



Water Sports in a Mountain Setting

The Whiskeytown Unit of the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area protects the Whiskeytown Lake and surroundings for water sports and other outdoor recreation activities. Whiskeytown is the smallest of the recreation area's three impounded lakes (see small map), but its constant level in the summer makes it ideal for recreational use. Popular water sports here include sailing, canoeing, power boating, jet skiing, swimming, sunbathing, and fishing from boat and shoreline on the lake and streams. Other popular activities are hiking, horseback riding, four-wheel drive touring on established backcountry roads, recreational gold panning, and nature study. Boats and other water craft may be rented at Oak Bottom Marina. The lake's stable summer level makes sandy beaches possible. The many coves and arms are conducive to quiet boating and canoeing, and to putting ashore for picnicking. Cold waters at the lake's western end assure good-to-excellent fishing through-

out the season. Yet the waters at its eastern end are pleasantly warm for swimming and other water-contact sports. Creeks flow into the lake like networks of refreshing aquatic environments, extending recreation pleasures up into the valleys and canyons of the high slopes that surround the reservoir. These shaded corridors are fresh counterpoints to summer's heat. The surrounding extensive backcountry can be explored by primitive road, afoot, on horseback, or by combinations thereof. The eight year-round creeks drain numerous peaks, the highest of which, Shasta Bally, reaches 1,893 meters (6,209 feet) elevation, some 1,500 meters (5,000 feet) above the lake surface. The result is a recreation haven of diverse possibilities and attractions.

Whiskeytown Lake resulted from the creation of the Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project, designed to divert water from the Trinity River Basin to the Sacramento River (see below).

Its workings include the Judge Francis Carr Powerhouse and the Whiskeytown Dam. The explorer of this landscape will find vast evidence of the California Gold Rush, particularly in the Tower House Historic District and in abandoned mine workings. The discerning eye—or sensitive spirit—may also sense the delicate imprint of the Wintu Indians who inhabited this region from about 900 A.D. until the Gold Rush and ensuing white settlement rapidly disrupted their culture.

Historically recent attempts to wrest livings from this landscape—copper mining, timbering and ranching—are attested to by varying imprints. Pollutants emitted from copper smelting activities drastically impaired areas of vegetation here. Lumbering denuded areas of today's recreation area, and they recover only slowly even with reforestation. Such logging caused heavy siltation in streams and severely reduced the spawning activity

of fish. But the cessation of logging and the land's recovery to brush have reduced erosion so that the streams now generally run clear except in flood stage during the rainy season. Trout and salmon once again navigate them to spawn. The increasing naturalization of the impounded lake, and this new health of tributary streams, are giving the area new ecological integrity. Or, as an angler might put it: the fishing's getting better!

The Wintu



Indian women and baby, Camden House, 1894



Indian basket

Before European settlement, today's recreation area was the home of Wintu-speaking Native Americans. They followed a valley and plains lifestyle of foodgathering, supplementing an acorn-based diet with antelope, elk, and deer, and salmon taken while spawning. The bow and arrow was their standard weapon. They fashioned cutting tools from flaked obsidian

and used long fishing spears to take salmon. They wove baskets for collecting, storing, and cooking foods. Their monetary system used round disc beads made from a marine clam shell. The Wintu's relation to the land—intimacy and mutual courtesy—was one of creative stewardship. They shunned any nonconformity with the natural order, which they

viewed as imbued with thoughts and feelings. Wintu chiefs had no real power beyond the persuasiveness of their advice and moralistic exhortations. Although Native American settlement patterns were probably stable for 1,000 years before whites arrived, the Gold Rush era propelled the Wintu and other tribes into rapid decline.

The Gold Rush Era and Early Settlement



Frank Bickford working El Dorado Mine, about 1960.



Levi and Philena Tower



Mine shaft

Jedediah Smith passed through here, exploring overland to California's coast in 1828. In 20 years, hordes of gold seekers would follow. The 1848 rush in the Whiskeytown area began when gold was discovered at nearby Reading's Bar. Whiskeytown was settled in 1849. Some of its old brick and stone buildings stood until they were removed when the reservoir was

built in 1963. The Whiskeytown Store (see map) was moved to high ground. It and the cemetery, moved south of the dam, are all that remain of the town proper. Southeast of Whiskeytown, Old Shasta, the center of gold mining activity, has been preserved by the State of California. Up to 100 freight teams stopped there per night. In 1853 the town

shipped \$100,000 in gold per month. Miners moved their cabins to trace veins leading under them. Placer and other mining practices have obliterated all but a few archeological sites. Two prominent early developers here were Charles Camden and Levi Tower. The latter built the Tower House hotel, which figured in the area's sub-

sequent agriculture industry, and transportation stories. Its irrigation system's ditches, flumes, and pipes were intriguing precursors of today's dam and powerhouse. Tower House, destroyed by fire in 1919, was built along the profitable toll road Charles Camden built and operated. Camden's house still stands. Numerous mines here—the El Dorado/Bickford,

Desmond, Ganim and Mt. Shasta—produced significant gold profits. Today you can relive that heady excitement here through recreational panning for gold.

Dam and Powerhouse



Judge Francis Carr Powerhouse

Whiskeytown Dam and Lake store and regulate waters being diverted from the Trinity River into California's Central Valley for industrial and municipal water supplies. Lewiston Dam diverts Trinity River waters into the Clear Creek Tunnel. The tunnel carries it 18 kilometers (11 miles) through the Hoadley Peaks to Judge Francis Carr Powerhouse (see map) and

into Whiskeytown Lake. The water next goes by tunnel to Keswick Reservoir, to be mixed with water from Shasta Dam and released through the Keswick Powerplant into the Sacramento River. From there the water flows south to San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Whiskeytown Unit

Regulations and Safety
Please observe all safety precautions and regulations, including those described below under specific activities. They are designed to protect both you and the area's resources. No fires are permitted on beaches. Use of fire may be restricted to developed campgrounds when fire danger is extreme. Pets must be kept off beaches; they must be under physical restraint in campgrounds, near boat landings, and in other areas of concentrated human use. If you have questions about any activity, ask a ranger before undertaking it. You are responsible for knowing the regulations. This will help assure you an accident-free visit. Remember, however, that your safety must be your responsibility.

Backcountry Use
All overnight backcountry use requires a backcountry use permit issued free at ranger stations and the Visitor Information Center. With permit, you may camp anywhere in the backcountry except within 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) of the lake shore. Check for other restrictions when you obtain your permit. Much of the backcountry is accessible via 80 kilometers (50 miles) of graded dirt and gravel roads. You may drive only on these maintained roads. Check local conditions. Some roads are regularly patrolled only in winter. Some are closed in winter. If you have vehicle trouble and must go for help, stay on roads. Do not go cross-country for help.

Access and Services

The Whiskeytown Unit lies on California 299 off Interstate 5 near Redding, Calif. Redding has air, rail, bus, rental car, and full tourist services. There is a small store and post office at Whiskeytown. Oak Bottom and Brandy Creek Marinas offer snack bars, a camper store, and boat rentals in the national recreation area. The Visitor Information Center offers publication sales, orientation map, exhibits, and information desk. Hours vary with seasons. For information write to the Superintendent at P.O. Box 188, Whiskeytown, CA 96095-0188.

The Shasta and Trinity Units of the national recreation area are administered by the U.S. Forest Service. For information about these units write: Shasta-Trinity National Forest, 2400 Washington Avenue, Redding, CA 96001.



Activities and Points of Interest

Fishing
Lake fishing is good from boat or shore. Species include rainbow and brown trout, large-, smallmouth, and spotted bass; and kokanee. A California fishing license is required. A synopsis of fishing regulations is available on request.

Water Sports
Excellent boating, water-skiing, scuba diving, and swimming are available on the lake. Power boating, sail boating, and canoeing are popular. All federal and state boating regulations apply.

Regulations and California Boating Tips are available on request. Please observe the restricted boating areas (see map below). There are concessioner-operated marinas at Brandy Creek and Oak Bottom. There is a launch ramp at Whiskey Creek. Scuba diving requires training, experience, and proper equipment, including a divers' down flag. Lifeguards are on duty at the Brandy Creek and Oak Bottom Beaches, as scheduled, from about Memorial Day through Labor Day. Never swim alone, and please watch children closely in and around park waters.

Camping and Picnicking
Camping is permitted in designated campgrounds and in the backcountry (see Backcountry Use). A 14-day limit applies from May 15-September 15; a 30-day limit otherwise. Brandy Creek (no fee) offers RV camping for self-contained units only. No hookups or restrooms. A sanitary dump station and drinking water are provided. Oak Bottom (fee) offers RV camping with dump station and water, but no hookups. Water and modern restrooms are nearby. Oak Bottom also offers walk-in tent camping with fireplaces, picnic tables, and modern restrooms. There are cold showers only, on the beach. Write the superintendent for fees and Golden Age, Access, and Passports information. Picnic tables, fireplaces, and trash cans are provided at all beaches.

Hiking and Horseback Riding
The extensive backcountry provides ample hiking and horseback riding opportunities. Ask a ranger for advice on the best trails for you.

Hunting
Hunting requires a California license. The main game species is the black-tail deer. California regulations are available on request. Some areas are posted; please observe them. No discharge of firearms is allowed in areas of concentrated human use, including picnic areas, launch ramps, campgrounds, and concessioner facilities. Check with a ranger for full seasons and regulations information before you hunt. Trapping is prohibited.

Gold Panning
Gold panning may be done for recreational purposes only, not to make money. It must be done in the historical manner, using a metal or plastic gold pan. Panners may use only small hand tools.

Interpretive Activities
Ranger-guided walks, gold panning demonstrations, and illustrated evening programs (at Oak Bottom Amphitheater—see map) are provided from mid-June through Labor Day. Evening programs cover history, natural history, and recreation topics. Schedules are posted at the Oak Bottom Campground restrooms, or ask at the Visitor Information Center.

