



Sierra
Club

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Angeles Chapter Sierra Club

Mule Pack Section

January 2019 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 2018 trips.

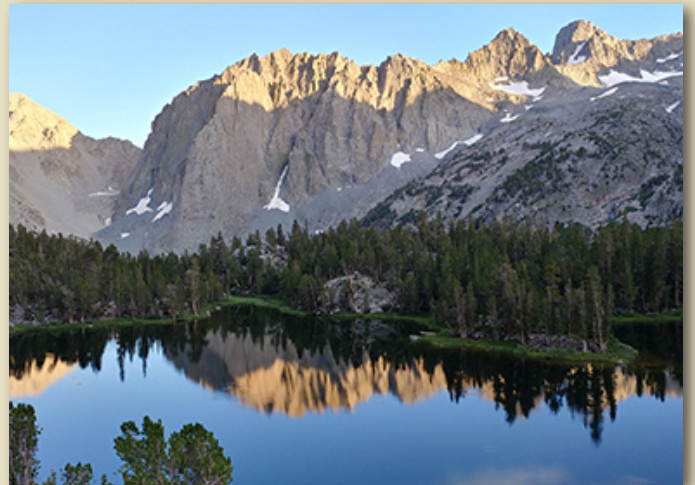
DESTINATION: BIG PINE LAKES

DATES: JULY 30 – AUGUST 4

Leaders: Cathie Miller and Kathy Viola

Participants: Joe Amador, Bonnie Blanton, Leslie Carlson, Camille Cusumano, Ruth Goldstein, Jean Hay, Kerry Leavitt, Barbara Marcotte, Norm Marcotte, Gerry Miller, Lisa Sanford

On Sunday night most of our group enjoyed a pre-trip dinner at the Country Kitchen in Big Pine. Monday morning our group of 14 met at 6:15 am at the Glacier Pack Train to begin our adventure. Knowing that it would be a hot, uphill hike, we got an early start to hike 9 miles up the North Fork Trail with 3000 feet



of elevation gain to our base camp overlooking Fourth Lake. Glacier Pack Train did an outstanding job delivering our gear, and we arrived at camp by 2:00 pm which gave us plenty of time to set up camp and prepare dinner. After dinner, we all enjoyed the sunset from our perch on a cliff overlooking Fourth Lake. On Tuesday most of the group explored Sixth and Seventh Lakes, and some went swimming in Summit Lake before an afternoon thunderstorm arrived with thunder, lightning, hail and plenty of rain. Some of us huddled under our kitchen tarp to enjoy the show while others napped in their cozy tents. Thankfully it cleared in time for us to eat dinner and then



enjoy our after-dinner sunset perch.

On Wednesday the whole group got an early start to hike up to Sam Mack Meadow. The hike included a few creek crossings and some bouldering, but was worth the effort to enjoy spectacular displays of Indian Paintbrush near the top. As thunderclouds rolled in, we headed back to camp. Some of the group stopped for lunch at Fifth Lake on the way back, but all made it back before the rain. Some of us made hot tea to sip while we watched another of Mother Nature's displays from under our tarp. Once again it cleared in time for our dinner and sunset perch.

On Thursday most of the group explored the site of old ruins from a 1920's movie set. Ev-



everyone enjoyed taking pictures and then hiked on to Black Lake for lunch. Afternoon clouds rolled in again, and everyone headed back to camp for the usual afternoon thunder, lightning, rain and hail show. Again the weather cleared in time for dinner and sunset. What luck!!

Friday was our last day to explore. Some went to Sam Mack Meadow again. Since the weather was clear with no sign of impending storm activity, two went all the way up to Pali-sades Glacier. Others went back to the movie set for more pictures and then went swimming in Summit Lake. We enjoyed our happy hour and final dinner together before celebrating a



wonderful week on our sunset perch.

Saturday morning we were packed and ready to leave by 9:00 am, thankful that all our gear was finally dry. We enjoyed a lovely lunch spot by First Lake on the way down. Glacier Pack Train did a wonderful job, and had our gear on the dock when we arrived at the Pack Station. We said our fond farewells and look forward to our next trip.



DESTINATION: CROWN LAKES

DATES: AUGUST 5 – 10, 2018

Leaders: Sandy Burnside, Yvonne Tsai and Lori DeLaney

Participants: Steve DeLaney, Mauriça Anderson, Deborah Nakamoto, Mario Burnside, Keri Burnside, Kathy Fisher, Sherri Sisson, Janet Carle, Johnathon Wheatley, Paula Day, Stephen Fabre, and John Kaiser.





We started our hike from Annette's Mono Village near Twin Lakes (7100') at the north-west end of Bridgeport. The hike to the base camp at Crown Lake (9520') was 8 miles with 2400' net gain along Robinson Creek in Hoover Wilderness. The first 3.7 miles are on the Barney Lake Trail through stands of Aspen and Cottonwood trees. Barney Lake is a beautiful place to stop for lunch. Crown Lake has towering granite peaks surrounding it with Crown Point to the west (11,346'). We camped next to and on ledges of a large steep rock halfway along the lakeshore off a big meadow. It is a great spot for swimming, fishing, and photography. The rainbow trout were jumping, and we saw a deer hanging out in the morning. The packers said there was a great campsite location at the entrance of the trail to the lake across the stream but the mules are not able to make a drop there.

We were thankful that we decided to rent a satellite phone this trip. On the second day, Yvonne reached the Mono County Sheriff dispatch to request evacuation of a participant with severe abdominal pain. The helicopter came within 10 minutes of the call. Many of us had tears in our eyes as the CHP helicopter flew away. We were relieved to learn later that our participant was fine and fully recovered from severe dehydration.

It was fun to keep stepping in and out of Yosemite National Park throughout our day hikes from Crown Lake. On the day hike to Rock Island Pass (10,200'), many saw Marmots, Pikas, and alpine flowers. Snow Lake just before the pass is gorgeous and a great

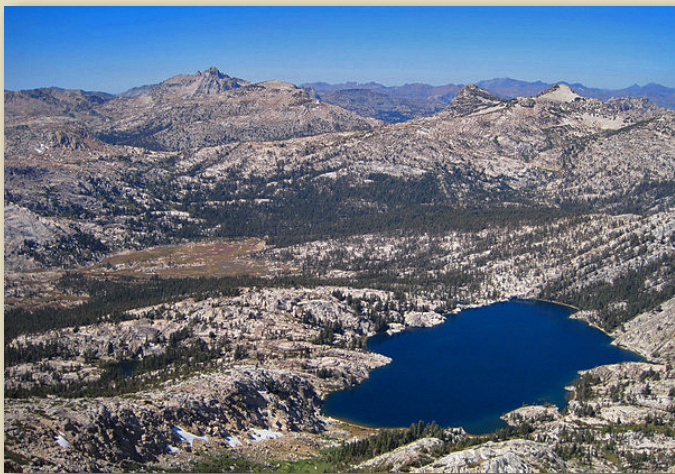


swim spot for the brave. Janet and Sherri saw an Osprey swoop down and catch a fish there. The day hike to Mule Pass (10,500') and down the canyon in Yosemite toward Burro Pass was spectacular with great views of northern Yosemite looking up at Matterhorn Pass and the Finger Peaks. Our hikers met up with a trail crew working on a bad stretch of trail and removed an abandoned fire ring. On the hike to Peeler Lake, you straddle the apex of the Sierra crest. The lake is 60-acres, deep blue, and ringed with a rocky shoreline with a great view of Crown Point. A favorite hike was the clockwise 9-mile loop via Kerrick meadow and Peeler Lake. It was not hard until the last



two-mile ascent back to Crown Lake. Great scenery!

Steve and Lori had Robinson Lake to themselves one day where we set up a hammock and camp chair and read – what a luxury! We had great group meals of taco salad and quesadillas. Keri and Mario paid for an extra mule, so they could bring in a few extras (a propane fire pit, tree lights, and camp kitchen). They made bread for their lunch sandwiches and wonderful appetizer's for happy hour. On our last evening, Sandy organized a competition that included the recital of poems, songs, tent site decoration, and a ring toss duck game! We had fun!



“We hiked in a daze
Through the smoke haze
Happy hour's a feast
Thanks to Mario's treats
For Crown Lake mule pack, nothing but
praise.”



DESTINATION: PIKA LAKE
DATES: AUGUST 9-12, 2018.

Leaders: Christine Gutierrez and Francine Oschin

Participants : Edie Jaranilla; Melanie, Jessica Ricci, Melani Pippo, George Aumann, Andrea Rose, Carol Tucker, Valerie Curtis, Kit Shaw, Diana Gonzalez, Zachary Oschin



On Thursday morning, we dropped our gear at the Mammoth Lakes pack station and car-pooled to the Duck Pass trail head located at the far end of the Coldwater Creek campground where a number of us had spent the previous night.

From the trailhead, getting to Pika Lake is a trek of approximately seven miles and about 2,400 foot elevation gain. On the way to the lake, we ate lunch at Barney Lake, then began the arduous traverse of a number of steep switchbacks, bringing us to the top of Duck Pass. This pass offers a view of many lakes and Mammoth Mountain to the north and our first look at Duck Lake, which appears rather large and quite imposing for a back country lake. From the pass, the trail drops down almost 1,000 feet to Duck Lake, and we began our walk around the lake and up a sub-alpine creek cascading down from Pika Lake. Pika





Lake is quiet and scenic, a pristine lake tucked behind Duck Lake.

Pika Lake is rather petite after the gigantic Duck Lake, but very picturesque. It is surrounded on one side by towering granite cliffs, with a couple of warm, private bays, and on the other side by flat beaches perfect for swimming or fishing. However, once you are at Pika Lake, one needs to climb back to the pass to access other trails in the area, which requires climbing back up the 1,000 feet to Duck Pass. Once this is achieved, many hikes can be accessed including Deer Lakes, Purple and Virginia Lakes, which many of the participants hiked throughout the weekend.

On Sunday we hiked out to the Mammoth Lakes pack station to gather our gear to head home. As we expected the gear to arrive in the late afternoon, many in the group went to lunch, spent time in the town or took showers

to clean up for the ride home. Unfortunately, our gear did not arrive until 6:30 p.m., leading to a late arrival back in the LA area, with the earliest time of at least midnight.

It turns out that one of the many cute dogs we saw as we hiked out were the cause of our packers' delay. As told by the packer, one of the unleashed dogs ignored its owner and disturbed the mules. As the dog chased under the legs of the mules, one of the mules toppled over, dumping the gear on its back. The mule survived, and to my knowledge, the gear. But the late arrival caused consternation as we imagined the worst, and anticipated a late arrival home. But the packer, mules and gear finally arrived and the group packed their cars in record time. Overall, it was a pleasant and scenic weekend, with new acquaintances, and many memories for the coming weeks.



DESTINATION: GARNET LAKE

DATES: AUGUST 12-17, 2018

Leaders: Alan Schimpff and Les Wilson

Participants: Joanne Schwarz, Mark Rosen, Michael Vilkin, Jeff Bates, Sam Rametta, Diane Dickey, Carol Fallon, Terri Garza, Tina Dellis, Chiyo Yaguchi





Despite the Ferguson Fire in Yosemite raging due west of us and the Lions Fire just east of Devils Postpile National Park, we were able to do the Garnet Lake mule pack as planned. At an elevation of 9,900 feet, our base camp was located just northeast of the huge peninsula that juts on the northern side of the 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 experienced smoky conditions during certain times of the day, but all were able to enjoy some amount of time for outdoor activities. Within its immediate area, Garnet Lake offered good options for hiking, swimming, and fishing. Agnew Meadows Pack Station provided very good service. Our gear was at the Garnet Lake site when we hiked in and had been covered with a tarp by two campers whose tents were

located just above where we set up base camp. We thanked them by inviting them to a couple of our camp-cooked evening meals. On hike-out day, there was a little wait for our gear to reach the pack station but that was understandable considering the long round trip that the mules had to make.

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



and the first night's traditional make-your-own quesadilla dinner.

There was a lack of bear activity in the area nor any signs of recent presence. This surprised some of us as Thousand Island Lake is notorious for bears due to the amount of campers there. Mosquitoes were also a non-issue. The first layover day saw different groups hike to: Lake Catherine and Thousand Island Lake. Some of the hikes were cut short due to heavy rain and hail.

The second layover day saw hikes to Nydiver Lakes, around Garnet Lake, and Thousand Island Lake. Again, because of rain and hail, some of the hikes were cut short.



The third, beautiful, layover day saw a different groups hike towards the following locations: Banner Peak, Altha & Clarice Lakes, Thousand Island Lake via the falls, and an unnamed peak close to base camp.

On the final layover day, different groups hiked to: Nydiver Lakes, Altha Lake, Thousand Island Lake via the falls, and areas around Garnet Lake.

During the trip, participants prepared delicious dinners: beef stew, spaghetti with clams, and bean and sausage stew.

We experienced heavy rain AND slush that lasted for more than an hour just past lunch-time on the second day which necessitated relocating some of the tents. The third day brought more rain and hail, which was not as



fierce as the day before. All were extremely thankful of the fine job performed by the people on the tarp set-up committee. The hikers who had to cancel (Dave Wales, Richard Potratz, Paul Rosen, Laura Joseph and Jean Hay) were sorely missed. A good time was had by all and it was agreed that Garnet Lake is a scenic destination offering sandy beaches, beauty and diverse activities, plus three very healthy trout that contributed to the final dinner.



DESTINATION: HUMPHREYS BASIN
DATES: AUGUST 20 – AUGUST 25

Leaders: Cathie Miller and Kathy Viola

Participants: Michael Boyer, Shaune Hand, Don Hansen, Patti Jones, Kerry Leavitt, Julie Meek, Scott Meek, Gerry Miller, Irene Shibata, Rita Stevens, Sharon Wright

On Sunday night most of the group enjoyed a pre-trip dinner at Perry's Italian Café in Bishop. Monday morning our group of 13 met at 6:15 am at Bishop Pack Outfitters to begin our adventure. We got an early start to hike about 10 miles up and over Paiute Pass to our lovely campsite near the outlet stream of Lower Golden Trout Lake. It was a clear, sunny day, and we arrived at camp while the packers were unloading our gear. We had plenty of time to set up camp and enjoy a delicious hot soup and salad dinner. After dinner, we all hiked up the





hill to a vista point above our camp to watch the sunset.

Tuesday was a relaxing day. Some of the group hiked cross country to Packsaddle Lake for fishing, swimming and exploring. Others explored Lower and Upper Golden Trout Lakes. It was a spectacular day ending with a fabulous sunset at our vista point.

On Wednesday the whole group hiked to Lower and Upper Desolation Lakes. Despite the sunshine, it was cool and windy at Upper Desolation Lake where we ate our lunch while being entertained by the fat marmots scurrying across the boulders. Some of the group returned to camp on the trail while others hiked cross country to explore Mesa and Tomahawk Lakes on the way back.

On Thursday an adventurous group hiked down the canyon toward French Canyon, crossing over Paiute Creek on a log and then heading straight up to Honeymoon Lake. It was a long day requiring steep uphill sections and totaling

10 miles round trip. Others spent the day on a cross country exploration to Muriel Lake, while some chose to return to Tomahawk Lake to fish. All returned hungry and enjoyed quesadillas and hot soup for dinner followed by another gorgeous sunset from our vista point. Friday was our last day to explore. Most of the group spent a relaxing day visiting the waterfalls near camp and hiking up to Upper Golden Trout Lake and around Lower Golden Trout Lake. Some enjoyed swimming and fishing. It was a beautiful day with blue skies and sunshine.

Saturday morning we were packed and ready to leave by 9:00 am. It was perfect hiking weather which made the 10 mile hike out seem easier. We had to wait a while at the pack



station for the mules to bring our gear, and some of the group enjoyed burgers at Cardinal Village while they waited. Our gear arrived around 5:00 pm, and we said our farewells. We had a wonderful time.

