

Mile 18.8—Smith Gulch, River of No Return Lodge, River Right
UTM 11 T 0658140 5038850 (approximate GPS reading)

The cabins tucked against the mountain now belong to Kevin Yeates and the River of No Return Lodge. Previous owners, Stan and Gail Watt began boating the river around 1980 and bought “White Water West” from Norm Guthe in 1995. The Forest Service recently restored the Blacky Foster House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mile 19.7—Corey Bar Camp, River Right (Large)
UTM 11 T 0657364 5039746 (approximate GPS reading)

The approach is tricky and easy to miss. A side channel cuts behind a rock bar with just enough room to squeeze through and row to the seldom-used beach. Moose often hang out in the willow thicket next to the beach, one of which charged a well-deserving guest on one of our trips. Above Corey Bar is a rocky, scrappy camp, labeled Upper Corey Bar on the Forest Service map.

Side Hike (No Trail): From camp, walk straight back through thick woods to the base of the mountain and work your way diagonally left and up, across the open grassy slope toward the ridge. This initial ascent is the steepest and most sketchy part of the hike. Walking on the ridge is much easier, though still steep. Remnants of an old trail help. If you reach point 4,008, you will have climbed 1,200 feet in just under one mile. The view down into Black Canyon is stunning.

Mile 19.9—Pebble Beach Camp, River Left (Small)
UTM 11 T 0656910 5039868 (approximate GPS reading)

A small low-water beach on river left marks the entrance of Black Canyon.

Mile 20.3—Scout for Salmon Falls, River Right
UTM 11 T 0656556 5040147 (approximate GPS reading)

We scout from this spot on river right just *upriver* from Arctic Creek. Walk up the trail.

Mile 20.3—Arctic Creek Outfitter Camp, River Left
UTM 11 T 0656479 5040218 (approximate GPS reading)

Jet boat outfitter Jim O’Connor’s cabin is neatly perched at the mouth of Arctic Creek in an unlikely spot. The property is on lease from the Forest Service. Salmon Falls is immediately below. Jim, a former river ranger at Corn Creek in the mid 1990’s, purchased Arctic Creek from Jack Smith in 2008. Jack’s grandfather, Clyde Smith, and his father, Don, ran the first commercial river trip through Alpine Canyon on the Snake River in 1940 and were the first to run a powerboat on the Salmon River in 1945 when they accompanied the Army Corps of Engineers through the canyon for a road survey. Jack jet boated on the Salmon River since 1959.

Mile 20.4—Salmon Falls, Class III to III+
UTM 11 T 0656372 5040288 (approximate GPS reading)

MAY BE FLOODED OUT BY THE BLACK CREEK DEBRIS See diagram on page 42. This rapid increases in difficulty as the water level decreases. Most folks opt to run “the jet boat slot,” between the two big rocks/domers, just right of center. The current moves into the slot from the right to left—so line up above the right doomer (or rock, depending on the flows) and it will be easier to maneuver through the slot. The far left run tangles with the big holes. Both runs offer plenty of opportunity for mishap. Scouting is advisable from river right, just above Arctic Creek (river left), when the ramp level is below three feet—but either side will do. Early boaters, including Captain Guleke, repeatedly dynamited Salmon Falls to make passage easier.

Mile 20.8—Black Creek Rapid, Class III(?)
UTM 11 T 0655705 5040676 (approximate GPS reading)

ATTENTION! Black Creek Rapid was enhanced by a flashflood in April 2011, backing up water over Salmon Falls and creating a river-wide log jam below the rapid. When we ran it in May 2011, Black Creek was the steepest drop on the river. The rapid will continue to change for the next several years while the debris settles. Scout on river left. Geologic time includes now.

Mile 21.4—Black Canyon Beach Camp, River Right (Small to Medium)
UTM 11 T 0654980 5041265 (approximate GPS reading)

A small beach emerges at the end of a slow, deep pool just above an unnamed rapid.