

**PEAR LAKE  
END OF SEASON REPORT  
2011  
Christina Gooch**

**A. General Summary**

This season the Pear Lake Ranger Station was staffed from July 7 through September 28. Due to yet another heavy snow year, the Lakes Trail and many of the campsites did not fully melt out until mid-July. I was able to spend the last few weekends in June out at the station, and was fully mobilized into the backcountry on July 8. As the snow rendered the trail impassible for stock, supplies were brought out to the station via helicopter.

Things got off to a slow and quiet start this season, as many hikers were deterred by the lingering winter conditions during June and July. The months of August and September saw normally high visitation, however (in spite of about two weeks of unfavorable weather in late September, with significant hail, thunderstorms, and unseasonably cold temperatures), and the Lakes area still seems to be a top spot for day-hikers and backpackers on short overnight trips. This season I spent quite a bit of time patrolling the Lakes and Alta trails and the Pear and Emerald camping areas, particularly during the weekends when visitation was highest. During the week focused more attention on popular local cross-country destinations such as Moose Lake and the Tablelands, and was once again able to spend an average of 1-2 nights per week further out on overnight patrols. This allowed me to increase the depth of my knowledge of cross-country routes within the patrol area, and to become familiar with longer cross-country routes that originate from the Pear Lake area.



**Raging Marble Fork near Pear Lake Ranger Station, Late June**

Statistics:

	<b>Visitor Contacts</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>EMS</b>	<b>SAR</b>	<b>Fire Pits</b>	<b>OB Campers</b>
June/July	539	237	0	1	7	1
August	743	228	3	0	2	1
September	476	243	0	0	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1758</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>

**B. Visitor Services**

**a. Contacts**

**i. Day-Hikers and Backpackers**

This season I encountered roughly equal numbers of day-hikers and backpackers in the Lakes area. The Lakes Trail and the Alta Trail continue to be extremely popular day-hiking trails, with Heather Lake and Alta Peak being some of the busiest spots. I also contacted roughly 250 backpacking parties this season, ranging in size from 1 to 15 members per party. Pear and Emerald Lakes on the Lakes Trail and Panther Gap, Mehrten Meadow, and Alta Meadow on the Alta Trail seem to be the most highly-used overnight destinations. Cross-country routes to the Tablelands, Moose Lake, and Alta Meadow were also popular overnight itineraries.

**ii. Stock**

I encountered no stock in the Pear Lake area this season other than NPS stock from Wolverton carrying out local area projects. The Wolverton packers supplied and demobilized the Phoenix/Clivus waste maintenance crew, who spent 5 nights at Pear Lake. They also made at least 3 trips to the Pear Lake station to deliver wood pellets for the station stove and to backhaul waste from the composting toilets. The station was demobilized using stock from Wolverton as well. As far as I know, there was no overnight stock use in the area this season.

**iii. Groups**

I encountered several organized groups staying in and passing through the area this season, including:

- Outward Bound (2) – passing through the patrol area as part of a 22 day trip.
- UC Santa Cruz (2) – first-year orientation groups, backpacking through Pear and Emerald Lakes, Moose Lake, the Tablelands, and the Twin Lakes area.
- Walden West Outdoor Science School (1) – group of 10-15 students (10-12 years old) staying at Pear Lake

**b. Law Enforcement**

I feel that having a non-commissioned ranger at Pear Lake worked well again this season, as I encountered very few situations that I felt required a law enforcement officer on scene. When issues did arise, I was effectively able to work with frontcountry law enforcement in Lodgepole, who contacted parties and issued citations when necessary.

I encountered very few regulation infractions in the Pear Lake area this season. Out-of-bounds camping was once again the most common infraction, with 1 incident occurring at Pear Lake, 1 at Emerald Lake, 1 at Aster Lake, and 1 at Heather Lake. Food storage

violations at Pear and Emerald were the next most common infraction, for which I gave 5 verbal warnings. Out of the all of the backpacking parties I contacted over the season (250+), 3 parties had failed to obtain a wilderness permit. I contacted one of these parties as they were hiking in and sent them back out to Wolverton (where they touched base with frontcountry law enforcement); the other 2 parties had already spent the night out by the time I contacted them (resulting in 1 citation and 1 verbal warning from Lodgepole law enforcement). One of these groups was also OB camping at Heather Lake with a fire, and received citations for the OB camping and the fire as well.

I also worked with front-country law enforcement to deal with a problematic group hiking with a dog on the Lakes trail. This group was issued a citation upon returning to Wolverton. I encountered 3 parties hiking with dogs on the Lakes Trail.

**c. Search, Rescue, Medical Incidents**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation</u>
July 3-4	Alta Trail	SAR	
August 11	Hump Trail	Broken Ankle	Litter
August 14	Thunder and Lightning Pass	Shoulder Dislocation	Helicopter
August 17	Pear Lake	Ankle Injury	Helicopter

There were three medical incidents in the Pear Lake area this season, and one search in the Alta area. In addition, I participated in a medivac from Guitar Lake on July 28, and was involved in several minor medicals, a vehicle accident/extrication, and one river body recovery in the front-country during June and early July.

There was also a wildfire east of Alta Meadow ignited by lightning-strike around September 9. A crew of three firefighters hiked out to contain the fire, which to my knowledge never grew larger than one quarter of an acre. (See photo below.)



**Smoke from Alta Fire, taken from Alta Peak.**

### **C. Use Patterns**

The Pear Lake area continued to be a popular destination for both day-hikers and backpackers. Many of the day-hikers I contacted stopped at the Watchtower or Heather Lake, while many continued all the way to Pear Lake. The majority of the backpackers on the Lakes Trail this season were coming from Wolverton and staying at Pear or Emerald Lakes. A significant number (around 20-30%) continued on to Moose Lake or the Tablelands, and a small percentage of those pursued longer cross-country routes, ending at Cedar Grove (via Cloud or Deadman Canyon) or Crescent Meadow (via Bearpaw). Most day-hikers along the Alta Trail were headed for Alta Peak, while most overnigheters along the Alta Trail stopped at Panther Gap, Mehrten Meadow, or Alta Meadow. Some continued through Alta Meadow to Moose Lake and out the Lakes Trail or vice versa.

The current quota numbers seem to be appropriate as the campgrounds rarely overfilled. Once again, the trailhead rangers did a wonderful job this season at keeping track of how many parties were destined for each campground and attempting to keep things from getting too crowded.

### **D. Natural Resources**

#### **a. Research Equipment**

Research groups from UCSB/UCR and SEKI (Kevin Skeen, Jim Sickman, Andi Heard) were very active in the Lakes area this season, with 1-4 researchers staying at Emerald Lake for several nights every other week or so from mid-July to mid-September. The researchers generally stayed at Emerald during the week when things were less busy, and their staying there never seemed to result in issues of overcrowding. It was actually quite nice to have a Park Service presence at Emerald, as they were able to talk to visitors about the area and their research, and were able to keep me informed of any issues or potential problems occurring at the lake. The group also had quite a bit of research equipment in and around Emerald and Aster Lakes. The equipment was well contained, however, and did not seem to attract much attention from visitors. Weather stations near Dome Lake and east of Pear Lake and water monitoring stations along the outlet of Dome Lake and in the lower Marble Fork also remain.

I did not run into any other research groups in the Lakes area this season.

#### **b. Bear Activity**

There were more bear sightings in the Pear Lake area this season than in the past two seasons. One particular yearling seemed to spend a good portion of the summer milling around the area, and was spotted twice right outside of the station. Several visitors reported hearing night-time bear activity at Emerald Lake. I also spotted a bear near Dome Lake, and saw fresh tracks at around 11,000 along the Tableland Divide in early July.



**Yearling outside Pear Lake Station.**

### **c. Wildlife**

Pika activity seemed much lower this season than last. I heard and saw almost no pikas before late July, and after that only heard them sporadically until mid-September, when they were seen and heard on a regular basis. During the past two seasons, pikas were often seen in the Lakes and station area and along the Lakes Trail above the Watchtower.

Coyote activity in the Lakes area was particularly low this season. I saw no coyotes in the Lakes area, and only had one visitor report of a sighting at Emerald Lake. I did see tracks and heard calls higher up in the Tablelands area.

Mouse activity in the cabin was moderate. I caught an average of 1-2 mice per week after the initial surge of trappings shortly after arriving to the station in early July. Other rodent activity in the station was negligible.

Marmots were once again abundant and bold in the station area and the Pear and Emerald camping areas, particularly during the months of July and August. Their activity started tapering off significantly by late August.

## **E. Cultural Resources**

### **F. Backcountry Facilities**

#### **a. Pear Lake Hut**

Overall, the cabin seems to be in great shape. The clivus was emptied in August, and should be set to go another year or two before its next emptying.

Unfortunately, upon my first trip to the cabin in late May, I found things in quite a messy, disorganized state. There were several dirty dishes in the sink, crumbs and trash on the

tables and floor, and old, moldy food items left on the shelves. The pellet stove had also been *left on* (at a low setting), and the propane tank was left in the open position (both on the tank and on the connector valve). I don't know who the last group to use the hut over the winter was, but I imagine the mess occurred sometime between the winter hut-keep's departure and my arrival.

#### **b. Propane System**

The propane system was damaged over the winter, when one of the connecting valves on the pipes leading from the tanks into the building broke under the heavy snow load. (As the propane tanks were left open, this allowed the contents of an entire tank to leak out.) I replaced the damaged valve early on in the season, and the system seems to be working well. Future improvements to the propane system should include:

- Replacement of flexible copper lines with standard black iron pipe
- Building of a protective box to house the 4 propane tanks

#### **c. Pear Lake Hut Roof**

The Pear Lake roof was replaced in the fall of 2009. It looks great and seems to be holding up very well!

#### **d. Solar Power**

The solar system at the Pear Lake station seemed to have problems holding a charge this season. The charge indicator stayed at "yellow" for most of the season, and would regularly drop to a blinking red with just a slight increase in use of power. After some trouble-shooting with David Karplus, I was still unable to fix the problem. It seems that the issue may lie with the wiring or with the solar panels themselves, as the batteries are quite new and the number of solar amps reaching the system is unusually low. Savannah Boyano is aware of the problem, and is working on getting the system looked at and repaired before the winter season gets underway.

The solar-powered 8v ice chest continued to be very useful, chilling the food by day and insulating it by night. This allowed fresh food to be stored significantly longer.

#### **e. Phoenix Composting Toilets**

The composting toilets at Pear and Emerald were emptied this August by a maintenance crew of four from Lodgepole. The cleaning went very well, and I continue to support emptying the toilets on a regular, bi-annual basis. Overall, the toilets served their purposes and stayed in relatively good shape throughout the summer. I also provided routine cleaning of the privies once or twice a week (sweeping, scrubbing, refilling wood chips, etc.).

Due to its dysfunctional solar mount, the Emerald Lake Phoenix remains in much worse shape than the one at Pear. The solar mount powers the ventilation fans in the collection tanks, thereby minimizing odors and fly activity (by causing the flies to be swept out the ventilation shaft). The Emerald privies were, therefore, consistently smellier than those at Pear, and were severely fly-infested.

**f. Heather Lake Toilet**

The Heather Lake pit toilet was in a pitiful state after the winter snowmelt. The wooden walls of the toilet are caved inward, and the platform and seat appear to be on the verge of collapse. (See photo at right.) The trail crew has decided to remove the toilet and fill in the pit later this fall.



While I believe the destruction of the current toilet is necessary, (b) (5)



**G. Trails**

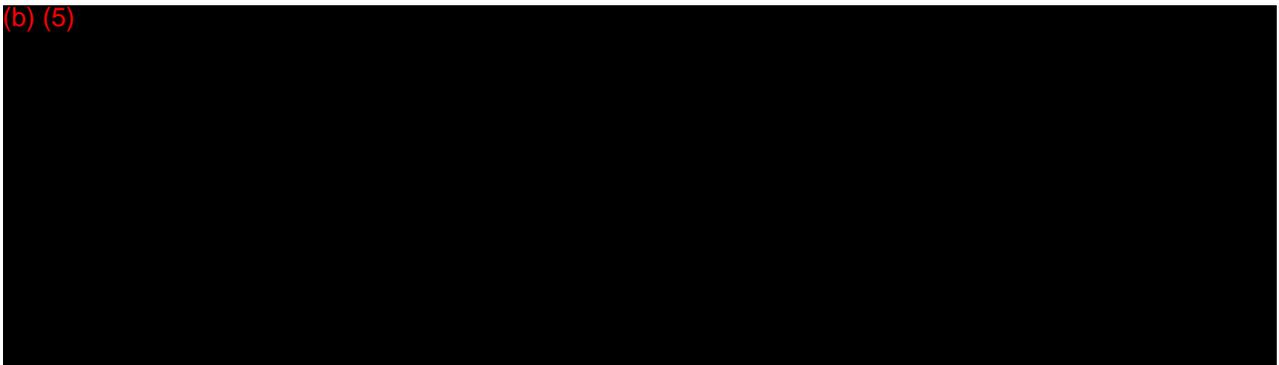
**a. Trail Work**

The heavy snows this winter and spring resulted in a large number of downed trees along the Lakes Trail and one large boulder along the trail between the Watchtower and Heather Lake (see photo below). The Kaweah trail crew was stationed on the Hump for two weeks in August, removing the downed trees and assessing the fallen boulder for blasting operations. The frontcountry trail crew also did a fantastic job removing debris on the Wolverton end of both the Lakes and the Alta Trails.

The fallen boulder was safely and successfully blasted from the trail on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Recommendations for future trail work include the following:

(b) (5)





**Boulder fallen across trail in between Watchtower and Heather Lake.**

### **b. Trailhead Signs**

Wolverton Trailhead – The signs at the Wolverton trailhead were recently updated. They are in good condition and provide, in my opinion, necessary and useful information for day and overnight hikers.

### **c. Trail Signs**

Heather Lake – The sign stating “Day Use Only – No Camping or Fires” seems to be a little too far from the actual lake for people to make a connection. The sign is currently posted just east of the Hump-Watchtower intersection, at which point the lake is not yet in view. I think the sign would be more noticeable and more effective if it were moved 200 feet down the trail. Also, as trail crew is planning to remove the Heather Lake pit toilet this fall, the “Toilet – 200 Yards” sign should also be removed next season.

Pear and Emerald Lakes – The bulletin boards at the Pear and Emerald Lake campgrounds are worn and in poor shape. I removed the board at Pear Lake, which had collapsed beyond repair over the winter. New boards should include the following information:

- Maps of the designated campsites
- No Fires
- Active Bear Area
- Permit required for overnight use

## **H. Camp Areas**

### **a. Area Overview**

The Lakes Area is an extremely popular camping destination, receiving high visitor use and impact each season. The visitor population encompasses a wide range of experience

levels, attracting both first-time backpackers and devotees coming back for their 20<sup>th</sup> summer trip to Pear Lake. Due to the high-use the area receives, I think that the presence of bear boxes, composting toilets, and numbered campsites are essential for and effective at minimizing impact of this use.

The Alta Trail receives slightly less use, but is still a popular day and overnight use area. Some of the specific problems noted along the Alta Trail are mentioned below.

## **b. Conditions**

### **i. Lakes Trail**

The Pear and Emerald Lakes camping areas were quite busy this season, but stayed in relatively good condition in spite of the high use.

The “bird-house” sign at Pear Lake was destroyed under the winter snow, and should be replaced next season. Several of the carsonite posts also broke during the season. I still believe that an alternative to carsonite posts should be considered due to the poor durability of the material. Unfortunately the rocky terrain makes it difficult to implant sturdier materials (eg, wood) into the ground, but it is something to keep monitoring and considering.

I still feel that it is extremely important to keep the structures and installations (including toilets, bulletin boards, signs, campsite posts) in the Lakes Area in good condition. Neatness and care of our structures implies to visitors that the NPS makes the effort to respect and protect this high-use wilderness area, and therefore indirectly encourages visitors to do the same. I believe that folks surrounded by disintegrating campsite posts, crumbling sign posts, and dirty, unmaintained bathrooms are much less likely to appreciate and respect the aesthetic value of the area, and more likely to leave behind trash, fire scars, and trampled vegetation.

**Pear Lake Hazard Tree:** Several years ago a hazard tree next to Site 5 was identified and marked. I was able to locate the tree towards the end of the season, and temporarily moved Site 5 away from the tree to a spot on the granite below the bathrooms (next to Site 3). A full rehabilitation of the old Site 5 should be undertaken next year, and a more appropriate, long-term replacement site should be scouted. For now, however, the current replacement site should serve its purpose.

### **ii. Alta Trail**

The Alta Trail continues to receive significant visitor use and impact. There are a number of long-standing trail maintenance issues (noted earlier in this document) that have yet to be addressed. The trailhead rangers were able to patrol the Alta Trail quite frequently this season, however, and did a wonderful job at contacting visitors, cleaning campsites, and minimizing the impact both directly through clean-up and indirectly through visitor education. Mehrten Meadow still seems to see the most use and impact, but it stayed in much better condition as far as trash, toilet paper, and messy fire rings this season than last.

The other popular campsites along the Alta Trail (Panther Gap and Alta Meadow) showed some signs of impact this season (particularly in the form of fire rings at Alta Meadow during busy weekends), but are in relatively good condition.

**Alta Peak Register:** During a patrol to Alta Peak on September 24, I discovered that the peak register and the metal cartridge canister in which the register is usually housed were both missing. I searched around the base of the summit in case someone had dropped or thrown the canister over the edge, but had no luck locating it. It's possible that someone hid it among the boulders below the summit (or that someone stole the whole thing and packed it out with them...? Heavy souvenir!), in which case it may end up reappearing on its own. If it does not turn up by next spring, however, we'll have to look into getting a replacement canister and register up to the peak.

#### **c. Fire Evidence**

I encountered a fair amount of fire evidence in the Lakes Area this season, including fire rings at Heather Lake (2), Emerald Lake (3), Pear Lake (1), the Hump (1), and along the Lakes Trail (1). I also destroyed 2 fire rings at Alta Meadow. Once again, most of the fire damage appeared to be leftover from late last fall, with only 3 new fire rings appearing in the Lakes Area throughout the season. I also destroyed one elaborately-constructed fire pit too close to the water at Big Bird Lake. (b) (5)

Fires in Alta Meadow continue to be a bit of problem – as the meadow rests right at 9,000 feet in elevation, campers tend to be unclear on whether or not fires are permitted there (although the trailhead rangers are generally explicit in explaining the regulations).

#### **d. Food Storage**

Most of the visitors to Pear and Emerald Lakes used the bear boxes in the campgrounds, though a fair number (around 15%) also carried canisters. I continue to believe that the bear boxes at Pear and Emerald are essential for maintaining a high level of proper food storage in the area. However, the boxes are in poor shape – they are difficult to open and close and they are not mouse proof. I would recommend replacing them (particularly the lower box at Pear Lake). Almost all parties I contacted that were traveling cross-country (away from the bear boxes) were carrying canisters.

I'm happy to report that it seems we've made some headway with the previously problematic UC Santa Cruz Wilderness Orientation groups. During the past two seasons, they have refused to carry canisters for their week-long, 15-member trips, claiming to counterbalance and post 24-hour watches. I ran into two of these groups this season, and their attitude towards canisters and food storage in general seemed to have improved significantly. The school's Wilderness Orientation program recently purchased a large number of canisters, and plans to purchase more as funding allows. Two of the groups I encountered were carrying canisters. The third group did not have canisters, but had planned their trip around the location of bear boxes. I was very pleased to notice these

changes! The group leaders also claimed that they were strongly encouraging the program directors to take food storage more seriously.

*I still strongly support making the carrying of canisters mandatory for all cross-country travel in the Tablelands/Moose Lake area.*

### **I. Permit System and Trailhead**

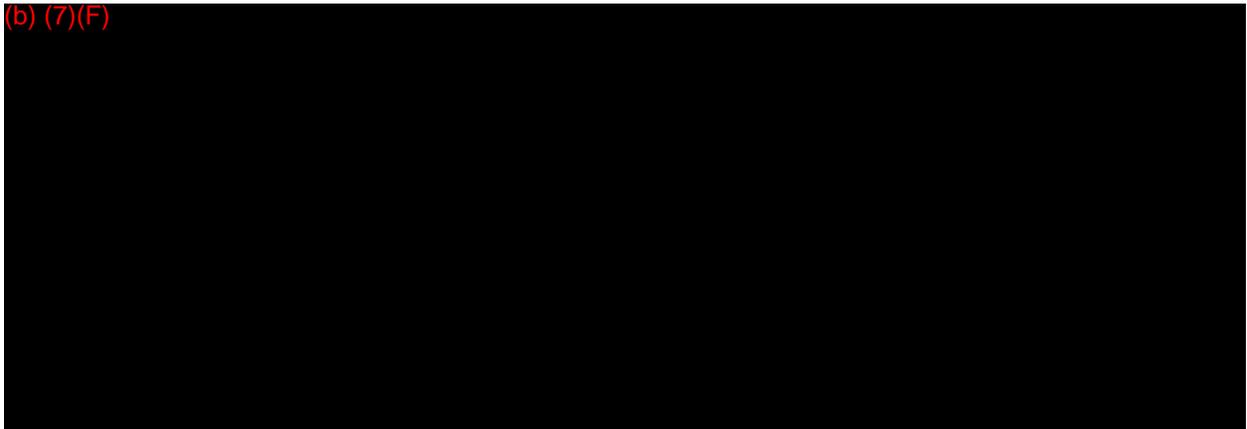
Nearly all of the backpackers I contacted this season left from the Wolverton trailhead, obtaining their permit at Lodgepole.

The Lodgepole trailhead team was particularly cohesive and effective this season. Communication with all three rangers (Ellyse Deldin, Myrth Killingsworth and Bobby Vaughan) was excellent, and they did a fabulous job of informing and educating visitors about area rules and regulations. As in previous seasons, the trailhead staff informed me of large or unusual groups in the Pear area, and on particularly busy weekend provided updates on party numbers and itineraries. This information was appreciated and was very helpful in planning patrols and making contacts.

All three trailhead rangers made it into the Pear area at least once during the season, which gave us an opportunity to exchange knowledge of the area and to discuss patrol issues. Once again they also got out on the Alta Trail quite a bit during the season, which I think was wonderful. I greatly appreciate the patrol overlap in that busy area.

### **J. Radio Communications**

(b) (7)(F)



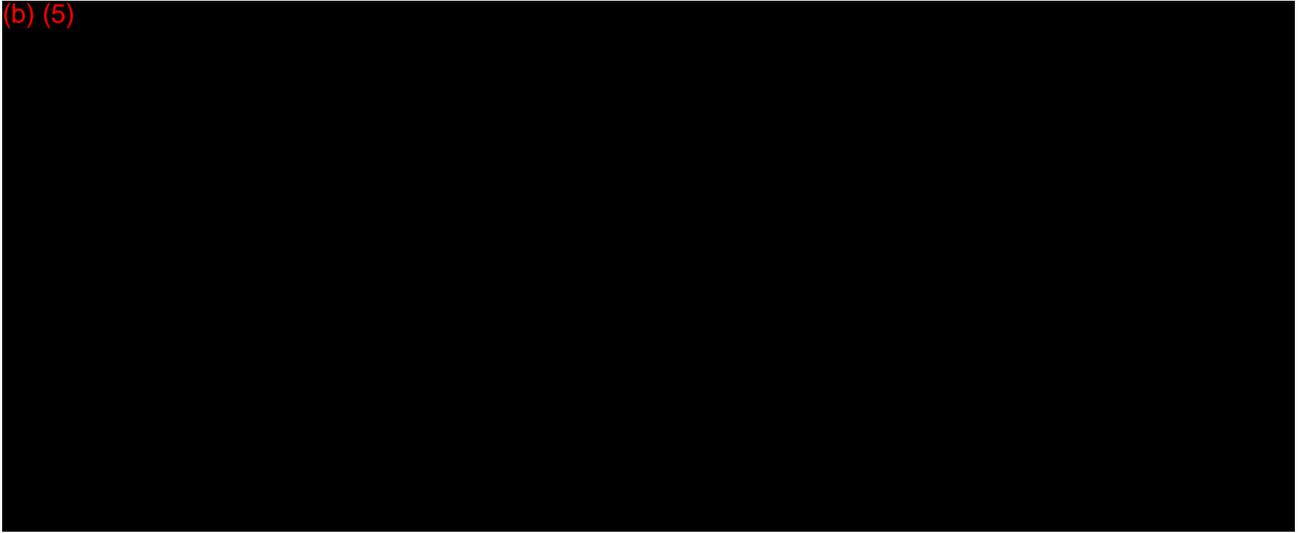
### **K. Needs for Next Year**

- Alta Peak register
- Ammo canister for Alta Peak register
- Propane
- Forms:
  - BIMS
  - Lost Person Reports

- Visitor comment forms
- Iodine prep pads
- Mount for solar panel at Emerald toilet

**L. Recommendations**

(b) (5)



**M. Pertinent Inventory**

As of 09/28/2011, pertinent inventory at the Pear Lake Station includes:

- 1 full and 1 half-full propane canisters
- 3 bags of wood shavings (plus an additional 3 bags at the Emerald toilets)
- 3 old batteries from the solar system

New items acquired for the station this season include:

- Digital indoor/outdoor weather station (thermometer/barometer)
- 2 Brunton compasses
- 1 set of trekking poles

All fire extinguishers and O2 cylinders were pressure tested at the end of the 2008 season. All other items from previous inventories remain, including EMS supplies, SAR gear (cache inventory was updated in 2008), winter SAR gear, sleeping bags and pads, and cabin living supplies.



# **End of Season Report**

Little Five Lakes Ranger Station  
June 13-September 24, 2011  
Alison Steiner



Little Five Ranger Station, 7/16/11

A. Visitor Services:

a. Contacts:

**NOTE:** Due to late snowmelt, I did not begin my season at Little Five until July 14<sup>th</sup> (2½ weeks later than usual). The persistence of snowy passes into mid-August also resulted in fewer backpackers and no stock users early season. Thus, contact numbers are significantly lower than in years past.

i. Backpacker/Dayhiker: 484/22

ii. Stock (includes stock use in Kern Canyon and Cliff Creek):

1. Total Animals/Total Use Nights: 65/397
2. Commercial: 30
3. Private: 1
4. Administrative: 34

b. Law Enforcement/Citations:

No citations were issued for violations in the Little Five area this summer. As always, education proved the most effective means by which to handle law enforcement situations.

c. SARs and Medicals:

Date:	Location of Incident:	Incident Details:	Evacuation/Resolution:
8/24	Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin (reported via satellite phone)	Medical: male w/deep leg laceration (to the bone)	Evacuated via helicopter
8/25	Nine Lakes Basin (reported at Bearpaw R.S.)	Medical: 30 yr. old male fell 25 ft., temporary LOC, rib and knee injury, respiratory distress	Evacuated via helicopter
8/26	Monarch Lakes (contacted at Groundhog Meadow)	Medical: 50+ yr. old male w/sprained ankle	Response by 8-1-7; self-evacuated to Mineral King
9/14	Little Five Lakes Ranger Station	SAR: separated party between Big Five and Little Five Lakes	Response by 8-1-7; located 17 hours later between Little Five Lakes and Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin, self-evacuated to Mineral King

d. Fatalities:

There were no fatalities in the Little Five area this season.

e. Weather:

Due to the heavy snowpack and a surprisingly cool spring/summer, snow persisted on the high passes through mid-August and meadows remained wet all season. Aside from a series of storms in late-July and mid-September, skies were generally clear.

f. Fires:

There were two lightning-strike fires in the Little Five area this summer, the Rattlesnake Fire (less than 1 acre) and the Willow Fire (~8 acres). Neither fire created significant smoke. Smoke from the Lion Fire (south of the park), however, was an issue of concern in late July. For approximately two weeks, visibility at Little Five was reduced to  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in the afternoons.



Lion Fire, 7/18  
(from Long Lake Drainage, looking south)

B. Use Patterns:

a. Backpackers:

Most visitors in the Little Five area hike loops that begin and end in Mineral King. As in previous years, the most popular loops were: Franklin Pass to Sawtooth Pass (or Blackrock Pass) and Timber Gap/Blackrock Pass to Sawtooth Pass. These loops saw little traffic until early August because of the late snowmelt. Visitation continued into mid-September.

Although use in the Upper Big Arroyo increased last year (due to a new "Eagle Scout Peak" badge for Boy Scouts), it decreased this season. I attribute this change to the fact that the most popular route up Eagle Scout Peak remained snow covered until early September. Thus, no new campsites or use trails developed in the area.

The heavy snowpack also affected use patterns within the Kern Canyon. On three separate trips, the number of backpackers whom I contacted in the Kern surprised me. The presence of snow on the high passes until early to mid-August most likely caused this increase in use. With the Kern Ranger Station unstaffed this summer, the invasive plant crew (stationed in the Canyon) found themselves

needing to perform many of the duties that normally fall to wilderness rangers. On several occasions, backpackers and commercial stock users asked them to assist with difficult route finding/trip planning questions, tasks for which they were not trained.

b. Stock (commercial and private):

I contacted only one private stock party this season, a gentleman with one burro who camped in Upper Cliff Creek for two nights.

I did not contact any commercial stock groups. However, Rock Creek Pack Station, Horse Corral, and Golden Trout Pack Station ran trips into Rattlesnake Canyon and the Kern Canyon throughout the summer.

c. Administrative:

Trail crews comprised the majority of administrative use in the Little Five patrol district this summer. The Hockett Crew spent eleven nights at the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin and two weeks in Lower Lost Canyon. The crew had 12 head of stock while in the area, totaling 132 use nights in the Big Arroyo and 168 use nights in Lost Canyon.

On August 27, the Construction Crew moved to Lower Rattlesnake Canyon to repair the switchbacks leading into the Kern. They remained in that location until September 21.

On August 30, 8-1-2 and 8-1-10 met me at Forester Bench Meadows (with 5 head of stock). We dismantled the pit toilet at Forester Lake, as well as 5 illegal fire pits at Forest Bench Meadow, on August 31. 8-1-10 continued to patrol the Little Five area until September 5.

d. Commercial (non-stock):

I contacted two commercial (non-stock) groups this summer, a 12-person Outward Bound group in Nine Lakes Basin and an 8-person Sierra Club group at the Little Five Lakes Ranger Station. Both groups had valid commercial use permits and were well-versed in park regulations.

e. Aircraft:

Although military over-flights were common along many of the district's trail corridors and cross-country routes, low-flying aircraft in the Little Five area were not. I reported no low-fliers this summer.

C. Natural Resources:

a. Bear Activity:

Bears were present, but not problematic, in the Little Five area this summer. On July 25, I saw a yearling in Lower Rattlesnake Canyon, and a visitor reported a bear sighting at Spring Lake on

August 17. Although bear scat was found throughout the Big Arroyo and Soda Creek, there were no reports of bear activity in campsites or bear sightings along these popular trail corridors. I attribute the absence of habituated bears to the presence of food storage lockers throughout the area as well as to the use of bear-proof canisters.

b. Wildlife:

Wildlife sightings this year included a coyote and two blue grouse above Franklin Lakes, a rattlesnake in Lower Rattlesnake Canyon, and several pikas on the districts' high passes.

Aggressive deer continue to frequent the campsites at Pinto Lake, chewing on people's gear and clothing in search of salt. The Mineral King trailhead rangers should inform all parties camping at Pinto Lake about this problem.

c. Vegetation:

The combination of an above-normal snowpack (146% in the Kern Drainage and 164% in the Kaweah Drainage) and a relatively rainy summer kept meadows in the Little Five area wet throughout the season. This caused most meadow opening dates to be delayed by several weeks. The only meadow that opened on its projected wet-season date was the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin Meadow (87-3).

9-2-31 completed residual biomass in Middle Rattlesnake on 9/15, and I clipped the Long Lake core and reference on 9/15 and 9/16.

On August 10, Upper Funston (86-2) was closed to grazing by Management Directive #9. Stock use nights had exceeded the estimated capacity, and 8-2-20 expressed concern regarding meadow impacts. I assessed the condition of this meadow on August 17. Approximately 35% of the vegetation was closely cropped (less than 1" tall) and stock trails had developed throughout the meadow.



Stock Trail



Cropped Vegetation  
(white square on left side of photograph is an official NPS pocket pad)

A native needleminer outbreak in the Big Arroyo caused the most notable change in vegetation this season. Although Tony Caprio first documented the outbreak in 2008 and again in 2010, it was far more noticeable this year than last. In mid-July, 90% of the lodgepole pines within 1½ miles of the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin appeared to be dead or dying. By late summer, these trees had grown new needles, making the affected lodgepoles less obvious. The outbreak is concentrated on the canyon floor, extending up the canyon walls to only 10,200 feet.



Needleminer Outbreak, Big Arroyo, 7/18

D. Cultural Resources:

a. Historic Sites:

8-1-1 and I assessed the condition of the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin on August 28. The logs at the bottom of the cabin have been damaged (possibly by bears). There is also evidence that campers are using shingles as firewood (as suggested by previous rangers). I recommend that the historic preservation crew examine the cabin next year.



Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin, 8/28

The Patrol Cabin's current sign asks campers to refrain from sleeping and storing food in the cabin. Seeing as how the cabin is locked, this sign should be removed and replaced with an interpretive sign.

E. Backcountry Facilities:

a. Ranger Station:

8-1-1 and 9-2-31 set the yurt up on July 9. They repaired the electric fence (by replacing several rotten posts) as well as the stovepipe's support system.

The winter's heavy snow load damaged the porch by cracking two beams. When a friend and I took the yurt down on September 17, we reinforced these sections of the porch. We stored the dome under the yurt platform (instead of the porch, as in years past) and protected it with a table, boards, and tarp (picture below).

Over the years, marmots have chewed holes in the plywood storage box covers and the drip edge. New plywood lids and drip edge should be sent in next year.



b. Signs:

As suggested in last year's EOS report, 8-1-1 and I installed a "Restoration Site" sign in front of the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin. All other signs in the district remain in good condition.

F. Trails:

a. Trail Activities:

In late July, the Kern Crew cleared hundreds of fallen trees from Chagoopa Plateau and Rattlesnake Canyon. However, a large tree between Chagoopa Plateau and the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin left the trail impassible to stock until late August (when the Hockett Crew removed the tree).

The Hockett Crew arrived on 8/27. They spent eleven days in the Big Arroyo and two weeks in Lost Canyon. They removed 40+ down trees, blasted in Soda Creek, and completed all basic trail maintenance.

At the end of the season, the Construction Crew moved to Lower Rattlesnake Canyon to rebuild an eroded section of trail. It is now stock passable.

b. Problem Areas:

The west side of Sawtooth Pass is the most problematic section of trail in the Little Five area. Visitors continuously complain that the trail is indiscernible. Other problem areas include the section of the High Sierra Trail between the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin and Kaweah Gap (where there is double braiding) and the Willow Meadow Cutoff/Lower Big Arroyo (where the trail is difficult to find). All other trails in the area are in excellent condition.

G. Camp Areas:

(b) (5)



a. Rehab/Restoration:

The restoration project that I completed at the Little Five Lakes bearbox site last year overwintered well, and I saw no backpackers using the rehabbed tent pads this summer. As predicted, campers began sharing the area (a development that helped to reduce the number of new campsites created around the lake).

An old restoration site near the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin began to expand with use this season. Thus, on 8/28, 8-1-1 and I rehabbed the site by burying rocks and moving duff. Next year's ranger should closely monitor this area.



Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin rehab site, 8/28  
(before/after)

In August, a new campsite appeared (only two feet from the trail) at Lower Big Five Lakes. I restored this area by removing a large fire pit, spreading duff throughout the site, and redistributing rocks.



Lower Big Five Lakes rehab site, 8/20  
(before/after)

b. Sanitation:

Typically, sanitation is not a concern in the Little Five district. However, it was a problem this season, particularly at the Cliff Creek/Timber Gap junction. On August 22, I found used toilet paper scattered along the trail as well as unburied human feces in one of the campsites. (b) (5)

Prior to my visit, no NPS employees had cleaned these campsites. (b) (5)

Because of this location's proximity to the frontcountry, it receives considerable use (often by inexperienced hikers).



Cliff Creek/Timber Gap Junction, 8/22  
(unburied human feces)

As recommended last year, the pit toilet at Forester Lake was removed this season. On August 30, 8-1-2, 8-1-10, and I dismantled the pit toilet/privacy screen and rehabbed the site. On September 21, the trail crew assisted in sling loading the toilet to Mineral King.



Forester Lake Pit Toilet (before)



8-1-10  
(removing trash from pit toilet)



8-1-2, 8-1-7, and 8-1-10  
(dragging pit toilet base)



Forester Lake Pit Toilet (after)

The new privacy screen around the Monarch Lake pit toilet did not overwinter well. By mid-August, it had collapsed. Due to the toilet's location (three feet from the trail), I recommend that the Park replace the three-sided privacy screen with a four-sided one.



Monarch Lake Pit Toilet

c. Fire Rings:

Fire ring maintenance proved an ongoing project this year. The decrease in backcountry staffing led to lighter coverage throughout the western portion of the Park. This caused an increase in oversized, trashy fire pits, especially in the Kern Canyon and at the Cliff Creek/Timber Gap junction.



Oversized Fire Pit at the Cliff Creek/Timber Gap Junction, 8/22  
(before/after)

In early September, I removed 10 lbs. of trash from fire pits and campsites in Rattlesnake Canyon and the Kern. On September 17, I removed 25 lbs. of glass and metal from a campsite near Upper Big Five Lakes.



Trashy Fire Pit and Campsite, Kern Canyon, 9/3

In addition to fire pit reduction and trash pickup, I rehabbed 47 illegal fire pits throughout the area this summer. This number was higher than the last two years, in spite of my shorter season. In 2009, I removed 26 fire pits; in 2010, I removed 35.



Illegal Fire Pit, Lower Big Five Lakes, 9/17  
(before/after)

d. Firewood Availability:

Firewood seems readily available in most sites where campfires are permitted. The area around the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin is the one exception. Although ample firewood exists in the area, visitors have stripped the immediate vicinity of all reasonably sized pieces.

e. Food Storage:

Most visitors in the Little Five area use food storage lockers and/or bear-proof canisters. Some backpackers still hang their food. It appeared that most food was being stored properly. As a result, there were no reports of bear activity in area campgrounds.

H. Permit System:

a. Compliance:

Permit compliance was quite high this summer. I contacted only one group without a valid wilderness permit. Rather than issue this group (comprised of three teenage boys) a citation, I requested that they pick up a retroactive permit from the Mineral King Ranger Station upon exiting the backcountry.

b. Issuing Office:

The issuing offices did a good job this summer. Visitors were

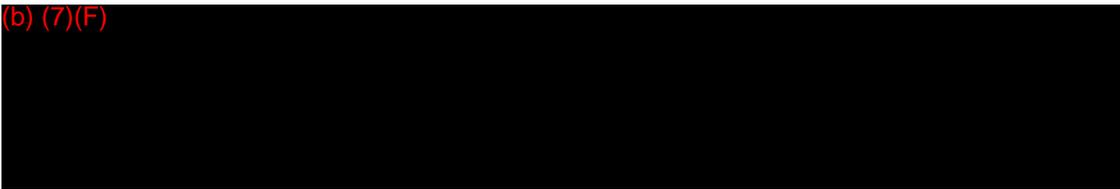
generally well-versed in backcountry regulations and made aware of pertinent issues.

(b) (5)



I. Communications:

(b) (7)(F)



J. Needs for Next Year:

Medical:

- 1 bag valve mask
- 1 suction device
- 1 adult size nasopharyngeal airway
- 1 adult size oral airway
- 1 ready bag
- 1 blood pressure cuff (to leave at station)

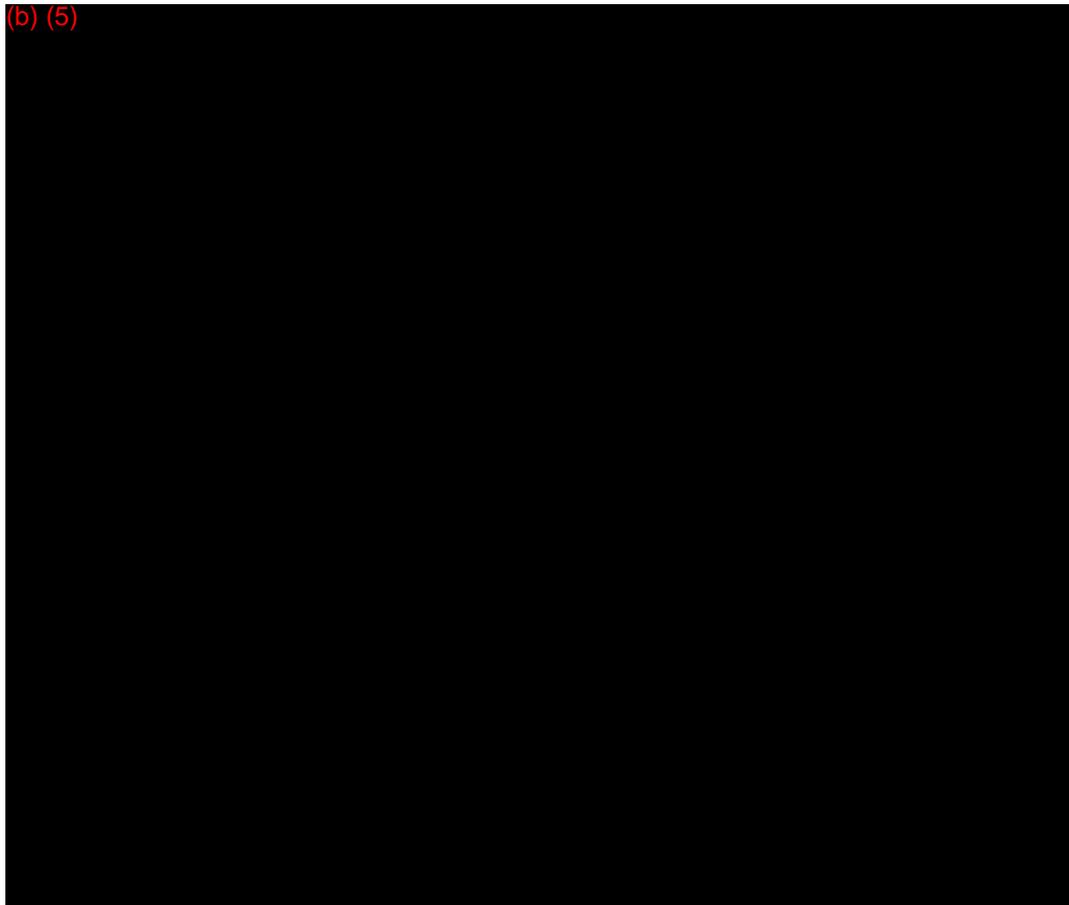
Other:

- 1 bottle wood glue
- 1 chair
- 2 lighters
- 1 log book
- small and large ziplock bags
- 1 roll duct tape
- staples (for Swingline Deluxe Desk Stapler)
- 7 BIMS forms
- 4 exotic plant observation forms
- rescue rope
- 2 rolls strapping tape
- 1 up-to-date CFR
- 1 small bottle bleach
- 2 rolls toilet paper
- 1 box aluminum foil
- coffee filters
- laundry detergent
- 15 large trash bags
- 3 small fuel canisters (for Pocket Rocket camp stove)

- 1 propane stove (stove at L5 is leaky)
- 2 plywood yurt box covers
- 1 tube super glue
- 25 small trash bags
- 2 tubes caulk
- 4 lost person questionnaire forms

K. Recommendations:

(b) (5)



L. Pertinent Inventory:

Maps:

- Johnson Peak-1
- Triple Divide—4
- Quinn Peak—1
- Kern Lake—1
- Mt Williamson—1
- Mt Kaweah—4
- Mineral King—3
- Chagoopa Falls—4
- Lodgepole—2
- Silver City—2

Kern Peak—1  
Mt. Brewer—1  
Mt Whitney—1  
SEKI General Park Map-1  
SEKI National Geographic Trail Map-2  
John Muir Wilderness/SEKI Map-1

Medical:

2 boxes alcohol prep pads	1 syringe
2 box bandaids	1 pair scissors
25 runsheets	lots of gauze pads
1 c-collar	(assorted sizes)
5 tampons	10 throat lozenges
15 SAR brochures	1 splinter kit
5 follow-up instructions	1 microshield
27 pair gloves	1 roll Tums
1 tick kit	lots of meds
3 SAM splints	(Aspirin, Advil, Tylenol)
1 surgical adhesive tape	1 stethoscope
(2"x10 yards)	1 large piece moleskin
2 muslin army bandages	2 non-rebreathers
4 ace bandages	2 nasal canulas
2 wire splints	1 nasopharyngeal airway
2 triangular bandages	variety of oropharyngeal
2 instant ice packs	airways
2 emergency sunglasses	1 O2 regulator
lots of steristrips	3 tanks oxygen
1 tube glucose	(1800, 1500, 1600 psi)
3 rolls athletic tape	

Other:

2 chairs (1 in bad condition)	29 sheets laminating paper
15 government pens	15 hangers
2 highlighters	1 clean bedsheet
5 sharpies	1 (old) rescue rope
1 mechanical pencil	1 yoga pad
4 regular pencils	11 rolls toilet paper
various mosquito repellents	4 paper towels
1 bottle dish soap	3 sponges
7 food storage locker lists	1 roll duct tape
24 wildlife observation forms	1 roll clear tape
1 exotic plant observation form	4 mousetraps
21 CUA forms	2 boxes matches
3 BIMS forms	½ box aluminum foil
25 AUO forms	9 tea candles

3 standup candles  
24 AAA batteries  
8 lithium AA batteries  
15 burlap sacks  
9 large trash bags  
25 small trash bags  
2 face masks  
1 helmet  
2 small propane tanks  
1/2 large propane tank  
8 "flammable" stickers  
2 small lighters  
1 box thumbtacks  
2 mosquito nets

30 SPF brochures  
1 pencil sharpener  
1 stapler  
1 large pair of binoculars  
3 pocket pads  
3 steno pads  
1 legal pad  
10 holey envelopes  
1.5 cans denatured alcohol  
1 can Coleman white gas  
3 small fuel canisters (1/2 full)  
4 large fuel canister (1/2 full)  
1 large fuel canisters (full)

Food (for 2012 setup crew):

5 bags black tea  
10 bags chai tea  
1 bag ginger tea  
5 bags green tea  
10 bags decaf tea  
2 cups ground coffee  
1 lb. coffee beans  
3 cups basmati rice  
2 Thai curry tuna packets (TJ's)  
10 coffee filters  
7 packets oatmeal  
2 packets instant grits  
1 bag split pea soup mix  
1 can diced tomatoes  
1 large can tomatoes  
2 cans kidney beans  
1.5 cups chili mix  
3 cups polenta  
2 cans black beans  
3 boxes mac 'n cheese  
1 can beef chili  
2 cans tuna  
1 bag ravioli

1 lb. farfalle pasta  
2 cans tomato sauce  
1 can salmon  
1 thai instant noodle mixes  
4 noodle soup mixes  
1 bag instant potatoes  
2 miso soups  
1 box triscuits  
1 bag plaintain chips  
1 bag dried mango  
3 fruit leathers  
1 small chocolate bars  
4 odwalla bars  
2 tomato soup mixes  
1 jar garlic stuffed olives  
1 bag cumin and chili chickpeas  
1 jar kalamata olives  
1 can anchovies  
2 cups white flour  
1 package yeast  
3 cups sugar  
2 beers

ROARING RIVER RANGER STATION  
END OF SEASON REPORT  
2011

A. GENERAL SUMMARY

I was on duty at Roaring River Ranger Station from 7-7-11 to 9-30-11. During the season I patrolled 742 miles of trail. I patrolled 582 miles on stock and 160 miles on foot. I contacted 1,034 people during the season.

B. VISITOR SERVICES

a) Contacts

- i. 468 Backpackers
- ii. 66 Day Hikers
- iii. 201 NPS & USFS
- iv. 6 Hunters
- v. 66 NPS stock users with 405 head of stock, 50 Private stock users with 89 head of stock, 147 Commercial stock users with 287 head of stock and 30 Day Riders with 35 head of stock.

b) Law Enforcement

Many contacts were made concerning food storage, camping and grazing regulations. Education and verbal warnings.

c) Citations

None issued this season.

d) Search, Rescue, Medical Incidents

Date	Location	Type	Evacuation
8-8	Roaring River Ellis Mdw. Rte.	injured NPS stock 2 horses ! mule	doctored scrapes & wounds in back- country
8-29	Roaring River	cracked tooth	self evac.
8-20	Cloud Canyon	CCC, eye injury	helicopter evac.
9-3	Roaring River	twisted ankle	refused runsheet, NPS stock evac.
9-11	Roaring River	sore knee(gave wrap)	Self evac.
9-23	Roaring River	sick horse(gave supplies, vet books)	
9-24	Roaring River	Sick horse(private) (horse used on a commercial trip, colic like symptoms, the horse was taken to a vet, but died during surgery)	Self evac.

e) Fatalities

None

f) Weather

It was a very snowy winter and there was a lot of snow and high water problems in July and August. Roaring River was high and white water until mid Sept. Most of the meadows were flooded when the water peaked in mid July. Colby pass and Elizabeth pass held snow until Sept. No stock crossed them this year.

g) Fires(natural, human caused not campfires)

#### B. USE PATTERNS

- a) Backpackers: Due to snow and high water use was light during July. August was busier, but many groups who planned to do cross country routes were warned about snow and most ended up turning back and sticking to the main trail routes until mid September!! Use was highest in late August and early September. The high numbers of downed trees also slowed down hikers.
- b) STOCK: The many downed trees on all trails in the area made stock travel very difficult. The main trail to Sugarloaf and to Roaring River was cleared in early July, so stock use was pushed to Scaffold meadows area and Grasshopper. Horse Corral Pack Station had many trips to the area in July. They hauled hay and moved stock to other grazing areas to make this possible. Most meadows were delayed for grazing due to flooding. High water and a bad creek crossing at Brewer Creek also kept use delayed into Cloud Canyon and downed trees kept Deadman Canyon closed to stock use until July 28th. Private groups came into the area later and were able to use some of the higher meadows.
- c) Administrative: The trail crew this year consisted of the 20 person California Conservation Corp Crew(CCC). They were kept supplied by NPS packers Rex and DJ with 2 pack strings. Their main camps were at Sugarloaf Flat, Scaffold Meadow and Grand Palace in Cloud Canyon. Many CG, LP and GG employees came through the area. Yes! and many AM employees as well. Four rangers came into Roaring River for horse training, other horse training was conducted at Grant Grove and Redwood Canyon. Keith Hamm was in Cloud Canyon and near the station looking for Archeological sites. Two Cedar Grove bear techs. came through looking for a tagged bear and a lost bear collar near Avalanche Pass. I expected the Historic Preservation crew to work in Cloud Canyon, but they never came in. (?)
- d) Commercial: I met a few Outward Bound and Yosemite Mtn. Guide trips through the area. Horse Corral Pack Station had many full service trips to Roaring River area and Cedar Grove Pack Station had at least one. The Sequoia High Sierra Camp is sending many day hikers to Seville and Lost Lakes and over Kanayer Gap and to Mitchell Peak. I turned around one group who had a dog with them, they were headed to Seville Lake.

#### C. NATURAL RESOURCES

- a. Bear Activity: No problem bears were reported in the area. A light brown mother bear with a red tag in her left ear and a small dark black cub was seen many times near Grasshopper meadow in July and early August. They would leave as people approached. A yearling blonde and brown bear was seen near the Ranger station and in lower Deadman Canyon during this same time period, it did not approach people or camps.

- b. Wildlife: There were many does and bucks near the station in the spring, but few in the fall. One rattlesnake was seen near Sugarloaf Creek. Mosquitoes were in abundance!!
- c. Vegetation: Wildflowers were fantastic and the spring flowers lasted through August!! Slow snowmelt and high creeks flooded the wet meadows and caused grazing dates to be pushed back for grazing, many to Sept. 1. Most had large standing ponds. Grazing was scattered as much as possible as things dried out. Horse Corral Pack Station packed in a lot of hay to feed and I packed in a lot of Alfalfa pellets and horse feed.(4 x more than normal) I supplemented with 16 bags of pellets, 8 bags of horse feed and 4 bags of dry cob and 2 bags oats. Meadows were monitored in September, in between rain and hail storms!! I had my first visit to Ellis Meadow. The old trail was fairly easy to follow from Sugarloaf and the meadow was wet, buggy and beautiful.

#### D. CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a. Prehistoric Sites: Keith Hamm recorded some sites up Cloud Canyon. We looked for new sites near the station and Deadman creek, but we didn't find anything.
- b. Historic Sites: The old snow survey cabin and the Barton/Lucky cabin are in the same condition as last year. The Shorty cabin in Cloud Canyon still needs work, which I thought was going to be done this year, but wasn't. (?) The Shorty cabin on Moraine Ridge is in worse condition this year. The tree that fell on it a few years ago and was not removed....has broken 1 - 2 rafters and caused the back roof to fall in near the fireplace. Can anything be done to halt the destruction? I looked for the Shorty Cabin at Ellis Meadow, but I did not find it. Does anyone have directions?

The known to me Basque Sheep herder carvings were checked this season. I also found the carvings north of the Moraine Ridge Shorty's cabin. I am trying to GPS the sites, take photos and I will be starting a binder on local carvings.

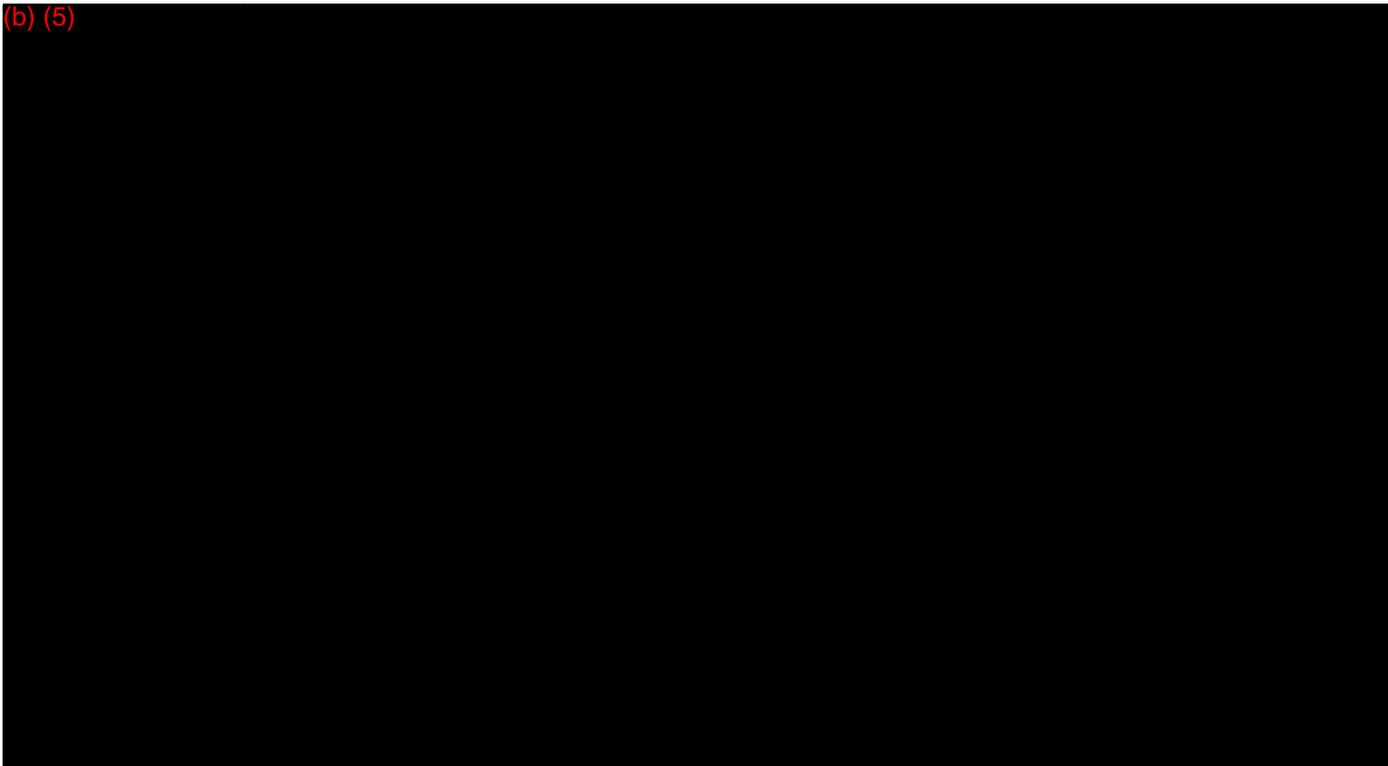
The group of three hikers came in to search for the lost P-40 airplane from 1941 again. This year they searched the upper Ferguson, Barton Peak and Ellis meadow areas. no plane was found.

#### E. BACKCOUNTRY FACILITIES

- a. Ranger Station: For the second year in a row, someone had been in the station through the back bedroom window. This year the solar batteries were drained and both doors were bolted from the inside, doors and drawers had been left open and mice had gotten into food and supplies. Otherwise the station came through the winter ok. A large fork of a ponderosa fell off a tree and crashed behind the station. It was 50 ft. long and 20 inch. Many fence rails were broken by snow, On July 25th, BSA Troop 613 cut 6 poles with hand tools and replaced the broken rails and hauled the broken rails to the fire pit to be cut up later. I thank them for a good service project!

Roaring River Ranger station solar system: The system has been faulty for the last 3 years due to uninvited people hooking up wiring wrong and zapping the charge controllers and draining the batteries and leaving them dead. A bear tore off the wiring from the outside of the RS this year and critters have been chewing on the outside wires during the summer, so it is very difficult to figure out the problems with charging. The system was on blinking red most of the season and once when I was gone for a week, it rose u. to yellow, but no further. In the fall with less light and more rain, I can't be sure I'll even have lights, and I usually take out my radio batteries to charge them in Grant Grove. I need a new charge controller that will handle 3 panels and has lights and read-outs and new wire and conduit would be wise.

(b) (5)



The water system needs a new/better screened draft intake valve. two would be better, then there would be a temp. one for the short line in spring during high water and a permanent one for the end of the long line and the heavy weighted pipe end. It needs to fit to a 2" plastic line without coming off in the current. This will keep sand and debris out of the water lines.

b. Signs: Two forest service signs are still missing around Rowell meadow, the Marvin Pass sign is gone and has caused some hikers to miss the junction. The Seville lake sign was put back up after last years fire, but the Mitchell Peak sign is still gone. I could take these signs back in for them next year if they are available. I checked with the sign shop about the Grant Grove trail signs this spring, and they said they had all the requests that were done with the entire inventory about 4 years ago, but have made no signs, because they want a priority list.....who can check on this? Replacing these signs next spring would be a good horse/rider training project and improve visitor safety.

## F. TRAILS

A. I was able to ride and train the stock this spring at Cedar Grove. The trails were cleared, had good signage both at the road and on the trail. I often saw the trail crews working and met the CCC crews often. I then was able to move the stock to Grant Grove. As I tried to ride the Grant Grove trails, I found the trails in poor repair, with missing or damaged signs, gutted trails due to no general maintenance or no water bars. The trails were brushy and hard to follow. There were many downed trees that had been there for many years. There were huge trees down on the Redwood Canyon trail that took us 30 minutes with horses to go down a gully, hop the horses across other logs and creeks to get through as we led them and we fell on the steep terrain, other areas had brush so thick and trees so low, it threatened to pull us out of the saddle, but the stock was spooked and we couldn't stop them so we could dismount safely, so we had to push through. Hiking visitors who saw 2 of us come through this said the other trail to the spring was even worse. The Grant Grove and Redwood Canyon areas are some of the original trails, the most historic in the parks and they need a great deal of repair and maintenance. It seems like this would be a great place for the CCC crew to work next spring!!

The Roaring River area had a hugh tree year! There were hundreds of trees blocking the trails everywhere. There was still a lot of patchy snow on the south side of Marvin pass as Karplus and Matley cut there way through towards Roaring River on July 7th. I packed our gear and led mules through the snow....that we weren't sure we could get through!!...I caught up with them near Comanche Meadow and we continued clearing our way in. There was a group of hugh "stopper" trees about a mile or so from the station that would have stopped me for sure!! We made it to the station and the next day, headed up Cloud Canyon along the white water of Roaring River, there were many trees that they cut out, then we hit the white water crossing of Brewer Creek. As they finished cutting a huge tree, I waded into the creek to move two water-logged logs, so we could make an easier crossing with the stock. It was cold and brisk at 0730! Karplus saw the crossing and led out riding my "new" horse Dudley and leading my best mule Rosy. I told him where he had to stay to the uphill side to avoid a big rock as you get out on the other side and that it would probably be 2 feet deeper in the "hole". They headed over and as they went into the deeper water in the "hole", Dudley freaked out and ju ed onto the submerged rock area and couldn't get footing. He looked like he might go over backward when Karplus saved it by jumping off...into 3' deep water. He tried to lead Dudley out safely, but Dudley freaked out and knocked him over in his desire to get out of the creek. Rosy was in danger of going down stream over the small falls area, I yelled at her and as Karplus was able to get out, she followed him, tripping on her submerged lead rope. I was already wet past the knees and riding my young horse Mac, so I thought I'd rather throw my lead rope over to Karplus and wade across...but I told Matley he had a good solid horse, who had probably done this creek crossing before, so it was his choice to ride or get wet....he told me then that it was only his second day of riding!!! I was amazed, as he seemed to be a very good rider, but I said ok, we both get wet!

We threw our ropes across and followed wet but safe and continued clearing the worst trees to get up Cloud Canyon so they could plan their reroute project for later in the summer. There were many trees down, snow and avalanche areas. We headed back through flooded trails seeing flooded Big Wet Meadow with the fantastic Whaleback view and dreaded going back through the Brewer Creek crossing as we were finally starting to warm up again....but we did and it was easier but also a little colder and deeper in the afternoon.

Later that summer, as the water stayed high and the trail crew packers saw the crossing, a plan was made to blow up the old log that caused the high water and back wash that created the "hole" every spring.(I would usually spend 2-4 hours filling it in with rock as the water fell) This made it better, but they also decided to black the slick rock that made it difficult for stock to get up and out the other side!!! This now makes it a good safe creek crossing for stock and hikers. Thanks!!

The CCC crew worked out of Sugarloaf Flat to do logging, brushing and waterbar maintenance from Marvin Pass to Silliman Pass and the lakes. There were hundreds of trees down. The crew did more reroutes on Kanayer Gap trail, but it needs waterbars added. The reroute they did at Comanche puts the trail very close to the backpacker camp. Meanwhile, DJ their packer, jumped ahead and cleared Deadman Canyon of 60 downed trees to make it passable to stock and hikers. The crew stopped shortly at the Scaffold Camp, but did not do the promised fence work and quick trail maintenance. They moved up to Grand Palace in Cloud Canyon and started the reroute project. I tried to repair and put up fences as the opening dates approached. The reroute project went well and the crew made a lot of effort to do very good rehab. to hide and restore the old trail bed, especially through meadow areas.

I don't know if the bad spot near Colby Lake was blasted, or if the three bad rocks that make it difficult for pack mules to pass on the dirt switchbacks just below Colby Pass were fixed. Probably not, due to snow and time. These are the areas I feel need the most attention in the future.

b. Problem Areas: Drift Fences They all need work. I was told that all fences in the area would be totally rebuilt this year. Very little work was done on any of them. Sugarloaf had the most work, but it will not hold stock. There are many runs of 30 to 40 foot stretches with no posts. There needs 15 posts added and 5 drop posts fixed and staubs added to protect live trees. The Swinging Gate Fence needs 4 posts added, 1 drop post repaired and a tree fell on the bottom 20 feet, it needs to be cut off and the fence rebuilt. The Wire Gate Fence needs 10 posts added and a tree cut off the top end and repairs. A post and brace needs to be added to the top fence added last year, so a horse can't get stuck between the fence and the rock shelf. The West Side Wire Fence at the station needs a total rebuild to keep stock from going through the rocks, so stock can be held and fed there and continue to fix the log rail fence as needed. Thanks to 4 1 11 and 4 1 12 for helping to cut trees off of the Lackey Pasture Fence and help replace 6 posts this year. Lackey Pasture Fence needs 16 posts on the short east end and 24 posts on the long end and the wire gate repaired.

Moraine ridge fence needs 11 posts on the uphill side and staples added to repair 8 posts. The gate posts are both very loose and the east side is ready to fall over. The downhill side needs 12 trees cut off the fenceline, all areas need brushing. It needs 3 drop posts fixed 75 posts replaced and the lower gate rebuilt. The trail to the lower campsite and meadow needs 10 trees cut out. The Grasshopper Drift Fence needs a new H brace and wire gate repair. I wanted to repair the historic swinging gate, but the crew cut it up, but did not haul it out. The fence also needs 12 posts on the downhill side and 2 posts on the uphill side. The Cement Table Fence needs the West gate brace rebuilt and 18 posts added. The Big Wet Meadow Fence needs 4 posts added and needs drop posts added near the gate, it was rebuilt this year solid and can't be dropped. The Grand Palace Fence needs 2 posts. The Austin Fence needs brushing and 3 posts added along the downed log section and new rails. The Wing Fence has 10 to 20 trees down on it. The Grave Meadow Gate was rebuilt this year. It needs a pole or post added, so stock won't get stuck between the fence and the rock and 2 small poles to fit the narrow posts. The Ranger Meadow Fence gate is loose, but could be secured to a tree or rebuilt. The uphill side needs a third wire added back, stock can go under it, and the top needs to tie into a tree or rock so the stock can't go around or get caught. The Top needs a center drop post and stubs to protect trees. The Upper Ranger Fence needs the two gate uprights reset(they are laying down) and 3 long slim rails taken up to the gate.

Hitch Rails: The Sugarloaf rail has been broken for 2-3 years. The three uprights are solid. A long rail needs to be cut and attached, the broken end of the existing rail is a hazard to stock. The rail at the Cement Table Camp was broken by an avalanche and not repaired this year.

JR Pasture Fence had 7 trees fall on the west and north sides They need to be cut out and a lot of fence rebuilt. It needs 33 posts added to the other fenceline.

#### C. CAMP AREAS

a. Conditions: General clean up of most camp sites was done during the summer. I spent 2 days cleaning sites breaking down huge fire pits at Seville Lake and clearing 20 trees off the trail leading to the back camps. Cathy Darlrumple made many patrols to Ranger, Lost and Seville Lakes during the summer. April Stiltz came into Roaring River and helped clear 6 trees off of the Austin Creek Crossing camp to make it usable. The Hilltop camp had many cedar trees fall near the springs area, but none blocked the camp. The Lakes area continues to attract alot of use by through hikers and beginner backpackers. The area needs more clean up and more patrols when possible.

b. Sanitation: The outhouses in the area could use new seats.(2)

c. Fire rings: 40 campfire pits were cleaned this season and 5 were obliterated. Seville and Lost Lakes need the most clean up.

d. Firewood Availability: Good availability at most camps.

e. Food Storage: People use and love the boxes. Some leave trash, but it still protects the bears from this trash. I vote to please keep the existing boxes, I would like a few added and repair the broken ones.

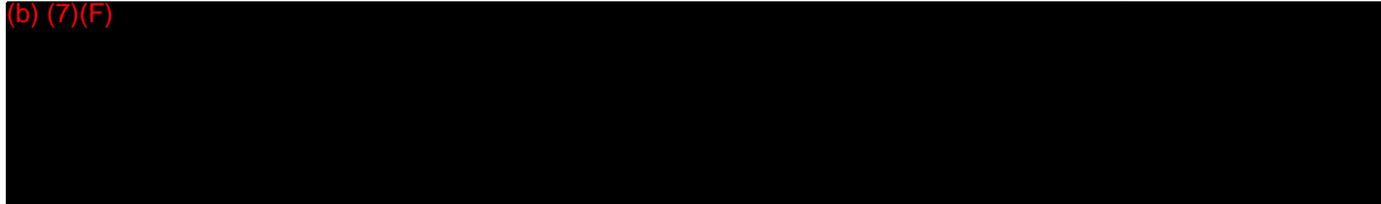
## H. PERMIT SYSTEM

a. Trailheads: Most people had NPS permits from Lodgepole, Grant Grove and Cedar Grove, they were well informed.

b. Issuing Office: Most were NPS permits and well informed. Private stock groups are less informed on grazing issues.

## I. COMMUNICATIONS

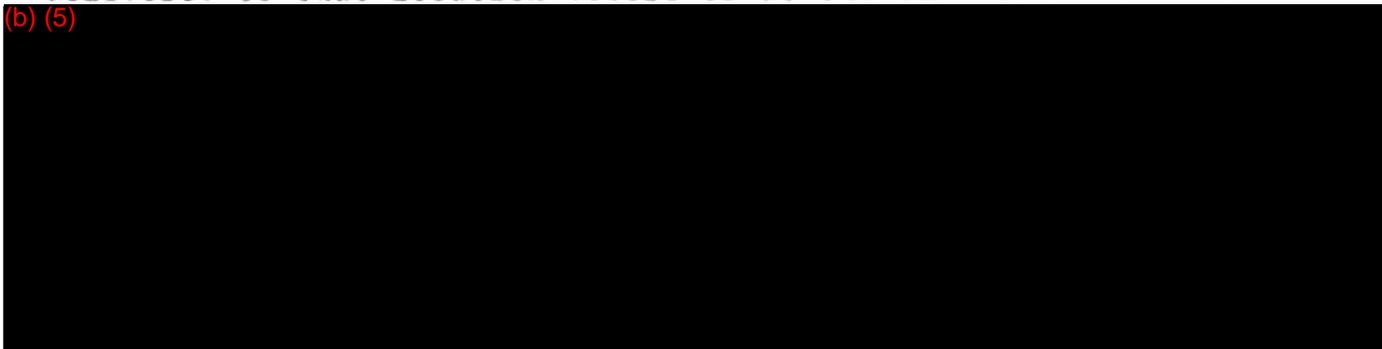
(b) (7)(F)



## J. NEEDS FOR NEXT YEAR

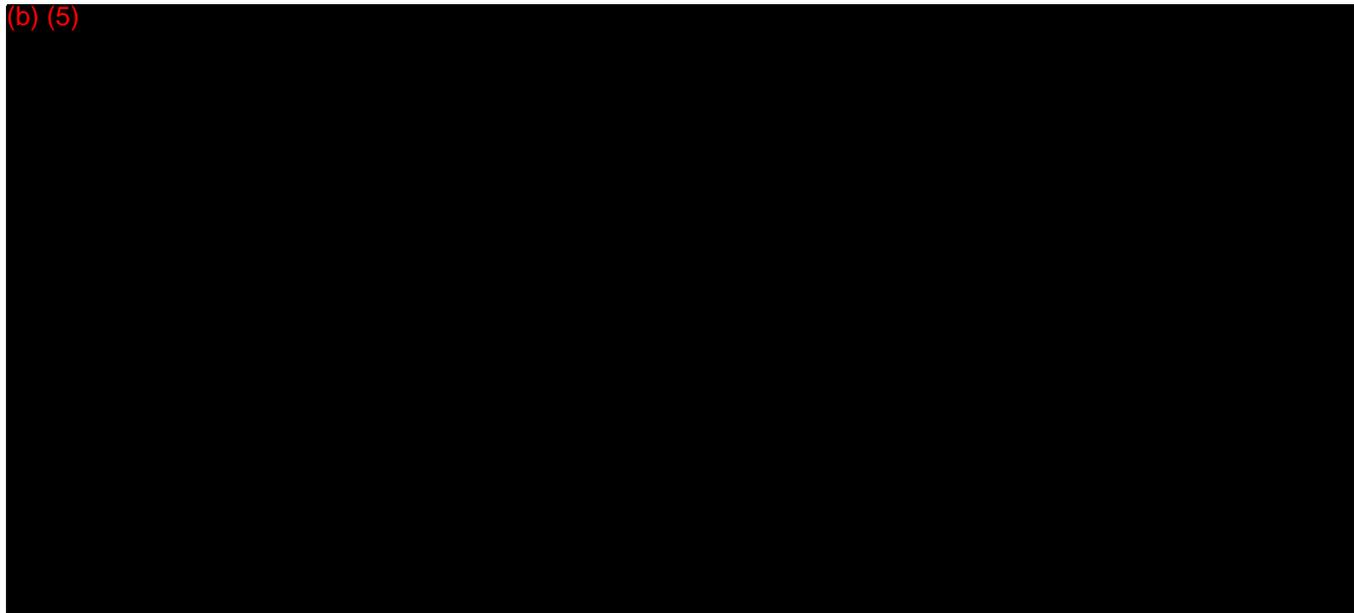
NPS Stock: The NPS stock needs to be shod at least 2 weeks before delivery and hopefully trimmed once or twice during the winter to protect their feet. The stock needs to be delivered on the requested date or right after ranger training ends, whichever comes first. If stock is delivered to a frontcountry location to be used before deploying to the backcountry, then hay and feed needs to be delivered to that location before or at the same time as the stock.

(b) (5)



Stock Gear: I need 2 green horse pads and 4 green pack pads.  
I need 4 new matties.

(b) (5)



(b) (5)

## K. RECOMMENDATIONS

(b) (5)

Roaring River Ranger Station: the solar system needs to be checked. A new charge controller -20 with readouts and lights needs to replace the two that are now in use. The batteries might need to be packed out and fully charged and taken back in. I hope they will still hold a charge and be ok for next year. 130 feet of conduit would protect the outside wire.

Small bulletin boards at the 3 lakes to give good NPS information.

Grant Grove trailhead and trail signs, trail work and stock training.

Drift Fence and Pasture Fence work in Roaring River.

## L. PERTINENT INVENTORY

2 cans sweet horse feed  
 ½ can Alfalfa Pellets  
 1 lg. Mineral Block  
 3 sm. white salt blocks  
 3 sm. fire extinguishers @ RS (\*2 large fire extinguishers brought out)  
 5 full Oxygen tanks @ RS (1 sm. full tank left @ govt. corral)

## NPS Warehouse Wish List:

1 doz. D Batteries	9 boxes kitchen matches
1 doz. AA Batteries	6 mattress covers
1 doz. C Batteries	20 tie on "material" tags for fuel
6 9-volt Batteries	20 tie on tags
10 orange firefighter note pads	1 fire shovel(for rgr lake cache)
6 steno pads	1 polaski (for rgr lake cache)
1 duct tape	1 fold out limbing saw-12"
	1 long pole saw-fiberglass

## Corral Needs:

8 bags dry cob	2 green riding pads, 4 pack pads
8 bags horse feed	Leather oil - 1 gallon
14 bags alfalfa pellets	4 new matties
1 box shoeing nails-#5 ch /shoes-)	

## 2011 End of Season Report

Rock Creek Ranger Station  
June 25 - September 24, 2011  
Ranger: David Alexander  
VIP: Elizabeth Curry



The view down Perrin Creek towards Mount Guyot

### A. Visitor Services

#### I. Contacts

##### a. Backpackers/Day Hikers

- i. Visitors passing through Rock Creek crossing area (approximated using infrared, automated trail counter): 2,198
- ii. Total visitor contacts: 873

##### b. Stock Observations:

- i. Total animal use nights: 265 (235 did not graze and brought in feed)
- ii. Horses/mules: 263
- iii. Burrow: 2
- iv. Llama: 0
- v. Commercial: 244
- vi. Private: 11
- vii. Administrative: 10

## 2. Law Enforcement/Citations:

Three citations were issued for violations in the Rock Creek area this season. The first was issued to a troop of Boy Scouts for exceeding the maximum group size. The second was issued to a commercial packer for a food storage violation (nine bags of alfalfa cubes hidden behind a tree). The third was issued to a backpacker for a campfire far above the 10,400 ft. elevation fire limit along the New Army Pass trail. The ranger station was staffed with non-commissioned personnel this year and all citations were issued with the help of off-site law enforcement personnel.

## 3. SARs and Medicals:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation</u>
7-4-11	Ranger Station	SAR: 38-yr-old, male, trail runner got lost on Mt. Whitney, spent the night out without proper gear, and then ran to the Rock Creek Ranger Station.	Patient spent the night at Ranger Station and self-evacuated the next day.
8-2-11	Lower Rk Ck	SAR: Male and female with possible leg injuries activated a SPOT device.	Ranger and 8112 hiked toward location and stood by while helicopter short-hauled patients.
8-11-11	PCT South	Medical: 50-yr-old male with possible altitude illness who gave all of his gear to a passing pack train for transport to the Cottonwood Pass trailhead.	Ranger accompanied the patient 8 miles to the trailhead.
8-14-11	Rk Ck Crossing	Medical: 57-yr-old male with possible strain or broken bone of foot.	Evaluated and monitored, self-evacuated the next morning.
8-24-11	Guyot Creek	Medical: 55-yr-old male with chest pain.	Helicopter, ALS.

4. Fatalities: There were no fatalities in Rock Creek this season.

## 5. Weather:

Heavy winter snows persisted through the spring and into the summer resulting in wet conditions and high run-off. Temperatures remained near normal during the season but rainfall exceeded normal levels. Two periods of thunderstorms in the beginning and end of July produced significant rainfall. The second event, lasting for three days beginning July 29, was particularly severe and created two consecutive days of flash floods in Rock Creek. This may well have been a hundred-year flood and significantly altered the entire Rock Creek drainage. During this event, Rock Creek became impassible by both stock and hikers. A number of hikers suffering from near-hypothermia came to the Ranger Station to seek shelter, get warm, and dry out. Two hikers without proper rain gear spent the night in the Station. Managing the logjam of stock and hiking parties unable to cross Rock Creek due to the flooding was a dangerous situation that required a great deal of intervention by the ranger and VIP.

In addition to the above effects, the persistent snow and above average rainfall resulted in delayed meadow grazing opening dates by nearly a month. Combined with the lack of trail crew grazing, the result was significantly less grazing than in previous years.



Flash flood swollen Rock Creek



Hail and snow on Mt. Langley during flash flood event

#### 6. Fires:

Three fires affected the Rock Creek area this year. Of the three, the Lion fire had the most impact on the area - during the second week of July, the afternoon convection would suck so much smoke up from the Kern Canyon that it would, on some days, blot out the sun. "Where is the fire?" was a question asked by most every visitor contacted during that period. The Willow fire had much less impact in the area with just the occasional smell of smoke. The Rock fire, which persisted through most of August and into September, smoldered on the western slope of Mt. Anna Mills and was confined to a small patch of foxtails. This fire had the least amount of impact due to its small size and out-of-view, remote location.



Lion fire obscuring skies above Rock Creek and the Miter Basin

## B. Use Patterns:

### 1. Backpackers/ Day Hikers:

During the first 2-3 weeks of the season, use in the area was dominated by PCT through-hikers, but by mid-July backpacking and stock use in the area was largely related to Mount Whitney trips. An estimated three-quarters of visitors to the area used only the few feet on either side of the PCT, beginning from the southern Park boundary to Guyot Pass, to spend the night. Most stayed in the established camp areas at Rock Creek crossing or near the Ranger Station. There were only a handful of evenings (limited to the beginning and end of the season) when those camp areas were found empty.

The remaining use was concentrated in the Lower Soldier Lake area, which was especially popular, and often crowded with visitors during long holiday weekends. To a lesser extent, backpackers camped along the creek up the New Army Pass trail either upon entering or before exiting the park. The Miter Basin saw low usage - our patrols there rarely saw more than one other party overnighing in the entire basin, and the same low level use was seen in the Upper Soldier Lake area, as well as the camp area around the food storage box at Rock Creek Lake. Additionally, the Funston Lake and Siberian Outpost areas saw very little visitation, only a few anglers and intrepid backpackers.

The concentration of use in these few areas is a positive development for both the ecology of the lesser-used areas, as well as for visitors searching out a true wilderness experience. But it meant that the popular areas demanded great attention to minimize the impact of the heavy use. Picking up trash, used toilet paper, and attending to the campfire rings (and removing inappropriate campfire rings) on a near-daily basis was a necessary routine in order to maintain an adequate wilderness environment and to keep the areas from becoming overtaken by litter, campsite spread, and other forms of damage.

Day use in the park was limited to the ascent of Mt. Langley from base camps in the Cottonwood Lakes and Long Lake areas in the National Forest. This peak, like Mt. Whitney, is an easily accessed high peak and continues to be a popular destination. Even early in the season, the side of Mt. Langley was completely covered with use trails, to the point that very little of it did not show a footprint. A designated and well-cairned trail would be appreciated to spare the alpine vegetation on that side of the peak.

### 2. Stock:

Stock use was also dominated by Mt. Whitney. Of the 25 commercial stock groups were contacted, only two of them had an itinerary that did not include crossing Lower Rock Creek en route to Crabtree and Mt. Whitney. One of those two outliers was in fact headed there, but had to change their destination due to the flooding and impassibility of Rock Creek. The wet meadow conditions and delayed grazing opening dates necessitated the use of additional pack trains to ferry grain and feed cubes in support of other stock trips. As a consequence, there were many spot pack trips that moved through the area to drop off feed at both Rock Creek and Crabtree.

Early in the season, Rock Creek/Mt. Whitney Pack Station had an unusually high number of trips going through to Mt. Whitney as their regular routes in the more northern areas of Kings Canyon were impassable due to lingering snow. Once Forrester and Mono Passes were shoveled clear, this pack station no longer used the Rock Creek area, and it was left to Cottonwood Pack Station. We also contacted eight full-service, stock-supported trips headed by Sierra Mountain Center, California Alpine Guides, Call of the Wild, and Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides.

The 265 head of stock spent most of their evenings this season tethered to the high-line in the demonstration stock camp at Lower Rock Creek crossing. Two commercial parties and one private party stayed at Rock Creek Lake and there was one night of administrative stock use at lower Nathan's Meadow.

During the course of the season we contacted four private stock users. None of the four had stock noted on their wilderness permits and none of them received the appropriate SEKI stock use information and grazing reporting reply card. All four had gotten their wilderness permits at the Lone Pine Interagency Office and had received information on stock use in the National Forest. One of the private parties planning to spend three nights in the park, did not know which meadows were open or closed.

### 3. Administrative:

Rock Creek received extensive administrative use this year both due to its proximity to the trailhead as well as to support and train the new Ranger and VIP. Such use began just two days after our arrival, when the two east-side trailhead Rangers joined us for their impromptu training on campsite and fire ring clean-up.

On July 11, (b) (6) who was doing vegetation research on the Siberian Outpost came to retrieve supplies that were mobilized along with ours. She was a welcome visitor throughout her month-long stay in the area.

On July 20, plant ecologist Eric Frenzel came to the station on the first of two visits to teach us about meadow monitoring, meadow ecology, and at the end of the season, residual biomass data collection procedures. His willingness to patiently share his knowledge was greatly appreciated.

On July 24, Chris Waldschmidt joined us to go over our progress and answer our many questions in person.

On August 1, plant ecologist Corie Cann hiked out to Rock Creek to walk the meadows with us and to help us determine an appropriate grazing opening date, as well as to help (b) (6) with her research. She returned a few days later on her way out.

On August 23, a forest crew came to the station to retrieve a cache of food and supplies that we had mobilized in for them at the beginning of the season.

On September 1, two trail crew members were spiked into the Rock Creek area for a few days of intensive trail work.

On September 5, sages (b) (6) joined us to discuss campsite usage and changes in use patterns in the area. They toured Rock Creek's most visited and camped-in areas. They returned a few days later after visiting Crabtree.

On September 12, Joe Ventura and Kip Knapp rode into the area for a quick tour on horseback and cooked us a fantastic dinner.

On various occasions, the water quality crew, Laura Pilewski, Dena Paolilly and Harrison Forester, used the ranger station as a respite in their official travels.

### 4. Commercial:

In addition to the commercial stock use mentioned above, we contacted three commercial groups on non-stock supported, backpacking trips. These trips were led by Call of the Wild and Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides. One of the three trips was a seven-day

unsupported backpack across the park from Sugarloaf to Cottonwood Pass, while the other two followed the usual Mt. Whitney route. There were no problems with the commercial backpacking groups and with just a few notable exceptions, the commercial stock parties complied well with wilderness regulations.

#### 5. Aircraft:

Military over-flights are common in the patrol area and interruption by their loud exhaust (especially when they fly in tandem) is a common, intrusive, and wilderness obscuring occurrence. No low flying aircraft were reported in the area, but the low flyers reported by the Crabtree Ranger were loud in the Rock Creek area as well.

### C. Natural Resources:

#### 1. Bear Activity:

We observed the same bear move throughout the patrol area on a number of occasions. Early in the season, we observed him near the backpacker camp at Lower Rock Creek, and in early August we observed him grazing in Nathan's Meadow. On the occasions that we saw him, he immediately ran away when he detected us. There were no bear sightings reported by any visitors. Bear canisters are required in the area and every visitor that we contacted had one.

#### 2. Wildlife:

Bighorn sheep were observed in both the Upper Soldier Lake meadow and in the upper sections of Miter Basin. On one occasion we were able to observe a group of 10 female sheep and more than 10 frisky, white lambs grazing in Upper Soldier Lake. The moist year provided excellent grazing for the sheep and if the coming winter is not too harsh, it should help to expand the population.

Coyotes were often heard howling at nights in the Miter Basin, and early in the season we had a mature Bald Eagle swoop down close over our heads to try to snag (unsuccessfully) one of the small trout in Nathan's Meadow. While camping at Forgotten Canyon Lake in late August, we had a great horned owl swoop over our heads at dusk.



Big horn sheep on the rim of Sky Blue lake in the Miter Basin

### 3. Vegetation:

As previously mentioned, the high snowfall, late snowmelt, and periodic heavy rains resulted in a very wet and productive season for the meadows. The grazing dates were delayed to August 20 for the lower meadows and September 1 for the upper meadows. This delay, combined with a lack of administrative grazing by the trail crew, resulted in the lowest number of grazing nights in many years.

### D. Cultural Resources:

#### 1. Prehistoric Sites.

No additional disturbing of the commonly visited prehistoric sites was observed. Only one of the visitors that we encountered asked about prehistoric sites and relics.

#### 2. Historic Sites:

The only historic site is the ranger station, built in 1949 by the Department of Water Resources. It remains in very good condition.

#### 3. Ranger Station:

The ranger station over-wintered well with no unauthorized use noted by the winter survey crew. The extensive and valiant efforts last year by Dave Yemm to mouse-proof the cabin paid off handsomely for us this season. Not one mouse was spotted or trapped in either the attic, woodshed, or cabin.

We extensively cleaned the walls, floors, and even the ceiling of the cabin at the beginning of the season and it proved to be a cozy home. I also replaced the screening in the screen door which greatly improved its appearance.

The solar unit worked well, but as noted in previous end of season reports, the batteries were installed in 2002 and after a decade of use should be considered for replacement. A

new digital solar controller is currently in its box in the cabin and should be installed next year. It will require some additional wiring for its installation.

#### 4. Signs:

Most of the area signs have been defaced by scratching, some with profane anti-government sentiments, which must be covered with a black marker each spring. This method is fairly effective, lasting the entire season, but if looked at closely, the scratched writing is still legible. The SEKI boundary signs show extensive scratching over “weapons prohibited” and replacement of these signs would benefit the park’s image with the public.

In an effort to reduce the number of inappropriate fire rings, we installed a new “No fires above this elevation” sign at the 10,400 ft level on the PCT south of the station. This sign was appropriated from the Crabtree Ranger Station where it was not being used. A similar sign had previously been placed on the Rock Creek trail, but there was not one on the more heavily used PCT. A discussion on the modification of current signage and proposals for additional signage to control inappropriate fire rings can be found in the recommendations section of this report.

As a reminder to visitors, we taped temporary signs to the food storage lockers at Lower Soldier Lake and Lower Rock Creek crossing. In the former case it was primarily intended to reduce the proliferation of fires in the area and it seemed to be effective as no new campfires were found this season. At Rock Creek, the temporary sign was intended to steer larger groups of visitors to the more impacted camp area at Rock Creek rather than the smaller and sensitive camp area next to Guyot Creek. The sign also contained a map of the trail to Crabtree, as well as local campsite and fire ring placements. Attaching permanent signs of this nature to the top of the three bear storage boxes in the area would be an unobtrusive and likely effective step to positively modify visitor behavior.



Installing sign on the Pacific Crest Trail

## 5. Other Facilities:

The stock demonstration camp's highline and boardwalk are in good condition. The convenience of the highline to stock users and the attractive group camping area nearby is the main draw of this heavily used area. The vast majority of commercial groups use this area, and by confining stock impact to this easily monitored and easily maintained site, the demo camp has a positive impact on the surrounding wilderness. Having the trail crew add a permanent fire ring to the highline area for the packers would make it even more attractive to them. In addition, installing another shorter fixed highline nearby would be appropriate to focus impacts in one location when larger or multiple stock parties use the site. This season, packers strung up additional highlines as needed, which negatively impacted multiple sites. The commercial stock users at the demo camp were generally very responsible and should be commended for effectively mitigating the effects of stock pawing and manure production.

The drift gate upright on the south side of the Rock Creek trail is rotting out at the base and is leaning precipitously. It should be replaced by the trail crew in 2012.

## F. Trails:

### 1. Trail Activities (work accomplished):

Due to high needs in other areas, only two of the Kern crew stayed in the area for trail maintenance and they were present for only a few days (September 2 - 6). They made the most of their short time though, concentrating their efforts on making the section of the heavily eroded Rock Creek trail from Soldier Lakes to Rock Creek stock passable again. This section of trail had been particularly hard hit during the flash flood event. The trails in the area could use much more attention next year, especially the heavily used PCT and the heavily eroded section of the Siberian Pass trail. It is recommended that the trail crew spend much more time in the area in 2012.

The winter saw a number of blow downs across the PCT at Lower Rock Creek and a small avalanche covered a section of the Rock Creek trail above Nathan's Meadow with downed trees and debris. The Ranger and VIP cleared these sections at the beginning of the season using bow saws, axes, and brute force. A small landslide occurred early in the season on the PCT near the park boundary that created a hazard for stock trains. We moved the smaller boulders to create a safer and more obvious path around the obstruction and the trail crew removed the largest boulder during their demobilization out of the area. They also cleared a large tree which was blocking the PCT near its intersection with the Siberian Pass Trail.



VIP clearing Pacific Crest Trail early in the season

The ranger split the winter wood supply after the helpful trail crew cut up a downed tree with a chainsaw.

## 2. Problem Areas:

The huge number of use trails on the upper slope of Mt. Langley continues to be a significant problem in the Rock Creek area. There are ecological concerns from the trampling of alpine vegetation and the hikers' effect on the endangered bighorn sheep population, as well as safety concerns as hikers become lost following the wrong use trail. In one such case this season, a trio of older hikers was encountered near Upper Soldier Lake thinking that they were near Cottonwood Lakes and their base camp. Their fatigued faces as they looked at the pass that they would again have to climb evinced the danger inherent in this confusing area. Establishing an official route to the summit, and having the trail crew mark it with large and obvious cairns, would go a long way to eliminating both problems.

The trail near the Army Creek crossing has been eroding for many years, as has been noted in previous end of season reports. This year's flash flood caused even greater damage and the trail is now too deep to walk in. Parallel trails have now developed on both sides of the original trail. This area needs trail crew attention next year.



Eroded trail near Army Creek with developing parallel trails

## G. Camp Areas:

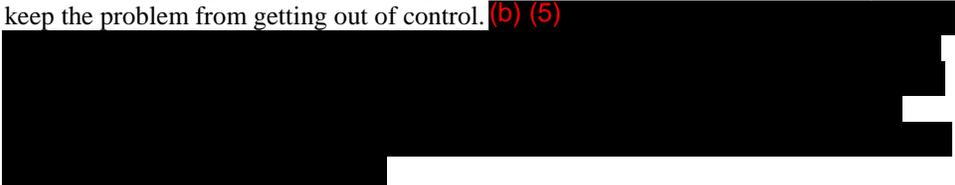
### 1. Conditions:

Rock Creek crossing is by far the most used camping area, with the majority of the area's overnight visitors choosing to camp there. Lower Soldier Lake is the next most used camping area, with Guyot Creek and Rock Creek Lake far behind in usage. Near daily patrols of the Rock Creek crossing area this season minimized the high use impact and kept the area tidy and appealing. We spent a number of days at the beginning of the season at Lower Soldier Lake removing campfire rings and rehabilitating campsites. Frequent visits to the area, especially on weekends, kept the area free of new fire rings and kept use impacts to a minimum.

Recreating the sign on the food storage locker at Rock Creek crossing designed by the previous ranger seemed to keep the impacts at Guyot Creek lower than they might otherwise have been, and kept many campers at the larger and more impacted Rock Creek campsites. A version of this temporary sign should be made permanent and bolted onto the top of the locker.

### 2. Sanitation:

Again this year, sanitation control presented an ongoing challenge, especially in the heavily used Rock Creek area. Toilet paper, and even worse, long-lasting synthetic wipes, were a familiar sight in the woods surrounding the more popular campsites. Particularly disturbing was the complete lack of effort by some visitors to bury or disguise their leavings. Frequent patrolling by the ranger of these often used areas was necessary to keep the problem from getting out of control. (b) (5)



### 3. Fire Rings:

Fire rings are maintained at Lower Rock Creek crossing, and Nathan's Meadow. The Rock Creek fire rings see constant use during the season and the others see occasional use. They are often enlarged and full of ash, partially burned trash, and half-burned logs. Near daily attention keeps them at reasonable dimensions and in good condition.

The removal of illegal or inappropriate fire rings is a frequent necessity, and this season we removed close to 50 of them. Particularly disturbing were the fires built next to large boulders causing smoke and heat scarring that can only be painstakingly chipped away. However, the removal of these rings is essential since an intact ring signals to the next visitor that a fire is overlooked and/or allowed. Recommendations to minimize this problem can be found later in this report.

### 4. Fire Regulations:

The 10,400 ft. fire limit implemented in 2009 has reduced the incidence of illegal fires in high elevation areas, but it has not eliminated them. Campfire rings are often found above the elevation limit. Recommendations to minimize this problem can be found later in this report.

### 5. Food Storage:

The Rock Creek drainage is a bear canister required area and we did not contact anyone who did not have one. This was true even of the PCT through-hikers that we contacted early in the season. The food storage lockers at Rock Creek crossing and Soldier Lakes are the most often used and many times this season they were filled with bear canisters. The down side of these lockers is that they are an attractant for caches, garbage, and discarded (and weighty) food and personal items. We removed many pounds of refuse and unwanted food items, which subsequently had to be packed out of the backcountry. If the food storage lockers were not there, it is likely that visitors would not so cavalierly abandon their possessions.

## H. Permit System:

### 1. Compliance:

Of all our contacts with visitors in the park, only one individual did not have a valid wilderness permit--he had a PCT permit that had expired. Compliance with the permitting system is universal with both the commercial and private users.

### 2. Issuing Office:

The issuing offices generally did a good job of providing pre-trip wilderness travel information. Problems with regulation violations were most often the result of a lack of communication between a trip leader and his/her party. Problems also resulted when a group leader, anxious to begin a trip, did not pay attention while the permitting office reviewed minimum impact regulations and/or neglected to read the minimum impact sheet.

(b) (5)



(b) (5)

I. Communications:

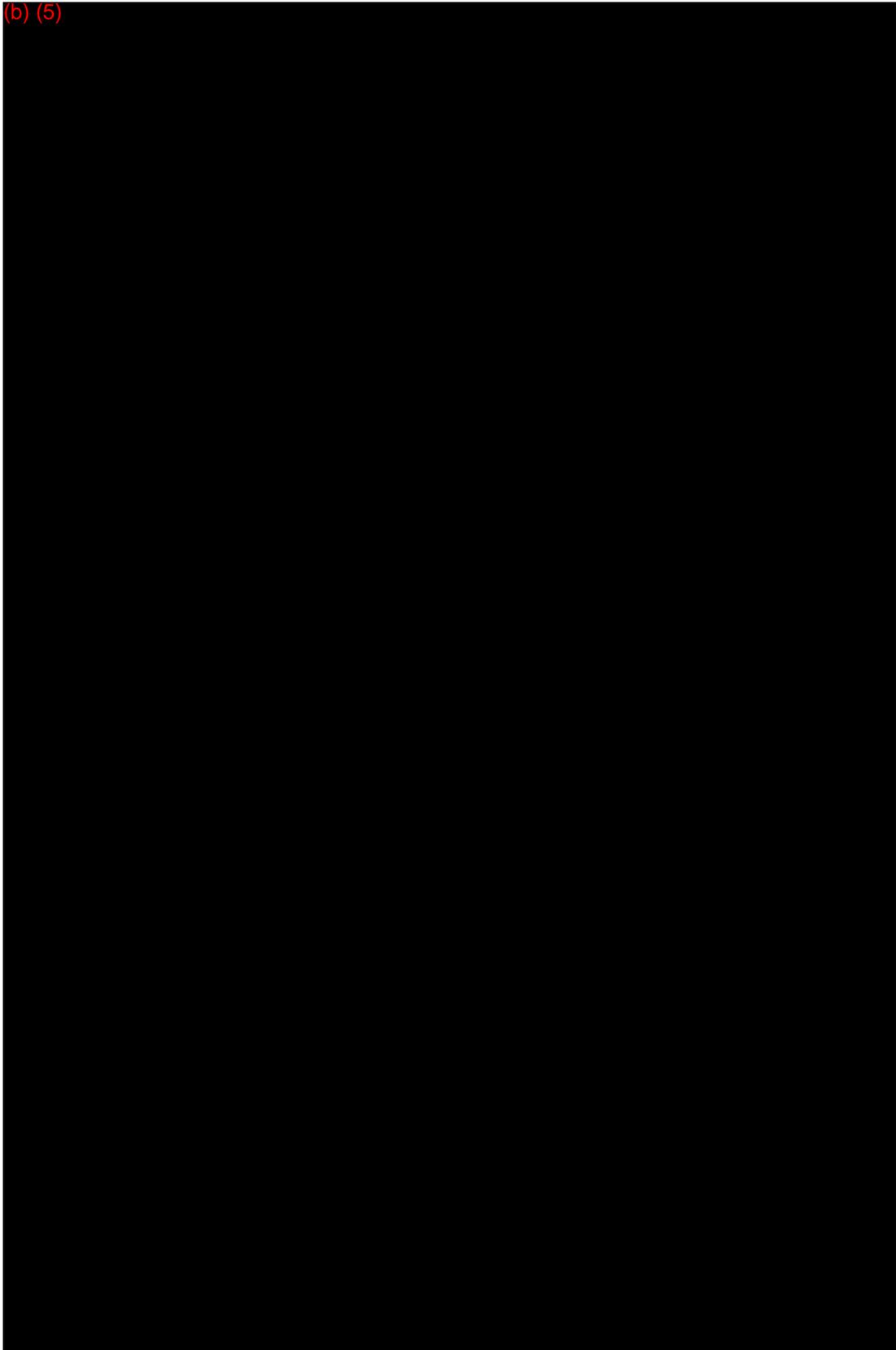
(b) (7)(F)

J. Needs for Next Year:

**Fuel:** Three large or six small propane tanks  
**Maps:** 1 Trails Illustrated SEKI, 1 Tom Harrison Whitney High Country, 1 Golden Trout Wilderness  
**Medical:** Assorted pain relievers  
PCR forms  
**Other:**  
Logbook  
25 Commercial Use Monitoring Forms  
2 Florescent light bulbs (GE-F15T8-CW 15Watts)  
1 Roll duct tape  
2 thick rolls strapping tape  
1 thin roll strapping tape  
5 pocket note pads  
3 bundles paper towels  
3 boxes of matches  
16 C-batteries for trail counter (two sets as they need to be replaced mid-season)  
1 box large zip-lock plastic bags  
1 box small zip-lock plastic bags  
10 burlap sacks  
1 pencil sharpener  
1 large carabineer (for highline)  
15 large trash bags  
40 small trash bags  
3 sponges  
10 rolls toilet paper  
Dish soap  
Laundry detergent  
Candles  
12 packages AAA-batteries (lithium) for headlights  
25 ft. each red and green wire for solar panels  
White cardboard for signs  
1 box thumbtacks  
4 mousetraps  
Chefs knife  
Rubber spatula  
Lightweight non-stick skillet  
5 large pocket rocket canisters  
10 small pocket rocket canisters

K. Recommendations:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)

L. Pertinent Inventory:

Fuel:

5 full and 3 partial 8-oz. pocket rocket canisters  
3 full and 2 partial 4-oz. pocket rocket canisters  
3 gallons white gas  
2 quarts ethanol  
1 partial large propane tank

Maps:

2 Mineral King (7.5 min)	1 Mt. Williamson (7.5 min)
3 Mt. Langley (7.5 min)	2 Cirque Peak (7.5 min)
1 Kern Lake (7.5 min)	1 Kearsarge Peak (7.5 min)
0 Kern Peak (7.5 min)	1 John Muir Wilderness (7.5 min)
2 Mt. Brewer (7.5 min)	1 Lone Pine (15 min)
3 Johnson Peak (7.5 min)	2 Kern Peak (15 min)
2 Chagoopa Falls (7.5 min)	2 Mt. Whitney (15 min)
6 Mt. Kaweah (7.5 min)	1 Golden Trout Sierra South
5 Mt. Whitney (7.5 min)	1 Inyo National Forest

Cabin Supplies:

0 quart size ziplocks	0 boxes Kleenex
14 lightsticks (for SARs)	5 CUA forms
5 bundles paper towels	10 visitor contact log sheets
12 rolls toilet paper	3 grain sacks
0 bottles dish soap	0 large trash bags
30 clothes pins	20 small trash bags
1 lost-found report book	0 aluminum shovel heads
1 employee medical evaluation packet	1 voltmeter
2 exotic plant observation forms	1 slingshot
50 wildlife observation forms	1 laundry brush
20 BIMS forms	1 bag cotton balls
5 burlap sacks	2 patch kits
15 sheets laminating paper	1 jar contact cement
5 cutter insect repellent sticks	4 pairs ear plugs
4 bottles insect repellent	1 medium leather gloves
1 bag p-cord	2 large leather gloves
2 bottles sunscreen	1 box ballpoint pens
0 boxes thumbtacks	1 box #10 envelopes

2 boxes aluminum foil	2 8 1/2 x 11 notepads
0 new mousetraps	4 D batteries
2 boxes matches	50 AA batteries
7 notepads	0 AAA batteries
2 rolls duct tape	0 logbooks

First Aid Supplies (ALS):

2 lactated ringer's injection USP 1000mL (exp. 9/11)  
 7 nu gauze (2x2, 4-ply)  
 Lots of alcohol pads  
 1 IV start kit with derma frame transparent dressing  
 1 primary IV set  
 1 small-bore T-port extension set (exp. 9/11)  
 1 sharps shuttle  
 1 sodium chloride 2 mL, 0.9% (exp. 11/09)  
 2 18G, 1 1/4" protect IV (exp 5/08 and 11/09)  
 1 20G, 1 1/4" protect IV (exp. 4/10)  
 1 roll tape

First Aid Supplies (BLS):

3 run sheets	Lots of moleskin
0 follow-up instruction forms	2 nasal cannulas
15 SAR brochures	1 2x5" yd gauze roll
27 knuckle bandages	2 4.5x4.5 yd gauze roll
3 eye bandages	20 4x4" gauze pads
2 splinter out kits	10 emergency sunglasses
20 steri strips	3 pair small gloves
50 butterfly closures	1 box large gloves
1 readisplint full arm	5 triple antibiotic ointment
20 3x4 in. sterile pads	25 2x3" gauze pads
1 4x30" scotch cast 2 splint	15 2x2" gauze pads
30 3x3" sterile gauze	0 Q-tips
20 alcohol pads	1 bottle caladryl
3 povidone-iodine pads	1 pupil gauge
1 4x15" scotch cast 2 splint	3 rolls athletic tape
0 acetaminophen	100 band-aids
15 aspirin	1 CPR microshield
2 sam splints	2 c-spine collars
1 multitrauma dressing	0 cardboard splints
1 air splint	10 menstrual pads
2 wound cleaning syringes	Digithermometer

First Aid Supplies (Ready Bag):

1 adult non-rebreather  
 1 pediatric non-rebreather  
 2 adult nasal cannula  
 1 emergency blanket  
 1 small bag Gatorade  
 1 CPR Mask  
 1 air splint  
 1 c-collar  
 1 multi-trauma dressing  
 1 stethoscope  
 1 blood pressure cuff  
 2 SAM splints

1 bag valve mask  
1 pediatric bag valve mask  
2 pair gloves  
1 pen  
2 rolls athletic tape  
1 run sheet  
Various gauze pads  
Assorted medications  
1 protocol book - 2009 EMS  
1 syringe  
1 pair trauma shears  
1 thermometer  
2 oxygen regulators  
Oxygen: 2 Jumbo D (1500 psi, 1600 psi)  
1 Regular D (1500 psi)

# Tyndall Creek Ranger Station Year End Report 2011- Kenan

## Season Overview

**Hikers contacted – 884**

**Miles patrolled – 526**

Tyndall was funded late in the spring for a short season. I started working the first of August and worked until the end of September. Even though the season was short, I arrived at Tyndall when the hiking season had just started to get busy due to the heavy snow pack.

My goal throughout the season was to cover as much of the area as possible over this two month period. I focused on patrols in the area that were mostly three to four days away from the station. I would then spend a couple of days in the Tyndall area doing area patrols, campsite cleanup, and visitor contacts. Some of the areas covered this season included: Upper Kern, Kern Kaweah, Hot Spring, Milestone Basin, Milestone Bowl, Junction Meadow, Wallace Lake, Wright Lake and Crabtree area. As a result of this constant patrolling, much work was accomplished in the area over a relatively short period of time. Even though the season was short, it proved to be a very productive seasonal operation.

## Backpackers

With all my contacts provided good information to backpackers is a priority. I want to help them maximize their trip experience and safety. Backpacker needs this season included extra food, medical assessments, information about the weather, strategic planning for their trip. The majority of backpackers contacted this season were JMT hikers, heading south and a few days from exiting their trip.

## Use Patterns

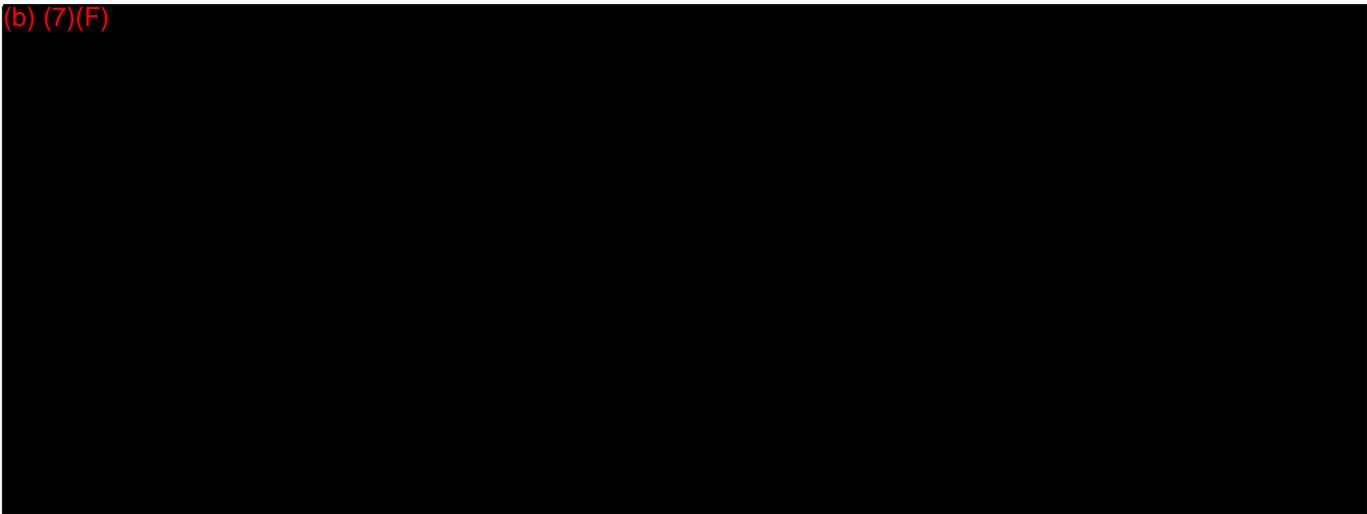
The last time I was stationed at Tyndall was in 1996. As the data shows, the increase in Muir Trail hikers over this period of time is dramatic. And as most all of them are heading south to Whitney. On a patrol day hiking from Crabtree back

to Tyndall in August, I past 62 hikers headed to Whitney and most of them were planning to camp at Guitar Lake.

The majority of the camping in the area is at two locations: the Tyndall crossing (west side of creek) and at the frog ponds. The bear box at the Tyndall crossing is used and is not recommended to be taken out. The camps areas were patrolled on a regular basis this season to pick up any bits of litter left behind along with inspecting the bear box.

### **Communications**

(b) (7)(F)



### **Stock**

I contacted two commercial groups and the trail crew stock. The first group was just below Waterfall Meadow. On August 9, I was hiking down Wallace Creek and contacted the group. The meadow officially opened on August 10. The packers were Howard and Rob. Their camp was well established on sandy soil and the stock appropriately kept on the sandy soil dry bench areas. They camped here for three nights. This group had come up Kern Canyon and grazed their 20 head for two nights at Upper Funsten and two nights at Cold Springs area. They camped just above the trail crew, when the trail crew was in the area. Their plans were to travel to Rock Creek and camp at the crossing and then exit the park over Cottonwood Pass. This was a full service trip with 8 guests and 3 crew (two packers and cook). The trip was done in a very professional manner. I had time to visit with the packers and the guests before leaving for Crabtree.

The next commercial group was also Rock Creek Pack Station. This full service trip with 9 guests and 3 crew was on August 23. The group camped with 12 head at the new stock camp just below the station across the creek. Packers Tyler and Cody were great to work with and fully compliant and conscientious. Tyler and Cody went up to Forester Pass to shovel snow on the north side to prepare for travelling over the pass the next day. I hiked to Forester that day and made contact with them on the pass. They seemed a little uncertain about whether they would do it or not.....the next day. With my contact with the guests, I had a clear feeling that they were not “pressuring” the packers to risk it and go over the pass. This all seemed to be a decision to be made by the head packer (b) (6) I went to their camp the next morning and their decision was to go for the pass. The guest had already gone. A week later, heard from the trail crew that they had “rolled a mule” in the snowfield. It sounded like a big mess, but they were able to recover and the mule was able to wobble out of the backcountry.

The trail crew stayed at their Tyndall camp for a week. They camped at the bottom camp, at the lower end of the main meadow on the SE side. This camp handled the impact well and the lead lines were placed in a good hard soil area. The stock were run down Tyndall Creek for grazing and showed very little impact in the meadow itself. The camp was nicely cleaned up before they left.

The trail crew camped at the Cold Spring camp for around three weeks. Check their grazing data for the exact length of time. At the end of the season I took down the Tyndall fence and inspected the river crossing to their camp. Photos were taken of stock use trails crossing the river to their camp. 9231 (Erik) inspected the camp in September when he was on his fall Kern Meadow monitoring trip.

### **Law Enforcement**

I did give a verbal warning to hikers who said that they had moved a bear box to keep other people from camping next to them. I did not have a need to issue a citation this season. All hikers that I contacted had wilderness permits and were complying with the minimum impact regulations. Garbage was found and cleaned up this season primarily left behind in bear boxes as one of the primary violations. I was very pleased not to contact a dog in the backcountry this season. As long as we remain very tough on “no dogs”, this is hopefully something we will see less and less of in the future.

With the transition in fire elevation in the Kern from 11,200 to 10,400, most people seem to have gotten the word. Along the JMT a few new fire rings were cleaned up and removed throughout the season. In other reaches of the area from the Kern Kaweah to the Upper Kern, old fire rings were found and a lot of cleanup was done. Old fire rings will continue to surface in the future, but overall the area is looking very nice and most fire rings have been eradicated.

## **SARS**

I started hiking in for the season on August 2 up Bubs Creek. I was aware of a SAR brewing when 4120 (Manley) drove me to Roads End on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. On the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 513 called and advised me to be ready for a “pickup” in Junction Meadow. I hustled up to Junction and the chopper “551” picked me up around noon in Junction. 116 (Duke) had been picked up at Charlotte and they were flying us both to Grant to help with the SAR planning.

The search area was south from Grouse Lake and north to Palisade Basin, depending on which of the multiple potential trips were done. A report by this hiker's wife had him overdue and a diabetic, but with years of experience hiking this area. At the RO, my day was spent drawing all of the potential routes on the map and working directly with 513 for assistance. The routes were done manually in several forms: with 7.5 quads that (b) (6) had put together as a huge wall map, as seven different sets of 7.5 quads for the search teams to be deployed, and on the computer using a mapping program. At the end of the day, the “phenomenal flight” with (b) (6) finding him at Kid Lakes, has to be one of the most remarkable search “finds” in the history of the park. In his not at all surprised to be saved state, he was truly someone that probably would not have lasted but a few more days in the back country, apparently not able to care for himself anymore. The next day I was flown into Tyndall, as this was the day that I was planning on arriving over Forester Pass. Nice SAR.

I was also requested to give advice on how to get down Goddard Creek from Disappearing Creek to help some disoriented hikers find their way. They somehow ended up going down Disappearing Creek by accident and had a Sat phone to be able to call for help. I provided information about this trip to 513 and she was able to communicate this to the hikers to help them get down to Simpson and get across the river safely.

## **Weather**

The late melt and the thick mosquitoes all season were the story this season. We had the big flood of 2011 that happened the very end of July. I was driving through the desert and it was raining in Barstow. The word from Pilewski (815 ) was that the storm lasted about 4 hours and with this torrential rainstorm flooded the areas drainages and stopped traffic along the trail for a day or so. Evidence of the washout was all over the backcountry.

August was extremely mild and cold weather with regular storms persisted throughout September. It seemed that the first of September brought fall. The September storms did not hit hard with big precipitation and seemed more to be on the mild category with some areas of isolated pockets of heavy lightening and rain.

## **Research**

The Kern Point Lakes are the areas frog research area. (b) (6) and Emma (9238) would hike over every two weeks from their Center Basin post to put a week in at Kern Point. Other research includes the water quality studies in Crabtree and the Kern Canyon “invasive” species work.

## **Residual Biomass**

This season I met with Erik (9231) at Tyndall Creek to discuss the area meadows. We reviewed the protocol and took a look at the area camps and the core plot. I did the clippings of the core and reference plots under ideal conditions at the end of the season.

## **Natural Resources**

Bear's are in the area in solid populations. They do have so much room to roam in the Kern with all of the drainage and wild country. But, with all of my years in the Kings, there are not the large populations of bears or other fur bearing mammals that are in the Kings. A bear came through on rolled my garbage barrel over when I was gone. I saw a bear in Junction Meadow and bear scat around in some of the wild drainages and canyons of the area. I had a report of hikers seeing a few bighorn in the Upper Kern. I looked for bighorn all summer, but had no sightings. I saw what I think was mountain lion scat in the Kern Kaweah. Saw many falcons on Bighorn Plateau and a golden eagle up near Shephard Pass. And one of the strangest sightings was hundreds of ravens flying around up near Lake South

America Pass, on the south side. They seem to be coming up from the east side during the day in packs and hanging out in the high country, feeding on the lush grasses and bugs in very regimented large groups.

### **Backcountry Facilities**

Tyndall Station is in great shape. The “finishing” of the attic looks great and is highly functional, holding heat into the station and allowing for more storage space upstairs. The solar is new since I was last here and it functions beautifully. The array is nicely mounted out front and the batteries cleanly mounted in the attic. The station is well supplied and the newly shingled roof was done very professionally. The big improvement with the station, with all of the years of trouble transmitting on Forgotten is the new antenna. I basically had no problem transmitting on Forgotten this season and the fact that the antennae allows Tyndall to Crabtree “direct” communications is huge. (b) (5) and I were able to communicate and correspond in a great and more casual format on direct.

Being that I was here for a short season, the outhouse is okay for at least another season. At some point a new hole will need to be dug. The fiberglass outhouse should last a number of more years. There are many signs out by the barrels and we should look at getting the unnecessary ones out to declutter the area. There are a few food storage caches in the attic for park employees, as preventing the attic from getting too cluttered is important. Will be requesting a few kitchen items, but other than that it is one of the finest backcountry stations that we have.

### **Signs**

I photographed all of the signs in my area this season. They are all compiled and named on the season’s photo log. The change in fire elevation signs covers all the of the places where hikers get into the no fires regions. There is some scratching and marking of the signs, but nothing appears to be needing to be replaced.

### **Trails**

Area trails are in a mix of repair. It is a big area and there is a lot of work that needs to be done. For the big one, Forester Pass is looking good. With the recent

north side work by the CCCs, the south side is holding up for now. This remarkable feat of trail building is a marvel to behold in looking up at the pass from the south side you've just got to go wow....how did they do that.

As much of anything it is up to the Kern Crew to do the best they can with each season that they encounter in working around the elements. It is important for them to distribute as much time as possible to make sure, for example that Tyndall Creek is a part of their rotation annually, whereas they do the best they can to get up to Colby Pass every few years.....it is a big area. With the new foreman Josh (755) this crew gets a lot of work done and is committed to improving the trails in the area. The trail crew got a lot of work done this season in the area.

### **Camp Areas**

As Laura Pilewski recommend last season, we should take out the bear box below the ranger station. Also, what is the purpose of the large metal box that is now in the packer camp just below the station. I think it should be removed too, the trail crew doesn't want it here to my knowledge. I am fine with leaving the other bear boxes in the area at the Tyndall crossing and at the frog ponds. If one box were taken out, at the Frog ponds for example, this would encourage more camping at the Tyndall crossing.....The primary camping areas within the area are the following: Tyndall crossing, Tyndall Frog Ponds, Wallace Creek crossing and Junction Meadow. These areas were patrolled on a regular basis this season to do the necessary cleanup.

It would be helpful to have the campsite inventory for the area left at the station to be used as a reference. Since the closure of fires has been changed in recent years to 10,400 ft., this would be a valuable reference. There is still a good bit of work in the area to find and eradicate fire rings between 10,400 ft and 10,800 ft.

### **Group Size**

I contacted a scout group that was split into two groups of 15 and were hiking together. They reported to me that they were not camping together at night. The British Military came through and had two groups of 15 that were hiking together and supposedly not camping together at night. This practice is illegal and each group needs to be ½ mile apart.

Large groups can create a large impact. Especially in the Whitney zone it is important that we discourage large groups and possible look at reducing the group

size in problem areas such as the Whitney area, since most of the hikers will be camping in the Guitar Lake area.

### **Frog Management**

Certainly the frog program is extremely valuable for our research efforts in the future. It is a relatively new scientific process and as a result it is a new work in progress. As this eradication program gains momentum with having an army of workers eradicating fish, close attention needs to be paid to which lake will be targeted for fish removal.

Stringent controls need to be placed on this approval process and should involve a committee for this approval process. Close attention needs to be paid to:

- .distance along the trail between lakes that are eradicated
- .size of the lake and the “reality” of actually being able to eradicate all of the fish
- .difficulty in accessing these locations (with crew safety being a priority concern), etc.

### **Conclusion**

The season proved to be very productive with the patrol area covered and the number of hikers contacted. The Tyndall receives a lot of hiker use primarily from JMT hikers. It is important to have a ranger presence in this area with the larger number of hikers that access this area. This season has proved that even a short season, which is the primary time of hiker traffic in the area, can be a highly effective operation.

### **Needs for 2012 Season**

- .grounding for station antenna (to prevent lightening from striking the station)
- .2 man tent (to be left at the station as emergency equipment)
- .tape (2 rolls filament and 2 rolls duct)

### **Medical Inventory**

3 sam splints

2 4" x 15" splints  
12 1" roll gauze  
12 rolls 2" tape  
2 ace  
1 sterile rinse  
2 pocket masks  
6 triangular bandages  
2 nasal canulas  
1 ped nasal  
1 ped nrb  
1 adult canula  
Lots of gauze pads  
Lots of band aids  
Several emergency sun glasses  
1 epi kit  
3 O2 cylinders (1 jumbo, 2 small)  
2 O2 regulators (1 good, 1 needs o rings)

1

2

3

4



## A. General Summary

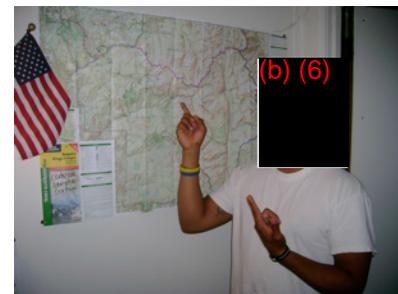
This was my 20th summer working as a commissioned wilderness ranger at SEKI. I have been the Crabtree Ranger for 12 of these years and would be happy to return for the 13th. Each season holds unique challenges and opportunities to serve the Park and its many visitors. This summer the main storyline was all about water. The early season was dominated by the frozen variety as there was more snow still on the ground when we arrived at Crabtree on June 23rd than I

have seen in my time here. The mid season saw a rain event that brought flash flooding and soaking rains that caused erosion and changed the appearance of things quite dramatically. And the late season, as well as throughout the summer, saw intensive work studying the water quality in the area. This was the second and final year of water quality research and the hard working scientists were good neighbors. It was a lower than average summer for visitation (numbers down slightly from last season). The focal point for most visitors to the area is Mt. Whitney.

I arrived at Crabtree on June 23th following two weeks of training. The early season snowpack and high water crossings kept all but the hardest of PCT thru hikers from visiting the area. There were plenty of them to keep the Crabtree ranger busy and the first medivac of the season took place on June 20th from Guitar Lake. Crossing Trail Crest required an ice ax and crampons this season. I contacted many PCT thru hikers and observed signs of much use prior to my arrival. It would be useful to arrive at our backcountry outposts closer to the beginning of June rather than the end. The Crabtree patrol cabin was in good condition upon my arrival and the snow surveyors continue to take good care of the cabin in the winter. There was a major SAR in the area last October after my season had ended and signs of use by NPS searchers were apparent. The hut on Mt. Whitney was in total disarray as a result of the "victims" being stranded there for 3 days.

## B. Visitor Services

Visitor services are a primary duty of the Crabtree ranger. The high volume of visitors to the area each summer insures that much time will be spent answering questions, giving directions, and "educating" visitors on taking care of this National Park treasure. The Crabtree ranger wears many hats throughout the busy summer season and most revolve around the visiting public. On any given day the Crabtree ranger is a cop, janitor, fireman, interpreter, researcher, educator, coach ("yes, you can make it up that mountain!"), and sanitation specialist. The preceding list was in no particular order but the last duty mentioned is admittedly the least desirable and bumps down the wilderness ranger gig as being all glamor and glory. The public service that the Crabtree Ranger provides to park visitors can be rewarding and meaningful to folks in helping them enjoy our public lands. Wilderness rangers are in the



unique position of contacting park visitors in a place where much effort was made to get to and being able to share the amazing surroundings of the high sierra and our own personal experiences with them. Also, being the person wearing the badge, and the grey and green puts us in pretty high regard with most visitors even before introductions are made and gives us the opportunity to enrich the experience that visitors have at SEKI. The fact that wilderness rangers at SEKI live in the wilderness all summer long makes this all possible. (b) (5)

[REDACTED]

**a. Contacts**

- i. Backpacker- 2,024**
- ii. Dayhiker- 1,877**
- iii. Stock- 174**



**b. Law Enforcement**

A seasonal LE commission is an essential tool for the Crabtree ranger to have in the tool box. It is used daily on patrols and I strongly recommend that a commissioned ranger continue to be staffed at Crabtree. Education of park visitors continues to be my focus to gain compliance with NPS regulations. Sometimes issuing a citation is the appropriate action to gain future compliance. Visitors continue to abandon property in the area and in particular the bear boxes. Record amounts of trash were packed out of the area this summer leaving the ranger quite frustrated. It is rare to catch the perpetrators in the act but there is a zero tolerance policy for littering or laziness.



This was the third season of the new fire regulations in the Kern (10,400' from 11,200'). There are still plenty of LE contacts pertaining to campfires, and the onis for some of these is on the NPS and USFS for not getting accurate information to park visitors. (b) (5)



[REDACTED]

The fire regulation at Lower Crabtree Meadow is also confusing and difficult to enforce. USFS personnel issuing permits to visitors coming to Crabtree have been pointing out that Lower CT meadow is at an elevation

of 10,330' and that fires are legal there because the fire elevation is 10,400'. Lower Crabtree is an "exception" to our fire elevation and the regulation is no fires "within 1/4 mile of the bear- box". We need to do better at informing park visitors of SEKI regulations. PCT thru hikers are not getting SEKI regulations, or perhaps not understanding said regulations, and this resulted in numerous illegal fires in the Crabtree area this summer. I expect that as the years go by the fire regulations will take better hold and the incidents of illegal campfires in the Kern will be reduced. At least this is my hope.

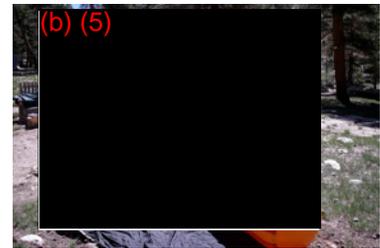
### **c. Citations**

Citations were written in the area this summer for: a stock party caching feed improperly, two parties that abandoned trash and food in the bear boxes at Wallace Creek and Crabtree (2 different citations), and an illegal campfire at Crabtree. Citations are most effective if issued in the field to the violator as opposed to mailed at a later date. Citations are but one tool that commissioned rangers have to enforce park regulations. Written warnings were written for a grazing violation, and caching of feed (stock) in the bear-box.

I issued verbal warnings for things such as: camping on vegetation, noise after "quiet hours", choice of highline areas for stock, and camping too close to water. Sometimes, with the proper time allowed to educate visitors, a verbal warning is the appropriate action to ensure future compliance. Put another way: often times a handshake gains compliance better than a clenched fist!

### **d. SAR & Medicals**

It was a quieter than usual summer in the area for medicals. The Crabtree ranger spends much time dispensing band-aids, tape, moleskin, and advice for minor medical issues such as mountain sickness, blisters. and sprains and strains.

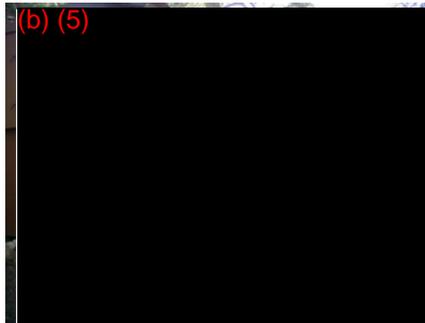


\*An Austrian National PCT thru hiker was evacuated from Guitar Lake in June for altitude illness and anxiety. This occurred via SPOT 911 activation and several days before I mobilized to Crabtree for the season. Had I been at Crabtree at the time this likely would have been something other than a helicopter evacuation.

\*A 48 year old male was evacuated from Guitar Lake with a dislocated hip by helicopter 552. Another park visitor came to the ranger station to get me and we evacuated him just before dark.

\*A 49 year old male with HAPE was evacuated from the area campground by helicopter 552. He did not request medical care initially, but his condition worsened overnight. He was flown to Southern Inyo hospital in Lone Pine.

\*A 27 year old male dislocated his elbow when he fell from a log while crossing Whitney Creek in the Kern on the High Sierra Trail. His brother, after considerable pain and



effort, was able to reduce the dislocation on scene. The patient was still in considerable pain and unable to use his arm. Another park visitor reported the incident and requested my assistance. The Kern trail crew helped the patient get to Wallace CK and we escorted him to Crabtree. After conferring with the doctor at RMC the patient self evacuated.

\*Several park visitors sought my advice complaining of fatigue and upper respiratory type infection. Since the symptoms were similar to altitude illness I suggested they rest and I monitored them during their stay in the area. They were able to self evacuate, it seems that it was an unhealthy summer in the front country and many visitors brought bugs with them into the wilderness.

\*A man was evacuated from the summit of Mt. Whitney by 8-1-1 and helicopter 552 complaining of chest pain. I was standing by at Crabtree if additional resources were needed.

\*An individual was evacuated from the summit of Mt. Whitney by 8-1-1 and helicopter 552 with an orthopedic injury of the lower leg. I was standing by at Wallace Creek if additional resources were needed.

There were numerous case cards for visitor assist minor medicals in the area this summer. Ibuprofen was dispensed for minor orthopedic maladies, and much advice was dispensed for altitude illness, blisters, wound care, and other non emergent issues.

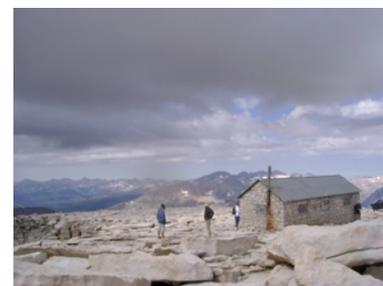
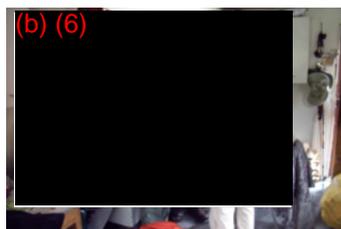
#### **e. Fatalities**

It was a busy season for the USFS on the east side of Mt. Whitney this summer. There were several fatalities and numerous incidents there. There were no fatalities in the Crabtree area this summer.

#### **f. Weather**

The weather came in bursts this summer with several storm events accounting for the total precipitation for the summer. On July 29th and 30th a significant storm system brought a deluge to the Crabtree area. On the afternoon of the 29th in particular I estimate that 5" of rain fell over 6 hours making Whitney Creek impassable to most and flooding area meadows and trails.

One hiking club from Los Angeles attempted to set up a rope crossing of Whitney Creek before I could intervene and a 71



year old member of their party fell in the rushing waters, lost some of his gear, and was extricated before any further damage was done. The result was that half of the party was on one side of the creek shivering and the other half took refuge at the ranger station. There was much shouting in Korean over their walkie-talkies and the ones huddled around the woodstove at the ranger station suddenly bolted for the door leaving the hypothermic 71 year old to fend for himself. He was well provided for overnight at the "Crabtree Hostel" and was able to self evacuate the following day. The same storm system caused a rock slide which closed the Whitney Portal road for 24 hours.

### **g. Fires**

There were no wildfires in the Crabtree area this summer. There was a solitary Foxtail pine tree on the slopes of Mt. Hitchcock that was struck by lightning during the aforementioned storm and was reduced to a pile of ash in less than 24hrs without effecting any of the surrounding forest. Thick smoke from the Lion fire on the Golden Trout Wilderness enveloped the area for several weeks in early August. Many visitors commented and inquired about the thick smoke. By late August the fire was mostly contained and no longer an issue in the area. A trail crew member spotted smoke from the summit of Mt. Whitney in the vicinity of Rattlesnake Creek and reported what was to become the Willow Fire.

## **C. Use Patterns**

### **a. Backpackers**

Backpackers constitute the majority of use in the Crabtree patrol area. The use trend of the long distance hikes, the PCT and JMT, are the most popular and bring the majority of backpackers to the area.. Southbound JMT hikers are perhaps the biggest user group in the area. On one patrol north on the JMT, 8 out of every 10 backpackers contacted were thru hiking the JMT from North to South. We really need to work with the permit issuers in Yosemite to ensure they are giving out good SEKI information. Permit information observed this year still state that the fire elevation regulation for the Kern drainage is 11,200'. This is not correct. The current fire regulation in the Kern is 10,400'. We should also make an effort to have wag-bags handed out to South bound JMT hikers. Since they constitute such a large amount of use in the area it would minimize the amount of wag-bags that SEKI has to fly in to Crabtree.



The PCT thru hiker numbers continue to rise. I contacted more PCT hikers this season than in any previous summers. The trend seems to be that people first hike the Appalachian Trail (AT) and then attempt the PCT. The issue that us rangers face is that these 2 thru hikes are entirely different from one another. I contacted numerous PCT hikers, fresh off of their AT experience, who were completely clueless when it came to true wilderness hikes and travelling through big western national parks where there are "regulations". Many in this category did not know about permit regulations, fire regulations, food storage, etc. The NPS should have a good

outreach program to ensure that these folks have the opportunity to be well versed in NPS issues and regulations. Going direct with the Pacific Crest Trail Association would be the best starting point as most PCT thru hikers obtain their permit via the internet from the PCTA. Permit compliance was better this summer than last and some SEKI information is getting out there as well. We need to continue to work with this group.

The loop trips from Horseshoe Meadow and Onion Valley to Whitney Portal continue to bring many backpackers to the area from mid July thru August. Most Boy Scout troops do their trips at this time and many parties of 15 are contacted heading for Whitney one way or another. The exit quota on Trail Crest is full during the busiest of the summer months resulting in more overnight use in the Crabtree area.

[REDACTED] (b) (5)

An alarming trend with backpackers these days is that more and more are coming into the wilderness without shelters. Some, believe it or not, do not carry any shelter at all and others have totally inadequate shelters for the times that it does storm in the Sierras. I attribute this partially to the "go light" mentality, and partially to the fact that, yes, the Sierra Nevada range is pretty user friendly and people get a false sense of security because they have been on trips where a shelter was not needed because of good weather. Well guess what, it only takes one near death experience where perhaps the ranger was not available to bail you out to make a believer out of you and cause you to come prepared next time (if you live that long....). During the big storm in late July I had 7 people at the Crabtree Ranger Station who were completely without shelter. Not even a trash bag to crawl into. Had I been away from the station on patrol there would have been 7 hypothermic patients at Crabtree. I am all for people making the choice of what to bring on their "wilderness" outings, but they should also be prepared to deal with the consequences if they do get in trouble and they do not have the gear to fend for themselves.

**b. Stock**

This was a most interesting year for stock use in the area. In the early season it seemed like the southern part of the park was the only game in town as all other passes were still snowed in and impassable to stock. This resulted in many commercial trips, exclusively the Rock Creek and Cottonwood Pack Stations, using twice as many stock on their trips in order to carry supplemental feed as the meadows in the area were still closed to grazing for quite some time. It was hard to keep up with all the rotating stock carrying feed and bringing clients to the area. We tried an experiment and let pack stations store feed in the old trail crew bear box at Strawberry meadow. The upside for the park was that there were less stock in camps and on the trail causing impacts. The downside for the park was that they ended up storing feed in the bear box at Lower Crabtree (wrong location), and at other locations that were not secure from bears and other critters. (b) (5)

(b) (5)

When meadows opened to grazing in August we were still the only show in town so more stock use and trips in the area. Strawberry meadow was open for two weeks before it reached its estimated capacity of 55 nights and we affected an MD-9 closure on August 9th. There were additional grazing nights after the closure as I was out of the area on lieu days and a party moved in that had not been informed of the closure. It was a struggle to manage the Tyndall Meadows this summer as well, because the Tyndall ranger did not arrive at his post till the first week of August. This left the Crabtree ranger to try and manage openings and monitor conditions for Crabtree and Tyndall until then which was not ideal.

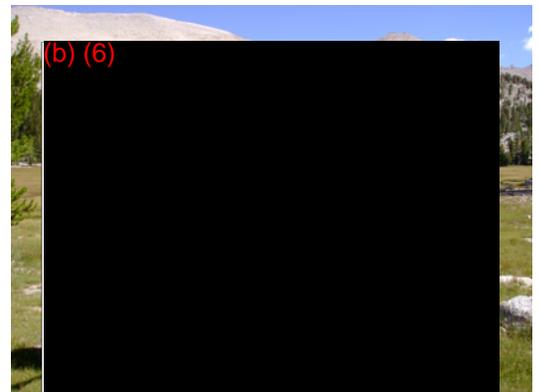
Overall I would say that stock use was up a little from last year, but that grazing nights were down due to late openings. There was one private party that stayed at Strawberry meadow for several days, otherwise all of the stock use was commercial and administrative.

### c. Administrative

The Kern trail crew camped at Sandy Meadow for 15 nights and did a fine job maintaining area trails. There was some rock fall on the Mt. Whitney trail and crew leader Josh Gabik sized up the work for potential construction crew project in the future.

This was the second summer of water quality research in the area. Harrison Forrester and Laura Pilewski spent the summer sampling and testing area water quality and it will be interesting to see the final report on what is in the water. They both were very helpful with other projects in the area and it is always good to have 3 sets of eyes and ears in the area instead of just one.

(b) (6), aka campsite inventory specialists, were at Crabtree for 2 days in September. We spent the time discussing use trends and current campsite conditions. (b) (6) was an integral part of the initial inventory at SEKI in 1977 and it was good to revisit sites with him and discuss current trends and patterns. We all agreed that due to wilderness ranger diligence over the past 35 years that the campsites that are still in use are less impacted and more appropriate for the SEKI wilderness, and that there is a dramatic difference in the number of sites overall. There are far fewer campsites now than in 1977 and this is testimony to the success of the wilderness ranger program at SEKI. (b) (5)



The Chief Ranger-Department of Defense trip to discuss military overflights of the SEKI wilderness was cancelled this summer. The number of military overflights seemed lower than in previous summers, (b) (5)

#### **d. Commercial**

Commercial use in the area focuses around Mt. Whitney. Be it backpackers, stock users, or climbers, most commercial use occurs on or around Mt. Whitney. I will not list all commercial users contacted this year in my report, but rather address the problem of Commercial Use Authorizations and enforcement of permit requirements in the field. All commercial groups contacted this summer held a valid CUA at SEKI. Some groups did not have them in their possession and had to be verified through the wilderness office. They were issued a verbal warning and instructed to carry copies of the permit, as well as an ID, on future trips. Compliance was good with all commercial groups this summer.

Monitoring forms are kept for all commercial users contacted in the Crabtree area. For more information on who is operating and how they are complying with SEKI regulations please refer to these forms.

### **D. Natural Resources**

#### **a. Bear Activity**

There were no reports of bear incidents or even sightings in the Crabtree area this summer. The only sightings that visitors reported to me were in the first 10 miles of the High Sierra Trail between Crescent Meadow and Bearpaw and in Yosemite National Park. Most visitors are carrying bear canisters and have been given excellent food storage messages from the permit issuers.

#### **b. Wildlife**

Not much of note on wildlife sightings. The small mammals continue to make up the majority of sightings. The ubiquitous Pika continues to thrive at the high elevations. In the forest the chatter of the Douglas Squirrel and the acrobatics of the Golden Mantled Ground Squirrel make for some fine entertainment. There were several does with fawns in the area this summer. It would appear that the Mt. Yellow-legged frogs are all gone from the Crabtree and Whitney drainages. Bummer. For a more detailed list of wildlife sightings please refer to the observation cards.

#### **c. Vegetation**

Monitoring area meadows is a big part of the Crabtree ranger's job responsibilities. Sylvia, our most respected plant ecologist, has done a fine job directing field rangers and managing meadows. This year it was a challenge to manage the meadows as they were wet well into summer from late snowmelt and just when they were slated to open in August we had the deluge that set things back even further. It can be difficult to project when meadows will be dry enough to allow grazing as the real time weather has so much affect on the timing of things.



## E. Cultural Resources

### a. Prehistoric

No prehistoric sites were observed this summer at Crabtree. I did not have the opportunity to visit any of the inventoried sites in the area.

### b. Historic

The Mt. Whitney Hut is the only historic building in the Crabtree Patrol area. It is now 102 years old and the visitors seem to relish this fact and often ask questions about it and have their picture taken by it. I did some maintenance on the visitor side door which kept it functional for the summer, but it really should be replaced in the next year or so. Graffiti continues to accumulate on the walls, doors, and windows of the visitors side of the hut. (b)



Otherwise, the Mt. Whitney Hut is in good shape. I do monthly inspections on the lightning diffusion system and all seems to be in order with it. Since it has been 20 years that the lightning diffusion system was installed I think we should have a park maintenance person do a thorough inspection on the hut to make sure that all is in order. Word is that Thor is planning some work on the hut next summer so perhaps that would be an opportune time.

The NPS rescue cache, which is stored in the locked side of the hut, took a real beating last fall when it was broken into by an irresponsible party who hiked to the summit in a storm and then became stranded as they were ill prepared to fend for themselves or find their way down on their own. They broke into the NPS side of the hut by climbing through the ceiling and removing all of the gear and taking it back to the visitor side of the hut. The gear that was left was ruined by winter snows and some of it disappeared all together. I spent the early part of the season cleaning up the mess and restocking the cache. It is presently in a ready state and inventoried. I guess we can take pride in knowing that the cache was used to save the lives of the stranded hikers, in spite of the emergency that they created of their own volition by continuing to the summit in the storm which was forecast to be a major snowstorm.



## F. Backcountry Facilities

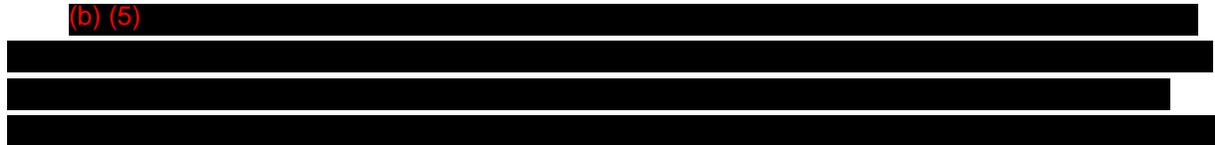
### a. Ranger Station

The Crabtree ranger station continues to be a well functioning ranger station and will be for years to come. The current ranger station is a well built structure that will last for years in its present state with very little maintenance required. The ranger station is slated to be replaced in the summer of 2013 with the foundation being built in the fall of 2012.

## **b. Signs**

I placed 2 signs on the Mt. Whitney hut, one concerning our SAR policy and, and one for visitors to make sure the door is closed over the winter to try and prevent further deterioration of the door and to keep snow from blowing into the hut. All other signs in the area are in good shape and placed in appropriate locations.

(b) (5)

A large rectangular area of the document is redacted with black bars. The redaction covers approximately four lines of text.

## **G. Trails**

### **a. Trail Activities/ Work accomplished**

The Kern trail crew performed routine maintenance on area trails in August. They also cut firewood for the snow survey and helped with the aforementioned project on Mt. Whitney. Area trails are still showing the efforts of the Cons crew who were in the Crabtree area for a full summer in 2007. Crew leader Josh Gabik and the crew of Adam, Kevin, and Beth did a fine job on area trails this summer.

### **b. Problem areas**

There were some big rocks that rolled onto the Whitney trail this winter, but are still easily passable to hikers. The dilemma of trying to move these rocks is the constant traffic on the trail and the threat of blitzing the trail below with any runaway rocks that might start rolling. The trail is totally serviceable and will be for years to come with routine maintenance. As I mentioned earlier there is the potential for a Construction Crew project on Mt. Whitney in the future. I am fully supportive of this as it is the most travelled trail at SEKI and one of the real gems of the NPS.

## **H. Camp Areas**

Conditions continue to improve at Guitar Lake due to the wag-bag program. This is not to say that the impact from human feces is no longer an issue. I collected more full wag-bags this summer than in previous summers and those who are not exiting to Whitney Portal and subsequently not using wag-bags are still leaving toilet paper and feces in inappropriate places. I dispensed approximately 1,500 bags from Crabtree this summer (down from 1,800 last summer) and compliance has been pretty good. We should try and dispense more bags at permit stations and trailheads for visitors coming to the Whitney area. This is especially important for Lodgepole and Yosemite as hikers on the HST and JMT constitute a large portion of visitors who pick up their wag-bags at Crabtree. We did better this year than last and should continue to push the dispensing of wag-bags at permit stations. The USFS office in Lone Pine continues to give wag-bags to visitors entering the Crabtree area from Whitney Portal and then going North on the JMT. These visitors then show up at the Crabtree ranger station looking for a place to dispose of their full wag-bag. To reiterate; there is nowhere to dispose of wag-bags in the SEKI wilderness. The only visitors who should be using wag-bags are those exiting to Whitney Portal from the West. I have my hands full already storing and sending out (stock-helicopter) the wag-bags that I pick up on the

trail and in camps. We really need to make sure all permit issuers understand this. All other camp areas at Crabtree are looking good.

The camps around the bear boxes continue to be the most popular campsites. We should leave the boxes that have already been placed in the backcountry for future use. Bear Boxes serve the park resources as well as the park visitors and much effort has already been made to place them in their current locations. I am becoming increasingly frustrated by visitors leaving trash and other items in bear-boxes, however, and am on the verge of recommending their removal. The amount of other peoples trash that is sent out from Crabtree every season is getting out of control.

(b) (5)  
[Redacted text block]

### **I. Permit System**

The permit system for hikers continues to function well. There were some issues with east side permit issuers telling hikers to pick up their wag-bags at Crabtree (rather than at the permit station). Since there is a limited supply of wag-bags at Crabtree and much effort to get them here it is better that folks pick up their wag-bags in Lone Pine. I think we should consider giving the permit station in Yosemite a nominal supply of wag-bags to dispense to southbound JMT hikers. They constitute a large volume of people who pick up bags at Crabtree.

The wilderness office did a great job this summer issuing permits and keeping visitors informed of conditions. A big thanks to Irene, Analisa, Casey, and Carson for all of their hard work and support this summer!!

### **J. Communications**

(b) (7)(F)  
[Redacted text block]

### **K. Needs for next year**

*\*Place Names of the Sierra Nevada* by Browning

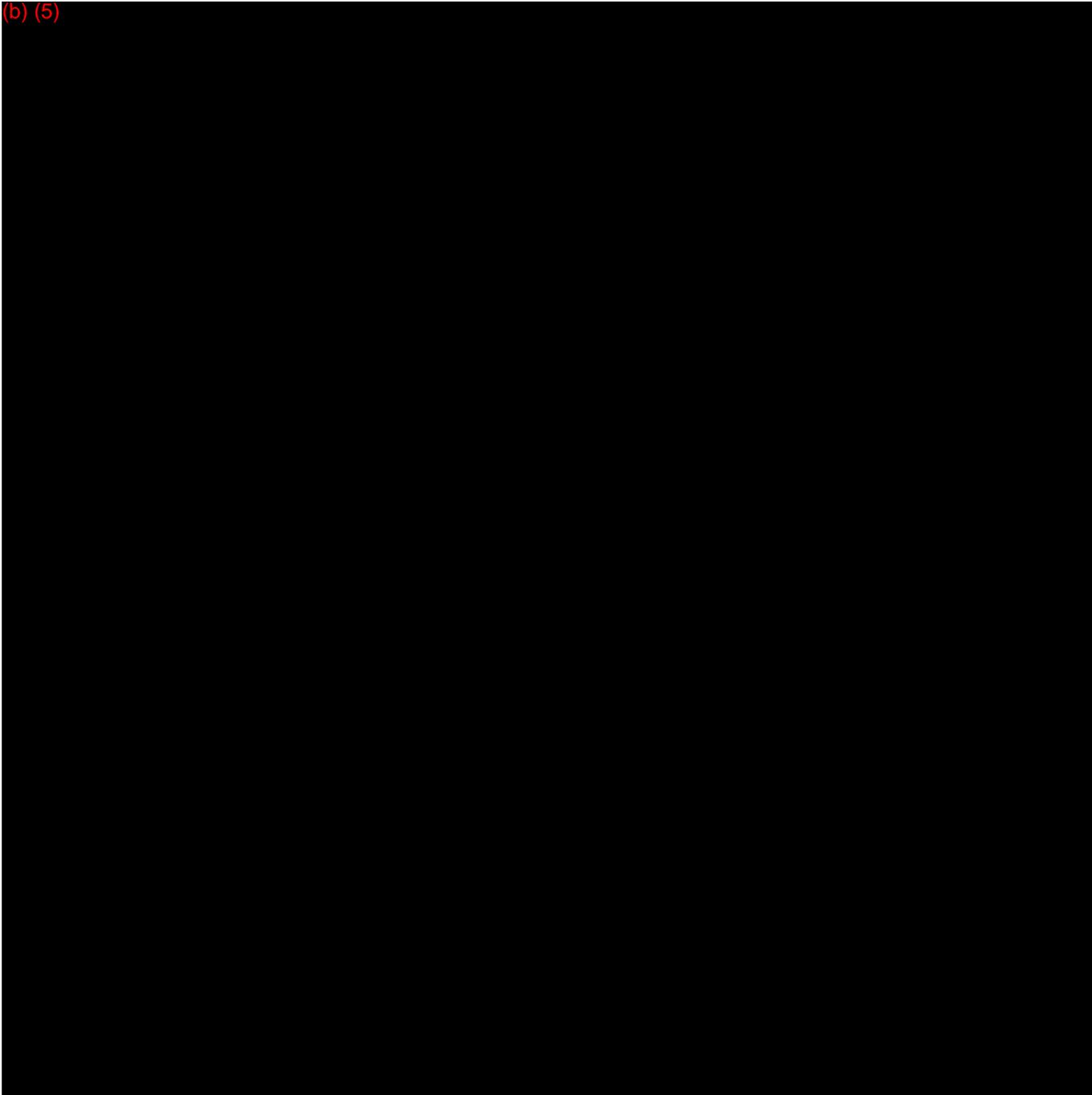
The Laws field guide to the Sierra Nevada by John Muir Laws

**\*see below for inventory and station needs**

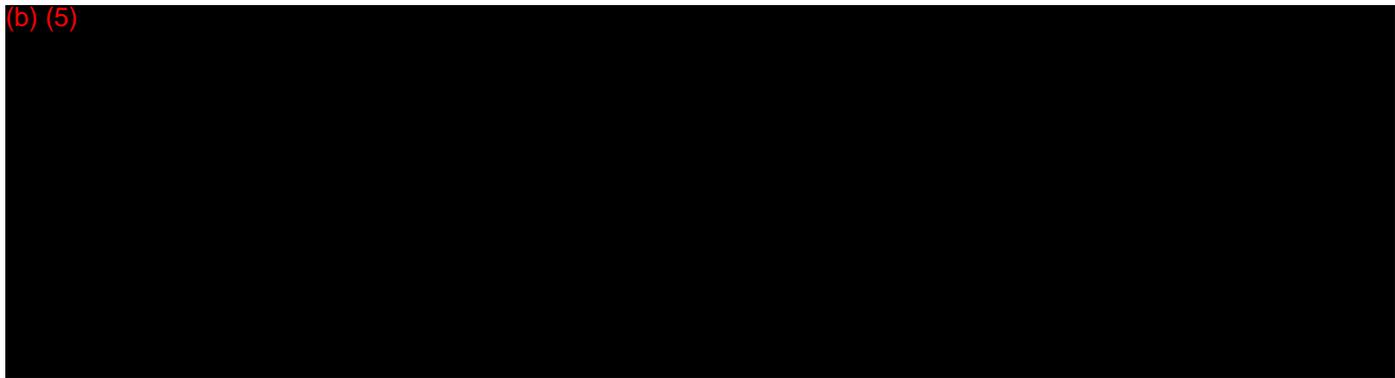
Wag-Bag count for summer 2011--  
1,600 distributed (down from 1,800 in 2010)  
200 left at Crabtree for 2012 season

**L. Recommendations**

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



### **M. Inventory**

Propane (sm.)-1 (used 2 large in 2012)  
Propane (lg.)-2  
Propane (Coleman)-depends on snow survey use  
Pocket Rocket (sm.)-2  
Pocket Rocket (lg.)-6  
White gas (gal.)-ample  
Bear canisters-1 bear vault

TP-16  
PT-4  
Steno Pads-1  
Log Books-0 (1 needed for 2012)  
8 1/2 x 11 Pads-1  
Pocket Pads-12  
Laminating Paper-ample  
Sharpies-1 box  
Pens-2 boxes skilcraft (ample)  
Pencils-ample \*need pencil sharpener  
Rubber bands, paper clips, holey env.-tons

### **7.5" Maps**

Cirque Pk-1  
Chagoopa Falls-2  
Johnson Pk-1  
Kearsarge Pk.-0  
Mineral King-1

Mt Brewer-2  
Mt Clarence King-0  
Mt Kaweah-3  
Mt. Langley-2  
Mt. Pinchot-1  
Mt Whitney-1 (2 needed for 2012)  
Mt Williamson-3  
Triple Divide-3  
Sphinx Lakes-0  
Marion Peak-1  
Quinn-1  
Recreation Map-1

Whitney Summit Registers-handful at Summit and RS. More needed for 2012.

Duct tape-0  
Strapping tape-1  
Electrical tape-3  
ear plugs-0

Vacum-splint-1  
Litter-1  
NRB-5  
Nasal Cannula-2  
D cylinder O2-3  
Jumbo cylinder O2-0  
Medical tape-2 rolls needed for 2011  
Latex gloves-Ample  
Ibuprophen-ample  
Aspirin-ample  
Acetaminophen-ample

LithiumAA-4  
AA batteries-50  
LithiumAAA-24  
AAA batteries-  
C batteries-0

(need 8 for trail counter in 2011, new trail counter needed from RC?

D batteries-Ample and not needed.

Lg. Trash bags-ample  
Sm. Trash bags-ample  
Burlap sacks-0  
Grain sacks (for firepits)-1  
Shovel blade (for firepits)-3 send 1 or 2 out 2012  
Work gloves (sz/type)-leather 2L, 1 XL

Sponges-3  
Matches (boxes)-6  
Snow seal-2  
Sunscreen-0  
Bug repellent-3

Aluminum foil- 1 full  
Coffee filters-0  
Coffee cone-2  
Laundry Soap-0  
Dish Soap-ample  
Shampoo-ample  
Conditioner-ample  
Soap-needed for 2012      Lotion-1  
Aloe-1

Spices listed: 1 cinnamon, 2 cumin, 2 chili powder, 2 curry, 1 garlic powder, 2 lemon pepper, 1 salt, lots black pepper

RUN sheets-ample  
AUO logs-ample  
Wildlife Obs.-ample  
Exotic Plant Obs.-ample  
BIMS-ample  
CUA/IBP-ample  
New Lightning Inspection forms-0 (need 12 2012)

Whitney Hut Cache combo lock left on door at end of 2011 field season at the end of September.

Cache is behind locked NPS door in metal locker.

3 sleeping bags

- 1 wool blanket
- 3 sleeping pads
- 1 space blanket
- 1 whisperlite stove, with fuel bottle and repair kit
- 1 svea cookstove
- 1 portable Coleman propane heater (small)
- 2 Coleman propane cannisters
- 6 life-ogen O2 cannisters with regulator and delivery device. Old but still functional
- 1 "tackle-box" with assorted bandaging and splinting supplies

There is an ample tool supply with the necessary tools to work on the Whitney Hut.

- 1 cordless drill (needs charged battery from Crabtree)
- 1 shovel
- 1 rock bar

From Bruce Flow

Oct 10

Alden -

Wish I had a few more tools & materials

I'd be building things like crazy. Rebuilt screen door w.  
made to fit, new handles & screen. Built real nice outdoor  
shower complete with block & tackle hoist for water tank.  
No breaking your neck & back climbing up ladder. First class  
eh? And you know what? Haven't even used it yet. Hope  
to before I leave. You know rule of woods "only take birth  
<sup>when</sup> small forces you out of Tipi".

 Well now down to serious matters...

I was camped at Junction mdw on the 27th  
of Sept. Some hikers stopped me and seemed to be very  
upset. They told me that they had just come from the  
trail crew camp and the campfire was still very much  
alive. The girl with THE GROUP had taken charcoal and  
written all over the metal explosives box that she  
was disqusted, that it was a poor example set by Park Service.

You know as well as I, the N.B.S. is its own  
worst enemy. Well as I checked out the campsite I  
disqusted too. I took pictures and listed  
some of the things I found →

1) The campfire - It was in a bad place, very close to dead ferns.

also full of litter here's what I found:

1) cleaner can top

2) lots of foil

3) Cigarette pack - (TRUE)

4) Burlap

5) Cigarette Butts

6) Bottle tops

7) Old sock

8) pop tops, tobacco top

9) Fiber tape

10) Beer can

11) Brillo pad

12) Band aid Box

2)

Three obvious holes dug for ashes and left that way without covering with DIRT

3) Whole camp had been raked and all drift & natural debris left in big pile.

Hole cut right in middle of log to enter camp from trail when there was already trail around log.

5) salt lick left right near trail

From the things I found in the fire I <sup>would</sup> have been able to tell it was a park service crew without even knowing they were in the area.

I had met the crew only two days earlier while blasting. They seemed like nice guys at the time. I GOT THE FORMANS name as Lefty. His # is 554 so HE would BE FRIZELL, I THINK IS FIRST NAME IS DOUG.

I RAN INTO (b) (5), (b) (7) (c) RIGHT AFTER I LEFT THE CAMP. He was doing studies on Lower mow. He told me THAT (b) (5), (b) (7)(C) had ~~done~~ written a complaint letter about trail crews to Superintendent. I don't know if it was the same crew.

I've found the crews in the Kern and Hockett to be very conscientious about how they leave their camps. But in the Kings it seems to be a different story.

I have pictures and if you want them I will send them. I don't think this kind of abuse should be tolerated. Especially by our own!!

#II

THE NEXT THING OF IMPORTANCE HAS TO DO WITH THE FIRE I DISCOVERED.

I WAS DOING THE LOOP, AND ON THE MORNING OF THE 4TH DAY I SPOTTED A FIRE IN UPPER PARADISE. IT WAS AN UNATTENDED CAMP FIRE THAT HAD SPREAD TO THE SURROUNDING AREA. I WAS MOSTLY OUT BUT I REPORTED IT TO FOX AND TOLD THEM THE LOCATION. I TOLD THEM I DIDN'T HAVE ANY TOOLS AND SINCE IT WAS IN THE SUPPRESSION ZONE THEY SENT IN TWO FIRE GUARDS. I SPECIFICALLY TOLD THEM ALL THEY WOULD NEED TO BRING WAS A COUPLE SHOVELS AND A FECCO.

IN ABOUT AN HOUR THEY ARRIVED AND I TOLD SZ A GOOD PLACE TO LAND. IN ALL THE TRENZ I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE ALL THE GEAR BEFORE SZ TOOK OFF. WELL THEY HAD WITH THEM EVERYTHING FOR A MAJOR FIRE: POLASKI, McLOUD, SAMUEL, CHAIN SAW, SAW KIT, BOX RATIONS, 2 FECCOS, 1-CUBI-TANKER & 2 PACKS (1 FRAME & 1 SOFT)

WHAT BOTHERS ME IS THE COMPLETE DISREGARD OF INFORMATION I GAVE THEM OVER THE AIR. I'M SURE THAT THOSE GUARDS PROBABLY WALKED OUT AND I DON'T SEE HOW IN THE WORLD THEY COULD HAVE CARRIED ALL THOSE ITEMS. I'M SURE THE FIRE WAS CONTAINED IN LESS THAN 2 HOURS.

THIS IS THE WAY MORE TRASH GETS DITCHED IN THE BACKCOUNTRY AND IT COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED. AFTER ALL WE ARE EXPERIENCED

PERSONNEL AND I THINK SHOULD BE REGUARDED AS SUCH.

I WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS THESE PROBLEMS WITH FIRE CONTROL I RESPECT YOUR DECISIONS SO THATS WHY IM BRINGING THIS TO YOUR ATTENTION.

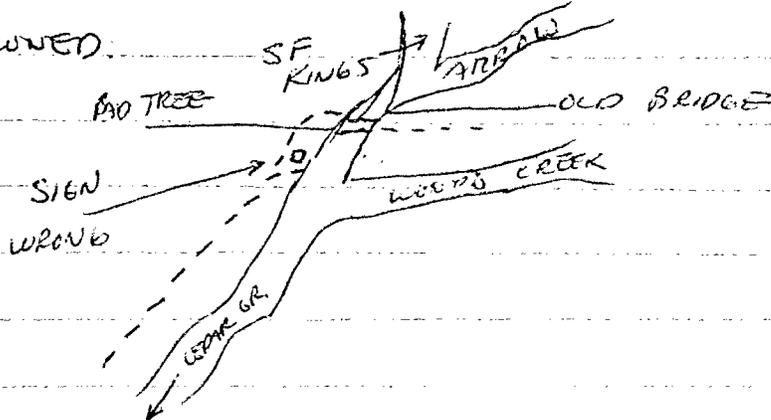
III TRAIL AT JUNCTION CAMP OF SF KING & WOODS CREEK VERY MIS LEADING IF COMING FROM CEDAR GROVE,

1. OLD SIGN (PORCELAN, WHITE GREEN) STILL INDICATES TO CROSS

IN WRONG PLACE. I THRAINED I FOUND FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR BEFORE I DISCOVERED THE PROBLEM.

2. CROSSING DANGEROUS - BIG TREE PEOPLE ARE USING STILL AS MANY BRANCHES AND LARGE ROOT AT ONE END,

3. MAYBE NEW BRIDGE SHALD BE BUILT OR GOOD SOUND TRY FELLEED OVER CREEK. I SEE THEY FELLEED A SAFER CROSSING AT BOBBS CREEK JUNT MOW AFTER A BACKPACKER DROWNED.



IV ~~\*~~ PUBLIC TOILET AT UPPER PARADISE NEAR WOODS  
CREEK. A REAL EYESORE. 2 SIDES ARE DOWN, LID TORN  
OFF TOILET, LOTS OF LITTER

V ~~\*~~ BEAR CABLE AT UPPER PARADISE RIPPED OFF TREES  
AND IN BIG TANGLED MESS ON GROUND.

VI HUGE TREE ACROSS TRAIL IN CASTLE DOMES MOW.  
HARD TO GET AROUND FOR FEET & ESPECIALLY STOCK USE.

VII GLASS BULLETIN BOARD AT ROADS END, DEPARTING  
BACK COUNTRY EDICUIT & RAE LAKES LOOP MAP.

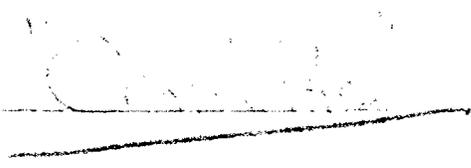
1. TERRIBLY OUT DATED

~~\*~~ 2. SHOWS WOMAN DUMPING TRASH OUT OF GROCERY BAG  
ON TO OPEN FIRE. CAPTION SAYING BURN ALL TRASH  
& GARBAGE IN BACK COUNTRY. SHOWS TIN CANS AND VARIOUS  
OTHER UNBELIEVABLES COMING OUT OF BAG.

3. SHOWS BACK PACKER WITH LARGE SHOVEL DIGGING  
CAT HOLES AND DIGGING OUT PIAT TO DOUSE FIRE,

THATS IT ALDEN IF YOU WANT ANY MORE INFO OR PICTURES  
I'LL BE GLAD TO SEND THEM TO YA ————— Bruce

Some items needed



- 1. Baking pans
  - 2. Pie pans
  - 3. Bread pans
- } NOTHING NOW!

- 4. STAINLESS STEEL PAN
- 5. Box for Eggs - has handle
- 6. Carpenter's square & cross cut saw
- 7. Drill bit

( ) ...

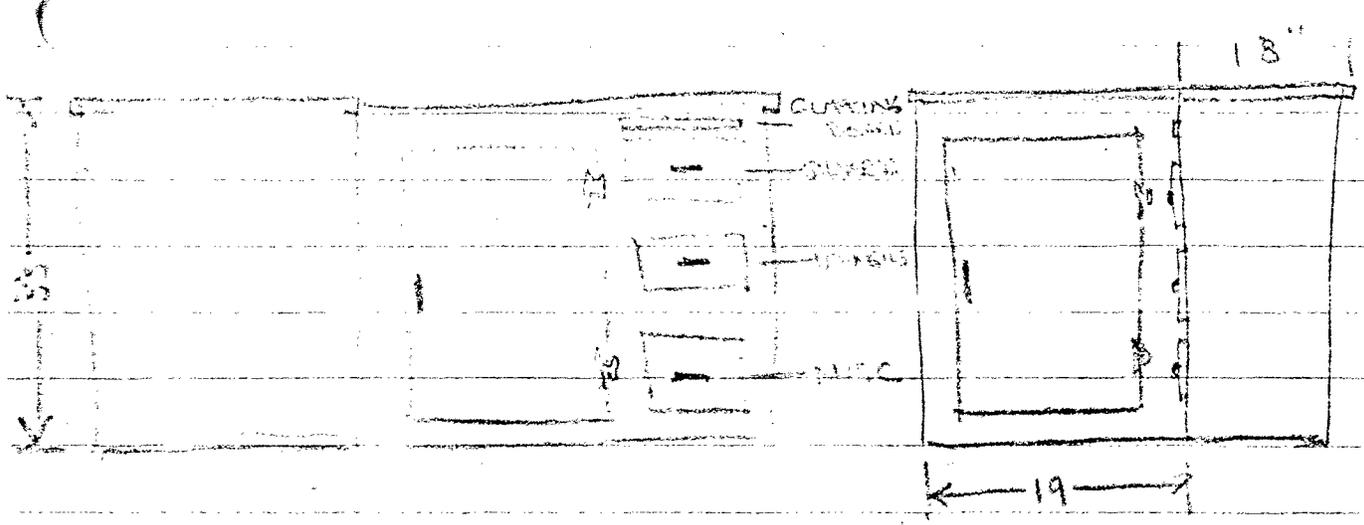
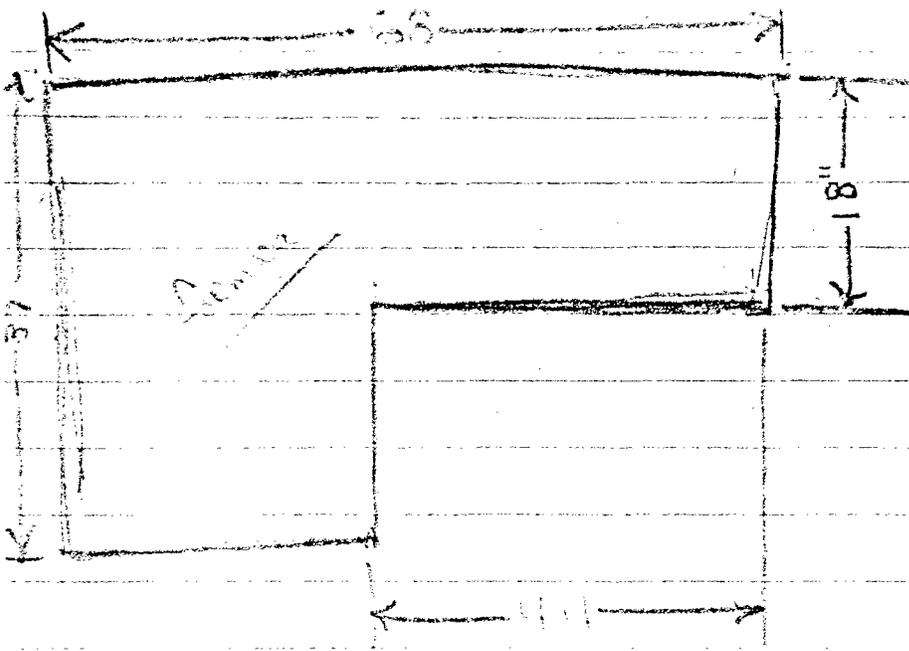
2. ... 48" x 95"  
 1 piece ply on [ 1/2" ... etc ]  
 85" L x 11" W

TO FIT ABOVE FOLD OUT TABLE

- 10. CLOTHES PINS

( ) ...

# KITCHEN CABINET "Charlotte"



ALSO -

TOOK THE LIBERTY OF DRAWING UP  
 A EARLY WOOD CABINET. THE CARPENTERS  
 DID NOT 3 BEHIND BUSINESS FOR THE WORK.  
 (I THINK THEY SAID IF YOU ALSO  
 WOULD BE OK)  
 THE PLAN IS TO FIT IN SW CORNER