



# NEWS RELEASE

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

1839 S. Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257

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Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

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## Lake Isabella: Recreation Opportunities Knock

Local places inspire our thinking, replenish our souls, and remind us that where we live is a place like no other. Many local residents to the Kern River Valley are fortunate to live and play in an area with exceptional scenery, unparalleled recreation and volunteer opportunities. Whether you are lucky enough to live here, or are one of the many visitors, the Kern River Valley area is a mecca for adventure seekers as hikers, boaters, water skiers, fishermen, birders, hunters, wind surfers, and kayakers.

Below are a few highlights of *Your Recreation Fees at Work* on the Kern River Ranger District.

- **This winter Camp 9 received a facelift!** Thirty-three new fire rings with grills were installed, the pavement was re-stripped, a large group camping area was re-designed, gates were painted, brush was removed, and an irrigation system was installed to water newly planted trees.
- **Need information?** New and expanded visitor information signs were completed at: Camp 9, Auxiliary Dam, Old Isabella, and South Fork Recreation Areas.
- **New portable toilets have arrived!** Six wheelchair accessible and four standard portable toilets were purchased. You will find these at popular sites around Lake Isabella (Auxiliary Dam, Old Isabella, and South Fork Recreation Area), and along the Upper Kern River.
- **New summer faces.** New this year, four Student Conservation Association Interns will be working in visitor services in the recreation areas where fees are paid. The Kern River Ranger District successfully competed for a \$10,000 Forest Service regional grant which pays 50% of the program costs. Also, four summer seasonal recreation technicians were hired for operations and maintenance of Forest Service fee sites at Lake Isabella, along the Kern River, and the Kern Plateau.
- **The Sequoia's First Quarterly Report for the Recreation Enhancement Act** fee program was presented to the California Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) meeting on May 13, 2009. This new format, designed with input from a Kern River Valley Adhoc committee, provides detailed information on collections and expenditures from the recreation funds collected at areas where entrance fees are charged.

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- **Family Fishing Fun!** The District prepared for over 10,000 entrants to the 20th Annual Isabella Lake Fishing Derby held at Lake Isabella, April 4-6, 2009. Free camping and day use was provided by the Forest Service at Camp 9 day use area, Auxiliary Dam, Old Isabella and South Fork recreation area.
- **Water flows again!** The old pressure tank was replaced to restore the water system at the South Fork recreation area.
- **And, all the rest.** Recreation area fees collected continue to help pay for salaries, trash service, toilet pumping, water system monitoring, and supplies.

#### **Other District news.**

- **Kids in the Woods.** The Annual South Fork Middle School Program, a partnership with the river rafting companies and the Forest Service, for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, was held on April 27, 2009. The annual five day camping event focused hands-on learning activities centered on conservation education. Students identified local trees, explored the role of fire in the ecosystem, navigated a compass and map orienteering course, panned for gold, learned hand tool safety to maintain trails and lake etiquette while rafting or kayaking, and sharpened mountaineering and rock climbing skills.

*Recreation Opportunities* abound throughout the Kern River Valley. The lessons I have learned through the years are embodied in the Forest Service mission statement, *Caring for the land and serving people*, which truly goes hand in hand with caring for community and being of service.

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