

Trip Report
Use this form to report on wilderness trips

Submitted by: Art Pope

Date:

Report Title: Trinity Alps Wilderness

Route: Where did you go?

We started at the Big Flat Trailhead and hiked a big circle back to that trailhead. Took the Yellow Rose Trail to the Dorleska Trail to the Lion Lake Trail and on to the Boulder Lake Trail. From Boulder Lake we followed the Tracy trail to the Parker Creek Trail and down the Bear Basin Trail to Black's Basin Trail. From Deer Creek Camp we did an afternoon hike around the Four Lakes loop then headed down Deer Creek and up Stuart Creek to a camp below Emerald Lake where we did an afternoon walk up to Sapphire lake. Finally, we made our way up Caribou Scramble to Snowslide Lake, up Old Caribou Trail and back to Big Flat on the Caribou Lakes Trail.

Where you camping? How many days?

We were on a seven-day backpacking trip

Summary: 250 word max

We encountered only six people during our seven-day trip. Many sections of our route were on seemingly little-used trails; needle-covered and stick strewn. Some sections were being lost to brush and brush encroachment was forcing sidhilee sections downhill. Horse traffic appeared limited outside of a limited number of popular lake basins. Campsites were rather widely spaced but concentrated around lakes and especially dense on lakes easily accessed from nearby trailheads.

High quality trail structured, created with huge amounts of labor and obvious pride are being allowed to deteriorate. I developed the impression that this was a wilderness that the California Conservation Corps had invested huge amounts of sweat into this wilderness. When the C's lost funding and a nearby facility was closed the forest Service was at a loss. The place now feels rather abandoned, rather like a garden once lovingly tended and now left empty and returning to the nature. Not necessarily a bad thing for wilderness....

Wilderness or Wild River:

Trinity Alps Wilderness

Management Unit:

The majority of the Trinity Alps Wilderness is managed by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest; sections are also managed by the Klamath National Forest and the Six Rivers National Forest

Administrative Location:

Redding, CA

Head of Administrative Unit:

Jody Noiron, Forest Supervisor

Trip Report: Grade the success of the management agency with an A to F letter grade. Comments must support letter grades in each category; skip any category on which you do not want to comment.

B Access: is resource damage occurring on trails and at trailheads.

It appears that for the last ten years or so trail maintenance activities have been at a standstill. Prior to that there is ample evidence of significant amounts of highly skilled stabilization and erosion control projects; exceptional trailcraft ignored and falling into disrepair. Woefully infrequent, but often exemplary, ancient water bars are now clogged and failing. Past work is truly impressive but sadly, this gigantic investment of resources is being allowed to deteriorate and erosion damage is reaching moderate to severe levels in many areas.

C Management: regulations, permit systems, education, enforcement actions.

We observed little in the way of management activity during this trip. A total of six newly bucked logs, out of over a hundred we encountered across the trails we hiked, represented the only obvious trail maintenance activity this season. We saw no agency staff during this trip. Educational signage is limited.

There is evidence of past efforts to remove fire rings and control/contain the use of campfires. Sadly this was a long-past effort and there are now fire rings everywhere. For some reason a California fire permit is required to build a campfire in the Trinity Alps. Amazingly the FS hands out California fire permit brochure that feature a rock-ringed campfire on their cover.

B Stewardship: are management actions in accord with wilderness values.

There is evidence that many significant trail restoration projects were accomplished with power equipment. Signs of gas powered drilling equipment are particularly obvious on the trail above Deer Lake.

B Wilderness: how well is management protecting the wilderness resource.

Observations from the trail give every indication that the agency is minimally involved in wilderness management. In many areas encroaching brush is forcing traffic downhill destroying trail alignment, increasing erosion and threatening to soon close trails. In other areas route finding is occasionally challenging and will soon become even more difficult. For wilderness is not necessarily a terrible thing. On one hand the public loses an expensive, valuable and almost irreplaceable trail resource. On the other, wilderness gains remoteness and becomes even wilder.

___ Fire Management, Wildlife Management, Other

The Trinity Alps Wilderness is a hot spot for that particular section of hikers hell created by misguided trail designers; unfunded FS road engineers assigned to wilderness, who believed it was their role in life to turn a one mile trail into three by reducing the grade to three percent. Hours of endless switchbacks to nowhere soon make even the most conscientious hiker long to start cutting switchbacks.