

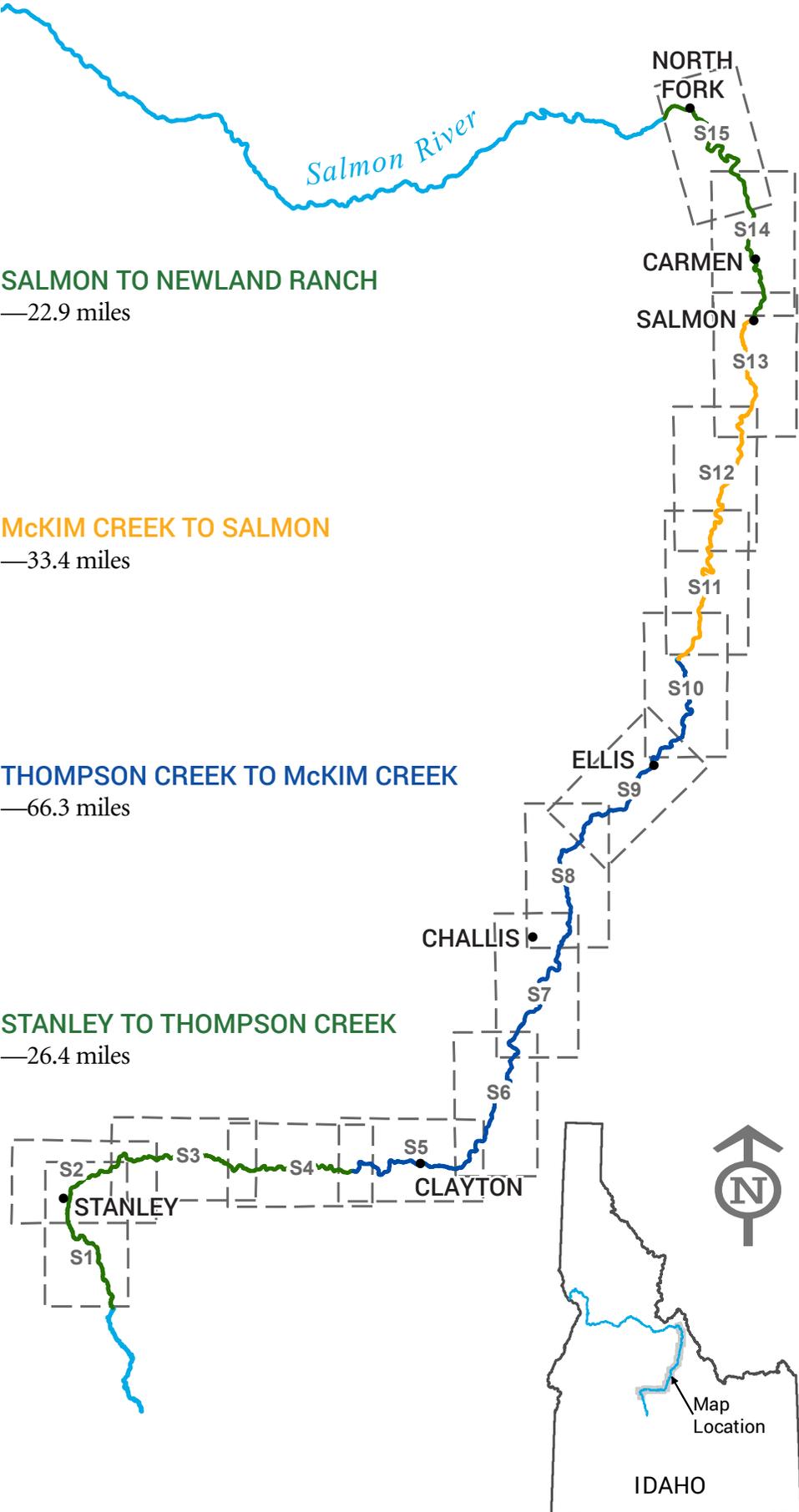


THE UPPER SALMON RIVER

BOATING GUIDE, EAST-CENTRAL IDAHO



INDEX AND LOCATION MAP





UPPER SALMON RIVER

BOATING GUIDE, EAST-CENTRAL IDAHO

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Salmon Regional Office
99 Highway 93 North
Salmon, Idaho 83467
208-756-2271

Sawtooth National Forest

370 American Avenue
Jerome, Idaho 83338
208-423-7500

Bureau of Land Management Idaho Falls District

1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
208-524-7500

Bureau of Land Management Challis Field Office

721 East Main Avenue, Suite 8
Challis, Idaho 83226
208-879-6200

Bureau of Land Management Salmon Field Office

Salmon-Challis National Forest

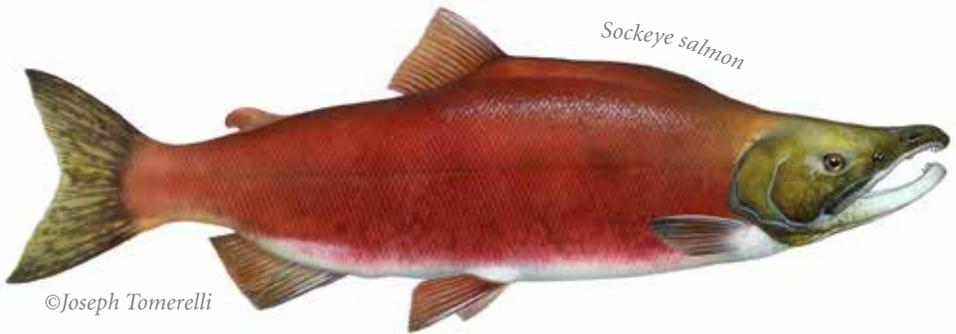
1206 S. Challis Street
Salmon, Idaho 83467
208-756-5400

THE RIVER'S NAMESAKE

The Salmon river supports three separate species of anadromous fish (fish born in fresh water that migrates to the ocean to mature, then returns to fresh water to spawn). A salmon's life begins and ends here in the mountains of Idaho. Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) travel nearly 900 miles to reach the spawning areas in the Stanley Basin and, unlike steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), die after spawning. All three species, as well as numerous other fish that make the Salmon River their home need clean, oxygen-filled water to survive. Dozens of wildlife and bird species also depend on the clean water and robust riparian zone of the Salmon River to survive, which is just one of many reasons to take care of this resource.



Chinook salmon spend one year in fresh water before they make the long journey to the ocean. After one to three years in the ocean, they are big and mature, and head back to their spawning grounds. As they make their way to the mountains their bodies change, growing a hooked jaw and large, sharp teeth.



Sockeye salmon also undergo drastic change on the long journey from the ocean to the Salmon River. The males grow a hump on their back, their jaws become hooked, sharp teeth grow, and they turn from entirely bright blue-silver to bright red bodies with dark green heads. Sockeye spawn in river systems that contain lakes. Their smaller relative, kokanee, live their entire lives in the high lakes and rivers.

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WHITEWATER CLASSES

Rapid ratings are a general guide to relative difficulty. Severe weather conditions, extreme water levels and remote locations all contribute to the danger of white water boating. Changes in water levels or flows cause variations in rapid difficulty. Scout any rapids you are not familiar with, and understand and respect your limitations.

Class I

Small waves, passages clear, no serious obstacles.

Class II

Medium-sized, regular waves; passages clear, some maneuvering may be required.

Class III

Waves are numerous, high and irregular; rocks, eddies, narrow passages; scouting usually required.

Class IV

Powerful, irregular waves; boiling eddies; dangerous rocks; congested passages; precise maneuvering required; scouting mandatory.

Class V

Exceedingly difficult; violent rapids often following each other without interruption; big drops, violent current, scouting mandatory, but often difficult.

Class VI

Limit of navigability, generally considered unnavigable.

USGS Streamflows

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/current/?type=flow>

Get real-time stream flows for most rivers in Idaho, water temperatures at some gauging stations and annual hydrograph charts that show when rivers typically get peak spring flows from the above website.



INTRODUCTION

The Salmon River flows 425 miles through Idaho from its headwaters near Galena Summit in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area to its confluence with the Snake River on the Oregon border. It drains 14,000 square miles and drops more than 7,000 feet.

The Salmon River has three distinct recreational segments: the Upper Salmon (Stanley to North Fork), the Main Salmon (Corn Creek to Carey Creek), and the Lower Salmon (White Bird to the Snake River confluence). This guidebook covers the 150 river miles from the Sawtooth Fish Hatchery in Stanley to North Fork and Newland Ranch.

The Upper Salmon River provides a variety of boating opportunities. Between Stanley and Clayton the river bounces through several classified rapids and is a favorite stretch for white water enthusiasts. Most trips begin below the Class IV Sunbeam Dam rapid taking advantage of Piece of Cake (III) rapid. As the river makes its way towards Challis, the valley broadens and the gradient decreases significantly. Ever changing cottonwood galleries pose their own threats to boater safety. From Challis to North Fork, the Salmon River is fairly mellow with Class I riffles punctuated with short canyon features and Class II rapids making this run an ideal beginner stretch.

The upper section is unique in its combination of easy access and back country scenic quality. The campgrounds and access sites along this corridor host thousands of people each year. Highways 75 and 93 parallel this entire reach, connecting the towns of Stanley, Clayton, Challis, Ellis, Salmon, and North Fork. Major tributaries include Valley Creek, Yankee Fork, East Fork, and the Pahsimeroi, Lemhi and North Fork rivers. Occasionally, boaters navigate some of the Salmon's tributaries.

This guide will help you navigate the river and learn about nature. Please note where the north arrow points on each map. Land ownership patterns are mixed (public and private lands) and rarely signed, so careful map reading ensures your activities will not impinge upon private property rights. Public and private campgrounds are prevalent along this stretch and accessible from the river as well as the highway. Please be aware that the Upper Salmon River, while not known for its classified rapids, still requires adequate equipment and skills to navigate safely.

LAWS AND REQUIREMENTS

INVASIVE SPECIES LAWS FOR BOATERS

Under this law, the owner of any non-motorized vessel in Idaho (canoe, kayak, raft, driftboat, etc.) is required to purchase and display Idaho Invasive Species Fund (IISF) stickers on their vessel(s) in order to legally launch and operate in Idaho. Inflatable, non-motorized vessels under 10 feet in length are exempt from this requirement in Idaho.



zebra mussels—aquatic invasive species



Idaho Invasive Species Fund (IISF) stickers. Left: non-motorized example for any boat that is registered in Idaho or another state, and any non-motorized vessel (canoe, kayak, raft, drift boat, etc.). Right: non-resident example.



MOTORIZED WATER CRAFT

Small to medium motorized water craft are allowed in this section of the river corridor downstream from Torrey's Hole although it is not common for long distance, through traffic.

RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY

There is a mix of private, state and federal land in this river corridor. Know where you are on the river and respect the rights of private property owners so that boaters can continue to enjoy the river in the future.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL MATERIALS

Collecting or disturbing archaeological artifacts and historic objects is prohibited by federal law.

HOT SPRINGS

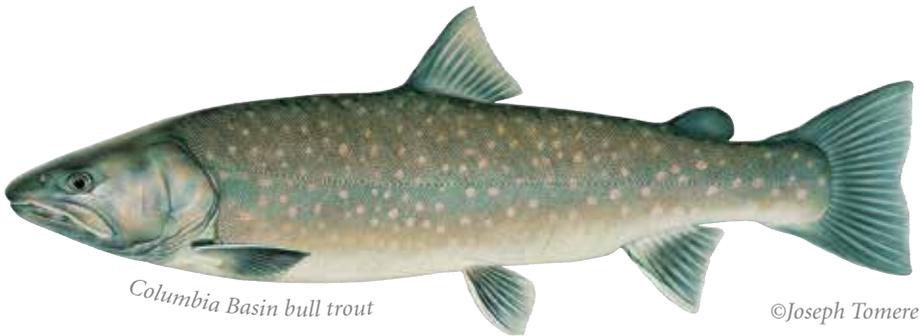
Digging, damming, or otherwise altering the natural flow or appearance of hot springs is prohibited by Idaho Code 42-351.

IDAHO STEELHEAD RULES

Anyone fishing for anadromous salmon and/or steelhead must have a valid fishing license and salmon and/or steelhead permit(s) on his/ her person. Non-residents must purchase either a non-resident season fishing license and a full season salmon and/or steelhead permit or a non-resident, 3-day salmon/steelhead license/permit. Learn the rules on the Idaho Department of Fish and Game website at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/seasons-rules-fish-2016-2018-steelhead.pdf>.

RECREATIONAL PLACER MINING IN IDAHO

Many people enjoy the challenge of searching for gold in Idaho's streams and rivers by means of recreational mining. The alteration of stream channels by using recreational mining equipment in a stream is regulated in Idaho by the Stream Channel Protection Act. Recreational mining equipment can be any implement that is used to dig, scrape, dredge, or otherwise move stream bed materials from below the mean high watermark in search of minerals. The Stream Channel Protection Act requires that a miner obtain a permit from the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) before altering any portion of Idaho's stream beds. IDWR regulations do not allow recreational mining in the Upper Salmon River and its navigable tributaries due to threatened or endangered fish species.



Columbia Basin bull trout

©Joseph Tomerelli

It is a misdemeanor in Idaho to alter a stream channel without the IDWR permit or to violate the conditions of the permit. Mineral removal from streams on private lands requires permission or a mineral lease from the owner. For more information, visit Idaho's website at www.idwr.idaho.gov/streams/recreational-mining-permits.html.

Please note the Sawtooth NRA is closed to all mining including recreational panning and placer mining.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was signed on December 28, 1973, and provides for the conservation of species that are endangered or threatened. The Upper Salmon River Basin is part of the Columbia River Basin—home to fish species listed under the ESA as endangered (Snake River sockeye salmon) and threatened (Snake River chinook salmon, Snake River steelhead, Columbia Basin bull trout). These native species occupy, currently reside, or migrate within many miles of streams and rivers. Tributaries used for spawning and rearing along the Salmon River are vitally important. Hundreds of stream miles are designated critical habitat for sockeye salmon, Columbia Basin bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), Snake River steelhead and the Snake River Chinook salmon. Other sensitive species include the westslope cutthroat trout and redband rainbow trout, both native salmonids. For boating restrictions in the Sawtooth NRA during spawning season, please read page 12.

SALMON HABITAT RESTORATION

The Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program, coordinated by the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation, helps landowners develop water restoration projects to improve salmon habitat. The program assists with the permitting process for these projects, oversees the work and monitors the outcomes. Additionally, the program pursues and manages major funding support. Partner agencies finance and implement projects through the program. Landowners hosting projects share the cost, usually with time and labor. Local businesses do the majority of the work on the ground. Primary funding is provided by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Projects include fencing along streams to encourage vegetation growth, which stabilizes the stream banks and reduces erosion; rebuilding and repairing irrigation intakes, where rotating screens keep juvenile fish from being swept into irrigation canals; and diverting trapped fish back into the main stream. A "Tech Team" of local stakeholders evaluates proposed projects, provides guidance to staff regarding funding and implementation, and develops plans for the future. For more information, visit online at www.modelwatershed.org/.

The Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program Partners

- Bonneville Power Administration
- BPA Environment, Fish & Wildlife
- Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program
- Custer Soil and Water Conservation District
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Water Resources
- Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation
- Idaho State Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- Idaho Water Resource Board
- Lemhi Regional Land Trust
- Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Northwest Power and Conservation Council
- Salmon Valley Stewardship
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service



In 2016, water users and state and federal agencies implemented a project that restored connectivity between Hawley Creek and the Lemhi River to provide access to historic steelhead and Chinook salmon habitat. Photography, OSC-USBWP

Local contractors finish work on the reconstructed Pahsimeroi-16 irrigation diversion. The project partners replaced a diversion that prevented fish passage and installed a fish screen and nearly 1.4 miles of pipeline. Results were a water savings of over 10 cubic feet per second that are now left in the Pahsimeroi River to benefit fisheries and riparian restoration. Photography, Bureau of Reclamation



SAFETY

Common sense and respect for the river go a long way in achieving your expectations and making your trip safe and enjoyable. Accidents can occur along any stretch of the river in the blink of an eye, and despite the proximity of the highways, rescue or emergency services can take a lifetime, literally. Self-rescue and survival skills, equipment, and preparation are vital. If you lack adequate experience, equipment, or knowledge of the river, you may wish to engage a licensed outfitter.

EQUIPMENT

Make sure all boating equipment is in good condition. Carry repair kits and extra oars. Consider carrying an extra life jacket or Personal Flotation Device in each boat. Carry safety and first aid equipment and know how to use them. Plan for all kinds of weather—even hot, sunny days can turn cool and rainy, creating hypothermia conditions.

MOST ACCIDENTS OCCUR ON SHORE

Wet rocks are slippery—wearing your life jacket can help cushion a fall. Rattlesnakes, bees, cactus, and poison ivy are all plentiful. Learn how to avoid them and how to treat the symptoms.

SCOUT THE RAPIDS

While there are not as many classified rapids along the Upper Salmon River as you may encounter on other popular rivers in the area, this does not make the river any less hazardous. In fact, it might make it more dangerous if you decide to take this river lightly. River conditions and rapids change constantly and are affected by water level fluctuations, obstructions, and shifts in the riverbed. Be alert when approaching whitewater by listening and watching for a fast drop in the river elevation. If or when you are in trouble, be active. Get yourself out of trouble first, then help others. Worry about your gear only after all people are safe.

BE AWARE OF HAZARDS

Many natural and man-made hazards exist along the Upper Salmon River and conditions can change at any time. Some of these hazards include high and low water, named and unnamed rapids, sudden weather changes, lightning, trees and logs in the river, blocked river channels, ice flows, ice dams, ice ledges, blowouts, cliffs, boulders, water currents, temperatures, rattlesnakes, ticks, animals, diversion dams, and bridge abutments. Locate private land/public land boundaries by using the maps in this guidebook.



A rafting guide provides a safety briefing to eager rafters, photography The River Company

ETHICS

RIVER AND BOAT RAMP ETIQUETTE

Although you may find solitude on the Salmon River, you are not alone. Your actions directly affect the experience of others on the river. A few simple guidelines will ensure the journey down the river is a positive experience for everyone. Courtesy is the key to successful interaction with other river users.

- **Get in and out of boat ramps as quickly and efficiently as possible.**
- Park your vehicles away from boat loading areas and in designated parking areas where provided.
- Give other boaters lots of space.
- Steer clear of fishermen's lines.
- Respect non-motorized and motorized boaters alike. Downstream drift traffic has the right-of-way especially if they are committed to a rapid or riffle. Pull aside and allow them to make their way through.
- Don't clog up the channel above or below a rapid.
- Keep noise levels low when you float by other parties.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife. If you encounter nesting broods of waterfowl, stay as far away from them as possible. To protect wildlife, as well as other visitors, discharging firearms is discouraged except during designated hunting seasons.
- If you bring a dog along, keep it under control and pack out dog waste.

MINIMUM IMPACT CAMPING

River users come to the Upper Salmon for many reasons and none of them come expecting to find beaches scarred with fire rings or fouled with litter or human waste. Work hard to protect and keep this river clean. Passing through without a trace is a challenge. Here are a few tips on how you can help care for the Salmon and all rivers.

Trash—take out everything you bring in. Spend a few extra minutes to pick up litter that may have been left behind by others. Cigarette butts, twist ties, fishing line, bait cups, lures and food scraps are trash. Carry them out and don't burn it on site!

Drinking Water—although water quality is high, river water is not considered potable without treatment or filtering due to the presence of Giardia. Bring your own drinking water.

Waste Water—use a small amount of biodegradable soap for washing dishes. Strain all dish and rinse water before scattering it broadly 200 feet away from the river and camp. Broadcast onto soil with vegetation.

In camps where there isn't 200 feet of space, dispose waste water as far from the river as possible. Leftover liquids from cooking, drinking and draining canned foods along with toothpaste waste can be deposited directly into the river. Food bits left in camp are a magnet for biting insects. Bring along a strainer or piece of screen to filter food bits from dishwater as you strain water into vegetation away from camp above the high water mark.

Bathing—during the summer, you can reduce the need to bathe by swimming frequently in the river. However, if you need to bathe, do so away from the river and use biodegradable soap. Do not allow any water containing soap, biodegradable or otherwise, to get into rivers or streams.

Urination—urinate directly into the river. Urinating on land, especially around well-used campsites, creates an unpleasant odor and attracts insects.



River trash collection, photography BLM

Human Waste—when possible, use vaulted toilets at campgrounds and fishing access sites. When those are not available, the use of a watertight, durable, portable toilet system similar to the Eco-Safe or Partner Steel brands is recommended. In lieu of a containerized toilet system, WAG bags or RESTOP 2 bag systems are also acceptable.

Fire Pan or Blankets—the use of fire pan containment system is highly recommended to prevent the creation of multiple fire rings at



commonly used camp sites. If use of a fire pan is not possible, then users should use established fire rings where available. If possible, pack out ash and scatter cooled fire ring rocks before departing your camp site.

Firewood and Fire Restrictions—do not cut or destroy standing live or dead vegetation. All seasonal fire restrictions must be followed in the river corridor. Fireworks are prohibited.



Salmon River trash collection: thousands of people use this river corridor each year, photography BLM

STEELHEAD



Steelhead, photography © Keith Douglas

THE ICON OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST RIVERS

Of all the ocean-going fish in Idaho, the steelhead remains prized among anglers for its challenging behavior and rainbow-dappled beauty. Unlike the Chinook salmon, steelhead can spawn more than once, though it doesn't commonly occur.

In the Lemhi and Salmon rivers, steelhead spawn from mid-April to late June. With powerful flexes of her body, the female uses her tail as a shovel to dig a nest (called a redd) in the river gravels. The male fertilizes the eggs as she releases them in the nest. She swims upstream a few feet and begins again, using the river's current to carry gravel over the newly deposited eggs.

STEELHEAD SEASONS

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game's pocket guide, *Upper Salmon River Steelhead Angling*, provides useful advice for steelhead angling in the upper river. It is online at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/upper-salmon-river-steelhead-angling-pocket-guide.pdf>.

For more steelhead locations and rules, go to <https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/seasons-rules-fish-2016-2018-steelhead.pdf>. Chinook fishing is from June to August with locations and rules at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/fish/chinook/rules>.

October- November

- Although some steelhead do show up in September, large numbers do not typically arrive until early October.
- The majority of angler effort occurs downstream of North Fork - this distribution does not change much between October and November.
- Depending on the weather and run timing, good fishing can be found near Salmon in November.
- The area between North Fork and Salmon is a very popular area for drift boats.
- The best catch rates usually occur near the end of October or early November. Usually the highest fishing activity occurs in the sections with the highest success rates from the week before.

March

- Fishing effort is much more spread out across the basin compared to fall.
- Heaviest effort occurs in the canyon section below Shoup, downstream of the Pahsimeroi River near Ellis, and near the Yankee Fork, upstream of Clayton.
- Areas near Salmon typically fish well for two to three weeks.
- Due to the weather and runoff, spring fishing can be erratic. When possible, pay attention to the forecast and attempt to make a trip when weather and river conditions are stable.

April

- In most years spring runoff makes for poor fishing conditions around Salmon, however clearer water and better conditions can generally be found by traveling upriver.
- Heaviest effort is concentrated downstream of Pahsimeroi River near Ellis or upstream of the East Fork near the Yankee Fork or the Sawtooth Hatchery.
- Boat effort near Challis also tends to pick up during this time.
- Effort is typically low downstream of North Fork, but depending on the run timing, anglers can still find steelhead in that area.
- Many fly fisherman show up during April near Challis and Stanley.

MAP LEGEND

Site Administrator

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Forest Service
-  Idaho Fish and Game
-  Other

 National Forest Boundary

 BLM Field Office Boundary

Map Features

-  BLM Office
-  USFS Office
-  IDFG Office
-  Boat Launch Ramp, Developed
-  Boat Launch Ramp, Undeveloped
-  Boat Launch Ramp, Private
-  River Access (no boats)
-  Campground
-  Campground, Fee Site
-  Fishing
-  Hatchery
-  Picnic Area
-  Potable Water
-  Restroom
-  RV Dump
-  Scat Machine
-  ADA Accessible Amenity
-  Diversion Dam
-  Historical Site
-  Recreation Site River Mileage
-  River Mileage
-  Rapids Class II
-  Rapids Class III
-  Rapids Class IV
-  Spring
-  Summit
-  U.S. Highway
-  State Highway
-  Road
-  River
-  Stream
-  Contour Line
-  Lake

Land Status

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Forest Service
-  State
-  Private

Coordinate System: Projection - Idaho Transverse Mercator, Datum NAD 1983, units in meters

Source Information: Land status, hydrology, and transportation data compiled from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource base data at a scale of 1:24,000. Contours derived from U.S. Geological Survey 10 meter national elevation dataset. The official land records should be checked for up-to-date status on any specific tract of land.

Recreation Information: Local Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Forest Service (USFS), and Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) office locations are shown on the maps throughout this guide. Office details are listed on the back of this guide.

Even though every effort is made to depict the road network, features and descriptions accurately, 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.

Contour Interval = 200 feet

MAP SCALE

1 : 63,000



THE HEADWATERS

THE SAWTOOTH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area consists of 756,000 acres of scenic mountain country including the headwaters of the Salmon River west of Galena Summit. The Sawtooth NRA includes the Sawtooth Wilderness, White Clouds Wilderness, and the Hemingway-Boulders Wilderness areas. It includes over 700 miles of trails, more than 100 peaks rising over 10,000 feet and 300 plus high mountain alpine lakes that add to the spectacular scenery and vistas. Recreational pursuits include outdoor activities of camping, hiking, backpacking, fishing, boating and canoeing, rafting, observing nature, photography and bicycling.

There are fabulous hiking trails leading into the White Clouds Wilderness to the south and trails leading north into the Salmon Challis National Forest.



Sawtooth Mountains, photography Forest Service

For more information please contact the Sawtooth NRA at 208-727-5000 or the Stanley Ranger Station at 208-774-3000.

MAP S1

BOATING IN THE SAWTOOTH NRA

Boaters are required to use designated put-ins and take-outs in the Sawtooth NRA. All floatboaters are required to access the river only at designated access sites from the Sawtooth Fish Hatchery to the eastern NRA boundary. These access sites include Buckhorn, Salmon River Bridge, Four Aces, Mormon Bend, Yankee Fork, Elk Creek, Snyder Springs, Torrey's Hole, Kayaker Take-out below "The Narrows" and Whiskey Flats Campground.

Seasonal closures to floatboating are enacted each year to protect spawning salmon. Closures from August 15 to September 22 include:

- August 15—sections closed to all floating are from the Sawtooth Hatchery to Stanley, Mormon Bend to Yankee Fork and from Torrey's Boat Ramp to the Sawtooth NRA eastern boundary below Holman Creek.
- August 29—sections closed to all floating are Indian Riffles, which requires a mile-long portage, and downstream of the Snyder Springs boat ramp.
- September 3—section closed to all floating is from Stanley 20 miles downstream to Snyder Springs until September 22nd.
- September 22—the entire river reopens to floating.

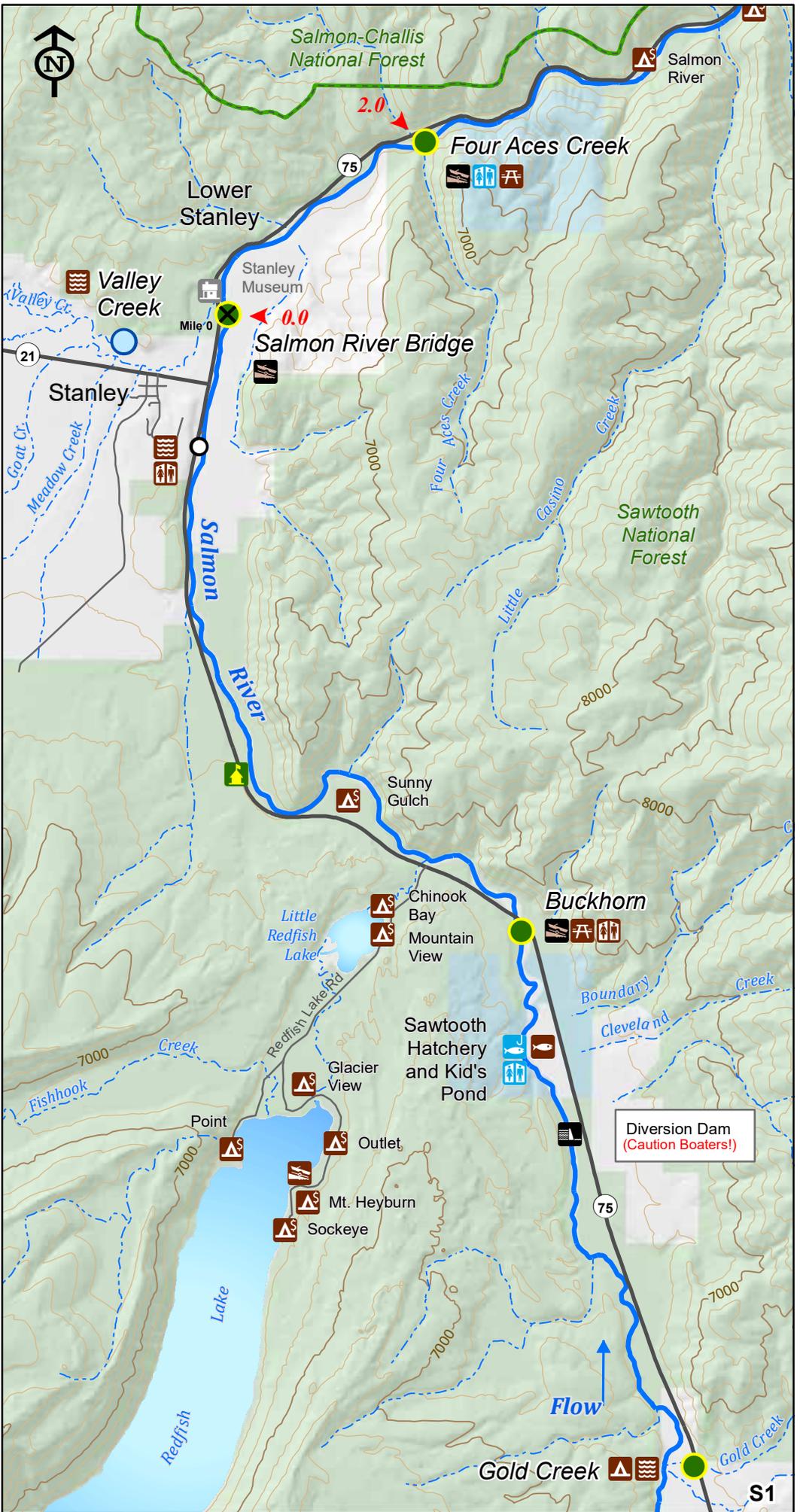
CAMPING IN THE SAWTOOTH NRA

Many Forest Service campgrounds along the river corridor are first-come, first-serve. They include Salmon River, Casino Creek, Riverside, Mormon Bend, Lower O'Brien, Upper O'Brien, Whiskey Flats and Holman Creek. Double sites are offered at Casino Creek, Mormon Bend, Lower O'Brien, Upper O'Brien, Salmon River and Holman Creek. There are also three stock campsites available at Casino Creek Campground. One developed picnic area, Snyder Springs, has a vault restroom, picnic tables, and a fire ring.

Daily rates for sites—single or double—at Casino Creek, Mormon Bend, Lower O'Brien, Upper O'Brien, Riverside, Salmon River and Holman Creek can be found on the Forest Service website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/sawtooth/recreation/camping-cabins>. There is no fee for Snyder Springs picnic area.



Camping stay limits: 10-day stay limit for developed campgrounds and you may not return to the same campground for the next 14 days. Dispersed camping stay limits: along the Salmon River Corridor and Iron Creek Road there is a 10-day camping limit and you must relocate more than 10 miles from your original site for 14 days. North of Galena Summit there is a 16-day camping limit then you must relocate 10 miles from your original site for 14 days. South of Galena Summit there is a 16-day camping limit and you may not return anywhere on the Ketchum Ranger District or Sawtooth NRA dispersed areas for 14 days. Motorized vehicles and bicycles are not allowed in any designated wilderness areas. Please keep all pets on a leash.



MAP S2

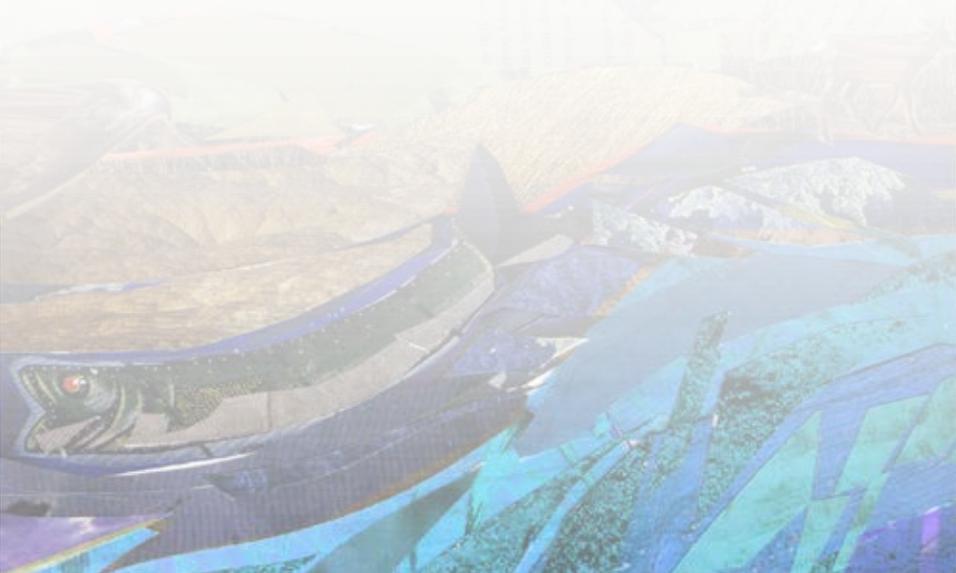


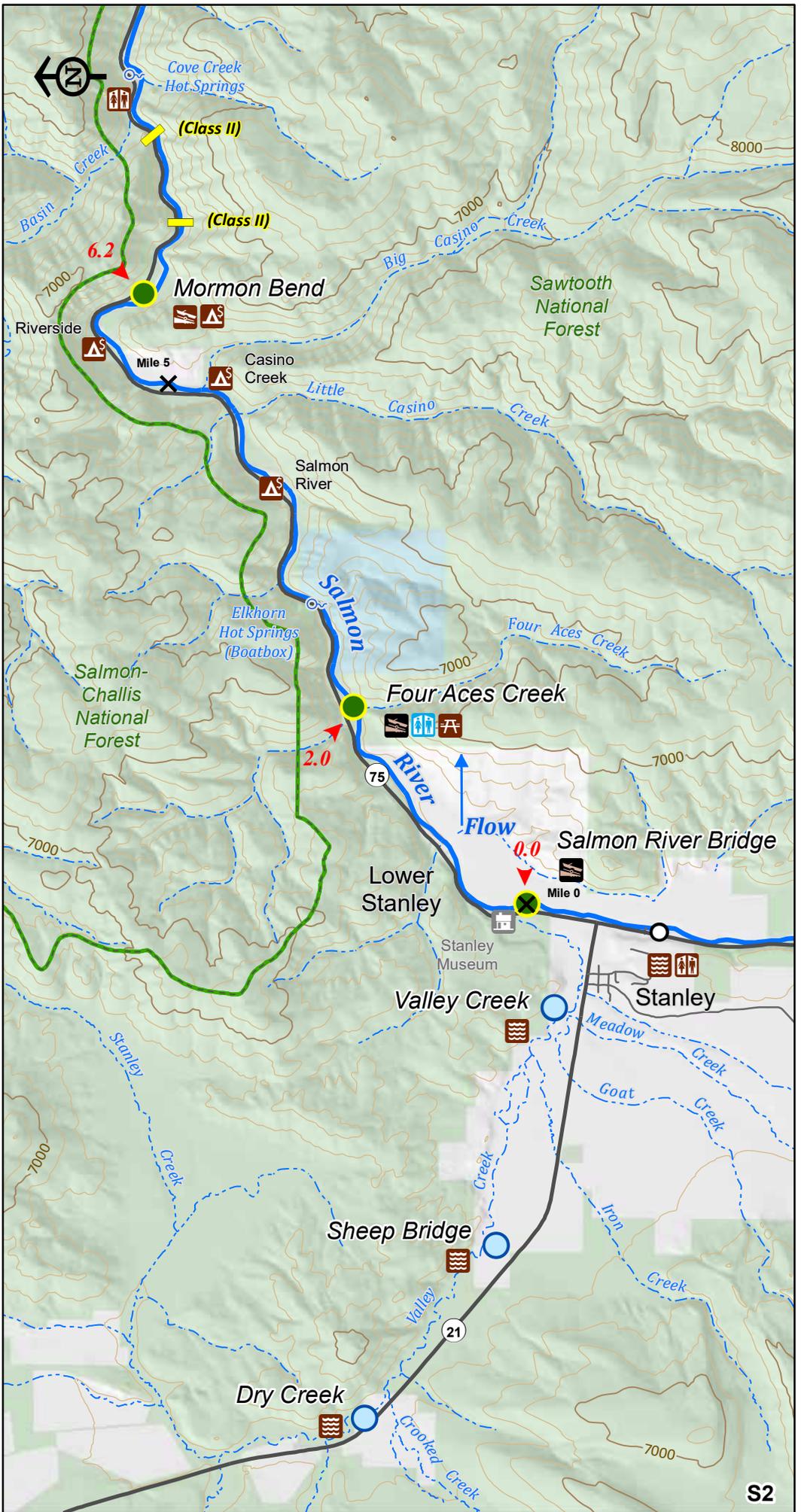
Running the Narrows, photography The River Company

MORMON BEND—PREPARE FOR RAPIDS AHEAD

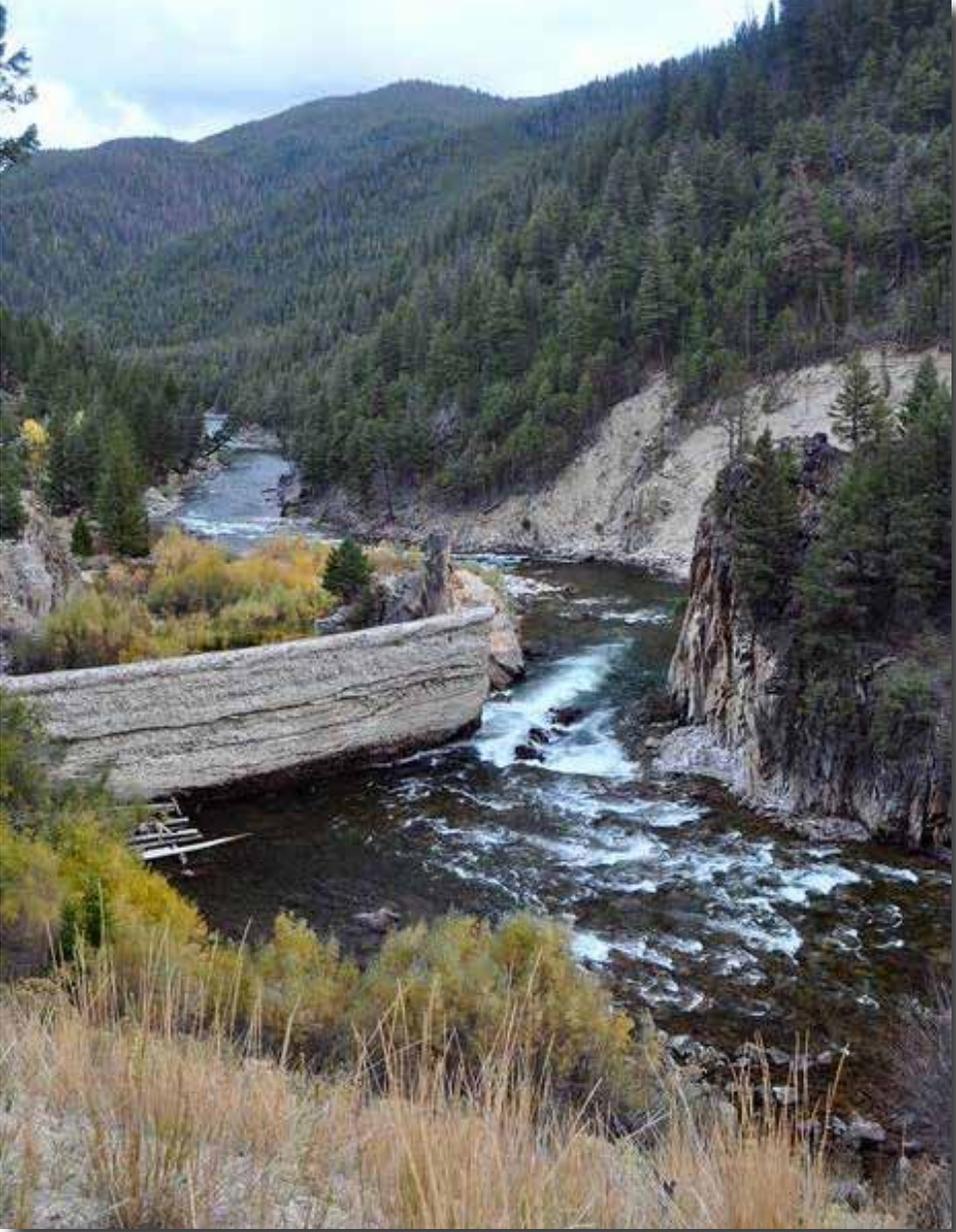
During high water conditions, adventurous boaters negotiate through class IV rapids for some intense fun. Downstream from the Mormon Bend launch site, encounter Shotgun rapid (Class IV) followed by two miles of whitewater and the historic Sunbeam Dam (Class IV) run. If you put in at the Salmon River Bridge or Mormon Bend, there are two Class IV and two Class III rapids between there and Robinson Bar. Most trips begin at the Yankee Fork boat ramp, below the Class IV Sunbeam Dam rapid, taking advantage of Piece of Cake (III) and the Narrows (III) rapids.

Boating groups also launch at Elk Creek where they ride the same series of lively class II and III waves and stop downstream of the “The Narrows” to swim at Jump Rock.





MAP S3

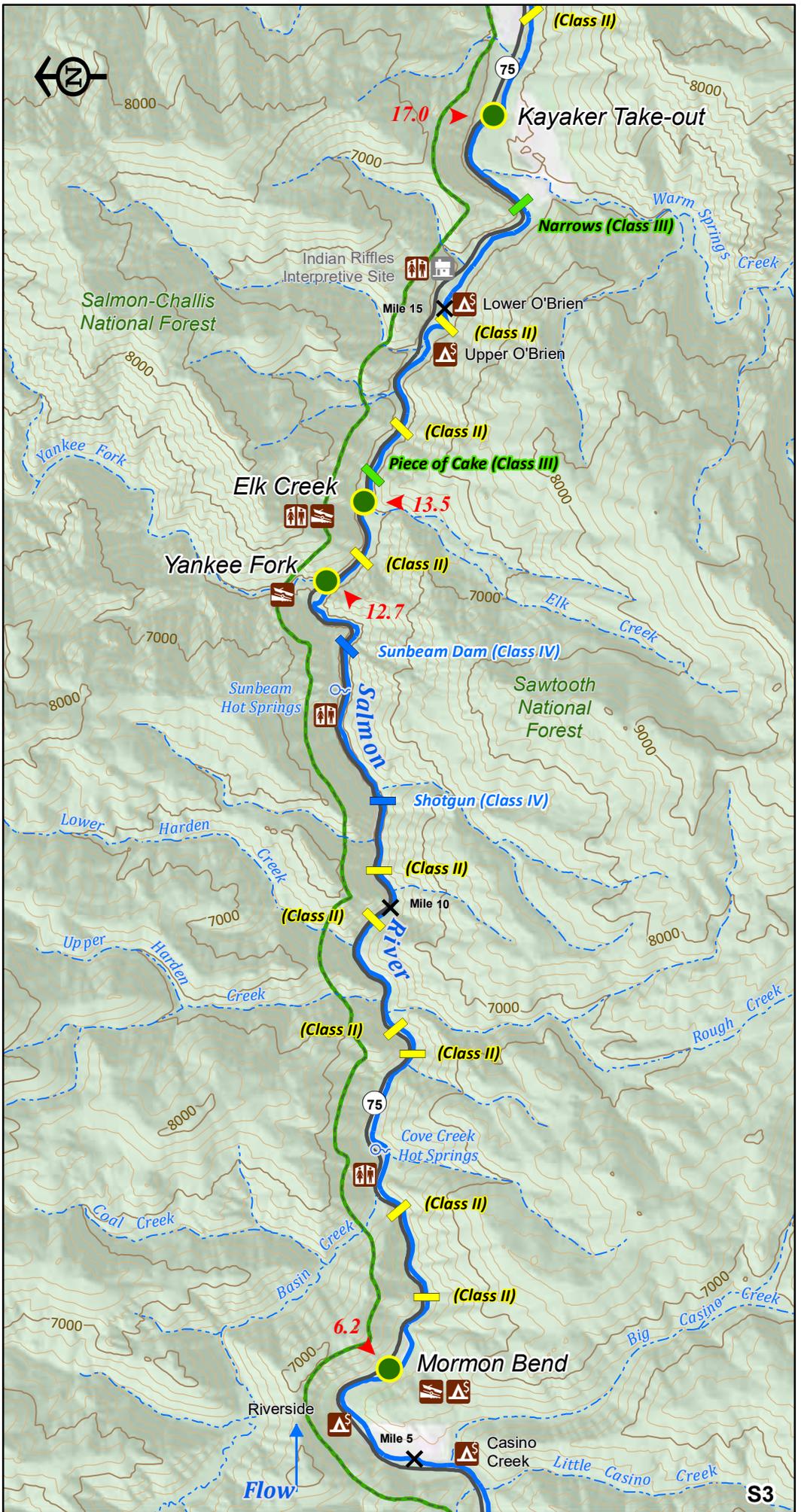


Sunbeam Dam and rapid, photography BLM

SUNBEAM DAM AND RAPID



The Sunbeam Dam was constructed from 1909-1910 to provide electricity to the Sunbeam Consolidated Gold Mines Company, located 13 miles up the Yankee Fork. The dam provided electricity to the mine until 1911, when the low cost of the electricity wasn't enough to offset the low value of Sunbeam's ore. In 1911, the Sunbeam property was sold at a sheriff's auction. By the early 1930's, the fish ladders had fallen into disrepair and the dam was partially dynamited in 1933 or 1934. This allowed the Salmon River to once again flow freely, albeit with a slightly altered course. The rapid adjacent to the dam is one of the more dangerous on this part of the river, particularly during low water when rebar and concrete in the remainder of the dam become exposed.





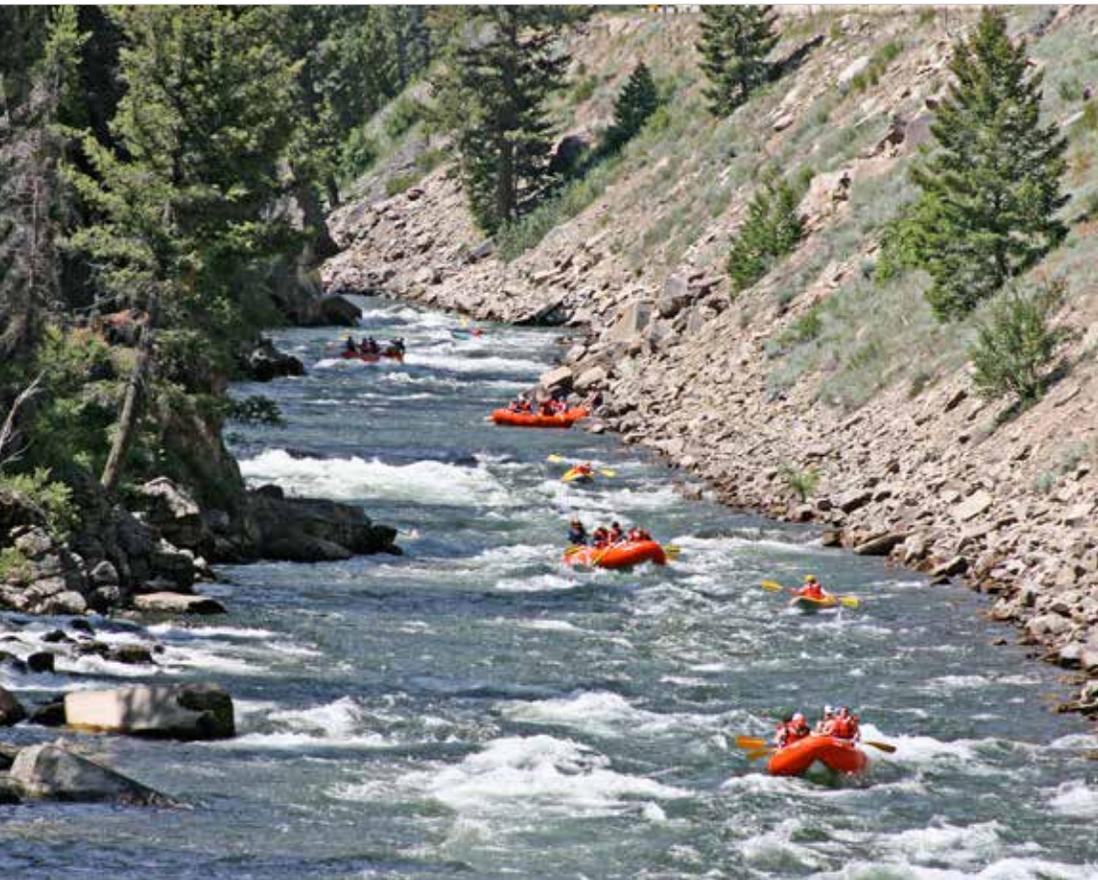
Yankee Fork dredges, photography BLM

DREDGING THE YANKEE FORK



The Yankee Fork joins the Main Salmon just upriver from here. The Yankee Fork was mined extensively in the early 1900's, and evidence of mining is all around you, from the cables in the river to the Sunbeam Dam. Historic mining in the Yankee Fork heavily altered the ecosystem by dredging the streambed and redistributing large piles of tailings along the banks. Numerous groups, including the Forest Service, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and Trout Unlimited have implemented large-scale stream restoration projects to restore the hydrology and habitat of the Yankee Fork.





Rafters navigate the Narrows, photography The River Company

Steelhead fishing during the spring, photography © Glenn Oakley



MAP S4

TORREY'S HOLE



The Torrey's Hole boat ramp is the largest and most well developed boat ramp on the Upper Salmon River. It is heavily used by licensed commercial rafting outfitters as well as the general public. There is a very large parking area, toilets, a wide paved ramp into the river, large turning radius and excellent safe ingress and egress from Highway 75. Torrey's Hole can become very crowded at the end of the day when incoming commercial rafting trips pull into the boat ramp. If salmon are biting at the same time, you could experience gridlock with fisherman and floaters.

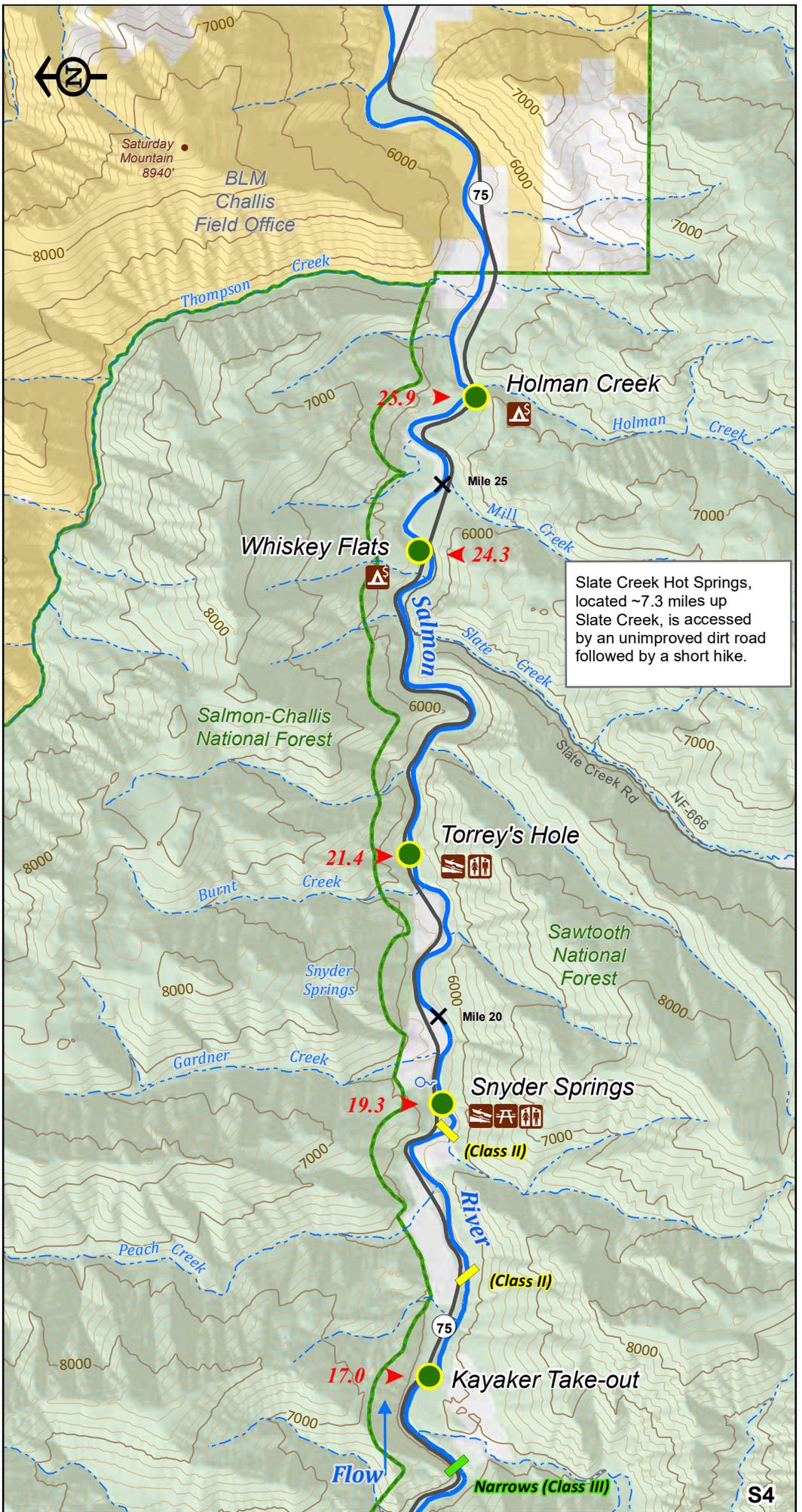
PRIVATE LAND AND PUBLIC LAND BOUNDARIES

As you leave the national forests (green area on the maps), there is a mix of private land (white on the map) and BLM-managed public land (yellow on the map) boundaries. Public and private campgrounds are prevalent along this stretch and accessible from the river and the highway.

The BLM takes care of nearly 12 million acres of public land in Idaho—home to over 350 species of plants and animals in the sagebrush-steppe community. Like national forests and parks, this land belongs to all Americans. Public land also provides food for livestock, timber and other natural resources such as coal, oil, natural gas and minerals. Molybdenum was mined for years at Thompson Creek. Public land contains evidence of the past, such as dinosaur bones and fossils. Archaeological sites help us learn about people who lived here long ago. Enjoy and care for your public land.

Rough-legged hawk, photography © Rob Palmer





Slate Creek Hot Springs, located ~7.3 miles up Slate Creek, is accessed by an unimproved dirt road followed by a short hike.

MAP S5



BATS AND MINES

Fourteen species of bats live in Idaho. All are insect eaters and most are cave-dwellers. Abandoned mines provide microclimates similar to caves, suitable for rearing young, hibernation, and rest stops during migration. As natural bat habitats are disturbed or altered, these man-made habitats become critical in bat conservation.

The BLM and Forest Service work to eliminate physical safety hazards such as open mine tunnels and shafts. Grates are installed over mine openings keeping people and animals safe, but allowing bats in to thrive.

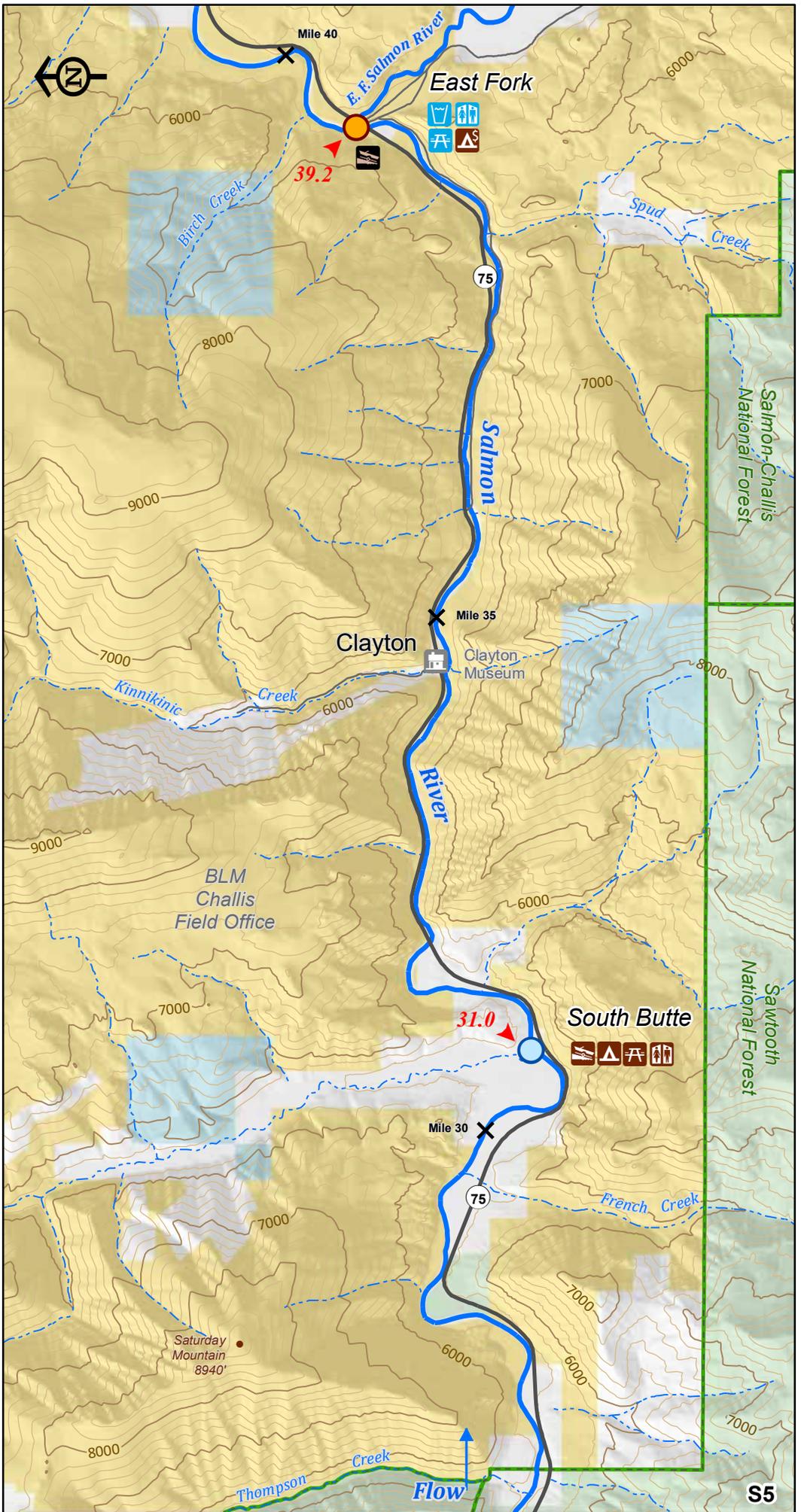
THERMAL REFUGE FOR BULL TROUT

Bull trout seek clean, cold, and undisturbed headwaters to grow and spawn in central Idaho. For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*) and bull trout were considered the same species. Bull trout serve as a prime indicator of the health of forest ecosystems and watersheds.

During summer, water temperatures in the main Salmon River become too warm for many fish species forcing them to seek cooler water in tributary streams. Fed by pristine waters from the high mountain lakes in the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains, the East Fork Salmon River provides this important thermal refuge for bull trout and other fish during the summer months.

Bull trout (Salvelinus confluentus), photography © Jim Cummins





MAP S6

THE EAST FORK—GATEWAY TO WILDERNESS

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Jerry Peak Wilderness Additions Act (P.L. 114-46) designated three new wilderness areas in 2015 that are accessible from the East Fork of the Salmon River.

Relatively easy access to wilderness makes the East Fork a popular area for hikers, horseback riders and hunters. To enter the Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness (116,898 acres), turn southeast off the East Fork Road on to the Herd Creek Road and drive 8 miles to the Herd Lake overlook. Little Boulder Campground provides access to the White Clouds Wilderness (90,769 acres). Both of these wilderness areas are managed cooperatively by the Forest Service and BLM. The East Fork Road ends on the edge of the Hemingway-Boulders Wilderness (67,998 acres) which is managed by the Forest Service.

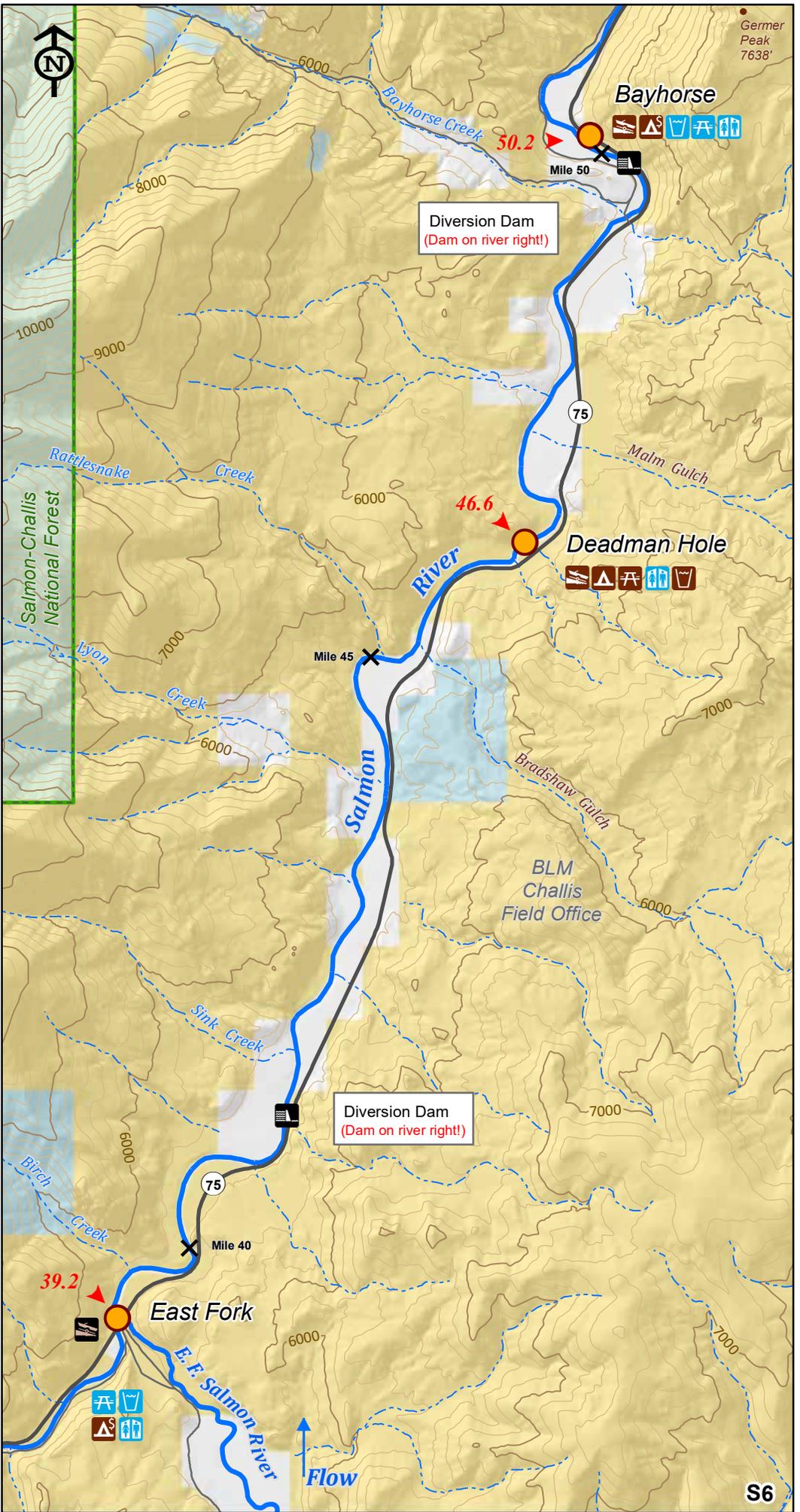


Four Lakes basin holds ice and snow well into July, White Cloud Wilderness, photography © Mark Lisk

ONE TOUGH SWIM

Deadman Hole is an appropriately named site for an ironically named prospector. In 1881 Isaac T. Swim made his annual trip from the Snake River plains up into the Sawtooth Mountains looking for gold. His search for the elusive ore took him down the Salmon River to the gold mines around Bonanza and Custer. As fall swept in and prospecting season ended, Swim was detained by heavy winds and a rain storm. As he gathered his pack animals he came across an uprooted tree which had exposed a vein of gold! He posted a claim notice on a nearby tree before early snows forced him to leave for the winter.

Swim returned the following spring excited to work his claim. High water and drift wood made fording the Salmon River too risky. However Swim decided to forge ahead. This ill-fated crossing was the last place Isaac T. Swim or his horse were seen alive.



Germer Peak
7638'

Bayhorse

Diversion Dam
(Dam on river right!)

Mile 50

46.6

Deadman Hole

Mile 45

Diversion Dam
(Dam on river right!)

Mile 40

39.2

East Fork

Flow

S6

MAP S7

DIVERSION DAMS, BOAT RAMPS AND BRAIDED CHANNELS



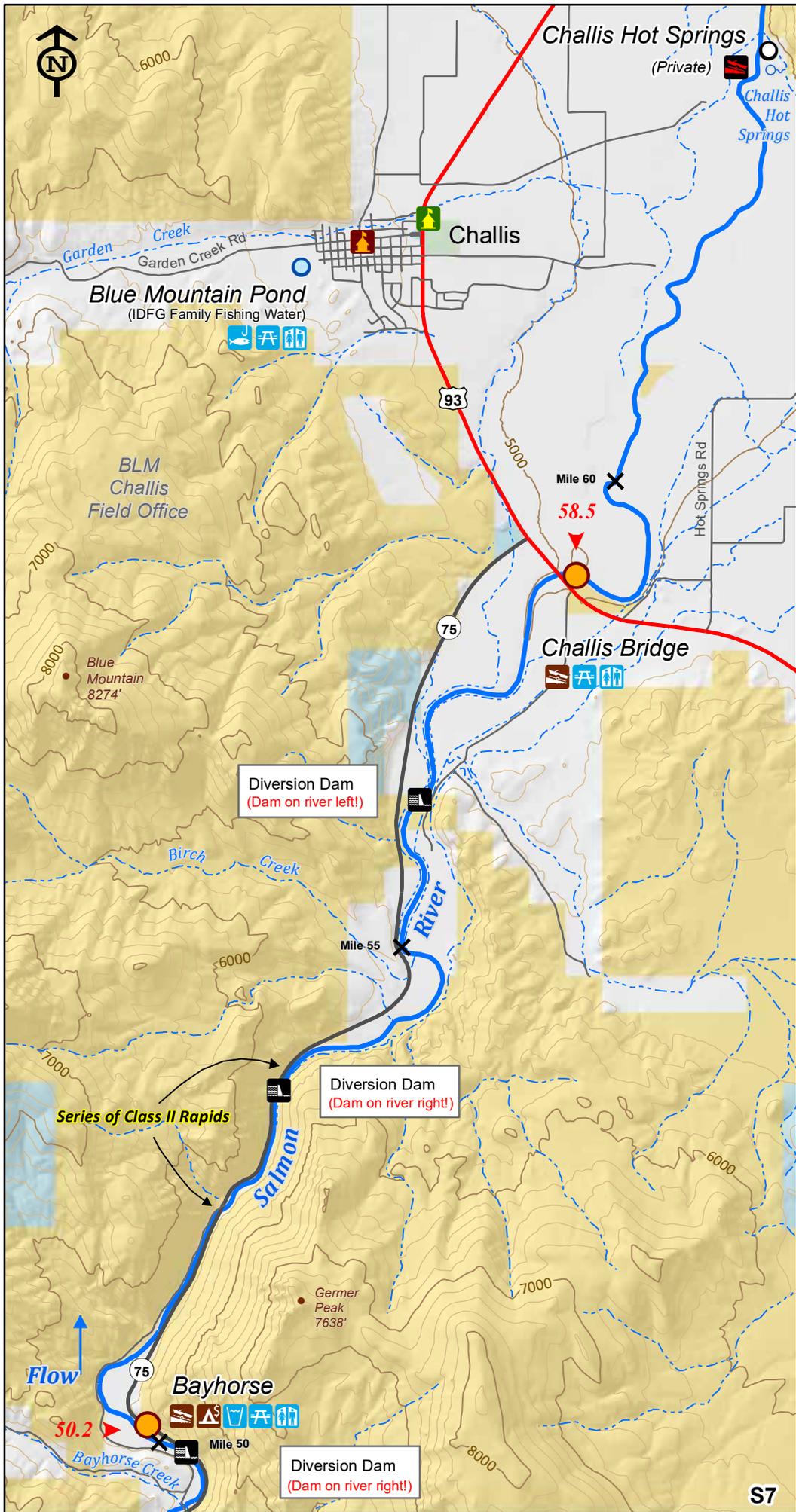
As the river approaches the town of Challis, irrigation diversions become more common. Please exercise caution when navigating the river in the vicinity of these structures. Major diversions are noted on the map. Notice the private land, white on the map, for the next 25 miles. Challis Bridge and Pennal Gulch, two BLM sites, have boat ramps on public land. The river channel from here to Cronk's Canyon is braided and has a substantial cottonwood gallery along most of it. While highly scenic and mostly away from the highway, boaters are advised to use extra caution while navigating this section due to down or partially submerged cottonwood trees that may be present.

WATCH FOR WILDLIFE

Keep your eyes open along the cliffs for bighorn sheep, under the willows along the banks for mule deer, and on the hills for Rocky Mountain elk. When you get back in your vehicle after a long day on the river, stay alert for animals. No matter where you're heading from here, these big game animals will be there too, heading to or from the river. This is particularly true between dusk and dawn, and during the fall as they migrate from their upper elevation summer homes down to their lower elevation wintering areas in the valleys. Vehicle-wildlife collisions are all too frequent along the river corridor, especially in the Challis Bridge area. Slow down, be vigilant, and try to see them as often as they see you!

Mule Deer (Odocoileus hemionus), photography IDFG





Diversion Dam
(Dam on river left!)

Diversion Dam
(Dam on river right!)

Diversion Dam
(Dam on river right!)

S7

MAP S8

TWIN PEAKS, A MASSIVE CALDERA

Fifty million years ago, this area of Idaho was much different. The climate here was cool and wet much like the Coast Range. The Salmon River flowed south from here to the Snake River Plain. Volcanism started from a variety of vents and continued until about 40 million years ago. Flows and tuffs cover almost 1,900 square miles of east-central and south-central Idaho and are up to 10,000 feet thick. They rerouted this river to the north.

Twin Peaks caldera, on the skyline west of Challis, is roughly 12.5 miles in diameter and was the major source for multiple eruptions of volcanic ash. You will float past white, red, lavender and green layers of volcanic ash that fell from the sky or flowed east onto existing highlands (300-700 million year old sedimentary rocks) above Pennal Gulch.



The view east, from inside the Twin Peaks caldera to the Salmon River valley below (right), photography BLM

CHALLIS HOT SPRINGS ON RIVER RIGHT

The Challis volcanic field is the largest of several in the Pacific Northwest. Shallow hydrothermal activity is evident in all of the hot springs along the Upper Salmon River. As cold, surface water descends through permeable or fractured rock, it is heated by direct contact with hot rock deep in the Earth's crust and ascends back to the surface as hot springs.

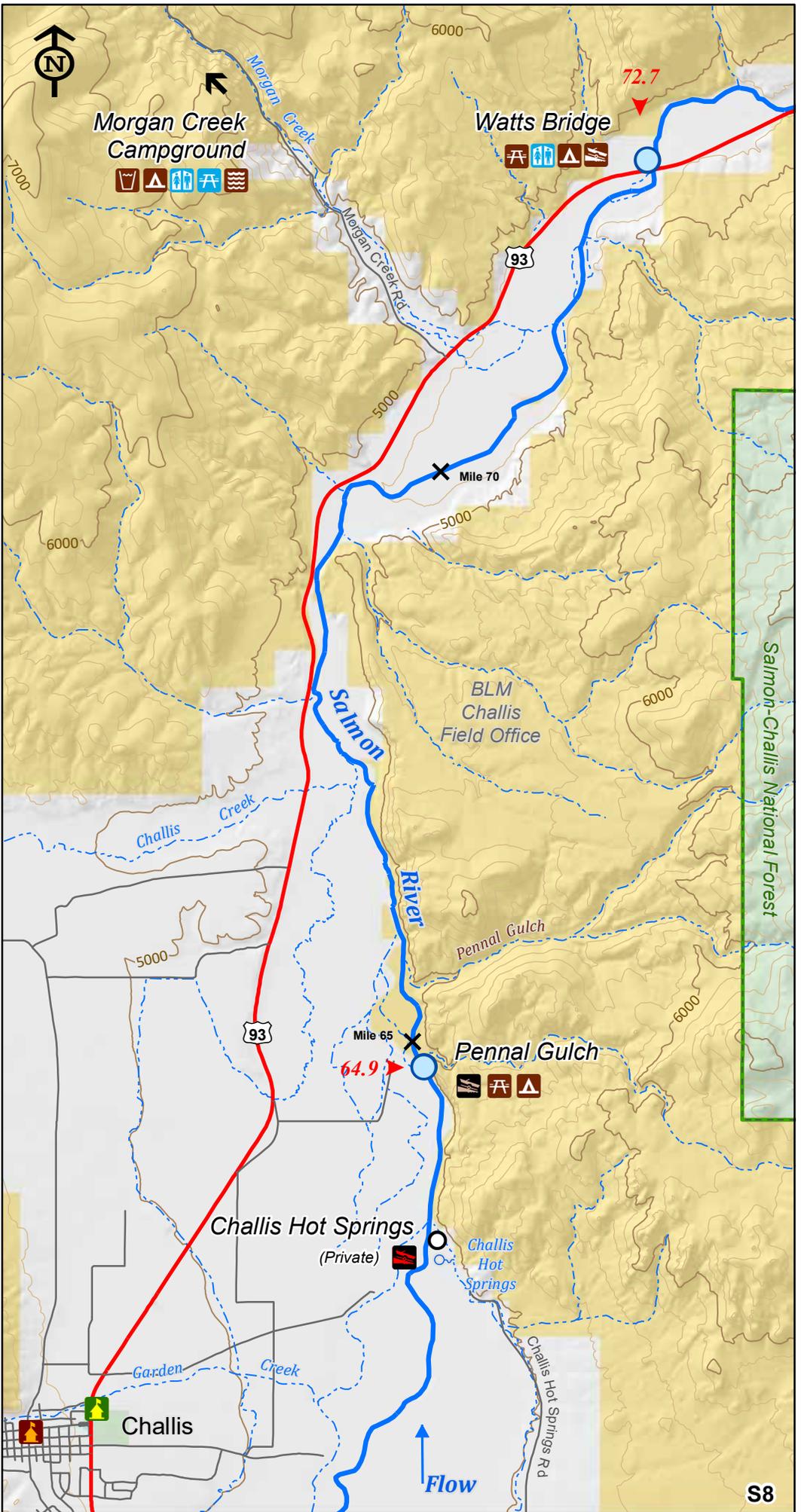
There is also a boat ramp on private land at Challis Hot Springs. Try out the two hot springs pools at this private facility.

Be cautious while navigating river channels and avoid downed trees.

PENNAL GULCH

A public boat ramp is located at Pennal Gulch. Access to Pennal Gulch from the highway is through private land. The gate may be locked from sunset to sunrise.





CLIFF NESTERS: LIFE ON THE LEDGE

Millions of years of sediment deposition and erosion have sculpted the spectacular cliffs rimming the Salmon River. These cliffs serve as “hardrock habitat” for at least 20 different bird species.

Cliff swallows build their mud pellet nests in tightly packed colonies tucked high on sheer cliff walls. Living in close quarters benefits the sharing of food resources and the detection of approaching predators.

With long saber-shaped wings, the white-throated swift is perfectly designed for life among the cliffs. The “little torpedo” spends most of its time aloft, hurtling above the bluffs in search of flying insects. Listen for its distinct call—a shrill, chattering “je-je-je-je.”

Keep your eyes to the skies for other winged denizens of cliff country including the violet-green swallow, canyon wren, Say’s phoebe, Peregrine falcon, and American kestrel.

White-throated Swift, photography IDFG





Chinook salmon on the Upper Salmon River, photography Silver Cloud Expeditions



Fall steelhead, photography Silver Cloud Expeditions



MAP S9

WATTS BRIDGE TO DEER GULCH



Even though fishing can be erratic, boating use is amplified in March and April during steelhead season on this stretch of river. When possible, pay attention to the forecast and attempt to make a trip when weather and river conditions are stable. Downstream from Deer Gulch, there is a private boat ramp at the Royal Gorge Resort and an undeveloped boat ramp in Cronk's Canyon.

THE BLACK COTTONWOOD

The Salmon River supports extensive galleries of black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) trees. Cottonwood trees thrive in a constantly changing environment. Floods tear down river banks and carry sediment down the river, creating gravel bars where cottonwood seeds can grow.

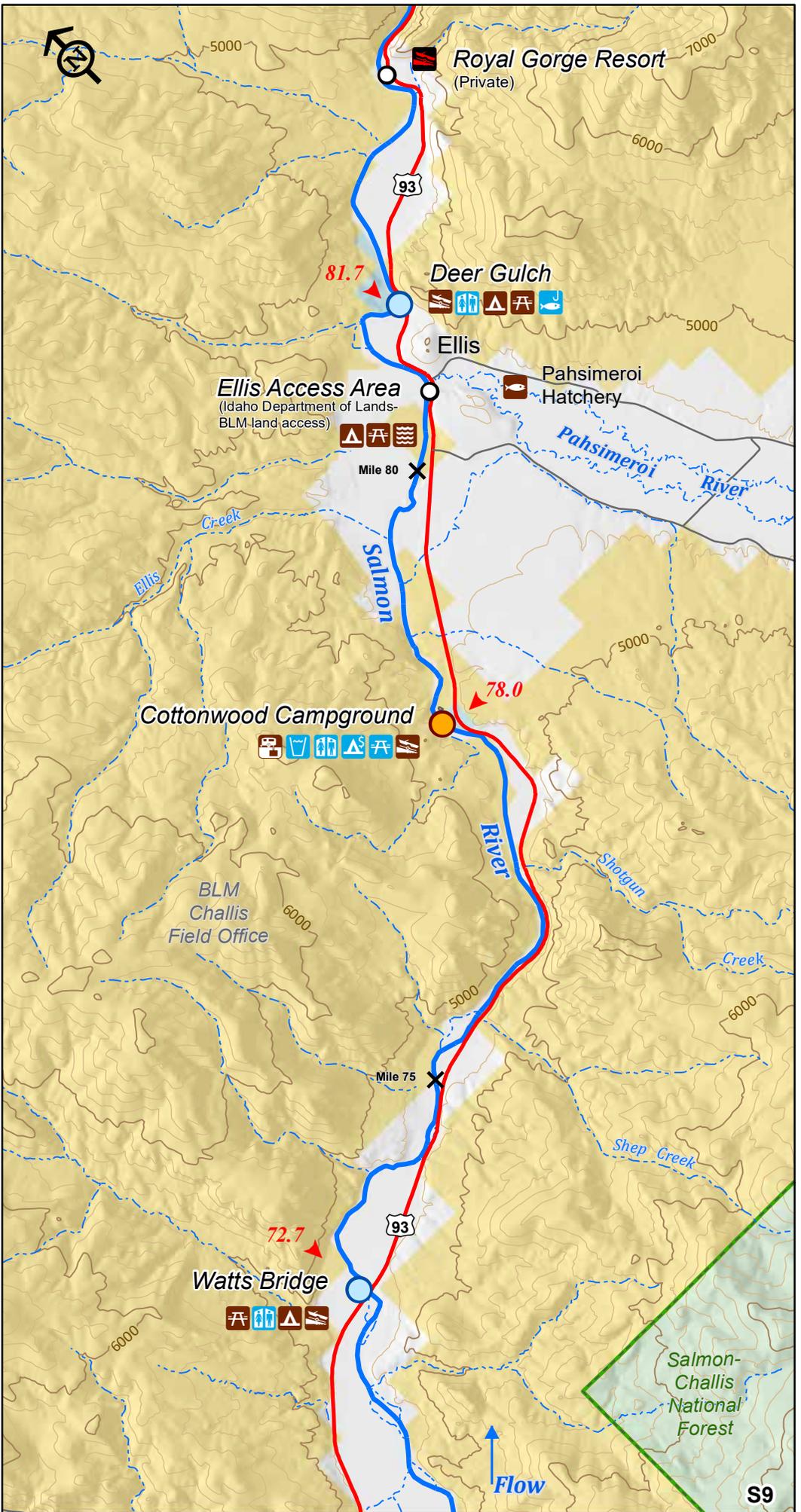
In the low-gradient reaches around the town of Challis, the Salmon River is a very dynamic system, and has meandered across its entire floodplain numerous times over the last several thousand years.

Where the river channel is today may be where a new cottonwood forest springs to life in decades to come. Cottonwood trees, along with other large woody riparian species are critically important to the function of the river system. Their roots stabilize the river banks, preventing erosion, and mature trees provide valuable habitat for many species of wildlife.

Bald eagles and osprey perch in the cottonwoods searching for fish, and great blue herons nest in the upper reaches of cottonwoods. These nest sites, called 'rookeries', are easily spotted after the leaves have fallen and look like large platforms of sticks high up in the trees. Rookeries can have as many as 135 nests in them!



Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) photography © John Tobin

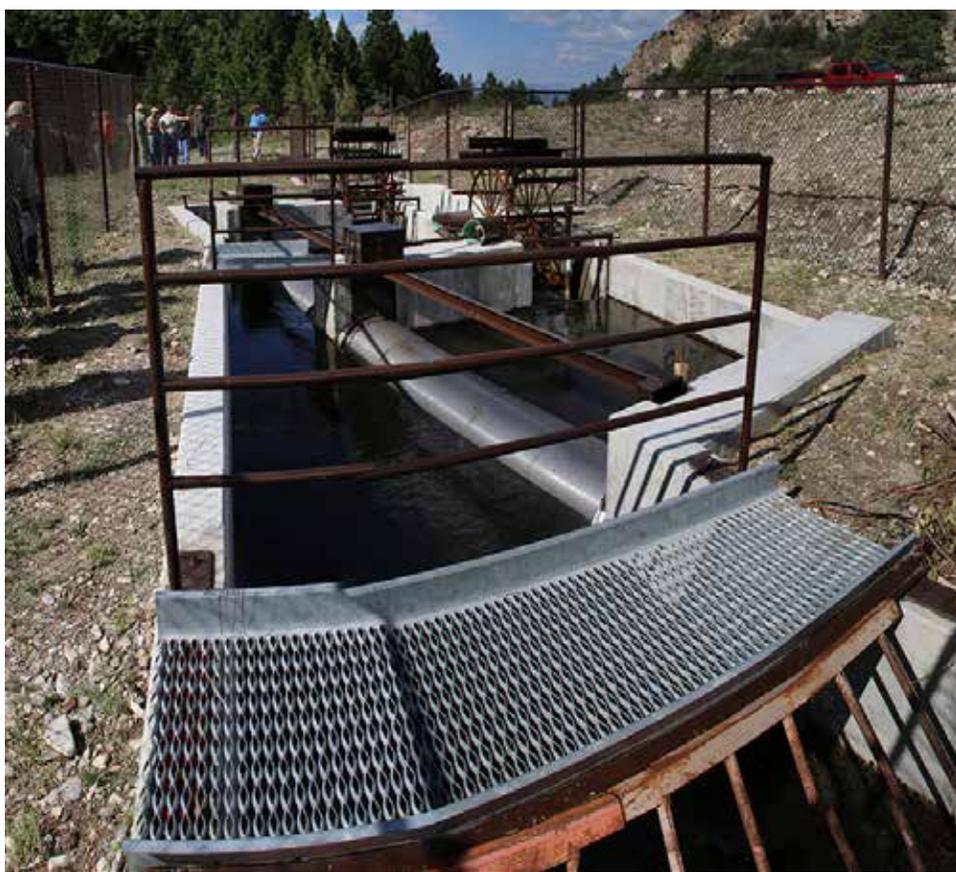


MAP S10

FISH SCREENS

Migrating juvenile salmon and steelhead (smolts) are often diverted into irrigation ditches. Fish screens are located in ditches to keep fish out of irrigated fields. When fish encounter a screen (revolving drum) they are guided back to the river through a plastic pipe. Paddle wheels provide power to rotate the drum screen. The rotation of the drum screen allows the water to wash debris off the drum.

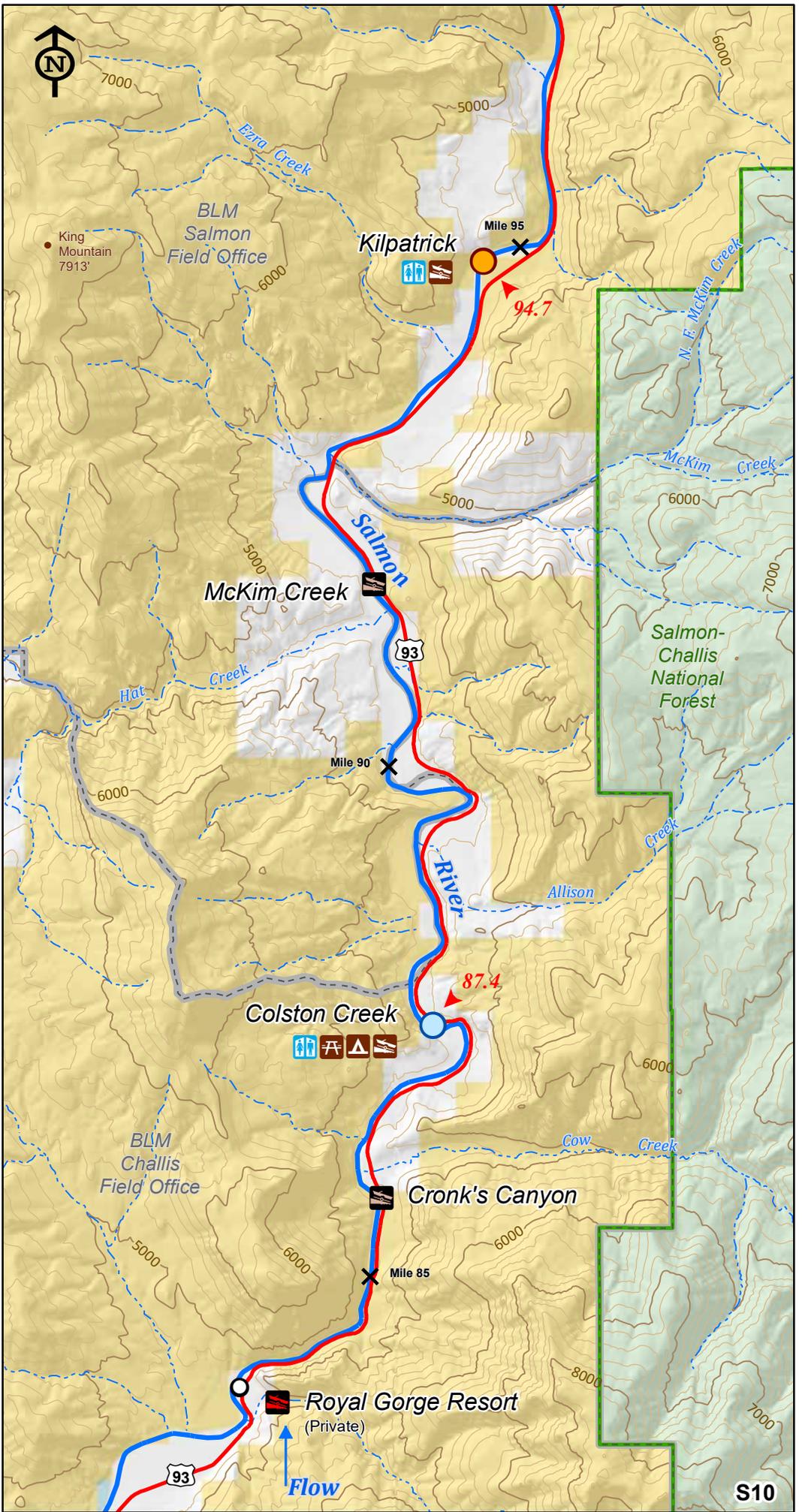
Fish screens are built through a cooperative program funded by National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bonneville Power Administration. Since the 1950s, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game constructs and maintains the screens in cooperation with local water users. You may pass by them along the diversion ditches on the river.



Idaho Department of Fish and Game's fish screen on Hawley Creek, photography BLM

STURGEON

White sturgeon need a large, cool river with deep pools and fast rapids. Sturgeon are one of the most long-lived of Idaho fishes. Sturgeon are bottom feeders, eating most living and dead organisms but favoring larger fish. Due to their low numbers, sturgeon may not be harvested or removed from the water and must be released immediately in Idaho.



MAP S11

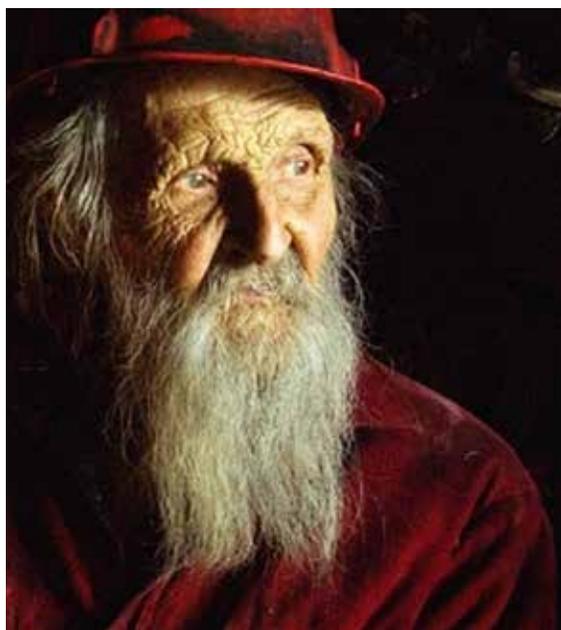
VEGETATIVE BUFFER ZONES ALONG RIVERS

Riparian areas are the lands immediately surrounding creeks, rivers, and wetlands where water-loving plants thrive due to the availability of nearby water. In the arid Intermountain West, riparian areas comprise less than 1% of the landscape, but are the single most productive type of habitat for fish and wildlife species. Riparian areas benefit over 75% of Idaho's wild species from amphibians and fish to songbirds, muskrats, fox, and moose. The large cottonwood trees growing along the river and stream banks help cool the water in summer with their tall, leafy canopies. Shrubs, grasses, and other plants provide protective cover and food that fish need.

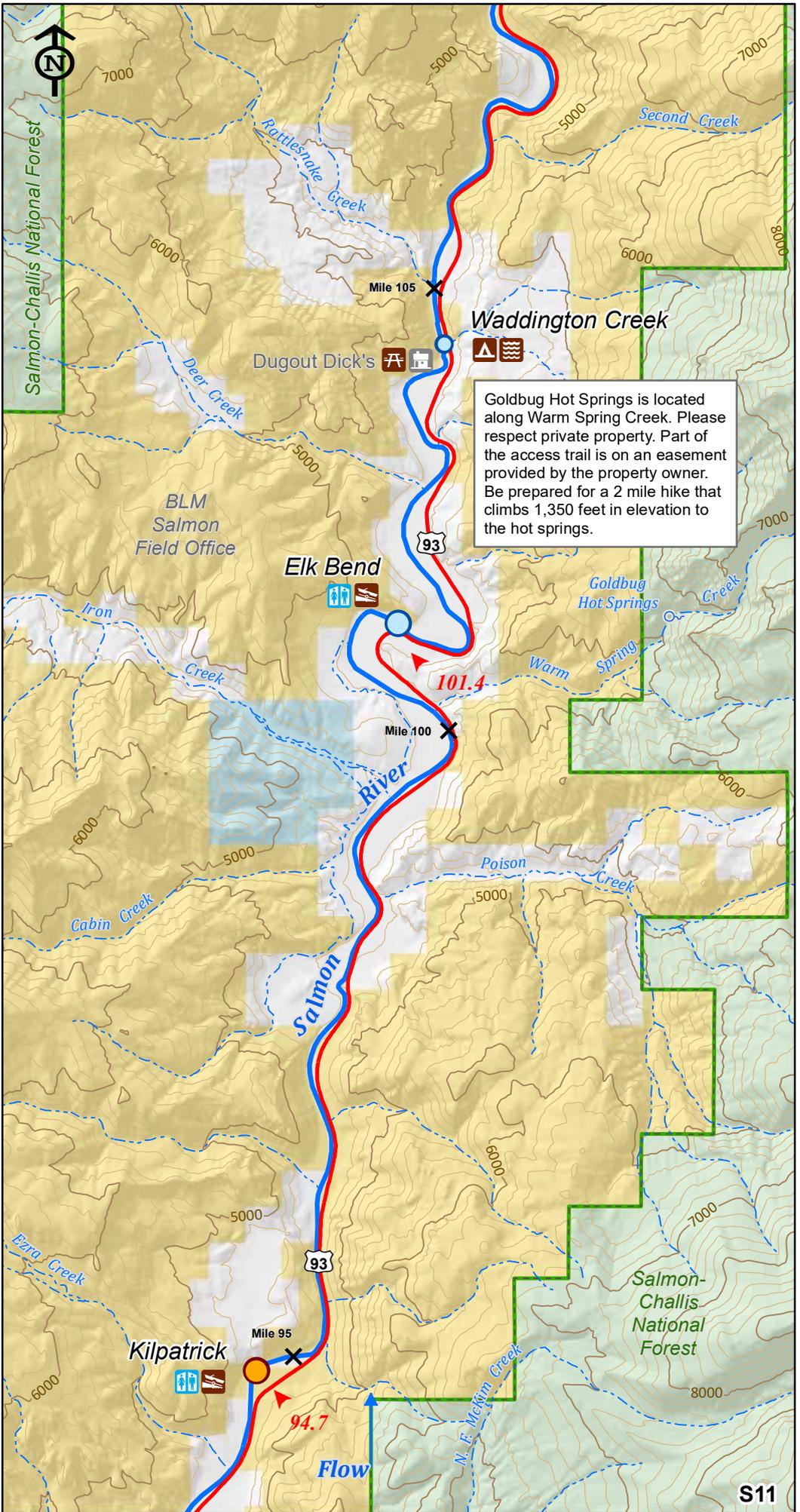
Rocky Mountain juniper, a native evergreen tree found throughout the river corridor, is adapted to a wide range of soils and moisture conditions. This species provides valuable winter food and cover to numerous birds and mammals. Wintering birds eat the fleshy "berries" and mule deer browse the leaves during harsh winters. Trees adjacent to the river provide shade, which moderate water temperatures and harbor an insect load that benefits fish habitat.

THE FAMOUS HERMIT OF THE SALMON RIVER

Richard Zimmerman (1916-2010), known as Dugout Dick, lived 63 years as a hermit in his hand-built cabins and caves above the river. Dick came to the Salmon River in 1947, grew an orchard here and built himself a cabin where he lived for 20 years while mining his prospect cave. He used junk yard scraps such as tires, windshields, windows and doors to build the cave into his home from the late 1960s until his death in 2010.



Dick made celebrity appearances in *National Geographic*, *People* and *The Smithsonian* as well as on TV shows such as *Good Morning America* and *Real People*. He turned down requests to be on *The Tonight Show* more than once. Walk up to his orchard and home to learn more about his amazing life. Three interpretive signs provide more colorful details about Dugout Dick.



Goldbug Hot Springs is located along Warm Spring Creek. Please respect private property. Part of the access trail is on an easement provided by the property owner. Be prepared for a 2 mile hike that climbs 1,350 feet in elevation to the hot springs.

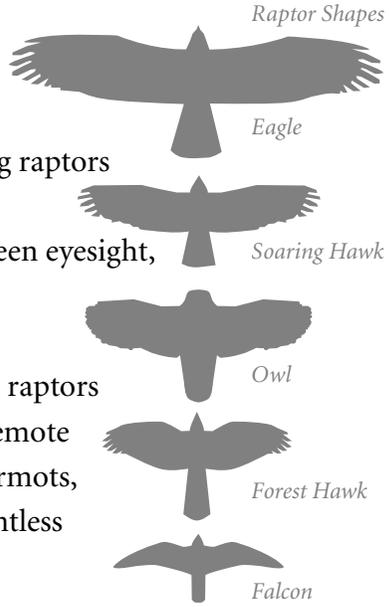
MAP S12

BIRDS OF PREY

The Salmon River Canyon is ultimate raptor country. Steep cliffs, rocky outcrops, and weathered alcoves support several nesting raptors or “birds of prey.” Raptors are identified by a hooked beak, strong feet with sharp talons, keen eyesight, and a carnivorous diet.

The canyon generates strong thermals, which raptors use for effortless flight. Cliff ledges provide remote and secure locations for nesting. Rabbits, marmots, ground squirrels, and other prey inhabit countless niches from streambanks to mountaintops.

Watch for golden eagles, osprey, red-tailed hawks, prairie falcons, American kestrels, and turkey vultures soaring on updrafts along the ridgelines.



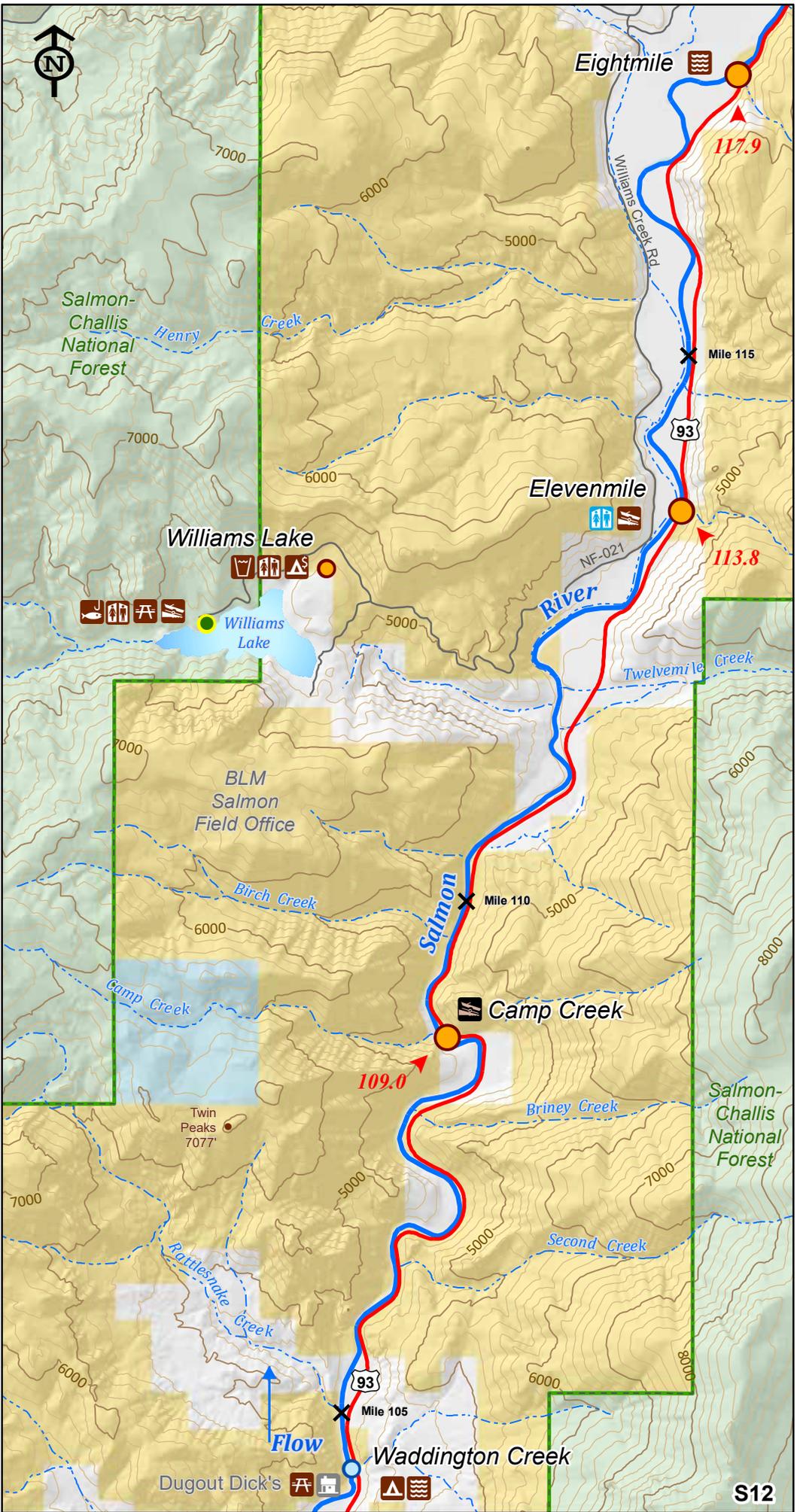
THE PEREGRINE FALCON

If one bird embodies the rugged grandeur of the Salmon River Canyon, it is the Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). These beautiful falcons nest on prominent cliffs overlooking water. The Peregrine is a fierce hunter of birds known for its power stoop and a closed-winged dive that can reach speeds of 200 mph. Using its feet, a Peregrine will strike its prey dead in mid-air.

The word “peregrine” means wanderer. Peregrines travel widely outside the nesting season, but have an incredible homing instinct that leads them back to favored nest sites. Once listed as endangered due to effects of the pesticide DDT, Peregrines have made a strong recovery and were delisted from endangered status in 1999.



Peregrine falcon, photography Larry Ridenhour



MAP S13

THE AMERICAN DIPPER

The American dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) is a small songbird uniquely adapted to swift, clear mountain streams. Adaptations for the life aquatic include dense feathers to stay warm and dry, a large preening gland to waterproof feathers, the ability to close its nostrils underwater, and a third eyelid to help it see while submerged. Dippers eat aquatic insects which are sensitive to sediment and pollution. A healthy dipper population indicates a healthy river.

Train your eyes along the riverbank for its distinctive “bobbing” movement and listen for the male’s loud, sweet, bell-like song, audible above the sound of rushing water.

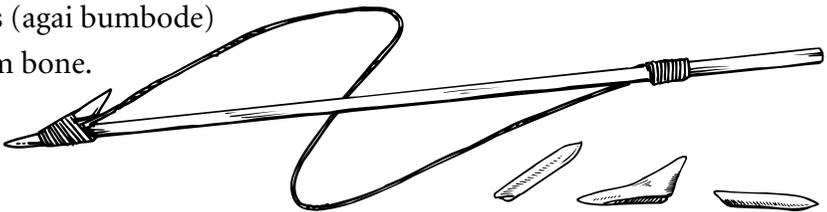


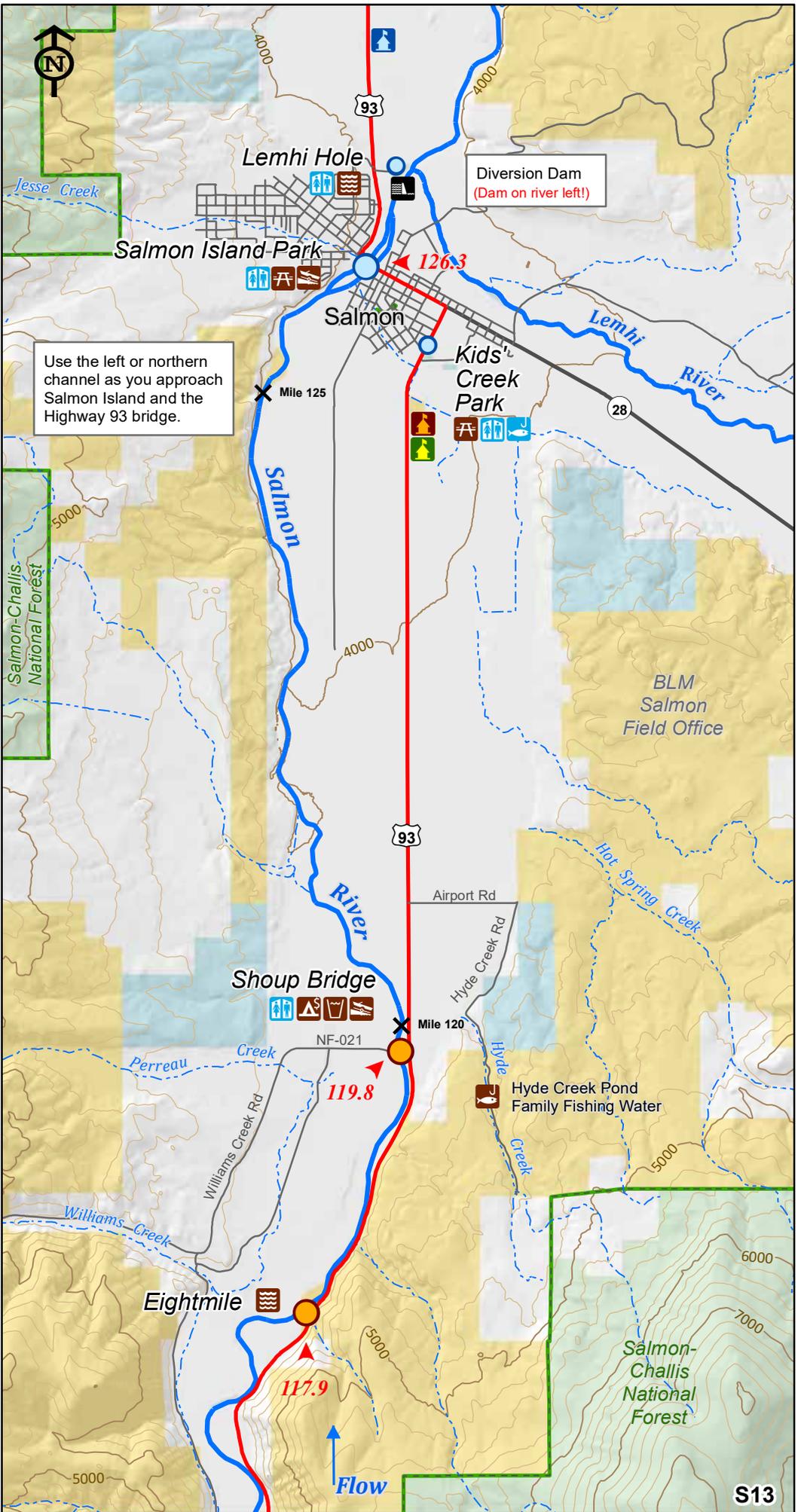
photography IDFG

LEMHI HOLE—CONFLUENCE



The Lewis and Clark Expedition followed long-established Indian trails along the Lemhi River, which is part of the homeland of the Agai Dika (“salmon eater”) Shoshone. Archaeological evidence suggests the Shoshone may have arrived around 3,500 years ago. The Chinook and sockeye salmon that returned here from the Pacific Ocean every summer to spawn were at the center of Agai Dika life and culture. Weirs were used to catch fish along with spears (tee-towah-gah) and fish hooks (agai bumbode) made from bone.

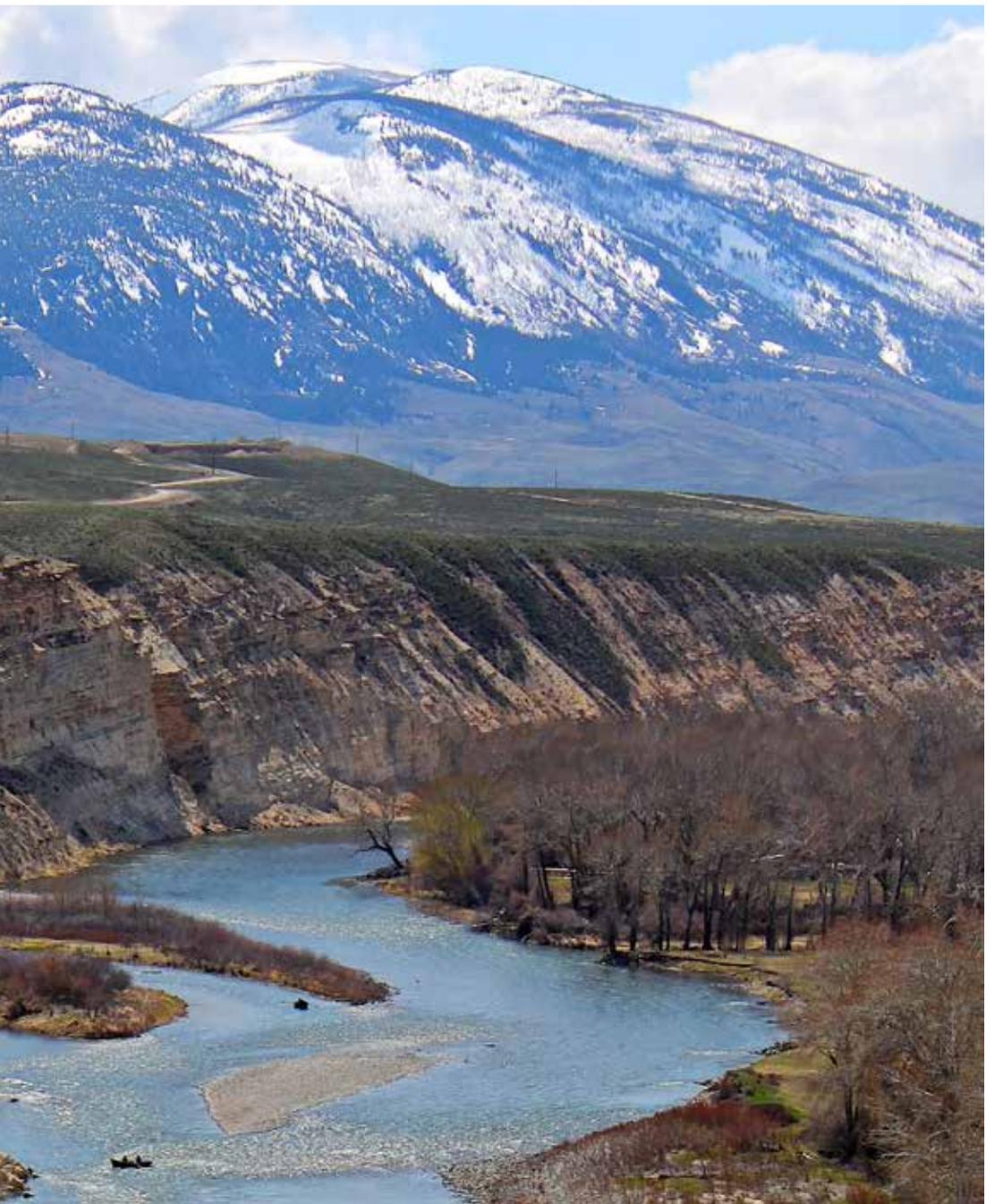






Above: The white cliffs below Discovery Hill trails and cottonwood galleries north of Salmon, photography David Lingle.





Below photos: Agai Dika fish weir (sihi-nei-coade) on the Lemhi River, circa 1906, Smithsonian Institution



MAP S14

WHITE CLIFFS

The mudstone and shale that comprise the white cliffs along the river lie in horizontal beds and are laterally continuous. This indicates they were deposited in a deep lake that filled this valley. Fossils of plants and raindrop prints are preserved in these rocks, which range from 4 to 40 million years old. Later, the Salmon River eroded almost level terraces that facilitated travel of the Agai Dika, Lewis and Clark.



Discovery Hill single-track trail, photography BLM

Above the White Cliffs on river right is Discovery Hill, where you can hike or bike on exceptional single tracks, through rolling sage hills surrounded by the stunning backdrops of the Beaverhead Mountains of the Bitterroot Range and the Salmon River Valley.

DIVERSION DAMS AT CARMEN BRIDGE

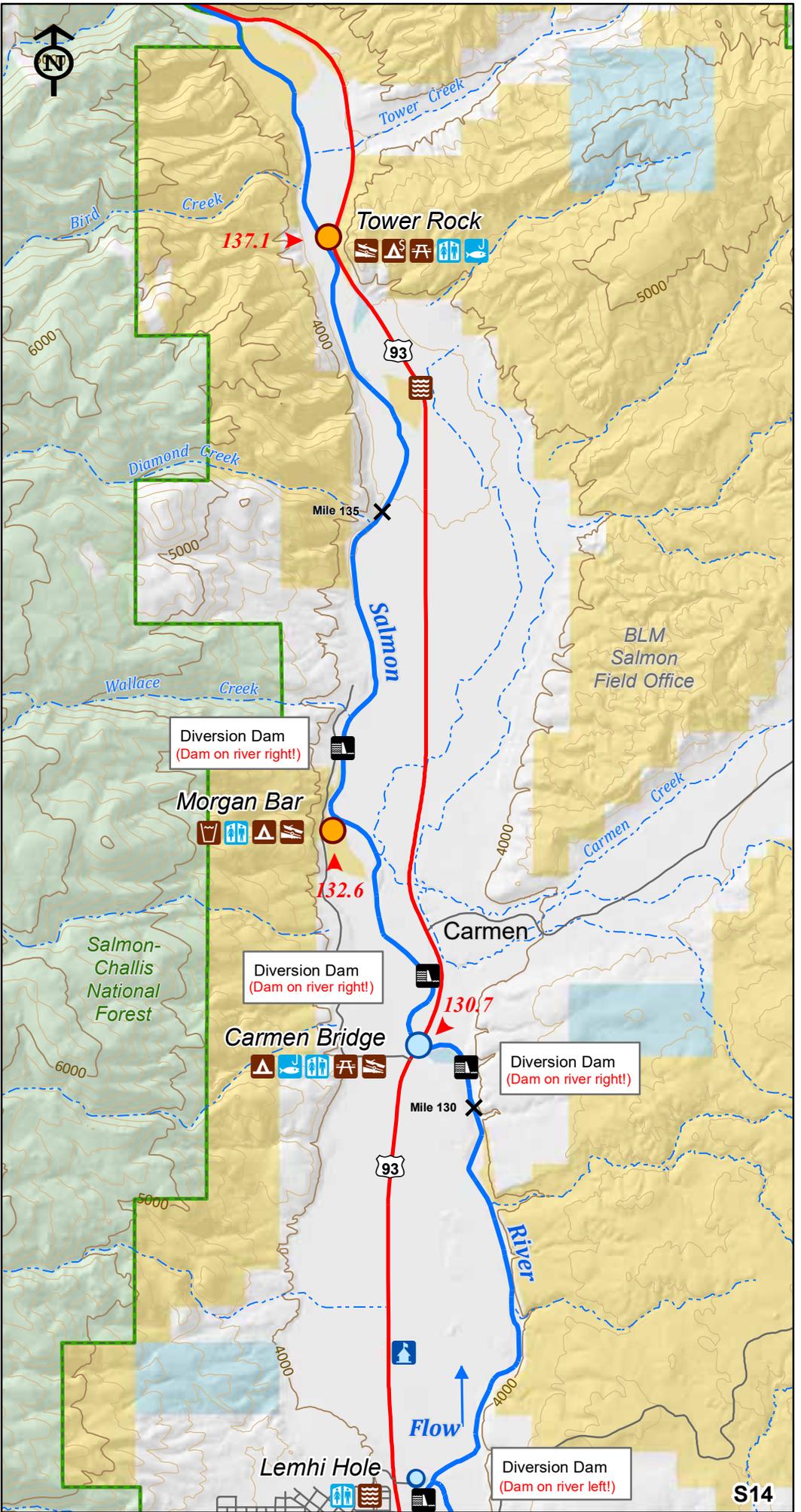
Use caution as you approach the two diversion dams before Carmen Creek.

OSPREY

Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) are the only North American raptor to feed exclusively on fish, so they are closely tied to water.



In Idaho, ospreys build nests high atop trees or platforms near rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Their bulky stick nests can weigh up to 1,000 pounds. Long, curved claws and barbed pads on the soles of its feet help it grasp slippery fish. The osprey carries its catch head first, in a streamlined position, to its feeding perch or nest.



S14

MAP S15

TOWER ROCK



William Clark's reconnaissance party camped at Tower Rock on their way down the Salmon River canyon on August 21, 1805. They returned on the 25th, convinced that the canyon was impassable. Clark's hunters saw deer and elk, but not close enough for a shot. "*Old Toby*," Clark's Agai Dika guide, obtained two salmon from women and children who were gathering berries near the river. Clark found the salmon "*pleasant eating*."

Tower Rock is composed partially of rocks, gravel, sand, clay, and silt that eroded from hills to the east into streams. It accumulated and cemented into a thick, coarse, conglomerate and sandstone approximately 57 million years ago. Further downstream, Precambrian quartzites—some of the oldest rocks in Idaho—are visible between Tower Rock and North Fork.



THE WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT—IDAHO'S STATE FISH

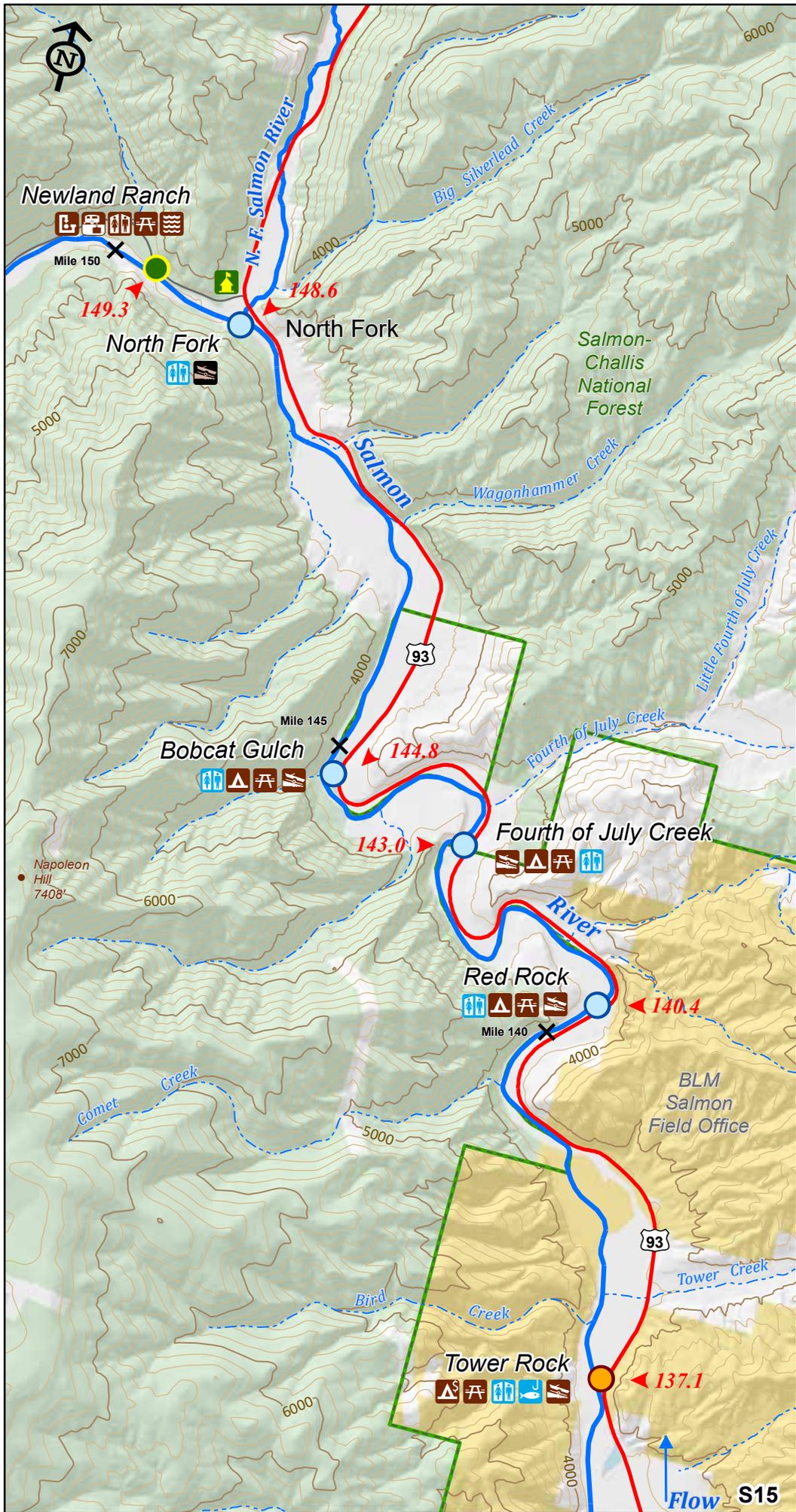
With distinctive orange slash lines along their jaws, westslope cutthroat trout are common in rivers and streams throughout central Idaho. They are the only native cutthroat trout subspecies found in central Idaho. Cutthroat trout thrive in clear, cold streams with deep pools and dense vegetative cover along the banks. Well-connected stream habitats are important to their survival by providing diverse habitats. Annual migrations up to 140 miles are common year round. Catch and release regulations are in place for the westslope cutthroat in the Salmon River.

NORTH FORK

The North Fork joins the main Salmon River and carves a right-angle turn to flow westward across the state to Riggins. Facilities at North Fork include a public boat ramp, general store, bed-and-breakfast lodging, motels, RV parks, gas station and private campground. Use the dumpster and clean your portable toilet in the SCAT machine at Newland Ranch.

The Main Salmon launch site downstream is located 47 miles west of North Fork at Corn Creek. Visit the Forest Service website or contact the North Fork Ranger District at 208-865-2700 for more information.





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The Salmon-Challis National Forest, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/scnf/recreation/wateractivities/?cid=stelprdb5303132>

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area in the the Sawtooth National Forest <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/sawtooth/recreation/wateractivities/recarea/?recid=5896&actid=79>

Upper Salmon River Steelhead Angling, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Salmon Region, <https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/upper-salmon-river-steelhead-angling-pocket-guide.pdf>

USGS Idaho Streamflows

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/current/?type=flow>



IDAHO BIRDING CHECKLIST

Stanley Mile 0

- Western Sandpiper _____
- Northern Pygmy Owl _____
- Ruddy Duck _____

Stanley–Challis Mile 30

- Rough-legged Hawk _____
- Williamson's Sapsucker _____
- Willow Flycatcher _____

Challis Mile 60

- Mountain Bluebird _____
- Tree Swallow _____
- Sandhill Crane _____
- Wild Turkeys _____
- Yellow-headed Blackbird _____
- Bank Swallow _____
- Solitary Sandpiper _____

Salmon Island Mile 120

- Cedar Waxwing _____
- Mallard _____
- Western Wood-Pewee _____

Salmon Mile 120

- Blue-winged Teal _____
- Marbled Godwits _____
- Northern Shoveler _____

Morgan Bar Mile 128

- Marsh Wren _____
- Hooded Merganser _____
- Barn Swallow _____

Tower Rock Mile 130

- Green-winged Teal _____
- Lewis's Woodpecker _____

North Fork Mile 143

- American Kestrel _____
- Sage Thrasher _____
- Vesper Sparrow _____



EAST CENTRAL REGION

idfg.idaho.gov/ifwis/ibt/pub.aspx?id=eastcentral



CONTACTS

EMERGENCY

Emergency Phone Number 911

Custer County Sheriff, Challis, 208-879-2232

Lemhi County Sheriff, Salmon, 208-756-8980

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Bureau of Land Management

<https://www.blm.gov/office/idaho-state-office>

Idaho Falls District 208-524-7500

Challis Field Office 208-879-6200

Salmon Field Office 208-756-5400

Forest Service

SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sawtooth>

Supervisor's Office, Jerome, 208-423-7500

Ketchum Ranger District, Ketchum, 208-622-5371

Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Ketchum, 208-727-5000

Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Stanley, 208-774-3000

SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/scnf>

Forest Supervisor's Office, Salmon, 208-756-5100

Challis-Yankee Fork Ranger District, Challis, 208-879-4100

North Fork Ranger District, North Fork, 208-865-2700

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

<https://idfg.idaho.gov/region/salmon>

Salmon Region, Salmon, 208-756-2271

Sawtooth Fish Hatchery, Stanley, 208-774-3684

Pahsimeroi Fish Hatchery, Ellis, 208-876-4330

OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES

Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association

<http://www.ioga.org/>

208-342-1438

State of Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board

<https://idfg.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>

208-327-7380