

Trip Report
Use this form to report on wilderness trips

Submitted by: Doug Daggett

Date: 5/3/18

Report Title: Illinois River

Route: Where did you go? How many days were you camping?

Did a three-day trip from Oak Flat to Oak Flat.

Summary: 250 word max

River was flowing a pretty consistent 800 cfs or so. Did not encounter another party on the river. However, we did observe the signs of their passage. It was disappointing to find boaters on this remote and difficult section of water less caring and less aware of their impact than on some much more heavily used rivers. This is a difficult and challenging river—do not take it lightly.

Wilderness or Wild River: Illinois River

Management Unit: Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

Administrative Location: Medford, OR

Head of Administrative Unit: Merv George, Forest Supervisor

Trip Report: Grade the success of the management agency with an A to F letter grade. Comments must support letter grades in each category; skip any category on which you do not want to comment.

B Access; is resource damage occurring on trails and at trailheads.

There are few campsites on the Illinois so the popular Pine Flat site receives significant use and the impacts of thoughtless campers are starting to show with fire rings being the most obvious sign of use; on this trip, we counted four fir rings used this season. Poor food handling techniques and human waste were also evident though it is possible this is all from the passage of a single clueless party.

C Management; regulations, permit systems, education, enforcement actions.

The Illinois is holding well despite a rather high level of benign neglect by the managing agency. There is no evidence of educational signage at the put-in and no clearly defined user requirements. This would not be a problem if users were a bit more caring about minimizing signs of their passage. I saw more huge fire rings on the Illinois than on the much more heavily used Owyhee. There was food in the water from dishwashing, egg shells around camp, toilet paper in the trees and green trees being cut for firewood. Come on people. Are you asking for regulations and river patrols!

B Stewardship; are management actions in accord with the tenets of the Wilderness Act.

The managing agency could better protect wilderness values by adopting a more proactive stance toward educating the user. Signage at the launch sites explaining that drones are not allowed within wilderness and that campfire and camping impacts should be mitigated would encourage users to better respect the area.

B Wilderness; how well is management protecting the wilderness resource.

Management appears to be minimally involved in management of this area. The difficulty of the river so far seems to serve as a limiting factor on use and the river retains a feeling of wilderness. Nevertheless, an increased focus on user education would be a proactive step on the part of management. Frankly users on this river are not doing a very good job of no-trace passage compared to many other more heavily used rivers.

There seems to be a significant opportunity to engage of shuttle companies in user education e.g., flyers left in client's cars, publications of hot sheets detailing current concerns, river-specific education materials on shuttle company websites.

___ Fire Management, Wildlife Management, Other

Over the last half dozen years fires have burned a significant section of the Illinois River canyon. The ecosystem appears resilient and healthy. The river remains amazingly clear and the habitat seems intact.