



NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

Boaters' Guide

Judith Landing to James Kipp Recreation Area
Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument





*“The Salts coal & Burnt hills & Pumieston
Still continue, game scarce. This Country
may with propriety I think be termed the
Deserts of America, as I do not conceive
any part can ever be settled, as it is deficient
in water, Timber & too steep to be tilled...”*

William Clark, May 26, 1805



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National Landscape Conservation System

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument is part of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), or National Conservation Lands, whose wild character and world-class resources are under the stewardship of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This program incorporates National Scenic and Historic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Areas, and National Monuments, to name a few. The BLM's mission for the NLCS is to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes and places that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations. The BLM's vision for the NLCS is to be a world leader in conservation by protecting landscapes, applying evolving knowledge, and bringing people together to share stewardship of the land.



The Upper Missouri River: Flowing with History and Adventure

Welcome to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument! Unspoiled and rugged, the lands of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument stretch across almost 380,000 acres in central Montana and contain a spectacular array of plants, animals, geology and history.

No less notable for its history than for its wildlife, the Upper Missouri Region was first documented in 1805 by famed explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. In his journal, Clark described the abundant wildlife of the area including mule deer, elk, bison and pronghorn. On April 29, 1805, the Lewis and Clark Expedition recorded the first big horn sheep observation by non-Indians in North America. Clark's description of the magnificent White Cliffs area on the western side of the monument was particularly poignant:

“The hills and river Clifts which we passed today exhibit a most romantic appearance. The bluffs of the river rise to the hight of from 2 to 300 feet and in most places nearly perpendicular; they are formed of remarkable white sandstone which is sufficiently soft to give way readily to the impression of water.”

-William Clark, May 31, 1805

During their trip, the explorers encountered Native Americans. The land later became a source of hope and inspiration for early American settlers, not to mention a sanctuary for outlaws eager to hide in the labyrinth of the badlands. Fur trappers and traders, too, could be seen moving their goods downriver in waters that reflected designs of modern steamboats. Remnants of this rich history are scattered throughout the monument, and it retains many of the same qualities and much of the same appearance today as it did then, thanks to the care and stewardship of farming and ranching families, land management professionals and visitors like you.

This 149-mile segment of Montana's Upper Missouri is an irreplaceable legacy of the historic American West and as such, it was designated a National Wild and Scenic River by Congress in 1976. Thousands of visitors have come through this land to experience the true sense of freedom, to peer into homesteads that have withstood the test of time, observe petroglyphs, and walk among ancient tipi rings where tribes gathered. In 2001, the river corridor, segments of the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce National Historic Trails, six Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and the Cow Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern were designated the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

The Bureau of Land Management is entrusted with managing your public lands here. We work to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Our team cherishes this remote, beautiful part of the country and we know you will as well. We hope your visit to the Upper Missouri is safe and pleasant, and that you'll find yourself engaged in your own unique adventure and enchantment each time you visit.

How to Use This Boaters' Guide

Being well prepared for your trip on the Upper Missouri River makes for an experience full of pleasure and discovery. However, if you are unprepared, it can be a very tough and potentially dangerous trip. Read the next section, "What You Need to Know before Your Trip," prior to launching.

The remainder of this guide is intended to enrich the Upper Missouri experience for both new and well-seasoned river floaters. It contains safety tips, up-to-date maps, camping and hiking information, and informational material to engage you in the historical, biological and geological wonders of the area.

The guide provides 15 maps of the river with an accompanying discussion about each map on the opposite facing page. Information is indexed to designations by "river miles," which is the distance along the river traveling downstream (generally west to east) from Fort Benton, Montana (river mile 0), to the Fred Robinson Bridge at James Kipp Recreation Area (river mile 149). This Boaters' Guide covers the river section from Judith Landing (river mile 88.5) to James Kipp Recreation Area (river mile 149).

Features along the river are identified by their river mile location and further detailed as located to the left of the downstream bow of a boat (e.g., 88.5 L), or to the right of the downstream bow (e.g., 149.0 R). In addition, the popular stretch of the river between Judith Landing (river mile 88.5) and James Kipp Recreation Area (river mile 149) is frequently referred to as the "Missouri Breaks" section of the Upper Missouri since it contains the stark rugged badlands.



The Breaks is a local geographic term describing the rugged valleys, badlands, bluffs, and coulees surrounding the upper Missouri River areas. It is often said that it appears that the land breaks away to the river. Others have described this terrain as upside-down mountains or badlands, though the Breaks is the most common term used to describe this area.



Two large pull-out maps in this guide show the entire river corridor. They are included because public land within the Monument extends beyond the immediate banks of the river into upland areas in many locations, especially on the lower stretch of the river. You are welcome to hike on public land, but remember, you need prior landowner permission to go beyond the ordinary high-water mark of the river onto private land.

Via color-coding, the maps show private, BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and State of Montana land. Most of the boundaries between public and private land are not marked by signs. Utilization of global positioning systems, maps and situational awareness will assist you in determining where you are.

On many pages we have left large blank spaces where you are encouraged to write your own notes. You, too, can be an explorer and adventurer. Your journal may not become as famous as Lewis and Clark's, but recording your own observations and impressions will help you create your own memories more valuable than any other story of the "Breaks."

Personal Journal Notes

Know Before You Go

Plan your Trip

Use this guide to help you ***plan your trip carefully and strategically.*** Although the waters here are classified as easy and smooth, there are reasons why this area is known as a Wild and Scenic River. In addition to self-registry when launching, tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. Ensure all boating and camping equipment is in working order before departure. It's up to you to ensure your own safety and enjoyment while visiting the Monument.

Float Distances and Times

Float times can be extended or shortened depending on a variety of factors such as weather, hikes, and camping opportunities. Days are included only to give you a gauge as to what visitors typically travel.

<i>River Reach</i>	<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Time</i>
Fort Benton to Wood Bottom	0 - 20.3	1 day
Wood Bottom to Coal Banks Landing	20.3 - 41.5	1 day
Coal Banks Landing to Judith Landing	41.5 - 88.5	3-4 days
Judith Landing to James Kipp Recreation Area	88.5 - 149	4-5 days

Water Flow and Water Levels

Please visit this website for current flow and river conditions:

waterdata.usgs.gov

Locations to search:

- Fort Benton, Montana (River Mile 0)
- Virgelle, Montana (River Mile 39)
- Landusky, Montana (River Mile 149)

The Upper Missouri River's flow can fluctuate between 4,000 and 17,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) on an average year with the high flow usually occurring after spring runoff. While 5,000 cfs is considered to be "low-water," it is still floatable via paddle craft. The river is reasonably calm with no discernable rapids throughout the Monument.



Access

Public access sites to the Upper Missouri River are limited, so you need to plan ahead as to where you will put-in and take-out. Private landowners along the river are able to enter the river from their own land, but visitors must use the developed public access sites.

Principal launch points are:

- Fort Benton Canoe Launch (River Mile 0)
- Fort Benton Motorboat Launch (River Mile 0)
- Wood Bottom (River Mile 20.3)
- Coal Banks Landing (River Mile 41.5)
- Judith Landing (River Mile 88.5)
- James Kipp Recreation Area (River Mile 149)

Additional launch opportunities at Virgelle Ferry (River Mile 39.1) and McClelland (or Stafford) Ferry (River Mile 101.8) make trips of various lengths possible.

Many boaters choose commercial services to either shuttle their vehicle or bring themselves, their boats and gear back from take-out locations to their launch point. You can find out about these shuttle services at the Upper Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center, Fort Benton with contact information located at the end of this guide. Cars can be parked in unattended lots at each of the public launch/take-out locations.

Local gateway communities of Fort Benton, Loma, Big Sandy, and Winifred all welcome visitors and are good places to find local knowledge of the Breaks or to explore on your own. Each community has food, fuel, and lodging available.

Party Size

The size of your party may enhance or alter your plans for your river trip due to campsite availability. From June 15 to August 1, groups larger than 20 can launch only on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. Groups larger than 30 must obtain a Special Recreation Permit. For organized groups, a Letter of Agreement should be obtained to help track your trip.

Permits and Registration

The Upper Missouri River does not have an allocation for river use, but does require a permit and payment of river fees. Fees are required for day use and overnight floats from Coal Banks Landing to James Kipp Recreation Area. These fees are usually paid before your trip so you have the stub as your receipt and proof of your permit which may be requested by any BLM employee. Payment can be made at the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing and James Kipp Recreation Area. Please contact us or our webpage for current fee amounts.



If you launch from Fort Benton Canoe Camp, Fort Benton Motorboat Launch or Wood Bottom, you can always stop at one of other locations to make payment and obtain your permit. For your own safety, the BLM encourages you to register your party prior to your trip. Self-registration boxes are located at Fort Benton Canoe Launch, Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center, Fort Benton Motorboat Launch, Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, and James Kipp Recreation Area. You may be approached by BLM employees or volunteers at popular launch and exit points who gather information about party size and camping use.

Potable Water

The only potable water supply is at Coal Banks Landing (mile 41.5) and James Kipp Recreation Area (mile 149). We recommend that you bring adequate drinking and cooking water (one gallon per person per day). The water wells at Coal Banks Landing and James Kipp Recreation Area are tested monthly during the recreation season to ensure the water is suitable for drinking.



Camping Opportunities

Some camping areas are much more popular than others, especially sites such as McGarry Bar and Gist Bottom. These are places where fellow floaters will likely be spending the evening. Please be respectful. You can find a description of these major sites in the map section of this guide.

Camp on durable surfaces such as established campsites, sand, or gravel. If you are part of a larger group, do your best to concentrate your tents, leaving room for others. Avoid spreading out your party along the bank and occupying all the best available spaces.

Be aware that venomous rattlesnakes inhabit the area. If you see a snake, step away from it slowly. In addition, be cautious of cottonwood trees as they are comprised of soft wood and limbs from aged trees can break without warning. For your safety, don't sleep within five feet of overhanging cottonwood limbs.

Personal Journal Notes

Four types of camping opportunities are available along the Upper Missouri:

- **Developed Public Access Sites and Campgrounds:** These sites are accessible by road with a full range of developments that may include parking lots, boat ramps, vault toilets, campsites for tents and RVs, and picnic facilities.

These sites include Fort Benton Canoe Camp, Fort Benton Boat Ramp, Wood Bottom, Decision Point, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk, and James Kipp Recreation Area.



- **Developed Boat Camps:** These sites are accessible to the public only by boat. The sites contain vault toilets, metal fire rings and some have open-air shelters.

These campsites are Little Sandy, Lonetree Coulee, Eagle Creek, Hole-in-the-Wall, and Slaughter River.

- **Primitive Boat Camps:** These sites are accessible only by boat and contain a metal fire ring and occasionally a fence enclosure to prevent cattle from entering. There are no other developments.

These sites include Evans Bend, Senieurs Reach, Black Bluff Rapids, Dark Butte, Pablo Rapids, The Wall, McGarry Bar, Gist Bottom, Upper Woodhawk and Hideaway.



- **Dispersed Public Land:** In addition to the developed sites described above, camping is permissible on any of the 90,000 acres of public land adjacent to the river. Absence of development allows opportunities for those seeking a completely primitive experience. The best campsites are found, not made. If you choose to camp on dispersed land, take special care to leave it exactly as you found it. Please do not build new fire rings; use a camp stove instead. If a fire ring exists, you may use it, but the idea is to use dispersed land in such a way that your presence is not detectable by the next visitor who discovers the site. In order to preserve these primitive camping experiences, we need your help. Please practice “Leave No Trace” camping. If you need help with the techniques, please give us a call or talk to one of our staff members prior to your trip.



Campfires

Wood is scarce in the more popular campsites, so a gas stove or charcoal grill is recommended. It's a good idea to collect firewood during the day if you plan an evening fire (fire restrictions permitting). Cutting live or standing timber is not permitted; collect only “dead and down” wood.

Even small fires can leave scars that last a long time. Please use existing fire rings. **Extinguish your fire completely; drown it with water, stir the contents, drown again and check around the fire ring.** The ashes should be “cool to the touch” (use the back of your hand to prevent damaging your palms). **NEVER LEAVE A FIRE UNATTENDED!**

Do not leave food, plastic, or metal in a fire ring. Before your trip, check with any Montana BLM office to find out if fire restrictions are in effect and what the stages mean for you.

Leave No Trace!

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument practices the principles of “Leave No Trace.”

Leave No Trace is a principle adopted by most land management offices, agencies and by many private citizens throughout the country and the world. The foundations of this principle are simple; leave the area either the same or better than the way you found it.

What this means to you:

- If you pack it in, you must pack it out!
- Do not build, modify or alter any natural, archaeological, historical or any other objects or areas.
- Do not dig holes, level ground, pull or cut vegetation.
- Do not remove anything that you find, even rocks or sticks.
- Minimize campfire effects. This means no fires if there is no fire ring. Please don't build fire rings if they are not present already.
- Respect wildlife, all wildlife. No harassment, feeding, or taunting.
- Do not carve, draw on, or alter sandstone or formations of any kind. The harm is irreparable and becomes an eyesore.

Human Waste Management

Portable toilet regulations are in effect for boaters on overnight trips from Fort Benton (mile 0) to the boundary of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (mile 138.8). The portable toilet must either be a washable, reusable toilet system or an approved degradable bag system specifically designed for human waste disposal. All portable toilet waste must be carried out of the river corridor and deposited in an authorized disposal facility. Vault toilets are not authorized disposal facilities. The washable, reusable toilet system may be serviced at the RV dump station in the James Kipp Recreation Area. Degradable waste bag systems may be disposed of in dumpsters at Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing and James Kipp Recreation Area.

Vault toilets are located at Judith Landing Recreation Area, Stafford Ferry, Lower Woodhawk Recreation Area, and James Kipp Recreation Area. We strongly recommend bringing your own supply of toilet paper.

Motorized Watercraft

Motorized watercraft are great ways to explore the river. Since 1976, there have been seasonal boating restrictions on the “Wild & Scenic” segments of the river from June 15 to September 15. In the Recreational segments of the river, motorized watercraft travel upstream and downstream is allowed year round.

Open Recreational Segments (All Year):

- From Fort Benton to Pilot Rock (river mile 0-52)
- From Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (river mile 84.5-92.5)

Seasonally Restricted Wild and Scenic Segments (June 15 - September 15):

- Pilot Rock to Deadman Rapids (mile 52 to 84.5)

*Motorized travel is only allowed downstream **seven days per week** at a no-wake speed*

- Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (river mile 92.5-149)

*Motorized travel is allowed only downstream on **Thursdays through Saturdays** at a no-wake speed.*

MOTORIZED TRAVEL IS NOT ALLOWED **Sundays through Wednesdays.**

A “no-wake” speed is defined as a speed where no white water occurs in the path of the vessel or in waves created by the vessel.

Motorized craft are sometimes necessary to fulfill the mission of managing and protecting the river corridor. You may see motorized craft in use by law enforcement officers, river rangers, range specialists and research teams. These people are carrying out riparian area exclosure fencing and monitoring projects, conducting various studies as well as performing patrols and conducting maintenance and site improvements along the river.



If you are planning a trip with a motorboat and are unfamiliar with the river, please contact us at (406) 622-4000. Depending on water levels and the size of your boat, there are inherent dangers with gravel bars, rocks, and other hazards.

Aquatic and Invasive Species (AIS)

Aquatic and invasive species negatively impact water bodies and wetlands. Their presence can cause severe damage to local ecosystems, industry, and tourism so we ask you to follow all Montana laws carefully.

All watercraft and water-based equipment (non-motorized and motorized) **must** stop at all watercraft inspection stations encountered in Montana. You can be cited for driving past an inspection station if you are hauling or carrying a watercraft, so don't neglect to stop. This includes fishing tackle, tackle boxes, waders, boots, fishing rods, nets, stringers, knives, etc. If anything has been in any other body of water, it needs to be, at a minimum: "Cleaned, drained, dried and inspected" before touching another waterway.

As of this printing, Montana does not have an AIS boat sticker or other pass requirement for boat launching.

It is **your** responsibility to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. With everyone's help we can keep our waterways free of damaging species.

Guided Trips

An outstanding way to experience the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument is to utilize a licensed outfitter. The 2008 Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Resource Management Plan allows for a limit of 23 special recreation permits for commercial use and include boating for commercial hunting, fishing, and scenic and interpretive tours and floats. River outfitters rent out equipment, shuttle vehicles, or provide a knowledgeable guide for your trip. Please call us or check out our website for information about outfitters permitted here.

Hiking Opportunities

The public lands within the Monument boundaries offer a plethora of hiking opportunities that will satisfy the abilities of every visitor, from



novice hiker to expert adventurer. Visitors are encouraged to explore the unique landscape of the Breaks terrain and to see for themselves the spectacles of unchanged “visionary enchantment” so eloquently described by Captain Meriwether Lewis more than two hundred years ago. Keep in mind there are few officially marked or maintained trails within the Monument, so visitors must use caution and common sense while exploring. Please see the safety section in this guide.

Take precautions while climbing and hiking on the uplands. Sandstone cliffs are soft, and a fine layer of sand on surfaces makes them slick.

Other Attractions

Fort Benton not only houses our River Management Station and Interpretive Center, but it is also home of a rich and long history and considered the “Birthplace of Montana.” It is home to a variety of museums highlighting the history of the area and various local businesses. You may find a stay here enjoyable as you plan your trip.



Local gateway communities of Fort Benton, Loma, Big Sandy, and Winifred all welcome visitors and are good places to find local knowledge of the Breaks. Residents of these communities all have their own love for the landscape and its history, and may have stories to share.

The Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge offers spectacular opportunities for viewing wildlife. Several species of large ungulates native to the area are often visible. A short distance down river from James Kipp Recreation Area is the “Slippery Ann” elk viewing area, considered one of the premier elk viewing sites in the state. In the late summer and early fall, vast herds of elk can be observed in the river bottoms adjacent to the roads in designated elk viewing areas. To get there, drive north from James Kipp Recreation Area on US 191. After crossing the Fred Robinson Bridge, travel approximately one mile and turn right (east) on CMR Refuge Road 101 (Auto Tour Route). Proceed just over five miles to the beginning of the “Slippery Ann” elk viewing area.

Interpretive signs along the route provide education and enhance the journey, offering visitors a glimpse of the past and featuring wildlife in their native habitat. The CMR Wildlife Refuge has an extensive continuation of roads and trails that offer incredible viewing opportunities of the Refuge, river and the Breaks.

In addition to the amazing opportunities and adventures to be had on the water, endless recreation opportunities abound in the uplands above the river bottom. There are several roads within the Monument that lead to amazing vistas, off-the-beaten-path homesteads, endless hiking and orienteering experiences, water and glacially scoured plateaus, rock formations, and other tributaries to the Missouri. Maps are available at select locations and are paramount to a safe and enjoyable experience.



Just north of the James Kipp Recreation Area and the CMR Wildlife Refuge is the intersection of Highways 191 and 66. Driving west on Highway 66 takes you into the Little Rocky Mountains and several different types of recreational opportunities. A quick drive up to the small community of Hays on the Fort Belknap Reservation will bring you to Mission Canyon and Natural Bridge areas. These areas are administered by the Fort Belknap Reservation and are very sacred to the tribe. Please treat their lands with the same respect as you would your own. There are also large areas of BLM and State land interspersed throughout the Fort Belknap area.

There are also several recreational opportunities south of James Kipp Recreation Area. The Judith Mountains are managed primarily by the BLM and offer great camping, hiking, biking and hunting opportunities.

Be sure to stop at the small towns in the area to find information on things to do.

Personal Journal Notes

Safety Considerations

The Upper Missouri River has Class I rapids that are defined as easy, fast moving with riffles and small waves, few obstructions, easily avoided, low risk and easy self-rescue. However, you should plan carefully to ensure a safe, enjoyable trip.

As you think about the proper precautions to take on the water, also plan for safety on land to mitigate for rugged terrain, snakes, insects, and spiny plants.

Flotation Devices

Approved personal flotation devices are required for every boater. Children under 12 must wear a life vest at all times.

Clothing and Gear

Tennis shoes, water sandals, river shoes or rubber boots are desirable for wear in watercraft, but hiking boots will make exploring shoreline areas easier. Other necessities include a shade hat, long-sleeve shirt, long pants, rain gear, jacket, sunscreen, sunglasses, first-aid kit, and mosquito repellent. Quick dry, moisture wicking clothing materials are preferred; avoid cotton if you can. You might also want to consider a mosquito head net and a screen tent. Your gear should be stored in dry bags (or water-tight containers) to protect it from the elements and boating mishaps.

Exposure

Exposure to heat and the narrow river valley can cause a variety of heat illnesses. Drink plenty of water and take frequent breaks out of the sun. Ensure you are taking in adequate salts through food intake or an electrolyte mix. Though not as common, too much water can flush needed nutrients out of your system and cause illness.

Do not filter or boil water from the Missouri or its tributaries to use for cooking or consumption. There is agricultural runoff as well as cattle excrement that is not removable using aforementioned processes.

First Aid

Carry adequate first-aid and emergency supplies. This kit should include enough supplies for all members of your party.

Campfires

Even small fires can leave scars that last a long time. Please use existing fire rings. Make sure to extinguish your fire completely; drown it with water, stir the contents, drown again and check around the fire ring. The ashes should be “cool to the touch” (use the back of your hand to prevent damaging your palms). **NEVER LEAVE A FIRE UNATTENDED!** Do not leave food, plastic or metal in a fire ring. Before your trip, check with any Montana BLM office to find out if fire restrictions are in effect and what the stages mean to you.



Ferry Crossings

Floaters should pay attention to the two ferry crossings on the Upper Missouri at Virgelle Ferry (River Mile 39.1) and Stafford-McClelland Ferry (River Mile 101.8). Be aware of the two low-hanging cables that cross the river in front of each ferry. Also, stay away from the upstream side of each ferry boat. The strong undercurrents they create can easily submerge your craft.

Communication (Cell Phones)

Cell service is not typical on the Monument or along the river corridor. You are encouraged to bring a satellite phone or another form of communication in case an emergency arises. Our expanded amenity sites may have available land-line phones for emergencies, but it's your responsibility to ensure your own safety. The last page in this guide has emergency numbers for your trip.

Plants

Poison ivy is common in the Breaks and surrounding areas. Take precautions while walking and setting up tents. Poison ivy can cause hives, rash and other complications.

Yucca plants are ubiquitous in the Breaks. Take care not to touch them with bare skin; the plant leaves are extremely sharp and contain saponins which are mild toxins that can irritate the skin and cause hives, irritation, and itching.

Prickly pear cactus are found in all areas of the Breaks and will inflict effects similar to those caused by a Yucca plant. The spines can stick in and break off in your skin.



Sinkholes or Swallow Holes

A unique hazard common to Breaks topography is the swallow hole, often referred to as a sinkhole. These swallow holes are natural caverns formed on the surface that channel water underground, often exiting hundreds of yards away from their starting points. These clay caverns sometimes get overgrown with brush and accumulate tumbleweeds, making them difficult for the unsuspecting traveler to see. They are prevalent throughout the Monument, especially in the more arid badlands areas. Hikers are cautioned to be cognizant of where they step.

Snakes

On occasion, you may encounter the prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*) along the Upper Missouri River. This species is native to this area and was frequently encountered by the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Unless provoked or surprised, the prairie rattlesnake is typically non-



aggressive. Be careful

when walking through tall vegetation, among rocky outcroppings, or around old homesteads. Use caution when gathering firewood.

Rattlesnakes are of course venomous, but there are also bull snakes, Western hognose, yellow-bellied racers, garter snakes and rubber boas located here which are not poisonous. Consider yourself privileged if you see one of these special residents. Please be cautious and conscientious when encountering any of these snakes. Step away slowly and remember that not all rattlesnakes actually rattle when encountered. Please do not harm these animals in any way. They are free rodent control!

“... on my return to camp I trod within [a] few inches of a rattle snake but being in motion I passed before he could probably put himself in a striking attitude and fortunately escaped his bite...”

-Meriwether Lewis, May 26, 1805



Shallow Waters and Gravel Bars

Though normally not a concern for kayakers and canoeists, gravel and sandbars change from season to season and can appear without warning due to the uniform color of the often muddy Missouri. These bars may present a challenge for motorized boat users so visitors are reminded to keep an eye out for them.

Swimming

Swimming can be a great way to escape the heat during the summer months on the river, but we recommend you have a companion and wear a personal flotation device. The river has deceptively strong currents with hidden rocks and snags below the surface.

Weather

Weather is one of the most hazardous factors on the river.

Temperatures during the floating season can range from 20 degrees to more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, or about -7 degrees to more than 37 degrees Celsius. Be prepared for all weather conditions by bringing **synthetic** clothing that can be layered. Don't forget sunblock, rain gear, a shade hat, long-sleeve shirt and pants, and a thermal layer.

The combination of wet clothing and cool temperatures can cause a rapid loss of body heat known as **hypothermia**. Hypothermia can be deadly, so be familiar with its symptoms and treatment. Being chilled is an early sign to take action. Change into dry, warm clothing early and keep moving. Eat or drink something warm, if possible. Use your body's natural systems to warm up.

The narrow canyons of the river can hide the approach of **storms** until the last minute. Watch the weather both in front of and behind you. Sudden, violent thunderstorms can whip the river's surface into dangerous whitecaps. Get off the water when you see a storm approaching, especially when lightning is present. Never take cover

under trees. Lightning strikes are possible and wind can cause even stout cottonwood branches to break off. Sudden storms can also create flash flooding, so be sure your gear is secured, especially your boat and associated equipment. Be familiar with the “lightning position.”

Even in clear weather, moderate-to-strong **winds** often blow through the river valley. The wind may increase or decrease your travel time. When camping in windy conditions, be sure your tent and boat are tied down and secured or they can blow away. Bring extra food and water in case your trip duration is increased due to wind.

Personal Journal Notes



On the River

Now that you've planned your trip and taken into considerations safety precautions, we hope you'll enjoy learning more about the river itself. Take note of the following information specifically associated with the river, its designations, history, geology, and wildlife, and enjoy what you see along the way.

Designations

As a designated National Wild and Scenic River within a National Monument, the Upper Missouri has three different classifications that are generally based on shoreline development. The three classifications are: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational.

- **Wild** - sections that are generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. The Wild sections of the river are from River Miles 52 to 84.5, 92.5 to 99.5, and 104.5 to 128.5 and constitute 64 total miles. The Scenic sections of the river are from River Miles 99 to 104 and 128.5 to 149 and constitute 26 total miles. This section primarily covers most of the Judith Landing to James Kipp Recreation Area.
- **Scenic** - sections with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines or watersheds still largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
- **Recreational** - sections that are readily accessible by road or railroad that may have some development along their shorelines. The Recreational sections of the river are from miles 0 to 52 and 84.5 to 92.5 and constitute 59 total miles.

The Upper Missouri is unique in the Wild and Scenic River system with boundaries from Coal Banks Landing to James Kipp Recreation Area ranging from "rim-to-rim" rather than the standard quarter mile from either shoreline. The boundary from Fort Benton to Coal Banks is from "bank-to-bank," or a standard quarter mile.



Boating and River Etiquette

Sounds of Silence

The Upper Missouri is one of the few places where one hears few sounds of human activity. Many people return to the Upper Missouri just to experience the joy of hearing only the sound of nature. When floating the river, please be respectful of others who are trying to listen to these natural sounds. In campsites, keep your conversations and revelry under control, especially after dark. Here, silence is golden. Leave the Bluetooth speakers at home. The sounds of nature are often sublime. By being quiet, you'll hear more, not less.

Respect for Private Land

Much of the land adjacent to the river on the Upper Missouri is privately owned. You must obtain landowner permission before entering private property for any activity, even hiking. Know where you are on the river by using the maps in this guide. Please respect private land and property rights. Trespassing is against the law.



Grazing Cattle

Private landowners commonly utilize their land for grazing, and they have also acquired grazing permits for their cattle on State of Montana land and BLM land. Livestock grazing is allowed on public land within the Monument, so do not be surprised if you see cattle by the river or near campgrounds, even in the sections designated as Wild. Some campgrounds, such as Eagle Creek and Little Sandy are on private land and leased for public use through access easements.

Non-Native Invasive Weeds

Noxious weeds dominate many areas in the West. Once they're established, they can take over and completely change the character of an area in a few short years. Help us keep the Upper Missouri River as free as possible from noxious weeds by learning to recognize invasive plants.

Invasive weeds opportunistically hitchhike to an area any way they can. Check your vehicle, clothing, shoes and even your pet for weed seeds before and after visiting the area. Some aquatic invasive species can survive two weeks on dry land, so be careful about

transporting wet equipment in and out of the Monument. Do your best to clean and dry equipment that comes in contact with water.

It is your responsibility to stop the spread of invasive species. Please do your part. Clean and inspect all of your items no matter how small.

Respect for Cultural Resources

A remarkable attraction of the Upper Missouri is the visible presence of remnants of a fascinating cultural history. It's the responsibility of every visitor to protect our common history. Please do not touch or move any of the historic features you encounter. These features might be as modest as circles of small stones that once held down Native American tipis; however, they are culturally valuable. Native American rock art (petroglyphs) are particularly fragile, degraded even by the oil on our hands, so please do not touch them. Old homestead sites abound, and you are welcome to explore these on public lands, but please do not displace any of the old tools, boards or remnants of this remarkable homesteading era. Simply moving something diminishes its historical context. Please be aware there may be some hazards associated with these sites such as loose boards, bats, snakes, nails and rusty metal, lead paints, etc.



Wildlife and Plants

Observe wildlife from a distance. Remember, you're visiting their home, so please be a respectful guest. Do not approach, follow, stalk or feed the wildlife.

Birds use the islands in the Missouri River for nesting. Avoid disturbing them and do not camp on the islands between April 1 and July 31.

Enjoy, but please don't pick vegetation. Native plants add to the scenery, are a food source for wildlife and a seed source for regeneration.



Fun and Memories

Above all else, be sure to have fun, make memories, and “take only photos and leave only footprints.” The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument is an amazing place just waiting to be discovered by you. This is a place where you can actively imagine you are the first human to step foot in the area, or to see a unique rock formation. A place where nature and history transcend time and the flow of true freedom is unimpeded by modern technology. The memories you make here will undoubtedly stay with you throughout your life and hopefully inspire others to take their own journey through this time capsule.



Personal Journal Notes

Missouri River Natural History: Cottonwoods and Islands

Prior to the construction of major dams on the Missouri River, major spring floods would reform river channels and create new islands and gravel bars. The big floods of 1908, 1953 and 1964 left lasting legacies of transformed stream sides and riparian vegetation. The “bank building” action from the floods would create cottonwood seedbeds high above the river’s “normal” water level which kept winter ice jams from slicing off the young seedlings in subsequent years.

The condition of riparian vegetation is of vital concern to managers and visitors to the Upper Missouri, since it provides habitat for wildlife, regulates ecological functions, controls bank erosion and provides beauty and shade to visitors. In addition to the plains cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*), other important plants provide food and shelter for wildlife. Willows, green ash, boxelder, snowberry, silver sagebrush, Woods’ rose, and red-osier dogwood are important woody species, and cattail, bulrush, and sedges provide cover for waterfowl, amphibians and small mammals.



During the steamboat era after the Civil War, “woodhawkers” sold cords of wood along the river to steamboat captains to fuel their boilers. Although a significant proportion of cottonwood was cut for the steamboats, much of the floodplain had recovered its potential to grow cottonwood by the mid-20th century. Recent flood control measures, however, have severely limited opportunities for cottonwood regeneration, and young replacement stands

of cottonwoods are relatively rare. In addition, cottonwood trees are commonly targeted by beavers, and you will likely see plentiful signs of beaver activity along the river.



Cottonwood Restoration Efforts

Have you seen some young cottonwoods behind wire between Coal Banks Landing and Boiler Bottom? Those trees are part of an ongoing restoration project started in 2014 by the BLM, Friends of the Missouri Breaks National Monument, and local volunteers.

Because cottonwood seeds are very small and do not tolerate shade, they need fresh sediment deposits to germinate. These deposits are often formed either at the deltas of tributary streams such as Arrow Creek or the Judith River, or following high flood events. The seeds also need access to the water table but be above the ice scour line... a difficult balance to find in today's river.

You might see some interns or volunteers using pumps and hose to water newly planted cottonwoods. Although these trees are planted 6-7 feet deep, many are still a few feet above the low summer water table. Watering them through plastic PVC tubes encourages the roots to grow deep and assures a higher survival rate (up to 80 percent).

You can help, too. Use the buckets placed at many of the campground restrooms to haul a little water to the trees.



The Missouri Breaks, a Living Museum

The Upper Missouri region is an area of extreme contrasts – from the wide, fertile valley near Fort Benton to the scenic White Cliffs downriver from Coal Banks Landing. The dramatic, rugged badlands below Judith Landing add yet another kind of vista to the Central Montana scenery. The wildlife viewing possibilities are endless; from numerous species of birds, mice, rabbits, turkeys, snakes, deer, elk, bighorn sheep, eagles, hawks, owls, osprey, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, sometimes even bears.

The Upper Missouri's geology, vegetation and wildlife make it a living museum.



Geology

Geologically, the land was originally laid down in horizontal layers, the sediment and shorelines of a great inland sea that once covered most of the Great Plains. These layers have since undergone a transformation – folded, faulted, uplifted, modified by red-hot volcanic activity and gouged and cooled by glaciers. This powerful mix, with constant erosion added, created the land known as “the Breaks.” The word “breaks” is a geographical reference to describe landforms that erode or break away from uplands to the river bed below and thought to have been coined by F.V. Hayden during the initial geologic survey of this area in the 1850s.

Vegetation

The vegetation adds to the diversity along the river. Large groves of cottonwood, ash, box elder, willow, and an understory of wild rose and

snowberry hug the riverbanks. The river terraces, bottom lands and valley slopes support mostly sagebrush and grass. High shale cliffs, where the river still slices into the valley slopes, are mostly devoid of vegetation. The cottonwood groves diminish after Judith Landing, and the conifers – ponderosa and limber pine, Douglas fir and juniper – begin to appear in the side coulees (drainages) and along the valley slopes. The lower reach of the Judith River, just above its confluence with the Missouri, contains one of the few remaining fully functioning cottonwood gallery forest ecosystems on the Northern Plains.

Wildlife

The varied vegetation provides habitat for an array of wildlife. Most of the 60 species of mammals, 233 species of birds and 20 species of amphibians and reptiles in the Upper Missouri River valley are dependent in one way or another on the riparian zone – the area of green plants along the river. The most common inhabitants are mule and white-tailed deer, non-native pheasant, waterfowl and raptors. Prairie dogs, greater sage-grouse and pronghorn live on the plains above the valley. You also might catch a glimpse of elk or bighorn sheep.

Fish

Fifty species of fish, ranging from tiny minnows (weighing a half-ounce) to immense paddlefish (which can grow to 140 pounds) reside in the river. Most of the native fish observed by Lewis and Clark are still found here today and include six Montana Species of Concern; pallid sturgeon, blue sucker, paddlefish, sauger, sicklefin chub and sturgeon chub. The pallid sturgeon is a federally listed endangered species. It is protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and if caught must be returned immediately to the water. Anglers are required to have a special tag to fish for paddlefish, another unusual native fish species. Other native species found here include goldeye, sauger, channel catfish, freshwater drum/sheepshead and shovelnose sturgeon. Non-native smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike are also frequently caught. We work closely with Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks to help protect these species. *See current Montana fishing regulations for details regarding fish identification and regulations.

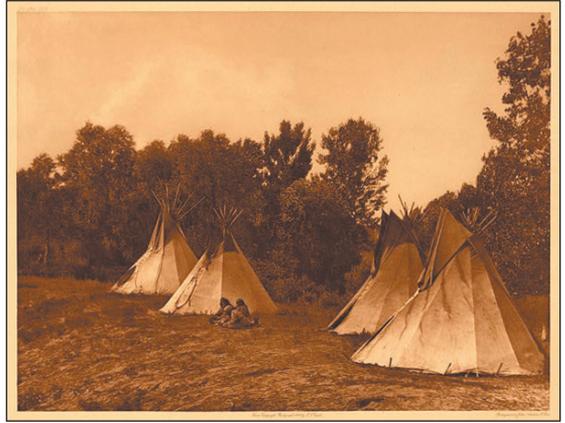
“While I viewed these mountains I felt a secret pleasure in finding myself so near the head of the heretofore conceived boundless Missouri; but when I reflected on the difficulties which this snowey barrier would most probably throw in my way to the Pacific, and the sufferings and hardships of myself and party in thim, it in some measure counterballanced the joy I had felt in the first moments in which I gazed on them;”

Meriwether Lewis, May 26, 1805

The People

Human occupation of the Upper Missouri River Breaks began more than 12,000 years ago. The area was part of the homeland or hunting grounds of numerous native peoples until around 1900, when Euro-American expansion reached its zenith.

The Upper Missouri was occupied by the Blackfeet, Nakoda (Assiniboine), White Clay (Gros Ventre), Crow, Plains Ojibwa and Cree nations. The region was also frequented for buffalo hunting by the Lakota, Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa from the eastern plains and from the west by the Kootenai, Salish, Niimiipuu (Nez Perce), Kalispel and Shoshone. Their occupation of this area is evidenced by religious sites, burial sites, pictographs, petroglyphs, riverside habitation sites, tipi rings, rock cairns, buffalo jumps and corrals. Again, please be respectful of the remnants of these special places; they are sacred to many people.



NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, EDWARD S. CURTIS



NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, EDWARD S. CURTIS

Lewis and Clark followed much of the Upper Missouri River on their historic westward exploration in 1805-06. Today, the Upper Missouri is part of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The Corps of Discovery followed the Missouri from St. Louis to one of its sources in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains of southwest Montana. The Corps traveled the wild and scenic portion of the river westward (upstream) in May and June of 1805. On May 26, 1805, while hiking above present-day Bullwacker Creek, Captain Clark wrote, "From this point I beheld the Rocky Mountains for the first time with Certainty...."

After failing to discover a northwest water passage to the Pacific Ocean and spending the winter at the mouth of the Columbia River, the Corps came back through Montana in the summer of 1806 on its way home. The explorers parted ways for awhile; Lewis and a small party traveled back down the Missouri, while Clark explored the Yellowstone River to the south. Today's travelers can camp in the same places as the Corps and easily visualize the scenes described in the expedition journals.

Fur traders quickly followed Lewis and Clark's route, and forts, both trading and military, began to appear along the river. The fur trade



spawned the first extensive use of the Missouri River as a road through this wild country. Keelboats, mackinaws, bullboats and canoes plied the upper river for the next two decades, bringing trade items and returning east with a wealth of furs. Steamboats followed in 1831, reaching Fort Union on the eastern border of Montana the next year. Steamboats reached Fort Benton in 1860, and river traffic swelled after gold was discovered in the area a short time later. In 1866, the Luella carried 2.5 tons of gold dust down the Missouri. Valued at \$1.25 million, it was the richest cargo ever to go down the river. The colorful steamboat period on the Upper Missouri ended when the railroad punched through the countryside, and dam construction began.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ON BEHALF OF THE USC SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Settlers began arriving after the Civil War. By 1916, almost every bottom along the river with enough level ground to farm had been settled. But farming along the Missouri was a rough way to earn a living. Drought, grasshoppers, poor soils, extreme weather and isolation forced many settlers to give up their farms and move on. Their shacks and cabins stand along the river in somber testimony of dreams that were not meant to be.

Today's residents take special care of their ranchlands along the Upper Missouri River based on their longstanding appreciation for the land and the communities where they live. A special program entitled "Undaunted Stewardship" began in 2002 in anticipation of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial to foster sustainable management of family ranches.



Undaunted Stewardship extends even beyond the Upper Missouri River, working as a statewide partnership involving 19 agricultural and conservation groups in Montana. It is managed and directed by Montana State University, the Montana Stockgrowers Association and BLM. To help preserve historic sites and encourage sustainable stewardship on private rangelands, Undaunted Stewardship certifies farms and ranches that use state-of-the-science land management practices. These Undaunted Land Stewards protect the long-term health and productivity of Montana's natural resources, preserving historic sites and finding ways to share them with the public.



On-Site Management

You will likely meet park rangers, law enforcement rangers and other BLM employees during your trip on the Upper Missouri River. BLM park rangers provide information to visitors, record registrations, assist with search-and-rescue operations, conduct maintenance and a variety of other tasks. They are there to serve you. At launch sites, seasonal workers and trained volunteers will help you prepare for your trip. They know the Upper Missouri River well and will be happy to answer any questions you might have.



“The air is so pure in this open country that mountains and other elevated objects appear much nearer than they really are; these mountains do not appear to be further than 15 M.”

Meriwether Lewis, May 24, 1805

Personal Journal Notes

Native Peoples



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To the first Euro-American visitors, the native groups of this region shared many cultural traits. These traits included high mobility, dependence on horse-mounted bison hunting, similar material culture and religious practices, and a common sign language in spite of many spoken languages and dialects.

The Indian Nations inhabiting the region during the 19th century included the Pikanii (Blackfeet), A'aninin or White Clay (Gros Ventre), Nakoda (Assiniboine), Apsaalooke (Crow) and Plains Ojibwa and Cree. The area was also frequented for buffalo hunting and raiding by the

Lakota, Mandan, Arikara, Hidatsa and Michif from the east and from the west by the Kootenai, Salish, Kalispel, Shoshone and Niimiipuu (Nez Perce) Nations.

Battle of Cow Island Landing

Cow Island Landing was the location of a September 23-24, 1877, encounter between warriors belonging to five non-treaty Nez Perce bands and a small party of entrenched U.S. Army soldiers and civilian freight clerks.

The clash occurred during the 1877 Nez Perce War, at the Cow Creek Landing which was then a commercial freight depot and landing located immediately above the mouth of Cow Creek on the Missouri River. The landing was constructed to enable overland shipping to Fort Benton during seasonal low water on the Missouri via the Cow Creek freight trail, which commenced at the landing. Two steamboats had recently unloaded freight, and a detachment of soldiers under Sergeant William Moelchert happened to be at the landing to retrieve supplies for engineers working upriver.

On September 23, the Nez Perce unexpectedly crossed the Missouri River near the landing. Negotiations ensued between Nez Perce leaders and Moelchert regarding supplies sought by the Nez Perce. After Moelchert essentially denied the tribal requests for provisions, warriors opened fire on the soldiers and civilians. The soldiers and clerks took shelter in an irrigation ditch that had been recently dug around the clerks' tents and effectively defended their position through the night from Nez Perce gunfire from the steep hills north of the landing.



The mouth of Cow Creek may be seen just beyond the steamboat in the picture, taken in 1880 by the great documentary photographer Frank Haynes. Cow Creek comes in from the north, and only in the spring or flood time does it contain any water. The stream appearing in the distance, as indicated by the brush, is Bull Creek. Cow Island itself is not shown in the picture, but is down the river a short distance. Haynes took the picture from the west, looking toward the east, or downriver.” Soldiers are in the lower right side of the image, likely engineers completing the wing dam at Cow Island between 1877-1880. Photo by F.J. Haynes, 1880, from the Montana Historical Society.

The Nez Perce took supplies from the tons of freight stored just north of the landing and camp and burned the remaining stores. The Nez Perce broke off the assault the following morning and resumed their trek north through Cow Creek Canyon in their attempt to reach refuge in Canada.

Approximately 70 miles from the river to the north, near present-day Chinook, Montana, is Bears Paw Battlefield where Chief Joseph surrendered on October 5, 1877, and is famed to have said, “*Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our Chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Ta Hool Hool Shute is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are - perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my Chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.*”

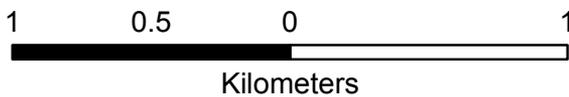
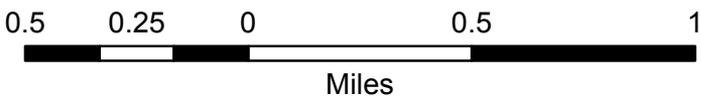
This national historic battlefield is managed by the National Park Service.

Map Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | BLM - Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument |  | Cottonwood Stands |
|  | BLM - Outside the Monument |  | Fire Ring |
|  | Indian Reservation |  | Lewis & Clark Campsites |
|  | USFWS National Wildlife Refuge |  | Canoe Launch |
|  | State of Montana |  | Motorized Boat Launch |
|  | Private |  | Developed Public Access and Campground |
|  | Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River |  | Developed Boat Camp |
|  | Scenic and Access Easement |  | Primitive Boat Camp |
|  | Wild and Scenic Boundary |  | BLM Office |
|  | Township/Range |  | Point of Interest |
|  | Section | | |
|  | 40-Foot Interval Contour | | |
|  | River Mile | | |
|  | Perennial Stream | | |
|  | Intermittent Stream | | |

ROADS

- | | |
|---|-------|
|  | Paved |
|  | Other |



Scale 1:24,000

Even though every effort is made to depict the road network and other features as accurately as possible, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) cannot guarantee road classification and/or positional accuracy of roads and other features in all cases. No warranty is made by the BLM for use of this data for purposes not intended by BLM.

INSERT MAP: JLKipp Foldout 1

INSERT MAP: JLKipp Foldout 2

Lower River Section

Judith Landing to James Kipp Recreation Area (River Miles 88.5 to 149)

Between here and James Kipp Recreation Area, the river has sections classified as Wild, Scenic and Recreational. The Wild & Scenic River boundary extends from rim to rim through river mile 139. Most of the adjacent land in this segment of the river is public land, but it is your responsibility to know where you are. Remember, any use of private property requires permission from the landowner. This area is most popular with boaters looking for a less-traveled, remote atmosphere and hunters in the fall seeking world class big game hunting. By canoe, this trip can take two nights and three days, but we highly encourage visitors to take more time and enjoy the solitude and unlimited hiking opportunities for a four-day float. See “Use of Motorized Watercraft” for information on seasonal motorboat restrictions. No potable water is available until the take-out at James Kipp Recreation Area.

Judith Landing Historic District (River Miles 84.5 - 92.8)

Upstream from the public access site at river mile 84.5 and downstream to river mile 92.8 is the Judith Landing Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 6, 1975. This is one of the few areas that contain all threads of man’s history on the Montana plains. Among many events identified within this 15 square mile district include:

- Corp of Discovery Campsite, May 28, 1805. Lewis’ dog saved his and Clark’s lives when a frightened bull buffalo almost ran them over as they slept.
- Fort Chardon Trading Post, 1844-1845. Third fur trading post established by the American Fur Company along the Upper Missouri after the massacre of Blackfeet Indians and the burning of Fort Mackenzie.
- Blackfeet-Flathead Council of 1846 and Isaac Stevens “Lame Bull” Treaty of 1855, where lodges of more than 15,000 Indians were camped.
- Camp Cooke, 1866-1870. The first military post to protect the steamboat trade.
- PN Cable Ferry, 1880-1908. Reportedly, cable ends still remain in the river banks.
- Ferdinand Hayden, 1855. Hayden uncovered and collected several specimens of fossilized dinosaur bones and teeth. His discoveries constituted the first identified dinosaur skeletal remains in the Western Hemisphere.

River Mile

88.5 L Judith Landing Developed Public Access Site - Fee Site

Judith Landing is the primary launching point for those embarking on a three-to-five day adventure on the lower stretch of the Upper Missouri River to the James Kipp Recreation Area, located within the boundaries of the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge. This is also the common take-out point for many boaters coming through the White Cliffs section of the Upper Missouri River. Judith Landing is accessible by highway through Big Sandy or Winifred. Its facilities include a campground with tent and RV camping, picnic tables, improved boat ramp, a BLM contact station, two vault toilets, and trash receptacle. The BLM has a five-month lease for public access to the site from May 15 to October 15. Between October 16 and May 14, permission to camp and/or park vehicles at this site is required from the landowner. Free access to the boat launch is available year round.

86-89 P-N Ranch

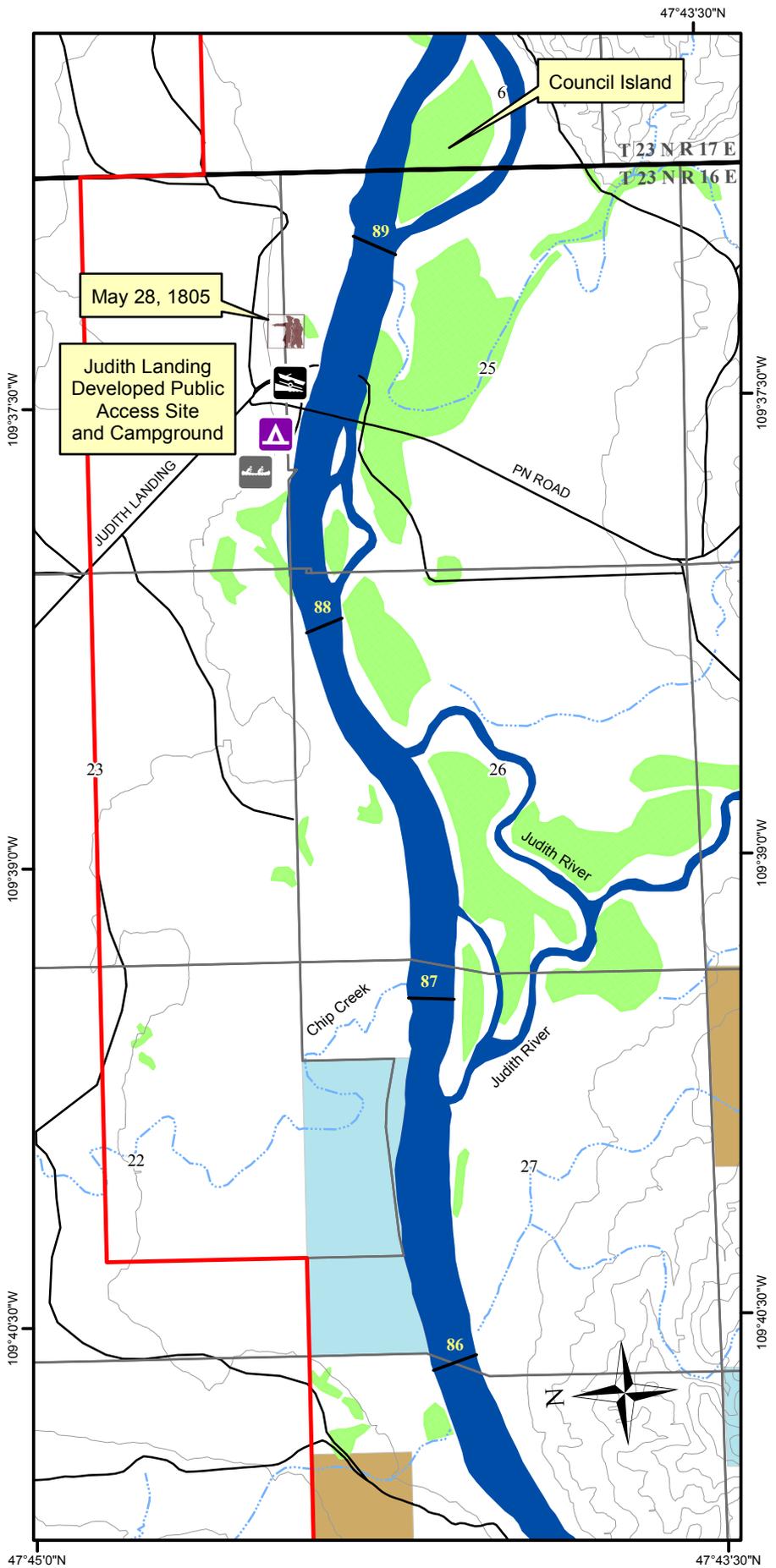
Upstream from the public access site at river mile 86 and downstream to river mile 89, on the right side of the river is a long stretch of private land with both immature and mature cottonwoods. This area is synonymous with the Powers-Norris (P-Lazy-N) brand, and was part of a large, open-range cattle spread founded by T.C. Power, merchant prince of Fort Benton, and John Norris, who managed the ranch for the company.

89.0 Council Island

Named for the 1855 Blackfeet Treaty of Fort Benton which was signed on the north side of the river near here; also known as Lame Bull's Treaty in which the various bands of the Pikanii (Blackfeet) and A'aninin (Gros Ventre) Nations signed their first of many treaties with the U.S. Government.

At Council Island, Nations signed the first of many treaties with the U.S. Government. Members of the Salish, Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille and Niimiipuu (Nez Perce) Nations were also present as third party members in an attempt to bring an end to the inter-tribal warfare so prevalent in the bison-rich territory claimed by the Blackfeet Confederacy. Washington Territory Governor Isaac Stevens presided over the gathering which resulted in "permanent" federally recognized establishment of the Blackfeet homeland and promises of peaceful existence with the other Nations using the area for seasonal hunting forays.

Personal Journal Notes



River Mile

90.0 R Dog Creek South Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

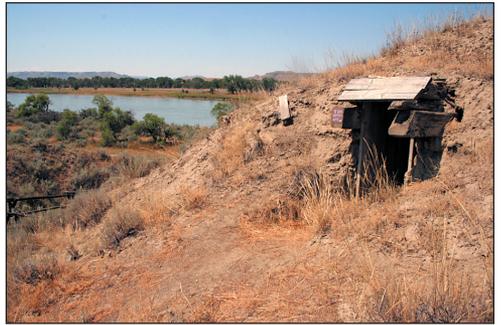
From this point on the right downriver to mile 96, this WSA encompasses approximately 5,150 acres.

Wilderness Study Areas

These are public lands that have been inventoried by the BLM, under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and found to possess the required wilderness characteristics as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964. Section 603 of FLPMA requires the BLM protect the wilderness values of these areas for future Congressional action. The monument contains six wilderness study areas.

90.8 R Murray Dugout

Most of the physical evidence of George and Anna Murray's homestead (settled in 1920) has disappeared. The remaining dugout represents only a small part of the story of this homestead. It was the refrigerator of the era.



The settlers cut ice from

the river during the winter, stored it in these underground vaults and covered it with sawdust. The ice often lasted through the hottest of summers.

91.8 Holmes Rapids/Holmes Council Islands

The rapids and the group of islands immediately downriver are named after the head boatman of the Stevens 1855 Council Expedition. They proved to be a minor obstacle to steamboat navigation.

91.9 L Stafford Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

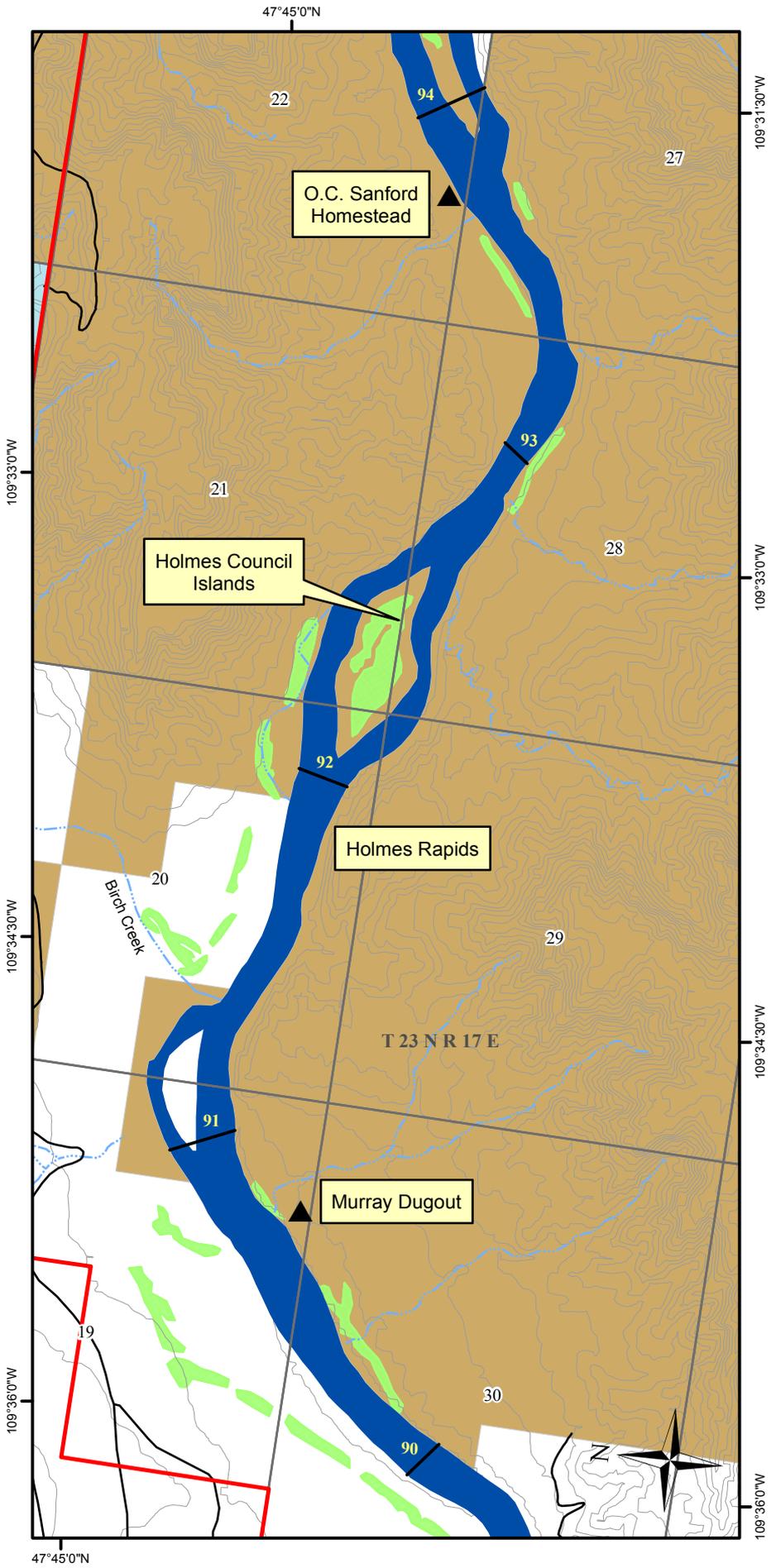
From this point on the left downriver to mile 101, this WSA encompasses approximately 4,800 acres.

92.5 The Wild Designation begins

From this point downstream until mile 99.5, the Upper Missouri River is classified as "Wild" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These sections are generally inaccessible except by water with essentially primitive shorelines.

93.7 L O.C. Sanford Homestead

John Sanford settled here in 1925 at the age of 22 and constructed the buildings whose remnants are evident today. Improvements to the original homestead were continuous — Sanford filed for patent on the homestead in 1933. At that time, the site included a 16' x 24' frame house, sheep shed, corral, root house, out house, 1 3/4 miles of fence and 45 cultivated acres. John was married with two children; later additions to the house were most likely made by his son.



River Mile

94.2 Iron City Islands

The islands are named for the steamboat “Iron City” that arrived in Fort Benton on June 8, 1866. It was grounded here in the summer of 1866 and attacked by warriors from the Lakota Nations (Sioux).

97.0 R Hagadone Homestead

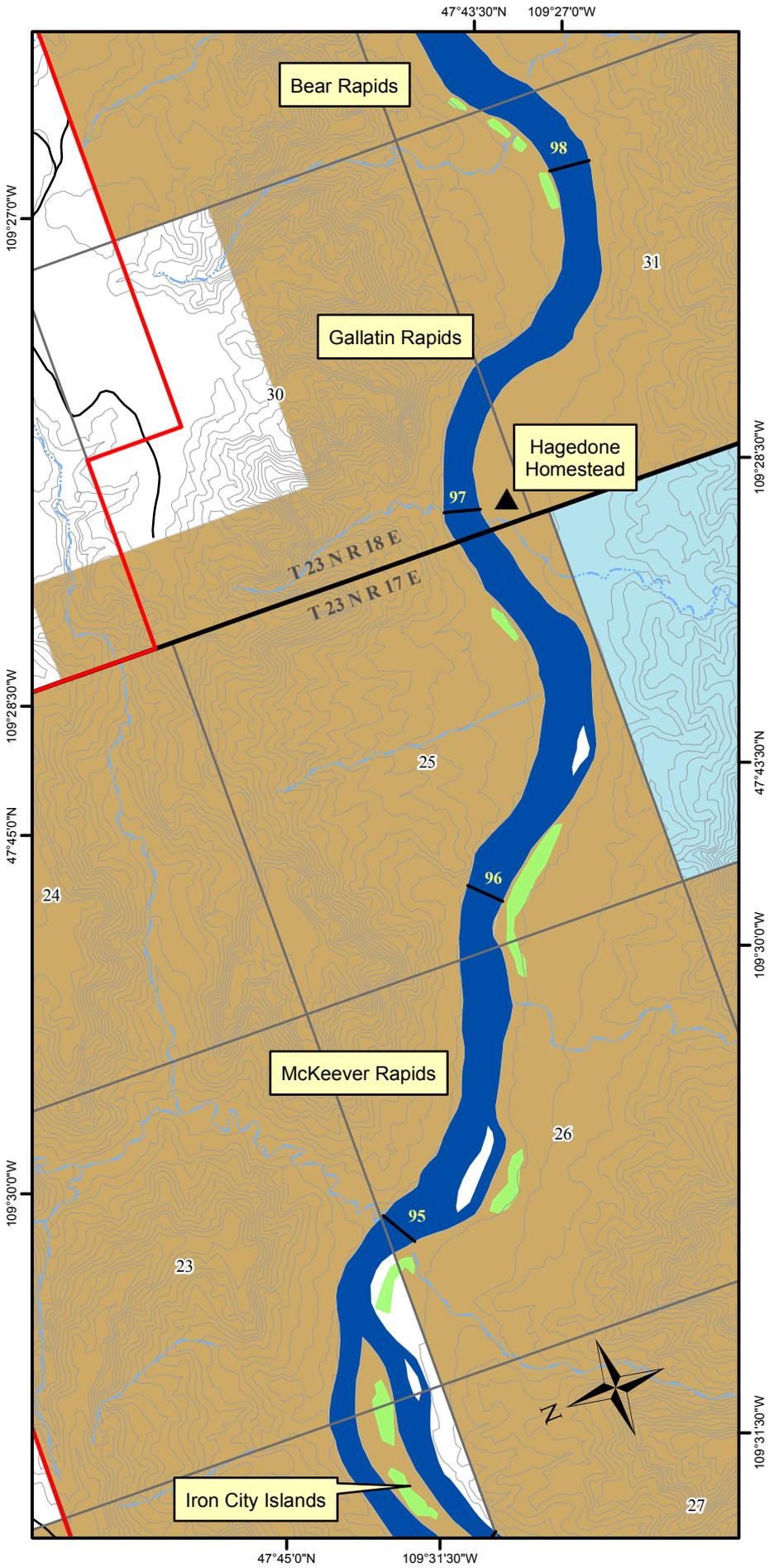
This homestead is one of the best preserved homestead complexes along the Missouri River and looks much as it did 100 years ago. It features a collection of horse-drawn farm implements, buildings and structures. The setting and feeling of the property are much as they were during the period of significance from 1918 to 1954. This homestead was originally settled by George Clyborne in 1918 and purchased by Francis (Frank) Hagadone in 1924. In 1930, Frank received the patent on his enlarged homestead and was here until 1954. The BLM purchased this property in 1980 and has since listed it in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Hagadone Homestead presents to the visitor a glimpse into the life of a homesteader in the first half of the twentieth century. The isolation faced by Missouri River homesteaders rivaled any of those endured by homesteaders settling in other parts of Montana.

Please respect this homestead and leave it and its objects in the same condition and location that you find them.



Personal Journal Notes



River Mile

99.5 Scenic Designation

From this point downstream to river mile 104.5, this section of the river is classified as “Scenic” under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These sections have shorelines that are still largely primitive and undeveloped but accessible in places by road.

101.8 L McClelland/Stafford Ferry and Campsite

This free, diesel-driven, steel cable ferry is operated by Blaine County. Worth noting, this location has a house where the ferry operator lives, so it may not feel as remote as other sites downstream. This location has a vault toilet, ample camping space and a fire ring. The gravel road north from here gives drivers access to the uplands portion of the monument and is the ending of Lloyd Road. The road to the south leads to Winifred.

Homesteaders Jack and Rena McClelland started the ferry in 1921. It was said that Jack often had to hitch up his sturdy team of horses to rescue motorists who braved the primitive roads. James Stafford of Winifred purchased the property several years later. The county replaced the original ferry after it was washed out in 1927 and has maintained the operation since.

Hiking Opportunity: Old Army Trail

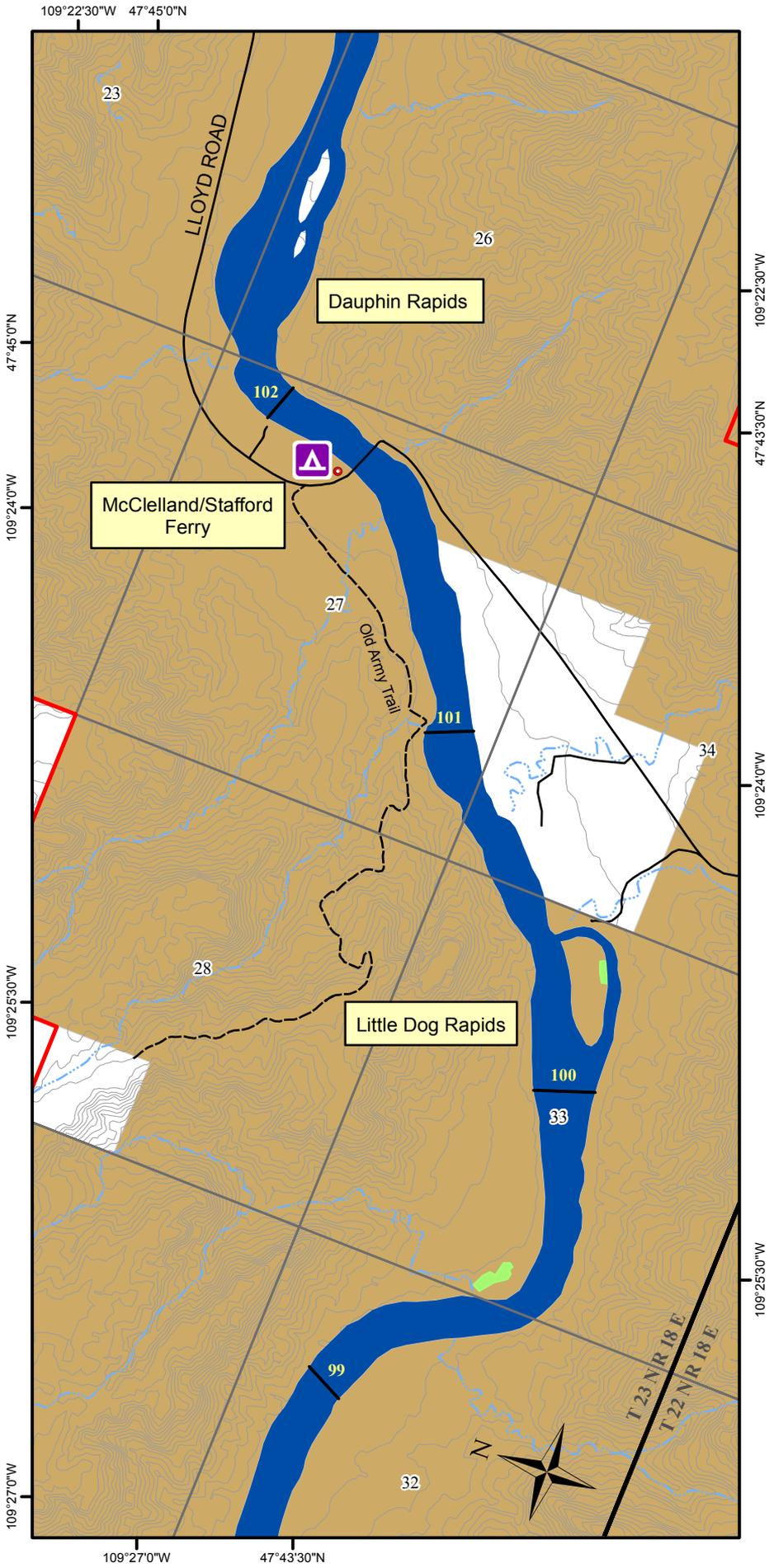
This 3.5-mile round trip trail was originally built in 1869 by the U.S. Army to recover cargo from the wrecked steamboat *Peter Balen*. The steamboat caught fire and sank below Dauphin Rapids, but was carrying valuable cargo, including an expensive boiler.

To locate the trailhead, walk 150 yards north of the river on the developed road. The trail is on the west side and marked by a green metal gate. An interpretive kiosk provides hikers with more information and the trail leads up a ridge to provide sweeping views of the rugged uplands breaks.

102.1 Dauphin Rapids

The rapids are named for Louis Dauphin, a respected hunter and scout who fell into the river here while accompanying Prince Maxmilian of Prussia and artist Karl Bodmer of Switzerland on their epic western journey in 1833-34. Dauphin was the favorite hunter of Captain Joseph LaBarge, who described him as seeming to delight in danger. His lack of prudence eventually led to his death in 1865 at the mouth of the Milk River.

In their present state, the rapids look unimposing compared to the major obstacle of navigation they presented in the steamboat era. Ships’ logs from that period recount innumerable incidents of failure in passing these rapids. Tow ropes and strong backs were often the only means of forward progress. A number of boats operated above the rapids for the sole purpose of relaying cargo from those that ended their voyage at this natural barrier.



River Mile

103.3 R McGarry Bar Primitive Boat Camp

This campsite, located on a grassy bottom with large shady cottonwood trees, provides spectacular views of the rugged breaks scenery. There is easy access from the river and a single metal fire ring. About a hundred meters or so downriver from the campsite, at the end of the cottonwood grove, visitors will find a brass marker identifying the actual campsite of the Corps of Discovery.

103.4 R Corps of Discovery Campsite

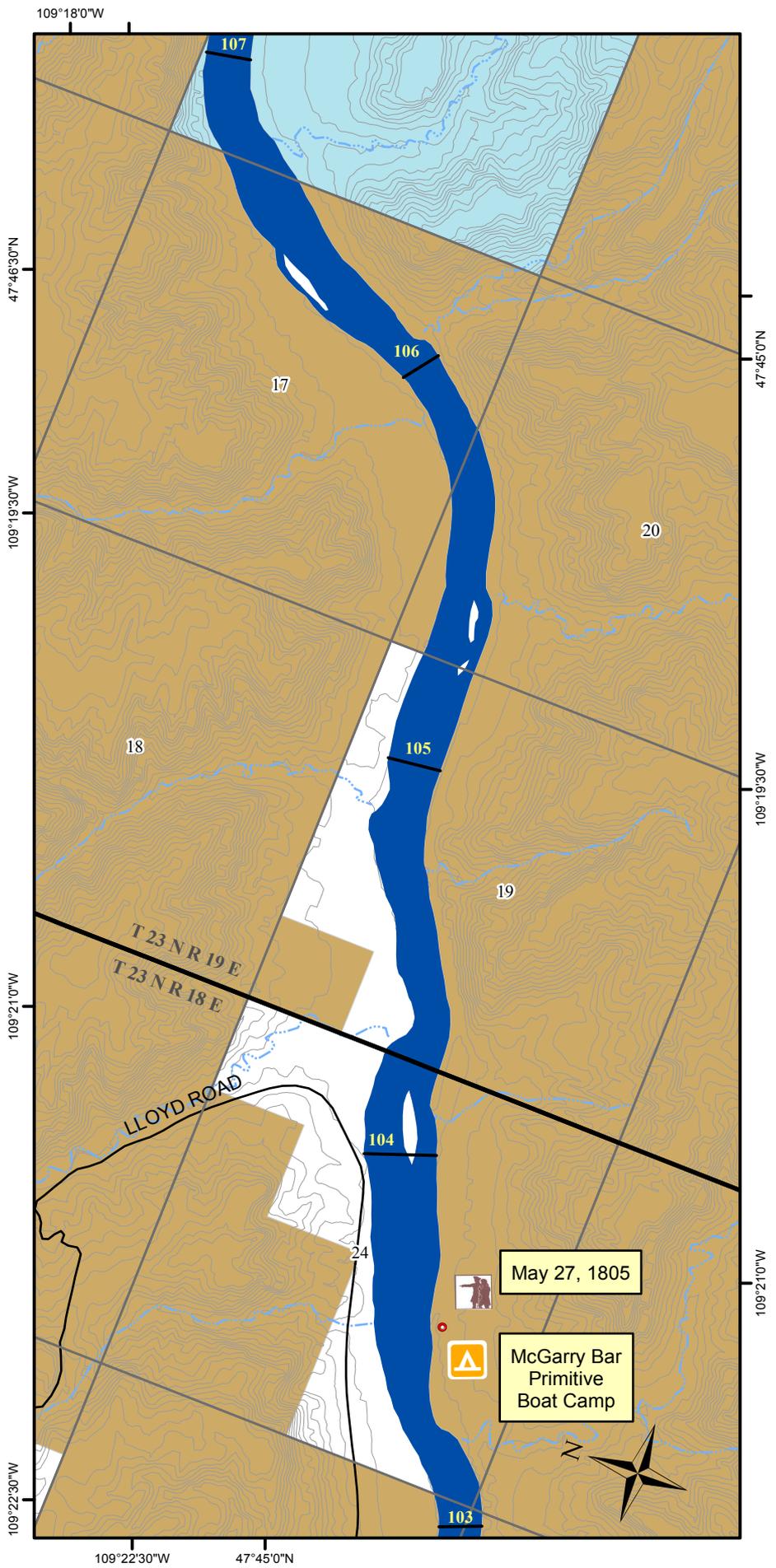
The Expedition camped here on May 27, 1805. Clark wrote, “This day is verry worm- we only Saw a few Small herds of the big horn animals on the hills, and two Elk one of which We killed, we Camped at 2 dead top trees on the Lard Side...”

NOTE: A brass marker identifies the site.

104.5 Wild Designation

From this point downstream to river mile 128.5, this section of the river is classified as “Wild” under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These sections are generally inaccessible except by water with essentially primitive shorelines.

Personal Journal Notes



107.0 R Hiking Opportunity: Chimney Bend Area

This area includes beautiful topography with the rocks being the Claggett Formation and the Judith River Formation.

This area does not include any footpaths, but is seen more as a wildlife viewing opportunity, so keep your cameras and optics handy. At times, this vicinity seems to attract more than its fair share of the nimble ungulates. In February 1980, 27 Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep were introduced to the area to replace the indigenous Audubon Bighorn Sheep that were hunted to extinction early in the 20th century.

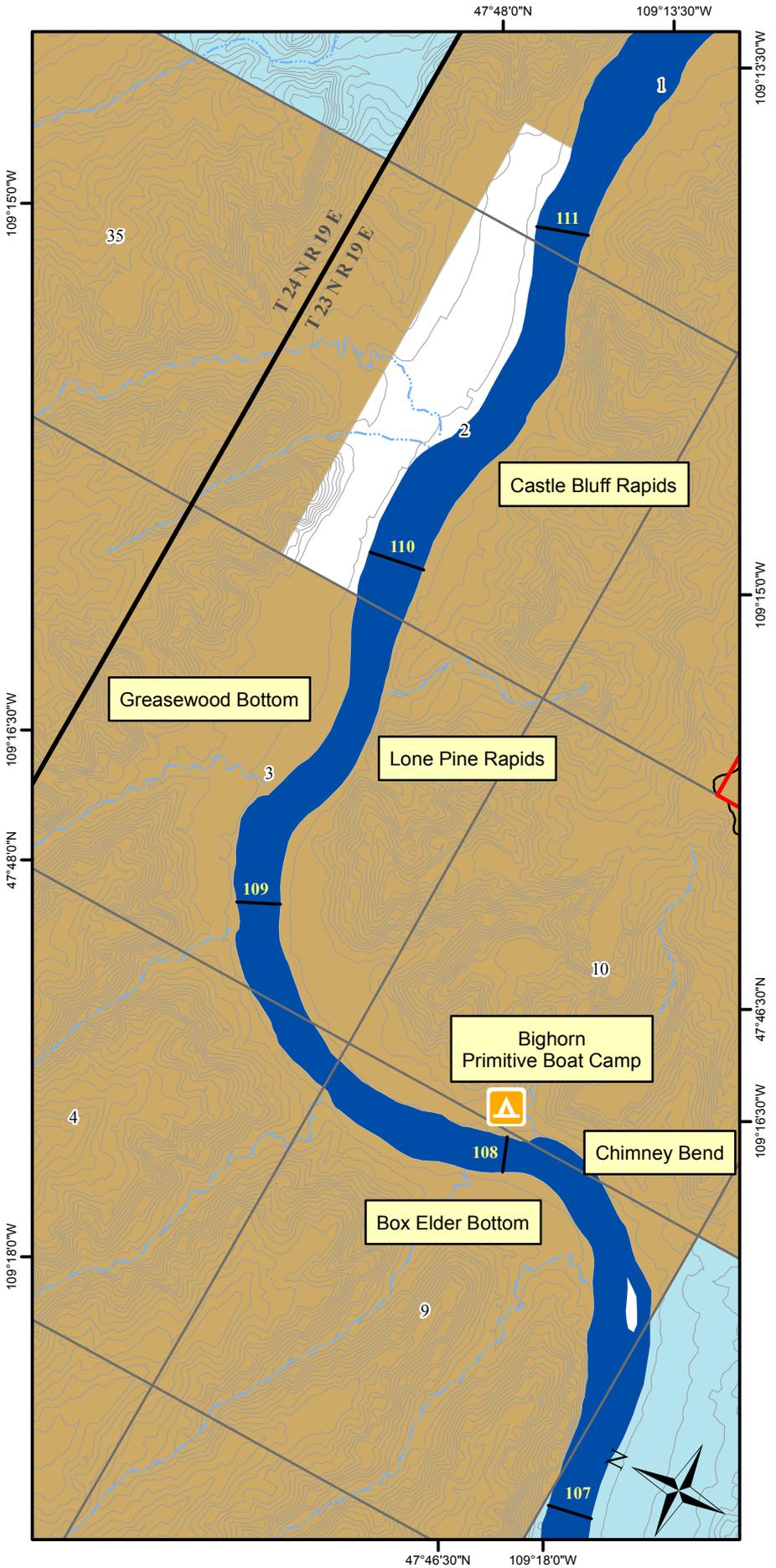
109.6 L Greasewood Bottom Camping/Hiking Opportunity

On a hot, cloudless day this site offers a pleasant relief from the sun or a splendid place for an overnight primitive camp. Close to the riverbank and next to large shady cottonwood trees is a level, sage-covered bench ideal for tents. For the adventurous soul, the coulee to the northwest of the site offers a close-up view of some of the striking red rock cliffs seen sporadically throughout the river corridor.

Missouri River Natural History: Wildlife

The wildlife species within the Monument are diverse, abundant and widespread. Of the species known to occur in the area before settlement, only the grizzly bear, grey wolf, bison and black-footed ferret no longer inhabit the Monument. The variety of vegetation along the river and its associated areas provides habitat for the diverse wildlife population. More than 60 mammals, 233 species of birds and 20 species of amphibians and reptiles inhabit these areas. The river itself is home to 48 species of fish ranging from the half-ounce minnow to the 140-pound paddlefish. Visitors are encouraged to engage in the principles of Leave No Trace and remember that they are truly the “visitors” to this fascinating area. Please observe wild creatures from a distance.

Personal Journal Notes



River Mile

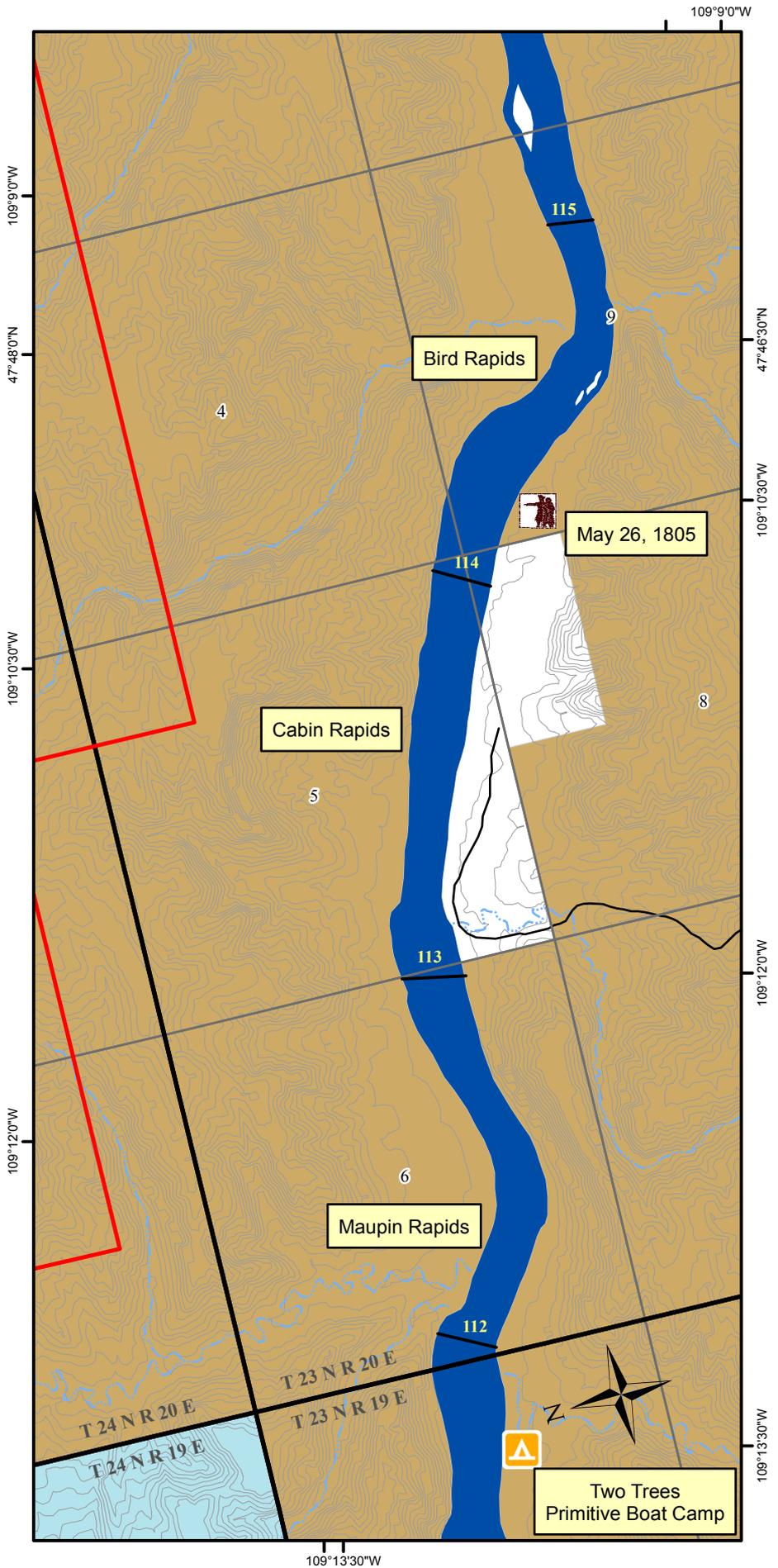
111.2 L Ervin Ridge Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

From this point downriver to mile 118.6, this WSA encompasses approximately 10,200 acres.

114.2 R Corps of Discovery Campsite

The Expedition camped here on May 26, 1805. Several miles downriver from this site on the opposite shore in the vicinity of river miles 122-124, one can observe the high bluffs that Captains Lewis and Clark ascended during the course of their upriver trek. Lewis wrote, “In the after part of the day I also walked out and ascended the river hills which I found sufficiently fortiequeing. on arriving to the summit of one of the highest points in the neighbourhood I thought myself well repaid for any labour; as from this point I beheld the Rocky Mountains for the first time...” (See River Mile 123.4 for more information.)

NOTE: A brass marker identifies the site.



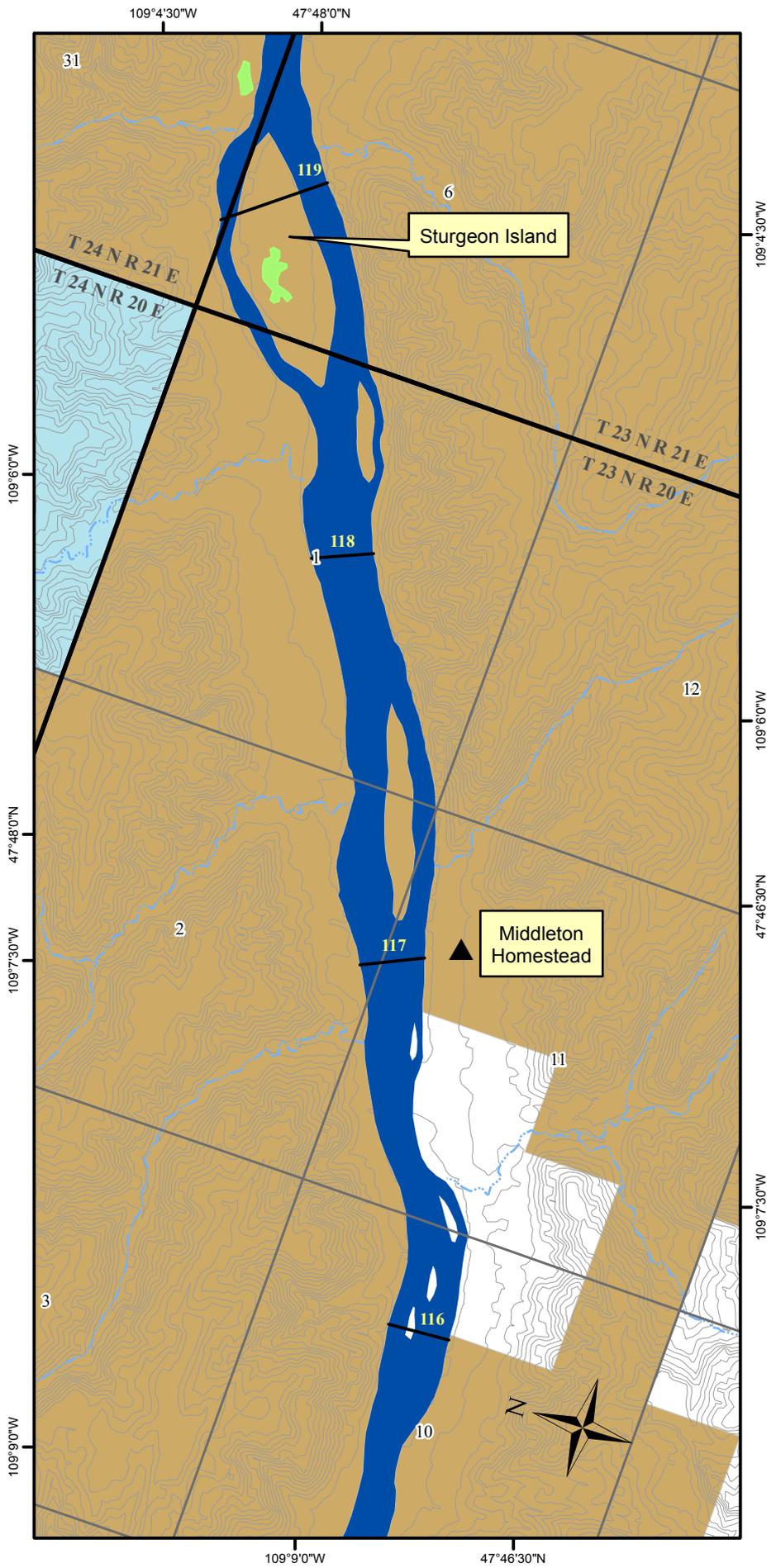
116.9 R Middleton Homestead

George Middleton, a frugal, lifelong bachelor, came to the breaks in 1913 and initially lived in a tent. He then constructed a dugout where he lived until 1918. He lived off the land and homesteaded in this bottom until the 1940s. Many other homesteads along the river had dugouts, cellars, or caves on their homesteads, many of which served as residences until cabins or houses could be built. Selling out in 1940, George moved first to nearby Winifred and later to Lewistown, Montana. Late in life, George often spoke with fondness of his days spent in the Breaks. George Middleton's experience exemplifies the transitional living common of the homesteaders.

Geologic History: Landforms on the Upper Missouri

The valley of the Upper Missouri is a living museum; the product of many events over time. The land was originally laid down in horizontal layers, the sediments and shorelines of a great inland sea that once covered most of the Great Plains. These layers have since been folded, faulted, uplifted, modified by volcano activity and sculpted by glaciers. Erosion then added to the terrain seen along the river today, now known as a landform called the "Breaks," a term thought to have been coined by F.V. Hayden during the initial geologic survey of this area in the 1850s.

Personal Journal Notes



River Mile

122.3 L Ervin Dugout

John Ervin, an orphan from Texas, built a two-room cabin on the west bank of Bullwhacker Creek in the early 1900s and lived there alone until he sold out in 1930. During Ervin's tenure on the land, he broke only 80 acres of land, most likely because he was busy rounding up and breaking wild horses. By 1915, John had a herd of 150 horses, mainly Percheron, and was a reliable source of work horses for other homesteaders along the river. Aside from horses, he also made moonshine. Several stories exist regarding Ervin's demeanor, temperament and reputation as a man not to be crossed. One friend, Robert Eigell described Ervin as a "thin wiry man of medium height" who in 1930 possessed "a full head of white hair and a pair of piercing blue eyes," and "a large, walrus type mustache." The BLM completed restoration of the dugout in 2009-10.

122.6 L Gist Bottom Primitive Boat Camp

This campsite offers easy access from the river and is located under a grove of mature cottonwoods. You can hike a long way from here in several directions and see two partially restored homesteads nearby. The site includes a metal fire ring.

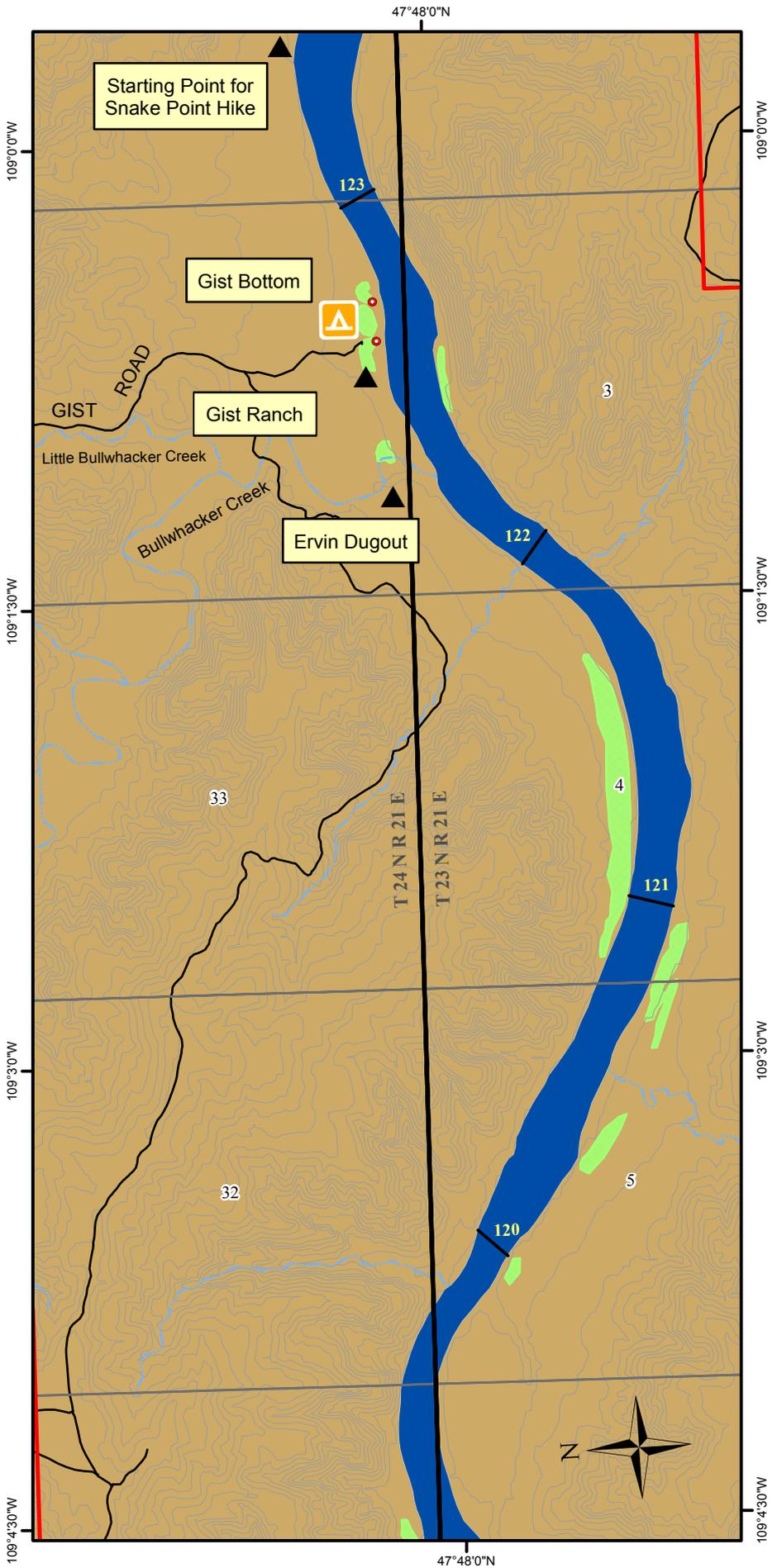
Hiking Opportunity: Gist Bottom/Bullwhacker Creek

The extensive Bullwhacker Creek drainage offers a variety of hiking and exploring opportunities. A short distance from the campsite is an abandoned ranch last used by the Gist Family. The homestead was sold to the BLM in 1980 and is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Up the Bullwhacker Creek drainage, a large diatreme, or volcanic plug, exists and can be distinguished by its color contrast against the neighboring hills.

123.4 L Hiking Opportunity: Snake Point

One can literally walk in the footsteps of Captain Clark and observe as he did, "the Rocky Mountains with certainty." Clark's route on May 26, 1805, likely traversed this vicinity. The high point of land he ascended is possibly in the neighborhood of a ridge top called Snake Point, elevation 3,126 feet (47° 49' 35" N/108° 58' 18" W).

Follow the plainly visible drainage directly north of the river bank at this point. Take the left fork of the three drainages (as you are traveling up the main drainage) and walk in the dry stream bed, going around the large hill that divides the drainage. Proceed until you see a rock column and hike up the low ridge that leads right up the saddle below the column. It is no more than an hour and about 1,000 feet to the top. There is no marked trail, but the ascent is clearly visible and easily negotiated by the experienced hiker.



River Mile

124.5 L Cow Creek Area of Critical Concern (ACEC)

The ACEC boundary along the river extends a short distance downriver to approximately river mile 125.3 but extends up the Cow Creek drainage encompassing 18,800 acres and a portion of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail, Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, Cow Island Trail and parts of the Cow Creek Wilderness Study Area. The majority of the ACEC is public land; however, 4,000 acres of the creek bottom are privately owned.

125.0 R Woodhawk Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

From this point downriver to approximately river mile 131, this WSA encompasses over 8,100 acres.

The term “woodhawk” is named for the men who set up shop on the banks of the Missouri to supply the steamboats with fuel-wood for their boilers, which consumed as many as thirty cords per day.

126.1 L Kipp Homestead

The James Kipp homestead is located just north of the mouth of Cow Creek, on a terrace west of the landing site. The homestead was claimed by Kipp in 1913. He was the grandson of James Kipp, a Metis trader who helped establish Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone in 1828 and who founded Fort Piegan at the mouth of the Marias River in 1831. The Kipp Homestead is abandoned but a cabin and outbuildings remain standing at the homestead site.

NOTE: This site is on private property. Landowner permission is required for access.

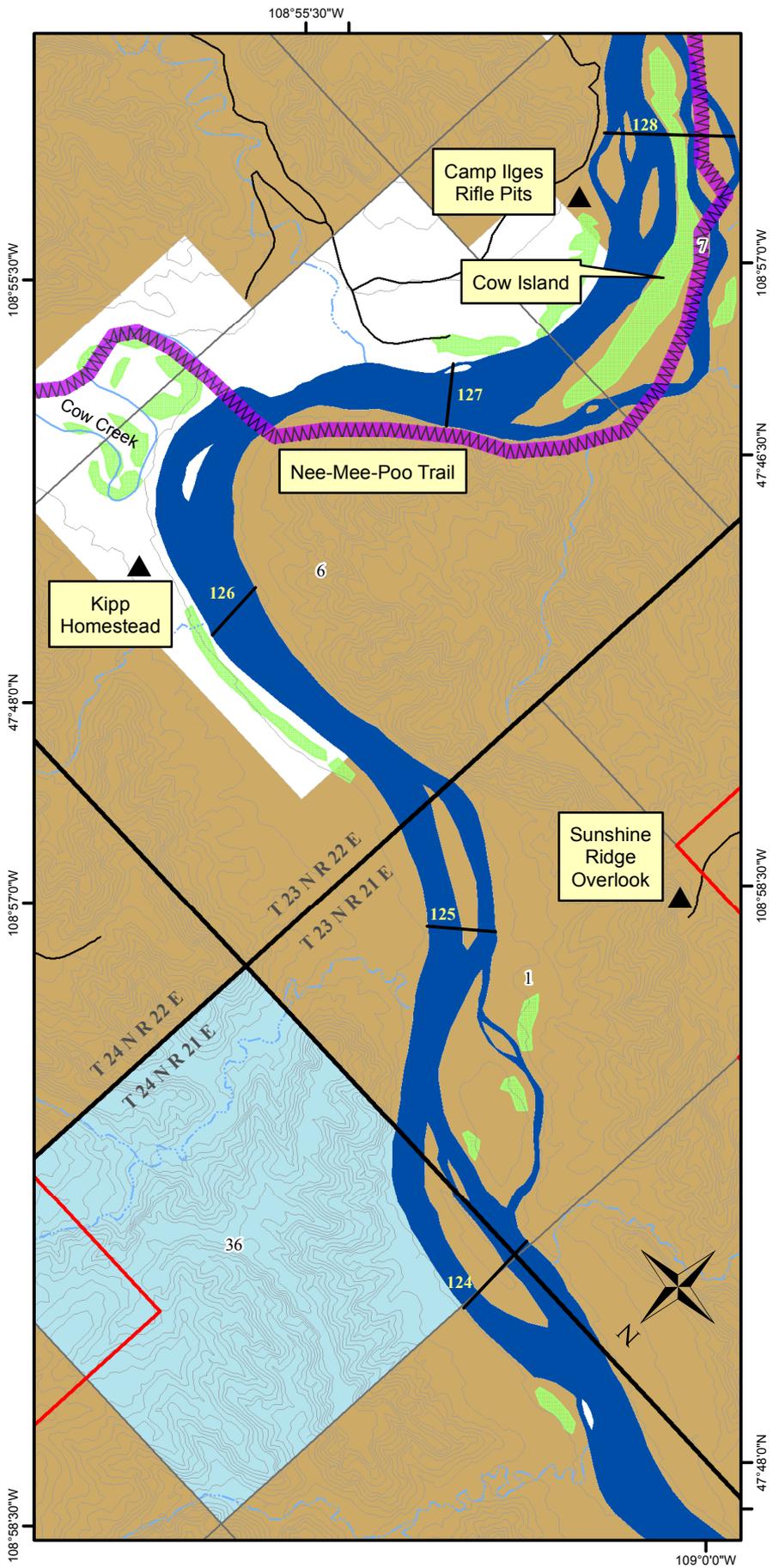
126.5 Nez Perce (Nee-Mee-Poo) National Historic Trail

In June 1877, the Nez Perce led by Chiefs Joseph, Looking Glass, Tulhuulhulsuit and Whitebird, left their homelands and set out for Canada to avoid being confined on a reservation and to continue to live by the customs and traditions of their ancestors. The trail begins in Oregon and follows the 1,200+ mile journey through Idaho, Wyoming, and finally terminates in Montana, 40 miles from the Canadian border. The trail crosses the Missouri River at this location.

126.5 L Cow Creek/Cow Island Landing

This sizeable tributary, at 35 miles long, provided a natural trail to the river through the steep surrounding country, and the solid river bottom created a natural ford known to native peoples for thousands of years. Later, explorers, trappers, traders and others used this area in the same manner as well as for camping, steamboat landings and homesteading. No permanent storehouses were erected at Cow Island. Once freight was offloaded here, it was tarped and remained only briefly before being moved to Fort Benton.

NOTE: This site is on private property. Landowner permission is required for access.



River Mile

127.8 L **Camp Ilges**

The U.S. Army established a small encampment here named for the colorful and popular Major Guido Ilges, a German immigrant who served in the Civil War and the Montana Indian Wars. He commanded the Fort Benton military post from 1875 to 1879, only to fall victim to bad judgment, court martial and disgrace.

Camp Ilges was used periodically from the mid-1860s through 1883 to stockpile freight unloaded from steamboats unable to navigate further. Rifle pits used by soldiers to protect the freight are all that remain of this once bustling frontier outpost.

128.0 **Scenic Designation Begins**

From this point downstream to river mile 149, this section of the river has a “Scenic” classification under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These sections possess shorelines that are still largely primitive and undeveloped but accessible in places by road.

130.0 R **Nelson Homestead/Hiking Opportunity**

Gus “White Gus” Nelson, a Swedish immigrant and lifelong bachelor, was a colorful local character of many trades (wolfer, hunter, cowboy, stage driver, cook and rancher) who homesteaded here from 1916-1939. The buildings and structures here convey a true sense of homestead life with a henhouse, cabins and farming implements complete with a large enclosure fence which makes one feel as if taken back to the era. We recommend this as a hiking opportunity from the Woodhawk campgrounds.

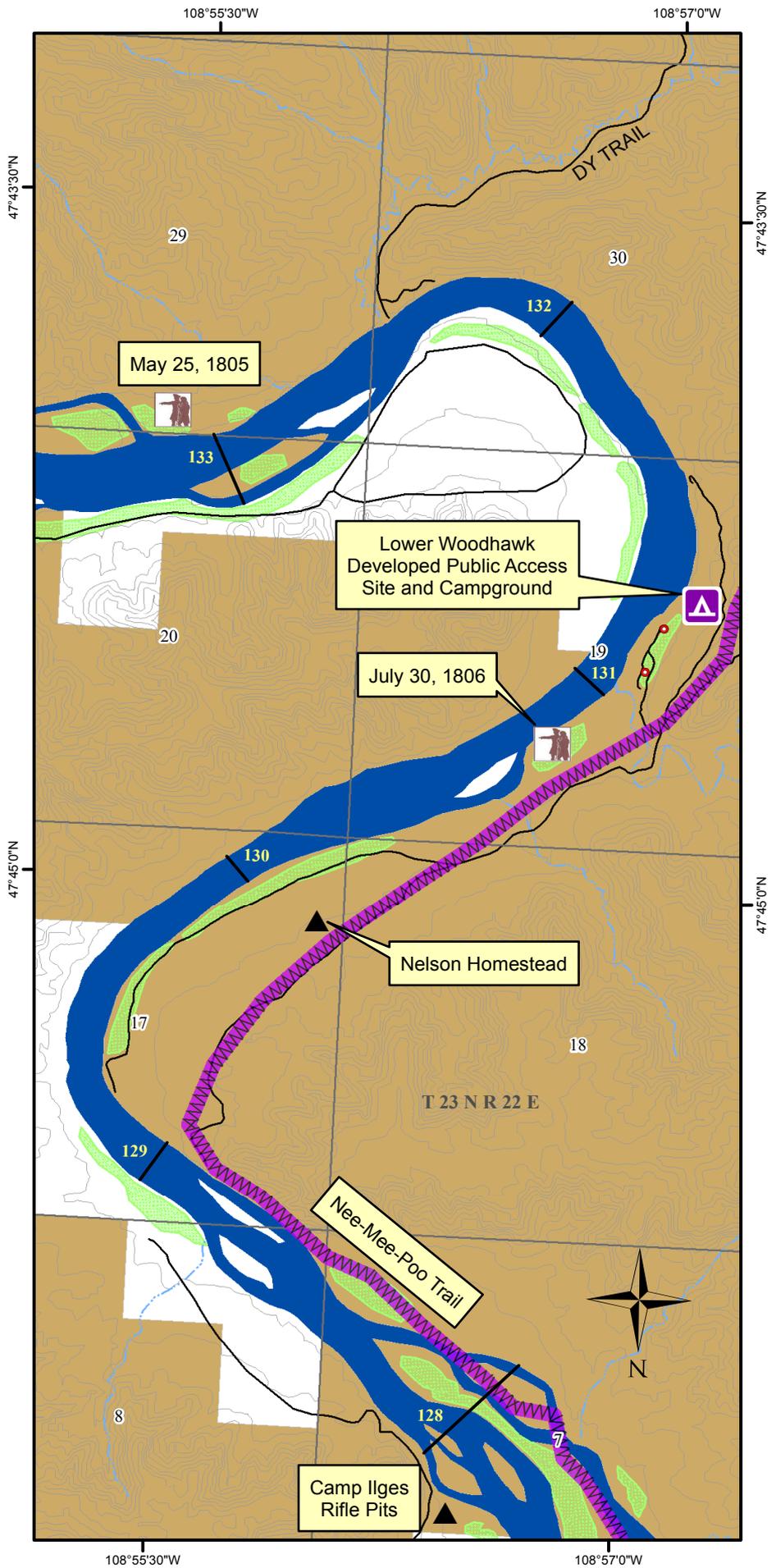
It is rumored that Gus skipped a Fourth of July celebration at a neighboring ranch for fear of river pirating during times when bandits knew he might be away. Gus kept hidden on top of one of his structures with a .30-30 rifle to see what would happen. Sure enough, two men sneaked up from the river and cleared out supplies and valuables from Gus’ home. After a brief encounter, the men left in a hurry. Gus claimed to have taken a shot only to scare them. A few days later, two bodies were found down river, possibly these very two river pirates.

130.1 R **Middle Woodhawk Primitive Campsite**

This site is relatively difficult to find from the river because naturally occurring willows and cottonwoods have grown wild and thick after the 2011 flood. There is a metal fire ring under the mature cottonwood trees away from the river and the site is accessible by the Lower Woodhawk Road.

130.8 R **Corps of Discovery Campsite**

On the return journey to St. Louis, Captain Lewis and his contingent of 19 men camped near here on July 30, 1806. There is some confusion as to whether the actual campsite was on the northeast bank of an island at this location or a couple of miles further downriver on Goodrich’s Island, just below the May 25, 1805, campsite. Lewis wrote, “we arrived this evening at an island about 2 ms. above Goodrich’s Island and encamped on it’s N.E side.” Sergeants Gass and Ordway both put the campsite two miles further downriver. However, current recordings of Lewis’s original lat/long readings put the site on the south bank of the river at this location.



River Mile

131.2 R Lower Woodhawk Developed Public Access Site

Lower Woodhawk, though relatively remote, is classified as a developed public access site and campground due to the maintained road providing entry. The campground has a vault toilet, picnic tables and two fire rings. Caution: Entry and exit to this site by road is weather dependent. During wet weather the roads are impassable, even with four-wheel drive vehicles.

Hiking Opportunity: Nelson Homestead/Woodhawk WSA

For an easy hike of just over a mile, follow the dirt road northeast out of the campground to the Nelson homestead. The bluffs, coulees and bottoms surrounding the homestead are part of the Woodhawk WSA and provide extensive hiking opportunities.

133.1 R Corps of Discovery Campsite

On Saturday, May 25, 1805, George Drouillard, the Corps of Discovery's primary interpreter and best hunter, was dispatched by Captain Lewis to obtain the party's first specimen of the bighorn sheep. Captain Clark and Private Bratton also harvested one of these animals during the course of the day offering the Expedition a change of diet in addition to a detailed examination of an animal never before seen by these eastern men. Clark wrote, "I walked on Shore and killed a female Ibex or big horn animal. in my absence Drewyer & Bratten killed two others ..."

NOTE: A brass marker identifies the site.

134.1 L Power Plant Ruins

This power plant was built in the early 1900s to power machinery used in the gold mines north of the river in the Little Rocky Mountains. Taking advantage of the area's lignite coal deposits, a vein was opened near here to provide fuel for the 750-horsepower steam-powered plant. Burning 70 tons of coal a day, the plant powered the Ruby Gulch Mining Company mill some 23 miles away from 1916-1918 and 1922-1923.

**Portions of this site are on private property.
Landowner permission is required for access.**

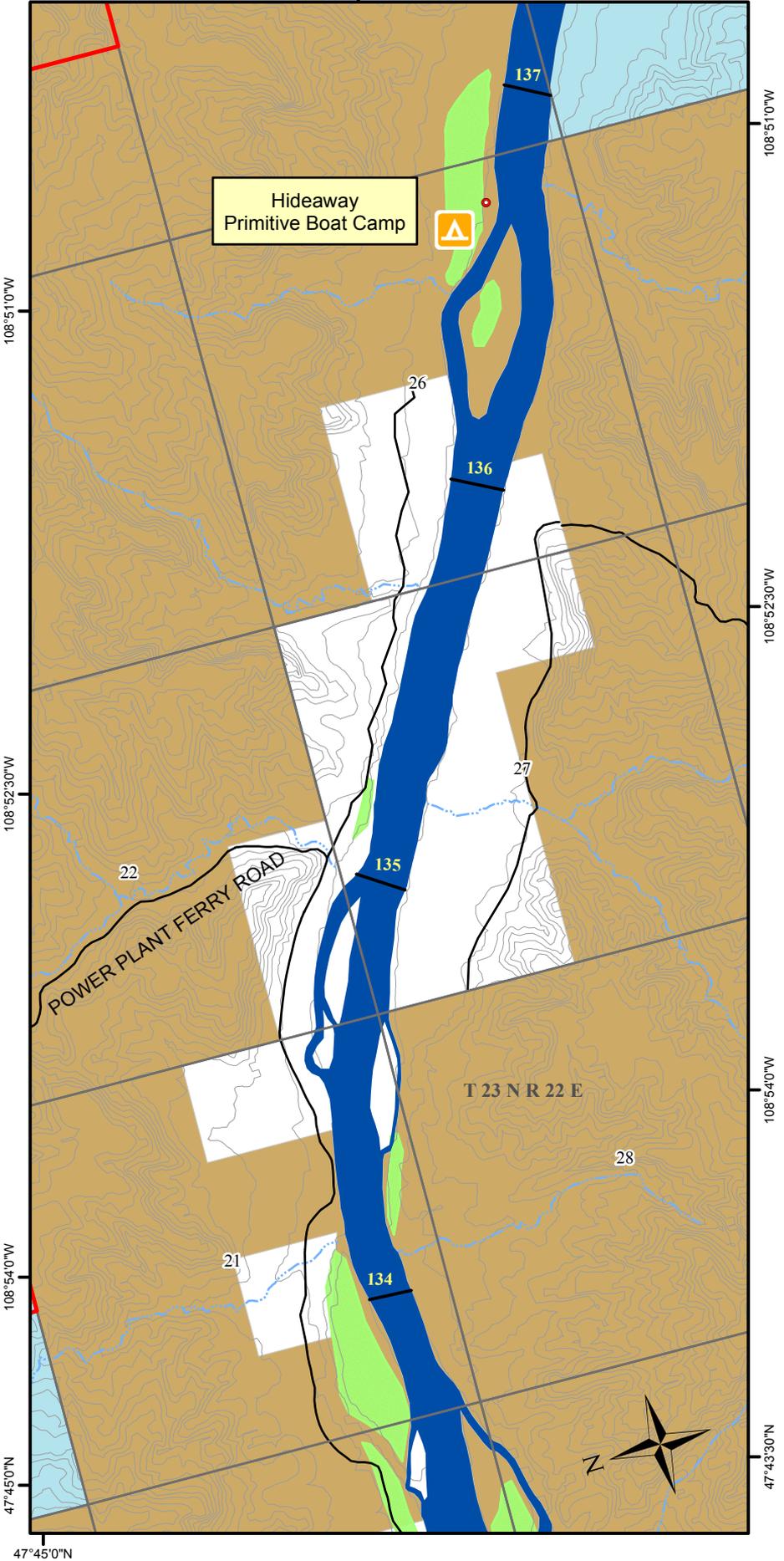
136.7 L Hideaway Primitive Boat Camp

This campsite is located in a thick stand of cottonwood, ash and willow trees and has a metal fire ring. Many visitors use this site as their final night on the river before taking out at James Kipp Recreation Area the following day.

136.7 L Antelope Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

From this point downriver to mile 138.9, this WSA encompasses approximately 12,350 acres.

47°43'30"N



138.8 R Hiking Opportunity: Hideaway Coulee

Remote, rugged breaks topography highlights this hike for the more adventurous spirits visiting the Monument. The steep vertical slopes punctuated with evergreens, sagebrush and rocky cliffs intensify the silent wildness of the area and offers a much sought-after experience for those seeking a true sense of times gone by. Once out of the river bottoms, the views from the uplands are awe-inspiring, classic examples of the Missouri River Breaks.

In the early 1900s, outlaw Kid Curry was a part of the Wild Bunch and gained the title of “the fastest gun in the West.” He was said to be able to drop a silver dollar off his hand, draw, and fire five shots before the coin could hit the ground. The gang was headed by the infamous Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and performed robberies throughout the west. Reportedly Kid and the gang escaped to a hideout somewhere up this coulee after they robbed a train.

138.9 L Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Boundary

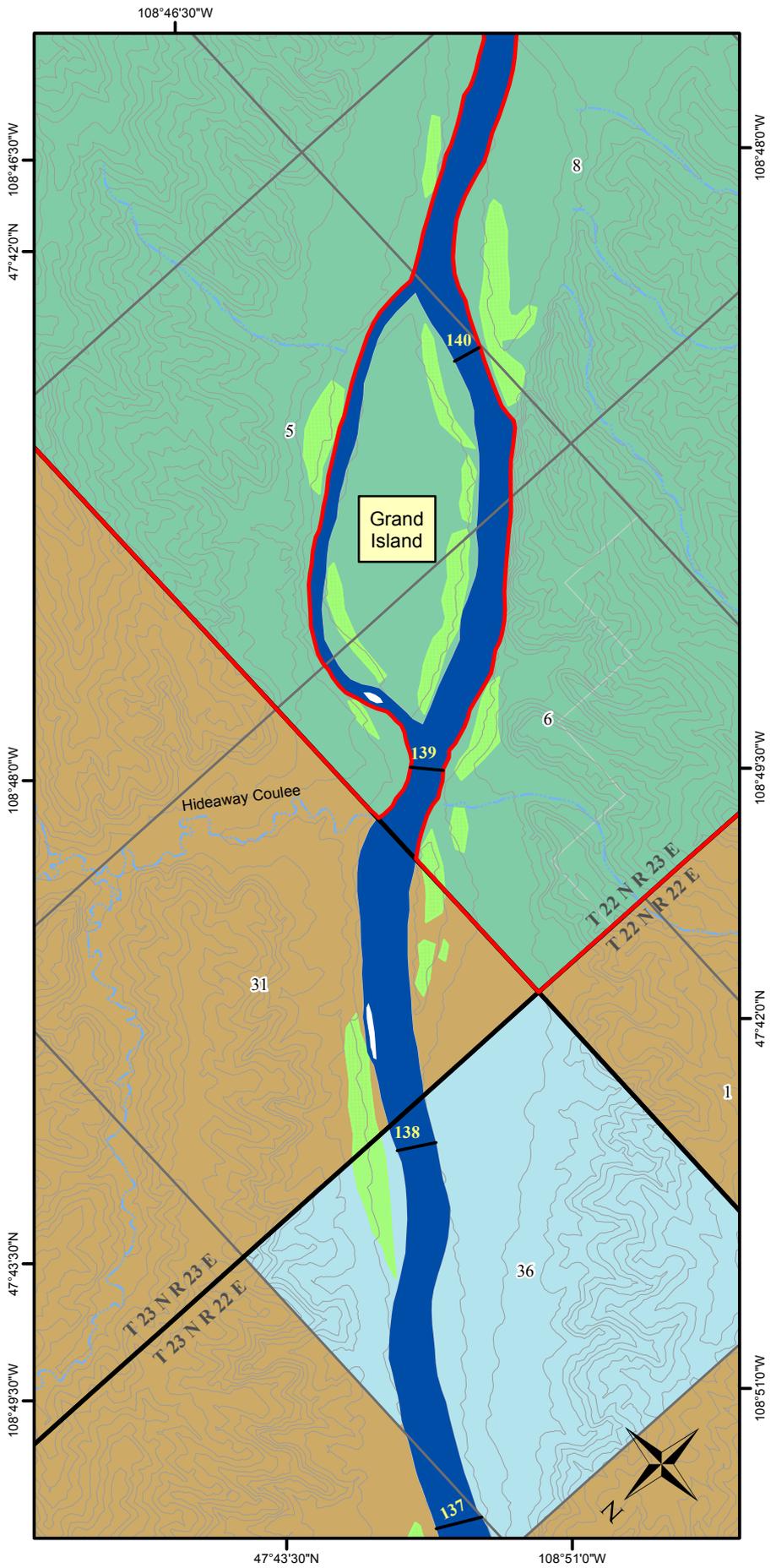
The Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River enters the refuge at this point. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the refuge encompasses nearly 1,100,000 acres and extends more than 125 air miles east of this point. A wealth of recreational opportunities await those with the time and desire to experience this vast, unspoiled expanse of scenic prairie grandeur.

For additional information please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at cmr@fws.gov, or call (406) 538-8706.

139.1 Grand Island

This island was noted by Captains Lewis and Clark on their upriver journey on May 25, 1805, but was not named by them. During the steamboat era, freight was often unloaded here and hauled overland to lighten the boats and permit them to get over the shallow rapids prevalent in this area.

Personal Journal Notes



River Mile

142.9 Upper Two Calf Island/Lower Two Calf Island

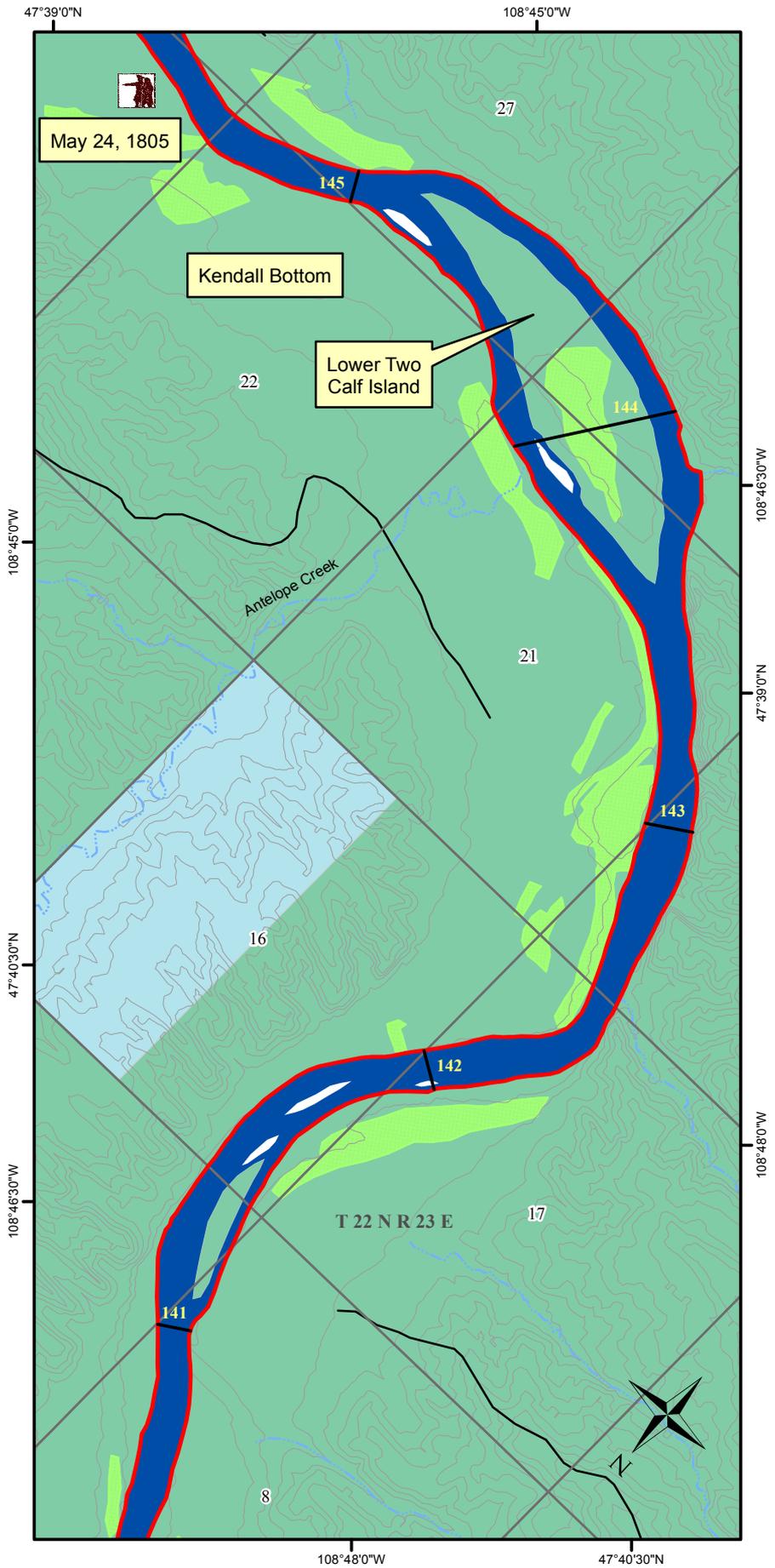
The numerous islands and braided river channels between here and Lower Two Calf Island just down river at mile 143.9 are thought to be eroded fragments of the large Tea Island charted by Lewis and Clark in May 1805. At river mile 143.9 right, Two Calf Creek enters the Missouri. One source implies that the creek is named thus because a few years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition, “a buffalo cow was killed here, having with her two calves, a fact never before observed.”

145.5 L Corps of Discovery Campsite

Over the past two centuries, the river’s channel has changed substantially and with it, this camp site’s location. On May 24, 1805, the Expedition encamped on the south side of the river. As of this writing, the site is located on the north side in what is now known as Kendall Bottom. Lewis wrote, “We set out at an early hour this morning and proceed on principally by the chord until about 9 A.M. when a fine breeze sprung up from the S.E. and enabled us though the balance of the day to employ our sails to advantage; we proceed at a pretty good pace notwithstanding the courrant of the river was very strong....”

NOTE: A brass marker identifies the site.

Personal Journal Notes



River Mile

148.8 Fred Robinson Bridge

The bridge that crosses Highway 191 here is named in tribute to Fred L. Robinson, a local resident, World War I veteran, and dedicated public servant who served in various elected offices including the Montana State Senate for a period of 40 years. During his political tenure, two primary objectives for the area—construction of a north/south road through Phillips County (Highway 191) and the building of a hospital—were accomplished. Consequently, the bridge was named in his honor in 1959.

149.0 R James Kipp Recreation Area

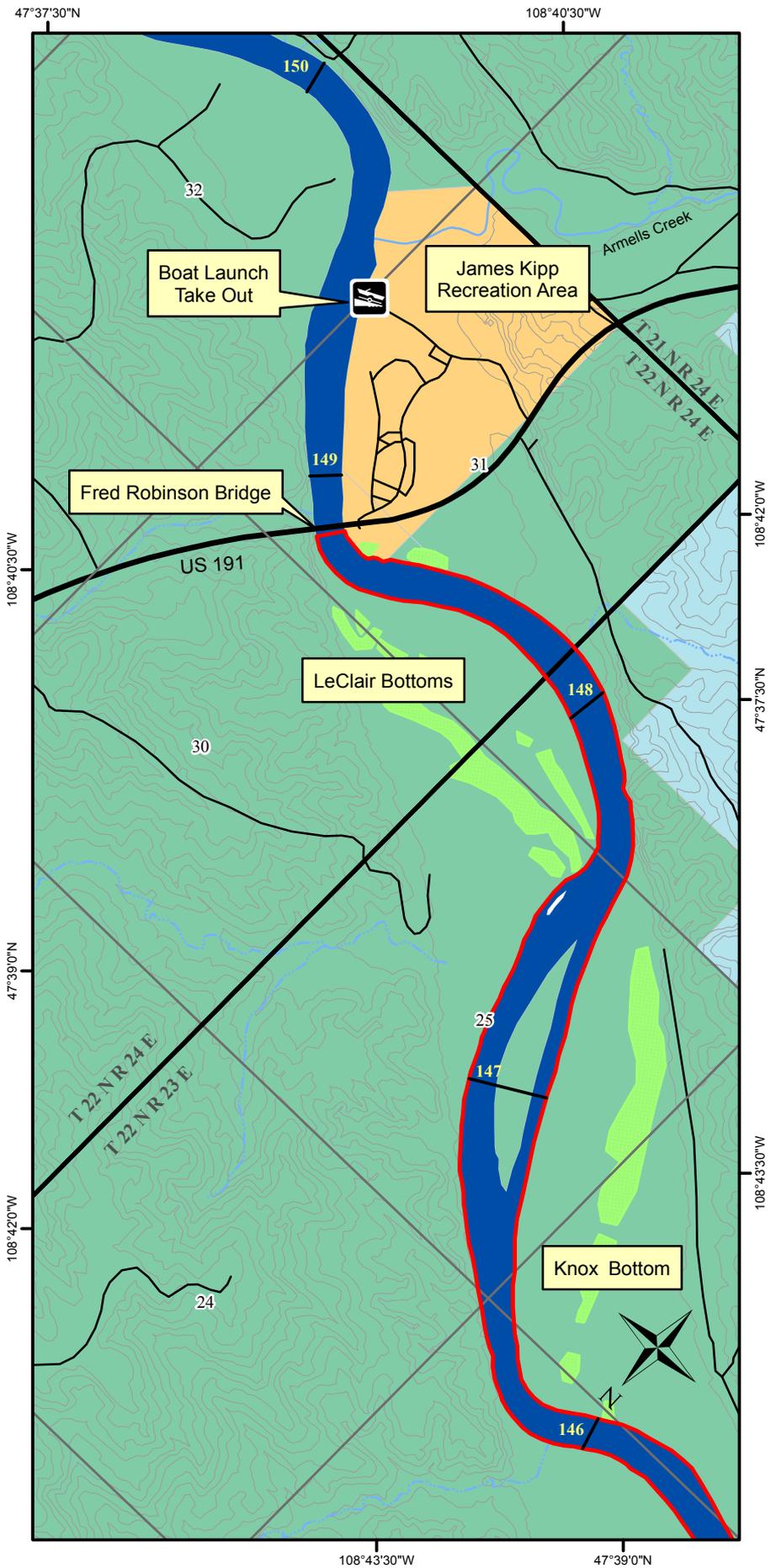
This marks the end of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River designation. For many visitors, arrival at the James Kipp Recreation Area is the conclusion of their river odyssey. The take-out point at the public boat ramp is approximately one mile below the Fred Robinson Bridge on river right.

James Kipp Recreation Area is named for James Kipp, a 19th century fur trader who opened the Upper Missouri to the fur trade with the establishment of Fort Piegan in 1831 at the Missouri's confluence with the Marias River.

This large campground is a classic example of a fully mature and healthy riparian river bottom once common to the Upper Missouri River. It is normally accessible year round and has a seasonal visitor contact station, well-maintained gravel roads, concrete boat ramp, water, vault toilets, RV campsites, tent sites, fire rings, picnic tables, trash dumpsters and an RV waste dump site. This site is operated as a fee site on a first come, first served basis. For additional information, please contact (406) 538-1900.

SAFETY TIP

For those continuing their journey past James Kipp Recreation Area, the river corridor is within the confines of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The river widens considerably as it becomes “slack water” as you proceed downstream. The river is eventually inundated by the Fort Peck Reservoir. Because of fluctuating water levels, access to surrounding areas indicated on maps of the area may not be possible. Extensive mud flats, high winds, waves and myriad other hazards associated with large water operations may be encountered. For safety's sake, we recommend visitors contact the C.M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters at (406) 538-8706 or local outdoor guide companies for the most current information.



Wildlife Viewing

The C.M. Russell Wildlife refuge offers spectacular opportunities for viewing wildlife. Several species of large ungulates native to the area are often visible. A short distance down river from James Kipp Recreation Area is one of the premier elk viewing sites in the state. In the late summer and early fall, vast herds of elk can be seen in the river bottoms adjacent to the roads in designated elk viewing areas. To get there, drive north from James Kipp Recreation Area on U.S. 191. After crossing the Fred Robinson Bridge, continue about one mile and turn east on CMR Refuge Road 101. Proceed just over five miles to the beginning of the elk viewing areas. Interpretive signs along the route educate and enhance the journey, offering visitors a glimpse of the past and featuring wildlife in their native habitat.



Sites and Facilities Chart

Site	River Mile	GPS Coordinates (Datum: WGS 84)			Boat Ramp	Road Access	Shelter	Fire Ring	Toilet	Water
		Zone	Easting	Northing						
Judith Landing Recreation Area	88.5 Left	12T	0603272	5288198	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Stafford Ferry	101.8 Left	12T	0620643	5288379		✓		✓	✓	
McGarry Bar Recreation Area	103.3 Right	12T	0623070	5289474				✓		
Lower Woodhawk Recreation Area	131.2 Right	12T	0653734	5289639		✓		✓	✓	
Hideaway Recreation Area	136.7 Left	12T	0661195	5287685				✓		
Kipp Recreation Area	149.0 Right	12T	0674428	5277036	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Emergency Contacts

In case of emergency begin with dialing **911**. Additionally, contact any of the following:

Chouteau County Sheriff <i>(River mile 0 to 88.5)</i>	(406) 622-5451
Fergus County Sheriff <i>(River mile 88.5 to 149)</i>	(406) 538-3415
Blaine County Sheriff <i>(River mile 88.5 to 149)</i>	(406) 357-2019
Lewistown Fire Dispatch	(406) 538-1072
BLM Law Enforcement Ranger	(406) 538-1939 (406) 622-4017

**Please be aware there is rarely cell phone service along the river.*

For Additional Information

For questions regarding river management or visitor services and information.

**BLM - Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center/
Fort Benton River Management Station** (406) 622-4000
701 7th Street
Box 1389
Fort Benton, MT 59442

BLM - Great Falls Office (406) 791-7700

BLM - Havre Field Office (406) 262-2820

BLM - Lewistown Field Office (406) 538-1900

BLM - Malta Field Office (406) 654-5100

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service--
C.M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge** (406) 538-5706

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (800) 847-6668
Report misconduct and/or game violations (406) 454-5878

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
[http://waterdata.usgs.gov/mt/nwis/
current/?type=dailydischarge&group_key=basin_cd](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/mt/nwis/current/?type=dailydischarge&group_key=basin_cd)

Contact for daily average river flow.



“The air is so pure in this open country that mountains and other elevated objects appear much nearer than they really are; these mountains do not appear to be further than 15 M. we sent a man up this creek to explore the country he returned late in the evening and informed that he had proceeded ten miles directly towards these mountains and that he did not think himself by any mean[s] half way these mountains are rocky and covered with some scattering pine..”

Meriwether Lewis, May 24, 1805



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

BLM/MT/GI-08/009 Rev. 11/17

