

# Study: Livestock polluting Sierra water supply

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

As director of the emergency room at the UC Davis Medical Center, Robert Derlet always wondered what made people sick.

Each summer, on hiking trips into the high Sierra, he brought that curiosity along, asking himself: Where do you get infections in the wilderness? The most obvious possibility, he believed, was the water.

Now, after 10 years of fieldwork and 4,500 miles of backpacking, Derlet knows for sure. What he has learned – after analyzing hundreds of samples dipped from backcountry lakes and streams –



Cattle near  
Bridgeport.  
Photo/Daryl L.  
Hunter

is that parts of the high Sierra are not nearly as pristine as they look.

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