



Salmon Challis National Forest | May 2024

9 Peaks - Lost River Range



BORAH PEAK – Elevation 12,662'

Lost River Range. Mt Borah was named for long time senator William E. Borah. People come from all over the country to climb Borah because of its “highest peak in Idaho status”. Hundreds of people stand on its summit every year making it crowded by Idaho standards. The one sure climbing path is the SW ridge route and even this has a treacherous spot. Borah is not a good mountain to climb for beginners.

LEATHERMAN PEAK – Elevation 12,228'

Lost River Range. Named for Henry Leatherman who was a early trapper and settler in Lost River country. From this summit you can see the geology of twisted tangled rock bands that compromise the sedimentary spine of Idaho’s highest mountain range.

MT. CHURCH PEAK – Elevation – 12,200' +

Lost River Range. In the 1930’s this peak was called Sacajawea peak by Idaho author Vardis Fisher. It is now known as Mt. Church by most climbers named after US Senator Frank Church III.

DIAMOND PEAK – Elevation 12,197'

Lemhi Range. This peak is in the Lemhi range. 300-million yr. old coral fossils have been seen

when the mt. is snow free. These peaks were the floor of a calm tropical sea in the Paleozoic eon. Dr. Swanson found that humans lived in the rock shelters 10,000 years ago.

MT. BREITENBACH – Elevation 12,140'

Lost River Range. The peak was named after Jake Breitenbach who died in the 1963 American Everest expedition. Controversy continues as to if this is one peak or two. The saddle between the summit dips 200'. Mountaineering guidelines say 300' dip and ½ mile in distance to identify as separate mts.

MT. IDAHO (Elkhorn Peak) – Elevation 12,065'

Lost River Range. Most who climb all 9 peaks save this one for last. The name Bell Mt. was suggested in the 1930’s for state mine inspector Robert Bell.

DONALDSON PEAK – Elevation 12,023'

Lost River Range. This mountain was named after Court Justice Charles Russell Donaldson. The snow horse with the flying mane that appears on the south face lets local irrigators know when the Lost River has reached its maximum flow. Donaldson and Church are connected by a ridge, and they can be climbed together.

HYNDHAM PEAK – Elevation 12,009'

Pioneer Range. Named for Civil War veteran Major William Hyndman, mining superintendent. This was originally thought to be the highest mountain until the 1930’s. The approach is longer then the other 12’ers and is done as an overnighiter with streams and lakes in an alpine setting. The other eight are noticeably more arid.

MT. MCCALED – Elevation 11,592'

Lost River Range. Named after Jessie McCaleb and one of the most distinctive summits. The 1st known ascent was in 1884 by J.D. Martin who served as Justice of the Peace for many years.

Campground Information

- Trailers and motor homes need to park in the large area below the switchback that leads to the campground.
- Three campsites available for regular vehicles and tents.
- Toilet facilities.
- No water is available at the campground or on the mountain, so potable water must be brought with you.
- Each site has a fire ring and a table.
- Additional parking spaces at the trailhead for picnicking and day hikers.

Weather & Information

- Late August stormy conditions can result in a couple of inches of snow at the base.
- Late afternoon thunderstorms can arise suddenly and unpredictably. These can be very dangerous.
- Do not hike Mt. Borah alone and do not leave the recommended route. Let someone know when you are going and take plenty of water.
- Please note there have been several deaths on this mountain. Please exercise caution at all times.



Area Attractions

- Leatherman Peak, the second highest peak in Idaho, is just 7 miles south of Mt. Borah.
- The Lost River Ranger District hosts 24 of the 25 highest peaks in Idaho. Please contact the Salmon and Challis National Forests.
- Earthquake fault interpretive area is located one mile north of Mt. Borah access road and 2-1/2 miles from Highway 93 on Double Springs Road.
- Trail Creek Road access to the Wildhorse and Copper Basin area is 16 miles north of Mackay.



Information Services

Lost River Ranger District
716 W. Custer, P.O. Box 507
Mackay, ID 83251
(208) 588-2224

Lost Rivers Visitor Center
132 W. Grand Avenue, P.O. Box 46
Arco, ID 83213-0046
(208) 527-8977

Mackay Action Center
P.O. Box 50
Mackay, ID 83251
(208) 588-2693

1-800-VISIT ID

MT. BORAH

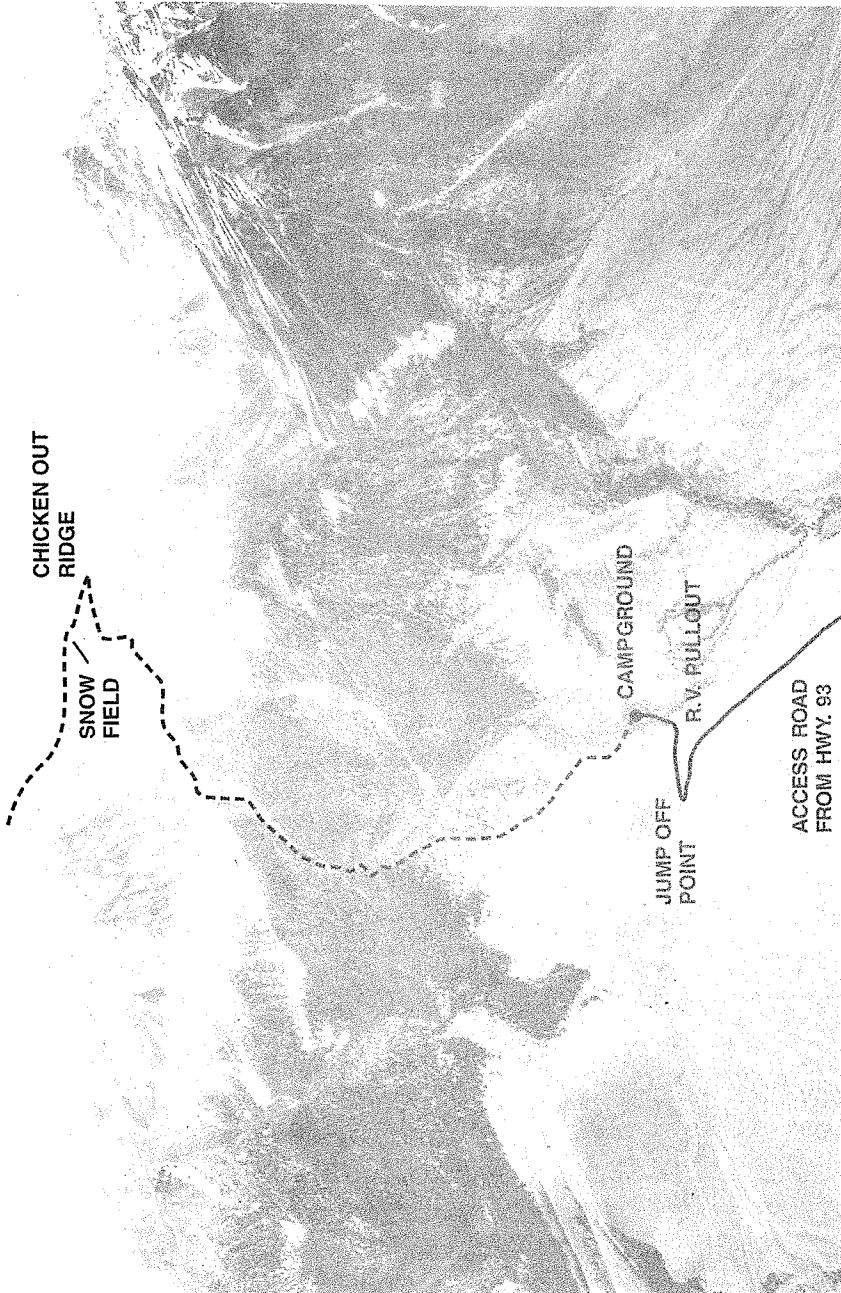
Mackay, Idaho



The Climb



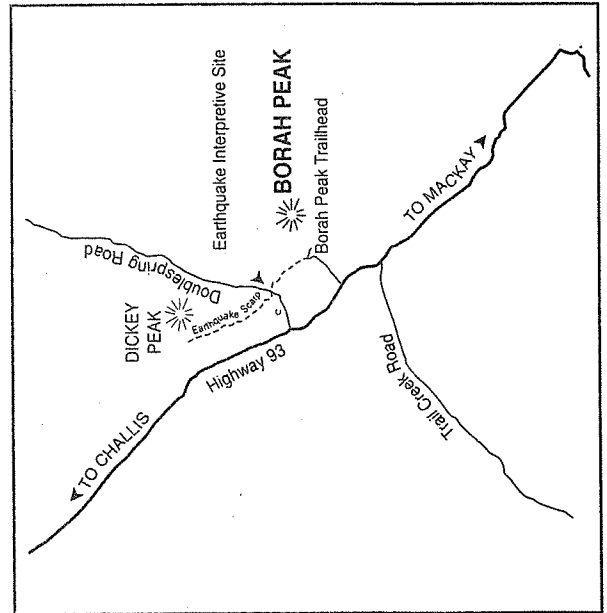
- Mid-July through Mid-August is ideal for climbing and photography.
- The trail takes off at the parking area above the Mt. Borah trailhead, at approximately 7400 feet elevation, up a sagebrush/grass slope dotted with mahoganies. The route climbs over 5100 feet in less than 3.5 miles.
- *Chicken Out Ridge*, a knife-edged ridge, starts at approximately 11,300 feet and goes to about 11,600 feet. This knife-edged ridge has a more dangerous slope on the north side than the south side and involves a class three scramble. Then climbers must cross the snow-draped couloir and follow the ridge to the summit because the trail is not marked and is difficult to follow.
- The last mile of climb has sections where the use of hands, as well as feet, is needed to maneuver around the rocks.
- The climb from the jump-off point to the summit takes the average climber 6-7 hours. Round trip should be 10-12 hours.
- The view from the summit takes in several mountain ranges. The summit is marked with a U.S.G.S. survey marker and nearby is the register. Please register your party so that we can keep making improvements as use increases.



Mt. Borah

This majestic peak, standing at 12,662 feet, was originally named Beauty Peak. In 1933, it was renamed for William E. Borah, a well-known senator from Idaho who served from 1906-1940.

Mt. Borah lies in the Big Lost River Range east of U.S. Highway 93, approximately 21 miles north of Mackay, Idaho, between mile posts 129 and 130.



Mt. Borah

Climbing Information Letter

Updated 1-15-17

Dear Forest User:

We are happy you have chosen to visit the Lost River Ranger District on the Salmon-Challis National Forest - THE TOP OF IDAHO. Of Idaho's 25 highest mountains, 24 are in our District. The two highest, Borah Peak and Leatherman Peak, are on the Lost River Range.

It is a pleasure to assist you with information on climbing Borah. The climb to the summit is not very difficult in terms of being complex, but it can be quite fatiguing due to the steepness of slope. The view of the surrounding mountains and valleys is spectacular and a tremendous reward for the effort.

Idaho's highest peak is reached from U.S. highway 93 by driving north of Mackay (21 miles) or south of Challis (33 miles). Between mileposts 129 and 130 signs indicate the "Mt. Borah Trailhead" turnoff. About two and a half miles brings you to a large flat area provided for trailers and motor homes which is just before the road turns to the left and then switches back across the base of a foothill leading to the new trailhead.

This trailhead is for regular vehicles only. Four campsites are available and each is equipped with a fire ring and table. At the end of the road is a turn-around area and parking for day hiking and picnicking. No garbage pickup is available so if you pack it in, you should pack it out. There are toilet facilities but no water is available.

No permits are required for climbing, camping or for building fires at the present time. We encourage those who build fires for heat or cooking to always check the fire danger rating before going out. If fire conditions are extreme, no fires will be permitted. "If it is too hot to touch it is too hot to leave".

The climb starts at an elevation of about 7400 feet. The trail takes off from the trailhead turn-around area and goes up the sagebrush/grass slope to the ridge. The route ascends over 5200 feet elevation to the summit in less than 3 ½ miles of trail.

The real climb begins as this trail goes up the brutally steep west ridge of Borah. Emerging above timberline, the route continues to follow this ridge which is not as steep as the initial climb and after a short distance, reaches another steep portion which involves scrambling, "Chicken Out Ridge". This knife-like ridge with the more

dangerous slope to the north side involves using both hands as well as feet to maneuver over and around the rocks. The route continues to follow the ridge and crosses a steep couloir that is usually draped with packed snow. (Some do not follow the ridge but use a trail through the shale on the north side of the ridge after crossing the couloir - snowfield. The shale is not stable and will shift down causing you to scramble a few feet back up to the trail.) The trail curves around to the north ascending the steep south ridge and slope of Borah Peak.

The climb rated as difficult is classified as a day trip and should take the average hiker 6 to 7 hours. The round trip should average about 10 to 12 hours, not counting time at the top. Some like to make it a two day trip by camping on the ridge the first night.

The Lemhi Mountain range lies to the east and northeast; Salmon River Mountains to the north; the White Clouds, Boulders and Sawtooths to the west; the Pioneer and White Knob Mountains to the southwest; then Leatherman Peak (Idaho's 2nd highest mountain) lies to the south east.

The summit is marked with a U.S.G.S. survey marker and a register is placed nearby.

Ideal climbing conditions range from early July through the middle of August when the snow level is at its lowest. When it's storming late in August, it is common for a couple of inches of snow to accumulate at the base of Borah.

Safety precautions we would like to emphasize are:

1. Keep abreast of current weather conditions. Weather patterns of afternoon thunderstorms are common during the summer. Thunderstorms can buildup quickly within a few hours and can be frightening if caught on an exposed ridge.
2. Do not take water from a stream. Even though cool and clear it may not always be as pure as it looks. Some streams contain Giardia. It's best to obtain your water for the climb from a municipal supply, a well, or you can boil it for at least one minute. Chemical purifiers are not always 100 percent effective. We don't want our forest visitors to go home with something they didn't bring with them.
3. For sanitation purposes and to prevent the spread of disease please bury or cover all human waste. This will keep the landscape pristine and make the climb more pleasant for others.

The sharp line across the base of Borah runs over 20 miles and was formed during the Borah Earthquake in October of 1983. The quake measured 7.3 on the Richter scale. Interpretive signs on the Doublesprings Road at the Earthquake Information

Site about 2 miles north of Borah Trailhead more fully explains the area quake. The enclosed brochures may be of interest to you.

A topo map of Borah is available at the Lost River Ranger District Office in Mackay.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, do not hesitate to contact our office at 208-588-3400.

Have an enjoyable and safe climb!

Internet resources for additional information, reviews and fellow climber input:

- www.idahoclimbingguide.com
- www.idahosummits.com
- www.climbingidaho.com
- www.summitpost.org/borah-peak/150190
- www.theoutbound.com/idaho/hiking/climb-mount-borah
- www.teraserver.com (Satellite Imaging)

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Challis National Forest
Lost River Ranger District
Mackay, Idaho 83251

BORAH PEAK TRAIL #44

Elevation: 7200 ft Length: 3 miles Difficulty: Easy to Extreme

Recommended Season: July 1 to October 15 Use: Heavy/Non-Motorized

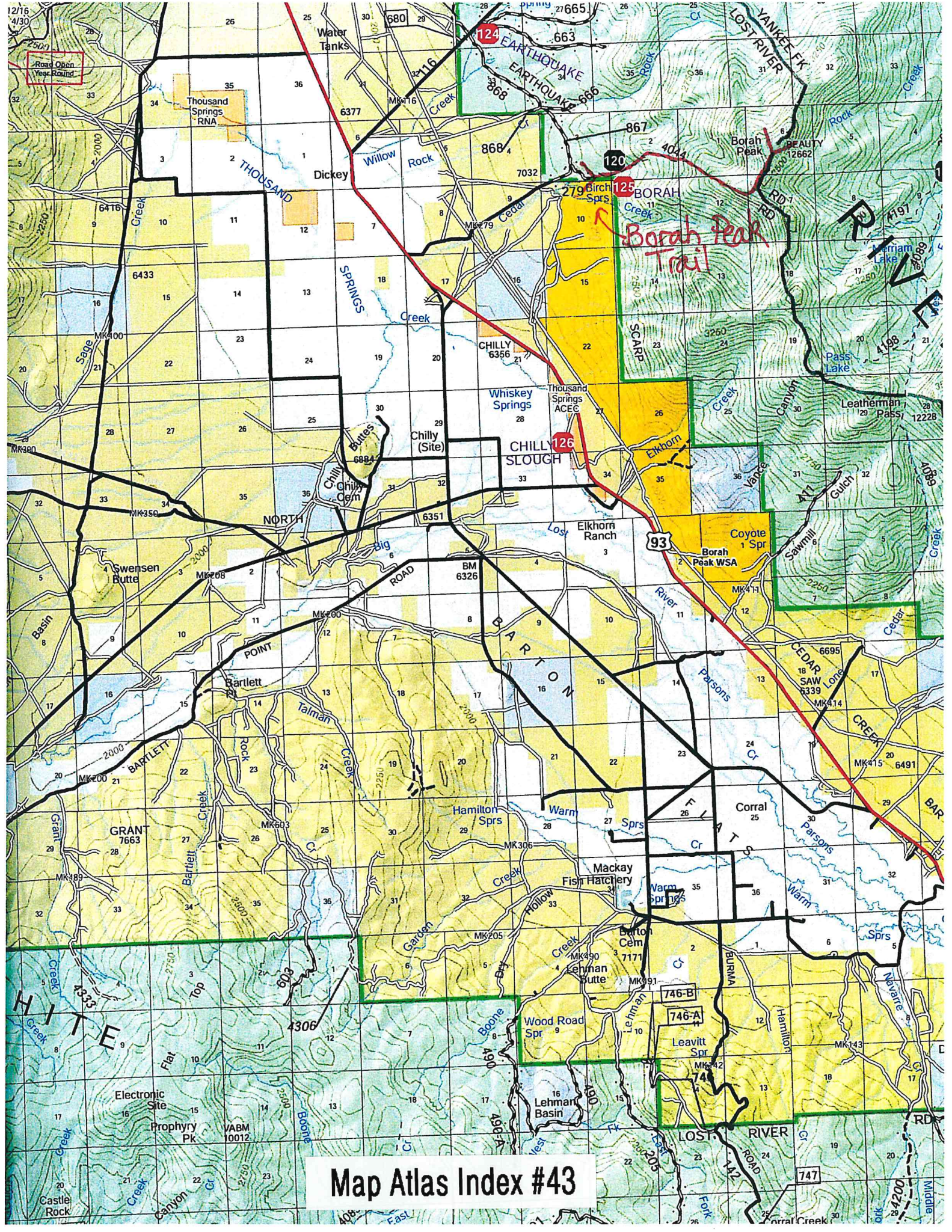
Map Information: Borah Peak, Township 9, Range 22, Section 3

TRAIL BEGINS: The trailhead is at the end of BLM Road #279 that exits Highway 93.

TRAIL ENDS: Hikers must backtrack to the trailhead.

CONVENIENCES AVAILABLE: Parking is available at the trailhead. No other modern conveniences are available.

NARRATIVE: There are known to be a number of fossils in this area. From the parking lot you will cross the Earthquake scarp, travel up an old 2-track trail and turn left of the Birch Creek drainage. This part of the trail is through scattered timber and is easy to moderate in difficulty for about 2 miles. However, the last mile has sections of hand-over-hand extreme climbing through bare rock. This area will be enjoyed only by those desiring a good challenge.



Map Atlas Index #43

Mackay Stockyard

Proud Source Water

USFS



Clark

Challis 53 miles

Wagon Wheel Motel & RV Park

Forest St.

Later Way

Greene Way

Mackay Airport
Elevation 5891'

RV Park & Dump Site

Red = Public Restrooms

Store
Fuel
F Food

Museum
Post
Office

US Hwy 93

City
Chevron
Scoops

Banks
Lndry
Shwr
Perks

Custer

9-Peaks

Pine

Library

Spruce

Artemesia
McCaleb

College

White Knob

Idanha

Vaden

Tourist Park
24 RV Spaces

Rodeo & Fairgrounds

Fire
Station

Arco 26 miles

Medical Clinic

School Ave

Rose

Senior
Center

High School
Grade School

Cedar

Park

Elm

Sheriff

Main

Capitol

Artemesia
McCaleb

Fullmer

Lambson

City of Mackay

RV Park & Golf Course

Mine Hill

Willow

Kids Creek

Swauger Slough

Avenza Instructions

For Android and iPhone

Cell phone Settings-Make sure location is turned on

Cell phone Apps-Search Avenza, Tap Avenza Maps-Offline Mapping by Avenza Systems Inc., Tap Install button

Open Avenza App, Tap Allow to give app permissions

It is **not** necessary to sign in with e-mail and password (but you can, or create one if a new user)

Android and iPhone instructions vary slightly for standard download and using QR Codes. The codes are universal

For Android-Tap shopping cart at bottom right of page (Store) **Find a map** page will open, choose the **FREE** tag (Green). A list of maps available will appear using your current location. To narrow the results, tap the search box at the top and add the keywords, Salmon Challis National Forest, click search. A list will appear. Find the preferred map, click on it to preview, click free, and download when prompted. All downloaded maps are stored on the opening page accessed by clicking the maps symbol on bottom left corner. If searching for a map in another location, tap the search box at the top and enter that forest (ie. Caribou-Targhee National Forest), then proceed following the remaining instructions. If you want to purchase the more detailed Forest map for \$4.99 it is easiest to use the QR Code.

For iPhone-Avenza instructions vary slightly between the iPhone and the Android systems. After downloading, installing, opening Avenza, and allowing the app permissions on iPhone (make sure location is turned on). You can skip the login portion. Tap the shopping cart at the bottom of the page. **Find a map** page will open, choose the **FREE** tag (Green). A list of maps available will appear using your current location. To narrow the results, tap the search box at the top and add the keywords, Salmon Challis National Forest, click search. A list will appear. Find the preferred map, click on it to preview, click free, and download when prompted. All downloaded maps are stored on the opening page accessed by clicking the maps symbol on bottom left corner. If searching for a map in another location, tap the search box at the top and enter that forest (ie. Caribou-Targhee National Forest), then proceed following the remaining instructions. If you want to purchase the more detailed Forest map for \$4.99 it is easiest to use the QR Code.

Note: The pdf forest travel plan maps are free. The Forest Maps are available for the purchase of \$4.99, do not use the FREE filter of maps for this, but you can use the enclosed QR code.

**Salmon Challis NF- Lost River RD East Side, West Side,
Challis Yankee Fork East Side, West Side, Middle Fork
Leadore, Salmon-Cobalt North Fork, and Four Paid
Forest Maps that show hiking trails and topo lines**

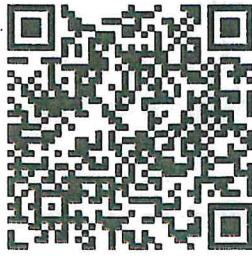


AVENZA Salmon-Challis National Forest MVUM QR Codes

Lost River East



Lost River West



Middle Fork



Challis-Yankee Fork East



North Fork



Salmon-Cobalt



Leadore



Challis-Yankee Fork West



Challis East Half

\$4.99



Challis West Half

\$4.99



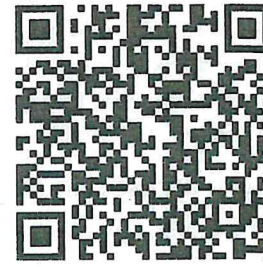
Salmon East Half

\$4.99



Salmon West Half

\$4.99



QR Codes are a shortcut that your camera scans to take you directly to the map you would like to download.

For Android- Once you install Avenza and turn on your phone location settings, Tap the Orange circle with a plus sign on the bottom right, Tap Download or import a map, Tap the top right corner (QR symbol that looks like four squares) if this is first time using, Accept allow camera use. Hold phone camera above the QR code of the map you want, it helps to cover the extra codes with your hand. Wait approximately 5 seconds for a new page to open, Choose the **Free** button to download. If a new version of the map is available choose the button **Download New Version**. Note, there are Forest Visitor Maps available for purchase, and if searched for, many other maps catering to a variety of needs. Repeat this scan method for each additional map. Downloaded Maps are in My Maps.

For iPhone-Avenza instructions vary slightly between the iPhone and the Android systems. After downloading, installing, turning your location on, Tap the download (square with an arrow) symbol in the top right corner. Then, tap the multiple squares (QR Code) symbol in the top right corner. If this is the first time using, to avoid an error code, you must download one map the standard way prior to using the QR Codes. First, Choose get map from store. Tap the **FREE** tag (Green), then type Salmon Challis National Forest in the search bar. Tap **Free** tag (Green) to download, then Return to My Maps (bottom left Symbol) and now the QR codes will download. From My Maps page, tap (download symbol), Tap the QR Code symbol to scan each map, (**Allow Camera Access**), Hold phone camera above the QR code of the map you want, it helps to cover the extra codes with your hand. Wait approximately 5 seconds for a new page to open, Choose the **Free** button to download. If a new version of the map is available choose the button **Download New Version**. Maps are in My Maps.

Update 2023

