



Floating the Snake River



General Information

Flowing west from its source in the Teton Wilderness, the Snake 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 downstream of Jackson Lake Dam, the river winds through the park.

The Snake River is complex to float. The beauty and lack of whitewater lulls floaters into inattentiveness. A tangle of channels and constantly shifting logjams present unique difficulties. Accidents are common. Use caution when floating.

Information on flow rates and additional caution areas are posted at river landings and permit offices. Reports are updated weekly or whenever a significant change in river conditions occurs.

Even frequent boaters on the Snake River should check conditions before each trip, as the river can change overnight. River flow varies greatly throughout the summer. Water depth averages 2 to 3 feet, but exceeds 10 feet in some locations. Boulders and bottom irregularities generate standing waves up to 3 feet high.

Typically, spring flows will be muddy, extremely cold, and very high, all sections of the river are more difficult at this time. As snowmelt diminishes, volume decreases and waters clear. In spite of reduced flow, the current remains deceptively strong.

Logjams and tight turns require boaters to set up maneuvers well in advance and make decisions early. Typically strong, upstream afternoon winds can slow your pace, especially when canoeing.

Safety and Etiquette

- Prepare boats away from launch ramps to reduce congestion at landings.
- Launch when other boats are out of sight, and maintain this interval throughout your trip.
- Excessive noise disrupts the river experience for other boaters and disturbs wildlife. Keep silent during wildlife encounters
- Steer clear of other boaters and anglers, including fishing lines.
- Rangers regularly patrol the river in summer. Contact river patrol rangers for assistance while floating.
- Information and assistance is available year-round at the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center and at Colter Bay Visitor Center (May through early October).
- Carry the following equipment on an extra paddle or oar, a waterproof container with extra clothes, first aid kit and waste receptacle. Inflatable boats should have an air pump, bailing bucket, and patch kit.
- Attach all gear securely.
- Do not drink river water unless boiled or purified.
- Swimming is not recommended in the river.
- **Aquatic nuisance species** are an increasing concern. Clean and dry boats, boots, and waders before entering a new body of water. *Never empty containers of bait, fish, plants, or animals into park waters.* Help protect park waterways and native fish; learn how to prevent the spread of exotics.
- For information on Snake River flows, call 1-800-658-5771 or check:

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/wy/nwis/>

Regulations

- All vessels must carry a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) properly fitted for each person on board. Passengers under 13 years old must wear a PFD.
- A non-motorized park boat permit is required for each watercraft. Purchase permits at Moose or Colter Bay Visitor Centers. Fees are **\$10.00 for a 7-day permit** and **\$20.00 for an annual permit**. Display the permit on the port (left) side stern (back).
- Boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited.
- Inner tubes, air mattresses, float tubes, and similar flotation devices are prohibited.
- Motors are prohibited on the Snake River. Motors may be used on Jackson Lake for the Flagg Ranch to Lizard Creek section with a motorized boat permit.
- No camping or fires on 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 1,000 feet of Jackson Lake Dam.
- A concession permit is required for all commercial activity in the park.
- Report any accident with a collision or injury to a ranger within 24 hours.

Suggested Float Trips

Beginner Level

Jackson Lake Dam to Pacific Creek

This stretch features scenic views, calmer water and few obstructions. At Pacific Creek landing the water is swift, boaters should scout this landing prior to launching.

Intermediate Level

Pacific Creek to Deadman's Bar

This section drops significantly creating swift water and braided channels requiring careful route-finding.

Flagg Ranch to Lizard Creek Campground

The braided channels make route-finding a challenge. The river winds for 6 miles before reaching Jackson Lake. Once on the lake it is 4 miles to Lizard Creek. Strenuous rowing or paddling may be required. Afternoon thunderstorms and winds produce waves that can swamp rafts and canoes. Motors may be used on Jackson Lake.

Advanced Level

Deadman's Bar to Moose Landing

This is the most challenging stretch of river in the park, many accidents occur here. The river drops more steeply and the current increases. Complex braiding obscures the main channel and strong currents can sweep boaters into side channels blocked by logjams.

Moose to South Park Boundary

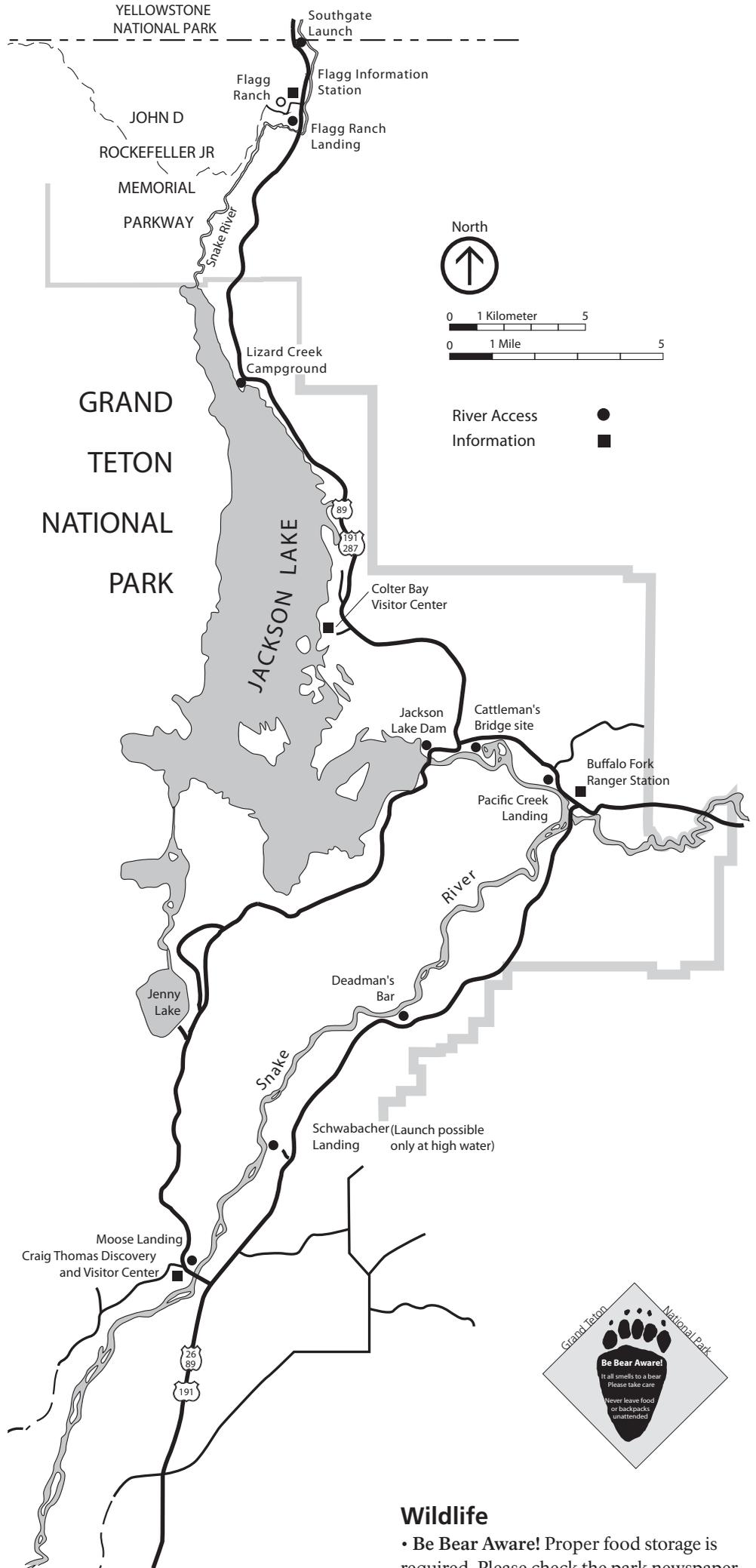
This section of the river is as difficult as the preceding section. Advanced boating skills are required due to fast current, braided channels and logjams. The park extends 5 miles downriver of Moose on the west bank and 2 miles downriver on the east bank; there is no take out or access to the river at the park boundary. The next take-out is at the Snake River Bridge east of Wilson, WY, 14 miles downstream from Moose.

Southgate to Flagg Ranch (Flagg Canyon)

Southgate Launch is 1/2-mile south of the South Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Flagg Canyon is steep and narrow with challenging white water for rafts and kayaks. Heavy spring water flows create standing waves, haystacks, laterals, and large holes capable of flipping rafts. Scout the river by walking the Flagg Canyon Trail on the west bank of the river. At over 4000 cfs flow the rapids are Class III (not recommended for canoes). Below 4000 cfs, canoeing requires advanced white water skills.

Mileages

Southgate Launch to Flagg Ranch	3
Flagg Ranch to Lizard Creek	10
Jackson Lake Dam to Pacific Creek	5
Pacific Creek to Deadman's Bar	10
Deadman's Bar to Moose Landing	10
Moose to Wilson	14



Wildlife

- **Be Bear Aware!** Proper food storage is required. Please check the park newspaper *Teewinot* or at any visitor center for more information.
- Do not approach or disturb large animals, such as bears, moose and bison.
- Bald eagles nest near the main channel. To protect this threatened species, nest areas are signed and closed to stopping and river bank use.