

Thirtymile / Armstrong Road Visitor Information



BLM has acquired a total of 11,149 acres of private land along Thirtymile Creek and Armstrong Canyon, including the lower stretch of Armstrong Road, which provides access to the John Day River (see attached map). Just over 4,000 acres were acquired in March of 2018 with the remainder acquired in August of 2019. The following direction will apply to this area. In the meantime, BLM will be working on a management plan for these newly acquired lands.

Can I drive down to the river now?

Yes. Directions from Highway 19 are shown on the attached map. The John Day River can be accessed by taking Armstrong Road down the canyon then continuing along the road on the south side of Thirtymile Creek. Armstrong Road will remain open through November 30, when a seasonal closure for deer and elk winter range goes into effect (from December 1 - April 15).

Does it cost any money to drive this road?

The public now has a right-of-way down Armstrong Road, even where it crosses private land. There are no fees to drive this road.

What is the condition of the road?

Armstrong Road is a dirt surface and largely unimproved road at this time. The road may become impassable during or following rain events. This is a narrow road in most places with few turnouts, and the vehicle going downhill must yield the right-of-way by backing up to a wider place or by stopping to leave sufficient space for the vehicle going uphill, except where it is more practical for the vehicle going uphill to return to a wider space or turnout.

Is Armstrong Road open year round?

No. There is a seasonal closure in place to protect wintering wildlife that closes the road to motorized vehicles from December 1 – April 15 each year. Visitors can access the area on foot, by bike or horseback, or by boat year round.

How do I access upland areas east of Armstrong Road (at the top of the canyon)

The BLM has acquired a public access easement off of the east side of Armstrong Road, located approximately one mile north of the intersection with Buckhorn Lane. This access point is signed and there is a gate providing non-motorized and mechanized (bicycle) access to the area. The sole public access to the Thirtymile area is off of Buckhorn Lane to Armstrong Road. Please respect private property and stay on the roadway along the fenced easement portions.

How do I access areas along Thirtymile Creek upstream of its intersection with Armstrong Rd?

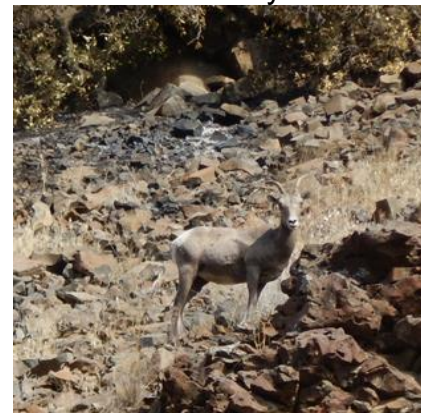
Non-motorized and bicycle access is allowed in this area. Parking is allowed along Armstrong Road near its intersection with Thirtymile Creek. Please be advised that the road that follows Thirtymile Creek upstream of this intersection has become largely overgrown.

Will the area be open for hunting this season?

Yes. Public lands are open for legal hunting unless specifically closed. Shooting is not allowed in the John Day canyon from 5/1-8/31 unless legally hunting. For specific hunting regulations, information about tags, or registration, contact the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Can I park along the road to access areas on foot?

You can park along roads if there is enough space to get your vehicle fully off the roadway. Do not park in tall vegetation that might present a fire hazard. Avoid parking in muddy areas.



Can I use the Thirtymile boat launch?

A primitive boat launch has been established in the former agriculture field just upriver from the mouth of Thirtymile Creek (the former boat launch). Follow Armstrong Road west from the top of the canyon; stay left before the crossing at Thirtymile Creek (this is now gated); continue along this road until you reach the barn/corral area where the road then drops down to the lower plowed field. Access to the John Day River and a kiosk are provided at the river's edge.

Is the Thirtymile launch site improved?

The boat launch is a primitive ramp and is unimproved. Boats may need to be unloaded and carried 30+ feet to the river; distance is based on water level and is dependent upon vehicle/trailer type. Be aware of river current as water level fluctuates.

Is there parking and room for trailers at the Thirtymile launch site?

There is plenty of parking space available in the plowed field.

Can I camp down by the river?

Dispersed camping is allowed and there is plenty of space available in the open field near the boat launch (see map). However, be aware that there is no potable water; bring your own or treat water onsite.

Are there restrooms available at the launch?

A porta-potty will be provided where the road drops into the plowed field. However, remember that boaters on overnight trips are required to carry and use a leak-proof, portable toilet system to remove solid waste from the river canyon. Disposing of Wag Bags in a porta-potty or vault toilet is prohibited.

Are campfires allowed?

Within the Wild and Scenic river corridor (see attached map), campfires are allowed in a firepan only outside of the annual fire restrictions. No campfires, smokers, barbecues, portable propane campfires, etc. are allowed from June 1 – September 30 each year, and visitors must use white gas or propane stoves designed for cooking or lighting only. There are no campfire restrictions outside of the river corridor; please follow basic campfire safety rules.

Do I need a permit to launch from the Thirtymile site?

An online launch permit is required to boat all sections of the John Day River between Service Creek and Tumwater Falls, including launching or taking out at Thirtymile. Visit our Recreation.gov page for further information and to obtain your permit.

Can I use a shuttle to move my vehicle?

Shuttle operators are listed on the John Day Boater Pass website. Contact them for shuttle options.

What if I want to be a guide for hunting, fishing or rafting on the John Day River?

Commercial operators need to have a Special Recreation Permit. Interested parties should contact the Prineville BLM for more information at (541) 416-6700.

Can I ride a mountain bike or OHV in this area?

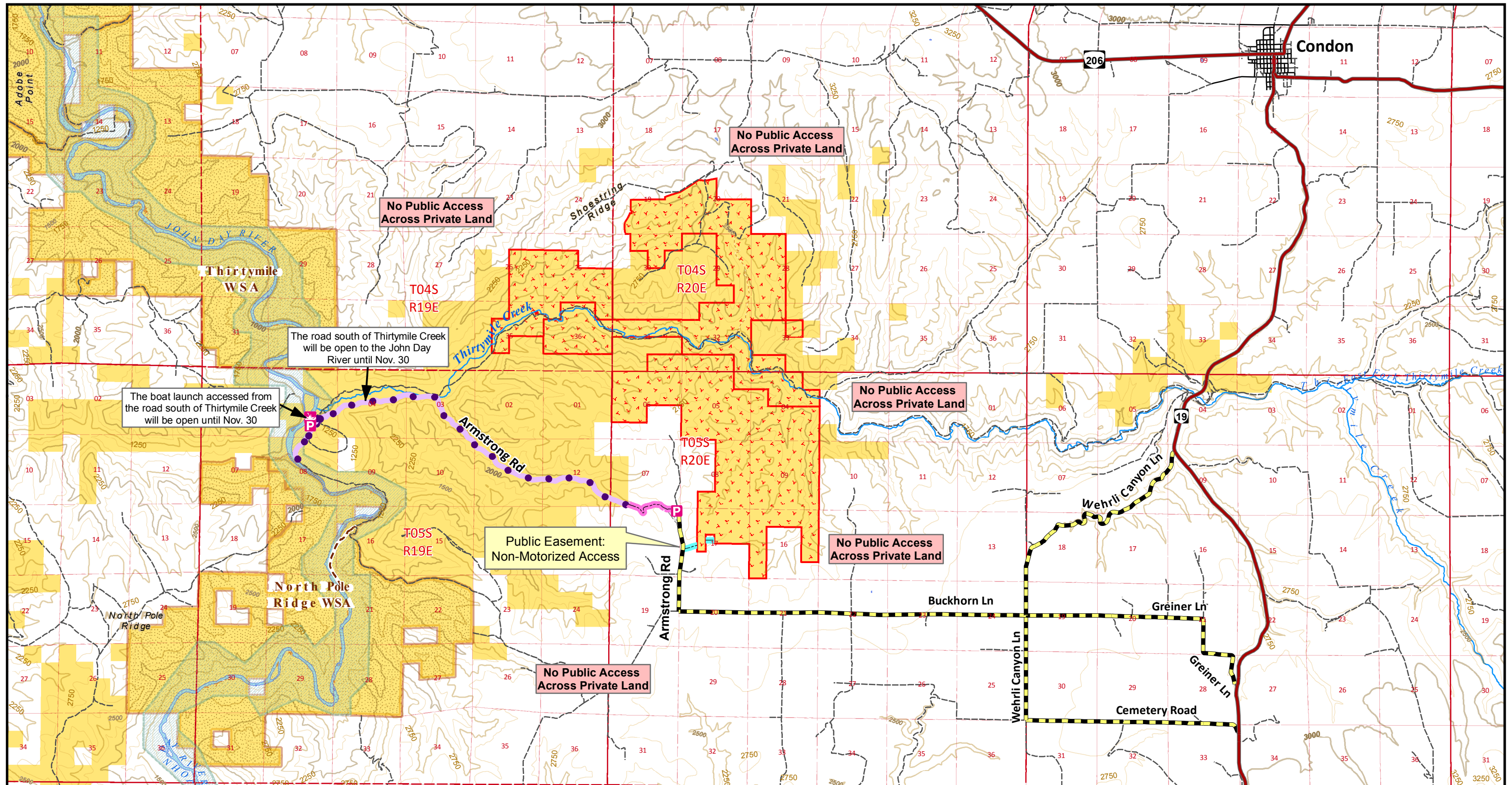
Bicycles are allowed on all roads year-round, except those designated as Non-Mechanized on the attached map (roads in the WSA). You can ride OHVs on roads designated as open to motorized use through Nov. 30. No cross-country travel is allowed.

Can I provide input to the Thirtymile Management Plan? Yes. Requests to be on the mailing list can be made to blm_or_pr_thirtymile@blm.gov

What if I have additional questions? Please contact Prineville District BLM at (541) 416-6700.



Thirtymile Area: Access and Visitor Information

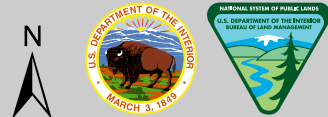


The road south of Thirtymile Creek will be open to the John Day River until Nov. 30

The boat launch accessed from the road south of Thirtymile Creek will be open until Nov. 30

Public Easement: Non-Motorized Access

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District, Oregon



Prepared by: C. Ryan (2/26/2020)

- Parking Area
- Boat Launch
- Wilderness Study Area [WSA]
- Wild & Scenic River [WSR]

- Land Ownership**
- Private/Unknown
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - BLM; recently acquired

- Public Easement - Respect Private Property and Stay on Roadway**
- Motorized Access Open Seasonally (April 16-Nov. 30); Open to Non-Motorized Use Year Round
 - Open to Non-Motorized Use Year Round

- Interim Road Designations***
- County Road Access from Hwy 19; Open to Motorized Travel Year Round
 - Motorized - Open Seasonally; April 16 - Nov. 30
 - Non-Mechanized Only (In WSA)

* All other routes (not shown in a color) on BLM lands are open to non-motorized use year-round.
*Bicycles allowed year-round on all but non-mechanized routes (not allowed in WSA).
*Pedestrian and equestrian access allowed year-round on all routes and across BLM land.