



2016 Grazing Advisory Number 2: May 4, 2016

Tentative Opening Dates for Grazing in Wilderness Meadows

Background Each year, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks establish opening dates for grazing in wilderness meadows. This allows the parks to protect biological and scenic resources from the impacts that can occur from grazing before the soil can support the weight of stock or before plants are developed enough to tolerate defoliation.

Meadows are most susceptible to stock impacts when soil moisture levels are high. Thus, the parks use the amount of winter precipitation (measured in the form of mountain snowpack) as a guide when establishing opening dates. Opening dates in wet years are later than those in drier years. To determine snowpack, the parks collect data along a series of snow courses throughout the winter.

The parks use the amount of moisture in the snowpack to categorize the year as one of the following:

- 1) **Dry** 50% or less of the average April 1 snowpack
- 2) **Normal** 51% to 150% of the average April 1 snowpack
- 3) **Wet** 151% or more of the average April 1 snowpack

The parks issue two bulletins based on the April 1 and May 1 snowpack measurements in order to allow commercial outfitters, recreational users, and park operations to plan trips in advance. 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.**

Current Situation Snowpack measurements in the parks as of **May 4** show that there is approximately **52%** of the average snowpack in the Kings and San Joaquin River drainages, **29%** in the Kaweah River drainage, and **44%** in the Kern River drainage. Snowpack data is available at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/>.

The parks are categorizing 2016 as a **normal** year in the Kings and San Joaquin River drainages, and a **dry** year in the Kaweah and Kern River drainages. However, recent field observations suggest that **cool spring weather is likely to delay snowmelt and plant development and cause opening dates to be delayed in some locations.**

Tentative Opening Dates The following list shows the normal year opening dates for the Kings and San Joaquin drainages, and the dry year opening dates for the Kaweah and Kern River drainages. The list is arranged by drainage and travel zone.

These dates are only guidelines. Depending on actual conditions, changes in opening dates may be made as the season progresses. If you are planning a trip, it is your responsibility to contact the parks' Wilderness Office at **559-565-3766** for the latest condition update. For more information, also visit www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/wilderness.htm.

Note that the opening dates only restrict grazing. We permit pack trips prior to opening dates as long as **all feed is packed in** and stock remain tied to either an existing hitch rail or a "high line" between two trees or rocks on a flat, hard, non-vegetated site away from the trail, water, and camp.

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

Updated May 4, 2016

San Joaquin River Drainage

Travel Zone	Forage Areas	Named Areas	Opening Date
28	all	Goddard Canyon	7/15
33	1	Evolution	7/1
33	2-4	McClure, Colby and Darwin	8/1
34	all	Evolution Basin	8/1

Kings River Drainage

Travel Zone	Forage Areas	Named Areas	Opening Date
38	all	Blue Canyon	7/15
39	all	LeConte	7/15
42	all	Dusy Creek	7/15
45	all	Upper Palisade Creek	7/15
46	1, 3-6	Upper S. Fork Kings River/Above JMT Jct	8/1
46	2	Upper S. Fork Kings River/Below JMT Jct	7/15
51	all	Simpson and Tehipite	7/15
52	all	Kennedy Canyon	7/15
53	1-6, 8	Dougherty Creek	8/1
53	7	Shorty's Meadow	8/15
54	all	Granite Basin	7/7
56	all	Twin Lakes	7/15
57	all	Woods Lake Basin	8/1
58	1	Castle Domes	7/15
58	2-3	Woods Creek Crossing, Baxter Creek Drift Fence	7/21
63	all	Charlotte Creek	7/15
65	all	Upper Bubbs Creek	7/15
66	all	Lower Bubbs Creek	7/1
67	all	East Lake	7/10
68	all	Sphinx Creek	7/1
69	all	Roaring River	6/25
70	all	Cloud Canyon	7/1
71	all	Deadman Canyon	7/1
72	1-13.1	Sugarloaf	7/1
72	13.2-22	Ferguson	7/1
73	all	Ball Dome Area	7/1

Kern River Drainage

Travel Zone	Forage Areas	Named Areas	Opening Date
79	all	Kern-Kaweah	7/1
80	all	Tyndall Creek	6/20
81	1-2.2,2.4	Wright and Wallace Creeks	6/20
81	2.3	Wallace Creek Waterfall	7/1
82	all	Upper Kern Canyon (Junction Mdw to Hot Springs)	6/25
83	1-3, 5-8	Lower Crabtree	6/20
83	4	Upper Crabtree	7/5
84	all	Lower Rock Creek	6/20
85	all	Upper Rock Creek	7/1
86	all	Lower Kern Canyon (Hot Springs to Kern Ranger Station)	6/1
87	all	Chagoopa Plateau and Big Arroyo	6/20
88	1-2	Little Five Lakes	7/1
88	3-5	Big Five Lakes	7/15
89	1-4, 10	Lost, Soda, Lower Rattlesnake, Laurel, Crytes, Coyote	7/1
89	5-9	Upper Rattlesnake (>9,000 feet)	6/15

Kaweah River Drainage

Travel Zone	Forage Areas	Named Areas	Opening Date
74	all	Clover and Silliman Creeks	6/15
75	all	Lone Pine Creek	7/1
77	1-4, 6-7	Bearpaw Meadow, Cliff Creek, Pinto Lake	6/15
77	5	Redwood Meadow	6/1
90	all	Hockett	6/10
91	all	South Fork Kaweah River	3/1
95	all	North Fork Kaweah River	3/1

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.