



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# Owyhee, Bruneau and Jarbidge

## WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS BOATING GUIDE

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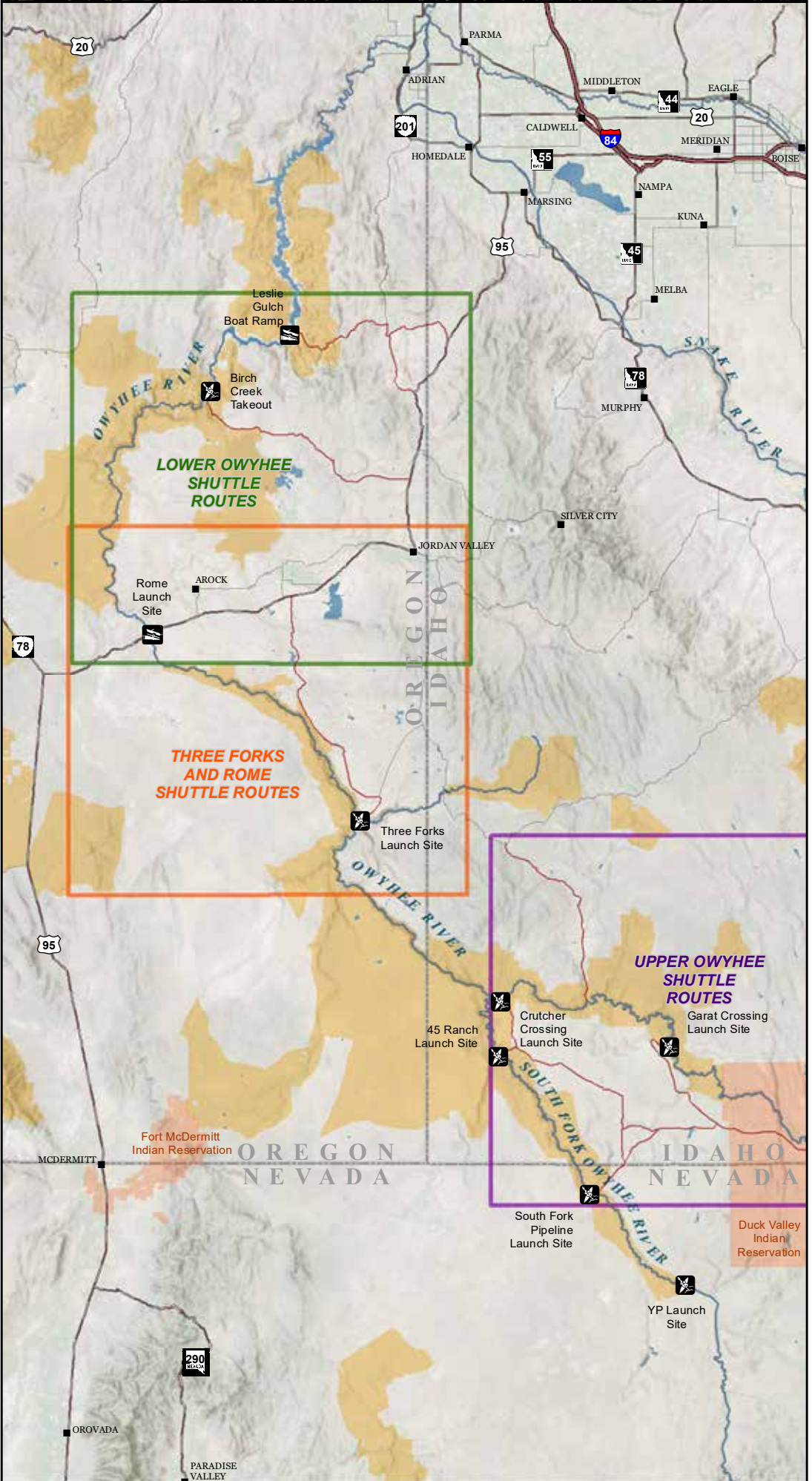
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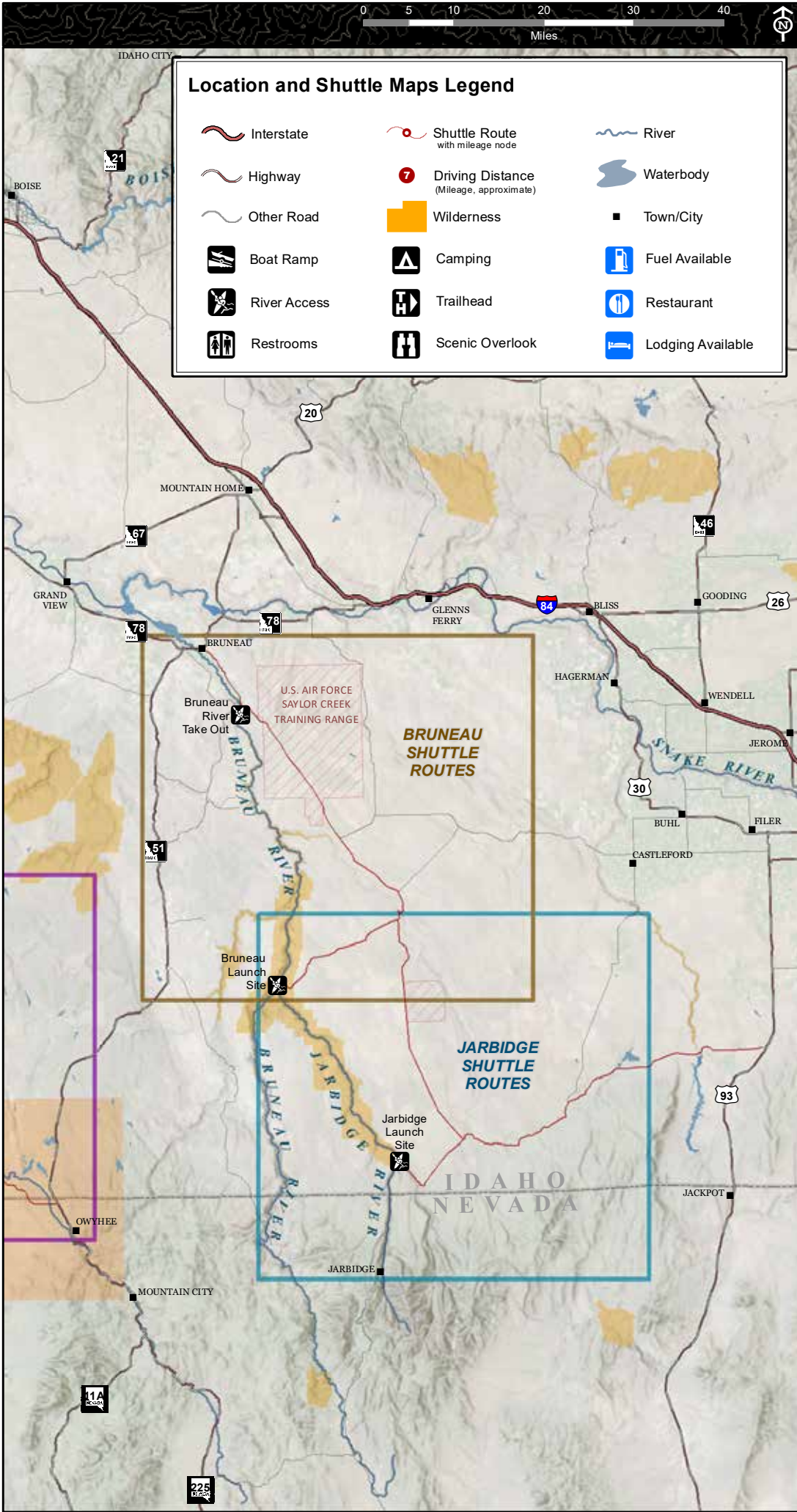






# GENERAL LOCATION





# RIVER MILES

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## SOUTH FORK OF THE OWYHEE RIVER

- YP Ranch to the South Fork Launch Site: 20 miles
- Nevada Pipeline Crossing to 45 Ranch: 25 miles
- 45 Ranch to Three Forks: 45 miles

## EAST FORK OF THE OWYHEE RIVER

- Duck Valley to Garat Crossing: 23 miles
- Garat Crossing to Rickert Crossing: 28 miles
- Garat Crossing to Crutcher Crossing: 42 miles

## MAIN OWYHEE RIVER

- Crutcher Crossing to Three Forks: 35 miles
- Three Forks to Rome: 37 miles
- Rome to Birch Creek: 50 miles
- Birch Creek to Leslie Gulch: 19 miles

## JARBIDGE RIVER

- Murphy Hot Springs to the Bruneau Launch Site at Indian Hot Springs: 30.5 miles

## BRUNEAU RIVER

- Bruneau Launch Site to the Bruneau River Take Out: 41 miles

# WHITEWATER CLASSES

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Rapid ratings are a general guide to relative difficulty. Severe weather conditions, extreme water levels and remote locations all contribute to the danger of white water boating.

Class I	Small waves, passages clear, no serious obstacles.
Class II	Medium-sized, regular waves; passages clear, some maneuvering may be required.
Class III	Waves are numerous, high and irregular; rocks, eddies, narrow passages; scouting usually required.
Class IV	Powerful, irregular waves; boiling eddies; dangerous rocks; congested passages; precise maneuvering required; scouting mandatory.
Class V	Exceedingly difficult; violent rapids often following each other without interruption; big drops, violent current, scouting mandatory, but often difficult.
Class VI	Limit of navigability, generally considered unrunnable.



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# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages the public land of the Owyhee Canyonlands, a huge and remote area of eastern Oregon, southwestern Idaho and northern Nevada. Hidden within this vast high desert plateau are deep canyons carved by the Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge Rivers.

The rivers of the Owyhee and Bruneau-Jarbidge systems offer something for nearly every level of boating experience. The Owyhee and Bruneau-Jarbidge river systems provide visitors with unsurpassed solitude in canyons of unique beauty and form. From placid pools to turbulent white-water; from vertical cliffs to steep grassy slopes; and from wildlife, such as California bighorn sheep to wildflowers, including the Bruneau River floss, these rivers and their canyons present visitors with challenging and extraordinary experiences.

In 1968, Congress enacted the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, establishing a system for preserving outstanding free-flowing rivers. In 1984, Congress designated 120 miles of the Owyhee River in Oregon as a wild river component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. The Owyhee National Wild River extends from the Oregon-Idaho border to the Owyhee Reservoir, excluding 14 miles near Rome, Oregon. A wild river designation is intended to protect the free-flowing character of the river, along with its outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, wildlife, and cultural values.

In 2001, the Owyhee County Commissioners convened a diverse array of interests with the goal to find common ground solutions to public land issues in Owyhee County, including protection of the ranching way of life, wild canyons, rivers, and cultural resources. Chaired by attorney Fred Grant, the Owyhee Initiative was born.

In 2006, the Owyhee Initiative produced an agreement with public input that set the course to protect cultural resources and the viability of the ranching economy as well as designate the very best of the Owyhee canyonlands as wilderness and wild and scenic rivers.

Senator Mike Crapo introduced the Owyhee Public Lands Management Act in the U.S. Congress as part of the implementation of the 2006 Owyhee Initiative agreement. The Act, passed Congress and signed by President Obama in 2009, designated 6 wilderness areas and 317 miles of Wild and



Scenic River in Owyhee County, Idaho, that consists of 16 different river segments. Wild and Scenic segments in the Owyhee River system are:

Battle Creek (wild)—23.4 miles,

Big Jacks Creek (wild)—35.0 miles,

Cottonwood Creek (wild)—2.6 miles,

Deep Creek (wild)—13.1 miles,

Dickshooter Creek (wild)—9.25 miles,

Duncan Creek (wild)—0.9 miles,

Little Jacks Creek (wild)—12.4 miles,

North Fork Owyhee River (recreational)—5.7 miles; (wild)—15.1 miles,

Owyhee River (wild)—67.3 miles,

Red Canyon Creek (wild)—4.6 miles,

South Fork Owyhee River (wild)—31.4 miles; (recreational) - 1.2 miles,

and Wickahoney Creek (wild)—1.5 miles.

The Wild and Scenic segments within the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers;

Bruneau River (wild)— 39.3 miles; (recreational)—0.6 miles,

Jarbidge River (wild)—28.8 miles,

Sheep Creek (wild)—25.6 miles, and

West Fork Bruneau River (wild)—0.35 miles.



*Jarbidge River, Casey Steenhoven*

# REQUIREMENTS AND LAWS

## PERMIT

All parties launching on the Owyhee, Bruneau or Jarbidge River Systems must complete a registration form at the launch site. The top copy goes in the registration box at the launch site. The bottom copy is carried by the trip leader on the river. While on the river, the registration form must be presented upon request by any BLM, State, or County employee.

## INVASIVE SPECIES LAWS

Under this new law, the owner of any non-motorized vessel in Idaho (canoe, kayak, raft, driftboat, etc.) is required to purchase and display Idaho Invasive Species Fund (IISF) stickers on their vessel(s) in order to legally launch and operate in Idaho. Inflatable, non-motorized vessels under 10 feet in length are exempt from this requirement in Idaho. In Oregon, an Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention (AISP) permit is required for all watercraft greater than 10 feet in length.



*zebra mussels—aquatic invasive species*

## HUMAN WASTE

An adequate-sized, approved water tight portable toilet system must be used on all float trips. Approved portable toilets are non-biodegradable, rigid, durable, and designed to receive and hold human waste without leaking. They are designed to be emptied using the approved protocol at an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved RV dump station and/or SCAT machine at the end of each trip. Toilets CANNOT be dumped in any BLM vault toilet. Plastic bag liners are not acceptable with the exception of solid human waste pouches, such as WAG bags and RESTOP 2 bag systems that are approved by the Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Portable RV toilets are not approved for boating trips.



*portable toilet*

## URINATION

Urinate directly into the river. Urine deposited on land, especially around well-used campsites, creates an unpleasant odor and attracts insects.

## WASTE WATER

Use biodegradable soap for washing dishes. Strain all dish and rinse water before scattering it broadly 200 feet away from the river and camp. Broadcast onto soil with vegetation. In camps where there isn't 200 feet of space, dispose waste water as far from the river as possible. Leftover liquids from cooking, drinking and draining canned foods along with toothpaste waste can be deposited directly into the river.



*portable toilet*



## FIRE PAN OR BLANKETS

Campfires must be contained in a metal fire pan or on a fire blanket that protects the ground from scarring and ash.



All unburned contents

of the fire including ash shall be removed and carried out of the river corridor. In Malheur County, Oregon, you may be fined up to \$500 for not bringing a fire pan on the Owyhee River.

## FIREWOOD

Do not cut or destroy standing live or dead vegetation. Oregon law requires that you carry your own firewood when floating downstream from the Rome launch site.

## FIRE RESTRICTIONS

All seasonal fire restrictions must be followed in the river corridor. Fireworks are strictly prohibited.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL MATERIALS

Federal and State laws strictly forbid disturbance or vandalism of cultural sites (such as petroglyphs) or the removal of arrowheads or other cultural artifacts. Collection and removal of historic artifacts or vandalism of historic sites (any site or object over 50 years old) is also prohibited by Federal law.

## HOT SPRINGS

Natural hot springs exist in the Owyhee, Bruneau and Jarbidge River Systems that support protected plants and animals. Federal and State laws prohibit digging, damming, or otherwise altering the natural flow or appearance of hot springs.

## PARTY SIZE

Float groups in the Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers, and in the Owyhee River System upstream from the Rome launch site are restricted to 15 persons, while float groups on the Owyhee River downstream from the Rome launch site are restricted to 20 persons.

## MOTORIZED WATER CRAFT

Motorized water craft, including electric motors, are prohibited in the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers, Owyhee River and other wilderness areas in Owyhee County.

## CAMPING

Camping in any area posted by BLM as "Closed" is prohibited.

## AIRCRAFT INCLUDING UAF (drones)

Landings are prohibited in the Bruneau-Jarbridge Rivers, Owyhee River and other wilderness areas in Owyhee County.

## PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY

On the Bruneau River, part of the main launch site and the takeout are on private land. On the South Fork of the Owyhee, the YP Ranch launch site and the 45 Ranch launch and takeout are on private land. Other private property is shown on the river maps. Please be respectful of private property and private property owners.

# SAFETY

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The Bruneau-Jarbridge Rivers and Owyhee River wilderness areas are remote. Once you enter these canyons, you will be a long way from help. Cell phone coverage is spotty and unreliable. You must be prepared to handle all problems and emergencies on your own. Be prepared for the unexpected.

Learn as much as possible about the river you plan to float. Hazards and the difficulty of the river change depending on the water level. Some portions of these rivers are recommended only for the most experienced boaters.

Check your boat and other equipment in advance and make necessary repairs or replacements. Carry patching equipment for emergency boat repairs. Carry at least one extra oar or paddle per boat to replace those that become lost or broken. Each raft should be equipped with long bow and stern lines.

Oregon, Idaho and Nevada state laws require that you carry a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) for each person in the party. Wear your PFD at all times while on the river, even during the shallow summer boating season. Rafting parties should carry one extra PFD per raft, and kayak parties should carry at least one extra per party.

Carry an adequate first-aid kit to handle emergencies. You will be a long way from medical help.

When in doubt, scout. Most segments of these rivers have rapids or other hazards that can't be seen until you are on top of them. There are also several portages. If you are unsure of what is ahead, pull over to the shore and take a look from the bank.



Watch your step. Most river accidents happen within 10 feet of shore, usually slips, trips and falls. Choose hiking boots or river sandals that provide good traction on wet rocks.

Most accidents happen at home. On a river trip, your camp is your home. It is where you will handle sharp knives and hot stoves, and encounter insects, rattlesnakes and poison ivy.

Poison ivy is common along the Bruneau, Jarbidge and some sections of the Owyhee river corridors. It is a shrubby, non-twining plant that grows in sunny and shady areas. Contact with any portion of the plant may cause a severe rash. From late spring through fall the plant can be recognized by the broad leaves arranged in groups of 3 or 5 off the same stem. It appears as numerous, silvery-gray, rounded stems growing up to 3 feet tall. With a little care, this plant can be easily recognized and avoided.



## ETHICS

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To prevent overuse of the river corridors, limit your trips to one per year on each of the river segments. Keep noise levels low when you float by other parties. Remember, one of the reasons you're here is to get away from the noise of civilization.

### CAMP AND TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

You can minimize your impacts and preserve the wild nature of the rivers by using established campsites. Camp on gravel or sand bars to avoid trampling vegetation. Avoid the fragile green riparian areas along the river banks. Kitchens should be set up in as durable a site as possible; sand or rocks are good places. Avoid cutting new trails. Stay on established trails.

## LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

An archaeological artifact may have been in place for hundreds of years. A rock may have lain in place for millions. Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving plants, rocks, archaeological artifacts and all other objects of beauty or interest as you find them. Collecting or disturbing artifacts and historic objects is prohibited by federal law.

## MINIMIZE THE USE AND IMPACT OF FIRE

A gas stove is clean and easy to use, and causes no permanent impacts. If you choose to have a fire, fire pans are required throughout the Bruneau, Jarbidge and Owyhee river systems. If your fire pan is not equipped with legs, elevate it with several rocks to avoid scorching the soil. Burn only dead and down vegetation. Better yet, bring your own fire wood. Hackberry trees and some shrubs appear to be dead during the primary boating season, but they are actually dormant. Standing vegetation is part of the canyon setting and should be left alone. Before leaving camp, extinguish your fire and pack the debris out with you. Fire pan contents may be re-burned in subsequent camp fires. All unburned contents of the fire including ash shall be removed and carried out of the river corridor.

## DISPOSE OF ALL WASTE PROPERLY

Carry out all your trash. Do not burn it. Much of the trash that looks burnable is lined with plastic or foil, which leaves a residue that will linger for many years. For waste and waste water see requirements and laws on page 2.

## AVOID DISTURBING WILDLIFE

If you encounter nesting broods of waterfowl, stay as far away from them as possible. To protect wildlife, as well as other visitors, discharging firearms is discouraged except during designated hunting seasons. If you bring a dog along, keep it under control at all times and pack out dog waste.



*Rattlesnake*

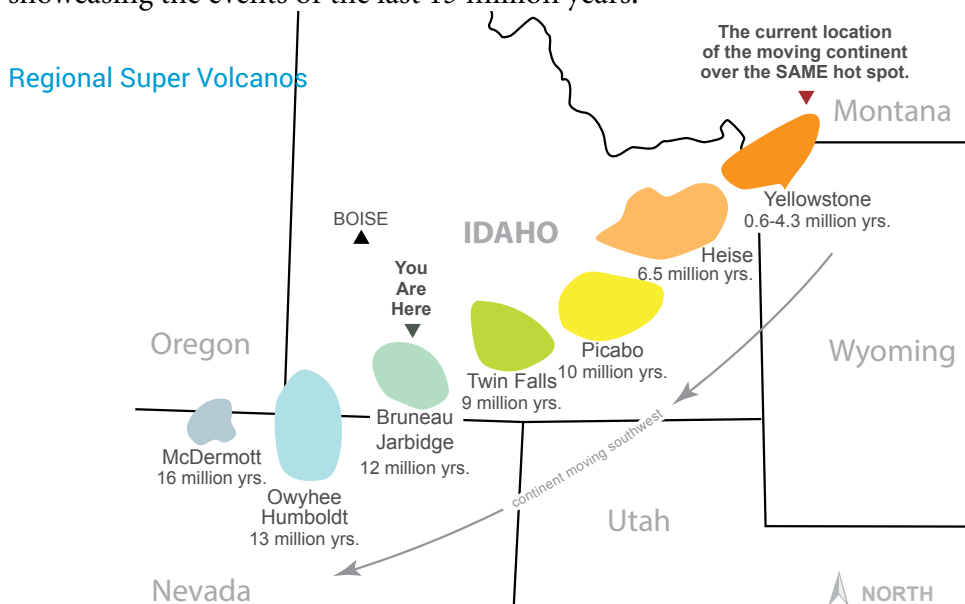
# NATURAL HISTORY

## GEOLOGY

The geology of the Bruneau-Jarbridge and Owyhee Canyons is spectacular, especially from the vantage point of a white-water craft. You will find yourself looking up at the caves, columns, and spire-like hoodoos towering hundreds of feet above. These natural monuments are carved by the river as it exploits weak layers of the volcanic rock. As interesting as these features are, the most unique aspects of southwestern Idaho's geology are so large they are nearly impossible to see. For example, the volcanism in the Bruneau-Jarbridge area formed an oval basin 60 miles long by 30 miles wide.

The geology of the canyons is shaped by an astounding combination of volcanism, glacial melt, and regional drainage patterns. The Bruneau-Jarbridge and Owyhee areas were the sites of two massive volcanic eruptive centers, fueled by what is dubbed the Yellowstone Hotspot. When tectonic plates slowly move over molten hotspots, large eruptions are inevitable. The Owyhee-Humboldt eruptive center was active about 13.8 to 12 million years ago. Although it is over 1 million years older than the Bruneau-Jarbridge eruptive center, the size of the explosions and the rock types of the two areas are very similar. In each area, there were multiple events of volcanic activity related to the hotspot.

Both the Owyhee-Humboldt and Bruneau-Jarbridge eruptive centers began with very explosive events that led to gradual collapse, creating basins. The next series of events was the eruption of massive rhyolite flows that filled the basins, the largest flow was over 200 cubic kilometers. Basaltic eruptions followed. Then, about two million years ago, glacial rivers slowly began to carve out the extraordinary canyons that we see today, brilliantly showcasing the events of the last 13 million years.





## BOTANY

The steep canyon walls, boulder fields, and rock crevices along the Bruneau, Jarbidge and Owyhee Rivers provide unique habitats in an area more commonly dominated by rolling hills and wide plateaus. Several rare plants occupy the niches created by these three rivers. The Bruneau River phlox (*Leptodactylon glabrum*) occurs in vertical or overhanging rhyolitic canyon walls along the inner Bruneau and Jarbidge River Canyons. The entire known extent of Bruneau River phlox in Idaho occurs within approximately 35 miles on the Bruneau, West Fork of the Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers. It is a white flowered and matted plant that clings to ledges, rock crevices, and cliffs. The vertical, cliff-side position of the Bruneau River phlox may provide protection from late season frosts (Patterson and Yoder-Williams 1984) and hazardous deposits of debris and mud during storm events.



*Owyhee Prickly-phlox*  
*Bruneau River Prickly Phlox*

The Owyhee River System is home to another rare plant, the Owyhee River forget-me-not (*Hackelia ophiobia*). Found nowhere else but this river system, this species occupies North facing vertical rhyolitic cliffs, sheltered crevices, and shady grottos. The pale blue flowers of this species contrast sharply with the backdrop of dark volcanic rock. May and June are the best time to view this species in full flower. Owyhee River forget-me-not can be found with other cliff dwelling species such as mountain snowberry, red alumroot, prickly phlox, and desert gooseberry.



*Rattlesnake Stickseed*  
*Owyhee River forget-me-not*

## WILDLIFE

The sagebrush plateaus of the Owyhee Uplands are bisected by deep canyons that provide habitat for over 200 species of wildlife. Some of the best remaining habitat for greater sage grouse is found in the Owyhee Uplands. While driving to the rivers across the sagebrush sea look for pronghorn (antelope), American badger, jack, pygmy, and cotton-tail rabbits, northern harrier, ferruginous hawk, mountain bluebird, sage thrasher, horned lark, and many reptile species. Chukar partridge are abundant throughout the canyonlands. Search the skyline in the river canyons to see soaring golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, Swainson's hawk, kestrel, prairie

falcons, and swallows that nest along the cliff faces. Songbirds including the showy lazuli bunting, Bullock's oriole, yellow warbler, and western tanager are frequently observed from late April-May in the trees and shrubs along the river riparian areas. Between



rapids, waterfowl including Canada goose, mallard, redhead, lesser scaup, common merganser and teal species are a common sight. The song of the canyon wren is familiar to those who spend time in the desert canyons of eastern Oregon and southwest Idaho. Mammals such as California big-horn sheep, mule deer, coyote, bobcat, river otter, marmot, and beaver are often spotted during river trips.

## HUMAN HISTORY

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Cultural resources are defined as definite locations of human activity. These locations include historic structures, archaeological sites, or places that have important public and scientific uses. Often times, these sites are of traditional or religious importance to social or cultural groups. Cultural history in the canyons ranges from ancient fish operations to cattle-driving legacies and more recently to the culture of white-water recreation.

Throughout the history of these canyons, one pattern of cultural use is quite clear: these canyons have always been a site of visitation, but rarely have they been a site of permanent residence. The canyons have been both revered for their natural resources and feared for their inaccessibility and many potential dangers, such as swift water, steep cliffs, rock fall, predators, and rough terrain. Valued resources include stones for tool making and gem collecting, fish, game, water, and rock shelters.

The ancestors of the Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone-Bannock peoples



*Homestead on East Fork of the Owyhee River, Seth Tonsmeire*

have used these canyonlands for thousands of years. A Native American legend about a dangerous creature that lived in the Jarbidge canyon supports the idea that ancient peoples avoided living there long-term. The creature was called Tsa-hau-bitts or Jahabich, loosely translating to “evil spirit”. Through many English interpretations of these names, the area eventually became known as Jarbidge.

The Bruneau River was either named by its French translation of ‘brown water’ or after a French explorer by the name of Jean-Baptiste Bruneau.

Native Americans used the canyonlands for shelter, weaponry, fish and game, and water for thousands of years. They left rock-art and other artifacts behind in a few locations. The canyonlands are still a vital part of their lives today.

Cowboys historically used the Cougar Creek Arch as a place to find community and relax while driving cattle. They also left their marks on the sheltered canyon walls.

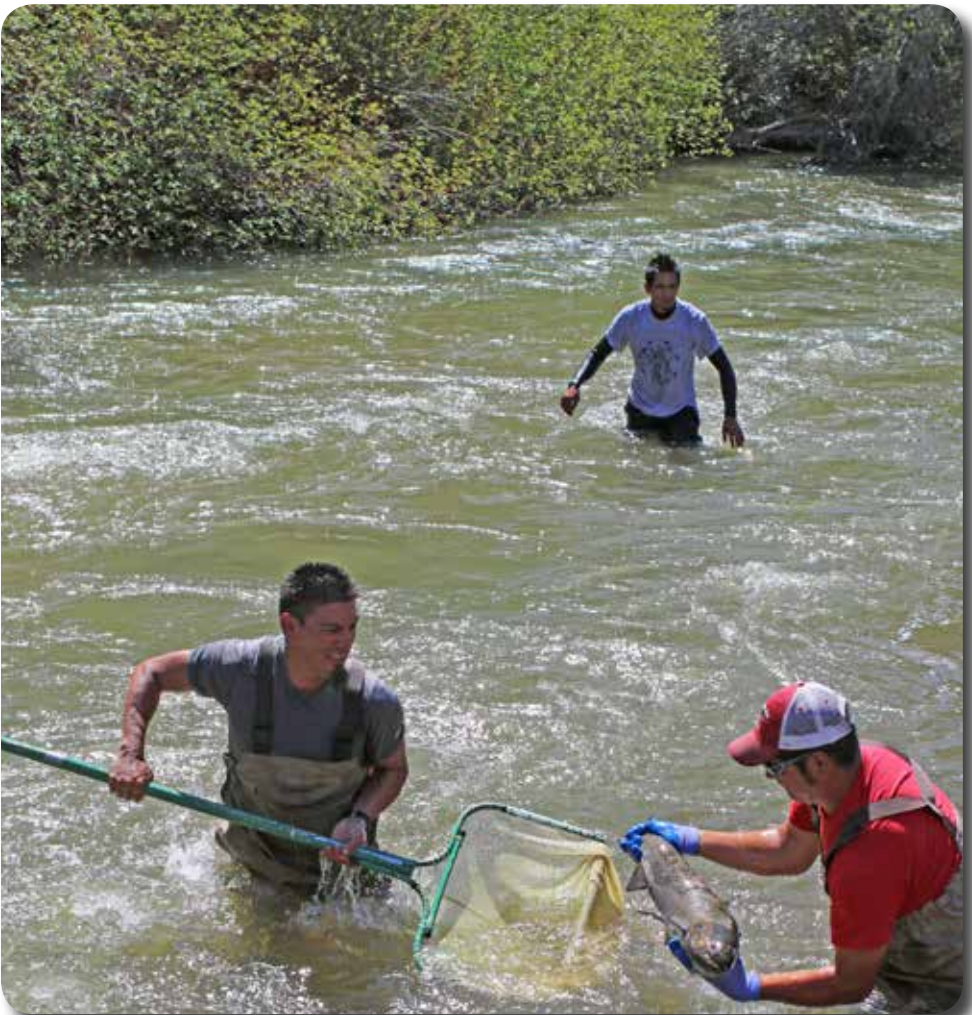
A few homesteaders chose the canyons as a place that was well-suited for collecting water, hunting game, and perhaps using nearby thermal pools. These homesteads were most likely not permanently inhabited for very long due to the harsh environment of the isolated canyons. Many of the abandoned sites seen in the area today were most likely used as line-shacks for cattle driving operations. The cabin at Indian Hot Springs exhibits a prime location providing access to a river crossing in order to drive cattle or sheep from one side of the canyon to the other. There is also a historic cabin foundation near the Murphy Hot Springs launch site.



Mining claims for Bruneau Jasper and other gem stones in the area were first filed in the 1950s. There is very little ore left to extract in these locations.

Today boaters, hunters, and fishermen seek the solitude and beauty of the canyons. The white water is a place for both adventure and a relaxing environment for fishing as well.

Recreational values are not to be confused with traditional cultural values—they are very different. However, it is important to recognize that the groups of people using the canyons today also represent a culture. By fishing in the Jarbidge or floating the Bruneau, people today are preserving a culture of adventure and solitary recreation within the sheltered canyons of the Wild and Scenic River designations.



*Chinook salmon were reintroduced into the East Fork of the Owyhee River in 2015 after an absence of 87 years to reestablish Shoshone-Paiute ceremonial and cultural practices that were nearly lost following the establishment of dams in the Columbia River Basin. The Shoshone Paiute Tribes worked with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to release almost 200 salmon between two fish weirs on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.*

# THE OWYHEE RIVER SYSTEM

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## BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UPPER OWYHEE

The upper Owyhee River system consists of the East, South and North forks, and several major tributaries.

Due to the area's remoteness, the upper Owyhee River is not recommended for beginners. Although most of the upper Owyhee River is Class I, II and III, and whitewater and hazards can be seen well ahead of time, the upper Owyhee can be dangerous for those who are improperly equipped, inexperienced or careless. On the upper Owyhee, downstream from the confluence of the East Fork and South Fork, two Class IV/V rapids may require portages or lining depending on the water level, type of equipment and boater skill.

The East Fork is recommended for kayaks and whitewater canoes only, due to two difficult portages located about seven and nine miles above the confluence with the South Fork. In any flow other than high water, portaging will be required on the upper East Fork if a launch is made at the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. The Rome, Oregon USGS gauge is NOT an indication of the water level in the East Fork. Floating is not recommended unless water is near bank-full or higher on the Reservation.

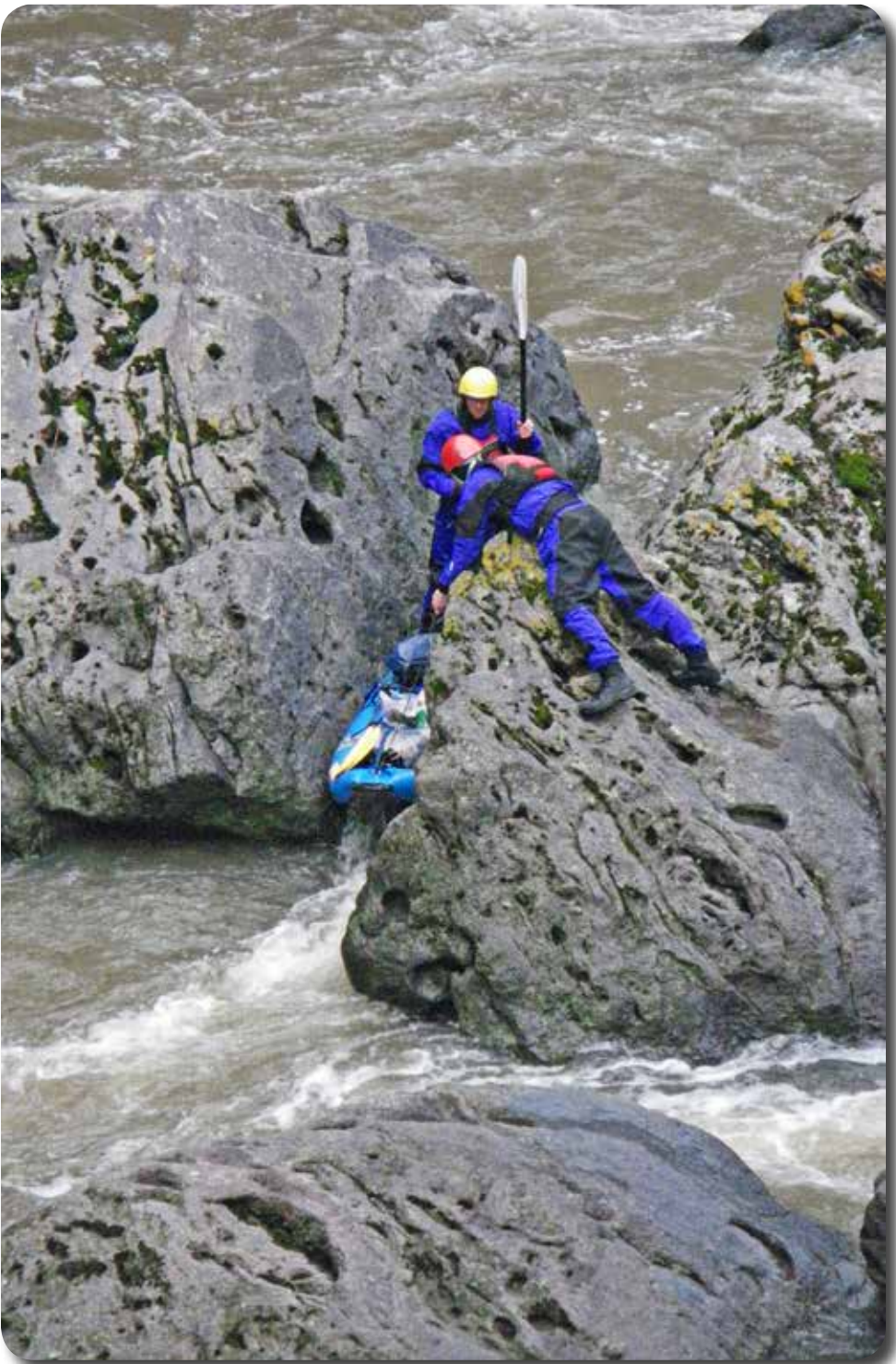
One of the East Fork's major tributary streams, Deep Creek, is boatable by kayak or open canoe early in the float season. Although this stream has no difficult rapids, it demands a high level of skill to negotiate its narrow width and braided channels while avoiding thick, overhanging vegetation and frequent strikes against gravel bars, streamside cliffs and fences.

The South Fork does not have portages for rafts or kayaks. Depending on the water level, some portaging may be necessary at Class III rapids. Rafts under 15' are ideal for this section.

On the upper Main Owyhee, downstream from the confluence of the South Fork and East Fork, two Class IV/V rapids may require portages or lining depending on the water level, type of equipment, and boater skill.

The North Fork Owyhee River joins the Owyhee River at Three Forks, Oregon. This section is recommended for expert boaters in kayaks and small cataracts. It is highly technical with a steep gradient, narrow channel and frequent obstacles. After warming up on a few Class II-III rapids, boaters will navigate consistent Class III-IV rapids (depending on flow). The run is about 18 miles from the North Fork Campground to Three Forks, and has plenty of nice places to camp. Trips can be launched early in the float season from the North Fork Campground in Idaho.





*Below: Thread the Needle, East Fork of the Owyhee River, Evan Worthington*

### **BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MIDDLE OWYHEE RIVER**

The 39-mile middle section of the main Owyhee River, from Three Forks to Rome, is very challenging, and the middle section of the river is recommended only for highly skilled whitewater boaters with medium-sized rafts (14-15 foot), kayaks, catarafts or covered full-flotation canoes. This section has a pool-and-drop character, where long sections of flat water are interrupted by difficult Class III, IV and V+ rapids, including long boulder gardens, heavy hydraulics and some very steep drops. These conditions combine to preclude the use of small rafts, drift boats and open canoes. Constricted channels and the possible need for portages make the use of large rafts difficult.



## BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LOWER OWYHEE RIVER

Numerous Class II, III and IV rapids on the 50- to 67-mile lower section of the Owyhee River below Rome challenge the skills of boaters in rafts, kayaks, and catarafts, making this the most popular section of the river. The lower section also has a pool-and-drop character, where pools of quiet water extend to the lip of rapids before falling sharply over Class II to IV rapids into other pools. Most rapids are relatively short.

## THE SPRING FLOAT SEASON

The primary float season for the entire Owyhee River system is from March through early to mid-June. During this season, changing weather conditions can cause rapid fluctuations in the water level, with flows ranging from 1,000 to over 50,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). Be prepared for severe weather, including strong winds, rain and snow.

The only water-level gauge upstream of Rome is at Crutcher Crossing on the East Fork. Generally, the best time to float the upper river is when the water level at the Rome, Oregon United States Geological Survey (USGS) gauge is between 1,000 and 6,000 cfs.

April and May are usually the best months for trips on the North Fork and Deep Creek. The Rome USGS gauge cannot be used to accurately predict floatable levels on these two waterways. For optimal conditions, boat the Three Forks-to-Rome section when the Rome gauge is between 1,500 and 3,000 cfs. Below Rome, the recommended float levels are between 800 and 10,000 cfs.

Low water runs on the Owyhee River are possible in canoes or kayaks at flows under 800 cfs. Dragging boats over gravel bars and lining around rapids can be expected. These low water runs are usually possible from early June to mid-July, depending on snowpack and runoff.



## OWYHEE RIVER FLOW INFORMATION

River Forecast Center (503) 261-9246

Idaho Department of Water Resources (208) 327-7865

Rome Launch Site Ranger Station (541) 586-2612

The USGS gauges for river flows are at Rome:

[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=13181000&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060,0001](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site_no=13181000&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060,0001)

and



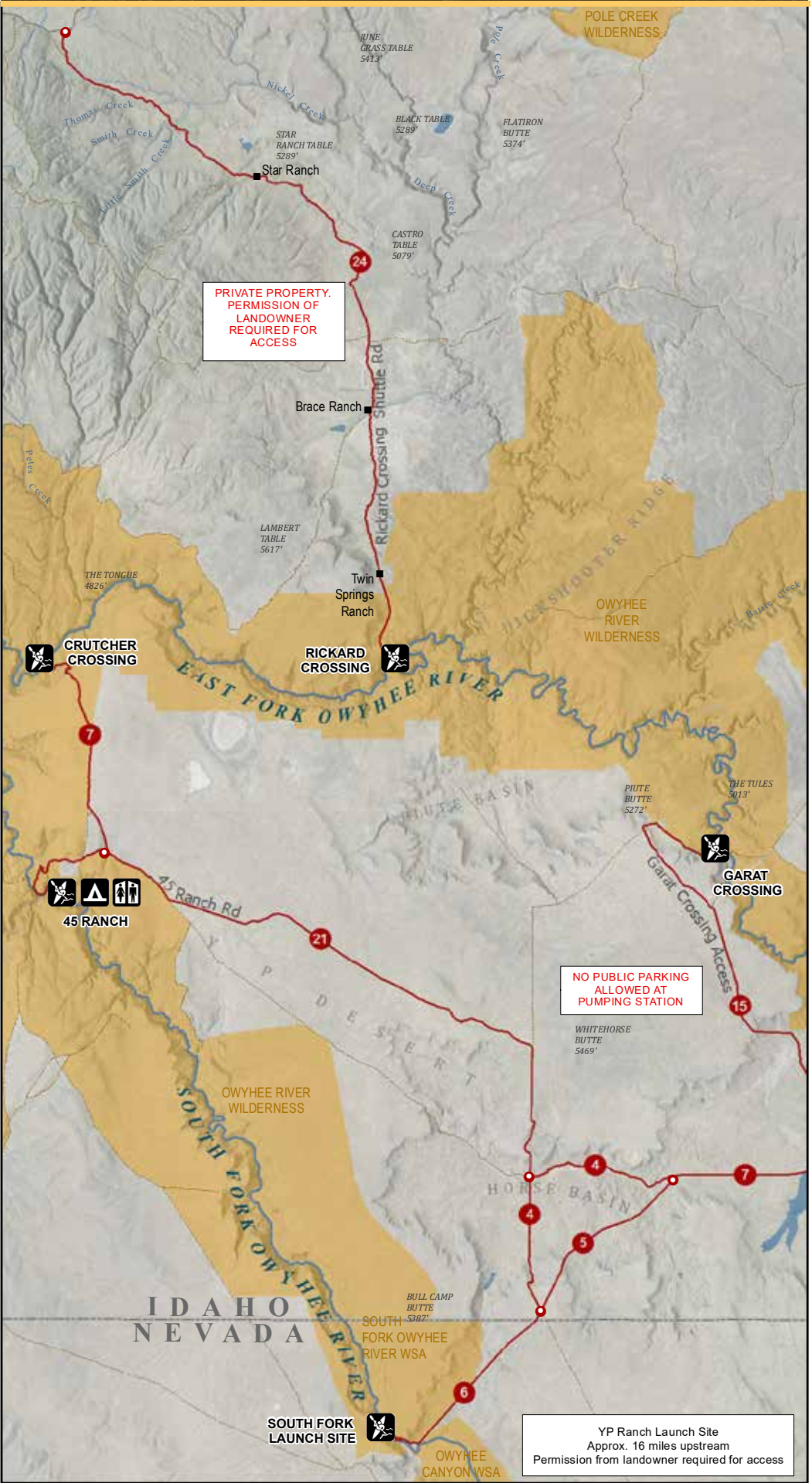
*Cable Rapid, Upper Owyhee River*

Crutcher Crossing (East Fork)

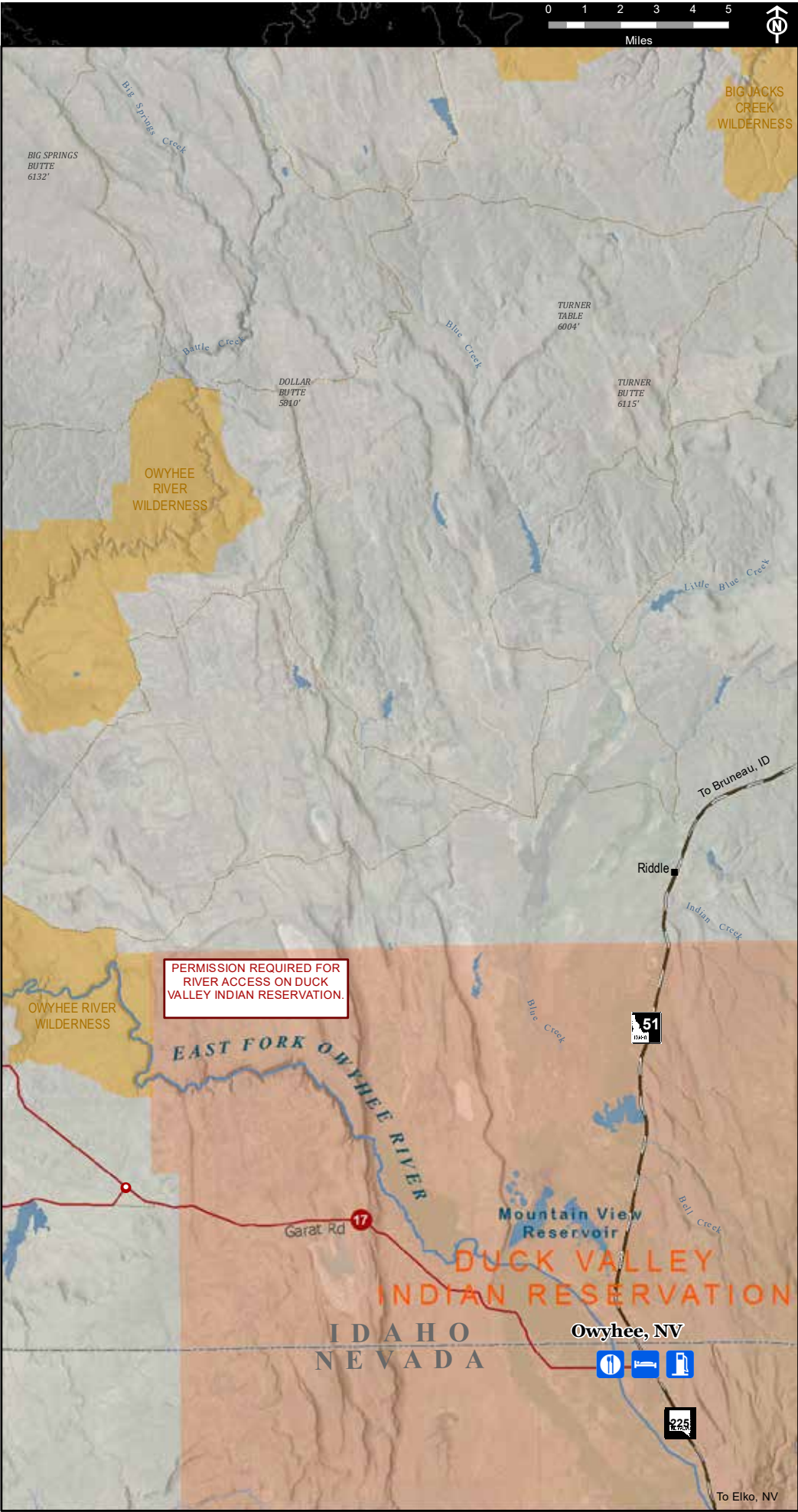
[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=13176400&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060,00010](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site_no=13176400&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060,00010)



# UPPER OWYHEE ACCESS MAP







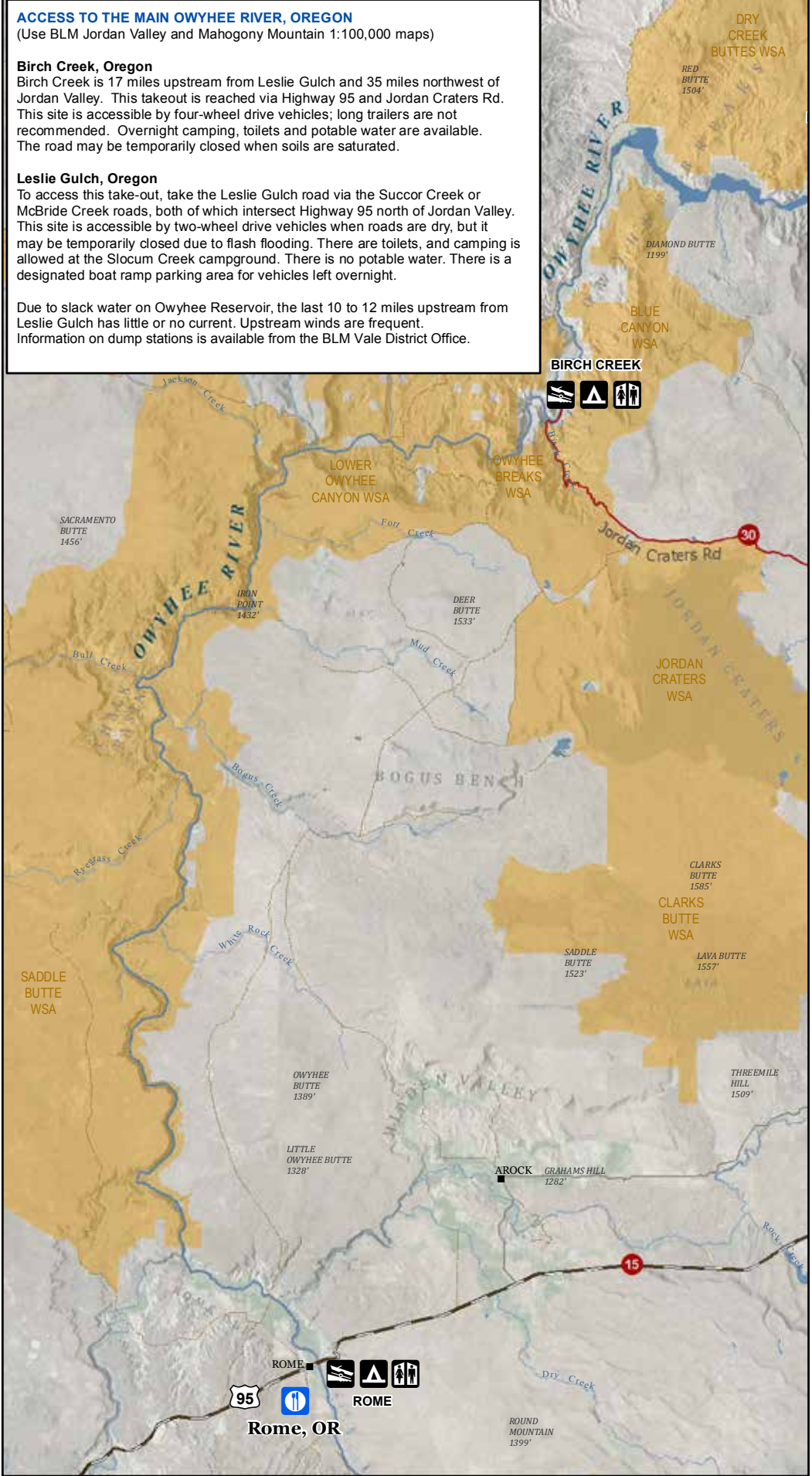
# MAIN OWYHEE ACCESS MAP

**ACCESS TO THE MAIN OWYHEE RIVER, OREGON**  
(Use BLM Jordan Valley and Mahogany Mountain 1:100,000 maps)

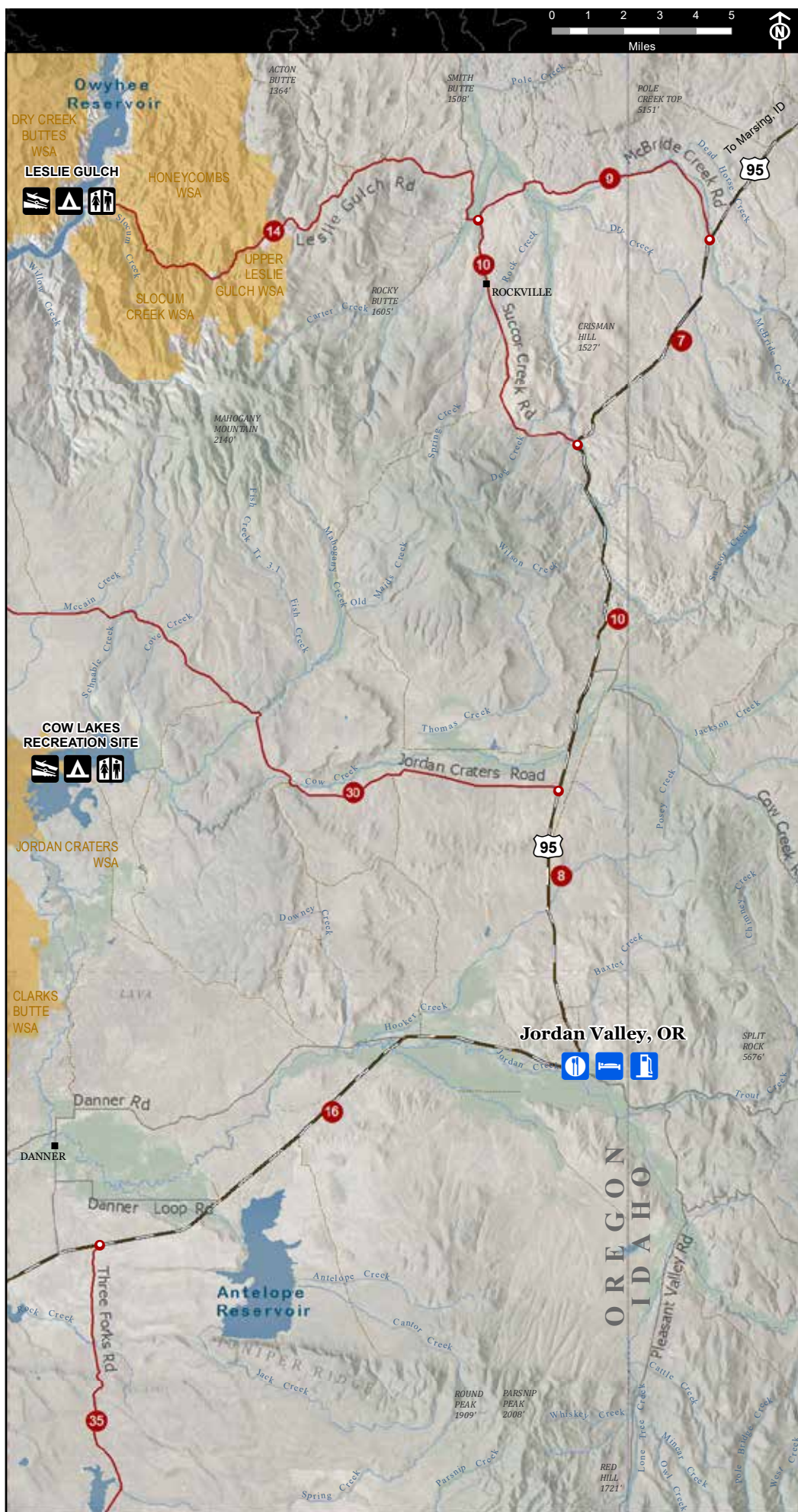
**Birch Creek, Oregon**  
Birch Creek is 17 miles upstream from Leslie Gulch and 35 miles northwest of Jordan Valley. This takeout is reached via Highway 95 and Jordan Craters Rd. This site is accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles; long trailers are not recommended. Overnight camping, toilets and potable water are available. The road may be temporarily closed when soils are saturated.

**Leslie Gulch, Oregon**  
To access this take-out, take the Leslie Gulch road via the Succor Creek or McBride Creek roads, both of which intersect Highway 95 north of Jordan Valley. This site is accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles when roads are dry, but it may be temporarily closed due to flash flooding. There are toilets, and camping is allowed at the Slocum Creek campground. There is no potable water. There is a designated boat ramp parking area for vehicles left overnight.

Due to slack water on Owyhee Reservoir, the last 10 to 12 miles upstream from Leslie Gulch has little or no current. Upstream winds are frequent. Information on dump stations is available from the BLM Vale District Office.

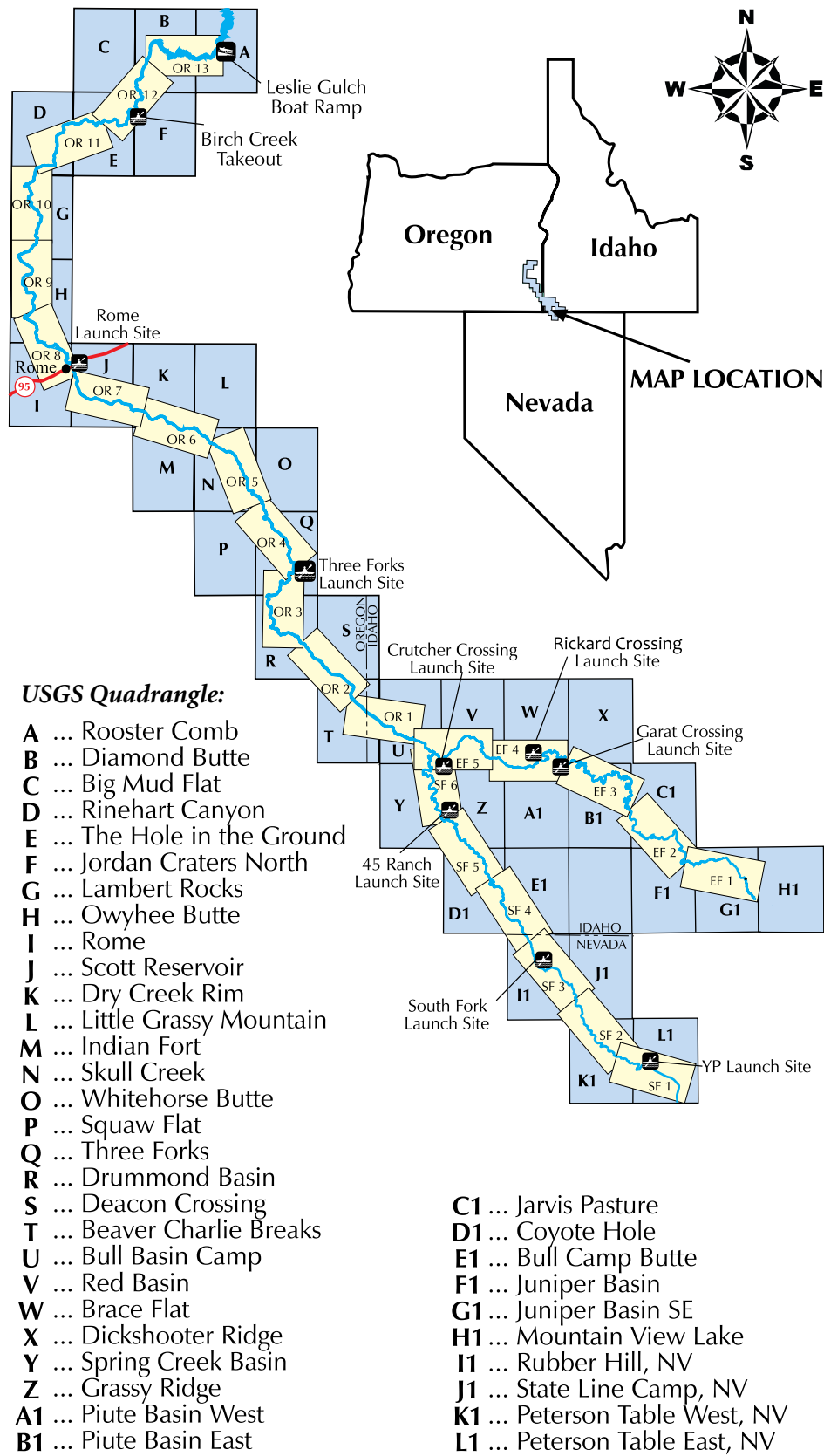

































# OWYHEE LOCATION MAP











# OWYHEE MAP LEGEND

-  River
-  Stream
-  Wild and Scenic River Designation

-  River Mile Marker
-  Portage or Lining Recommended
-  Launch Site
-  Camping
-  Boat Launch
-  Restroom
-  Historical Site
-  Latitude/Longitude Coordinate
-  Dam
-  Rapids Class II
-  Rapids Class III
-  Rapids Class IV
-  Rapids Class V
-  Rapids Class VI

-  Road or 4WD Trail
-  Hiking Trail (non-mechanized)
-  Pipeline
-  Contour Line
-  Lake
-  Playa
-  Map Overlap
-  State Boundary

## Land Status

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Bureau of Reclamation
-  Indian Reservation
-  Private Land
-  State Land
-  BLM Wilderness (ID)
-  Non-Wilderness Access Route (cherrystem)
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area (NV, OR)

Coordinate System: Projection - UTM Zone 11, Datum NAD 1983, units in meters

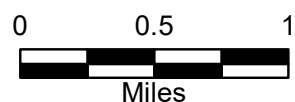
Source Information: Land status, hydrology, and transportation data compiled from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource base data at a scale of 1:24,000. Contour derived from U.S. Geological Survey 10 meter national elevation dataset. The official land records should be checked for up-to-date status on any specific tract of land. Recreation information: BLM Boise, Twin Falls Vale and Elko District Offices.

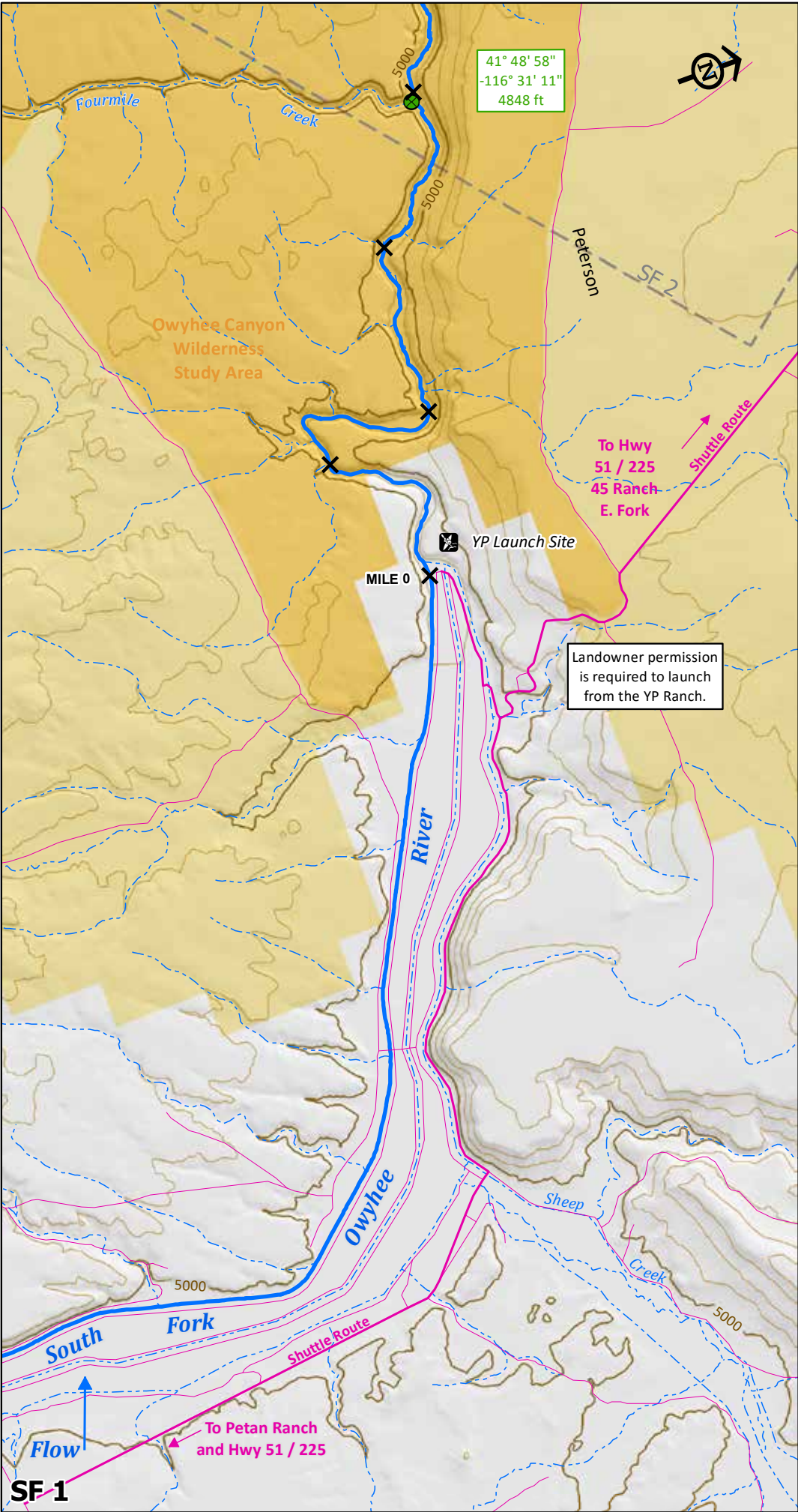
Warning: Inclement weather can make road surfaces impassable. Travel on unpaved routes with properly equipped vehicles and in good weather. This is an extremely remote region. Plan ahead. Take precautions. Patrols are infrequent. Some roads cross private land and may require permission for access.

Even though every effort is made to depict the road network, features and descriptions accurately, BLM cannot guarantee road classification and/or positional accuracy of road and other features in all cases. No warranty is made by the BLM for use of this data for purposes not intended by BLM.

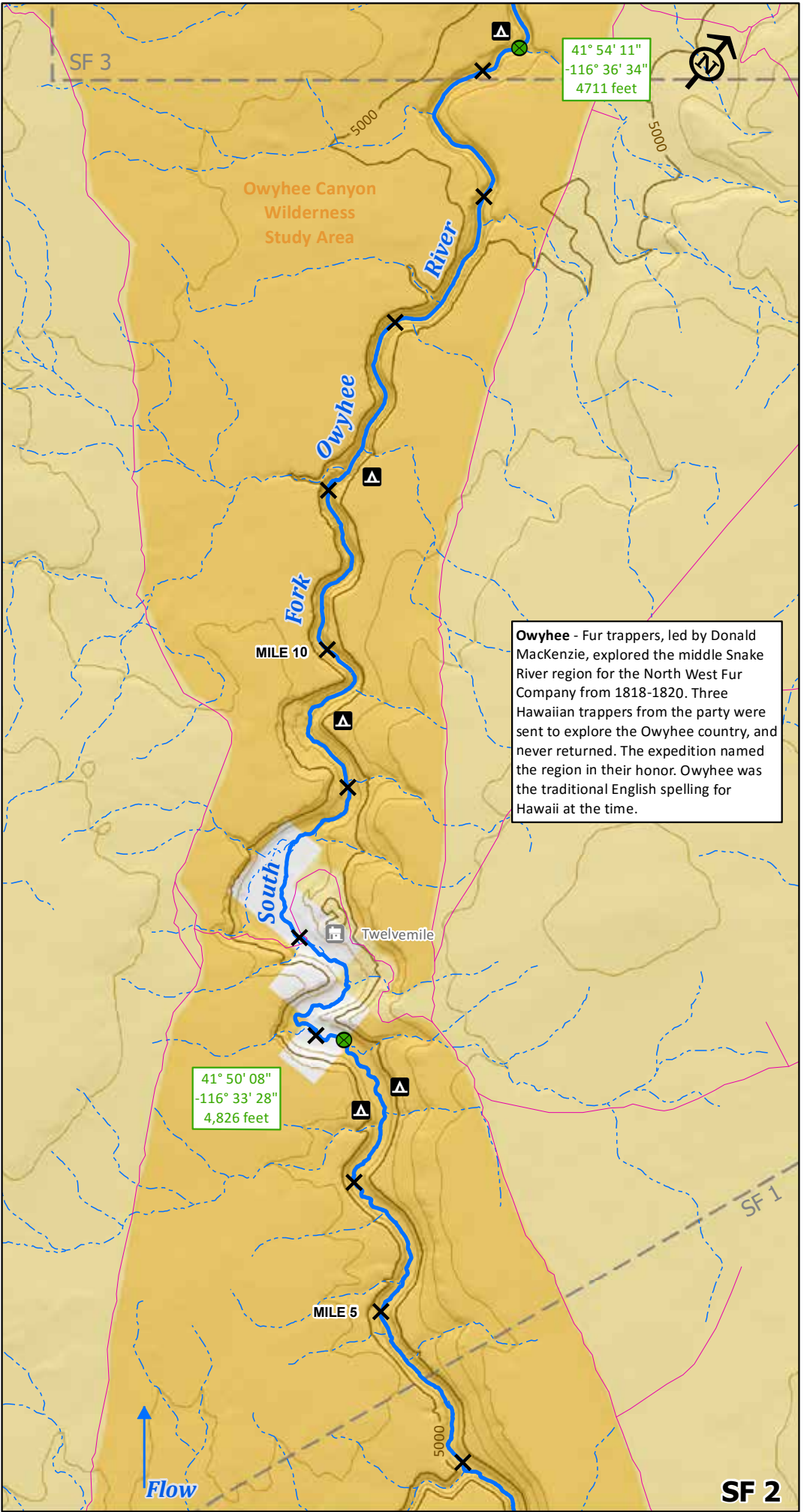
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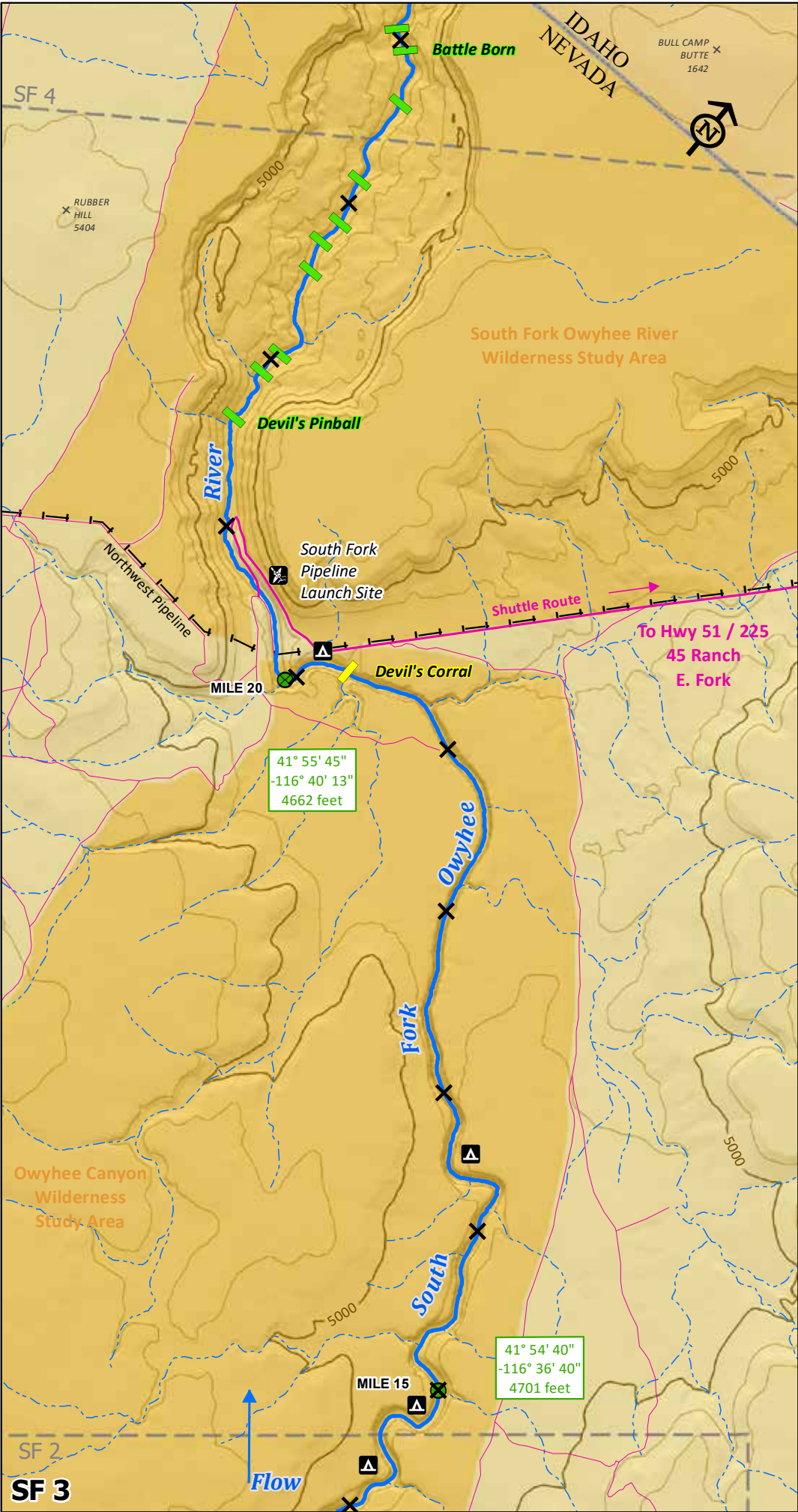
Contour Interval = 100 feet

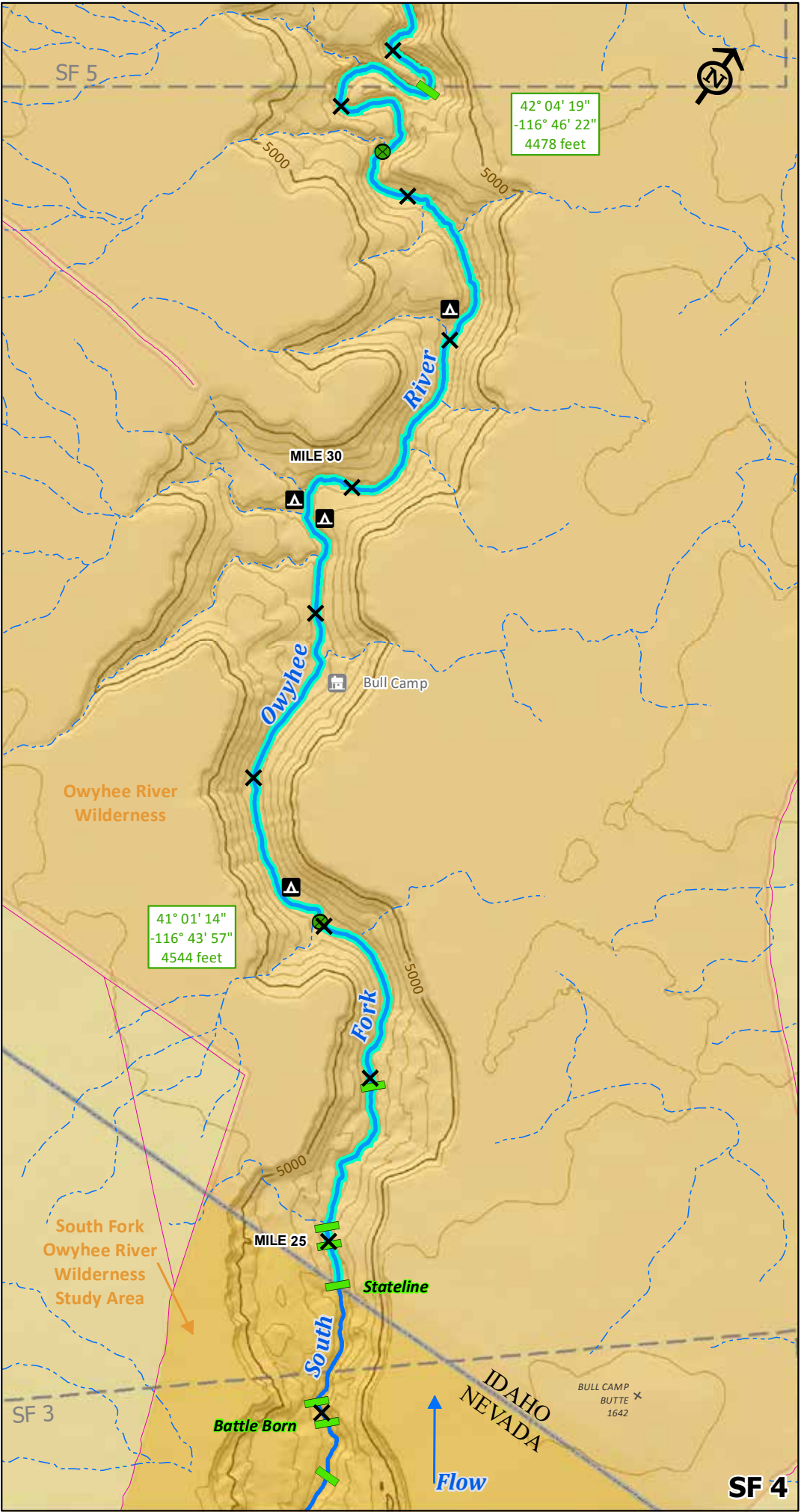




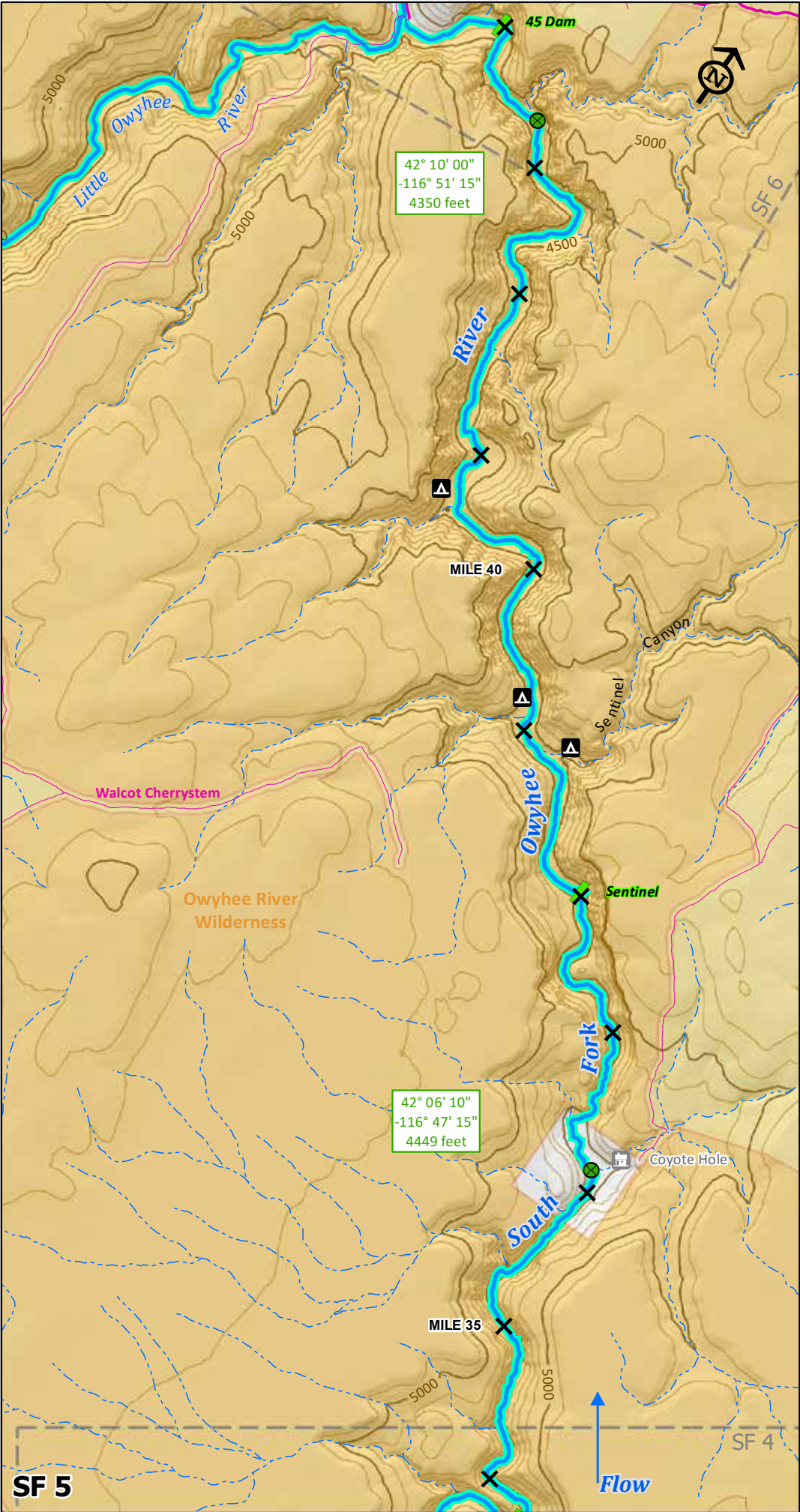


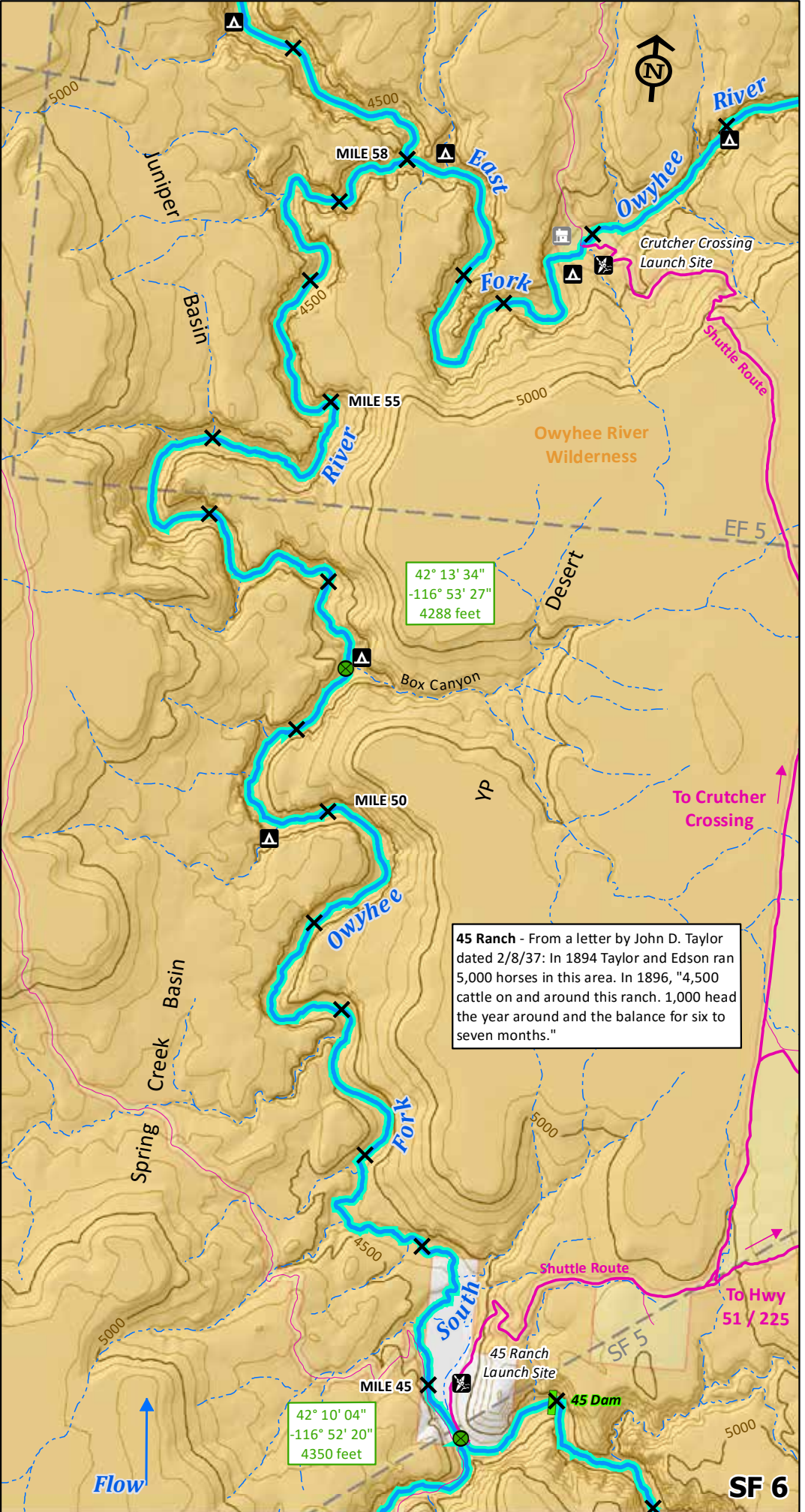










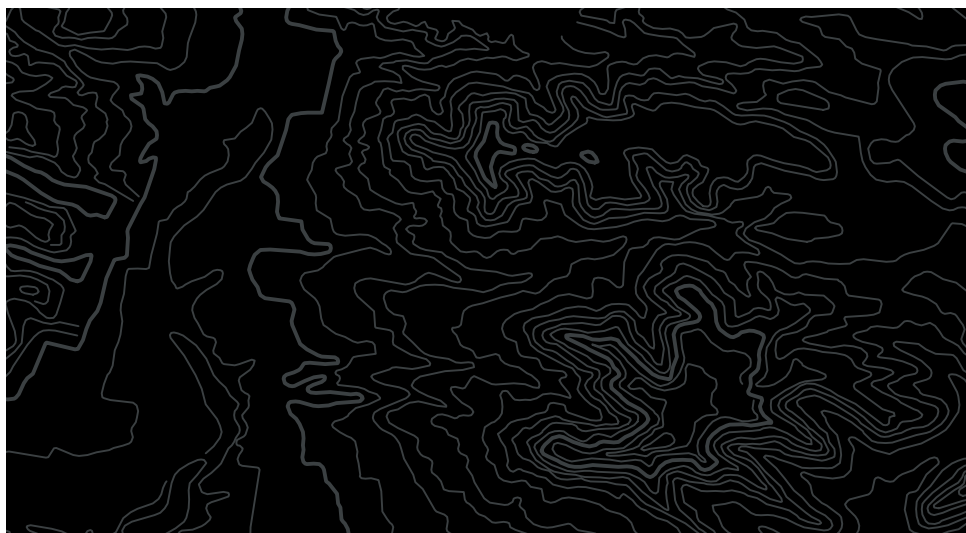


**45 Ranch** - From a letter by John D. Taylor dated 2/8/37: In 1894 Taylor and Edson ran 5,000 horses in this area. In 1896, "4,500 cattle on and around this ranch. 1,000 head the year around and the balance for six to seven months."

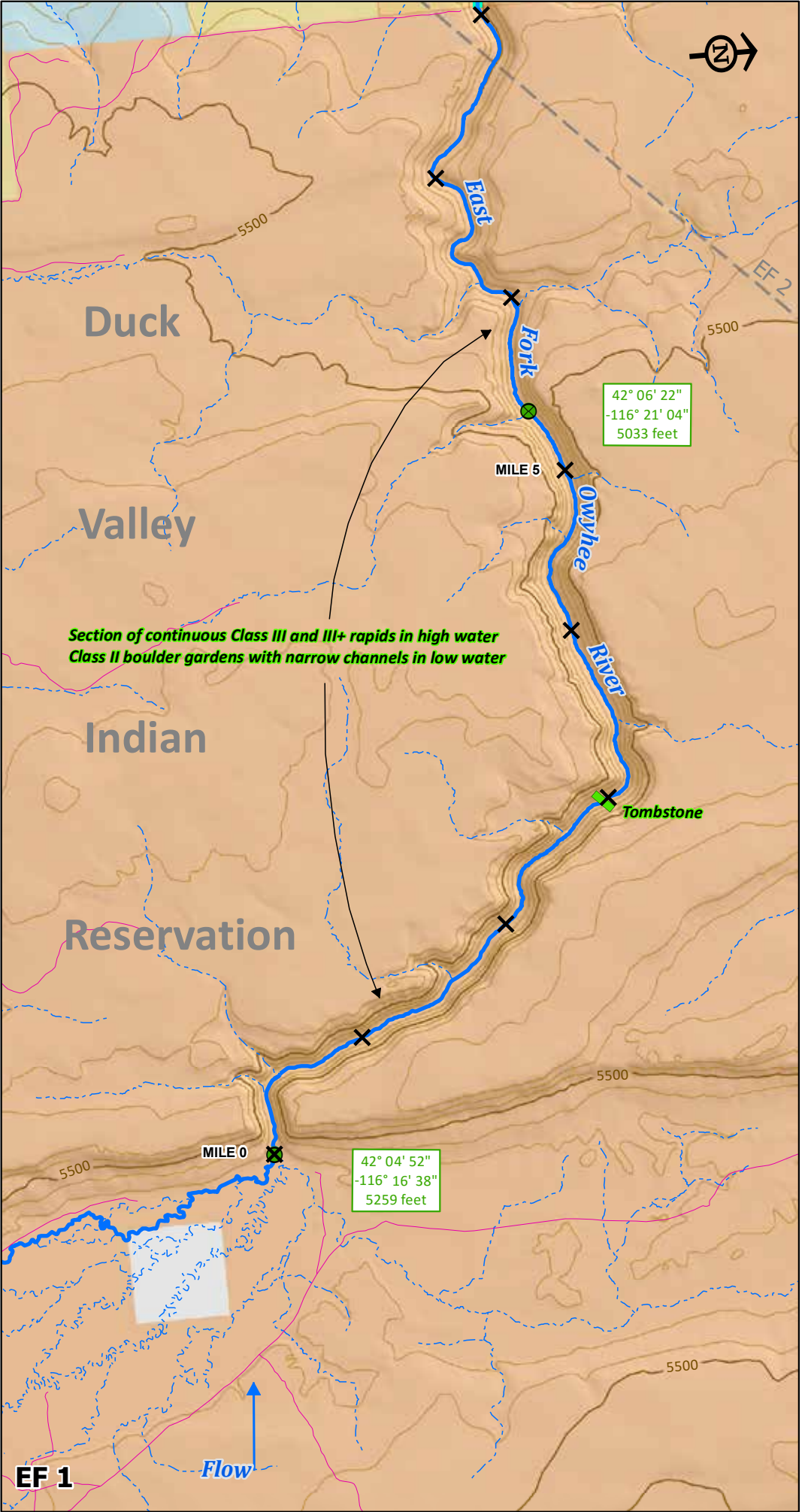


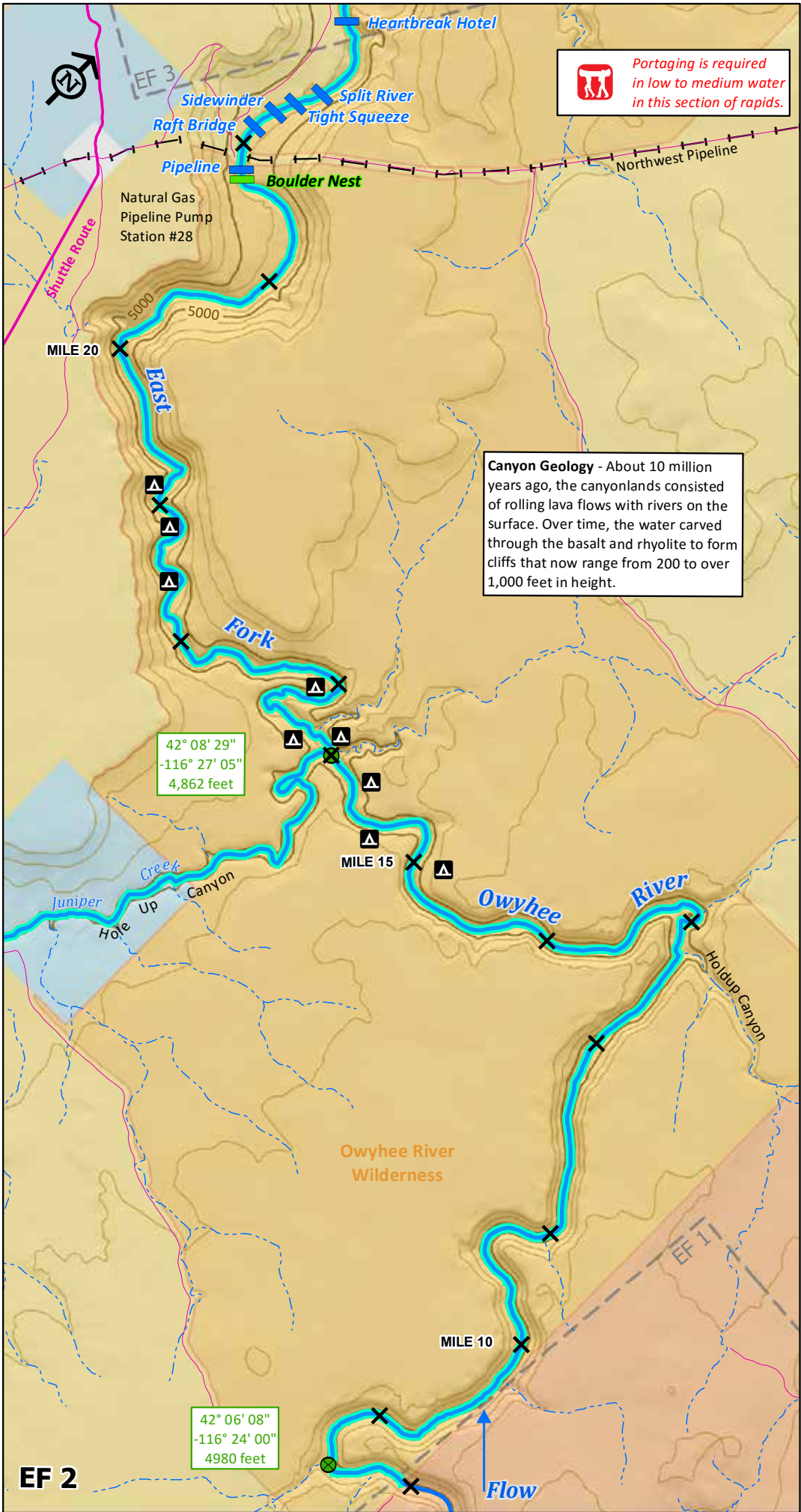


*Deep Creek, Seth Tonsmeire*

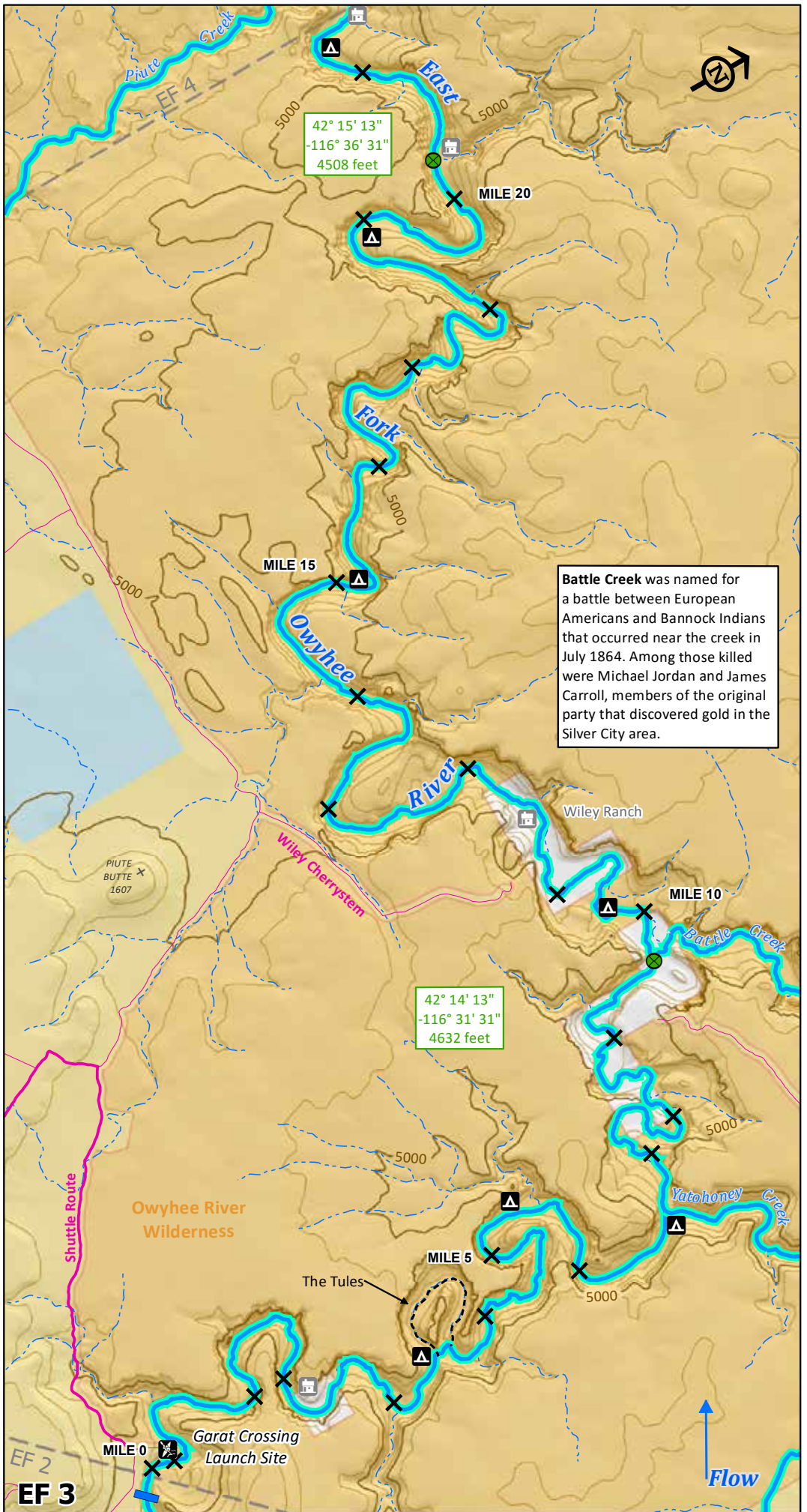




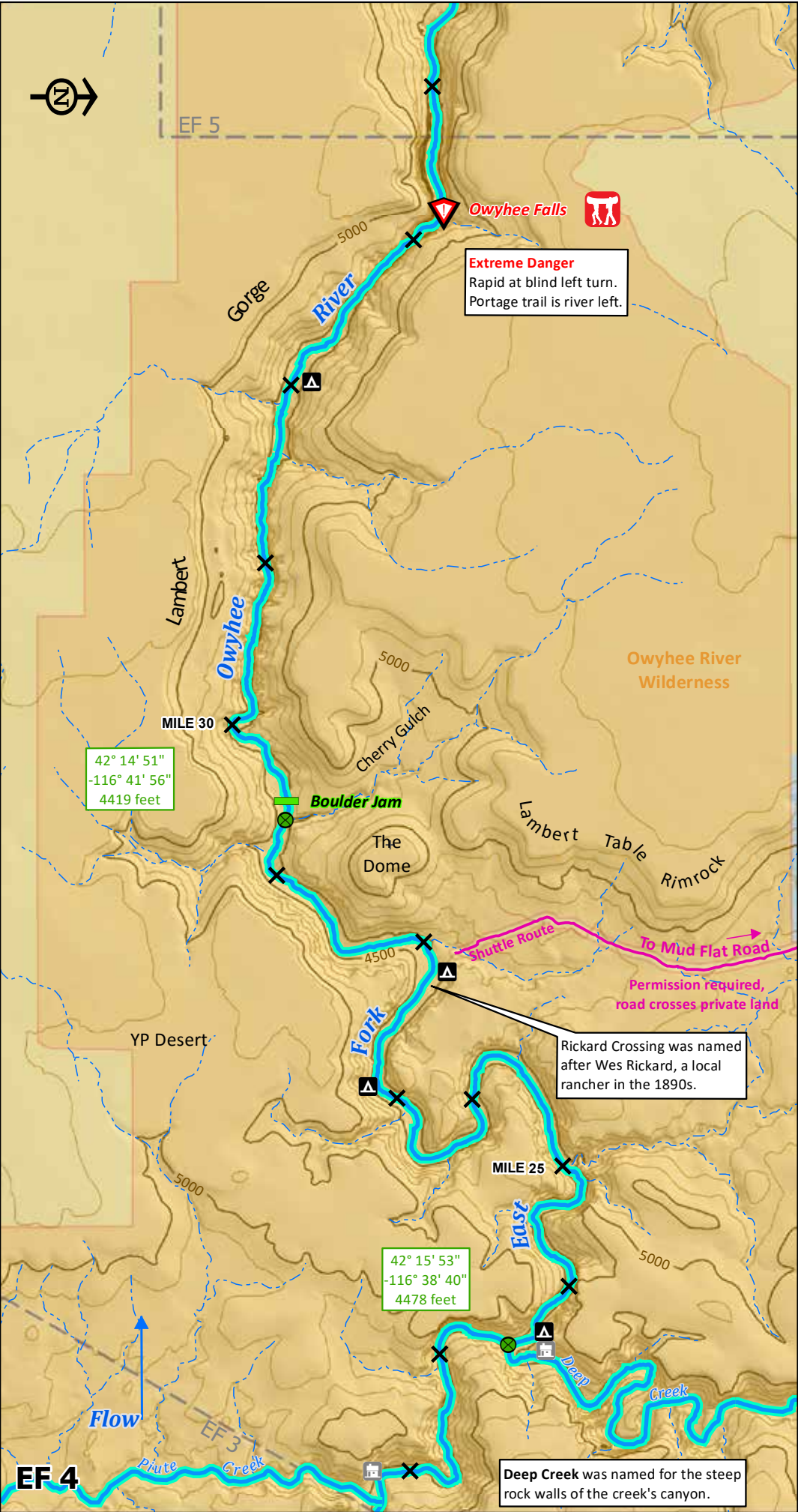


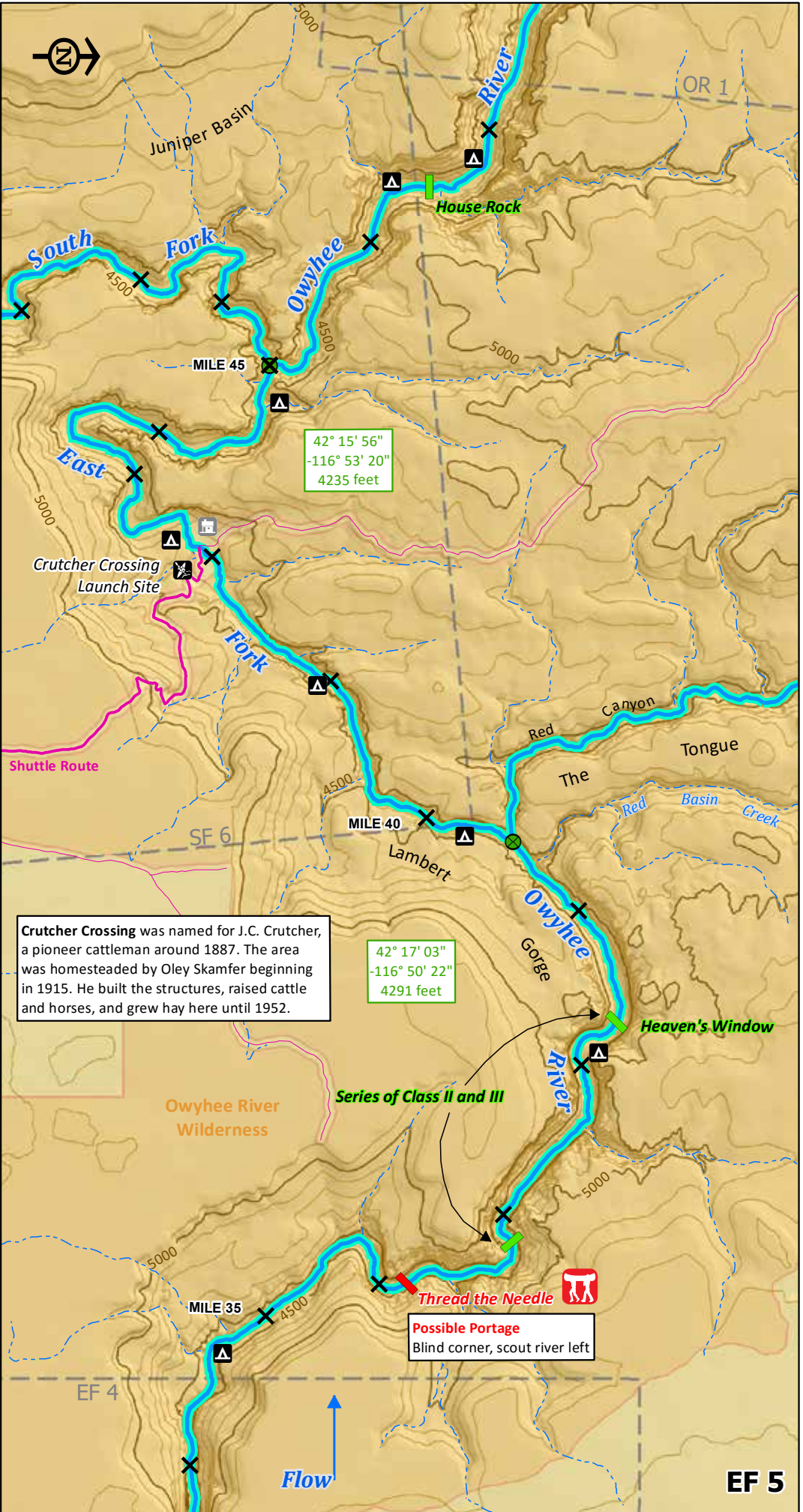




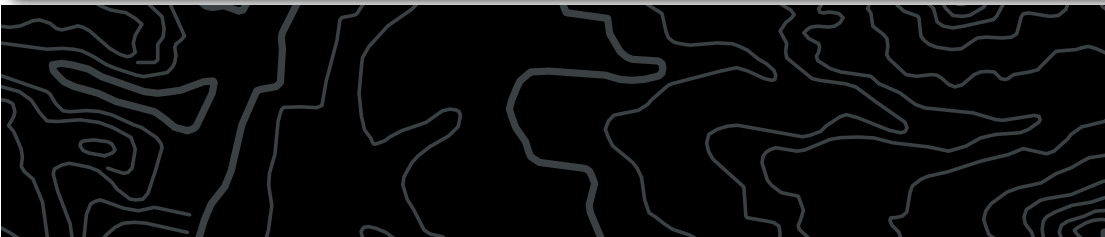




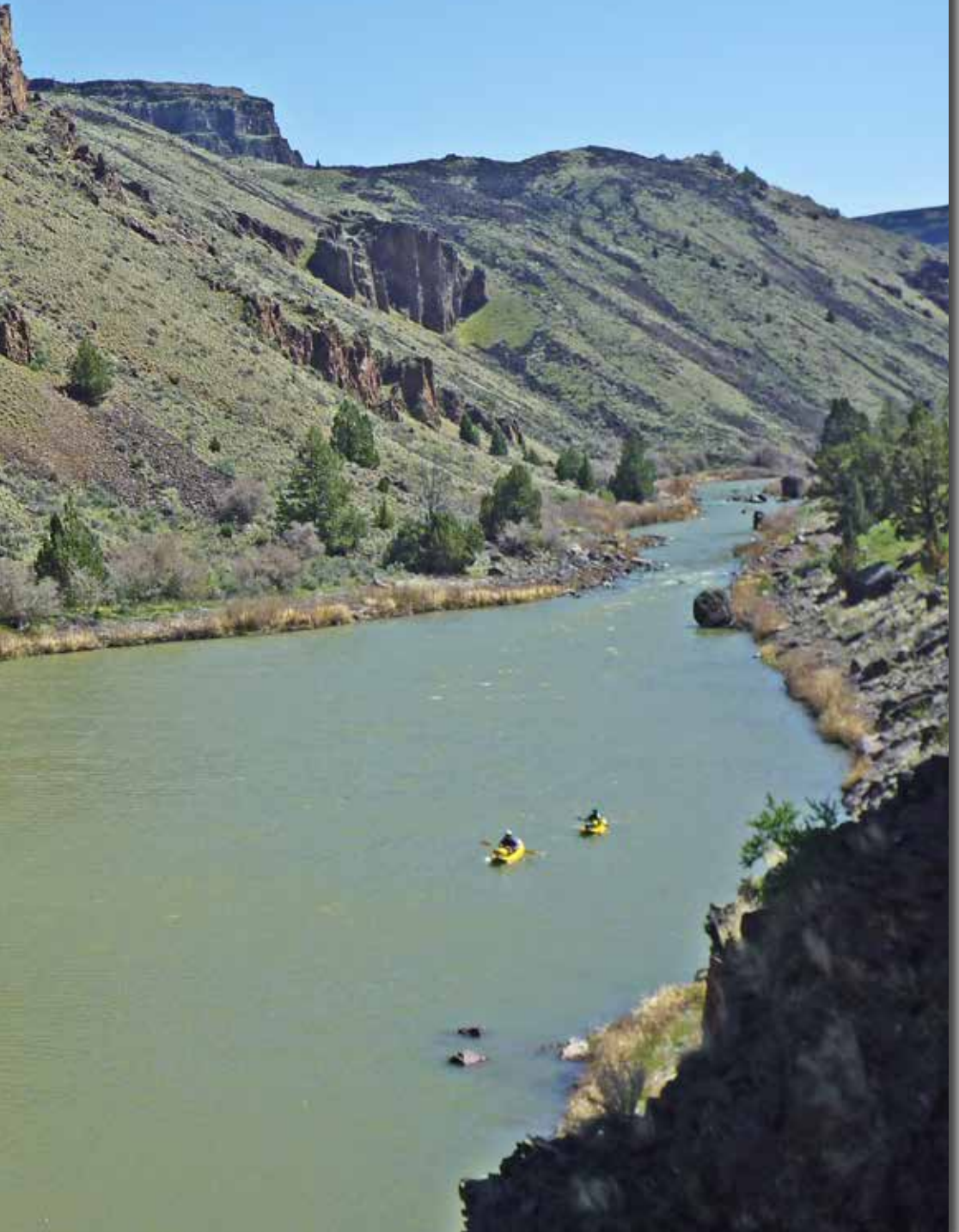


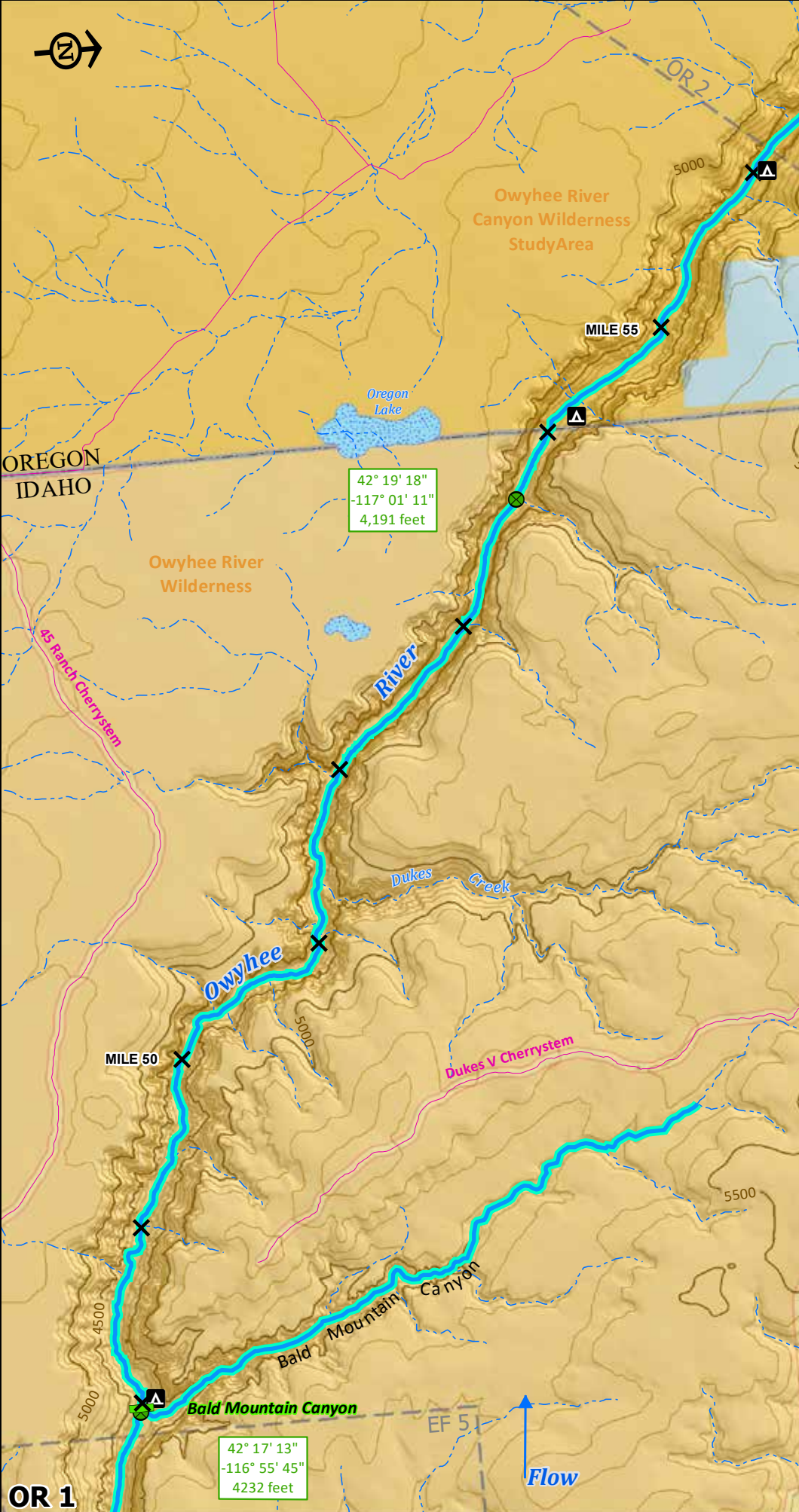












OREGON  
IDAHO

Owyhee River  
Wilderness

Owyhee River  
Canyon Wilderness  
Study Area

42° 19' 18"  
-117° 01' 11"  
4,191 feet

MILE 50

MILE 55

Dukes V Cherrystem

Bald Mountain Canyon

OR 1

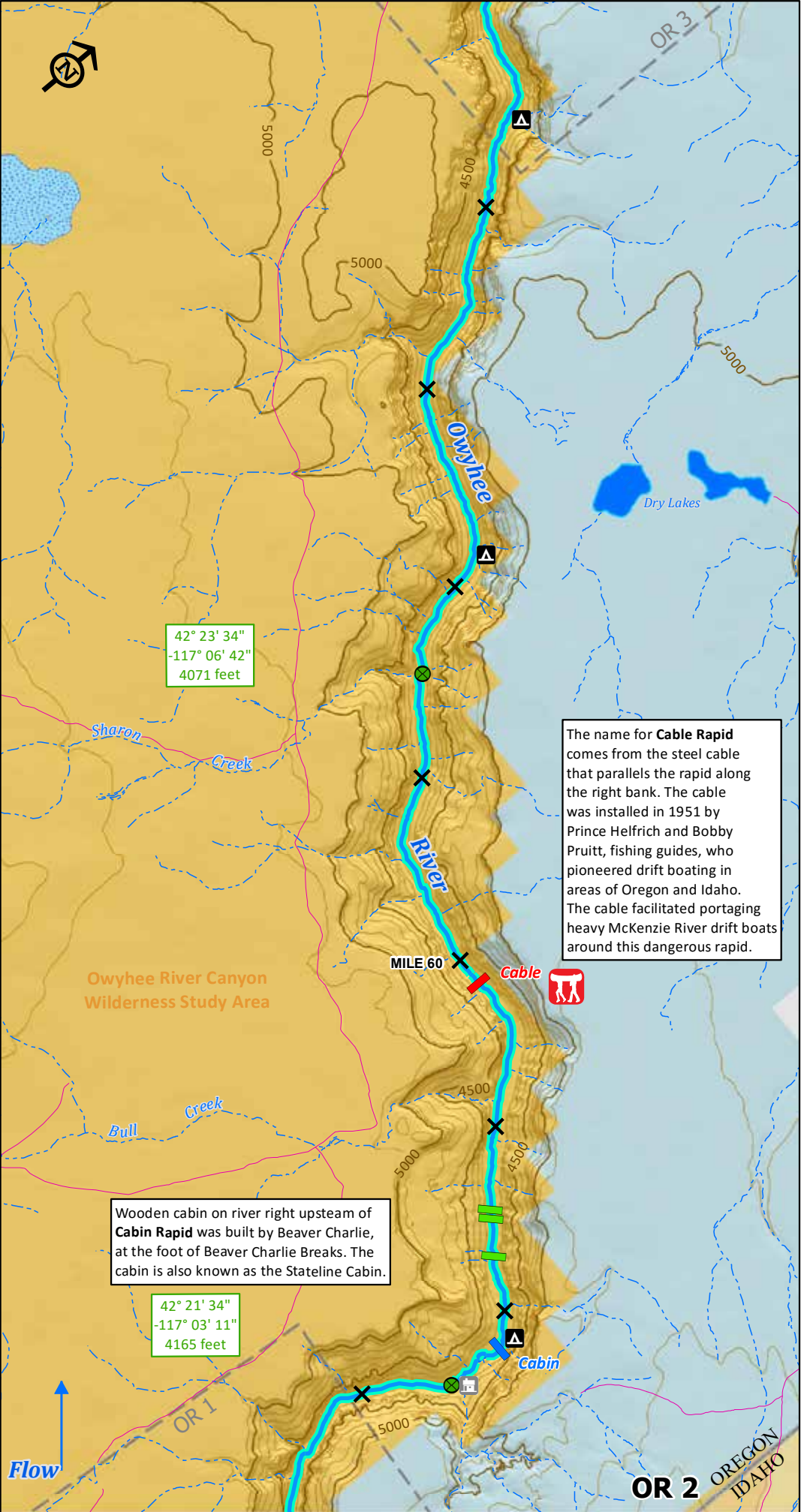
OR 2

EF 5

Flow

42° 17' 13"  
-116° 55' 45"  
4232 feet

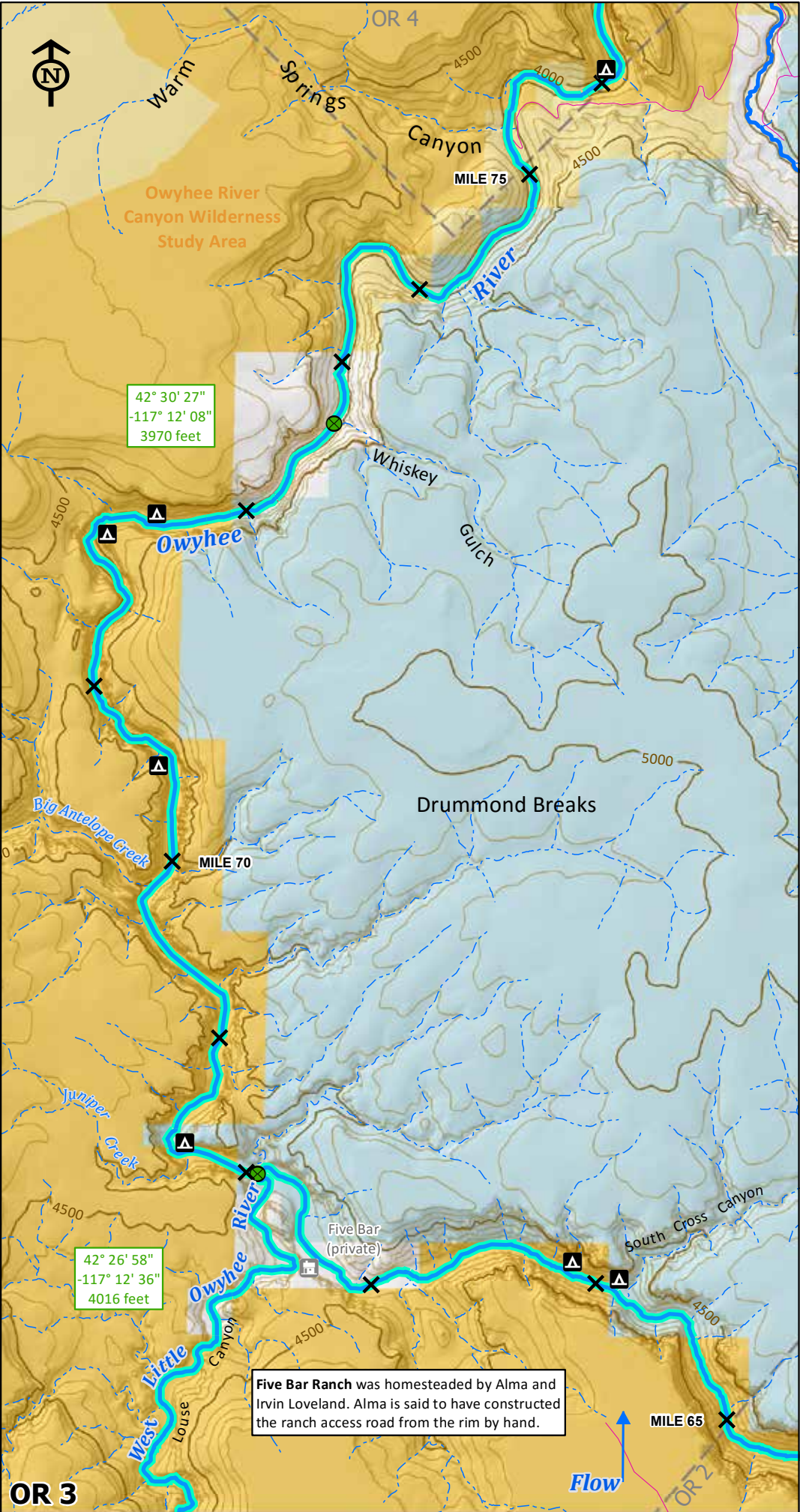


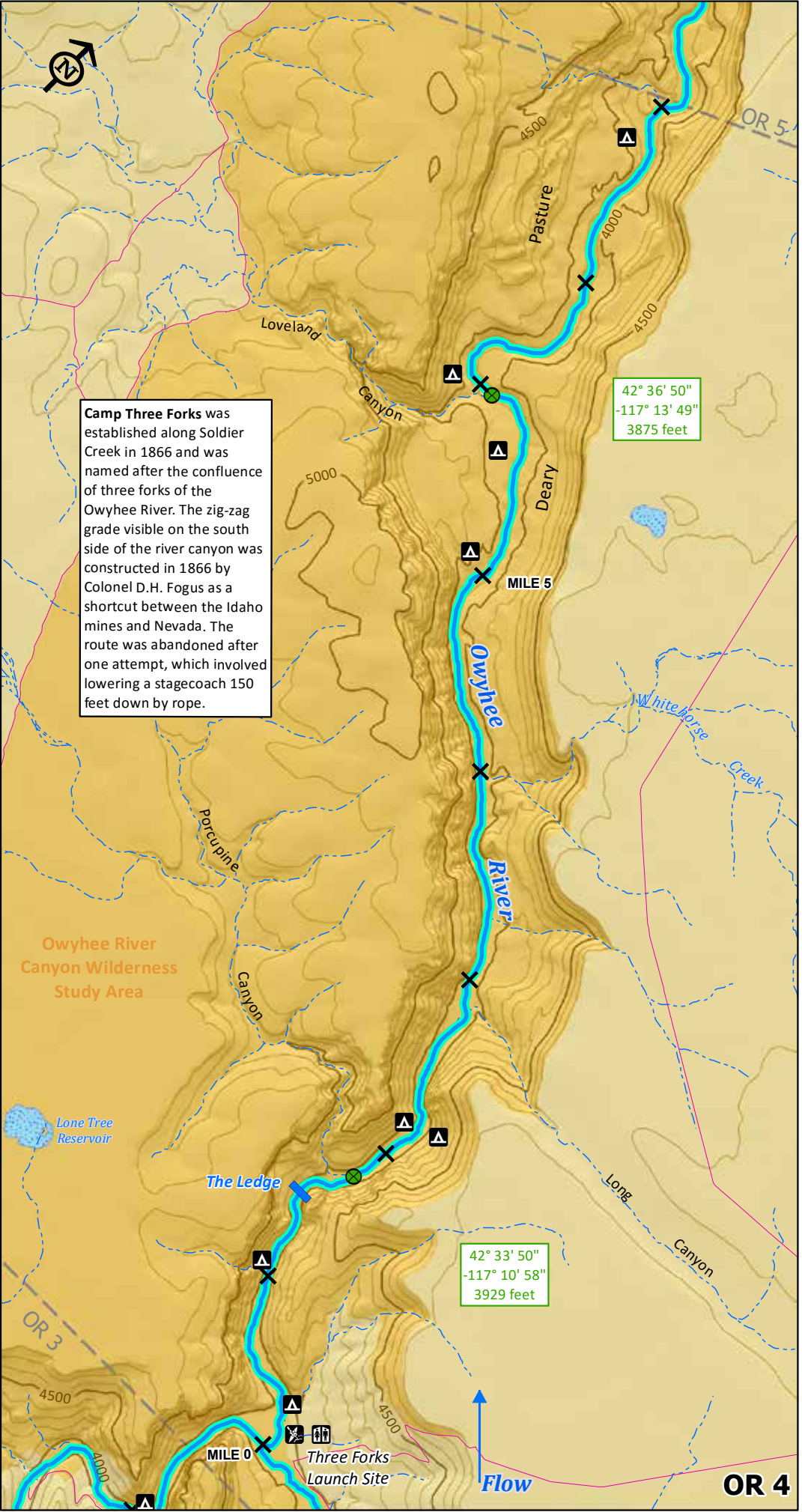


The name for **Cable Rapid** comes from the steel cable that parallels the rapid along the right bank. The cable was installed in 1951 by Prince Helfrich and Bobby Pruitt, fishing guides, who pioneered drift boating in areas of Oregon and Idaho. The cable facilitated portaging heavy McKenzie River drift boats around this dangerous rapid.

Wooden cabin on river right upstream of **Cabin Rapid** was built by Beaver Charlie, at the foot of Beaver Charlie Breaks. The cabin is also known as the Stateline Cabin.





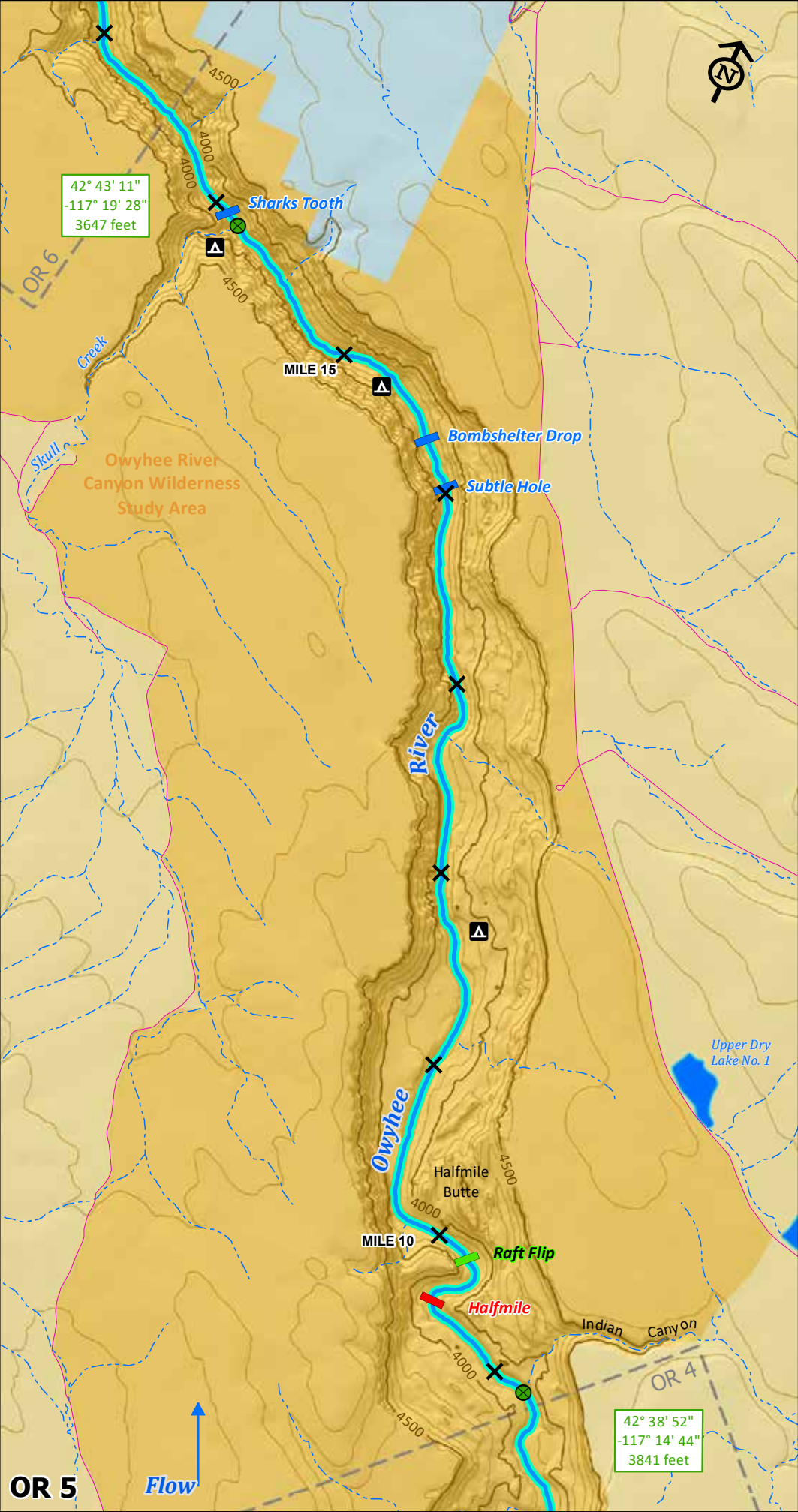


**Camp Three Forks** was established along Soldier Creek in 1866 and was named after the confluence of three forks of the Owyhee River. The zig-zag grade visible on the south side of the river canyon was constructed in 1866 by Colonel D.H. Fogus as a shortcut between the Idaho mines and Nevada. The route was abandoned after one attempt, which involved lowering a stagecoach 150 feet down by rope.

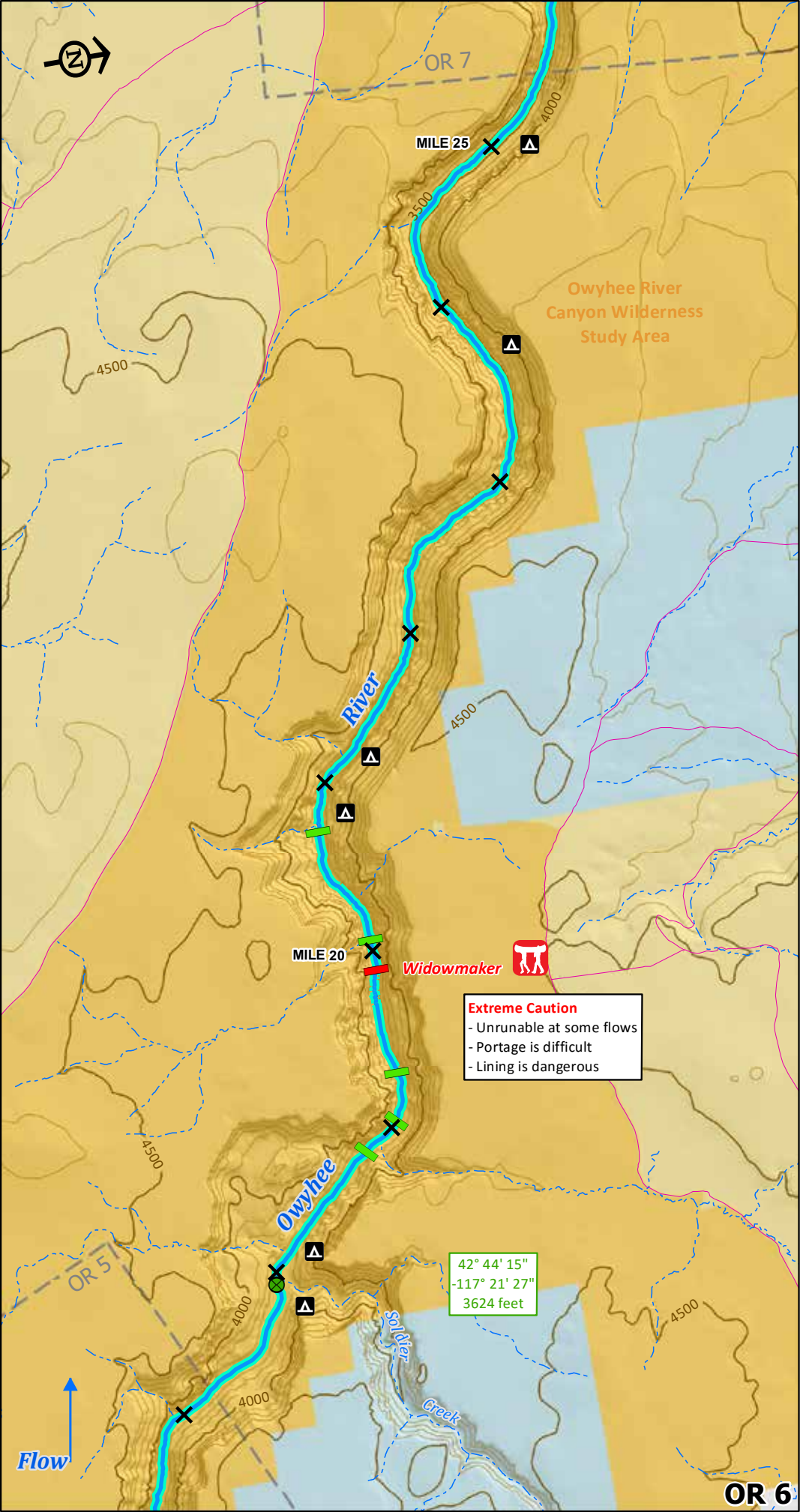
42° 36' 50"  
-117° 13' 49"  
3875 feet

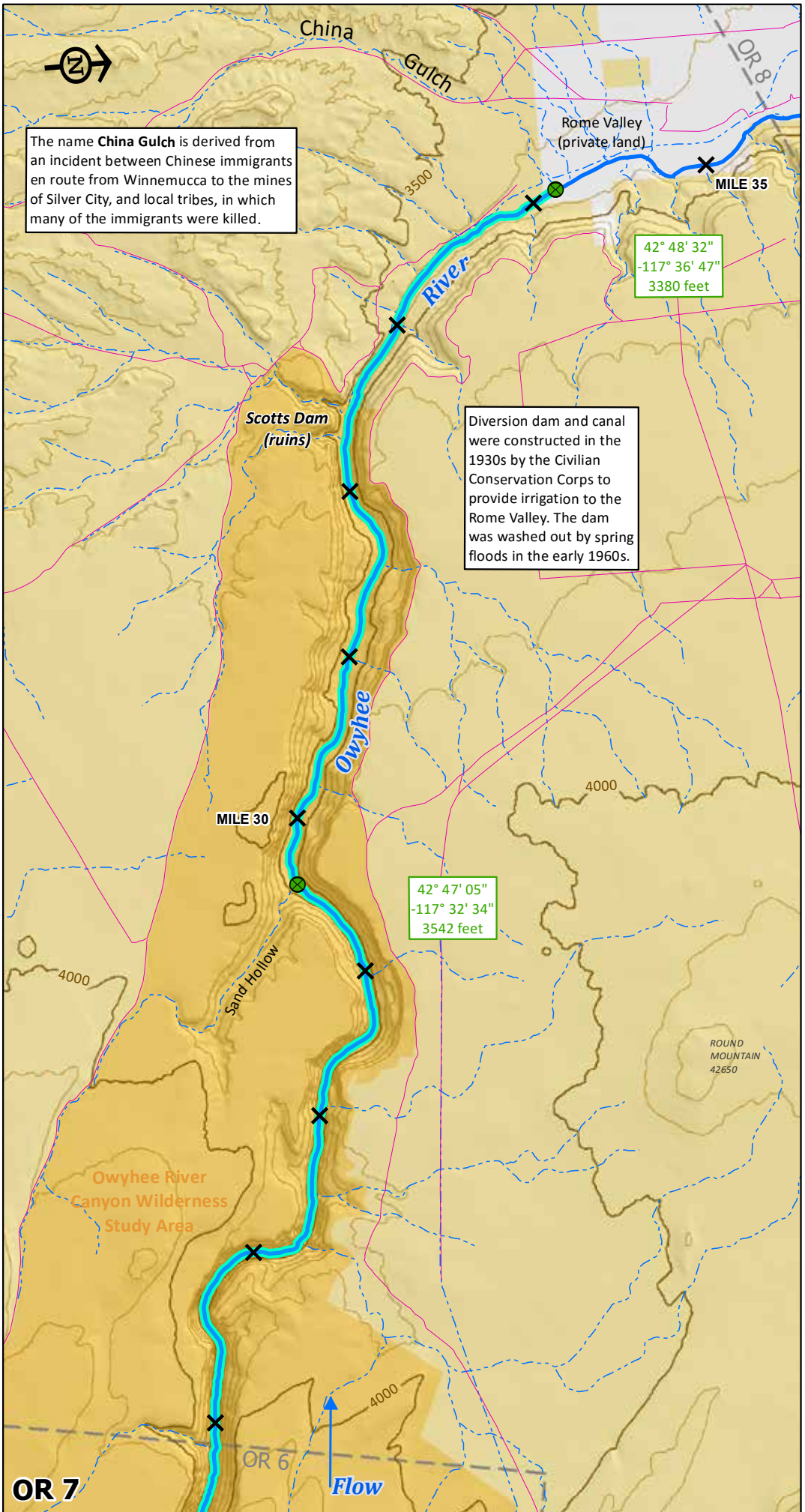
42° 33' 50"  
-117° 10' 58"  
3929 feet













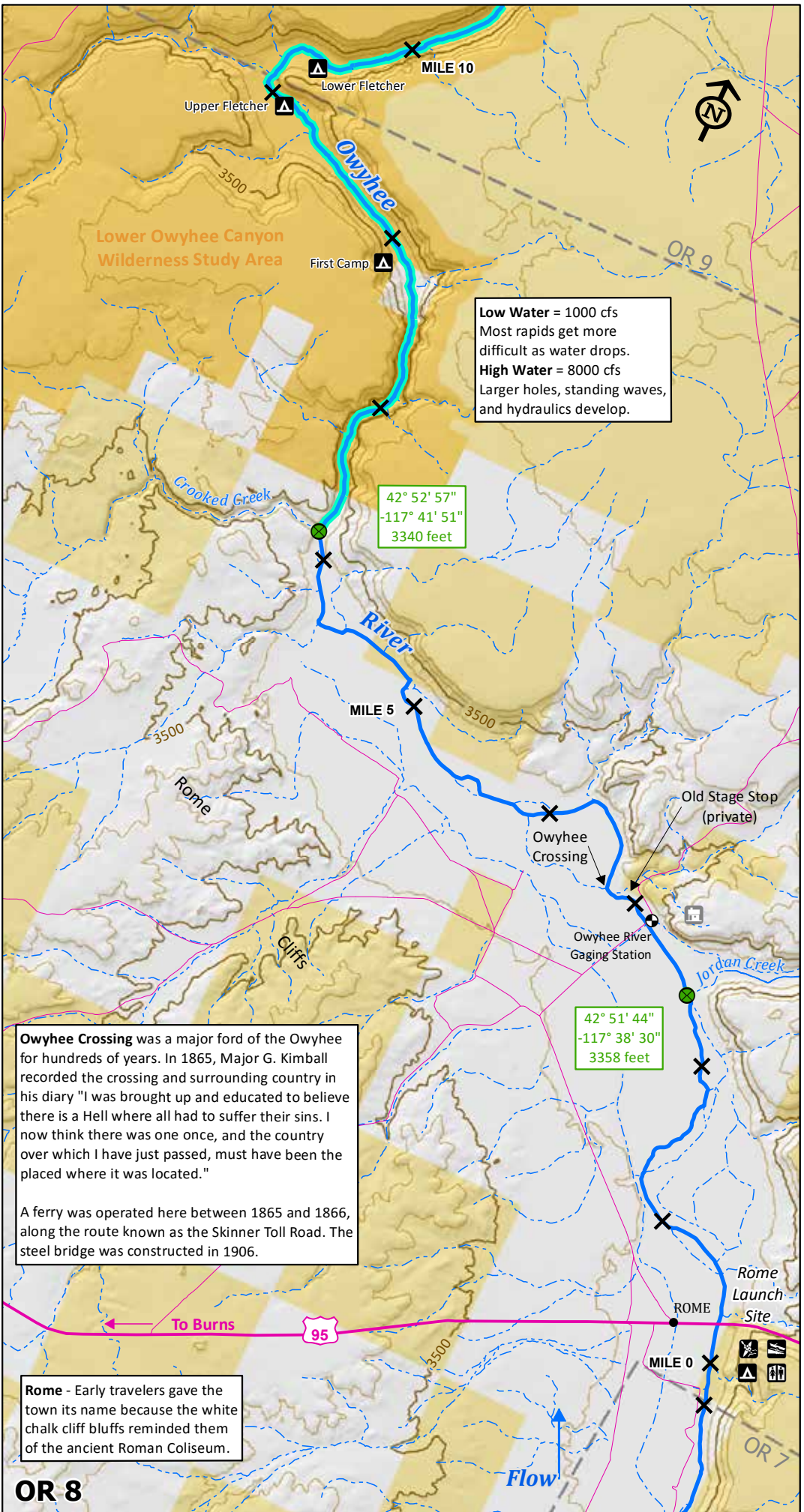
*Lower Owyhee River*

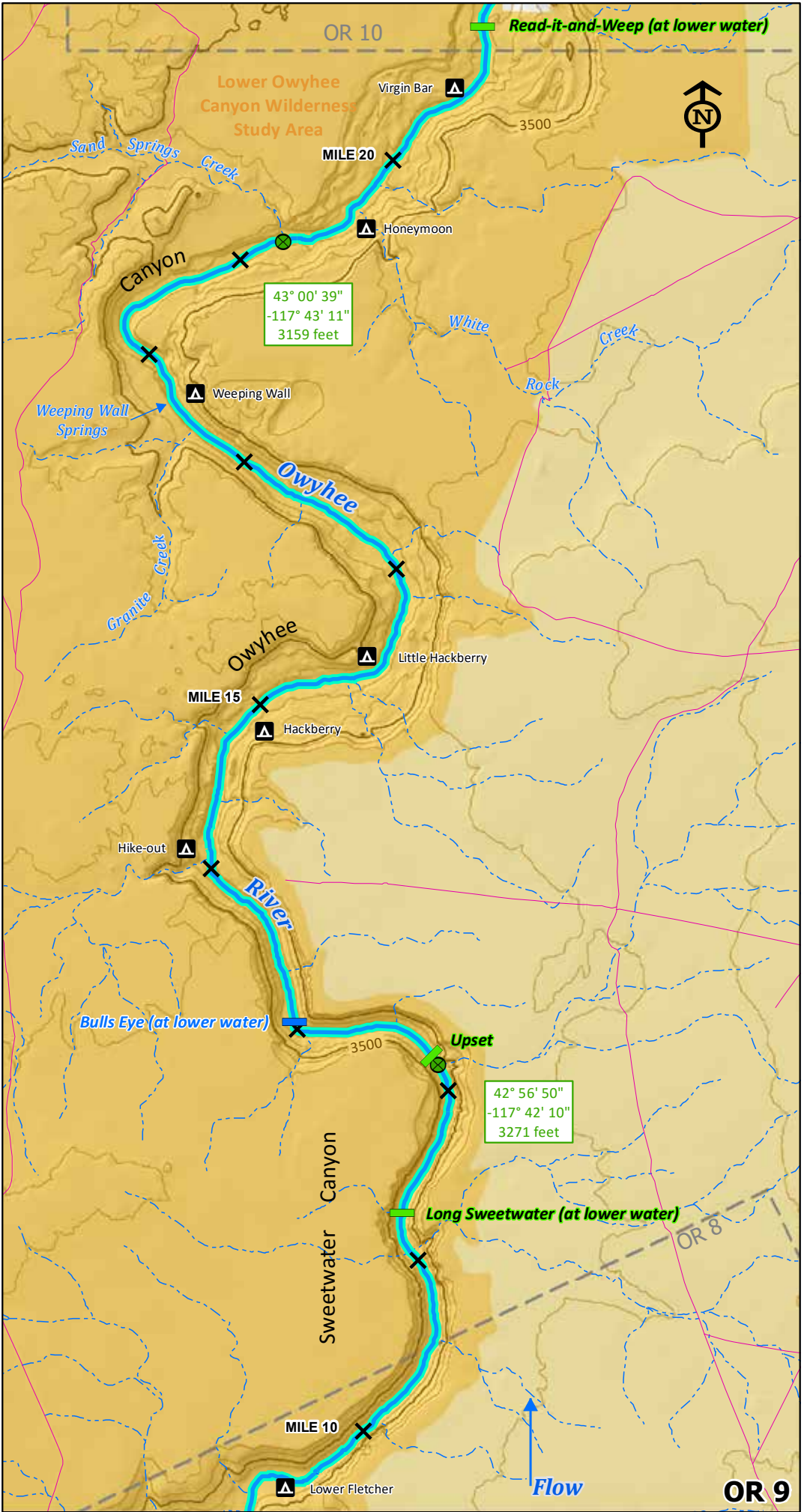


*Lower Owyhee River*

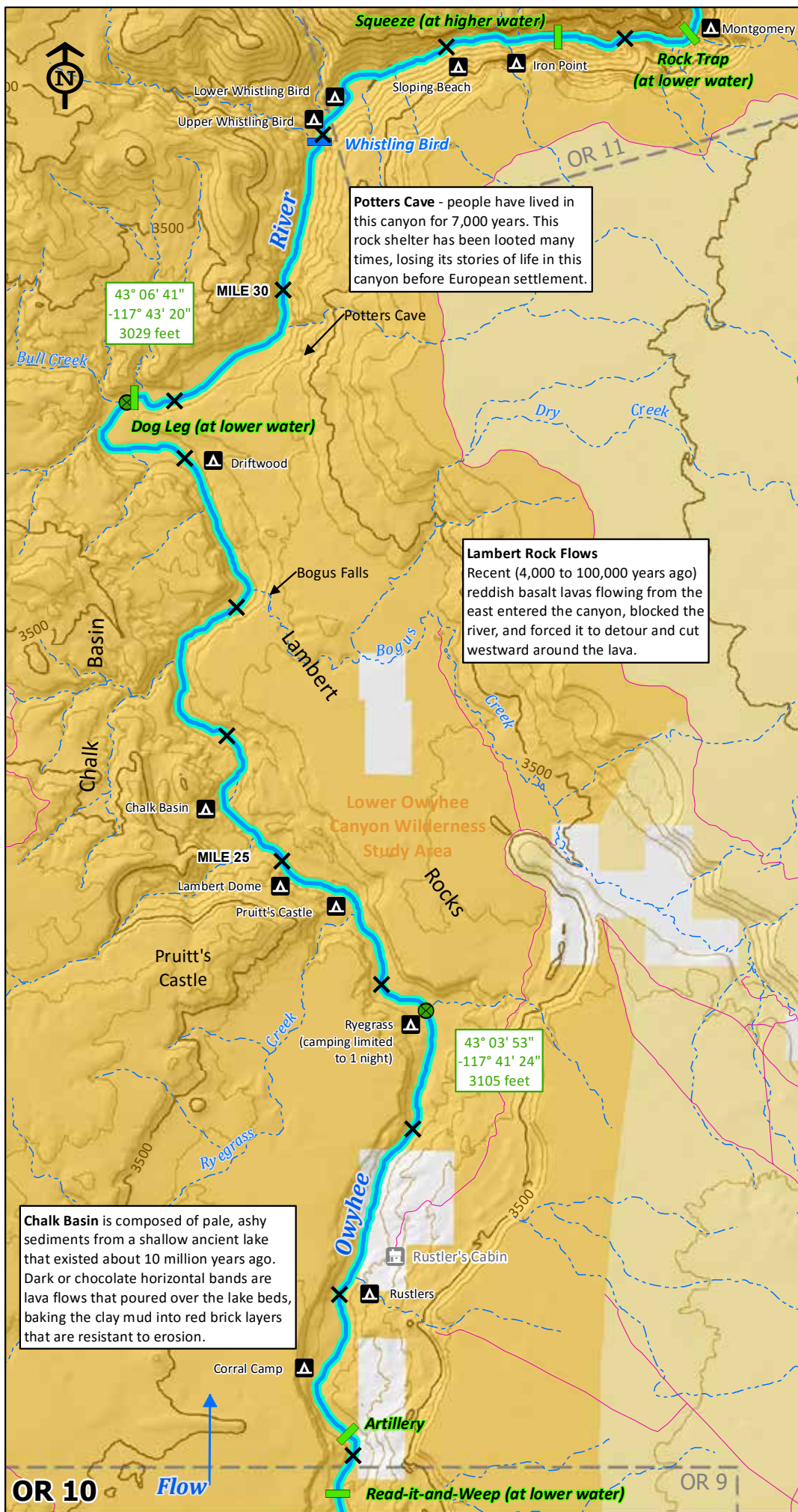


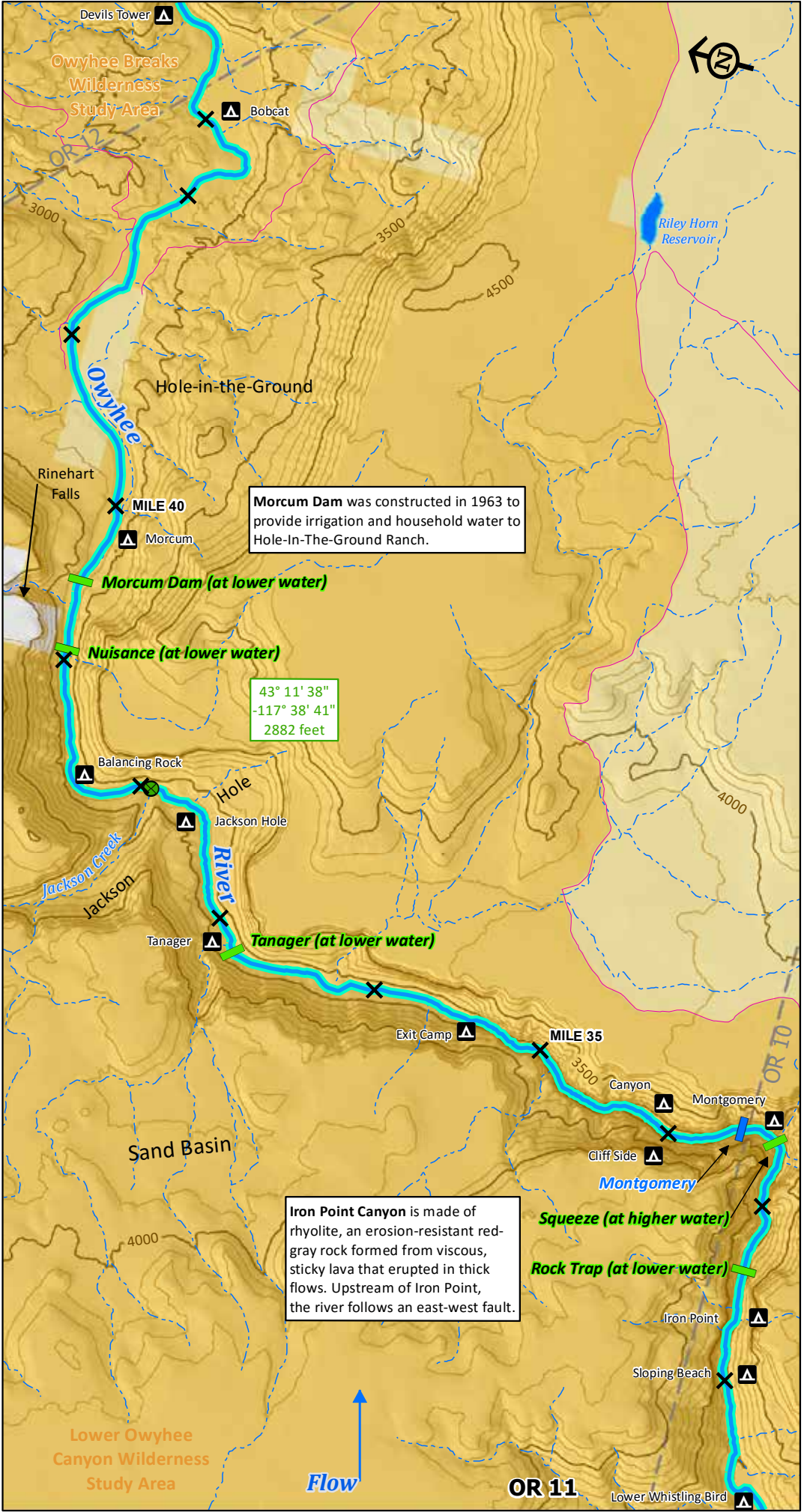




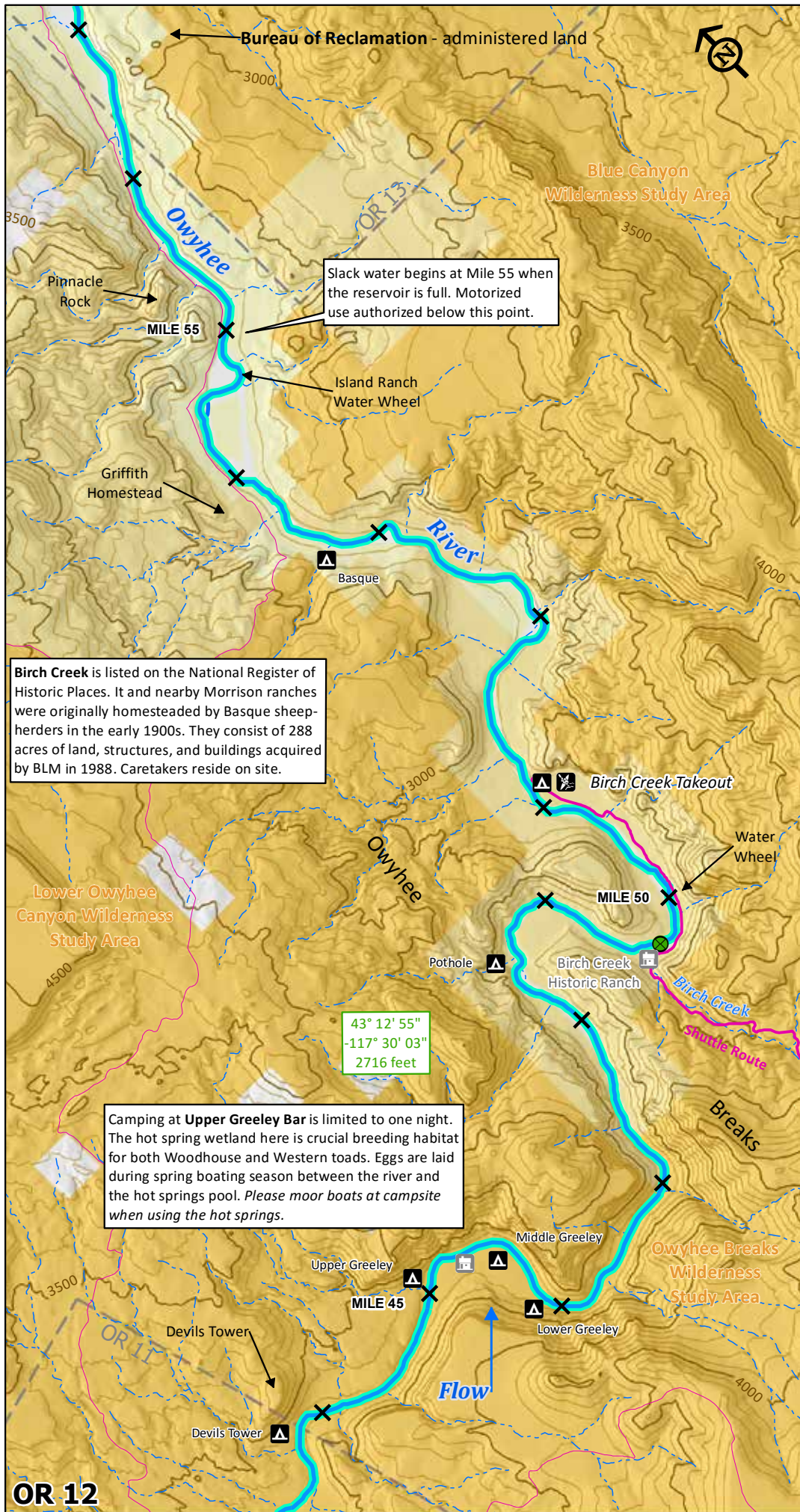


























# BRUNEAU & JARBIDGE RIVERS

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## BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BRUNEAU RIVER

The Bruneau River flows north from the Jarbidge mountains of northern Nevada through the Owyhee Uplands on its way to the Snake River in southern Idaho. The river has cut two principal canyons in the plateau: the Jarbidge River and the West Fork Bruneau River canyons. The Jarbidge River carries the majority of the system's flow and becomes the Bruneau River where the West Fork empties into the Jarbidge about 24 miles north of the Nevada border. Only very experienced boaters should float the 69 miles of the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers due to challenging rapids, log jams and other hazards. Some hazards can't be seen until boaters are on top of them.

The Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers can be run by kayak or raft. The most difficult segment of the Bruneau River is a five-mile section in the lower portion of the canyon. Your ability to run the Bruneau should be judged by your skill in running the sustained Class IV whitewater found in Five Mile Rapids, beginning at river mile 58.5.

## BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WEST FORK

The West Fork should be run only by kayak and only by expert kayakers. It is extremely challenging due to its small size, numerous Class IV and V rapids and potential for strenuous portages.

## BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR SHEEP CREEK

Sheep Creek is the mystery run in the Bruneau Drainage. It flows into the Bruneau River 13 miles downstream from Indian Hot Springs. Runnable river flows are dependent on heavy rain fall and it is rarely boatable in any craft. When it does have water, Sheep Creek is a challenging run with a handful of Class IV and V rapids such as Gun-shy, Blind Date and Grants Slam. This is a 19 mile run for expert kayakers, in addition to the 27 miles of the Bruneau. The launch site is upstream of Marys Creek at a bridge off of Highway 51.

## BOATER SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE JARBIDGE RIVER

The Jarbidge River is a narrow technical river. Navigating around the many obstacles in a raft requires constant maneuvering in tight spaces. Boats over 14' are not recommended on the Jarbidge.

If you boat the Jarbidge River, you should be aware that there are two or more long, rocky and arduous portages, depending on your skill and the water level. Additional hazards on the Jarbidge are the ever-changing log jams. Be cautious of blind corners and constricted areas where logs can

stick on rocks and trees lean in off the banks. Due to rising and falling flows, the locations and severity of logjams can be different from one day to the next.

## SPRING BOATING SEASON

The normal float season is during spring runoff from about April 1 to June 15. The flow of the Bruneau River generally peaks in mid to late May. However, cold or warm weather or heavy rain can cause dramatic fluctuations in water levels at any time. You should be prepared for severe weather conditions, including strong winds, accompanying rain, and snow storms.

The ideal time to float the Bruneau River is when water flows are between 500 and 2,500 cfs at the Bruneau USGS gauge. Go to <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nmis/> to find water levels at the Bruneau USGS gauge. The river is best for rafts when flows are over 1,000 cfs. It is recommended that the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers not be boated in any craft when the USGS gauge reading is above 2,500 cfs.

The Jarbidge River is normally floatable in rafts beginning the first part of May when the Bruneau gauge reading exceeds 1,000 cfs, and/ or the Jarbidge USGS gauge reads 100 cfs or more. The Jarbidge USGS gauge is in Nevada and represents one third to one half of the flow at the Jarbidge put in.

The West Fork Bruneau River is a lower-elevation watershed that has an earlier snow melt than that of the Jarbidge River. It is runnable in a kayak with around 300 cfs and above on the Rowland USGS gauge, located on the Idaho Nevada border. Go to <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nmis/> to find water levels at the Rowland USGS gauge.

## SUMMER BOATING SEASON

The Bruneau River is usually floatable with inflatable kayaks from about June 15 to as late as July 31, when water levels are between 200 and 500 cfs. Due to a number of large, exposed boulder fields in the river channel, you should expect to make several portages and numerous linings. Low water conditions also demand that you be prepared to deal with punctures and other equipment damage.

Even with an inflatable kayak, you should avoid the Jarbidge River at flows under 350 cfs on the Bruneau gauge because of nearly continuous, shallow rapids. To avoid running Five Mile Rapids on the lower Bruneau, you can make an arduous portage up the Roberson Trail to the canyon's eastern rimrock at river mile 57.8. Refer to the river access map to find this location. Otherwise, a full day of scouting and lining is required to get through the first three miles of Five Mile Rapids.



## BRUNEAU-JARBIDGE RIVER FLOW INFORMATION

Idaho Department of Water Resources (208)327-7865

The USGS gauges for river flows are at:

Jarbidge

[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=13162225&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060,00010](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site_no=13162225&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060,00010)





West Fork Bruneau

[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nv/nwis/uv?site\\_no=13161500](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nv/nwis/uv?site_no=13161500)

Bruneau (Hot Springs)

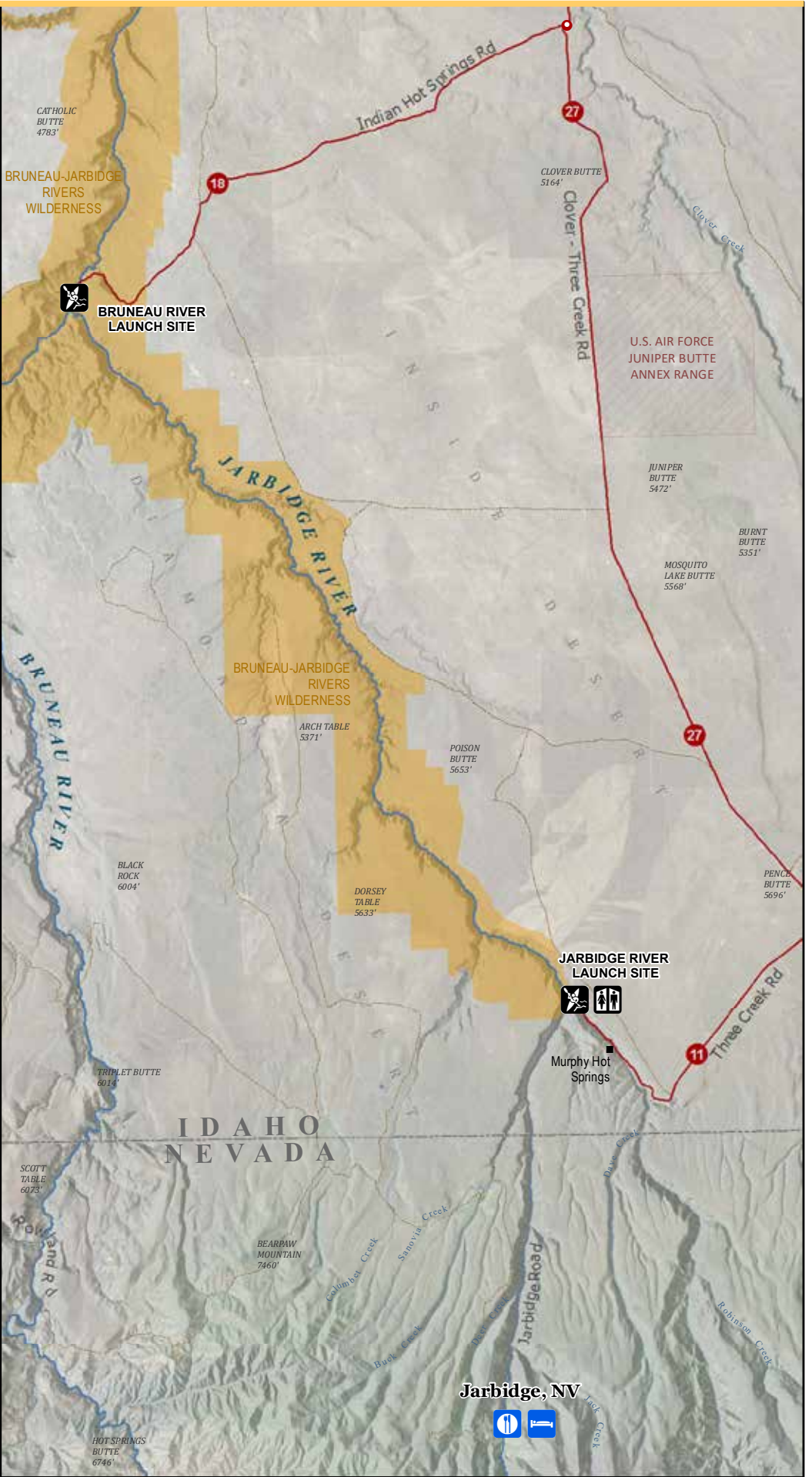
[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=13168500&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060,00010](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv/?site_no=13168500&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060,00010)

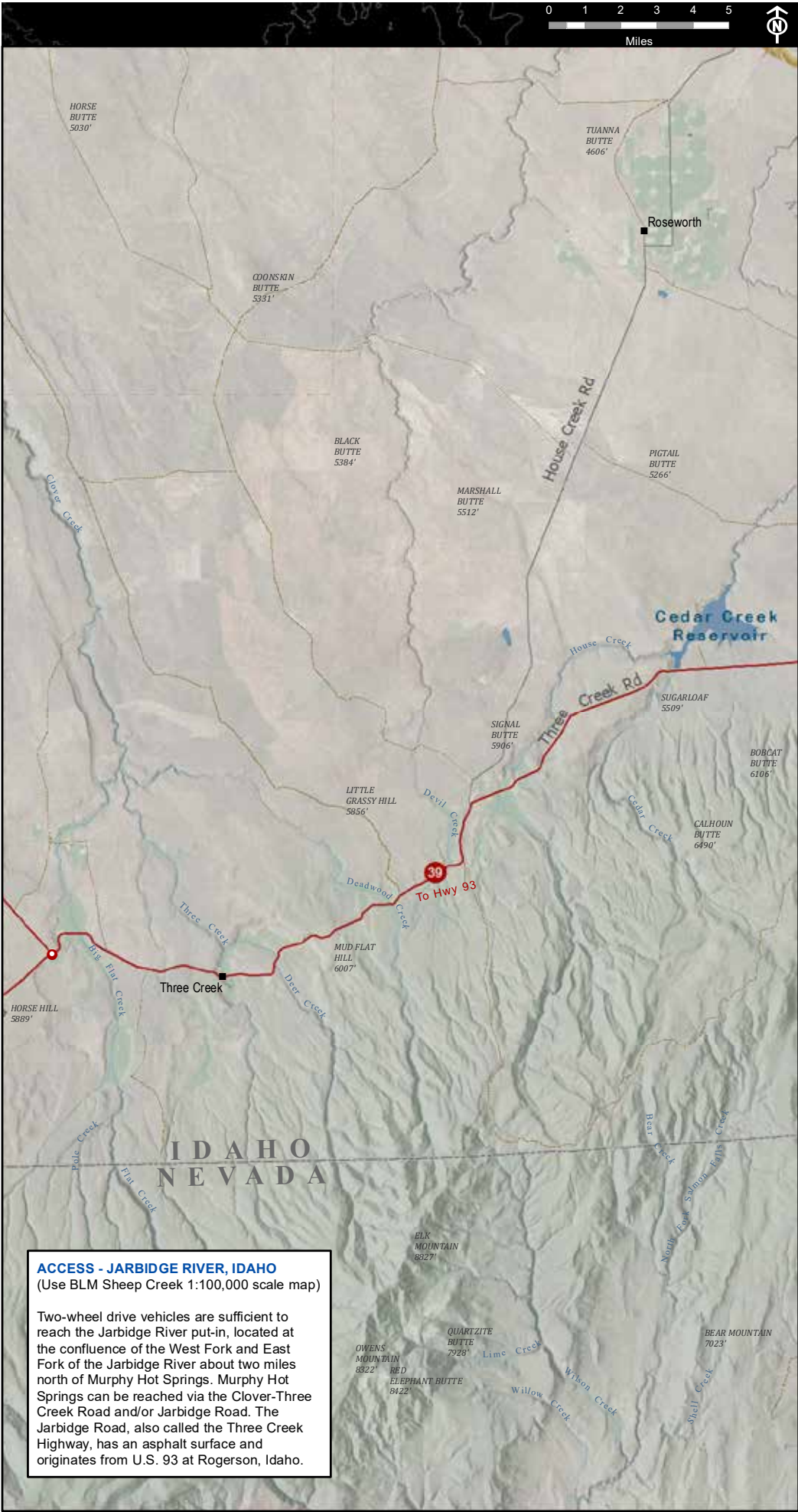
*Wally's Wallow, Jarbidge River, PJ Moran*





# JARBIDGE ACCESS MAP



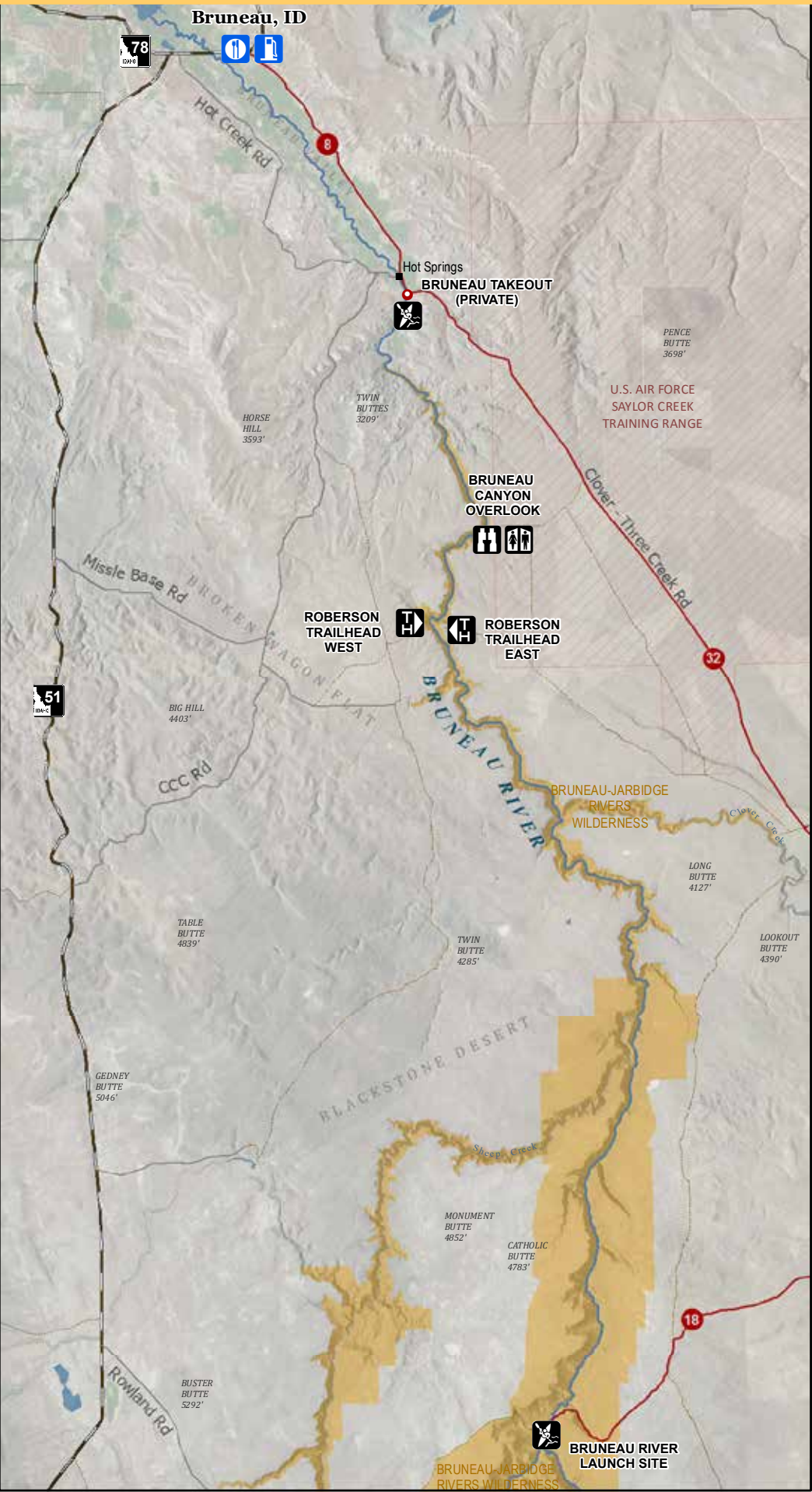


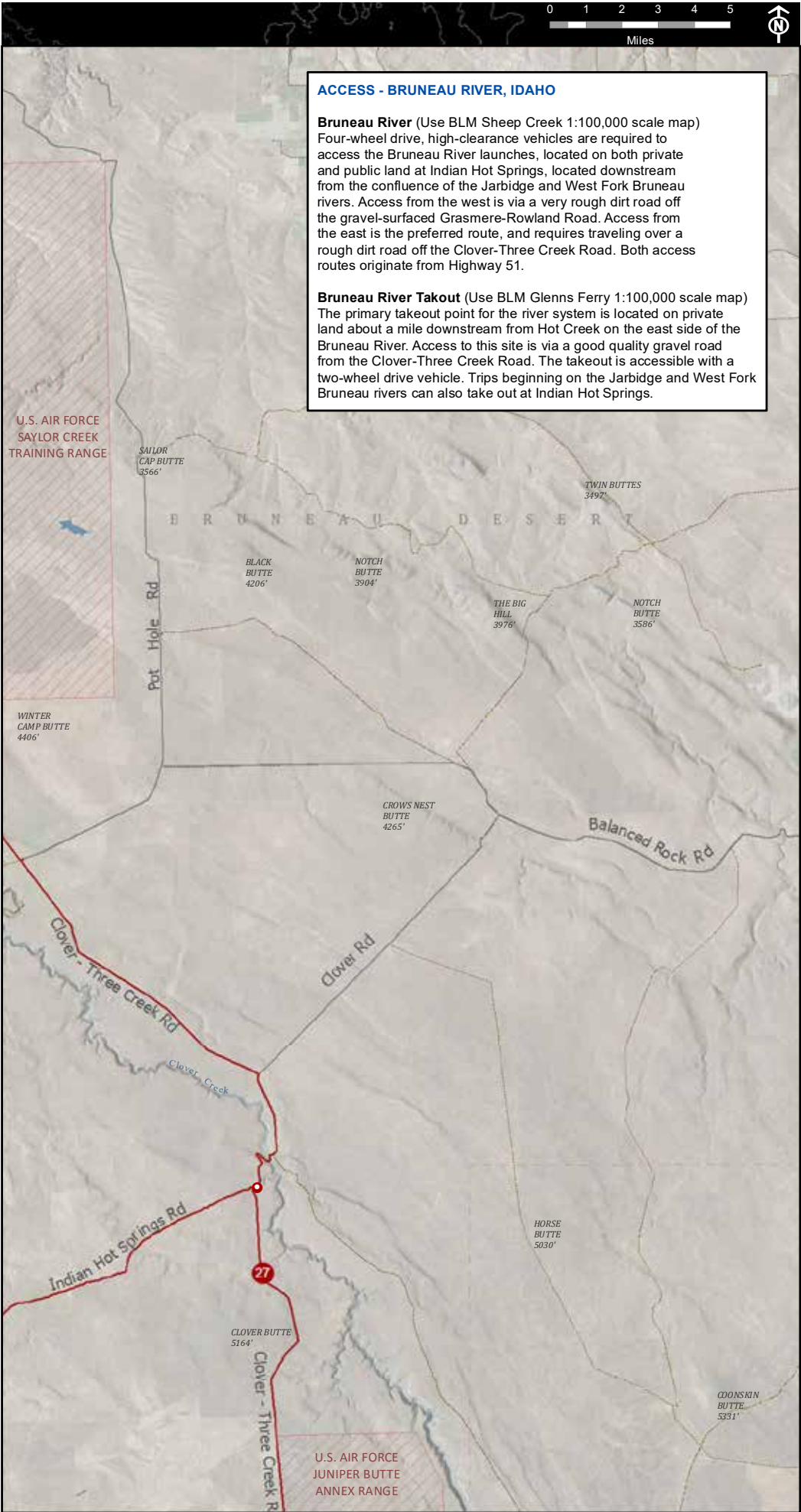
**ACCESS - JARBIDGE RIVER, IDAHO**  
(Use BLM Sheep Creek 1:100,000 scale map)

Two-wheel drive vehicles are sufficient to reach the Jarbidge River put-in, located at the confluence of the West Fork and East Fork of the Jarbidge River about two miles north of Murphy Hot Springs. Murphy Hot Springs can be reached via the Clover-Three Creek Road and/or Jarbidge Road. The Jarbidge Road, also called the Three Creek Highway, has an asphalt surface and originates from U.S. 93 at Rogerson, Idaho.



# BRUNEAU ACCESS MAP





#### ACCESS - BRUNEAU RIVER, IDAHO

##### Bruneau River (Use BLM Sheep Creek 1:100,000 scale map)

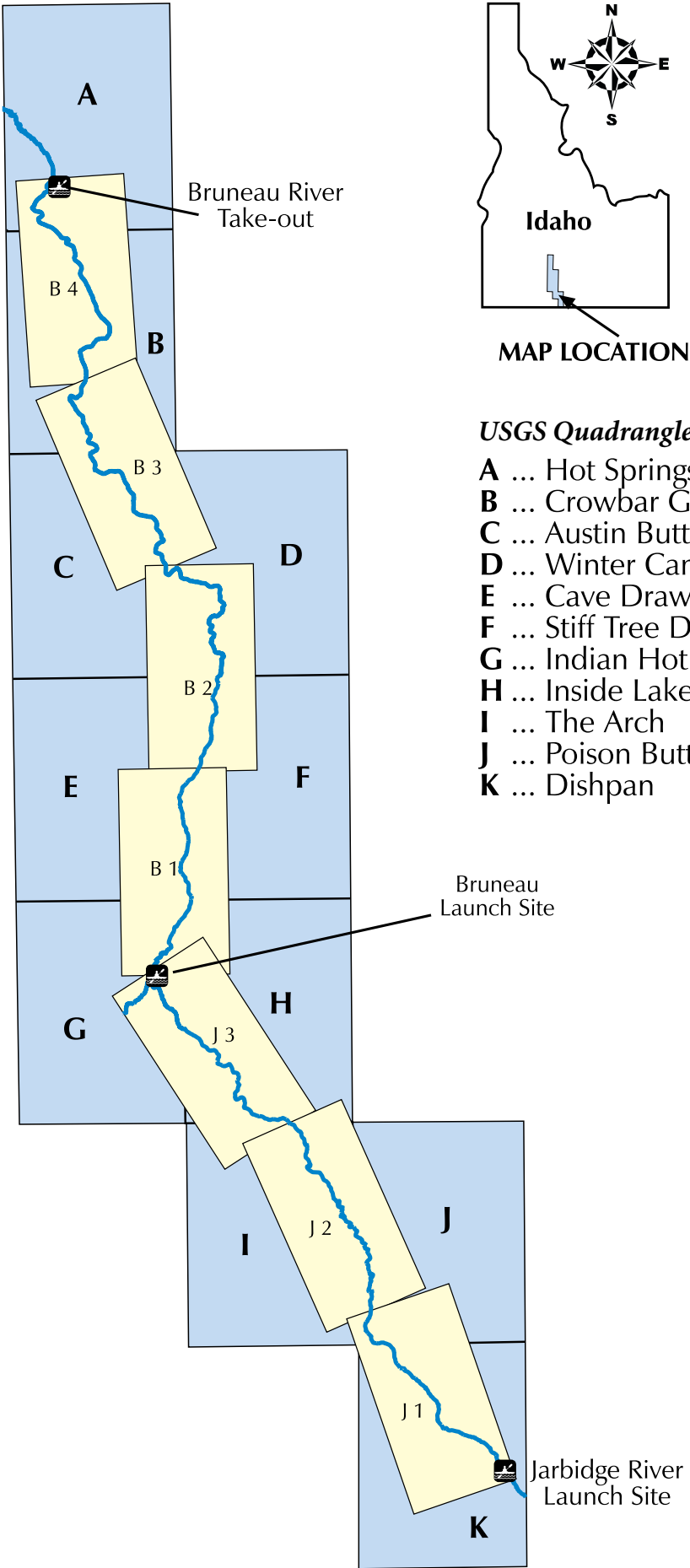
Four-wheel drive, high-clearance vehicles are required to access the Bruneau River launches, located on both private and public land at Indian Hot Springs, located downstream from the confluence of the Jarbidge and West Fork Bruneau rivers. Access from the west is via a very rough dirt road off the gravel-surfaced Grasmere-Rowland Road. Access from the east is the preferred route, and requires traveling over a rough dirt road off the Clover-Three Creek Road. Both access routes originate from Highway 51.

##### Bruneau River Takout (Use BLM Glenns Ferry 1:100,000 scale map)




The primary takeout point for the river system is located on private land about a mile downstream from Hot Creek on the east side of the Bruneau River. Access to this site is via a good quality gravel road from the Clover-Three Creek Road. The takeout is accessible with a two-wheel drive vehicle. Trips beginning on the Jarbidge and West Fork Bruneau rivers can also take out at Indian Hot Springs.

























# BRUNEAU-JARBIDGE LOCATION MAP











# BRUNEAU-JARBIDGE MAP LEGEND

-  River
-  Stream
-  Wild and Scenic River Designation

-  River Mile Marker
-  Portage or Lining Recommended
-  Launch Site
-  Camping
-  Boat Launch
-  Restroom
-  Historical Site
-  Latitude/Longitude Coordinate
-  Dam
-  Rapids Class II
-  Rapids Class III
-  Rapids Class IV
-  Rapids Class V
-  Rapids Class VI

-  Road or 4WD Trail
-  Hiking Trail (non-mechanized)
-  Pipeline
-  Contour Line
-  Lake
-  Playa
-  Map Overlap
-  State Boundary

## Land Status

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Bureau of Reclamation
-  Indian Reservation
-  Private Land
-  State Land
-  BLM Wilderness (ID)
-  Non-Wilderness Access Route (cherrystem)
-  BLM Wilderness Study Area (NV, OR)

Coordinate System: Projection - UTM Zone 11, Datum NAD 1983, units in meters

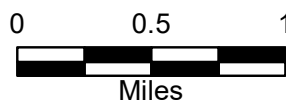
Source Information: Land status, hydrology, and transportation data compiled from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource base data at a scale of 1:24,000. Contour derived from U.S. Geological Survey 10 meter national elevation dataset. The official land records should be checked for up-to-date status on any specific tract of land. Recreation information: BLM Boise, Twin Falls, Vale and Elko District Offices.

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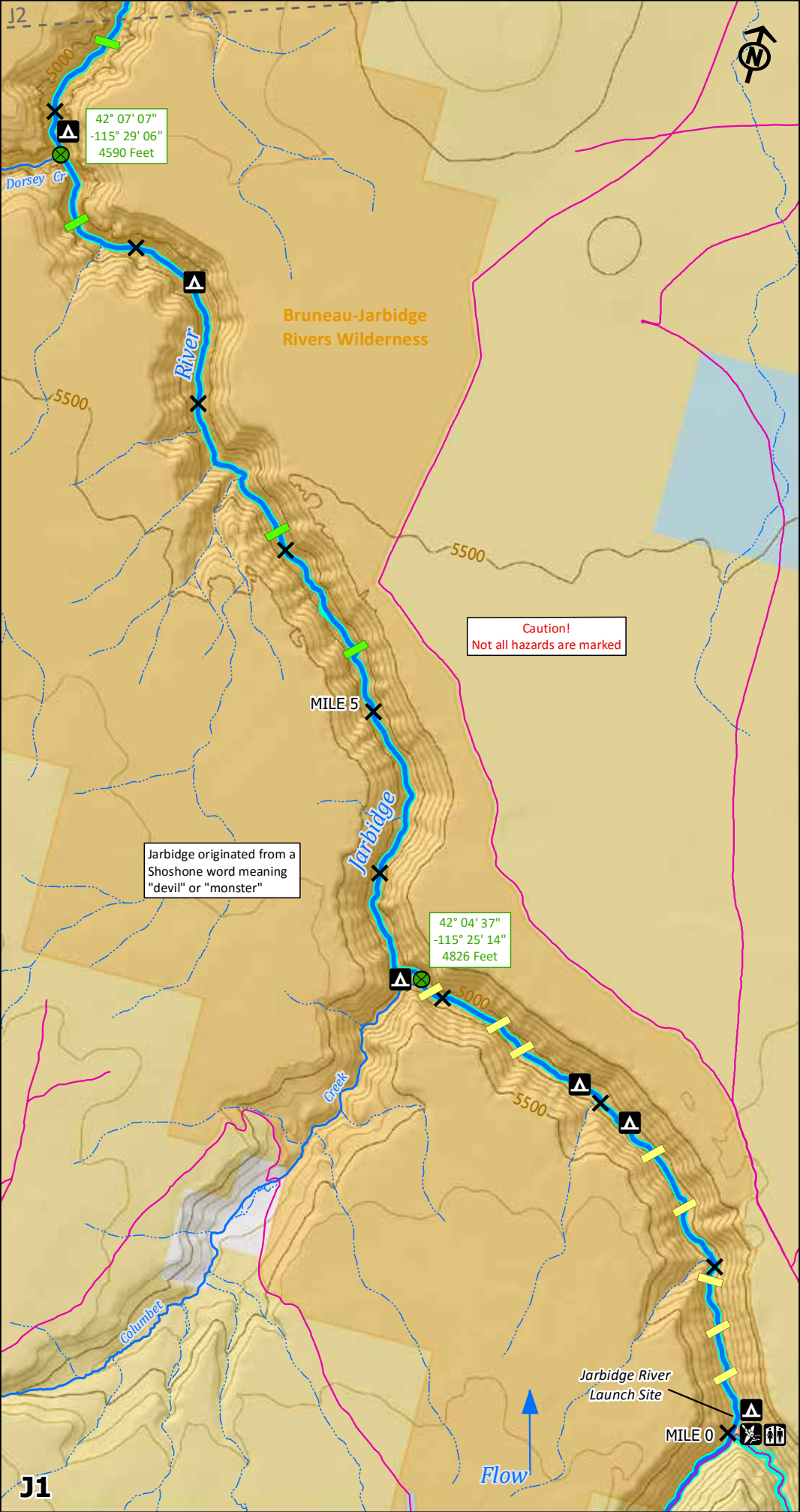
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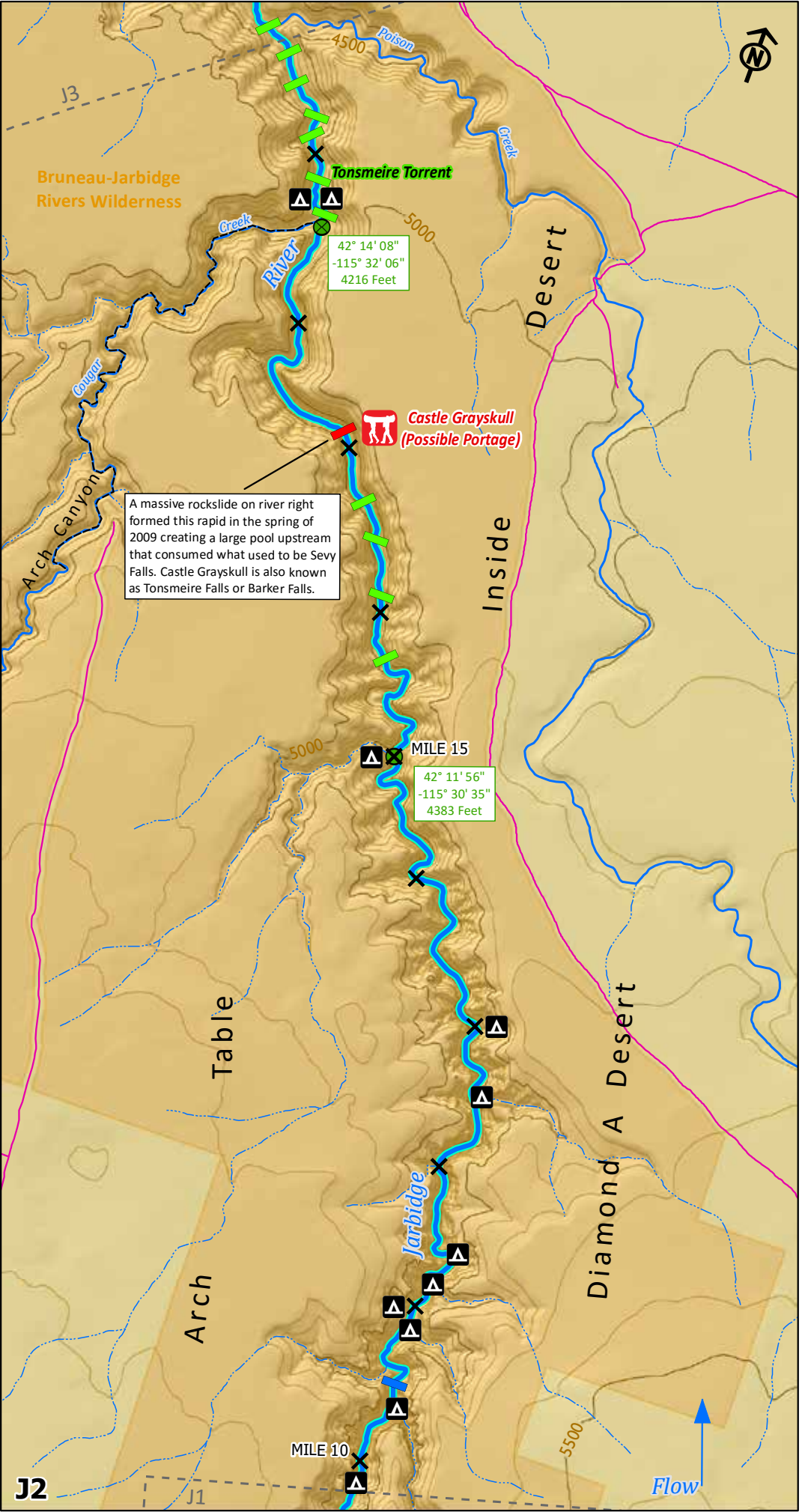
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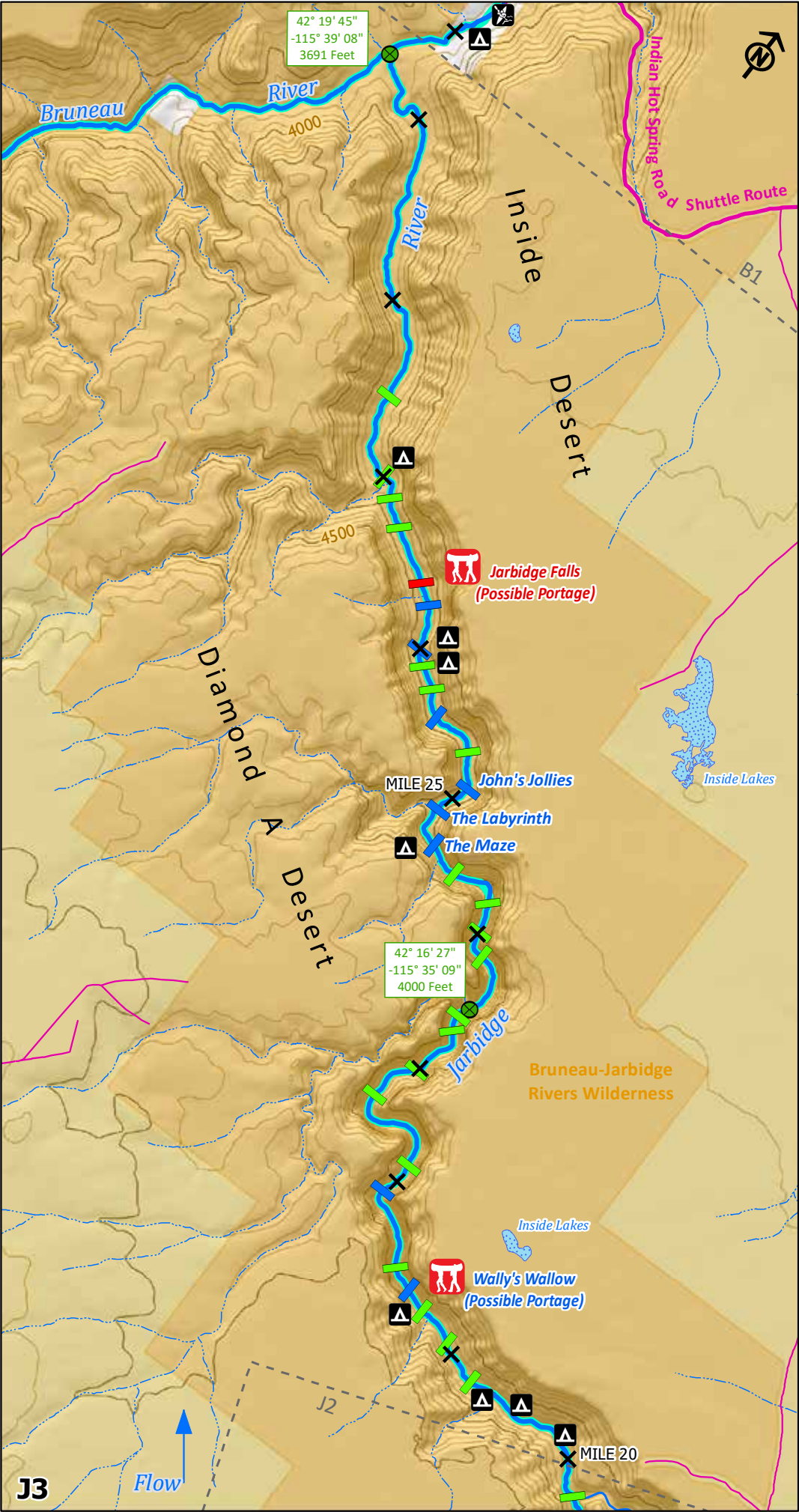


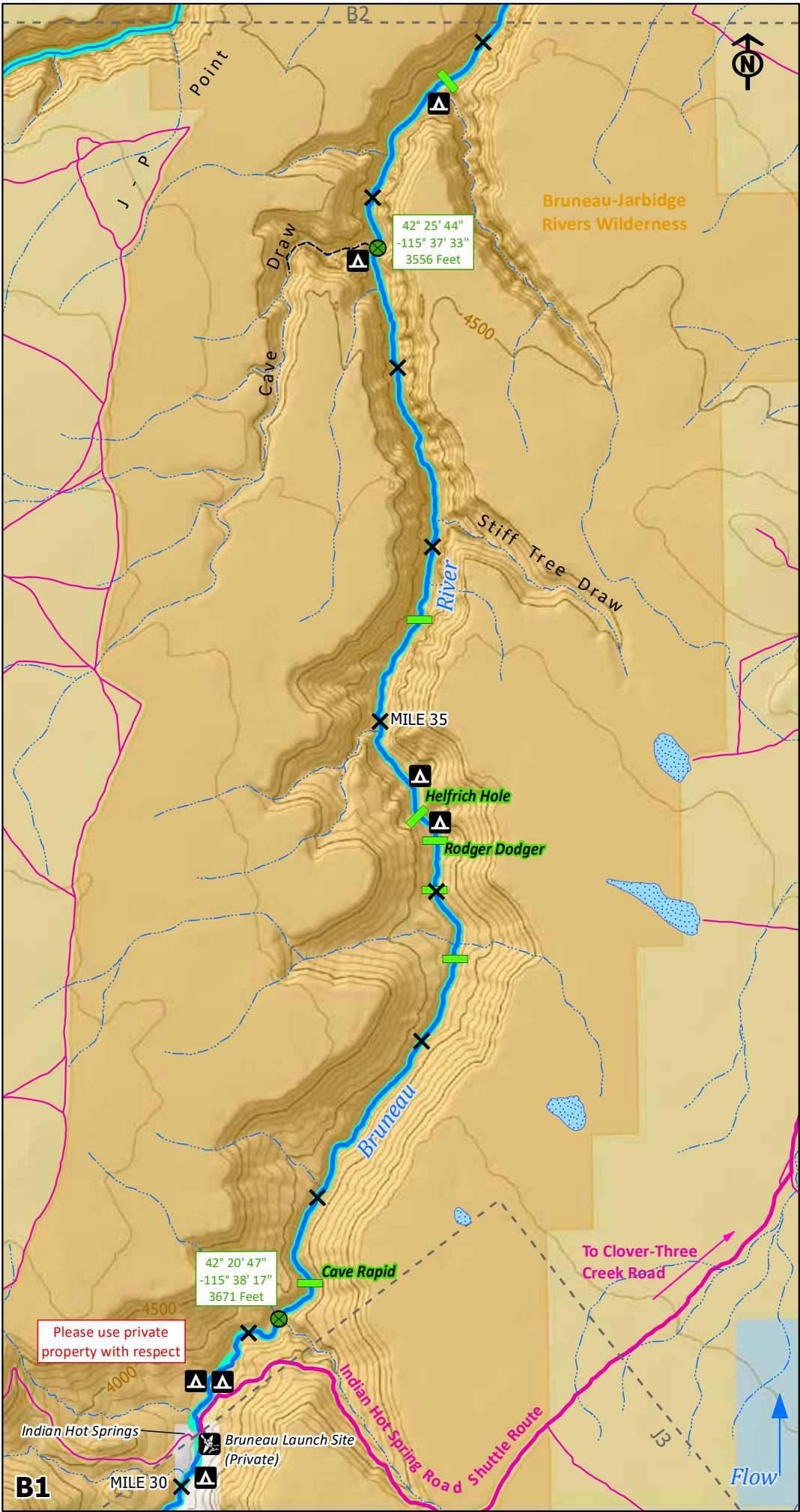




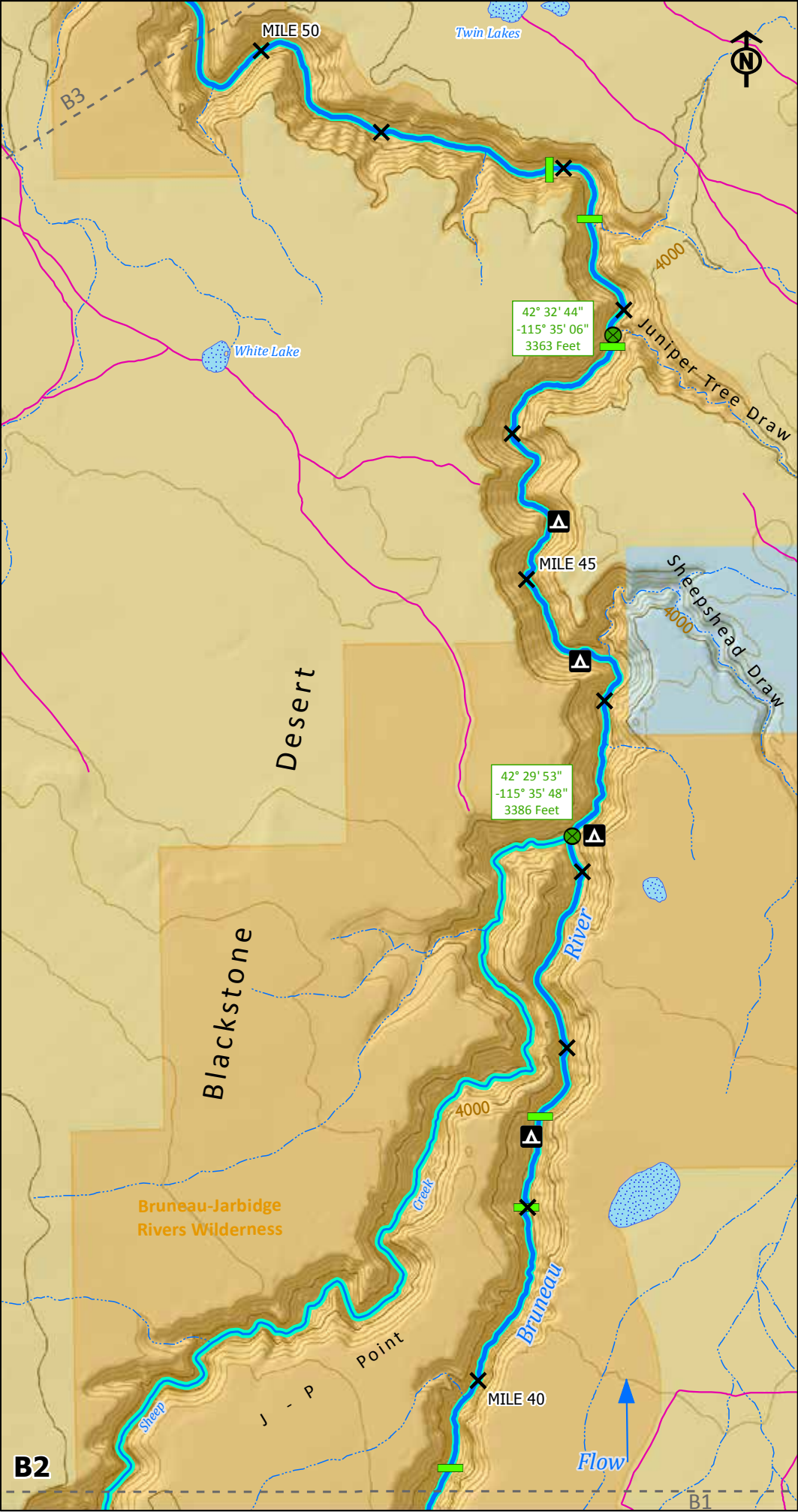


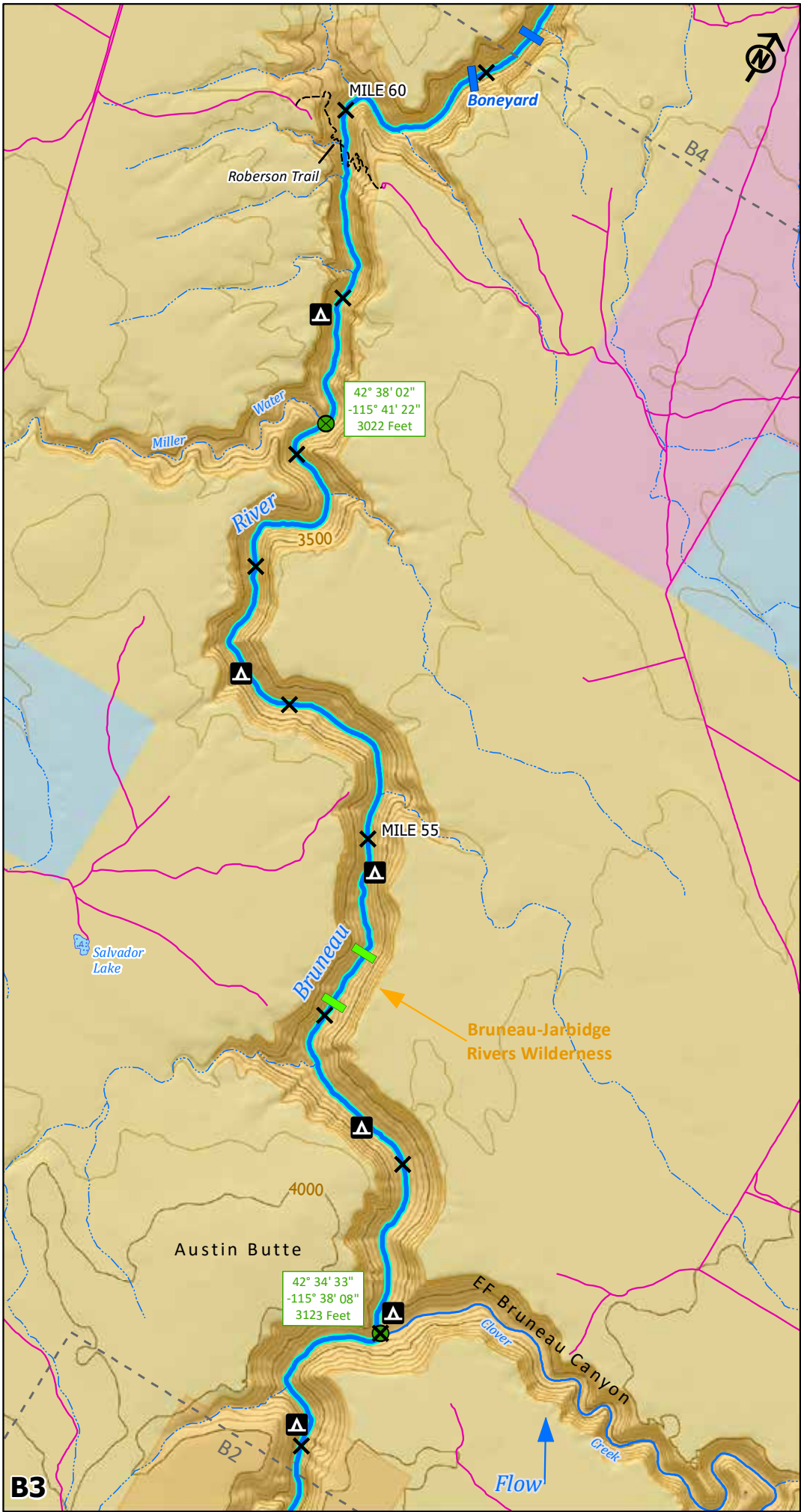




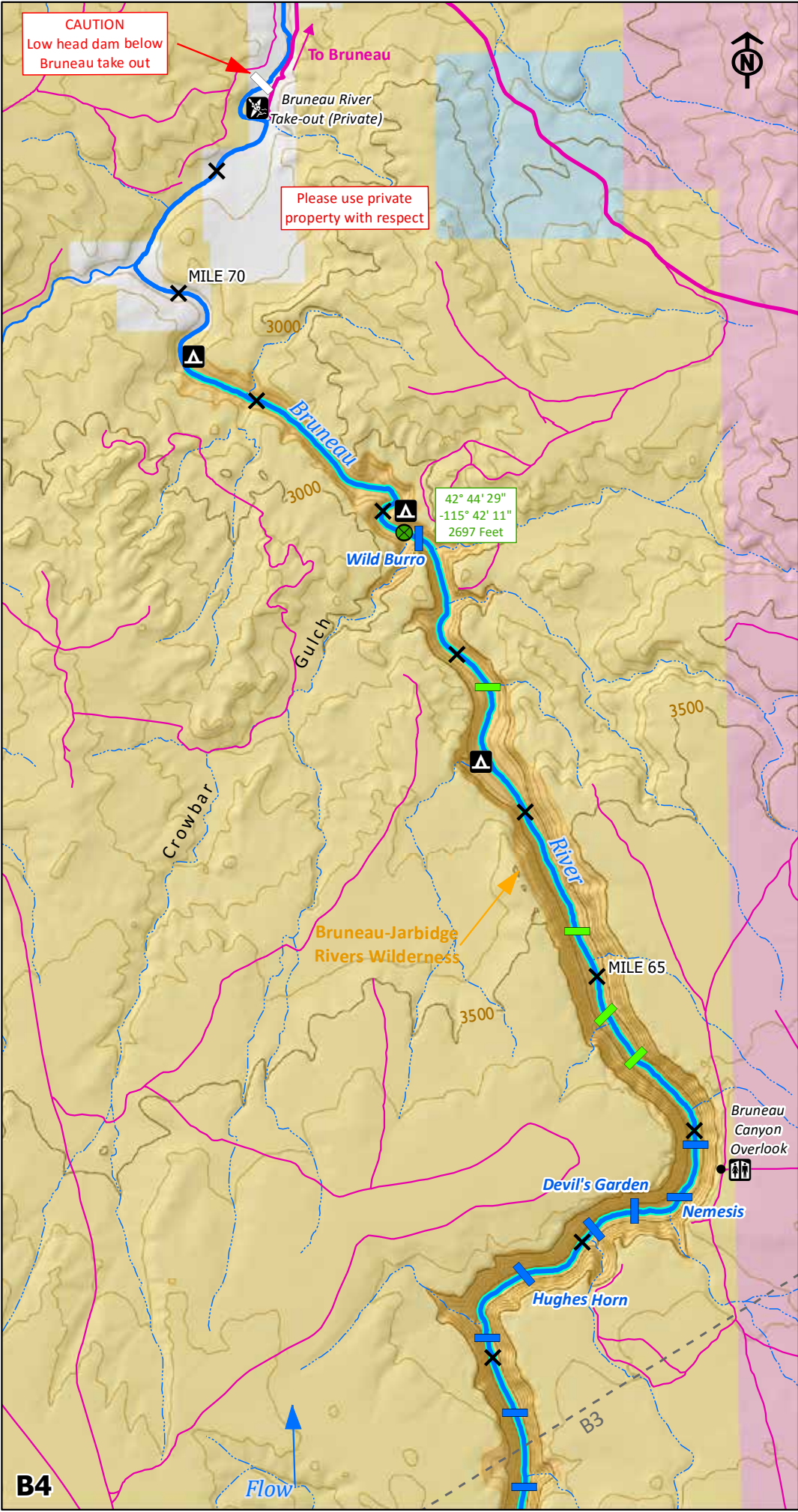












# EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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Emergency Phone Number 911  
Owyhee County Sheriff in Murphy, ID (208)495-1154  
Malheur County Sheriff in Vale, OR (541)473-5126  
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Owyhee (208)759-3246  
Boise Interagency Logistics Center Dispatch (208)384-3400  
BLM Vale District Dispatch (541)473-6296  
South-Central Idaho Interagency Dispatch (800)974-2373  
Idaho EMS Communication Center, Boise (877)554-3367

# OUTFITTERS & AGENCIES

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For outfitter/guide service information or to report illegal outfitting or hunting:

Oregon State Marine Board 435 Commercial St. NE Salem, OR 97310 (503)378-8587	Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association (IOGA) P.O. Box 95 Boise, ID 83701 (208)342-1438
Oregon Fish and Wildlife 3814 Clark Blvd. Ontario, OR 97914 (541)889-6975	IOGA Licensing Board 1365 N. Orchard #172 Boise, ID 83706 (208)327-7380 general (208)327-7167 enforcement
Nevada Division of Wildlife 60 Youth Center Road Elko, NV 89801 (775)777-2300	Idaho Department of Fish and Game 3101 S. Powerline Road Nampa, ID 83686 (208)465-8465 Report wildlife crimes: 1(800)632-5999

# BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Boise District Office 3948 S. Development Avenue Boise, Idaho 83705 208-384-3300	Vale District Office 100 Oregon Street Vale, Oregon 97918 541-473-3144
Twin Falls District Office 2536 Kimberly Road Twin Falls, Idaho 83301 208-735-2060	Elko District Office 3900 E. Idaho Street Elko, Nevada 89801 775-753-0200



*Sheep Creek, Evan Worthington*



*Jarbridge River, Tipton Power*

