

Grand Teton

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway

National Park
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Moose, Wyoming 83012
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Floating the Snake River



"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. In or out of 'em, it doesn't matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don't; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get

anywhere at all, you're always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you've done it there's always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you'd much better not. Look here! If you've really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?"

Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind In The Willows*

General Information

Floating the Snake River offers a chance to experience an outstanding natural area. Flowing west from its source in the Teton Wilderness, the river enters Yellowstone National Park, then flows south through the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway, and into Jackson Lake in Grand Teton National Park. Regaining its free-flowing character at the Jackson Lake Dam, the river winds through the park.

The Snake is a complex river to float. The beauty and lack of whitewater often lull floaters into inattentiveness. A tangle of channels and constant shifting of logjams

present difficulties found on few whitewater rivers. Accidents occur often. Use caution whenever you float.

Information on flow rates and additional caution areas are posted at river landings, visitor centers, the Rockefeller Parkway Ranger Station and the Buffalo Fork Ranger Station. Reports are updated weekly or whenever significant change in river conditions occur. Even boaters frequently floating the Snake should check conditions before every trip, as the river can change overnight. River flow varies greatly throughout the summer. Water

depths average 2 to 3 feet, but exceed 10 feet in a few locations. Boulders and bottom irregularities cause standing waves up to 3 feet high. Typically, spring flows will be muddy, extremely cold, and very high, increasing the difficulty of all river sections. As snowmelt diminishes, volume decreases and waters clear. In spite of reduced flow, the current stays deceptively strong. Logjams and tight turns remain. Always set up maneuvers well in advance and make decisions early. Take into consideration traditionally strong upstream winds, especially when canoeing.

River Etiquette

The quality of float trips depends largely on the wildness of the river. The very presence of other boaters threatens this quality. Help preserve the tranquility of the river scene. Reduce congestion at landings by preparing craft away from launch slips. Launch when other boats are out of sight, and maintain this interval throughout the trip. Excessive noise disrupts the solitude others seek. Silence is especially important when passing wildlife. When encountering other boaters and anglers, respect their rights by steering clear of their boats and lines.

Important Information

Rangers regularly patrol the river during the summer. Patrol boats carry first aid gear and two-way radios. If you have any questions or need assistance, contact the River Patrol Rangers. Information and assistance are available year-round at the Moose Visitor Center and in summer (May through September) at the Buffalo Fork Ranger Station in Moran, the Rockefeller Parkway Ranger Station at Flagg Ranch and the Colter Bay Visitor Center.

Equipment should include an extra paddle or oar, a waterproof container with extra clothes, a first aid kit and a waste receptacle. Attach all gear securely. Inflatable

boats should have an air pump, bucket for bailing and patch kit.

Do not drink the water unless you boil or treat it first. Swimming in the river is not recommended.

For information on Snake River flows, call 1-800-658-5771; internet address "http://wyoming.usgs.gov/rt/cgi/gen_tbl_pg" For information on floating the Snake outside the park contact: Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, Box E, Jackson, WY 83001 307-733-3316; or Bridger-Teton National Forest, Box 1888, Jackson, WY 83001 307-739-5500 or 739-5417.

Regulations

Detailed boating regulations are available at visitor centers and ranger stations. Regulations include:

- All vessels must carry a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) properly fitted for each person on board.
- A park permit is required for each boat. Permits may be purchased at Colter Bay, Buffalo Fork, Rockefeller Parkway and Moose Ranger Stations. For non-motorized craft the cost is \$5.00 for a 7-day permit and \$10.00 for an annual permit. The permit must be prominently displayed on the craft.
- Boating under the influence of intoxicants or narcotic drugs is prohibited.
- Inner tubes, air mattresses, float tubes and similar flotation devices are prohibited on the river. Unreliable maneuverability make these craft unsafe.

- Motors and pets are prohibited on the river. Motors may be used on Jackson Lake, but a motorized boat permit is required.
- Camping and fires are prohibited along the river.
- Floating is prohibited on all rivers in the park and parkway except the Snake River. The Snake River bottom is closed to floating and public entry each year from December 15 to April 1. Floating is prohibited within 1000 feet of Jackson Lake Dam. Floating is not allowed on the Snake River in Yellowstone National Park.
- A concession permit is required for all commercial activity in the parks.
- Any boating accident involving a collision or casualty must be reported to a ranger station within 24 hours.
- All trash must be packed out.

Wildlife

- Do not approach or disturb large animals, such as bears, moose and bison.
- Several bald eagles nest near the main channel. To protect this threatened species, nest areas are closed to river bank use.
- Ospreys and great blue herons nest near the Snake River. Do not stop near nests as these birds are also susceptible to disturbance while nesting.





Please note the skill level listed after the location of each trip.

Jackson Lake Dam to Cattleman's Bridge
Cattleman's Bridge to Pacific Creek
Beginner These stretches provide scenic views, calmer water and the fewest obstructions. When flow rates exceed 5,000 cfs, there is a portage at Cattleman's Bridge. Fast water at the Pacific Creek landing requires boaters to land their craft in quiet waters about 100 yards upstream from the actual landing.

Pacific Creek to Deadman's Bar
Intermediate More difficult than the preceding section, this stretch of river drops significantly, increasing the current. Braided channels make route-finding difficult and require more skill. Boating experience on lakes has proven to be of little help to river runners on the Snake.

Flag Ranch to Lizard Creek Campground
Intermediate The braided channel makes route-finding a challenge. After the Snake River winds through the Rockefeller Parkway for 6 miles, it flows into Jackson Lake. During the remaining 4 miles on the lake, the predominant southwest winds can be moderate to strong and strenuous rowing or paddling is required. Afternoon thunderstorms and strong lake winds can produce high waves that can swamp rafts and canoes. Motorized craft are prohibited on the river; however, motors can be carried on vessels and used on Jackson Lake.

Deadman's Bar to Moose Landing
Advanced Most river accidents occur on this section, the most challenging stretch of the river in the park. The river drops more steeply, with faster flows than in other sections south of Pacific Creek, giving boaters very little time to maneuver their craft. Complex braiding obscures the main channel. Strong current can sweep boaters into side channels blocked by logjams.

Moose to South Park Boundary
Advanced This section of the river is as difficult as the preceding section. Fast moving water, braiding, channel selection, logjams and route finding require advanced boating skills. The park boundary extends 5 miles downriver of Moose on the west bank and 2 miles downriver on the east bank; there is no take out or access to the river at the park boundary. The next take out is at Wilson, 12 miles downstream from Moose.

Southgate to Flag Ranch
Advanced Southgate Launch is 1/2-mile south of the South Entrance of Yellowstone National Park. The river slopes steeply and the narrow riverway provides challenging whitewater for rafts and kayaks. In spring, increased water volume creates large standing waves, haystacks, laterals and large holes capable of flipping rafts. It can be scouted by walking the canyon rim trail along the west bank of the river. During flows greater than 4000 cfs, the whitewater rapids are Class III and are not recommended for canoes. Below 4000 cfs, only canoeists with advanced white water skills should attempt this section.

Mileages

Southgate Launch to Flag Ranch	3.0
Flag Ranch to Lizard Creek Campground	10.0
Jackson Lake Dam to Cattleman's Bridge	2.0
Cattleman's Bridge to Pacific Creek	3.0
Pacific Creek to Deadman's Bar	10.5
Deadman's Bar to Moose Landing	10.0
Moose to Wilson	12.0