

August 27, 2011

Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Superintendent
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, California 93271

Dear Ms. Taylor-Goodrich,

I am writing to provide are commenting on SEKI's Wilderness Stewardship Plan. I have been lucky enough to make several trips through he area, on foot and on skis, and I know what a treasure this area is. Something that I have always noticed while traveling in the Sierras is the destructive influence of horses in their non-native environment. I think any plan should consider the disproportionately large damaging influence that equine recreation has on our fragile high-altitude mountain areas. I have personally seen multiple instances of such damage, including:

- Trails worn down up to 12 inches into the soil and rocks
- Tree roots severed and mashed by steel-shod hooves
- Piles of excrement in and near water sources
- Clouds of insects attracted to said piles
- Small springs trampled and polluted

Related to horse travel in the sierras is the use of our lands for a narrow range of business, the pack outfitter. With horses, large groups of people can pack in immense amounts of creature comforts, including large amounts of alcohol and portable music, which can often negatively affect the wilderness experience other users are after.

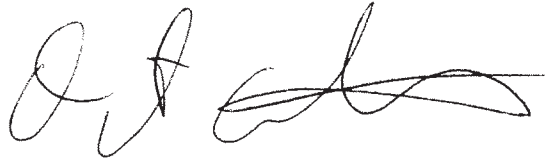
Given that I have experienced these detriments first hand, I would like to comment on a few issues that should be addressed in a stewardship plan:

1. Consider limiting or abolishing pack operations and/ or horse traffic in the area. Horses are not native, open up a wide range of uses out of character for a wilderness area and in my opinion do more damage than motorcycles.
2. If horse access persists, make operators of the animals use manure catchers and make them responsible for the spread of invasive species through special fees or something similar. At the same time, make access to the park equal to all users, as now I believe there is an advantage to using a pack service to get wilderness access when others are denied permits.
3. We should move toward a network of foot-only trails that would provide a more genuinely Sierra experience.

4. It is time to consider removing the Bearpaw High Sierra Camp. This again is out of character with wilderness areas, and in its current state is selective and expensive, unattractive and generates a considerable amount of pollution in a fragile high-altitude environment.

Thank you for considering these comments and I hope you will give them weight deserving of a local who has passed many miles in this beautiful area, and seen firsthand the subject of my comments and suggestions. Furthermore, our appreciation for your efforts to protect this national treasure are appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Anthes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Anthes