

Paddling the Horseshoe Bend

The US Forest Service and American Whitewater have jointly proposed voluntary guidelines to protect spawning Chinook Salmon on the North Fork Nooksack. Paddlers and other users are asked to avoid water-based recreational activities from August 15th to October 15th from Nooksack Falls and continuing downstream.

The section of the river that includes Horseshoe Bend is open however for paddling during the voluntary closure. This section is approximately 100 feet-per-mile. Chinook spawning habitat occurs in reaches where gradient is less than 1% (53 feet-per-mile). These spawning areas are located downstream of Douglas Fir Campground and upstream of Horseshoe Bend.

During this the period of the closure paddlers are asked to use an alternative Lower Put-In to protect the lower gradient spawning habitat near the more commonly used Upper Put in. The Lower Put-in is accessed off the old powerline road that turns off Highway 542 and heads down to the start of the Horseshoe Bend. Paddlers should not use the put-in just east of milepost 37 and avoid in the side channels located upstream of the Lower Put-in.

