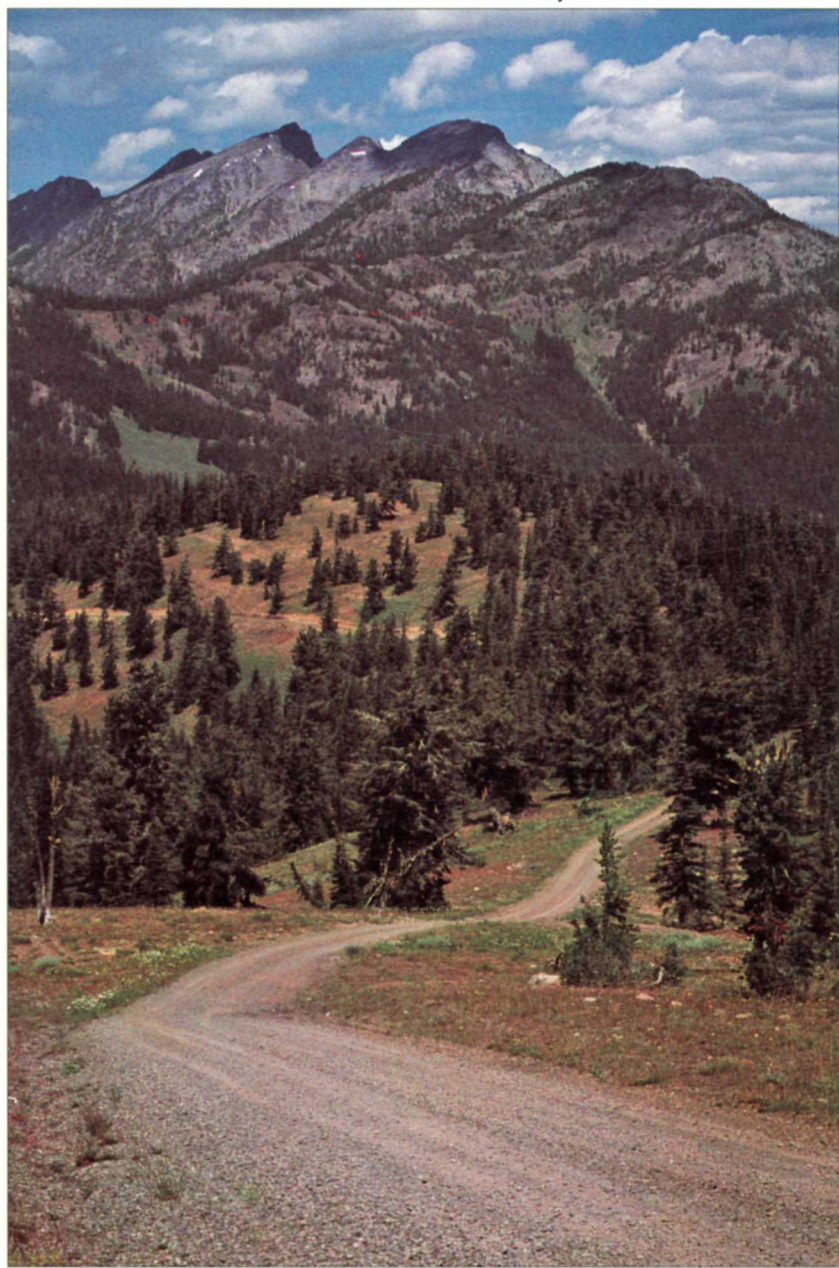


ROAD TRIPS

Methow Valley Recreation Guide



Welcome

From rough, dusty logging tracks to modest two-lane paved routes, the Okanogan National Forest has more than 2,500 miles of roads.

There is beauty along every forest route. The ten scenic drives described in this booklet are the very best road trips of the Okanogan National Forest.

Enjoy!

CHECKLIST

- Radiator, brakes, oil, and gas
- Drinking water, extra food
- Warm clothes and matches
- Someone at home knows the route and return time
- Map with current forest road numbers
- Shovel and axe
- First aid kit

ROAD SIGNS

Most forest roads are identified by a number which is on a small sign or flat, brown plastic stake near the start of the road. The markers are sometimes turned sideways, so they might be hard to spot at first. Main roads have a two-digit number, secondary roads a four-digit number that includes the number of the main road they branch off of. Any roads that branch from the secondary roads are identified by another three digits, usually 100, 200, 300, etc. For example, Road 5130-100 is a more primitive route that branches off Road 5130, which itself is a branch of Road 51. In the route description it would just be called Road 100. Confused? Just follow the route descriptions and watch for slender brown markers or small signs on posts.

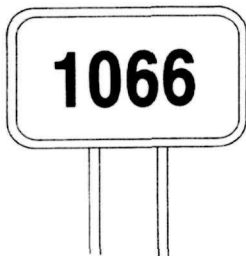


Table of Contents

Trip Name	Page
Mazama Area	
Hart's Pass	2
Mazama Overlook	4
Winthrop Area	
Sweetgrass Butte	6
Rendezvous	8
Chewuch	10
Lone Frank	14
Blue Buck	16
Twisp Area	
Buttermilk	18
Twisp River	20
Starvation Mountain	22
General Map	12
Driving Tips	24
Addresses and Phone Numbers	25

NOTE: The maps do not show all the roads and junctions. Use an Okanogan National Forest map for details.

This electronic edition should be used for *historical purposes only* as conditions may have changed since it was published.

Hart's Pass

72 miles round trip
Allow 5 hours

There just aren't many drives in the United States like this one. The route isn't the easiest, but the payoff, weather permitting, is a view of the North Cascades you'll remember the rest of your life. The approach is a relaxing tour up the Methow River past the towering cliffs of Goat Wall and the lower reaches of clear mountain streams. For the last 15 miles, the road is narrow and the climb is steady, first up the side of Last Chance Point, then up the high-sided valley of Rattlesnake Creek. The pass is named for Colonel Hart, who built the first bumpy wagon road through it and beyond to the gold mines in the next valley. Drive three miles past the small ranger station at Hart's Pass through flower-filled slopes to 7,440-foot-high Slate Peak.

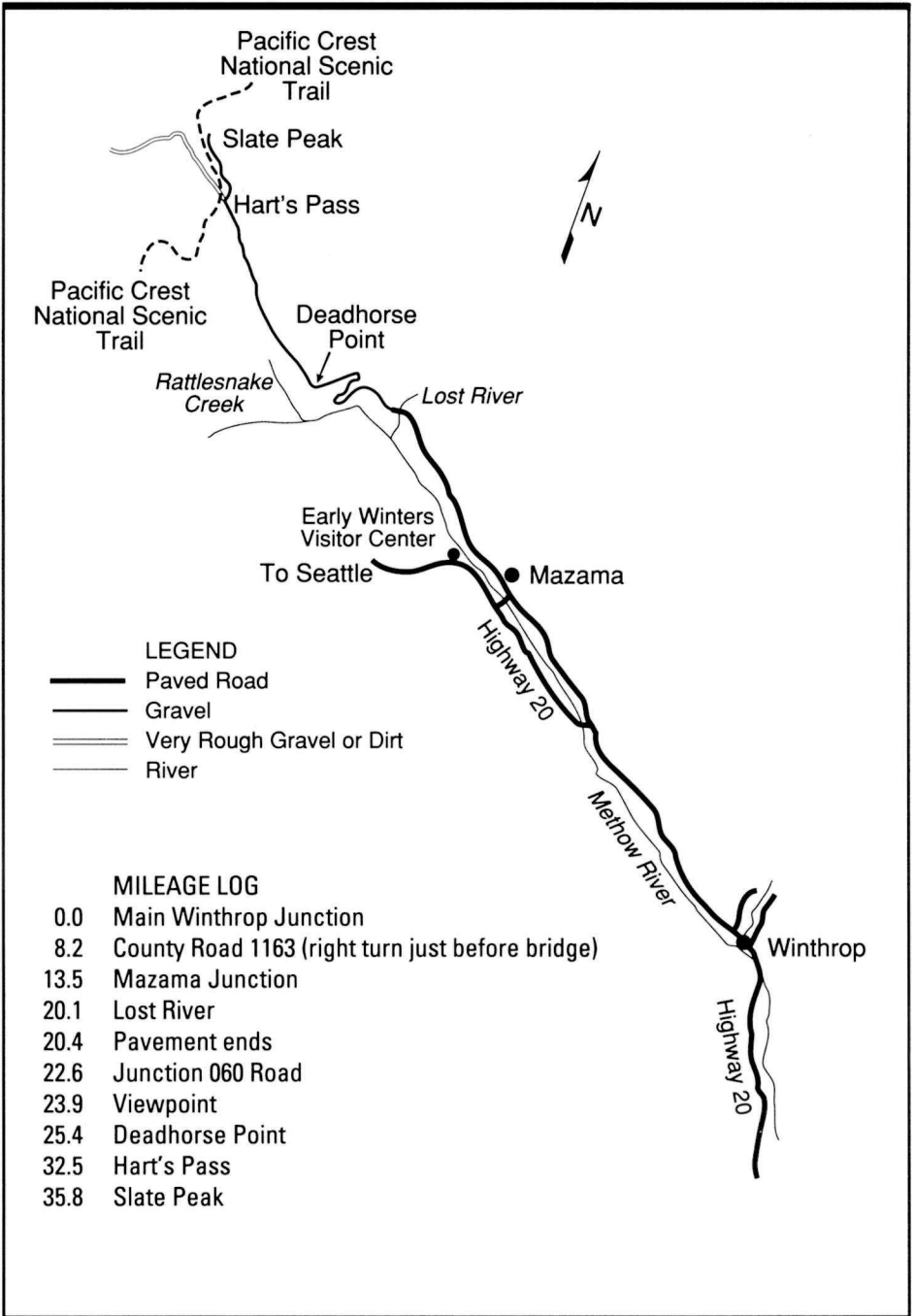
DIRECTIONS: From Winthrop, head west on Highway 20 for 8.2 miles and turn right (just before the bridge) on to the Goat Creek road. Follow this road to the one-store town of Mazama. (Don't cross back over to Highway 20 just before Mazama). Head past the store and follow this same road to the end of the pavement at Lost River, and into the national forest. Just past Ballard Campground, the route bears right and the climb begins. Be mentally prepared for the sheer cliff at Deadhorse Point. At Hart's Pass, bear right again past the little ranger station and up to Slate Peak.

BEST TIME: Mid-July through September. The road is normally maintained by late July, but is passable sooner.

PRECAUTIONS: Hundreds of passenger cars get to Hart's Pass each year, but the road is narrow, steep and bumpy. Go slowly and expect another vehicle around every turn. You may also meet a large truck hauling horses—give them lots of room to slow down and let them pass on the **inside** if at all possible. No trailers are allowed on Hart's Pass Road.

HIGHLIGHTS: 360° "top of the world" view of the Cascades. Highest road in the state. Crosses the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Deadhorse Point—breathtaking section of road across sheer cliff.





Mazama Overlook

The most prominent landform in the upper Methow Valley is Goat Wall, a furrowed, granite cliff that rises nearly straight up for 2500 feet. Glacial ice created the wall by grinding down the valley sides for thousands of years. This drive takes you to the top, where you'll find a view that stretches all the way from Winthrop to the peaks of two wilderness areas. At the center of the panorama is Sandy Butte, the bulky, timbered hill proposed as a major downhill ski area and the focus of a long lasting controversy. Two alternate return routes offer either a gentle tour through valley-bottom timber or a more adventurous circuit deeper into the national forest and up over another 5000' pass.



DESCRIPTION: From Winthrop head west on Highway 20 toward Mazama. At the bridge 8.2 miles from town,

turn right onto the county road (**don't** cross the bridge) and continue 3.3 miles to another right turn on to Forest Road 52. Follow the signs toward Goat Peak Lookout, turning left onto Road 5225 at the junction. Continue following the lookout signs but stop short at the unsigned but obvious overlook. (The fire lookout is a longer drive and a hefty hike.)

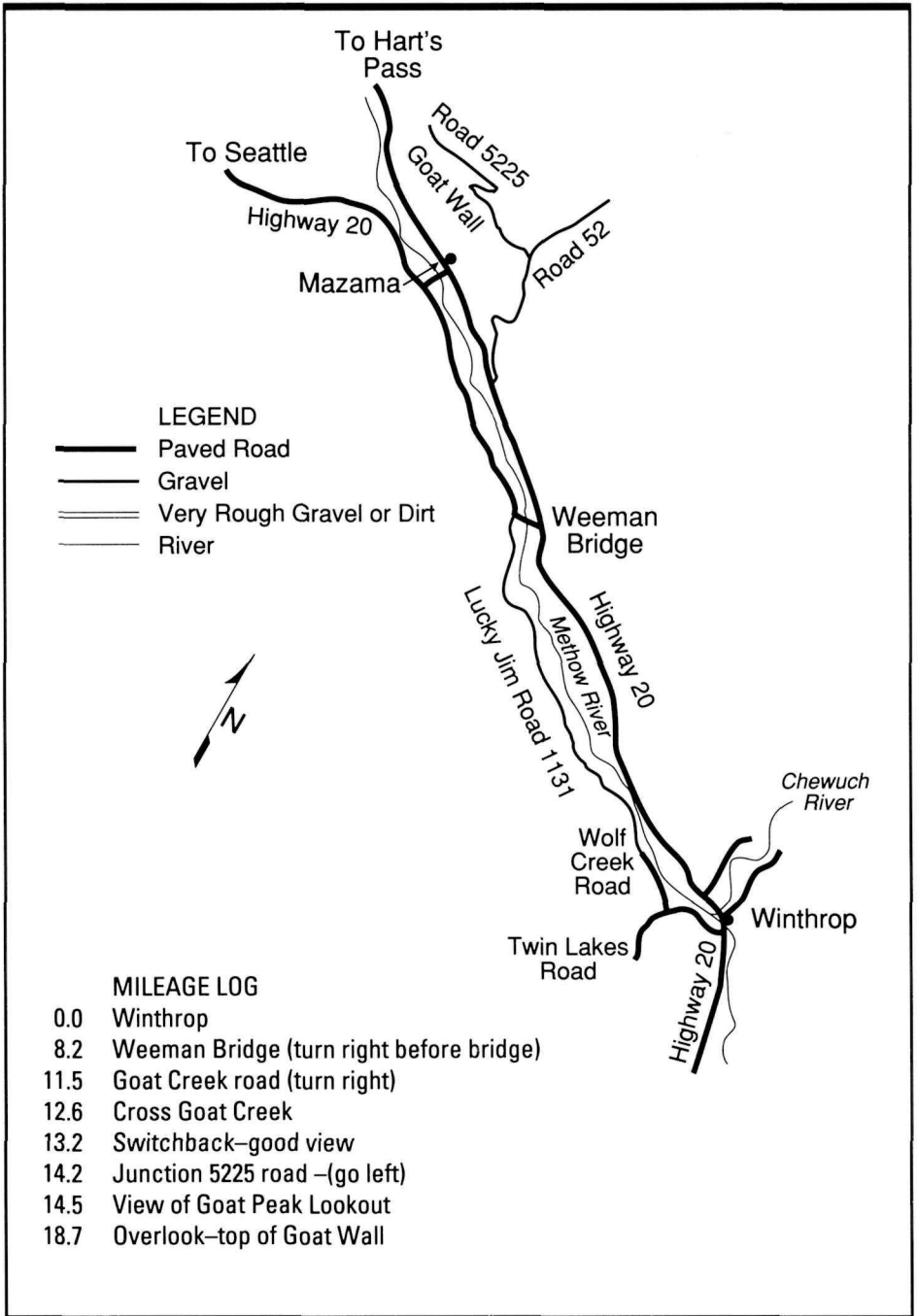
To return, head back to Highway 20, this time turning right across the bridge, and then left in a mile or so onto the Wolf Cr. Road which leads all the way back to Winthrop.

Alternate return: Go back down to Road 52 and turn left. Follow this road up and eventually across Goat Creek, up through Banker Pass, and down through the forests of Cub Creek to pavement again and a junction with a county road. (Take an Okanogan Forest map.) Turn right to get back to town.

BEST TIME: June through October. Best light is in the morning, when it comes from behind the overlook toward the peaks you see.

PRECAUTIONS: Watch for log trucks or bicycles as well as other sight-seers. Parts of these forest roads also tend to be washboarded.

HIGHLIGHTS: One-of-a-kind view of the upper Methow Valley.



Sweetgrass Butte

45 miles round trip
Allow 3-1/2 hours

The Sweetgrass name came from the early days of sheep grazing, probably from a rider pleased with the abundant forage he found on the summit. Sweetgrass Butte, once the site of a fire lookout, is carpeted with wildflowers during June and July and offers a tremendous 360 degree view of surrounding peaks and rolling lowlands. Part of the view is also into one of the more timber productive parts of the forest, where the differences between old and new logging practices can be picked out.

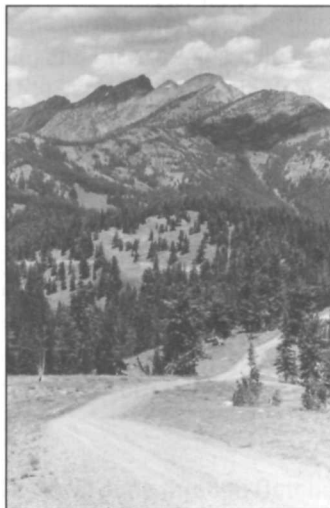
The equipment on top of the butte is for relaying radio signals between the ranger station and the backcountry. Rangers far back in the mountains, many of them alone, rely on it to keep in contact. Electricity to run the equipment comes from the sun.

Sweetgrass Butte is great for an evening picnic, but take a jacket. Things cool off quickly as the sun sets.

DIRECTIONS: From Winthrop, head west on Highway 20. Just outside town, turn right up the hill past the ranger station on the West Chewuch Road. In 5.9 miles, turn left and up the hill on the Cub Creek Road. At the junction another 7.4 miles further (the pavement ends and the road becomes Forest Road 52 before you get there) turn right towards Sweetgrass Butte and then quickly left, again towards the butte and Cub Pass. At

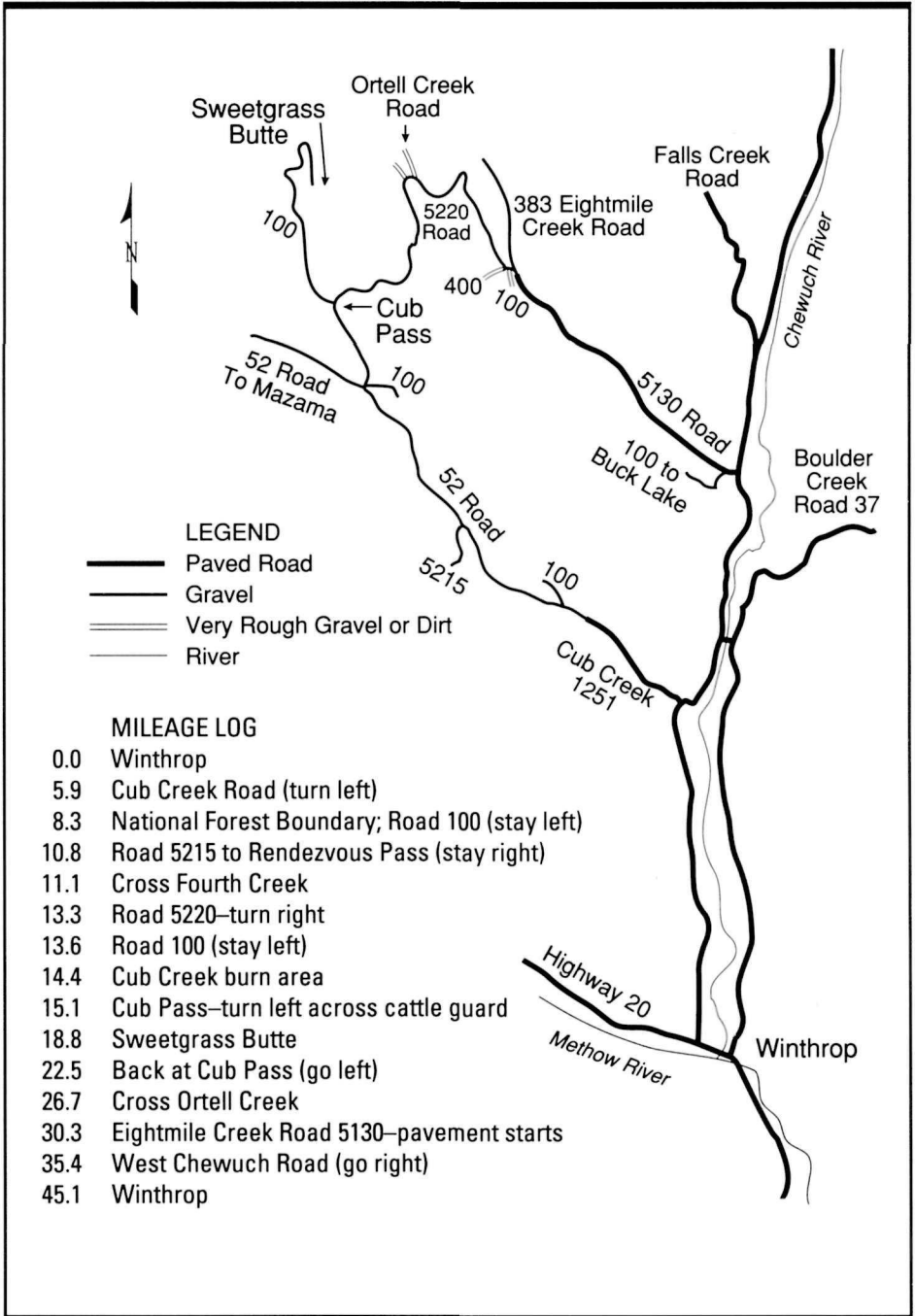
Cub Pass (surrounded by an old forest fire), go left across the cattle guard and up to the 6104-foot summit.

To return, head back down to Cub Pass and turn left on Road 5220. This will lead you down through the forest to the paved road along Eightmile Creek. Turn right. All the way down at the main Chewuch River Road, turn right again to get back to town.



BEST TIME: Anytime except winter. There are flowers in spring, cool temperatures in mid-summer, and great fall colors in October. Morning has the best light for photographs and views.

HIGHLIGHTS: The outstanding view from the butte. The old Cub Creek burn area. Room to stroll or hike on or near the summit.



Rendezvous

28 miles round trip
Allow 3 hours

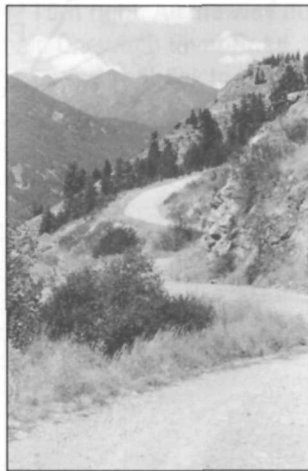
Guy Waring, the starchy, Boston-bred pillar of the young town of Winthrop, planted an apple orchard in the dry hills northwest of town and named it Land Five. To Waring's dismay, the orchard perished in the heat of the Methow summers—except for a few hardy trees which can still be seen .

The Forest Service's Frank Burge Seed Orchard, a little further along the way, has been more successful. Here pine and fir trees are beginning to grow seeds for future forests. The orchard trees are the offspring of "superior trees," often seen along road trip routes, marked with paint and collared with bands to keep squirrels from stealing the cones.

If these highlights don't interest you, then the views might. They are wide and pastoral, with many good openings down to the valley floor, and tend to change all day long as the light shifts.

DIRECTIONS: The route begins and ends in Winthrop. From the center of town, start out on Highway 20 west. Just out of town, across from the red "Barn" turn up the hill on the Chewuch River Road past the ranger station. A mile or so farther, make a left onto the dusty Rendezvous Road. Climb up into a wide bowl and bear left again at the first intersection. The road winds through grassy hills

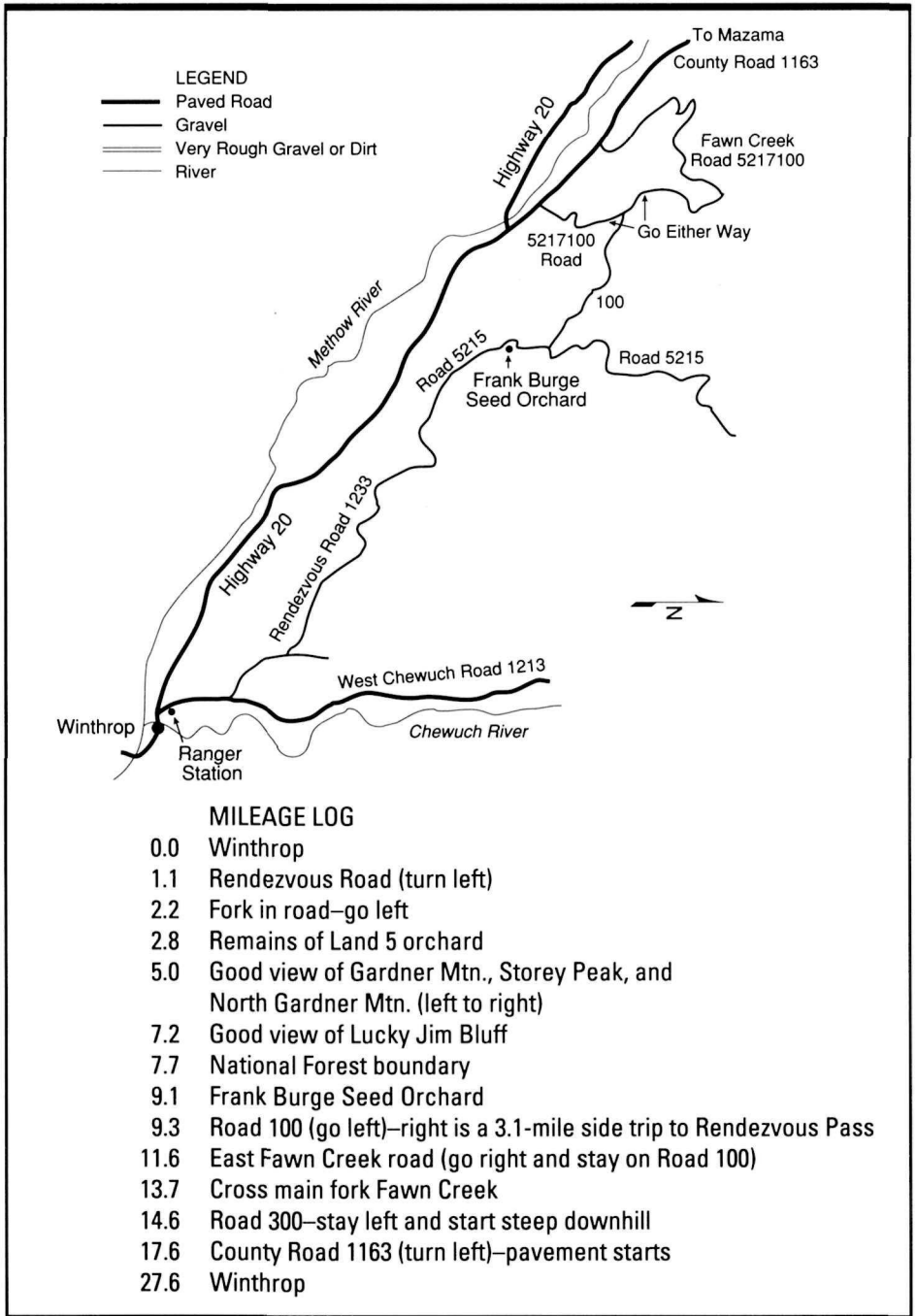
above the valley, enters the forest, and moseys past the Frank Burge Seed Orchard. At the next junction go left again (don't go to Rendezvous Pass). Then stay on the main 100 road until it deposits you on County Road 1163, where it's time to go left again and back to Winthrop.



BEST TIME: Spring for the wildflowers or fall for golden aspens against dry hills and snow-dusted peaks. Still a good summer trip, particularly in the morning.

PRECAUTIONS: Watch out for deer and grazing cattle. Log trucks could also be using the road. Most of the first part of the route is through private land — please respect the owners' boundaries.

Highlights: Sweeping views. Historic Land Five Orchard. Frank Burge Seed Orchard.



Chewuch

37 miles round trip
Allow 2-1/2 hours

On a hot, dry summer day in the Methow there are few treats as nice as a visit to the cool waters and shady banks of the Chewuch (say "Chee-wuk") River. This boulder-filled watercourse is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the state and an important spawning ground for spring chinook salmon. The drive is an easy, pleasant tour up one side of the river and back down the other, with plenty of inviting places to stop for lunch, a quick dip, or just to watch the water go by. Ponderosa pines line much of the roadway and the river is an almost endless collection of pools, riffles and lazy backwaters. This can be a great drive for spotting wildlife as well as a relaxing way to pass part of a sunny afternoon. Bring your fishing pole and license.

DESCRIPTION: Starts and ends in Winthrop. From the middle of town go north on the East Chewuch road (toward Pearrygin Lake). Keep going past the turnoff to the lake until you get to a bridge 6.6 miles from Winthrop. Bear right (**don't cross the bridge**). At the fork 1 mile further, bear left. Follow this road along the river all the way to the next bridge (18.7 miles), cross there, turn left onto the pavement, and return to town.

If you'd like to explore a little more, turn right on the paved road and continue upstream. The road turns back to gravel in a little while and ends in another seven miles at Thirtymile.



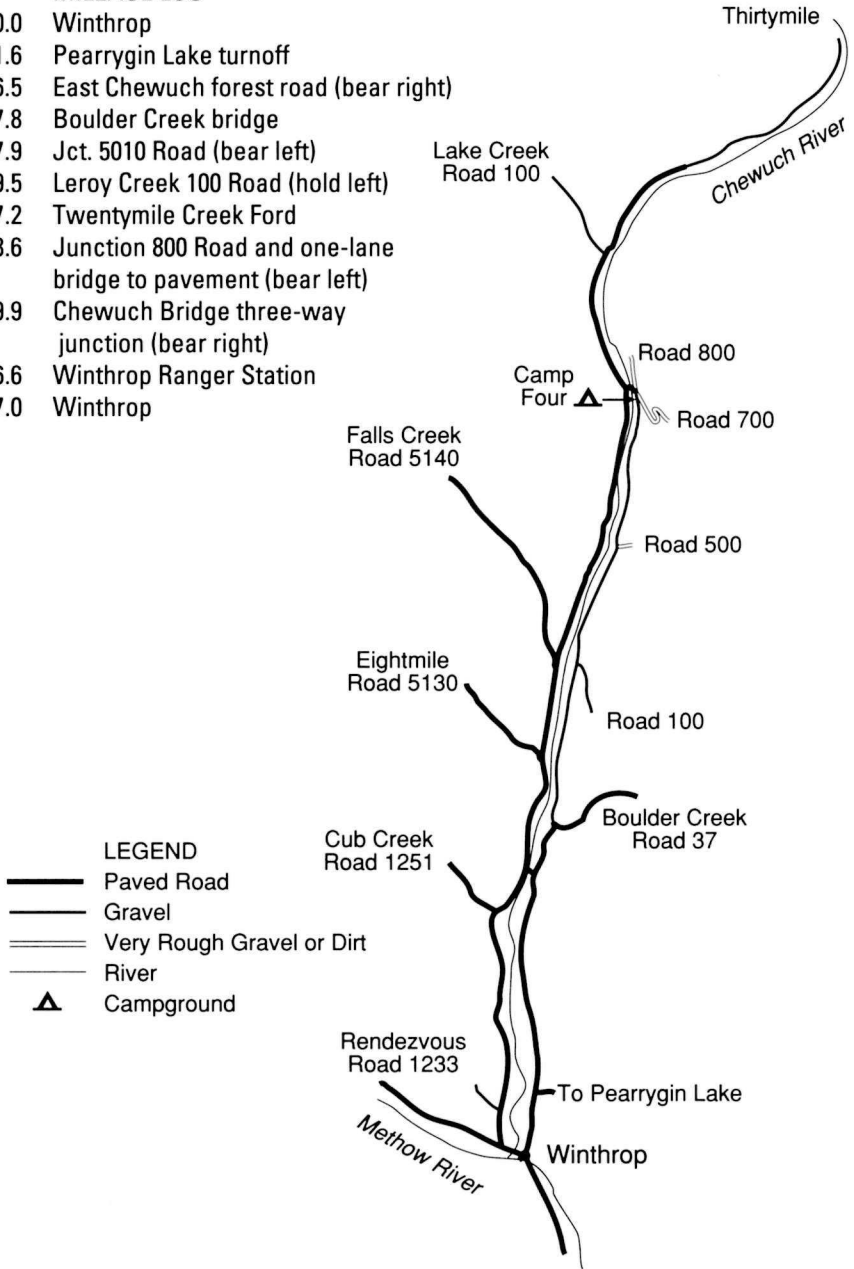
BEST TIME: May through October. Early morning is best for seeing wildlife. Good light any time of day.

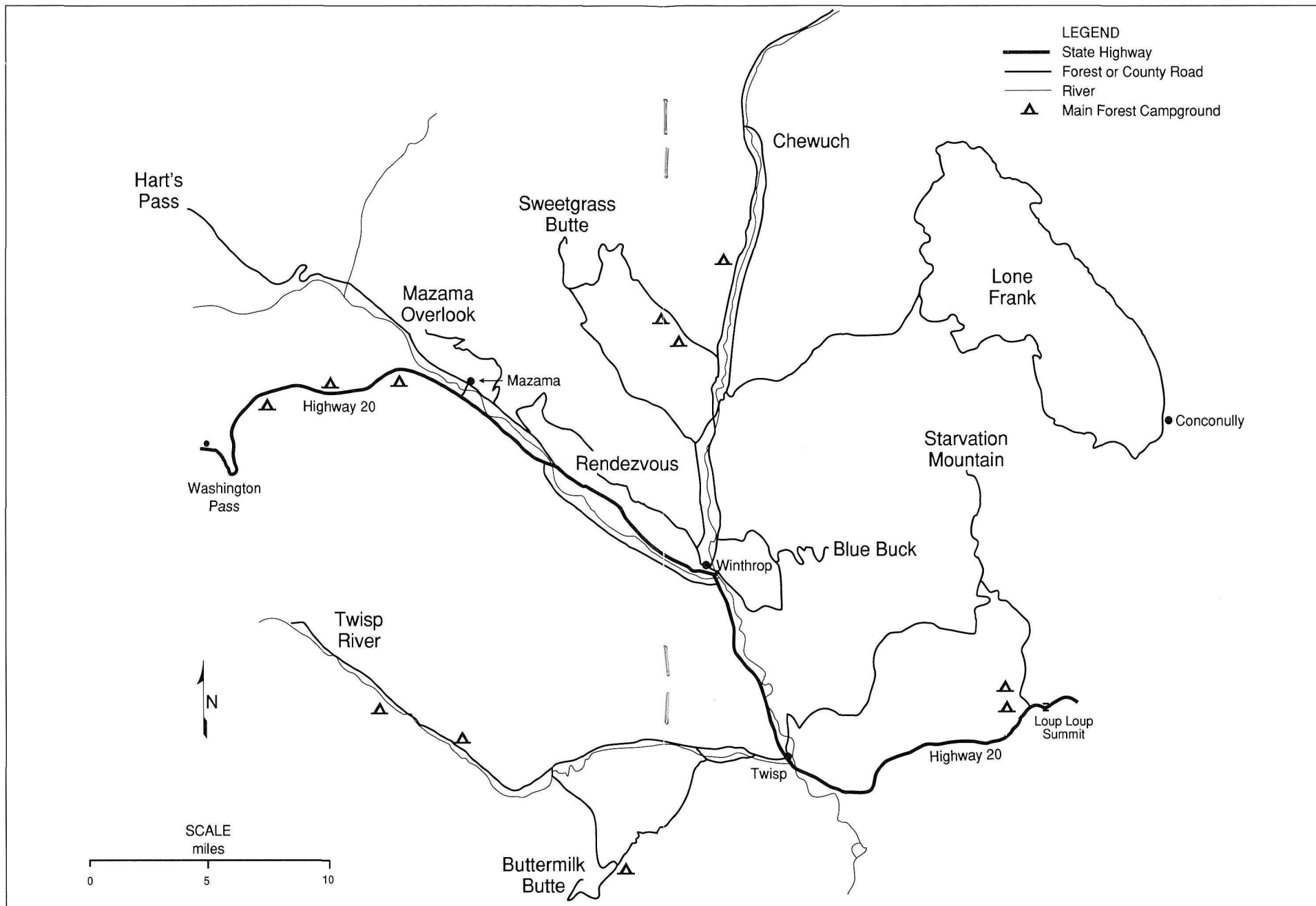
PRECAUTIONS: Much of the road is one lane with turnouts, and traffic can include everything from bicycles to log trucks. The Twentymile Creek crossing is a ford—the water runs over the road. If water is too high, this leg of the loop will be closed.

HIGHLIGHTS: Lots of riverside pullouts. Falls Creek Falls. Wildlife. Twentymile Creek crossing.

MILEAGE LOG

- 0.0 Winthrop
- 1.6 Pearrygin Lake turnoff
- 6.5 East Chewuch forest road (bear right)
- 7.8 Boulder Creek bridge
- 7.9 Jct. 5010 Road (bear left)
- 9.5 Leroy Creek 100 Road (hold left)
- 17.2 Twentymile Creek Ford
- 18.6 Junction 800 Road and one-lane bridge to pavement (bear left)
- 29.9 Chewuch Bridge three-way junction (bear right)
- 36.6 Winthrop Ranger Station
- 37.0 Winthrop





Lone Frank

94 miles round trip
Allow 6-7 hours

Day after day the sun rose and set and Frank watched the sheep. Too young to even vote, he was sent by his family into the mountains with the flock. He did the work, but he was lonesome—so lonesome that a low point between the Methow and Okanogan valleys became Lone Frank Pass in his honor. The circle drive through Lone Frank Pass, down to the quiet town of Conconully and then back by way of Baldy Pass is best as an all-day adventure, with time allowed for scenic stops, lunch along the way, and maybe a swim in Conconully Lake. It's long and bumpy in places, but full of interesting settings and views. A visit to the friendly community of Conconully breaks the drive up nicely.

DIRECTIONS: From Winthrop, drive north out of town on the East Chewuch Road. Continue past the turnoff to Pearrygin Lake and keep heading north past private homes and farmlands. Just before a small bridge across the Chewuch, turn right onto the Boulder Creek Road 37, staying on the east side of the river. After entering the national forest, cross a one-lane bridge and bear right at the first junction and up the hill (still on pavement).

Where Roads 39 and 37 meet, bear left towards Roger Lake. At the next major junction, bear right to Lone Frank Pass and then Conconully

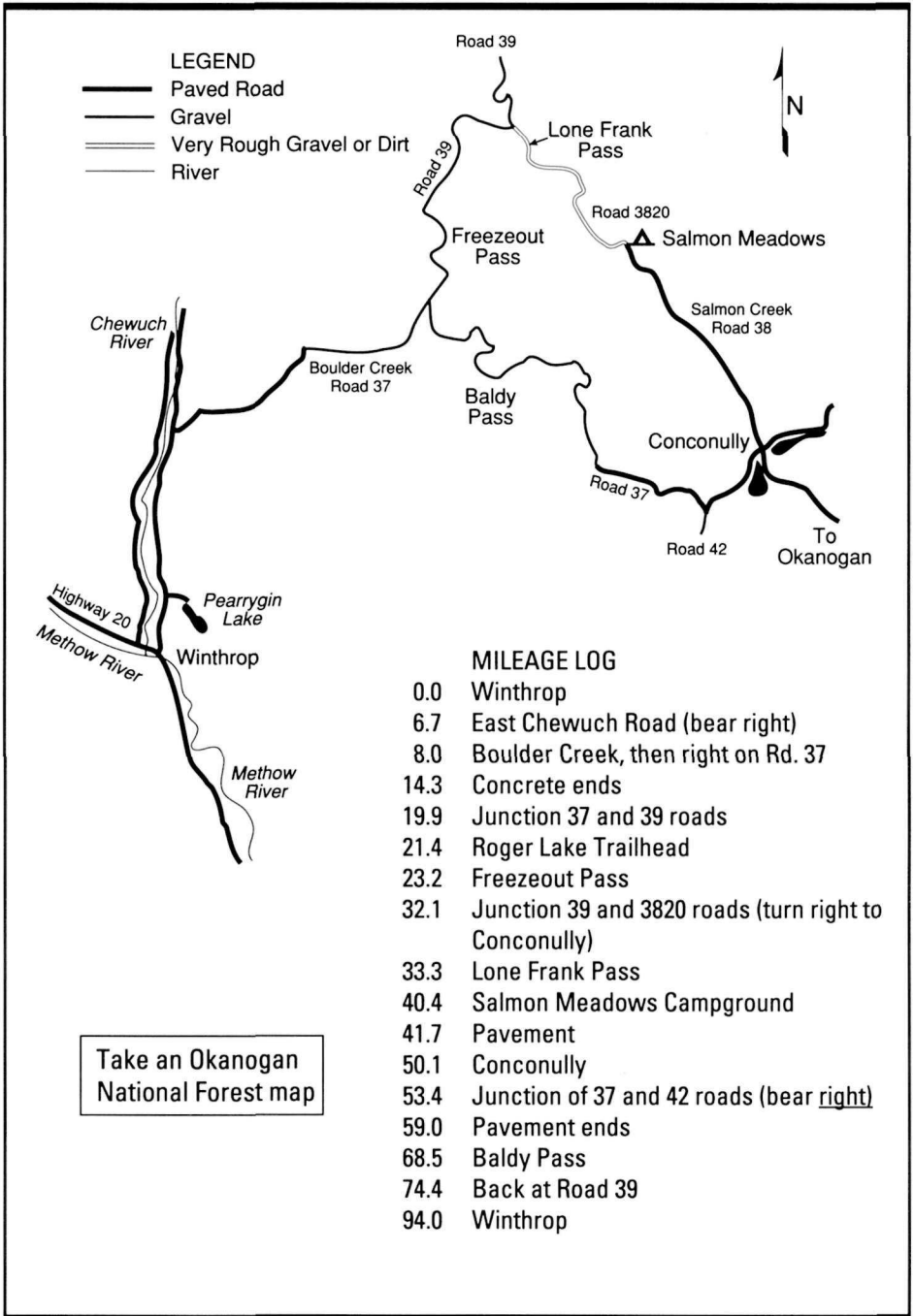


where, if the roads are too rough, you'll have a chance to bail out by taking the road to Okanogan and then returning to Winthrop on Highway 20. Otherwise, go on through Conconully and turn right to keep the big lake on your left. Drive on Road 37 over scenic Baldy Pass and back down to the Boulder Creek Road and Winthrop.

BEST TIME: Pleasant any time the snow is gone and the weather is nice.

PRECAUTIONS: Check at the Winthrop Ranger Station for road conditions and logging. Go slowly, washboarded roads are usually a problem.

HIGHLIGHTS: The passes have impressive views. Salmon Meadows is beautiful in the spring, Conconully is a pleasant stop, and the western larch turn brilliant gold in the fall.



Blue Buck

26 miles round trip

Allow 3 hours

Blue Buck Mountain is one of the timbered hills east of Winthrop that is plain enough to go unnoticed. Driving up onto that hill, however, is like taking a balcony seat for a fabulous display of the tall, ragged peaks of the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. Much of the drive is a loop through the rolling lowlands of the Methow Wildlife Area, which is protected by the Washington Department of Wildlife as a place for local mule deer to winter undisturbed. The country is open and easy, with fields of bitterbrush and bunchgrass and pockets of shady pines. The dead-end side trip to the slopes of Blue Buck is a steady climb through sunny stands of timber to mountainside viewpoints high enough to let you see some of the geologic shapes and patterns that characterize the Methow Valley.

DIRECTIONS: Starts and ends in Winthrop. Drive north out of town on the East Chewuch Road for 1.6 miles and turn right on the road to Pearrygin Lake State Park. Continue past the state park entrance onto the gravel road and into the Wildlife Area. (DON'T turn left toward Ramsey Creek and Sullivans Pond on Road 5009-100). At 5.3 miles from Winthrop is the left turn for the side trip to Blue Buck Mountain on Forest Roads 5008-100 and 5008-200. From this junction the drive continues south 1.8 miles to a paved road that

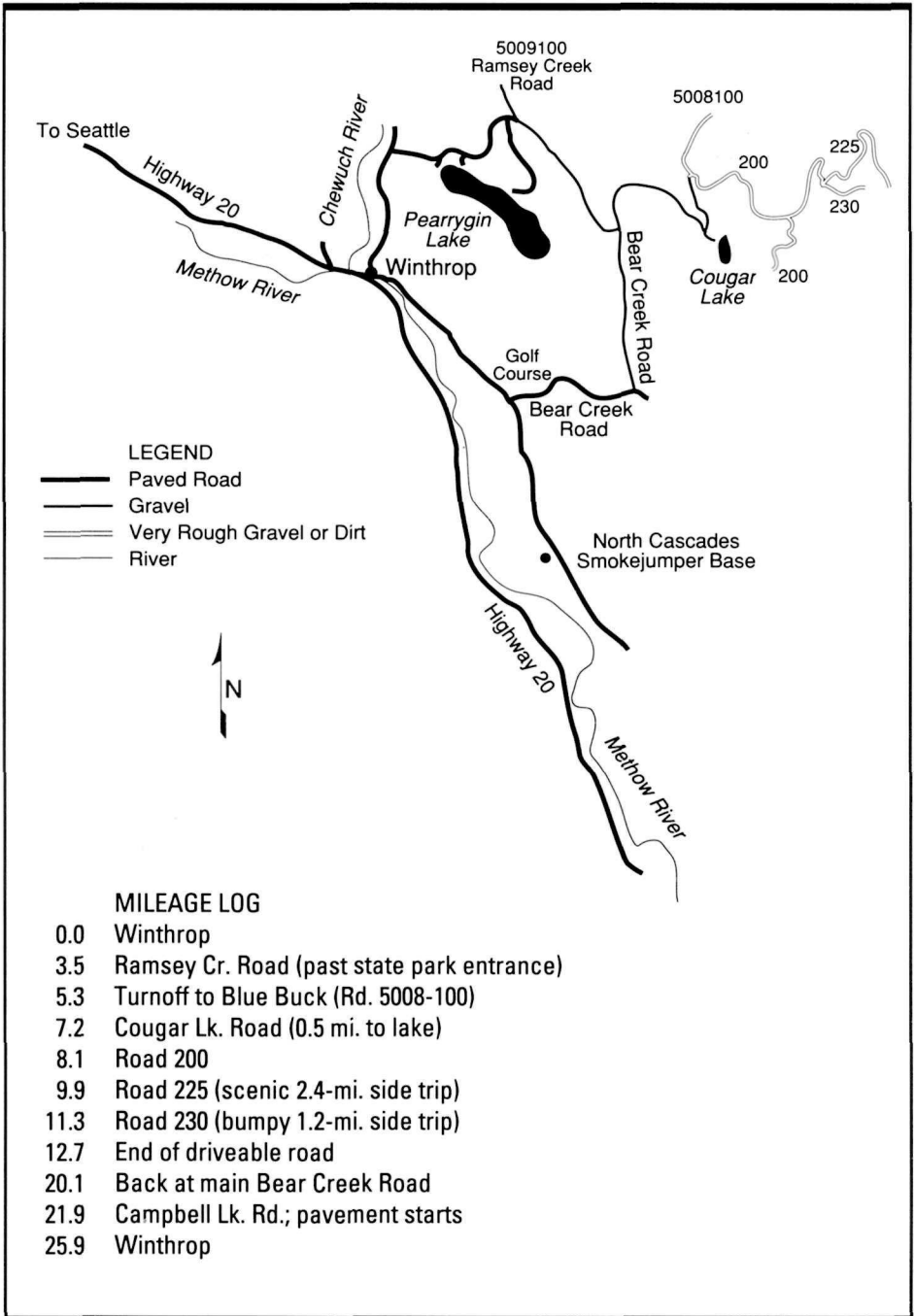
will lead you past the Bear Creek Golf Course and back down to the valley floor. Turn right at the stop sign to return to Winthrop.

BEST TIME: Mid-May through October. The best light is in the morning.

PRECAUTIONS: Watch for deer in the roadway—don't expect them to get out of your way. The Blue Buck Mountain Road gets rough and narrow near the top with only a few good places to turn around. Watch for mountain bikes on the road.



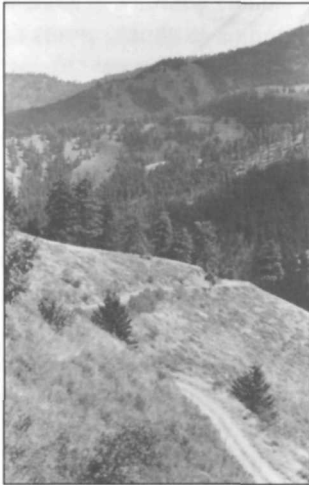
HIGHLIGHTS: Pearrygin Lake, Methow Wildlife Area, tremendous views of the Methow Valley and the peaks and ridges of the Chelan Divide, easy side trip to North Cascades Smokejumper Base.



Buttermilk

45 miles round trip
Allow 3-1/2 hours

The breezy, rounded summit of Buttermilk Butte offers a view that is wide and far, with deep, forested valleys and hard-edged peaks carrying names like Mission, Spirit, and Hoodoo. The lookout that once sat on the butte is long gone, but it's still easy to imagine what it might have been like to spend all summer perched on top, watching for smoke. There's room on the butte to stretch your legs or set out a camp chair or two. Early in the summer you'll be surrounded by the bright yellow blooms of arrowleaf balsamroot. In the fall, groves of golden-leaved aspens fill the foreground.



DESCRIPTION: Starts and ends in Twisp. From the Twisp Ranger Station, hit Highway 20 west, then quickly turn left up the Twisp River Road (one block west of main street). Head upstream 10.8 miles to the

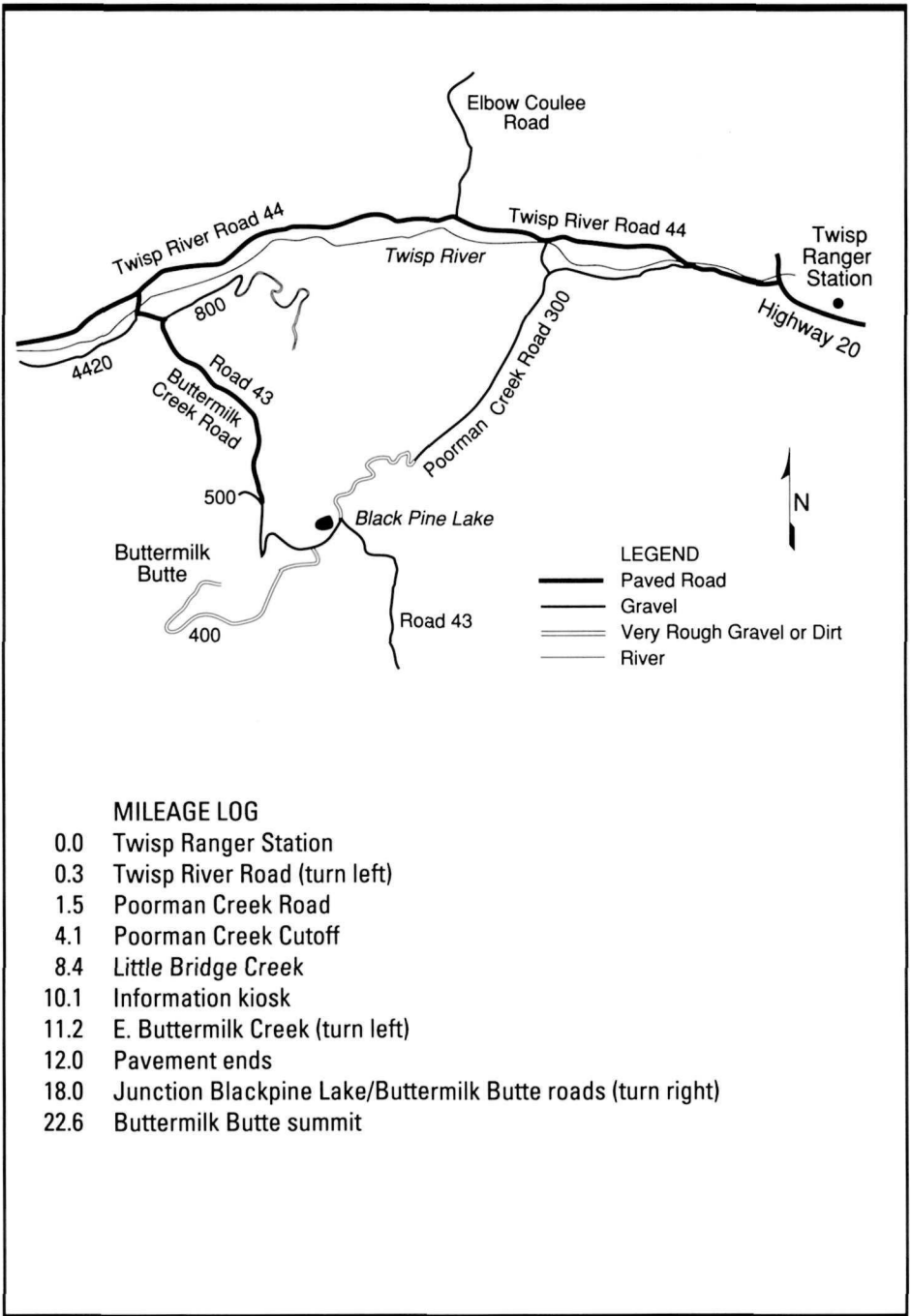
Buttermilk Creek Road 43. Turn left and follow the signs to Blackpine Lake. At the top, just before the lake, continue right on Road 43 (past the road to Blackpine Lake Campground) and then right again on Road 400, which winds and climbs another 4.6 miles to the summit.

To make one loop back, travel down to the lake and then past it down the narrow, graveled Road 300 to the Twisp River and Twisp. For a longer loop, come back down to Road 43 and turn right and right again for a pleasant 12-mile trip down Libby Creek. At Highway 153, turn left and drive north along the Methow River through Carlton and back to Twisp.

BEST TIME: Mid-June through October. The best light is morning to midday.

PRECAUTIONS: Road 400 to the top of the butte can be rough—drive slowly. Watch for logging traffic in Libby Creek. The road up to Blackpine Lake is also part of a mountain biking route—keep an eye out.

HIGHLIGHTS: Blackpine Lake Campground (swimming and boating). Outstanding views of the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. Interesting homes and ranches along the Twisp River (no trespassing, please).



Twisp River

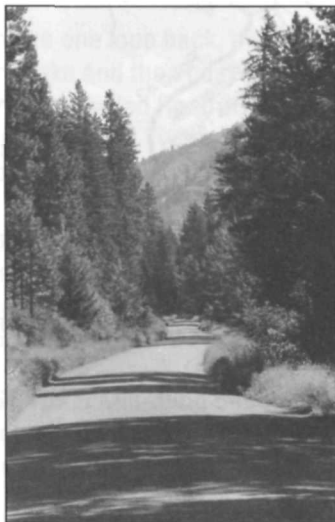
52 miles round trip
Allow 4 hours

The Twisp River Valley starts as a wide, pleasant bottomland near the confluence of the Twisp and Methow rivers, but it narrows to a tight passage surrounded by tall peaks. At one time the valley was considered as a possible way through the North Cascades for either a highway or a railroad—an alternate to the route the North Cascades Scenic Highway eventually took. (The end of the Twisp River road is actually only about four miles away from Washington Pass on Highway 20). Today it's an important access both for the people who live along the lower reaches of the river and for the thousands of recreationists who each year head for the trails, campgrounds and fishing holes farther upstream. Climbing only 1900 feet in 26 miles and paved for nearly three quarters of the way, this is a great tour for those less used to driving on mountain roads, with good views, nice picnic spots, cool and shady riverbanks, and a few pieces of history along the way.

DIRECTIONS: From Twisp, turn off of Highway 20 and head due west on the Twisp River Road (County Road 1605). In a mile and a half you go past a left turn to Poorman Creek and then make a quick climb up the hill known locally as the Spokane Grade. Stay on the same road all the way—once you enter the national forest it becomes Forest Road 44. It finishes

at appropriately named Road's End Campground.

For an interesting side trip, try heading north into Elbow Coulee (County Road 1097) for a few miles and then back. The turn is about 5-1/2 miles from Twisp.

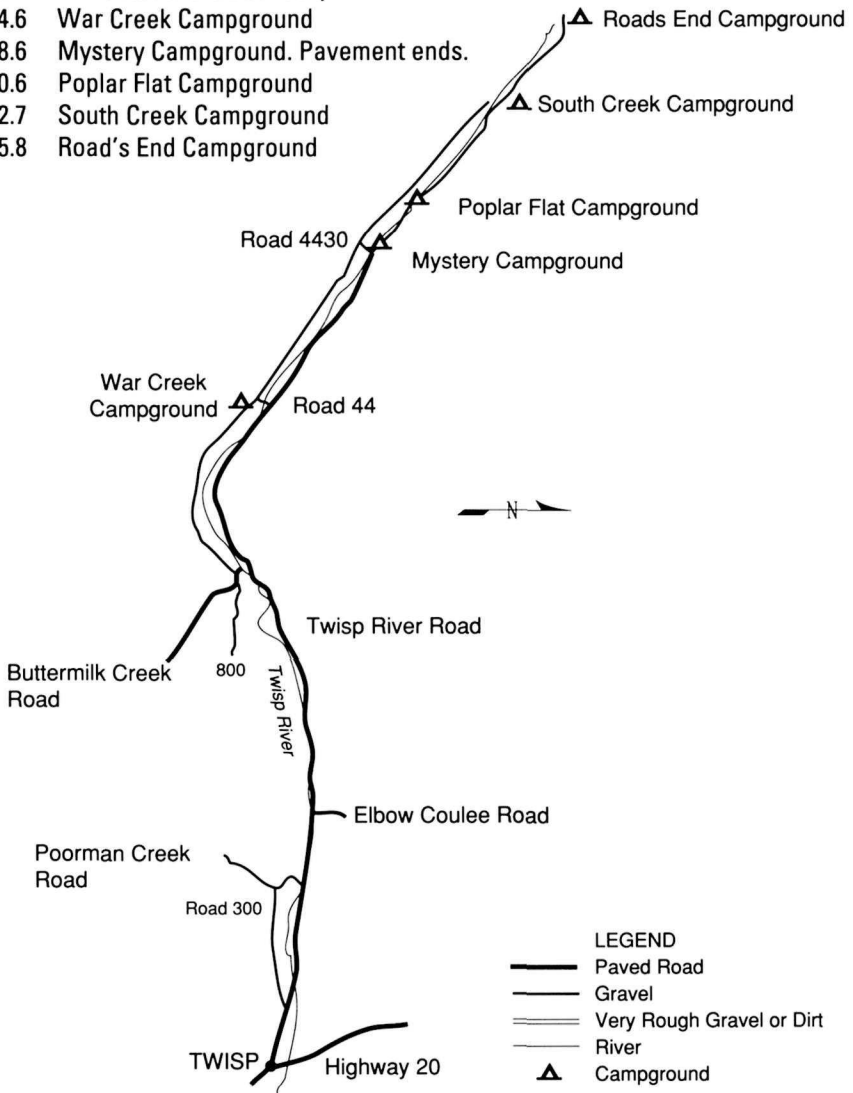


BEST TIME: This is a good tour spring, summer and fall. In early spring, lingering snow patches may keep you off the last few miles. In fall, aspens and cottonwoods along the river turn bright yellow and gold. In late afternoon, the sun can shine directly in your eyes during parts of the drive, making driving harder.

HIGHLIGHTS: The historic townsite of Gilbert at the upper end of the valley (very little left now). Great scenery. Good wildlife viewing in the morning.

MILEAGE LOG

- 0.0 Twisp Ranger Station
- 0.3 Twisp River Road
- 1.5 Junction of Poorman Creek Road
- 5.9 Elbow Coulee Road
- 13.4 National Forest Boundary
- 14.6 War Creek Campground
- 18.6 Mystery Campground. Pavement ends.
- 20.6 Poplar Flat Campground
- 22.7 South Creek Campground
- 25.8 Road's End Campground



LEGEND

- Paved Road
- Gravel
- Very Rough Gravel or Dirt
- River
- Campground

Starvation Mountain

54 miles round trip
Allow 4-1/2 hours

A radar station stood on top of Starvation Mountain during the Cold War, set up to watch for Soviet planes that never came. Since the turn of the century, thousands of sheep and cattle have trod the nearby Cathedral stock driveway on their way to and from summer pasture in the high mountains. The drive to the summit is a pleasant meander through the forest, with glimpses of the Lake Chelan Sawtooth Wilderness. When the sun is low and shadows are strong you can see scars scraped by glaciers into the lower landscapes. The rather complicated route has plenty of chances for side trips or shortcuts as well as for getting lost. An Okanogan National Forest map is strongly recommended.



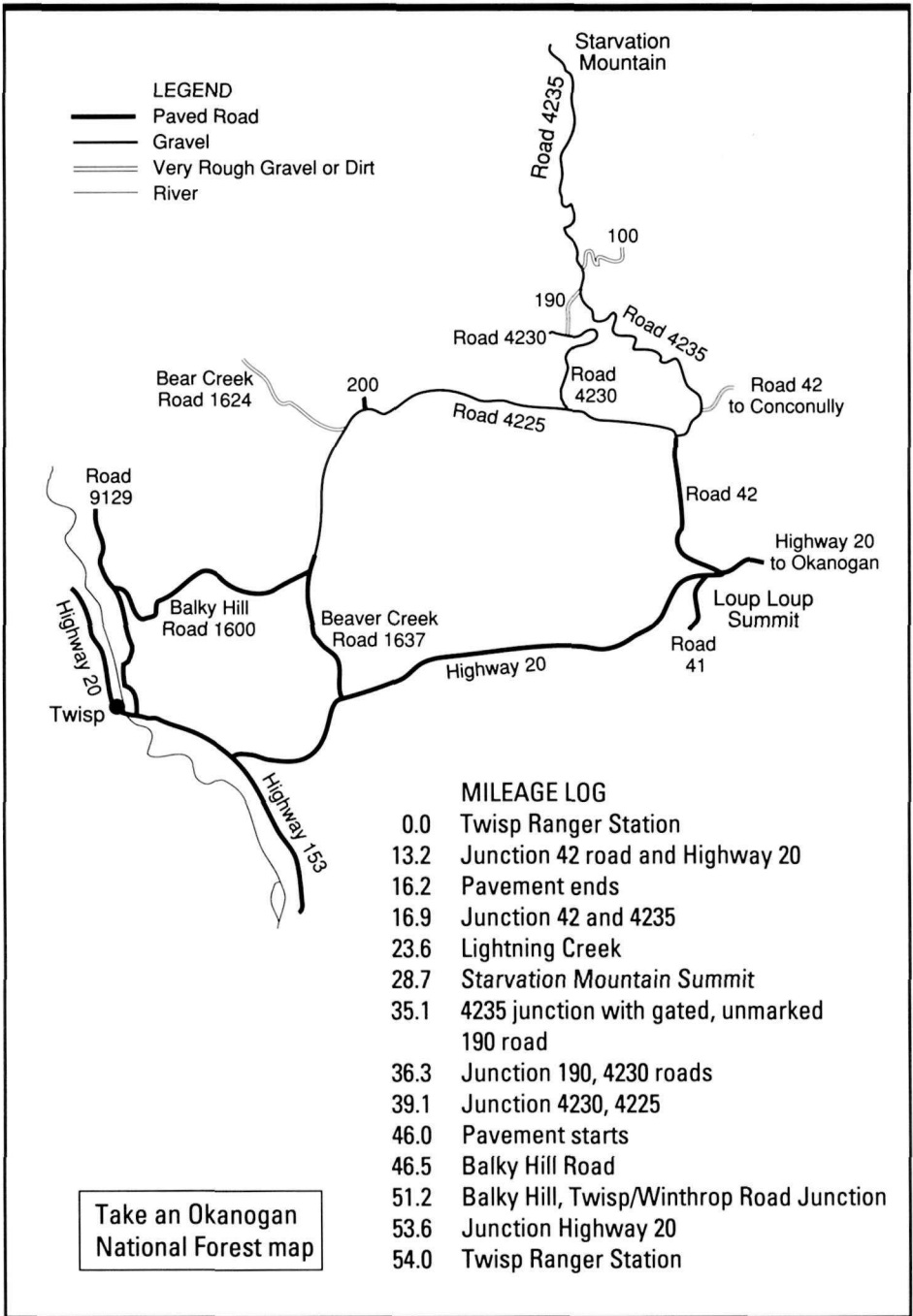
Directions: From Twisp follow State Route 20 toward Okanogan as far as Loup Loup Summit. There turn left onto Forest Road 42. At the end of the pavement stay right, still on Road 42, another 0.7 miles then turn left onto Road 4235. This road takes you all the way to the top. Pay attention at all the junctions.

To return, start back the way you came on Road 4235 for 6.4 miles then turn right on Road 190, which has a gate at the start and is not clearly marked. Continue 1.2 miles and turn left on Road 4230. Wind your way down this gravel road to Road 4225 and turn right. Soon you will leave the forest and head down Bally Hill Road into the dry, open foothills. At the valley bottom, turn left and return to Winthrop on paved country road. If you miss Road 190 near the top, don't worry. Just keep going all the way back to where the pavement starts and make a hard right on Road 4225 for the trip to the valley bottom.

Best Time: Spring or fall or on a cooler summer day. The lower parts of the trip can be hot. Morning is best for light on the distant peaks.

Precautions: Watch out for cattle in the roads and be alert for log trucks.

Highlights: Great views of the Methow Valley. Often cooler at the summit on a hot summer day.



Forest Driving Tips

WASHBOARDS

Gravel roads are prone to “washboards.” Washboards are tight, regular series of bumps, like hardened waves. They’re dangerous because they can break a tire’s grip on the road and send the car skidding.

The only way to beat washboarding is to travel slowly, so that tires retain full contact with the road as they travel over the bumps.

GRAVEL

Gravel is a tricky driving surface. Breaking and cornering can be difficult because gravel will roll under the tire like marbles under the feet of a comedian, and the driver loses control of the automobile. The only cure is to drive slowly.

LOG TRUCKS

Log truck drivers guide 40 tons of steel and wood down gravel roads that are often steep, narrow, and crooked. It’s a tough and dangerous job, compounded by having to dodge other traffic on forest roads.

Huge, heavy log trucks cannot be stopped or maneuvered like a passenger car, so be aware and give way. Pull over, way over, on the shoulder and stop until the truck has passed.

CHECKPOINTS

In active logging areas, you may see small numbered signs every half mile or so. These are log truck checkpoints. Log truck drivers call out their position at each checkpoint on Citizens Band radios. Full trucks have the right of way, empty trucks head for pullouts to let the full trucks past.

If you have a CB radio and can catch which channel the trucks are using, listen in. You might be able to avoid the surprise of a large, loaded truck coming downhill around a corner toward you.

STAY ON THE ROAD

Don’t drive off the roads, you will damage the soil. In dry weather, your hot exhaust system could start a wildfire.

–ABOVE ALL, DRIVE DEFENSIVELY AND AT A MODERATE SPEED–

Request and Information

Noxious Weeds Love to Travel

Noxious weeds are spreading and replacing natural vegetation in the national forest. A single plant can contain more than 20,000 seeds.

HELP STOP THE SPREAD. Remove any plants attached to your vehicle and dispose of them. Don't drive in infested areas.



Diffuse Knapweed



Numbers and addresses:

Winthrop Ranger District
Box 579
Winthrop, WA 98862
(509) 996-2266

Twisp Ranger District
Box 188
Twisp, WA 98856
(509) 997-2131

Okanogan National Forest
Box 950
Okanogan, WA 98840
(509) 826-3275

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

FOREST FIRES
800-562-6010

SHERIFF'S OFFICE
800-572-6604



Published by
Northwest Interpretive Association