



Planning for a Multiday Float on the John Day River:



1. *The Wild and Scenic John Day*

The following packing list was created for boating trips on the Wild and Scenic John Day. You will be traveling through remote, desert canyonlands with the possibility of unpredictable weather and large temperature swings. Since the John Day is an undammed, free flowing river, water levels can change rapidly, depending on the season. Upstream winds are another prominent feature on the John Day, which usually occur in the afternoon around 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Upstream winds can be quite strong, so it is advisable to put on the water early and make decisions on where to camp later in the day. Have the appropriate craft, necessary experience, and suitable crew for your trip, as each river segment is unique. For more detailed information about river segments and rapid difficulty ratings, refer to our John Day River Boater's Guide, which can be purchased at the Prineville District Office in Prineville, Oregon.

Remember, it is better to have and not need, than to need and not have. Planning ahead is essential for any river trip. Practice *Leave No Trace* principles, outlined below, so that our beautiful, *Wild and Scenic River* can be enjoyed by generations to come.



REQUIRED ITEMS on your John Day River Float:

- **Permit:** Go to [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) to obtain your overnight / day use permit to float the John Day River. Permits are required year-round for both day and overnight trips on the John Day River between Service Creek and Tumwater Falls.
 - Of Note, an Oregon Waterway Access Permit is required for your float if you are going during the low season. High season permits fall under an exception. For more information visit [Oregon State Marine Board's Website](https://www.oregon.gov/OSMB/).
 - **Personal Floatation Device (PFD):** Set an example and **wear your life jacket**. Oregon Marine Board regulations require a Type III or V PFD for all persons on a boat. An approved PFD must be worn by all persons in a boat in any section of waters rated Class III or higher. Children 12 and younger must wear a PFD at all times while riding in a boat.
 - **Carry Safety Gear.** Oregon State Marine Board requires each boat to carry a whistle, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recommends that each group carry a throw rope, first aid kit, repair kit, spare oars / paddles, a spare PFD, and a pump for inflatable crafts.
 - **Required Camping Items:**
 - the BLM requires the use of a portable, re-useable toilet that can be dumped at a proper waste facility. Waste bag systems are allowed if used bags are stored in a leak-proof, hard-sided container.
 - In addition, when fires are allowed, a raised fire pan with 2-inch sides is required to minimize damage to the environment. Pack out all ash. See our [BLM website](https://www.blm.gov/) for more details.
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The 10 Essentials Items Recommended for your trip:

It is recommended that you carry the “*ten essentials*” for any multiday boating trip that are detailed below. There is no cell service within the John Day River corridor, so making sure you have a suitable navigation system and form of communication is highly recommended.

- **NAVIGATION:** Map, Compass, and GPS System. The updated John Day River Boater's Guide includes river maps, campground locations, and rapid descriptions. It is available for purchase at the Prineville District Office. You may download the georeferenced map on Avenza using the QR code on the back of the Boater's Guide.



- **SUN PROTECTION:** Sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat (with a chin strap). Shade trees are limited on the John Day River, and most of the river is open and exposed to the sun.
- **INSULATION:** Jacket, hat, gloves, rain shell, and thermal underwear. Nature is unpredictable; be prepared for sudden changes in weather.
- **ILLUMINATION:** Flashlight, lanterns, and headlamp. Did you remember spare batteries?
- **FIRST-AID SUPPLIES:** Bring a first Aid Kit; Plan for emergencies on river trips.
- **FIRE:** Matches, lighter and fire starters when boating outside the fire ban (June 1 through October 15). Fire can be an emergency signal and a heat source for cooking and warmth.
- **REPAIR KIT AND TOOLS:** Duct tape, patch materials, knife, multitools, etc. Carry a basic repair kit; in addition, bringing a pin kit is recommended.
- **NUTRITION / FOOD:**
In case of changes to your float, pack an extra day's supply of food.
- **HYDRATION:** A general guideline is to pack one gallon of potable water per person, per day. We do not recommend drinking water from the John Day River.
- **EMERGENCY SHELTER:** Tent, space blanket, tarp, and bivy. Shelter is one of the most important elements during an emergency survival situation.



2. Pack cooking materials, like a camp stove, for your float



Leave No Trace Principles for Overnight River Expeditions:

- **Plan ahead and prepare:** learn about river regulations, use a guidebook, prepare for extreme weather and emergencies, and carry equipment to minimize impact.
 - For example, dispersed camping is permitted on undeveloped BLM lands along the John Day. However, private land is interspersed with public land in all river sections, so it is essential to carry a current map showing land ownership.
- **Travel and camp on durable surfaces:**
Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites, leave campsites clean and natural looking, disperse use in pristine areas.
- **Dispose of waste properly:** pack it in, pack it out.
- **Leave what you find:** appreciate natural objects and cultural materials but leave them undisturbed.
- **Minimize campfire impacts:** Use stoves, elevate a fire pan with a blanket to catch embers, and carry out all ash.
- **Respect wildlife:** observe wildlife from a distance; control your pets around wildlife.
- **Be considerate of other visitors:** let nature's sound prevail and respect others quality to their experience.



3. Leave no trace to help preserve our wild landscape.

See our [Know Before You Go Video](#).



An Example Packing List:

Below is a template for a recommended pack list for the John Day. You should make your own pack list that is based on time of year, flow and weather, group skill level, craft and group size, etc. We are providing this list as a template to help personalize your own.

River Clothes:

- Dress for the weather!
- Sun shirts with quick dry material is good. Cotton is not recommended.
- Closed toed river shoes or sandals that will stay on during a swim (tennis shoes work fine).
- Light, quick dry pants or shorts that offer UV protection!
- Base layers (for colder months, e.g. fleece / wool in a couple of different thicknesses for varying temperatures).
- Dry suit, shell pants and shell jacket, or splash gear (for colder months).
- Synthetic fiber or wool socks, 2 or more pairs (for colder months).
- Gloves and warm hat (for colder months).
- Sunglasses (2 pairs) and a sun hat (with a strap).

Camp Clothes:

- Dry camp shoes! Crocs, sandals, boots.
- Pants or shorts, think comfy!
- Warm coat.
- Shirts for varying temps.
- Sweatshirt / sweater.
- Wool socks.
- Rain gear.
- Gloves and warm hat (for cold months).
- Consider an extra set of dry clothes for the drive home.



4. Camping along the John Day.

Toiletries:

- Sunscreen.
- Bug Spray.
- Toothbrush, paste, floss.
- Hand sanitizer.

- Biodegradable soap.
- Medications.
- Chapstick.
- Lotion.

Kitchen and Bed:

- Tent / cot.
- Sleeping bag / pillow.
- Camp chair.

- Kitchen tarp / wing.
- Kitchen table
- Food and Water.



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- Sleeping pad.
- Stove, fuel, cooking supplies.
- Cooler.

- Coffee / tea fixings.
- Emergency water filtration.
- Headlamp and Lantern.

Boating Essentials:

- Permit.
- John Day Boater Guide (Maps) & Compass.
- First Aid Kit.
- Communication (e.g. satellite phone, Garmin in-reach).
- Day Use water bottles and large water containers.
- Repair kit / Pin Kit / Multitool.
- Portable Toilet, toilet paper, and hand sanitizer.
- Fire pan, fire blanket, matches, and lighter.
- Dry bags / Dry Boxes.
- Life Jacket with whistle and knife.
- Helmet.
- Throw rope.
- Spare Paddle / Oar and a pump for inflatables.