

National Pioneer Historic Byway



The Byway abounds with undiscovered recreational opportunities, scenic and historic sites for families and travelers to discover and enjoy. Geological formations combine with mountain passes providing a beautiful journey. There are over ten reservoirs which offer boating, fishing, and camping.

The Pioneer Historic Byway begins on US 91 at the Utah/Idaho border. It then continues north to Idaho 34 ending at the Idaho/Wyoming border.

Call (208) 852-2703 OR 1-800-723-8597 for more information.



1. Franklin Historic District

The oldest continually settled town in Idaho, Franklin was founded in 1860 by Mormon pioneers. Several original buildings stand in the historic district: the Relic Hall, the old ZCMI store, the Hatch House, and others. The Old Yellowstone Route is just outside of Franklin where stagecoaches full of tourists once traveled on tours to Yellowstone National Park.

Start at the Relic Hall 1/2 block off of Hwy 91 on East Main Street.

42° 1'1.16"N, 111°48'11.79"W



2. Preston-Oneida Stake Academy

The Academy is a unique 3-story Romanesque stone building, constructed in the early 1890s. It is one of three, out of 35, similar surviving buildings from the days of Mormon Church sponsored education. It was moved from Preston High School to its current location in 2004.

Turn East from US 91 onto Oneida street (traffic light), drive 1 block to the Oneida Stake Academy on the south side of the road.

42° 5'45.88"N, 111°52'27.47"W



3. Bear River Massacre Site

The January 29, 1863 Bear River Massacre of 250 or more Native Americans, by Colonel Patrick Connor and his troops, occurred here. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. The battle became one of the worst disasters for Native Americans in the west.

Drive north 4.5 miles, 10 minutes, out of Preston on US 91 to the top of the hill.

The entrance is on the right. 42° 9'10.25"N, 111°54'26.45"W



4. Red Rock Pass

About 14,500 years ago, an earthen dam suddenly broke, beginning one of the largest floods ever recorded in geologic history. Ancient Lake Bonneville, larger in size than Lake Michigan, emptied in a catastrophic torrent. Evidence of the flood such as melon sized gravel is visible along the byway. Today all that remains of Lake Bonneville is the Great Salt Lake. Proceed north 22 miles, 30 minutes, out of Preston on US 91 to Milepost 30.1. 42°21'16.18"N, 112° 2'56.92"W



5. Niter Ice Cave

The Cave was formed when basalt lava flowed out of a vent 500 thousand years ago forming a lava tube typical to this type of volcanic activity on the Snake River Plains. It was important to early settlers and native Americans for food storage. John A. Dalton, the original homesteader, and his family also used the Cave as a refuge from encounters with unfriendly native Americans.

Travel north on SH 34, turn right (east) onto Ice Cave Road and proceed 0.15 mile to the pull off on the left (north) side of the road above the Ice Cave Entrance.

42°31'58.19"N, 111°43'34.75"W



6. Black Canyon Gorge

This beautiful gem of the byway could be easily passed or overlooked if travelers aren't already aware of it. The Black Canyon Gorge is just one mile west of Grace and offers display of a basalt lava flow combined with the effects of nature over time. The Bear River formed the canyon as it cut through a series of lava flows. Travel to downtown Grace, Idaho and turn left (west) on Center Street. Travel 1.1 miles to the Bear River bridge. 42°34'35.55"N, 111°45'2.63"W



7. Last Chance Canal

This site is the point on the Bear River where water was first diverted by Mormon settlers to develop an agriculture industry in Gem Valley. It was completed in the early 1900's and was an engineering masterpiece for it's time. From the junction of Center Street and SH 34 in Grace proceed north on SH 34 for 2.1 miles (5 minutes) to Telford Road. Turn right (east) on Telford Road and go 1.5 miles to this site. 42°36'0.23"N, 111°42'32.81"W



8. Sheep Rock-Oregon Trail

Sheep Rock was the location of the first split of the Oregon-California Trail. The Bidwell-Bartleson Party and the Hudspeth Cutoff diverged from the main trail here. 42°39'0.85"N, 111°42'5.08"W
Oregon Trail Public Park and Marina - This park, on the shore of Alexander Reservoir, features a marina, picnic area and playground, and a remnant of the Oregon Trail. East of the intersections of SH 34 and US 30. 42°39'31.89"N, 111°39'0.35"W



9. Chesterfield Townsite

Established in 1879, this historic community on the Oregon Trail is a well preserved example of a small Mormon settlement. The town site features 23 historic buildings, many of them brick, built between 1884 and 1904. Drive north through the US 30/SH 34 junction onto Old Highway 30. Drive 10 miles to Bancroft, ID. Then turn right on the paved County Road, Chesterfield Highway, cross the railroad tracks, and go 10 miles. 42°51'54.16"N, 111°54'12.89"W



10. Geyser Park and Visitor Center

Soda Springs boasts having the world's only captive geyser. On November 30, 1937 in an attempt to find a hot water source for a local swimming pool, a well driller set free the natural geyser at a depth of 317 feet. It is located on Pyramid Spring, a travertine mound described by Fremont in his 1840s expeditions, along with other area springs. The history of Soda Springs and Caribou County is portrayed on picture boards in the Geyser Park Visitor Center. Historical artifacts and antiques are on display next door at the Enders Hotel Museum. Enter on Main Street & 1st Street South and drive 150 feet west to Geyser Park. 42°39'26.13"N, 111°36'17.32"W



11. Hooper Springs

The most famous of the area's springs, is a large sweet-tasting, naturally carbonated cold water spring. A prime attraction for more than 160 years, soda water from these springs was known nationally after rail service reached this resort area in 1882.

At SH 34 Milepost 59.8, turn left (west) on Government Dam Road, at the base of a very large hill on your front-left side. Proceed on the County road for 0.9 miles. 42°40'45.26"N, 111°36'14.36"W



12. Formation Springs Preserve

In 1989, 160-acres surrounding Formation Springs was turned into a preserve. It features crystal pools and a wetland complex at the base of Aspen Mountain. The terraced pools are formed by cold springs that feed into them and deposit high concentrations of calcium carbonate.

Turn east at SR 34 Milepost 60.8 onto Trail Canyon Road. Proceed one mile to the preserve parking lot. 42°41'39.14"N, 111°33'18.42"W



13. China Hat Geological Site

China Hat and China Cap are rhyolite domes that formed around older lava flows. There are many faults located in the area which have had a part in forming these landforms as well as multiple "grabens."

Drive 9.2 miles on SH 34 to the junction with Blackfoot River Road at milepost 69.9. Turn right (east) into the parking lot. To get closer turn left (west) on China Hat Road at Milepost 69.

42°48'53.97"N, 111°35'47.52"W



14. Henry-Chester's Country Store

The store, built in 1908, is a last remnant of a small but important livestock community in that time. The once famous Henry Stampede Rodeo and Stockman's Reunion began here in 1918.

The Chester Country Store is located at the south end of the Blackfoot Reservoir in the little community of Henry.

Continue north on SH 34 for 9.1 miles to milepost 76.8.

42°54'26.32"N, 111°31'45.89"W



15. Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge

19,000 acres of land are home to at least 163 species of birds including the Great Basin Canada Goose and the Sandhill Crane. Here you'll find excellent nature viewing opportunities in a pristine setting.

Drive north on SH 34 for about 8 miles to Milepost 85.0. SH 34 bears east and skirts the south end of the refuge for 7 miles to Milepost 91.9. Turn left (north) onto Grays Lake Road. Travel 3 miles to the the field office.

43° 1'49.44"N, 111°22'35.01"W



16. Lander Trail

The site is a 7 mile segment of "The Lander Cut-off of the Oregon Trail", the first road commissioned by Congress with funding for location and construction. F.W. Lander supervised the project.

The highway on the way to Grays Lake is following the Lander Cutoff of the Oregon Trail, and offers a view of Caribou Mountain on the north side of the road. Starts at 43° 0'43.82"N, 111°30'24.41"W

43° 0'43.82"N, 111°30'24.41"W



17. Caribou Mountain

Jesse "Cariboo" Jack Fairchild discovered gold high on this mountain in 1870 and a mining rush from Utah followed. Millions of dollars worth of gold were mined before it ran out. It created an economic boom for the region that went as far south as Salt Lake City. The peak is 9803 feet high.

Viewed from SH 34 between Mileposts 85.0 and 91.9. There is a highway marker in Wayan at N 42° 58.629 W 111° 22.621.

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18. Tincup Canyon

This forested area offers camping, recreation and wildlife viewing in the great outdoors of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest.

Tincup is 20 miles past Wayan, Idaho on SH 34.

42°58'13.65"N, 111°15'25.32"W

The Pioneer Historic Byway ends at the Idaho/Wyoming border at the junction of SH 34 and the paved State Line Road, one mile north of Freedom, ID/WY.

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