

SMITH RIVER STATE PARK & RIVER CORRIDOR

FLOATER INFORMATION PACKET 2023

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MONTANA **FWP**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Floating the Smith River requires careful planning and preparation. The following are questions that FWP personnel are often asked. Please call the Great Falls FWP office at (406) 454-5840 if you have any additional questions. This packet is also available to download on the Smith River State Park website: [Smith River Floater Webpage](#)

Q. Reminders for the 2023 float season?

REGISTRATION AND ARRIVAL AT CAMP BAKER: Floater registration will occur **via phone**, two days in advance of your launch date. River Rangers will call permit holders, in a randomly selected order, between 1:00 and 3:30 pm MDT to complete the registration process. Please be prepared with the names of all party members, ages, state of residence, number and type of watercraft and boat camp preference. **In addition, the River Rangers will assign a “one-hour” time interval for each float group to approach the boat ramp to launch.** Payment will be made at this time with a credit card (Visa or Mastercard). If you need to make alternate arrangements for the phone registration, due to the inability to take a call at that time or the desire to have another party member complete the registration, please call the reservation clerk at (406)-454-5861.

Camp Baker is a “day use only” site, with no overnight camping allowed, except for the period of September 01 through November 30. Float groups are encouraged to arrive at Camp Baker a minimum of one hour prior to their scheduled boat ramp launch time on their launch date, to prepare boats and equipment in the staging areas, off and away from the boat ramp. Upon arrival, please check-in with the River Ranger, or site host, who will direct you to an appropriate staging area for your party and arrange for the orientation and safety talk once all party members arrive. Float groups are also welcomed to begin preparing and staging equipment the day prior to their scheduled launch.

- **FOOD STORAGE REGULATION:** Food, garbage and other attractants must be stored securely in an IGBC approved bear resistant device such as a cooler, container and/or within electric fencing. Attractants may also be suspended at least 10 feet from the ground and 4 feet horizontally from a vertical support. All approved food and attractant storage methods or equipment must be installed and/or utilized in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications in order to meet Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) standards. For example, ***all approved coolers must be locked using either two padlocks or two threaded bolts and nuts.*** If using a padlock, we highly recommend a combination lock versus a keyed lock, since keys are easily misplaced or lost. If using bolts and nuts, we highly recommend bring multiple spares in case you lose them.

There are currently three manufactured portable electric fences available for sale and/or rent on the market that meet the IGBC standards. However, some floaters may choose to construct a homemade fence and/or already possess a homemade fence that they’ve used elsewhere. If this is the case, the ***fence must meet required specifications.*** See Publication #0723-2305 MTDC at: [Specifications for Portable Electric Fence Systems](#)

The original 7-strand electric fence developed by the USFS Technology Development Center is also an acceptable food storage option. However, this fence is more applicable to use in situations involving longer term base camps where the fence is in place for several days. The specifications for this fence can be found in Publication # 9923-2321 MTDC at: [7-Strand Electric Fence](#)

Learn more ways you can [Be Bear Aware](#)

For a complete list of approved [Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee \(IGBC\) products](#)

Please be prepared to produce your food storage equipment and to describe your plans to the ranger at Camp Baker

- **HUMAN WASTE MANAGEMENT:** Pit toilets will continue to be provided in 2023 and the public will not be required to pack-out human waste. **Beginning in 2024**, mandatory human waste pack-out will be required. Additional information and details regarding this requirement will be posted to the website at a later date.
- **BOAT INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS** - Montana law requires the following:
 - All boaters carrying or towing any watercraft must stop at all open watercraft inspection stations encountered in Montana.
 - If traveling from out-of-state, all watercraft must be inspected prior to launching on any Montana waterbody. Before you arrive at Camp Baker, your watercraft must be inspected and have a receipt as proof of inspection. Go to [CleanDrainDryMT](#) to find an inspection station.
 - All watercraft traveling from east of the Continental Divide must be inspected before launching on waters west of the Divide.
- **AIS VESSEL PREVENTION PASS** – Montana law requires the following:
 - Non-residents must purchase an [AIS Vessel Prevention Pass](#) their watercraft, which may be obtained at [fwp.mt.gov](#) or any FWP office. The fee is \$10 for all non-motorized watercraft.
- **DRONES:** Park regulations prohibit launching or operating an unmanned aircraft system, drone or model aircraft from the Camp Baker put-in to the Eden Bridge take-out.
- **SUPER PERMIT:** In addition to the regular private float permits, FWP will issue one [Super Permit](#) each year. The recipient of the permit will be allowed to launch on any date of their choosing for that year. Float fees are not included and are due on the date of launch. There is no limit to the number of chances someone may purchase (\$5 per chance). The money from the sale of Super Permit chances will be deposited in the Smith River Corridor Enhancement Account. The Super Permit drawing will occur after the regular private lottery, which means unsuccessful applicants will have an additional opportunity to draw a coveted Smith River permit! The deadline to purchase Super Permit chances is March 23, 2023.
- **GROUP SIZE:** Maximum group size per permit is 15 people including children.
- **FEES:** Float fees are applicable year-round.
- **STAY LIMITS:** During the May 15 to July 15 peak season, all groups are limited to four nights on the river. Nights spent at private cabins or guest ranches are included in the four-night limit.
- **PETS:** No pets are allowed on Smith River float trips. This restriction does not apply to legitimate service dogs and hunting dogs used for lawful hunting purposes during legal hunting seasons.
- **RIVER CLOSURE:** The ability to utilize a permit may be affected by an emergency closure of the river and/or one or more boat camps to protect public safety. In the event of an emergency closure, every attempt will be made to promptly contact the permit holder. NOTE: The department does not close the river due to low flows, but simply offers recommended minimum flows for different types of watercraft.

Q. When is the float season? The float season varies widely depending on snow-pack, rainfall and amount and timing of irrigation. The “typical” float season runs from mid-April through mid-July, with occasional floating opportunities in September and October. A permit and payment of fees is required to float year-round.

Q. When do I register, choose my boat camps and pay float fees? Floater registration will occur via phone two days in advance of the permit holders' launch date. River Rangers will call permit holders, in a randomly selected order, between 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. MDT to complete the registration process, which includes listing party members and number and type of watercraft, choosing boat camps and paying float fees via credit card (Visa or Mastercard). **In addition, the River Rangers will assign a "one-hour" time interval for each float group to approach the boat ramp to launch.** This time interval will be based upon float distance to the first night's camp. *If you need to make alternate arrangements for the phone registration, due to the inability to take a call at that time or the desire to have another party member complete the registration, please call the reservation clerk at (406)-454-5861.* On launch day, float groups will receive their copy of the registration form, boat tags, river maps and floater log and will be required to attend a mandatory safety and orientation talk prior to launching.

Q. How soon do I need to arrive at Camp Baker? Camp Baker is managed as a "day use only" site, with no overnight camping allowed, except for the period of September 01 through November 30. Float groups are encouraged to arrive at Camp Baker a minimum of one hour prior to their scheduled boat ramp launch time on their launch date, to prepare boats and equipment in the staging areas, off and away from the boat ramp. Please check-in with the River Ranger, or site host, for instructions. Float groups are also welcomed to begin preparing and staging equipment the day prior to their scheduled launch.

Q. What is the procedure once I arrive at Camp Baker? Upon arrival on the day of your scheduled launch date, please check-in with the River Ranger, or site host. They will direct you to an appropriate staging area for your party and arrange for the orientation and safety talk once all party members arrive. This is where you may begin preparing boats and equipment prior to your scheduled "one-hour" boat ramp launch time. The River Ranger, or site host, will deliver your packet of materials which includes a copy of your registration form, boat tags, river maps and a floater log. The River Ranger, or site host, will present the mandatory safety and orientation talk at some point prior to your "one-hour" boat ramp launch time.

Q. When can I begin staging gear and/or boats at the boat ramp? During the registration process via phone two days prior to the launch date, the River Ranger will assign a "one-hour" boat ramp launch time. Please do not approach or occupy the boat ramp prior to your scheduled launch time, or until a River Ranger or site host has granted permission. Prepare boats and gear in the staging areas adjacent to the boat ramp. Please be prepared to have boats loaded and ready to shove off within the scheduled "one-hour" time interval. Please do your best to share the ramp(s) and respect other users.

Q. How many days does it take to float the Smith River? The float is 59 river miles from Camp Baker (put-in) to Eden Bridge (take-out). On average, floaters take four days to float. A minimum of two nights and three full days should be planned for normal water levels, which is 300+ cfs. Factor in probable river flows, distances you wish to cover each day and the type of experience you are seeking.

Q. Is there a limit to the number of nights allowed on the Smith River? Yes. During the peak season of May 15 through July 15, floaters are limited to a maximum of four nights camping. The four-night limit includes nights spent at private cabins or guest ranches. Layover nights (two or more nights at the same camp) are permitted at mid-canyon boat camps (Two Creek to Upper Parker), however, only one layover night is permitted during the high use season (May 15-July 15).

Q. Can we camp and fish anywhere on the Smith River? No. Of the 118 miles of shoreline along the river, only 26 miles are public land. There are 27 boat camps with 52 campsites along the river located on National Forest land, FWP land, DNRC state land and leased private land. The boat camps are signed and marked on the Smith River maps, which are distributed at Camp Baker upon registration. You can only camp at your assigned boat camps. The Montana Stream Access law allows walking and fishing along the river within the ordinary high-water mark. As a courtesy to landowners, please refrain from stopping in front of cabins and homes along the river.

Q. What type of fish are in the Smith River? The Smith River is predominantly a rainbow and brown trout fishery. Whitefish are also common. A complete list of the fishing regulations can be found in the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Fishing regulations which are available anywhere fishing licenses are sold. ***Please note that fishing licenses are not sold at Camp Baker but may be purchased in the nearby town of White Sulphur Springs at Twins Sisters Trading Company or Castle Mountain Grocery.***

Q. What special regulations apply to floating the Smith River? The Smith River is managed as part of the Montana Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division and in cooperation with the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest. Fees and rules for Smith River State Park and River Corridor are established under the authority of the Smith River Management Act and the Smith River Biennial Rule [Smith River Fees & Rules](#). Regulations specific to the Smith River can be found on page 9. State Park [Public Use Regulations](#) also apply in the corridor pertaining to littering, fires, firearms, fireworks, disorderly conduct and the prohibition of drones.

- **FOOD STORAGE REGULATION:** Food, garbage and other attractants must be stored securely in an IGBC approved bear resistant device such as a cooler, container and/or within electric fencing. Attractants may also be suspended at least 10 feet from the ground and 4 feet horizontally from a vertical support. All approved food and attractant storage methods or equipment must be installed and/or utilized in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. For example, ***all approved coolers must be locked using either two padlocks or two threaded bolts and nuts.*** If using a padlock, we highly recommend a combination lock versus a keyed lock, since keys are easily misplaced or lost. If using bolts and nuts, we highly recommend bring multiple spares in case you lose them.

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Please be prepared to produce your food storage equipment and to describe your plans to the ranger at Camp Baker.

Q. Is there a maximum group size for floating parties? Yes, maximum group size for private and outfitted groups is **15 people**.

Q. What services are offered on the Smith River? The Smith flows through a remote canyon. There are no public services from Camp Baker to Eden Bridge. You must carry all your own food, water, safety and camping equipment and fishing license. It is advisable to ***bring all the drinking water you will need for the duration of your trip, as there is no drinking water available at Camp Baker.*** There are no trash dumpsters at Camp Baker, but two are available at the Eden Bridge takeout along with an aluminum-recycling center. You can obtain supplies, overnight accommodations, gasoline, water and information at White Sulphur Springs on your way to the put-in. You should top-off your gas tank while in White Sulphur Springs. Cascade, Great Falls and Ulm are the closest services to the

Eden Bridge takeout, with gas stations at each town.

Q. Can I hire a person to perform services for me during my float trip (Example: Row gear boat, cook meals, camp set-up etc.)? No. Hiring a person, group or organization to perform any type of service for compensation during a private permitted float trip on the Smith River is illegal outfitting. There are seven (7) commercial outfitters who are authorized and permitted by Montana State Parks and the United States Forest Service to conduct commercial float trips on the Smith River. However, these outfitters are allocated a specific number of launches on specific days throughout the float season and conduct fully outfitted float trips for persons not possessing a private float permit. They are not authorized to provide specific services for private permit holders.

Q. Is there whitewater on the Smith River? Throughout its length, the Smith moves quickly with sharp turns, rocky shallows and snags in/or partially across the river. There is one section of class II whitewater at river mile 47 and several sections of class II whitewater at mile 49. The current of the river can sweep you into sheer rock walls and in higher flows, eddies can be very strong. In addition, floaters may encounter float gates, downed trees and pieces of fence torn loose by high water. You should possess, at a minimum, ***intermediate rowing or paddling skills*** before floating the Smith. ***Secure all equipment tightly in your boat and carry your gear in waterproof bags or boxes.***

Q. What kind of boats can be used on the Smith River and at what river flows? The Smith River is a non-motorized river. Rafts are used by about 80% of floaters; canoes by 5% and the remaining 15% of boats on the Smith are other types of craft such as drift boats and kayaks. Rafts and canoes are the most appropriate craft, although inflatable and solid-body kayaks, rowboats and drift boats are also taken down the river. Drift boats are particularly difficult during low water conditions. To help floaters, Montana State Parks recommends minimum flows for different types of watercraft. ***Drift boats generally begin to have trouble at river flows below 350 cfs, rafts below 250 cfs and canoes below 150 cfs. This does not mean that different watercraft types will not have trouble floating at levels above those given. These are estimated levels listed to assist floaters in planning their trip. Remember that the river is always changing, and you should adjust accordingly.*** Feel free to contact the ranger at Camp Baker (406) 547-3893 to ask about current flow levels and up to date information and advice on floating conditions.

Q. How can I find out about flow levels? Visit the Montana USGS Web site at [SmithRiverFlowGauge](#). This streamflow monitoring gauge is named, ***“Smith River bl Eagle Cr nr Fort Logan MT”*** and is located approximately 1.5 miles downstream of the Camp Baker put-in.

Q. What other type of equipment should we bring? Expect all types of weather conditions, especially in the spring. Snow is possible and quite common in April and May and occasionally in June. The Smith River flows between the Little Belt and Big Belt mountain ranges, which are conducive to dramatic and quick weather changes. Bring good raingear, a complete first aid kit, adequate warm clothing, sunscreen, an extra paddle or oar for each boat, boat repair equipment and supplies, an extra day of food, extra life jacket, extra firewood and a five-gallon bucket and shovel for extinguishing fires. The five-gallon bucket is also useful for pouring water into the latrines, which aids in settling the solids and extending the latrines’ life, as well as for washing your boats during and after your float trip. In addition to the equipment you plan on using to comply with the mandatory [Food Storage Regulation](#) we also strongly encourage you to bring bear pepper spray.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE LAW, EVERY BOAT MUST HAVE A LIFE JACKET ON BOARD FOR EACH PERSON. IT MUST FIT THE INTENDED WEARER, BE READILY ACCESSIBLE AND IN GOOD CONDITION. CHILDREN UNDER 12 ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A LIFE JACKET AT ALL TIMES WHILE IN A BOAT THAT IS IN MOTION.

Q. How do we dispose of human waste? As with fires, you should learn and practice Leave No Trace techniques with respect to human waste disposal in the backcountry. All boat camps have open pit toilets; please use them whenever possible. ***NOTE: Beginning in 2024, mandatory human waste pack-out will be required. Additional information and details regarding this requirement will be posted to the website and this packet at a later date.*** If

you can't use a pit toilet, pick a spot on public land with adequate soil cover at least 200 feet from the river and dig a "cat hole" six to eight inches deep. It is advisable to carry a small trowel to properly dig the hole. Bury your human waste and then fill and tamp the soil. Disguise the site by scattering leaves or grass over the disturbed area. We encourage you to consider using one of the commercially available human waste pack-out systems.

Q. Can we have campfires along the Smith River? Yes. However, it's highly suggested that you arrive at Camp Baker with your own supply of firewood or purchase it at Camp Baker (\$5 per bundle). No person may cut living or dead standing trees for firewood or other purposes. Gathering dead native wood deprives many animals of shelter from high summer and low winter temperature extremes. The same principle applies to driftwood found along the river bank, as it serves as habitat shelter for fish. If you find it necessary to gather firewood, avoid stripping an area of its entire supply. ***Help to enhance the feeling of solitude in the canyon by not using a chainsaw. Please use the metal fire rings within each boat camp and make sure all wood is completely contained within the fire ring and that your fire is dead out before leaving.*** The most common type of litter left at campsites is half-burned plastic, aluminum foil, glass, eggshells, cigarette butts and melted aluminum cans left in the fire rings. Do not attempt to burn anything in the fire ring besides paper, wood or charcoal. ***Clean your fire ring after extinguishing your fire. If you plan on camping and having a fire at Camp Baker, the same Leave No Trace principles as above apply.***

Please help reduce the threat of forest pests by sourcing your wood as locally as possible. Please do not bring any wood from other states. [Firewood Movement: Buy It Where You Burn It](#)

Q. Why are there fences across the Smith River? The Smith River flows through a great deal of private land. Ranchers along the Smith River graze livestock, particularly during the late summer and early fall. In some places, fences have been installed across the river to control livestock. Most fences will have float gates installed with the cooperation of the landowner, allowing safe passage of your boat. Use caution when approaching and passing through the float gates. Please repay the favor by respecting the landowner's property rights. Don't cut fences, camp on private land without permission, litter or vandalize equipment. ***Please respect cabin owners' privacy by not stopping in front of their cabin sites.*** Realize that only through cooperation between the landowner and floaters will the Smith River continue to be used and preserved by all.

Q. Are dogs allowed on the Smith River? Dogs are ***not*** allowed on Smith River float trips. The only exceptions are legitimate service dogs that accompany someone with a disability and hunting dogs used for lawful hunting purposes during legal hunting seasons. Aside from these two exceptions, no dog or pet will be allowed on a Smith River float trip. Keep in mind that there are no kennel options at Camp Baker; if you bring a dog or pet to Camp Baker, they will not be allowed to accompany you down the river and you will not be permitted to leave the animal at Camp Baker.

Q. Are shuttle services available? Yes. Several shuttle services can move your vehicle from Camp Baker to Eden Bridge. A current list of shuttle services is included on pages 14-16.

Q. How do I get to the Camp Baker put-in? White Sulphur Springs to Camp Baker is 26 miles. Take State Secondary Road 360 (Fort Logan Road) west from White Sulphur Springs 16.6 miles to the Camp Baker turn-off. Follow the directional signs 9.6 miles to Camp Baker. It takes two hours (75 miles) to drive from Camp Baker to Eden Bridge on Millegan Road (State Secondary Road 360). ***Driving this gravel road (Millegan Road) should not be attempted during wet conditions. Please obey posted speed limits on all roadways and be observant for wildlife, livestock and/or ranch machinery.*** Make sure to lock your vehicles and leave no valuables in your vehicle at Camp Baker or Eden Bridge. Eden Bridge is 28 miles from Great Fall via Ulm and Interstate 15. Great Falls to Camp Baker via White Sulphur Springs is 127 miles.

Q. Are commercial outfitters allowed on the Smith River? Yes, but they are strictly limited, both in the total number of outfitters and the number of launches that each outfitter is allocated. Currently, seven outfitters are authorized to

conduct commercial use on the Smith River with a total of 73 launches allocated among them. The number of launches allocated was determined by analyzing historic use levels. The outfitters operate under a permanent launch calendar with their 73 launches scheduled on specific dates during the months of May, June, July and September. Two outfitted trips are allowed to launch per day on Sundays and Wednesdays; one launch per day allowed on other days of the week. To view the outfitter launch calendar, go to [Outfitter Launch Calendar](#). **Please note: It is illegal for any unauthorized outfitter or individual to provide commercial services to Smith River floaters (This does not apply to vehicle shuttles or bed and breakfasts).** If you wish to hire the services of an outfitter do not apply for a private permit in the drawing: The outfitters are allocated a specific number of launches on specific days of the week and month. The permitted outfitters are listed in this packet on page 18.

Q. What can floaters do to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and aquatic invasive species (AIS)? Clean, Drain and Dry your equipment. **(1). CLEAN:** Completely remove all mud, water and vegetation and then use water to wash your equipment clean, before leaving the access area. **(2). DRAIN:** Drain all water from your watercraft and equipment. **3. DRY:** Dry your watercraft and fishing equipment thoroughly; this will kill most invasive species. Brochures addressing noxious weeds and AIS are available at Camp Baker.

Remember that Montana law requires the following:

- All boaters carrying or towing any watercraft must stop at all open watercraft inspection stations encountered in Montana.
- If traveling from out-of-state, all watercraft must be inspected prior to launching on any Montana waterbody. Before you arrive at Camp Baker, your watercraft must be inspected and have a receipt as proof of inspection. Go to [CleanDrainDryMT](#) to find an inspection station.
- All watercraft traveling from east of the Continental Divide must be inspected before launching on waters west of the Divide.
- Non-residents must purchase an [AIS Vessel Prevention Pass](#) for their watercraft, which may be obtained at [fwp.mt.gov](#) or any FWP office. The fee is \$10 for all non-motorized watercraft.

For additional details and information:

AIS: [Aquatic Invasive Species](#) or [Clean Drain Dry MT](#)
Noxious weeds: [Noxious Weed Management](#)

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Be a good steward and help protect Montana's public lands. Please obey the following rules and regulations:

Camp Baker

- Day use only. No overnight camping, except for the period of September 01 through November 30.
- Food, garbage and other attractants must be stored in a bear resistant manner when unattended, day or night.
- Fires permitted in designated fire grates only.
- Fires must be completely contained within the fire grate and fully extinguished.
- Motorized vehicles restricted to roads and parking areas.
- Preserve natural and cultural resources – do not remove or damage.
- Discharge of firearms, weapons or fireworks prohibited.
- Launching or operating an unmanned aircraft system, drone or model aircraft is prohibited.
- Pack In – Pack Out. Do not litter.

River Corridor

- River floating requires a permit year-round.
- Floater fees required year-round.
- Commercial outfitting restricted to authorized Smith River outfitters.
- Camping allowed in designated sites only.
- Camping limited to 4 nights (May 15 – July 15).
- Food, garbage and other attractants must be stored in a bear resistant manner when unattended, day or night.
- Fires permitted in designated fire grates only.
- Fires must be completely contained within the fire grate and fully extinguished.
- Pets are prohibited – exceptions include legitimate service dogs and hunting dogs used for lawful hunting purposes during legal hunting seasons.
- Preserve natural and cultural resources – do not remove or damage.
- Feeding and harassing wildlife is prohibited and unsafe.
- Discharge of firearms and weapons prohibited in boat camps. Fireworks prohibited on all public land within river corridor.
- Launching or operating an unmanned aircraft system, drone or model aircraft is prohibited.
- Pack In – Pack Out. Do not litter.

For a complete list of regulations governing use in Montana State Parks: [Public Use Regulations](#)

REPORT VIOLATIONS AND VANDALISM TO STATE PARK PERSONNEL or 1-800-TIP-MONT

LEAVE NO TRACE OUTDOOR SKILLS & ETHICS



Montana FWP and the U.S. Forest Service are agency partners in the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, a national program that promotes responsible outdoor recreation on our public lands. In traveling the Smith River, you play a part in its preservation and management. Please help limit the need for new rules and regulations by using common sense to reduce or eliminate your group's impact. Regulations on the Smith River have been thoughtfully crafted to reflect the public's desire to maintain a high-quality experience.

Simple living, adventure and solitude can still be part of backcountry travels. To assure the continued existence we must take the responsibility to educate ourselves and to become equipped with skills and habits that enable us to have minimum impact.

You can help to reduce problems in the backcountry or become part of them. Low-impact camping practices must be realistic and tempered by judgment and experience. Ask yourself why you came and what you received from the Smith River. What will you choose? What will you do?

The following principles form the foundation of the Leave No Trace program. Conscientious attention can greatly aid your ability to minimize the impact of your Smith River and other backcountry visits.

- **Plan ahead and prepare**
- **Travel and camp on durable surfaces**
- **Dispose of waste properly**
- **Leave what you find**
- **Minimize campfire impacts**
- **Respect wildlife**
- **Be considerate of other visitors**

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

Avoid unnecessary impact in river corridors by carefully preparing for your trip. Give early and careful consideration to the abilities of everyone in your party, your food and equipment needs, and safety considerations related to weather and water conditions.

EXPECTATIONS: Taking time to think about what you expect from your trip will help you prepare for it. On the Smith River, you should expect to camp in designated, established sites and see other groups of people.

REDUCE LITTER AT THE SOURCE: Plan your meals carefully to reduce waste and leftovers. Repackage food into reusable containers or plastic bags. Remove any excess packaging.

Equipment: Proper equipment can help minimize resource impacts. Bring a camp stove to cook your meals and all necessary equipment for washing dishes, straining dishwater, and carrying out trash. Take everything you need to be safe on the river.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA: Familiarize yourself with the weather and water conditions that might be encountered. Don't overshoot your planned campsite and be forced to camp in a less than optimum site. Know the regulations.

Take time to scout any questionable whitewater. Consider lining your boat comfortable floating through the section. Wrapped rafts and pinned canoes certainly add to river trash, not to mention personal injury.

PERSONAL SAFETY: Many river accidents and tragedies are linked to inadequate trip planning and preparation. Carefully consider the abilities of everyone in your party and plan for the unexpected.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

SELECTING A KITCHEN SITE: Just like in your home, people tend to congregate in the kitchen. On river trips, this area receives the most impact, so put your kitchen in the most resistant and impacted location.

CAMPING ON UPLAND AREAS: Place individual tent sites on areas hardened by use. You can easily distinguish these areas by their loss of vegetative cover. Never pull out vegetation or break off tree limbs for a more comfortable sleeping spot. If you have to move rocks or limbs, put them back where they were found.

MINIMIZE SITE ALTERATIONS: On all sites, leave the area as you found it. Do not disturb your campsite in a permanent manner. Don't build new fire rings with rocks. Do not dig drainage trenches for tents or construct lean-tos, tables, chairs or other rudimentary improvements. If you clear the area of surface rocks, twigs or pinecones, replace these items before leaving. Consider that good campsites are found and not made.

AVOID DAMAGING LIVE TREES AND PLANTS: Do not damage trees by hammering nails into them for hanging things or hack at them with hatchets and saws. Breaking limbs off for firewood causes lasting damage to trees.

AVOID MAKING NEW TRAILS: Always stay on established trails, even if it means going out of your way. It only takes a few people traveling a new route through vegetation to create a noticeable trail. The objective is to confine impact to places that already show use and to avoid enlarging the area of disturbance.

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WASTE

PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT: Pick up and pack out all of your litter. You must carry ALL refuse and solid waste out of the canyon. It is imperative that beaches and campsites be kept free of organic wastes. Treat your kitchen and eating area as you would your home. Would you leave scraps or litter on your kitchen floor?

Pick up food scraps from around the kitchen area and pack them out. By packing all refuse out, bees, ants, flies and mice will be kept to a minimum at campsites. The best way to do this is to carry and use a portable "kitchen floor". Bring a tarp large enough to cover the entire area of your kitchen. Set up your tables and stove on the tarp. Any food scraps, pull-tabs, twist ties or other small trash will fall onto the tarp instead of disappearing into the ground. When you break down camp, either pick out the litter or simply put everything that fell onto the tarp into a trash bag. The same tarp can also be used under your lunch site. Keeping food, dishes, and garbage in sealed containers and picking up all food scraps will keep campsites clean and odor free thus reducing pests such as ants, bees and wasps. It will also protect your food from occasional high winds.

Grease should be put into a container and carried out, NOT BURIED OR BURNED. Burning and burying these types of waste are ineffective and inappropriate methods of disposal. Some paper items can be burned in a campfire, but much of the paper packaging used today is lined with non-burnable foil or plastic, so it is best to get in the habit of carrying everything out. It requires a very hot fire to burn garbage thoroughly, and animals will dig it up if buried. Keeping food waste away from animals is important so that they do not become habituated to people as a food source. Use bail buckets lined with garbage bags as convenient trashcans around camp. If you smoke, put the butts in your pocket until you can dispose of them with the trash. Cigarette and cigar butts are litter and should be treated as such. Pack out your butts! Other items such as tin and aluminum cans, plastic, tin foil and glass are not burnable and must be packed out. Avoid

bringing Styrofoam, but if you can't, don't poison the air or yourself by burning plastic or Styrofoam. Crush cans for compactness. There is a recycling station at Eden Bridge for aluminum. Please keep aluminum items separate during your trip and place them in the appropriate container at Eden Bridge. This will help to reduce management costs. Be particularly careful about "micro litter" (twist ties, cigarette butts, pop tops, pieces of potato chips, etc.). These items accumulate rapidly and are difficult to clean up.

LIQUIDS: Wastewater includes soapy and gray water from bathing and dishwashing, as well as unwanted liquids from canned foods, coffee grounds, soup, and unwanted beverages. These liquid wastes should be strained for solids and placed in garbage bags. Seasoned river runners carry a metal mesh strainer for this purpose. Leftover liquids can be poured into a bailing bucket and disposed of with strained dishwater (gray water). After straining, scatter wastewater onto the land away from camp. Rainfall will allow the soap to percolate and degrade over time in the soil. Scatter wastewater over a wide area, away from camp and above the high-water line.

Soap degrades water quality, affects endangered species, and at colder water temperatures, biodegradable soap does not degrade - affecting the natural riparian plants and animals that serve as the base of food chains. Avoid using soap within 200 feet of any side stream or spring. Dispose of toothpaste the same way you would dispose of wastewater. Minimize the disposal problems by using as little soap as possible and making sure the soap you use is biodegradable.

THREE-BUCKET METHOD FOR WASHING DISHES: Scrape food off dishware into a garbage container. Scrub dishes in hot water containing biodegradable soap. Rinse in hot water, getting all the soap off, and finally rinse in cold water with a cap of chlorine bleach. Do not wipe the rinsed dishes! Let them air dry.

HUMAN WASTE DISPOSAL: Improperly disposed human waste poses a significant threat to public health and overall water quality. Practice appropriate Leave No Trace techniques with respect to human waste disposal in the backcountry. All boat camps have open pit toilets. Please use them whenever possible. If you can't use a pit toilet, pick a spot with adequate soil cover at least 200 feet from the river and dig a "cat hole" about six to eight inches deep. It is advisable to carry a small trowel to properly dig the hole. Bury your human waste and then fill and tamp the soil. Disguise the site by scattering leaves or grass over the disturbed area. We encourage you to consider using one of the commercially available human waste pack-out systems.

LEAVING CAMP: Your party should thoroughly inspect the camp and the group should correct any problems before launching. Please pick up any litter or refuse left by other parties and report poor conditions to the ranger, Eden Bridge volunteer and in your floater log. Make sure you leave only footprints.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

TRY TO LEAVE NO TRACE OF YOUR PASSING. Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts and other objects of interest as you find them.

CULTURAL SITES: Archaeological sites, artifacts, and historic structures are evidence of earlier inhabitants. The signs left by the indigenous population color the scene and add to the mystery of the Smith River. We want you to view and enjoy these sites, but need your help in protecting them. Don't touch pictographs - it abrades the inscriptions and the oils from your hands cause deterioration. Your signature on rock features, trees, or any other place is destructive, not historic.

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and Montana State Law protect cultural artifacts and it is illegal to remove or disturb these remnants of the past from any public lands.

If you find an arrowhead, old gear around cabin sites, or other artifacts view them with care. Soak in the thrill of discovery, but leave everything as you found it. You should report findings of significance to a ranger. If you see someone disturbing a site, damaging a pictograph, or stealing your heritage, ask the person to stop and report it to a ranger or Eden Bridge host.

Picking a few flowers does not seem like it would have any great impact. If only a few flowers were picked it wouldn't, but if every visitor thinks, "I'll just take a few," a much more significant impact results. Take a picture instead of picking it. Enjoy an occasional edible plant, but be careful not to deplete the surrounding vegetation or to disturb plants that are either rare or do not reproduce in abundance. A good rule-of-thumb is to harvest only 10% of the available crop. Natural objects of beauty or interest, such as antlers or petrified wood, are appealing when found on the river but should be left for others to experience the same sense of discovery.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

CAMP STOVES: Portable camp stoves offer an excellent means of cooking meals without the impacts associated with campfires. Please consider this alternative for your cooking needs.

FIREWOOD: Do not gather wood from standing or fallen trees, DEAD OR ALIVE. The best bet for firewood is to bring your own or use charcoal. **Firewood is available at Camp Baker for \$5/bundle.** Gathering dead native wood deprives many animals of shelter from high summer and low winter temperature extremes. The same principle applies to driftwood found along the river-bank, as it serves as habitat shelter for fish. If you find it necessary to gather firewood, never strip one area of its entire supply. If you use charcoal, any residue should be carried out of the canyon, not left on the beach or dumped into the river. Charcoal is especially noticeable on sandy beaches. When the charcoal scatters it leaves orange-red oxidized or blackened sand. Charcoal decomposes very slowly, and if thrown into the river it will only wash up on a downstream beach.

FIRE RINGS: Designated fire rings are provided at all boat camps. Fires must be completely contained within the fire ring. If you choose to have a campfire, build a small fire - not a bonfire! If a small fire is left to burn out overnight, make sure it is completely extinguished before you leave camp. Remember to clean the fire ring and grate of any residual food stuffs.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

Respect for others on the river should be extended to wildlife. River runners have the potential to greatly impact wildlife through direct contact and habitat destruction. When approaching raptors, herons, breeding waterfowl and mammals on the river always remain quiet, stay in boats, move to the other side of the river, and keep moving. Camp away from all nests and burrows. Never feed animals or leave food scraps where they might be eaten. Food, garbage and other attractants must be stored securely in an IGBC approved bear resistant device such as a cooler, container and/or within electric fencing. Attractants may also be suspended at least 10 feet from the ground and 4 feet horizontally from a vertical support. We recommend you bring bear pepper spray with you on your trip for deterring nuisance or aggressive bears.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

Respect other visitors and help protect the quality of their experience. Keep your noise to a minimum and let nature's sounds prevail. Please stay in your declared campsites, as this will help visitors find camping space at their declared sites. Avoid monopolizing popular fishing holes. Be considerate of other float parties needing space at launch areas and only occupy launch areas long enough to prepare and launch. For additional information regarding ethics and etiquette for river recreationists, please visit: [River Ethics](#)

RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY

Approximately **80%** of the property through the Smith River corridor is private property. The success of the Smith River State Park program depends upon cooperation with private property owners. It is critical that recreational floaters respect private property rights in the corridor by adhering to the following advice:

- Please be aware of private property while floating the river. This can be easily done by following the changing land ownerships and boundaries indicated on the river maps provided to each float group at Camp Baker. Each boat camp has a mileage marker associated with it on the map so floaters can tell how far they have traveled.
- Please pay attention to all private property and any signs posted along the river. It is the floaters responsibility to know where they are at all times.
- Do not camp, build fires, or trespass on private property.
- Please note the last 12 miles of river between Rattlesnake Boat Camp and the Eden Bridge take-out point is entirely privately owned on both sides of the river.
- FWP leases the following boat camps from private landowners: **Staigmiller, Upper/Middle/Lower Ridgetop, Upper/Lower Givens Gulch, and Upper/Lower Rattlesnake**. The ability of FWP to continue to lease these important boat camps for use by the public depends upon floaters respecting these private properties. Please do your part to ensure that all the boat camps are kept clean of garbage and litter, and that all campfires are completely extinguished before leaving the site.
- Please do not trespass onto private property to collect firewood, either from the river or from the boat camps. Firewood is becoming more difficult to find along the river each year. Consider bringing all firewood you plan to use with you on your trip. Firewood bundles are also available for purchase at Camp Baker.
- Please respect the privacy of individual private property owners and do not stop in front of cabins to fish, eat lunch or relieve yourself.
- The Montana Stream Access law allows recreational use of rivers and streams up to the ordinary high-water mark. If you choose to stop along your float to wade fish on the Smith River or any side tributaries (Sheep Creek, Rock Creek, Tenderfoot Creek or Hound Creek) be sure to stay within the high-water mark. ***If you are not within the high-water mark or on public property, you are trespassing on private property.***
- Please report trespassers to a River Ranger or 1-800-TIP-MONT.
- Please enjoy your Smith River float experience this year. Thanks in advance for your awareness and respect of the private property along the Smith River!

PRIVATE SERVICES

DISCLAIMER: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) provides this list of private services (shuttle, equipment rentals and accommodations) solely for the convenience of the recreating public. In providing this list, FWP assumes no liability whatsoever for any loss incurred by anyone, including any person who may choose to make use of these services nor does FWP make any expressed or implied warranty or representation of competency or fitness of these private services.

SHUTTLES AND EQUIPMENT RENTALS

ALL RIVER EQUIPMENT

Dana Corson

201 N Hannaford (office); 2920 Billings Ave (rental delivery and pick-up)

Helena, MT 59601

(406) 431-1815

E-mail: rentals@allriverequipment.com

Website: allriverequipment.com

Services offered: **All River Equipment specializes in sales and rentals of self-bailing rafts and NRS raft accessories, kayaks, stand up paddle boards, canoes, bear resistant Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) approved coolers and portable electric fences, camp gear, dry bags, camp kitchen gear and logistics services at the best prices around. Smith River packages are available and All River offers equipment drop off and pick up services.**

THE BASE CAMP

5 W. Broadway

Helena, MT 59601

(406) 443-5360

E-mail: Tim@thebasecamp.net

Website: thebasecamp.com

Services offered: **Great selection of rental kayaks, canoes, stand up paddle boards, PFD's, paddles and throw bags. Our store has a variety of dry bags, gloves and water accessories, and quality outdoor clothing and footwear to outfit your trip on the Smith River. We sell UDAP Bear Spray, and IGBC approved bear resistant Yeti coolers and UDAP Food Storage Bear Fences.**

BOZEMAN BOAT RENTAL

8118 Rolling Hills Drive

Bozeman, MT 59715

(406) 404-6931

E-mail: reservations@bozemanboatrental.com

Website: bozemanboatrental.com

Services offered: **Aire and NRS raft rentals with the fisherman and family in mind. Multi-day package discounts specifically for the Smith River. Dry boxes, 3 oars, raft trailer, fishing platforms, pfd's, patch kit, Yeti 110 cooler and deluxe NRS fish frame included with every rental. Every raft is inflated and customized to your preference when you show up for pickup.**

CASTLE MOUNTAIN GROCERY

Shane Sereday

4273 E US HWY 12

White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

(406) 547-3731

E-mail: castlemtnplc@yahoo.com

Website: facebook.com/castlemountaingrocery

Services offered: **IGBC approved Counter Assault bear fences for rental or purchase. Full grocery and drug store. Pre-made sandwiches, burger patties, homemade brats, precooked ring sausage. Flies, fishing tackle and bait. Camping supplies.**

CHARLIE'S THINK WILD SHUTTLE SERVICE

Charlie Meeks

P.O. Box 282

White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

(406) 547-6338

E-mail: charliethinkwild@itstriangle.com

Website: charliethinkwildshuttleservice.com

Services offered: **Vehicle shuttles**

CROSS CURRENTS FLY SHOP

Chris Strainer, Jennifer Harris

326 N Jackson

Helena, MT 59601

(406) 449-2292

E-mail: crosscurrentsflyshop@gmail.com

Website: crosscurrents.com

Services offered: **Full-service boat and equipment rental and sales only. Rentals include new to one year old AIRE and NRS self-bailing rafts with NRS adjustable rowing and fishing frames, inflatable kayaks and canoes, personal pontoons, SUP boards, flat bed trailers; river camping equipment including dry bags, dry boxes, super coolers, cots and shelters; and fly fishing gear including Orvis rods, reels, waders, and boots. Multi-day rental specials offered.**

CRAIG MADSEN'S MONTANA RIVER OUTFITTERS

Craig Madsen, Tim McKnight

923 10th Ave North

Great Falls, MT 59401

(406) 761-1677 or 1-800-800-8218

E-mail: mro@montana.com

Website: montanariveroutfitters.com

Services offered: **Rentals, shuttles and sales of rafts, cataracts, canoes, kayaks, inflatable kayaks, personal pontoons, SUP boards, and trailers. Our rafts are state of the art self-bailing boats complete with Smith River specialized and adjustable NRS rowing and fishing frames, with multi-day discounts. Complete river camping and fishing equipment rentals are available. Vehicle shuttles can be provided, as well as full service pick up and drop off service for people and equipment. Deluxe rental packages are a popular option, which include boats, camping, cooking gear, food packed in coolers and delivered to the put in and picked up at the take-out.**

EXPLORE RENTALS

32 Dollar Drive

Belgrade, MT 59714

(406) 922-0179

E-mail: office@explore-rentals.com

Website: explore-rentals.com

Services offered: **Offering NRS, Star and Smithfly rafts professionally rigged for Smith River trips. IGBC compliant bear fences, coolers, dry boxes and bags, cooking kits, camp furniture, river shelters and the most extensive inventory of rental camping gear in Montana. And, rental cars to tow your boats up to the river!**

HATCH ADVENTURES

Stephan Morris

81549 Gallatin Rd, Unit #5

Bozeman, MT 59718

(406) 223-4224

E-mail: info@hatchadventures.com

Website: hatchadventures.com

Services offered: **NRS raft rentals, camping gear and everything you need for a memorable Smith River trip. Our NRS Outlaw rafts are fitted with a comfortable NRS fishing frame and come inflated on a trailer for easy transport. Lockable bear proof cooler, PFDs, patch kit, 3 oars and dry bag included with each rental. Smith River packages are available.**

RUBBER DUCKY RIVER RENTALS

Emmy Handl and Carter Seymour

15 Mount Baldy

P.O. Box 808

Livingston, MT 59047

(406) 222-3746

E-mail: rubberduckyriverrentals@gmail.com

Website: www.rubberduckyrentals.com

Services offered: **Boat rentals *only*, including; rafts with rowing and fishing frames, kayaks, canoes, cataracts, trailer, and equipment rental and sales. Smith River trip rental specials offered.**

SMITH RIVER SHUTTLE *Continued on next page...*

Jody & Caroline Cox

1699 Millegan Road

Great Falls MT 59405

(406) 866-3522 or 1-866-500-3522

Email: contact@smithrivershuttle.com

Website: www.smithrivershuttle.com

Services offered: **Vehicle shuttles, minor repairs. We wash and detail every vehicle we shuttle. Original owners/operators since 1996. Located ½ mile from the Eden Bridge take-out. You float, we drive. Clean car when you arrive!**

THE TRAIL HEAD

221 East Front St
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 543-6966

E-mail: info@trailheadmontana.net

Website: www.trailheadmontana.net

Services offered: **Offering the largest selection of boats and river supplies for sale and rent in Montana—including highest quality AIRE or NRS self-bailing rafts; Mad River and Wenonah canoes; Wilderness Designs, Dagger and Perception kayaks; AIRE and Alpaca pack rafts; SUPs and pontoon boats. IGBC approved as bear resistant aluminum dry boxes and Yeti coolers; PFDs, oars, throw ropes, dry bags and more.**

TWIN SISTERS TRADING COMPANY

Bodie and Alaina Morrison
14 S Central Ave
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
(406) 547-3259

E-mail: TwinsistersTradingWSS@gmail.com

Website: www.twinsisterstrading.com

Services offered: **Montana state liquor store, sporting goods, fly shop, camping gear, clothing, footwear and gifts available in our shop. Portable electric bear fences for food storage also available.**

RESTAURANTS, LODGING and APPAREL

ALL SEASONS INN & SUITES

808 3rd Avenue SW
P.O. Box 318
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
(406) 547-8888
Reservations: (877) 314-0241
Fax: (406) 547-2573

E-mail: info@allseasonsinnandsuites.net

Website: allseasonsinnandsuites.net

Services offered: **Hotel, open 24 hours, continental breakfast, free WI-FI, business services, free floater parking, ice, large sulphur-free hot tub, and guest laundry.**

HEAVEN ON EARTH RANCH

Vic Anderson
PO Box 389
Ulm, MT 59485
(406) 799-0461

E-mail: deepcreek.1917@gmail.com

Website: www.deepcreekoutfitters.com

Services Offered: **Bed & Breakfast & supplies (River Mile 28) – Golf, Cabins, Ice, and Firewood. Overnight accommodations by reservation only.**

SMITH RIVER CUSTOM APPAREL

Heather Novark
200 S. Central Ave.
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
(406) 461-2775

E-mail: smithriver406@gmail.com

Services Offered: **We offer custom imprinted garments featuring the Smith River, Montana, White Sulphur Springs and much more. We carry hoodies, t-shirts and hats in all colors and sizes. Stop by for your local souvenir apparel. Open 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, MST, Monday through Friday. RENTAL: Smith River Gateway Apartment located in the apparel shop, 2 blocks off Main St. in White Sulphur Springs. Sleeps three; contact Heather for more information @ (406) 461-2775.**

THE BARNWOOD CABIN

Owned and operated by Twin Sisters Trading Company

Bodie and Alaina Morrison

509 3rd Ave SW

White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

Book your stay on airbnb.com

<https://airbnb.com/h/thebarnwoodcabin>

Services Offered: 2 bedrooms, 5 beds, full kitchen, TV, Wifi, large parking lot, conveniently located right in White Sulphur Springs.

WILLOW CREEK CABINS

Connie Townsend

PO Box 504

White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

(406) 580-6928

E-mail: willowcreekcabins@gmail.com

Website: willowcreekcabinsmontana.com

Services offered: **Two large cabins each sleeping 12 (6 bedrooms), full kitchen, and 2 bathrooms. Free Wi-Fi and secure, private parking. Two private, stocked fishing ponds. 5 miles from White Sulphur Springs.**

AUTHORIZED SMITH RIVER OUTFITTERS

The following list of commercial outfitters are the only outfitters permitted and authorized by both Montana State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service to provide float trips on the Smith River in 2023. It is illegal for any unauthorized outfitter or individual to provide commercial services to Smith River floaters (This does not apply to vehicle shuttles or bed and breakfasts). If you wish to hire the services of an outfitter, do not apply for a private permit in the drawing: The outfitters are allocated a specific number of launches for specific days of the week and month. To view the outfitter launch calendar: [Outfitter Launch Calendar](#)

BLACKFOOT RIVER OUTFITTERS (BRO)
JOHN HERZER
610 SPEEDWAY
MISSOULA, MT 59802
PHONE # (406) 542-7411
EMAIL: john@blackfootriver.com
WEBSITE: blackfootriver.com

BLAST & CAST OUTFITTERS (B&C)
TODD FRANCE
P.O. BOX 824
ENNIS, MT 59729
PHONE # (406) 682-4420
EMAIL: blstcst@3rivers.net
WEBSITE: blastandcastoutfitters.com

MONTANA ANGLER FLY FISHING (MAFF)
BRIAN MCGEEHAN
45 EAST MAIN ST.
BOZEMAN, MT 59715
PHONE # (406) 522-9854
EMAIL: brian@montanaangler.com
WEBSITE: montanaangler.com

LEWIS & CLARK EXPEDITIONS (L&C)
MIKE GEARY
270 TUKE LANE
TWIN BRIDGES, MT 59754
PHONE # (406) 549-2030
EMAIL: hwlodgmt@gmail.com
WEBSITE: hwlodge.com

GLACIER GUIDES/MT RAFT, DBA (GG)
MARK O'KEEFE & DENNY GIGNOUX
P.O. BOX 535
WEST GLACIER, MT 59936
PHONE # 1-800-521-7238
EMAIL: info@glacierguides.com
WEBSITE: glacierguides.com

MT FLYFISHING CONNECTION (MFFC)
JOE SOWERBY
P.O. BOX 17701
MISSOULA, MT 59808
PHONE # (406) 370-2868
EMAIL: joe@smithriverflyfishing.com
WEBSITE: montanaflyfishingconnection.com

PRO OUTFITTERS (PRO)
BRANDON BOEDECKER
P.O. BOX 621
HELENA, MT 59601
PHONE # (406) 442-5489
EMAIL: brandonboedecker@gmail.com
WEBSITE: prooutfitters.com

