

Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail

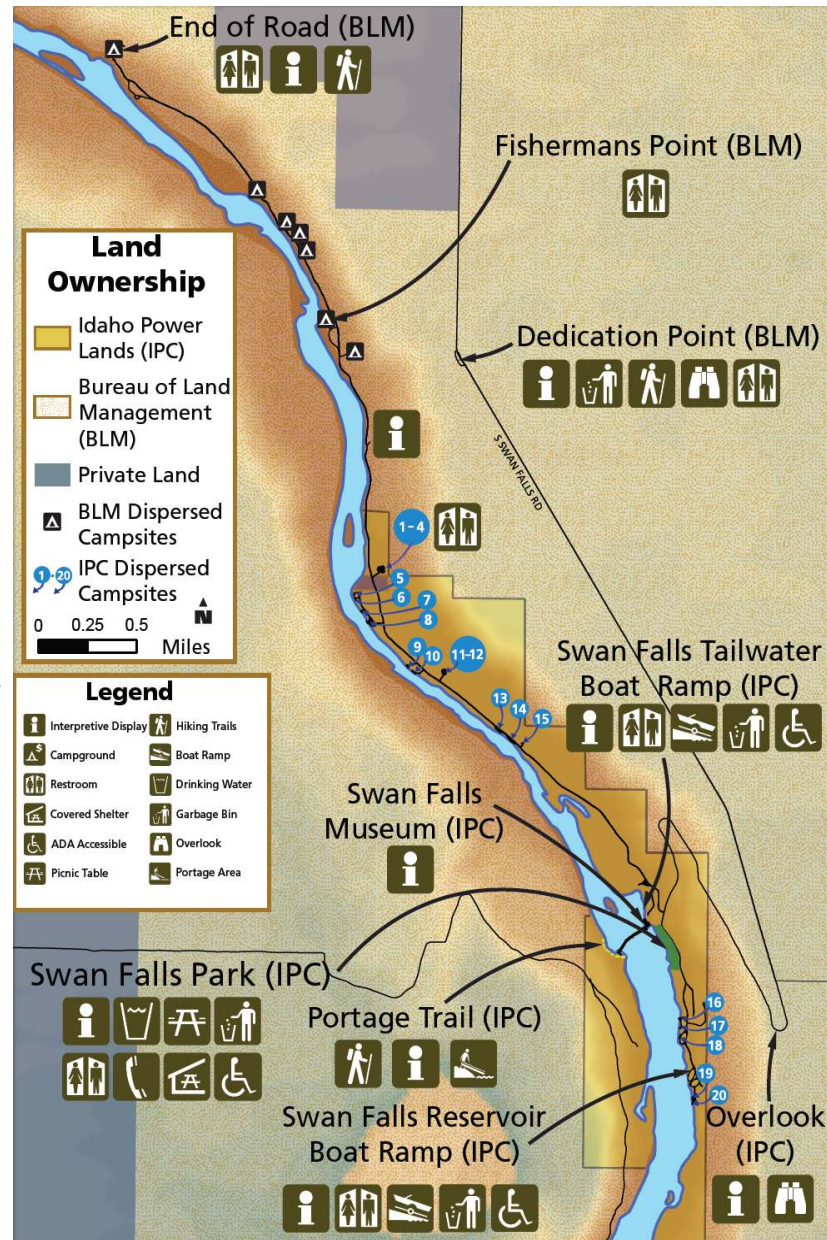
Story contributed by:
Erik Bird, Idaho Power Company Biologist

Swan Falls Recreation Improvements

Idaho Power Company's (IPC) Swan Falls Hydroelectric Project is located **on the Snake River approximately 20 miles south of Kuna within Ada and Owyhee counties**. Swan Falls Dam is the oldest hydroelectric facility on the Snake River. It began generating electricity in 1901 for mines in the nearby Owyhee Mountains and IPC took ownership of the project in 1916. Today, Swan Falls has a generating capacity of 25 megawatts. At peak efficiency the total maximum output under ideal conditions is enough to power more than 18,000 homes.

Swan Falls is an **ideal spot for bird watchers** because it lies within the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) administered by the Bureau of Land Management. This area is home to many bird species including hawks, owls, eagles and falcons. Other **popular activities include fishing, camping, boating, and upland bird and waterfowl hunting**.

Under the terms of the 2012 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license for Swan Falls, IPC is required to implement measures to protect and enhance fisheries programs, water quality, botanical, wildlife, cultural, recreation, and aesthetics resources within the project boundary. The project boundary **encompasses approximately 1,593 acres of land and water**, of which 186 acres are federal lands within the NCA. These protection, mitigation and enhancement compliance measures came in the form of license articles which Idaho Power is fully engaged in implementing over the term of the new license. **Several recreation improvements were completed in 2014**.



The specific recreation improvements completed at Swan Falls in 2014 include:

Swan Falls Park has an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible route that connects a new picnic shelter, interpretive information, mooring docks, and picnic tables. The retaining wall was rebuilt, new plant material placed, and additional parking spaces (including ADA) were created.



Swan Falls Tailwater Boat Ramp has been modified with expanded gravel parking, a new vault toilet, concrete ramp, ADA designated parking, and ADA pre-launch boarding structure.

Dispersed camping has been defined both above and below the dam. There are now **20 new universal campsites** with a compacted, level gravel surface. All sites have improved



road access and fire rings and some have picnic tables.



Swan Falls Reservoir Boat Ramp modifications included replacement of the single lane boat ramp, ex-

gle lane concrete ramp to a two panded gravel parking, ADA parking, a new vault

toilet, and docks.

Camping is on a first-come, first-served basis. Visitors are asked to camp in designated areas only to protect the fragile soil and plant life in the area. Water is available at the restroom in the day-use area but not at the campsites. Swan Falls Museum, the decommissioned old power plant, will be open each Saturday (9AM - 5PM) from Memorial Day until Labor Day. Enjoy bird watching, camping, fishing, hunting and water sports year round at Swan Falls! **For more information please visit:**

<https://www.idahopower.com/OurEnvironmet/Recreation/SwanFalls/default.cfm>