



# NEWS RELEASE

## Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

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Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

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### **Princess Campground: Family Memories**

Summers at Princess Campground provide an incredible experience which touch people and create lasting family memories! Our national forests provide families opportunities to get away from the distractions we face each day and get back to basics by camping under the stars.

Princess Campground sits within the Indian Basin Giant Sequoia grove (5,900 feet), in the northern section of the Giant Sequoia National Monument on the Hume Lake Ranger District. Here visitors have remarkable opportunities to walk and camp among young giant sequoias, lush meadows, and shallow creeks along the Indian Basin Interpretive Trail.

The Indian Basin grove provides fascinating lessons in early American history. As destructive as logging was in the early 1900's, it required an amazing amount of ingenuity and investment. A century ago, families traveled through rugged mountainous terrain on foot, horse or mule using hand tools. Historic remnants left in this grove tell a rich story of the western frontier and the 1900-era logging operations. The logging artifacts and the numerous awe-inspiring stumps of monarch giant sequoias, will challenge your imagination.

Princess Campground is a popular destination on the Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, the Kings River Special Management Area, the Kings Wild and Scenic River, the Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, Hume Lake, the Boole Tree, (the largest tree on National Forest System lands and 6<sup>th</sup> largest in the world), the Converse Basin Grove, (the largest of all the sequoia groves), and Boyden Cavern.

Starting in 2003, the Sequoia applied for and was awarded a 1.5 million dollar U.S. Forest Service Capital Improvement Project grant to rehabilitate and begin deferred maintenance on the campground's 90 sites located along three loops. When finished the renovations will enhance visitor experiences and provide recreation facilities for persons of all abilities including wheelchair access.

Many of the improvements are listed below and are designed to meet today's 21<sup>st</sup> century customer. Reconstructed level parking spurs will soon accommodate recreational vehicles and trailers.

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- **Indian Basin Interpretive Trail** was constructed and paved to be wheelchair accessible. The trail meanders through the giant sequoia grove interpreting nature's wonders along the way;
- **Camping spurs** are now much larger to accommodate RVs along with new picnic tables and campfire rings that meet accessibility standards;
- **New Paving** for roads, camping spurs, 2 host site trailer pads, pathways to 8 toilet buildings and 16 water hydrants allows access for wheelchairs;
- **Replacements** of 4 gates, 5,315 feet of waterline including drains, 2,300 feet of pump and control lines, replacement of the generator house, installation and replacement of 21 valves with valve boxes, installation of 2 leach fields;
- **Installation** of a new RV water tower washout station and potable water fill, 2 new RV pedestals, a pumpout septic tank for the host site, and 1 government generator building; and
- **Toilet improvements** and 2 additional toilet buildings built in the areas of the accessible campsites.

A week at Princess Campground can and will change your perspective on life! I look forward to hearing your family stories that include seeing your first giant sequoia, exploring the Indian Basin grove, walking along the new interpretive trail, fishing or splashing in Hume Lake, experiencing Kings Canyon one of the steepest canyons in north America, or just stargazing.

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#### **Editors Note on Construction Closures.**

Beginning September 8, 2009, through the 2010 camping season, California Land Management (CLM), the U.S. Forest Service concessionaire will not accept any reservations for Princess Campground until construction is complete. For updates on the campground opening, please visit CLM's website at: [www.clm-services.com](http://www.clm-services.com), or Sequoia National Forest at: [www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia).

#### **Giant Sequoia life stages sidebar:**

A 100-year-old tree may be no more than waist high if early growth is suppressed from the shade of larger, adjacent trees. You can tell the approximate age of a giant sequoia by looking at a tree's shape.

- Sequoia branches spiral from near the base of trees less than 100 to 150 years old, and they have pointed crowns.
- From around 150 to 500 years, trees begin to lose bottom branches, creating more rounded crowns.
- Trees 500 to 1,500 years old begin to take on the classic giant sequoia appearance with massive, reddish trunks and rounded more open crowns.
- Craggy branches and missing tops (often struck by lightning) signal trees beyond 1,500 years.
- Giant sequoias reach about 80 percent of their height by age 150, if they have full sunlight.
- Unlike their cousins the coastal redwoods, giant sequoias do not re-sprout from the remaining stump.