

File Code: 2350

GREETINGS SELWAY RIVER FLOATERS

Congratulations and welcome to a unique and wild experience along one of the most remote rivers in the country! The Selway River is in the ancestral lands of the Nimiipuu (or Nez Perce Tribe) and was among the first rivers in the country to be nationally designated in 1968 under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Flowing 47 miles through the heart of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (the 3rd largest Wilderness in the lower 48 states), the Selway River offers a true wilderness experience full of adventure in wild and remote country.

The permit system in place on the Selway River provides the opportunity for a premiere, multi-day, wilderness, whitewater experience and ensures that the pristine nature of the corridor remains as such for many generations to come. We ask that your group embrace and practice the seven **Leave No Trace** principles during your float to enhance the experience for your own group and the next to come.

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare** - for a multi-day, self-sufficient experience.
- **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces** - minimize impacts to soil and vegetation; choose durable surfaces to walk, scout rapids, secure your boat, set up camp, etc.
- **Dispose of Waste Properly** - portable toilet system required; haul your human waste and garbage out with you.
- **Leave What You Find** - do not disturb or remove rare, historical, or cultural resources.
- **Minimize Campfire Impacts** - use a stove for cooking, firepans required for campfires; burn only small diameter downed woody material.
- **Respect Wildlife** - store food properly, do not pursue, feed, or force animals to flee.
- **Be Considerate of other Visitors** - allow others to experience the spacious and quiet setting afforded in this wild and remote location. Naturalize your camp before leaving.

Please review the enclosed information packet to help best prepare you and your group for your adventure and reach out if you have any further questions.

May your waters be wild,



Daniel Pliley
West Fork District Ranger
Bitterroot National Forest



Ron Tipton
Moose Creek District Ranger
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest



ATTENTION FLOATERS

The Selway River corridor is a dynamic environment prone to significant wind events, rockslides, wildfires, and other natural events.

Especially during spring runoff, there may be considerable movement of trees and other large woody debris within the river corridor.

Boaters should exhibit extra care navigating the river and evaluating overhead hazards when selecting campsite locations.

When in doubt, scout!

Selway River Regulations and General Information

PERMIT REGULATIONS

- A permit is required to float the Selway River during control season. (May 15th- July 31st)
- Permit holder must be 18 years old.
- There are no per person user fees for the Selway River.
- Permits are NOT transferable for any reason.
- Permit holder must contact the West Fork Ranger station within 14 days prior to the launch date, to arrange pick up of their permit. (406) 821-3269.
- Permits **MUST** be cancelled on recreation.gov **15 days prior** to the launch date to prevent a late cancellation penalty.
- Late cancellation and no-show penalties prevent you from holding a permit on the Selway for 1 year.
- When water levels exceed 5 feet at the Paradise gauge, or snow is blocking the road to the launch site, penalties will be waived.
- Permit holder must show their photo ID to obtain boat tag and sign permit.
- Permit holder is responsible for the entire group. Permit holder **MUST** be present and accompany group at all times on the river.
- Observe all local, State and Federal laws and regulations.
- Idaho Invasive Species stickers **ARE REQUIRED** – please check <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/activities/boating>.
- Carry and display permit upon request of any Forest Officer.
- During the control season, maximum party size is 16, but maximum trip duration can vary.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Groover or portable toilet with appropriate capacity
- Campfire supplies
 - Fire pan (metal, 3-inch sides, minimum 144 sq. inches for containing embers)
 - Strainer
 - Shovel and bucket
 - Ash container
- Emergency satellite communication device is strongly recommended.

CAMP SANITATION

- All dish/wastewater must be strained and water broadcast above high-water mark.
- All human and pet feces should be packed out in a porta-potty.
- Absolutely nothing but human/pet waste in porta-potty, no sanitary wipes, tampons, sticks etc. Foreign objects aren't compatible with RV dump stations.
- All fire ash should be packed out in ash container.
- All urination should be above the high-water mark.

- No soaps (even biodegradable) in any streams, river, or water source.
- All litter, food particles, including micro-trash, **MUST** be packed out.

CAMP AND RIVER ETIQUETTE

- **LEAVE NO TRACE** camping techniques are **REQUIRED**.
 - **Plan Ahead and Prepare** (Plan for a multi-day, self-sufficient, white-water experience. Familiarize yourself with all rules and regulations and campfire restrictions well in advance).
 - **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces** (Avoid unnecessary impacts to soil and vegetation. Choose durable places to walk, set up camp, scout rapids, launch, secure your boat, etc. Use established camps and trails).
 - **Dispose of Waste Properly** (Portable toilet system required; haul your waste out with you. Pack it in, pack it out. Do NOT burn garbage).
 - **Leave What You Find** (Do not disturb or remove rare, historic, or cultural resources).
 - **Minimize Campfire Impacts** (Use a stove for cooking. Firepans required for campfires. Only use down and dead firewood or charcoal and keep fires small. Do NOT build fire rings).
 - **Respect Wildlife** (Store food properly utilizing bear bags or in secure hard-sided coolers or dry boxes. Be bear aware! Do not pursue, feed, or force animals to flee).
 - **Be Considerate of other Visitors** (Allow others to experience the spacious and quiet setting afforded in this wild and remote location. Leave camp in a pristine state – take the time to naturalize your campsite removing all signs of your group’s presence prior to leaving, including firewood piles, rock cairns, driftwood structures, etc.).
- Use sand stakes for securing rafts, tents, and tarps. Return rocks to where they were found, if used for tent, tarp, or boat anchors. Please do not leave camps littered with rocks.
- Leave beaches unmarked as high water would; smooth and naturalize any disturbed surfaces.
- ALL members of group must camp together. Choose sites appropriate for your group size.
- Please plan lay-over days in less used sites.
- Camps at Moose Creek may need to be shared with other groups, particularly during high water.
- Public nudity is discouraged.
- Respect private property. Do not enter unless acknowledged or invited. Contain dogs at boat or on a leash.
- Be courteous and efficient at put-in and take-out sites. No camping at boat ramp or leaving parked vehicles there.
- Please park vehicles at Paradise parking area (near the guard station) approximately ¼ mile from the launch site.

HERITAGE RESOURCES

- Do not touch, remove, or damage any heritage resources (e.g., historic cabins, pictographs, artifacts, etc.) Oils from fingers contributes to deterioration of pictographs.
- Cultural sites and artifacts are protected under federal law.
- Additional historical information about the area is attached.

DIRECTIONS

WEST FORK RANGER STATION

From US Highway 93, 3 miles south of Darby, Montana, turn south on State Highway 473, the West Fork Road. Follow to 6735 West Fork Road (mile marker 14).

PARADISE LAUNCH SITE

From the West Fork Ranger Station, proceed approximately 0.8 miles to the Nez Perce Road (#468), turn right and continue driving another 49.3 miles to the launch site. The road is mostly a narrow road with turnouts and is heavily used by other recreationists. Drive slowly and enjoy the scenery! Paradise Campground is located 0.3 miles from the launch site; (there is no potable water or garbage service provided at this location).

RACE TRACK TAKEOUT

The Race Track takeout is located at the confluence of Meadow Creek and Selway River, 16 miles upriver on Selway River Road #223. You must take out at Race Track to avoid Selway Falls. From the takeout at Race Track, head west out the Selway River Road, a narrow, gravel, one lane road with intermittent pullouts. Because this route is heavily used by recreationists throughout the summer months, we ask that you drive slowly with your headlights on and stay on your side of the road to avoid collisions with other drivers.

CAMPING FACILITIES

Both dispersed and developed campgrounds are available along the Selway River Road #223, and along U.S. Highway 12. Fee campgrounds typically range in price from \$8 -\$14, depending on the location. If you would like more information about camping along the Selway River Road, please contact the Fenn Ranger Station at 208-926-4258, Mon-Fri, 7:30-4:00 PST

PERMIT

After exiting the takeout, please scan or take a picture of your permit and email it to the West Fork Resource Assistant Staci Guenthner: Staci.Guenthner@usda.gov

If you prefer, you may stop at the Fenn Ranger Station Visitor Center (Milepost 5 along the Selway Rd) and deposit your permit before departing the river corridor. A deposit box for permits is located outside the visitor center foyer and is available 24 hours a day. The box is located on the left-hand side of the visitor center door.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Options for sewage disposal after the takeout include the following locations:

- Cedar Flats RV dump station is approximately 14.5 miles downriver from the takeout, located on the north side of Selway River Road #223 just before Fenn Ranger Station. The cost is \$10.00. Please do not dump plastic bags, feminine hygiene products, wet wipes or any other items that are non-biodegradable. This garbage will disable use of the station for all visitors.
- West on Highway 12:

- o The Orofino city treatment plant. Donation Requested.
 - o Kooskia River Junction RV Park. \$10.00 for dump station use.
 - o The Harpster Riverside RV Park on Highway 13. \$10.00 for dump station use.
 - o Grangeville Nom Nom Gas Station. Free dump station use.
- East on Highway 12:
 - o Bretz RV & Marine near I-90 Exit 101, Missoula, MT. Free dump station use.

EMERGENCIES

It is highly recommended (not required) **that each party carries a satellite phone or other satellite communication device** to call for assistance, should you encounter a life- threatening emergency that requires advanced medical help. Please reference the information listed below on how to contact appropriate authorities in an emergency while floating the Selway River.

****IF YOU HAVE A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY WHILE FLOATING THE SELWAY RIVER, PLEASE DIAL 911 OR CONTACT THE IDAHO COUNTY SHERRIF'S OFFICE AT 208-983-1100 LOCATED IN GRANGEVILLE, ID.**

Emergencies can also be reported to Forest Service personnel at:

- Fenn Ranger Station: 208-926-4258 (Mon-Fri 7:30-4:00 PST)
- West Fork Ranger Station: 406-821-3269 (Mon-Fri 8:30-4:30 MST)
- Radio and Satellite phone communication is available at Moose Creek Ranger Station for emergency use only.
- The nearest cell service is west on Highway 12 just before Kooskia, ID

Call ahead on road conditions and campfire restrictions – West Fork Ranger District (406) 821-3269.
Updated 12/2023

SAFETY – It's Your Life

It is your life and your responsibility to be thoroughly prepared and skilled to safely boat the Selway River. The river's course takes you through 47 miles of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Once you start this float, you are committed to a trip with limited chance of assistance. Help is slow to arrive even when requested. Wilderness access is limited to foot, livestock, boat, and several remote airstrips. Planning to be anything other than self-sufficient may prove to be highly consequential.

The river drops an average of 28 feet per mile (though significantly steeper below Moose Creek), creating a very technical whitewater course. Numerous Class IV rapids require a high level of whitewater skills, experience, and good equipment. Mid-May to mid-June is when the river is typically highest and flow volumes fluctuate widely, changing the character and difficulty of the rapids dramatically. Water temperature as low as 30 degrees Fahrenheit can be expected and life-threatening hypothermia may occur with any extended immersion in the river. The character of the Selway varies considerably- ranging from steep and technical at lower flows to some of the highest volume, most technical whitewater in North America. Know what you are getting into and be prepared with an appropriate craft based on current river conditions.

In the past, some boaters have not been adequately prepared or skilled. Boating accidents resulted in loss of life once prior to 1988, again in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1996, and again in 2004. These deaths were a result of ill-prepared parties with poor equipment, limited boating experience or skill, or poor judgement.

As a prepared and skilled boater, you will:

1. Scout each major rapid and be willing to portage if you don't feel competent to run the rapid.
2. Have a first aid kit designed for wilderness survival, including care for snake bites.
3. Be able to execute river rescues of people, gear and boats.
4. If needed, know how to swim a rapid in the safest manner possible.
5. Have safety gear such as helmets, life jackets, throw ropes, extra oars or paddles, repair equipment, warm clothes such as wet/dry suits and neoprene booties.
6. Have your gear in first rate condition and be able to repair equipment damage on the trip.
7. Know how to rig your boats to prevent overloading and gear loss if the boat flips.
8. Be physically fit to handle strenuous activity such as unforeseen portages, dealing with flipped boats, or swimming rapids.
9. Waterproof your gear and food while floating.
10. Be willing to hold over if the river rises to a dangerous level from spring runoff. You may have an unplanned extended trip due to high water conditions. In 1996, one group had to stay at Moose Creek for 14 days, with other groups spending several unplanned days. When the gauge at Paradise is running above six feet, the river is at a dangerous, potentially life-threatening level. Think twice before you go!

**RIVER SAFETY IS A MUST. BE SAFE WITH YOUR LIFE.
ARE YOU SKILLED AND PREPARED?**

HISTORY OF THE SELWAY BITTERROOT WILDERNESS AREA

“The scenery is wild and in many parts sublime.”

Samuel Parker, 1844

Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains



Figure 2: Projectile point.

The land encompassing the 1.3 million acres of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is the ancestral territory of the Nimiipuu or Nez Perce Tribe. While other Tribes are known to have frequented the area, including the Salish, Pend d’Orielle, Kootenai, and Shoshone, during the period of contact with European colonists these lands were almost exclusively occupied by the Nimiipuu. Countless generations have hunted these lands rich in wild game, fished for salmon and steelhead from the Selway River and its tributaries, and gathered resources from the steep and rugged terrain.

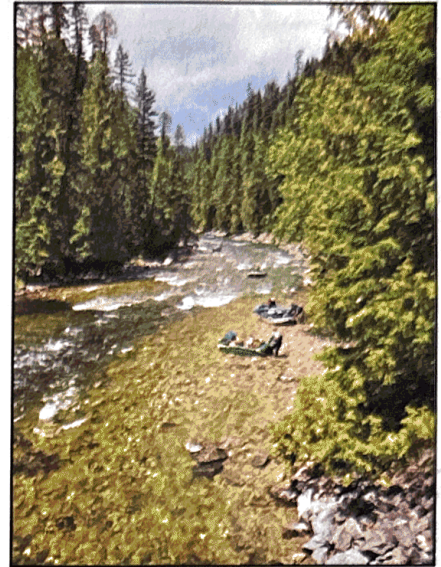


Figure 1: View of Selway River.



Figure 3: Peeled Tree at Indian Creek Campground.

These peoples knew how to navigate the Selway River Corridor as well as where and when to hunt and gather resources. This information was handed down generation to generation for many millennia, including knowledge on how to care for the land. At the time of contact, explorers noted the park-like feel of the forests and the pleasant well-worn paths across the landscape. They believed it was a natural, “wild” process and not the careful management of the vegetation by the Native population.

In more recent times, people left their mark on the Selway River Corridor by constructing roads, cabins, and other developments. Evidence of this activity can be found across the Wilderness as well.

You may see remnants of these past people during your travels in the SBW. Feel free to enjoy looking at them, but please, don’t touch or remove them. Their locations are meaningful and important to the story of the people who lived here in the past, which we hope will be preserved for future generations to enjoy. They are also protected by federal and state law. Thank you for your help in protecting their stories!



Figure 4: Shearer Guard Station.



Selway River Campsites				
Camp	River Mile	Bank	Size 1 = 8 people 2 = 15 people 3 = 15+ people	Maximum Usable Water Level
Put-in	0			
Bad Luck Bar	2.4	L	3	High
Waldo Bar	4.9	R	3	High
Driftwood Bar	5.3	L	2	Med
Hungry Bear	5.5	L	1	Low
Running Creek Bridge Camp	6.9	L	3	Med
Running Creek Flat	7.1	R	3	High
Archer	9.1	L	3	High
Goat Creek	11.1	L	1	High
Little Goat Creek	12.1	L	3	Med
Cougar Flats	14.8	R	3	High
White Tail Flats	15.9	R	3	High
Mills Camp	16.0	L	3	High
Bear Creek	16.3	R	1	Low
Unnamed Camp	17.0	L	3	High
Big Cedar	17.3	R	2	Low
Black Sands	18.1	L	3	Med
Dead Elk	18.9	R	2	Low
Rattlesnake Bar	21.1	R	2	High
Roots	24.2	L	1	Med
<i>There are a limited number of campsites at Moose Creek, so floaters may need to share camps.</i>				
Tony Point Bridge- Upper	26.2	R	2	High
Tony Point Bridge- Lower	26.3	R	2	Med
Tony Point Camp	26.4	L	2	High
Divide Creek	27.1	L	2	Med
Upper Cedar Flats	29.9	R	1	Low
Lower Cedar Flats	30.3	R	2	Med
Meeker Creek	31.9	R	1	Med
Tango Creek	33.1	R	2	High
Tango Bar	33.2	L	3	Med
Trapper Camp	33.6	L	2	Low
Boulder Bar	36.2	R	2	Med
Dry Bar	36.5	R	2	Med
Upper Pinchot	37.7	R	2	Med
Lower Pinchot	37.9	R	3	High
Ballinger	39.5	R	2	High
Tee Kem Falls (Jims Creek)	40.6	L	2	Med
Cupboard Creek	41.1	R	2	Med
<i>Many beach camps occur at low water below Cupboard Creek</i>				
Take Out	47.5	R		