

July 2011 Overview

Kings Canyon Backcountry Trail Crew

David Villarino: Supervisor

Ahhh July, after completing 549 sq feet of retaining wall and 38 rock retainer bars on Bubb's Creek our sponsors decided to reward us with an extra day off, leaving us with a four-day Fourth of July weekend. The crew originally planned to do the forty-mile Rae Lakes loop but was not allowed due to still bulging river crossings. So individual groups of corpsmembers instead did the eight-mile 5000 ft elevation climb to Granite Basin. At approximately 8000 ft the trail was lost under lingering snow fields. So the group used their navigation skills (gained from a compass class taught by Erik Perez) to cross-country straight up the mountain to a 10,300 ft pass called the lip. They were greeted by an amazing south facing view of the Sierra, a bounty of alpine lakes and a ton of wild flowers and lodgepole pine. The rest of the weekend was spent swimming in unnamed alpine lakes, seeing more stars than they knew existed on a moonless night at 9,000 ft and sliding down snow fields. Upon returning to Lewis Creek the groups were greeted by a visit from Karlson. Many jokes were exchanged and more than a few fierce volleys of badminton unfolded. After 4th of July dinner the crew decided it was time to head to the backcountry. So the next morning along with Karlson we packed up our rock bars, picked up our chain saws and headed out to Sweeney Swamp pack station. There we began opening trails in to the Roaring River District and our first backcountry camp in Sugarloaf Valley. 100 downed trees and 12 miles of maintained trails later our path to the backcountry was open. Before leaving we spent one last weekend stocking up on supplies and making a side trip to Muir Rock and into the cold waters of the South Fork of the Kings River. After successfully moving and setting up our new camp we began opening the web of trails on the west side of Roaring River including maintenance, logouts, rockwork, re-routes and of course brushing. Overall 26.7 miles of trail are now open including paths to Scaffold, Sugarloaf, Comanche Meadow, Mitchell Peak, Marvin Pass, Silliman Pass, Seville Lake, Ranger Lake, Lost Lake, Rowell Meadow and the boundaries on the west side. Outside of work the crew has been enjoying their new camp and lifestyles. Friday nights have become optional martial arts class since some corpsmembers witnessed a sponsor who is a Jujitsu black belt dropkick a downed tree in half (it was only logical). Other classes have been poetry by Kyle Miraz, hat making, Mission Statement, and "In a Grove." Weekends have been spent swimming, fishing and exploring off trail in a nearby slot canyon full of pools and waterfalls, cross country treks to alpine lakes and an 11,000 ft ridge above table lands where we could see northward all the way to Yosemite.