



**NEWS
RELEASE**

United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
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May 12, 2008

Five River Camps not available on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River

Fires that burned into the Middle Fork of the Salmon River corridor last year impacted several of the river camps. A total of 16 camps were impacted by fires in 2007, leaving behind burned trees that have been weakened and are at a higher risk of falling in high winds or wet conditions.

Forest Service crews will be tackling the challenge of assessing campsite conditions and using the minimum tool evaluation process to determine the appropriate management actions to mitigate hazards within the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness.

The assessment and mitigation of hazards requires special skills and knowledge, according to Middle Fork District Ranger Tom Montoya. “Our personnel will focus on clearing as many camps as possible to keep the maximum number of camps available with the limited number of people available to do this technically difficult work,” commented Ranger Montoya.

Because of hazardous conditions, five camps are not considered “reasonably safe” for the 2008 season and will not be assigned to floaters on the Middle Fork. These five camps are:

- Lake Creek – Mile 14.9
- Johns Camp – Mile 15.2
- Greyhound – Mile 15.9
- Dome Hole – Mile 15.9
- Horsetail – Mile 52.7

The first four camps were burned by the Monumental Fire, which created a large number of hazardous conditions in these camps. Removing all of these hazards would take a significant amount of time, reducing the number of other camps that Forest Service crews could treat. In assessing the number of hazards that may have to be mitigated, Salmon-Challis National Forest Supervisor Bill Wood has decided to let those four camps in the upper section of the river be shaped by natural forces, and reassessed for next season.

The fifth camp, Horsetail, is a seldom-used camp that was burned by the Red Bluff Fire. The area near this camp was significantly burned, especially the drainage around the camp, which puts the camp at high risk of a blow-out during any localized rain events.

The four camps in the upper section of the river are large, heavily used camps, and the temporary loss of these four sites will impact all boaters. Launch site personnel may need to restrict, or even eliminate, layovers in the upper stretch of the river, and trip leaders will be asked to take the smallest camp possible for their group. Boaters may need to do a very long or very short first day on the river. Some camps, such as Trail Flat, Sheepeater, Fire Island and Dolly Lake, may be shared by smaller groups if their combined numbers total 30 people or less.

“Not having these four large camps available to us for the 2008 float season will not be easy, and I ask that all boaters work with the launch site personnel to make this season a successful one. I do not want to reduce the number of campsites available to our floaters, but logistically, I need to focus our resources to keep as many camps open as possible. To that end, I am targeting the less-damaged camps as the first priority for our crews to clear of hazards,” stated Ranger Montoya.

Until, and even after, the assessment of campsites is done, boaters should be heads-up when selecting their tent and kitchen sites. As always, be alert for possible hazards in all river camps and any other sites along the river.