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

## Town meeting highlights parks, county updates

The monthly Three Rivers Town Hall meeting returned last Monday, Oct. 5, to the Three Rivers Memorial Building after a three month hiatus. There were updates and news on several topics of interest.

Deb Schweizer, fire education specialist for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, opened the forum by introducing Jeff Bradybaugh, the interim superintendent for the local national parks. Bradybaugh, a career resource management specialist, is filling the vacancy created by the retirement of Craig Axtell and comes to Ash Mountain from Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument.

Relative to fire, Deb announced that the Azalea prescribed burn near Grant Grove had been completed. Best-case scenario, she said, is that fire managers are looking to complete another eight projects before the end of fire season.

"It's unlikely that everything will line up to complete all the projects," Deb said. "Next on the agenda is the Ella burn, a 70-acre parcel near Grant Grove, where the NPS hopes to begin ignitions as soon as this Sunday [Oct. 11], and the Quarry burn near the Sherman Tree in Giant Forest."

The 45-acre burn near the Sherman Tree will not necessitate any closures, Deb said. The largest projects still out there is the 1,200-acre Mosquito/Fowler burns in the Mineral King area.

Those combined burns are planned for a few days before an approaching storm. Ignitions in the steep terrain below the Tar Gap Trail, Deb said, will be done by helicopter.

Dan Blackwell, parks' chief of maintenance, announced that the next few summer seasons will be

## MEASURE C DOLLARS GO TO WORK



Breaking ground Tuesday morning, Oct. 13, on junior-varsity baseball and softball fields at Woodlake High School are (from left to right) Bill Lewis, city administrator, City of Woodlake; Frances Ortiz, vice mayor, City of Woodlake; Raul Gonzales, mayor, City of Woodlake; Brent Cushenbery, assistant superintendent, Woodlake Public Schools; David East, assistant superintendent, Woodlake Public Schools; Tim Hire, superintendent, Woodlake Public Schools; Nicole Glentzer, principal, Woodlake High School; Steve Tindle, Micham Construction (contractor); Sandra Flores, chief financial officer, Woodlake Public Schools; and Richard Rochin, board member, WHS. The Woodlake High School District's Measure C \$4.5 million bond — which will ultimately add classrooms, restrooms, and improve athletic and performing arts facilities on the campus — was passed by voters in February 2008. —BRIAN ROTHHAMMER PHOTO

busy ones for road construction in Sequoia. A series of upcoming projects are a part of a \$100 million backlog in deferred maintenance.

The current paving work on the Generals Highway near Halstead Meadow has been hampered recently by the cold weather. The completion of that contract, scheduled for October 23, might have to be extended.

Blackwell also said that the next stretch of the Generals Highway beyond Amphitheater Point that's on tap for 2010 will require one-hour closures similar to what has been experienced in the past. That's the steepest and most difficult portion with lots of retaining walls that might even require some night work, he said.

—see MEETING, page 11

## Climber airlifted from Whitney zone

Climbing any of the several routes on Mount Whitney is an extreme adrenaline rush. Looking down the 14,505-foot peak from the shear north face is an unforgettable experience.

But for two men who attempted the climb on Friday, Oct. 2, the rush and the experience quickly became a nightmare. That's because one of the climbers was struck by a basketball-sized rock that banged his shoulder, causing severe compression on his scapula and vertebrae.

Though details are sketchy as to what happened next, the duo was able to get a cell signal and call 911. According to Adrienne Freeman, public information

officer at Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, the call came into the dispatcher in the early evening so it was too late to dispatch a helicopter for an immediate rescue.

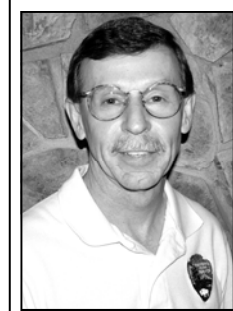
Undaunted, the apparently experienced climbers knew exactly what to do until help arrived. They spent most of the night down-climbing and set up a makeshift camp east of Iceberg Lake near an open flat where they were clearly visible.

At first light, a park rescue helicopter was dispatched. After landing nearby, the injured victim was transported via helicopter to a nearby hospital where he was treated for severe trauma to the shoulder and back but otherwise glad to have survived a brush with death.

## Interim parks boss strong on resource protection

By JOHN ELLIOTT

When Jon Jarvis, the former head of the Pacific West Region was nominated to become the director of the National Park Service by President Obama, it set in motion a musical chairs of sorts among the superintendent positions of the biggest and most prestigious national parks. Added to the speculation of who might succeed Jarvis, who was sworn in Friday, Oct. 2, as the agency's 18th director, are the usual retirements and suddenly there are vacancies in key posts throughout the western region.



JEFF BRADYBAUGH  
INTERIM  
SUPERINTENDENT

For these contingencies, the NPS regional office in San Francisco maintains a list of qualified individuals who might be willing to move on short notice

to take an interim appointment.

That list is essentially how Jeff Bradybaugh became the interim superintendent at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. His first day at his new Ash Mountain office was Monday, Oct. 5, and will help ensure a smooth transition until the next superintendent is named.

Craig Axtell, the former superintendent of Sequoia-Kings Canyon, officially retired October 2. Bradybaugh said he believes that hiring a replacement will take at least three to six months.

"There's an evaluation process of how the park has changed that has to occur when there's a va-

—see PARK, page 11

### KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake • WEATHER WATCH

Saturday, October 10	Sunday, October 11	Monday, October 12	Tuesday, October 13	Wednesday, October 14	Thursday, October 15	Friday, October 16
Sunny Hi 83 • Lo 52	Sunny Hi 82 • Lo 50	Clouds forming Hi 73 • Lo 51	Chance of showers Hi 73 • Lo 54	Showers Hi 74 • Lo 50	Clearing Hi 78 • Lo 49	Sunny Hi 79 • Lo 48

It's official... NOAA scientists now have sufficient data to say without a doubt that the 2009-2010 precipitation season in the central and southern Sierra regions will be influenced by El Nino. However, they do not predict the current season to be as strong as the last one that occurred in 1997-98. There is a 70 percent chance for rain in Three Rivers and snow in the nearby mountains by mid-week. Stack the firewood and get the galoshes and cold-weather gear ready for some action.