Winter 2003

Volunteer Manager, Phyllis Swanson, at 242-3421.

unencumbered access to Whiskeytown that can be difficult to obtain
the public, and which can be sold directly by the artist.

return, the park will provide housing for a two-week period and will
their work, framed or otherwise finished, and ready for display. In

further support the park you are welcome to join the Friends of Whiskeytown who are assisting the National Park
hikes and programs and explore our vast trails, beautiful lake in its mountain setting, and dramatic scenery. To
Please have a safe time at Whiskeytown and seek out its secrets and rich historic past. Take advantage of the ranger
journey from the Pacific Ocean. Bald eagles and the northern spotted owl will be seeking nesting sites. Our fire
waters that bring life to the creeks and forest. Salmon are migrating up Clear Creek deep into the park after a long
in the park's cool waters and shaded forest.

By Gretchen Ring, Botanist

Our

The official newspaper of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area
Winter 2003

Mr. Tower’s Apple Trees

Winter Banana, Rhode Island Greening, Grimes Golden, Red Betimeger... what do these unusual names have in common? They are all varieties of historic apple trees that are found in the Tower House Historic District in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. This amazing apple stock and other orchard trees including cherry, plum, pear, persimmon, quince, walnut, and hazelnut have survived since gold rush days.

Located at the west end of the park, the bustling settlement included a popular hotel, residences, a saw mill, a mine, a blacksmith shop, and numerous outbuildings. Charles Camden and Levi Tower partnered up in the early 1860s to become the first successful entrepreneurs in the area. While Camden was busy with road building and mining, Tower built a hotel and planted magnificent orchards and gardens to provide his guests with fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Tower House Hotel had the reputation for providing the best food for many miles around. Tower’s orchards included one thousand fruit and nut trees and several thousand grape vines. Some of these trees came around the Horn of South America, some through the isthmus of Panama, while others came from one of the first nurseries in the west started in Oregon by the Lleweling Brothers, whose fruit tree stock came across the plains in covered wagons. Eighty of these trees survive today, making some of them at least 150 years old, and some of them are still bearing fruit. They outlined the Tower House Hotel, which was destroyed by fire in 1909.

Park staff and volunteers are working hard to preserve the ancient trees by pruning, mulching, feeding, weeding, and watering them. The old timbers are responding wonderfully and some have been grafted to new rootstock to preserve the genes of the trees even when they die. The staff has made a precise map of the location of each tree, compiled an historic record of the orchard, and rehabilitated the gold rush era irrigation system to once again nurture the gardens.

Take a stroll through the historic district to admire these venerable beauties in the yard of the beautifully restored Camden House, along the trails and meadows paralleling Willow Creek, near the Tenant Farm House, and in the field bordered by Highway 299 and Trinity Mountain Road. A map of the Tower House Historic District may be obtained at the Visitor Center.

To volunteer for orchard work, please call the office of park botanist, Gretchen Ring, 359-2360, or the Volunteer Manager, Phyllis Swanson, 242-3421.
Clowning Around With Acorn Woodpeckers

There are even more characteristics that make acorn woodpeckers unique. Some animals are such specialists that they depend on one crop for their survival. These woodpeckers manage to make it through the cold months on the acorns stored in their granaries. With their chiseled bills, they drill thousands of holes in the bark of oak trees, telephone poles, fence posts or other wooden structures and insert as many acorns as possible while the supply lasts in the fall.

The open oak woodlands of Whiskeytown are ideal habitat for this unique species. They don’t have to depend on a single species of oak for their acorn supply—they have ten species here that they can use. If the crop of one particular species of oak fails, there are usually other types producing. This supply allows the woodpeckers to live in the park year round, and they don’t migrate unless their granaries run out of food, a rare occurrence. In the spring and summer, the birds switch to the abundant insects for the mainstay of their diet. The bugs are caught on the wing or bored out of dead branches.

The fate of the acorn woodpecker in the western United States depends upon the protection of oak woodlands. Save those oaks on your property by being careful not to disturb their roots by compacting them with machinery or overwatering with an irrigation system. If you have a wood burning stove, consider switching to a different source of heat that will lessen the demand on oak for firewood. These are a few things that you can do to help preserve one of nature’s most endearing characters, the acorn woodpecker.
Bats Aren’t Creepy!

Most bats are insectivorous, like those at Whiskeytown. Insectivorous bats can consume more than their body weight in insects in one night! Bats reduce the toll that mosquitoes, moths, beetles, and grasshoppers take on farmers’ crops each year. You can see why they are so valuable to humans for insect control.

Whiskeytown is home to 13 of California’s 24 bat species. There are 45 species found in California, 26 of which are common bats. This family includes the big brown bat and the Yuma myotis, the two species most often detected by special sensing equipment in the park. The Brazilian bat, the only free-tailed bat occurring in Whiskeytown, is a member of the Molossidae family.

Bats are expert flyers and have been clocked at 12 to 20 miles per hour. They have normal vision, but rely mostly on sounds emitted from their nose or mouth to “see” their environment. Sound waves are bounced off prey or other objects to determine direction, distance, size, and velocity. The animal’s flight path is generally straight, becoming erratic when in pursuit of prey. If you see a wobbly, night-flying creature, you can bet it is a bat. They may swoop close to you in pursuit of a meal, but they will not fly into you or bite you.

The animals communicate between one another in this way also, but most of these sounds are beyond the range of human hearing. If these pulses of sound were audible to humans, the 145 decibel calls of some bat species would be the equivalent of hearing a jet taking off!

Whiskeytown’s bat species have various strategies for coping with the cold winter months. Some of the bats stay in the park and go into hibernation. Weatherbee stresses the importance of not disturbing hibernating bats, which causes them to use up precious energy reserves to “wake up.” This can leave the bats without sufficient energy to emerge from hibernation in the spring. Other bat species migrate to warmer climates to spend the winter months. A few species exhibit seasonal altitudinal migration - the bats stay within the park but move from higher to lower elevations, where it is warmer.

Predators of bats include owls, hawks, raccoons, skunks, and snakes, though none of these animals prey on them regularly. Humans are having the most significant impact on bat populations. Over the last 20 years, approximately 80 percent of the U.S. bat population has been lost due to habitat destruction and eradication efforts because of fear and misunderstanding. Half of North America’s bat species are listed as endangered or are candidates for such a listing. The most important thing humans can do is to try and change their perception of bats. The decline or loss of any bat species creates a ripple effect across the entire ecosystem. These interesting and important animals deserve our respect.

One quarter of the world’s 4,000 species of mammals are bats. During their 65 million year existence, they have diversified quite a bit. The wing spans of bat species may range from 5 inches to 6 feet and their weight may vary from less than a penny to a little over two pounds. Some are fruit-eaters while others feed on pollen and nectar. These species play a vital role in pollination throughout the world. There are 450 cash crops around the world that depend on bats for pollination and seed dispersal.

History Comes Alive at the Whiskeytown Cemetery

by Anette Rardin, Visitor Use Assistant

More than half a million hopeful miners flooded into California during the Gold Rush beginning in 1848. Some of them lived and worked, died, and were buried along Whiskey Creek. The original Whiskeytown Cemetery was located above Whiskey Creek, near its confluence with Clear and Brandy creeks. The cemetery was moved in 1961 to its present location to avoid being buried under development.

Tales of vampire bats and the fear of contracting rabies foster a dislike for the creatures. In reality, only one species found in parts of Mexico, Central, and South America feeds on the blood of large birds and mammals, and does not prey on humans. And fewer than 1 in 1,000 bats carry rabies. Bats are actually gentle and passive, biting only if they feel threatened or when sick. They are very clean animals, spending much of each day grooming.

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Williams was the town’s “good natured blacksmith.” Although successful, the Williams family had their share of hardship. Of their nine children, at least three died at a young age. One was especially saddening. In December 1865, one of the daughters died at about four years of age. She and another child were playing around a fire they had built a ways from the Williams’ home. The little girl’s dress caught fire, and she was badly burned, with little hope of recovery. The Shasta County Sheriff referred to her as a “good and affectionate child.”

The Keslers and Williamses to Whiskeytown, but it was the bonds of friendship that tied these two families together. The Kesler family still stands. Lewellyn Williams was born in 1832 in Wales, but by 1853 he had moved and lived for gold along Whiskey Creek. Unlike many other miners who moved on to other “diggins” when the gold played out, the Williams family stayed in Whiskeytown.

The Keslers were another early Whiskeytown mining family. Their tombstones are also found in the Whiskeytown Cemetery, next to the Williams’ plot, a firing location because the two families were neighbors in life as well. William Kesler was born about 1824 in Kentucky and arrived in Shasta County in 1850. He mined for gold with moderate success in the 1850s and 1860s.

Kesler, who also became the “enterprising and gentlemanly merchant” of Whiskeytown, had a bit of difficulty hanging on to the gold. Once, for example, he left $700 in gold dust and coin in the store drawer while he went in the back to stock merchandise. When he returned, the gold was gone—so was the thief!

It may have been the lure of gold that brought people such as the Keslers and Williamses to Whiskeytown, but it was the bonds of family and friends and the building of a community that kept them there. Whiskeytown Cemetery memorializes these pioneers.
**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**SERVICES:**

**Visitor Center:** Located on Hwy 299 and Kennedy Memorial Drive, the Visitor Center is open daily during the winter from 10 am - 4 pm. All permits and passes are available here. A large selection of books and postcards are also available. (530) 246-1225

**Park Headquarters:**
- Open Monday - Friday 8 am - 4:30 pm
- Special Use Permits are available here.
- (530) 242-3400

**Radio:**
- Tune to 1440 on your AM radio for information about Whiskeytown.

**Launch Ramps and Fishing Piers:**
- There are three boat ramps on the lake located at Whiskey Creek, Oak Bottom, and Brandy Creek Marina.
- There are handicap accessible fishing piers at Whiskey Creek and Oak Bottom.

**Marinas and Store:**
- Oak Bottom Marina provides gas, fishing supplies, souvenirs and other non-perishable items for sale.
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**TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY CALL 911**

**Ranger Guided Programs**

Winter is a great time to visit Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. The park offers a variety of ranger guided activities throughout the year. Call the Visitor Center at (530) 246-1225 (10 am - 4 pm daily) for the most current information. Winter activities that may be offered include:

**Camden House Tour**
- Tour the 1852 home of pioneer and prospector Charles Camden and learn how fortunes were made and lost during the California Gold Rush.

**Walk In The Park**
- Discover the natural beauty and historical values of Whiskeytown while exploring the backcountry with a ranger. Learn how the National Park Service works to preserve and protect these treasures for all to enjoy. Program length and location varies. Dress in layers and be prepared for changing weather conditions.

**Camping at Whiskeytown**

Reservations can be made up to five months in advance of your stay at Oak Bottom, Dry Creek, and the Whiskey Creek Group Picnic Area by calling the National Park Reservation Service at 1-800-336-2267 or using the website http://reservations.nps.gov. Overnight campers must purchase a daily, weekly or annual pass for their vehicle in addition to their campsite fee.

Oak Bottom Campground offers $18.00/night lakeside tent sites, $60.00/night tent sites, and $40.00/night RV sites. During the winter season, sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis at $8.00/night for tent and $76.00/night for RV sites. Reservations may be made May 15 to September 15.

Dry Creek Group Tent Campground offers 2 campsites (tent only) at $75/night. Each has a maximum of 50 people and may be reserved from April 1 to September 30.

**Whiskeytown Group Picnic Area**

Offers 3 group day-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. Permits are available at the Visitor Center. Year-round rates are $20.00 per night.

**Brandy Creek RV Campground** offers sites on a first-come, first-served basis. Summer rate is $44.00/night and winter rate is $37.00/night. Permits are available at the fee drop box in the campground.

**Volunteers - In - Parks Profile**

“**No SWEAT!”** is how this non-profit group from Redding feels about helping keep Whiskeytown clean.

In the past year SWEAT members have picked up at least 3 tons of garbage on the Oak Bottom Water Ditch Trail which they have graciously adopted. “We enjoy running, biking and swimming at Whiskeytown so we decided to give back to the park by adopting the Oak Bottom Trail” states SWEAT members. Since 1975 SWEAT (Shasta Wonderland Elite Athletic Team), a non-profit organization, has been an integral part of the fitness scene in Northern California, promoting health and fitness through running, walking and bicycling. The group, commonly referred to as SWEAT Running Club shares a common interest in fitness and fun and the satisfaction of helping the National Park Service and its visitors.

Keeping the park clean is an enormous task and this group has certainly been a great help. If you or your group are interested in volunteer opportunities at Whiskeytown, please contact the Volunteer Manager at (530) 242-3421.

**Winter Safety at Whiskeytown**

**Boating**

- Water levels in the lake fluctuate constantly during the winter months. When the lake level is low, numerous shoals present new boating hazards that may not have been a problem during the summer high lake levels. Heavy storm systems may flush a lot of debris, such as logs and mud, into the lake. Extreme weather changes can occur more abruptly this time of year. The water is cooler and the cooler air temperatures make the chance of hypothermia much greater. Remain alert to stay safe.

**Tips for Avoiding Hypothermia**

- Follow the weather reports if you intend to be outside for extended periods.
- Realize that conditions may be worse than the forecast.
- Dress properly. Wear layered, insulated clothing that doesn’t retain moisture like polypropylene or wool (no cotton) and a windproof outer layer. Always carry raingear.
- Keep your clothes dry. Wet clothes lose their insulating effect and, combined with wind, can chill you.
- Wear a warm hat or hood. Thirty to fifty percent of body heat is lost through the head.
- Avoid dehydration and sweating. Sweating increases heat loss through evaporation.
- Increase your intake of fluids and food. Carry high-calorie foods such as candy bars and trail mix when going out in questionable weather. But avoid caffeine and alcohol; they steal your heat.

**PARK PASSES**

Passes may be purchased at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center and at self-service stations throughout the park. Place your pass on the driver’s side dashboard when you visit the park. By purchasing a pass, you are directly contributing to improvements at Whiskeytown.

**Daily - $5**
- Valid at Whiskeytown on date of purchase only.

**Annual - $20**
- Valid for one year from month of purchase. Also honored at Lassen Volcanic National Park.

**Golden Age - $10**
- Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are 62 years or older.

**Golden Access - Free**
- Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are permanently disabled.

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