

11th annual
Woodlake
Car Show

—SEE PAGES 6-7

THE Kaweah Commonwealth

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WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THREE RIVERS AND SEQUOIA~KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS



TROUBLED BRIDGE OVER WATER: Above, the closed-off bridge at road's end in Mineral King. Left, the underside where some supports are rotted.

—FORREST JONES PHOTOS

MK bridge deemed unsafe for traffic

By JOHN ELLIOTT

Every three years when inspectors from Federal Highways make their appointed rounds looking at all the bridges in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, there are bound to be some surprises. On July 13, after inspecting the bridge at the end of the Mineral King Road, an immediate closure was ordered that surprised a number of visitors.

There were approximately 30 vehicles parked in and around the Disney-owned parking lot area in East Mineral King whose owners were undoubtedly surprised and a little confused. Signs announcing the closure were placed on either end of the narrow bridge that spans the East Fork of the Kaweah River at the uppermost crossing of the Mineral King Road.

Most visitors to Sequoia National Park never see the tiny bridge or road's end in the scenic Mineral King valley. Monday's closure, however, caught dozens of Mineral King hikers off-guard and had cabin owners in East

Mineral King pondering the most prudent way to get back and forth.

Dan Blackwell, chief of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks facilities and who is responsible for getting the bridge repaired, said he wasn't surprised by the temporary closure.

In a statement issued after a July 15 squad meeting, Blackwell said the local parks were aware there was a potential problem with the Disney bridge located 25 miles from where the Mineral King Road junctions with Highway 198 east of Three Rivers. Blackwell said a number of the wooden stringers in the substructure showed evidence of massive rotting.

Park workers recently had completed some minor repairs to the structure, and there is an application pending for more funding to complete the job, Blackwell said. For the time being, outbound vehicles may exit on the upper side of the bridge; vehicles approaching the bridge from down-canyon are being directed

—see **BRIDGE**, page 11

3R declared official weather station

When a society and its members are dedicated to collecting the history of a community, what better place to record local weather information? That's just what the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Hanford was thinking when they established a data collection station at the Three Rivers Historical Museum.

On Thursday, July 9, Steve Mendenhall, meteorologist in charge of the Hanford office, was at the local historical museum to present its board members with a plaque. The presentation was made after Mendenhall explained what the local station does and how it works.

The data is collected by a computer-automated program that

—see **WEATHER**, page 11



WEATHER WATCHERS: Members of the Three Rivers Historical Society board receive a plaque from Steven Mendenhall (center), meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Hanford station. TRHS directors, from left to right: Dodie Marshall, archivist; Tom Marshall, president; Carolyn Talley, at-large; and Nancy Brunson, vice president.

President to nominate Park Service director

President Barack Obama announced last week his intent to nominate Jonathan Jarvis to be director of the National Park Service. Jon Jarvis, who has been an employee of the NPS for over 30 years, is currently director of the Pacific West Region, which includes Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

As regional director, Jarvis is responsible for the 54 units of the National Park System in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific islands of Guam, Saipan,



JON JARVIS

and American Samoa. He oversees 3,000 employees with an

—see **DIRECTOR**, page 11

• KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake •

Saturday, July 18	Sunday, July 19	Monday, July 20	Tuesday, July 21	Wednesday, July 22	Thursday, July 23	Friday, July 24
Mostly sunny Hi 103 • Lo 71	Sunny Hi 104 • Lo 70	Sunny Hi 104 • Lo 70	Sunny Hi 104 • Lo 69	Sunny Hi 103 • Lo 68	Sunny Hi 102 • Lo 70	Sunny Hi 103 • Lo 69

WEATHER WATCH

HOT

Kaweah Country is in the grips of the annual summer heatwave. There is no relief in sight from the triple digits, which are forecast to continue through the week.