

## Upper North Fork Lewis River Outing

**Date:** Early to mid-July check the outings schedule for specifics.

### **Meeting Place & Time:**

We typically use the Lower Falls campground on the Upper Lewis River. This campground is on the river, in the trees, with running water, pit toilets and spaces for either tents or trailers. It is considered to be one of the “jewels” of the Mt. Saint Helens National Monument campgrounds.



**Outing Descriptions:** If you want to fish small streams with the possibility of catching big fish, while standing in old-growth timber, this is the outing for you. We will be fishing the North Fork Lewis, the Muddy, Pine Creek, Rush Creek, Big Creek, Quartz Creek, and probably others that escape my memory. Access is available at several areas that we will point out if you are unfamiliar with the area. If you have a Forest Service map or Gazetteer, bring it along, and we will give detailed directions. We will be available to help folks who are unfamiliar with the area find the various access points and will also be available to offer fishing advice, the value of which is questionable.

**Directions:** The campground is approximately 90 miles from Vancouver. Drive east from Woodland on HWY503 or drive north from Battle Ground on Highway 503 to the intersection at the place where Jack’s Store once stood. Continue east to Cougar, past Merwin, Yale, and Swift Creek Reservoirs. Highway 503 turns into Forest Road 90 below Swift Creek dam. Continue on. Just past the head of Swift Creek Reservoir, at about Mile Marker 15, there is a turn-off to the right with a sign “East 90 to Highway 14 and Carson;” turn right. You will cross Eagle Cliff Bridge over the North Fork of the Lewis River. Follow the FS-90 Road for about 15 miles, you will cross the Lewis again about 1 mile before the Campground. The campground will be on your right. There is a sign at the campground that says “Lower Falls Recreation Area .” The camping sites are generally to the left; we will post the club signs at our camp. The FS-90 Road to this location is usable for trailers and RVs, but there are a few spots where caution is advised.

**Effective Methods & Flies:** The Lewis has pools, runs, riffles, and pocket water, depending on what stretch of water you fish. You can fish it with anything from a short 0 weight to steelhead-sized rods with heavy sink tips. For dry-fly fishing I would recommend 2-4 weights, so here is an opportunity get out your light sticks and have some fun. An assortment of standard patterns can work very well in all of these streams. Stimulators, Elk Hair Caddis, Adams or Parachute Adams in all sizes will catch fish. Attractor patterns can work well here, so bring Humpys, Coachmen, Trudes, Renegades, and so on. Soft Hackles can be a very effective pattern fished alone or as a dropper below a dry. Wooly Buggers fished deep in the larger pools can provide action with fish in the several pounds range. Oh, and this other fly you might want to bring is called a MUDDLER it imitates a sculpin. Big fish eat little fish. Don't forget.



If the weather is warm you can wade wet, but this river has very large rock in it, and I would suggest that good wading shoes are almost a must.

**Other Activities &**

**Accommodations:** Bring your cameras and hiking shoes. There are walks to several waterfalls in the area that range from a couple hundred

yards to a mile or so and will reward you with spectacular views. There is also short hike at the Cedar Flats area through old-growth trees that is inspiring; highly recommended, to say nothing of the river trail that runs adjacent to the North Fork Lewis River between the FS 9039 Road Bridge and Quartz Creek, a distance of approximately 15 miles.

**Fishing Regulations:** The river from the Eagle Cliff Bridge to Lower Falls is hook and release selective gear rules. The area is home to ESA-listed Bull Trout in addition to many very nice rainbows, so keep in mind no bait and single barbless hooks in that area. Above Lower Falls, it is statewide rules for streams; I would suggest you should check the regulations for specifics if you wish to kill a fish or two.