



2009 Grazing Advisory Number 2: May 4, 2009

Tentative Opening Dates for Grazing in Wilderness Meadows

Background

Each year, opening dates for grazing are established for the wilderness meadows of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Setting opening dates for the meadows allows the parks to protect biological and scenic resources from unacceptable impacts that may occur when the meadows are too wet.

As meadows are most susceptible to damage from stock when ground moisture levels are high, opening dates are established based on the amount of precipitation that the high country receives over the winter.

Recognizing that commercial outfitters, recreational users, and park operations need to be able to plan trips in advance, we issue these bulletins two times during the spring season as a service to keep all stock users informed. The bulletins update current conditions and anticipated opening dates. **All bulletins are advisory only, the actual opening dates of specific meadows will be determined in the field. For final opening dates call the Wilderness Office prior to your trip at 559-565-3766.**

Opening dates are anticipated based on the snowpack in the high country. The snowpack is the best indicator we have of the amount of moisture the meadows received. The park has a series of snow courses that are measured periodically through the winter, with the late April snowpack measurements giving the latest and last estimate of conditions.

According to the amount of moisture in the snowpack, we categorize the year as one of the following:

- 1) **Dry** (less than 50% of average snowpack)
- 2) **Normal** (51% to 150% of the average snowpack)
- 3) **Wet** (more than 150% of the average snowpack)

Opening dates in wet years are later than dry years.

Current Situation

Snowpack measurements as of **May 4** show that we have approximately 54% of average precipitation in the Kings River Drainage, 71% in the Kaweah River Drainage, and 51% in the Kern River Drainage. At this time, the parks are anticipating that 2009 will be categorized as a "**Normal**" year for purposes of setting preliminary opening dates in these watersheds. Up to date snowpack data are available on the internet at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/>.

Tentative Opening Dates

The attached list shows the opening dates for "**Normal**" years for each meadow in the Kings, Kaweah and Kern watersheds. The list is arranged by drainage and travel zone. These dates are only guidelines; changes in opening dates may be made as the season progresses depending on actual conditions.

If you are planning a trip on or near the opening date for a particular area it is your responsibility to contact the parks' Wilderness Office at **559-565-3766** for the latest update on conditions. For more information, also visit www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/wilderness.htm. Note that the opening dates only restrict grazing, pack trips prior to the opening dates are permitted as long as **all feed is packed in** and stock remain tied up at all times.

Your cooperation in managing stock use in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks is appreciated. Together we can continue to protect the natural diversity and beauty of the Sierra wilderness.

NORMAL SNOWPACK YEAR OPENING DATES

Updated May 4, 2009

South Fork San Joaquin River Drainage

Opening Date	Travel Zone	Meadow Area
7/15	28	South Fork San Joaquin River
7/1	33	Evolution Meadow
8/1	33	McClure & Darwin pocket Meadows; Colby Meadow & Darwin Meadow proper CLOSED TO GRAZING in 2009
8/1	33	Lower McGee Canyon
8/1	34	Evolution Basin

Kings River Drainage

Opening Date	Travel Zone	Meadow Area
7/15	38	Blue Canyon
7/15	39	LeConte Canyon & Palisade Creek (below lakes)
7/15	42	Dusy Creek
7/15	45	Palisade Lakes
8/1	46	Upper South Fork Kings River (above JMT crossing)
7/15	46	Upper South Fork Kings River (JMT crossing & below)
8/1	47	Cartridge & Cataract Creeks
7/15	51	Middle Fork Kings River (Simpson Meadow & below)
7/15	52	Kennedy & Lewis Creeks
8/1	53	Dougherty & Horseshoe Creeks
8/15	53-7	Shorty's Meadow
7/7	54	Granite & Copper Creeks
7/15	56	Twin Lakes & Pinchot Pass Area
8/1	57	Woods Lake Basin
7/15	58	Castle Domes Meadow
7/21	58	Woods Creek Crossing
7/21	58	Baxter Creek Drift Fence Meadow
	61	Sixty Lakes Basin CLOSED TO GRAZING in 2009
7/15	63	Charlotte Creek
7/15	65	Upper Bubbs Creek (above Vidette Meadow)
7/1	66	Lower Bubbs Creek (Junction Meadow)
7/10	67	East Creek
7/1	68	Sphinx Creek
6/25	69	Roaring River Ranger Station Area
7/1	70	Cloud Canyon (Brewer Creek and above)
7/1	71	Deadman Canyon (Austin Camp and above)
7/1	72	Sugarloaf & Ferguson Creek Drainages
7/1	73	Ball Dome Area

Kern River Drainage

Opening Date	Travel Zone	Meadow Area
7/15	79	Cold Springs, Milestone, Kern-Kaweah River
7/1	80	Upper Kern Basin & Tyndall Creek
7/1	81	Wright Creek
7/15	81	Wallace Creek Waterfall
7/5	82	Upper Kern Canyon (above Hot Springs to Junction Meadow)
7/1	83	Whitney & Crabtree Creeks
7/15	83-4	Upper Crabtree Meadow
7/1	84	Siberian Pass Creek
7/1	84	Lower Rock Creek (below Nathan's Meadow)
7/15	85	Upper Rock Creek (Nathan's Meadow & above)
6/15	86	Lower Kern Canyon (Hot Springs to Kern Ranger Station)
7/10	87	Big Arroyo & Chagoopa Plateau
7/15	88	Little Five Lakes
7/25	88	Big Five Lakes
7/1	89	Coyote, Soda, & Lost Creeks
7/1	89	Lower Rattlesnake Canyon (Cow Camp)
7/15	89	Upper Rattlesnake Canyon (above Cow Camp)

Kaweah River Drainage

Opening Date	Travel Zone	Meadow Area
7/1	74	Clover & Silliman Creeks
7/15	75	Lone Pine Creek
7/1	77	Bearpaw Meadow to River Valley
6/15	77	Redwood Meadow
7/1	77	Cliff Creek & Pinto Lake
6/20	90	Hockett Plateau
3/15	91	South Fork Kaweah River
7/15	92	Monarch & Franklin Creeks
7/15	93	White Chief, Eagle & Mosquito Creeks
7/15	94	Mineral Creek
3/15	96	North Fork Kaweah River

These tables only list tentative opening dates. Always check for area-specific regulations related to stock use. Find details about these regulations by calling the Wilderness Office at 559-565-3766, requesting a copy of the annual Stock User's Guide, or visiting the website at www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/wilderness.htm.