

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Whiskeytown National Recreation Area
California**

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Foundation Document- Public Review Draft

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MISSION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The NPS core values are a framework in which the National Park Service accomplishes its mission. They express the manner in which, both individually and collectively, the National Park Service pursues its mission. The NPS core values are:

- **Shared stewardship:** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.
- **Excellence:** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Integrity:** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition:** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.
- **Respect:** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous national park system units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The national park system continues to grow and comprises 401 park units covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management in order to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.

The Arrowhead (this will be a sidebar when formatted)

The arrowhead was authorized as the official National Park Service emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. The sequoia tree and bison represent vegetation and wildlife, the mountains and water represent scenic and recreational values, and the arrowhead represents historical and archeological values.

INTRODUCTION

Every unit of the national park system will have a foundational document to provide basic guidance for planning and management decisions—a foundation for planning and management. The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park as well as the park’s purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes. The foundation document also includes special mandates and administrative commitments, an assessment of planning and data needs that identifies planning issues, planning products to be developed, and the associated studies and data required for park planning. Along with the core components, the assessment provides a focus for park planning activities and establishes a baseline from which planning documents are developed.

A primary benefit of developing a foundation document is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park. The process of developing a foundation document begins with gathering and integrating information about the park. Next, this information is refined and focused to determine the most important attributes of the park. The process of preparing a foundation document aids park managers, staff, and the public in identifying and clearly stating in one document the essential information that is necessary for park management to consider when determining future planning efforts, outlining key planning issues, and protecting resources and values that are integral to park purpose and identity.

While not included in this document, a park atlas is also part of a foundation project. The atlas is a series of maps compiled from available geographic information system (GIS) data on natural and cultural resources, visitor use patterns, facilities, and other topics. It serves as a GIS-based support tool for planning and park operations. The atlas is published as a (hard copy) paper product and as geospatial data for use in a web mapping environment. The park atlas for Whiskeytown National Recreation Area can be accessed online at: <http://insideparkatlas.nps.gov/>.

1 **PART 1: CORE COMPONENTS**

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3
4 The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park, park
5 purpose, significance statements, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes. These
6 components are core because they typically do not change over time. Core components are expected
7 to be used in future planning and management efforts.
8
9

10 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PARK**

11 Whiskeytown is a unit of the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area (NRA), a
12 shared recreation area with the U.S. Forest Service. It is located in Shasta County, California, about
13 eight miles west of downtown Redding. The U.S. Forest Service manages the Shasta and Trinity units
14 as the Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area. The National Park Service manages the
15 Whiskeytown Unit as Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.
16

17 The creation of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area was a product of a developing conservation
18 movement in America. The park is a result of both local and national forces that recognized the value
19 of the area’s natural resources for sustainability and conservation purposes. The park’s evolution
20 from its original concept as a 5,000-acre county park to a 42,000-acre national recreation area within
21 the national park system is a testament to those political leaders who had the vision to pursue it.
22 From its original conception in 1937 and through its congressional creation in 1965, Whiskeytown
23 continues to evolve as a treasured place for nearly one million annual visitors.
24

25 Whiskeytown Lake, created by an earth-filled dam on Clear Creek, is managed in partnership with
26 the Bureau of Reclamation. The reservoir provides high-quality recreation opportunities because of
27 its forested mountain setting, and a mode of operation that keeps it full throughout the primary
28 recreation season. In this regard, Whiskeytown is unlike most other major California reservoirs,
29 including the two other units of the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area, which
30 experience large drawdowns during summer months. At Whiskeytown, visitors can enjoy high-
31 quality swimming beaches, lakeside camping, boating and picnicking. Sport fishing is also a popular
32 activity at Whiskeytown. While the primary focus for Whiskeytown visitors is water recreation, the
33 park also contains cool rugged canyons, forests, streams, and waterfalls. Whether hiking, mountain
34 biking or horseback riding, the land surrounding Whiskeytown Lake provides many opportunities
35 for enjoyment.
36

37 Whiskeytown Lake, itself, comprises less than 10% of the park’s acreage; the vast majority of the
38 park is the surrounding forested land. Elevations range from 800 feet in lower Clear Creek below
39 Whiskeytown Dam to more than 6,200 feet atop Shasta Bally, the highest peak in the Whiskeytown
40 National Recreation Area. The natural vegetative communities at Whiskeytown are varied, with a
41 mixture of mixed conifer forest, riparian communities, oak woodlands, and chaparral. These habitats
42 provide shelter and sustenance to an abundant and diverse wildlife community, including numerous
43 species of concern and other rare species, as well as providing highly desirable natural settings for
44 recreation activities. The high-elevation forests have been profoundly influenced by disruption of
45 the historic fire regime, and today fire management plays a key role in the preservation and
46 restoration of the natural communities in the park.
47

1 Whiskeytown National Recreation Area includes parts of Shasta, Trinity, Siskiyou, and Tehama
2 counties. It is located within the traditional boundaries of the Wintu, who used the area for
3 thousands of years before the arrival of European Americans in the 19th century. Archeological
4 remains document their extensive habitation and use of the land that is now encompassed by
5 Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. Traditional ties to Whiskeytown remain among
6 contemporary Wintu.

7
8 European explorers and trappers began visiting the upper Sacramento Valley in the early part of the
9 19th century. They were soon followed by parties of settlers on their way to central California and
10 Oregon, and in 1848, gold was discovered on Clear Creek just west of Whiskeytown. “Boomtowns”
11 such as Shasta, Whiskeytown, and French Gulch grew quickly as large numbers of miners arrived in
12 the area. The remnants of the mining history of the area are evident at many places within the park.
13

14 In the fall of 1850, Levi Tower and Charles Camden arrived in the area and began mining for gold.
15 They soon expanded their business prospects by investing in a hotel, orchards, sawmill, construction
16 of a toll road, and water ditches. The Tower House Historic District, listed in the National Register
17 of Historic Places in 1973, is significant because of the contributions of these two men to the
18 development of commerce, transportation, agriculture, and industry in Northern California in the
19 two decades following the discovery of gold in 1848.
20

21 **PARK PURPOSE**

22 The purpose statement identifies the specific reason(s) for establishment of a particular park. The
23 purpose statement for Whiskeytown National Recreation Area was drafted through a careful analysis
24 of its enabling legislation and the legislative history that influenced its development. The park was
25 established when the enabling legislation adopted by Congress was signed into law on November 8,
26 1965. The purpose statement lays the foundation for understanding what is most important about
27 the park.
28

29 *Established to fulfill the conservation and recreational purposes of the Central Valley Project in Northern*
30 *California, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area provides opportunities for recreation in both a lake-*
31 *based and scenic mountain setting while conserving the scientific, natural, historic, and cultural values*
32 *for the enjoyment and inspiration of present and future generations.*
33

34 **PARK SIGNIFICANCE**

35 Significance statements express why a park’s resources and values are important enough to merit
36 designation as a unit of the national park system. These statements are linked to the purpose of
37 Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, and are supported by data, research, and consensus.
38 Statements of significance describe the distinctive nature of the park and why an area is important
39 within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. They focus on the most important
40 resources and values that will assist in park planning and management.
41

42 The following significance statements have been identified for Whiskeytown National Recreation
43 Area. (Please note that the sequence of the statements do not reflect the level of significance.)
44

- 45 ▪ From the peak of Shasta Bally to the Sacramento Valley floor, the wide range in elevation,
46 location, connection to surrounding areas, and convergence of four ecological provinces
47 support diverse ecosystems and provide habitat for protected plant and animal species,
48 including the only known global location of Howell’s alkali grass (*Puccinellia howellii*).

- 1
- 2 ▪ Whiskeytown’s environmental school, managed by the Shasta County Office of Education, is
- 3 one of the longest-running outdoor environmental education centers in the national park
- 4 system. Together with the park’s interpretive program, research, and partnerships, the school
- 5 provides outstanding opportunities for understanding and appreciating the area’s natural
- 6 and cultural resources.
- 7
- 8 ▪ Whiskeytown National Recreation Area provides a variety of outdoor recreation
- 9 opportunities in a scenic mountain-lake setting ranging from family boating, to inspirational
- 10 experiences in wild, undeveloped places.
- 11
- 12 ▪ Whiskeytown National Recreation Area’s landscape, historic sites, and remnant gold mining
- 13 features provide unique opportunities within the national park system to understand the
- 14 dramatic effects of the California Gold Rush.
- 15
- 16 ▪ Whiskeytown Lake is an important component of the Central Valley Project that
- 17 transformed California’s growth, economy, and agriculture through the delivery of clean
- 18 water. The creation of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area also helped fulfill one of the
- 19 goals of the Central Valley Project—to provide recreational opportunities to the local
- 20 community and visitors from afar.
- 21
- 22 ▪ Whiskeytown protects and preserves a continuous record and remnant sites of people,
- 23 including the Wintu, historic residents and a diversity of present day park visitors.
- 24 Whiskeytown’s landscape reflects the stories of how people have utilized the area’s resources
- 25 through time.
- 26

27 **FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES**

28 Fundamental resources and values (FRVs) are those features, systems, processes, experiences,
29 stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration
30 during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of
31 the park and maintaining its significance. Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a
32 park’s legislative purpose and are more specific than significance statements.

33

34 Fundamental resources and values help focus planning and management efforts on what is truly
35 significant about the park. One of the most important responsibilities of NPS managers is to ensure
36 the conservation and public enjoyment of those qualities that are essential (fundamental) to
37 achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. If fundamental resources and
38 values are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

39

40 The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for Whiskeytown National
41 Recreation Area:

- 42
- 43 ▪ **Recreational Opportunities.** Whiskeytown National Recreation Area provides an
- 44 exceptionally wide variety of experiences for a diverse group of users. This occurs on the
- 45 lake, beaches, and in the backcountry, and includes boating, swimming, camping, hiking,
- 46 biking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and gold panning.
- 47

- 1 ▪ **Opportunities to enjoy scenic resources and explore special places.** Whiskeytown
2 National Recreation Area provides abundant opportunities to explore special places and
3 experience viewsheds and scenic resources—from picturesque waterfalls to views of the
4 Trinity Alps and Mt. Lassen from the top of Shasta Bally.
5
- 6 ▪ **Legacy of Learning.** Whiskeytown National Recreation Area has provided more than 40
7 years of environmental education that includes public outreach through the National
8 Environmental and Educational Development (N.E.E.D.) Camp (currently Whiskeytown
9 Environmental School), and a variety of interpretive activities that include cultural
10 experiences.
11
- 12 ▪ **High Biodiversity Supported by Natural Processes.** Whiskeytown NRA supports
13 biologically diverse flora and fauna, including the only known global location of Howell's
14 alkali grass (*Puccinellia howellii*). Critical to maintaining their integrity are the natural
15 processes, such as fire, geologic, and hydrologic processes, necessary for supporting healthy
16 ecosystems. The park's forests, including seven sections of old growth, are complex and of
17 conservation significance. Whiskeytown is within the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion, an area
18 considered a center of biodiversity, an International Union for Conservation of Nature
19 (IUCN) Area of Global Botanical Significance, and a United Nations Educational, Scientific
20 and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proposed World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.
21
- 22 ▪ **Stories Related to Human Use of the Land.** Oral histories, historical research, and
23 collections at Whiskeytown provide an excellent opportunity to share stories about the
24 dramatic changes that have occurred to the landscape over time, from the discovery of gold
25 and followed by the immigration of pioneers to California, requiring an increase in food
26 production. Whiskeytown Lake and Dam provide opportunities to tell the story of the
27 Central Valley Project and how local visionaries and the U.S. President John F. Kennedy
28 made contributions to a 50-year legacy of outdoor recreational development.
29
- 30 ▪ **Sites, Structures, and Archeological Resources.** Whiskeytown contains a wide range of
31 historic sites and structures, cultural landscapes, and archeological features related to human
32 use of the landscape over time. This includes resources related to American Indian
33 occupation, mining features and settlement (Tower House Historic District), and
34 components of the Central Valley Project that created the lake, such as Whiskeytown Dam.
35 The Tower House Historic District exemplifies early European American settlement in
36 Northern California, beginning with the gold rush.
37
- 38 ▪ **Water Resources.** Whiskeytown National Recreation Area provides valuable, clean water
39 for hundreds of thousands of people of California and is one of many important sources of
40 water for the Central Valley. Whiskeytown's watersheds provide a source of fresh water to
41 seven major creeks that lie at the confluence of Whiskeytown Lake. These watersheds
42 support a diversity of plant and animal species, including critical habitat downstream of the
43 dam for steelhead and spring-run Chinook salmon, both federally listed as "Threatened"
44 under the Endangered Species Act.

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INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significance statements and fundamental resources and values.

Interpretive themes are organizational tools that reveal and clarify meaning, concepts, contexts, and values represented by park resources. Sound themes are accurate and reflect current scholarship and science. They encourage exploration of the context in which events or natural processes occurred and the effects of those events and processes. They go beyond a mere description of the event or process to foster multiple opportunities to experience and consider the park and its resources. Themes help to explain why a park story is relevant to people who may otherwise be unaware of connections they have to an event, time, or place associated with the park.

The following interpretive themes have been identified for Whiskeytown National Recreation Area:

- **Healthy Ecosystems.** The convergence of four geographical provinces (the Great Basin, Cascade, Klamath, and Coast Range) and the range in elevation (from the top of Shasta Bally to the Sacramento Valley foothills) have created a remarkable diversity of habitats and life in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, and therefore provide opportunities for research so that we can better understand the natural world.
- **Water.** Water is today’s gold, and as the final project of the transformative Central Valley Water Project, the clean waters of Whiskeytown Lake embody the vital roles of water in the West and throughout the world—supporting communities, agriculture, producing power, and providing recreational opportunities.
- **Human Connections to the Landscape.** The region's many historical and cultural resources stand in testimony to the rich and diverse human presence in this region spanning thousands of years—from prehistoric American Indian cultures to current day tribes as well as evidence of modern day miners, explorers, and settlers. Today’s visitors value the opportunities to recreate, rejuvenate and reconnect with nature.
- **Legacy of Learning.** Whiskeytown embraces the value and role of environmental education. From its very beginning as a forerunner in America’s environmental education movement in promoting, understanding and appreciating our nation’s natural resources and history, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area continues its legacy of stewardship, and playing a vital role in nurturing connections between people and their park.
- **Conservation.** The creation of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area reveals the efforts of the visionaries who elevated a planned county park to a unit of the national park system and established a treasured place.