

› Fish and Game

# Changes to Camping at Lower Portneuf Fishing Access

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idfg-cwatkins

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Idaho Fish and Game manages a fishing access site along the Portneuf River just north of Lava Hot Springs. The site is formally known as Lower Portneuf, but also the “Byington Place.” This is one of the few public access areas along the Portneuf River between Chesterfield and McCammon which makes it very popular with anglers as well as other recreationists. The site provides direct access to around 1 mile of the Portneuf River, along with ample wade access upstream and down. Dispersed camping has been available on the property for many years. Access at this area is free of charge to all users.

Unfortunately, there have been many challenges with managing overnight camping at the property. It has become routine for folks to overstay the camping limit, to leave excessive amounts of garbage behind, and to engage in illegal and disruptive activity. Illegal activity has become very common and presents a continued safety risk to users if a change in management direction is not taken.

Offering camping opportunity for the public is something that Idaho Fish and Game values and has tried hard to maintain where it can be accommodated. However, the increased level of law enforcement presence and cleanup required at this site is not sustainable or justifiable within a fishing access program. Thus, the IDFG will no longer allow dispersed camping at this site. Camping will still be allowed at Lower Portneuf, but that activity will take on new character this year. Instead of camping being allowed anywhere on the property, it will instead be relegated to eight developed camp sites located within a smaller segment of the property. The IDFG recognizes that camping has been an important type of use at the Lower Portneuf property, and that the property can sustain camping if it is managed in a more organized fashion.

Providing a clean and safe place for folks to enjoy fishing is our priority. When that priority conflicts with other uses, such as camping, management changes are often necessary to maintain that priority. We are disappointed about the change in opportunity for campers, but we are hopeful that anglers and campers alike can now enjoy a better and safer experience when visiting Lower Portneuf.

This month IDFG will begin an enhancement project by delineating the new camping area boundary with a buck and rail fence. Fence work will be followed by road and camp site surfacing. During construction, the public should expect the property to be closed to overnight use. Day use closures will also be used intermittently while the main access road is resurfaced. Detailed closure information will be posted to the IDFG website and Southeast Region Facebook page to provide folks with up-to-date

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. Spring is here, so get out and enjoy the fishing!



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