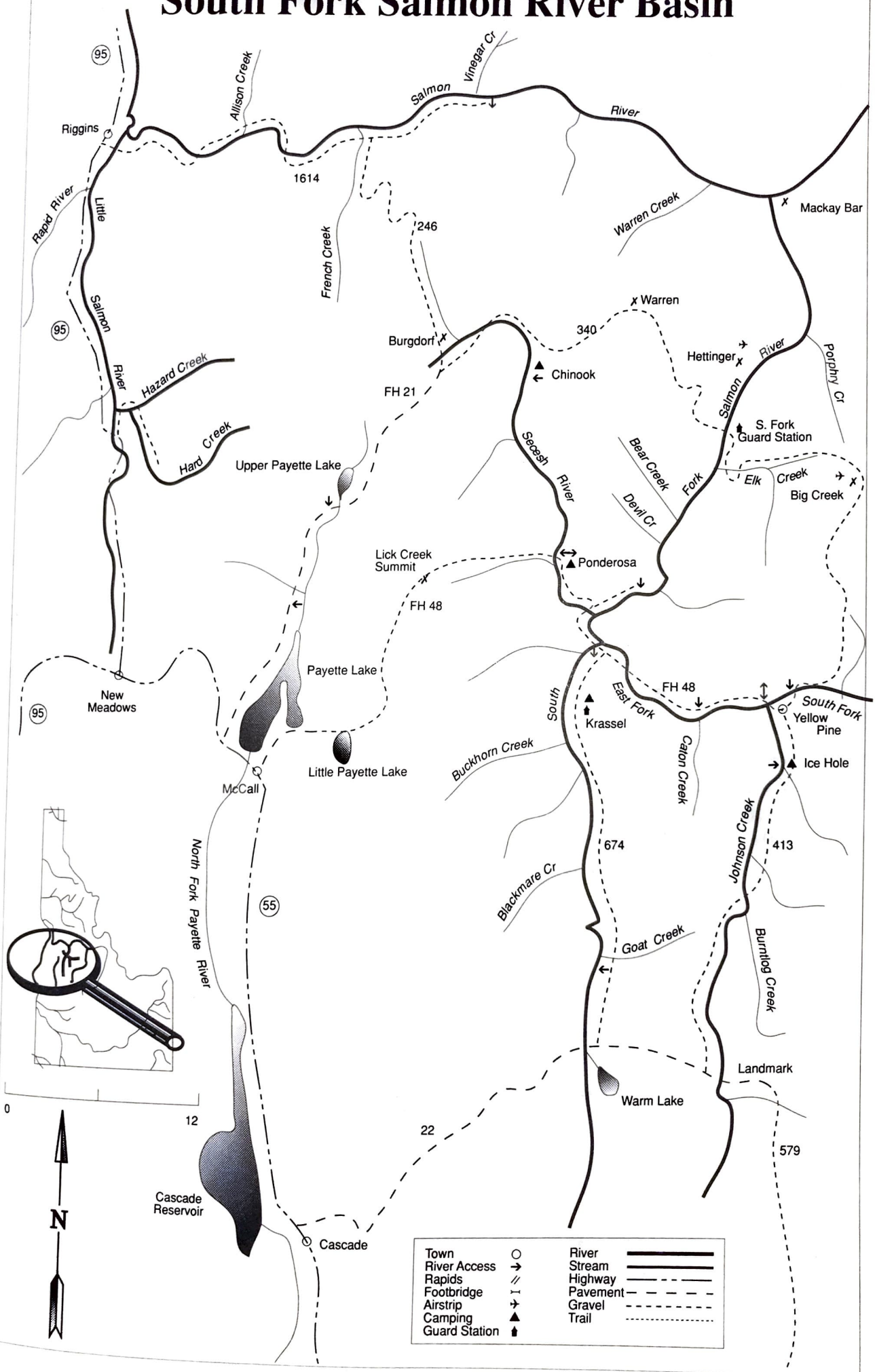


South Fork Salmon River Basin



SOUTH FORK SALMON, CANYON

CLASS	LEVEL	LENGTH	GRADIENT	TIME
III+	<1.5'	52 (32) miles	42 fpm	2 days
III-IV	>1.5'			
IV-V	>4.2'			

PUT-IN:	Road end (3,500 ft.)
TAKE-OUT:	Vinegar Creek {(confl. 2,160 ft.) 1,960 ft.}
SHUTTLE:	101 miles
CRAFT:	Kayak, canoe, raft
PORTAGES:	No
SEASON:	May, June, July
GAUGE:	Krassel, (208) 634-8151
PERMIT:	No*
MAPS:	Williams Pk., Parks Pk., Pilot Pk., Chicken Pk., Warren 15', <i>Payette NF</i>
CHARACTER:	Steep mountain-river, boulder-choked rapids, limited access, trail, wilderness.

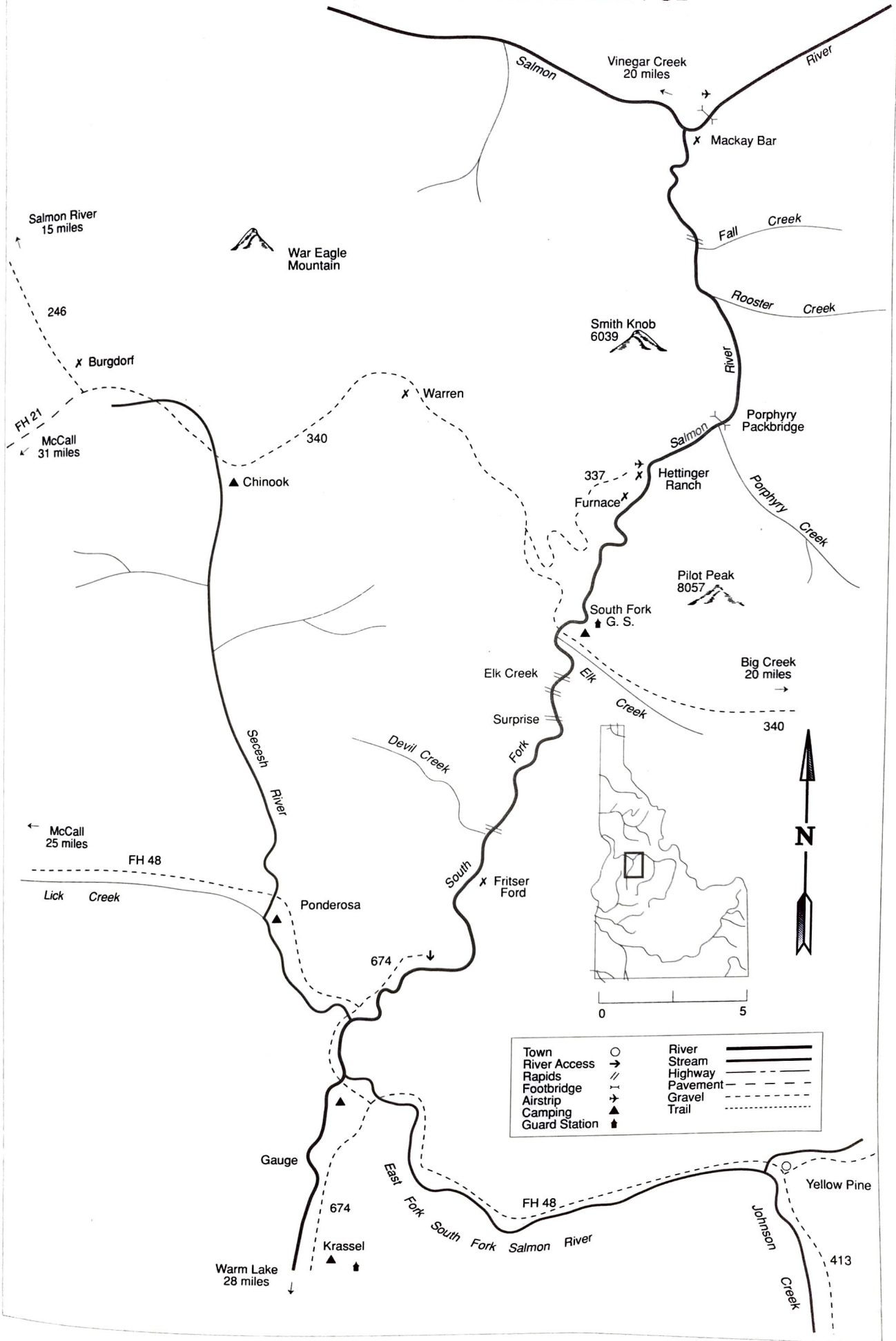
DESCRIPTION: There are good reasons the South Fork of the Salmon is becoming a popular whitewater run. It has the perfect mix of whitewater, scenery, and seclusion.

The rapids are a mix of long rock gardens and steep single drops. The South Fork has been kayaked and canoed when the flow was below 1'. The run loses most of the whitewater excitement at low flows, but remains a beautiful wilderness tour. When the water's high, the South Fork contains some challenging whitewater. Bruce Olson and Mike Lyons kayaked the entire 52 miles in a day by putting on when the water was high enough to entirely submerge the Krassel Gauge. The large flat rock below Hettenger is called Greyhound, because the hole that forms below the rock when the water's this high is, according to Lyons, big enough to surf a Greyhound bus.

The river runs through a beautiful granite canyon. The vegetation is a mix of thick forests and open mountain sides, much like the Middle Fork. The first named rapid is Devil Creek; a big boulder choked affair with a large hole on the left. You can sneak between the boulders at most flows. It's about five miles down from the put-in. The next big rapid is Surprise; a fun rock garden or a frightening minefield of deep holes, depending upon the water level. Elk Creek Rapid, formerly known as Teetering Log, can be identified by the tall cliff on the left and the steep drop at the base of the cliff. A teetering log, left by high water, used to be perched on the edge of this cliff. High water washed it off in '82. Don't go in the deep holes in the first part of this rapid. There's only a short recovery pool before the second part of the rapid.

At the South Fork Guard Station there is a bridge, some buildings and developed camping. A shuttle can drive here with camping gear if Profile Gap and Elk Summit are open to the east or Secesh and Warren Summit to the west. On the left bank, five miles downstream, Hettenger Ranch is on the left bank. Look for some buildings, an old incinerator and an airstrip. From the

South Fork Salmon River



Town	○	River	———
River Access	→	Stream	———
Rapids	///	Highway	———
Footbridge	— —	Pavement	———
Airstrip	▲	Gravel	———
Camping	▲	Trail
Guard Station	▲		

river the ranch is out of sight. Equipment could be flown in and left at the airstrip if you want to live it up. Mackay Bar makes regular flights in here during the summer and cars can drive in here as well, but Secesh and Warren Summits must be open.

Fall Creek, the last rapid, is the biggest. A huge logjam on the right marks the rapid. At high water Fall Creek is a long series of steep chutes, deep holes and big waves. It's steep enough that you will probably want to scout it. As the flow drops, slow moving water develops between the first two drops and the rapid can be sectioned by kayaks.

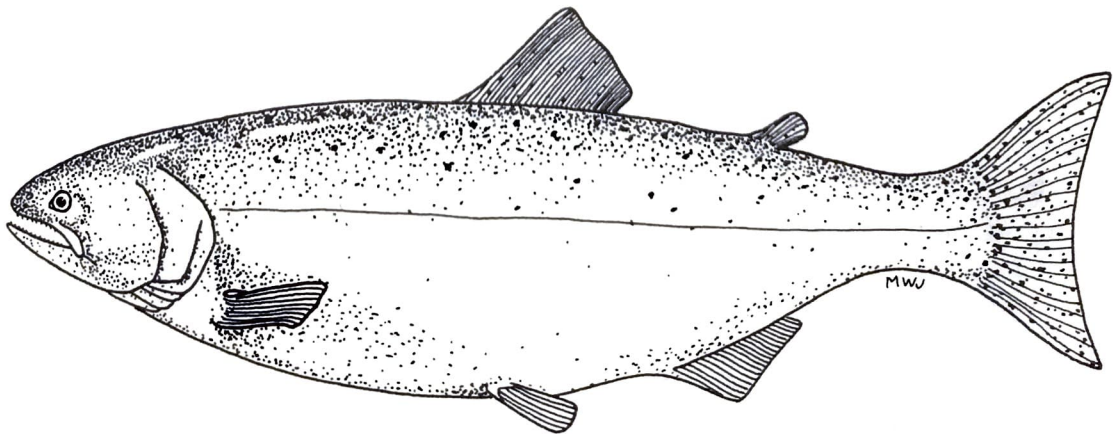
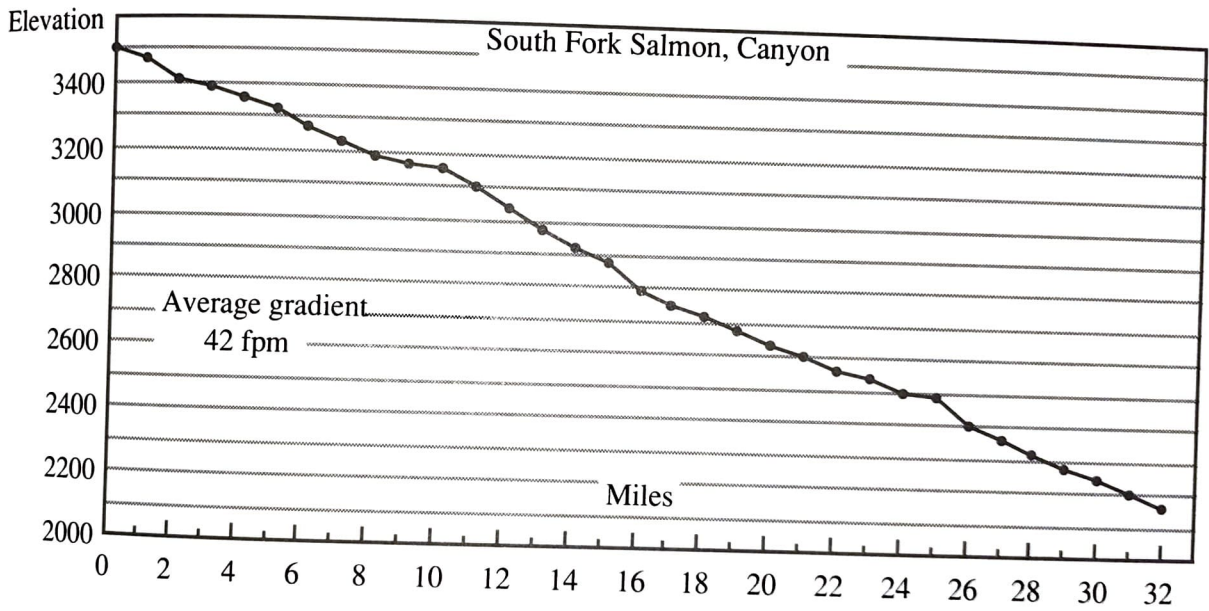
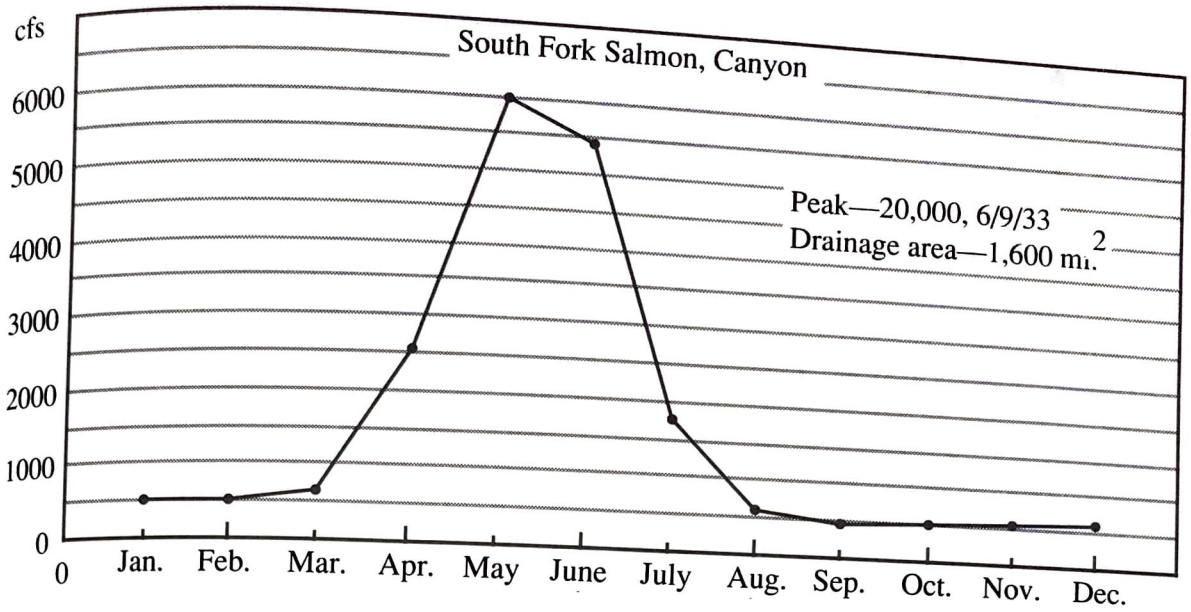
Upstream of the South Fork's mouth, Mackay Bar, a back country guest ranch, is just a short hike up the river-left bank of the Main Salmon. To get there, stop when the trail on the right bank of the South Fork starts to climb away from the river, because at the mouth, there is a large bluff that's difficult to get around. With reservations, there are cabins and hot meals available at Mackay Bar. Beer and candy can be bought without reservations but, the price is reflective of American Economic Theory.

Don't camp along the Main Salmon unless you have a permit. Paddling out is recommended. This part of the Salmon is known as "Salmon Lake." There are two rapids in 20 miles; paddle don't float.

The gauge at Krassel is used to determine flows on the South Fork, but if you are going to use this gauge there are a couple things you should be aware of. Unfortunately, the Krassel gauge is located upstream from the confluence with the East Fork of the South Fork, which is equal to, or bigger than the South Fork at this point. The Secesh adds at least another 1000 cfs as well. There used to be a gauge located at the put-in (1932-1943). The records from this gauge show the river peaking in May. The Krassel gauge shows a June peak. Therefore a Krassel reading in May should indicate a higher flow in the canyon than a June reading.

The shuttle is long and difficult. Starting in McCall, go east on the main street along the lake. Where the main road turns south towards Boise, follow the Lick Creek Road 34 miles to the confluence with the South Fork. Then turn left and drive to the end of the road. If the Lick Creek Road is closed, go south of McCall to Cascade. Just north of Cascade take the Warm Lake Road to the east. Drive to the South Fork Road, and turn north. Follow the South Fork past the Secesh to the end of the road. The take-out is east of Riggins up the Salmon 26 miles at Vinegar Creek. McCall can also be reached from the take-out on the French Creek Road, if it's open. Most of the passes in this area open in June depending upon the snowpack. Call the McCall Ranger District for details. Shuttle drivers can be arranged at the sporting goods shops in McCall.

*To float out on the Main Salmon you need a permit. People have been stopped and fined coming off the South Fork.



CHINOOK SALMON
Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

SOUTH FORK SALMON, GOAT CREEK RUN

CLASS	LEVEL	LENGTH	GRADIENT	TIME
IV-V	3'-4,5'	6 miles	83 fpm	3 hours
V	>4.5'			

PUT-IN:	Goat Creek, mile 8.9 (4,680 ft.)
TAKE-OUT:	Poverty Flats, mile 14 (4,180 ft.)
SHUTTLE:	7 miles
CRAFT:	Kayak, canoe
PORTAGES:	Logs
SEASON:	May, June
GAUGE:	Krassel, (208) 634-8151
PERMIT:	No
MAPS:	White Rock Pk.
CHARACTER:	Swift mountain river, ledge drops and rock gardens, logjams, removed road, remote.

DESCRIPTION: The Goat Creek run on the South Fork of the Salmon is a great class IV day run. There are at least 20 good drops including one class V ledge. The run is extremely secluded and the water cold. The road climbs up away from the river at the put-in and doesn't return until the take-out.

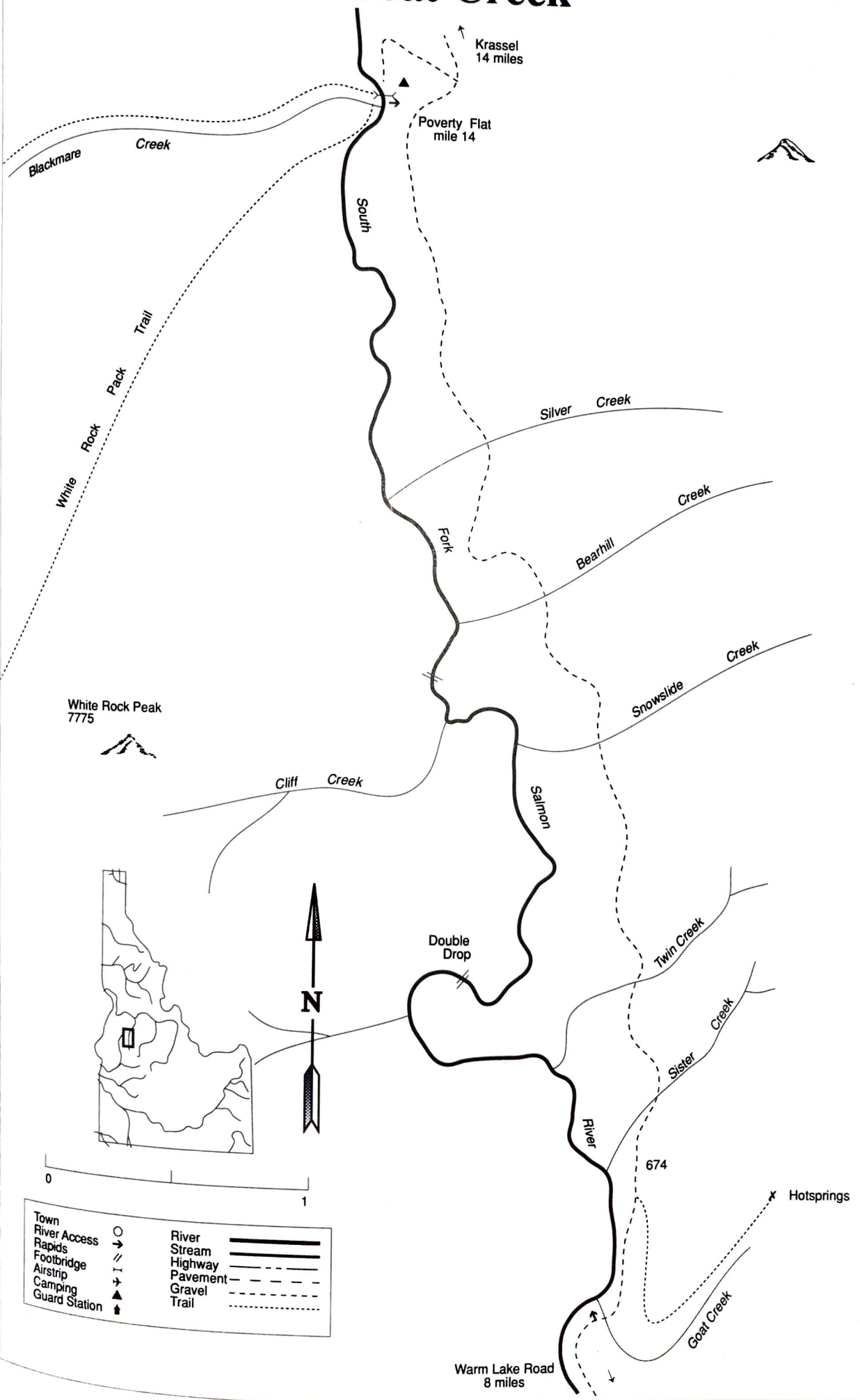
You may have seen the high water put in technique for this run in a Rocky Rossi video. It's very shallow and rocky below the pipe. If you can see the rocks, walk down the steep hill and avoid the theatrics.

About half way down this run, logs start to show up. A sharp, but open, corner to the right signals the start of the bigger drops. There is a huge log in the eddy at the top on the left. You can't miss the obvious horizon downstream. The next drop is a class V series of ledges known as Double Drop. Keep your nose up. Pitons are common here. There's an easy portage on the right, put in either mid-way or at the bottom.

The class II riffle just below has an innocuous, but dangerous under-cut rock right in the middle. On one cold spring morning, I was eddied out in the pool below this drop watching Clinton LaTourrette float down. Suddenly, he literally disappeared from the river's surface, pulled down by the undercut. As I jumped out of my boat, his yellow helmet rose up and broke out of the water in the same place he had gone under. His face was out of the water and he could breathe, but he was pinned to the bottom. Our eyes locked and I remember mentally going through a hundred rescue techniques in about five seconds. Then I could see he was moving forward in the water. He had reached down, put his hands on the rock and bottom and pulled forward and free. His kayak breached out of the water like a surfacing submarine.

Two more significant rapids remain, both are steep ledges dropping into reversals. The first is marked by a log bridging the river below the drop. As you come around the corner it looks like the log is sitting right on the water's surface, however at all but the highest flows there's plenty of clearance. If you're on this run and going under this log is a tight squeeze, you don't need a guidebook. There are lots of logs and sweepers on the this run as well and

South Fork Salmon River Goat Creek



Town	○	River	—————
River Access	→	Stream	=====
Rapids	///	Highway	—————
Footbridge	—/—/—	Pavement	-----
Airstrip	⊥	Gravel	- - - - -
Camping	→	Trail
Guard Station	▲		

Warm Lake Road
8 miles

Hot Springs

674

White Rock Peak
7775

Krassel
14 miles

Poverty Flat
mile 14

Cliff Creek

Silver Creek

Bearhill Creek

Snowslide Creek

Double Drop

Twin Creek

Sister Creek

Blackmare Creek

White Rock Pack Trail

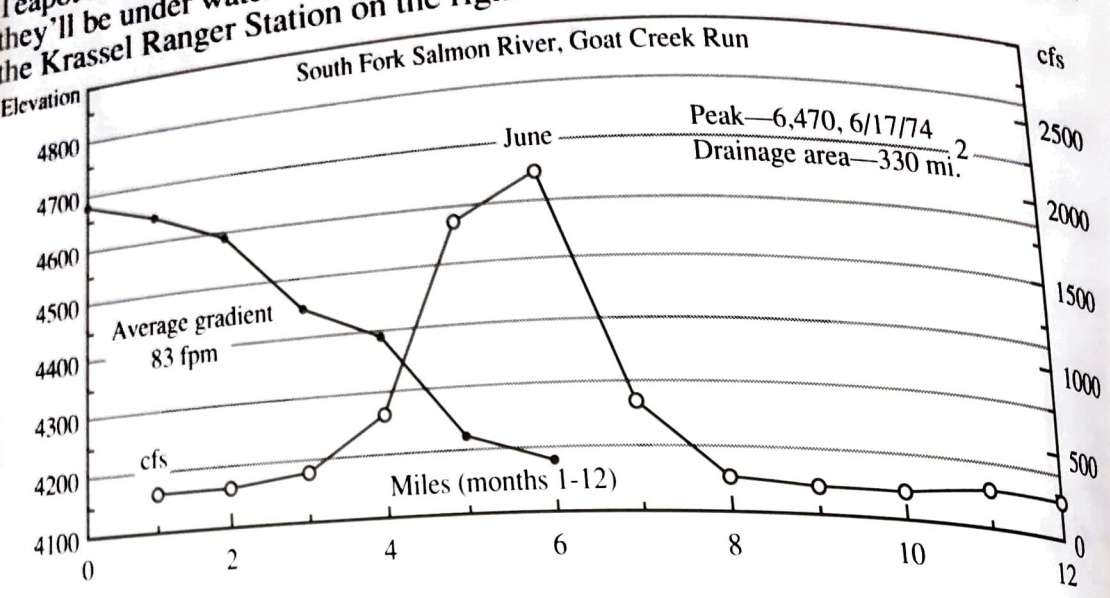
South Fork

Salmon River

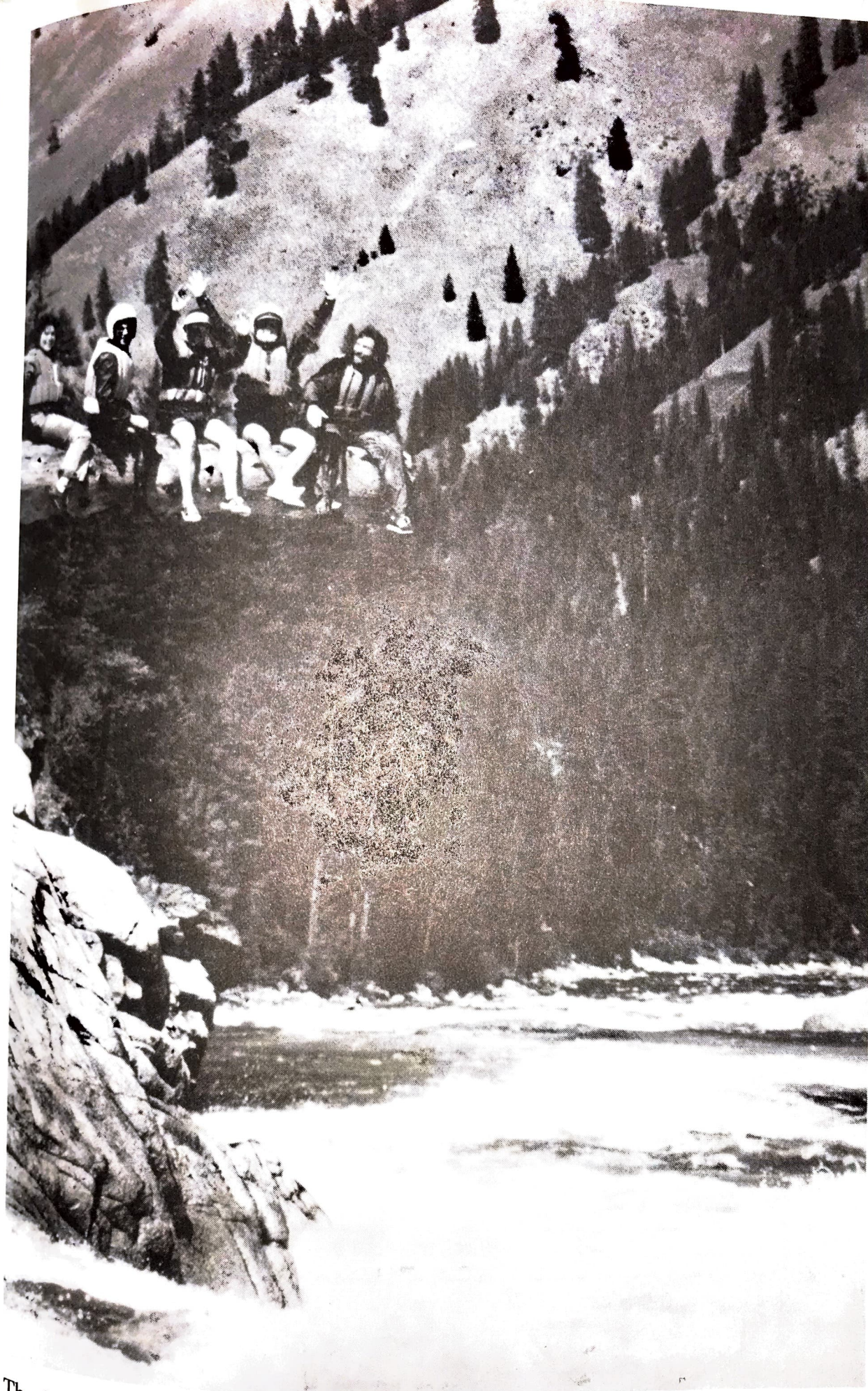
River

Goat Creek

several must be portaged depending on the water level. The river mellows out about a half mile above Poverty Flats, the take-out. A mile-and-a-half downstream, Teapot Hot Springs are on the right bank. There's a little gorge in this stretch, which makes the run to Teapot worthwhile. From the road Teapot Hot Springs are close to milepost 16, but if the flow is 6.4' or higher they'll be under water. The gauge is located about a mile downstream from the Krassel Ranger Station on the right bank.



Plenty of clearance. Bruce Olsen dropping into the Swimming Hole.



The famous Teetering Log. Photo: Rob Lesser

EAST FORK SOUTH FORK SALEMON RIVER, LOWER

CLASS	LEVEL	LENGTH	GRADIENT	TIME
III-V	1,000 cfs	15 miles	67 fpm	5-8 hours
IV-V+	>1,500 cfs			

- PUT IN:** Johnson Creek (4,650 ft.)
- TAKE OUT:** Indian Point (3,640 ft.)
- SHUTTLE:** 15 miles
- CRAFT:** Kayak
- PORTAGES:** No
- SEASON:** May, June
- GAUGE:** No*
- PERMIT:** No
- MAPS:** Williams Pk., Parks Pk., Pilot Pk., Chicken Pk., Warren 15, *Payette NF*
- CHARACTER:** Small mountain river, high gradient, continuous boulder-choked rapids, logs, road, secluded.

DESCRIPTION: This is an outstanding whitewater run. It is full of class IV drops with the most difficult rapids at the top. At most levels the river is full of big holes and even if you've scouted and planned out a line, you can count on falling into a couple of them over the course of the run; boat scouting will put you in a lot more.

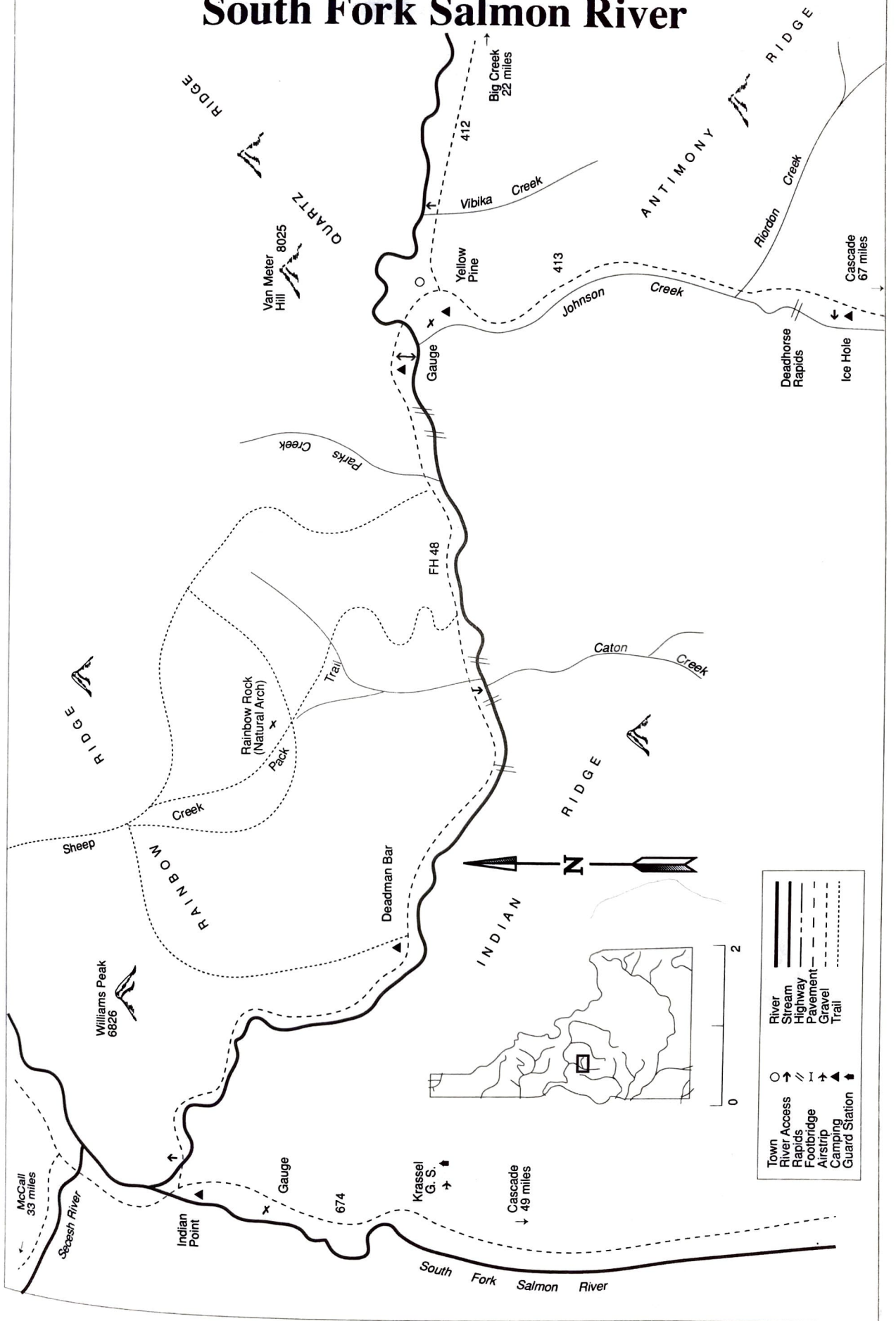
Below the short flat water warm-up, the river drops directly into two back-to-back class V rapids. The first one has a fairly clean line, but you will still have to take on a few holes towards the bottom. We call this Flight Simulator. While scouting this rapid one morning, Tony Brennan and I kept looking towards the sky to find the jet plane we were hearing. As we scrambled down the bank we realized the jet sound was coming from the rapid. The second rapid doesn't have a clean line. It has lots of nasty rocks, hydraulics and a log or two as well. Above 1,600 cfs on the Johnson Creek gauge consider the Caton Creek put-in.

Take the time to road scout this run while setting up the shuttle. If you start at the bottom and things are looking pretty big to you by the time you reach Caton Creek — go no further. Things only get tougher upstream and Caton Creek is a common alternative put-in. This will cut out most of the class V, but you'll still be crashing through some river wide holes and dodging some adrenaline focus points. At lower flows the rapids become technical as the rocks emerge and the eddies take on some definition. The East Fork South Fork can be a fun day at low water, but be careful of broaching or pinning.

There are good camp sites at both the put-in and the take-out. Food and drink as well as gas and groceries can be found a mile up from the start in the little mining town of Yellow Pine.

*A stick gauge is located 100 yards up Johnson Creek on the right bank. Because Johnson Creek is the major source of water for the East Fork, this gauge can be used to judge the flows for this run. See the appendix for the rating table.

East Fork South Fork Salmon River



EAST FORK SOUTH FORK SALMON RIVER, UPPER

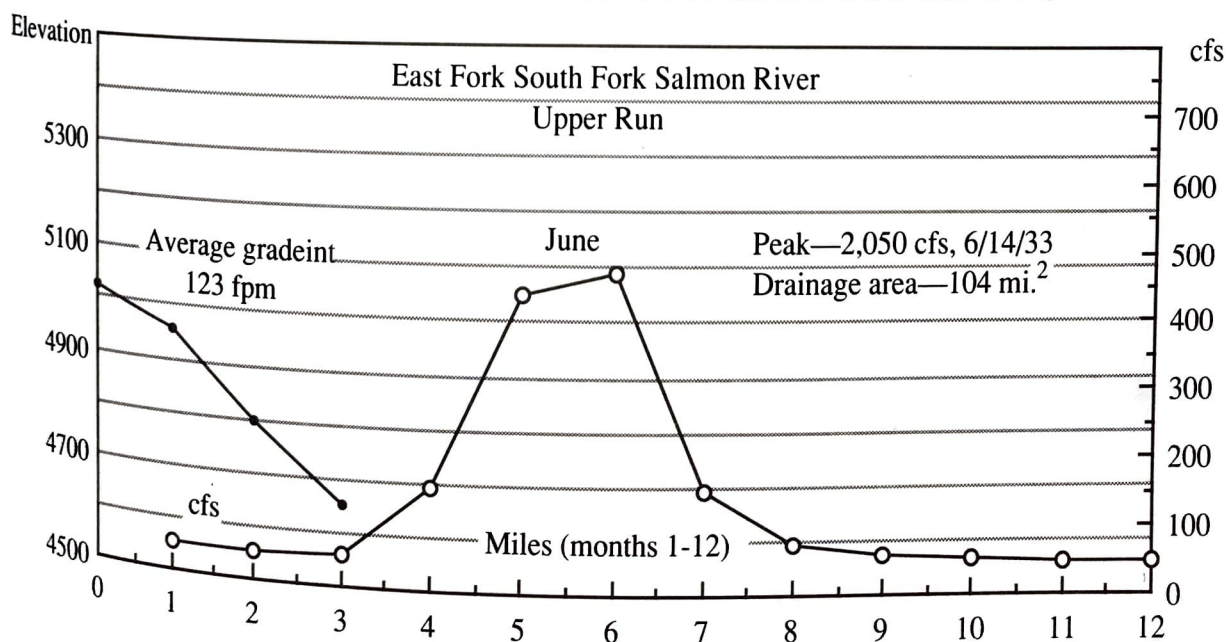
CLASS III-IV	LEVEL 250 cfs	LENGTH 3 miles	GRADIENT 123 fpm	TIME 1-2 hours
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PUT IN: Vibika Creek (5,020 ft.)
TAKE OUT: Johnson Creek (4,650 ft.)
SHUTTLE: 3 miles
CRAFT: Kayak
PORTAGES: No
SEASON: May, June
GAUGE: Near Stibnite
PERMIT: No
MAPS: Yellow Pine, *Payette NF*
CHARACTER: Steep creek, continuous, technical, logs, road, secluded.

DESCRIPTION: If you like catching eddies and flying down steep chutes, you'll like this run. This is a little creek, with lots of technical rock gardens and a couple of steep chutes. Some of the chutes may require scouting simply because the bottom is hidden under the horizon. At higher flows these ledges could change into powerful reversals. There are two good rapids at the end of the run. The first is just upstream from the East Fork Road Bridge and the second is at the confluence with Johnson Creek. The stretch that can't be seen from the road is basically the same as the rest of the run.

There is an operating gauge seven miles upstream from the put-in. The hydrograph is based on the old gauge, located upstream of the confluence. Though this gauge is no longer operating, the data is more accurate for judging the season and actual volume of this run.

The put-in is east of Yellow Pine three miles on road 412.



JOHNSON CREEK

CLASS
II-V

LEVEL
600 cfs

LENGTH
6 miles

GRADIENT
53 fpm

TIME
3 hours

PUT-IN: Ice Hole Campground (5,600 ft.)
TAKE-OUT: Yellow Pine Campground (4,650 ft.)
SHUTTLE: 6 miles
CRAFT: Kayak
PORTAGES: 0
SEASON: May, June
GAUGE: Yellow Pine
PERMIT: No
MAPS: Log Mtn., Caton Lake, Yellow Pine, Boise NF
CHARACTER: Steep creek, rock gardens, logjams, road, secluded.

DESCRIPTION: There are two outstanding rapids on this run. The first is right at the start, the second at the end. In between, there are four miles of class II and III busy water.

If you start at Ice Hole Campground, Deadhorse Rapid is around the corner following a hundred yards of class II-III; not much of a warm up for what follows. Deadhorse starts off with a long rock garden. After crashing down a series of ledges, the river is pinched between two boulders in a slot ten feet across dropping six feet onto a boulder in the center of the current. Depending on the level, you're either going to hit the boulder, surf an ugly cushion or, if you've been living right, you might squeak through clean. Then the river takes a sharp turn to the left. The outside is choked with sweepers, don't go out here. The turn leads into a fantastic rock garden that ends in a great play hole. From here down to the confluence with the East-Fork South-Fork you can relax and reflect on your fast start. The last rapid is a steep boiling mess due to the mixing currents of the two rivers. At this point, Johnson Creek is about twice as large as the East Fork South Fork. There's a stick gauge on Johnson Creek about 100 yards up from the confluence. See the appendix for the rating table.

