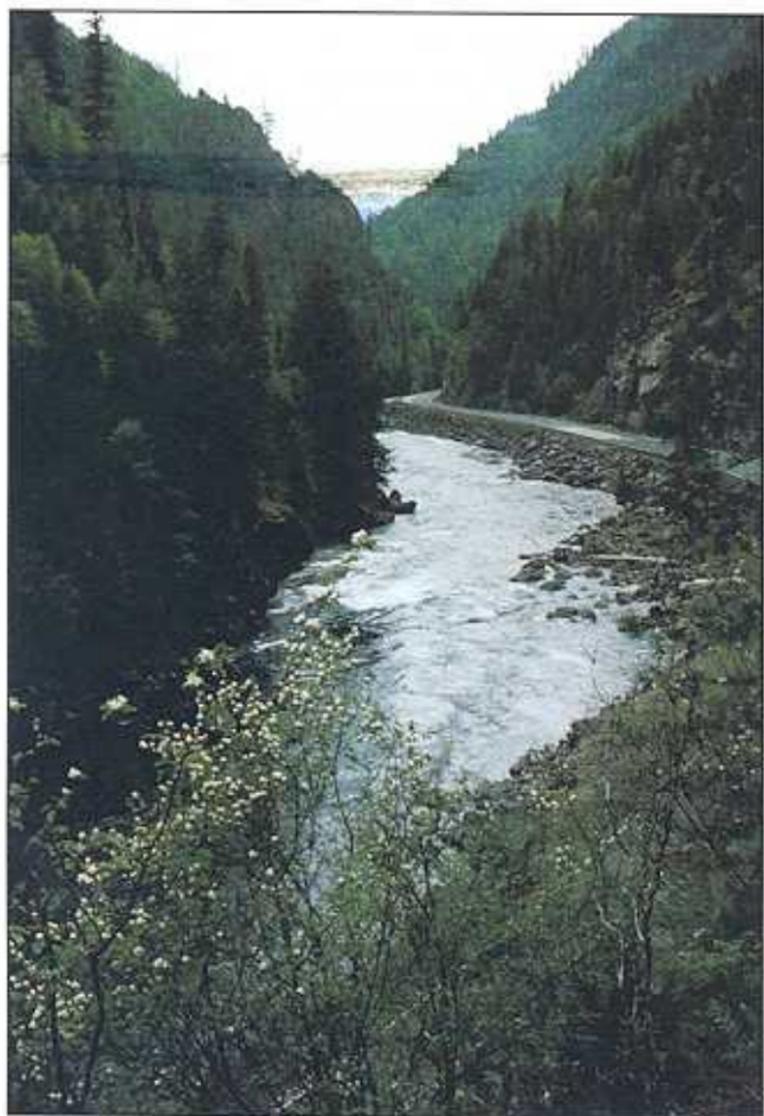


LOCHSA RIVER FLOATING GUIDE



THE RIVER AND YOU

Welcome to the Lochsa! You are about to experience one of the most exciting and challenging whitewater rivers of the Northwest.

As part of the Middle Fork Clearwater Wild and Scenic River system, the Lochsa, with "Recreation River" classification, is managed to protect fish and wildlife and to enhance recreation, scenic, and historic values that contribute to public use and enjoyment of its clear, free-flowing waters and associated environment.

The Lochsa is a hazardous river requiring skill and heavy duty equipment. If you have lightweight equipment, little experience, or are unsure of your ability to handle your craft in difficult conditions, you should not consider floating the Lochsa unless you are accompanied by competent, experienced guides.

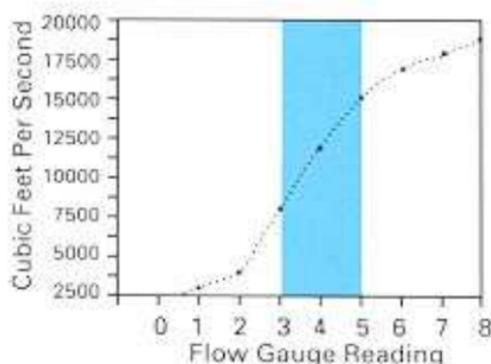
Because of the hazards, scouting the river is recommended prior to each float trip. U.S. Highway 12 parallels the Lochsa most of the way, although a few major rapids are not visible from the road.

The Forest Service has developed a number of river-access sites along the Lochsa. These sites are indicated on the river map. Undeveloped, unmarked, sites are also available.

The whitewater floating season normally extends from May through early July. The approximate river flow in cubic feet-per-second at various river levels is shown on the chart below. This chart corresponds to a gauge marked on the Lochsa River Bridge at Lowell (U.S. Highway 12, milepost 97).

Professional boatmen consider 3 to 5 feet on the Lowell Bridge gauge to be optimum floating level. Above 6 feet, runs are altered to avoid certain river sections or trips are cancelled. Below 2 feet, rocks begin to appear and some sections are difficult to float without dragging. Current river levels can be obtained by contacting the Lochsa Ranger Station at Kooskia, Idaho (208) 926-4275.

Lochsa
River
Discharge



Food, phone, gas, lodging, and camping are available at the small communities of Powell, Lowell, and Syringa. A medical quick-response unit is located at Lowell. Ambulance services are available at Kooskia, Powell, and Missoula, Montana. A medical rescue helicopter is available at Missoula, Montana. Small hospitals are located at Grangeville and Orofino, Idaho, and larger hospitals at Lewiston, Idaho, and Missoula, Montana.

RIVER CHARACTERISTICS

The Lochsa Wild and Scenic River can be best described in four sections based on floating characteristics.

SECTION ONE - Confluence of Crooked Fork Creek and White Sands Creek to Indian Grave Creek. Approximate floating time is 6-8 hours.

In this area, the river valley is wider and flatter than the other three sections. This section contains longer stretches of smooth water with fewer large rapids. Less technical maneuvering is required for floating this section. It is suitable for open boats, less experienced kayakers, and rafters.

At river levels of 4.5 feet or above, spray covers for open canoes and use of kayaks or inflatables are recommended. Levels of 6.0 feet are recommended only for expert kayakers and rafters, and extra safety precautions are needed.

SECTION TWO - Indian Grave Creek to Wilderness Gateway Campground Bridge. Approximate floating time is 5 hours.

This section contains large rapids requiring very technical maneuvering. It should be attempted only by skilled kayakers and rafters with good, heavy-duty equipment, using extra safety precautions. Water levels of 6.5 feet and above will find rapids running into each other, loss of eddies and pooling below major drops, and movement of dangerous debris down the river channel.

SECTION THREE - Wilderness Gateway Campground Bridge to Split Creek Pack Bridge. Approximate floating time is 4 hours.

This section contains some very large rapids, requiring less technical maneuvering than in Section Two. Rapids tend to be followed more by pools, allowing more time for rest and easier rescue. This area should be attempted only by experienced floaters with heavy duty equipment, using extra safety precautions.

At levels below 6.0 feet, eddies form behind rocks, and there are numerous bank eddies. The river is still quite "pushy" and recommended only for experts. Above 6.0 feet, there are few eddies, rapids run into each other, and tight maneuvering is required on some sharp bends. Rapids also form between rapids marked on the map.

SECTION FOUR - Split Creek Pack Bridge to Lowell. Approximate floating time is 6 hours.

In this section the river gradient begins to flatten out and the river valley widens. Intensity of the water begins to diminish. This section is used by experienced boatmen when high water levels prohibit floating other areas. Several large rapids must be noted, as they come up unexpectedly. Apart from the few large rapids, this section is suitable for less-experienced boatmen.

SAFE FLOATING

An enjoyable river experience requires a thorough knowledge of river conditions, proper equipment, and a realistic assessment of your ability to float the river safely. Run the river during the time when conditions are suitable for your equipment and skill level, or employ an outfitter/guide.

RAPIDS

Rapids are continually changing. Each year new boulders and driftwood tumble into the river. Immersed rocks roll and slide. The Lochsa can rise and fall quite quickly, altering the feasible routes through a rapid. This map is intended only as a guide. It is dangerous to rely solely on a map or any other river guide. Major rapids should be scouted in advance. Be alert for rapids and hazards that may not be indicated on the map. The guide does not attempt to show every danger. The Forest Service does not provide a regular patrol on this river and is not liable if you have an accident.

Rapids change constantly. Scouting the rapids for yourself prior to each trip is a must. Watch for rapids and other hazards that may not be included on the map. At water levels of 8 feet, stopping points are washed out, noted rapids change considerably, and most calm areas disappear.

LOG JAMS

Log jams must be expected anytime, anywhere, especially during higher flows. Water flowing under log jams creates turbulence that can easily trap a boat. Scout just before floating and give logs and log jams a wide berth.

HYPOTHERMIA

During the spring and early summer the weather is often cool, wet, and cloudy along the Lochsa. The Lochsa is fed by melting snow, and water temperatures remain in the mid 30s to low 40s even though the air temperature may be quite warm. The danger of hypothermia is always high. Use the 120 degree rule: if air temperature plus water temperature reading is less than 120 degrees, wear a wet suit. Floaters must be aware of prevention techniques, signs, and treatment of hypothermia.

GIARDIASIS

To prevent the intestinal disorder caused by the *Giardia lamblia* microorganisms, **never** drink untreated water. If untreated water must be used, heat to a full boil for 3 to 5 minutes, or use a filter approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for removal of giardia cysts.

LIFE JACKETS

Idaho State law requires that each person in a boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Floating the Lochsa without life jackets is like playing "Russian Roulette." Helmets and other safety equipment are also advisable.

SAFETY

The Lochsa is not regularly patrolled by the Forest Service or other agencies. It is a highly variable river that can change swiftly with weather conditions. Persons electing to float the river do so at their own risk and must recognize that they are solely responsible for assessing their skill level and the river conditions at the time of entry.

CAMPING

River users are encouraged to utilize developed national forest campgrounds to avoid degradation of natural sites along the river. Campgrounds may not be open prior to Memorial Day weekend. Contact Lochsa Ranger Station, Rt 1, Box 398, Kooskia, ID 83539, (208) 926-4275 for current information.

Campground	Location	Units	Fee	Water	Trailers/RV's
White Sands	FS Rd 368 E of Powell	6	No	No	Yes
Powell	Mile 167	39	Yes	Yes	Yes
White House	Mile 158.5	13	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wendover	Mile 158.2	27	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jerry Johnson	Mile 149	15	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wilderness Gateway	Mile 122.5	89	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knife Edge	Mile 108.5	5	No	No	Yes
Appar	Mile 104.3	7	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wild Goose	Mile 95.3	7	Yes	Yes	Yes

FISHING AND HUNTING

Trout fishing season generally opens in the Lochsa the last weekend in May. The Lochsa above Wilderness Gateway Bridge is catch-and-release fishing only. Except for spring bear, big-game seasons normally open in early October. Additional information may be obtained from the Idaho Department of Fish & Game, 1540 Warner, Lewiston, ID 83501, (208) 743-6502.

HIKING/BIKING

Hiking trails in the river vicinity are shown on the floating guide map. Additional information may be obtained from the Kooskia or Powell Ranger Stations. Wilderness access trails are closed to mechanized travel including trail bicycles. This includes most trails on the south side of the Lochsa River.

WILDLIFE

A variety of birds and animals may be viewed as you travel the Lochsa. Osprey frequently nest adjacent to the river and may be seen perched atop their large nests of sticks or flying over the water, diving for fish. Mountain goats can be spotted on the steeper rocky cliffs although field glasses may be needed to see them. The glossy black raven, blue/black Steller's jay and a wide variety of song birds, as well as deer, bear, elk, moose and cougar, call the Lochsa their home. During spring and early summer, Harlequin ducks may be seen rearing their families on the Lochsa before traveling back to their winter home on the Pacific coast. Please take care not to harass or disturb wildlife.

RAPID RATING

The International Scale for grading rapid difficulty has been used for rating the Lochsa. The ratings indicate the difficulty of each rapid at water levels between approximately 5 and 8 feet on the Lowell Bridge gauge (10,000 to 18,000 CFS). Ratings were determined by an experienced boatman studying the Lochsa River during the whitewater season of 1982. Commercial and private boatmen familiar with the Lochsa were consulted during the study. The opinions of those making the study may differ from yours.

CLASS I - VERY EASY - Small regular waves and riffles, few or no obstacles, little maneuvering required.

CLASS II - EASY - Small waves with some eddies, low ledges and slow rock gardens; some maneuvering required.

CLASS III - MEDIUM - Numerous waves that are high and irregular, strong eddies; narrow but clear passages that require expertise in maneuvering; scouting from the shore necessary.

CLASS IV - DIFFICULT - Long rapids with powerful, irregular waves; dangerous rocks and boiling eddies; precise maneuvering and scouting from the shore imperative; take all possible safety precautions.

CLASS V - VERY DIFFICULT - Long rapids with wild turbulence and extremely congested routes that require complex maneuvering; a danger to your life and boat and near limits of navigation.

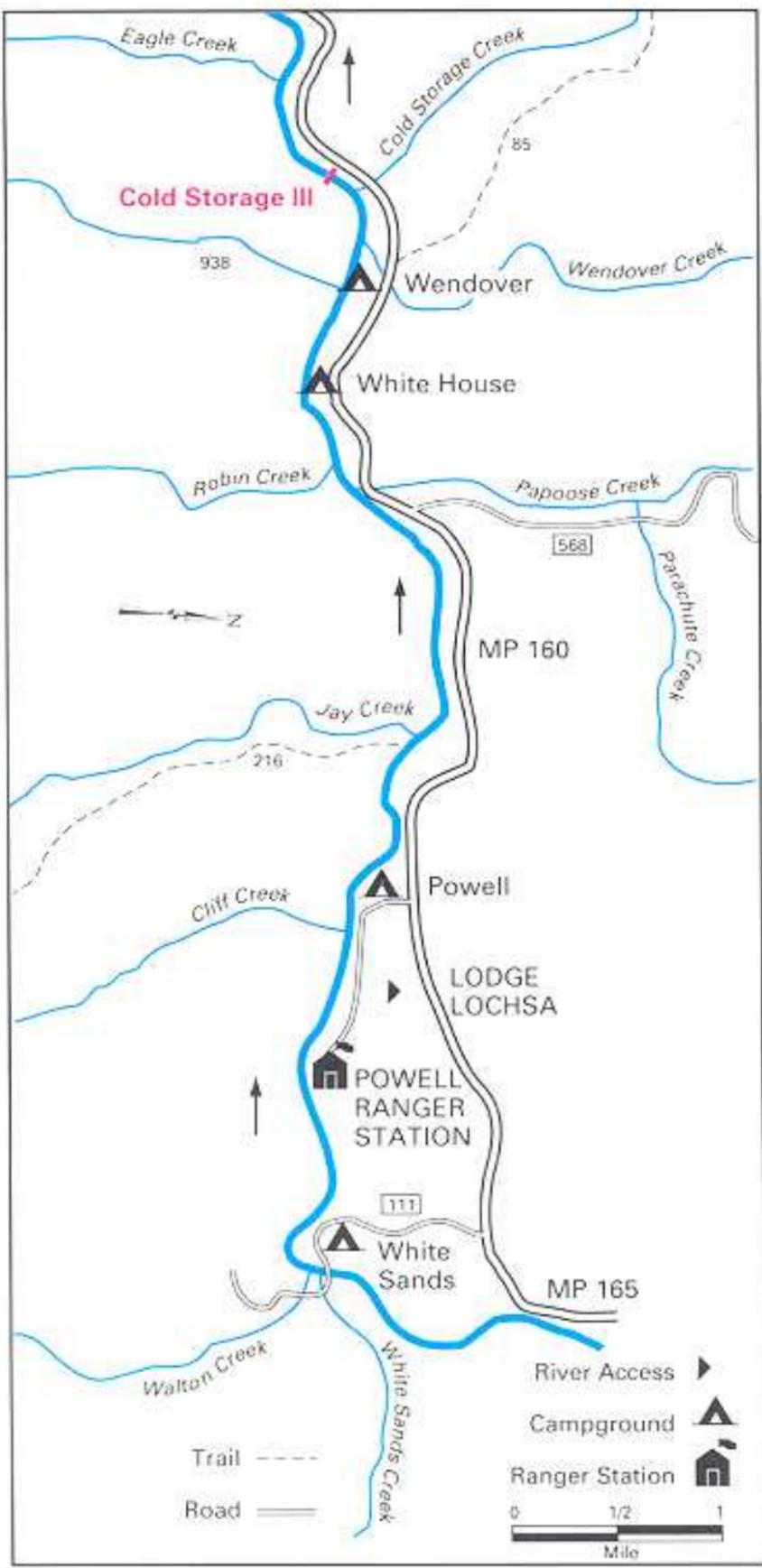
CLASS VI - THE LIMITS OF NAVIGATION - Rarely run; a definite hazard to your life.

You may obtain information about professional guides by contacting the following:

Idaho Dept. of Parks & Recreation
State of Idaho
Statehouse Mail
Boise, ID 83720

Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board
State House
Boise, ID 83720

Hwy 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
157.6 ↑	Cold Storage - River valley narrows, following a gravel bar island, to form the first rapid requiring maneuvering. Straightforward at most levels; second part more difficult.	III
158.2 ↑	Wendover Campground - 27 Units - Fee Camping	
158.5 ↑	White House Campground - 13 Units - Fee Camping	
161.8 ↑	Powell Campground - 29 Units - Fee Camping	
161.8 ↑	Powell Ranger Station	
163.4 ↑	White Sands Campground - 6 Units - Fee Camping (Begin River Section One)	



SECTION ONE

WITHOUT A TRACE

The greatest threat to the quality of the river environment is associated with the activities of users—litter, pollution, fire, campsite development, and noise. Thoughtful attention by everyone can go a long way toward alleviating the negative effects caused by user activities.

PLANNING

Plan to use developed campgrounds rather than impacting natural sites along the river. If you do camp at an undeveloped site, please carefully adhere to the following standards:

FIRES

Use of a self-contained stove is preferable. If you must have a fire, use a fire pan. Keep your fire small and do not construct rings of rocks around the fire. Use only small wood and let the fire burn itself out. When ashes are cold, pick them up and remove with the rest of your trash. Always be careful with fire.

VEGETATION

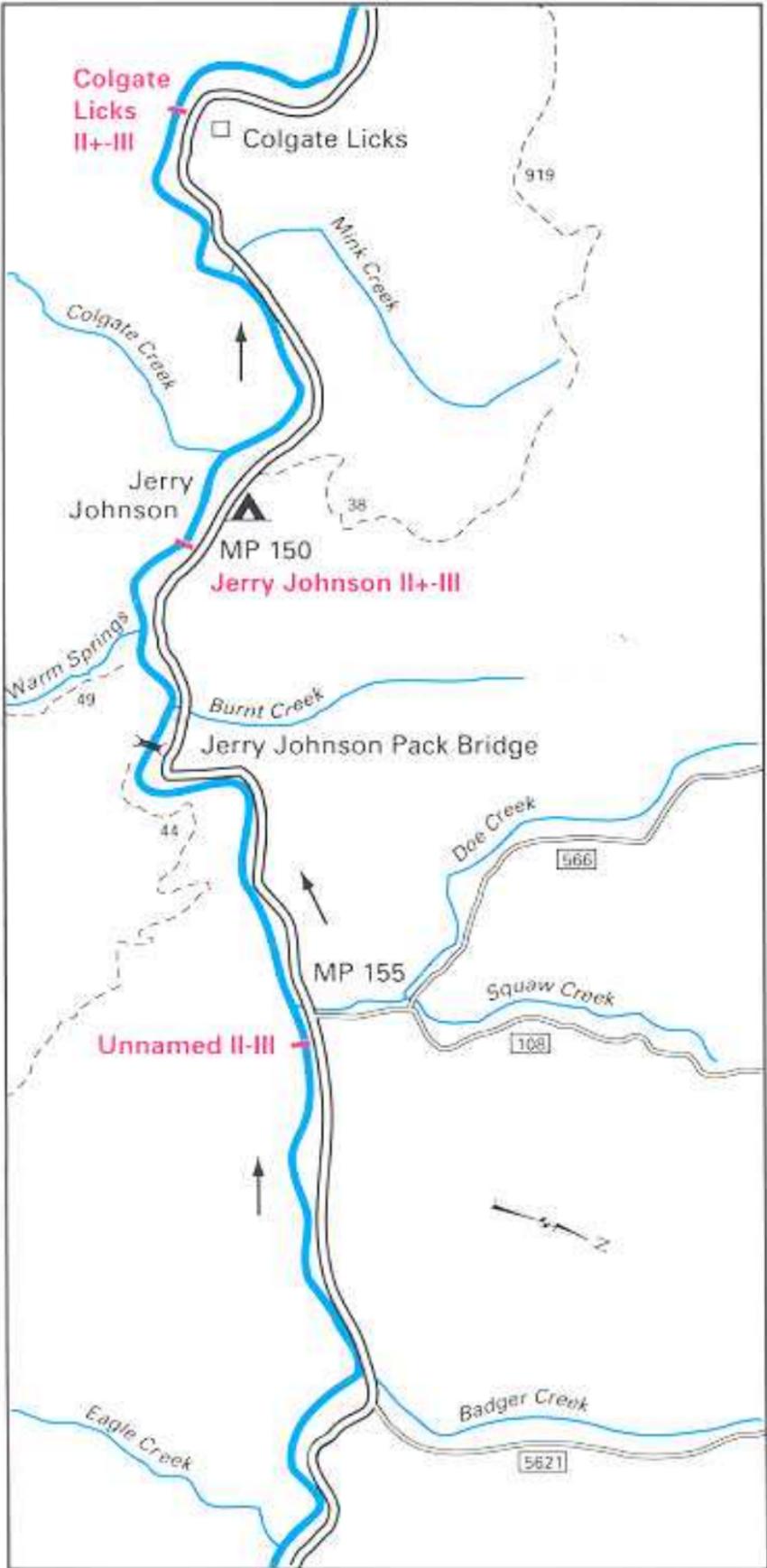
Please respect the vegetation. Do not dig trenches, chop trees, clear brush, trample meadows, pick flowers.

The lower Lochsa River environment, termed "coastal disjunct" is quite unlike the surrounding area. Some 15 plant species not normally found east of the Cascade Mountains grow along the Lochsa. Major Fern Picnic Area/ National Recreation Trail is dedicated to interpreting this unique environment. The nature trail, located adjacent to the Lochsa River at highway milemarker 107.8, is approximately 1/2 mile in length and identifies many of the coastal plants.



Osprey
(*Pandion haliaetus*)

Hwy 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
148.3 ↑	Colgate Licks - River constricts and increases in gradient. Straightforward with some maneuvering on slightly sweeping bends.	II-III
149.0 ↑	Jerry Johnson Campground - 15 Units - Fee Camping	
151.0 ↑	Jerry Johnson - Just below Warm Springs Creek. River constricts in a sweeping right turn. Fairly straight rapid.	II-III
155.2 ↑	Unnamed - Large waves, straight shot, few obstacles.	II-III



SECTION ONE (cont.)

WITHOUT A TRACE (CONT.)

SANITATION

Please help preserve the quality of the water and river shore. Wash at least 100 feet from the river and use only biodegradable soap. Utilize restrooms at campgrounds or launch sites, or pack out human waste. Strain waste water to remove food scraps. Dispose of waste water at least 100 feet from the river.

CAMPSITES

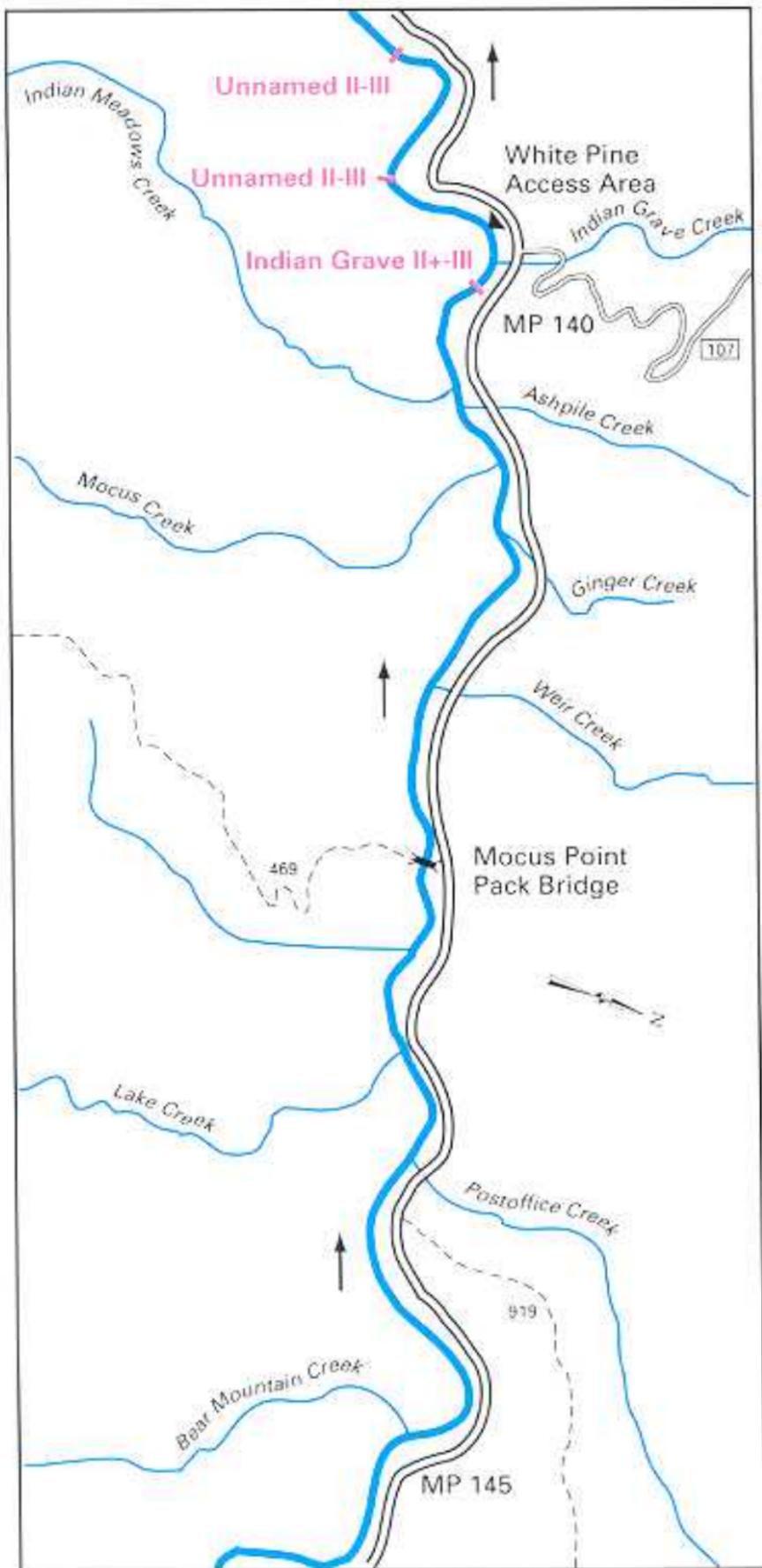
Naturalize the area when you break camp. Pick up all litter (including those often forgotten bits of foil and cigarette butts), scatter any unused firewood, and return any logs or rocks to their original locations.

Remember... **PACK IT IN - PACK IT OUT!**



Lochsa River Rafting by Mel Fowlkes

Hwy. 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
138.5 ↑	Unnamed - Short rapid that discharges into a large pool.	II-III
139.3 ↑	Unnamed - River constricts, forming rapid that discharges into a pool.	II-III
139.5 ↑	White Pine - Developed River Access	
139.8 ↑	Indian Grave - Indian Grave Creek enters on right on an outside bend (Begin River Section Two)	II+ - III

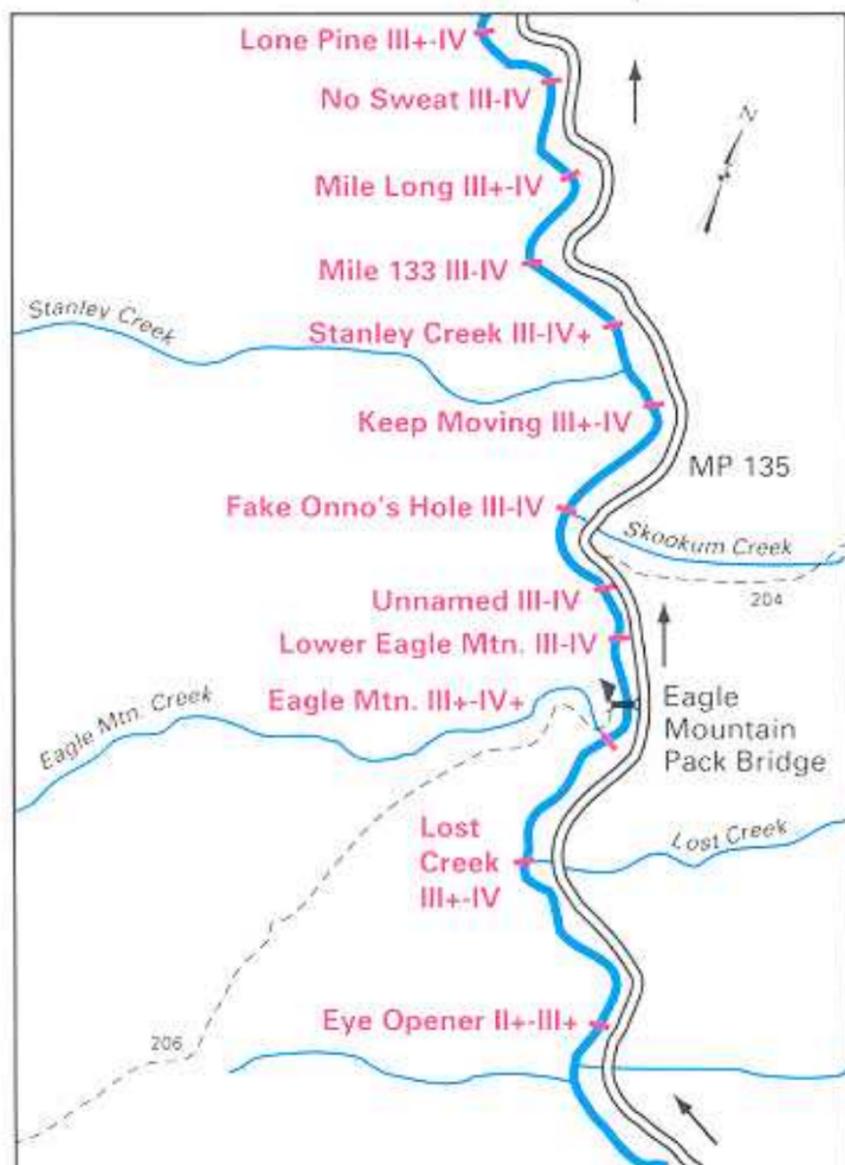


SECTION ONE (cont.)

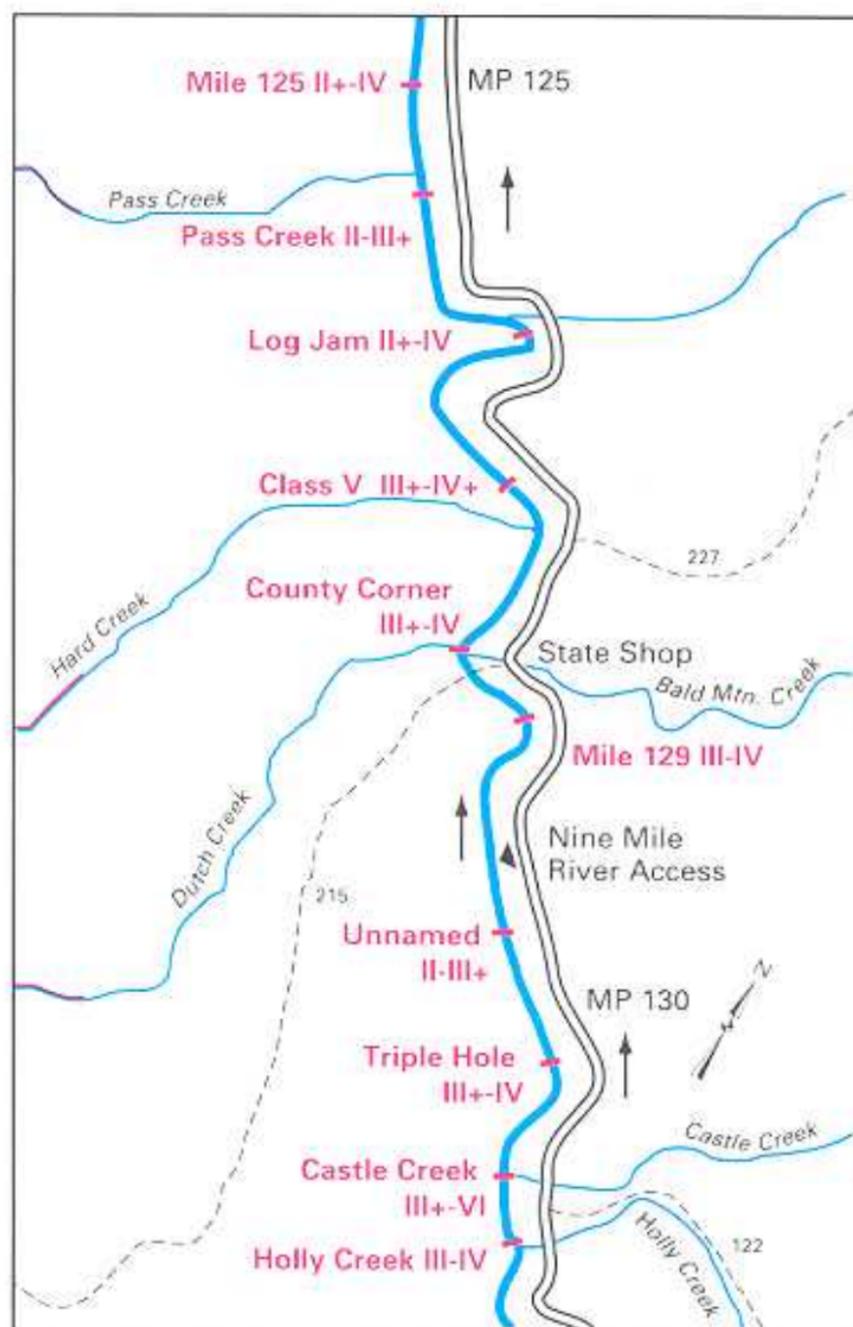
Hwy 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
131.6 ↑	Lone Pine - Identified by the lone ponderosa pine on the butte above river right. Ugly holes, runs tight left and center. Worth scouting!	III+IV
132.0 ↑	No Sweat - Sweeping left-turning rapid, some holes left and right at high water. Rocks exposed at lower level. Center clear.	III-IV
132.6 ↑	Mile Long - 1/2 mile of sweeping left-turning rapid marked by two large rocks at top with fast-moving water along left shore.	III+ - IV
132.9 ↑	Mile 133 Rapid - Right-turning rapid. Features change with water level changes.	III-IV
133.5 ↑	Stanley Creek - Low water holes become large pushy waves on a tight left turn at high water. Pours over rocks at bottom right. One of the more pushy rapids on the river at high water. Stanley Creek enters above river left.	III-IV+
134 ↑	Keep Moving - 1/2 mile of twisting water that continues to just above Stanley Creek.	III+ - IV
134.5 ↑	Fake Onno's Hole - Short intense rapid with a large hole at bottom right. This is a must-scout rapid, tight run with serious consequences.	III-IV
135.1 ↑	Unnamed - Straight shot rapid which appears at higher water levels.	II-IV
135.3 ↑	Lower Eagle Mtn. - Some holes, breaking, curling waves that change with water level.	III-IV
135.5 ↑	Eagle Mountain - Located at Eagle Mountain Pack Bridge. Major rapid requiring maneuvering and avoidance of rocks and powerful holes.	III+ - IV
136.3 ↑	Lost Creek - Major rapid on sweeping right turn, requires much maneuvering at all levels, long and continuous with holes, bottom half blind, stay to inside.	III+ - IV+
137.4 ↑	Eye Opener - Large rapid with large waves and maneuvering required. Long and continuous.	II+ - III+



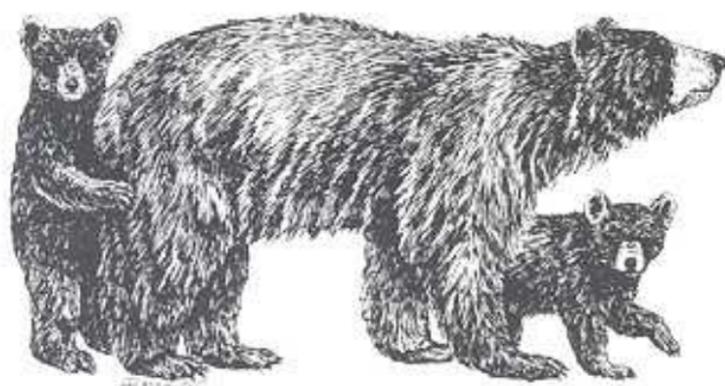
Elk
(*Cervus elaphus*)



Hwy 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
125.0 ↑	Mile 125 Rapid - At high water, an exciting rapid with large curling and standing waves continuing around a small bend in the river. Flattens out at lower water levels.	II+ - IV
125.5 ↑	Pass Creek Rapid - Straight shot with fast water. Flattens out at lower levels.	II - III+
126.7 ↑	Log Jam - Identified by the large pile of logs piled on the face of the island at the bottom of the rapid. A sharp left turning rapid that doesn't reveal itself until one is committed. At high water, the log jam blocks the right half of the channel.	III+ - IV+
127.9 ↑	Class V - Long, continuous rapid on a sweeping left turn. Identified by large boulders at top right. Continues for 1/2 mile. Large waves and pushy current down left channel.	III+ - IV+
128.5 ↑	County Corner (Highway Station) - Sweeping right turn identified by presence of Highway Dept. building. Contains large standing waves at bottom of rapid. Pushy maneuvering at top at high water.	III - IV
129.0 ↑	Nine Mile River Access	
129.0 ↑	Mile 129 - (Undeveloped River Access) - Straight shot with waves becoming holes and rocks at lower levels. Empties into Class 2 water below.	III - IV
129.4 ↑	Unnamed - Sweeping wide open stretch has rapids that form at high water.	II - III
130.3 ↑	Triple Hole - A relatively short rapid whose features change considerably at various water levels. No sound description except to heed the name. Rapid occurs on a tight left corner below Castle Creek.	III+ - IV
131.2 ↑	Castle Creek - Probably the largest, most technical rapid on the river. A long, twisting rapid whose 1/2-mile length is not totally observable from the water at any one time. Large holes become large waves at high water, and everything pillows left off a huge block of bedrock at the bottom of the rapid. Considered un-runnable at high flows. Must scout! (Cannot be seen from the highway.)	III+ - VI
131.3 ↑	Holly Creek - Marked by large piece of bedrock lying across side of river. Rock forms huge hole at high water and forces the water to pillow off to the right at lower levels. Short rapid.	III - IV



SECTION TWO (cont.)

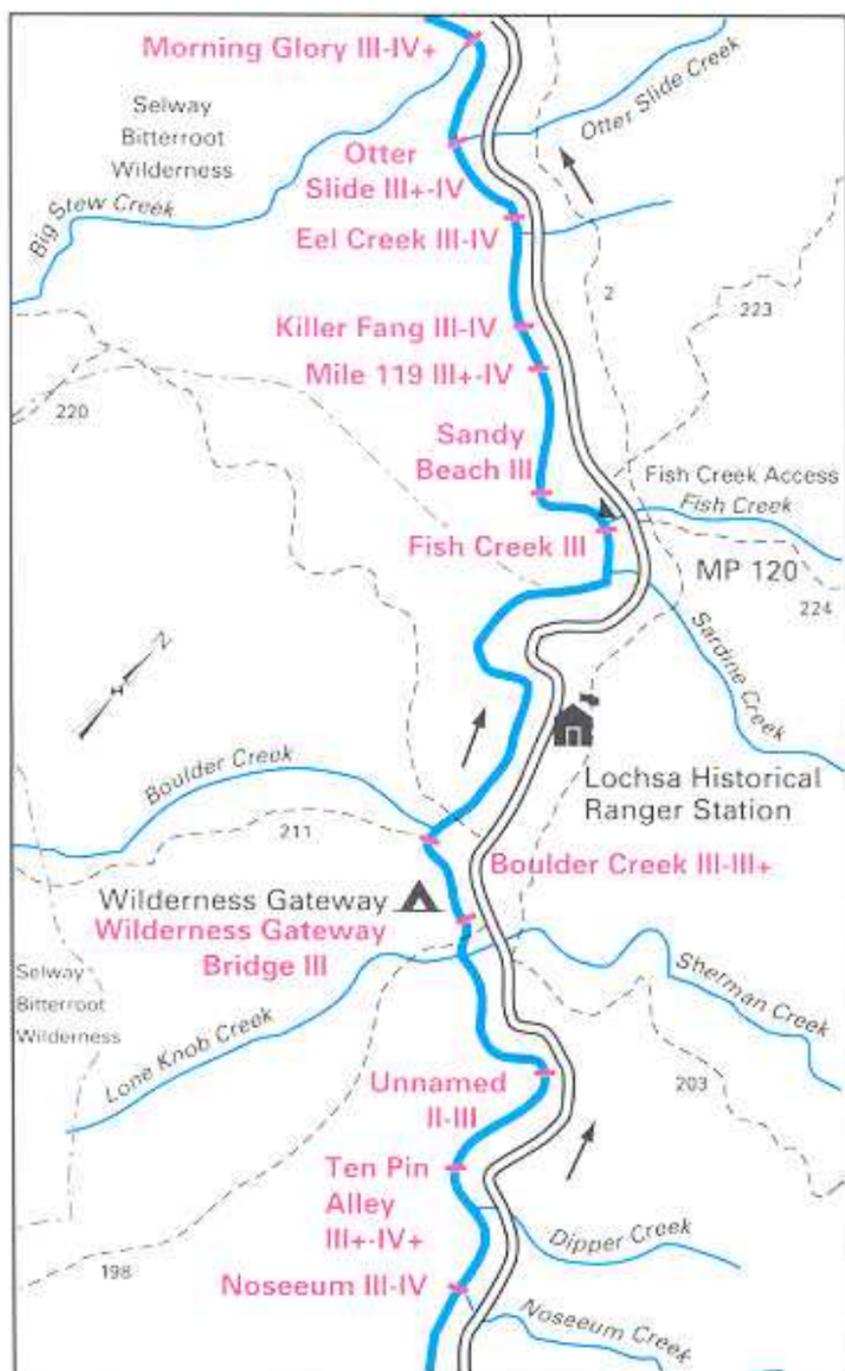


Black Bear
(*Ursus americanus*)

Hwy. 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
117.7 ↑	Morning Glory - Hard left corner pushes water to outside of turn at high water. Low water chute down left is a fast ride with a big hole at the bottom.	III-IV+
118.1 ↑	Otter Slide - Straight forward rapid whose low-water holes become high water waves.	III+ -IV
118.8 ↑	Eel Creek Rapid - Straight shot with some breaking waves at higher levels.	III-III+
119.1 ↑	Killer Fang Falls - Two large rocks on river left become holes, hydraulics, then huge crashing waves as water rises. Shear rock on left with sneak on right at most levels.	III-IV
119.2 ↑	Mile 119 Rapid - Short rapid with a variety of features at varying water levels. Usually has large waves.	III+-IV
119.8 ↑	Sandy Beach - Popular playing spot at lower water levels. Around sharp right bend next to sandy beach.	III+
120.0 ↑	Fish Creek River Access	
120.0 ↑	Fish Creek - Long, wide open, twisting rapid with three parts and a major wave segment at the bottom around a left turn.	III+
121.5 ↑	Lochsa Historical Ranger Station	
122.0 ↑	Boulder Creek Rapid - River maintains Class III character in a wide, open, twisting rapid. (Begin River Section Three)	III-III+
122.5 ↑	Wilderness Gateway Campground - 89 Units - Fee Camping	
122.6 ↑	Wilderness Gateway Bridge - Rapid twists and turns, requiring maneuvering at all levels. Identified by bridge at head of rapid.	III
123.5 ↑	Unnamed - Minor rapid on left. Turning bend requires some maneuvering.	II-III
124.1 ↑	Ten Pin Alley - One of the more technical and larger rapids on the river. Occurring on a sharp right bend. Numerous routes and problems. Scouting from right shore advised. Not much room between river and highway. Caution a must when scouting.	III+ - IV+
124.7 ↑	No-See-Um - Huge high-water rapid. As wake levels start to drop, it is as its name implies: "No-See-Um." No-See-Um Creek enters on river right.	II-IV



Steller's Jay
(*Cyanocitta stelleri*)



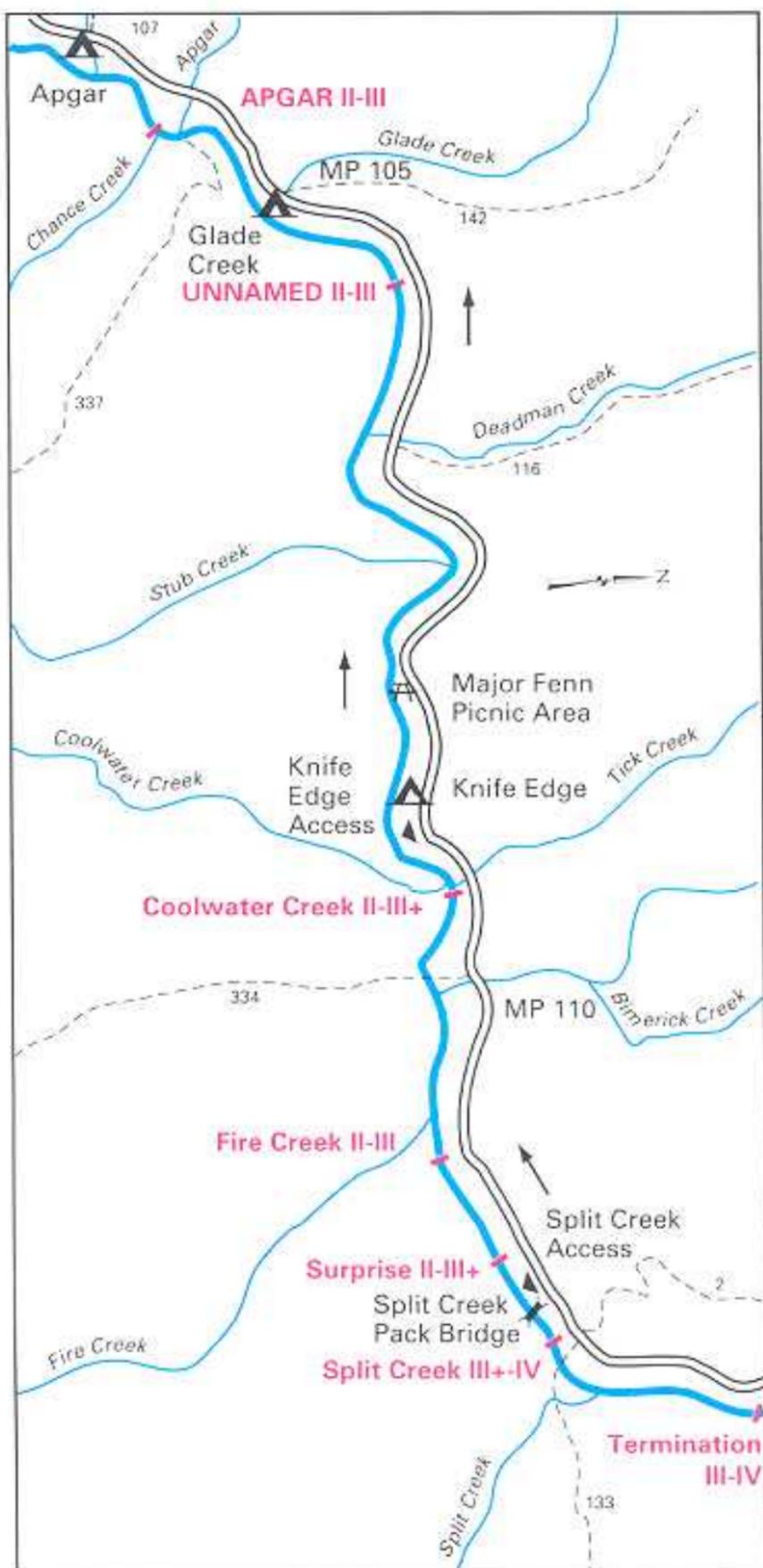
Hwy. 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION Name & Description	Rating
113.4 ↑	Old Man - Straightforward rapid. Some holes and obstacles left and right. Old Man Creek enters river left.	III-IV
113.6 ↑	Pipeline (Surfin' Wave) - Large waves, good for surfing, pop-ups, and playing. Straight run.	III-IV
113.9 ↑	Picking Up The Pieces - Continuous series of waves with few obstructions. Grows as water level increases.	III-IV
114.1 ↑	Lochsa Falls (Big Drop) - A very short rapid with a falls-like vertical drop. Left-side ledge becomes a large pour-over then a crashing wave at higher levels. Right-side tongue is navigable at most levels. A popular viewing spot and landmark.	III+ - IV+
114.3 ↑	Prelude - At higher levels curling and breaking waves continue in to the next rapid. This rapid begins to disappear at lower levels.	III-IV
114.8 ↑	Horsetail Falls - Rocks begin to emerge making this a technical drop at lower water and a mix-master of side currents at higher levels.	III+-IV
115.1 ↑	Jones's Waves - Chains of waves that increase in size with rising water levels. Can cause problems at higher levels due to side action.	III-IV+
115.4 ↑	Shoestring Falls - Big waves at high water give way to smaller, more technical drop at lower levels.	III-IV+
115.7 ↑	Cliffside - Under mossy granite cliffs. Washes out at higher levels. Surfing waves at lower levels.	III-III+
116.0 ↑	Grim Reaper - Changeable rapid with varying features. Pushy water with lots of side action and a big pour-over on the bottom left. More technical at lower levels.	III+ - IV+
116.6 ↑	Bloody Mary - Big waves and an occasional hole. Watch for pour-over on right shore.	III-IV
117.0 ↑	House Wave (House Rock) - Big hole at water level forms one of the largest waves on the river at high water. Backed by a series of waves.	III-IV



SECTION THREE (cont.)



Hwy 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
104.3 ↑	Apgar Campground - 7 Units - Fee Camping	
104.4 ↑	Apgar Rapid - Below Apgar Campground. Appears as water level drops. Straightforward, few obstacles.	II-III
104.9 ↑	Glade Creek Campground - 4 units - group camping, reservations only.	
105.9 ↑	Unnamed - Some maneuvering required in breaking waves.	II-III
107.8 ↑	Major Fenn Picnic Area and National Recreation Trail - 1/2 mile trail interpreting Lochsa River environment.	
108.5 ↑	Knife Edge Campground - Developed River Access - 5 Units - No Fee	
109.4 ↑	Coolwater Creek - Breaking and curling waves on a left-hand bend require some maneuvering. Rapid becomes fairly straightforward at lower water.	II-III+
110.7 ↑	Fire Creek - Straightforward rapid. Fire Creek enters river left.	II-III
111.0 ↑	Surprise (Mile 111) - Short, intense rapid that drops into a large pool. Large rocks and some holes at low water give way to large waves at high water.	III+
111.4 ↑	Split Creek Pack Bridge River Access (Begin River Section Four)	
111.7 ↑	Split Creek - Large waves and holes left and right with a route down the middle at most levels. Holes can be quite deceiving, hiding behind waves.	III+ IV
112.8 ↑	Termination - Rapid terminates against a cliff at the bottom. Usually no trouble avoiding it although the large V wave is quite pushy at high water.	III-IV

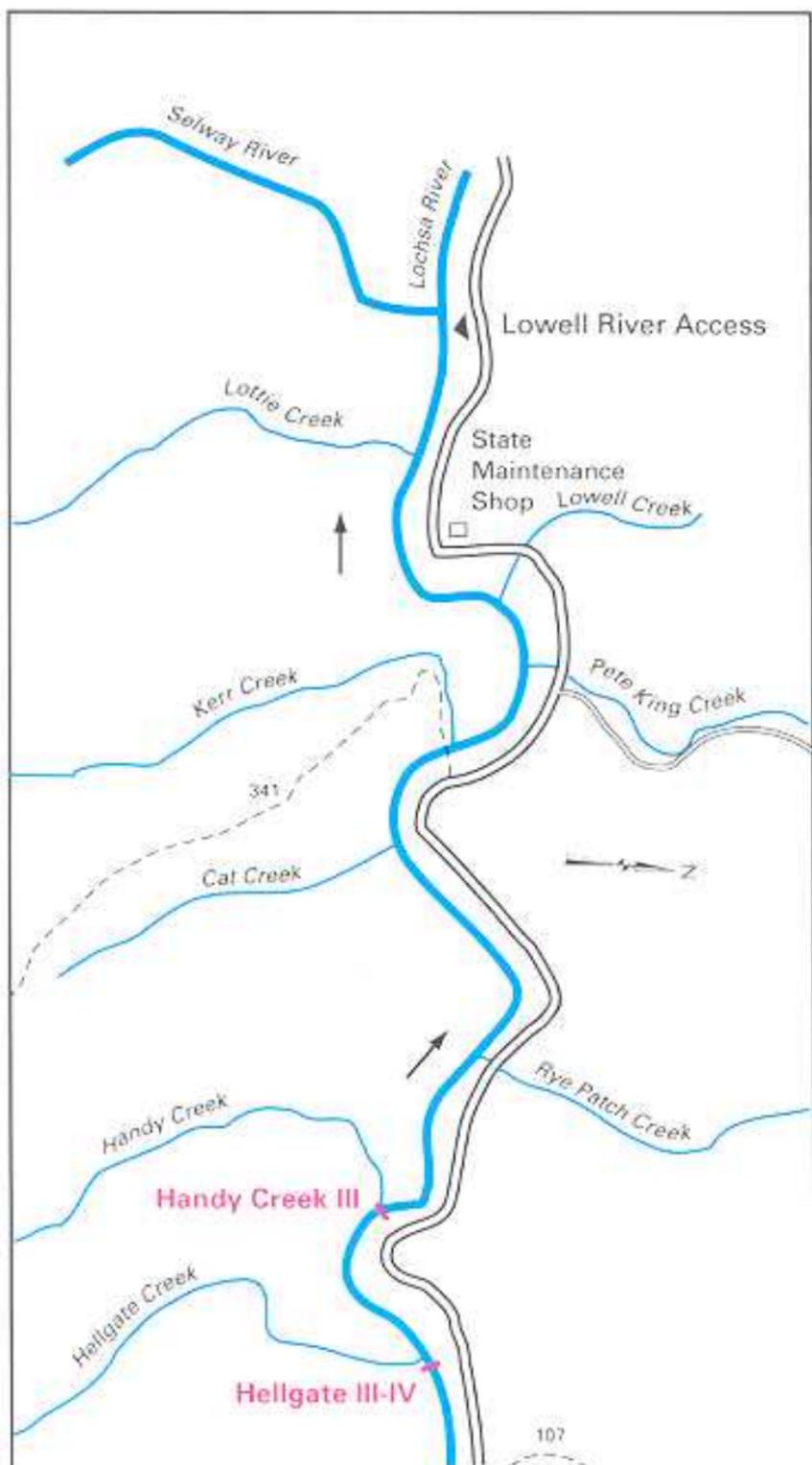


SECTION THREE (cont.) and SECTION FOUR

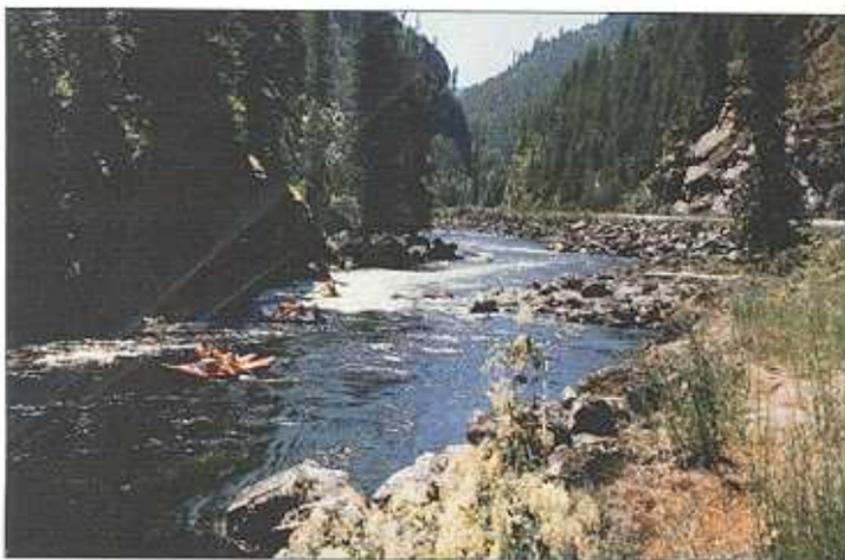
Hwy 12 Road Mile	RAPIDS DESCRIPTION	
	Name & Description	Rating
102.0 ↑	To Lowell - Most of the river below is a wide open and gentle gradient with few obstructions and little maneuvering required. This is a good section for less-experienced boaters and smaller craft.	
102.3 ↑	Handy Creek - Appears at lower levels. Located on left turn. Straight shot.	III
103.2 ↑	Hellgate - The largest rapid in Section 4. Somewhat unexpected after the relatively calm water in the rest of this section. The large pour-over forming rock on river left is usually noticeable, but in right tongue there is a hidden hole capable of flipping large rafts and trapping smaller craft. Portage on right is easy, as is scouting.	III-IV



Andy Opler at the "Pipeline" by Lisa Gelczis



SECTION FOUR (cont.)



Lochsa River by Mel Fowlkes

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kooskia Ranger Station
Rt. 1, Box 398
Kooskia, ID 83539
(208) 926-4275

Powell Ranger Station
Lolo, MT 59847
(208) 942-3113

Clearwater National Forest
12730 Highway 12
Orofino, ID 83544
(208) 476-4541

HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED YOUR LOCHSA RIVER EXPERIENCE!

Emergency services may be obtained through the Idaho County Sheriff's Office, (800) 922-9141 or 208-983-1100.



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