

The Whiskeytown Nugget

WHISKEYTOWN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

SUMMER 1999



WHAT IS WATERSHED RESTORATION — AND WHY SHOULD ANYONE CARE?

What is it? Watershed restoration is an attempt to bring the land back into a natural state after it has been altered. While it focuses on water absorption, drainage, and erosion, it also takes into account all ecological related issues associated with a drainage area. Most of Whiskeytown is located in a “world-class” watershed called the Clear Creek Watershed.

Why should we care? Clean drinking water and having enough of it is one reason.

More of the water that falls on a healthy watershed sinks in and drains slowly, without carrying away as much sediment with it. That translates into cleaner water in our rivers and reservoirs. Even with today's dams and controls, an amazing amount of silt-laden, muddy water goes to “waste” down the Sacramento River during the heavy storms of winter. Slower runoff means that more clean water has time to sink into the ground and replenish groundwater supplies. It also means more available

water during the summer months, when we need it the most.

This is good for humans, but it is critical for fish. Unfortunately salmonoid fisheries (salmon-bearing rivers & streams) continue to decline in the Pacific Northwest. As a result, more and more populations of salmon

and steel-head trout continue to be listed as endangered or threatened. A primary cause of this decline is loss of habitat due to impacts from upland erosion and sedimentation.



Outsloped roads help water to run off naturally.

Whiskeytown has experienced many erosion and sedimentation problems over the years. Some of the causes are the results of past logging and mining activities. For example, roads were constructed by placing fill in runoff channels. This alters the natural drainage patterns and increases the potential for stream diversions and washouts. Poor road drainage and saturated fill have resulted in severe landslides over the years.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Whether this is your first visit, or you have been here many times before, welcome to Whiskeytown. We hope your visit is safe and enjoyable.

1999 is an important year for Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. We are investing almost \$2,000,000 in facilities and resource improvements in support of our new General Management Plan (GMP). This General Management Plan is a very important document for us and you, the visitor. It will guide our management and help us with priorities and direction in all areas of the Park over the next 10-15 years. Whiskeytown's GMP planning process started about 2 1/2 years ago with several “scoping” meetings to determine public concerns and interest. With the information from those meetings we crafted a variety of alternatives to address public and staff concerns, interests, and issues.

These alternatives were released for public review last Fall. The public response included almost 1200 written comments, all of which were used to come up with the final plan.

This new GMP is extremely important to the future of Whiskeytown. It is the best way we know to let the people tell us what they want us to do, and I want to

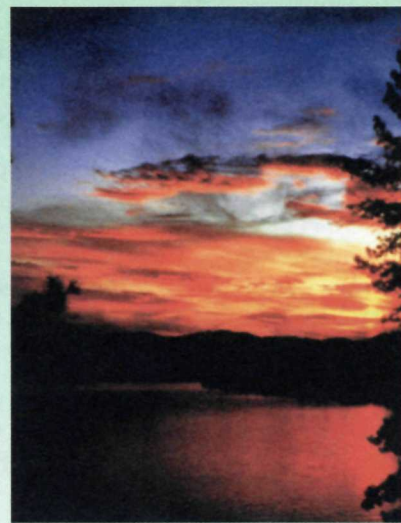
thank all of you who attended meetings, wrote letters, and otherwise helped us produce it.

The breadth and extent of the projects and programs that we have underway is remarkable for a “small park” like Whiskeytown. All of them need your support, and in some cases maybe actual involvement.

A large number of people become Volunteers and are involved in one or more of our activities. Maybe this is something you would want to consider. If so, please contact us.

I hope your 1999 is enjoyable and productive. Enjoy Whiskeytown and all it has to offer, and DO IT SAFELY.

*David A. Pugh
Superintendent*





Your fee money helped improve Whiskeytown's backcountry campsites. Shown above is Sheep Camp after improvements.

WHAT ARE YOUR FEES BEING USED FOR?



Sheep Camp before improvements.

Last year Whiskeytown collected over \$250,000 in fees from visitors such as you. What is this money being used for? In general, it is used to provide facilities and services for your use and enjoyment.

Specifically, the following are some of the projects that are being done this year:

Rehabilitating the Oak Bottom Amphitheater —

\$10,000 has been used to rebuild the projector screen and support facilities at the amphitheater. This will allow us to project a better quality image on the screen - and better protect the equipment used. These free programs are designed to help visitors have a safer and more enjoyable visit to Whiskeytown. For more information see RANGER GUIDED PROGRAMS on page 3.

Improving the campsites at Oak Bottom Tent Campground —

\$56,000 is being used to help control erosion near the lake caused by steep banks and heavy usage. Included are shoreline matting, rock placement, re-contouring and planting vegetation.

Rehabilitation of Primitive Campsites —

\$50,000 is being used to improve the primitive campsites at Sheep Camp, Peltier Bridge, Crystal Creek and Brandy Creek campgrounds. New picnic tables, fire rings, tent pads, bear-proof food storage lockers and trash cans are being installed. Two new sites are being created in Peltier Valley and one new site at Brandy Creek.

Improvements to Dirt Parking Areas —

\$30,000 will be used to resurface some of the high visitor use areas such as Davis Gulch Trailhead, East Beach and Mt. Shasta Mine Loop Trailhead. New fencing will better define the parking areas.

Other projects being planned are:

- Trailhead and trail signs
- Wayside exhibits in the Tower House District
- New kiosk bulletin boards at launch ramps
- A low power radio transmitter providing updated information for Park visitors
- Hand dryers in restrooms

"GREENING" WHISKEYTOWN

You may ask what does "Greening" Whiskeytown mean. Isn't Whiskeytown green enough? Are we going to start painting everything green?

No, what "greening" means is to use sustainable practices in all aspects of what we do at Whiskeytown where practical. The term greening refers to recycled materials and products, using solar energy, recycling trash, using products that will last longer such as more efficient light bulbs and concrete picnic tables. These are some of the types of things that Whiskeytown is implementing into the operations of the recreation area.

An example of one of the major rehab projects this year is to replace all of the parking area lights. Instead of replacing them with standard fixtures, we will use a solar powered model. Over \$150,000 has been invested throughout the recreation area. We have also installed energy efficient lighting in our administrative offices. This will not only save energy but will also reduce electricity costs.

More recycling containers are also being installed at various locations

such as launch ramps, picnic areas, campgrounds, etc. We are recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles and keeping these items out of landfills. We also recycle office paper, cardboard, tires, scrap metal, used oil and antifreeze from vehicles and equipment.

You will probably notice new picnic tables, benches and fire pits at some picnic areas and campgrounds. These are examples of products being purchased that will last fifty or more years and require less maintenance to keep them looking good and functional.

We have also begun a composting program to turn grass clippings from the areas that require mowing in the summer into compost to use for fertilizing landscaped plants and shrubs.

More is being planned. If you have any good ideas, please let us know. And please place your trash in one of the bear-proof trash or recycle containers that you see around the lake.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

VISITOR CENTER: (530) 246-1225

The Visitor Center is open 8am-6pm daily from Memorial Day through August and 10am-4pm the rest of the year. *The Whiskeytown Annual pass and Daily pass are available here as well as the Golden passes.*

PARK HEADQUARTERS: (530) 241-6584

Park Headquarters is open daily from 8am-4:30pm. Special use permits, wood permits and primitive camping permits can be obtained here.



CAMPING:

Reservations are available, May 15-Sept. 15, for camping at Oak Bottom, Dry Creek and Whiskey Creek Day Use, by calling the National Park's Reservation Service at 1-800-365-2267 or at www.nps.gov/whis

Oak Bottom Campground offers \$18.00/night lakeside tent sites, \$16.00/night tent sites, and \$14.00/night RV sites. During the winter season, sites are available on a first-come-first-serve basis at \$8.00/night for tent and \$7.00/night for RV sites.

Dry Creek Group Tent Campground offers 2 campsites (tent only). Each has a maximum of 50 people and can be made April 1 to September 30.

Whiskey Creek Group Picnic Area offers 3 group day use picnic areas. Reservations can be made April 1 to September 30.

Primitive Tent Campsites are available only on a first-come-first-serve basis at Park Headquarters. Summer rate is \$10.00/night and winter \$5.00/night.

Brandy Creek RV Campground offers sites on a first-come-first-serve basis. Summer rate is \$14.00/night and winter rate is \$7.00 per night. Permits are available at the Brandy Creek Marina Paystation.

BOAT RAMPS:

There are three boat ramps on the lake, Whiskey Creek, Oak Bottom, and Brandy Creek.

MARINAS:

Oak Bottom Marina offers boat rentals, gas, food and fishing supplies. Brandy Creek (summer only) has a small marina store.

SNACK BARS:

Both Brandy Creek and Oak Bottom Swim Beaches offer food service during the summer.

PHONES:

Phones are located at Oak Bottom Store, Marina, and Beach, Brandy Creek Beach and Marina, Whiskey Creek and the Visitor Center.

MAIL:

Whiskeytown Post Office is located off of Hwy 299 near Whiskey Creek.

NEARBY SERVICES:

Old Shasta: Post Office, J's Café, Market, Mill House Deli

French Gulch: Post Office, French Gulch Hotel, E. Frank Bar, Old School Deli/store

SAFETY Do's & DON'TS

WEATHER:

Summers are typically hot and dry with temperatures often around 100 degrees. Consider sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses and drinking water.

ALCOHOL:

Alcohol is permitted throughout the park EXCEPT at Brandy Creek Beach and Picnic area, Oak Bottom Beach & Picnic areas, Whiskey Creek Group Picnic Area, and East Beach.

PETS:

Pets on leashes are permitted on the trails and around the lake, EXCEPT for Brandy Creek Swim Beach and Oak Bottom Swim Beach. Never leave your pet in a closed vehicle due to rapid and often extreme heat buildup.

FIRES:

Fires are allowed only in designated camping and picnic areas.

PLANTS, WILDLIFE and ARCHAEOLOGY:

Plants, animals, archaeological remains and other features are protected and must not be removed or disturbed. **DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE.**

HIKERS:

The following are recommended:

- Stay on established roads and trails.
- Wear proper footwear.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Watch for natural hazards including poison oak, rattlesnakes, bears and ticks.
- Watch for other hazards including steep drop-offs and abandoned mine shafts.

BOATERS:

- Keep a safe 100 feet from other boats, swimmers and diver's flags.
- Observe warning and regulatory buoys.
- Maintain a wakeless speed in marked channels.

SWIMMERS:

- Never swim alone.
- Always check the bottom before jumping or diving.
- Watch for boats.



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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WHISKEYTOWN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
P.O. Box 188
WHISKEYTOWN, CA 96095
www.nps.gov/whis





Park Ranger Clinton Kane discovers nature with campers on a Junior Ranger program.

RANGER GUIDED PROGRAMS

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area offers a wide variety of Ranger guided activities for you and your family from *mid-June through mid-September*.

Check the campground Bulletin Boards or the Visitor Center for a program schedule.

GOLD PANNING:

1:00pm Tuesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Discover the myths and realities of the Gold Rush Days. Learn the history of the area and try your luck on a modern day gold hunt. Pans and shovels are provided. *Meet at Tower House parking area.*

TOWER HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Journey back to the 1850s gold rush era through special programs and tours offered in this historic area. (See program schedules for times and dates)

EVENING PROGRAMS:

Thursday through Sunday 9-10pm through Aug. 8 8:30-9:30pm beginning Aug. 12

Join a ranger at the *Oak Bottom Amphitheater* for an illustrated talk or program about Whiskeytown.

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

Saturday & Sunday 10am—11am

If you are between the ages of 7 and 12 you can become a Junior Ranger! Make new friends while exploring the natural wonders and recreational adventures of Whiskeytown. *Meet at the Oak Bottom Amphitheater.*

JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER:

Saturday 11am—12pm

Join Whiskeytown's fire crew in this hands on program as you learn the important role they play in fighting fire and how you can help. *Meet at the Oak Bottom Amphitheater.*

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

Check at the Visitor Center or bulletin boards for other special programs. Programs could include walks, hikes, night programs and more.

SMOKE OVER WHISKEYTOWN

WHERE THERE IS SMOKE THERE IS FIRE

A visit to Whiskeytown just may include a sight, or a whiff, of smoke. We have embarked on a long-term program to reduce the fuel buildup in our Recreation Area. Whiskeytown's forests, which were once open and park-like, are now choked with brush and dead leaves and limbs, creating conditions where wildfires can rage.

Historically our forests contained larger but fewer trees, abundant grasses and shrubs, and less down and dead material on the forest floor. Dead logs, branches, and leaves do not decompose easily in the arid west. The natural role of fire is to consume fuels and recycle nutrients back into the soil. In the past, more frequent fires burned this area, with lower intensity. Generally, this spared larger trees and created a mosaic of diverse vegetation. Seventy-five years of fire suppression has left us with our current fuel buildup, which is unsafe for people and unhealthy for the forest.

We are working year round, using a variety of techniques, to reduce wildfire danger and restore the forests to a more "natural" condition. In the winter and spring we create and improve shaded fuelbreaks.

Hand crews cut, stack, and burn brush along ridges, creating areas where firefighters can access fires and fight them with a greater margin of safety. In the summer, when fire is too risky to use, hand crews cut and chip brush and dead limbs and branches along our roads and around our facilities, improving visitor safety in our developed areas. Added benefits of this work are the improved vistas throughout Whiskeytown.

Fall is our primary burning season, where we carefully apply fire under controlled conditions to the landscape. Milder, wetter weather conditions allow us to control the effects of the fire, removing the surface fuels while protecting the larger trees. This is the season when we create the most smoke.

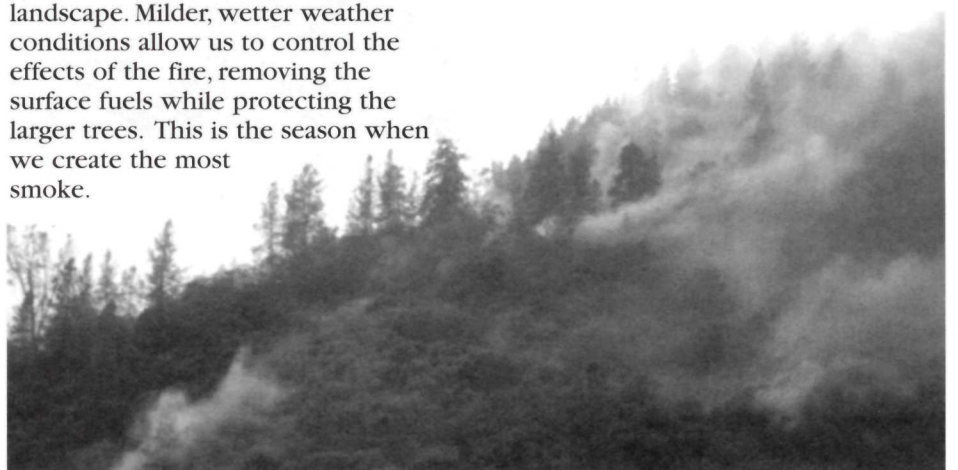
The smoke you see is from burning leaf litter and down and dead branches and limbs. In the past year we have burned over 1500 acres, and plan to burn at that level in the future.

Why do we burn? As with our fuelbreaks, burning increases both visitor and firefighter safety by reducing fuel buildup, thus increasing the resistance of the forest to destructive wildfire. The use of fire enhances conditions for grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs to grow, and wildlife benefits from the improved foraging habitat. Burning also removes pockets of brush and small trees, which serve as "ladder fuels" (fuels that can carry fire into the crowns of trees). Last year one of our burns was done to remove ladder fuels beneath the trees used by bald eagles for nesting. Eventually, visitors will see a Whiskeytown with a more open, park-like setting, with more wildflowers, grassy meadows, wildlife, and a safer, healthier forest surrounding your beautiful lake.

Most people think of smoke as "pollution", and a degradation of our environment. While there is significant truth to that, it's not that simple. The smoke from wildland fire while chemically similar, has some difference and perhaps some different effects. Perhaps more importantly though, is that wildfire smoke is part of the "natural" environment rather than a human caused degradation or stress to the environment. The rest of the ecosystem has adapted to, and has become dependent on fire and smoke over the years.

There are many other "natural" things and events that we humans find inconvenient or undesirable from our human perspective. Although undesirable, occasional wildfire smoke is something we need to adapt to, and live with, as a part of our natural world.

So, if during your visit to Whiskeytown you encounter smoke, remember, it's part of our natural world — and it's also the sight, and smell, of fire protection.



Smoke rises from a prescribed burn in Whiskeytown.

WATERSHED

Continued from page 1

The National Park Service became convinced that something needed to be done. But what was to be done, how it was to be done — and by whom? Through the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program, a model watershed program was developed. Partnering with Shasta College, Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a "Fish First" goal was developed. Its purpose is to develop and demonstrate cost-effective methods that reduce erosion and landslides caused by past human activities — and create a water habitat suitable for fish.

The first project was to restore a 300-acre area in the Paige-Bar watershed, a subwatershed of Clear Creek. Estimates show that Clear Creek below Whiskeytown Dam has the potential to contribute six percent of all salmon fisheries within the entire Sacramento River watershed. Last year (1998), one mile of an old logging road, was converted to a trail. Another mile of a popular backcountry road was outsloped and culverts installed at each water crossing. Remarkably, as a result of this project, an estimated 10,000 cubic yards of sediment is prevented from entering tributary streams leading to the

Sacramento River.

A second watershed restoration project removed two backcountry bridges and another section of an old logging road was again converted to a trail. This was accomplished using Emergency Relief Funding provided by Federal Highways and a partnership with the California Conservation Corps who completed the revegetation process using their crews.

Shasta College has provided much of the science, expertise and experimental design for these model projects. They have also developed a Watershed Restoration Technology curriculum that uses Whiskeytown as its "outdoor laboratory." Through this partnership, NPS staff, students, and other professionals will gain valuable technical and hands-on experience in "landform restoration."

Whiskeytown will integrate watershed restoration into other park projects including shoreline erosion and the maintenance of campgrounds, trails and service roads. We will likely find that some things work better than others — and that some are more cost effective. The key to success is to figure out which is which — and learn.



USER FEES

DAY PASS: \$5.00

This pass is per vehicle and is valid in all areas of Whiskeytown. Daily fees can be paid at self-serve machines at Brandy Creek Marina, Brandy Creek Swim Beach, Visitor Center, Whiskey Creek Boat Ramp, and at Oak Bottom, adjacent to the campground registration office. Receipts need to be placed in the driver's side vehicle window.

ANNUAL PASS: \$30.00

This pass is valid for the calendar year and can be purchased at the Park Visitor Center or by writing: Superintendent Whiskeytown NRA P.O. Box 188 Whiskeytown, CA 96095.

GOLDEN AGE & GOLDEN ACCESS:

These passports entitle you to 50% off daily fees, camping fees and the annual pass. **The Golden Eagle Passport** does not apply.

PRIMITIVE CAMPSITES:

A \$10.00 (May 15 thru Sept. 15), \$5.00 (Sept. 16 thru May 14) is required for use of primitive campsites. Permits are available at Park Headquarters.

GOLD PANNING PERMITS:

A \$1.00 recreational Gold Panning permit is required for anyone 17 years and older. Permits (and a gold pan — \$12.50) may be purchased at the Visitor Center.

WOOD PERMITS:

Wood permits are available at Park Headquarters for \$10.00 for two cords (dead and down wood only).

YES, THERE ARE BEARS HERE

Remember when black bears were a rare sight in parks and campgrounds? No longer is this the case at Whiskeytown. We have a healthy population of black bears and chances are good that visitors will see a bear. We want to make sure both the visitor and the bear have a good experience.

Black bears belong here. Whiskeytown is a healthy habitat for the bears, offering plenty of natural foods for them to feed on. Bears eat berries, acorns, plants and small animals. As the bears search for food with their keen sense of smell they often find themselves in picnic areas and campgrounds.

The problems start when bears get into human food or trash. These bears quickly figure out that human food is much easier to come by than their natural foods. Once bears get into the habit of eating human food it

is very difficult to "rehabilitate" them. Over time, these bears lose their fear of humans and become aggressive in obtaining their food. Trapping and relocation of problem bears is almost always ineffective. Typically, relocated bears are killed by territorial resident bears, illegally killed by humans, or end up repeating the same types of behaviors that caused their relocation in the first place. Unfortunately, destruction of these bears is usually the only alternative.

"A FED BEAR IS A DEAD BEAR"

During the summer of 1998, park rangers killed two bears at Whiskeytown. These bears lost their natural fear of humans and became dangerous because they were repeatedly fed by visitors, sometimes accidentally and sometimes on purpose. The unfortunate truth to the story of

these two bears is that they both died unnecessarily.

As visitors to this area it is your responsibility to help protect these bears by keeping them wild. While visiting, please:

- **Never feed bears or any wildlife.**
- **Use bear proof garbage cans.**
- **Don't leave food unattended on picnic tables or camping areas, even for a few minutes.**
- **Store all food items in bear proof lockers when camping.**
- **If a bear approaches, stand up, wave your arms, shout or make loud noises. Be bold but use good judgement. If you feel threatened walk away, do not run.**
- **Report all bear sightings to a park ranger. DON'T let your carelessness lead to the death of a bear.**



Redding Area Mountain Bikers participate in a Trail Maintenance Workshop on the Clear Creek Vista Trail.

VOLUNTEER AT WHISKEYTOWN

What's in it for me?

Maybe a lot! Whiskeytown has a very successful volunteer program that has resulted in a tremendous improvement in facilities and services offered to you, our visitor. In addition to the benefits for visitors, there are also benefits for our volunteers. Sometimes it's just the good feeling our volunteers get knowing they have done something that helps others. Sometimes the project improves something they will use themselves.

Whiskeytown's Volunteer program dates back to the early 1970's when we were trying to find ways to "get the job done" with declining budget resources. Volunteers became part of the answer back then. Today volunteers still supplement paid staff and help accomplish work that otherwise would not be possible. With their high level of enthusiasm, dedication and community commitment, volunteers continue to help Whiskeytown.

A variety of volunteer projects were worked on or completed last year. For example, Ric Balfour and Holly Hill of Subaru/International Mountain Biking Association's (IMBA) Trail Care Crew and twenty-one members of Redding Area Mountain Bikers (RAMB) improved the Clear Creek Vista Trail. Beginning in the late summer of 1997 volunteers from the Rat Pack 4 Wheel Drive Club from Redding, and later the Bank of America's volunteer group Team America and Eagle Scout Caleb Stefanovich of Boy Scout Troop 122 improved some primitive camps including installing new picnic tables, fire rings, and leveling tent sites. Additional improvements to primitive campsites are scheduled for the summer of 1999. In January of 1999, 13 year old Jim Dalziel of French Gulch began helping to improve Whiskeytown's web page (www.nps.gov/whis).

Whiskeytown would not be the place it is today without the dedicated support of volunteers. Whiskeytown's volunteer program offers unique opportunities within its mountainous backcountry and large mountain lake. By contributing time and talent, volunteers have an opportunity to experience a part of Whiskeytown that few visitors see — and do something that is important and meaningful for other visitors to Whiskeytown. For additional information concerning volunteer opportunities at Whiskeytown contact our Volunteer Coordinator at (530) 241-6584 ext. 224 for information and an application.



"A FED BEAR IS A DEAD BEAR." Please don't let your carelessness cause the death of a bear.

WATCH IT!

CRIME AT WHISKEYTOWN:

Visitors are often surprised that crime can and does occur in "such a beautiful place."

- **DON'T LEAVE VALUABLES UNATTENDED OR IN PLAIN VIEW.** Place valuables in the trunk or leave them at home.
- **WATCH FOR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY.** Report all crimes and suspicious activity to a Park Ranger or Park Headquarters at 241-6584.

NATURAL HAZARDS:



- **POISON OAK:** Poison Oak is commonly found at Whiskeytown. The resinous oils produce a skin rash in most people. It can be recognized by its leaves, which look like other Oak leaves and occur in groups of three at the end of the branch. Remember, "Leaves of three—leave them be."

- **TICKS:** As you walk through foothill grasses and under trees, ticks may hitch a ride. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them yourself with tweezers or seek medical assistance. Consider keeping the tick for testing in case you become ill or develop a "target shaped rash" around the bite.

- **RATTLESNAKES:** Rattlesnakes are common in the foothills. Most snake bites occur as a result of teasing or trying to handle snakes. Few people die



from bites, but tissue damage from the poison can be severe.

WHISKEYTOWN IS MOUNTAIN LION COUNTRY

Few people ever see these elusive animals in the wild. However, mountain lions have been known to attack people and pets. When visiting mountain lion territory precautions should be taken. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely, and never let them run ahead of you on the trail. If you do cross paths with a mountain lion your best chance is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous yourself.

FOR YOUR SAFETY:

- Don't run. Running may stimulate the lions instinct to chase. Face the



Mountain lions are at the top of the food chain. They help maintain the balance of the ecosystem by keeping deer populations in check.

- lion and stand upright. Make eye contact. Do not turn your back on the mountain lion. Back away slowly.
- Pick small children up and place on your shoulders. Spread your arms, open your coat, and try and make yourself appear larger.
- If the lion behaves aggressively wave your hands, shout and throw sticks or rocks.
- If attacked, fight back. Do not "play dead."

Report all mountain lion sightings to a park ranger or call park headquarters at 241-6584.

