

2020 June - Journal

Friday, June 26, 2020

Cliff Camp Journal Sheet

2020 — 1

Names: Who was in your party? Steve Kliewer

Dates: What days were you here? June 18-25, 2020

Comments:

This was another great trip to Cliff Camp - Beautiful weather, charming animals, and glorious flowers.
Strange times - because of COVID-19, I was alone this week. I am truly saddened to have missed seeing everyone this year.
Wishon Resort was diligently observing the mask and social distancing advisories. PGE has closed all of its campgrounds in the area.

First Day:

Road conditions:

The road was clear. Many areas along the road have been extensively logged.
Many trees on Hoffman mountain above Wishon Reservoir are grey and dying.
This is officially another extreme drought year (see chart below).

Trail condition:

The trail needs clearing: A log needs to be cut. Various limbs, brush, slippery pine needles, pine cones, and short round sticks on steep sections need to be cleared. A note of interest. A log near the water fountain shows signs of a bear digging for grubs (beetle larvae)

Fall Creek:

It is flowing in 2 streams. The log crossing is working great.

Water Supply:

The intake pipe in the spring reservoir was plugged. Additional plugs were found at two of the insert type splices in the pipe to the storage tank. I would recommend that the entire stretch of pipe from the spring to the tank be replaced with new pipe and buried as much as possible with NO splices. The raised portion of the pipe was parted by a fallen tree. It was damaged and should be replaced. Preferably by a ground-level pipe using Blue-Lok elbows to rise to the inlet of the tank. The storage tank was struck by other parts of this tree. A lot of debris still needs to be cleared. Luckily the fallen tree only shattered the tool box, the 4" elbow for the overflow pipe, and the 1" outlet ball valve (should be replaced with plastic). At least two more dead trees are getting ready to fall and look likely to fall in the direction of our tank. They should be felled to provide control. If either fell on the tank it would be destroyed.

The spring is now flowing into the tank at a rate of 5 gal/min. This fills the 420 gal tank in an hour and a half.
(1 cup/sec) = 3.75 gal/min

Garden:

This was a late start for garden planting and it was dry since the water system had been damaged.
I removed weeds, tested the soil, fertilized, redesigned the drip system, and set up a compost system.

Kitchen scraps (no meat, oil, fats, bread, or mild) should be accumulated and added to the pile. Cover with a thin layer of screened forest humus (next to compost pile). The pile should be kept moist but not muddy. Then the compost pile should be turned weekly or monthly. I plan to spread a layer on the garden this fall along with mulch.

Astronomy:

Earthquake! I was working in the shed when it shuddered twice about 30 seconds apart at 10:41am PDT on Wednesday, June 24, 2020. This was caused by a magnitude 5.8 quake centered in Lone Pine.

The sky was unlighted by the Moon - it went from 2 days before New to 5 days after New.
Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars were brilliant in the early morning hours.

However, it took until 9:30 pm before the sky got dark enough to start seeing the brightest stars. ISS and Hubble did NOT make visible passes during this time.

Work Projects completed:

- First tasks were restoring the water system and the usual tasks of opening the cabin (cables, unpacking, putting up the stove pipe, cleaning mice out of the cabin).
- Several days were allocated to fixing up the garden and the Solar Power system (new meters, and an extra USB charger was added).
- Next was building more shelving & setting up the shower. For a second year, a colony of bumblebees took up residence in the piping. They died overwinter but their bodies plugged the tubing.
- I cleaned, flushed, and oiled all three Coleman stoves.
- I moved the NW corner about 250 ft W of its last position near the trail to the old cabin. This was done to enlarge the property to a full 40 acres and include more of the meadow.
- The SW corner was lost in a tangle of fallen trees and a new one was placed in a new more protected location similar to the NW corner. All four corners will be fully documented and posted in the cabin.
- Lastly, I organized the tool corner in the shed.
- My oxygenation rate at home is typically 98% and pulse 60 to 70. The first day at Cliff Camp it was 92%. The second day it was 94% and by the third day it was 96%. When working hard (like on the hike up the hill my heart rate climbs to about 120 but my oxygenation remained unchanged for that day. .

Work Still needed:

The water storage tank needs work. Debris from the near miss should be removed. The overhead pipe should be dropped to ground level (use 2 elbow fitting to raise the pipe to the tank inlet). The pipe from the spring to the tank has at least 5 splices in it. I recommend it be replaced with a new pipe.

Take a look around for other potential falls that might destroy the tank. I think at least two dead trees should be dropped to remove the danger.

Please add kitchen scraps to the compost, keep it moist, and turn the pile weekly. Hopefully you will be able to enjoy some fruits and vegetables if my work wasn't to late this spring.

The trail-in needs to be cleared - use chainsaw, pruning shears, and rake - see above. Try to clear brush at least 2 feet back from trail. It grows fast. I have done this many times but am no longer able to do so.

Both garden hoses (garden and shower) will need to be replaced soon (5/8" x 25ft).

Several brass gate valves have become damaged, leak, and should be replaced with plastic.

- 1" gate valve at the tank outlet
- 3/4" gate valve on the outside cabin wall
- 1/2" gate valve in the shower

Gate Status:

Most if not all PGE campsites are closed.

Spanish Lake OHV: Locked

Triangle OHV gate: Locked

Gate #1: Open

Gate #2: permanently open

Kings Caverns:

The road is open to explore these marble caves. It is only a 1/2 mile hike. See complete description in Cliff Camp Manual.

Fishing:

Wishon reservoir is only about 1/2 full and the flow of the Kings is therefore low and probably great for fishing.

Rivendell:

I checked out the fishing at the old fishing spot along Little Rancheria. It was great - 6 to 10 inch Brown trout. Also, I spotted a water ouzel.

20 min from Crown Valley Trailhead to Little Rancheria Creek

Stock trail branches left before main trail descends to creek.

10 min to Rivendell (a very nice glade and meadow). The creek here is a mostly open, gravel, trout stream.

Spotted:

- A daily visitor was a delightful Western Tanager - Gorgeous orange head, bright yellow body, with sharp black markings

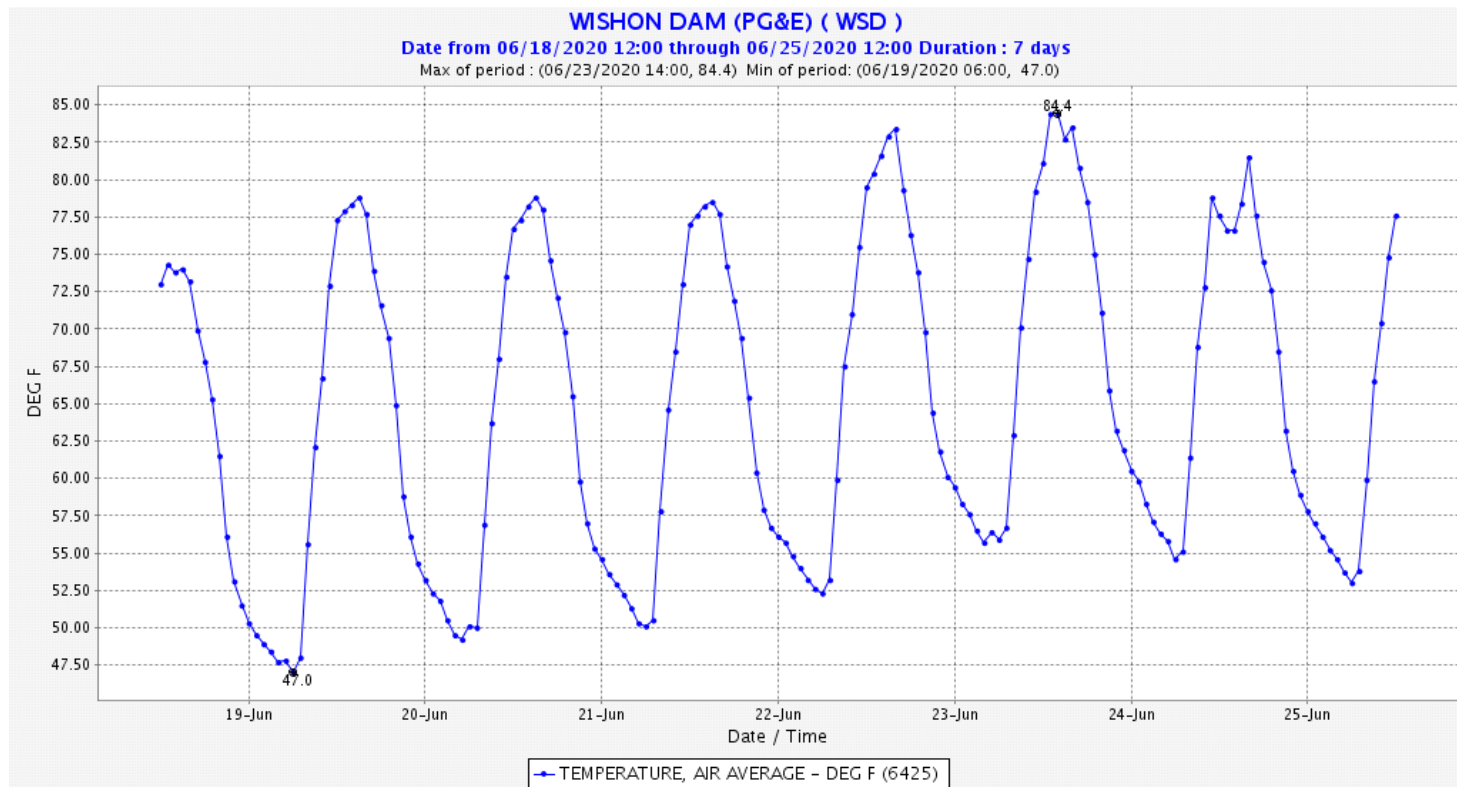
on its wings and tail. He dropped in daily and checked me out while I did the same.

- One Water Ouzel, three does, one rubber boa, one marmot, many squirrels and birds, bear evidence (but no bears)
- Many of my favorite flowers: Columbine, Mariposa Lily, Shooting Stars, Tiger Lily, Queen Ann's Lace, Collinsia, Gentian, & Farewell-to-Spring.

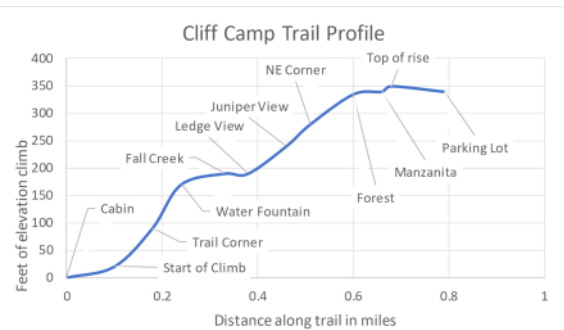
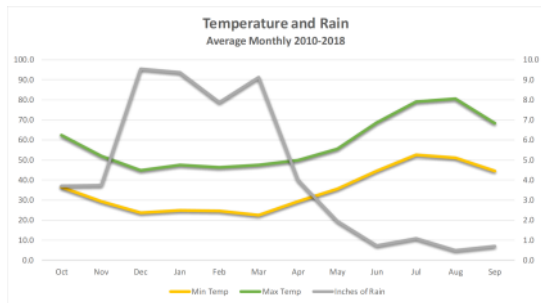
Weather Report:

The weather was great - sunny, blue skies every day - but hot. All heavy work was completed by 10 am. Light work in the afternoon or just rest.

May	DOW	Desc	Notes
18	Thu	Clear & bright blue	
19	Fri	Clear & bright blue	
20	Sat	Clear & bright blue	
21	Sun	Clear & bright blue	
22	Mon	Clear & bright blue	hot
23	Tue	Clear & bright blue	hot
24	Wed	Cloudy	humid
25	Thu	Clear & bright blue	

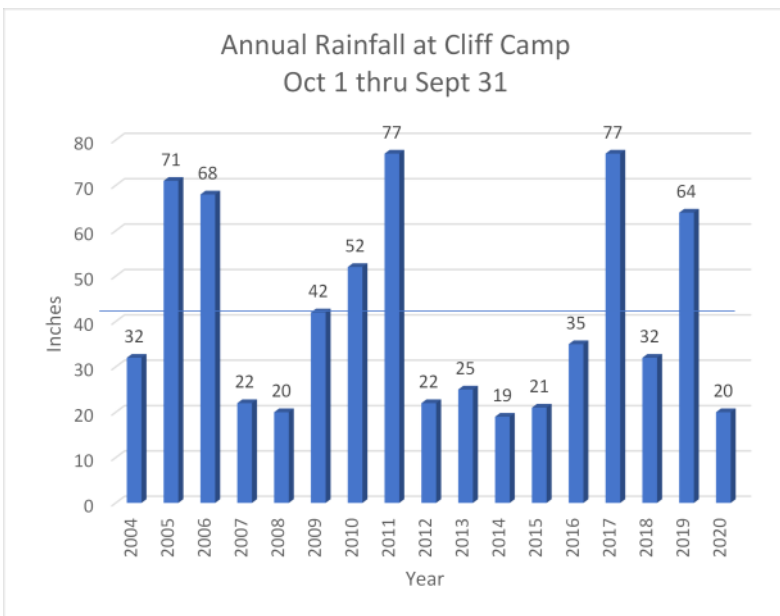


http://cdec.water.ca.gov/dynamicapp/staMeta?station_id=WSD



Accumulated Precipitation
since Oct 1, 2019 = 20.5"
10" in Dec, 4" in March, 2" in May
The Annual Rain Year is defined as
Oct 1 through Sept 31.

Wishon Reservoir:
Storage = 57500 acre-feet
(max = 128,300 af) = 45 %.
Water elevation = 6460 ft = 64%
Reservoir min = 6290 ft, max = 6555 ft
Range = 265 ft
= 80 ft below spillway
Spillway min: 6540 ft



Cliff Camp Journal Sheet

2020 — 4

Names: Who was in your party? Steve Kliwer and Bill Easley

Dates: What days were you here? Oct 7-13, 2020 & Oct 17-20, 2020

Comments:

Steve's drive to Cliff Camp on Oct 7 was aborted by a gate at Dinkey Creek locked that morning by the USFS. Bill was able to get a special permit to be escorted through the gate after a week-long effort to contact the District Ranger.

This year has been horrendous. Not only the COVID-19 pandemic and the Creek Fire, but the worst drought in years.

Oct 7 - Steve's aborted trip:

Steve: "In Prather and Shaver Junction, signs were everywhere – thanking the firefighters and chastising the Sierra Club.

From about 2/3 of the way up the 4-lane grade to Musick Falls it was total devastation – only charred matchsticks and dense smoke. Cressman's at Pineridge is completely gone.

From there through Shaver Junction to Dinkey Creek it was clear and untouched except for extensive logging. Often a clear swath extending 40 to 100 feet on each side was being cut and debris removed down to mineral dirt.

The day before, I had received confirmed clearance from the Fresno County Sheriffs office with only a suggestion that I carry proof of ownership.

But when I got to Dinkey Creek, disaster struck as I found a locked gate. I located Forest Service Officer D. Oates who explained that the gate had just been installed and locked that morning. This was a new policy but there was no fire risk to Wishon. He told me we would have to apply for a special permit from the Sierra Forest District Ranger Kim Cicironi-Wilson at the Prather Ranger Station. Kim is the ranger in charge of the Creek Fire response. The station was closed but Officer Oates gave me a phone number to reach her: 559-855-5455 x3340.

I was unable to get through to Kim Wilson but left a message. I talked with someone in the office (extension 0) and found that the permit often required an escort. I am still unsure if that will allow us to go in to the cabin for multiple days of work.

I gave up and drove home. Not being able to go up until at the earliest on Friday and being required to be back no later than Sunday, I have been forced to realize this is more than I can handle. I have given up on going in this fall."

Oct 17-20 - Bill's Trip:

Bill: "I wanted to give a short update on my trip to close the cabin.

Thanks to Steve, I was able to make contact with the Forest Service, acquire a permit and keys to access Wishon, and close the cabin for the winter. We got a lot accomplished while we were there, and hopefully all will be well in the Spring on our return. We were able to complete the job of replacing all nails in the roof with gasketed roof screws. This should hopefully help with keeping the roof a little more water tight and from moving in the wind. A majority of the nails had been pulled loose over the years. We also cleaned and packed out all of the trash on the side of the shed, as well as brought the earth down below the shingled siding so it would not dry rot. I left an aluminum extension ladder in place of the garbage as it is too long to store in the shed. The large pine next to the shed had some large branches that over the years have grown down to the roof level and were causing damage to the shed roof. We were able to get high on the tree and limb those branches. We should be good for years to come. The grill for the BBQ is back after some minor repair, with new wider sleeves to fit over the grill posts so it is not such a tight fit. We also cut new supports for the south side of the cabin as most if not all were either broken or had pulled away from the outer wall. At the spring we replaced all the old connectors we could find that were causing clogs with the new compression fittings. We also cut and partially split a large pile of wood. We will finish splitting and stacking it when we return next year.

Water was a challenge this trip. The spring was barely producing any water, and the storage tank was all but empty. We did end up running out of water our second day (even with conservation), and used melted ice, and containers that (Steve?) had filled earlier in the year. We ended up closing the valve at the tank overnight and that filled the tank enough to keep us going the rest of the trip (bathing in the swimming hole at the bridge was not as nice as a warm shower would have been! 😊). Since it looks like we will be entering drought years, my suggestion is that every group shuts the water off at the tank when leaving, so it will be full for the next group. It probably is not as important early in the season, but as we get further into summer/fall, it would be nice. There is obviously some leakage in the system, and my feeling is that if we are not storing water in the tank, then the tank is really not adding any value. The garden was unfortunately was a total loss. The only thing remotely alive was the Giant Sequoia sapling, and it was not happy. We watered it, but I don't have high hopes.

At the old cabin, the top was off the 5 gallon bucket, and the pictures were scattered around camp. I can only assume this was the work of a bear (which visited us on our last night). I cleaned them up, and placed them back in the bucket.

One of the three plastic hinges on an igloo ice chest broke while we were there. This was not the ice chest that I replaced hinges with earlier this year, but the other one with the cheap plastic hinges. I will purchase the new reinforced hinges and replace when I go back up. It is still in working order with 2 remaining hinges, but just be aware that they will break as well if not treated with kid gloves.

Mitch left the cabin in great shape. Other than mice activity, the cabin looked great! Thanks Mitch! Since this is the first time I have closed the cabin, I'm hoping I got everything done. We were able to use both Steve's previous email instructions, as well as the instruction at the cabin.

Steve,

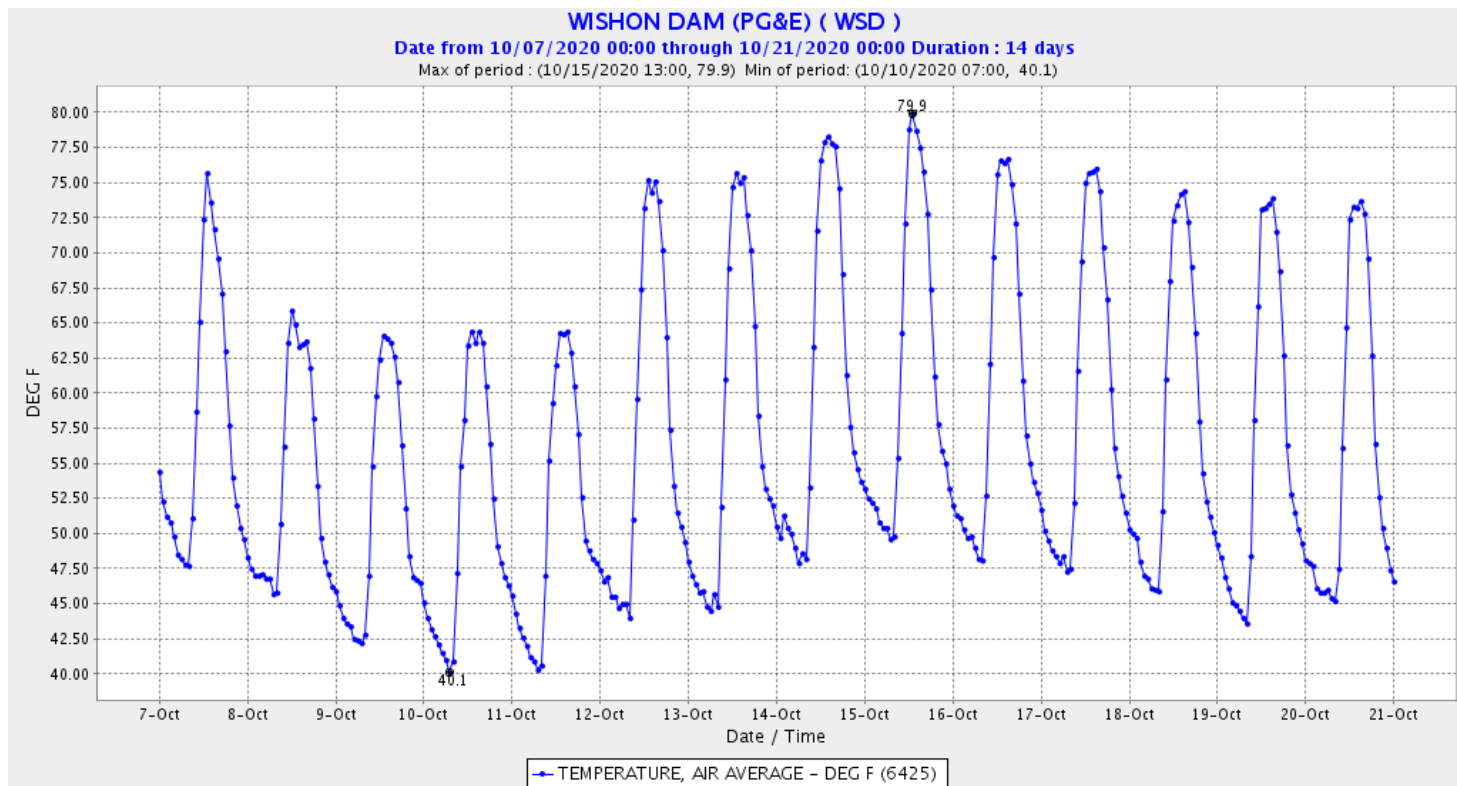
If you are first to the cabin, you will need a 5/16 hex bit to remove the cover from the roof jack. It is secured with self tapping metal screws. We left a storm collar as well with the same size screws holding it together. You will likely need to remove the screws to install it and then put them back in. I would also appreciate putting WD-40 (for whoever uses the grill) on the tightening nuts. The old ones were replaced with stainless steel and if they get cross threaded, it will be a very bad thing!"

Water Supply:

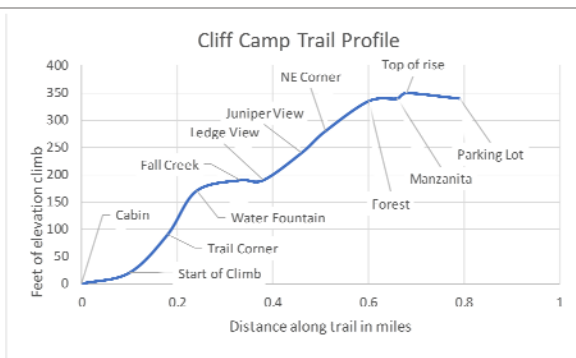
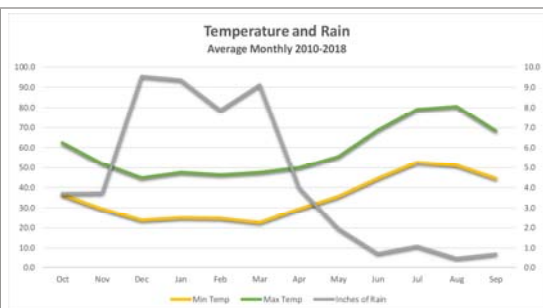
Bill found the tank empty but the spring was still trickling. He recommends that the tank outlet valve be closed at the end of each visit.

We estimate the flow at 0.4 gal/min (1 cup of water every 10 sec).

This is sufficient to fill the 420 gal tank overnight. (1 cup/sec = 3.75 gal/min)

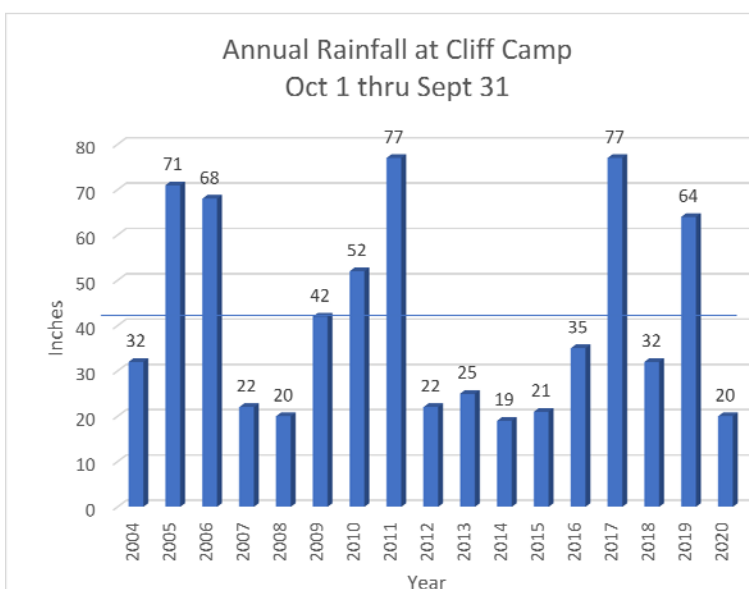


http://cdec.water.ca.gov/dynamicapp/staMeta?station_id=WSD



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since Jul 1, 2020 = 0.0"
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2020 Closing Report by Bill Easley

Thursday, February 25, 2021 8:51 AM

From: Bill Easley <bill@billeasley.com>

Sent: Monday, October 26, 2020 10:25 AM

To: skliwer@gmail.com

Cc: 'Greg Davis' <coach_davis@sbcglobal.net>; 'Cooper Collins' <coopercollins@me.com>; j-kambrose@att.net; 'Liz Collins' <lizziecollins1106@gmail.com>; 'Blythe Collins' <info@bnnrbakery.com>; 'Bert Blumenthal' <lynnundbert.blumenthal@gmail.com>; 'Carol Sacco' <cmsacco@basicisp.net>; 'Brian Gallant' <btgdenver@gmail.com>; 'Steve Chambreau' <schambreau@yahoo.com>; 'Bill Easley' <eas63ley@hotmail.com>; ryan@ryaneasley.com; 'Jeanne Stanford' <jeannestanford@outlook.com>; 'Jennifer Waddell' <waddell.jp@gmail.com>; 'Conrad Collins' <conradcollins@icloud.com>; veronica.collins@icloud.com; 'Adrienne Collins' <adrienne_c_7@yahoo.com>

Subject: RE: Cliff Camp

Good morning all,

I wanted to give a short update on my trip to close the cabin.

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Steve,

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I hope everyone is doing well!

Bill

From: skliewer@gmail.com <skliewer@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2020 6:31 AM

To: 'Bill Easley' <bill@billeasley.com>

Cc: 'Greg Davis' <coach_davis@sbcglobal.net>; 'Cooper Collins' <coopercollins@me.com>; j-kambrose@att.net; 'Liz Collins' <lizziecollins1106@gmail.com>; 'Blythe Collins' <info@bnrbakery.com>; 'Bert Blumenthal' <lynnundbert.blumenthal@gmail.com>; 'Carol Sacco' <cmsacco@basicisp.net>; 'Brian Gallant' <btgdenver@gmail.com>; 'Steve Chambreau' <schambreau@yahoo.com>; 'Bill Easley' <eas63ley@hotmail.com>; ryan@ryaneasley.com; 'Jeanne Stanford' <jeannestanford@outlook.com>; 'Jennifer Waddell' <waddell.jp@gmail.com>; 'Conrad Collins' <conradcollins@icloud.com>; veronica.collins@icloud.com; 'Adrienne Collins' <adrienne_c_7@yahoo.com>

Subject: Cliff Camp

Bill, et.al.

I drove up to the Sierra yesterday.

Signs were everywhere – thanking the firefighters and chastising the Sierra Club.

From about 2/3 of the way up the 4-lane grade to Musick Falls it was total devastation – only charred matchsticks and dense smoke.

From there through Shaver Junction to Dinkey Creek it was clear and untouched except for extensive logging. Often a clear swath extending 40 to 100 feet on each side was being cut and debris removed down to mineral dirt.

The day before, I had received confirmed clearance from the Fresno County Sheriff's office with only a suggestion that I carry proof of ownership.

But when I got to Dinkey Creek, disaster struck as I found a locked gate. I located Forest Service Officer D. Oates who explained that the gate had just been installed and locked that morning. This was a new policy but there was no fire risk to Wishon. He told me we would have to apply for a special permit from the Sierra Forest District Ranger Kim Cicironi-Wilson at the Prather Ranger Station. Kim is the ranger in charge of the Creek Fire response. The station was closed but Officer Oates gave me a phone number to reach her: 559-855-5455 x3340.

I was unable to get through to Kim Wilson but left a message. I talked with someone in the office (extension 0) and found that the permit often required an escort. I am still unsure if that will allow us to go in to the cabin for multiple days of work.

I gave up and drove home. Not being able to go up until at the earliest on Friday and being required to be back no later than Sunday, I have been forced to realize this is more than I can handle. I have given up on going in this fall.

Bill, I hope with the information above, you will be able to get clearance and still go in as you planned. I have attached the Notes I was going to leave at the cabin to guide you with closing the cabin if you get there.

A question for all – What condition was the cabin left in July? How would it fare if no one was able to go in this Fall?

This is the second year Cliff Camp has been threatened by fire. We are just entering what is likely to be another string of extreme drought years. The forests surrounding Cliff Camp are already greatly stressed with many dead or dying trees. The grounds are often choked by downed trees and dense extremely combustible debris.

What can and should we be doing?

**Sad Days,
Steve**

From: Bill Easley <bill@billeasley.com>
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 1:41 PM
To: skliewer@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Cliff Camp

Agreed Steve,

To be clear though, I'm not recommending we shut off the garden, I'm recommending that when leaving Cliff Camp on the last day of anyone's stay they turn the ball valve off at the tank on their way out. That way it will be sure to be full for the next groups trip. It won't make much difference in the early season since the spring will be producing, but later on even a gallon/hour would fill the tank between most visits.

Bill

From: skliewer@gmail.com <skliewer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 10:56 AM
To: 'Bill Easley' <bill@billeasley.com>
Subject: RE: Cliff Camp

Hi Bill,
Glad your trip worked out and sad you had problems with the water.

I was expecting that the water would be very low. Last year was fine all year round. But we may be entering a new phase with another extended drought.

I had planned to review the water situation in my June and October (cancelled) trips.
You are probably right that the garden will have to be suspended if we are in another drought phase.

However, the fact that the spring was still producing even a small stream is encouraging. Looking at

records I made during the last drought, the flow at the spring measured no lower than ~ 0.5 gal/min. Even this is enough to fill the tank overnight if all of it was collected and no leaks were found. I suspect that we need to look for leaks in the delivery system. Shutting off the garden would not fix that problem.

**Good Energy,
Steve**

From: Bill Easley <bill@billeasley.com>
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 8:50 AM
To: skliewer@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Cliff Camp

Good morning Steve,

I hope you are doing well.

I wanted to reach out to you before I sent an email update to the group about closing the cabin. We were able to get up there and get the cabin buttoned up. As you expected, the garden was completely dead with the exception of the sequoia tree which was not doing well. We watered it, but I don't have high hopes. There was no water in the tank when we arrived, but some remained in the water line (even though there was a very slight stream of water entering the tank from the spring). I did not measure it, but I would estimate maybe a gal/hour or so. We did end up running out of water even though we were conserving, so we hiked up, turned off the ball valve at the tank over night, and allowed the tank to collect some water. This gave us enough to finish the trip.

My question to you and to the group soon, is if we are going to leave the storage tank valve open, and there is obviously some leakage in the system, then I'm not sure of the value of even having a water tank. I know that your garden is important to you, but at the same time, trips later in the season when the spring is not producing would benefit greatly from having some water stored in the tank. I understand this is not an issue typically for trips early in the season, but wanted to get your feedback before I brought it up to the rest of the folks.

Bill

From: skliewer@gmail.com <skliewer@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 4:12 PM
To: 'Bill Easley' <bill@billeasley.com>
Subject: RE: Cliff Camp

Hi Bill,
Shortly after I sent the email to you I finally received a message from Kim Wilson. She apologized and said they would work with us.

You will need a 7700 permit (Application form available online at: https://www.fs.fed.us/database/acad/om/weight_size.htm and email it into them. Or you can get a copy by calling the Prather Ranger Station at 559-855-5355 x0 or ring bell at door. They are open 8-5 M-F.

The Dinkey Creek gate is open this weekend. However on other days, with the permit, they would escort you through the gate and arrange a return time to let you back out. She also gave me her cell phone number 559-365-1497. Hope this helps.

**Good Energy,
Steve**

From: skliewer@gmail.com <skliewer@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 12:11 PM

To: 'Bill Easley' <bill@billeasley.com>

Subject: Cliff Camp

Hi Bill,

I hope you have had better luck than I have at contacting the Forest Service and getting clearance. I have tried several times.

Please let me know if you have had better success.

What if you can't get in. Would everything be OK?

Unless we have a heavy snow load this winter (unlikely as forecasts are for continued drought), I think the cabin would probably be OK. Beds, shower, tools, furniture, and especially your new roof Jack might be in danger.

I am sure that your superb jack is strong. However, the stove pipe can provide a lot of leverage powered by sliding snow. This might still be extremely damaging. What do you think?

Normally all tools and furniture are brought in during the summer. However, beds are often left out. This might be a problem.

The spring, tank, and water system are probably OK but will need special attention in the spring.

The hoses at the garden and shower will probably be OK but may crack or be damaged from the cold and snow load stress.

My garden is probably toast. But that is easily replaced.

If you do get to go in. Please try to measure or estimate the spring's flow rate (gal/min). This might give us a great deal of insight into what is going to happen if we continue in a drought status next year and the year after.

**Good Energy,
Steve**