



Backcountry Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a Backcountry Management Plan (BMP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) to guide future management of the park's backcountry. The process will explore the range of resource conditions and visitor experiences that should be achieved and maintained over time.



The park would like to know what you value about Whiskeytown's backcountry as well as any issues or concerns you have regarding how the backcountry resource is used and managed. Your comments are important to us.

How to Submit Comments

Please submit comments online at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BackcountryManagementPlanScoping>

Or by mail to:

Superintendent
Whiskeytown National Recreation Area
Backcountry Management Plan Comments
P.O. Box 188, Whiskeytown, CA 96095

Comments may also be provided at the public meeting at Redding City Hall on February 29, 2012. This meeting will provide information on the planning process and opportunity to ask questions and submit comments and suggestions.

Introduction/Purpose of Backcountry Management Plan

In conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the NPS is preparing this document to assist the park in preparing and evaluating the alternatives to be used for future management of the backcountry.

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area (NRA) was established by the Act of November 8, 1965. The General Management Plan (GMP) for Whiskeytown National Recreation Area identifies 36,825 acres of the park's 42,503 acres as backcountry (87% of the total park acreage).

The Backcountry Management Plan and Environmental Assessment identify opportunities for a variety of backcountry recreational activities and experiences while managing and protecting the resource values of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. The park recognizes that there will be an increasing demand for recreation in the future and wants to provide for those opportunities. This plan will be a working document that allows for adapting to changes in recreational use over time and leaves the natural and cultural resources of the park unimpaired for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Backcountry Management Plan serves four purposes: (1) it is a public document that explains the policies and actions used for backcountry management at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area; (2) it identifies long-term management goals, management objectives, and actions to achieve those objectives; (3) it is a working guide for employees who manage the backcountry; and, (4) it provides direction for management of natural and cultural resources within the context of backcountry management policies and actions to mitigate associated impacts.

Management Zones

The park is proposing that the backcountry be stratified into three Management Zones with different goals and actions for each. Each zone will have different management objectives in terms of the desired resource condition, visitor experience, management, and appropriate kinds of activities and developments.

Zone 1 - The Solitude/Low Use Zone

This zone includes areas that are, generally, out of sight or sound of day-use visitors on trails. Seeing other people in this zone is rare. Trails and campsites are not maintained as regularly or to as high a standard as other areas. Campsites are few in number but some may be used frequently. There are no trailhead amenities beyond basic signage and parking area for a few vehicles.

Zone 2 - The Medium Use Zone

This zone includes areas with impacts that are visible to most visitors and where visitors can expect to see a few other people, although it is still relatively quiet. There are numerous established trails with more trailhead amenities. Trails and roads accessing these areas are open most of the year. Camping is in designated areas with few amenities. Camping amenities may include toilets, small parking lots, tables, trash cans and bear-proof food lockers. Trails are maintained on a regular basis, depending on the amount of use they receive. It is possible to

have a primitive experience on some trails. Trails and trailheads may have small parking lots, trash cans, bulletin boards, benches, picnic tables, and/or bridges.

Zone 3 – The High Use Zone

This zone includes areas where visitors can expect to encounter many other users on a regular basis. The trails are multiple use and contain improvements for broader use. These areas are the most developed and include both drive-in and walk-in campsites and contain numerous amenities. Campsite amenities may include trash cans, hitching rails, tables, walls, and campfire pits. Trails and trailheads have or may have fee envelope drop boxes, toilets, kiosks, bulletin boards, wayside exhibits, trash cans, tables, large parking lots, bulletin boards, bathrooms, benches, picnic tables, vista viewpoints, and/or bridges. A lot of publicity is generated about these areas.

Proposed New Backcountry Camping and Trail Locations

The park currently has over 70 miles of designated trails and six designated campgrounds in the backcountry. The park proposes to add additional trails and campsites in this plan. Six additional campsites have been proposed to increase backcountry camping opportunities in the park. The amenities provided will correspond to those previously-described in the management zones section above. Hike-in sites vary in distance from the parking area to the campsite, while drive-in sites allow the visitors to drive to their prospective campsite.

Proposed Backcountry Hike-In Campsites

Location	Zone	Access
1. Kanaka Peak	Low	Hike-in
2. Peltier Trail	Medium	Hike-in
3. Papoose Gulch Trail (1-2 sites)	Medium	Hike-in

Proposed Backcountry Drive-In Campsites

Location	Zone	Access
1. Lower Brandy Creek (2 sites)	Medium	Drive-in
2. Star Island	Medium	Drive-in
3. Lower Crystal Creek	Medium	Drive-in

Proposed Backcountry Trail Segments

Trail Segment	Zone
1. Shasta Divide	Medium
2. Monarch Mountain	Medium
3. Shasta Bally West	Low
4. Clear Creek Gorge	Medium
5. High Route	Low
6. Upper Brandy Creek Falls	High
7. Princess Water Ditch	Medium
8. Headquarters to Visitor Center	High
9. Lakeshore Trail	Medium
10. Upper Boulder Creek Falls	Medium

Proposed Hiker's Huts/Backcountry Cabins

The park is also proposing the construction of “hiker’s hut” structures (no more than three) in the medium use zone that would provide visitors an opportunity to experience the scenery and solitude of the backcountry on a day use or overnight basis. Currently, there are no facilities in the park’s backcountry that provide people a resting place or a location to gather that is protected from the elements. These facilities are developed improvements that would provide a destination and an opportunity to socialize with others of similar interests.

The largest structure of the three proposed would be located near Monarch Mountain and would be the most-used facility due to ease of access and large enough to accommodate up to 20 people. The building would be situated to provide excellent views of the surrounding landscape, have a fire place, and an outside vault toilet.

The smaller backcountry facilities would be cabins designed to provide shelter for 4 to 6 people to spend the night. Proposed locations are near the summit of Shasta Bally and in the Coggins Park/Queen Mary area. These structures would have 4 to 6 bunks, a table, stove, and separate composting toilets. These cabins may also assist rangers patrolling the backcountry of the park.

All proposed locations are situated near roads that are accessible by NPS administrative vehicles, but are not open to public vehicle use. The three proposed locations are all deep in the forest and take time to reach by foot, mountain bike, or horse. The Hiker’s Huts will be placed to minimize the visual impact, and be designed to blend into the surrounding forest and still provide views from the structure.

Overview of the Process

Step 1- Define Purpose and Need; develop preliminary alternatives

Step 2 – Conduct external scoping (current step)

Step 3 – Refine alternatives

Step 4 – Identify environmental impacts and select preferred alternative

Step 5 – Prepare draft plan/environmental document

Step 6 – Public review of draft plan/environmental document

Step 7 – Analysis of public comment

Timeline for the EA

- NPS will hold a public scoping meeting on February 29, 2012 at Redding City Hall at 6:30 p.m.
- Public scoping period will be open through March 29, 2012.
- EA should be available for public comment late spring 2012.