

Recreation Activities in Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey

While the BLM's mission is to maintain the remarkable wildlife habitat within the NCA, recreation activities, such as camping, fishing, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding and sightseeing, which are compatible with this mission, can occur.

Driving Loop Tour

A 56-mile loop tour beginning at Kuna Visitor Center provides opportunities to view wildlife and scenic vistas, and to visit cultural sites in the NCA. Allow at least 3 to 4 hours to complete the route.

Depending on the length of stops, one can easily spend an entire day exploring the loop drive. See our visitor guide for more details. [MAP](#)

Camping in Developed Areas

Cove Recreation Site, on C.J. Strike Reservoir, is BLM's only improved public camping facility within the NCA. Facilities at this fee site include potable water, picnic shelters, fire rings, picnic tables, fishing docks, RV dump station, and a boat ramp. This campground does not take reservations; it is a first come-first served campground.

On the south side of the reservoir and west of Cove Recreation Site, the privately-operated Black Sands Resort offers campsites with full hookups, restaurant/bar and boat launch.

Idaho Power Company manages four campgrounds around the reservoir (North Park, Scout Park, Locust Park, and Cottonwood Campground).

Camping in Undeveloped Areas

Primitive camping is allowed throughout the NCA. Avoid areas where birds are nesting and observe these low-impact camping practices:

If you pack it in, pack it out, and always remember to LEAVE NO TRACE!

Use stoves to cook instead of campfires. Open campfires are allowed in the NCA only in improved campsites with fire rings.

To dispose of human waste and waste water, dig a small hole at least 200 feet from water and 6-8 inches deep. Do not bury food waste in the hole, as animals will dig it up.

Hiking and Bicycling

There are many miles of roads and trails throughout the NCA that are open to non-motorized users. One popular trail runs along the north side of the Snake River from the steel gate below Swan Falls Dam to Celebration Park. This 5-mile stretch includes wildlife viewing, scenery, easy access to the Snake River, and passes interesting old homesteads and cultural sites. A primitive trail system on the south side of the river can be accessed by crossing Swan Falls Dam or Guffey Bridge at Celebration Park.

Horseback Riding

Most equestrian users ride within the Snake River Canyon and usually begin in the Celebration Park area. From here riders can access the Halverson Bar area which is designated for non-motorized uses. Another option is to ride downstream from the park and cross the Guffey Bridge to trails on the south side of the Snake River. Riders can also use the roads and trails.

Target Shooting and Hunting

To protect visitors, shooting restrictions have been implemented in the most heavily visited portion of the NCA. If you plan to shoot in the NCA, be sure you are in an area where it's permitted and that you follow safe shooting practices. Please refer to the safe shooting, safety and canyon zones on the map.

Fishing

Fishing is usually poor between Grand View and Swan Falls Dam. Between Swan Falls and Walter's Ferry, fishing for smallmouth bass and catfish is good. Those planning to fish, however, must have an Idaho state fishing license and should obtain the current regulations from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, as some species are catch and release only.

Boating

Boating provides a great way to view raptors and explore the Snake River Canyon. However, variable winds, fluctuating water levels, and shifting sand and gravel bars often create hazardous boating conditions on the Snake River. C.J. Strike Reservoir has 7,000 acres of flatwater for more relaxed boating, and three developed launch sites.

Boating on the Snake River

Motorized craft can navigate with caution above Swan Falls Dam and below Celebration Park, but the river is rocky and treacherous for motorboats between Swan Falls Dam and Celebration Park. Developed launch sites are located at Grand View, Swan Falls Dam, Celebration Park, and Walter's Ferry.

Non-motorized or float boats can be launched from Grand View and Swan Falls Dam. Floaters launching from Grand View should plan on camping one night along the river before reaching Swan Falls Dam. This stretch of river has no rapids, but winds and waves can create difficult conditions.

Floaters can portage around Swan Falls Dam to continue down river to Celebrations Park. This stretch of the river contains two Class II rapids and makes a nice day trip for rafters or experienced canoeists. The river slows considerably between Celebration Park and Walter's Ferry. No commercial shuttle services are available.