

Wild & Scenic Rivers

Owyhee County

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Wild and Scenic River Designation

In 1984, Congress designated 120 miles of the Owyhee River in Oregon as a wild river component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. The Owyhee National Wild River extends from the Oregon-Idaho border to the Owyhee Reservoir, excluding 14 miles near, Rome Oregon. A wild river designation is intended to protect the free-flowing character of the river, along with its

outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, wildlife, and cultural values.

On March 30, 2009 President Obama signed



the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (the Act), which designated 317 miles of Wild and Scenic River in Owyhee County, Idaho. The Act designated 16 river segments and six wilderness areas. The 16 river segments are entirely within five of the six wilderness areas. The Pole Creek wilderness area contains no wild and scenic river segment.

Bruneau/ Jarbidge River

The 69-mile Bruneau/Jarbidge River System flows north from the mountains of northern Nevada through the Owyhee Uplands to the Snake River in southern Idaho. The Jarbidge River joins with the West Fork Bruneau River to form the Bruneau River about 24 miles north of the

Nevada border, just upstream of Indian Hot Springs. These rivers provide challenging whitewater, but also significant danger due to dramatic variations in flows, severe weather, log jams and portages.

The primary float season generally runs from April through mid June, and the Bruneau River flows

usually peak in mid to late May. Optimal flows for rafting the Bruneau are between 800 and 2,000 cfs on the Bruneau River gage. Due to its narrow, rocky channel, and one or more portages, the Jarbidge is primarily boated by experienced kayakers. At some flows, the Jarbidge is passable for small rafts and catarafts. Depending on



Bruneau/Jarbidge Cont.



flows, both the Jarbidge and Bruneau Rivers may also be kayaked in late June and early July. The rivers are not recommended for boating in any craft when the Bruneau gage reading exceeds 2,500 cfs. For more information regarding cfs levels go to: http://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site_no=13168500

The Five Mile Rapids of the Bruneau River, located in the lower reach

of the canyon, presents an incredibly challenging experience for floaters. The combination of this section's steep gradient and constant Class III-IV rapids forms the most difficult section of the Bruneau River. It is possible to take out above Five Mile Rapids by hiking up the Roberson Trail to a road at the canyon's eastern rimrock. However, this is an arduous climb of 700 vertical feet.

This river system is located in a remote environment that is far from emergency help. Your cell phone won't work here. Each boater should have proper equipment for quickly changing weather conditions and be self-sufficient to handle any medical, rescue, repair or other emergency that may arise. Boaters should choose river stretches that are appropriate for their experience level.

Owyhee River

The primary float season for the entire Owyhee River system is from March through early to mid-June. During this season, changing weather conditions can cause rapid fluctuations in the water level, with flows ranging from 1,000 to over 50,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). Be prepared for severe weather, including strong winds, rain and snow.

There is no stream gage on the upper Owyhee River in Idaho or Nevada. Generally, the best time to float the upper river is when the water level at the Rome, Oregon United States Geological Survey (USGS) gage is between 1,000 and 6,000 cfs. Water levels at the Rome USGS gage can be found at: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/usa/nwis/uv?131810000>. April and May are usually the best months for trips on the North Fork Owyhee River and Deep Creek. The Rome USGS gage cannot be used to accurately predict floatable levels on these two waterways. For optimal conditions, boat the Three Forks-to-Rome section when the Rome gage is between 1,500 and 3,000 cfs. Below Rome, the recommended float levels are between 800 and 10,000 cfs.



Idaho River Systems



The BLM manages several spectacular Idaho river systems that offer world-class recreational opportunities. The Owyhee, Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers in southwest Idaho, the South Fork Snake River in eastern Idaho, and the Lower Salmon and Payette Rivers in west-central Idaho

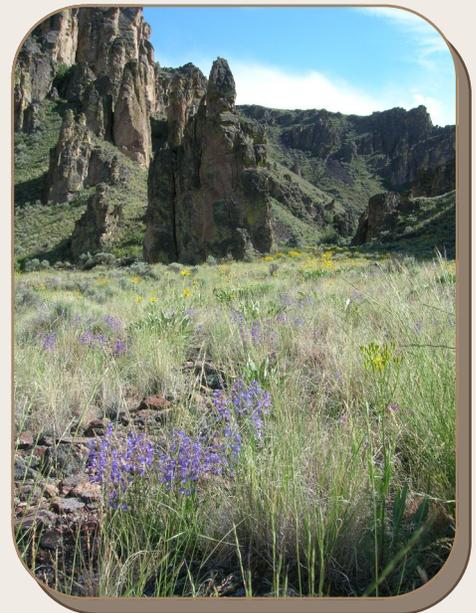
each have distinctive characteristics and offer different recreational experiences. Each river system offers outstanding scenery and provides a different balance of boating and fishing opportunities. Several river systems, such as the Owyhee and Bruneau-Jarbidge, offer truly challenging whitewater in remote wilderness settings and are only appropriate for multiple-day journeys by skilled and experienced boaters. Stretches of these rivers have been added to

the Wild and Scenic River System.

Other rivers, such as stretches of the Payette and Snake, have calmer water, excellent access, great fishing and can be perfect for day-trips. The Lower Salmon and Payette Rivers are mountain rivers with excellent whitewater, good access, and offer a range of boating experiences.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

River Segment Name	Length (miles)	Classification
Owyhee River Wilderness		
Battle Creek	23.4	Wild
Deep Creek	13.1	Wild
Dickshooter Creek	9.25	Wild
Owyhee River	67.3	Wild
Red Canyon Creek	4.6	Wild
South Fork Owyhee River	32.6	Wild
Big Jacks Creek Wilderness		
Big Jacks Creek	35	Wild
Cottonwood Creek	2.6	Wild
Duncan Creek	0.9	Wild
Wickahoney Creek 2	1.5	Wild
Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness		
Bruneau River	39.9	Wild/ Recreational
West Fork Bruneau River	0.35	Wild
Jarbidge River	28.8	Wild
Sheep Creek	25.6	Wild
Little Jacks Creek Wilderness		
Little Jacks Creek	12.4	Wild
North Fork Owyhee Wilderness		
North Fork Owyhee River	20.8	Wild/Recreational



Resources

Need an Outfitter or River Guide? Research licensed guides in your area and find the trip that is right for you with the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association. There are six commercial outfitters authorized to float the East and South Forks of the Owyhee River as well as, four authorized outfitters for the Bruneau/Jarbidge River.

Interested in Purchasing River Maps or Other Information? Detailed maps are available at BLM Idaho Offices for the West's popular destinations, such as the Owyhee River, Bruneau River, South Fork of the Snake River, Snake River in Hells Canyon, the middle and main forks of the Salmon River and the Lower Salmon River. Most guides cost \$5.00 or more and provide detailed maps, photos and critical information about each location.

BOATERS - BE AWARE OF A NEW STATE LAW! Under the new Idaho Invasive Species Law and Boater Registration, any boat that is registered in Idaho or another state, and any non-motorized vessel (canoe, kayak, raft, drift boat, etc.) will be required to purchase and display Idaho Invasive Species Fund stickers in order to legally launch and operate in Idaho. Inflatable, non-motorized vessels must be less than 10 feet in length to be exempted from this requirement.

Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Updates

Wilderness and WSR Management Plan (WMP): In FY2011, the Boise and Twin Falls Districts held five Wilderness Management Plan pre-scoping meetings and four Travel Management Plan pre-scoping meetings. The meetings elicited over 200 Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River comments and about 450 Travel Management comments, all of which were used to characterize the public issues and concerns that will be addressed in the plans.

Alternatives will be developed to address public issues and concerns, and a draft Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) designed to manage wilderness

and wild and scenic rivers, with a preferred alternative will be released for public review and comment in 2012. BLM will issue a Proposed WMP and a final decision record after incorporating any changes necessitated by the public comments. Throughout the planning process, BLM will continue to consult and/or coordinate with federal, state, tribal, and local governments to ensure that the WMP is consistent and compatible with other plans that may affect the planning area. The general public will be involved through the formal scoping efforts. Updates about the

status of the planning process will be posted to our website and included in our newsletters.

The WMP will incorporate decisions about how to manage visitor use along the 16 designated WSR segments, and will set visitor capacity limits for each of the river segments. Through the WMP, BLM will determine how best to manage visitor use, with alternatives ranging from a permit system for float trips to a more flexible Adaptive Management system. Alternatives will be developed with the goal of maintaining and enhancing each WSR's outstandingly remarkable values.

The Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge Rivers Boater Guide was revised and reprinted to reflect: 1) changes in management due to recent wilderness and wild and scenic river designations, 2) changes in river rapids caused by seasonal flooding, and 3) more accurate campsite locations. The new Boater Guide is available on-line at: http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/recreation/what_do_you_want_to_rivers/bruneau-jarbidge_rivers.html, and the cost for a hard copy is \$5.00.