

End of the Tour

You have reached the end of the New Meadows Auto Tour. We hope you have enjoyed a glance into the work done on the New Meadows Ranger District, and gained insight to the multiple resources the Forest Service manages for present and future use.

To return to New Meadows continue on this road (FR 100) to its intersection with Highway 95. At the highway, turn east (left) and continue on to New Meadows.

Thank you for taking the New Meadows Auto Tour.



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Come See How Your Forest Works For You!

New Meadows Ranger District

Auto Tour



Enjoy, Explore, Experience

U.S.D.A. Forest Service

Payette National Forest



Welcome to an auto tour on the New Meadows Ranger District

This auto tour will take you through scenic country on the Payette National Forest, highlighting historical and present-day activities that make this a working forest. The tour begins at the New Meadows Ranger District office.



Cattle drive in New Meadows—1937

Because this is a working forest you may encounter livestock, active burning, recreationists or logging trucks on the roads. Please travel with caution.

Most of the tour stops are located along a well maintained gravel road, which easily accommodates passenger cars.

Two stops along the tour (the Campbell and Osborn houses) are privately owned. These featured homes are not open to the public—be sure to respect homeowners privacy.

Stop #21: Old Railroad/Riparian Area

Mileage at Stop 21 = 37.4 miles

Transportation was difficult when this area was first logged in the 1940s. The loggers developed an innovative approach: they brought the railroad to the logging site. If you look to the east across the creek, about 50 yards from the road, you'll see a grassy ridge that was once a railroad grade.

At the time, exclusively non-motorized traditional tools were used for tree-felling. This included axes and crosscut saws. Tractors would then skid logs to the rail cars that would travel to New Meadows before being shipped to lumber mills. When timber harvest in one drainage was completed, the rails were pulled up and taken to the next drainage to repeat the process.



Railroad grade



Railroad logging, date unknown

Stop #20: Game Cabin

Mileage at Stop #20 = 36.6 miles.

In the meadow below are the remains of a cabin built in 1936 by Alfred Clark for Wildlife Services; it is one of three cabins he constructed for the agency that year. The role of government trappers was to monitor wildlife and predator interactions. They often stayed in rustic cabins while working on the Forest.



Cabin remains

The State of Idaho manages wildlife on the National Forests while the Forest Service manages the wildlife habitat.

The Mud Creek area is excellent habitat for all forms of wildlife. Elk, deer, bear, and an occasional moose can be seen in this area. As you drive along, watch for a variety of big and small wildlife. Listen for the cry of the red-tailed hawk. These majestic birds frequent this drainage every year for its plentiful food and nesting habitat.

Look for the Auto Tour signs along the way. Unless otherwise noted, each stop is marked with an Auto Tour sign and number corresponding to this booklet. Most stops correspond with a parking area to safely park and view the feature. This booklet lists the approximate total mileage of the tour, beginning with the first stop, and accumulating along the tour, so you can stay on track.



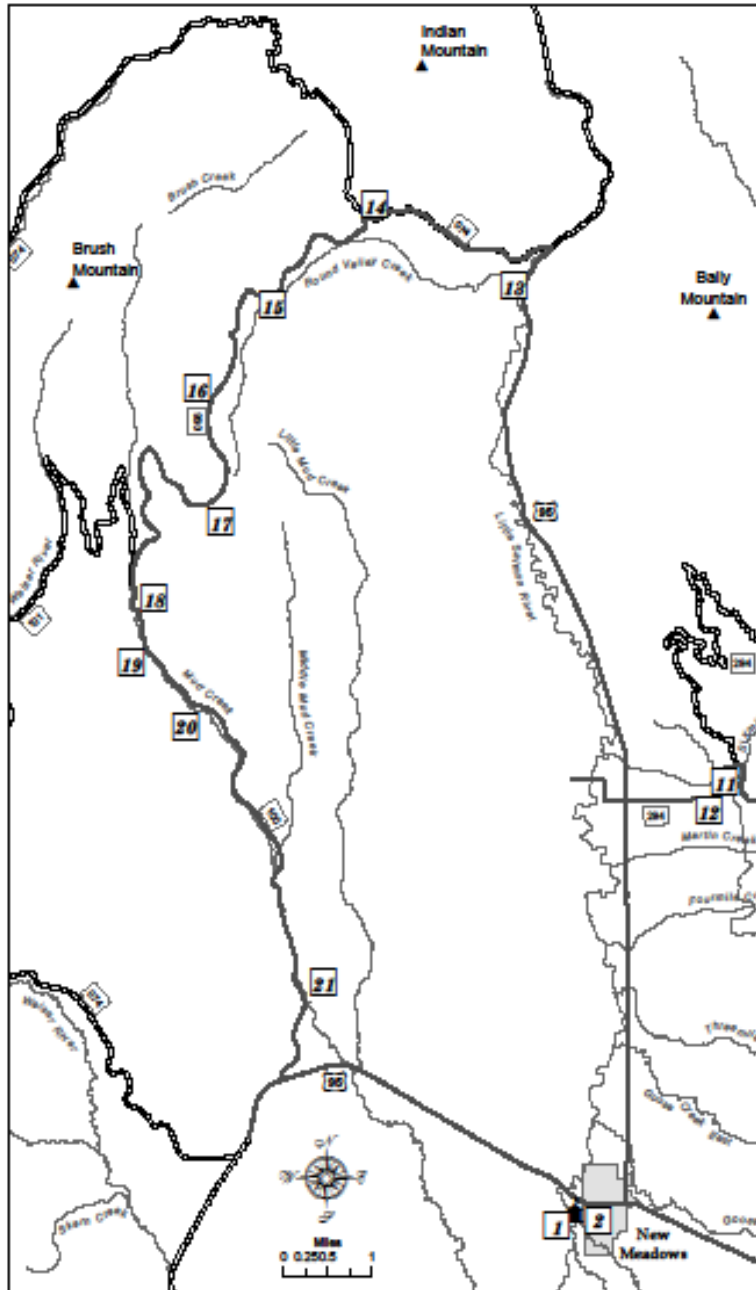
CCC member (Camp S-223) and assigned truck

The entire tour will take approximately 2 1/2 hours, but can be divided for a shorter experience.

- West half of tour takes about 1 hour
- East half of tour about 1 1/2 hours.

For more information on this tour, local recreational opportunities, any seasonal restrictions, or permits, visit the New Meadows Ranger District at 3674 Highway 95, New Meadows, ID 83654. Phone: 208/347-0300.

West — Auto Tour



Stop #19: Engelmann Spruce

Mileage at Stop 19 = 35.8 miles

Engelmann spruce is easily identified by its prickly needles. It favors moist soils adjacent to streams. These trees have a shallow root system and frequently topple over during high wind storms.

In 1985, strong winds caused a “blowdown” in this drainage. Many of the trees were salvaged for forest products, others near the stream were left to help stabilize soil and reduce erosion into the waterway. Those that fell into or across the water provide pools and shade for the fish.

This soft-wood conifer provides important habitat for many of Idaho’s songbirds. These birds feed mostly on insects and seeds. Many species reside in Idaho during the breeding season, but migrate south to the tropics for the winter. They are called neo-tropical migrants.



Stop #18: Ponderosa Pine

Mileage at Stop #18 = 34.7

In front of you you'll find a stand of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) trees, also known as "yellow pine." A valuable commercial tree, its lumber is used primarily for door and window framing as well as floor and roof decking, and furniture.

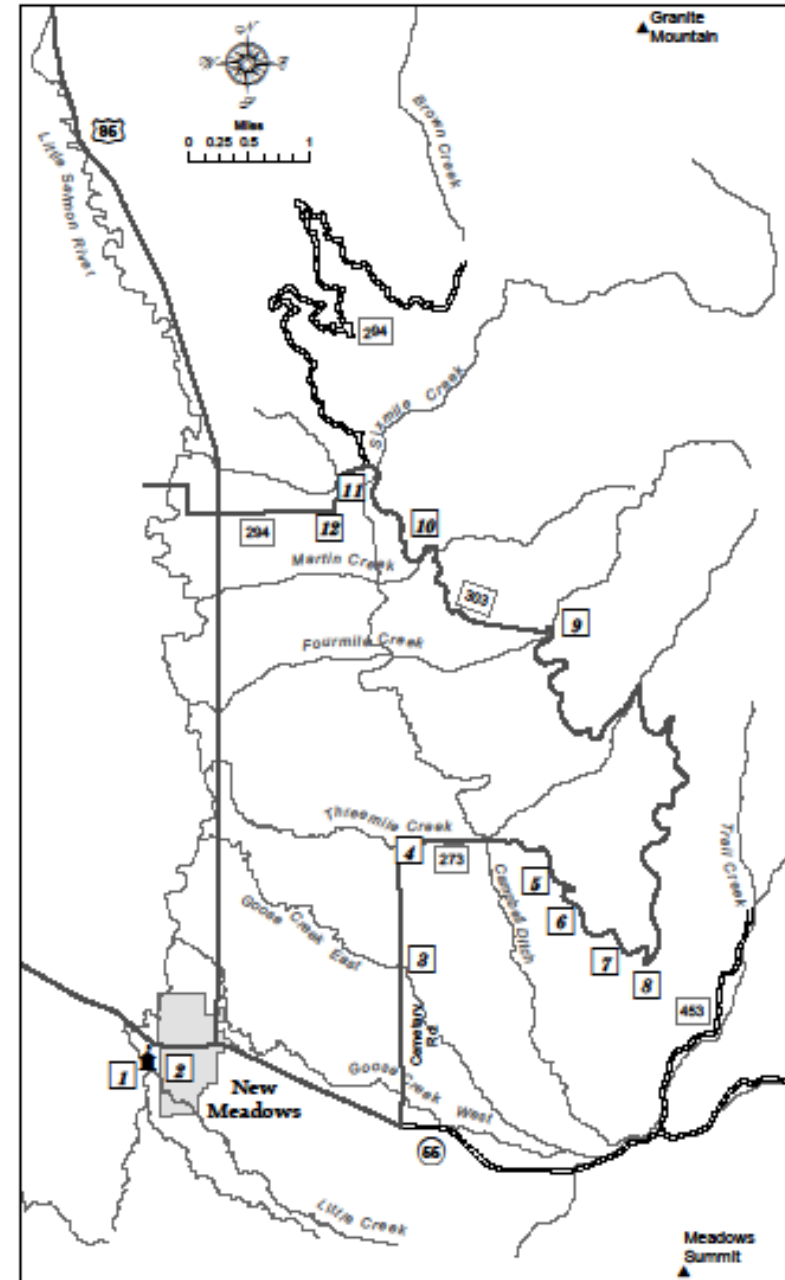
The ponderosa provides valuable habitat for wild turkeys who roost among its well-spaced branches and eat the seeds.

Scratch and smell the bark of this tree, it's debated whether the bark smells more like vanilla or caramel.



Needles are 4-5 inches in length

East — Auto Tour



Stop #1: New Meadows Ranger District



New Meadows Ranger Station Today

Mileage @ Stop #1 = 0 (No Auto Tour sign)

The Payette National Forest mission is to manage for multiple uses. New Meadows District manages recreation, timber, wildlife, grazing, fisheries, watershed, soils, archeological sites, and fire. The Payette works to balance products and services for the public while managing for sustainable forest health.

Stop #17: Access Management

Mileage at Stop #17 = 34.2 miles



The National Forest in this area provides important habitat for big game species, primarily elk and deer. These same areas also produce a significant amount of timber upon which local economies depend. Many of the

roads we use for recreational purposes were originally built for logging access. Managing timber resources requires extensive road access and results in reduced tree cover. These two factors can increase the vulnerability of big game species. To reduce this vulnerability, some roads are closed to the public during the general hunting season—October 1—November 8, yet remain open at other times for firewood cutting, berry picking, and other opportunities. The closures affect only motorized traffic. Hikers, horseback riders and other non-motorized users are welcome.



Stop #16: Wildlife Snags

Mileage at Stop #16 = 32.9 miles.

Several snags were left standing in the clear-cut below. These trees were protected as future habitat for the many species of wildlife that use them for nesting, roosting, shelter, and as a food source. Dead or dying trees with visible nests, trunk holes, and broken tops are protected to allow continued use by a variety of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Dead trees that have fallen into streams are used by fish for shelter.



Pileated Woodpecker



Stop #2: Railroad Depot

Mileage at Stop #2 = 0.2 (No Auto Tour sign)

Construction of the Pacific & Idaho Northern Railroad began in Weiser in 1889 and ended in New Meadows in 1911. The rail line never connected to Missoula, Montana - the engineers' original goal. For 68 years the railroad provided economical transportation of lumber and cattle to the markets. Abandoned in 1979, trucks now fill those transportation needs. The railbed is now the *Weiser River Trail*, a popular non-motorized foot and bike path.

The train depot pictured below, cost \$30,000 to build and was considered one of the finest buildings in the state. The building is being restored by the local historical society and residents.

On the way to Stop #3 look east toward the old town of Meadows. Established in 1883, it was a thriving community before the railroad was established in New Meadows. (From Stop 2, turn off Highway 55 onto Cemetery Road).



New Meadows Railroad Depot

Stop #3: Cemetery



Mileage at Stop #3 = 4.0. Mileage number is taken as you leave the cemetery at the stone gate.

The untimely death of a local ranch hand prompted the community to choose a cemetery site in the mid-1880s. Looking at the headstones you'll notice dates from both the past and present day. Please be respectful of others that may be visiting gravesites.

The cemetery's stone work was completed by the Works Progress Administration during the Depression. The flowers and shrubs have been planted by local volunteers over the years. Take a minute to drive through the cemetery and you will come to understand why the settlers chose this restful, scenic location.

Stop # 15: Ecosystem Management

*Turn on the New Smokey Boulder Road to Mud Creek Rd 098.
Mileage at Stop # 15 = 32.7 miles*

Looking at the ridgeline in front of you, notice the varying height and size of the trees, and the pattern of this variation. In the 1970s this area was clear-cut. A clear cut, the method of timber harvest that removes all trees in a specified area, is used when the tree species favors reseeding in an open canopy. It is also used to simulate fire and to treat disease outbreak or insect infestations. If tree stands are still of quality, they are harvested for forest products including lumber. Clear-cutting was used when the forest had more of an emphasis on timber production.

Forest management is undergoing a transition. Instead of looking at stands of trees as separate units, resource managers are looking at managing ecosystems at the landscape level.

Today, the Payette's timber management strategies are more ecologically based. These stands are now managed using a combination of commercial timber harvest, thinning, and prescribed fire, creating a relatively open condition dominated by large fire resistant trees.



Stop #14: Urban Interface

Mileage at Stop #14 = 28.2 miles.

It may appear to be country living, but as you drive through the Circle C subdivision you are driving through an area known by fire managers as the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). This is an area where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire. According to the National Fire Protection Association, conditions include the amount, type, and distribution of vegetation; the flammability of the structures (homes, businesses, outbuilding, decks, & fences) in the area, and their proximity to fire-prone vegetation and to other combustible structures; weather patterns and general climate condition, topography; hydrology; average lot size; and road construction. WUI conditions occur across the country where wildlands and urban environments intermingle.



Stop #4: Osborn House

Mileage at Stop #4 = 5.1.

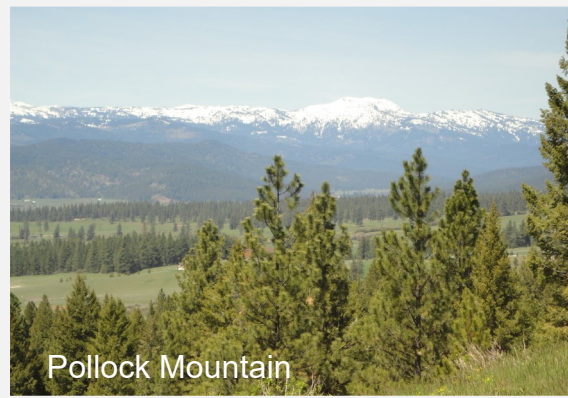
This house was built by Edward Osborn in 1910. He constructed the red barns and outbuildings behind the house shortly thereafter. Edward was born in 1871 in Warrens, ID. His father was killed when he was a small child. A few years later, his mother married Tommy Clay, and the couple became one of the first to homestead in Meadows Valley.

As a young man, Edward spent his winters carrying mail to Warren on skis. The trip took three days each way, and he stayed in provisioned cabins along the way.

Just past the Osborn house turn right on Wallace Lane. Stay on Wallace Lane to the Forest boundary at mile 6.5 and follow FR 273.



Stop #5: A Forest at Work



Pollock Mountain

Mileage at Stop #5 = 6.9 miles

In the distance you can see Pollock Mountain, a notable landmark with a broad flat summit. In the surrounding forest you can see evidence of intermittent logging, meaning the trees you see are the result of encouraged regeneration.

The valley floor was once a shallow lake during the most recent Pleistocene ice age.

Indigenous peoples have called the area home since time immemorial and continue to gather, hunt, and fish. Archaeological evidence of indigenous use is found throughout the area. One such site, a burial complex, dates to 6,000 B.P.



Camas/Camassia quamash/qém'es (Nez Perce)

Auto Tour (West)

Stop #13: Fishing

The pullout is located near a Fire Prevention sign. *Mileage at Stop 13 = 25.2 miles*

Anglers and wildlife alike enjoy the Little Salmon River's resident fish population. Two species of anadromous fish are present in the drainage, chinook salmon which is a listed species under the Endangered Species Act and steelhead trout. With the help of local landowners, Payette fish biologists are steadily improving aquatic and riparian habitat in the area.



Downstream of Smokey Boulder Road are the Little Salmon Falls that prevents aquatic species from upstream travel. The falls may be an inadvertent result of road construction or natural obstacles; Payette fisheries biologists, Northwest Power Planning Council, and the Nez Perce Tribe are exploring ways to improve watershed health and upstream travel for anadromous species. Human activities in the valley can affect habitat downstream, so care must be taken to limit impacts.

Turn left (west) off Highway 95 when you arrive at the Smokey Boulder Road.

Stop #12: Log Worm Fence



Turn right on Circle Ranch Road. *Mileage at Stop #12 = 17.0 miles.*

This larch fence is over sixty years old, according to ranch owner, Warren Osborn. Fences like this were built in Meadows Valley during a period when larch was plentiful and posts and barbed wire were expensive. Unlike wire fences that needed yearly maintenance, the larch fence was carefree for at least twenty years. The wood rots very slowly because it's not in direct contact with the ground.

This stop marks the conclusion of the East half of the Auto Tour. Continue on across Highway 95 to Stop # 13 (Fishing) to take the West half of the Auto Tour. If not, turn left at Highway 95 to return to New Meadows.

Stop #6: Thinning

Mileage at Stop #6 = 7.3 miles

It may seem like a contradiction to cut trees in order to grow trees. The stand before you has been thinned. Thinning removes the more spindly, shorter, slow growing trees which often contribute to an over-crowded forest.

By increasing the spacing between trees, the remaining trees are able to better compete for water and sunlight to grow taller, straighter, and bigger. This makes them more desirable for future harvesting. Providing wood products is an important function of your National Forests. Thinning is a critical part of the Timber Management program.



Stop #7: Western Larch



Mileage at Stop #7 = 7.8 miles

This unique tree, known as a tamarack, has an unusual claim to fame. It is one of three deciduous conifers in the world. Most cone-bearing trees keep green needles all year. Every fall the western larch's (*Larix occidentalis*) needles glow a brilliant yellow before they fall to the ground.

Early settlers valued this wood because it splits easily and has proven more rot-resistant than other local trees. It is still the most popular source of wood for fence posts and rails in the area today. It is an excellent source of firewood because it burns hot.

Looks can be deceiving, if you are out cutting firewood in the fall, remember that just because the tree doesn't have needles doesn't mean it's dead. It could be a larch. Your firewood map and guide will give you additional information to identify these trees and how to tell if the tree is still living!

There is a Plateau oral tradition that tells when Creator called upon the plants and animals to give to the coming humans for their survival, the larch refused. Larch loses its needles as a reminder of the unwillingness to give.

Charles married Caroline Osborn, sister of Edward Osborn, and had five children who all took part in running the ranch. They outgrew the original two-room cabin so Charles built a frame house with four bedrooms. The house was later rebuilt into the home you see today.

In 1937, Circle C gained national attention for a single shipment of 3200 head of beef cattle. The Pacific & Idaho Northern Railroad had to use a train of 108 cars to move this many animals. Remarkably, the cattle were loaded in three hours, and were in Denver, Colorado in less than 36 hours. Franklin D. Roosevelt was on his way west at the same time as the cattle were going east. It was decided that it was more important to get the animals to market so the president's train was put on a side track while the cattle sped on to their destination.

Marking the end of an era, the Circle C Ranch was sold in 1972 after having been owned by the Campbell family for almost a hundred years.



Stop #11: Campbell House/Circle C Ranch



Mileage at Stop # 11 = 16.8 (No Auto Tour sign)

This is a privately-owned working ranch with a rich history. It is not open to the public. You may view the property from the Stop #12 location.

The original 320-acre ranch was homesteaded in 1879 by Charles Campbell. Initially, he built a log cabin, and grew his operation from a team of oxen and seven calves, to 29,000 acres and thousands of cattle. The ranch extended from this valley west to the Snake River, and north to Whitebird. In its heyday, it was the largest family-owned cattle operation in Idaho.

Stop #8: Prescribed Fire

Mileage at Stop #8 = 8.1 miles. Stay on FR 303 to Stop #9.

Fire is a natural part of a forest's lifecycle. It contributes to the soil's overall nutrient content by consuming dead trees and underbrush and recycling them back into the soil. This improves soil conditions and allows tree seeds to take root and grow.

In a natural fire regime, this area would be impacted by low intensity fires every five to fifteen years. This pattern of burning supported fire-resistant tree species like ponderosa pine and western larch, and helped prevent a thick understory of brush and saplings from taking hold. As early firefighting policies attempted to eliminate all wildfires, the forest became overcrowded and dominated by heavy brush, dead trees and fire intolerant trees, such as grand fir and Douglas-fir.

Today, forest managers use fire and logging as tools to thin the forest and reduce damage from wildfires. This prescribed fire was completed in 2014.



Prescribed fire completed in 2014

Stop #9: Watershed



Mileage at Stop 9 = 10.7 miles

You are crossing Four Mile Creek, a tributary of the Little Salmon River. This watershed system provides water for irrigation to the ranches in the valley below. Early ranchers dug ditches from creeks, to carry the spring runoff from the mountains to their crops and pastures.

As an increasing number of people live and play in and around Meadows Valley, the need to successfully and sustainably manage water resources has become a critical issue. Watershed protection was one of the main Congressional motivations for creating the Forest Reserve. Now, over a hundred years later, that mission is just as imperative. Healthy water supplies are needed to sustain wildlife, livestock, and agricultural resources. As water supplies in the West become increasingly strained, the importance of the forest's role is underscored.

Stop #10: Seed Tree

Mileage at Stop 10 = 13.9 miles

Look around at the trees in this area. Given the choice, which tree's seed would you use to regenerate a forest? Seed quality can make or break a reforestation program.

The Payette collects seeds on-forest for western larch, Douglas fir and spruce. Ponderosa pine seeds come from the Nez Perce -Clearwater National Forest's seed orchard at Slate Creek, north of Meadows Valley on the Salmon River.



Once collected, seeds are taken to the Lucky Peak tree nursery on the Boise National Forest, where they are stored until seedlings are needed to plant an area that has been harvested, or where a fire burned and natural re-generation is not possible.

You will cross over the Forest boundary into private land at milepost 14.6. Stay on road 303 to Stop 11.