



Sierra
Club

Founded 1892

Angeles Chapter Sierra Club

Mule Pack Section

January 2018 Annual Newsletter

Edited and published by *Bob Hansen*



The MPS Executive Committee voted in 2008 to publish the MPS newsletter only as an online document. The newsletter will include only short trip reports to provide our members and leaders with resource information about the destinations of the mule pack trips. Here are reports from the 2017 trips.



BIG PINE LAKES

Dates: July 23 – 28, 2017

Leaders: Sandy Burnside and Yvonne Tsai

Participants: Bonnie Blanton, Clifford Mapes, George Aumann, Joanne Hihn, Richard Hihn, John Rawlings, Sarah Timby, Kathleen Fisher, Maurica Anderson, Rose Lee, Sharon Wright, and Terri Oates.

Due to the unusually heavy snow pack in the Sierra the previous winter, Sandy Burnside had been contacting the Glacier Pack Station frequently since early July. Finally one week before our trip, the packer said we could base camp at 4th lake. Whew! What a relief. Originally our trip had three leaders. My steadfast co-leader for the past 15 years, John Kaiser, emailed us in late June that due to his health condition, he had to cancel. It was with great trepidation Sandy and I co-led this trip without John.

All participants arrived on time to Glacier Pack Station on a sunny morning. The trail is conveniently located a few feet away from the border of the dirt parking lot. Due to the 3,000 foot elevation gain in 7 miles, we kept on a very slow pace on the hike in. Soon we found that one participant was having difficulty with the elevation, possibly made worse by the warm weather. Everyone was very patient and cooperated with leaders while we switched the lead and sweep positions often.

The packer suggested that we hike in via first and second lake due to the trail's gradual rise and shade. The mosquitoes were annoying at some places but overall it was a scenic trail, following the roaring north fork of the Big Pine Creek for quite some distance and passing Lon Chaney's cabin on the way.

Throughout the morning, we heard helicopter noise and even heard their public announcement system



when we were near the second lake and Temple Crag. But we could not decipher the words and exactly what happened remained a mystery.

Our base camp was located on a bench to the east of the inlet of Lake #4, the same location as the 2016 Big Pine Trip. It was the site of the 1920's era Upper Glacier Camp. Some artifacts were found by Maurica, our semi-third leader. The view is breathtaking and we couldn't ask for more. The weather was unstable throughout the week and the tarp served us well, although it was quite shaky with the gusty wind. It rained on us off and on for at least four cycles in the afternoon of the first layover day and again, with hail and downpour, on the last layover day.

Day hike destinations were Summit Lake, 5th, 6th and 7th lakes, Sam Mack Meadow, and a movie set. A group went up on the use trail for a view of Palisade



movie." Maurica searched the web and came across this picture of what it looked like back then:

<http://imgzoom.cdlib.org/Fullscreen.ics?ark=ark:/13030/kt4k4017m4/z1&&brand=calisphere>

On the exit hike we went by Black Lake. The packers returned with our gear around the same time as the first group reached the trailhead. The packers let us have four pannier boxes free of charge. Excellent service and reasonable price!! Since a picture is worth a thousand words, Joanne, an expert photographer, has generously allowed me to share her album here, enjoy.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/x2SU93FAvqejuWF73>



Glacier but had to turn back due to snow cover at the trail's 45 degree angle! John knew the limited options for day hikes due to the heavy snow, therefore he found the movie set info for us. The GPS coordinates of the cabin are 37° 07.531'N, 118° 29.724'W. Sandy and three friends scouted it out on the second layover day, and then Kathy led the hike for us on our last layover day.

We had a ball there. Kathy stopped by the movie museum in Lone Pine and found out this interesting info. "The movie set above 2nd and 3rd lakes was for a movie called 'The Honeymoon' produced by Erich Von Stroheim that takes place in the Alps. Originally the movie was 7 hours long so they broke it into two parts: The Wedding March and The Honeymoon. Both movies were never shown in the States but in Europe. The Honeymoon movie was lost. There is no copy of it. The movie was produced in the 20's and was a silent

MCGEE CREEK

Dates: July 30 – August 4

Leaders: Cathie Miller and Kathy Viola

Participants: Bonnie Blanton, Sue Ellen Gittings, Ruth Goldstein, Samuel Goldstein, Jean Hay, Jane McCord,





Gerry Miller, Lisa Sanford, Muffi Scott, Irene Shibata, Walter Roth and Sharon Wright

On Saturday night some of our group enjoyed greeting old friends and meeting new ones over dinner at the East Side Bake Shop, located at the McGee Creek Lodge. Sunday morning 14 of us began the day at 6:30 am dropping gear at the pack station and then driving to the McGee Creek trailhead to begin our adventure. Due to the extreme snow pack this year, the creek crossings were cause for some anxiety among the group, but Jennifer Roeser and her crew from the McGee Creek Pack Station did a wonderful job creating plank and log crossings for us. Thanks to Gerry and Walter, who helped everyone cross all the streams, we all made it safely.

We set up our base camp on a bench located near the junction of the McGee Creek trail and the Baldwin Canyon trail. We had lots of room for all of our tents and a nice kitchen area. Our water source was a nearby creek. We finished our first night's soup and salad dinner before rain sent us to our tents for an early-to-bed night.

On Monday the group attempted to hike to Big McGee

Lake but encountered impassable water crossings and snow obstacles. All the water made the wildflowers amazing but also brought swarms of mosquitoes.

On Tuesday a group hiked up Baldwin Canyon to the Scheelore Mine, an old tungsten mine located at 11,000 feet elevation about 4 miles from camp. Those who made it all the way to the mine were rewarded with incredible vistas and a frozen lake.

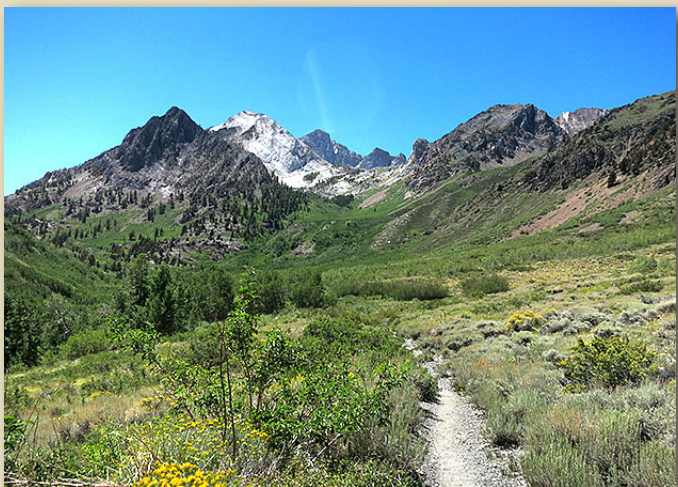
On Wednesday, the group headed back up the trail to Big McGee Lake to try to find an alternate route that would avoid the unsafe snow bridge that stopped the first attempt. This try was successful, and the wildflowers and mountain views made it worth the effort.

On Thursday, some took another trip back to the mine to show it to those who didn't make it the first time. By late afternoon clouds were gathering and it was obvious we weren't going to escape the rain. We managed to finish our dinner and clean up before a rain



storm that lasted most of the night.

It was a wet year and our camp was below 10,000 feet, so we were able to have campfires – something that doesn't happen very often on Mule Pack Section trips. After dinner on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, we enjoyed tea and dessert around a cheerful campfire. Friday morning we packed up all our very wet gear and were ready to go by 9:30. We were sad to leave but looking forward to a shower and relief from the mosquitoes that had plagued us all week. We all agreed that we had the best group of helpful team players and an amazing experience...already looking forward to next summer.





COTTONWOOD LAKES

Dates: August 2-6, 2017

Leaders: Fran Penn, Karen Belville

Participants: Rita Stevens, Danielle Hill, Lydia Sanchez, Amy Leeson, and Bruce Langedyke.

We started from the Cottonwood Pack Station at the Horseshoe Meadows trailhead. The hike in to Cottonwood Lakes was just over six miles and about 1,100 feet of gain to our camp by a no name lake located just across the marked trail to the east of Cottonwood Lake #3 at 11,100 feet. Our 6 member group (Karen Belville became ill at the last minute) hiked in on Wednesday morning. The wrangler was patient while we scouted for suitable campsites which were limited



off trail route to Hidden Lake which was located by our best navigation student Amy Leeson. The weather provided the usual afternoon thunderstorms to varying degrees with rain the first two nights. The mosquitoes weren't terrible except after dinner, which made it difficult to stay up to star gaze.

Participant Review by Amy Leeson:

This was a great trip. The leader, Fran, was extremely prompt and helpful in responding to pre-trip questions by email. She also took the time to scout the area of the trip a few weeks before meeting the group to check out the trail conditions and gather information that would help her in campsite selection. On the trip itself, she was responsive and adaptable to the group members' abilities and desires concerning what to do on our layover days. She also taught us a great deal about how to lighten our packs, and about how to use a map and compass for navigation. In addition, some of the gear that we used (including a camp stove and table) were her personal gear, which she made available for the group to use. I think that shows the highest level of dedication to the comfort of the group on the trip. In short, having hiked with Fran for 5 days



due to the excess water resulting from the heavy snow the previous winter. Our campsite had many trees and large rocks for privacy. Our water came from an overflow stream from the no name lake that we called Home Lake.

We enjoyed views of nearby Cirque Peak and Mt. Langley from our campsite. On Thursday, the group hiked to Cottonwood Lakes 3, 4 and 5 and Muir Lake to get acquainted with our surrounding area. On Friday, a hike to the top of New Army Pass at 12,400 feet was instigated by Danielle Hill who was training for a Machu Pichu trip. Rita Stevens, Amy Leeson and Fran Penn joined the day hike for conditioning. Our fisherman Bruce Langedyke went fishing at Cottonwood Lake 5 and brought us back 5 rainbow trout that we enjoyed for dinner on Friday night. Lydia Sanchez enjoyed her day in camp relaxing and taking in the beautiful view. On Saturday, the group explored the



in the Cottonwood Lakes area, I'd welcome the opportunity to hike with her again. That also goes for the other group members on the trip!



HOOVER LAKES

Dates: August 3-6, 2017

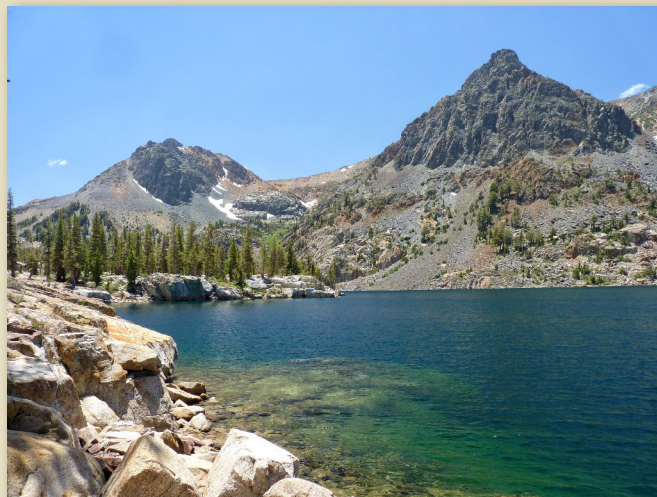
Leaders: Francine Oschin, Christine Gutierrez, Dave Cross

Names of Participants: Terry Boehmer, Maggie Dettelbach, Tina Dellis, Shaune Hand, Maewja Suchin, Edith Jaranilla, Melanie Pipo, Arlene Reiss, Mark Friedman, Bruce Corning, John McElligott, Gordon Sundberg
Our group of 15 intrepid hikers went to the Hoover Lakes Wilderness for four days and three glorious nights. The Hoover Lakes Wilderness is located just



over the summit, north of Virginia Canyon in the Yosemite High Country. The hike to our campsite at Green Lake was about four miles with a 1,250 elevation gain.

Green Lake is a glorious green--not emerald but a dark, earthy shade of jade. We chose this lake as the short hike in gave us plenty of time to enjoy the lake and surrounding area that afternoon, and the special perk of an elevation that allowed us to have a campfire. The Hoover Wilderness is an area of high peaks and many brilliant lakes. Because the past winter exceeded the usual snowpack, the trails did not open until a couple of weeks before our arrival as they were still covered in snow. The heavy snowpack produced an abundance of wildflowers typical of the alpine habitat, still gorgeous in the month of August. As we hiked the trails to the camp and on our day hikes to East and



the Hoover Lakes we found ourselves navigating over snow patches, mud and crossing over raging rapids. On arrival, we set up an area near the campfire for our communal social hours. On the second day, half of us went to East Lake and the other half took the hike up to West Lake. West Lake feeds into a magnificent thousand-foot waterfall. We got to the top of the waterfall and had a wonderful view of the canyon below. We could see the waterfall across the lake from our campsite and could hear the rushing water at night. On the third day, half the hikers went to the Hoover Lakes, passing Gillmore, West Lake and the Nutter Lakes. It was lake heaven. As we started back to the camp, it began to rain, becoming afternoon of lightning, thunder, pelting rain, hail and graupel. This became a test of rain jackets and, back at the camp, tents. As we hiked over the trail flowing with water, some of us were also treated to rain water dripping through our jackets and boots. We arrived back at camp to find that some of us were not prepared for rain as drip,drip,drip and buckets of water invaded our habitats.

We spent the late afternoon huddled in our tents, being startled when particularly loud and close lightning





thundered in our valley. At about 7:00 PM the rain stopped and we were able to light a fire and warm ourselves. As much as we enjoyed the fire the other two nights, this night was by far more appreciated, as we spread our clothing on nearby logs and chairs to be warmed and dried by the fire. As the storm cleared, we were treated to a sky full of stars and the moon. The last day we hiked out through what used to be a trail and now was mud and flowing water following the previous day's storm. The Virginia Lake Packers arrived at the campsite on Sunday to pick up our gear at 10:30 AM. In spite of the weather and wetness, it was an enjoyable weekend in the wilderness!



DINGLEBERRY LAKE IN SABRINA BASIN

Dates: August 6-11, 2017

Leaders: Alan Schimpff, Laura Joseph and Les Wilson

Participants: Doug and Joanne Schwarz, Mark and Paul Rosen, Tom Molloy, Michael Vilkin, Jeff Bates,

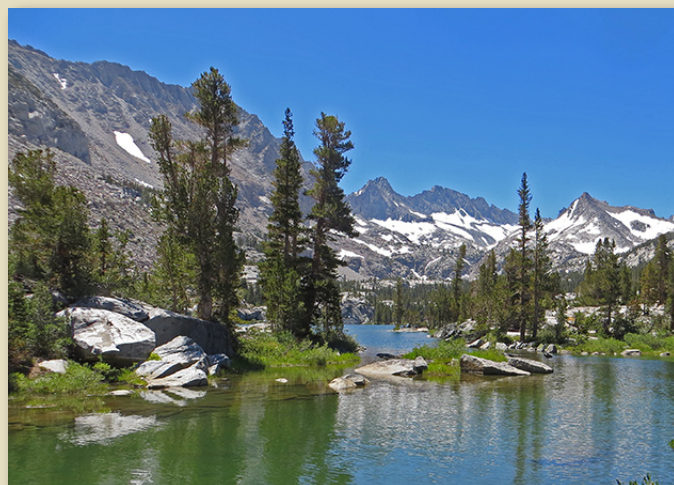


Sam Rametta, Richard Potratz, Jean Hay, Dave Wales, Herb Taylor

The Sabrina Basin is a well-known area accessed from Sabrina Lake, north of Bishop. In contrast to recent years, this year Lake Sabrina was filled to capacity! With copious amounts of snow on the ground, streams and creeks seemed like rivers. The whole area is truly beautiful with lakes, mountains, streams, trees and wildflowers. Our base camp at around 10,500 feet was by the inlet to Dingleberry Lake. The site we chose was spacious and offered many options for tent locations as well as a nice space for our kitchen/dining area.

We had great service from Bishop Pack Outfitters. Our gear was at the Dingleberry Lake site when we hiked in, and we did not have to wait too long for our gear to reach the pack station at the end of the trip.

We chose and furnished our individual spots and, after



everyone pitched in to set up our deluxe campsite—complete with potty and shower tents, an REI Alcove for the tables, two Noah's tarps for shade (we had no rain), a gravity filtration system, and a fully equipped kitchen—we settled down to fancy appetizers prepared by Richard and Les and the first night's requisite make-your-own quesadilla dinner.

There were no bears in the area, nor any signs of recent presence. Mosquitoes, however, were plentiful and were constant companions when lounging around the campsite. On our first layover day, the majority of the group wandered off to explore the Emerald Lakes, while the rest headed toward Hungry Packer Lake. Emerald Lakes turned out to be more akin to Emerald swamp after the wet year, a heaven for mosquitoes. The second layover day saw 5 different groups forming. The largest went off to Donkey Lake. A slightly



smaller group headed to Hungry Packer Lake. Four decided to do a hike close to camp, while Doug and Joanne explored around Dingleberry Lake. Sam went fishing.

The third layover day, a different group headed to Donkey Lake and a large Columbine patch on the main trail past Blue Lake. Another group headed off to Midnight Lake, after which two hikers, on the way back to camp, headed down to the outlet of Topsy-Turvy Lake, then up the short distance to PeeWee Lake, then on up to the top of the ridge where there were clear vistas of the Emerald Lakes, Sabrina Lake, the Owens Valley and the White Mountains on one side, and Topsy-turvy Lake and beyond on the other. They even discovered a small lake/large pond (christened Top-knot Lake) with warmish water for swimming on the descent from the ridge and quite close to camp.

The last layover day, a group headed off cross-country in the direction of Bottleneck Lake, another to Moonlight and Midnight Lakes. A more ambitious group headed toward the ridge between Hungry Packer Lake and Midnight Lake, with the destination of Lake 12, 345', which sits right below Haeckel Col. Happily, the Col was attempted and bagged. The sanest group

decided to look for Top-knot Lake for a swim. During the trip, participants prepared delicious dinners: fettuccine with fresh salmon and capers, spaghetti with clams, and pesto tortellini with pine nuts. Appetizers and desserts were much more varied than usual, with Joanne's concoction of cheese, tomato and pesto on Triscuits a winner.



CLARK LAKES

Dates: August 20 – August 25

Leaders: Cathie Miller and Kathy Viola

Participants: Maurica Anderson, Russ Brown, Linda Ledger, Helen Maurer, Gerry Miller, Wanda Naylor, Marvin Prichard, Lorraine Seidmeyer, Richard



Seidmeyer, Sylvia Stevenson, David Urciuoli, Sharon Wright

On Saturday night some of our group enjoyed greeting old friends and meeting new ones over dinner at the Eagles Landing Restaurant in June Lake. Sunday morning our group of 14 met at 6:30 am at the Frontier Pack Train to begin our adventure. Knowing that it would be a hot, dusty uphill hike, we were on the trail by 7:15 am.

Our hike to base camp took us up above Silver Lake; then past Agnew Dam and Lake where construction was underway; then all the way around Gem Lake, over Rush Creek; then up, up, up to our campsite at Clark Lake, a distance of about 7.5 miles with 3,000 feet of elevation gain. Rain was threatening so we hurried to set up camp and cook dinner. Thankfully, we had all crawled into our tents at the end of the evening before any raindrops fell.





Monday was the day of the solar eclipse. Some watched from our campsite while others hiked up the Spooky Meadow Trail to get to a clearing to observe the eclipse. They shared a pair of special glasses. The group enjoyed views of Banner and Ritter, tons of wildflowers and vistas down toward Mono Lake. Later in the day some of us hiked over to Agnew Pass before dinner and then after dinner out to an overlook at sunset. It was a cloudy day but no rain.

On Tuesday we set off to Thousand Island Lake and beyond to Island Pass for the most spectacular vistas. Some went swimming in Thousand Island Lake. The weather was improving each day so we enjoyed blue skies and puffy clouds. It was picture perfect, and we even had a fabulous sunset that night!

On Wednesday the group hiked over Agnew Pass to Badger Lakes, enjoying many wildflowers along the way. A few then explored an old, overgrown trail well above a cliff overlooking Gem Lake. They turned back when the trail came too close to a sheer cliff, which we later realized was a fairly recent landslide.

Since Thursday was the last day to explore near Thousand Island Lake, the group decided to hike south from there passing Emerald and Ruby Lakes to Garnet Lake.



They enjoyed beautiful weather and incredible scenery. Friday morning we were packed and ready to leave by 9:30 am. We had originally planned to hike out through Spooky Meadow but the trail was still closed due to the construction at Agnew Lake. So we had to hike out the way we came in around Gem Lake. The trail was sunny and hot! Frontier Pack Train did a great job, and the mules arrived back at the Pack Station before we did.

Every night we had hot, delicious soup, plenty of wine and lots of laughter. We had a wonderful time!



HILTON LAKES

Dates: August 27 – 31, 2017

Leaders: Yvonne Tsai and Lori DeLaney

Participants: Sylvie Cote, Todd Clark, Steve DeLaney,



Paula Day, Teri Going, Bob Hansen, Ellen Holden, Sharon Kirk, Debby Kobayashi, Val Nordeman, Karl Rubin, and Yunchu Schabert.

Thanks to leader Yvonne Tsai for scouting out the hiking route in early July to check the stream crossings. She had hoped to set up a base camp near the outlet stream near Lake 4 but the stream crossing was thigh deep in July. The Rock Creek Pack station kept us updated and recommended that we consider camping at Lake 2 instead.

John Kaiser, unable to join us on the trip due to health concerns, stayed with us in East Fork campground the two nights before the trip when he gave several of us a great lesson in knot tying for tarps. The day of our departure, all participants dropped their bags at the Rock Creek Pack Station and parked in the small park-



ing lot near the Hilton Creek Lakes Trailhead, on Rock Creek Road near Rock Creek Lake. The Hilton Creek Lakes are a string of nine lakes ranging in elevation from 9,800 feet to about 11,000 feet. Our 5-mile hike started with a short climb, then gently rolling terrain before climbing a sandy hillside to a ridge. It ended with a descent into a trail junction where we turned right down to Lake 2.

Our base camp was located on the north side of Hilton Lake 2. The lakeside was forested with a great view of Mount Huntington. Everyone pitched in to set up a group tarp that held up through the wind and rain. Thank you, John, for teaching us well. It rained on and off for a few days, heavy at times. There was a remarkable appearance of tiny frogs that jumped up on tents and seemed to be on their way to the lake. But, by the end of the week, it was clear and sunny.

There were many options for day hikes. Participants hiked the trail to Davis Lake to enjoy a sandy beach while others scrambled along a rough trail on the lake edge to get to the falls. Sylvie and Todd hiked cross country scouting out a route to Stanford Mountain. Most of the group hiked up to Hilton Lake 3 and then 5, enjoying the

alpine lakes. From there we hiked cross country most of the way to Hilton Lake 8 and then Lake 7 (the prettiest of them all). Karl was great at scouting a route. Smaller groups hiked up to Hilton Lake 4 where there was an old Indian campsite. From that vantage point you could see back to Hilton Lake 2 and Davis Lake. One fisherman caught and released a rainbow trout at Lake 2. Teri brought an inflatable inner tube that several folks enjoyed at Lake 2. Two people set up hammocks to relax by the lakeside. We enjoyed great group meals – taco salad the first night and quesadillas another night. Happy hour provided a time for everyone to get to know one another and hear about the highlights of the trip and adventures from previous trips.

One leader started out early for the return hike to accommodate hikers who needed a little more time. With



two-way radios we were all able to keep in touch. The faster hikers caught up mid-way and all reached the end of the hike in time to enjoy a burger and pie at the Rock Creek Lodge before the mules returned with our gear at 2:45 p.m.

