



**5 PACKSADDLE CAMPGROUND TO ST. JOE CITY**

Thirty-eight miles of grade I and II rapids require two or more days to travel. All summer this trip can be made with anything from air mattresses and innertubes to canoes and kayaks. The river offers good fishing, swimming, and paddling as well as the availability of several undeveloped campgrounds.

The toughest rapids are at the beginning of the trip. These rapids may be inspected from the road, and if they appear too difficult they may be avoided by beginning the float trip below Avery at Fishhook Creek or at the bridge at Hoyt Flats.

**3 GOLD CREEK TO BLUFF CREEK BRIDGE**

Seven miles of floating through this scenic canyon with sheer moss-covered cliffs and deep pools takes 3 to 5 hours.

Because the canyon is narrow, the water is usually deep enough to run through July. In August, though, this run may mean a well-scarred boat.

Several undeveloped campgrounds are available.

The roughest rapids on the St. Joe River are on this section. Tumble Down Falls, a 6-foot drop located about 2 miles above Tumble Down Creek, is preceded by 200 yards of grade IV rapids. Several violent eddies and souse holes, plus other long difficult rapids, dictate that this run be attempted only by experts in white water kayaks and rafts.

**1 HELLER CREEK TO SPRUCE TREE CAMPGROUND**

This trip should be attempted only by highly skilled and experienced paddlers in sitom kayaks. Log jams which are nearly impossible to avoid, maneuvering in large waves with abrupt bends, violent eddies and falls up to 4 feet cause this to be a very dangerous run.

A 17 mile wilderness canyon run that contains rapids in grades II through V. It is recommended that you plan two days for this trip.

There are no campgrounds or roads; however, a trail does follow the right bank.

It should be noted that snow blocks the road to Heller Creek until July and water flow sufficient for boating lasts only until mid-July.

**6 ST. JOE CITY TO COEUR D'ALENE LAKE**

Thirty-one miles of deep, slow-moving water pokes along at about 1/4 mile per hour, requiring at least 2 days of paddling to travel the entire distance. The only serious obstacles are the waves kicked up by the passing motor boats.

Developed campgrounds are available at the Forest Service's "Shadowy St. Joe", two miles below St. Joe City, and Heyburn State Park on Chatcolet Lake.

This is known as the world's highest navigable river. At an elevation of 2128 feet, tug boats can be seen towing large brails of logs to the mills at Coeur d'Alene. The scenery is outstanding, mostly in a primitive state, even though the river flows through somewhat populated areas. These tranquil waters, lined with cottonwood trees give rise to the river's nickname, "The Shadowy St. Joe". The lower six miles are on the "River Through the Lakes" a unique phenomenon where the St. Joe River with its natural tree-lined levees meanders through Benewah, Round, Chatcolet and Coeur d'Alene Lakes. These levees are the summer home for the largest colony of osprey in North America.

There are several good take-out points on Lake Chatcolet.

**4 BLUFF CREEK TO TURNER FLATS CAMPGROUND**

Sixteen miles of grade II rapids make this a delightful one-day trip for intermediate boaters. In the summer it is run by rafts, open canoes, and kayaks. In the spring the large waves demand a cover on all crafts. This run provides a leisurely cruise through fast water with no difficult hazards. Good swimming and fishing spots abound and there are plenty of rapids to give intermediate canoeists a chance to practice.

★ All boaters are cautioned to land boats at the Turner Flats Campgrounds, and in no case proceed past Tourist Creek.

**2 SPRUCE TREE CAMPGROUND TO GOLD CREEK**

Twelve miles of grade II and III rapids that can be run in about 6 hours. It should only be attempted by experienced paddlers in canoes, rafts, or kayaks. In the spring, large waves necessitate covered boats.

During low water the boulder strewn portions of the river require careful rock dodging. Generally, the water on this section of the river is too low for boating by mid-July, but for those who don't mind a few scratches, the course can be run into August.

Developed campgrounds are available.

**Legend**

- ▲ CAMPGROUND, FOREST SERVICE
- ▲ CAMPGROUND, OTHER
- ▲ DISTRICT RANGER STATION
- 0 5 SCALE IN MILES

**SKOOKUM CANYON**

Several hundred yards after Tourist Creek, the river enters Skookum Canyon. A thousand yards of violent class III and IV rapids limit this section of the river to highly skilled experts who have first thoroughly scouted this section. Each year this canyon claims several boats.

V. INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

If rapids on a river generally fit into one of the following classifications but the water temperature is below 50 degrees F. or if the trip is an extended trip in a wilderness area, the river should be considered one class more difficult than normal.

RATING	ALWAYS SCOUT AHEAD FOR HAZARDS
WHITE WATER	RIVER OR INDIVIDUAL RAPIDS CHARACTERISTICS
CLASS I	Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.
CLASS II	Easy rapids with waves up to 3 feet and wide, clear channels that are obvious. Some maneuvering is required.
CLASS III	Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow passages that often require complex maneuvering. May require scouting from shore.
CLASS IV	Long, difficult rapids with constructed passages that often require precise maneuvering in very turbulent waters. Scouting from shore is often necessary and conditions make rescue difficult. Generally not possible for open canoes. Boaters in covered canoes and kayaks should be able to Eskimo roll.
CLASS V	Extremely difficult, long, and very violent rapids with highly congested routes which nearly always must be scouted from shore. Rescue conditions are difficult and there is significant hazard to life in event of a mishap. Ability to Eskimo roll is essential for kayaks and canoes.
CLASS VI	Difficulties of Class V carried to the extreme of navigability. Nearly impossible and very dangerous. For teams of experts only, after close study and with all precautions taken.

For additional information about canoeing and kayaking write to:

American Canoe Association  
P.O. Box 248  
Lorton, VA 22079

OR

American Whitewater Affiliation  
P.O. Box 1483  
Hagerstown, MD 21741-1483

If You **PACK IT IN - PACK IT OUT!**



PLANNING YOUR RIVER TRIP

The St. Joe River contains over 120 miles of free-flowing river which offers challenging adventure to canoers, kayakers, and rafters. All types of water can be encountered, from raging white water suitable only for teams of expert kayakers, to placid meanderings for the beginning canoeist.

This folder has been prepared to help you select a river trip on the St. Joe which is suited to your abilities and desires. The difficulty rating assigned to each trip is based on average July and August water levels. During spring runoff from March through June the difficulty of running the St. Joe increases at least on full grade.

For further information, contact the District Ranger at Avery or St. Maries.

**ST. Joe Ranger District**  
Avery HC Box 1 Avery, ID 83802-9702  
Voice/TTY: (208) 245-4517  
222 S 7<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 1  
St. Maries, ID 83861  
(208) 245-2531

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call 1-800 795-3272. USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

R1-0404-14-1

FOREST SERVICE  
Northern Region



Idaho Panhandle  
National Forests

# St. Joe River Float Trips



St. Joe Ranger District