

OUTPOST ON THE SNAKE RIVER
with Ana Maria Spagna
September 3-8, 2025
Participant Packet

Welcome to Outpost on the Snake River. We hope you are as excited about this opportunity as we are to provide it! Please take the time to read the following pages carefully, as they contain important information regarding your Outpost experience from the trip schedule to the suggested packing list.

Fishtrap's Outpost Program

The goal of Fishtrap's Outpost program is to provide writers with an opportunity to experience a remote, natural environment in Wallowa County in order to find solitude, connect to the landscape in a meaningful way, and write about their experience.

Ana Maria Spagna guides your Outpost writing this year, and [Winding Waters River Expeditions](#) (WWRE) leads the river trip. Winding Waters River Expeditions is a family owned and operated whitewater rafting outfitter based in Joseph, Oregon. They are experienced pros, love what they do, and know what it takes to provide a quality rafting experience.

Outpost on the Snake River

You will raft down one of the world's most dramatic and rugged canyons while receiving personal instruction from author Ana Maria Spagna. To experience the natural world from the bottom of Hells Canyon, the deepest river canyon in the United States, is sure to stir the imagination and provide stories for a lifetime. As hosts of the trip, WWRE will expertly navigate the canyon, provide delicious meals, and bring you to the best camp spots on the river. The work that will emerge is sure to paint a complex beautiful landscape, true writing of place.

Outpost Instructor

Ana Maria Spagna writes about wilderness, work, community, and history. She is the author of nine books including most recently, *Pushed: Miners, a Merchant and (Maybe) a Massacre*, an investigation of violence against Chinese miners in the Inland Northwest, *Reclaimers*, stories of elder women reclaiming sacred land and water, *Test Ride on the Sunnyland Bus*, winner of the *River Teeth* literary nonfiction prize, and three essay collections, *Uplake*, *Potluck*, and *Now Go Home*. Her first novel for young

people, *The Luckiest Scar on Earth*, about a 14 year-old snowboarder and her activist father, appeared in 2017. Her first chapbook of poetry, *Mile Marker Six*, appeared in 2021. Ana Maria's work has been recognized by the Society for Environmental Journalists, the Nautilus Book Awards, and as a four-time finalist for the Washington State Book Award. She lives with her wife, Laurie, in Stehekin, a remote community in Washington's North Cascades.

Meals

You'll have fresh, nutritious meals served with an emphasis on locally grown ingredients. No one will go hungry or thirsty, that's for sure. The WWRE guides will provide basic regular, vegetarian, and vegan meal options but are not able to make custom meals based on each person's dietary restrictions. You are welcome to contact WWRE to discuss your dietary restrictions.

Lodging

Each night of the raft trip, the group will camp along the banks of the Snake River. Participants are encouraged to bring a summer weight sleeping bag. Find a link to a full pack list below. WWRE also has sleeping bags, cots, tents, fishing poles and more for your use. More details to come as we get closer to September 2025.

Important: **You are responsible for arranging your own lodging Wednesday, September 3 and Monday, September 8.** There are many options available, from Motels to camping. Learn more at the [Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce](#). Winding Waters River Expeditions also has a good list of resources, too: [Winding Waters – Trip Planning](#).

Getting Here & Opening Day Schedule subject to change per day depending on environmental conditions

Please give yourself plenty of time for travel. Wallowa County is a long drive from most anywhere. Get an early start and time to get any last-minute supplies.

Wednesday Sept. 3

6:00pm – Evening Orientation and Welcome Dinner at Winding Waters Boat House.
204 E Wallowa Ave, Joseph, OR 97846

Thursday, Sept. 4

7:00am – Meet at Winding Waters Boat House and travel to Launch Site – Breakfast Served

7:30am – Depart for the 2 to 2.5 hour drive to the Launch Site on the Snake River (Hells Canyon Creek)

Between 10:30-11:30am – Receive a safety briefing and orientation to the boats and embark on the trip. Lunch will be served riverside following the launch.

Afternoon: Upon arrival in Camp, Writing Instruction and River Recreation

Friday, Sept 5

Camp Day – Writing Instruction and River Recreation

Saturday, Sept 6

River Travel Day – Evening Writing Instruction and River Recreation

Sunday, Sept 7

Camp Day – Writing Instruction and River Recreation

Monday, Sept 8

Around 1:00pm Jet Boat up river to Launch Site – Travel to Joseph, Oregon

Arrive at Boat House between 5:00pm and 7:00pm

How to Prepare

You're in for a great adventure. The key to getting the most from your trip is to be prepared. The Winding Waters' Trip Planning web page can help answer most of your questions and help you pack for the experience. You'll get insight from the experts on everything from weather and water to information on the geology of the area. Please visit this page and give it a good, hard look.

[Winding Waters – Trip Planning](#)

Packing List & Tips

Please visit Winding Waters Packing List Page to help you know what to pack, and what not to.

[Winding Waters Packing List](#)

Medical and Travel Insurance

One or more of the Winding Waters guides on your trip will be certified first responders. In the case of a life-threatening emergency you will be flown or jet boated out of the canyon. **We recommend investing in a [LifeFlight](#) plan before your trip and travel insurance** in the case that you are not able to attend due to circumstances beyond your control. Please pack all your medications and don't take any physical risks while hiking and exploring. Drink lots of water. Seek shade. Be careful out there.

Pre-Purchase Fishing Licenses: If you're interested in fishing on your trip, we suggest you pre-purchase your fishing license online. Please have a printer at hand to print off your license. <https://myodfw.com/articles/how-buy-oregon-fishing-license>. Winding Waters will provide fishing gear for the trip.

Drinks

Alcohol is not included with your trip cost. You are welcome to bring your own libations. WWRE will provide ice for clinky drinks. They ask all beer to be in cans for safety reasons. Glass wine bottles are accepted. For your convenience, WWRE does sell a nice selection of canned beer and box wine that you can order at this link:

[Winding Waters Beer and Wine Order Form](#). If you order here, simply select paying at the Pre-Trip Meeting. If you are bringing your own alcohol, please bring it to the river the morning of your trip launch.

Tipping/Gratuities: Many of WWRE guests ask about and appreciate information on the custom of tipping. WWRE guide crew will work hard to make your Outpost experience the best it can be. While it is not expected whatsoever, if you wish to tip, we recommend treating it like a restaurant (anywhere from 10-15% of your trip cost for the crew). You can either give your lead guide cash at the end of the trip or have us here at Fishtrap put it on your credit card. The gratuities will then be distributed among the guide crew, food manager, and shuttle driver(s). And again, please know this is not expected.

Outpost on the Snake River Terms and Conditions - Refund and Cancellation Policy

Outpost is held on the Snake River bordering Idaho and Oregon. This is an outdoor setting with inherent risks, hazards, and dangers. All registrants agree to follow the rules and policies of Winding Waters River Expeditions and sign a waiver.

If for any reason you need to cancel your plans to attend Outpost, our refund policy is as follows:

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Fishtrap registration includes a \$150 nonrefundable deposit. If you need to cancel your registration for any reason, the following schedule applies:

- 60 days or more prior to the first day of the program, you will be issued a full refund minus the \$150 deposit.
- 30-59 days prior to the first day of the program, you will be issued a 50% refund of the total registration fee.
- Less than 30 days prior to the first day of the program, no refunds will be issued.

Requests for refunds must be submitted in writing to Program Director, Mike Midlo.
mike@fishtrap.org

In the unlikely event that Fishtrap cancels Outpost or Summer Fishtrap, you will have the option of receiving a full refund, including deposit, or receiving registration credit for the following that can be applied toward registration fees for any Fishtrap workshops within 24 months. Fishtrap is not responsible for any nonrefundable travel costs.

Notice of Non-Discrimination and Code of Conduct

Fishtrap prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or age. This policy applies to all Fishtrap administration, activities, and events and will be enforced for all employees, contractors, volunteers, and participants.

At the time of registration you agreed to the [Fishtrap Code of Conduct Policy](#). This policy exists to ensure the safety of all participants, instructors, and staff. Any person who violates this policy may be removed from Outpost while the event is in progress, will not receive a refund, and are responsible for any costs incurred as a result of their removal.

Suggested Reading List

- *Snake River in Hells Canyon* by Carrey, Conley, and Barton - A great resource for homesteader history in Hells Canyon. A series of entertaining short stories perfect for reading before bed.
- *Home Below Hells Canyon* by Grace Jordan - A memoir of a homesteading family at Kirkwood Ranch in the 1930s.
- *Islands and Rapids: A Geologic History of Hells Canyon* by Tracy Vallier - Interesting read by one of the leading research geologists in Hells Canyon.
- *I Will Fight No More Forever* by Merrill Beal - The story of the Chief Joseph Band of the Nez Perce Tribe in the Hells Canyon region.

Michael Wasson's "Swallowed Light"

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/146708/a-poem-for-the-haawtin-hewlekipx-the-holy-ghost-of-you-the-space-thin-air>

Interesting Hells Canyon Information

- Hells Canyon is the deepest river gorge in North America, with a drop from rim to river of more than 7,900 feet; it is approximately 10 miles wide.
- It was added to the National Wild and Scenic River System on December 1, 1975.
- Total length of Hells Canyon: 78.7 miles from Hells Canyon Dam to Heller Bar.
- The Bonneville Flood (approximately 14,500 years ago) is believed to be the second largest single flooding event in geologic history and estimated to move water at 33 million cubic feet per second (cfs) through present-day Hells Canyon. Today, the Snake River in Hells Canyon typically flows between 10,000 and 50,000 cfs. The floods widened Hells Canyon more than deepened it. Many of the benches in Hells Canyon today are remnants of these floods.
- The first people in Hells Canyon are believed to be of the Nez Perce Tribe.
- In 1925 Amos Burg made the first documented float through Hells Canyon in a wooden canoe.

Questions? Get in touch with Fishtrap Program Director, Mike Midlo
mike@fishtrap.org