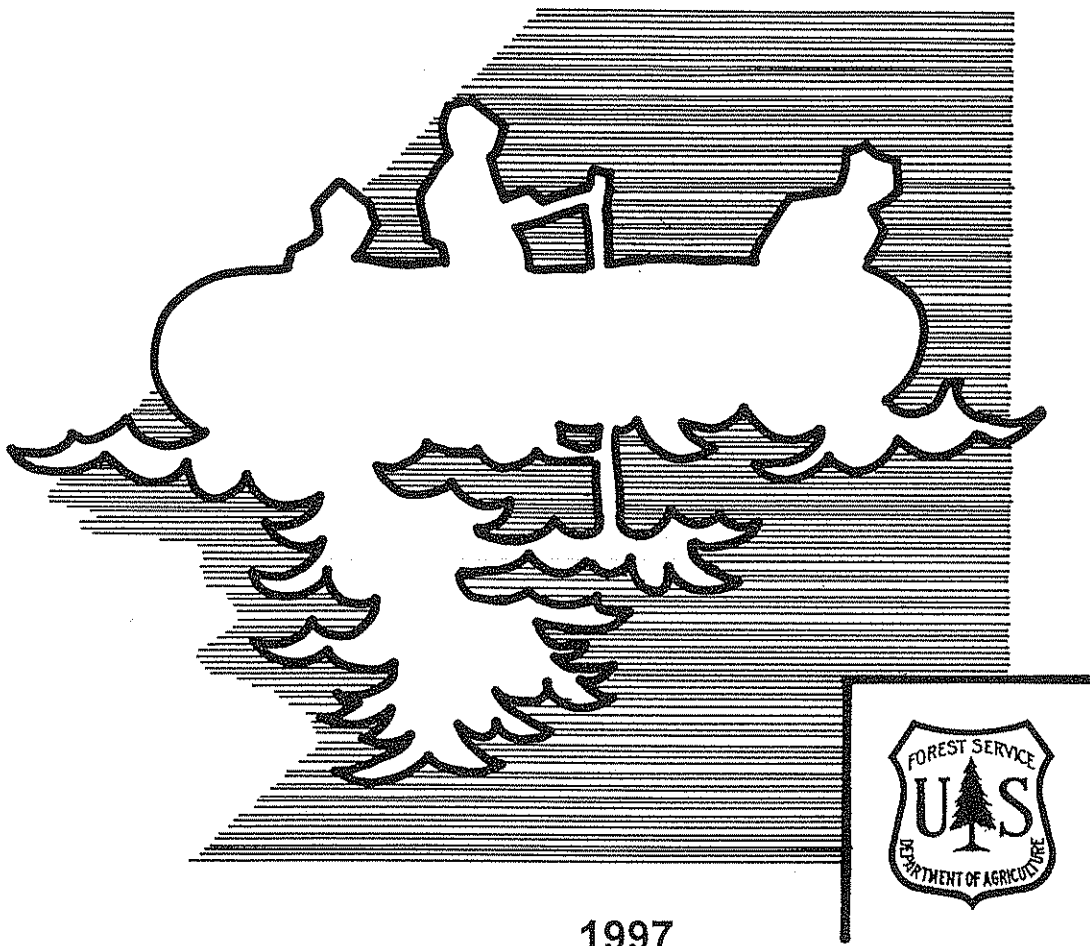


# RECREATION OPPORTUNITY GUIDE

ORIGINAL

RECEIVED  
5-20-97

## VERDE RIVER



### COCONINO, PRESCOTT & TONTO NATIONAL FORESTS

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

*Prepared by*  
Forest  
Service

Southwestern  
Region

012

ORIGINAL

RECEIVED



RIVER-  
RUNNING  
BOATING

**VERDE RIVER**  
(Camp Verde to Horseshoe Reservoir)  
United States Department  
of Agriculture

**WELCOME**

Since we might not have a chance to meet you during your visit, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and to provide some information that will give you a better appreciation of this special river.

The Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 established a portion of this river as Arizona's first and only **WILD RIVER**; at the same time, another portion was designated as Arizona's first and only **SCENIC RIVER**! The Scenic River Area begins near Beasley Flat and continues downstream to the boundary of the **MAZATZAL WILDERNESS** (just below Childs). At this point, the Wild River Area begins and continues downstream to the mouth of Red Creek. The river remains within the Wilderness until

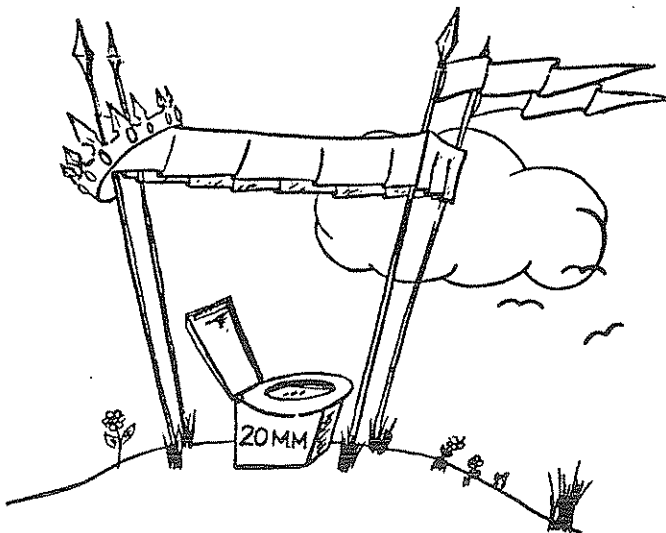
approximately one mile above the Sheep Bridge. Neither motorized equipment nor mechanical transport are allowed within this area.

A **group size limitation** of not more than **15 people** is in effect. As you visit this area, we ask that you respect and help preserve its outstanding scenic and wild characteristics.

**PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

You will be pleased to learn that **no permit is required** for private parties to run this river; however, with added freedom comes added responsibility. We ask that you conduct your trip so that virtually **NO TRACE** is left of your presence along this unique river. With your cooperation and help, we hope to be able to continue to welcome visitors without requiring a permit.

While permits are not normally required, under certain circumstances they are. For example, if money changes hands for any reason (except sharing of all costs by all participants) a permit would be required. If you have any question concerning this or if you are approached by a "pirate outfitter" (or if you would like a listing of **authorized outfitter/guides**), please contact a local Forest Officer.



## SAFE BOATING CONSIDERATIONS

It is difficult to generalize about this river since much depends on the time of year, water level, boat involved, and certainly the skills of the river-runner. It very definitely is not a river meant for beginners or novices.

This river is usually run in rafts and kayaks. It is possible to run it in a white-water canoe, however the number of wrecked canoes that have been left along it clearly show that this can be a high-risk type of trip.

The river-running season is basically March and April, and depends very much on the spring run-off. The amount of water in the river is critical: some years the river is virtually unrunnable by rafts due to lack of run-off.

During the late spring and early summer when the water is more manageable, the portion of the river above Beasley Flat is popular with canoers.

Below 400 CFS (into Horseshoe R.), you will begin having trouble with rocks and other obstacles. It is run at lower levels but can be very hard on equipment if

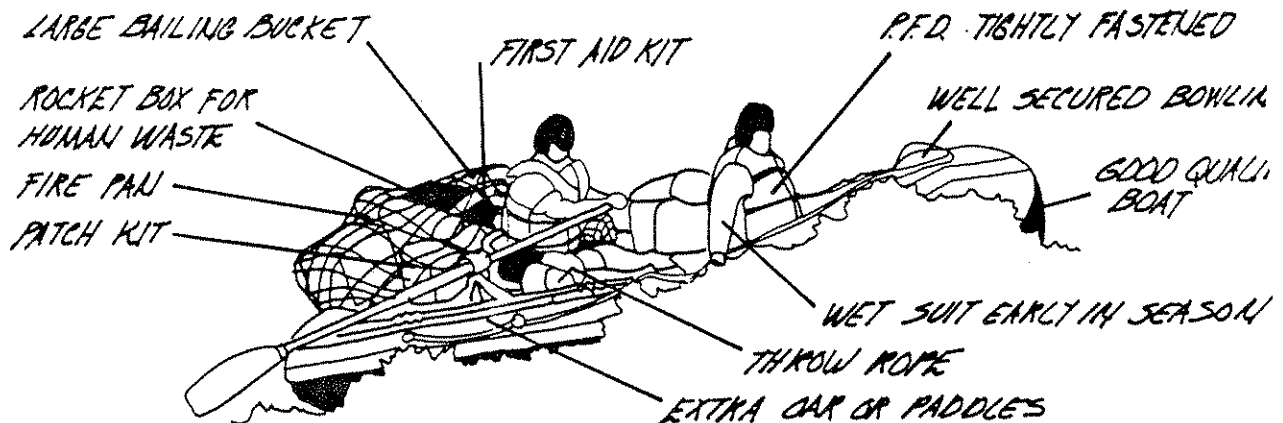
certain rapids are not walked. Inflatable kayaks can also successfully negotiate the river at significantly lower levels. Above 3,000 CFS, trees, brush, etc., along the side and in the channels become even more of a hazard, and river-running becomes significantly more dangerous. Information on flow may be obtained from:

Salt River Project - (602) 236-5929

All safety precautions should be taken when preparing for a trip on this river. Although it does not have the big white-water of some rivers, it does have special hazards such as trees and vegetation blocking channels, etc. Since these change from flood to flood, it is not possible to accurately show the locations of these hazards on this map.

It should also be recognized that because of the isolated nature of much of this river, little problems can very quickly become big problems!

The Verde Falls at mile 56.8 presents a special hazard to river-runners. It can be a "Class V" under certain conditions and must be approached with extreme caution.

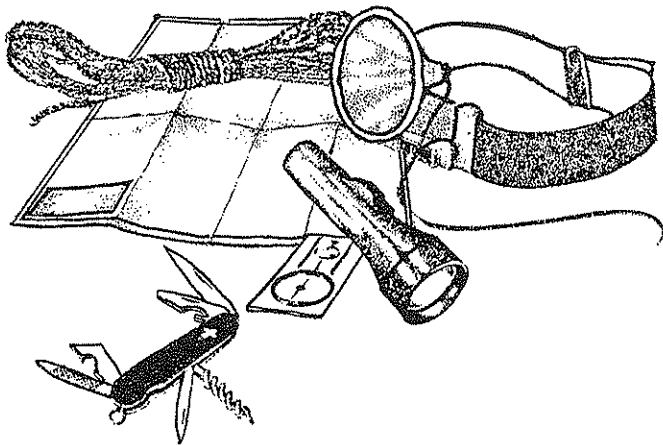


Your personal floatation device (life vest) should be high quality and provide floatation equal to at least 10 percent of your body weight. It should be worn *at all times* when on the river.

Because the water in March is snowmelt and very cold, full or partial wet suits are important.

Kayakers should have rescue lines installed on their boats; rafters should have a good throw-rope and know how to use it.

Responsibility for search and rescue is with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office. Leave your itinerary with someone who can call them if there is a true emergency: Yavapai County Sheriff's Office, (520) 771-3260



## A WORD TO THE WISE

The information contained in this guide is for general purposes only and is not meant to be taken as an invitation, nor as a statement of conditions at any one time. Conditions can vary greatly in relation to temperature, weather, water level, and other factors. All persons intending to run this river are responsible for personally assessing these conditions, as well as their own ability to cope with them. You should be aware that all recreational river use of this type involves a degree of risk, and persons engaging in this activity assume the risk associated therewith.

For additional information on river safety, we recommend the AWA Safety Code. If you enclose a self-addressed business-sized envelope, you may obtain a *free* copy from:

American Whitewater Affiliation  
Safety Codes  
146 North Brockway  
Palatine, Illinois 60067

There are a number of books on the market that can assist you in developing your backcountry skills. Do not "bite off more than you can chew", since compassion is not one of this river's attributes.



## CULTURAL RESOURCES

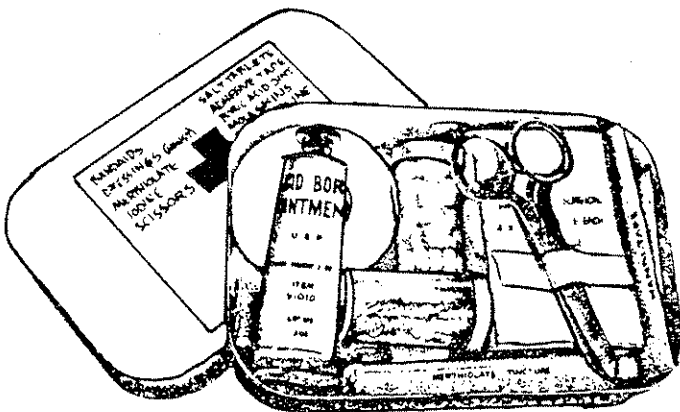
Human use of this area dates back into prehistory, over 11,000 years ago. Since no written records were made, archaeologists must look for other evidence of the way man lived in the past.

We need your help to preserve Arizona's past for the future. If you visit a pre-historic or historic site, please **leave everything** as you find it. If incidents of recent site destruction are noted, report your discovery to the nearest Forest Officer.



## WITHOUT A TRACE

No-trace camping is the art of using a piece of land and leaving it as you found it. It also represents **an ethic** - a respect for the land and the rights of those who follow you. We must learn to **use** this river **wisely** or be faced with more and **more restrictions** as use and damage increases. These ideas will help:



## TRIP PLANNING

- Much of the land near Camp Verde is **privately owned**. Respect the rights of landowners.
- Keep your party small: not more than **15** people per group are allowed below Childs.
- Use rocket boxes or garbage bags inside burlap sacks to **carry out** your trash.
- Bring a **fire-pan** for your fire. Take a gas stove to help conserve firewood and reduce impacts to the landscape.
- Bring an extra container to carry out **human waste**.

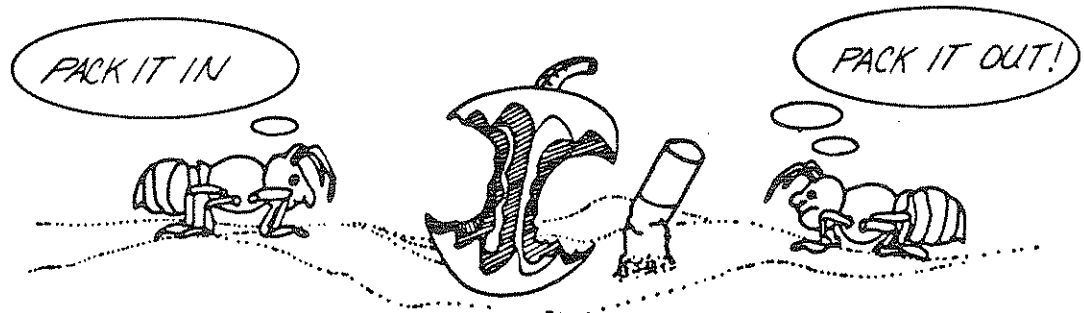
## AROUND CAMP

- \* Do not camp around other groups trying to enjoy the solitude.
- \* Wash dishes and discard waste water at least 100 feet from the river and beaches.
- \* Campfires too often result in sooted rocks, hacked logs, partially burned wood, and charcoal-covered beaches. The best way to prevent a campfire scar is not to build a fire at all. If you do, here are some ways to reduce the impact:
  - Use a fire pan or fire blanket. Ashes can then easily be dumped into the river.
  - Use only fallen deadwood or driftwood.
  - Dig a shallow pit for the fire instead of constructing the traditional rock "fire-ring".
  - Select a safe spot away from rocks that would be blackened by smoke.
- \* Put your fire **out cold** before you leave. Don't forget to naturalize the site after the cold ashes are disposed of.

- \* Bring litter bags to carry out all trash that cannot be completely burned. Aluminum foil and aluminum-lined packages *will not* burn; put them in your litter bag.
- \* Scout the area before leaving your camp or lunch stop. Be sure nothing has been left behind; try to make it appear as if no one had been there!

## SANITATION

- > Treat and/or filter all water.
- > Biodegradable soap should always be used but doesn't belong in the river or side streams. Bathe well away from the river, using a bucket or wash pan.
- > Keep litter bags handy during the day for empty beverage cans and incidental trash. Never sink cans or bottles in the river.
- > If you smoke, put the butts in your pocket. They don't belong on the ground or in the river.
- > Everything not totally combustible should be compacted and packed out.



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Note that each river mile is indicated by a circled number beginning with Mile 69 near the Camp Verde bridge, and ending down near Mile 10 at the Sheep Bridge (the mileage is from the Horseshoe Reservoir Dam). Allowing time for breaks, scouting rapids, etc., rafters often plan a two-mile per hour schedule.

Not all rapids are shown, but most significant ones have been. Even though this guide has been prepared over a period of years (begun by Pete Weinel in 1973), it cannot cover every situation found. As with any guide, it will only be of use if it is, in fact, in use. It will do little good if packed away where it cannot be referred to regularly. To avoid nasty surprises, you should make it a policy to know where you are on the river at all times.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Tonto National Forest  
2324 E. Mc Dowell Rd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85006  
(602) 225-5200

Cave Creek Ranger District  
PO Box 5068  
Carefree, AZ 85377  
(602) 488-3441

Verde Ranger District  
Prescott National Forest  
PO Box 670  
Camp Verde, AZ 86322  
(520) 567-4121

Beaver Creek Ranger District  
Coconino National Forest  
HC 64, Box 240  
Rimrock, AZ 86335  
(520) 567-4501

*"No servant brought them meals... No traffic cop whistled them off the hidden rock in the next rapids. No friendly roof kept them dry when they misguessed whether or not to pitch the tent. No guide showed them which camping spots offered a nightlong breeze and which a nightlong misery of mosquitos; which firewood made clear coals and which would only smoke. The elemental simplicities of wilderness travel were thrills...because they represented complete freedom to make mistakes. The wilderness gave...those rewards and penalties for wise and foolish acts...against which civilization has built a thousand buffers."*

*Aldo Leopold  
(1887-1948)*



## RIVER ACCESS POINTS

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DIRECTIONS TO RAP's are as follows:

**Mile 69.1 - White Bridge:** Approximately 0.2 mile east of the Verde River Bridge on State Highway 260, take the first right onto Quarter Horse Lane. After 50 yards turn right again to the White Bridge River Access Point, which has picnic tables, parking, and a trail to the river.

**Mile 68-61 - Verde Valley:** There are a number of places to access the river, but be aware that this is all private land, and the rights of land owners must be respected. Inquire locally to obtain permission to cross private land.

**Mile 60.5 - Beasley Flat:** Approximately 0.2 mile north of the Verde River Bridge (and the Verde Ranger Station) on State Highway 260, turn west on the Salt Mine Road (small green street sign). Follow FR 574 (County Road 163) for 8.4 miles to FR 334 (County Road 328). Turn left and follow this road for about 3 miles to Beasley Flat. This is an excellent RAP with picnic tables and a boat unloading area. Overnight camping is prohibited.

**Mile 51.5 - Brown Springs Ranch:** Access at this point requires carrying gear about ¼ to or from FR 574. This RAP makes a nice one one-day float from the Verde Valley and is an easy car shuttle.

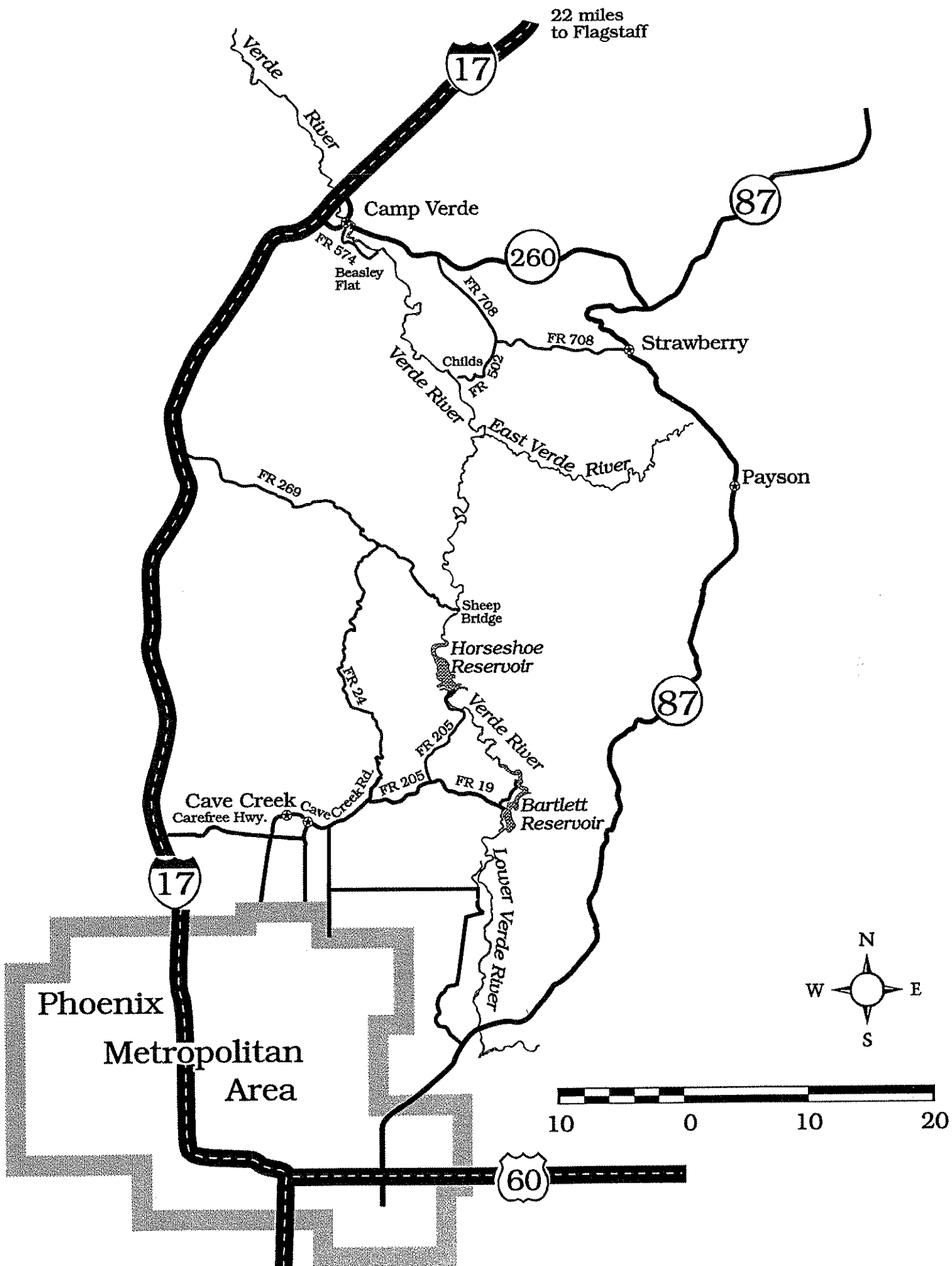
**Mile 42.5 - Childs:** This is now the primary access to the river in this area. Can be a take-out for a weekend trip from the Verde Valley, or a put-in for a 2-3 day trip to the Sheep Bridge or Horseshoe Reservoir. High-clearance vehicles are needed; 4WD or chains recommended if the roads are muddy. From the Camp Verde Bridge, follow State Highway 260 east for 6.7 miles. Turn right onto FR 708. Follow this road 13.8 miles to the turn-off onto the Childs Road (FR 502). Follow this road 6.2 miles to the turn-off to the RAP just before reaching Childs. (Note: This spot is also marginally accessible from the west side with a 4WD vehicle.) Allow up to 2 hours travel time from Camp Verde depending on road conditions.

**Mile 34.4 - Houston Creek:** A very rough 4WD road comes to within ½ mile of the river. Probably only useful for emergency purposes.

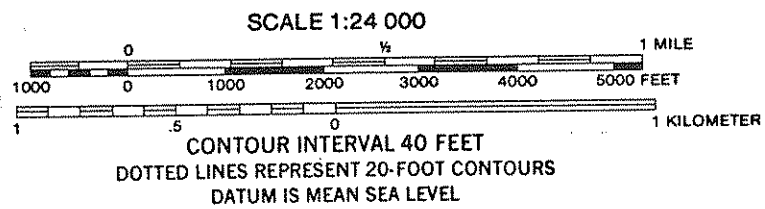
**Mile 19.8 - Red Creek:** A rough 4WD road comes down Red Creek at this point.

**Mile 9.8 - Sheep Bridge:** (1) From Carefree, drive north on FR 24 approximately 3.7 miles to Bloody Basin. Turn right on FR 269 and drive 12 miles down to the Sheep Bridge. (2) From the Bloody Basin Exit on Interstate 17, drive east on FR 269 approximately 30 miles to Bloody Basin; continue on FR 269 for 12 miles down to the Sheep Bridge. When these roads are muddy 4WD should be used.

**Mile 0.1 - Ocotillo Boat Ramp:** A tow across Horseshoe Reservoir is one way to reach this RAP, but it can also be reached the old-fashioned way ("Stroke! Stroke!").



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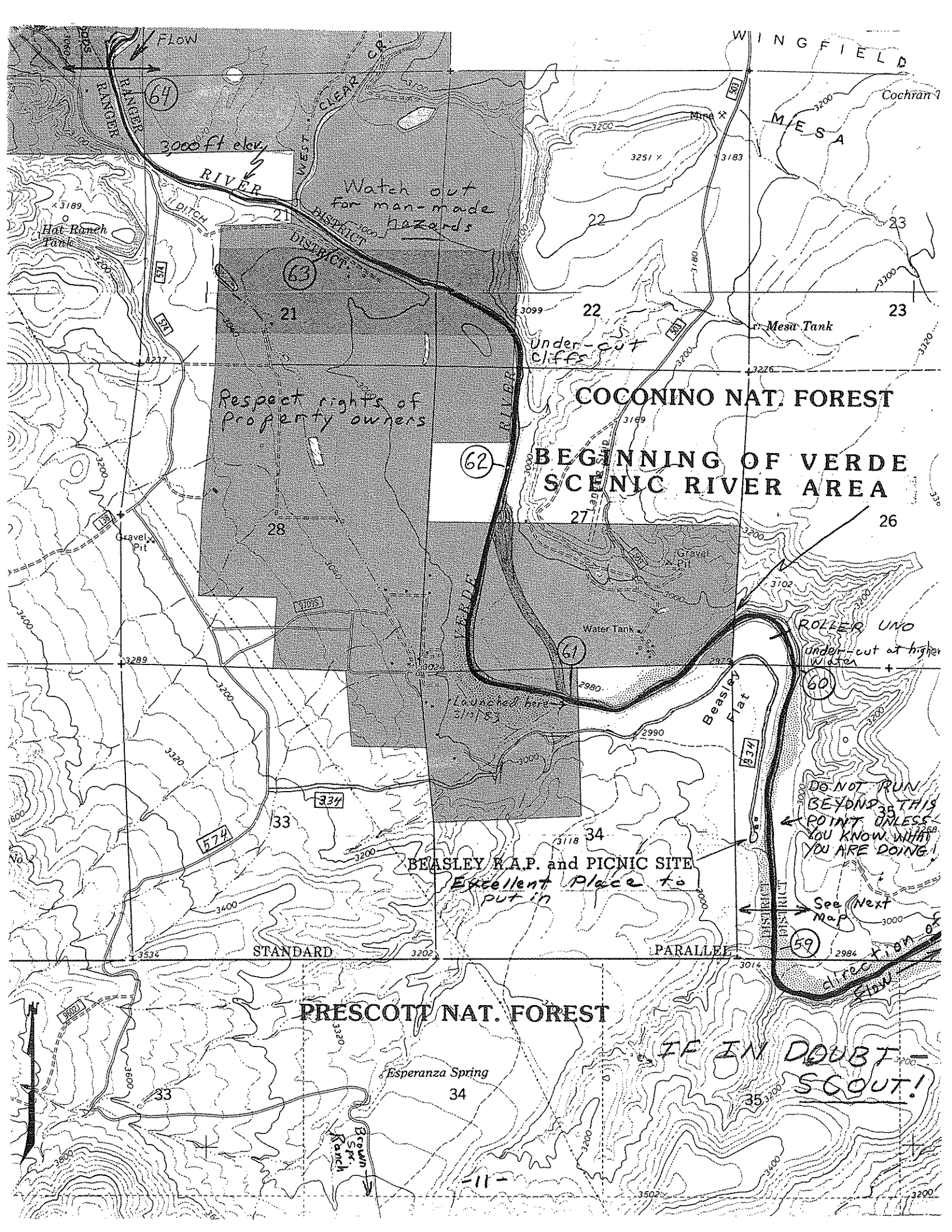


ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information contact:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Forest Service  
Tonto National Forest  
2324 E. McDowell Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85006





Flow

(64)

3000 ft elev

RIVER

Watch out for man-made hazards

Respect rights of property owners

(62)

BEGINNING OF VERDE SCENIC RIVER AREA

(61)

ROLLER UNO  
under-cut at higher water

(60)

DO NOT RUN BEYOND THIS POINT UNLESS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING

See Next Map

(59)

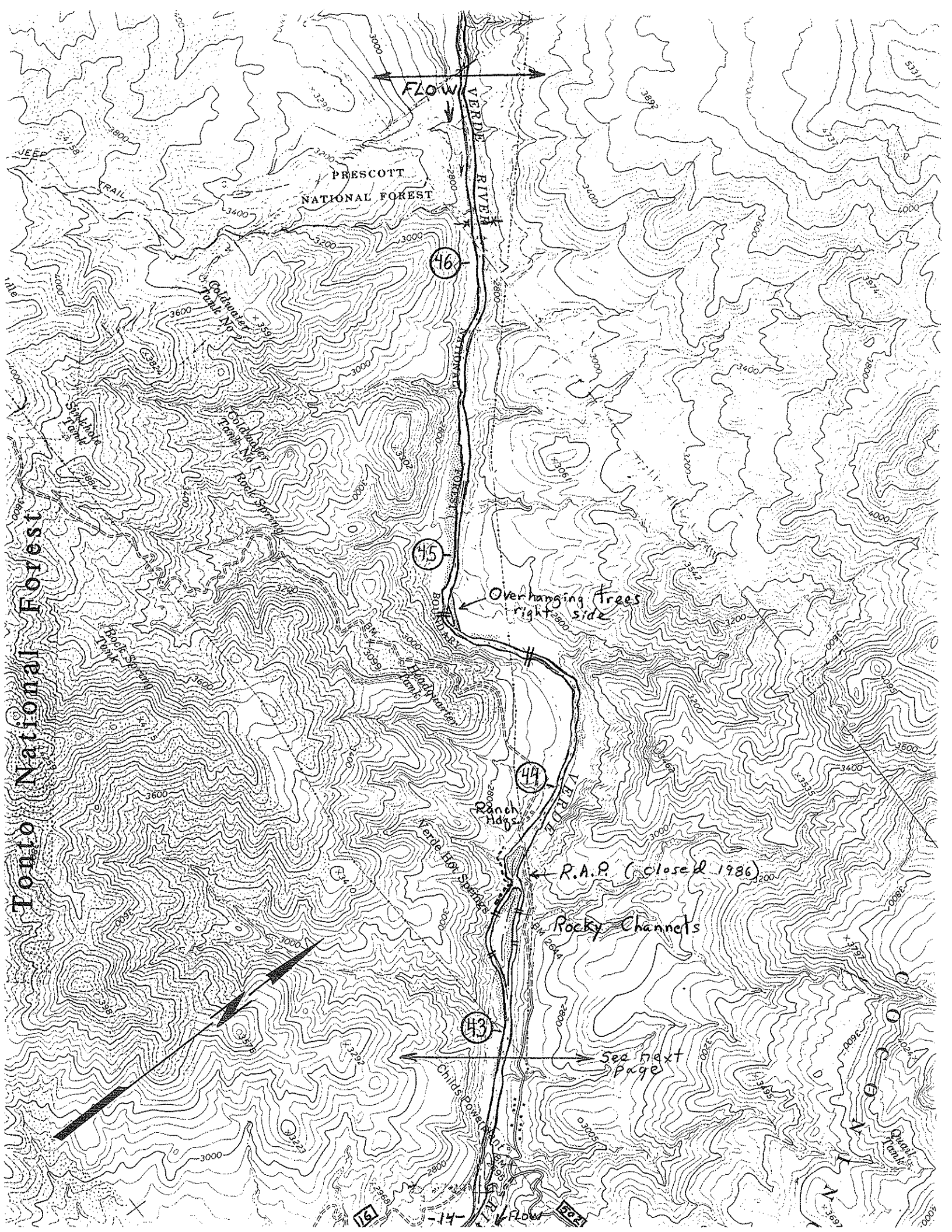
BEASLEY R.A.P. and PICNIC SITE

Excellent place to put in

PRESCOTT NAT. FOREST

IF IN DOUBT - SCOUT!





Tonto National Forest

PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST

FLOW

VERDE RIVER

46

45

Overhanging trees right side

44

Ranch Hdqs.

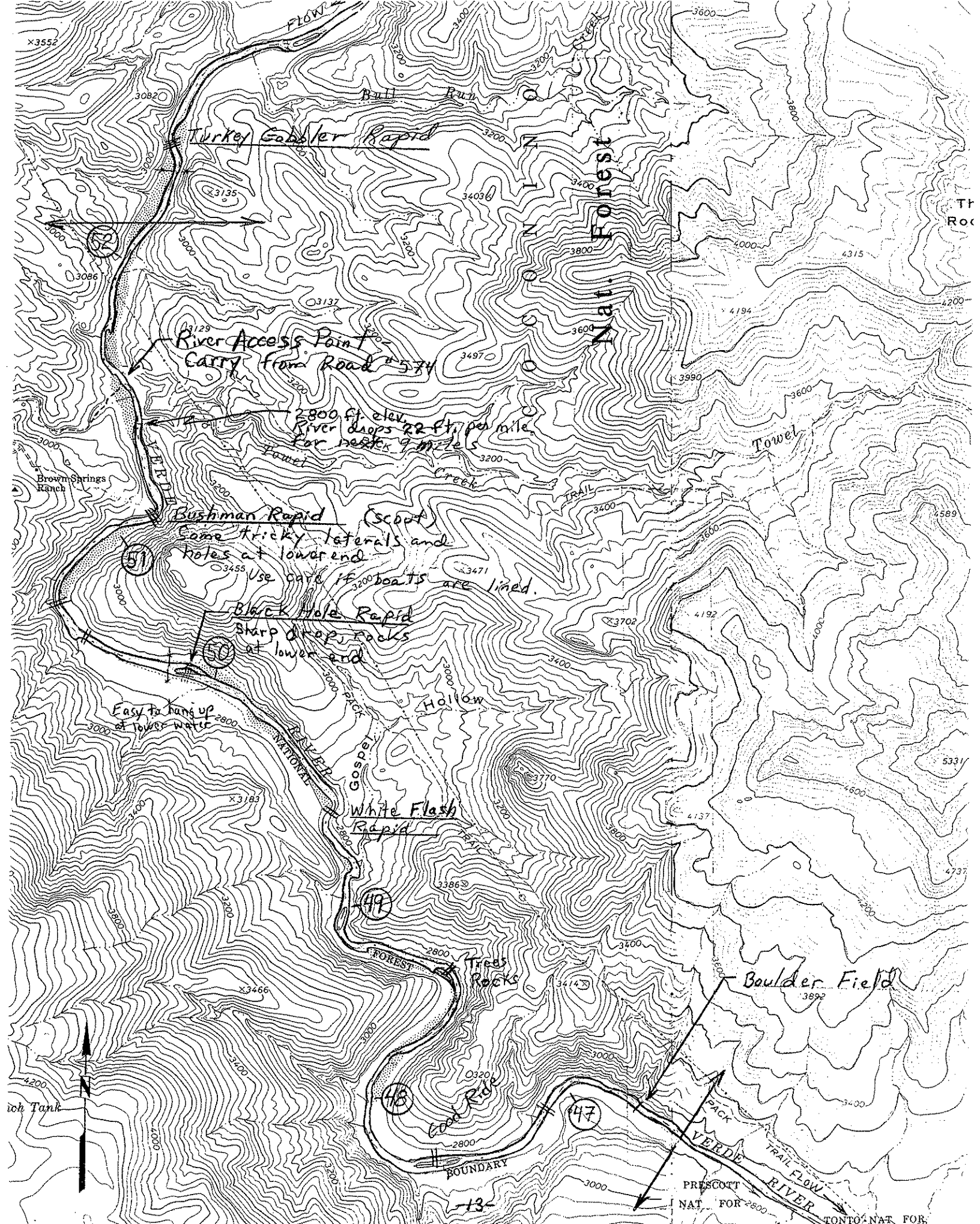
R.A.P. (closed 1986)

Rocky Channels

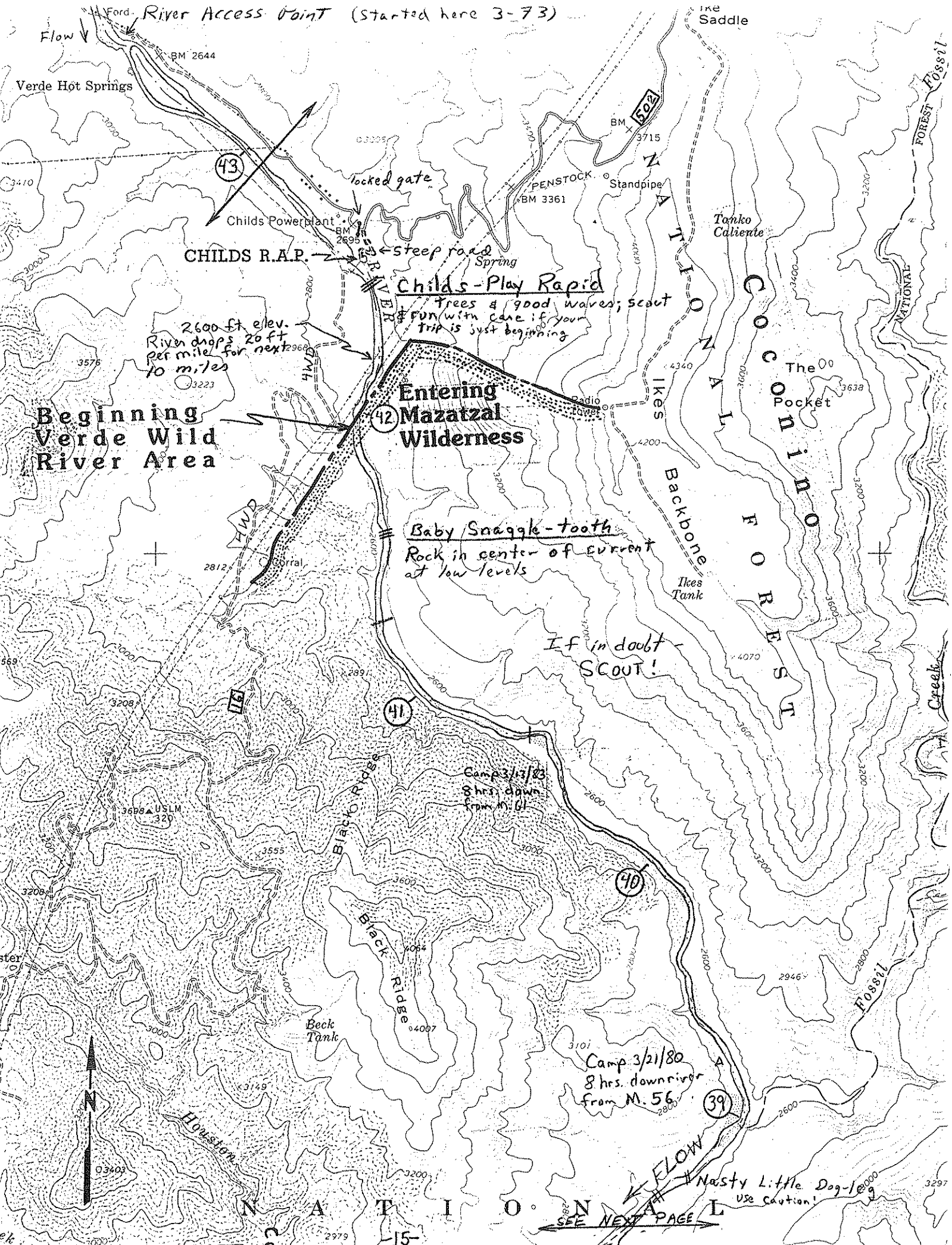
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See next page

Childs Power







Ford. River Access Point (started here 3-73)

Flow ↓  
Verde Hot Springs  
BM 2644

(43)

Childs Powerplant  
locked gate

CHILDS R.A.P.

steep road

Childs-Play Rapid

Trees & good waves; scout  
Fun with care if your  
trip is just beginning

2600 ft elev.  
River drops 20 ft  
per mile for next  
10 miles

Beginning  
Verde Wild  
River Area

Entering  
Mazatzal  
Wilderness

Baby Snaggle-tooth  
Rock in center of current  
at low levels

If in doubt  
SCOUT!

(41)

Camp 3/17/83  
8 hrs. down  
from M. 61

(40)

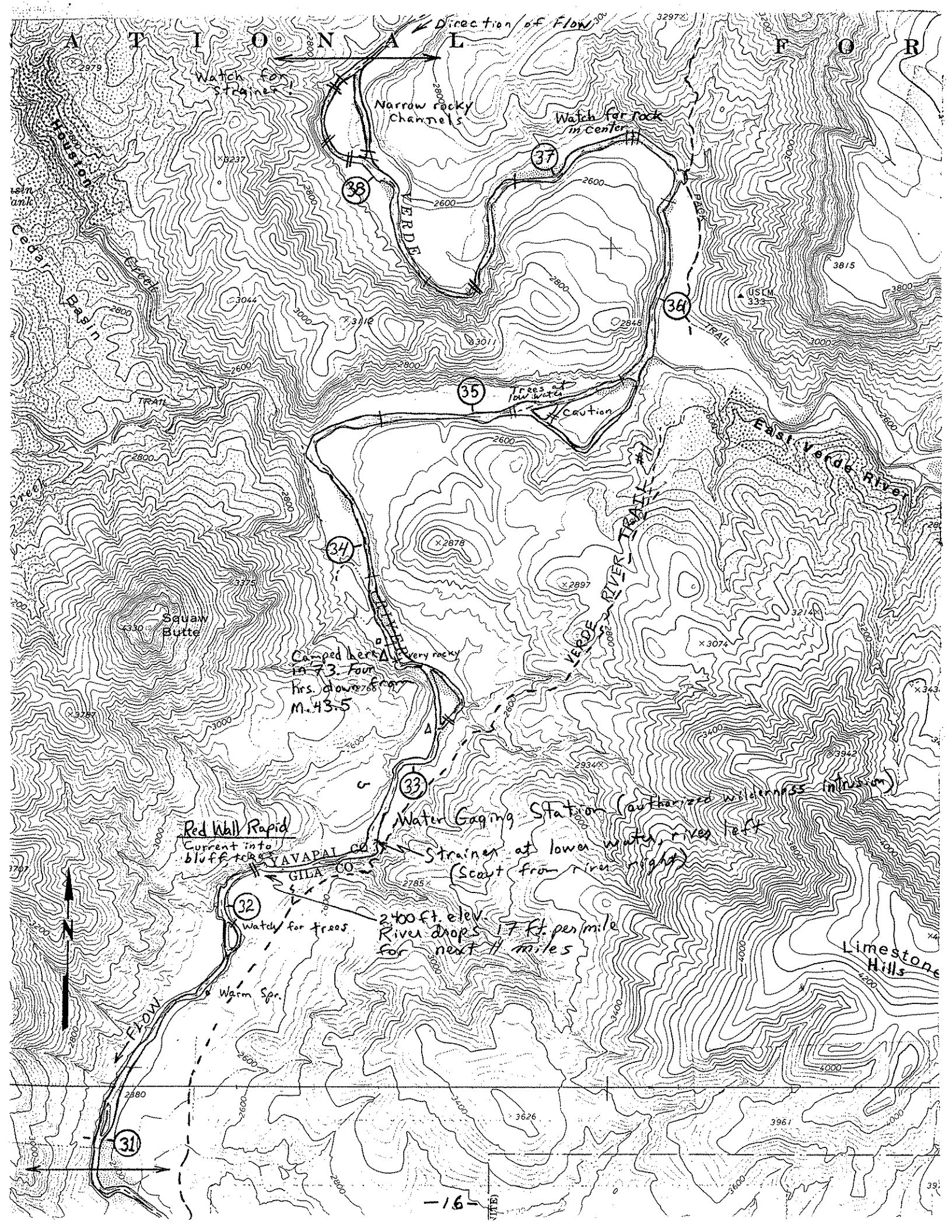
Camp 3/21/80  
8 hrs. downriver  
from M. 56

(39)

FLOW ↓  
Nasty Little Dog-1989  
Use Caution!

SEE NEXT PAGE





A T T I O N A L F O R

Direction of Flow

Watch for  
strainer

Narrow rocky  
channels

Watch for rock  
in center

38

37

36

35

Trees at  
low water

Caution

34

Squaw  
Butte

Camped here  
in 73. Four  
hrs. down stream  
M. 43.5

Very rocky

33

Water Gaging Station (authorized wilderness intrusion)

Strainer at lower water, river left  
(Scout from river right)

Red Wall Rapid

Current into  
bluff crevices

YAVAPAI CO. / GILA CO.

32

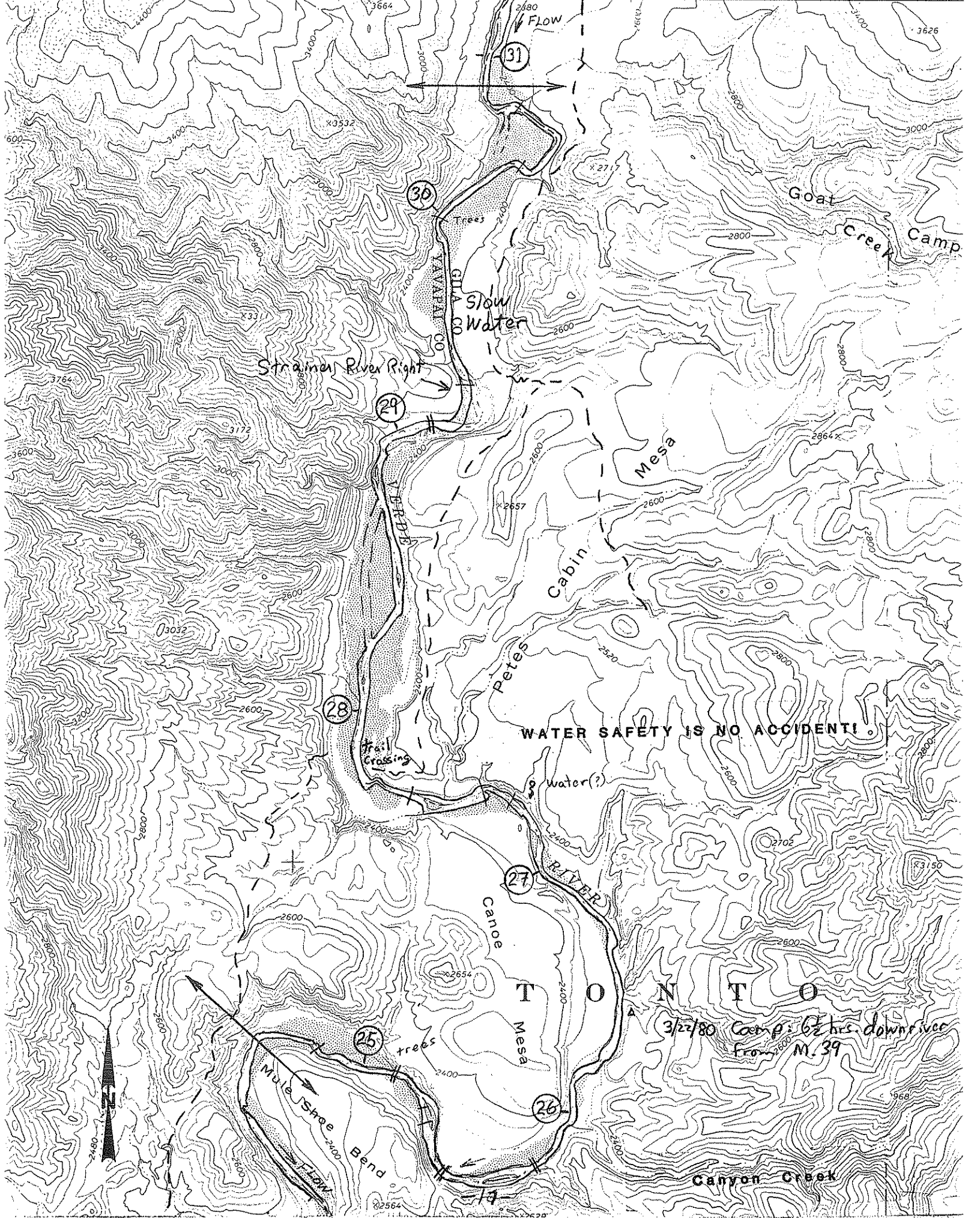
Watch for trees

2400 ft. elev.  
River drops 17 ft. per mile  
for next 11 miles

Warm Spr.

31

Limestone  
Hills



WATER SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT!

3/22/80 Camp: 6 1/2 hrs downriver from M. 39



30

29

28

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25

26



Strainer River Right

Slow Water

Trail Crossing

Petes Cabin

Mesa

T O N T O

Canoe

Mule Shoe Bend

Canyon Creek

Goat Creek Camp

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Wet As Rapid

18  
V.R.D.E.

Seep  
473 Camp  
All day from  
M. 33.5

75 Camp  
All day from  
M. 33.2

17

16

Nice  
Ride  
(20)

15

Watch for trees

Spring

Water's

14

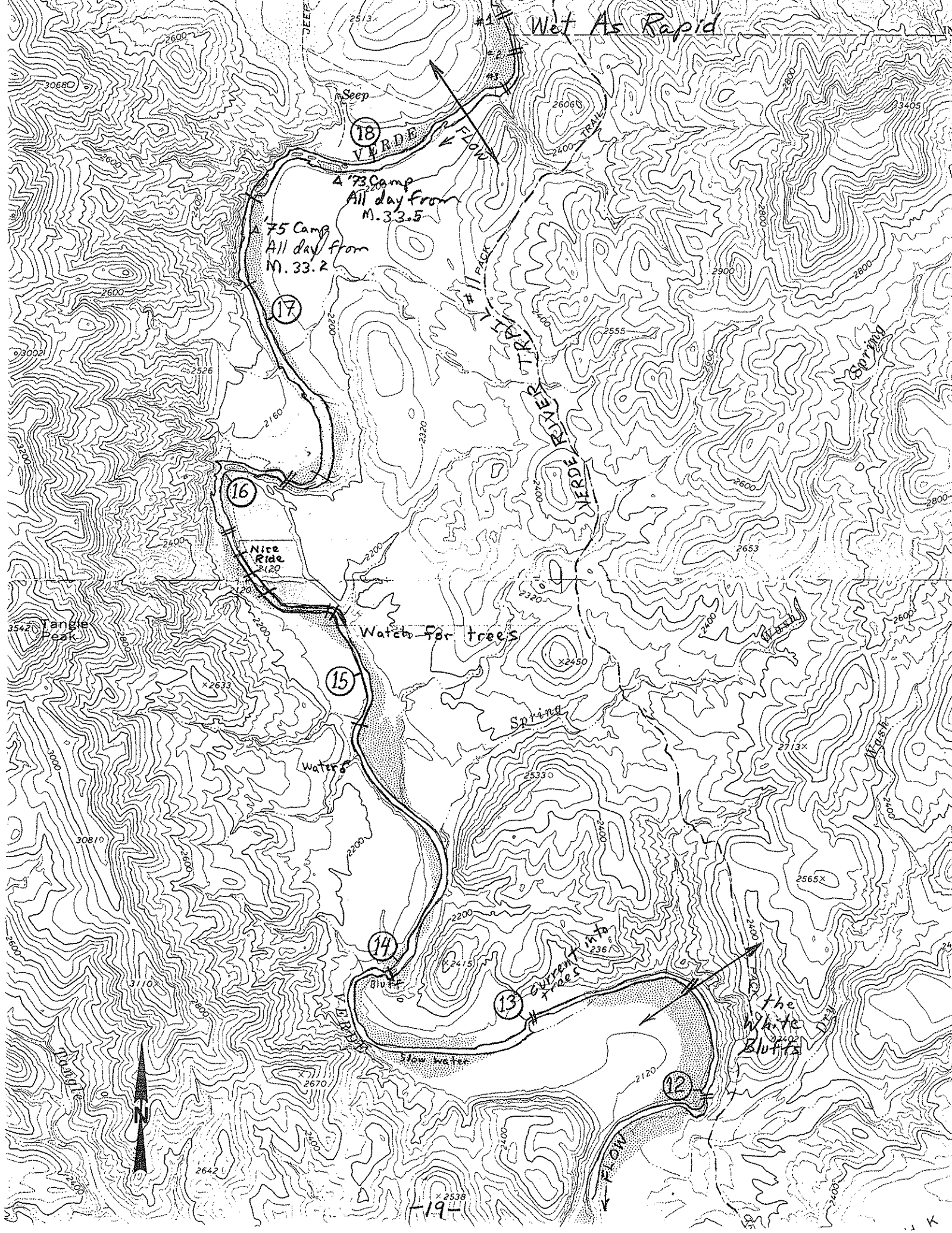
13

Current  
trees

the  
White  
Bluffs

12

19



Wilderness

The White Bluffs

Honey Crote

22 Miles to S 17

Road very bad when muddy

SHEEP BRIDGE RAP

REVER APPEARS TO GO STRAIGHT BUT BEST CHANNEL IS RIGHT

Scouters Recommended

Out 3/23/80  
6 1/2 hrs. downriver from M. 26.4  
Out 4/15/80  
4 hrs. downriver from M. 21.6

Chalk Mtn. Rd # 479  
(Note: Horseshoe Dam crossing closed by S.R.P.)

T o n t o

N a t i o n a l

F o r e s t

2,000 ft. elev.

HORSESHOE RESERVOIR (upper limits)

