

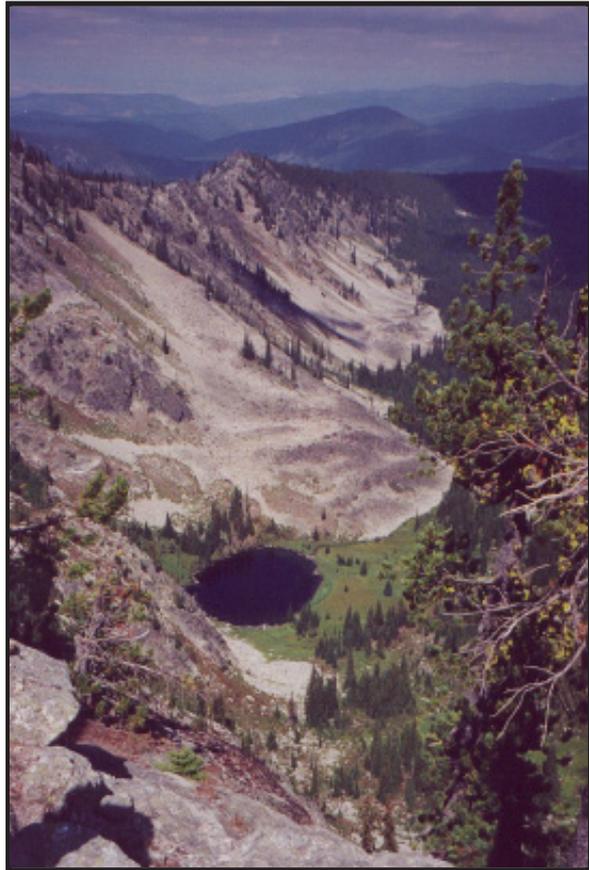
United States
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Agriculture

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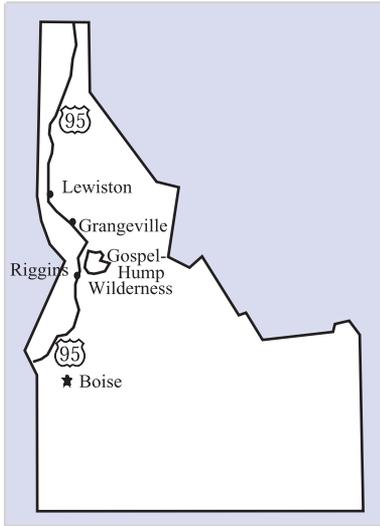
NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST



GOSPEL-HUMP WILDERNESS



A guide to wilderness
recreation opportunities



Gospel-Hump Wilderness

In 1978, Congress recognized 206,053 acres of undeveloped federal land east of Riggins, Idaho, and north of the main Salmon River as a special area and designated it the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. Since then, the area has been managed to preserve its natural condition and to provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

Elevations in the Gospel-Hump Wilderness range from 1,970 feet at the Wind River pack bridge on the Salmon River to 8,940 feet at the summit of Buffalo Hump.

The northern part of the Wilderness is moist and heavily forested; the southern part is dry and sparsely vegetated. The two parts are separated by a rugged, glaciated divide which contains the peaks for which the wilderness is named.

Climate

Temperatures vary with the elevation. Summer afternoon temperatures along the Salmon River often exceed 100 degrees, but frosty mornings are possible even in midsummer in the high country. Roads and trails are usually free of snow from mid-July through mid-October, although snow squalls can occur at any time.

Temperatures can change dramatically within a few hours. Be prepared for all kinds of weather.

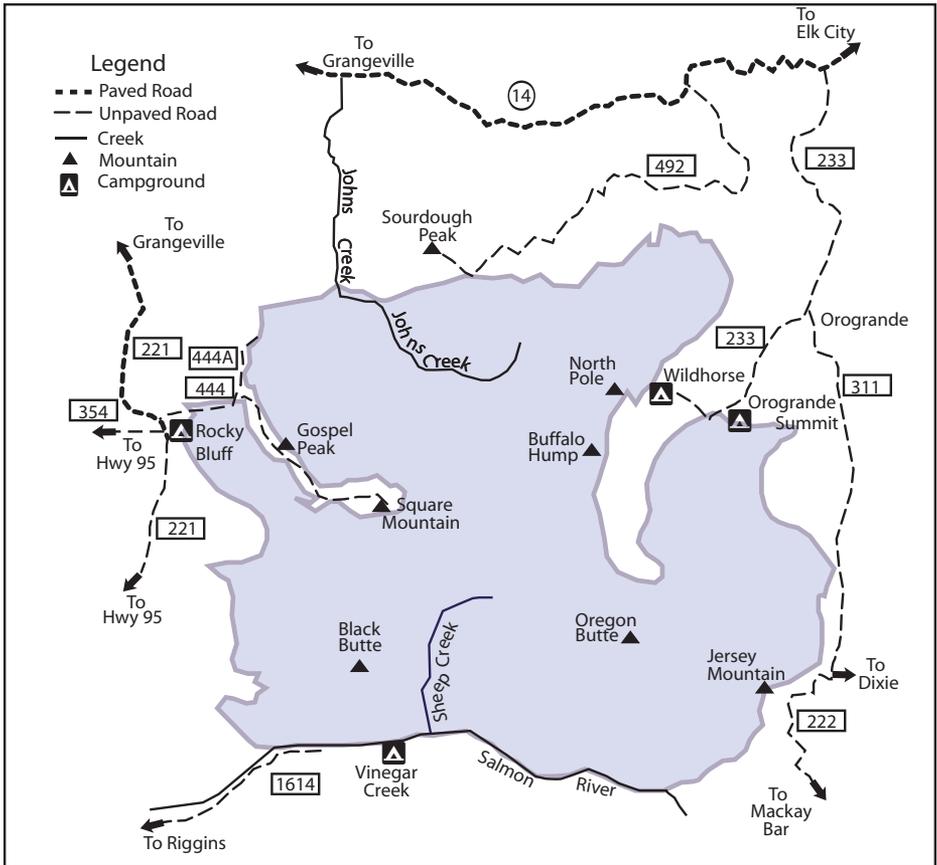
Fish and Game

The streams and lakes within and adjacent to the Wilderness support many kinds of fish. The Salmon River is a travelway for migrating sockeye salmon. The river and many tributaries contain spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and chinook salmon. In addition to these ocean-going species, several resident trout species are present. Sturgeon, whitefish and smallmouth bass are less common.

Big game species like elk, mule and whitetail deer, black bear, cougar, moose, mountain goat and mountain sheep live within the Wilderness. Chukar, grouse and other game birds inhabit the area. Squirrels, songbirds and other nongame wildlife species can frequently be seen or heard.

For information about hunting and fishing seasons and regulations, visit any vendor of Idaho hunting and fishing licenses.

Gospel-Hump Wilderness Access Map



Roads and Trails

Several unpaved roads provide access to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness during the summer months.

- Forest Roads 444 and 444A from Forest Road 221.
- Salmon River Road 1614 and Slate Creek Road 354 from Highway 95.
- Sourdough Road 492, Orogrande Road 233 from Highway 14.
- Orogrande to Orogrande Summit - "not suitable for trailer towing."
- Orogrande Summit to Lake Creek

- Dixie Road 311 from Dixie

These roads are shown on the Forest Visitor Map available at the Nez Perce National Forest headquarters and district offices.

Trails both within and adjacent to the Wilderness are shown on the Forest Visitor Map. Although many miles of trails are maintained annually, some may be impassable, extremely challenging or unsuitable for pack stock. Check with a district office for specific details.

Cultural Heritage

The Nez Perce Indian culture dates back to 6,000 BC in central Idaho. The Gospel Peak and Buffalo Hump areas were used by the Nez Perce Indians long before the arrival of settlers. As part of their seasonal subsistence rounds, they hunted elk, deer and bear, and used game trails to access the Salmon River for fishing.

Placer gold was discovered at Florence, just outside the Wilderness, in 1861. These deposits, while rich, were soon depleted. In 1898, an extensive quartz vein was discovered at the base of Buffalo Hump. The discovery touched off one of the last major gold rushes in the western United States. Thousands of prospectors moved in, and two wagon roads were built so supplies could be moved.

The mining boom subsided in 1903 only to be revived during the Depression. Remnants of placer mines, diggings, and abandoned boom towns are still evident. Prospecting and mining continue today outside the Wilderness.



Photo by Dean Geouge

The Wilderness Legacy

"...man himself is a visitor who does not remain." This key passage from the Wilderness Act of 1964 leaves little doubt about human occupancy in a wilderness. Law or administrative regulations alone, however, cannot fully protect a wilderness.

Only you can.

On the following pages are some hints about how you can reduce your impacts on the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. Adopt these hints during your visit, and be guided by this simple question:

"Will others know I have passed this way?"

Special Regulations

There is a 14-day limit on camping or storing equipment and supplies at a site. A site is defined as any location and the surrounding five mile area.

Travel is permitted only by foot or by stock.

Group size is restricted to 20 people and 20 head of stock.

Use of wheeled vehicles and motorized equipment is prohibited.



Campsite Selection

To reduce camp impacts:

- Select a campsite 200 feet or more from water. Meadows streambanks and lakeshores are very fragile.
- Pitch camp 200 feet or more from other campers. Respect the solitude of others.
- Use an existing campsite if possible, but avoid sites that show evidence of heavy use.
- Resist the temptation to dig trenches or construct anything.



Campfires

To help preserve the Wilderness, use a lightweight stove. If you must build a campfire, please:

- Use an existing fire ring if possible. If not, scrape down to bare soil, and then dig a small hole for the fire.
- Burn only down, dead wood and burn only what you need.
- Attend your campfire at all times. Be particularly careful during dry conditions.
- Make certain your fire is **dead out** before naturalizing your campsite.
- Gather up cool ashes and scatter them away from the campsite.
- Pack out aluminum foil, snap tabs, cigarette butts, twist ties and other nonburnable trash.
- Replace the duff or sod over the fire hole, and thus restore it to near-natural condition.

Stock Use

To minimize impacts from the use of pack and riding stock:

- Carry as little equipment as possible to reduce the number of pack animals needed.
- Hobble, picket or highline stock overnight. Avoid tying stock to trees or near tree roots for long periods of time.
- Use certified weed-free feed. A ration of 12 to 18 pounds of pellets per head per day is sufficient for most stock.



- Hikers should yield to stock traffic. Stand on the downhill side of the trail whenever possible.
- Both hikers and stock should stay on the trail instead of cutting across switchbacks, which causes erosion.
- At rest stops, stock should be tied well off the trail with a highline or tree-saver straps.

Trail Courtesy

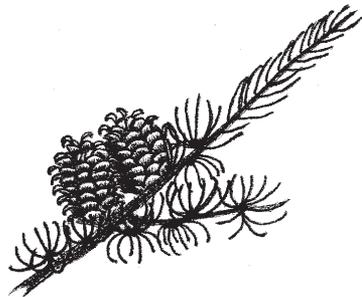
Hikers and stock use many of the same trails:

- Stock should be kept in a single file to avoid creating multiple parallel trails.

Sanitation

Human waste and waste water threaten the delicate balance maintained in wilderness. Please follow these guidelines:

- Dispose of human waste, toilet paper and waste water at least 200 feet from water and where rain and snow runoff will not carry the contaminants to lakes and streams.
- Bury human waste in a hole 6 to 8 inches deep. Let nature do the rest.
- Wash dishes with biodegradable, non-phosphate soap in a dishpan or other suitable container. Dispose of soapy water well away from fresh water.
- Bathe well away from lakes and streams if soap is used.





Beware!

Poison ivy, rattlesnakes and black bears are common along the Salmon River and the lower reaches of its tributaries. Ticks can be particularly abundant during the spring months and may carry Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Mosquitoes, biting flies and no-see-um gnats can also make life miserable. Carry repellent.

Some surface water in the Gospel-Hump Wilderness may contain microbes which can cause intestinal disorders. All drinking water should be treated. Chemical treatments such as iodine or chlorine are not wholly reliable. To be sure, use a water filter or boil the water for at least 3 minutes.

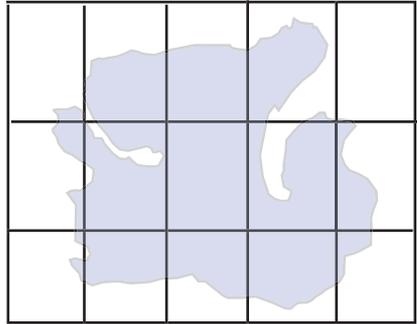
For short trips, bring a supply of water that is known to be safe.

Permits

Permits are not required for either backpackers or persons with stock. A permit is required if you plan to float, jetboat or kayak the Salmon River from June 20th to September 7th.

North Fork Ranger District
 Salmon-Challis National Forest
 (208) 865-2700

Salmon River Ranger District
 Nez Perce National Forest
 (208) 839-2211
 (Jet Boat Only)



Maps

Gospel-Hump Wilderness maps are available at Forest Service offices.

Detailed topographic maps of the Gospel-Hump Wilderness are available. Fifteen maps are needed for complete coverage. The maps can be obtained from:

US Geological Survey
 Box 25286, Denver Federal Ctr
 Denver, CO 80225

Several regional bookstores also stock these USGS "quad" maps.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Salmon River Ranger District
304 Slate Creek Road
White Bird, ID 83554
(208) 839-2211
FAX (208) 839-2730

Red River Ranger District
300 American River Road
Elk City, ID 83525
(208) 842-2245
FAX (208) 842-2150

Nez Perce National Forest
Headquarters
104 Airport Road
Grangeville, ID 83530
(208) 983-1950
FAX (208) 983-4099

WEBSITE:

www.fs.usda.gov/nezperce

*Cover Photo by
Jennifer Stephenson*

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