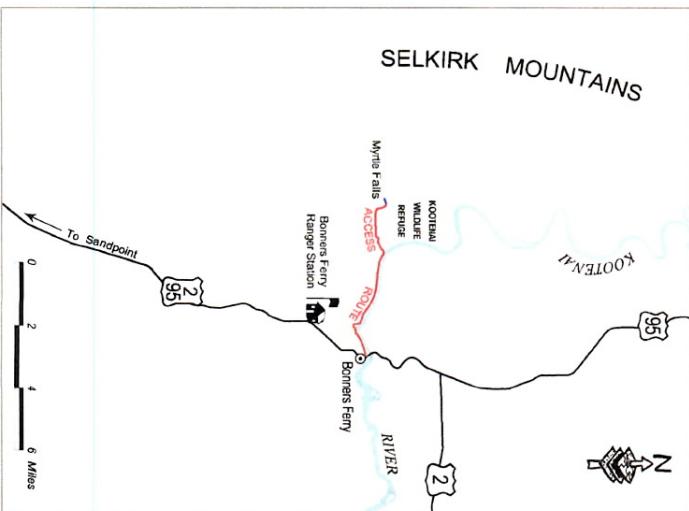


Access: Heading north on Highway 95 through Bonners Ferry, turn left onto Main Street just before the bridge, take the immediate right onto Riverside Road. Follow Riverside Road for 5 miles through the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge, angle right onto Westside Road and follow Westside Road for .2 miles to the trailhead parking area on the left.

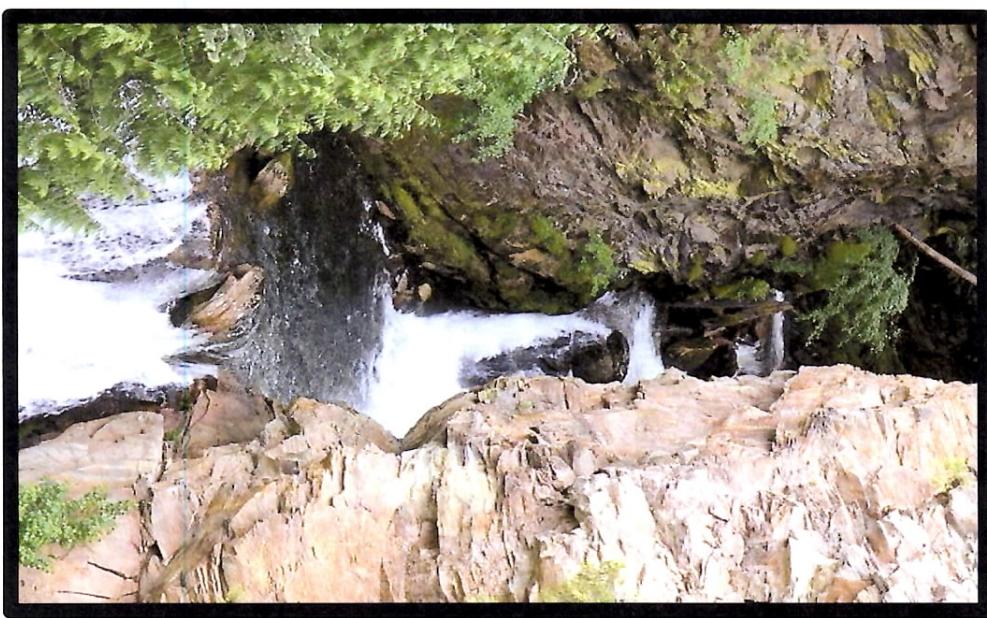


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Bonners Ferry Ranger District
6286 Main Street
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805
208-267-5561

MYRTLE CREEK FALLS



Length: 0.5 miles
User: Hiker
Difficulty: Easy
Elevation: 1900 feet
Recommended Season: May to October

Myrtle Creek Falls Trail #195

A short 5 mile drive from Bonners Ferry will take you to scenic Myrtle Creek Falls. There is a paved parking area with plenty of parking available. Directly across the road is the wildlife headquarters. There you will find a picnic area with 3 picnic tables, also restrooms. This is a day-use area only, with no overnight camping.

The first section, 0.1 miles of this trail is a wide paved trail which is fully accessible up to and including the bridge over Myrtle Creek. There is a bench right after crossing the bridge.

After the creek crossing the trail narrows and the tread turns to dirt.

The remaining 0.4 mile of the trail is an easy ascent ending at an observation area halfway up the falls.

A small gorge carved by Myrtle Creek contains a 15 to 25 foot punch bowl followed by its waters thundering 35 to 50 feet downwards.

This great cascade has exposed the native brown quartzite forming a beautifully colored filled sprite. The falls is particularly impressive during spring runoff.

While at the falls keep an eye out for the Black Swift. The birds most often nest on high cliff faces, behind or next to waterfalls. The nest is made of twigs, moss or ferns glued together with mud. Black Swifts live on the wing, foraging in flight. They eat flying insects, primarily flying ants and beetles.

The American Dipper is another bird you may see along the creek. The Dipper is North America's only truly aquatic songbird. It catches all of its food underwater in swiftly flowing streams by swimming and walking on the stream bottom.

Myrtle Creek is home to brook and cut throat trout. The Federal listed threatened species, bull trout, has been documented in Myrtle Creek. In late August into the fall you can you can see Kokanee (land-locked form of the sockeye salmon) spawning.

The slopes of the Selkirk Range creates a series of aspects that vary from relatively dry, open areas with ponderosa pine to colder wetter sites dominated by western red cedar. Douglas fir is the most common in both the dry and moist sites. Other conifers include grand fir, western larch and western hemlock. Large cottonwoods, aspen and birch are found along the creek.

Light Company. The name was later changed to Bonner Water and Light Company when it was purchased by A.H. Featherstone. The plant supplied electricity to the City of Bonners Ferry until 1921. The power was generated by the Pelton Wheel, thought to be one of the most efficient types of water turbines. Invented in the 1870s by Lester Allan Pelton, the Pelton Wheel extracts energy from the impulse (momentum) of moving water. The paddle's design enabled the rim to run at half the speed of the water jet so water would leave the wheel with little speed, extracting almost all its energy.

The power house was burned down in 1971.



The Pelton Wheel is on display in Bonners Ferry, located at the south side of the Kootenai River Bridge.

Across Myrtle Creek is the foundation of the Bonner Water and Light Company's power house. At this site in 1906, Alex M. Winston established the first hydro-electric plant, under the name of Newport Electric