

## McClure Ranger Station: End of Season Report 1995

George Durkee

### Stats:

Visitors Contacted	700
Miles Hiked	600
Citations	0
Warnings	25 (camping on veg.; unclean camp etc.)
Medivacs	2 (Horse-evacs)
Searches	1 (Goddard Cr.)
Grazing nights observed	75 (Evolution Mdw. to Darwin Cr.)

### OVERVIEW

An incredible snow year. Snow was up to the eaves of the cabin (4 ft) when we arrived. Skiing was excellent until about July 8. Because of high water and extreme conditions, there were only about 10 visitors until mid-July. The Evolution radio repeater was not working when we arrived. In spite of repeated notifications to the radio shop, it was not fixed until 8/8. I wrote a memo in mid-August recommending that protocols be established to have these problems fixed in a more timely manner. However, on 9/23, we were again unable to transmit to any base station using the Evolution repeater. Again, I reported the problem 3 times to Dispatch (using the Sierra Forest frequency). When we left McClure on 10/12, the problem had still not been fixed. The repeater was not working for a total of 9 weeks out of the season. This is unacceptable. It is not clear that anyone is in charge or that there's any accountability once a report is made. Safety considerations for both visitors and NPS personnel necessitate a serious effort at correcting this problem.

Otherwise it was an incredibly quiet season. The only major event was the arrival of a Japanese film crew filming a special on hiking the John Muir Trail. I was interviewed for about an hour. Not since Commodore Peary have Japanese/American relations been dealt such a blow. I discussed meadow/grazing problems with Charlie Scheltz and Wilderness issues with Ralph Moore and Chief Ranger Debbie Bird when they visited the area. I've written a separate memo reviewing options for closing McClure Meadows to grazing in the future.

Overall, grazing pressure was light, though there was increased damage from hooves because of the wetter meadows--even with opening dates delayed. For future reference, I should probably never have allowed McClure or Colby to be opened, though I thought they were ready at the time (8/25). Again, the Darwin Creek campsite seemed to sustain grazing pressure the best because of the dry benches available for forage.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Close McClure and Colby Meadows to grazing. Allow packers to graze at Darwin Creek for up to 3 nights. It might be acceptable to allow camping with stock (at approved stock camps) where the packer uses cubes or pellets and doesn't let the animals loose.

2) Use Outward Bound work groups to remove the Soil and Moisture check dams put in during the '60s. They seem to be preventing the streams from returning to a narrow deep channel, though they have allowed the banks to stabilize. Consult with Ralph Moore for specific plans.

3) As I mentioned last year, limit cross country travel to group size maximum of 6-8 The Ionian Basin has become a major destination by Sierra Club groups (4 trips), Scouts and private hiking clubs. There are not more than 3 camping spots in the entire basin and none can sleep more than 4 people without damage to vegetation.

4) Because the backcountry radio repeaters are in marginal shape, all backcountry radios should be programmed with the nearest National Forest frequency as backup:

McClure	Sierra National Forest Repeater
LeConte	Inyo NF Repeater
Bench	Inyo NF
Simpson/Volcanic	Sequoia Forest (??)
Rae	Sequoia NF & Inyo NF (?)
Charlotte	Sequoia NF & Inyo NF (?)

**McClure Ranger Station, 10/95**

Sign Request for Piute Creek Entrance on John Muir Trail  
(Consolidates 3 signs, replaces broken wooden entrance sign.)

**Entering Kings Canyon National Park  
Wilderness Permit Required  
No Pets or Firearms  
Hunters Must Camp Outside Park**

Also a sign for Evolution Lake reroute:

**Restoration Area  
Please Stay on Trail**