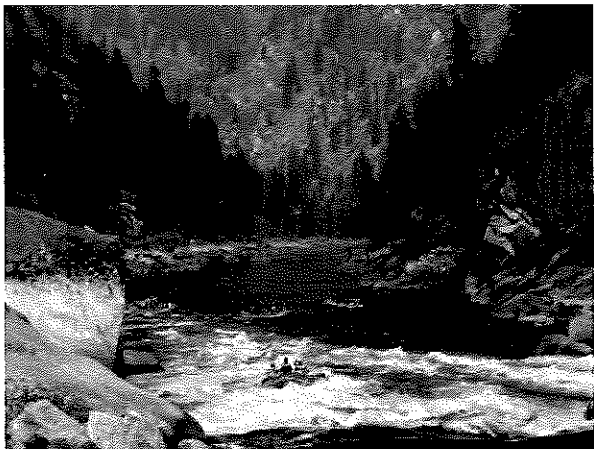


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Northwest of the rural mountain community of Salmon, Idaho, just a stone's throw from the Continental Divide, the mighty Salmon River veers west, abruptly leaving civilization behind. The road to the river ends at the Corn Creek boat launch, the beginning of the 79-mile wilderness section of the Main Salmon, known as the famous "River of No Return"

The Salmon River has a rich history of mining, homesteading, exploration and preservation. The first white men who considered running the Salmon River were Lewis and Clark in 1805. After Clark's reconnaissance mission, they decided that it would be impossible to navigate the river in canoes with horses following along the bank. Many years passed before anyone attempted to run the river. The Northern Pacific Railroad organized a survey of the Salmon River Canyon in 1872 and according to the official summary found "the most difficult instrumental survey ever made in the United States...In every reasonable sense it is an impracticable route."

In the 1880s, boatmen started running wooden scows, flat-bottomed boats that used long poles fitted with blades in the bow and stern to steer, from Salmon to the mine at Shoup, Idaho, a distance of about 39 miles. After dropping off their cargo at Shoup, the boatmen would dismantle and sell the boat for lumber and return to Salmon by road.

The most famous scow captain on the Salmon, Harry Guleke, piloted his boat to Riggins, Idaho, in 1896, about 152 miles, and proved the entire river could be navigated. Guleke dominated the river for 40 years; his typical trip would start in Salmon and end in Riggins or Lewiston, Idaho, where the Salmon meets the Snake River. At trip's end, he would sell the boat for lumber and return to Salmon to start the entire process over again. These one-way trips coined the moniker "River of No Return." Once Guleke and his fellow boatmen started running the length of the river, settlers staked mining claims and homesteads along the banks of the Salmon. Historic structures can still be found at Campbell's Ferry, Jim Moore's, Rhett Creek, Buckskin Bill's, Polly Bemis and Shepp Ranch with two listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Jim Moore's place and Polly Bemis Ranch. In July, 1936, the National Geographic Society commissioned Monroe Hancock, along with John Cunningham on the back sweep, to pilot his wooden scow on a U.S Geological Survey of the Salmon River from Salmon to Lewiston, Idaho.

Amos Berg ran the first rubber raft down the River of No Return on a 16-day trip in 1939 that started on the Middle Fork, a tributary of the Main Salmon, and ended at Riggins Hot Springs.

The Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness was established in 1980 and named after Idaho's late senator, Frank Church, who was instrumental in passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The wilderness encompasses over 2.3 million acres that includes the 79 mile wilderness section of the mighty Salmon River. The Salmon was also designated a Wild and Scenic River in 1980.

Present day river runners can step back in time and explore the River of No Return and the surrounding wilderness. This is a true escape from all of the pressures of daily life. Sit back, relax and enjoy simple pleasures: run rapids, reconnect with friends and family, take a hike, view wildlife and capture it all on film.

The Salmon River offers exciting whitewater, sandy beaches and fun for everyone in your group. You can find Salmon River Outfitters listed on the right. When planning your raft trip on the River of No Return, consider purchasing the guidebook of the same name by Johnny Carrey and Cort Conley. It provides a mile-by-mile description of river lore and history that will enhance your Salmon River wilderness raft trip.

## River Stats

## Outfitters

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