land at Florence Lake and at North Lake have good minimum impact information but no Park Service information. NPS information should be added to these signs.

There were no major bear incidents in the Evolution region this season. Two or three times bear sign was observed. There were two minor incidents. In the first, a bear got packer Bob's lunch. The second was from last season: a bear found a cache left by a packer on the south side of Evolution Creek at McClure Meadows. Both incidences were reported on BIMS forms.

Wildlife sightings included a young golden eagle over McClure Meadows, and several mule deer, both down in the San Juaquin River and up high in the Darwin Basin. Researchers from Dinky Creek Wilderness reported trapping three fishers this summer. Several pikas were seen whenever I made patrols above tree line.

Other than campsite and grazing impacts, there are no significant resource problems except for the off-trail trails going to McGee canyon and Darwin Basin. I installed a series of check dams and a drain on the McGee canyon trail to prevent erosion. A few more sections of this type of work should be done on these trails to try to minimize this type of resource damage.

This season I finished rehabilitating or removing all fire pits in the area, making all the camps with fire pits look more natural and cleaner. Approximately 150 fire pits were removed or rehabilitated.

We need to educate visitors on how to care for backcountry fires. EXAMPLE:  
Use gas stoves when possible. Plan your fire so it burns down to ashes before leaving (to prevent charcoal build-up). Do not burn any foil or foil lined wrappers in fire. Do not fill fire pits with dirt. PLEASE HELP RANGERS KEEP OUR CAMPS AND PARK CLEAN.

See campsite Inventory for camps at Evolution Lake and Evolution Valley.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

A problem exists at the stock camp at Evolution Meadow. Too many animals have been tied to hitch lines between the camp and the trail. Pawing and scuffling have made deep depressions in the ground and added much manure to the area. We need to make sure all users get the word to make their hitch lines farther from camp. The best solution that 9-2-30 and I came up with is to have stock parties take their stock to the camp that the trail crew uses on the south side of Evolution Creek, one hundred yards below the meadow. See photos taken by 9-2-30 (9/17/03).

Another stock-related problem area is in McClure Meadows: the good stock camps are on the south side of the meadow which causes a large amount of hoof-print damage traveling to and from camp. A solution can be to have the group use the backpacker camp just south of the ranger station and to put their hitch line above the John Muir Trail far away from camp. The other option is to try to have stock parties go to Colby Meadows to camp.

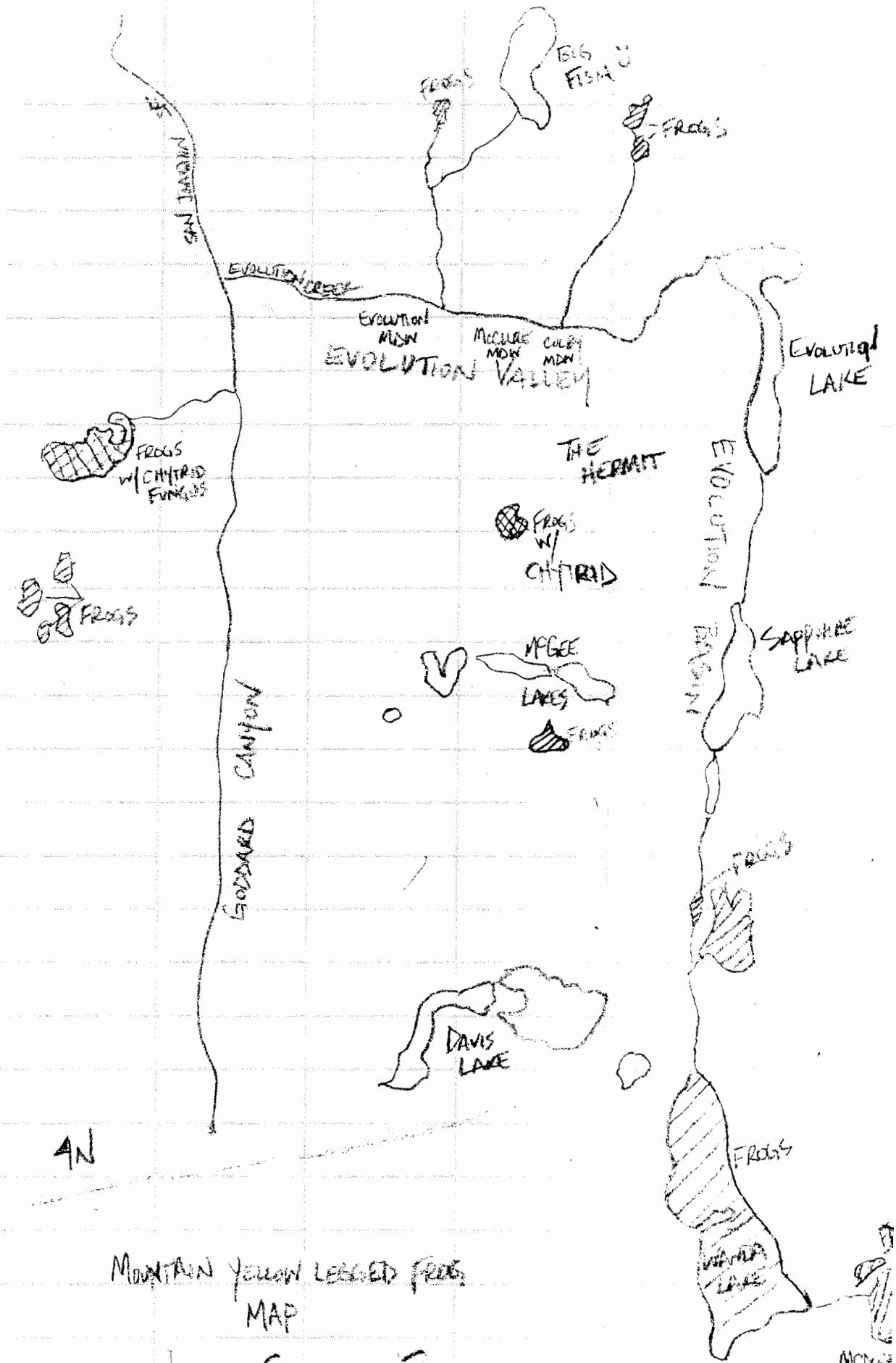
### **EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

- 2-3 PLATES
- 1 PROPANE TANK

## **EQUIPMENT ON HAND**

- 2 POLARGAURD SLEEPING BAGS
- MISCELLENOUS UTENSILS
- 3 MATTRESSES





MOUNTAIN YELLOW LEGGED FROG  
 MAP  
 by Casey Rae

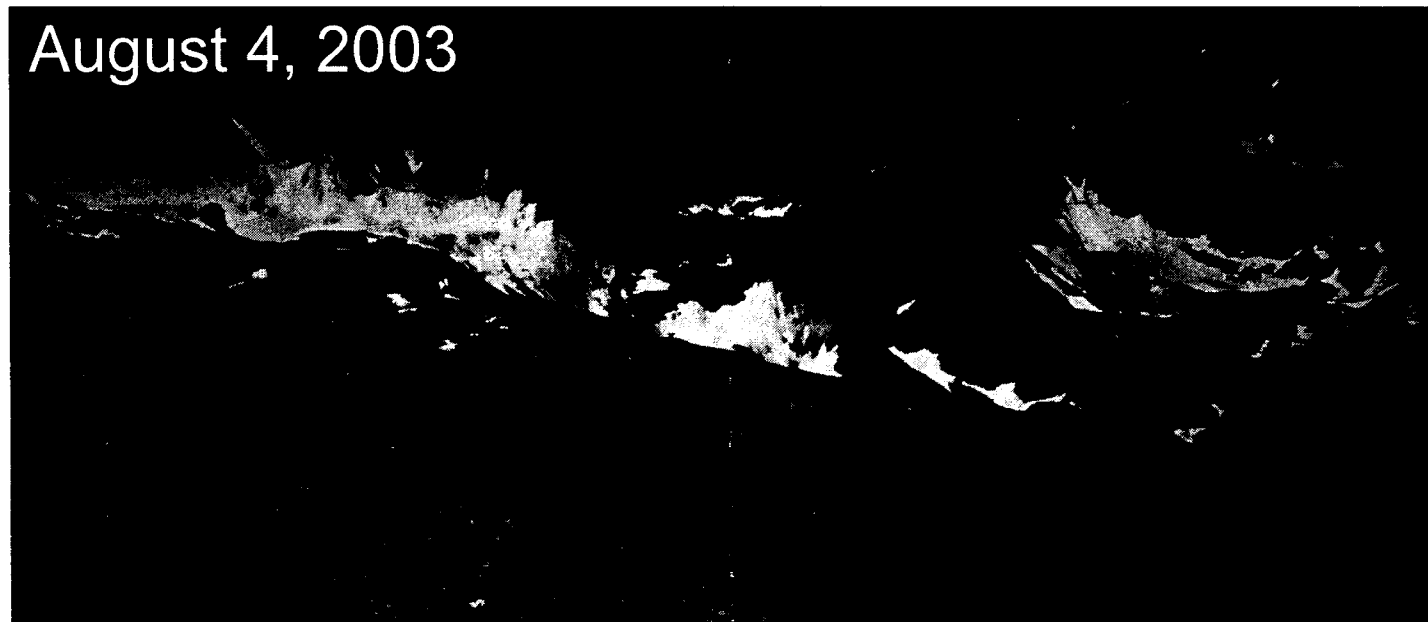
MOUNTAIN  
 YELLOW  
 LEGGED  
 FROG

Goddard glacier, Kings Canyon National Park

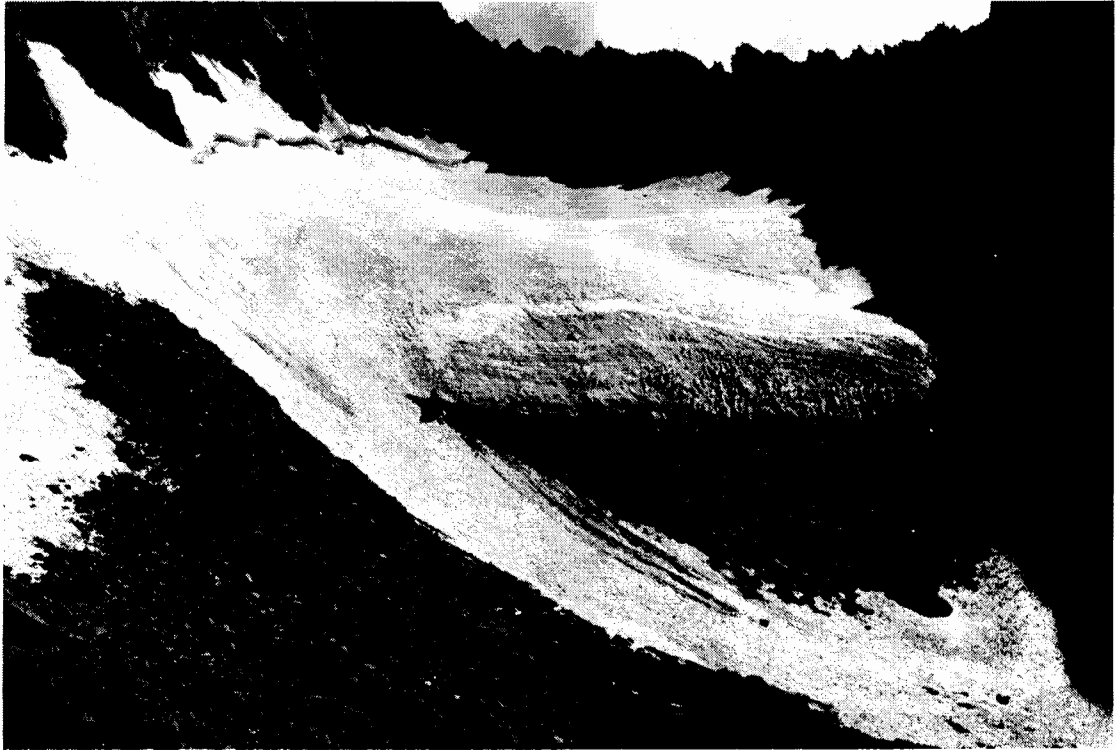
August 13, 1908



August 4, 2003



Darwin Glacier, Kings Canyon National Park  
August 14, 1908



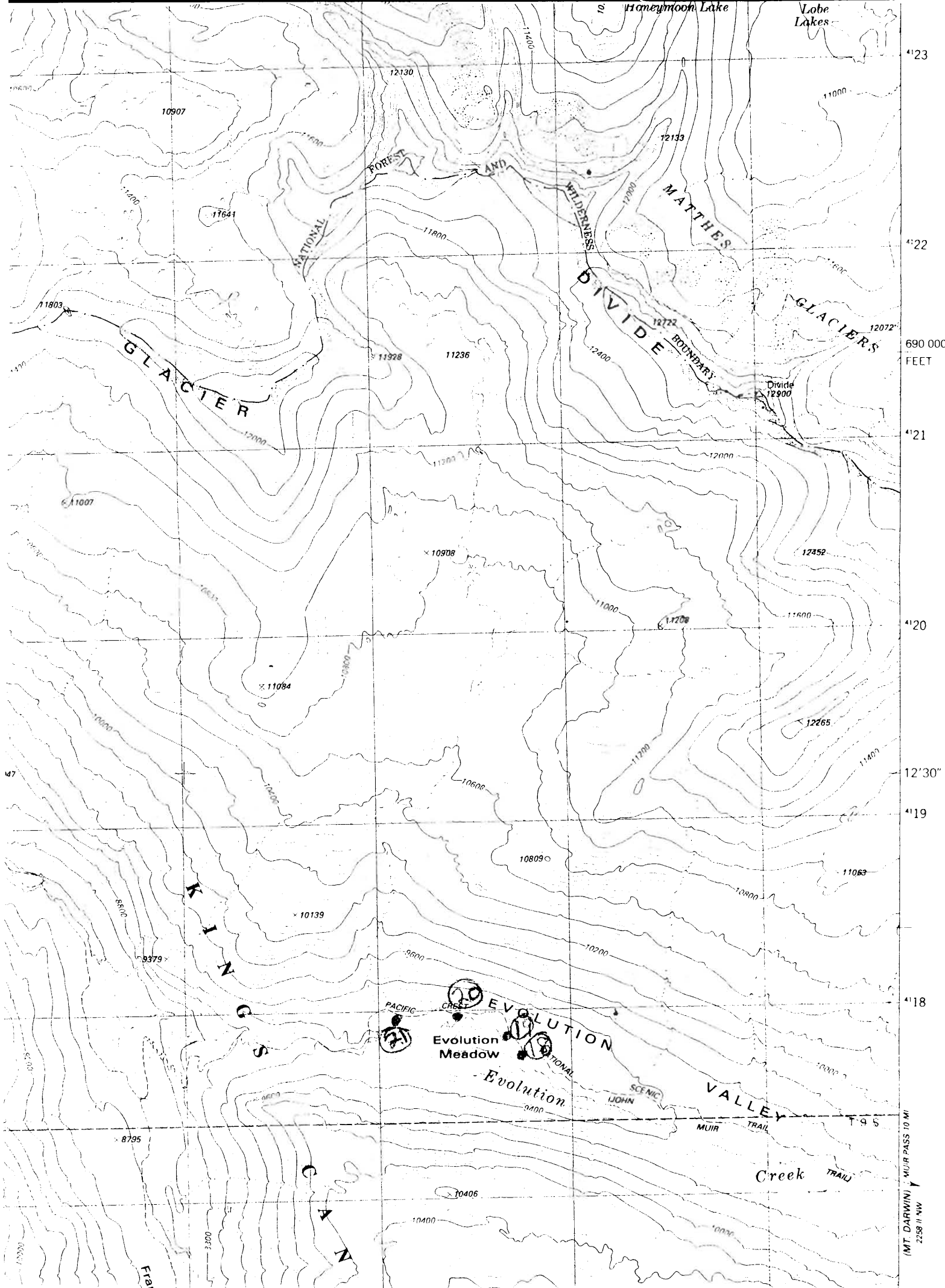
August 2, 2003



Campsite Inventory  
Evolution Valley

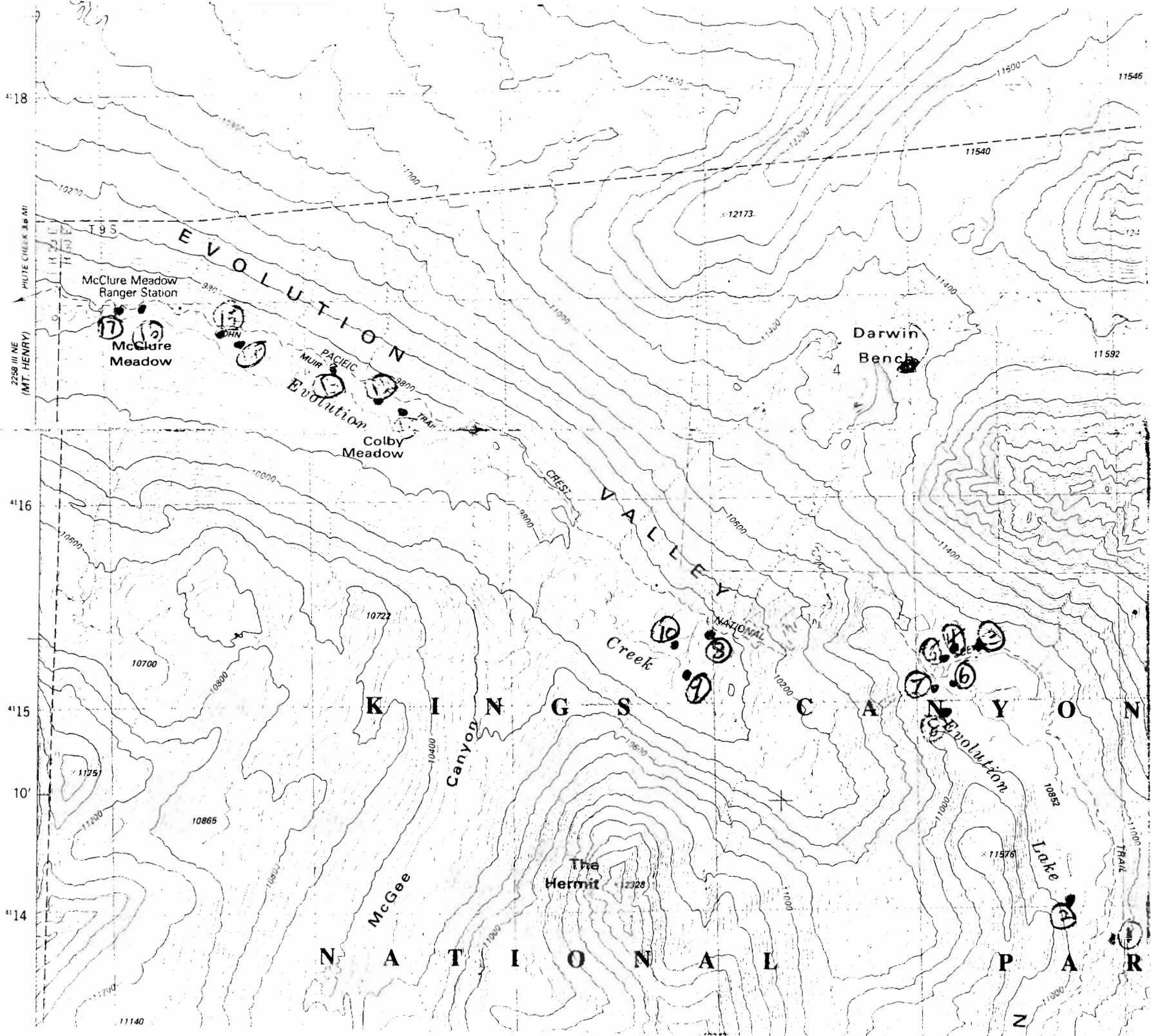
## Campsite Inventory (see maps)

	# Tent Sites	Distance H <sub>2</sub> O	Distance trail	Impact (1-3)	Use level	Comments
①	1	120'	100'	2	1	only site on SE side of Lk.
②	2	100'	500'	1	1	only good site on SW side of Lk.
③	1	150'	110'	2	3	last trees
④	2	120'	100'	2	3	last trees
⑤	2	120'	100'	2	3	last trees
⑥	4	60-100'	100'	3	3	open, no trees
⑦	1	50'	400'	2	1	at outlet, waterfall
⑧	4+	100'	500'	2	1	open, many sites
⑨	4	125'	300'	2	2	former stock camp w/ firering
⑩	2	100'	350'	1	1	firering, wood avail.
⑪	1	150'	300'	1	1	firering
⑫	3	125'	80'	2	2	firering, wood scarce
⑬	3	100'	150'	1	1	firering, wood avail.
⑭	3-4	120'	100'	3	3	firering, wood scarce
⑮	2-3	125'	75'	3	3	firering, wood scarce
⑯	2	60'	85'	3	3	firering, wood scarce
⑰	3-5	100'	110'	2	2	1 firering, multiple tent sites
⑱	2	175'	60'	1	1	firering, wood avail.
⑲	2	120'	80'	2	2	firering, wood scarce
⑳	5	100'	100'	3+	2	stock camp wood scarce
㉑	3-4	110'	60'	2	2	good hard ground



41°23'  
41°22'  
690 000  
FEET  
41°21'  
41°20'  
12°30"  
41°19'  
41°18'

(MT. DARWIN) MUIR PASS 10 MI  
2258 11 NW



2258 III NE  
(MT. HENRY)  
PIUTE CREEK 3.0 MI

41°18'

41°16'

41°15'

10'

41°14'

T 95

McClure Meadow  
Ranger Station

McClure  
Meadow

PACIFIC  
MUR  
Evolution  
TRAIL

Colby  
Meadow

Darwin  
Bench

EVOLUTION  
VALLEY

Creek

K I N G S C A N Y O N

McGee  
Canyon

The  
Hermit

N A T I O N A L P A R K

Evolution  
Lake

11140

11500

11546

11540

12173

12123

11400

11592

10000

10900

10722

10700

10800

11175

10865

10610

10200

11000

10852

11576

11100

11000