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# The Grande Ronde River

Flowing 212 miles from the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon to its confluence with the Snake River in Washington, [the Grande Ronde](#) is one of the Pacific Northwest's finest rivers. Its lower 44 miles, from the Wallowa River confluence to the Snake, are designated [Wild and Scenic](#) and course through spectacular river canyons, some more than 3,000 feet deep.

## Why It Matters

The Grande Ronde supports crucial runs of Snake River salmon and steelhead and is one of the Pacific Northwest's most revered fishing destinations. Its lower 90-plus miles offer one of the region's great multi-day river trips, with abundant wildlife, dramatic basalt rock formations and excellent fishing, hunting, kayaking, rafting and camping.



## Fish

The Grande Ronde is home to 23 species of native fish, including four—spring and fall Chinook, bull trout and summer steelhead—that are threatened. The Nez Perce Tribe and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife are working to reintroduce coho salmon, which haven't existed in the basin since the 1980's.



## Wildlife


The Grande Ronde's abundance of wildlife is one of the things that makes this river so special. Rocky Mountain elk, bighorn sheep, black bear, white-tail deer, river otter, great gray owl, goshawk and bald eagle can all be seen along the river, especially within the lower canyon.

# How to See It

Most of the Wild and Scenic stretch is roadless, making boating the best (and often only) way to see it. The lower river, at its confluence with the Snake, is flanked for three miles by a road from Heller Bar, 28 miles south of Clarkston, Washington. Hwy 244 (off I-84, west of La Grande) offers access to the upper river.



## Paddle


 The most popular float is the 46-mile trip from Minam to Troy, which begins at the Minam/Wallowa confluence, where [WRC protected the popular boating launch](#) on the west side of the Minam River. With several Class III rapids, the float requires some technical maneuvering and is most challenging during late-summer and spring. Rafts can be rented at [the Minam Store](#), and the float is best done in three days (or more, if you really want to enjoy it). For more information, visit the [Umatilla National Forest website](#).



## Fish

 The Grande Ronde is one of the Pacific Northwest's premier fisheries, especially for its famed summer-run steelhead, which begin arriving in late September and peak between October and early December. Trout fishing can be excellent within the Wild and Scenic stretch, as well as on the upper river. Summer is also small-mouth bass season, which are non-native but thrilling on a fly rod.

## Getting there

 The [Minam Store](#) and the [Minam State Recreation Area](#) are located on Highway 82, just 33 miles northeast of La Grande, OR and 150 miles southeast of Kennewick, WA. While the Recreation Area is open year-round, State Parks does not maintain the road during the winter. The Heller Bar put-in can be accessed off Snake River Road via Highway 129. A [Washington Discover Pass](#) is required when visiting the site.

### Best Times of Year to Visit

Boating:	May to July
Trout and Bass Fishing:	Spring & Summer
Steelhead Fishing:	Late Sept. thru Dec.



## CONSERVATION THE WRC STORY

WRC has been working in the Grande Ronde river basin for 25 years. In 1992, we partnered with The Trust for Public Land to protect [Lime Point](#), an outstanding property at the confluence of the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers, at the mouth of Hells Canyon. In 2012, when [access to the Minam River](#) boat launch (the main put-in for floating the Wild and Scenic stretch of the Grande Ronde) was threatened, WRC acquired the launch and conveyed it to the Minam State Recreation Area to forever protect this important access point. Most recently, WRC conserved 2.5 miles of [Catherine Creek](#), a critical tributary to the Grande Ronde. The project enabled intensive restoration of the highest-priority stream-reach of river in the entire Columbia Basin for recovering Chinook salmon.

[How to Help](#)