



James K. Carr Trail to Whiskeytown Falls



TRAILHEAD DIRECTIONS (Via Mill Creek Trail)

Starting at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center, drive west 8 miles along Highway 299 to Crystal Creek Road, located about .25 miles past the Tower House Historic District.

Turn left onto Crystal Creek Road and drive 3.75 miles to reach the Mill Creek Trailhead. You will pass the turnoffs for Crystal Creek Falls and for Crystal Creek Campground.

The Mill Creek Trail sign indicates distances to the James K. Carr trailhead leading to Whiskeytown Falls and the El Dorado Mine on Mill Creek.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION

Starting at the parking area, the trail leads downhill following the roadbed of a restored logging road. Cross over the west fork of Crystal Creek on the footbridge.

Proceed up the trail, noticing “Cougar Rock” on the left toward the top of the trail. Continue on

FEATURES

Difficulty Level: Moderate to difficult

Length: 3.4 miles round trip

Whiskeytown Falls, 220 feet tall

Misty, slippery sections on trail during wet weather

This trail connects to the Mill Creek Trail

the level stretch of path for a short distance, watching for the James K. Carr trailhead sign on the right.

The trail ascends steadily uphill, moving away from the east fork of Crystal Creek. Shade-loving ferns are seen as the trail ascends this 0.5 mile portion of the trail through “Steep Ravine.” Use caution as this portion of the trail could be strenuous for some. Stay on the main trail, avoiding old logging spurs leading off to the right and left.

Hiking up the path, try to imagine the logging trucks that regularly drove up and down this former logging road. Arthur Coggins, owner of the land and the Northern California Logging Company, selectively logged the area for Douglas Fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine and incense cedar during the 1950s.

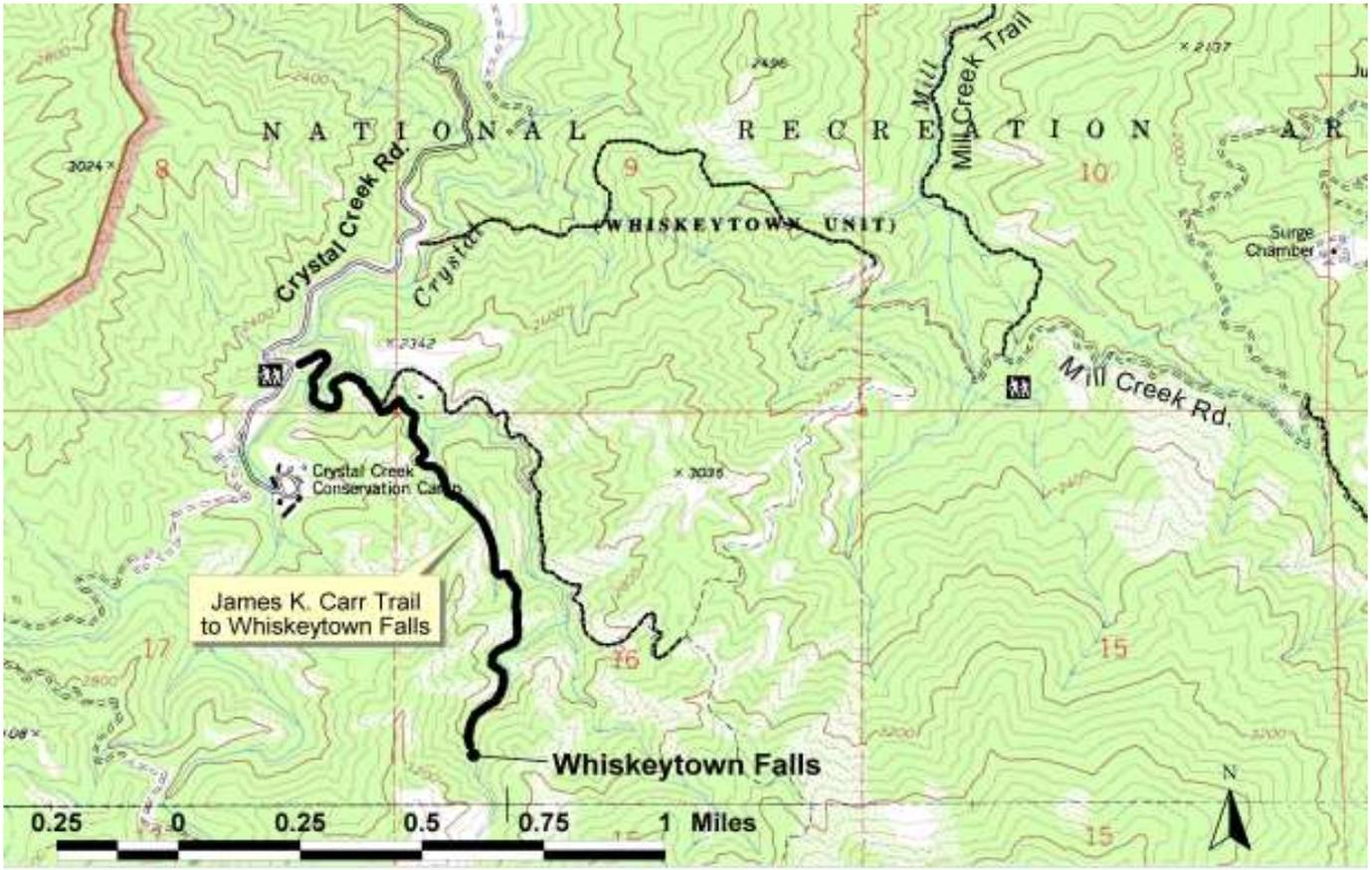
The trail levels out, affording a vista of the upper forest at “Wintu View.” Continue ahead to a picnic area at “Trail Camp;” horses and bicycles should be left here. The trail soon approaches a footbridge that enters a box canyon. The falls are now .25 miles distant. This portion of the trail is not suitable for horses and mountain bikers.



Decomposed granite boulders of Cougar Rock.

As the trail parallels the creek, notice the cooler temperatures, higher humidity and moisture-loving plants that are typical of a riparian habitat. Plants such as ferns and mosses as well as trees such as white alder and big leaf maple flourish in riparian habitats.

At the base of the falls, look to the left for the stone stair trail up the cliff. Be sure to use the metal handrails for safety. Always stay on the trail to protect delicate mosses, plants and animals such as the Banana Slug. The first vista point is “Photographer’s Ledge” and the upper vista, “Artist’s Ledge.”



THE HIDDEN FALLS

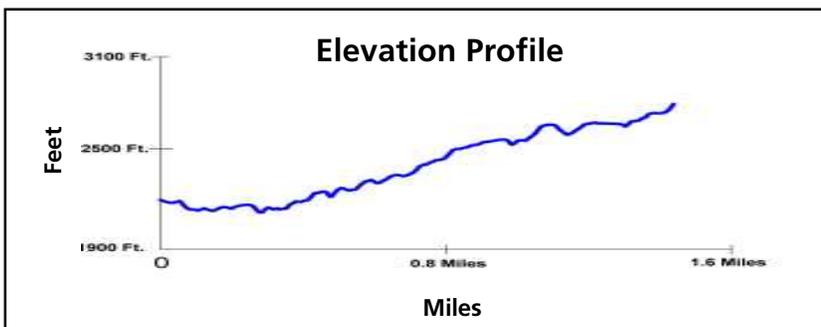
James K. Carr, a former Shasta County resident, became the Undersecretary of the Interior during the Kennedy Administration in 1963. He was determined to set aside Whiskeytown Lake, Shasta Bally and the surrounding mountains as a national park site. Carr was successful and on November 8, 1963, Congress created the 42,000 acre Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.

Before becoming a park, the land was privately owned. Loggers were generally the only people who knew about the falls. Park rangers initially learned about the

waterfall in 1967, but kept it quiet. At that time, the park did not have the staff to protect this treasure or the money to construct a trail to the falls. Eventually, these rangers moved on and others who knew about the site passed away. Knowledge of the falls was generally forgotten and only a few residents visited the falls over the years. It was in 2004 that park biologist Russ Weatherbee “discovered” the falls while viewing aerial photos. Intrigued, he and Park Geologist Brian Rasmussen hiked into the the area and found the falls.



Use caution on the damp and slippery stone stairs to the vista points next to the falls.



SAFETY

To prevent any damage to this area and yourself, please do not go beyond any railings or signs. Please stay on the trail at all times.