

Year End Report
Rae Lakes Patrol Area
Rick Sanger, 1995

Summary:

Visitor use:

Heavy snow and the wash-out of the log bridge over the S. Fork Kings resulted in very low visitor use. Only 3 head of stock were known to visit Rae Lakes.

Patrol and Law Enforcement

Station occupied from June 17 - Sept 29

June: 53 miles, 34 contacts, 2 QSOs, 2 firerings, 1 low-flying aircraft

July: 115 miles, 73 contacts, 10 QSOs, 10 firerings, 2 low-flying aircraft.

Aug : 151 miles, 230 contacts, 3 QSOs, 26 firerings, 3 low flying aircraft.

Sept: 142 miles, 200 contacts, 2 QSOs, 15 firerings, 1 low flying aircraft.

Total: 460 miles, 551 contacts, 17 QSOs, 53 firerings, 7 low-flying aircraft.

Number times invited to dinner: 5

Two citations may be issued as of time of this report.

Numerous verbal "warnings" about camping on vegetation, camping too close to water and other regulations.

Emergency Services

Two medivacs

One search

Primary Recommendations (discussed in detail below):

Designated tent sites between middle Rae Lake and Glenn Pass

Stock required to bring feed past Woods Crossing on way up Woods creek and past Baxter Meadow on way up south fork Woods Creek

Use of HAM radio and Cellular phone:

HAM radio can be used to contact "the outside world" from Woods Lake Basin, Baxter Pass, Rae Lakes Ranger Station and Glenn Pass. Simplex (short distance to another local user) must be used in most other areas.

Cell sites can be reached using the right equipment, but only from a spot near Glenn Pass.

Auxiliary Reports and attachments:

Goddard Creek Route and SAR Notes (Goddard.doc)

Photo list (photo.doc)

Replica Photo UTMs (histphoto.doc)

station inventory and needs list (invent.doc)

wildlife sightings (wildlife.doc)

Station history and guide (added to station manual) (guide.doc)

Survey of Campsites in Rae Lakes Area (campsits.doc)

Implementation of designated sites in Mt. San Jacinto State Wilderness & Proposed Implementation for Rae (implemnt.doc)

Other electronic files:

station log (log.doc)

This document (yearend.doc)

Report:

Visitor use:

The winter of 1994/95 was reported to be the third heaviest snowfall this century. When I arrived at the station on June 17, the lakes were frozen and 3 feet of snow covered the ground. Snow level in the basin was approximately 9600 ft. The snow prevented many people from crossing Glenn Pass. On July 5, high runoff washed out the log bridge over the south fork of the Kings River. Logs were fell within several weeks to create an unstable crossing, but the trailhead rangers warned heavily against attempting it. Visitation finally picked up at the beginning of August.

Only 3 head of stock were known to visit Rae Lakes, those used by Marty Gardiner of the trail crew on a quick rocking trip from Woods Creek Crossing.

Patrol and Law Enforcement

I patrolled primarily on skies until July 4. The Rae Lakes were frozen until July 15. Glenn Pass was never fully snow-free.

A llama party staying at Twin Lakes was believed to have had a fire at their site. Citations for littering and illegal campfire may be written if this is found to be the case over the phone.

Emergency Services:

I initiated a medivac from Rae Lakes for a near drowning. Another medivac was carried out from Twin Lakes for a dislocated shoulder. This was carried out without my assistance.

Trail conditions:

Wet conditions early in the season contributed to new, parallel trail development in several wet meadows (Baxter camp meadow on JMT, White Fork Camp) but did not develop into a serious problem

The bridge between southern and middle Rae Lakes floated away early in the season, but I rebuilt it, and is high and dry at the time of this writing.

The bridge over the outlet from 60 Lakes Basin across the JMT washed away, and needs to be replaced.

The bridge in Baxter camp meadow on the JMT has a bent I-beam which causes it to sag on one side. It has been reported that this has been the case for several years.

The westerly "White Fork Camp" has a trail which passes through a small, dry, short-hair sedge meadow. Parallel paths have developed. I feel a re-route would be possible and would prevent further damage to this sensitive area.

Finally, I would like to note that the trail crew (Marty Gardiner & Cameron) left their camp in excellent condition. I found it raked and clean. Their conscientiousness is appreciated.

Signs:

The Sawmill pass sign is in very bad shape. Randy Coffman says that the placement of new signs is being discussed with the Forest Service for Sawmill and Baxter Passes. These signs should include the statement “Fires prohibited above 10,000 feet in Kings Canyon,” as suggested by other Rae Rangers in their yearend reports.

Several signs were ordered this year. These include anodized aluminum signs with correct mileages to replace those at the JMT/60 Lakes Basin junction and at Woods Creek Crossing. After ordering signs to mark the junctions with Baxter Pass trail, the 60 Lakes Basin trail and the Woods Lake Trail, I realized that the backcountry management plan does not allow for signing unmaintained trails. Thus the placement of these latter signs must be discussed further.

I placed a sign on the JMT in Woods Creek at the 10,000 ft level saying “Fires Prohibited above this point” in an effort to curb fires at Woods Lake and Twin Lakes. The old wooden sign was removed.

The idea of placing “bulletin boards” with laminated maps/signs of the Rae Basin was discussed with Randy Coffman. The signs would be placed at Woods Crossing, Dollar Lake, Rae Ranger Station, and at the 60 Lakes Junction. I believe these might help orient visitors to the area. I have submitted the text to be used for the signs. The small amount of room given for special comments on these signs will probably result in terse language listing restrictions in the area (No Fires, No camping on vegetation, etc.). I have had at least 10 groups give me positive comments regarding my hand-written sign at Woods Crossing. The sign is personal, pointing out local sights as well as reminding visitors of local restrictions. The comments I received included an appreciation for the personal touch, a feeling that they knew the ranger, appreciation for stream crossing updates, and in one case the visitor felt it was responsible for him seeing a Golden Eagle. I received no negative comments. It is likely I will continue posting a handwritten sign at this location on the bulletin board, if erected

I forgot to order two signs reading “One person only” for the bridge at Woods Crossing. (So have the past 6 rangers!)

Overlay corrections:

Randy Coffman has been putting together a list of entities to be found in the backcountry (outhouses, drift fences, etc). In reviewing this list, I feel the following corrections should be made:

1. Drift fence #19. Correct wording from “just above Baxter Ck drift fence” to “just north of tributary from 60 lakes basin.”
2. Structures: Shorty’s Cabin #10. It should be stated that the cabin is on west side of the south fork of Woods creek, within view of the trail.
3. Established stock camps, Camp 45, White Fork Camp. The wording should be changed from “just below meadow along trail” to “just within the trees bordering a large talus field at about 9740 ft elevation.” This will help the camp

- from being confused with a much more fragile camp downstream which I believe should NOT be listed as a stock camp (see section below)
4. Established stock camps, Camp 50, Baxter Creek Drift Fence Mdw. It should be added that the camp is on the west side of the south fork of Woods Creek.
 5. Established stock camps, Camp 51, Fjord Mdw. I believe this entry should be removed from the list. It does not have the qualities of a “stock camp” as discussed below.

Camping Issues:

Camper impact:

Since at least 1980, the Rae Rangers have discouraged or closed camping at Dollar Lake and the isthmus. I did not do this for two reasons: 1) I believe it is beyond the patrol ranger’s authority to close these areas, and 2) I did notice significant visitor impact in these areas this year.

I believe the reason the isthmus and Dollar Lake were impacted is partly due to low visitation, and partly to bear box placement. I have found that about 95% of groups plan their trip around bear boxes. Now it is the bear box locations that are getting the impact. Although not a problem in this low-visitation year, significant impact has been noted in the location of the bear box at middle Rae lake and Arrowhead lake. In 1993, Bob Kenan stated in his yearend report that the peninsula was “severely impacted” and suggested that “we need to take every management step possible to significantly reduce the amount of camping here.” The location is the first place a tired hiker can drop after Glen Pass, and the last place to camp for the anxious hiker getting ready to do the pass the next day. A possible solution to this issue is discussed after first mentioning another issue.

One night limit:

Currently there is a restriction of one night per lake in the Rae Basin. Many hikers (about 30-40%) want to stay an extra night. Debbie Bird (Chief Ranger) asked me to consider policy alternatives after encountering a party who had descended back to Woods Crossing to avoid violating the one-night limit. They understood the restriction to be one night for the whole basin.

My review is as follows:

At the least, the signs saying “One Night Camp Limit” should be clarified so visitors will not interpret the signs to mean “One night in the whole basin” or “One night at the lake adjacent to this sign” This will probably be accomplished by the bulletin board signs discussed above, if implemented.

Rae Basin is a perfect destination/layover spot. It represents the best the National Parks have to offer, and should be allowed to be enjoyed in an unhurried manner. Visitors can currently stay one night per lake, which totals about four nights in the basin. But why force visitors to pack up every night? Doesn’t this, in the end, cause even more impact from increased activity at each site?

Randy Coffman suggests that the limit be used as a tool to “lever” people out when the camping areas get crowded. This is a good tool with the current restrictions, but I feel a more optimal solution exists, as follows:

- 1) Allow a maximum of three nights for the whole basin. Visitors can spend this time at whatever lakes they choose, moving or not, as desired. Note that theoretically this does NOT increase the numbers of people in the basin, since four nights are currently allowed. I found that about 40% of people want to stay one night, 45% want to stay two nights, and only 5% would care to stay longer. Thus, the difference in impact between a two and a three night limit would be minimal. But, removing the one night per lake limit will intensify use of the southern bear box. Therefore,
- 2) Establish designated tent sites from the middle bear box to Glenn Pass. I propose all sites be located on the peninsula (see attached map). This will control the impact in the most popular areas. This will also address the historical abuse of the isthmus in a manner within the authority of the Rae Ranger. Several “Restoration Area - No Camping” signs would also be able to be removed. The proposed bulletin board system (see above) could alert visitors to this new approach.
- 3) The occasional (hopefully) but inevitable “overflow” from the peninsula area will increase use at the middle bearbox and at Arrowhead lakes. These areas are also fragile. Arrowhead lake bearbox only has two sites suitable for camping, and one is too close to water. I believe additional sites could be created uphill from the current bearbox location.

I further propose that the designated tent sites should have the following characteristics:

- out of direct sight from each other (eliminating crowding complaints)
- in spots already impacted (no vegetation)
- More than 100’ from water except 1) where the sites are already impacted, 2) do not show susceptibility to erosion, and 3) do not show promise to support vegetation.

I have identified a total of 12 sites on the peninsula that would be acceptable designated sites (see attached maps). Four of these are acceptable group sites.

I did not witness more than 7 groups on the peninsula this summer at any given time, and since visitation was about half normal, I feel there are plenty of sites in the peninsula area. But perhaps all sites shouldn’t be opened, helping to reduce the sewage disposal problem noted by Kenan. Also, by using less sites than available, rotation between site use might be implemented in the future.

I have worked in a wilderness area with designated campsites, and I have summarized the implementation approach in an attached document. In the same document, I propose an implementation approach for Rae Lakes.

It appears to me that the above proposal takes a step toward both preserving the resource and enhancing the visitors enjoyment of it. But it could be argued that the proposal will cause more problems than it will solve. After all, given its long history of

over-use, the peninsula looks in pretty good shape. Therefore, I think feedback from former Rae Rangers should be gathered about this proposal. Other ideas may result, for example, Bill Tweed suggested that certain more distant sites should be designated for multiple-day use. I am open to hearing suggestions and ready to carry out new management approaches on a trial basis.

Composting Toilet at Rae:

A composting outhouse would help take care of the sewage disposal problem on the peninsula noted by Kenan. It would also allow a slightly more dense occupation of this popular area. However, Rob Hayden says toilets are inevitably a hassle. For example, people will throw trash into them and then the bears will rip them apart. The problem of sewage disposal is one in need of a solution!

Impact at Arrowhead Lake:

As mentioned above, there are only two sites suitable for camping at the bearbox at Arrowhead lake, and one is too close to water. I believe additional sites could be created uphill from the current bearbox location. The creation of these sites would be a fairly large project. It would impact the area, but in a more durable location than the current sites.

Misc.

Ralph Moore asked me to supply him with the following additional data:

- Typical Routes into Rae Basin

From Kearsarge & return: 50 %

Rae Loopers: 30%

Other: 20%

Start from Cedar & come to Rae but don't loop

Start from Cedar & don't make it to Rae

PCT/JMT hikers

Hikers with 60 Lakes Basin as destination

Baxter & Sawmill entry

Large loop from Cedar Grove over Cartridge Pass, Pinchot Pass, Rae Lakes, Bubbs Creek

Edible plants:

Many visitors enjoy picking the wild onions which grow in abundance in the Rae Basin. Some use Pennyroyal, another common plant, to make tea. However, collecting these plants is illegal. 36 CFR 2.1 (c)(1) states "The superintendent may designate certain fruits, berries, nuts, or unoccupied seashells which may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption..." Can this include other plants? I believe an amendment, as follows, would be appropriate for the backcountry:

Parts of plants may be gathered, in such a way as is non-fatal to the plant, by individuals for their immediate consumption.

Meadows and Stock Use:

Many of the questions/issues stated in this section were brought up in discussions with Charlie Schelz. He asked me to document our discussion as well as my further thoughts.

Philosophy:

In 1991, George Durkee stated the following in his year end report. I feel this statement expresses the sentiment of most backcountry rangers.

“Backcountry rangers are too often portrayed as ‘anti-stock.’ We’re not. But in our direct and daily experience, stock does a disproportionate amount of damage to alpine ecosystems that cannot be justified by arguments of ‘historical use.’ When minimum impact regulations were implemented 20 years ago, everyone except the stock users went along with the program--usually cheerfully, recognizing the common good. For a number of years we’ve been making the same recommendations for restrictions on stock use that are too often ignored. Current studies on meadows concentrate entirely on the long term effects of grazing on species composition and change. It’s been pretty well established for a number of years that the level of grazing is unlikely to affect species composition in most meadows. The complaints from backpackers--and our direct observations and concerns--have consistently centered around the aesthetic damage stock does: manure, torn up trails, meadows cropped down to putting greens. Research and regulations, then, have to go much farther to address these concerns. Craig London and his partner Dave (Mt. Whitney Pack Station) have consistently shown that a pack outfit can do an excellent job of keeping impact to an acceptable minimum and still retain a satisfied client base. It is long past time that we hold the other commercial outfits to these same standards.”

Definition of Stock Camp:

I think a definition of what makes an area a “stock camp” should be explicitly stated in the Meadow Management Guide (or somewhere!). Then, the “established” stock camps should be reviewed to make sure they meet this criteria. I propose:

- An area in which stock have traditionally spent the night (already impacted)
- An area which has nearby forage which is adequate for overnight grazing

There are “stock camps” in my area which do not meet the above two criteria, and are discussed below (60 Lakes Basin, White Fork)

Grazing in 60 Lakes Basin:

Both the forage guide and Coffman’s “overlay data” say there is an “undeveloped stock camp” in Fjord meadow (61-2). Upon inspection I only found a heavily trampled area within 50’ of the shore of Fjord lake. No stock-related developments were found. Other sites in 60 lakes basin showed at least as much (or as

little) development; one with nails in the surrounding trees, one with massive fire rings, all with manure scattered about. All were illegal (too close to water, on vegetation). All were very fragile areas, unable to endure continued stock use.

I find the wording “undeveloped stock camp” suggestive. It indicates that if stock users go there they will find a good site, although undeveloped. But this is not the case. They will only find an illegal site, too close to water, with marginal forage in a fragile area. The description of meadow 61-3 contains the wording “no developed stock camps.” I find this closer to the truth - and in fact there are *no* developed stock camps in 60 Lakes Basin. But the truth, in reality, is that I have found no site in 60 Lakes Basin which has more than a minimal amount of forage, in delicate areas with water within a few hundred feet. I toured the area with Charlie Schelz, and he was unable to suggest where stock might graze without causing long-term damage.

In short, 1) I don’t know where to send stock parties wishing to spend the night in 60 Lakes Basin. 2) I feel the “undeveloped stock camp” should be eliminated from Coffman’s “overlay data” 3) I feel the wording “undeveloped stock camp” should be eliminated from the “forage guide” in the description of meadow 61-2.

An additional issue in 60 Lakes Basin is that of the inhomogeneous drying of meadows and the Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog. At any time in the summer, some part of some meadow will be dry enough for grazing, yet nearby will be a damp bog vulnerable to deep hoof prints. This makes choosing an opening date difficult, since it seems any date will be too soon for some area. Some of these small, wet, puddles (3 or 4 in the entire basin, according to Bruce Christman) are where the Yellow-Legged Frogs choose to lay a majority of their eggs. Thus, it is also conceivable that a grazing animal could have a major effect on frog reproductive success by wandering through one of these small puddles.

Another concern is possible forage competition with Bighorn Sheep. 60 Lakes Basin is one of the few places where the sheep have consistently been observed.

Under the current regulations, a stock user can spot trip into Rae Lakes, then move on to 60 Lakes Basin to spend the night. It seems absurd that a user might proceed to a more fragile area just to avoid regulations.

For the above reasons, I feel 60 Lakes Basin should at least have a “bring your own feed” restriction, or stock should be eliminated from the basin altogether.

An employee of Fish and Wildlife said that the Backcountry Horseman group seemed to be very used to carrying their own feed in trips out of Reno. He also advised me that if the Yellow-Legged Frog becomes endangered, and it was determined that the frog was losing habitat due to stock, then the F&W could shut down the basin to stock. If the frog was listed as C1 or C2 (close, but not yet endangered) that a Conservation Agreement could be created which could generate money for frog and habitat studies. This latter fact may be of interest to the folks in resource management.

Grazing in Rae Basin:

The 1985 Draft of the Meadow Management plan states that the Rae Lakes Area is “closed to grazing and overnight use by stock from Glen Pass to Baxter Creek

drift fence.” In the final, 1986 version, the wording was changed to “Rae Lakes, Zone 62, the entire basin is closed to grazing use.” Although this first appears to be a more expansive limitation, apparently zone 62 only extends to the Baxter Drift Fence, so in effect, it is the same restriction as the draft plan. Although the wording in the draft is easier for the user to understand, in the end, it is less precise than the final version. However, the final version requires the consciences user to find a definition of zone 62.

The forage guide says “All of Rae Lakes Basin, from Dollar Lake to Dragon Lake, is closed to grazing.” This last statement is not the full truth, for the limits extend more northerly and southerly than the statement indicates. I suggest the wording in the forage guide be changed to “All of Rae Lakes Basin, from Glen Pass and Dragon Lake to the Baxter creek drift fence, is closed to grazing.”

Grazing in Woods Lake:

The Meadow Management Plan states: “no grazing at Woods Lake.” The 1994 Stock & Grazing regulations handout states “Closed to grazing around Woods Lake.” The Forage Guide states: “The lakeshore meadows are closed to grazing.” If grazing is allowed somewhere in the Woods Lake area, but not “at” Woods Lake, the boundaries should be clarified to allow enforcement. Also, the restrictions should appear in a regulatory document and not just in the user’s forage guide.

Partial meadow closures:

Woods Lake has some meadows in which grazing is permitted, and some (close to the lake) in which grazing is not permitted. It is unclear, as one stockman supposedly put it, “how to tell them critters not to go down to the lake.” What advice should the enforcement ranger offer the stock user who wants to comply to the partial closure of meadows?

Off-Trail Use:

Approximately 1/2 mile of off-trail travel is required to reach the primary lake of Twin Lakes. Yet, Twin Lakes is within zone 56, in which off-trail travel by stock is prohibited. It is unclear from the Meadow Management Plan how far off-trail travel by stock is permitted. Also, it should be noted that many fragile meadows are traversed to reach Twin Lakes, as no established trail exists.

In addition, 60 Lakes Basin, Woods Lake Basin, and Baxter Lakes are more than 1/2 mile from a maintained trail. Yet stock are allowed at these locations. This issue should be clarified in some management plan.

White Fork Camp:

The Forage Guide describes the White Fork Camp (56-3) as “a meadow buried in the trees just below the 10,000 ft fire limit. The White Fork drift fence is a mile downstream. A stock camp is located just below the meadow along the trail.” In fact, there are two camps along this section of Woods Creek, and the above description is a blend of them both.

The westerly camp is about 1/2 mile upstream from the drift fence at UTM 40835, 3737. The camp is located just below the trail, at the edge of a very small, dry, short hair sedge meadow which is not large enough for grazing. Yet stock stays there and does much damage. I did a residual biomass transect in this meadow this year. There is a more lush area a few hundred yards upstream that is larger, but I do not know if it is adequate for grazing. I feel this area is NOT a “stock camp” as described above, due to inadequate forage.

The easterly camp is about 1.5 miles upstream from the drift fence, and 3/4 mile below the 10,000 ft fire limit at UTM 40844, 37435. It is just inside the trees which border a large talus field. Grazing is to the north and west in a very rocky area. Areas to the east of the camp are very wet, and there is evidence of hoof damage. This camp is more durable to grazing, but I feel it should be reviewed by someone with more experience than I have.

In the least, the Forage Guide should guide users more explicitly to the upper camp. I suggest changing the wording to “The camp is just inside the trees which border a large talus field at the 9740 ft level, 1.5 miles above the White Fork drift fence.”

Drift Fences:

Although the Castle Domes (Upper), and the White Fork drift fence appear on the ‘Maintenance Priorities’ list in the 1985 draft of the Meadow Management Plan, they do not appear in the final, 1986 version. If this was not an accidental omission, then the priorities should be addressed.

It should be noted that all drift fences in the Rae Ranger patrol zone appear to be in place only for convenience:

Lower Castle Domes: To contain stock within Castle Domes Meadow & prevent them from drifting down valley (home).

Upper Castle Domes: To prevent stock from drifting down valley (home).

Baxter Fence: To keep stock in Baxter Drift Fence meadow & to keep them from moving back down valley.

White Fork: To keep stock in the White Fork Camp meadow and to keep them from moving back down valley.

Baxter Drift Fence Meadow:

This meadow was very wet this year, but had substantial amounts of forage. The adjacent meadow, on the east side of the S. Fork Woods Creek (just north of Baxter Ck confluence) has deep hoof prints from years past. I believe the area was the site of a trail crew camp.

A Proposal:

I feel it is appropriate to limit grazing beyond Woods Creek Crossing (for trips up Woods Creek) and beyond Baxter Drift Fence meadow (for trips up Rae and into 60 Lakes Basin). This would mean, at least, a “bring your own feed” policy for trips

into Twin Lakes, Woods Lake, and 60 Lakes Basin. This would go far in protecting these fragile, alpine meadows.

Residual Biomass Measurements:

It may help to include in the instructions for biomass measurements that transect areas should be selected with a homogenous level of dryness. I found that, when slightly greener, a given species would be dramatically heavier. This would cause a discrepancy between the data-taker's subjective assessment of a quadrat and the actual weight of the quadrat, even though the data-taker's assessment might have been fairly accurate (as proven once the clippings were all dried out). Also, an area with uniform species distribution should also be picked. This avoids quadrat assessments from being thrown off by the presence of a stalkier, or more green (wet) species suddenly appearing in certain areas.

Charlie Schelz and I also discussed somehow "blinding" the data-taker to the measurements of the duplicate "calibration" quadrat measurements taken after walking the plot. Instead, I would like to suggest that one set of the "calibration" measurements be done after walking *half* the transect. In this way, the data-taker can re-adjust his or her assessments for the second half of the plot, increasing the accuracy of the data.

Use of HAM radio:

In the past I used a HAM radio to help with emergency communications on numerous occasions in the state wilderness where I formerly worked. For this reason, I experimented with HAM communications in the Rae Lakes patrol region. I also made handouts for the Cedar Grove Permit Station (see attached). I do not know how many copies of this handout were distributed, but I believe the supply ran out early in the season.

Reception:

I spoke almost daily with N6RU in Tom's Place about snow and travel conditions and various routes. He is very familiar with the Sierras, and has assisted in several rescues using his radio. Our communication was via the Mazourka repeater (146.760) at 3 to 5 watts using a 1/2 wavelength, telescoping antenna. The Mazourka repeater is linked to the Little Lake repeater which covers the Ridgecrest area. The system has an autopatch, enabling the user to dial 911.

I was able to hit the Mazourka repeater from a few spots in the South Fork Woods Creek when snow was on the ridges. Transmission is good from Woods Lake, Baxter Pass, Bench Lake Ranger Station, and the pass leading to 60 lakes basin (but not from the basin proper). From Glenn Pass the Mazourka repeater is covered by the Salinas repeater (and probably one other repeater) using the same frequency.

The Silver Peak repeater (146.940) in Bishop is also monitored regularly. There is a nightly net at 9 pm. I could hit this repeater solidly from Woods Lake and the Bench Lake Ranger Station, barely from Twin Lakes (with snow on the ridges), and from the pass leading to 60 lakes basin.

I was only able to hit repeaters on the west side of the Sierras from Glenn and Gardiner Pass. These include Coalinga (147.330) and Porterville (145.310)

Use during season:

I was able to “outreach” to sierra users in the Owens Valley on numerous occasions to advise them of trail conditions and park regulations. Less often I contacted visitors actually in the backcountry. The radio was used by Randy Coffman (district ranger) to gather information on an ongoing search when NPS reception was poor (in Woods Lake Basin).

Use of Cellular Phone:

Cell sites in the central valley, the coastal range, and Bishop can be reached from 1/8 mile west of Glenn Pass. This requires a 3-watt phone using a Yagi (directional) antenna. No sites were reachable from the Rae Lakes Basin or North Dragon Pass.

Visitor Suggestion:

One visitor suggested that the permit station in Cedar Grove give out plastic trash bags with the camping permit to encourage visitors to pick up trash. Slogans could be printed on it, for example “pack it in-pack it out” or “help keep the wilderness as you like it.” I like the idea of communicating to the visitor that it is everyone’s job to keep the wilderness clean.

Roaring River Ranger finds it effective to use a salt brick to keep the marmots from devouring his tack. Perhaps this could work at Mineral King.

Projects for next year:

Terry Gustafson, in 1992, mentioned that a visitor reported plane parts on the south side of Woods Creek to the east of the King Col River confluence. If so, they may still be there, and should be cleaned up. He also mentioned a can dump in Woods lake basin. Sandy Graban described the location as “1/4 mile up the trail to Woods Lake, then contour to creek. The dump is on the south side on an obvious bench place.” This should be investigated.

The cabin needs a coat of paint, especially on the floor and on the porch.

One hasp on the southern-most bear box is broken off. I am not sure how to fix this.