

Dear Snake River Floater,

The following information is provided to help you plan your float trip on the Snake River in Hells Canyon.

### Access

- **Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site** is the primary launching point for float trips and is the only location in Hells Canyon where the Snake River is accessible by a two-lane paved road. This site, 23 miles north of Copperfield (Oxbow), OR, is accessible year round via a paved Idaho Power Company road.
- **Pittsburg Landing**, accessible year round via a 19-mile single lane gravel road (FS#493, the Deer Creek road). Turn west off of US Highway 95, south of Whitebird, ID and cross the Salmon River bridge.
- **Dug Bar**, on the Oregon side is north from Imnaha, requires a high clearance, 4WD vehicle. **This road is not maintained and should be driven with extreme caution. We suggest contacting the Enterprise office for the latest road conditions before traveling.**
- **Heller Bar** takeout near the mouth of the Grande Ronde River is 23 miles south of the town of Asotin, WA via a paved and gravel county road.

### Launching and Takeout

The **Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site** has a Visitor Information Station, toilets, paved parking and a concrete ramp. Please call prior to launch for an update on the status of the launch facilities. Parking space is limited and anyone planning to launch directly from a trailer should have a vehicle with good traction, as the ramp is steep. At flows below 6,000 c.f.s. the ramp is unsuitable for launching boats that require the trailer to be in the water. The launch/takeout site at **Pittsburg Landing** has a Visitors Contact Station, toilets with changing area, a double concrete ramp, float apron, paved parking and a 28 unit campground. The **Dug Bar** launch/takeout has a single concrete ramp and toilet, however this site is not well maintained. The **Heller Bar** launch/takeout has a double concrete ramp and toilets. Although this site is larger than the others, it is also more heavily used. **Be organized before you get to the ramp so your group can launch and take out quickly.**

## Trip Length

The following chart provides the information for floaters launching from Hells Canyon Creek. Afternoon winds blow upriver and can lengthen float times in quiet sections of the river.

TAKEOUT	MILES	DAYS
• PITTSBURG LANDING	32	2-3
• DUG BAR	51	3-4
• HELLER BAR, ASOTIN	79	4-6
• LEWISTON, ID/CLARKSTON, WA	104	6-8

## Camping

Camping is allowed at designated, dispersed sites only. Reference a copy of the **Snake River guide** for the location of these sites. Most campsites are on grassy benches, limited in number (especially in the upper river) and are on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Party size at campsites should never exceed 24 people.**

- 1 night only per party at Granite Creek or Oregon Hole and Saddle Creek
- 3 days and 2 nights per site in the wild river
- 4 days and 3 nights per site in the scenic river
- maximum party size is 24 per camp site
- Camping is prohibited at the Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site. However, campgrounds are available on Hells Canyon Reservoir for camping the night prior to the launch.

## Degree of Difficulty

The degree of difficulty in normal summer flows varies from Class II (International Scale) to Class IV. However, difficulty varies with water volumes. Flows may be as low as 5,000 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.) in summer to 80,000 c.f.s. or more in the spring runoff. Since the river flow is controlled by dams, releases can vary from day to day and hour by hour. Rafting the rapids of Hells Canyon is not recommended for the inexperienced or poorly equipped. Portaging or lining through or around many rapids is difficult, if not impossible. Major rapids should be scouted before running.

**For flow information, call Idaho Power at 1-800-422-3143  
or view flow monitors located at Hells Canyon Creek, Pittsburg Launch,  
Cache Creek and the Clarkston, Washington Forest Service office.**

## Recommended Craft and Equipment

A good, serviceable personal, U.S. Coastguard approved, personal flotation device (PFD) is required for each person on any river craft. Children 12 years or younger are required to wear a PFD at all times while rivercraft is under way. Coast Guard approved Type I and Type V- Whitewater jackets are recommended. The **Snake River Guide**, a water resistant, one inch=one mile, topographic river map with information on river rapids and campsites is available for sale at our offices in Clarkston, Riggins and Enterprise and at the Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site. This map can also be purchased by phone with a Visa or MC by calling the **Float Reservation line: (509) 758-1957** or by calling the **Hells Canyon general information line: (509) 758-0616**.

## Getting on the River

### **Wild River Section (Hell Canyon Creek Launch to Pittsburg)**

- Reservations needed 7 days per week during Primary Season
  - 3 private launches per day, 2 commercial
  - non-motorized window ( see enclosed calendar)
  - 8 craft 24 people trip limit
  - Launch site: Hells Canyon Creek Launch
- **Reservations are required during the Primary Season which is the Friday before Memorial Day through September 10<sup>th</sup> each year. Permits are required year round. Float Reservations (post Lottery) are made by phone only: (509)758-1957**  
**Hours are from 8A.M. to 4P.M PST 7 days a week, during the Primary season.**

**There is no reservation fee at this time.**

- **A Non-Motorized** period is in effect during the Primary Season. No Powerboat access is allowed in the Wild River between the top of Wild Sheep Rapids to the upper landing at Kirkwood Historic Ranch. This Period is Monday through Wednesday every other week, beginning the first Monday in June through the End of August.
- **Cancellations must be received 7 days prior to launch.** People who have a reservation, but fail to launch or cancel the reservation, will be penalized by being placed on a list of people ineligible for a permit for the remainder of the season and during the entire following primary season.
- **A Waiting List** is also available. You can be placed on one day of the float calendar by calling the Float reservation line. However you cannot hold a reservation and be placed on the waiting list at the same time. When a cancellation is received the first person on the waiting list will be contacted and given the opportunity to pick up that launch.

- **Trip Permits** are issued at Hells Canyon Creek seven days per week during the Primary Season. Prior to the issuance of a trip permit, all members of a float party will receive a short orientation/education presentation from the Forest Service.
- **Confirmed reservations** will only be held until 4:00 p.m. PST on the assigned launch day. Reservations unclaimed after that time will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis by anyone waiting at the launch site.
- **Self-issue Permits** are required during the Secondary Season and are available at each river portal.

### **Scenic River Section (Pittsburg to Cache Creek)**

- Reservations needed Friday, Saturday, Sundays and Holidays during Primary Season
- 2 launches per day
- permits required year-round
- no non-motorized period
- 8 craft/24 people trip limit
- Launch Site: Pittsburg Landing and Dug bar
- **A state boat registration number is required on all float craft that will use kickers in the Scenic River.**

### **Rules of the Road**

- Please plan your assembly of boats and gear in such a manner as to clear the ramp area as quickly as possible.
- Craft traveling downstream, both powered and non-powered, generally have the right-of-way but don't have a right to intentionally block navigation.
- When you see a powerboat coming, if possible, pull to one side of the channel and let it by.
- Keep your float party together instead of strung out over a long distance on the river.

- Kickers (outboard engines) on float craft may not be used in the wild river year-round, but may be used in the scenic river.
- Fuel carried for kickers must remain on the boat at all times.
- On-river fueling must utilize fuel absorption material at all times during any fueling operations.
- Trip leaders are responsible for the conduct of the members of their party during the entire trip and each member is also accountable for their own conduct. **We strongly recommend that you and your party take time to watch the Whitewater Boating Safety and Etiquette video available for viewing at both the HCCL and Cache Creek.**

**Retrieval of overturned or wrecked boats, gear etc.  
is the responsibility of the boat owner.**

### **About the 4 Rivers Lottery**

The Snake River of Hells Canyon participates in the 4 Rivers Lottery Float Reservation System. Through an application process, The Main Salmon, Middle Fork of the Salmon, Selway and the Snake allocate launches for their Primary Seasons at a \$6.00 fee. Applications are available beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> and must be received no later than January 31<sup>st</sup>. In 2006 the application submissions became available on the website at: [www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/). However, any of the four offices still accept applications by mail. To request a lottery application, call the toll free number at **800-758-8067**.

Once the Lottery is run and launches have been allocated (early to mid February), we ask for confirmations by mid-March. Any unassigned, canceled or unconfirmed launches will then be allocated by telephone on a first-come, first-served basis. To find out the exact date to call in for available launches please contact the float reservation line at **509-758-1957**. Remember that we offer any launches to the first person on the waiting list and **you can be placed on the waiting list beginning the last Monday in February each year.**

## Other Important Information

- **The burning of wood in open fires - including fire pans - is prohibited annually from July 1 to September 15.**
- **Fire pans are required yearlong for anyone planning to have a campfire.** Campfires built in rock fire rings are no longer authorized. A fire pan must have sides 3"high to be adequate to contain all ashes and charcoal, which must be carried out with you. **The practice of cutting firewood for camp use is no longer allowed. Pack in your own fire wood.**
- **Public drinking water is not available at Hells Canyon Creek, Kirkwood Historic Ranch, or Cache Creek Ranch. Plan accordingly by carrying ample water supplies or purification equipment.**
- **Human waste must be carried out from river corridor. This equipment will be checked prior to launch.** Enclosed is a list of manufacturers of solid human waste carryout equipment or businesses, which have this equipment available for sale. Equipment that is compatible with disposal at an RV or trailer dump station is the most versatile when looking for approved, off-site disposal facilities. There are **SCAT Machines** for cleaning and sanitizing carryout equipment located at **Chief Looking Glass Park in Asotin, Washington** and the **Chevron station in Riggins, Idaho.**
- **Trash---Pack it in, pack it out!**

## Commercial/Non-Commercial Trip Status

A commercial trip is any trip for which consideration is paid, collected, received, or requested regardless of whether or not a profit is made. A non-commercial trip is a trip for which there is no payment, collection, receipt, or request for consideration.

## **Illegal Outfitting**

Illegal commercial outfitters using the river under the guise of being private boaters are stealing opportunities from the legitimate private sector, are not covered by insurance to protect their passengers, and may not be qualified to run safe trips. Floaters who use the river without a reservation or permit are also unfairly impacting the Canyon and could directly impact your recreation experience. Information resulting in convictions of illegal outfitters can lead to combined rewards of up to \$500.00.

## **Cultural Resources**

Hells Canyon is rich in both historic and prehistoric cultural resources. These sites are fragile and irreplaceable. Enjoy them but leave them intact for visitors who will follow you. All artifacts and cultural sites in the canyon are protected by law with severe penalties for violators.

## **Places to Visit during Your Trip**

**Kirkwood Ranch** offers a taste of canyon life in the 1930's. Visitors are welcome to stop at the museum and learn about ranching life in the canyon. A short  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile hike up Kirkwood Creek takes you to the Carter Mansion, an unusual vertical-log home built in 1920.

**Cache Creek Ranch**, is another location where visitors are welcome to take a break, picnic under the shade of the fruit orchard and visit the interpretive facilities. It is about one mile south of the Washington/Oregon border, 8.7 miles up river from Heller Bar. This ranch was purchased by the US Forest Service in 1991.

**Beware of natural hazards in the canyon.** Rattlesnakes, spiders, scorpions and poison oak and ivy are common in the canyon.

**Only one state's license is required to fish the river when the person fishing is in a boat that is afloat, even if the boat is tied to a particular side. However, when standing on the shore or having one foot on the shore you must have a fishing license for that state you have committed to.**

**Violations of Forest Service Regulations are punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or six months.**

**Hells Canyon National Recreation Area**, like many of the forests, parks and public resources you will visit this year, will be utilizing the services of volunteers at many sites and on the river in support of patrols and maintenance. When you travel through Hells Canyon, you will often be greeted by these host's whose purpose is to assist in making your visit a unique and special experience. They are dedicated to maintaining the resource and we appreciate their time and efforts and hope that you will enjoy the diversity this program brings to **Hells Canyon—truly, a work in progress.**

If you would like more information about our volunteer program, please contact the Riggins, Idaho office at 208-628-3916 or the Clarkston Washington office at 509-758-0616. We would be happy to assist you with any questions you may have and mail you an informative volunteer packet. You can also visit our website at [www.fs.fed.us/hellscanyon/](http://www.fs.fed.us/hellscanyon/).

**For more information about the surrounding areas contact any of the following Chamber of Commerce offices.**

Halfway  
PO Box 841  
Halway, OR 97834  
541.742.5722

Wallowa County  
115 Tejaka Lane  
Enterprise, Or 97834  
541.426.4622

Weiser  
309 Stare St.  
Weiser, I D 83672  
208.414.0452

Clarkston  
502 Bridge St.  
Clarkston, WA 99403  
509.758.7712

Whitebird  
PO Box 93  
Whitebird, I D 83546  
208.839.2499

Riggins  
PO Box 289  
Riggins, I D 83549  
208.628.3778

**Hells Canyon Creek Launch: 541.785.3395**