

Pear Lake End of Season Report

2013

Christina Bonasso

I. General Summary

The Pear Lake Ranger Station was staffed from June 23 to September 26 this year. This was my first season at Pear Lake.

For the second year in a row, the Sierra saw very low snowfall (30% of normal this past winter). This opened up the wilderness early to summer backpackers and day hikers. With such low snowfall, the stream behind the ranger station dried up July 14. The upper Marble Fork dried up almost completely, and Tokopah Falls output thinned to that of a garden hose. I filled water buckets in June to cache 200 gallons for the dry season. This, plus a several heavy rainstorms in July and August, provided ample water for the station.



Drying stream behind station in July



Moose Lake in June

Pear Lake Statistics:

	Backpacker contacts	Day hiker contacts	Miles hiked	SAR/EMS	OB campers	Illegal fires
June	109	145	94	0	0	1
July	362	349	177	1	2	1
August	324	179	156	0	1	0
September	220	171	89	2	0	1
Total	1015	844	517	3	3	3

II. Visitor Services

a. Contacts

i. Day hikers

The Watchtower and Heather Lake continue to attract the bulk of day-hikers on the Lakes Trail. Its popularity is made evident by the abundance of used toilet paper, especially on the weekends.

ii. Backpackers

Backpackers were plentiful on the trail this summer. On many occasions the Lakes Trail campsites were completely full. From Pear Lake, the most popular destination is by far Moose Lake. On Sundays, about half the campers at Pear are headed to Moose for a day-hike. I found that Saturday evening rounds were a good time to review cross-country routes that people had questions about.

iii. Stock

On three separate occasions, I passed large stock trains (largest with ~10 head) exiting the Alta Trail from the HST as I was hiking in to the station. These were the only stock I encountered during the season, except for the NPS packer and his string for mob and demobilization. There were signs of a stock party on The Hump Trail late season, but I never saw the group.

iv. Groups

I encountered several Boy Scout troops and two Outward Bound groups in the Lakes area this season. The Outward Bound groups each completed a service project with me. One project, in late June, was replacing birdhouse signs at Pear Lake and Heather Lake. We also moved the no camping sign at Heather closer to the lake. The other group helped to reline undefined trail and cover cut switchbacks on The Hump.

b. Law Enforcement

I made several contacts this summer issuing verbal warnings. Most were resolved through education of proper minimum impact practices or an agreement to obtain a retroactive permit. Only one group blatantly ignored all rules and regulations.

Minimum Impact Violations:

Date	Location	Issue	Outcome
June 29	Heather Lake	Camping with no permit, at an illegal campsite, with a campfire	Notified law enforcement
July 13	Pear Lake	Camping with no permit, in a non-site.	Educated on LNT principles, obtained retroactive permit
July 28	Emerald Lake	Camping with no permit (arrived after permit desk closed)	Obtained retroactive permit
August 18	Tablelands	Camping with no permit (arrived at the station, thinking they could be issued a permit there)	Advised to obtain retroactive permit
September 14	Pear Lake	Using a wood-burning stove, ripping dead limbs off of trees	Educated on LNT principles and importance of not burning wood at 9,500 ft. Recorded the incident in the database under the permit-holder's name.

c. Search, Rescue, Medical Incidents

Pear Lake had very few medicals this summer.

#1: On July 6, a man dislocated his elbow. I was not in the area at the time, but a trailhead ranger happened to be on patrol there. He assessed the patient, splinted his arm in a position of comfort, and hiked out part way with him. The man then sought medical care outside the park.

#2: On September 1, I was brought to the campsite of a 25-year-old man with all the signs and symptoms of HAPE. After taking vitals and completing an initial assessment, I relayed the information through dispatch to a CRMC doctor. With the doctor's advisement, the patient was evacuated by helicopter. He was then transported by ALS ambulance to Kaweah Delta Hospital.

#3: On September 11, I took part in a short search-and-rescue on the Little Baldy Trail. A 68-year-old woman was reported 5 hours overdue by her husband. The search resolved with the missing woman found hiking down the trail. She had gotten lost for several hours off trail after reaching the summit.

III. Use Patterns

Pear Lake continues to be a popular trail for day hikers and backpackers alike. Many day hikers turned around at the Watchtower, although most continued to Heather Lake, and some went as far as Emerald or Pear Lake. Use was at its peak between the Fourth of July and mid-September. The campgrounds often filled up on the weekends, while mid-week usage saw fewer backpackers. Most backpackers ended their trips at Emerald or Pear Lake, with many day hiking to Moose Lake, the Tablelands, or Alta Peak. Some continued on to the Tablelands. Fewer still

backpacked into Ferguson or Deadman canyons, down to the High Sierra Trail, or over to the Alta Trail from Pear.

IV. Natural Resources/Wildlife

a. Bears

Five different bears were spotted from the Hump/Watchtower split to the Tablelands this summer.

A sow with a yellow tag and two cubs were spotted on both the Watchtower and the Hump trails. According to one runner, the sow bluff charged him near the Watchtower.

A small black-colored bear with a green tag was spotted cruising through the Emerald Lake campground, down to Aster Lake, and was reported walking through the Pear Lake campground on a several occasions.

A large brown-colored bear was reportedly roaming through the Tablelands. A secondhand report was given to me that a bear ripped through a tarp and obtained a bag of trail mix from an Outward Bound group in the Tablelands. I discovered a large pile of bear scat in Table Meadow. I spotted a large brown bear at Heather Lake. Another party reported seeing it swimming in Heather Lake.

b. Other animals

- i. **Pikas** – Pika appearances and squeaks were widespread and frequent from Emerald Lake through the Tablelands, Moose Lake, and the Alta bowl. A family of them enjoys the sunset daily between the ranger station junction and Emerald Lake.
- ii. **Coyotes** – Coyotes were a common presence this summer. I occasionally saw coyote scat, with some even on the ranger station trail. Their calls could be heard after a thunderstorm at Big Bird Lake, in Upper Bob Meadow, Pear Lake, and at Heather Lake. I only spotted one coyote on a ridge near the Moose Lake overlook. Multiple groups of backpackers said they spotted coyotes on the way to Moose. One group even showed me a picture of a coyote with a marmot in its mouth.
- iii. **Marmots** – Marmots were out in full force at Pear Lake and the ranger station early this summer, hanging out especially near the latrine. Pear Lake had significantly less marmot activity in late summer. They were also seldom seen at the ranger station in late summer.
- iv. **Birds** – Hummingbirds were another animal frequently encountered in early season. They would greet me on the trail every patrol and even peer in the ranger station window in the morning. Later (when the penstemmon dried up and was replaced by ripening red elderberries), loud flocks of pigeon-like birds took their place. Another loud, clunky bird that piqued visitors' curiosity was the Sooty Grouse. They were on and near the trails all summer, and moved into Pear Lake

Campground in September. Their appearance caused some to confuse them with quail and their deep calls sometimes were mistaken with bear grunts.

- v. **Frogs** – I spotted several populations of tree frog this summer, including tadpoles in the tarns above Pear Lake and on the Tablelands, and a single frog on the way to Moose Lake and at Ranger Lake. No Mountain Yellow-Legged Frogs have been encountered.

V. **Cultural Resources**

While on patrol, I found an old canteen, the rusted top portion of a stove, a rusted bell, and other mildly intriguing relics (a Nalgene bottle and many balloons). No other notable cultural resources were encountered.

VI. **Backcountry Facilities**

a. **Pear Lake Hut**

- i. **Mice** – Mice were active early in the season, then activity tapered off. None were caught in mid-late September. Altogether, I recorded catching 18 mice this summer.
- ii. **Wood rats** – Wood rats claimed the attic, basement, and outside areas of the cabin. Their activity in the basement in late season was loud and pronounced.
- iii. **Solar panels** – The solar power at the station worked well. There was enough sunlight during most days to run the lights in the evening in addition to the continually running fan. I charged my electronic devices in daylight hours. The cold box solar panel was mounted on the roof this summer, but due to safety concerns, it was decided that this method will no longer be continued.
- iv. **Phoenix toilet** – The toilet remained in good repair this summer.
- v. **Propane system** – The propane system worked well, with no difficulties.
- vi. **Repairs**
 - 1. Completed:
 - a. One window, broken from this past winter, was replaced by Thor Riksheim. Several other window panes have cracks in them, but are not in immediate need of replacement.
 - b. The front door lock clasp was fixed by John Gibler on his visit to check the latrines.
 - 2. Prospective:
 - a. The closet door is no longer fitting the door frame properly. To be able to close it for the winter, I removed a strip from the bottom of the frame, hammered down the remaining nails,

removed several screws, and detached the hinges. Still, it only barely fits. A 77-lock and combination lock were used to secure the door in place.

- b. Some of the balcony floor boards are currently loose and deteriorating slightly. They could benefit from some attention next year.

b. Latrines

Both the Pear Lake and Emerald Lake latrines are pit toilets. I filled out a work order for both latrines. On July 31, John Gibler hiked out to assess their conditions. He found them to be in good condition; they are not functioning as designed, but are doing well enough to be low priority.

i. Emerald

The Emerald Lake solar panels remain broken and, according to Rick Sanger's 2008 EOS Report, have been since 2000. The panels remain on the ground, unmoved, next to the latrine building.

ii. Pear

The Pear Lake fan stopped running at the end of June. With the subsequent lack of airflow, smell and fly presence noticeably increased. This encouraged users to prop open the doors, which allowed marmots in. The Pear latrine solar panels are still attached to the roof with no obvious sign of deformity, but the batteries and fans are stagnant.

iii. Heather

Heather Lake has had a pit toilet in the past. Day hikers go swimming, picnic, listen to music, fish, read, and otherwise spend hours at Heather Lake. Many of these day hikers are inexperienced and do not carry out their toilet paper. With its high concentration of day hikers, duration of their stay, and the amount of toilet paper found there over the season, I would highly recommend that a pit toilet be reconsidered for Heather Lake.

VII. Trails

a. Trail work

To my knowledge, no major trail work was done on the Lakes Trail this summer. I discussed with Tyler some erosion on the trail. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough water in The Hump area for the trail crew to move there as planned.

b. Trail signs

i. The Hump Sign

The new Hump/Watchtower sign attracted copious graffiti etched into the metal this summer. The profanity in particular stands out on the sign.



ii. Heather Lake

With the help of Outward Bound, we replaced the information board at Heather Lake, moving it next to the Pear/Emerald directional sign. The hope was that this would clear up any confusion about Heather being Emerald. It is also just at the junction with the toilet trail, making even more obvious that that is not the correct direction. We also moved the “Heather Lake, no camping permitted” sign from the Watchtower/Hump Junction area to closer to the lake. We chose a spot where you first catch a glimpse of the lake straight ahead (in a possible illegal site) in an effort to identify the lake and discourage camping.

I received one complaint that the signage at Heather Lake was not adequate. The party concerned would have liked to see mileage on the Pear/Emerald directional sign and didn’t feel that the trail was sufficiently obvious at the birdhouse sign post. (The old toilet trail continues straight, while the Lakes trail turns right. (The trail has been lined with stones in effort to make it more obvious.) I have noticed dayhikers gazing confusedly at the current materials on the sign.

iii. Pear Lake

The Outward Bound group also helped me replace the birdhouse sign at Pear. I believe the location and quality of installation are a major improvement from the old sign. With the old Pear sign, I was re-tacking the materials to the board every patrol due to the wind and repositioning the board due to it being held loosely in place by a few rocks. The new sign is dug into the ground, supported by crushed granite and supporting rocks aboveground.

iv. Emerald Lake

No work was done with the Emerald Lake sign this year, save re-thumbtacking. It appears to be in good condition.

VIII. Camp Areas

a. Area overview

For such a high-use area, I believe the Lakes Trail is in good condition. Having designated campsites and latrine buildings certainly helps to minimize human impacts in the area. Some more seasoned backpackers expressed disappointment in the developments and lack of freedom in campsites. This is, however, the compromise for camping at one of the park's most popular destinations.

I made it to the Alta, Twin Lakes, and High Sierra trails a couple of times each this summer. The trailhead rangers took excellent care of these trails and associated camping areas.



b. Conditions of Campsites

There were 11 sites available for camping at Pear Lake this summer and 8 sites at Emerald Lake. The middle space at Pear Lake continues to be closed for rehab as of last year. The campsites are well marked, with green and brown numbered carsonite posts. Many campers were unsure of how far they could stray from the posts though. On many weekends, I had to ask campers to move their tents into the actual site. Most of the sites at Emerald and Pear accommodate 2-3 tents. On occasion, there were groups squeezing in 5, 7, or 8 tents in one site!

The 2 sites directly behind the Pear bathrooms were utilized only a handful of times this summer, and understandably so. Especially on hot days, they smell unpleasant, are ugly, and give no impression of camping in the wilderness. I received one complaint about the

campsites not being scenic enough and several about the bathroom doors slamming shut too loudly.

I also discovered this September that the current site #5 is directly in the helicopter landing zone (in front of the bathrooms toward the Matterhorn). The helicopter does not often need to land at Pear Lake, but this might be a consideration for future site placement.

Not too many rock structures were built in the campsites this summer other than a few rock tables and walls. As the weather cools, campers are more likely to build rock walls for wind protection.

c. Fire evidence

Evidence of previous fires in the campgrounds include fire-scarred rocks, scattered ashes, and a few burnt logs. A trail head ranger and I spent the better part of an afternoon trying to remove these fire signs. The largest fire scar, near the shore of Emerald Lake, still lingers. I didn't find signs of new fires until September. As the weather got cooler, I found half-buried charred bits of wood at site #11 in Pear and a burnt log at Emerald Lake.



d. Food storage

Food storage in the campgrounds was good in most cases. It was common to see a few food and trash items out, further than arm's reach from the nearest camper. Many backpackers brought their own bear canisters. Others made use of the food storage lockers. Oftentimes on the weekends, these lockers would be filled. Currently, there are 4 lockers at Pear Lake and 3 at Emerald Lake and they are all needed! I usually warn people that the old lockers are not mouse-proof though.

IX. Permit system and trailhead

The trailhead staff this summer was an invaluable resource.

Most of the backpackers on the Lakes Trail began their trips from Wolverton and obtained a permit from Lodgepole. The trailhead staff did an excellent job of informing all parties of minimum impact regulations in the wilderness. I observed them giving the minimum impact talk at the desk and witnessed how much campers retained once in their campsites. I appreciated the trailhead rangers writing “no fires” in red highlighter on each party’s minimum impact sheet, to serve as an extra reminder. There were a few backpackers who claimed ignorance of fire restrictions, designated campsites, or stove restrictions, but most of these were parties that had not obtained a permit in the first place.

Each of the trailhead rangers patrolled the Lakes Trail at least twice this summer. They brought in supplies, assisted with projects, covered the area while I was away, joined me in patrolling new routes, and discussed area issues. (b) (7)(F)

With a veteran Pear Lake Ranger as trailhead lead, many potential problems were avoided this summer. The campgrounds were never overbooked as far as I know. The trailheads paid close attention to the number of backpackers slated for the Lakes Trail each day, limiting backpackers in each campground and closing the quota early if needed. Their knowledge of the area and popular cross-country routes was excellent, providing consistent and helpful advice to backpackers.

X. Radio Communications

a. Radio Coverage

(b) (7)(F)

b. Wilderness Update

Wilderness Round-up was discontinued this year, replaced with a slightly abbreviated and much less reliable Wilderness Update. The Wilderness Office reads itineraries from notes passed from Dispatch, who the Rangers called a few hours earlier. The most notable change is that the information is less accurate. Locations and itineraries have been wrong on many occasions. In case of emergency, it is important that someone knows our actual destination and not just a close approximation. It was very helpful when dispatch would repeat my transmissions to ensure they copied it.

Round-up was also more reliable because it was conducted daily. Hearing itineraries directly from the other rangers not only ensures accuracy, but also provides a morale boost and reinforces a sense of community. All of these small details make a big difference to rangers in the field. A smooth-running radio check-in eliminates confusion and serves as a true safety tool.

I propose that the task of recording Wilderness Ranger itineraries be returned to the Wilderness Office and that the full Wilderness Round-up be restored.

XI. Needs for next year

- a. Broom for Emerald latrine
- b. Pump/spigot for 55-gallon drum
- c. Distilled water for Pear and Emerald latrine batteries
- d. Wood shavings (2 bales for each latrine building, same as this year)
- e. Burlap sacks (20)
- f. Rope
- g. Screwdrivers (Philips-head)
- h. Hammer
- i. Duct tape (3 rolls)
- j. Electrical tape (1 roll)
- k. Mops (2)
- l. Chlorox wipes (2 canisters)
- m. Rubber gloves (2 boxes)
- n. White paint

XII. Recommendations

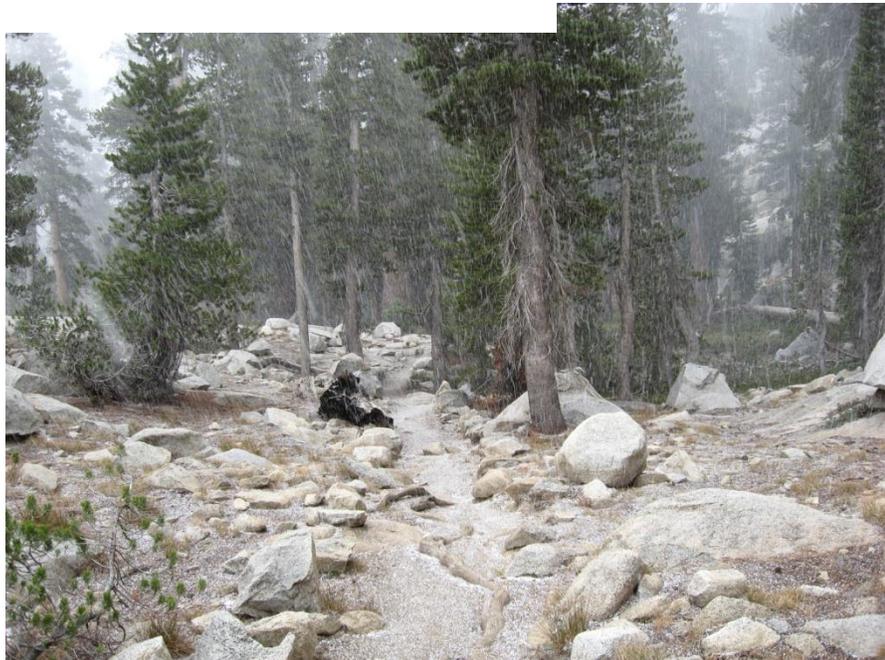
- a. (b) (5)
- b. Fix latrine solar systems
- c. (b) (5)
- d. Repaint Emerald latrine interior (to cover graffiti)
- e. Cover graffiti on Hump/Watchtower sign
- f. Send out dried paint cans from Emerald
- g. Send out old food caches from station
- h. Fix the closet door in the station
- i. Add a latrine back at Heather Lake.

XIII. Pertinent Inventory

- a. 1 full and 1 half-full propane canisters
- b. 4 bags of wood shavings in the station basement
- c. Previous seasons' inventory, including: EMS supplies, SAR gear, dishes and kitchen utensils, previous rangers' logs



drying tarn above Pear



September snow at Heather



2013 Kern/ Hockett Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Bob Kenan, VIP/Kern Ranger

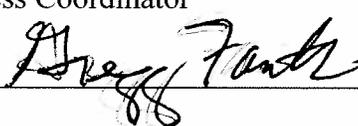
Through: Brad Farlinger, Mineral King Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 01/21/14

Through: David Fox, Sequoia District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 2/5/2014

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 2/26/2014

Mineral King / Kern Sub-district
Kern / Hockett Ranger Stations
2013 End of Season Report
Prepared by: Bob Kenan

Introduction

There was no plan this season for manning the Kern or the Hockett Ranger Stations due to the lack of funding. Acting Sub-district Ranger Brad Farlinger supported me as a volunteer to work between the Kern and Hockett Ranger Stations, as well as patrolling to the Quinn Ranger Station.

The Kern Ranger Station is located at the primary park entrance at the southern end of Kern canyon. The station traditionally has been operated by a stock patrol ranger. In 2007, the station transitioned to foot patrol. The Kern is a massive region that is best served by having a ranger patrolling continuously throughout the season.

Kern Ranger Station

Mice and rats are getting into the station. The velvet grass eradication crew arrived at the station in June and reported mice and rat droppings all over the inside of the cabin. During the season mice continued to get into the cabin; traps were set to control them. I recommend mouse-proofing the station. I observed that the fireplace could be the primary source of entry for the rodents. Screening the inside of the fireplace could eliminate this problem.

The station was also used as a home-base for the velvet grass crew. They set up their tents behind the station, but were able to freely use the station. I was able to resupply with their shipments using the Golden Trout Pack Station. Sharing the ranger station with the crew worked well.

Hockett Ranger Station

I made five individual trips into the Hockett area, opening the Hockett Ranger Station the later part of June. I set up the solar unit and thoroughly cleaned the station. VFRP Packer Joe Ventura did a few patrols into Hockett and he completed the set up for the station well. I recommend a "well hookup" diagram be created for and left at the Hockett Ranger Station. Ventura was able to provide a resupply at Hockett.

The refrigerator was replaced this season. The fire crew monitoring the Hockett Fire assisted in moving the equipment out of and into the station.

Quinn Ranger Station

I made several trips to the Quinn Ranger Station. I cleaned the inside of the station and assessed the equipment needs. I patched a gap around the back door where mice could have entered the cabin. A new front foundation log and a new ceiling appear to have been installed. This has helped to mouse proof the cabin. I saw no sign that mice were getting into this cabin. There were numerous spiders in the outhouse.

There is a lot of construction debris and wood around the cabin. I recommend the wood is removed for structure fire protection.

With my first trip to Quinn in July there was water flowing in the creek in front of the station. Later in the season the creek dried up and the only water available was a small pool at the bottom of the meadow.

(b) (5), (b) (7)(F)

The route north of the Quinn Station to the Little Kern (Golden Trout Wilderness) has not been cleared by the Forest Service since the fire. The route to the Wet Meadow Creek crossing is very difficult to find and requires map and compass skills to be able to find your way. Also, the cutoff to the Little Kern is not marked, making it difficult to finding your way through the area.

Area Patrol

The Kern Station worked well as a base for area patrol. My focus for patrol this season was Kern Canyon up to Tyndall Station. As a special project, I assessed numerous old camp sites in the Kern that need to be restored to natural conditions. Other areas covered this season included:

- Golden Trout Wilderness over Siberian Pass to Rock Creek,
- Quinn Station through the Little Kern over Coyote Pass to Kern Station,
- Farwell Gap, Franklin Pass, Sawtooth Pass, Hands and Knees Pass, Glacier Pass,
- Big Five and Little Five Lakes
- Upper Big Arroyo, Lost Canyon, Soda Creek Canyon, Chagoopa Plateau

Trail Crew

Trail conditions were reported to the Kern Trail Crew. I made contact with them a couple of times during the season. The Kern Trail Crew helped to open the Kern Station in early June. I reported to them trees down across the trail in the area. At the end of the season, I dropped the four drift fences on Rattlesnake Creek. The Kern Crew keeps up on maintenance of the Kern Hot Spring.

Kern Hot Spring

Several patrols were made to the Hot Springs this season. Cleanup is needed here on a regular basis throughout the season. This is a major camping destination on the High Sierra Trail, receiving significant traffic. The tub feeder pipe got plugged during the season. This is the pipe that moves water from the main hot spring to the tub. Water will not move into the concrete tub. The trail crew had attempted to repair this at the beginning of the season without success. They left a five- gallon bucket to allow visitors to move hot water into the tub from the spring. Later in the season, I received a report that a trench had been dug from the pool to the tub. I asked the Little Five Ranger to take that report.

Area Fires

Fish Fire: The Fish Fire starting around August 20 and required a trail closure from the Kern Station to the south. The trail closure was posted on the bulletin board and some hikers had to plan a different exit from the park. A Golden Trout pack trip had to evacuate from the station up Coyote Creek and over Coyote Pass to get back to their pack station. The Ace Crew evacuated up Kern Canyon and out over Franklin Pass. The first week of this fire it was growing 500 acres a day and appeared to be on the verge of blowing up into a huge fire. It was putting out an enormous amount of smoke that was impacting all of the Kern Canyon area. The suppression effort got into full effort and the weather changed with more humidity and containment was achieved after about 10 days.

Hockett Fire: The Hockett fire lasted for many weeks. A trail closure was needed for the Evelyn Lake Trail and was posted on the Hockett Ranger Station Bulletin Board. Initial efforts were made by the Arrowhead Hot Shots to suppress this fire. It was then monitored for a few weeks with a three man crew. I met with the park fire crew on August 27 when they were in the final stages of the mop up.

Aircraft

In July, a yellow A-Star helicopter flew approximately 300 ft. AGL from SW to NE over the Kern Station and then proceeded up the Kern approximately 2 miles (on the west side of the Kern River) before circling around and landing on the private land. The helicopter repeated this same flight pattern two times. Ash Mountain Fire was notified and was in contact with this helicopter managers out of Porterville.

Area Signs

I took photos of every sign that I saw this season. Each sign has been put into a separate folder with the CD included with this report. There are a few places where the old aluminum (silver) sign is combined with the new brown sign. Overall the signage is in good shape.

Hazardous Crossings

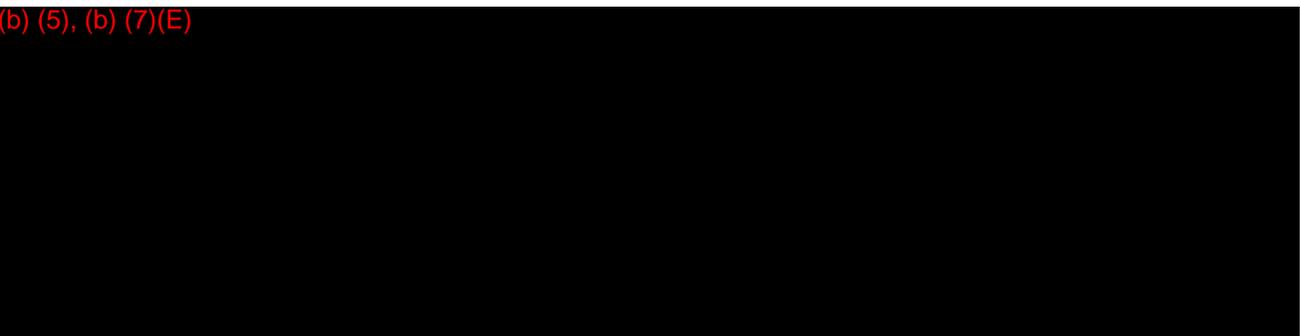
With this being a dry year, there was no concern about hazardous crossing except for a few days in August when Wallace Creek in the Kern became more difficult due to rainfall.

Search and Rescue / Emergency Medical Services

I handled a couple of minor medicals this season, assisting visitors with applying moleskin to bad blisters. I had a report of a hiker coming up to the Kern Station seeking assistance for an injured hiker. The hiker reportedly was at Big Kern Lake and received help from the Forest Service. There were numerous SARs in the Kern region this season.

Radio Communications

(b) (5), (b) (7)(E)



Wildlife

Beaver activity in the Kern was observed this season along the Kern River as far north as within a mile south of Junction Meadow. There is plenty of sign of bear and deer in the Kern area. I spotted a few golden eagles. I saw a large white tailed jack rabbit on Siberian Outpost. I did not see other mammal activity (weasel, martin, fisher, etc)

Velvet Grass Project

The Velvet Grass Project has required special stock restrictions in Kern Canyon. The project requires pulling the weeds and burning them in order to get rid of the Velvet Grass. Most of the Velvet Grass in the canyon is from Kern Station north to lower Funston Meadow. There are also significant patches from Kern Station south to Big Kern Lake. The Forest Service has given the park permission to eradicate the velvet grass in this area.

Certainly, critical to the success of this project is preventing stock users from entering the park and continue to contaminate the area. Ranger presence is important to help insure the success of this project. Stock users are required to hold and feed their stock for two days prior to entering the park. This requires them to pack feed for their animals to prevent them from eating velvet grass prior to entering the park. Packers that I spoke with this season don't really understand the regulations (hold and feed) and are frustrated in not knowing how long these restrictions will be in place. In the past, the velvet grass project has helped support having a ranger at the Kern Station. The potential for a "shared" funding to help support ranger operations should continue to be explored.

Drift Fences

There are nine drift fences in the canyon from the Station north to the Tyndall Creek fence in the canyon. There are four fences on Rattlesnake Creek. All of the fences and gates appear to be in a good state of repair except for the lower Funston gate (one of the gate posts needs to be replaced). The trail crew was notified and it was determined that it was not a priority to fix it this season since lower Funston is closed to grazing.

Recommendations

Kern Station

- Install three new solar batteries,
- Provide respirator masks (professional type for use with station cleanup)
- (b) (5)
- Provide screen for fireplace (hardware cloth type with 1/8 inch squares) 4'X 10'
- Mouse proof the Kern Ranger Station. Focus on the areas around the fireplace.

Quinn Station

- Clip type radio batter
- Box of AA batteries
- Station water filter
- (b) (5)
- Wood needs to be cleared from around cabin

Hockett Station

- Well hookup diagram at station
- Park map (1 complete Sequoia/Kings Trails illustrated map)

Other Recommendations

- (b) (5)
- Ensure wilderness employees receive radio training on the new radio system.
- Continue public education efforts on the stock restrictions related to the velvet grass removal.
- Repair the Lower Funston drift fence gate.

Kern Ranger Station Opening and Closing Guide

A. Cabin

1. Remove shutters, open the windows, and install the screens, they are numbered 1 through 11....begin #1 at the south east window.
2. Clean the interior of the cabin. Use a dust mask, rubber gloves, a spray mixture of water and bleach on every surface, then wipe up with paper towels and burn. Spray the floor as well to wet rodent droppings before sweeping. After sweeping, use a bucket of water with bleach to mop the floor.
3. Install the solar panel on the post, careful to align the black lines for proper positioning. Connect the batteries, including the inverter and controller in the process. There is a schematic in a folder marked Kern Station Folder in the library cabin, if you have any problems. There is also a volt meter in the office supplies cabinet. The batteries should still hold a charge from the previous season.
4. Remove mattresses from the ceiling pipes. The two with plastic covers should stay inside, the other two go on the bunk beds on the front porch.
5. Connect a propane tank to the exterior line located on the kitchen wall. Turn on a burner on the stove to get the fuel flowing. Open the broiler door and light the oven pilot light. Failure to do so will result in a gas odor. Follow the instructions on the bottom of the "new" refrigerator for lighting.

B. Water System

1. Sometimes the trail crew will arrive before the ranger and if so they will have installed the water system.....otherwise the responsibility remains with the ranger to get the system going and the irrigation ditches flowing.
2. Refer to the water system diagram on the wall inside the station. Begin with the diversion dam, undamming the water at the top pool, by diverting enough water into the diversion ditch, so that the volume of water will aid in the cleaning of debris from the ditches. Follow the ditch down to the cistern or the spring box, diverting water into it until the water goes over the dam. Remove the coffee can from the inlet in the cistern so water will flow into the pipe. A 30 ft section of pipe is visible below the cistern and may be missing a 10 ft. section. If so, look for this section on the bank and reinstall. Attach the pipe with Dresser unions....there are spares in the tool shed.
3. Back at the cabin there are 2 drain plugs in an orange plastic container filled with oil under the kitchen sink. These go on the low end of the two vertical pipes outside the kitchen sink window. Connect the green garden hose to the faucet outside the window and open the valve. Place the hose end near the small pine tree near the porch, let the water run until clear. Check the water tank and shower valves for leaks.
4. There is a gate valve in the pipe system that may or may not have been closed at the end of the last season. It is just past the outhouses about 100 feet. Follow the faint path and ducks. It should be under a coffee can. Open it. When you leave for an extended patrol, you should consider closing the valve. This will discourage people using the hose to bath at your kitchen window.

C. Ditches

1. The Ditch system in a dry year needs bi-weekly attention. As the water in Coyote Creek drops, more water must be diverted from the creek. You will have to use rocks or plastic tarp to accomplish this. Pine needles and other debris will also dam up the ditches. This is not a problem in a normal or wet year.
2. The ditch that runs to Irene's camp is required to be opened and running water. An occasional hiker or two will stay at the camp. This ditch also runs water to the large pasture providing water for the stock. The northern ditch that runs past the drift fence does not need to run.

D. Plumbing

1. Kitchen, shower, and the outdoor wash basin all drain into the sump. It does not drain very well, and heavy use will cause it to overflow. In the shower stall, open the hot water valve completely and leave

it like that for the season. The black hot water tank normally absorbs enough sun during the summer day to give a luke warm shower. Use the cold water valve to blend the water to the appropriate temperature. It takes five minutes or so for hot water to reach the tap in the kitchen sink. It is not recommended to get hot water at the tap in the kitchen.

Miscellaneous

It is recommended to shutter the cabin when going on extended patrols. In the past bears break a window on the porch and get into the cabin tearing it up. Lock the outhouse when gone.

Closing the Station

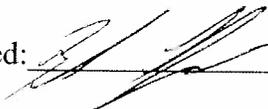
1. Clean all the surfaces in the cabin much like when you arrived. Clean the refrigerator, and stove top. Install the shutters, put the screens and the front screen door inside the cabin. Hang up the mattresses, hose off the rugs, and hang them on the poles with the mattresses.
2. A day or two before leaving, drop the drift fence and large pasture fence. Check with the trail crew to have a plan for dropping all of the fences in the area.
3. Disconnect the batteries, take down the solar panel, and disconnect the inverter.
4. The water system is shut down the same way it was turned on. Open up the dam to the diversion ditch, stopping or slowing the flow of water. Dam up the ditch to the cistern, so water stops flowing over its dam. Dam up the ditch that runs alongside the cabin. Remove the section of pipe (if necessary) or find another way to drain the water out of the cistern. Replace the coffee can over the pipe inlet.



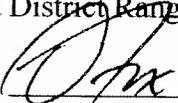
2013 Little Five Lakes Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Christina Gooch, Little Five Lakes Ranger

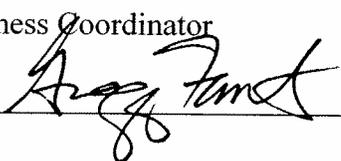
Through: Brad Farlinger, Mineral King Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 01/21/14

Through: David Fox, Sequoia District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 2/5/2014

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 2/06/2014

**MINERAL KING/KERN SUBDISTRICT (Little Five Lakes)
END OF SEASON REPORT
2013
Christina Gooch**



Morning at Little Five

A. General Summary

This season the Little Five Lakes Ranger Station was staffed from June 7 through September 15 (excluding a week of EMS and Wilderness training, June 17-21). The early patrol time was extremely beneficial, as it allowed me to make a presence in the area and attend to the late-fall/early-spring campsite impact. The Little Five area as a whole seemed busier this season than last (an impression supported by my 635 visitor contacts compared to last year's 529 over roughly the same amount of time), with visitation remaining steady from early June throughout the season.

Though the Little Five area does not receive as heavy traffic as some of the other station areas, due to the vastness of the patrol range and its central location between two currently unstaffed stations (Kern and Bearpaw), I strongly feel that staffing the Little Five station should remain a priority. I was often the only NPS presence that hikers out of Mineral King or Lodgepole encountered in the wilderness, and felt that the opportunities for providing information and education were both meaningful and productive.

Statistics:

	Visitor Contacts	Miles	EMS	SAR
June/July	280	252	2	0
August	268	245	1	1
September	87	96	0	0
TOTAL	635	593	3	1

B. Visitor Services

a. Contacts

i. Backpackers (599)

The majority of my contacts this season were backpackers. The Mineral King trailhead rangers were once again thorough in covering the trails within a day's hike from the Mineral King Valley, allowing me to focus my patrols further out in the wilderness.

ii. Day Hikers (36)

The only day-hikers I encountered this season were in the Mineral King Valley, during patrols to and from the frontcountry.

iii. Stock

- Commercial: 0
- Private: 2
- Administrative: 3

This season the Little Five ranger station was mobilized in part on June 24, with a second mule train delivering the rest of the supplies on July 22. Both of these trips were led by NPS packer Joe Ventura. The station was demobilized on September 16 with NPS trail crew packer Nick Knudsen. The only other stock that I encountered in the Little Five area was that of the NPS trail crews. I did, however, see evidence of two small, probably private stock parties (1-2 animals) in the Big Arroyo (coming and going over Kaweah Gap), and at Forester Lake (exiting over Shotgun Pass).

iv. Groups

The Little Five area continues to be a popular destination for organized groups, particularly Outward Bound groups and Boy Scout troops. This season I made contact with a total of 11 organized groups staying in and passing through the Little Five area, including:

- Outward Bound (3 groups) – passing through the Little Five area as part of 22-day trips (11-13 people).
- Boy Scouts of America (6 groups) – at Upper Big Five Lakes (12 people), Soda Creek (9 people), Big Arroyo (11 people), and 3 groups at Little Five Lakes (10-12 people each).
- UC San Diego (1) – first-year orientation group camping at Little Five, making the loop from Blackrock Pass to Sawtooth Pass (15 people).
- California Hikers Club (1) – at the Big Arroyo Junction, hiking the High Sierra Trail to Mount Whitney (13 people).

b. Law Enforcement

(b) (5)

(b) (5) Many of my contacts were preventative in terms of regulation infractions, particularly for fires, food storage, and camping violations. The majority of regulation infractions I did encounter were effectively remedied through discussion and education. I was able to easily communicate and collaborate with frontcountry law enforcement in Mineral King on the rare occasion that further action was deemed necessary.

The most frequent regulation violations I encountered over the season included camping on vegetation (6), improper food storage (4), camping too close to water (3), caching food in bear lockers (3), and lack of wilderness permit (2). I also encountered evidence of illegal fires and improper waste disposal throughout the season, but was unable to contact any of the responsible parties.

c. Citations

No citations were issued this season, as the few infractions I did encounter were addressed effectively through education and communication.

d. Search, Rescue, Medical Incidents

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation/Resolution</u>
1.	6/23	Franklin Lakes	Medical (Altitude illness)	Walked out w/ assistance
2.	7/20	Little Five Lakes	Medical (General Illness)	Helicopter
3.	8/9	Sawtooth Pass/MK Valley	Search	Recovery
4.	8/10	Cliff Creek	Medical (Foot Injury)	Helicopter

There was one major search that involved part of the Little Five patrol area this season. I took part in searching the Spring Lake, Glacier Pass, and Sawtooth Pass areas. The subject was located and recovered on the slopes southwest of Sawtooth Pass.

e. Fatalities

There was one fatality this season in mid-August, on the west side of Sawtooth Pass (as mentioned above).

f. Weather



Storms to the east, from Blackrock Pass

The park saw another dry winter this year, which, combined with the low snowfall of last year, made for particularly dry conditions this summer. There was no snow in the station area when I arrived in early June, and most of the high-elevation trails and passes were melted out by early July. Meadows in the area opened on their predicted dry-season date, but due to little to no stock-use did not end up needing to close early.

The Little Five area did receive significant rain and thunderstorm activity throughout the season, with afternoon showers and storms being a regular occurrence beginning in early July.

g. Fires

There were several lightning-strike fires in the Little Five area this season. Two were on the eastern slopes of the Chagoopa Plateau near the High Sierra Trail (the 58-acre Chagoopa Fire, reported 8/18, and the 0.1 acre Boreal Fire, reported 8/22), resulting in closures on the High Sierra Trail in the Funston Creek drainage from 8/24 to 8/26. The Willow Creek Fire (less than 0.1 acre, reported 9/11) occurred near Willow Creek, Willow and the Cliff Fire (0.1 acre, reported 9/12) near the trail between Timber Gap and the Cliff Creek Junction. Additionally, two fires in the Golden Trout Wilderness south of the Kern Ranger Station (the Fish Fire and the Angora Fire) produced significant smoke that impacted the Little Five, Big Arroyo, and Chagoopa Plateau areas during late August and early September.

C. Use Patterns

a. Backpackers

Once again, the majority of the backpackers that I contacted this season were hiking in and out of Mineral King following loops over Timber Gap/Blackrock Pass to Sawtooth Pass or over Franklin Pass to Sawtooth Pass. I also encountered a significant number of hikers looping from Mineral King through Redwood Meadow to the High Sierra Trail, and back to Mineral King via Blackrock, Sawtooth or Franklin Passes. The High Sierra Trail corridor through the Big Arroyo and along the Chagoopa Plateau also received a significant

amount of traffic. A smaller percentage of the backpackers I encountered were on routes that included Rattlesnake Canyon, the Kern Canyon, or cross-country travel into Nine Lakes Basin, Kaweah Basin, and Picket Guard Creek. I also contacted a number of groups climbing in the Kaweahs and along the Great Western Divide; many of these parties base camped at either Little Five or the Big Arroyo Junction.

b. Stock (commercial and private)

I encountered no private or commercial stock use in the Little Five area this season. I did, however, notice evidence of small (1-2 head), presumably private, stock trips in the Big Arroyo and Forester Lake/Shotgun Pass areas.

c. Administrative

Trail crews comprised the majority administrative use in the Little Five area this season. The following stock night numbers are current as of September 16: The Hockett Crew used a total of 113 stock nights in the Big Arroyo and a total of 201 stock nights in Lost Canyon (including the upper and lower canyon meadows). The Kern Crew spent time in Rattlesnake Canyon early in the season, totaling 39 stock night at Cow Camp and 17 stock nights at Middle Rattlesnake, and grazed at Sky Parlor Meadow while camped at the Kern Hot Springs, totaling 48 stock nights. Pinto Lake was also grazed during resupplies for the Hockett and Kaweah Crews, seeing a total of 12 stock nights.

d. Commercial

I contacted three Outward Bound groups in the Little Five area this season (two staying at Little Five, one in the Big Arroyo). All groups had valid commercial use permits.

e. Aircraft

I witnessed two low-flying aircraft this season, one flying E-W over Forester Bench at an elevation of app. 1,000 ft. AGL (July 2, 1820 hrs.), and one flying N-S over the Big Arroyo at app. 1,000 AGL (July 20, 1300 hrs.). Military aircraft were a common, at times almost constant, presence throughout the season and in all areas of the Little Five patrol zone. Though most were above 3,000 AGL, these aircraft were extremely loud and conspicuous.

D. Natural Resources

a. Bear

This season I observed evidence of bear activity on the ridge between Lost Canyon and Big Five (early July) and encountered one yearling in the Kern Canyon near Lower Funston Meadow (early September). Otherwise I observed very little bear activity in the Little Five area. I did, however, receive reports throughout the season of bear sightings near Pinto Lake and Cliff Creek, and within the Mineral King Valley.

Like last season, I received no reports this year of visitors having problematic encounters with bears. Almost all of the parties I contacted were carrying bear canisters, and most seemed to be well informed and conscientious about maintaining a bear-proof camp.

b. Wildlife

Coyote: Coyote activity was moderate throughout the season. Activity increased significantly in late August and early September, with sign, sightings, and calls being reported frequently throughout the Big Arroyo and the Little Five Basin.

Deer: Deer made frequent appearances throughout the season and throughout the patrol area. They were particularly bold towards campers and their gear in the Pinto Lake, Cliff Creek, and Spring Lake areas, frequently absconding with campers' sweaty clothing during the night and leaving a chewed up, saliva-soaked mess in some far off bush to be discovered in the morning.

Pikas: I heard and observed pikas on a regular basis in the Little Five area and throughout most of the patrol area's higher elevations, particularly during the months of June-August.



Rattlesnakes: I encountered five large rattlesnakes along Rattlesnake Creek and in the Kern Canyon, and received frequent reports from visitors about sightings in these same areas.

Marmots, Squirrels, and other various and sundry Rodentia: Marmots were common throughout the patrol area, particularly through early August, and were up to their usual antics of chewing on campers' gear behind their backs. Several marmots continue to burrow beneath the yurt, but don't seem to have done any damage to the structure itself. Squirrels and

chipmunks were also ubiquitous throughout the area. Mice were a mild nuisance in the yurt this season – though they did not get any food in the station (as none is stored there), they were quite active during the nighttime hours.

Mosquitoes: The mosquitoes continue to thrive in the Little Five area, and seem to find the station area to be a particularly fine place to call home. Due to the dry conditions this season, however, they were almost completely gone by the second week in July.



Haze of mosquitoes over Little Five

c. Vegetation

Due to yet another winter with far below average snowpack (2% of average in the Kaweah River drainage and 3% in the Kern River drainage as of May 6, 2013), all of the meadows in the Little Five area opened on their projected dates this season. Like last year, the meadows became dry relatively early in the season, but by this time were seeing little, if any, stock use. Upper Lost Canyon, which showed impact from increased trail crew stock use last year, seems to be recovering well with less use this season.

E. Cultural Resources

a. Historic Sites

The Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin remains in poor condition, and seems to have deteriorated even more since last season. The roof shingles, the logs around the base of the cabin, and the window panels are in particularly poor condition. As this structure is in a high-use area and draws much visitor interest and attention, I recommend getting work completed on the cabin as soon as possible so that its condition does not continue to deteriorate.



F. Backcountry Facilities

a. Ranger Station

Yurt: I set up the yurt with the assistance of Ranger Ryan Buxton on June 14. It appeared to have weathered the winter well again, though several of the deck and platform floorboards remain loose and warped. I recommend replacing these boards within the next season or two. New plywood storage box covers were packed in this year to replace the old, marmot-chewed covers. A new sheet of plexiglass was also packed in to replace the cracked door window; this should be installed next season.

Solar: The solar system worked well again this season. Once again, the battery charge indicator light on the solar controller never dropped below green, providing adequate power for all power needs at the station. I would still recommend re-wiring some parts of the system, however, as the wires are becoming weathered and frayed – this will require purchasing new, single-filament wiring.



Toilet: The station privy platform is warped and appears to be cracking in places. It is also getting quite full, and I recommend digging a new privy within the next season or two. Its condition should be monitored and reassessed next season.

b. Signs

- i. The sign at the junction of the Kern Canyon and Chagoopa Plateau is bent and scratched, and should be replaced (see photo). All other signs in the Little Five area are in good condition.



G. Trails

a. Trail Activities (work accomplished)

The Hockett Crew arrived in the Little Five area on August 12. They spent approximately two weeks in Lost Canyon and two weeks in the Big Arroyo, clearing downed trees and performing basic trail maintenance throughout the area. The Kern Crew spent time in Rattlesnake Canyon and on the Chagoopa Plateau, performing general trail maintenance. I assisted the Kern Crew in removing a large fallen tree from the trail in lower Rattlesnake Creek.

b. Problem Areas

Chagoopa Plateau – Due to the heavy rains this season, some sections of the trail between Moraine Lake and the western HST junction are washed out and difficult to follow.

Lost Canyon Junction – There are many superfluous social trails at the Lost Canyon-Big Five junction, particularly leading to the stream crossing and to the Group Site/Trail Crew camp on the west side of the stream.

Sawtooth Pass – The west side of Sawtooth Pass continues to be a problem area, as new social trails are created through the loose scree between the pass and Monarch Lake. I received numerous complaints from visitors about the condition of this trail section.

Big Arroyo Junction – There are a number of social trails at the junction leading from the main trail to and among the campsites and to various river crossing sections. I imagine the problem becomes even worse on high-water years when convenient crossing spots are more difficult to find.

Blackrock Pass – a boulder fell across the trail on the west side of Blackrock Pass this winter, approximately half a mile from the top of the pass. Though still stock-passable, the boulder does make stock passage more difficult and should be removed next season.



Boulder in trail near Blackrock Pass

H. Camp Areas

a. Area Overview

The highest use camping areas in the Little Five patrol area continue to be clustered along the Franklin-Sawtooth-Blackrock loops and along the High Sierra Trail, and include the Lost Canyon-Big Five junction, Columbine Lake, Lower Big Five, the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin junction, and Moraine Lake. These areas appeared to receive the most traffic and the greatest impact. The main camping area near the Little Five Ranger Station received much higher use this season than last, as did the Upper Big Five Lakes. I spent a significant amount of time in all of the above areas making visitor contacts and performing campsite maintenance.

Camping use was also high but much more dispersed throughout Upper Lost Canyon, the Upper Big Arroyo, Soda Creek, Rattlesnake Canyon, and at Little Claire and Forester Lakes. Camping use and impact was low and dispersed throughout the rest of the Little Five patrol area.

b. Conditions

Despite increased visitor use in the Little Five area this season, camping areas remained in good condition. While some of these areas did require major clean-up early in the season (from late-fall/early-spring use), they remained in good condition for the rest of the season.

While I was able to regularly patrol and maintain the high-use camping areas in the Little Five patrol zone, the high-use campsites in nearby sections of the Kern and Bearpaw zones proved to be the most problematic areas. These areas include the Cliff Creek-Timber Gap Junction, the Kern Hot Springs, the Kern-Rattlesnake Confluence, and Upper Funston Meadow. The few times I was able to patrol these areas, I encountered large amounts of trash in the campsites and bear boxes, messy fire pits, and sanitation issues. Also, it appears the Kern Hot Springs drainage system is stopped up in the springs and a channel was built from the springs to the bathtub (see photo). This should be assessed and fixed next season.



In addition to addressing the trail and stream crossing problems mentioned above, the Lost Canyon-Big Five junction could use rehabilitation. One of the main, well-established campsites is within 100 feet of the stream, and the bear locker is within 25 feet of the water. Should resources be available for a large rehabilitation project in the area, I recommend relocating the bear locker, restoring the campsite to natural conditions, and finding a suitable new location further east of the river to replace the campsite. This project could be completed by the Little Five ranger and the Mineral King trailhead rangers.

c. Rehabilitation/Restoration

On August 4, I organized a rehabilitation/restoration service project with a 10-member Boy Scout Troop at Little Five. During this time we rehabilitated three large campsites in the Little Five area (one too close to the water, one in a restoration zone, and one uncomfortably close to a hazard tree). We also performed general maintenance in the main Little Five campground, spreading duff, reinforcing the outlined and established campsites and social trails, and making a thorough trash pick-up.



Before (campsite in restoration zone)

After (Boyscouts at work!)

I completed several other minor campsite rehabilitation projects, particularly early in the season (most likely from late fall and early spring use), including three sites near the water at Little Claire Lake, one site near the water at Forester Lake, two sites at Upper Big Five Lakes, and one site near the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin at the Big Arroyo Junction. Very few new illegal sites cropped up during the season.

The restoration site completed last year with the Construction Trail Crew at Moraine Lake seems to be holding up well, and showed no signs of new use.

d. Sanitation

Sanitation was only a moderate problem throughout the patrol area this year. The biggest problem areas included the main Little Five camping area, lower Big Five Lakes, and Moraine Lake, with the most egregious sanitation issues seeming to be caused by specific parties. Columbine Lake was less of a problem than last year. I recommend the trailhead rangers continue to stress the importance of packing out used toilet paper for backpackers heading to all locations as it appears to be an effective solution.

e. Fire Rings

Due to the Stage 2 fire restrictions in place for most of the season (July 2 through September 9), the fire rings in the Little Five area got significantly less use this season. Even in the high-use camping areas with established rings, visitors were often compliant with the restrictions. I would occasionally come upon a fire ring that been used (particularly at the

Big Arroyo Junction, Lower Big Five lake, and Lost Canyon Junction), but it was equally common to discover that the rings were clean and unused. I therefore devoted much less time to fire pit maintenance this season.

I also noticed a major decrease in the development of new fire rings in the area. I broke down 9 new, illegal fire rings this season, as compared to (an already low) 24 last season. Most of these were discovered and obliterated in the beginning of the season, and were probably from late fall and early spring use.

In addition to contributing to the decrease of new, illegal rings, I think the fire restrictions helped maintain cleaner campsites in general – less ash, less concentrated impact around established fire rings, and less impact on the surrounding wood supply.

It should be noted that the biggest problem areas I observed this season in terms of messy, trash-filled fire pits, illegal use of fire pits during the Stage 2 restrictions, and the development of new fire pits took place in the Kern and Bearpaw patrol areas (specifically Pinto Lake, the Cliff Creek/Timber Gap Junction, the Kern Hot Springs, the Kern/Rattlesnake Confluence, and Upper Funston Meadow).

f. Firewood Availability

Firewood seems to be scarce in the immediate vicinity of the main camping areas at Moraine Lake, Forester Lake, and the Big Arroyo Patrol Cabin. In light of the fire restrictions this season and visitors' general compliance with these restrictions, this did not seem to pose any problems; however, it should be monitored in future seasons. In all other areas where fires are permitted, firewood availability seems adequate.

g. Food Storage

General: I ran into relatively few problems with food storage compliance this season. The majority of hikers I encountered had rented bear canisters from the Mineral King ranger station and seemed well versed on proper food storage. Of the approximately 200 backpacking parties I contacted, about 85% were carrying approved bear-proof canisters. Roughly 10% were relying on bear boxes, and less than 10% were planning on counterbalancing their food. I only encountered one party that had no plan (or regard) for storing their food.

Ursacks: There is still some confusion among visitors about whether or not Ursacks are considered legal food storage options in the park. I encountered several parties who stated they had been told the Ursack was a viable option. All permit issuing offices should continue to educate visitors regarding approved food storage containers.

Food Storage Lockers: All of the food storage lockers in the Little Five area are functional and most are in relatively good condition. The lockers at Big Five Lakes and Lost Canyon are older models, and though functional, are challenging to open. These lockers should be replaced when possible.

I. Permit System

a. Trailheads

The communication with the Mineral King trailhead rangers was good this season. I was typically informed beforehand of large, potentially problematic, or otherwise noteworthy groups coming into the Little Five area, which allowed me to plan my patrols

accordingly. Almost all of the trailhead rangers made into the Little Five area at least once during the season, which I believe is extremely beneficial for providing accurate information when issuing permits for the area.

The trailhead rangers did a fantastic job of covering the Mineral King Valley up to Franklin and Sawtooth passes and Timber Gap. Their presence in these areas gave me the freedom and flexibility to focus more attention on the rest of the rest of an already vast patrol area.

It could be beneficial to have a training session at the beginning of the season with the trailhead rangers to discuss patrol objectives and effective methods for campsite rehabilitation, fire pit destruction, etc. This would allow us all to be on the same page in terms of method and objective and could take the form of a collaborative, early season rehabilitation project that involved a variety of tasks and skills. This would provide training and skill development, team cohesion, and the workforce to complete an ambitious project in a short amount of time.

b. Issuing Office

Nearly all of the backpacking parties I contacted this season obtained their permits from either the Mineral King Ranger Station or the Lodgepole Trailhead desk. Both of these issuing offices did a good job of emphasizing regulations and minimum impact practices, and providing accurate trail information and conditions.

J. Communications

(b) (7)(F)



(b) (7)(E)



K. Needs for Next Year

- **EMS:**
 - 10 PCR's
 - current aspirin, Ibuprofen, and acetaminophen packets
 - current epinephrine vial
- large screws for deck boards (2 ½ - 3 inch)
- S-hooks for yurt walls
- wiring for solar system (not filamented)
- 6 burlap sacks
- 1 metal dust pan
- 8 rolls toilet paper
- 1 bottle hand sanitizer
- 3 dish sponges
- 2 rolls duct tape
- 3 lighters
- fuel canisters (for MSR Pocket Rocket stove)
- sunscreen
- insect repellent (1 large bottle)

L. Recommendations

Recommendations have been made throughout this document. Main points include:

(b) (5)



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-
-
- Replace warped deck and platform boards for the yurt within two years.
- Replace frayed solar wiring at the station with single filament wiring.

- Assess privy at the Little Five Station:
 - The platform is warped and cracking in places.
 - The vault is nearly full and will need to be relocated soon.
- Replace the sign at the junction of the Kern Canyon and Chagoopa Plateau that is bent and scratched.
- Remove a large boulder in the trail on the west side of Blackrock Pass.
- The pipe leading from the Kern Hot Springs to the tub is blocked. A channel has been created to move the water. Unblock the pipe and rehabilitate the channel.

• (b) (5)

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• Wilderness Update

(b) (5)

M. **Pertinent Inventory** (as of 09/11/2013)

- a. Propane – 2 full five-gallon propane tanks and 1 half-full five-gallon propane tank
- b. EMS – See attached EMS equipment inventory list.
- c. Maps –

USGS 7.5-minute Quads:

- Triple Divide Peak (5)
- Mount Kaweah (6)
- Chagoopa Falls (5)
- Mineral King (4)
- Silver City (2)
- Kern Peak (1)
- Quinn Peak (1)
- Kern Lake (1)
- Johnson Peak (2)
- Mount Brewer (1)
- Lodgepole (2)
- Mount Whitney (1)
- Mount Williamson (1)

USGS 15-minute Quads:

- Triple Divide Peak (1)
- Kaweah (1)
- Mount Whitney (2)
- Olancha (1)

Tehipite Dome (1)
Lone Pine (1)
USDA/DOI John Muir Wilderness & Sequoia/Kings Canyon NP Map
SEKI Park Brochure (1)
National Geographic Trails Illustrated Sequoia/Kings Canyon Map (1)

d. Other – See attached Little Five Station Inventory

e. Food for 2014 Yurt Set-up Crew

Dinner Food:

2 16-oz. bags pasta
1 bag tortellini
1 jar pasta sauce
5 packages ramen
2 packages Thai noodles
1 package split pea soup
3 packages instant mashed potatoes
1 box Mediterranean Curry
couscous
1 box Annie's Mac and Cheese
1 box Herb Butter Rice-a-Roni
1 cup dehydrated refried beans
1 can black beans
1 can refried beans
1 can chick peas
1 can corn
1 can green beans
2 cans tomato paste
1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
1 can diced tomatoes w/ green chiles
1 can green olives
1 can mushrooms
1 can diced jalapeños
1 jar garlic-stuffed green olives

1 2-oz. can anchovies

1 3-oz. salami

3 3-oz. packs tuna

Breakfast Food:

12-oz. bag coffee beans
12 packs instant oatmeal
2 packs instant grits
1 4-serving package multigrain hot cereal
1 jar Malt-o-Meal
1 jar Nutella
2 cartons dried hash browns
1 can Spam
1 bag assorted teas (caffeinated)
5 packets hot chocolate
sugar

Snacks:

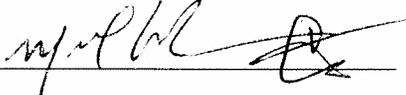
1 box multigrain crackers
4 granola bars
dried bananas
dried mangos
dried pineapple
1 package Newman-O's
Cookies
1 bag hard candies



2013 Lodgepole Trailhead Ranger End of Season Report

From: Ellyse Deldin, Lodgepole Trailhead Ranger

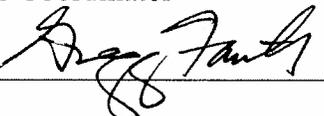
Through: Michael Cole, Lodgepole Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 2/8/14

Through: David Fox, Sequoia District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 2/20/2014

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 2/26/2014

Lodgepole Trailhead Report 2013

May 24 - September 28, 2013

Report by Ellyse Deldin

Trailhead Rangers:

Ellyse Deldin

Sam Webster

Adam Fix



General Observations

This was another drought year. We noted August conditions in May for rivers like the Marble Fork and Mehrten. We did not encounter any snow in the high country by July. For the first time in many years, it was difficult to find water in the Sierra. There were large populations of mosquitoes and biting flies present from May to early August. Fortunately, we had a few moments of reprieve from the dry conditions. A number of summer storms rolled through the Sierra, bringing plenty of lightning and a little rain. These storms started many fires in the park, from Cedar Grove to Mineral King. The High Sierra Trail (HST) was even closed briefly due to the Chagoopa fire. Air quality was unhealthy during the end of August/early September. The Fish and Angora fires in Golden Trout Wilderness created significantly smoky conditions in the Kern, Big Arroyo, Little Five and even the Lodgepole area. Many of our backpackers this season stated they were trying to escape the smoky conditions of Yosemite National Park (Rim fire) and found our air quality only slightly better at times. Winter arrived early, bringing snow to the high country, low temperatures at all elevations, and clearer skies.

In terms of SARs and medicals, this was an incredibly and surprisingly quiet season. Trailhead did assist with the few medicals and SARs in our area – we were staffed with one EMT and two Wilderness First Responders. The rangers enhanced their skills at SAR and Swiftwater Rescue training.

The condition of the food storage lockers continues to be an issue in the Lodgepole area. The lockers on the Twin Lakes Trail at Clover Creek, JO junction, and one at Twin Lakes are in poor condition. The hinges on the locker at Clover are completely rusted out. Additionally, none of them are rodent-proof, so there have been many issues with people losing their food to mice. The trail crew installed a new locker at Twin Lakes. Along the HST, the remaining old boxes at Bearpaw and 9 mile are difficult to use. The box at Hamilton is still broken. We recommend that we keep food storage lockers functional. Many of them have reached the end of their functionality and should be replaced.

Lodgepole trailhead patrolled 1,404 miles this season. While patrolling, we contacted 2,014 backpackers and 1,207 day hikers. During our patrols, we encountered a moderate number of violations involving food storage, dogs on the trail, illegal campsites, and natural resource destruction. The HST and the Twin Lakes trail encountered the greatest number of resource violations. We dealt with these issues primarily through education and contacted law enforcement as necessary.

The number of dogs on the trail seems to be increasing. Over half of the people with dogs claimed their dogs were a service animal. When asked, the visitors would often claim the animals provided emotional support; this is not a valid service under the guidance from the Department of Justice, and they were sent back to the trailhead. There are many websites devoted to advising visitors how they can bring their dogs on the trail claiming them as service animals so they don't get in trouble.

We had an incredible season of inter-district/inter-agency collaboration. The Wilderness Office employees came up to Lodgepole to hike the trails and work at our desk. They worked with us at the trailhead desk on multiple occasions to learn about our issues. They discovered how slow our access is to the database and just how busy it is in the Visitor Center. We recommend this orientation and cross training happens again. After shadowing the Wilderness Office a few seasons ago, it is clear that we can learn from each other's operations. Each trailhead desk varies so greatly that it is essential for us to know these differences so we can better inform visitors.

Forest Service Ranger Jeff Duneman from Jennie Lakes Wilderness sought us out at the beginning of season to share information about our respective patrol areas. This was an important connection that we have been trying to establish for years. We now have the Jennie Lakes District contact information in the log book and we know who to talk to next season about trail conditions and other mutual concerns.

Permit Statistics/Use patterns (During Wilderness Desk Summer Season)

Number of Permits Issued

	May 24-31	June	July	August	Sept. 1-28	Total
HST	26	92	156	188	97	559
Bearpaw	0	33	47	43	33	156
Alta	23	48	65	74	41	251
Pear Lake	14	91	131	119	100	455
Twin	23	64	80	102	51	320
Total	86	328	479	526	322	1741

Number of Visitors

	May 24-31	June	July	August	Sept. 1-28	Total
HST	71	200	424	523	218	1436
Bearpaw	0	135	231	267	114	747
Alta	57	176	211	369	159	972
Pear Lake	36	264	351	307	259	1217
Twin	71	107	153	143	91	565
Total	235	882	1370	1609	841	4773

Number of Visitor Nights

	May 24-31	June	July	August	Sept. 1-28	Total
HST	183	946	2482	3018	1094	7723
Bearpaw	0	212	360	277	185	1034
Alta	144	218	786	878	313	2339
Pear Lake	67	487	763	654	513	2484
Twin	148	502	707	1413	424	3194
Total	542	2365	5098	6240	2529	16774

This year we issued 195 more permits than last year which encompassed 299 more visitors and 1,822 more nights out. We had a lengthened season, early snow melt off, and visitors stating they came to Sequoia due to the fires in Yosemite NP. During late August and early September, we were filling the trails midweek (an unusual occurrence).

Projects

The long standing winter sign project has been completed. We replaced missing or damaged signs on the following trails: Crescent Meadow, Old Lodgepole Road, and Clover Creek. Crescent Meadow was in the worse shape by far, due to the number of sign-bearing trees burned during the prescribed fire last year. All miscellaneous trailhead projects normally saved for September were done during our busy season in August.

Another notable project for trailhead was updating our breezeway bulletins. The information was outdated and the maps were in disrepair. We felt that this was an important project since people utilize these bulletins during the self-issue period. We typed out new trail descriptions, fixed the maps, and added new signs for leave no trace ethics and winter travel. During this project, we were contacted by Erika Williams and informed that she could make signs for the breezeway. We worked together to create signs for each of our trails plus wilderness ethics and winter travel. She believes rough drafts of these signs will be ready for approval by next spring.

Camp Areas

A primary focus of the trailhead staff was to keep the wilderness clean. We collected approximately 248 pounds of trash from the wilderness. We removed 54 fire rings, cleaned up 260 campsites, and rehabilitated 53 campsites. Our camping areas were in surprisingly better condition this year. Stage 2 fire restrictions reduced the number of campfires. We still found evidence of fires on occasion, but overall the fire rings were a non-issue. Fewer campfires meant less trash in the fire rings and cleaner campsites.



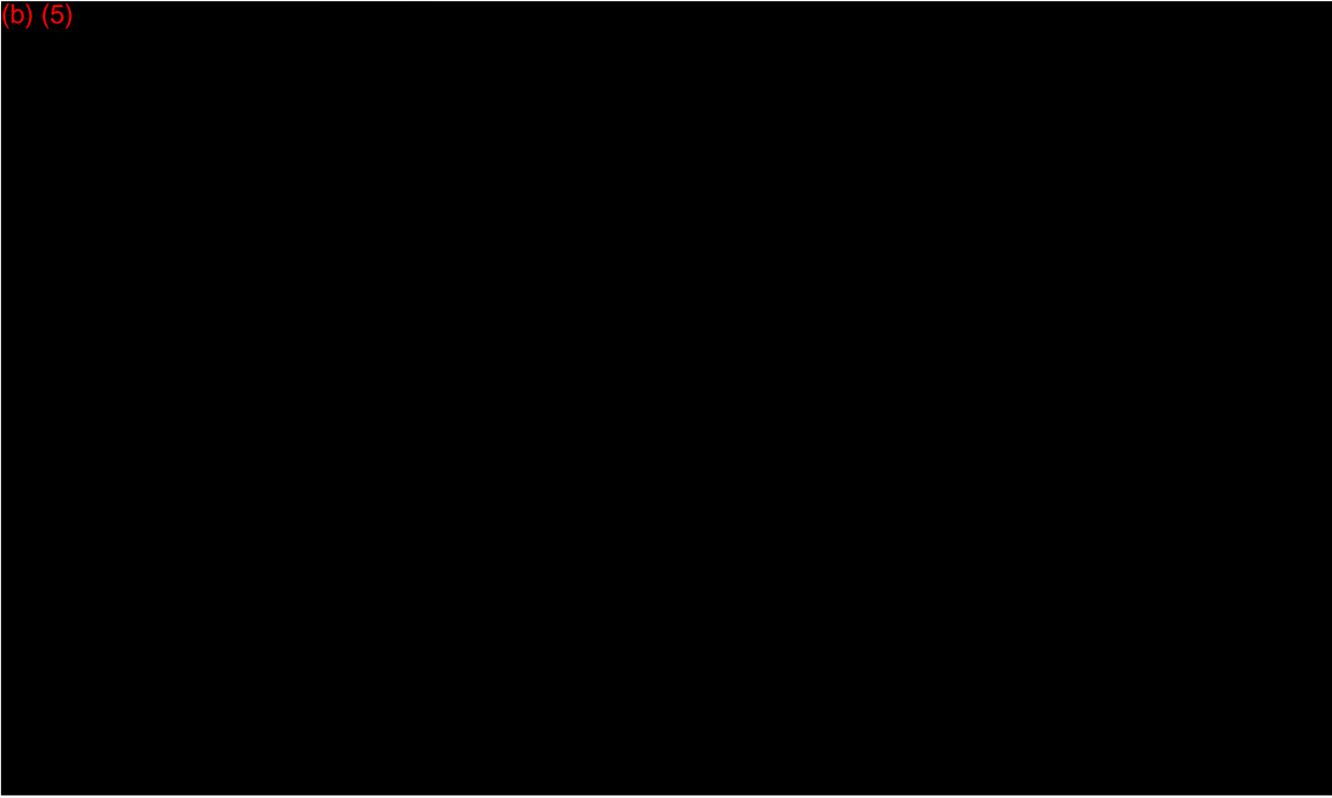
One of the many loads of trash hauled from Bearpaw – this was appx 20lbs

Permit System

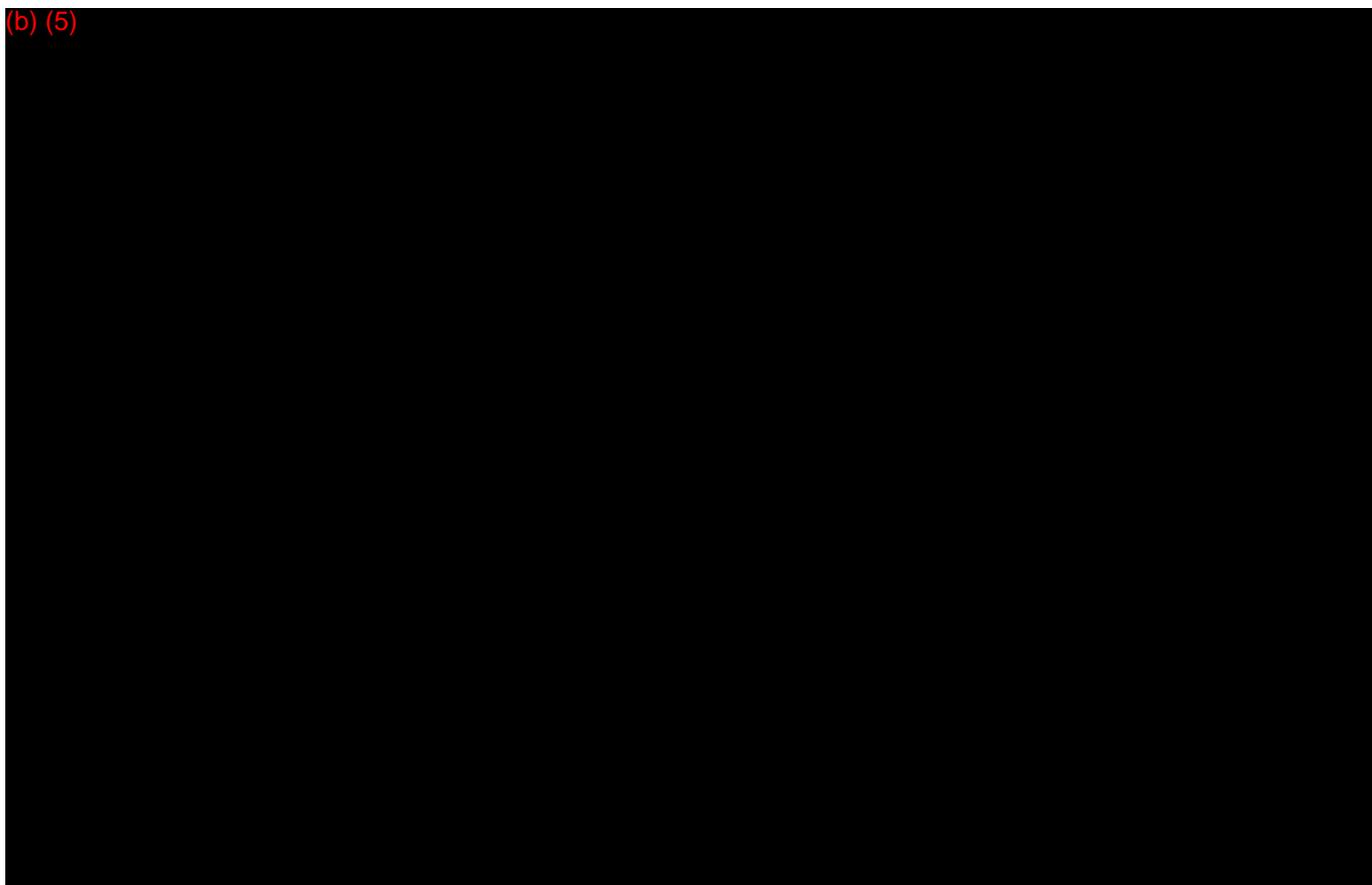
The permit database caused multiple issues. At the beginning of season, the database was crashing after every two permits processed (on average). It would often crash after much of the visitor information had been collected, forcing us to start over with the same visitor. It began working more smoothly by July. It is still an incredibly slow database, particularly if you to exit the “Browse Permits” tab and utilize other modules. For example, we attempted to access and print a daily permit log to accompany our remits. This quickly proved impractical as it took at least 10 minutes to access that information once leaving the “Browse” section. Other than the above issues, the database has proven helpful for SARs and citations. It is not the most easily searchable database, but if you have an idea of what you are looking for, you can usually find it.

Miscellaneous/Recommendations

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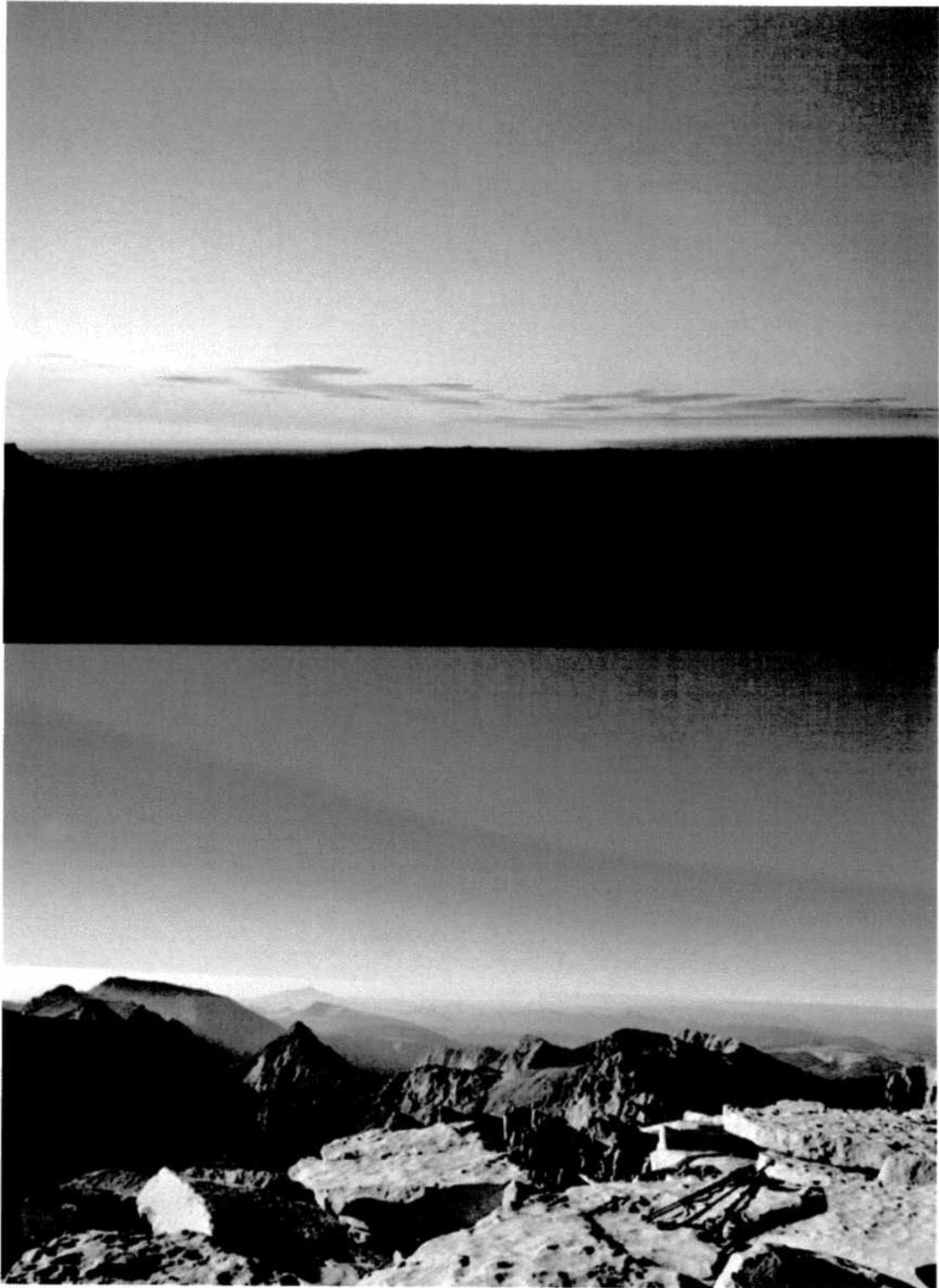


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Evidence of drought: top left Silliman Creek; top right Mehrten Creek; bottom Buck Creek



Fire in the Mountains: Smoke seen from Mt Whitney; Smoke in Kings from Silliman Crest

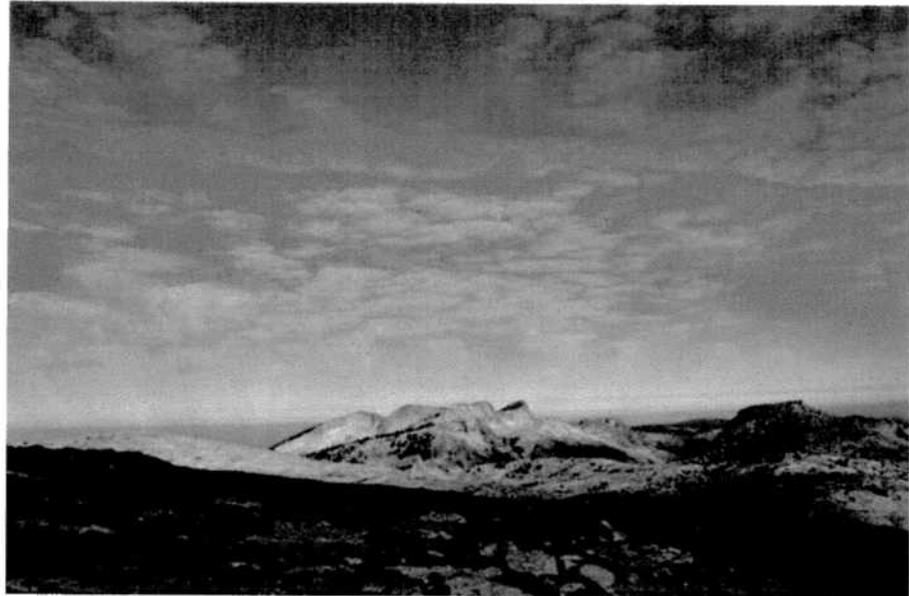


Wild Things: Mom & cubs that continuously prowled between Mehrten Meadow and Mehrten Creek; Pika near Precipice Lake; a bird's nest made of toilet paper and twigs at Twin Lakes



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Cloudy Days in the Sierra: Black Kaweah wrapped in clouds



Clouds: Fog in the Tokopah Valley; Looking towards Mt Silliman from Silliman Crest

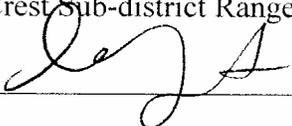




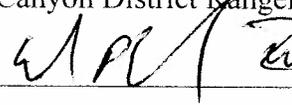
2013 Tyndall Creek Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Dena Paolilli, Tyndall Creek Ranger

Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 12/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/15/14

Tyndall End of Season Report 2013

Dena Paolilli



The Tyndall Ranger Station was staffed from July 29th through September 24th this season. Laura and Rob Pilewski kindly opened the station for the season. Matt Zussman and Bob Keenan came through on patrols prior to my arrival with no major incidents or problems that I am aware of.

Visitor Services

Contacts

Backpackers- 598

Day Hikers- 0

Stock- Commercial: 2 groups with Rock Creek Pack Station- 14 head and 5 head
1 group with Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides- 7 head

Administrative: Kern Trail Crew- 12 head

Private: 0

Law Enforcement

In the Tyndall patrol zone, I issued a few warnings about improper food storage, camped on vegetation (mainly up near Forester Pass), washing clothes in streams, and camping too close to water. I contacted a couple individuals carrying bear spray and a couple carrying twig stoves. Other issues I encountered were improper disposal of human waste, one of which I was able to catch the person responsible, trash left in bear boxes, and evidence of illegal campfires. I found plenty of toilet paper in my patrols, in which no attempt was made to

even burn or bury it, as well as plenty of micro trash and a handful of pieces of abandoned property, mainly clothing.

Citations

I issued one citation this season for improper disposal of human waste on August . While at Junction Meadow I noticed three piles of human waste near the river with relatively fresh toilet paper on top or near them. When I asked a group that had been camping there for two nights if they were responsible for them, they said no. However, one of the party lead me to where he had been going which was within 50 feet of the campsite and not properly buried. I issued a citation.

Search, Rescue and Medical Incidents

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation</u>
7/31	Tyndall Creek Campsites	HACE	Helicopter
8/19	Junction Meadow Campsites	Fatigue	TR
8/21-22	Tyndall Stock Camp	Fever	Helicopter



Fatalities

There were no fatalities in the Tyndall area this season.

Weather

Once I was out at Tyndall there were a few evenings and nights of rain and thunderstorms, one significant hail storm that cleared in a couple hours and a dusting of snow at the end of the season. There were periods of cold nights in August.

Fires

There were no fires in the Tyndall zone. Also, this area was only affected by smoke on three different days throughout the season.

Use Patterns

Backpackers

The majority of people I encountered were hiking on the JMT (mainly southbound) or the High Sierra Trail. A small percentage of people were hiking on the Lake South America trail, Colby Pass trail, and (an even smaller percentage- 6 people total) the John Dean cutoff. When hiking on the Inyo National Forest of Shepherd Pass to the trailhead, I was surprised by the

number of hikers (15-20 on the three occasions I hiked it) since it had sustained damage in the July storms.

Though I saw signs of people off trail (footprints, obvious campsites, illegal campfires, trash, etc), I only ran into one group of two while traveling cross-country on route to Kaweah Basin.

Stock

Three commercial stock groups came through the Tyndall area once I was at the station. Mark with Rock Creek Pack Station had 14 head with a group of 15 clients at the end of August. They spent one night at Lake South America and two nights at Upper Wright Creek Meadow. The second group with Rock Creek came through with 5 head and stayed for two nights in Tyndall meadow also at the end of August. One group came through with Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides at the beginning of September with 7 head and 14 clients and stayed one night in Tyndall Meadow.

The Kern Trail Crew stock used Tyndall Meadow for a total of 81 nights in the month of August and Wright Creek Meadow for 76 nights.

Administrative

The Kern Trail Crew camped for three weeks (8/9-9/2) below the Tyndall Ranger Station and commuted to Forester Pass to work. The Construction Crew was camped at Wright Meadow until September 19th. They worked on the High Sierra Trail along Wallace Creek and the JMT from Bighorn Plateau to Wallace.

The Frog Crew (Sean and Patrick) came through twice every two weeks while traveling between Center Basin and Kern Point.

Commercial

Commercial use was mainly JMT trips. Though I encountered one group with Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides doing a guided trip from Colby Pass to Whitney. Also, I came across a guide with Sierra Mountaineering International transporting gear around for an older woman in the Upper Kern. The guide did not have proper bear proof food storage and was going to hike out to get canisters. I wasn't able to recontact later to see if that happened.

Natural Resources

Bear Activity

I did not observe any bear activity in the area nor did I hear of any from hikers. I saw some scat on up from Junction Meadow on the Colby Pass trail in early September.

Wildlife

I observed the usual animals: marmots, ground squirrels, pikas, deer, dark eyed juncos, Clark's nutcrackers, ravens, and a few coyotes.

Vegetation

Tyndall Meadow was grazed close to capacity this year though still had a decent amount of forage left. Wallace Waterfall Meadow was untouched by domestic stock and Wright Creek, though utilized, looked to be hardly touched.

I had the opportunity to go through Tyndall Meadow with Corie Cann and learned more about what to look for in terms of meadow usage. She also did the residual biomass collection with me in both the core and reference plots in Tyndall Meadow which was extremely helpful.

In addition, I was able to accompany I and M's Forest Monitoring crew to their plot off of the Upper Kern cutoff trail and see the data they are collecting on whitebark and foxtail pines.

Cultural Resources

Prehistoric

I am unaware of any specific prehistoric areas of significance in the Tyndall region. If there are any I would be curious to know about them in the future.

Historic

The two historic cabins in the area (Shepherd's and the one on the Kern) were in similar condition to previous years with the addition of the new door on the Shepherd cabin. There was, however, an interesting chemical smell coming from that cabin throughout the season. Perhaps the Restoration crew came through and did some work on it early on?

Backcountry Facilities

Ranger Station

The Tyndall Station is in good condition. It has remained mouse proof- thanks to Laura Pilewski it seems. The bench outside is more for show than for use. Sitting on it is out of the question and even resting objects on it is not feasible as it is unstable and falling apart. Also, the privy door is hanging loose but I was unable to adequately fix it. The only other damage of note is a crack in the window. However, the crack doesn't seem to be letting air in.

The solar system worked well and provided plenty of power for my needs.

Signs

The signs in the area seemed adequate and were in fine condition.

Trails

Trail Activities

The Kern Trail Crew worked on three large blowouts on the switchbacks of Forester Pass from August 9 through September 9. They put in an I-beam at the top and several rock walls to reinforce the trail. They also blasted out a section to level it.

The Construction Crew put in several weeks work on the High Sierra Trail along Wallace Creek, blasting and adding steps near the Wright Creek waterfall crossing. They also worked a few weeks on the JMT from the Bighorn Plateau to Wallace Creek.

Problem Areas

The trail up Lake South America Col is still washed out and there is a section where a use trail runs parallel to the real trail a few feet away. The only two complaints I got about trails were about the Upper Kern cutoff east of the turnoff to Lake South America and a portion further west of the turnoff where the trail travels through rocks. Otherwise, trails in the Tyndall zone were well maintained.

Camp Areas

Conditions

The Tyndall Creek and Frog Pond campsites seemed to get a fair amount of use. Tyndall Creek had campers every night that I passed through. Once I found a bag of trash in the bear box at the Frog Ponds, three times in the Wallace Meadow bear box, and three times in the Junction Meadow box. The sites at Junction Meadow accumulated a lot of trash in general, around the camps themselves. Also, the Kern Hot Springs had quite a bit of trash around the spring itself, including an epipen.

Sanitation

As previously mentioned I found a considerable amount of human waste unburied with toilet paper nearby. The main areas where I encountered this with some frequency were Junction Meadow and up near Shepherd Pass. Though I found toilet paper often enough throughout the backcountry.

Fire Rings

I came across fire rings in a variety of places where fires are illegal and where people would have to be carrying wood up from treeline including Wallace Lake, Upper Kern, and Bighorn Plateau. A few others in areas where fires are legal in most years, I downsized some rings that were overly large.

Firewood Availability

Firewood availability wasn't an issue this year with Stage II fire restrictions implemented until September 9th.

Permit System

The permit regulations still seem a bit hard for people to wrap their mind around. The

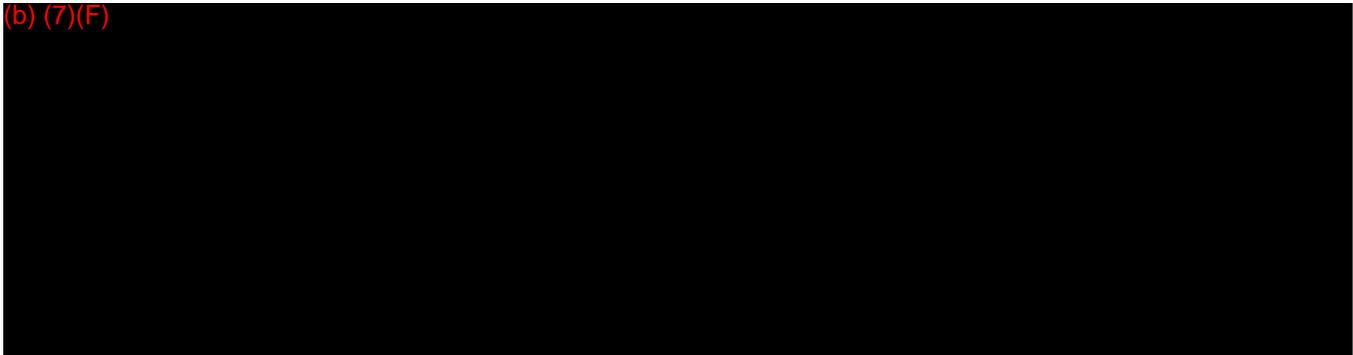


way that the food storage regulations are written makes people have to use their skills of deduction. If they are camping above treeline where there aren't food storage lockers, they need a bear canister, whether they are in a required area or not. Perhaps that can be written more explicitly. Also, the fire regulations for Sequoia require visitors to know more about their surroundings than they often do, i.e. what river drainage they

are in. If these regulations could be more uniform, people might be able to better understand them.

Communications

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Needs for Next Year

- A new axe or at least a new axe handle. The handle of the one at the station split (it's currently held together with duct tape but still functions).
- One D or larger O2 cylinder. (Those small ones go quickly)

Recommendations

(b) (5)



-A new camera be purchased for the Tyndall Station.

(b) (5)



Pertinent Inventory

- Propane: 2 full 5 gal
- 1 full 10 gal
- 1 empty 5 gal
- 8 coleman fuel canisters
- 4 gal white gas
- Plenty of isobutane canisters
- 4 415 L O2 cylinders (1 of which is in the red backpack)
- 1 Vacuum splint
- 1 bucket litter

Maps: 1 SEKI Nat Geo Map

1 Golden Trout Wilderness Map

7.5 min maps: Mt. Brewer

Mt. Kaweah (2)

Mt. Williamson (2)

Kearsarge Peak

Mt. Whitney (3)

15 min: Mt. Pinchot

Marion Peak

Mt. Whitney

Johnson Peak (2)
Chagoopa Falls (2)
Cirque Peak
Triple Divide Peak (2)
Sphinx Lakes
Mt. Clarence King (2)

Burlap Sacks:2

Duct Tape: 2

Matches: 2

Sponges: 3

Fiber Tape: 2

Electrical Tape: 1

AA Batteries: 10

AAA Batteries: 8

Work gloves: 1 large
2 medium

Shovel Blade: 2

TP: 15

Steno Pads: 2

Pocket Pads: 5

Pens: 2 boxes

EMS backpack supplies: 1 415 L O2 cylinder w/ regulator
1 BVM
1 CPR mask
1 NC, adult
1 NRB, adult
1 NRB, ped
1 OPA set
1 NPA set
3 pair gloves (L)
1 C-collar, adjustable
2 SAM splints
2 triangular bandages
1 trauma dressing
1 1" tape
1 2" tape
bandaids
2x2 gauze
4x4 gauze
2 4" kling
steri strips
1 irrigation syringe
1 pair trauma shears

Extra EMS supplies: More of all of the above (3 more 415 L O2 cylinders)
1 box large gloves
1 box small gloves
4 glucose packets

In this example the Woods Creek Trail has 6 reservations 3 reservations/people have arrived and been issued a permit. 7 people have gotten walk-up permits and now there are 12 permits/spots left for the day.

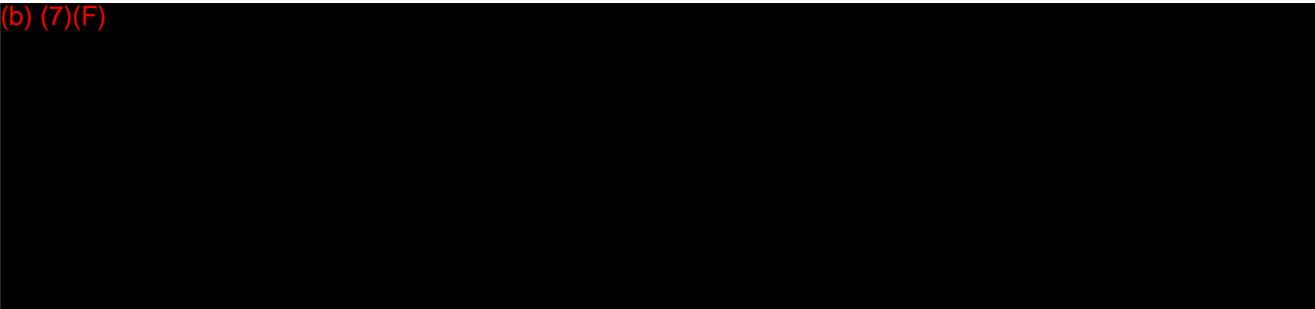
The only problem we have is when we erase the /'s for the next day's reservations we erase the boxes too. We have made the boxes with permanent marker but it still eventually fades away. Having this system makes it easy to view how many people are on the trail and how much space is available.

Lots of visitors ask for free maps so we got a box of the general SEKI maps to have something free to give visitors.

Previous years the station has been giving out car passes to backpackers and this year we got rid of that. I didn't see the benefit of the passes and it just prolongs the individual permitting process.

In past seasons there have been issues with the power at Roads End. This year I am happy to say that we never once ran out of power. There were a couple of times where our power was working but the registers did not have power. With the help of Mel Manley we found out that it was just a bad connection with the inverter in the bear canister return box. I had this issue a couple of times throughout the summer. To solve the issue I had to go in the bear can return box and reconnect the power cord to the inverter. Also to save power on cloudy days and once we got into September we would have the main power switch switched to the off position so that we were not using any power when it wasn't needed.

(b) (7)(F)



Overall the permit station operation ran smoothly this year.

Permit Statistics:

Month	# Permits	# People	#RS Contacts	# Stock Permits	# Stock	# Nights for Stock Permit	#Stock User Nights
May	Stats were not collected in May						
June	186	501	3,077	1	4	0	0
July	365	933	4,501	2	34	2	2
August	437	1,146	4,005	14	73	47	43
September	278	1,107	2,266	5	22	12	6

Patrol Statistics:

# of Patrols	# of Nights	Miles Hiked	Fire Rings Removed	Fire Rings Cleaned	Campsites Cleaned	Trash Removed	Verbal Warnings	Emergency Medical Services	Compliance Checks	Backpackers Contacted	Day Hikers Contacted
41	43	913	58	110	244	111 lbs.	14	3	430	1441	924

Wilderness:

This summer we had five different patrols of the Rae Lakes Loop and had many shorter patrols of Paradise Valley and Bubbs Creek. Areas that were not covered as much were the Lewis Creek Trail and Copper Creek Trail. John, Jarod, and I each spent at least one or two nights up on the Monarch Divide. We had no patrols that went to State Lakes, Horseshoe Lakes, or Grouse Lake. I believe these areas have had a fair amount of use this summer especially Grouse Lake. Grouse Lake is usually the first stop for backpackers who are doing the Sierra High Route. The Sierra High Route was fairly popular this summer. We wrote approximately 46 permits with 90 people doing the full Sierra High Route or some variation of the route. Most of the permits were for group sizes of 1-2. We did one patrol up the Lewis Creek Trail this summer in September. There were around 10 trees down on the trail and brush was starting to grow over the trail. Lewis Creek gets a very small amount of use in the summer but I still would have liked to have patrolled it more than once and earlier in the summer. We would have had firsthand experience of the area which would add to the quality and accuracy of information we were giving out to visitors. There was little to no trash on the trail or in the bear box.

On the Rae Lakes Loop backpackers had the tendency to leave their trash in the bear boxes. This seemed to be a continuing issue all summer long. Many people do not like the idea of packing out their toilet paper and it was noticeable. I noticed it most in Paradise Valley and the Woods Creek Crossing. People would simply not carry out their toilet paper and many

times hikers would not even dig a hole. I believe a large contributor of toilet paper on the Mist Falls trail and possibly some on the Paradise Valley trail are day hikers. I'm not sure how to educate the day users about proper waste disposal maybe a sign is needed. But honestly I wouldn't want to see a sign at Roads End that talks about poop. Kind of ruins the mood.

This summer starting July 1st we had Stage 2 Fire Restrictions which banned all fires in the wilderness. People seemed to understand that this was a very dry summer and most of them followed the restriction. Because of this restriction when we took out the campsites in Paradise Valley we also took out the fire rings. Most of the other legal fire rings in the remaining areas we just filled with rocks to stop people from using them. This way the rings would be easier to be used again when the restrictions were lifted.

Wildlife:

Bears obtained food on 4 separate instances in Paradise Valley and Woods Creek area this year. One of these incidents a woman was just 25-30 feet away from her pack getting water and a bear got into her pack and ate some of her lunch. Another incident a couple was eating dinner in Lower Paradise when a bear walked near their camp. The two people were startled and left their dinner in their camp and ran away. Once they left their camp the bear ate their dinner. In June a bear bit a man in Paradise Valley who was sleeping in his hammock. He was not seriously injured.

Bubbs Creek has had no negative bear issues this summer. Many bears were seen in the Bubbs Creek area including a mother and her two cubs. Earlier in the season when there were many berries near the river we had bear sightings almost every day at the permit station and Muir Rock. The bear techs caught several bears at roads end and tagged them so they could be better identified.

Trainings:

Before the permit stations opened this summer all of the trailhead rangers in SEKI attended a two day training on the job of a trailhead ranger. We talked about what we do on patrols, how to safely contact hikers, what characterizes wilderness, radio training, how to handle emergencies, what gear to bring on patrol, and other topics related to being a trailhead ranger.

All three of us were able to have ambulance training. Ned came down and gave us an introduction to the ambulance and showed us where all the gear was that we may need on a medical or SAR. Ned also had each one of us drive around Cedar grove, go through a cone course and backing course before he passed us to drive the ambulance.

John and I attended a two day swift water rescue training course located here in Cedar Grove. We learned very valuable information on swift water rescue and just general water safety, not that it was going to be much of an issue this summer.

Russell Weaver put on training with Rescue 4. We learned where all the equipment was located, practiced loading a patient on a backboard and moving them in the wheeled litter. This came in handy because shortly after this we had the Mist SAR.

SAR's:

We had a busy season with SAR's this summer. Ten separate incidents throughout the summer. There were a few minor SAR's and some major SAR's that happened in Cedar Grove:

- We had a broken ankle 1.5 miles from Roads End on the Mist Falls Trail. We used a wheeled litter to take the patient out to the ambulance where he was taken to the hospital.
- A woman fell on the Bubbs Creek trail and broke her arm. She walked to the permit station for help. Russ splinted the woman's arm and her friends took her to the hospital.
- A man slipped below Roaring River Falls and lost consciousness and had a small seizure. With the help of Engine 41 crew and bystanders we took him from the river up to the trail to the gurney and flew him out of Cedar.
- I helped Cindy Wood escort a man out of the backcountry who had severely sprained his ankle when he fell hiking the JMT near the Woods Creek Junction.
- In late June a man slipped and fell over Mist Falls. Bystanders administered CPR but could not revive him. We could not recover his body until the next day with a helicopter.
- John and I were assigned to a SAR in Mineral King for a few days searching for a missing day hiker. She was found by the helicopter on the second day of the search near the base of Sawtooth Peak. She had suffered a heart attack which caused her to fall off of a cliff. She had been missing for six days.
- While on a Rae Lakes Patrol I assisted with a man with kidney problems at Woods Creek Junction. Erica Josted came in a helicopter and he was flown out to a hospital.
- In late August there was a truck that rolled over with people in the bed of the truck at Zumwalt Meadow at approximately 0130. There were five people involved in the crash. One died at the scene, two were put in the ICU at the hospital, and another two were released from the hospital the same day.
- In mid September an NPS employee had a stroke at the sewage treatment plant. We got him in the ambulance and met up with Life Flight who took him to a hospital in Fresno.

- In Late September a man reported at Roads End that his son had been suffering from altitude sickness for the past three days. The patient was not able to keep any food down and was too weak to get out of bed. The patient was located at the bear box at Charlotte Creek. A helicopter was sent up with Chris Waldschmidt to assess the patient. The patient had gotten better and did not want any medical assistance. Andy Riordan and I were sent up to meet the patient to assist him in exiting the backcountry and take weight from his pack. We got to roads end without incident and the patient went back home to Clovis with his father.

Projects:

We had several projects this year that we completed. A big project was destroying designated campsites in Upper, Middle, and Lower Paradise Valley. In order to get rid of campsites we had to take out the sign posts, destroy campfire rings, and rehabilitate the sites. We accomplished this task over a period of three days. The first day John and Jarod were able to rehab most of Lower Paradise and Upper Paradise. The second day I helped John rehab Middle Paradise and some of Lower. Before I arrived John worked on finishing Upper Paradise and on the third day John made finishing touches on Lower Paradise. The reason behind changing the arrangement of the Paradise Camp system is that in the summer of 2012 the campsites were surveyed for hazard trees. Many campsites had hazard trees in the sites. We did not want to be telling people where to stay when we knew that the sites were dangerous.

Another project that we completed was helping Rick Sanger the Charlotte Ranger with residual biomass at Junction meadow and East Lake. Both John and Jarod were able to assist Rick with clipping the meadows and hiking the samples out to the front country. On their way out they also brought out a wildlife camera that was placed in Junction Meadow to help monitor grazing. I'm not sure when the camera was initially installed in Junction Meadow but throughout the summer we checked on it a few different times to make sure the batteries were still good and it had enough memory.

The last few patrols we had we went up Paradise Valley, Bubbs Creek, and Lower Tent Meadow to clean up campsites, bear boxes, and whatever else we found that may need our attention. We were able to take out a fair amount of trash and destroy and resize some campfire rings. Recently backpackers have told me that there is already trash in the bear boxes in Paradise Valley and Bubbs Creek and now there is no one to clean it out until next season.

This year we installed a message board. Throughout the summer many visitors needed to leave notes for other hikers and we decided that it would be nice to have a message board for them to use. I ran the idea by Ned and he approved. Mike Brown constructed the message board and it now sits in the room next to the permit office. It is a very nice resource for visitors to have.

Recommendations:

For the summer of 2014 I have a few recommendations.

(b) (6)

- Possible additions to the station are a flag pole and a scale so hikers can weigh their packs. I brought this up with Ned and Erica they agreed this was a good idea but they wanted a PSAR message board with it. From my understanding the PSAR message would be encouraging hikers to bring only what they needed to lower the weight of their pack.

(b) (5)

- Find or purchase tent poles for the second Big Agnus tent so both tents can be used.

(b) (5)

- Have Maintenance sweep off the roof of the permit station.
- The station needs one new window blind.
- The following is a list of items that would be helpful for the operation of Roads End:
 - Get a new high chair.
 - Find the cash drawer for the NPS register.
 - Get a new clicker.
 - Get a new SNHA register. The one we have now works but it would be nice to have a higher quality register.

(b)

Station Startup:

Items that would be helpful to have for a smooth startup for next season:

- Change Fund
- Permits both self issue and regular
- Cash registers with receipt tape
- Credit card slips and knuckle busters
- Safe combo
- Safe log



2013 McClure Meadow Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Dario Malengo, McClure Meadow Ranger

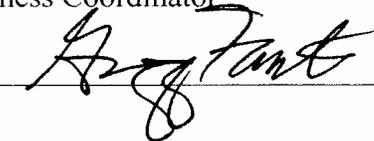
Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 12/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/14/2014

McClure Meadow 2013 End-of-Season Report



General

My 2013 season as the McClure Meadow Ranger started with a trans-Sierra hike with Laura Pilewski to search for Larry Conn who was missing since last October. His camp and some remains were found by Inyo County Search and Rescue shortly after our trip. I hiked over Lamarck Col on June 26 to begin my season as the McClure Meadow Ranger. The first thing I noticed was that the snow on Lamarck Col was nearly gone. This was the first time I have ever been able to skirt the snow crossing the Col. At the top; it was very noticeable how little snow was left on the Darwin and Mendel Glaciers. When I arrived, the McClure Meadows cabin needed a lot of work. There were large amounts of old food and equipment that needed to be packed out - and of course the mice had a field day with the food... fortunately, Allen the packer for High Sierra Pack Station came by with an extra mule and packed out much of the old food. The PCT hikers also helped by taking a lot of the left over food. After two days, I had the cabin in order and a good base to operate from.

Visitor Use

Visitor use was steady starting early this season. PCT hikers came through at a steady pace for the first month. There were more PCT hikers than ever in the past. Many are doing high mileage days, twenty miles or more, without serious problems. I did not have any medical issues with any of the PCT hikers.

The largest user group is the JMT hikers. They came through at a steady pace all season long. I would often contact over fifty JMT hikers on any given day. Most are small groups, but this year I met many families doing the JMT, mom dad and kids. They are from all over the country.

The North Lake and South Lake loop is the second most popular trip. It is fifty-seven miles to do the loop. Some hikers will do it in a four-day weekend but most take longer. It is necessary to check up on this group because they do not have time to acclimate well and can get in trouble with altitude illness. I met one large group (14) that was trying to push on to Evolution Lake. I noticed that one in this group was having some difficulty. After asking a few questions, I discovered that they were trying too hard to make it to Evolution Lake. So I did as I often do and gave them my best advice, "If you take her up to Evolution Lake you will finish her off." They heeded my advice and camped lower down in the valley. The next day they were able to all make it over Muir Pass and down to Le Conte Canyon. The following day I met them in the North Lake parking lot and they thanked me for my advice.

Another user group is the people who enter from Florence Lake. They are usually going to McClure Meadows, McGee Lakes, Darwin Basin, and/or Evolution Lake and returning to Florence Lake. A common cross-country trip is the Goddard Canyon to Davis Lake to Wanda Lake loop. I did not meet anyone going into the Ionian Basin this season.

I traveled over Lamarck Col several times this season, since it's the shortest way to the east side. I encountered approximately ten to twelve hikers using the Col every time I used this route. Lamarck Col is not technically difficult but it is rugged and can be tiresome due to loose rocks, sand, gravel and many boulder fields to cross. I discovered an old metal five-gallon bucket that melted out of the ice this season due to the warming of the ice and lack of snow this season.

From McClure Meadow going up to Evolution Lake, nearly every campsite is occupied nightly, and nearly all are vacated in the morning. This goes on all summer and surprisingly all the campsites still look good at the end of the season.

Medicals

There were two medevacs by helicopter. One was a fifty-four year old woman who fell going down the Evolution switchbacks. It was reported to the ranger station that she had a bad cut over her eye and nothing else. Historic Restoration crew member Riksheim, who was working on the cabin, was two hours closer than I and responded only to discover that they were hiking away from him. He caught up with them in Goddard Canyon where they activated the 9-1-1 signal on their spot device. I was able to direct them to a LZ over the radio and she was flown out just before dark.

The other medevac was a satellite phone call from Evolution Valley and Ranger Jostad responded to find a man who had serious problems and could not hike out. I was out of the mountains on a lieu day.

One horse evacuation was reported to the Muir Trail Ranch and they responded to Goddard Canyon where they assisted a 78 year-old man with a foot problem out of the mountains.

Other medicals did not require evacuations. A forty-two year old man reported to me that he had blood in his urine. I have heard of this before that after extreme exercise red urine develops. Actually, it is caused from muscle tissue breakdown (hemoglobinuria) as Ranger Jostad informed me. I relayed the information to RMC and the DR. agreed with me that after rest the patient would be okay to hike out to Florence Lake. The next morning his urine was clear and he hiked out.

The two other medicals were the result of bad blisters. I monitored these patients for two days and advised them to end their trip and hike out to the nearest trailhead. So many people doing the JMT are on a march to do as much mileage as they can and many abuse their bodies while missing a lot of beautiful scenery.

Stock Use and Meadows

The High Sierra Pack Station is the most frequent user in this area. Their trips usually amount to dropping off clients, grazing Evolution Meadow and going back to the pack station. Bishop Creek Pack Station, Rock Creek Pack Station, Muir Trail Ranch and Pine Creek Pack Station also use the area.

Pine Creek Pack Station only made one trip here and was not able to get one of the mules across the middle bridge in Goddard Canyon. I was able to get word to the Boy Scout group at Evolution Lake that they had to meet the packer by 1400 hours the next day to get their food. Fortunately, they made it on time and got their food.

The only problem with stock use was when both High Sierra Pack Station and Bishop Creek Pack Station both grazed the “pocket meadows” in upper Evolution Valley. They tied their stock to trees and considerable pawing and scuffling took place. Ranger Jostad

discovered this resource damage when she flew into that meadow two days after they left on an unrelated medical.

Sonny, the National Park Service packer for the cabin restoration crew made four trips into McClure with four to six head for each trip and grazed McClure Meadow.

Andy the packer for Rock Creek Pack Station made two trips to the McClure area. Both times he did everything right, and went out of his way to do so.

There were four private groups with two head each that used this area. One was a solo hiker doing the PCT with two donkeys. One of his donkeys (Daisy) injured her foot crossing the snow on Muir Pass on June 26. He rested Daisy for two days at Colby Meadow and my recommendation was to go to the Muir Trail Ranch to rest Daisy. I later heard from other hikers that Daisy was not doing well traveling north. Their web site is:

(b) (6) [REDACTED] Hopefully (b) (6) [REDACTED] figures things out and finds a good pasture for Daisy.

Ranger Station

The McClure Meadows Ranger Station was vastly improved this year by Thor and the cabin restoration crew. They spent three weeks treating the outside logs, made new screens, used caulk to seal up holes and cracks, closed many mouse entrances in the attic and in the cabin and, most important, installed a sink in the cabin. They also painted the floor. Since then we have not trapped a mouse in the cabin. The attic still has mice and will require more work. The cabin crew was good company while here and the cabin is looking better than ever, almost new!

One item missing is a sign on the trail indicating the ranger station. Several times this season hikers traveling south have asked me where the ranger station is after passing it. See needs list at end of report.

Bears

There were no bear incidences this summer. 1-1-1 and myself both got a report on the same day that there was bear activity at McClure Meadows. That was the only report.

The only signs of that bear was that 1-1-1 had her bear canister tipped over ,and a week later I saw fresh bear scat 1,200 feet above the station.

The trails in the McClure area are all passable for stock and foot traffic. The trail from Evolution Meadow to McClure Meadow is in need of general trail maintenance more than any other section in the area. Erosion here has made many areas difficult for stock.

A trail crew in this area would be well placed. I did some trail repair just below McClure Meadows with retainer bars but much more is needed.

The trail up Goddard Canyon is in good repair from the CCC crew a few years ago.

Also, the trail from Evolution Lake to Muir Pass is in good repair.

Camps and Fire-pits

Most all the campsites and fire-pits in the area are in good order. I re-habbed all of the fire pits, with the exception for a few down at Paiute Creek that can be done next season.

The no-fire closure this season helped with this.

Statistics

Visitors Contacted	1492
Miles Hiked	685
Medi-vacs	3
Medical Assists	10
Fire Pits Rehabbed	21
Fire Pits Removed	25

Visitor Assists	24
Concessions Contacts	19

Needs

Trail signs indicating Ranger Station (that can be seen from both directions)

Inventory

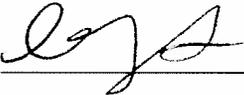
- #2 large propane tanks
- Assorted kitchen utensils
- All necessary hand tools: saws, hammers, wrenches, screwdrivers, etc.
- Trail tools: shovel, Pulaski, double jack, rake
- Knack box & 2 other large boxes
- 1 down sleeping bag ,1 polar-guard sleeping bag



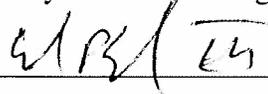
2013 Rae Lakes Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Dave Gordon, Rae Lakes Ranger

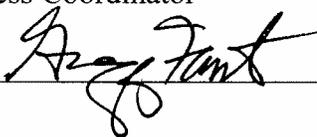
Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 12/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/14/14

Rae Lakes Ranger Station 2013 End of Season Report Ranger Dave Gordon

General Summary

This was another much-drier-than-normal snowpack season (about 30% of the normal spring snowpack in the Kings River drainage the Park) -- this made for easier than usual crossings of passes and creeks. Visitation in the backcountry was very high beginning with a near-record amount of PCTers early season -- estimates indicate about 900 having started, about half of which make it to Rae Lakes. Also, a record high number of JMT hikers were encountered during the summer, with over 4,000 hikers having obtained permits from Yosemite to Mt. Whitney. Bugs peaked in June and were much less than normal for the rest of the summer -- probably a record low for this area of the Park.

Visitor Contacts / Patrols

	Visitor Contacts	Miles Patrolled
June (7 days)	75	28
July	555	150
August	1046	136
September (20 days)	319	91
Totals	1,995	405

Contacts were mostly with backpackers, except for about two dozen day hikers contacted east of Kearsarge Pass, about a dozen joggers doing the Rae lakes loop in one day. 22 stock groups were contacted (10 commercial, 3 private and 9 administrative) consisting of 73 stock users (including clients) with 145 horses/mules. The commercial groups were as follows: Cedar Grove Pack Station (3); High Sierra Pack Station (1); Sequoia-Kings Pack Station (3); and Rock Creek Pack Station (3). Administrative stock used the Woods Creek Crossing trail crew camp, but did not graze.

Patrols through Baxter and Woods Lakes Basin indicated relatively light visitation, with no stock use at Baxter Lakes and perhaps one stock group having been through Woods Lake Basin.

Law Enforcement

Almost every group contacted was checked for possession of a Wilderness Permit and asked how their food was stored at night -- all had canisters and one person was without a permit. 17 verbal warnings (CAD Code SV) were given as follows: 8 - tents on vegetation; 4 - camp too close to trail; 3 - tent too close to lake; 1 - no permit; 1 - food left out of canister, unattended.

Search, Rescue, and Medical Incidents

Date	Location	Type	Disposition
7/5	Gardiner Basin	Kidney Stones	Helicopter Evac.
8/11	Woods Creek X-ing	N/V/D	Helicopter Evac.
8/16	60 Lakes Basin	Epididymitis	Helicopter Evac.
8/17	Woods Creek X-ing	Blood in urine	Helicopter Evac
9/6 - 9/7	King Col	Chest injuries	Helicopter Evac.

9/12	Pinchot Pass	Knee Injury	Helicopter Evac.
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Two “hasty searches” were initiated for hikers that were separated from their groups on 8/2 – both were located the next day, less than 24 hours after being reported. There were 13 EMS Visitor Assists (CAD Code EV): 3 - advice for mild AMS or general illness; 1 - advice for sore knees; 9 - medical supplies given out (bandages, moleskin, hand balm for cracked skin, Ibuprofen, and an ankle brace). The searches and advice may have prevented SAR(s) with evacuation(s), had I not been there.

Weather

This summer was a stormy one with many thunderstorms with significant precipitation due to monsoonal flows that were coupled with several tropical storms, and a “cut-off” upper-level low. The frequent monsoonal flow also resulted in a relatively warm summer with few sub-freezing nights above 10,000 feet. Precipitation helped keep small tributary creeks flowing most of the summer that would otherwise have dried-up.

Use Patterns

Visitation was very high this summer from late June to late September. JMT hikers accounted for about 40% of contacts (almost all from Yosemite to Mt. Whitney); about 40% did the Rae Lakes loop; 10% in/out of 60 Lakes basin; 5% PCTers; and 5% miscellaneous routes.

Organized groups encountered consisted of 8 - Boy Scout troops, 1- Sierra Mt. Guides, 1- Southern Yosemite Mt. Guides, a non-profit boys’ camp group, and Korean walking group.

Natural Resources

Three bears were observed near Woods Creek Crossing (also a bear was reported in the Rae Lakes area several times in August). Other sightings included 8 Big Horn Sheep near Baxter Pass, 2 coyotes (together), a Peregrine Falcon, an Osprey, a Golden Eagle, a Short-tailed Weasel, and a White-tailed Jack Rabbit.

All meadows were opened to grazing in accordance to the “dry” year schedule. Castle Domes Meadow received light to moderate grazing, and Baxter Creek DF Meadow experienced moderate grazing. Woods Creek Crossing Meadow had moderate grazing mainly below the stock camp on the north side of the creek.

Ranger Station

In spite of stuffing numerous cracks/holes around doors/windows with steel wool, mice are still getting into the cabin, but at a much lesser rate than the early season (about 1-2 per week by September) – they seem to be entering behind the cabinets on the north side of the cabin. Two holes were plugged at the apex of the roof, under the eave on the back (east side) of the cabin, and have stopped Chickarees from getting in between the roof and the ceiling and building nests.

Trails

A trail crew of three worked about five weeks along Woods Creek, and another five weeks from Rae Lakes repairing/rebuilding portions of the JMT and the 60 Lakes trail.

A new trail junction sign was placed at the intersection of the JMT and the 60 Lakes trail. Another sign was erected at the junction of the JMT and Woods Lakes trail (“Sawmill Pass – 3 Miles”).

Drift Fences

The trail crew repaired and erected four drift fences that are now in fair to good condition (Baxter Creek DF, Woods Creek one mile above the suspension bridge, and Castle Domes Meadow above and below). They will require routine yearly maintenance.

Camp Areas

5 fire rings were cleaned and/or reduced in size this season, and 19 fire rings were destroyed. These are record low numbers due to the Stage II Fire Restrictions that were in effect from 7/1 to 9/9 prohibiting camp fires at all elevations.

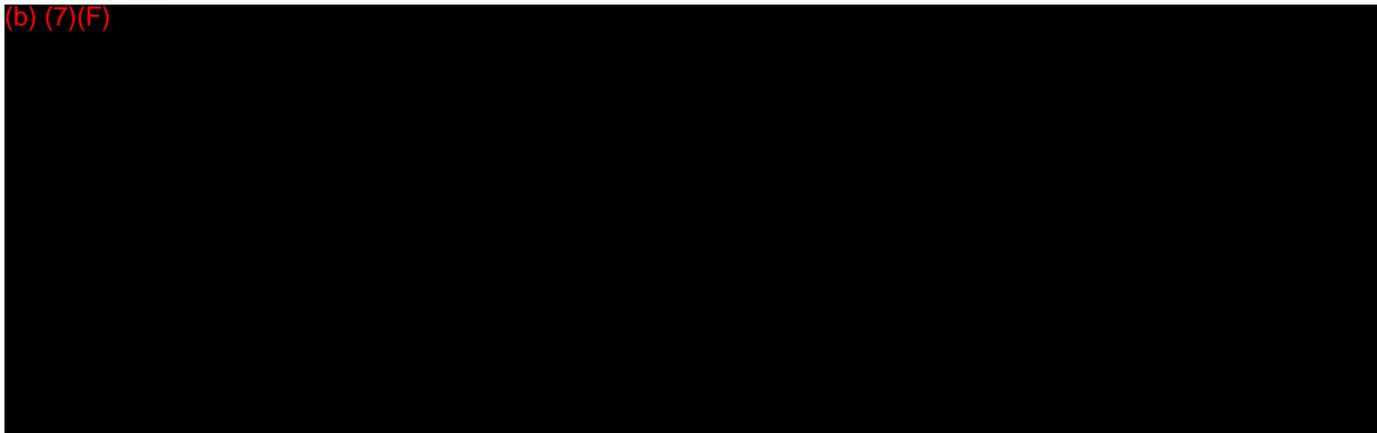
The five food storage boxes in the patrol area need to be emptied of trash/food/gear at least weekly in spite of placards stating to “leave nothing behind” and “pack it in, pack it out”.

Permit System

Most Wilderness Permits that were issued to hikers came with regulations attached, and provided thorough minimum impact camping information – of course, not everyone reads “the fine print”: many hikers do not know to pack out used toilet paper, to not burn foil/plastic containing food packaging, or to not build or modify fire pits; some don’t know not to erect a tent on vegetation (a bigger problem this year), and many do not bury human waste properly (often found under rocks with used toilet paper).

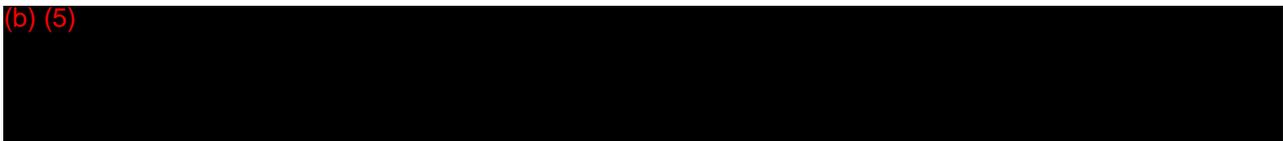
Communications

(b) (7)(F)



Recommendations

(b) (5)



2. “Cabin Caulk” should be applied to cracks around doors and windows to prevent mice from getting in – about three dozen were trapped this summer.

3. I suggest that one (or two) gallon “zip-lock” bags for used T-P be given out to each hiker with Wilderness Permits. Labels on the bags could have sanitation instructions: pack out all used T-P, bury waste 6-8 inches deep and at least 100 feet from water.

(b) (5)

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6. A new toilet site has been located for the Woods Creek Crossing toilet. It is just 180 feet south of the bridge at 371848 x 4081757 UTM, and is less than 100 yards from most of the campsites. The old site is too far away from the campsites on the north side of the creek, and would need to be rebuilt as the support structure is destroyed. The old toilet body can be reused, but a new seat/lid is needed due to broken hinges. (see photos #23 - #25 of the proposed site).

(b) (5)

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Rae Lakes Ranger Station
Needs for 2014

- 8 rolls toilet paper (not "Orex" one ply)
- 20 small, clear plastic bags
- 8 large, brown plastic bags
- 6 mouse traps
- 2 match boxes
- 1 fireplace lighter
- 2 hand sanitizers
- 4 kitchen sponges
- 5 CUA Monitoring forms
- 10 AUO time logs
- 24 AA batteries
- 10 AAA batteries
- 2 packages paper towels
- 2 rolls duct tape
- 1 black logbook (7530-00-274-5494)
- 1 box "large" medical gloves

Rae Lakes Ranger Station
Consumables Inventory (on hand September 2013)

- 20 gallons propane (no propane needed for 2014)
- 0 propane canisters
- 3 rolls toilet paper
- 0 packages paper towels
- 1 quart all purpose cleaner
- 0 gallon simple green cleaner
- 0 gallon white gas (Coleman stove)
- 6 AAA alkaline batteries
- 4 AA alkaline batteries
- 0 AA lithium batteries
- 0 gallon bleach
- 1 quart laundry detergent
- 1/2 pint dish soap
- 9 boxes of Firelogs (6 per box) (no logs needed for 2014)

**Bishop, Eastside Trailhead
End of Season Report, 2013**

A. Visitor Services

a. Contacts

- i. Backpackers: 1,029
- ii. Day hikers: 237
- iii. Stock (commercial, administrative, private): 61

b. Medical incidents

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation</u>
7/21	High Trail, Kearsarge Pass	Wrist Fracture	Treat and Release

c. Fatalities: 0

d. Weather: Kings Canyon was not near as dry as Sequoia at the start of the summer because of the significantly deeper snow pack north of Forester Pass than south of it. Grasses though were already turning brown in early July. Thanks to the heavy monsoons starting in late July and continuing all the way through August, the creeks and lakes looked replenished and the flow was better during the August rains than it was in mid June.

e. Fires (natural, human caused not campfires): Smoke was an issue for hikers starting on the eastside of the Sierras starting with the Aspen Fire. Mammoth was the most impacted and hikers would come farther south trying to find a smoke-free hiking area. It was difficult to predict for them how the smoke would be once they got up to the trail. There were some days that I could not see the mountains from the visitor center, but hikers would report that it was clear up at the 9,000 foot + trail head. Other times hikers would leave their trip early and report to us that the conditions were too smoky to hike in. The Rim fire brought only few days of smoky conditions—most all the smoke was blowing north to Tahoe and Reno. Many residents of those towns came down to the Owens Valley to escape the extremely heavy smoke.

B. Use Patterns

- a. Backpackers: Thru hikers, PCT and JMT, outnumbered other hikers until late in the season. (I did not tally the actual number, but can go back through my notes and get the actual percentage if you need it.) The majority of thru hikers reported that they were hiking 12-15 miles a day, had scheduled very few lay-over days, and had planned no off-trail travel.
- b. Stock: Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the stock I encountered were commercial pack trips, either dunnage or spot trips for hiking groups, or full riding trips.

C. Natural Resources

- a. Bear Activity: I did not see a bear this season nor my two previous Lone Pine seasons. I saw bear scat on the Bull Frog Lake Trail to Kearsarge Lakes. I also had a report from a camper at Charlotte Lake that he had seen a mother bear and cub roaming the camping area. Over labor day

weekend a hiker reported to me that someone had left a lot of food out by the North Lake bridge and that a bear got it all. There are no food storage lockers at North Lake or Sabrina Lake, or many other trailheads on the eastside. There were reports also of bears getting food at McGee and Hilton Lakes Trailhead where there are no lockers. There were no interns hired this year to work at the parking lots distributing information about bears and human food. They had had interns working out of Lone Pine the previous two summers. I don't know if Bishop has ever had them.

- b. Wildlife: Deer and marmots in Kings Canyon did not look thin. The summer rains appeared to help delay the vegetation from completely drying up.
- c. Vegetation: Flowers came and went fast in June and July. Grasses were seeding early.

D. Cultural Resources

- a. Prehistoric Sites: 116 and 1-1-12 told me where to see some petroglyphs under a large boulder on the use trail between the High Trail and Bullfrog Lake Trail. They were faint and I was impressed that they spotted them. They had already reported the location.
- b. Historic Sites: Some hikers wanted me to know that they had found what they thought was one of Scotty's cabins in the Gardiner Basin area. I passed on the GPS coordinates to Ward Eldridge in case it was not known about.

At Evolution Lake I met a hiker looking for a plaque memorializing two young men who had died there in the mid 1960's. I checked with 112 and 115 to see if they had ever seen or heard of it, but they hadn't. I gave the hiker Ward's contact information.

E. Backcountry Facilities

- a. Signs
 - i. The only sign that I saw that may need to be replaced next season is the sign glued to the Lower Kearsarge Lake food storage locker that is coming unglued around all its edges. Also the padlock to that locker will need to be replaced since it was vandalized this summer and can't be unlocked.

F. Trails

- a. Problem Areas
 - i. The switchbacks going up to the col into Sabrina Basin: I'm not sure how many people have actually gone over that col on purpose or by accident. There were many footprints leading up though. There was a SAR a little time ago for a hiker that mistakenly took that way instead of Lamarck Col. (At least--one good thing--the SAR wasn't for me!) But, might there be more problems there in the future?

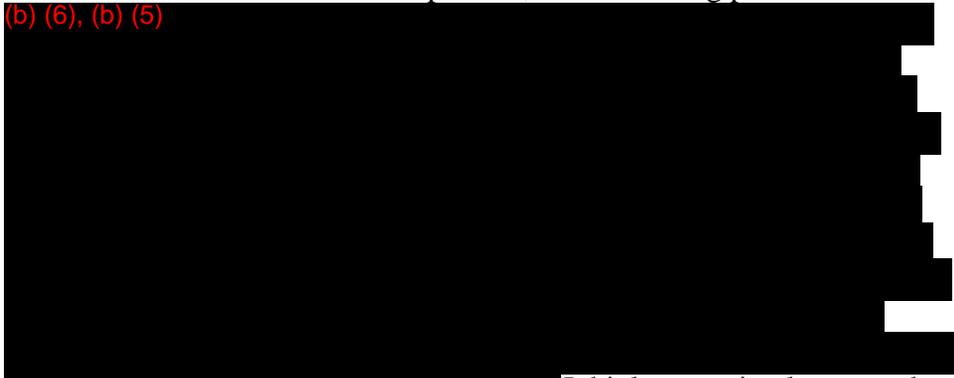
- G. **Camp Areas:** Kearsarge Lakes (No other areas did I get to know so well, or that stood out as having significant problems, except Evolution Lake which gets so much use also.)

- a. Conditions at Kearsarge Lakes: There are several large, flat areas covered with dry grass or tiny ground cover plants that hikers habitually camp on. I had given 3 camping on vegetation warnings for those areas this summer.
- b. Sanitation: I did not find near as much toilet paper or trash this season as I have found before. A hiker who has been visiting Kearsarge for 20 years said that the area is looking so much better in the last couple years. I don't know though if that is because hikers are taking better care of the place, or because of the frequent visits from 116 and 1-1-11, having picked up all the trash and not leaving me as much to find.
- c. Fire rings: Still finding them every time I patrolled there, but at least they were generally smaller and fewer in number than in seasons past.
- d. Food Storage: This is still the major problem at Kearsarge Lakes. Almost always I find groups with not enough bear cans for what they have, and trash or toiletries being left out. I did not talk to anyone this season though that said they had planned to use the lockers not knowing that they were not available. And I didn't find any thru hikers coming back in from resupplying that did not have enough canister space for all their food.

H. Permit System

- a. Issuing Office: At the Bishop VC most of the staff members were very good and put in a lot of effort to get the leave-no-trace message across. The best issuers were hikers and backpackers themselves—they had the interest and passion behind them to keep them from getting board and their message stale. They gave as good an education message as they could with the restraints of the repetitive, rushed issuing process.

(b) (6), (b) (5)



I think a meeting between the new Bishop VC supervisor and the new SEKI Wilderness Office supervisor would be a good idea at the beginning of the next season to go over special SEKI concerns and problems. Only the supervisor has the ability and authority to make sure that all staff are updated and responsible for knowing about the SEKI issues, like stock use, canister requirements, etc.

I. Communications

- a. Dispatch: At first I was resistant to the idea of Dispatch taking over all wilderness communication duties from the Wilderness Office, feeling like they would be too busy with the front country and wouldn't be able to pay

enough attention to us, like the Wilderness Office had been able to do in the past. But I was wrong, dispatch really looked after us and I sure appreciate the whole staff, and certain dispatchers especially. They do a magnificent job of not losing us and this new system is working a lot better than how it's been the last several years since the Wilderness Office has been steadily letting go of wilderness contact. I have only one suggestion to make: can dispatch do the wilderness update on Sundays when the Wilderness Office is closed? It would be helpful.

b. Itineraries: Sometime they are more abbreviated than the rangers have called in to dispatch. Is that an error on the dispatchers part, or a problem with the CAD not allowing enough space for the whole itinerary?

J. **Needs for next year:** I have always wished that we had a powerful educational video for the hikers to watch before they get a permit. Something that will grab their attention and take the glaze out of their eyes. Something that shows hard subjects like a dead bear that had to be shot, something that will wake them up. The percentage that actually reads their permits is probably lower than we want to know. Strong visuals will get the attention of even the most complacent and ignorant hiker. And the video will also give the permit issuer a break from the repetition--they might have time to answer important questions in more detail.

K. **Recommendations:**

(b) (5)



Sierra Crest End of Season Summary

Summer 2013

Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-District Ranger

SIERRA CREST STAFF:

Erika Jostad	Sub-District Ranger
Dario Malengo	McClure Ranger Station
Chris Miles	Le Conte Ranger Station
Unstaffed	Bench Ranger Station
Dave Gordon	Rae Lakes Ranger Station
Rick Sanger	Charlotte Ranger Station
Suzanne Sanger	Charlotte Area VIP
Dena Paolilli	Tyndall Ranger Station
Rob Pilewski	Crabtree Ranger Station
Laura Pilewski	Rock Creek Ranger Station

The Sierra Crest was expanded in May to include the Tyndall, Crabtree and Rock Creek areas. There was little time for preparation of the logistical support required, however, with years of experience in this area it was a fairly seamless addition. This was an effective use of limited resources and allowed me to collaborate with commercial operators, Inyo National Forest and Inyo SO very effectively on issues involving our extensive eastern park boundary.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

	<u>Citations issued by field rangers and SDR</u>
Le Conte	9 (2 human waste disposal, 2 no permit, 1 food storage, 1 littering, 1 abandoned property, 1 camping on vegetation, 1 pet in closed area)
Charlotte	5 (3 food storage, 1 camping on vegetation, 1 fire,)
Tyndall	1 (human waste disposal)
Crabtree	8 (4 group size, 2 abandoned property, 1 weapon possession, 1 no permit)

Rangers gave regular warnings to gain compliance for different issues (camping on vegetation, camping too close to water or trail, food storage, no permit, washing in stream/lake, building new fire pit, camp not left clean upon departure) and documented incidents through CAD.

EMS AND SAR:

There were 39 SARs (29 helicopter medevacs/short hauls) in the Sierra Crest. Of the Sierra Crest incidents, SARs 35, 39, 48, 54, 65 and 72 were life saves. There were no multi-day searches. The park was notified that a wilderness visitor was in need of assistance via SPOT type device or satellite phone in fourteen of the thirty-nine SARs. This represents a moderate increase over the previous year. Remains were located belonging to the subject of the unresolved search in the Bench Lake area in 2012. Several search efforts were made in this area by SEKI, Inyo County SO and Sierra Madre SAR teams. The subject's camp and human remains were located on the south east side of Taboose Pass in the Inyo National Forest.

EMS and SAR comparison with previous years:

2013 39 SAR 29 helicopter medevacs (includes expanded Sierra Crest)
 2012 31 SAR 24 helicopter medevacs
 2011 16 SAR 10 helicopter medevacs
 2010 17 SAR 10 helicopter medevacs
 2009 21 SAR 15 helicopter medevacs
 2008 16 SAR 8 helicopter medevacs

SAR	Incident	Date	Area
13	Search	5/11	Mt Whitney
14	Search	5/19	Rock Creek
18	Medical-cardiac	6/3	Forester Pass
23	Search-subject located	6/19	Piute Pass
24	Search-subject located	7/3	Kearsarge Pass
27	Medical-kidney stones	7/5	Gardiner Basin
28	Medical	7/9	Charlotte Lake
30	Medical-facial trauma	7/12	Glenn Pass
31	Medical	7/13	Crabtree
35	Medical-loss of consciousness	7/22	Bench Lake RS
37	Medical-N/V/D, fatigue	7/26	Palisade Creek
39	Medical-altitude illness	7/31	Tyndall Creek
41	Search-subject located	8/3	Bubbs Creek
42	Search-subject located	8/3	Kearsarge Pass
43	Medical	8/6	Mather Pass
44	Medical-knee injury	8/6	Dusy Bench
48	Medical-abdominal pain	8/8	Crabtree
49	Medical-cardiac arrest fatality	8/9	New Army Pass
53	Medical-N/V/D	8/11	Woods Creek
54	Medical-altered	8/12	Darwin Pckt Mdw
56	Medical-trauma	8/14	Martha Lake
57	Medical-head trauma	8/14	Evolution Meadow
58	Medical-epididymitis	8/16	Sixty Lakes Basin
59	Medical-blood in urine	8/17	Woods Creek
60	Medical-allergic reaction	8/21	Blue Canyon
61	Medical-N/V/D, fever	8/22	Tyndall Creek
62	Medical-fall fatality	8/22	Diamond Peak
63	Medical-femur fracture	8/22	Upper Rock Creek
65	Medical-N/V/D, fever	8/26	Deer Meadow
69	Medical-fall fatality	9/1	Mt Whitney
71	Medical-altitude illness	9/5	Palisade Lake

SAR	Incident	Date	Area
74	Medical-N/V/D, fever	9/10	Mc Clure Meadow
76	Medical-knee injury	9/12	Pinchot Pass
77	Medical-fall, trauma	9/14	Mt Whitney
78	Medical-altitude illness	9/14	Junction Meadow
79	Medical-abdominal pain	9/16	Deer Meadow
81	Medical-fatigue	9/22	Charlotte Creek
82	Search-unfounded	9/23	Sierra Crest

TRAINING:

The law enforcement rangers started work in mid-May, completing 40 hours of LE training, a PEB and field training. New law enforcement ranger, Dena Paolilli completed field training and task book patrolling Sierra Crest and Grant Grove in June and July before full time assignment to Tyndall Creek Ranger Station in August. Six PEBs were conducted over the course of the year.

There were 2 days of wilderness training for seasonal staff. Topics covered during training included JHA review and wilderness safety, serious incident case review, residual biomass, meadow management, Wilderness Stewardship Plan, research topics, SPOT and satellite messaging.

A 24 hour NREMT recognized transition refresher was presented in June. This course served as the transition from EMT-Basic to EMT scope of practice. The doctors from RMC presented all the lectures and assisted with skill stations. Parkmedics assisted with hands on exercises. Forty-eight participants completed all requirements for the refresher. Another seven people attended for continuing education hours.

MCI (multiple casualty incident) drill was given on August 14 at the Grant Grove amphitheater area. There were participants from Hume Lake Fire and Rescue and various divisions from Sequoia and Kings Canyon NP.

MOBILIZATION:

The winter snowpack was low and largely melted by May. Most mobilization of equipment to the field was planned and completed using NPS stock. Equipment was mobilized on shared pack loads with the trails program over several weeks to Rae Lakes, Charlotte Lake, Crabtree, Rock Creek and McClure Meadow. Equipment for Le Conte was sent in over two months on stock contracted with Rainbow Pack Station. Equipment was brought in to Crabtree on flights shared with the trails program for the rebuilding of the ranger station there. Equipment for Tyndall was attempted to be packed in via the Roaring River Ranger. Trail conditions did not permit this to be conducted safely and the mission was accomplished via a flight shared with the trails program.

DEMOBILIZATION:

McClure, Le Conte, Tyndall, Crabtree and Rock Creek Ranger Stations were demobed by NPS trails packers. Rae Lakes and Charlotte were demobed by the Roaring River Ranger.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteer Suzanne Weber supplemented Sierra Crest coverage in the Charlotte Lake and Rae Lakes area. She worked 420 hours between late June and late September.

MCCLURE AREA:

All meadows in the area opened as scheduled due to early snowmelt. The Evolution Valley saw moderate, distributed stock use in 2013. Colby, Evolution and McClure meadows were all open to use with established capacities and Colby was only open to private stock parties.

All rangers noted the continuing trend of increased use on the John Muir/Pacific Crest Trail through the parks. Other use patterns remain consistent with previous years with significant traffic on the North Lake/South Lake Loop and entry to Evolution Basin via Lamarck Col.

The historic restoration crew spent three weeks in the area making improvements to the cabin. It is mouse free for the first time in decades, perhaps ever. A sink was installed in the counter so that washing can be conducted indoors.

History Flight.org stated significant interest in working with a search dog and specialized imaging on the Mendel Glacier in an attempt to locate possible remains of the servicemen who crashed an aircraft there in 1942. There was speculation that remains would be visible after the low snowpack. Members of the group made a site visit on foot via Lamarck Col. They did not locate remains.

LE CONTE AREA:

All meadows in the area opened as scheduled due to early snow melt. Visitation was similar to previous years. Le Conte Canyon saw moderate stock use in 2013. Big Pete Meadow was closed early through MD9 based on impacts noted by the area ranger.

The cabin built in 2012 is in good condition. Previous issues with the electrical battery system have been resolved. However, given the forested site in the canyon bottom, this site has some limitation on available electrical power. The same factors continue to be responsible for poor radio and satellite communications.

A CCC/NPS trail crew was stationed at Palisade Lakes for most of the entire summer working on the John Muir Trail. Crewmembers assisted taking initial reports of several medical emergencies.

BENCH AREA:

The Bench Lake patrol area was unstaffed in 2013. Two searchers were hired to continue efforts beginning in July to locate the subject of the 2012 Taboose SAR. Sierra Crest rangers completed search assignments in the area in late May and early June. The subject was located in the Inyo National Forest in mid-June. I conducted an additional search with a cadaver dog in July attempting to locate additional remains in the Taboose Pass area. These efforts were unsuccessful. I did respond from Taboose Pass to a medical emergency near the Bench Lake Ranger Station and spent two evenings with a crew surveying soil and archaeological resources in the area. There were no other patrols of this area. The aquatics crew did not set up a wall tent

as in the previous two years but did use the station site intermittently from June to September. I have only anecdotal information about use of the area based on several major search and rescue operations conducted in the patrol area. Like 2011 and 2012, rather than send a ranger on foot to investigate, rangers responded directly via helicopter to the Bench Lake area to assist visitors in distress.

RAE LAKES AREA:

The new Rae Lakes Ranger Station saw it's second summer of use. The building again overwintered well however, mice are able to access the interior of the cabin. Rangers and trail crew continue to attempt to close the access points without success.

Meadows in the Rae Lakes patrol area received moderate use. The reinstatement of the 1 night per lake camping restriction was reported as an effective tool to manage camping impacts.

A trail crew was camped 1/10 mile above the Rae Lakes Ranger Station for five weeks working on improving the JMT on the north side of Glenn Pass and improving the trail into Sixty Lakes Basin. A frog restoration crew was camped in Sixty Lakes Basin for the summer and assisted with three SARs.

CHARLOTTE LAKE AREA:

Backpackers have for several years been leaving food caches in the food storage lockers throughout the Kearsarge Lakes area. Most of the caches are for long distance hikers on the JMT. The Charlotte Ranger removes hundreds of pounds caches, abandoned garbage associated with caches each summer. In response to this the park worked closely with Inyo NF to implement a temporary closure of these lockers to determine their necessity. The move was highly interpreted for the public and generally well received. Hikers camping in the area used their own canisters or stayed in nearby sites with lockers, such as Charlotte Lake or Vidette Meadow. There were no human/bear incidents and a significant decrease in the volume of abandoned and cached food in the area. This closure should continue into 2014.

Significant clean up administrative and other trash was made in the patrol area. Equipment abandoned by early frog research in Sixty Lakes Basin was removed or reused. The remains of a barbed wire fence in Gardiner Basin were brought to a central location for removal. The Charlotte Ranger and Lee Loverin collaborated to remove scrap wire at the East Lake drift fence. The T-posts remain and should be removed.

The Charlotte ranger and VIP worked with a number of children on the Wilderness Explorer program. Charlotte Lake is well suited for this due to its proximity to the front country and high number of young and novice backpackers.

The Sequoia Kings Canyon Pack Station had a challenging summer. Their owner/packer suffered a broken wrist and back injury at Kearsarge Lakes. Rangers assisted with the evacuation. The pack station was cited for improper food storage and continued to have challenges meeting their commitments to clients who contracted for resupply services. I am in regular contact with this operator to address issues as they arise.

TYNDALL AREA:

The Tyndall Ranger Station was staffed for approximately 60 days in August and September. The Tyndall Ranger spent the first half of the summer stationed at Grant Grove developing law enforcement skills. The ranger was new to wilderness patrol and spent the summer largely working with other rangers to learn the area, procedures and relevant skills.

The Sequoia trail construction crew spent the entire summer in the area making repairs and mitigating erosion on the JMT.

CRABTREE AREA:

The Crabtree Ranger Station was replaced this year. The cabin crew of 4-6 (varied over course of summer) moved on site in early June and completed work by early-September. All demolition and construction was completed in one season. The crew lived at the work site for the entire summer. A temporary camp was set up approximately 0.1 mile below the Ranger Station site and visitors were directed to the temporary station. The patrol ranger moved into the cabin in September. The cabin is similar to the stations installed at Rae Lakes in 2011 and Le Conte in 2012.

Visitation continues to be very high at Crabtree compared with all other patrols areas with the focus of activity being Mt. Whitney. Crabtree sees significant commercially guided foot and stock use.

All meadows opened to grazing on schedule for dry year opening dates. Lower Whitney Creek closed prior to any use due to lack of plant development in dry conditions. Upper Crabtree, Lower Crabtree and Sandy Meadows all closed early under MD09 when they met established capacities.

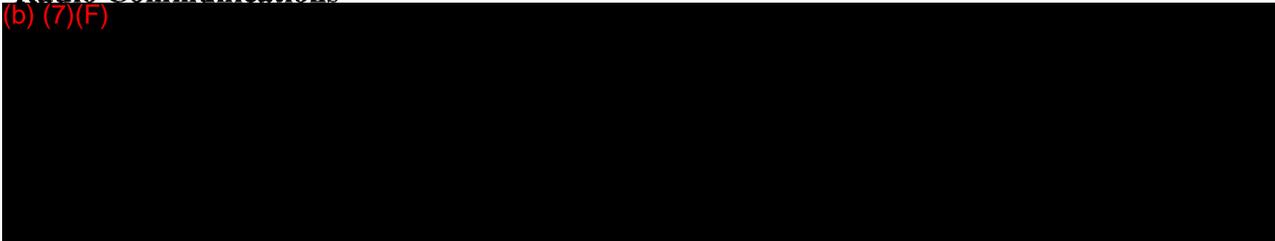
ROCK CREEK AREA:

Rock Creek had significant administrative use. This has long been the case in part due to easy access from the front country. The following work groups were in the area: Fen monitoring, invasive plant species, I & M Forest and Bird, Forest Demography, Restoration, Archaeology and both Kern and Trail Construction Crews. An interdisciplinary group evaluated the proposed route on Mt Langley and progress is being made to define a route and mitigate erosion in this area.

Bighorn sheep were observed regularly as well as a suspected Yosemite Toad (photograph in Rock Creek EOS).

GENERAL:**Radio Communications**

(b) (7)(F)



(b) (7)(F)

Wilderness Update

Employee tracking via the CAD has been implemented and with a linked radio system rangers can communicate directly. Several rangers report that “Wilderness Update” is redundant. I concur though would like to see the Wilderness Office continue to provide radio support on an “as needed” basis for things such as researching permits or answering commercial use questions. These are better suited to be answered by that office than the dispatch office.

Satellite Phones

(b) (7)(F)

Satellite Personal Tracking Devices

(b) (7)(F)

ACTION ITEMS and RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Redeck bridge at Woods Creek Crossing—Kings Trails
- Install sign on JMT indicating the Ranger Station at McClure—Jostad

(b) (5)

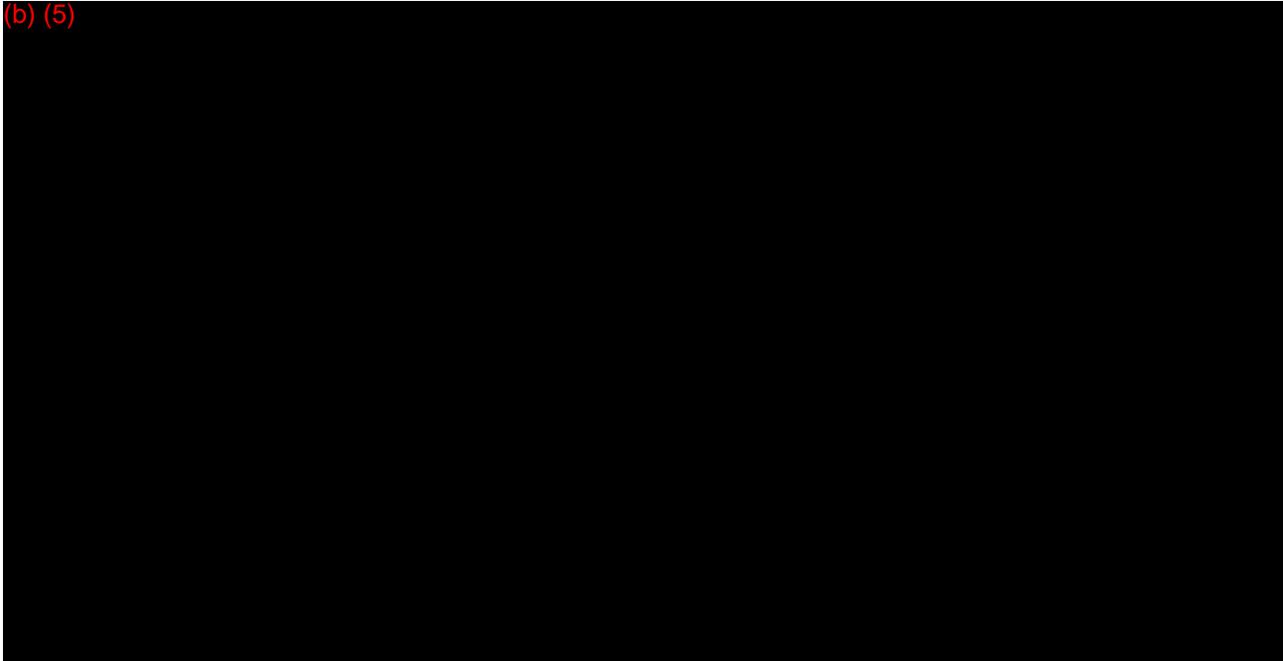
- Distribute zip lock bag/interpretive message at trailheads to address toilet paper and non-biodegradable wipes in wide use to be packed out—Jostad, Wilderness Supervisors, Wilderness Office

(b) (5)

- Address rodent entry at Rae Lakes Ranger Station (cabin caulk)—Kings Trails
- Provide user training of new linked wilderness radio network—Radio Shop
- Repair drift gate below Evolution Meadow—Kings Trails

- Clean up East Lake drift fence debris—Kings Trails
- Repair/replace windows at Charlotte Lake Ranger Station—Kings Trails
- Continue temporary closure of food storage lockers at Kearsarge Lakes—Jostad, Inyo NF

(b) (5)



- Remove 1 sling load of construction garbage from Crabtree Ranger Station—Jostad, Kings Trails
- Effectively distribute Wag Bags to Yosemite for distribution to JMT hikers—Jostad, Wilderness Office, Inyo NF

(b) (5)



- Remove cached wire from former drift fence in Gardiner Basin—Jostad, Kings Trails, Helitack



2013 Charlotte Lake Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Rick Sanger, Charlotte Lake Ranger

Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 12/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/14/14

**Charlotte Area
End of Season Report 2013
Rick Sanger**

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Other Documents Associated with this report

End of Season report, Charlotte 2013.doc	This document
Daily Log.doc	Daily log of activity
Inventory.doc	Beginning of digital Inventory
Wildlife.doc	Wildlife observations
Stock Use.doc	Stock use form
Station Closing	Checklist
How We Did It	Beginnings of station manual
Project status	Unfinished projects in area

A. General Summary

This year, the station was staffed from June 24 to Sept 19. Winter precipitation levels were 15% of normal – a record, I hear. On July 1 “stage II” fire restrictions went into effect, prohibiting fires even below 10,000 ft. These were lifted early September.

Notable Steps Forward (issues discussed in previous reports):

The East Lake drift fence was rebuilt with wooden posts (although the cache of tee posts was left, along with old wire)

B. Visitor Services**Stats:**

Month	Miles	Vtr. Contacts
June/July	210	664
Aug	108	606
Sept	62	390
Tot	380	1660

Law Enforcement

5 citations (3 food storage, 1 camped on vegetation, 1 illegal fire (terms of permit))

Very numerous warnings for camping on vegetation and food storage.

Search, Rescue, Medical incidents

MEDICAL/SAR (several minor medical assists not tabulated)

7/8 Knee injury near sand flats. Self-evac

7/8 digestive issues at bullfrog junction, self evac

7/12 face injury from slip near Glen pass, reported by sat phone, self evac

7/16 respiratory distress at charlotte, self evac

7/21 broken wrist/hurt back at kearsarge pass. Self-evac

8/3 respond to SPOT activation, ends in hasty search, subject found on center basin trail at night

8/24 search for family reporting son with fever. Find at sand flats, treat & release

VIP Sanger

VIP Suzanne Sanger was with me the entire season. She performed significant visitor assistance and resource protection, from cleaning of fire-rings

to emergency services. Her presence greatly enhanced the services available in the Charlotte patrol area. Of particular note, her presence increased the safety of performing our duties.

Additionally, Suzanne managed the Wilderness Explorer program for young hikers. It seemed the number of visitors under 12 was more this year than in past years. Approximately 14 badges were awarded.

C. Use Patterns

Backpacking:

We arrived in the area in time to catch a fair number of PCT hikers. After that, John Muir trail hikers became the dominant users.

I estimate the following usage for visitors I encountered

John Muir Trail N->S	60%
Rae Lakes Loop	15%
Other trailheads to Mt Whitney	15%
Other	10%

September seemed unusually busy this year. Perhaps the Yosemite fires sending people south?

Stock Use:

Stock use was rather light this year. There we 2 or 3 trips thru the area by Rock Creek Pack station supporting longer trips, and a good amount of day trips by Pine Creek Pack station to drop JMT resupplies at sand flats.

(b) (6) said they had hardly been up Bubbs at all. However the use of Bubbs is difficult to monitor. The strings pass behind Roads End Permit station so the staff cannot let us know when stock is enroute. No meadows looked significantly impacted.

For CUA administrators:

Rock Creek Pack Station (b) (6) came to the ranger station specifically to check in and ask for grazing recommendations. All packers are responsive to ranger suggestions and do their best to follow management policies.

Sequoia Kings Pack Station: These folks continue to be plagued by a dark cloud. (b) (6) stepped in when (b) (6) was injured. He was good about picking up trash from the ranger station. Early in the season a cache or two was left at the ranger station bear box despite this being specifically prohibited as of last year. The point had to be tediously reiterated to the owners. Later in the season, Tim was cited for improper food storage, saying he was unaware of canister requirements in the area.

Cedar Grove Pack Station: It should be noted that (b) (6) went out of her way to pick up a large amount of trash out of a bear box in Upper Bubbs. I do not believe anyone specifically asked this of her. Additionally, on my request, she picked up a load of old wire before leaving East Lake, and some metal refuse in Vidette that I had cached for mule pickup.

Climbers

A significant number of folks are climbing Charlotte dome, it could be more than 5 parties a week. We visited the climbers camp and found it to be clean with just a few campfire rings.

D. Natural Resources

Wildlife:

Individual sightings were tabulated and accompany this document (Wildlife.doc). Most notable was a water shrew.

We did not see any bears this year, but heard they were active in Bubbs Ck and rather aggressive in Paradise valley. Bears were also seen at Woods Xing (a lot) and some at Rae Lakes, and a reported “sniffing” at Kearsarge Lakes and Charlotte Lake both on 9/8 although no actual bear was seen and no food gains were reported.

Meadows

Opening dates were not varied from Dry Year dates. Residual Biomass was done 9/7 to 9/9 in Junction, East Lake and Upper Vidette. Private stock users did not receive meadow and stock use information – see section H

Trash left by Researchers

I am very saddened to report that last year significant effort was made by protection, resource and maintenance divisions to remove a significant amount of junk left by (b) (6) research efforts in 60 Lakes Basin. No denying his research changed the course of frog protection and has been invaluable. But the abandoning of stuff in the backcountry by researchers has happened before. It may not be possible for researchers to post a bond before being given a permit – but it seems that this issue should be addressed.

E. Cultural Resources

Shorty’s Cabin, Gardiner Basin

I visited Shorty’s cabin in Gardiner Basin and took pictures & video (submitted with other photos). The UTM for the cabin are 11S 0366326 4076602 (NAD 83)



F. Backcountry Facilities

Kearsarge Lakes Bear boxes

Last year the bear boxes in the Kearsarge Lakes area (4ea) were locked. Signs remain in place at the Onion Valley trailhead and the Kearsarge Lakes junction from Kearsarge Pass. However the sign at Onion Valley is in a place not easily seen by visitors, and I believe it needs to be mounted in a new location. One visitor specifically searched the area for the sign and still did not find it! It would be nice to include this information as part of a full size placard with SEKI regs. One visitor suggested we include the reason that fires are not allowed above 10,000 ft, which I think is a good idea. Other relevant topics include not to camp on vegetation (picture!) – pack out toilet paper – the wonder of foxtails...



I did hear reports of food stored improperly at Kearsarge Lakes, and of bears present at the lakes sniffing around campsites. I still feel it is a matter of time before food is obtained by bears in the area. I address this further in Section J: "Operations".

- No caches were found in the area.
- Received report of several parties without enough room for food in their canisters – and bear sniffing thru camp the same night.
- Issued one cite in the area for improper food storage
- Lock on one box beaten up in attempt to get in. (lowest lake)
- Several parties were contacted at Charlotte Lakes that were resupplying JMT



hikers, with more food than would fit into their canisters (using boxes at Charlotte)

One parties were contacted at Vidette Meadows (where there are boxes) resupplying JMT hikers, with more food than would fit into canisters.

Signs:

No new sign suggestions over what I described last year. None of those suggestions yet implemented. I no longer feel a “restoration site” sign is needed for the area just west of Vidette Meadow. It seems to be holding it’s own.

Outhouse at Charlotte Lake:

This could use about 20 new shingles.

G. Trails

Ranger Station Trail

(b) (5)

East Lake Drift Fences

It appears that the East Lake Drift fence was rebuilt this year, replacing many of the metal tee stakes with wooden posts, and allowing it to be dropped for the winter. Kudos!! However I was surprised by the amount of old scrap wire cut and discarded on site. It was disappointing to find, and reminded me of the repeater batteries discarded at repeater sites by NPS personnel in an unenlightened era. And the cache of metal tee posts on site remains. I vote for a future cleanup mission. I gathered much of it and (b) (6) was kind enough to haul it out.



Gardiner Basin Drift Fence

I was able to gather up the remains of a barbed wire fence in Gardiner Basin that has been bugging me for years. It is cached at 11S366413, 4076494 (NAD 83)

Boggy area on Vidette Switches

(b) (5)



Slick Rock Areas on High Trail



Trail Flooding downhill from Bullfrog

The section of trail below has been so compacted that the small pond near it overflowed into the trail. Approx utm: 11S 0374133 4070265 (NAD83)

Hazard Tree

The tree pictured below is leaning over a popular campsite at Junction Meadow, adjacent to the knack boxes.



H. Permit System/Visitor Information

Modifications to Minimum Impact Restrictions flyer #1

(please forward to people that edit this flyer)

Although I mentioned this last year, this easy fix was not addressed. The min impact flyer states that food-storage canisters are required on the Rae Lakes Loop. It is unclear from this language that they are also required at Kearsarge Lakes and all the way up Bubbs Creek. It would also be helpful to state that not only are canisters required, but enough canister space to store all food items! This eliminates someone from bringing 1 canister, and hanging all the food that won't fit in that canister. I suggest the wording be changed to:



Modifications to Minimum Impact Restrictions flyer #2

(please forward to people that edit this flyer)

Another statement on the flyer could use clarification – “Never wash directly in a water source. This includes washing clothes, dishes and yourself” I was asked if this means you can’t swim in the lakes. Does “wash” imply the use of soap? Many people still rinse clothes directly in lakes & streams and enjoy afternoon swims. Are we specifically prohibiting these activities?

Use of Wood Stoves

(b) (5)

Stock use information

I am sad to say that dissemination of stock use & grazing restrictions to private parties is not happening. I encountered a number of private parties who, at best, received an antiquated booklet published by some Backcountry Horseman’s group that, among other information, showed how to counterbalance grain supplies. Mostly, they received nothing. (b) (5)

(b) (5)

I. Radio Communications/GeoPro

(b) (7)(F)

Dispatch Tracking Rangers & CAD

(b) (5)

GeoPro

(pass to Kevin Morris)

(b) (5)

(b) (5)

J. Operations

Problem of High Food Density

A problem remains unsolved: what to recommend to hikers entering the park with food for extended trips that won't fit into a single canister. This problem is most common at Kearsarge Lakes and Dusy Basin. It is unclear whether expedition size canisters hold enough, but recommending them may be a good start.

(b) (5)

Of course, trash will build up, but perhaps the packer could be asked to haul trash from the box periodically.



Label on bear boxes at Onion Valley

(b) (5)

Wag Bag Disposal

I hear wag bags are being left on the trail and not hiked out. Why not use sharpie to write person's last name on the bag when handed out? This may deter leaving bags behind due to fear of being ticketed.

(b) (5)

K. Recommendations

See "Project Status 2013" document for projects suggested in previous years but not yet complete.

Place full size informational board at Onion Valley dedicated to NPS regs addressing caching and fires (see section F)

Tag about 20 new shingles on Charlotte outhouse.

Trail work, as described in section G

Make changes to minimum Impact Restrictions Flyer, as detailed in Section H

(b) (5)

L. Needs for next year

	ON SITE	NEED
Bags, large plastic	About 10	About 10
Bags, small plastic	About 20	About 20
Batteries, AA size lithium	4 ea	??depends
Batteries, AA size, alkaline	0 ea	12 for station lantern + ???
Batteries, AAA size, alkaline	10 ea	8 ea
Battery, 9 v	0 ea	2 ea
Battery, CR123a, lithium, for steripen	0	2 ea
Dish Gloves	0	2 pair, Lrg
Dish Soap	0	2 bottles
Dish sponge	0	4 ea
Dish towels	4 old ones	Wash each year
Duct tape	1 roll	1 roll

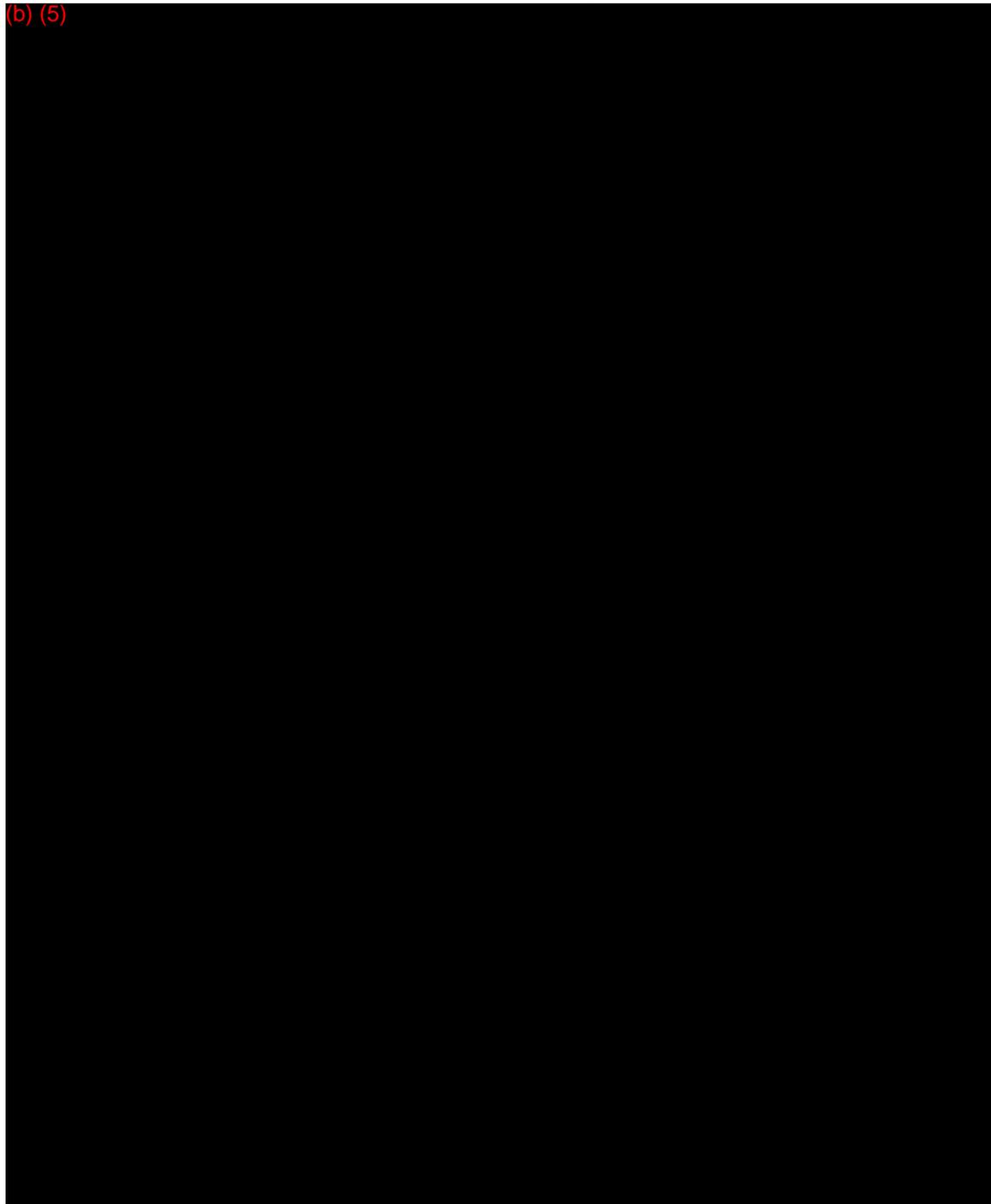
Isopropane canisters(8 oz lasts up to 4 nights)	4 oz: 9 ea 8 oz: 4 ea	8 oz: ??depends 4 oz: ??depends
Paper towels (used 2 in 2010, used 1.5 in 2011, used 2 in 2012)	0	2 pkg
Propane (used about 1.5 3' tanks in 2009) (used 1.75 of large, 10 gallon type tanks in 2010) used 1.5 of large in 2011, 2.5 of med type(25 lb) used in 2012)	Med(25 lb) 2.5 ea Lrg(29 lb: 0 ea	Maybe 1 med or small
Toilet paper (used about 7 in 2010, 8 in 2011) DO NOT USE ONES WITH BLUE WRAPPER, they are worthless.	1 roll	10 rolls
Wilderness Explorer completion certificates	7 ea	2 ea
Wilderness Explorer workbooks	4 ea	5 ea
Envelopes, Holey	3 ea	3 ea
Steno pads	1.5 ea	1 ea
8.5 x 11" lined paper in pad	2 used	2 pad
Sharpies,	Black: about 3 Green: 0 Blue: 0	1 ea, black 1 ea, green 1 ea blue
Brown report binders	0	1 ea
Pocket notebooks, brown cover	0 ea	2 ea
End of season reports	2008,2009, 2012	2010, 2011, 2013 and any others...
Daily Logs, charlotte RS	78-84, 86-87, 89, 91-92, 94-98	Any not already here
Run sheets	6 ea	10 ea
Compendium	2009: 1 ea	2014
Sphinx lakes, 7.5	0 ea	2 ea
Volt meter	0	1 ea
Bowls, large dinner	4 ea	4 ea
Can opener	3	One that works...!!
Ladel, normal soup size	0 ea	1 ea (on palette in cache)
Hot pads	2 ea (pretty grotety)	2 ea
Alcohol, bottle	0	1 ea
Asperin, packets of 2 ea, 125mg	3	10
Chairs, canvas folding with flat seat (NOT directors chairs!)		2 ea
Surveyer's tape	0	1 roll
Green brillo for cleaning katydyn filter	0	1

Pick up from Cache

Ice Axe, light weight	Bring from GG cache
Snowshoes	Bring from GG cache
Microspikes	Bring from cache
sleeping bag for patrol	Bring from cache
Canister, bear for patrol	Bring from cache
Titanium pot for patrol	Bring from cache
First aid kit for patrol	Bring from cache

Appendix A: Thoughts/Confusion Re Bear Canister Regulations

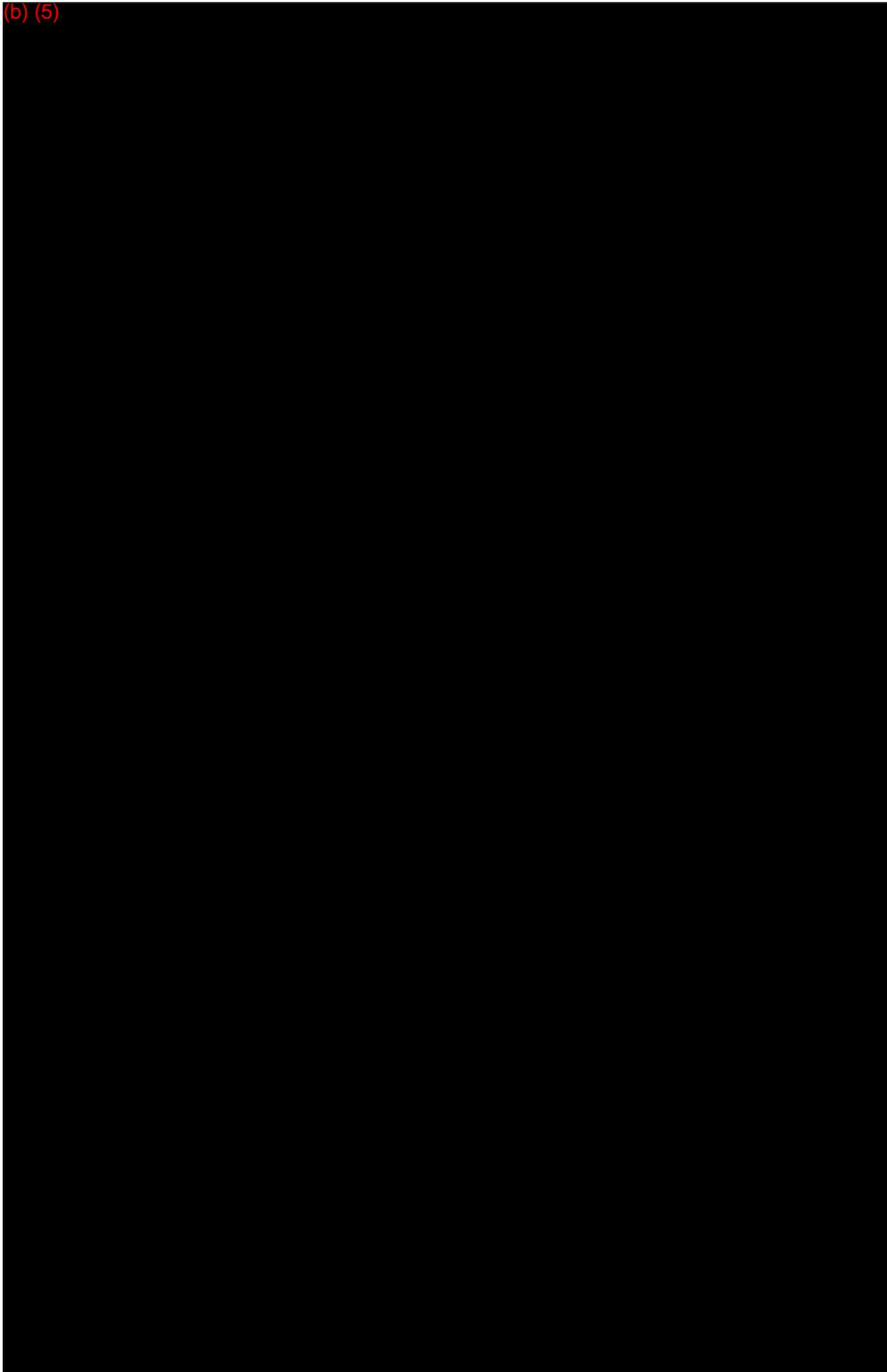
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2013 Rock Creek Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Laura Pilewski, Rock Creek Ranger

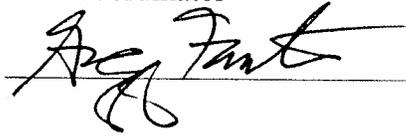
Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 12/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/15/14

Rock Creek EOS Report 2013

By Laura Pilewski



A. General Summary

It was great to be back at Rock Creek for my fifth season (my nineteenth in the wilderness of Sequoia-Kings National Parks). For whatever reason, visitation was visibly down despite the user friendly conditions of no snow, mosquitoes or high water. However, there were still a few thousand hikers passing through a couple of who had serious or fatal incidents. Commercial Whitney trips, both stock and non-stock supported, are becoming increasingly popular, passing through Rock Creek on the way in and out. Both commercial and private groups were very well informed this year in Leave No Trace ethics and virtually no one had an illegal fire even within the maintained fire pits. Only one person to my knowledge cached food in a bear box and there were no bear problems this summer. Overall, things went very smoothly. I am looking forward to spending season number twenty (half my years!) sharing my experience as a naturalist, EMT and park ranger with those who come to visit this wilderness and with those who are deemed with managing and protecting it for years to come.

B. Visitor Services

a. Contacts

i. Backpacker (approx. 1,700)

See encounter surveys. Overall numbers seem lower than usual.

ii. Day hiker

There is no consistent way to innumerate day hikers. Mt. Langley can see between fifty to a hundred people a day on a busy August weekend, weather permitting. A fair number of people will walk and or run the Cottonwood/Army Pass routes as well (more often than we know with their dogs even)! I normally patrol this corridor on weekends for that reason.

iii. Stock

There were a small number of private users, all with different agendas and different animals (horses, mules, burros, and llamas). Most did not get proper information (forage guides/maps, grazing cards) from the trail head in Lone Pine. The llama group, however, had spoken with Amanda in the Wilderness Office and therefore, knew all of the rules and regulations. Thank you!

Commercial trips were the most popular. Most were support for SMC and SMG trips.

b. Law Enforcement

N/A

c. Citations

I forwarded information to the Crabtree Ranger regarding three Boy Scout groups that exceeded the group size limit of fifteen. All three violations (six permits total) occurred within a 48 hour period at the Lower Crossing of Rock Creek.

I also met a group of seven backpackers below Guyot Pass that were not carrying bear canisters in the required area. They admitted to hanging their food illegally in the Cottonwood Lakes and Rock Creek areas. The Crabtree Ranger issued a citation for this offense.

I forwarded pictures and information regarding two parties with dogs in NPS wilderness to my supervisor. (The following picture is actually a group with a service dog however).



Of the two groups, one was on a day hike of Mt. Langley. The other group had spent two nights within the park. A third group with a dog was warned when he crested over the Siberian Pass cross country after losing the trail.

d. SAR & Medicals

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation</u>
*8/24/2013	Rock Creek closed meadow	distal femur fx	helicopter
9/18/13	Rock Creek RS	poss. flu	AMA/self evac.

8/24/13: This group apparently triggered their SPOT device, but no signal was ever received by the front country (not sure if it malfunctioned or if it was user error). Coincidentally, they decided to cover their bases and also send help the old fashioned way to the ranger station. And, thankfully for them there was a ranger staffing it!

e. Fatalities

Date	Location	Type	Evacuation
8/9/2013	New Army Pass	fatality(CPR performed on scene)	helicopter
9/1/2013	Mt Whitney trail	fatality	helicopter

I was the first NPS EMT on scene for the New Army Pass possible cardiac arrest (see report). With only one leader remaining, I thought it best to escort the remaining Boy Scout Troop to the trail head safely (after spending one night with them at Long Lake) following such a tragic incident.

As for the Whitney incident, I assisted with the trail closure as I was already in the area on my day off. It was Labor Day weekend and extremely busy during this short haul operation with dangerous flying conditions in very close proximity to a large section of trail.

f. Weather

Up to four inches of rain fell in July. There were also frequent thunderstorms in August and through early September. However, dry conditions still persisted. Siberian Pass Creek and the springs along it were dry throughout the whole summer season. The spring at the southern PCT park boundary (which is shown as a small lake or tarn) did run until the end of the season. The lake/tarn above it on the trail (which I don't believe is spring fed) was dry all season. The spring southeast of the lower Army creek crossing was dry; however the ones east of the upper crossing ran all season.

g. Fires

The Rock Creek drainage became intermittently smoky due to lightning caused fires late August and early September. The closest fires were the Fish and Angora Fire just south of the Sequoia Park boundary and the Chagoopa fire due west of Rock Creek. I also believe the smoke from the Rim Fire in Yosemite drifted south on occasion as well.

C. Use Patterns

a. Backpackers

Despite the incredibly user friendly conditions this season (no snow, high water or mosquitoes), there seemed to have been fewer backpackers than normal. Numbers did spike (thanks to BSA) mid August, but only over a two week period. It was also busy the week of Labor Day through mid September. From what I saw, the Miter Basin saw most of its use in mid to late September.

b. Stock

Use patterns seemed normal with maybe a slight increase in private stock users and, as said, with Mt. Whitney commercial trips. Their distinct pattern is to spend the first night at the lower Rock Creek Crossing, and their last night in upper Rock Creek which helps spread use out and make it easier for their clients to hike to the trail head.

c. Administrative

Rock Creek is still the hub of administrative use. The following crews worked or passed through the area: Fen, Invasive plant species, I&M Forest & Bird, USGS tree demography & Bighorn sheep, Mt. Langley recon for trail marking/restoration (Athena Demetry -Restoration, Emily -archeologist, Chanteel Walter and Marjor Bryant-Construction crew, Josh Gabik -Kern Trail Crew); and last but not least, the Kern Trail Crew.

Administrative stock use was much lower than usual which the very dry meadows appreciated. The Kern trail crew brought in feed and Robert simply passed though on a weekly basis to supply the Crabtree Cabin Crew. He was very helpful during mobilization and throughout the season shuttling various supplies and/or trash.

d. Commercial (see stock)

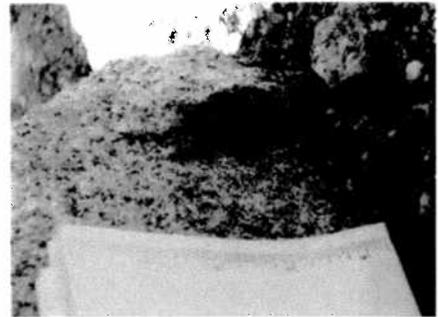
D. Natural Resources

a. Bear Activity

No bears were reported in the Rock Creek area until August 26, 2013. That one was seen at Lower Soldier Lake. A week later I saw tracks on the trail as well.

b. Wildlife

I saw the Mt Langley Bighorn Sheep herd on most patrols in that respective area. I photographed what I believe was a Yosemite (?) toad at the Army Creek crossing, not knowing if it's of note. I had a couple of unique bird sightings this season, both at the Rock Creek Ranger Station. The first was upon my arrival. A Short-eared owl was being raised just across the creek from the station. I assume it had two parents but I only saw one at a time, including the juvenile(s?). At the end of the season I saw and photographed (poorly) a Townsend's Warbler. A small flock of them spent the day along the banks of Rock Creek eating *Senecio triangularis* seeds and in the Lodgepole tree tops eating pine cone seeds or bugs. I also spotted more of them the following day along lower Rock and Guyot Creeks as they were migrating through. These were both species I had never seen or recognized in the back country since I started in 1995 although both are on the parks species list.



Lastly not as unique but somewhat unusual, two Great Blue Herons were seen by me (and the Crabtree Ranger on his lieu day) at Funston Lake.

c. Vegetation

Meadows received much needed rain this summer which kept them looking better than anticipated given two consecutive dry summers. I collected a few plant specimens that may or may not still be needed in the park herbarium. Two were an *Arabis* sp. and a Borage that I was unable to key in the back country (no dissecting scope this year!) and the other I believe is *Ribes cereum* var. *cereum* which is not on the most recent species list.

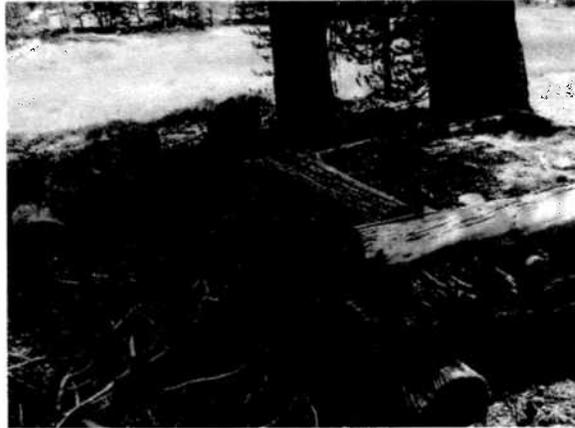
E. Cultural Resources

a. Prehistoric

Area sites appear intact.

b. Historic

Area sites appear intact.



F. Backcountry Facilities

a. Ranger Station

Thor and crew did a great job on staining and re-roofing the cabin last season. Unfortunately, the attic is still not mouse proof and snow survey sleeping bags, clothes and shoes were for some reason stored in garbage bags up there (and not where normally stored in lockers) and hence destroyed. The sleeping bags have been replaced.

b. Signs

In 1993, my sister and I followed the trail on our map to lower Soldier Lake. It leads to a "dead end" on the west side of the lake where one has to backtrack and then walk through a saturated meadow or, on a normal year, wade across the outlet to get to the main campsites on the peninsula. Unknown to us, and most visitors, a newer, dry trail leads straight to these same campsites without any consequent resource damage. It is just not shown on the maps or reflected appropriately by NPS signs. Almost every



visitor gets confused in this area even with a map and GPS.

This season, I took measurements of the sign bolt spacing in hopes that this can be remedied once and for all. All have $\frac{1}{4}$ " bolts. The signs have 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " and 4" spacing respectively. The reason this issue probably has been overlooked for this long is because one wouldn't know about the confusion unless they asked or watched the visitors in this Bermuda triangle (see Rock Creek 2012 EOS report).

G. Trails

a. Trail Activities/ Work accomplished

- GPS'ed the old Siberian Creek trail again as I believe that historic data has been lost.
- GPS'ed some of the local trails as the PCT in particular is shown incorrectly on contemporary maps as is the lower Rock trail. Also, on the Mt. Langley 7 ½" quad., a trail is shown along the crest to Mt. Corcoran. This leads visitors to assume a trail exists there. It is in addition to the designated agency boundary.
- GPS'ed some of the local cross country routes and use trails including the one that may be designated as the preferred route on Mt Langley.
- Removed small tree from trail adjacent to Ranger Station meadow early season.

b. Problem areas

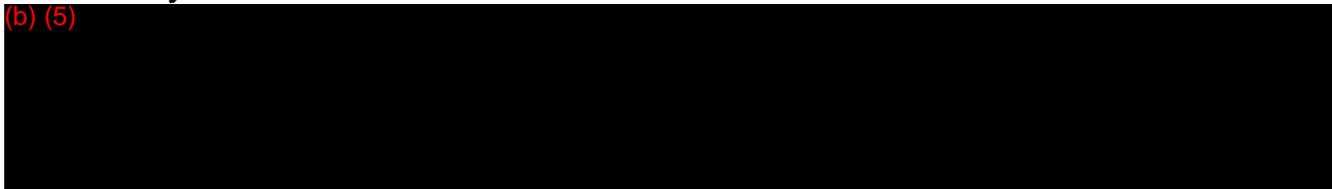
- 1) Lower Rock Creek switchbacks.
- 2) Checks/steps along PCT between Siberian Outpost and Rock Creek junction.
- 2) Army Pass trail between upper creek crossing and Army pass(es).
- 3) Mt Langley user trails.

H. Camp Areas

Due to high volume of traffic, areas are in need of constant maintenance, however all look good. "Stock Camp" sign was removed due to potential hazard trees that cannot be removed on a regular basis in wilderness.

I. Permit System

(b) (5)

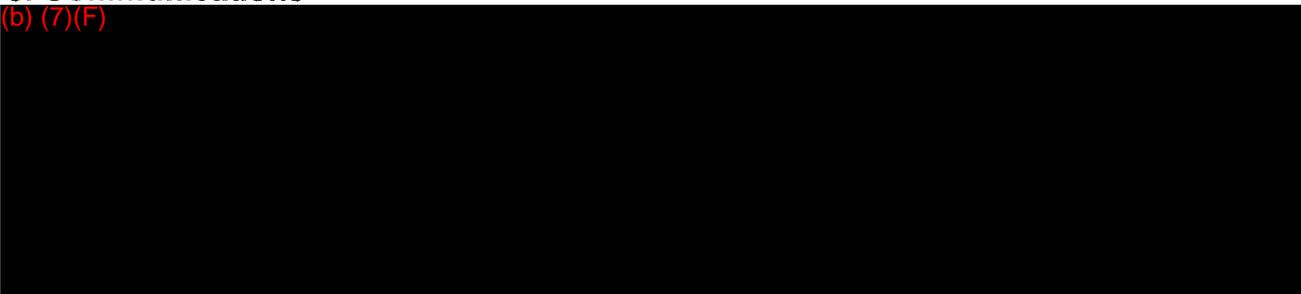


It would be nice to target the PCT hikers with modern technology (i.e. apps or websites) that encourage LNT practices and inform them of the different regulations for the different agencies along their route. As a user group, they seem to be having the most negative impact to our patrol areas and normally are long gone by the time we get to our stations so we can't address them in the field.

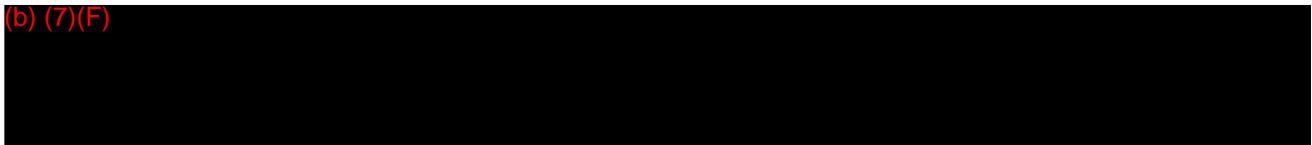
We also need to find a way to identify private stock users at the trailheads and give them appropriate information. This is a perpetual problem. Maybe specifically ask all permittees if they have a dog or stock when issuing every permit (and not making the assumption that they don't).

J. Communications

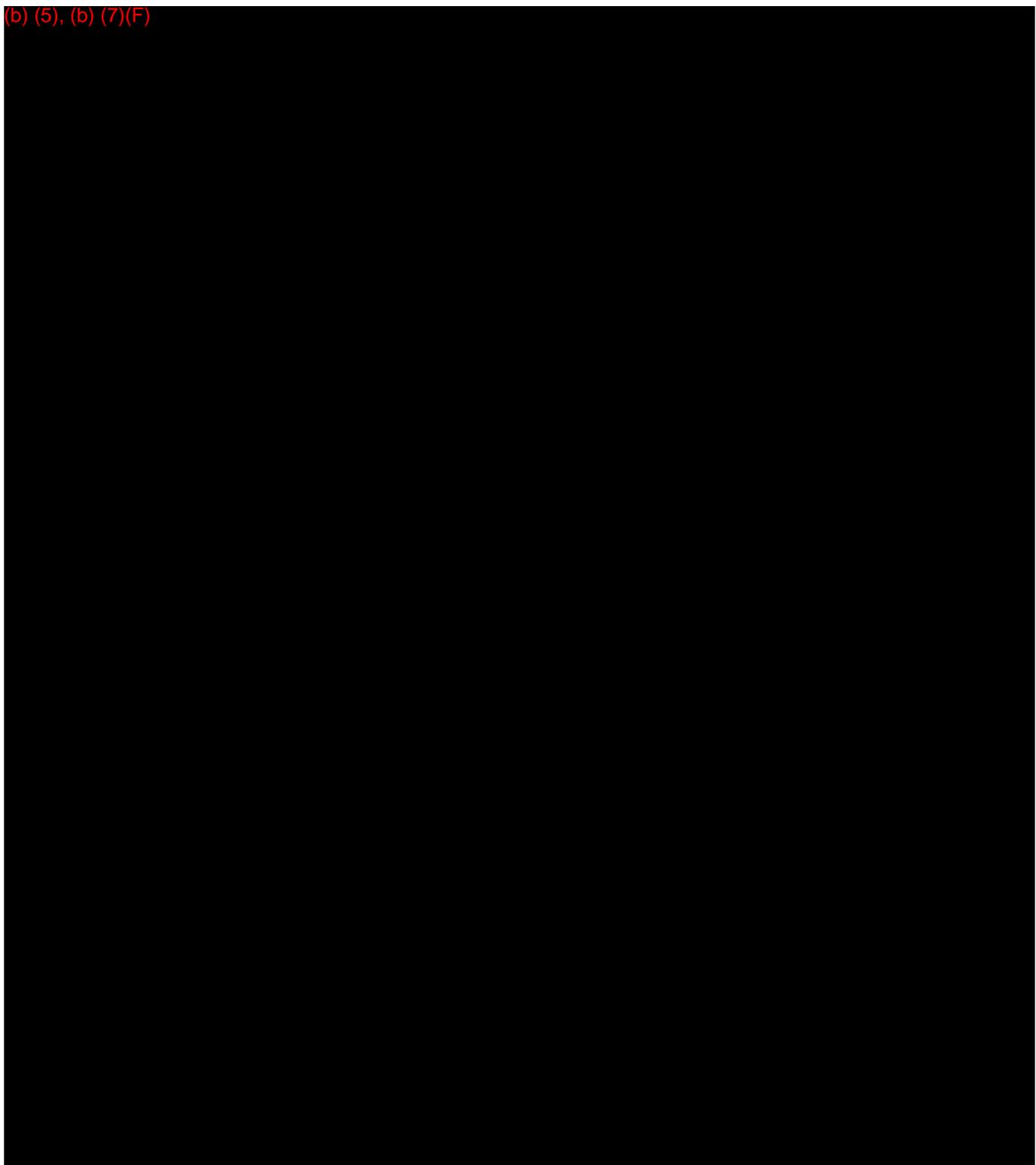
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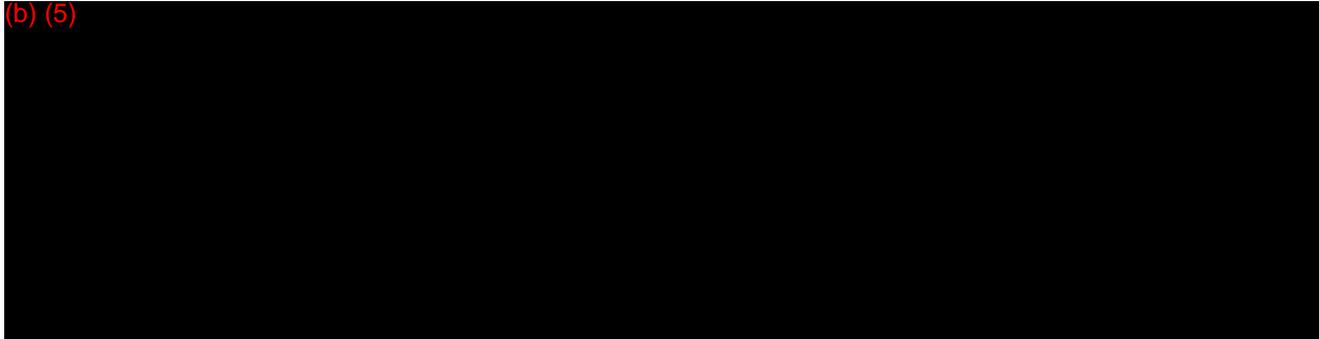
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K. Needs for next year: WILDERNESS RANGERS!!!

- Pressure cooker or try gasket first (3Qt. Corning Revere). Stored in attic 2012 and mice chewed gasket up!
- Handle for Master Nat'l Excelsior Stove (one that turns grate for ash removal. It used to be at the station!)
- Crampons for non-crampon compatible hiking boots

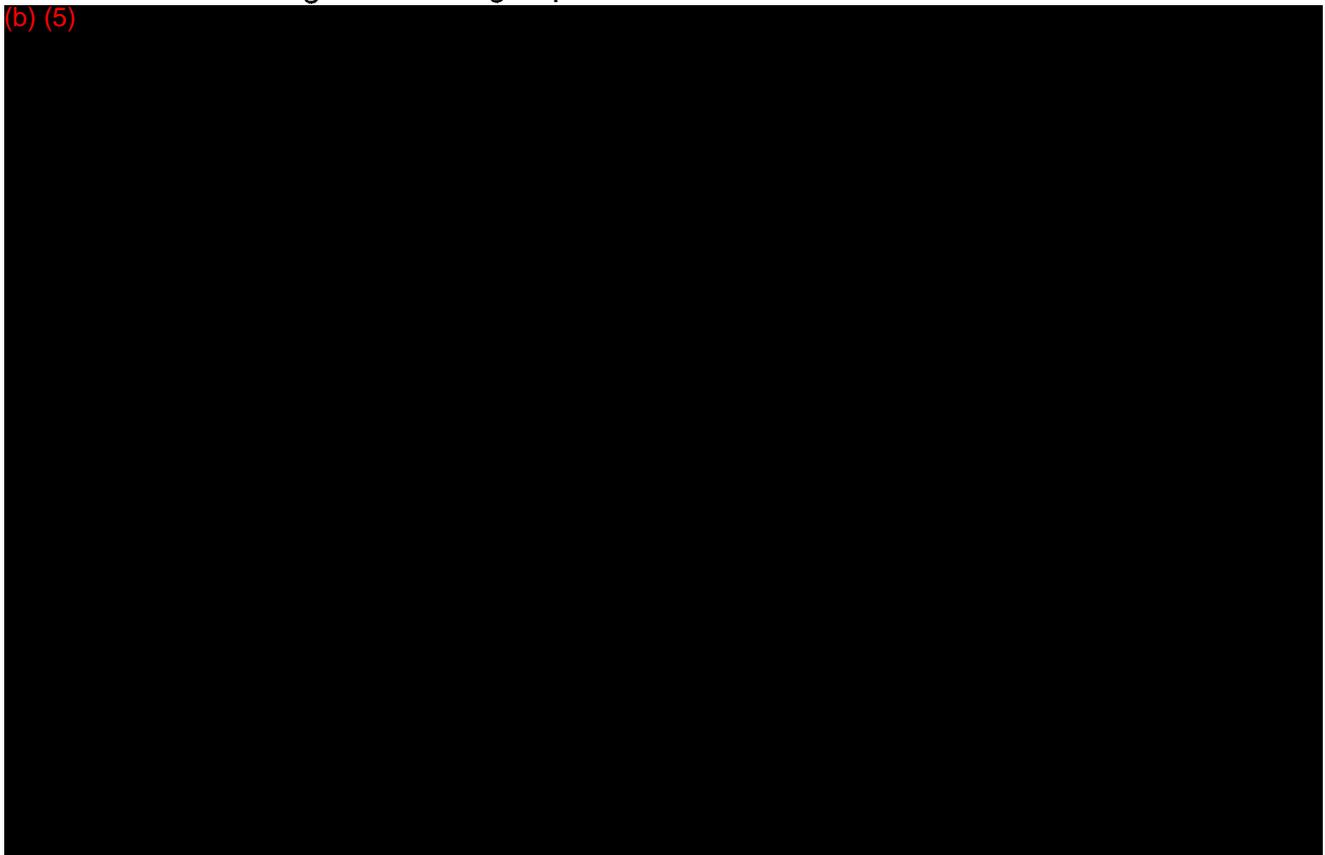
L. Recommendations

(b) (5)

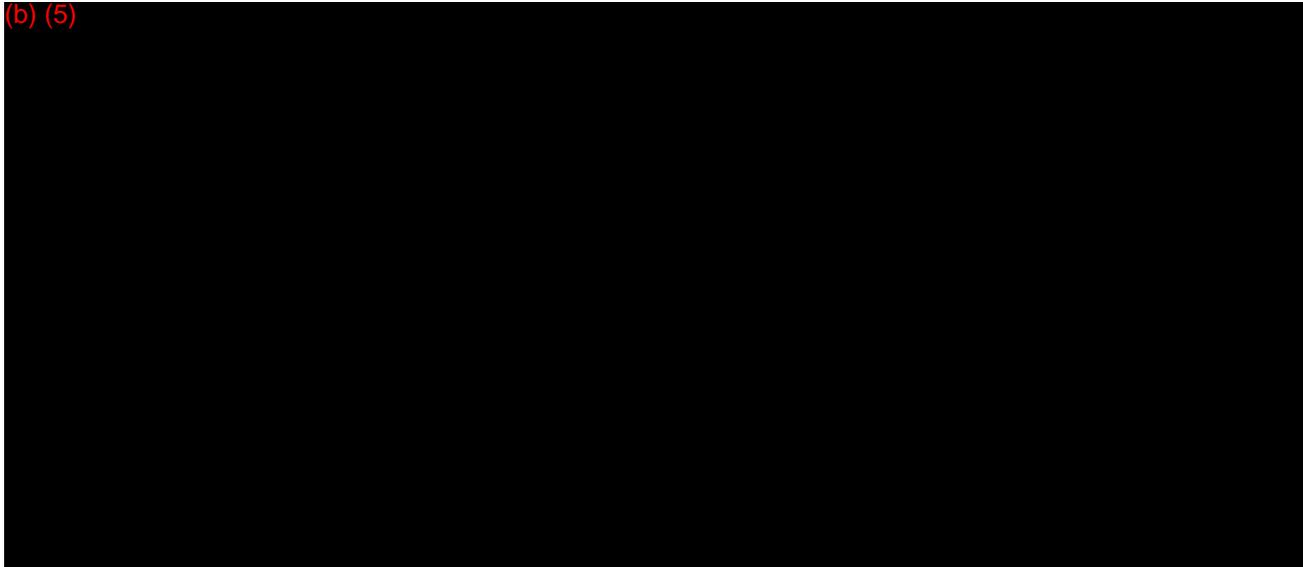


- Replace Soldier Lake area signs (see report).
- Make computer generated signs for bear boxes reflecting area issues (see old hand written ones).
- Follow through with "highlighting" Langley route 2013.
- Better radio training for all user groups.

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Matt Zussman, Lone Pine Trailhead Ranger
End of Season Report
2013

- A. General Summary

This has been a fantastic season; it was a treat working in the Park Wilderness. And I was thrilled to discuss trip plans with visitors when I was able to share my firsthand, up-to-date knowledge of routes.
- B. Visitor Services
 - a. Contacts
 - i. Backpackers: **806**
 - ii. Day hikers: **53**
 - iii. Stock: **26** (commercial: 4; administrative: 21; private: 1)
 - iv. Dogs: **6**; 5 dogs were on the East Side (Inyo National Forest), and I verified that they were not entering SEKI; 1 dog was in Crabtree Meadow, and the violation occurred on 6/22, prior to the arrival of wilderness rangers
 - b. Weather: A rainier than usual summer; a few patrols with predominately clouds, rain, hail, and/or lightning for multiple days; more unpredictable than the typical afternoon thunderstorm.
 - c. Fires: Despite the high fire activity this year, my patrols more or less avoided the smoke. There were a few days at the permit issuing station in the Interagency Visitor Center, however, that Lone Pine was engulfed in smoke, primarily from the Fish Fire; most visitors still kept their plans and hiked to Whitney or out of Horseshoe Meadows.
- B. Use Patterns
 - a. This may come as obvious, but it was remarkable just how much less trafficked areas were once I stepped off the PCT/JMT.
 - b. A very slow start: Other than the typical hotspots (Whitney/Crabtree, Rae Lakes Loop, Kearsarge Lakes), I found visitation relatively slow until mid-July.
- C. Natural Resources
 - a. Bear Activity: I did not see a single bear on wilderness patrols this season.
 - b. Wildlife: Sighted a fox at Upper Soldier Lake on 6/24; reported to Danny Gammons.
- D. Backcountry Facilities
 - a. Rae Lakes Ranger Station: large gaps between wood led to significant mouse issues.
- E. Camp Areas
 - a. Wag bags: it would be good to clarify policy of what long distance through hikers need to do when they begin trips at Whitney and then continue for many days afterwards: do they need to carry their used wag bags for another 8 days until their next resupply? Should they bury their wag bag waste somewhere outside of the Whitney zone (even though there are chemicals in the wag bags)? Does this small portion of hikers have an exception to using the wag bag?

- b. Fire rings rehabbed/removed:
 - i. Rehabbed (cleaned and/or made smaller): **11**
 - ii. Illegal removed: **17**
- c. Food Storage – Significant abandoned gear and trash in lockers, particularly at Wallace Creek, Tyndall Creek, and Charlotte Lake.

F. Permit System

- a. (b) (5) [Redacted]

G. Communications

- a. (b) (5) [Redacted]



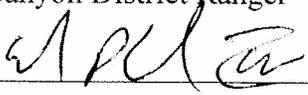
2013 Crabtree Meadow Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Rob Pilewski, Crabtree Meadow Ranger

Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/7/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/15/14

A. General Summary

This was my 22nd summer working as a commissioned wilderness ranger at SEKI. It was a unique summer at Crabtree in that the new ranger station was being constructed and I lived and worked out of a temporary ranger "camp". Ranger camp was located 1/3 of a mile to the west of the construction zone. Careful consideration went into the location of the temporary ranger camp. I wanted to keep the camp accessible to park visitors while also diverting the high volume of traffic to the Crabtree area away from the construction



zone. In the end, the location I chose worked well and park visitors were well served and Marty and crew were able to do their work with minimal interruption and no safety compromise. More of my work time was spent in the vicinity of the ranger station this summer due to the set-up/moving to ranger camp in early season, tending to area visitors in mid season, and moving/ clean-up of new ranger station site in late season. The last 3 weeks of my field season were spent working on the grounds of the new ranger station after the cabin crew departed in late August. Fortunately, I was able to enlist the help of volunteers for some of this arduous work.

I arrived at Crabtree on June 24th following 5 weeks of training and front country patrols. This summer came on the heels of the second dry winter in a row and conditions were alarmingly dry when I arrived in late June. Visitors took full advantage of this easy early season access and May and June saw high numbers of visitors to the Crabtree area. The PCT thru hikers, in particular, take a heavy toll on park resources prior to wilderness rangers arriving for the season. Area meadows were already open to grazing when I arrived in late June. Park resources would be better served if wilderness rangers started the field season sooner.

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. Because the highest, and infinitely accessible point in the lower 48 States resides in the Crabtree Patrol area there is a large number of novice wilderness users that require more coaching than more experienced users do. There are also 100+ day hikers on the 2 miles of the Mt. Whitney trail that are in the Park on most summer days. The



USFS had a minimal ranger presence on their part of the Whitney trail this summer and this, too, increased the work load of the Crabtree Ranger. This lack of a ranger presence resulted in more hikers on Mt. Whitney without permits and the subsequent

information that comes with the permit process. I fielded many visitor complaints about the unsanitary conditions along the Mt. Whitney trail in the early season. Used and abandoned wag-bags were littering the trail corridor on both sides of Mt. Whitney prior to my arrival at Crabtree, and the USFS rangers starting their season on the east side.

(b) (5)



a. Contacts

- i. Backpacker- 2,480**
- ii. Dayhiker- 1,950**
- iii. Stock- 256**

b. Law Enforcement

(b) (5)

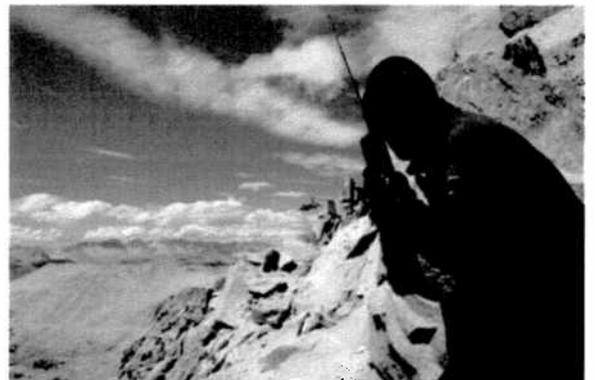


c. Citations

I issued 8 citations this summer and issued countless verbal and written warnings. I responded to an individual armed with a bow and arrow at Guitar Lake. This PCT thru hiker was planning on supplementing his diet on his long distance hike by hunting. He was aware that hunting was not allowed in the park, but did not know what to do with his bow and arrow when he got to the park boundary. I impounded the "weapon" and issued a citation. Other citations were written for: failure to obtain permit, caching of food, group size violations, and abandoning property. Compliance with park regulations can often be accomplished by educating the visitors. Wilderness law-enforcement is different than front country and should be managed as such. The environment that contacts are made, the nature of the violation, and who we are contacting are inherently different than front country contacts. The law enforcement commission is, none the less, still a valuable tool.

d. SAR & Medicals

There were 2 SARS in the Crabtree area this summer. They both occurred on Mt. Whitney and the first one, which occurred on Labor day, is mentioned below. The second SAR was for an overdue day hiker on Mt. Whitney on September 14. The reporting party ran to Crabtree to report hearing cries for help coming from the SW slopes of Mt. Whitney. The day



hiker lost the trail while descending the mountain and took a tumbling fall coming to rest on a ledge. He had scalp lacerations and hand injuries and spent the night on the ledge without overnight gear. Helicopter 5-5-2 was able to spot the stranded hiker and performed a successful short haul operation with Chris Waldschmidt acting as medic.

MEDICALS--

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Evacuation</u>
7/21	Crabtree	sprained knee, AMS	Helicopter
8/2	Crabtree	Acute abdominal pain	Helicopter



. There are numerous visitor assist EMS calls throughout the summer. Many are at the Crabtree ranger station and are for such minor maladies as AMS, muscle strains, and a wide range of ambiguous medical complaints. In this wilderness setting it is sometimes difficult to separate the people who require evacuation from those who require monitoring and encouragement. Medical control is a helpful tool, but it too can be difficult to paint an accurate picture for the docs in Fresno of what we are dealing with here in the wilderness,

e. Fatalities

There was one fatality in the Crabtree Patrol area this summer. A 60 year old man fell to his death on the park side of the Mt. Whitney trail. It is reported that he may have been suffering from AMS and stumbled off of the trail. 1-1-9 and myself assisted with the SAR and recovery.

f. Weather

Whitney Creek was barely flowing when I arrived at Crabtree in June. By the end of July it was back to its usual mid summer self due to the wettest July that I have seen in my 23 summers in the park. The monsoons brought a deluge to the area starting on July 4th and lasting most of the month. The first half of August was dry, and then the monsoonal flow returned bringing showers and thunderstorms to the area into September. The last week of August brought thunderstorms that caused numerous wildfires in the park.

g. Fires

SEKI fire season started in earnest the last week of August with numerous wildfires in the park. The Crabtree area saw only smoke from these fires. The Fish Fire, in particular, brought heavy smoke to the area for several days, and caused trail closures in the Kern Canyon.

C. Use Patterns

a. Backpackers

Backpackers constitute the majority of use in the Crabtree patrol area. There were more stock supported hiking parties this summer than in previous seasons. The JMT thru hikers originating in Yosemite and hiking Southbound thru SEKI to Mt. Whitney have perhaps become the biggest user group in the area. It would be good to get the permit data from Yosemite to see just how many permits they are issuing to southbound JMT hikers

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 and other SEKI areas. I think we should continue to pursue getting the USFS to do away with this quota. Most visitors approaching Mt. Whitney from Horseshoe Meadow and Onion Valley would prefer to exit to Whitney Portal and many would not even be spending the night on the east side, but merely passing thru on their way to Whitney Portal.



b. Stock

There was an increase in commercial stock use at Crabtree this summer. The stock supported hiking trips to Mt. Whitney continue to be the biggest source of grazing nights in the area. These trips originate and finish at Horseshoe Meadow. They are run by Sierra Mountain Center and REI. The Cottonwood and Rock Creek Pack Stations are "subcontracted" to pack for the trips and they stay 2 nights in the Crabtree area while the clients are hiking Mt. Whitney.

The Kern trail crew had very few grazing nights in the area this summer. The cabin crew had a weekly resupply brought in by Packer Robert and his string, but they did not graze any nights in the area. The trails in the Crabtree area were showing signs of the heavy stock use by summers end.

c. Administrative

The ranger station construction at Crabtree constituted the majority of administrative use at Crabtree this summer. For nearly 2 weeks in mid June the park helicopter was bringing in loads for the new station and taking out loads from the old one all day long. Marty and crew were camped at the construction site all summer and had weekly resupplies brought in by stock. There were signs posted along the PCT/JMT regarding the construction and advising travelers to choose alternate campsites to avoid the construction sights and sounds that were prevalent in the area this summer. I closed the area surrounding the construction zone and diverted



visitor traffic to my ranger camp. Things went quite smoothly with the ranger station construction and there were no conflicts with other user groups.

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. This season saw a spike in the number of commercial stock supported hiking trips. These trips primarily originate at Horseshoe Meadow, culminate in a hiking ascent of Mt. Whitney, and exit via the same route to Horseshoe Meadow. They are 5 night trips and utilize commercial pack stations to carry camp supplies from one location to the next. The reason that they exit back to Horseshoe Meadow rather than Whitney Portal is because the USFS does not allow commercial use on the main Mt. Whitney trail (east side). The primary pack station is Cottonwood Pack Station, with Rock Creek Pack Station also packing for some of these trips. They typically travel with 7 head of stock for groups ranging in size from 4 to 12 people. These trips are primarily sold by Sierra Mountain Center (SMC) out of Bishop, with REI subcontracting SMC for their trips. There was at least one, but sometimes 2 of these trips every week throughout the summer. I did not have any issues with any of these trips. Their guides are professional and compliant with park regulations. They use wag-bags for their human waste while they are camped at Guitar Lake and pack it back out to Horseshoe Meadow. The stock aspect runs smoothly as well and they had it down to a routine operation by seasons end. I wrote commercial use monitoring reports on all commercial users and documented any problems or good work that they did. Please refer to these reports for specific numbers and other information. It should be noted that these trips constituted the majority of stock use in the area this summer. I do not think that any management action needs to be taken on this increase in commercial use, but it should be noted that it is indeed an increase in use in an already busy area.

Other commercial users in the area this summer were: Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides, Mt. Travel Sobek, High Sierra Pack Trains, Sequoia-Kings Pack Trains, and Call of the Wild,. Again, almost all of the commercial use in the Crabtree area has an element of Mt. Whitney in it, if not an exclusive reason to be in this part of the Park.

D. Natural Resources

a. Bear Activity

I had reports of bear sightings at Lower Crabtree Meadow this summer, but there were no incidents that I know of involving problem bears (or problem visitors). Almost all backcountry travelers are carrying bear proof canisters or panniers these days and even the long distance hikers arriving from Yosemite report very little in the way of bear activity.

b. Wildlife

I found the carcass of a small canine at Crabtree Pass this summer that I thought may have been the rare Sierra Nevada Red Fox. I collected samples and sent them to the park wildlife biologist and he confirmed that they were from a coyote. Otherwise it was the usual suspects in area this summer.....deer, marmots, Douglas



squirrels, and *Homo sapiens*.

c. Vegetation

Monitoring area meadows is a big part of the Crabtree rangers job responsibilities. All of the Crabtree Meadows were open for limited grazing by recreational pack stock this summer. We closed the lower Whitney Creek meadow before any grazing nights occurred there due to dry conditions and low productivity. Lower Crabtree was allotted 40 nights of grazing and it was closed in early August. Upper Crabtree was allotted 75 nights of grazing and was closed in late August, and Sandy Meadow was allotted 150 nights and it was closed in early September. Sylvia and Erik have done a great job of guiding field rangers in the management of park meadows. It is a bit of a shell game here at Crabtree to monitor grazing impacts. Once packers turn their stock out at night to graze they drift to places that they have no control over. In an area like Crabtree it would be ideal if we could require stock users to have better control of their stock once they are turned out to graze. Some stock users are happy to have the opportunity to hand graze their animals in certain areas, or to use electric fences to control where their animals go for grazing. Most users maintain that turning the stock out at night and listening for the bell in the morning and "wrangling" the stock by going to find them, wherever they have drifted overnight is the right way to graze their stock. The resource would be better served if the park required stock users to have better control of their animals when grazing. I also think that there could be more grazing nights allotted if stock users had better control of where their stock graze, therefore more evenly distributing use across the meadow, and in places that can sustain more grazing.

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 turned 104 years old this summer. It is still much revered by visitors to the summit of Mt. Whitney. The great work that the historic preservation crew did on the hut last season is already showing wear and tear. The door knob was broken out of the new door sometime last winter, and some visitors still insist on writing their names and other nonsense on the walls of this historic hut.

F. Backcountry Facilities

a. Ranger Station

Marty, Tim, Dewey, and Andy did an exceptional job of constructing the new Crabtree Ranger Station this summer. The result is a ranger station that will serve the park, its visitors, and the Crabtree Ranger well for many, many years. Great job Marty and crew! It is a



beautiful structure and is laid out to be well functioning for summer and winter use. The construction of the cabin this summer brought many challenges for ranger operations, but in the end it went as smoothly as possible. Without going on and on here, I think I have earned the rights to the first full summer of being the Crabtree Ranger working out of the new station.



b. Signs

A new sign was placed at the trail junction below Trail Crest in an effort to prevent day hikers from hiking down the wrong side of Mt. Whitney. So far, so good, as there were no incidents this summer of misplaced day hikers showing up at Crabtree.

G. Trails

a. Trail Activities/ Work accomplished

The Construction Trail crew, led by Major Bryant, was at Crabtree for a month this summer to help with the new ranger station. While in the area, they also performed some great trail work on area trails, especially Mt. Whitney. The west side trail heading up from Guitar Lake is now in great shape and should be for years to come. Great job Major and crew!

b. Problem areas

Crabtree area trails are in good shape. The high volume of stock traffic each summer takes a heavy toll, however, and annual maintenance is required,

H. Camp Areas

Conditions continue to improve at Guitar Lake due to the wag-bag, pack out your poop, program. I dispensed approximately 1,800 bags from Crabtree this summer, which is 600 less than the previous summer. We have started handing the bags out in Yosemite Park to JMT hikers and this has caused the reduction in bags handed out at Crabtree. Even though I picked up more wag-bags than any previous summer since the program began 6 years ago, compliance of wag-bag use remains high and we should continue the program as is to continue the "clean-up" of Guitar Lake. It is no small task to get wag-bags to Crabtree and we should continue to push the dispensing of wag-bags at all permit stations for visitors entering the Whitney area and exiting to Whitney Portal. Guitar Lake remains the most popular overnight area at Crabtree, and perhaps the entire SEKI wilderness. All other camp areas at Crabtree are looking good.



The camps around the bear boxes continue to be the most popular campsites. They are still used by many visitors and we should keep the ones in place that are already in use area. 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. Permit System

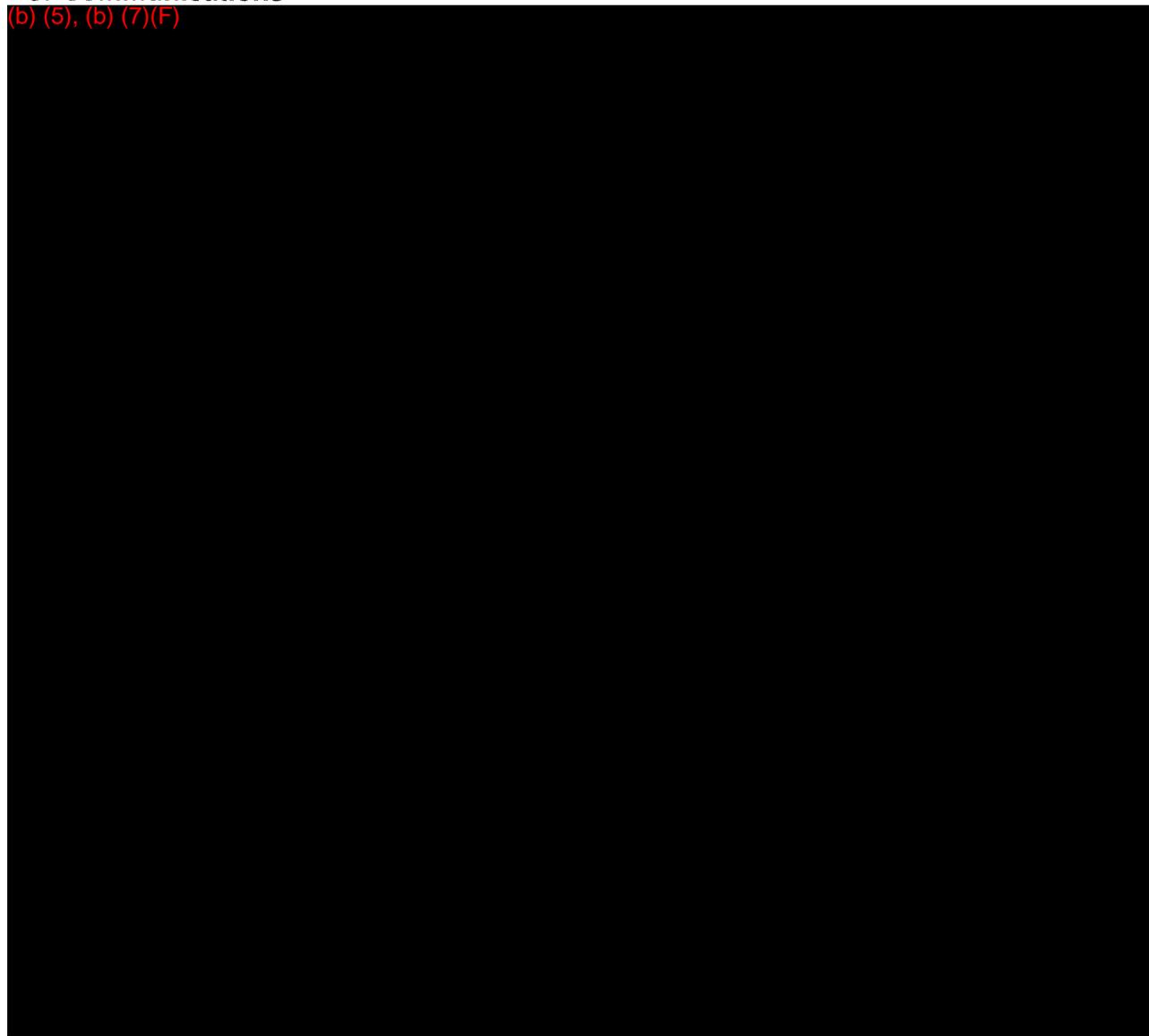
The permit system continues to work well for most user groups. The one

(b) (5)

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J. Communications

(b) (5), (b) (7)(F)

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(b) (5), (b) (7)(F)



K. Needs for next year

*1 large stock pot

*Some area rugs for new ranger station. Either that or put a new finish on the floor, as the tongue and groove flooring is difficult to keep clean.

*New daypack. The old one is falling apart. I prefer the Osprey Talon 44 size medium.

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

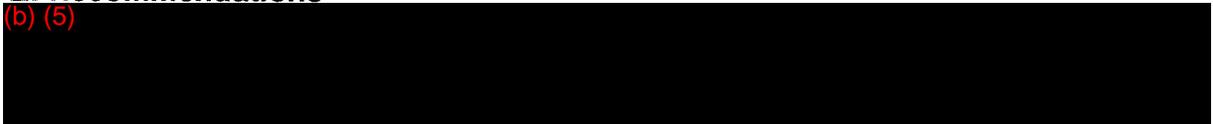
Wag-Bag count for summer 2012

1,800 distributed

400 left at Crabtree for 2014 (need 15 boxes for next season)

L. Recommendations

(b) (5)



*There is a sling load of construction trash left in the weather tower at Crabtree from the new ranger station. During next seasons mobilization we should sling load all of this out as trash.

(b) (5)



*Work harder to ensure that hikers in the Crabtree area who are traveling in the "wag-bag zone" have been given wag-bags already and do not need to pick them up at Crabtree. This is not an attempt to stop our dispensing of bags at Crabtree, but rather minimize the number of bags we send to Crabtree each season to be dispensed.

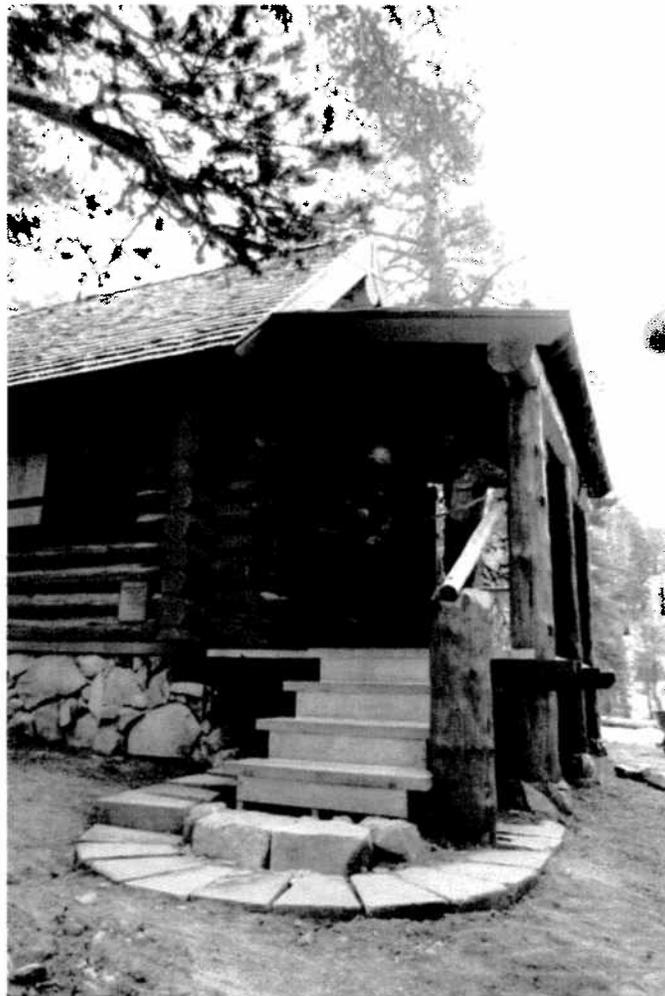
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(b) (5)



Ribbon cutting ceremony at Crabtree Ranger Station, August 30 2013



M. Inventory

Propane 2.5 Large. (1 large used in 2013), 2 small (partial)
Propane (Coleman)-depends on snow survey use
Pocket Rocket (sm.)-4
Pocket Rocket (lg.)-4
White gas (gal.)-ample
Bear canisters-1 bear vault

TP-2
PT-5
Steno Pads-3
Log Books-1
8 1/2 x 11 Pads-1
Pocket Pads-7
Laminating Paper-ample
Pens-2 boxes skilcraft (ample)
Pencils-ample

7.5" Maps

Cirque Pk-1
Chagoopa Falls-2
Johnson Pk-2
Kearsarge Pk.-1
Mt Brewer-2
Mt Clarence King-0
Mt Kaweah-2
Mt Langley-2
Mt Whitney-1
Mt Williamson-2
Triple Divide-3
Sphinx Lakes-0
Recreation Map-2

Duct tape-0
Strapping tape-2
Electrical tape-
Lithium AA-0
Lithium AAA-0
AA batteries-0
AAA batteries-0
C batteries-6
D batteries-0
Lg. Trash bags-6
Sm. Trash bags-20
Burlap sacks-2

Grain sacks (for firepits)-1
Shovel blade (for firepits)-1
Work gloves (sz/type)-leather large (2)
Work gloves (sz/type)
Work gloves (sz/type)
Work gloves (sz/type)

Sponges-2
Matches (boxes)-4
Snow seal-1 partial
Sunscreen-2
Bug repellent-2

Aluminum foil- 1 partial. (more needed for 2010)
Coffee filters-ample large
Coffee cone-2
Laundry Soap-0
Dish Soap-ample
Shampoo-needed for 2013
Conditioner-ample
Soap-needed for 2013
Lotion-needed for 2013
Aloe-1
Spices listed

RUN sheets-ample
AUO logs-needed
Wildlife Obs.-ample
Exotic Plant Obs.-ample
BIMS-ample
CUA/IBP-6
Bear Box Loc.-ample

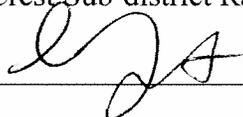
Mailing Labels with present CVB location-ample if they are still being sent to
Philadelphia



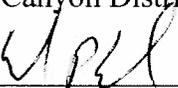
2013 Le Conte Canyon Wilderness Ranger End of Season Report

From: Chris Miles, Le Conte Canyon Ranger

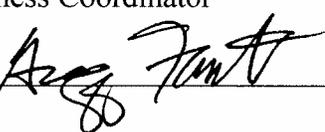
Through: Erika Jostad, Sierra Crest Sub-district Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 12/13

Through: Ned Kelleher, Kings Canyon District Ranger

Read and approved:  Date: 1/17/14

To: Gregg Fauth, Wilderness Coordinator

Read and approved:  Date: 1/24/14



**Sierra Crest Sub-district: LeConte Ranger Station
End of Season
2013**

This was my first season at the new and improved LeConte Canyon Ranger Station. The cabin was luxurious to say the least and served us well for the entire summer. There were no major issues with the cabin and just a few minor issues that were easily taken care of. We experienced no mice what-so-ever for the entire summer. All in all it was a very busy summer in terms of numbers of people but there were few major incidents. A lot of people stopped by to see the new cabin and were very impressed with the construction.

VISITOR SERVICES:

- i: 2148 Visitor Contacts
- ii: 6 day hikers (running North Lake South lake)
- iii: 10 Stock Groups came through the area. Rainbow Pack Outfit most frequently but Rock Creek was the heaviest user. I saw 2 private stock groups each with 2 head.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

I gave numerous warnings for food storage and camped on vegetation. I also talked to a lot of people who said they were burning their toilet paper. Most of the food storage warnings were given to people who didn't know if they could fit all of their food

into their canisters after resupplying either at Muir Trail Ranch or over Bishop Pass. There were a few groups who were under the impression that the Ursack was allowed in SEKI.

I issued 8 Citations this year. 3 to one group alone: 1 for food storage, 1 for Improperly disposing of human waste and 1 for improper disposal of refuse. I issued two citations for Failure to Obtain a permit, 1 for Property unattended for more than 24hours, 1 for improper disposal of human waste and 1 for Violation of Permit Conditions for camping too close to water and on vegetation.

SEARCH AND RESCUE AND MEDICAL INCIDENTS:

I assisted with two stock evacuations this year. There was one other stock evacuation that occurred while I was on days off in Bishop. The injured party contacted the packer during a resupply of another group. There were five helicopter evacuations from the area this year.

7/1	LeConte RS	Knee injury	Self Evacuation
7/7	LeConte RS	Ankle	Med Assist/ Wrapped Ankle
7/26	Golden Staircase	Leg Injury	Helicopter
8/4	LeConte RS	Ankle	Horse Evacuation
8/6	Dusy Bench	Dislocated Knee	Helicopter Evacuation
8/21	LeConte RS	Injured Feet	Horse Evacuation
8/23	LeConte RS	Eye Injury	Treat and Release
8/26	Golden Staircase	Fatigue	Helicopter Evacuation
8/31	LeConte Canyon	Ankle	Horse Evacuation
9/16	Deer Meadow	Abdominal Pain	Helicopter Evacuation

There were no fatalities in the LeConte area this year.

WEATHER:

The weather this year was interesting. During the last week and a half of June it was very hot due to the heat wave that gripped this part of the country. We had heavy rains during the middle of July and it even rained through the night on several occasions. There was also a wet period in the middle part of August with thunderstorms and heavy rains that made the Middle Fork of the Kings River run muddy brown for one afternoon.

On my walk out of the backcountry on September 22, there was snow on the ground from a storm the night before. High winds and about an inch or two of snow.



FIRES:

The LeConte area saw very little smoke from the Aspen fire west of Mammoth this year. We had two days of light to moderate smoke in the afternoon during that period. Thunderstorms in the middle of August, however, ignited a fire west of the Great Cliffs near Simpson Meadow. This fire started on August 23rd and produced heavy smoke in the canyon for the next week or so. Smoke was heaviest during the afternoons and even heavy in Dusy Basin. There was one evening in Dusy Basin where you could barely see the Palisade group. Generally, smoke was heaviest at the Palisade Creek Confluence 3.5 miles south of LeConte Ranger Station. The fire grew to approximately 650 acres.



USE PATTERNS:

Most of the traffic I saw this year were backpackers on the JMT. About 90% of the contacts I made were visitors on the JMT. Of the remaining 10% most visitors were doing the North Lake to South Lake loop. I saw very few Day hikers (4) running the North Lake South Lake Loop.

One trend that I did notice was that Ropers High Route seems to be getting a lot of attention these days. I ran into a number of groups doing parts of the route or the whole thing and even ran into a guided group with Sierra Mountain Center doing the entire route. Some folks were only going up to Amphitheater Lake and into Lake Basin either over Frozen Lake Pass or through the Dumbbell Lakes area.

I did not notice a lot of climbing in the Palisades this year. I talked with (b) (6) from Sierra Mountain Center and his feeling was that the Palisades had lost some of their appeal because the routes were getting more dangerous due to decreasing ice and snow which, in turn is causing increased rock fall. (b) (6) also felt that people were doing things a little further out and/or that user groups were changing. The groups that were climbing heavy in the Palisades over the last 10 years or so are getting older and now do not wish to climb that way anymore. In his opinion, this group would rather have a stock supported trip and walk on the trails; Interesting thought.

Stock:

There were a number of stock groups in the area this year. Rock Creek Pack Station had four trips come through: One trip from the Pack Station to Bishop Pass, with another trip doing the opposite, one trip from Kearsarge Pass to Bishop Pass and then a longer trip from Cottonwood in Sequoia to Bishop Pass. Bishop Pack Station had one trip come through doing the North Lake-South Lake Loop. High Sierra Pack Station was through twice on the JMT going to Whitney. Rainbow Pack Outfit made numerous trips into the canyon this year. They mobilized our gear through the

month of July and in addition resupplied various individuals as well as other stock supported trips. They were definitely the most frequent user but rarely had more than 4 head at a time and even then it was only 6 head on one trip. I saw two private stock parties with two head each in the canyon this year doing long trips to the north either starting in Sequoia or Kearsarge Pass. I saw one private stock group in the second week of September with one burro and two people doing the North Lake South Lake Loop.

Administrative:

The CCC crew was at Palisade Lakes all season working on Mather Pass this year. A Kings Canyon trail crew was in Dusy Basin starting at the end of the last week in August. They worked mainly below the Lip and did maintenance on the upper part of the trail.

The Historic Building Crew was at Simpson Cabin in the beginning of the season for about two weeks. They then moved up to the Muir Hut on Muir Pass for about a week.

Rich Thiel was into LeConte to pull Orchard Grass and we pulled between 500-1000 plants at the Palisade creek Confluence site.

There was a Frog crew in Amphitheater Lake during the season.

Commercial:

There was quite a bit of commercial traffic in the canyon this year. Sierra Mountain Center had three trips through the area. Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides was through twice supported by High Sierra Pack Station. Alpine Mountain Guides was through once with a single client on the JMT.

NATURAL RESOURCES:

There was very little bear activity in the canyon this year. I saw two bears near the cabin the first week and then another bear in Grouse Meadow shortly after that. I only got one reported sighting and that was in the first week of September. It seemed very strange that there was not more activity.

We had our resident deer population with a mother and two fawns hanging out near the cabin for the entire season. It was such a treat to watch them grow. They were certainly accustomed to our presence and hardly flinched when we were around. There were at least two more mothers with one and two fawns that we saw periodically in the area.

One thing we did notice is that the willows were affected by some type of caterpillar in the early season. We believe it was the Yellow Spotted Tiger Moth. Later in the season the willows seemed to be affected by some sort of fungus. It turned the willows yellow early in August and seemed to affect only a certain type of willow as there were other willows unaffected by the fungus. Could this be a result of the caterpillars?



CULTURAL RESOURCES:

There are a few historic sites in the area. The most notable being the area around the Ranger Station. I saw lots of obsidian in the area.

BACKCOUNTRY FACILITIES:

The new Ranger Station was amazing! Very well put together and it served our needs well. There were no major issues with the cabin. We fixed a small propane leak in the stove that seemed to be manufacturer defect. It worked very well during the entirety of the season. I stuffed some more steel wool into various areas, specifically above the book shelves on the south wall. We saw no mice inside the cabin this year unless we left the door open after dark. Then one would scurry in and quickly retreat back outside. We caught none in our traps.

The solar system worked adequately despite there being one old battery hooked up to the two new ones. The only time we ran into problems is when it rained for three days in the middle of August. We also ran into low batteries in early September during a period of cloudy weather. I would suggest not hooking up old batteries to new ones as the new ones will equal out to the charge level of the old ones effectively making the batteries old before they are even used. The panel is in a great location and gathers lots of sunlight.

I cleaned up lots of trash and brush in the area around the station in the first week I was there. There is lots of scrap lumber around to use as fire wood probably for at least the next season if not two depending on how often the stove is used. The wood stove worked amazingly well. Often I would light a fire and not restock it with wood and the cabin would hold the heat. The cabin stayed warm at night and was often warmer than outside even without a fire.

We hung the towel rack over the sink and organized the bookshelves. I hung the information board just outside the door so that it was no longer just sitting on the bench out front. This requires the front shutter to be closed to see it but looks much nicer.

I pointed out to Phil Gross a few things that need to be done on the cabin. The east shutter on the south side of the building sticks on one of the eaves. Not a huge deal but something to be aware of. On the north side of the building there is space between the roof and the top plate that needs some caulking of some sort. It should really be done as soon as possible to insure that the cabin stay mouse free.

All in all, the cabin is in great shape, as it should be being a year old.

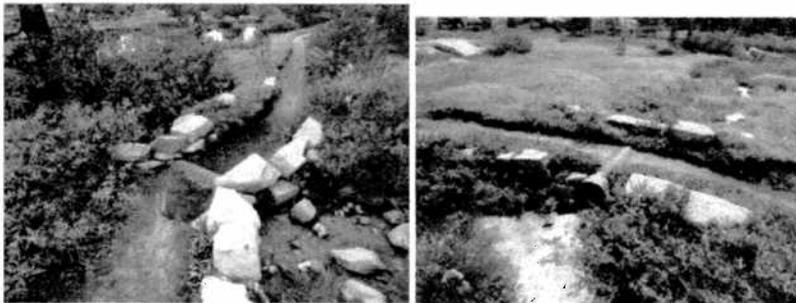
All signs in the area are in good shape.

TRAILS:

The JMT is the primary trail in the area and is generally in good shape. I cut out three trees in the area this year and did minor clearing of brush and rock. I received many compliments on the trails from various individuals. Our trail crews should be proud.

The Bishop Pass Trail is in need of some work. While the trail is generally in good shape it could use some serious maintenance attention. The lower switchbacks just east of the JMT junction could use some widening as well as some inside walls to keep the hillside from sliding into the trail making it narrower. The CCC crew did some minor clearing of this section and removed a large boulder that was giving stock an interesting time in the beginning of the season. The section above the Dusy Creek Bridge is in need of some serious drainage work for the trail is flooded in some areas and has stayed that way all season due to springs in the area. There are some very large steps that seem unnecessary as they are up to my knee (I'm 6'2") and are difficult to ascend.

I know the issue of the culverts in Dusy Basin has been visited before. Evaluate what is the most effective method for erosion control and least impact to wilderness character. They are an eyesore and the trail around one in particular is eroded so that the top of the culvert is exposed.



CAMP AREAS:

Camp conditions are not too bad in the LeConte area. Camps are clean and people seem to be taking care of them. There is the usual issue of micro trash but that is a constant battle. I continually discovered out of the way sites that were more to my liking being off the trail and hidden. The camping in upper LeConte is sparse, especially above Median Lake. This area is exposed with very few trees and few decent camping spots.

Sanitation:

Sanitation continues to be challenging to get across to visitors. I gave two citations this year for not disposing of human waste properly and found numerous sites where people had gone to the bathroom without digging a hole, left their toilet paper and threw rocks on top of the spot (picture). I don't think people are getting the message about either digging a hole or packing out their toilet paper. Most folks I talked to had their bag of used TP but I believe it is still a problem. In high use areas there is the definite ring of TP/Poop 50-100ft around a given camp site. It is an issue that needs

more attention.

During the summer I did some calculations regarding our sanitation issue. Based on 2000 JMT permits issued out of Yosemite the following numbers are striking with regards to human waste: 20 days average on the trail and every person goes at least once a day. This equals 40,000 piles between happy Isles and Whitney. Broken down further each person spends an average of 7 days in SEKI. This equals 14,000 piles in SEKI alone. Again, this does not include people section hiking the JMT/PCT or any other types of trips.



Fire Rings:

I cleaned many fire rings this year and removed many other redundant or illegal fire pits. Despite the campfire ban people were having fires and even in a few instances building new fire rings. Foil is still the most common article pulled out of the fire pits. Maybe this could be a talking point included in the minimum impact regulations.

I received one complaint on the fire ban this year from a commercial packer who had travelled from Cottonwood to Bishop Pass. The packer was supportive of the fire ban but felt that if there was to be a ban then it should apply to administrative users as well. He reported to me that while in Crabtree area, the area was filled with smoke from fires from administrative activities. This brought about complaints from his clients as to why they could not have fires if the NPS allowed administrative use of fires.

I reduced many fire rings this year. In one instance I reduced one from about knee height and underneath it all found a perfectly good three rock ring! Cool!

Fire wood availability is good in some spots but diminished in others (campsites around the station). Two years of fire restrictions may help this as there are many trees down.

Food Storage:

This was a great topic of discussion this year with a great many people. Many people were interested in why they had to carry food canisters above 11,000 feet and not in the canyon bottom. It produced quite an array of opinions.

Most people were carrying food canisters and when asked about storage of food after a resupply or on their first night in Dusy Basin, about half replied that they could fit everything in their cans that first night. Some people carried two bear canisters or the largest one they could get (Barricade Expedition-11 days of food!) I ran into a few folks who told me they thought the Ursack was allowed for use in this park.

Permit System

The major trailhead in the LeConte area is the South Lake trailhead. I saw a lot of traffic coming over Bishop Pass either to continue on the JMT or to complete the

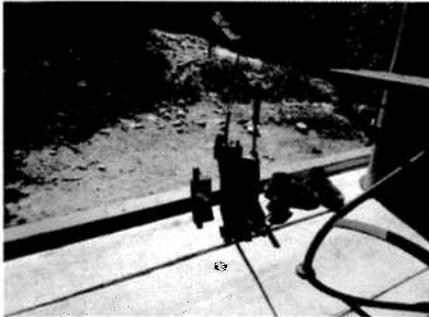
North Lake South Lake loop.

I saw a lot of permits this year that had incorrect information. Mostly it was location of camp spots. Many times the areas listed on a permit were nowhere near the LeConte area. Many times the reservations were made online and once the individual picked up their permit at the office it was too late to change it?

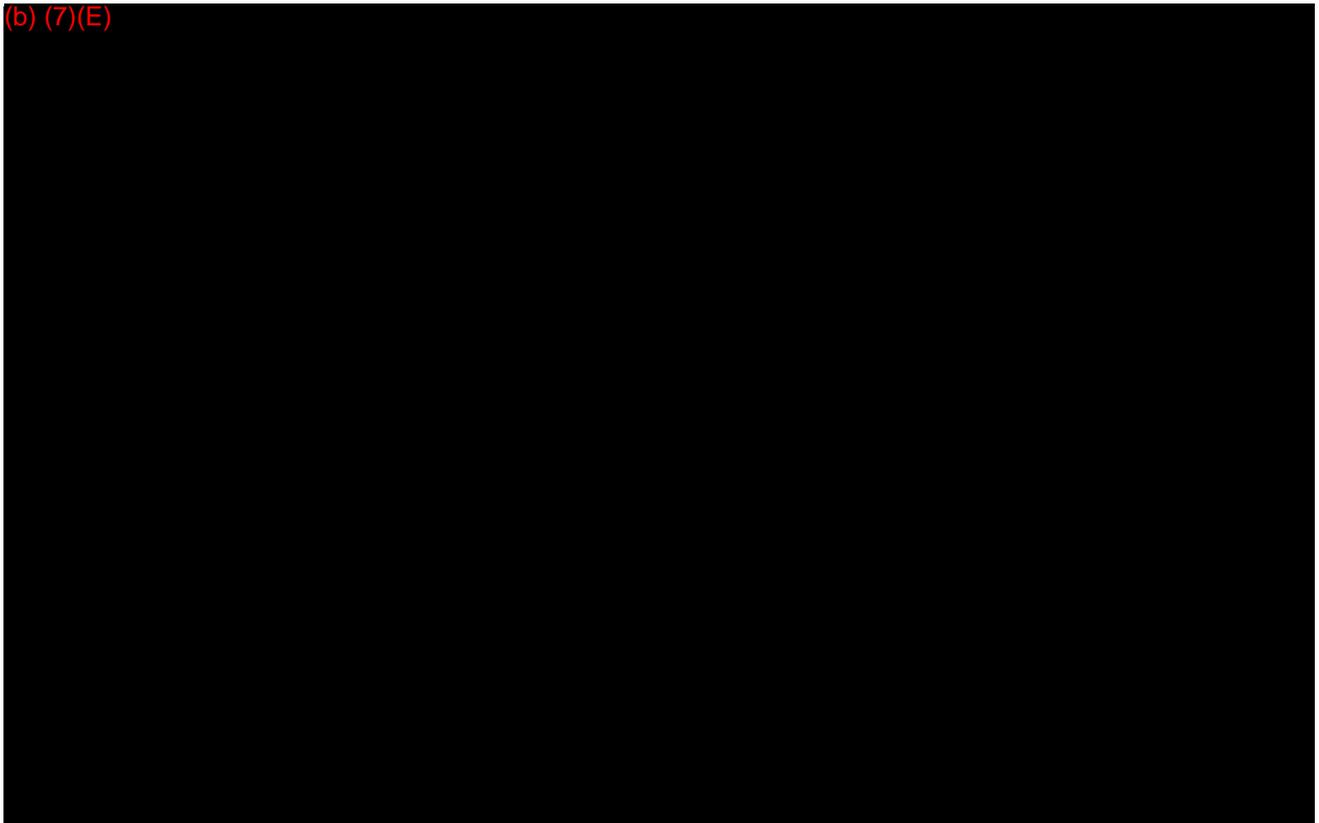
Issuing Offices

Most permits were issued either out of Yosemite, Bishop or Lone Pine offices. I contacted a number of visitors later in the season that were told about a problem bear in LeConte Canyon. I was surprised by this information because I received almost no bear reports at all during the entire summer. I received one report the first week of September of a bear about 1/2 mile south of the ranger station and the next day got a report of a bear in Big Pete (same bear?) but both reports did not confirm that the bear was being a problem bear. I do not believe that incorrect information is the way to go about educating people on how to store their food.

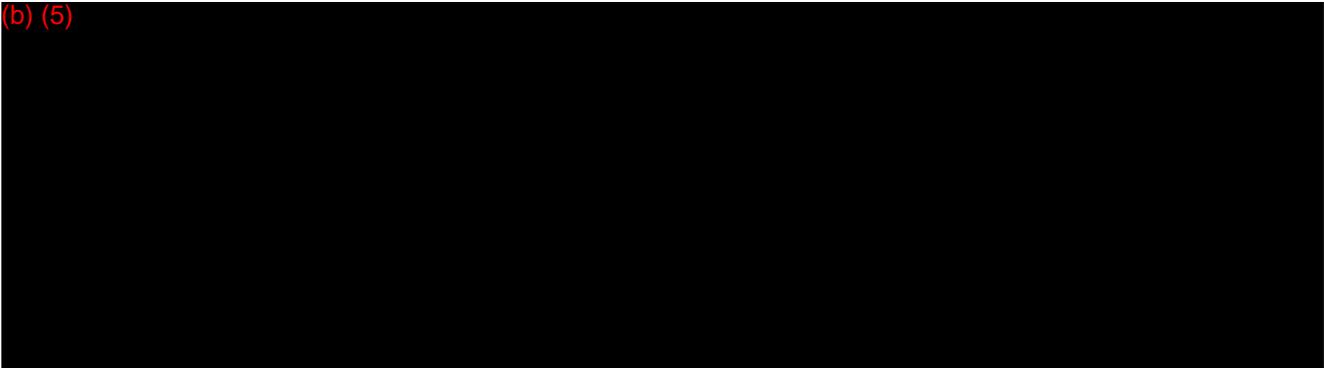
COMMUNICATION



(b) (7)(E)



(b) (5)



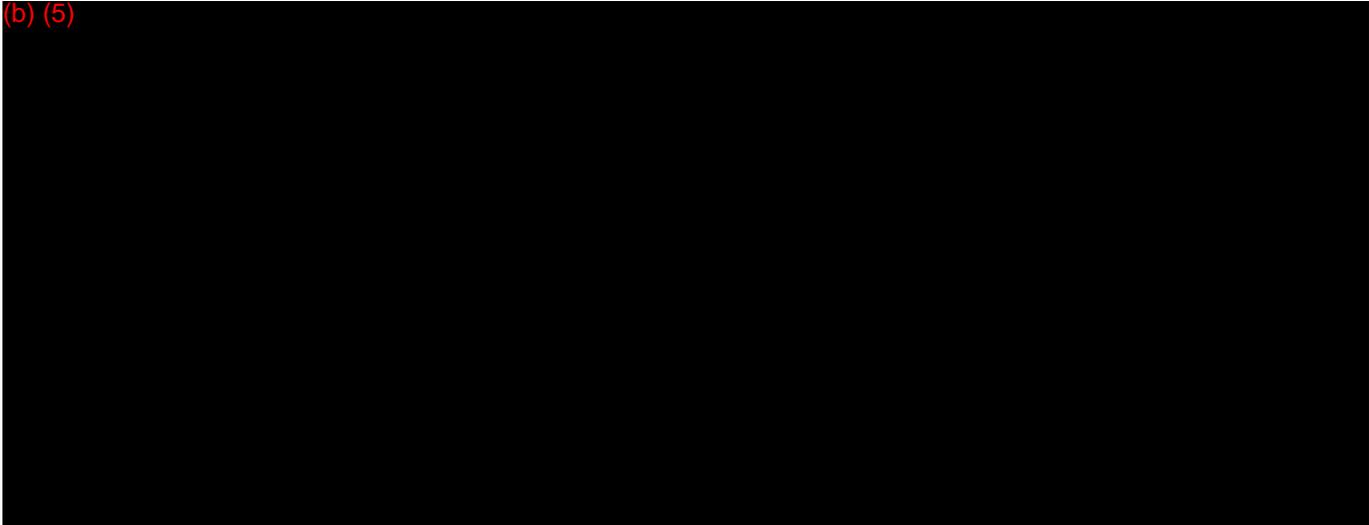
NEEDS: See attachment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(b) (5)



(b) (5)



Chris Miles and Family 2013

NEEDS:

TP

Hand AX

Murphys Oil Soap (for floor)

Trash bags (sm)

Trash Bags (lg)

tung or linseed oil for floor

Matches and/or lighters

The right hardware for new solar batteries (see pictures)

Curtain rod for the big southside window

Axe

INVENTORY:

8 8x11 pads paper
12 pre paid envelopes
3 dish washing basins
10 rolls TP
2 new Marmot sleeping bags with liners
1 katadyn Water filter for station (lg)
2 2.5 gallon water jugs
3 3 gallon galvanized water buckets
1 wash basin
2 MTN maytags
1 cordless drill
assorted trail signs
3 travel chairs 2 adirondack chairs
2 other chairs for front porch
1 sm step ladder
1 lg ladder
2 bow saws
3 hand saws
5 bear canisters
20 Canisters ISO Butane fuel
6 Coleman fuel canisters
6 Compressed Fire Logs
1/2 box Fat wood fire starter
5 sponges
1.5 dish soap (lg)
1/2 bottle bleach (sm)
3/4 bottle of laundry soap
1 large hand sanitizer
Sky probe antenna
One long metal antenna

MEDICAL:

2 O2 tanks (1000 ,1200psi)
O2 regulator
BP Cuff
2 Stethoscopes
1 Ped stethoscope
Assorted bandaids
34 Vionex towelettes
2 C collars
2 Sam splints
8 rolls Kling
4 4x75 inch rolls gauze

4x4 gauze- Plenty
1 infectious control kit
2 CPR masks
9 nasal canula
4 non rebreather masks
1 ped O2 mask
IV bag
Various rolls tape