WELCOME TO WHISKEYTOWN
National Recreation Area, where you can swim, hike, mountain bike or ride your horse as far as you like. It is a great pleasure to see the park in full operation again following the quiet season of winter. I invite you to explore the park and discover our vast wealth of recreational opportunities, natural resources and cultural history.

Our park staff and the marina concession have been working hard to prepare for this summer season. Our maintenance crews, working with private contractors, have constructed a new water line to serve the Visitor Center. A new fuel spill containment system, and an environmentally friendly vehicle wash-facility have been constructed at Park Headquarters to protect Whiskeytown Lake’s water quality. Many interpretive programs are being offered, including tours of the park’s California Gold Rush historic sites, campground programs, and ranger-guided kayak tours of the lake.

We have also prepared for another busy fire season by hiring firefighters that will protect the park and our neighboring communities. Whiskeytown’s firefighters will also help with fire fighting efforts when needed throughout the United States. During the past winter, we had both private contractors and inmate crews working to construct shaded fuel breaks in strategic locations around the park boundary to reduce the threat of wildfire. The park’s natural resource management staff worked through the winter writing an Environmental Impact Statement for the park’s new Fire Management Plan.

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C., our National Park Service Rangers have been providing increased law enforcement security for Shasta Dam, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As a unit of the National Park Service, Whiskeytown offers the public authenticity in both its natural and cultural resources. The park’s old growth forest of sugar pine, Douglas fir, and ponderosa pine, provide lovely places for quiet reflection, picnics, and camping. The park has several scenic waterfalls worth hiking to, and miles of cascading mountain streams that provide forest shaded relief from the summer’s heat. Black bear, mountain lion, and an abundance of bird life make Whiskeytown their home.

I personally hope you learn something new and interesting about Whiskeytown, but above all, have a safe and enjoyable visit.

People Making a Difference

There’s a special group of individuals here at Whiskeytown, about two hundred in all. They come from all over the north state. They contribute over 7500 hours a year helping with the operation of the park. They aren’t here for the money. In fact they aren’t paid. They come for the inspiring beauty of the area. They come to meet some of the half a million visitors that come here each year. They come for the camaraderie, and they come to make sure that Whiskeytown is protected and preserved properly. They are part of a 70,000-member program nationwide. These are the people of the “Volunteers in Parks” program.

Volunteers work with the National Park Service staff performing duties vital to the park’s operation. The park’s Visitor Center is run by a staff of 15 volunteers. They sell merchandise, permits and passes and provide information to park visitors. Other volunteers help by doing various maintenance tasks. Maintenance volunteers donated over 4000 hours last year. Other volunteers assist park rangers conducting backcountry hikes or kayak tours. Some provide special skills such as photography or scuba diving. There are also those who drive thousands of miles to get here to spend their summer as Campground Hosts. Many of Redding’s high schools and scouting groups also provide volunteers for various projects.

Although volunteers aren’t paid, they receive plenty of kudos from park employees. Whiskeytown is proud of its volunteer program and makes every effort to ensure that the experience is rewarding and enjoyable. Anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to contact the park’s Volunteer Coordinator at (530) 242-3421.
The solar panels are capable of producing 3,800 watts of power at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center when in full sun. The solar array consists of solar panels that rotate to face the sun as it moves across the sky.

In addition to providing most of the Visitor Center’s electricity needs during the daytime, Whiskeytown’s solar energy system is capable of feeding excess electricity back into the main utility grid through two inverters that match the solar power to the grid. This means that Whiskeytown’s overall electricity bills will be lower, and that at times when the Visitor Center is generating more power than is being used, the park will see credits, instead of charges, on Whiskeytown’s utility bill.

Meters located in the Visitor Center measure how much electricity has been produced overall, and track how much power is sold back to the electricity company. The total cost to install the photovoltaic system was $9,000 after a $9,000 rebate from the California Energy Commission. It is estimated that, at current energy prices, the new solar energy system will save taxpayers approximately $50 a year on Whiskeytown’s utility bill. At this rate the system will pay for itself in approximately 19 years. If energy costs rise, the system will pay for itself even sooner.

In May 2000, hundreds of bullfrog tadpoles were found dead in Whiskeytown Lake. Although bullfrogs are a non-native species that preys on several native animals within the park, the death of these tadpoles still concerned park staff because amphibians like the bullfrog are indicators of water quality and environmental health.

Samples of the dead tadpoles were sent to the National Wildlife Health Center for inspection. Examinations found problems on the skin, and around the gills and mouths of the tadpoles, but no signs of infectious disease. It was determined that an irritant in the water was the most likely cause. Consequently, what was originally thought to be a disease outbreak quickly turned into a water quality concern. However, preliminary lab tests did not show a problem.

Whiskeytown Lake is at the confluence of seven major streams that form one of the largest watershed feeding the Sacramento River. The National Park Service shares land ownership in the area with the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, timber corporations, and other private landowners. Land use activities that occur outside the park became suspect.

Analysis of one stream led to the discovery of a previously unknown abandoned mine that is associated with the Iron Mountain Superfund toxic waste site. Iron Mountain is famous for producing the most acidic waters (pH of -3.8) in the world. However, it was determined that the tadpole die-off was not caused by acid mine drainage.

Additional tests suggested that the die-off might have been caused by chemicals found in some fertilizers, herbicides, and oil-based solvents. Park staff wondered if these compounds were from the fire retardant that is dropped from airplanes by firefighters. Pollutants associated with two-stroke engines (MTBE and PAH) were also considered because even low concentrations of these chemicals can cause adverse effects in aquatic animals.

Last year the park discovered that illegal marijuana production was occurring in some remote portions of the park. Rangers raided several of the marijuana gardens confiscating $1 million worth of marijuana being grown in the park. Chemical fertilizers and other harmful compounds were found in the areas being used to grow marijuana. It is likely that the chemicals washed into the streams feeding Whiskeytown Lake, causing the bullfrog tadpole die-off.

Ambient populations are declining worldwide. Scientists are currently investigating this problem in several locations across the United States, including several national parks. Possible reasons for this decline include regional pollution, the introduction of non-native species, increased ultraviolet (UV-B) radiation, acid rain, global warming, infectious disease, or possibly a combination of these factors.

Whether the Whiskeytown tadpole die-off is related to other worldwide amphibian die-off events is still unknown. What is clear is that we need to continue, and expand, our monitoring of water quality so that we can better understand the ecological processes going on around us.

Personal Watercraft Ban Offers Improved Recreational Opportunities

Personal watercraft (PWCs) also known as Jet Skis, Wave Runners and various other brand names are no longer allowed on Whiskeytown Lake. The ban which went into effect April 20, 2002 applies only to Whiskeytown Lake and surrounding creeks. PWCs will continue to be allowed at Shasta and Trinity Lakes. The decision to ban PWCs was based on reducing visitor use conflicts that were identified by the public during the General Management Plan (GMP) process.

Issues of noise, water pollution, safety and incompatible behavior associated with PWCs were common complaints contributing to the decision to discontinue their use at Whiskeytown Lake.

We encourage all park users to continue to enjoy all the other recreational opportunities available at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, and to explore new recreation activities that provide an "escape from the noise and crowding associated with urban environments".

YOUR FEE DOLLARS AT WORK

Construction projects occurring at Whiskeytown this year include installation of a new handicap accessible fishing pier found at the Whiskeytown Creek Launch Ramp, handicap accessible picnic sites and trails at public beaches, new signs and bulletin boards at various trailheads, and new drinking fountains and picnic tables at public use areas.

Other construction projects this year include a new footbridge at the Brandy Creek swim beach area and a new sewage treatment facility for Brandy Creek.
Applying for a Job with the National Park Service

Winning the War on Weeds

NON-NATIVE PLANTS, ALSO CALLED EXOTIC OR ALIEN, are plant species that have been introduced into an area in which they did not evolve. Many thrive in disturbed areas, such as along roadsides and trails, and usually do not have natural enemies to help control their populations. When this type of plant spreads quickly, or crowds out native plants, we refer to it as an invasive species.

Invasive plants can quickly take over native landscapes, robbing wildlife of their natural food and shelter. Some of the most troublesome weeds found at Whiskeytown include yellow star thistle, (pictured at right) French, Scotch and Spanish broom, tree of heaven and Himalayan black-berry. The National Park Service uses many tools to limit the spread of invasive plants. This includes biological control (insects that are the specific plant’s natural predator), manual removal, mulching, and the use of chemical herbicides. As exotic plants are removed, natives are planted to help restore the natural landscape.

Some examples of native plants found at Whiskeytown can be seen in the planters outside the Visitor Center, including California wild rose, yarrow, Western raspberry, and buckbrush. Common native trees in the area are black oak, ponderosa pine, big leaf maple, oak and live oak, and native wildflowers such as California poppies, lilies and purple penstemons can be seen in and around the park in the spring and early summer months.

Wildlife, wind, water, and people spread both native and non-native plants when seeds or plant parts are moved from one area to another. You can help reduce the spread of exotic plants by not taking wildflowers from natural areas, and by checking your shoes and tires for attached plant parts to prevent unintentional transport of exotic species. Many thistles are infamous for transporting themselves by sticking to the bottom of hiker’s boots.

In many places people have deliberately introduced non-native species. A big part of the war on weeds is in your own backyard! Consider planting native species rather than exotics the next time you landscape your yard or update your flowerbed. Many natives are just as easy to grow, require less watering, and can be obtained through the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society. We stand a better chance of winning the war on weeds when we work together.

Miner’s Cats of Whiskeytown

YOU’VE JUST SPOTTED A RING-TAILED CREATURE at Whiskeytown. You do a double take. It’s not a raccoon. It has bright white around the eyes and a longer tail. What is it? This unique looking critter is the Ringtailed, also known as the “miner’s cat,” or civet. The name “miner’s cat” comes from the fact that Ringtails found the rock piles of gold dredging operations to their liking. Early settlers in the southwestern U.S. kept them around their homes as pets and to catch mice.

Although some people call them ring-tailed cats, they are not in the cat family. Some scientists think the Ringtail is so unique that it should be classified in its own family, Bassariscidae. However, the Ringtail is most commonly included in the Procyonidae family, which includes raccoons and Pando Bears.

Although Ringtails are uncommon in some habitats, they are fairly common in the lower elevations of Whiskeytown. One reason they are seldom seen is because Ringtails are nocturnal creatures meaning they are most active at night.

The animals are usually found on rocky, brush-covered slopes with blue oak and gray pine. They are never far from water, and are found from sea level up to 6,000 feet in elevation. Just a little larger than a gray squirrel, the Ringtail’s body is a pale yellowish gray, with a bushy tail encircled by seven incomplete blackish-brown rings and seven whitish ones. Ringtails appear fox-like with a broad head, sharp muzzle, and large ears. Their large eyes are adapted for seeing at night.

The sharp claws of these agile creatures enable them to run down trees and scale rough surfaces, allowing them to climb trees to escape danger. When disturbed or upset, the animal makes a cooing bark similar to that of a fox. Ringtails may also whimper or emit a piercing scream.

Ringtails den under rock piles, in caves or crevices along cliffs, and in unused buildings. Three or four young kits are born in May or June. At birth the female feeds them. When the kits are approximately three weeks old the male helps provide food for them. At two months of age the young kits forage with their parents, and by five months of age their behavior and appearance is similar to that of an adult.

Ringtails hunt lizards, birds, mice, and other small rodents. Acorns, blackberries and the fruit of the madrone and manzanita are also eaten. In the summer and fall, insects form the major part of the Ringtail’s diet. In the winter and spring rodents are the primary food. This provides an important service to people by helping to control rodent populations.

The Ringtail is a protected species in California. However, in some locations they are trapped, although they aren’t particularly popular for their fur. Be sure and keep your eyes open for this interesting nocturnal creature while you’re visiting Whiskeytown.

Summer Junior Lifeguard Program

Whiskeytown is sponsoring a Junior Lifeguard Program this summer at Brandy Creek Beach. The program is for young people between the ages of 12 and 17 and runs from June 24th to August 16th. Those interested in applying should be prepared to swim 400 yards as part of the selection process. Parental consent is also required of all participants. A total of 12 candidates are selected each year.

Sessions are held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9a.m. to 12 noon. Participants receive training in water safety, open-water lifeguard techniques and may be certified in CPR and Basic First Aid. The Junior Lifeguard Program also introduces children to search and rescue, wildland fire control, park ranger boat patrol and natural resource protection. Participants also take part in a physical conditioning program with an emphasis on swimming.

The Junior Lifeguard Program provides participants with job experience when applying for paid lifeguard jobs at Whiskeytown and other local water recreation locations. Junior life guards regularly practice and develop excellent water rescue skills above and beyond what they may experience at a swimming pool setting. Several National Park Service, park rangers, and maintenance employees began their careers as Junior Lifeguards.

For more information call Whiskeytown Chief Ranger Stephen Prokop at (530) 242-3413.
Camping at Whiskeytown

**Whiskey Creek Group Picnic Area** offers 3 group-use picnic areas at a rate of $40 or $50 per site depending on which site is reserved. Reservations may be made April 1 to September 30.

**Primitive Tent Campsites** are available only on a first-come-first-served basis at the Visitor Center. Summer rates are $10.00/night and winter rates are $2.50/night. Permits are available at the campground registration box.

**Brandy Creek RV Campground** offers sites on a first-come-first-served basis. Summer rate is $14.00/night and winter rate is $5.00 per night. Permits are available at the campground registration box.

**Park Passes**

Pases may be purchased at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center. Place pass on the dashboard of driver's side when you visit the park. By purchasing a pass, you are directly contributing to improvements in your park.

- **Daily** - $5
- **Weekly** - $10

**Golden Age** - $10

Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens and permanent residents that are 62 years or older.

**Golden Access** - Free

Lifetime pass for permanently disabled U.S. Citizens and permanent residents.

**Visitor Center now the “One Stop” Permit Center**

A pass is required for all day-use visitors to Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. A $5 Daily Pass, $50 Weekly Pass, and $20 Annual Pass are available. Overnight visitors must also purchase a Daily, Weekly or Annual Pass for their vehicle in addition to their campsite fee.

All permits, including park entrance passes, visitors must also purchase a Daily, Weekly or Annual Pass for their vehicle in addition to their campsite fee.

**Reservation holders for the group areas at Whiskey Creek and Dry Creek will also need to check in at the Visitor Center.**

**All the Visitor Center is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and from 10 am to 4 pm the rest of the year.**

**Alligators at Whiskeytown?**

The northern alligator lizard, Elgaria coerulea shastensis, is distinguished by its bright yellow body and slate gray head. This species of lizard is normally found in cool, damp woodlands where it hunts for insects, ticks, spiders (even the poisonous black widow!), scorpions, and millipedes. Unlike most other lizards, the northern alligator lizard gives birth to live young, rather than laying eggs.

Although this critter is thought to be very primitive in terms of evolution, it has been recorded as being one of the most intelligent species of its kind.

(Jennifer Gibson)