

# *Park Ridge Lookout*

## *Kings Canyon National Park*

### **End of Season Report, 2006**

#### **Narrative:**

Park Ridge Lookout went into service for the season on June 30, 2006 with BRF Volunteer Coordinator Wendy Garton and Volunteer Doug "Fuzzy" Belt and Homer, the Lookout Hound. Visitors were already waiting at the base of the lookout and smoke from the lightning caused, KNP Goliath Fire was visible as the lookout was opened up.

Within one week, beginning on July 5<sup>th</sup>, Park Ridge and her volunteer lookouts would become very involved in the 619 acre KNP prescribed fuels reduction burn known as the "Upper Redwood Burn" just 2 miles southeast of the lookout. Monitoring smoke and taking weather observations would become very important tasks for the next several days. Kathy Ball and Buck Rock were completely smoked out as this burn took hold on the second day of ignitions so she moved over to Park Ridge for a day to join lookouts Tammy Ahumada and Wendy Garton. The girls were treated to quite an aerial show as H-552 dropped accelerant filled ping pong balls into the areas within the burn that were inaccessible by foot.

As all eyes were glued to the southeast, a smoke popped up in the Wilsonia area, just below and northwest of the lookout. A smoke check was called into Ash Mountain Fire and was later determined to be a legal (?) debris burn at one of the private cabins.

Park Ridge would continue to monitor smoke from the "Upper Redwood Burn" well into August, with occasional smoke seen as late as into September.

Throughout fire season 2006, Park Ridge would monitor other prescribed burns and WFURB fires, from both the NPS and USFS, including the Goliath, Brewer, Maggie, Trail, Roaring, Tamarack, Beck and Silver.

July was very busy with several days of thunderstorm activity. Though no smokes were reported by Park Ridge resulting from turbulent weather patterns, several hours were logged on the insulated stool.

Towards the end of the season, on October 15<sup>th</sup>, volunteer lookout Doug Wachtell made a smoke report to Ash Mountain Fire, 90 degrees from the lookout, east, over the ridge at Mitchell Peak. Because the ridge hid the base of the fire, the exact location and distance would be impossible to calculate. It wouldn't be until several days later when this new, lightning caused, fire would be located at Pond Meadow on the boundary between NPS & SQF. Park Ridge's only first report of the season was now official. The volunteers would, however, be involved with smoke/fire confirmations throughout the season.

The only continuing problem is the lock/chain situation on the fire road gate off Panoramic Point Road. Several times, again this season, our volunteers were either locked out or locked in! When locked out, they must return to Wilsonia and locate someone (fire, maintenance or law enforcement personnel) who can travel out to the gate and open another lock. When locked in, the volunteer must return to the lookout and either call on the radio for assistance at the gate or retrieve the NPS key, return to gate, correct the problem, then go back to the lookout to replace the key in its holder and go out, once again. Fortunately, all the situations thus far have been resolved with just one key. We have seen several locks that were locked out with no way of putting them back in line.

Park Ridge Lookout was closed for the season on Tuesday, October 24, 2006.

### **Fire Statistics, 2006**

- \* Total number of fires reported by Park Ridge (1<sup>st</sup> Reports): 1  
Pond Fire, 1<sup>st</sup> reported on October 15, 2006, confirmed on October 19, 2006.
  
- \* Total number of smoke checks: 1  
Wilsonia Debris Burn, private cabin, reported on July 6, 2006.
  
- \* Total number of 2<sup>nd</sup> reports or confirmations: 0

### **Staffing Statistics, 2006**

Park Ridge seasonal staffing is done entirely by Buck Rock Foundation volunteers.

Volunteer Days = 48 days

Training Days = 7 days

June 30, 2006 thru October 24, 2006      Total Staffed Days = 48

### **Visitor Statistics, 2006**

Total number of visitors who signed the guest book: 362

### **Project Work, Maintenance, Purchases and Acquisitions, 2006**

- \* Rock chisel work at the base of the stairs for head safety, done by volunteers
- \* New NPS Bendix/King hand held radio, provided by NPS
- \* New fire extinguisher, provided by NPS
- \* Used microwave, donated by volunteer
- \* Map Clipboard, donated by Buck Rock Foundation
- \* Floor rugs, donated by volunteer
- \* Misc. kitchen utensils (measuring cups, pots and pans, kitchen towels), donated by volunteers
- \* Small television, donated by volunteer
- \* 2 small tables for catwalk, donated by volunteer

### **Repairs and Maintenance Needs, 2006:**

- \* Ceiling of the cab needs repair
- \* Scrape old interior paint along windows and apply new paint to entire cab
- \* Base radio needs repair (SQF)
- \* Floor needs repair or replace tile with new tile or carpet
- \* Repair/restore telephone service (SQF)

### Inventory, 2006

- \* Refrigerator
- \* 4 burner stove with oven
- \* Sink counter
- \* Osborne Fire Finder
- \* Electric Stove
- \* Trundle bed
- \* Stools - 1
- \* Chairs - 2
- \* 2 plastic coffee tables
- \* Midland Base Radio (needs repair)
- \* New Bendix/King HT (NPS)
- \* Older Bendix/King HT (SQF)
- \* Pentax 10X50 binoculars
- \* Belt weather kit
- \* Maps -assorted forest recreation and topo maps
- \* Tool Box with assorted tools
- \* Portable battery screw driver
- \* Plastic step stool
- \* First Aid Kit
- \* Hot water heater
- \* Scanner
- \* Operation Manual, which includes  
Fire Fighter's Guide
- \* Combination locks - 3
- \* Clock
- \* Coffee maker
- \* Assorted kitchen towels
- \* Assorted hot pads
- \* Comforter, sheet set
- \* Trash can
- \* Microwave
- \* Assorted cleansers
- \* Misc. office supplies
- \* Small television
- \* Broom, mop, dust pan
- \* American Flag (no pole)
- \* Assorted silverware
- \* Assorted pots and pans
- \* Shovel, rake, mop bucket
- \* Map Clipboard
- \* 3 drawer dresser
- \* Visual reference books - 2

### Wish List, 2006 (in no particular order)

- \* Kestrel
- \* Portable AM Radio
- \* Cassette Player
- \* Calculator
- \* Baking Pans
- \* Tea Kettle
- \* Lightning Strike Alert (Cabelas)
- \* Horse Hitching Post
- \* Desk (Wendy has measurements)
- \* New gate at the fire road entrance that can accommodate numerous locks (like the one on HWY 180 going down to Cedar Grove)
- \* Installation of culvert on the road at the spring (muddy mess all season long!)
- \* Permanent outhouse
- \* Permanent sign at the base of the lookout with name, dates, elevation and lat/long (maybe picture of Mattie Simms with dedication?)
- \* Oscillating fan
- \* Wooden stool with insulators on the legs
- \* Rain gauge
- \* Indoor/outdoor thermometer (one that works properly)
- \* 18 mile walkie-talkies (Cabelas)