

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE SALMON RIVER, IDAHO

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The Middle Fork of the Salmon River is the principal tributary of that stream, which rises and comes to an end entirely within Idaho. The Middle Fork winds through a vast wilderness area as yet unaffected by roads or other obvious incursions of western civilization. Two remote guest lodges are reached by air, and other portions may be reached on horseback. The only way by which continuous travel down this river may be sustained is by rubber raft, a trip of 100 or more miles, depending upon the point of origin for such a trip. Under National Park Service Contract No. 14-10-424-209, Earl Swanson and John Rice of the Idaho State College Museum surveyed the Middle Fork from Indian Creek to its confluence with the Salmon River, a distance of nearly 100 miles. The reconnaissance was carried out in early August, 1958, with a professional guide, Don Smith, of North Fork, Idaho.

The canyon of the Middle Fork is narrow and deep, winding through heavily forested mountains. Douglas fir and ponderosa pine predominate among the trees, and occasional open parklands are found on the river's edge. Terrace remnants are frequently wide and well preserved, though not always easily reached because of the numerous, very fast rapids. The main concentration of sites occurs near the junctions of Loon Creek and Camas Creek, which enter the Middle Fork from the east. Both streams provide today, as apparently in the past, the principal routes of access to the deep canyon of the main river. Upriver from Loon Creek, the number of sites diminishes, while downriver, in the last 20 miles of the river, only one route exists into or out of the canyon. Boat is there the only means of transportation, and this was reflected in the presence of one prehistoric site.

The Middle Fork is close to being an archaeologist's paradise. Most of

the sites have neither been noticed nor disturbed by white men, and they possess a freshness, a clarity, that sets this basin apart from the rest of Idaho.

Sites with features of several kinds are present here, in addition to a number of rockshelters with a remarkable array of pictographs. Apart from the superlative fishing here, and the quantities of big game, there are also a number of warm springs, each with one or more sites nearby. Some of the sites contain well defined tipi rings, large circular house depressions, small rock rings, and in a few locations, great boulder rings up to 35 feet in diameter. These features, which may be found together in a single site, are in clearly separable groups, suggesting that a time difference is involved. The tipi rings are also found in groups, some standing clearly on the surface, others in various stages of being covered up. The sites of the Middle Fork, properly handled, would require some years to excavate. Most are large, characterized by repeated occupations, often of different character. Some of the open sites contain upwards of 100 features. Any project pretending to completeness would be a major archaeological undertaking, quite apart from the problems of logistics posed by the remoteness of the area, and these are formidable enough.

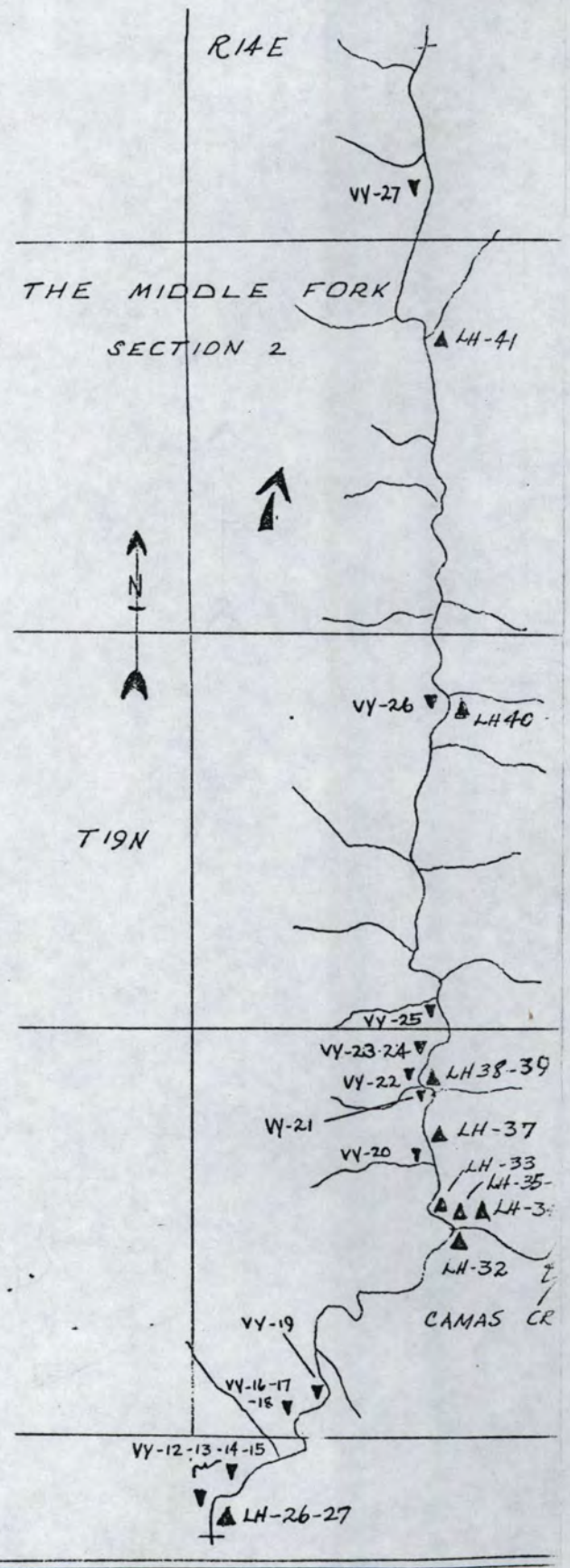
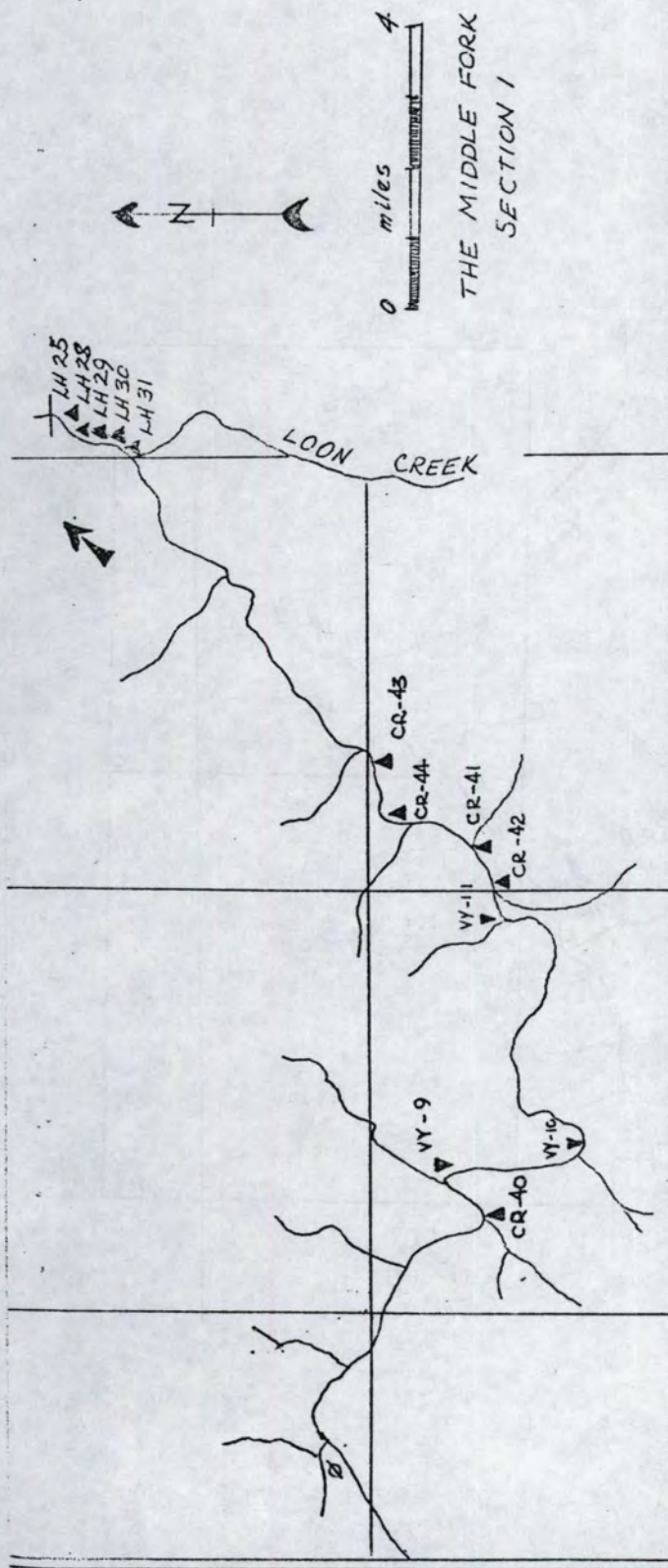
Relatively few artifacts were found because of the undisturbed condition of the sites and the excellent plant cover in the region. Some sites were probably missed when the boat swept through a rapids and past a likely location before a landing spot could be selected. Still, we would estimate that most of the sites present were located, given the consideration that some may be buried too deeply to reveal their presence on the surface.

A list of sites follows:

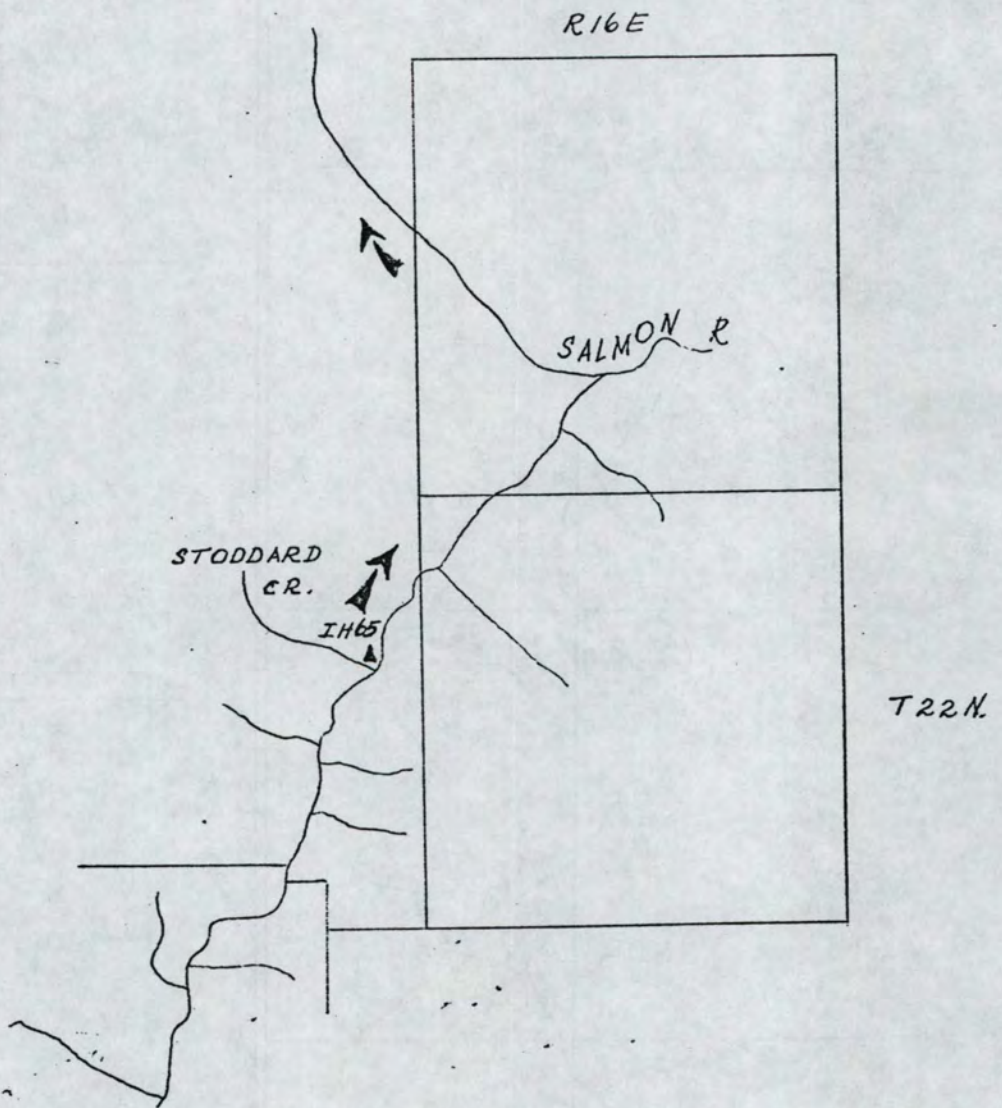
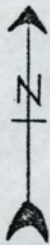
Site	Location	Type	Features
1 ✓ 10-VY-9	T16N, R12E, Sec. 9 - NW $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Pictographs, 6' of fill
2 ✓ 10-VY-10	T16N, R12E, Sec. 16 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Campsite	None
3 ✓ 10-VY-11	T16N, R12E, Sec. 12 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings
4 ✓ 10-VY-12, 13, 14, 15	T17N, R14E, Sec. 6-7	Rockshelters	Pictographs, talus pit, deep deposits
8-10 ✓ 10-VY-16, 17, 18	T18N, R14E, Sec. 31 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelters	Pictographs, shell, bone, shell, deep deposits
11 ✓ 10-VY-19	T18N, R14E, Sec. 31 - E $\frac{1}{2}$	Village	Circular housepits up to 21' in diameter
12 ✓ 10-VY-20	T16N, R14E, Sec. 10 - W $\frac{1}{2}$	Village	Housepits, boulder rings, tipi rings
13 ✓ 10-VY-21	T18N, R14E, Sec. 3 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Earth fill
14 ✓ 10-VY-22	T18N, R14E, Sec. 3 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Earth fill
15-16 ✓ 10-VY-23, 24	T18N, R14E, Sec. 3 - NE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelters	Earth fill
17 ✓ 10-VY-25	T19N, R14E, Sec. 34 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	House depressions
18 ✓ 10-VY-26	T19N, R14E, Sec. 3 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	House depressions, small rock rings
19 ✓ 10-VY-27	T21N, R14E, Sec. 34 - NE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	None
20 ✓ 10-VY-28	T14N, R10E, Sec. 31 - NE $\frac{1}{4}$		Pictographs not a
21 ✓ 10-VY-29	T13N, R10E, Sec. 34 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, pictographs not a
22 ✓ 10-IH-25, a, b, c, d	T17N, R14E, Sec. 7 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelters	Earth fills
23 ✓ 10-IH-26 a, b	T17N, R14E, Sec. 6 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelters	Earth fills
24 ✓ 10-IH-27	T17N, R14E, Sec. 6 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings
25 ✓ 10-IH-28	T17N, R14E, Sec. 7 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, housepits, small rock rings
26 ✓ 10-IH-29	T17N, R14E, Sec. 18 - NE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings
27 ✓ 10-IH-30	T17N, R14E, Sec. 18 - C	Village	Tipi rings
28 ✓ 10-IH-31	T17N, R14E, Sec. 18 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings

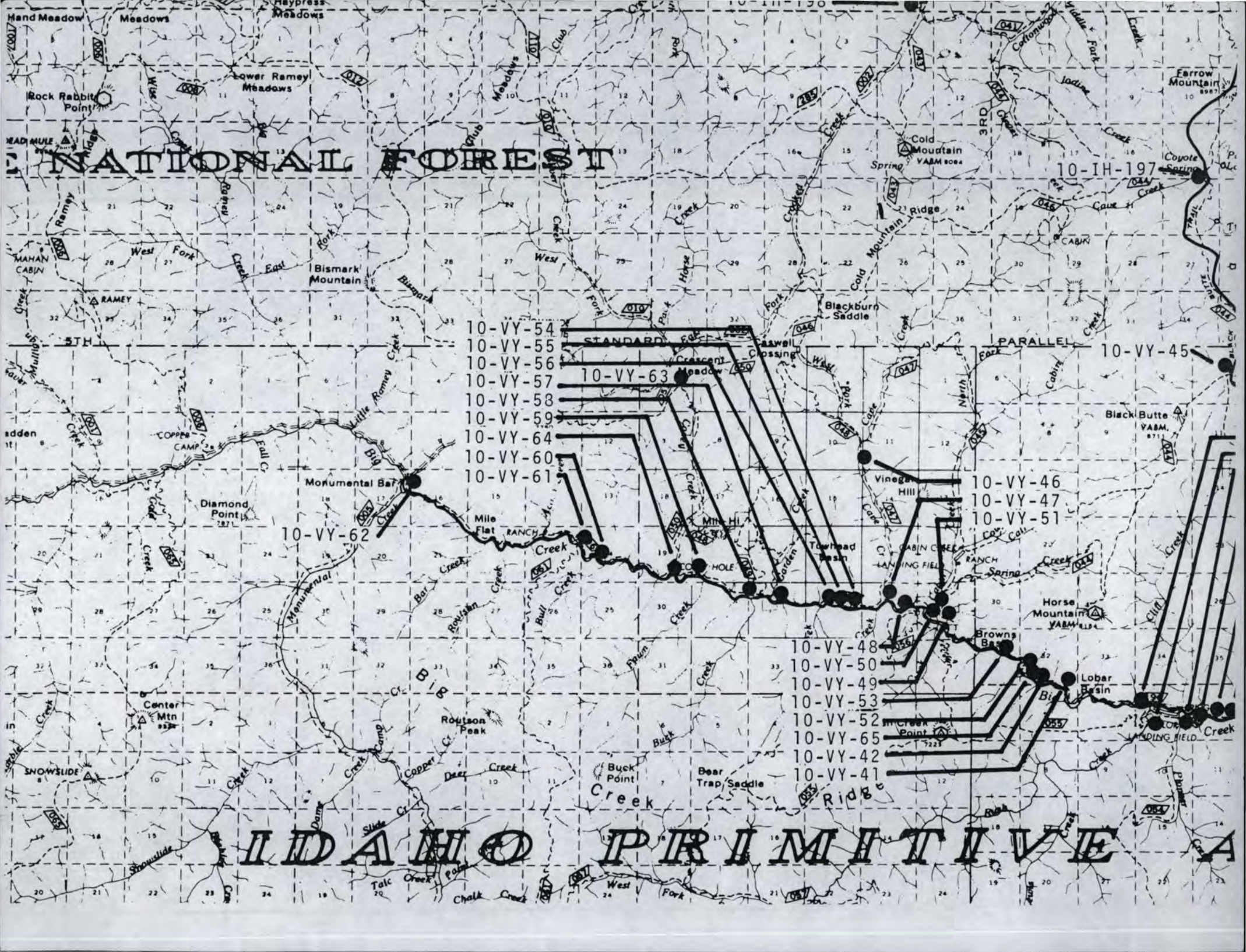
29	17	10-IH-32	T18N, R14E, Sec. 14 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, boulder rings, house depressions
30	18	10-IH-33	T18N, R14E, Sec. 15 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, boulder rings, small rock rings, house depressions
31	18	10-IH-34	T18N, R14E, Sec. 14 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Earth fill
32	18	10-IH-35, 36	T18N, R14E, Sec. 15 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelters	Earth fills
34	19	10-IH-37	T18N, R14E, Sec. 10 - E $\frac{1}{2}$	Village	Tipi rings, boulder rings, small rock rings, house depressions
35	20	10-IH-38, 39	T18N, R14E, Sec. 3 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelters	Earth fill - slight
37	21	10-IH-40	T19N, R14E, Sec. 11 - NW $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Pictographs, deep deposits
38	21	10-IH-41	T20N, R14E, Sec. 10 - NE $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Pictographs, deep deposits
39	21	10-CR-40	T16N, R12E, Sec. 8 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	House depressions, tipi rings, small rock rings
40	21	10-CR-41	T16N, R13E, Sec. 7 - SE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, small rock rings
41	21	10-CR-42	T16N, R13E, Sec. 7 - SW $\frac{1}{4}$	Rockshelter	Earth fill
42	21	10-CR-43	T16N, R13E, Sec. 5 - NE $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, house depressions, small rock rings
43	21	10-CR-44	T16N, R13E, Sec. 5 or 6	Village	Tipi rings, small rock rings
44	21	10-IH-65	T22N, R15E, Sec. 19 - NW $\frac{1}{4}$	Village	Tipi rings, housepits, two rockshelters, pictographs

In order to cope with this array of sites, it would be necessary to establish base camps at Loon Creek, Osmas Creek, and Hospital Bar. Each area around a base camp would require three or more seasons of work since these are large habitation sites. Because of the isolation of the area, a powerful short wave radio would be indispensable, and a doctor should be included in the camp. While it might be possible to arrange for a doctor to take his vacation in that area for two weeks, some rotation would undoubtedly be necessary.



THE MIDDLE FORK
SECTION 3





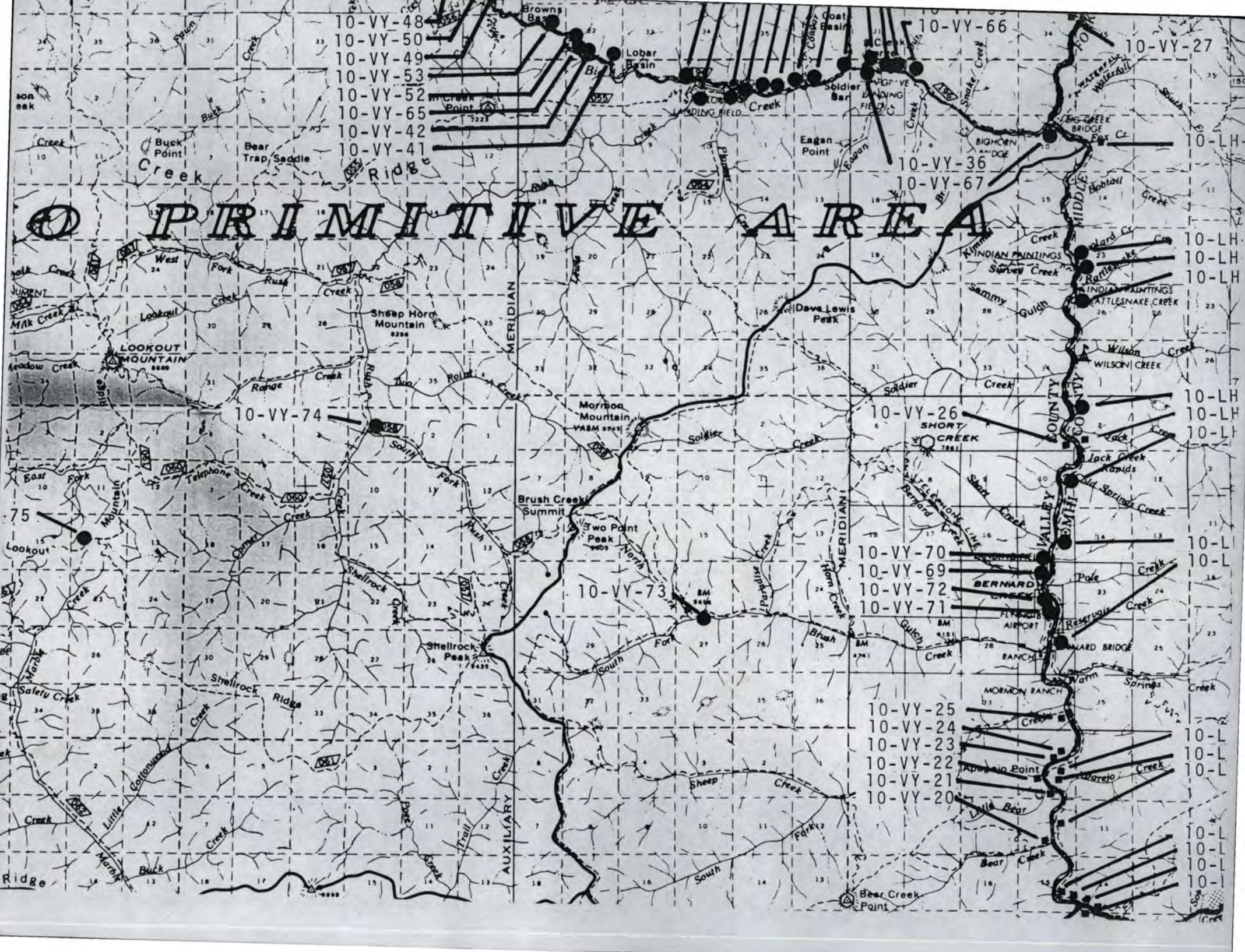
IDAHO PRIMITIVE NATIONAL FOREST

- 10-VY-54
- 10-VY-55
- 10-VY-56
- 10-VY-57
- 10-VY-58
- 10-VY-59
- 10-VY-60
- 10-VY-61

- 10-VY-45
- 10-VY-46
- 10-VY-47
- 10-VY-51

- 10-VY-48
- 10-VY-50
- 10-VY-49
- 10-VY-53
- 10-VY-52
- 10-VY-65
- 10-VY-42
- 10-VY-41

IDAHO PRIMITIVE NATIONAL FOREST



PRIMITIVE AREA

- 10-VY-48
- 10-VY-50
- 10-VY-49
- 10-VY-53
- 10-VY-52
- 10-VY-65
- 10-VY-42
- 10-VY-41

- 10-VY-66
- 10-VY-27

10-LH

10-LH

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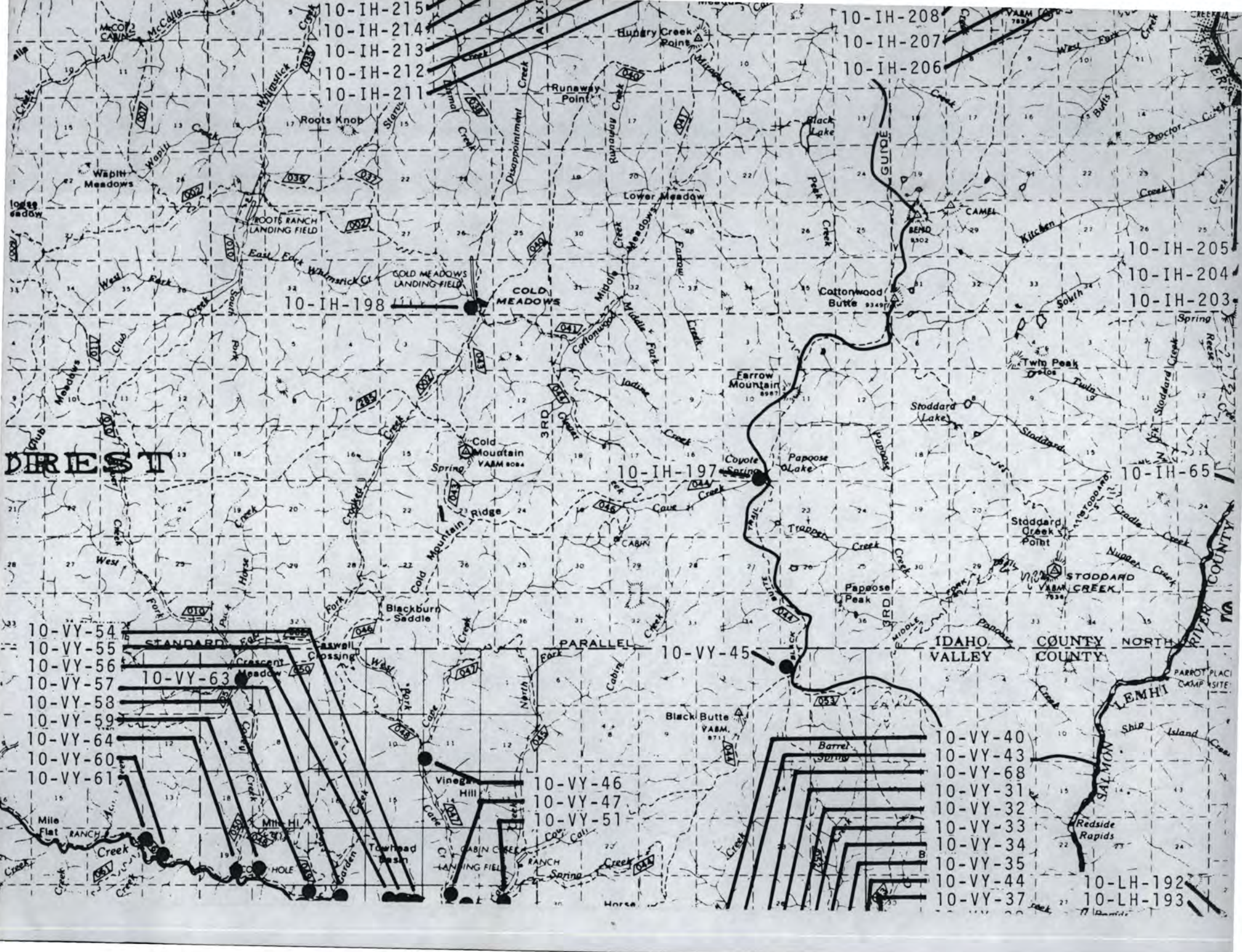
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10-L

- 10-VY-25
- 10-VY-24
- 10-VY-23
- 10-VY-22
- 10-VY-21
- 10-VY-20

10-L

10-L



10-IH-215
10-IH-214
10-IH-213
10-IH-212
10-IH-211

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10-IH-207
10-IH-206

10-IH-205
10-IH-204
10-IH-203

10-IH-198

10-IH-197

10-IH-65

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10-VY-55
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10-VY-61

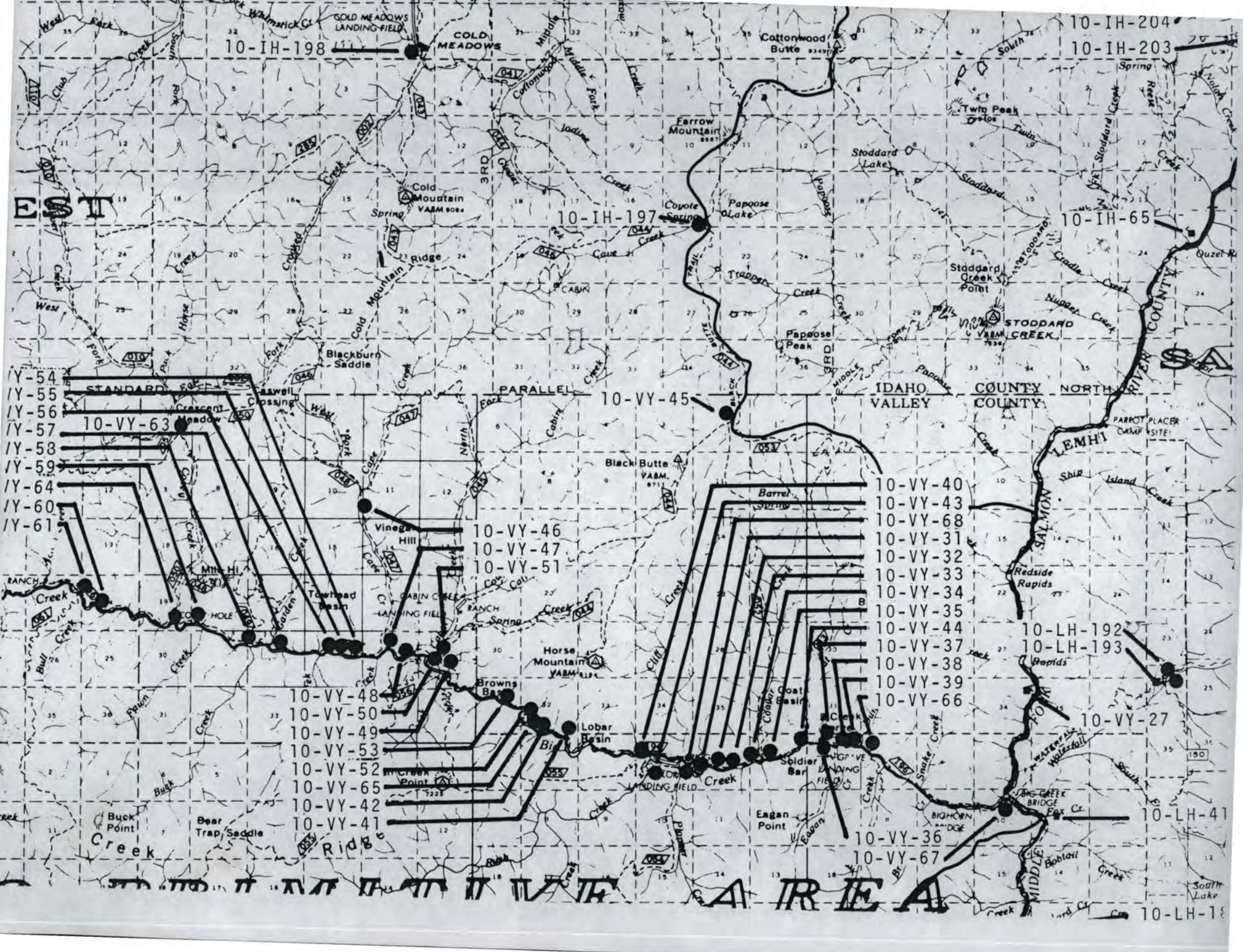
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10-VY-51

10-VY-40
10-VY-43
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10-VY-31
10-VY-32
10-VY-33
10-VY-34
10-VY-35
10-VY-44
10-VY-37

10-LH-192
10-LH-193



10-IH-198

COLD MEADOWS

Cottonwood Butte

10-IH-204

10-IH-203

EST

10-IH-197

10-IH-65

Y-54
Y-55
Y-56
Y-57
Y-58
Y-59
Y-64
Y-60
Y-61

10-VY-63

10-VY-45

IDAHO VALLEY COUNTY NORTH RIVER COUNTY

10-VY-46

10-VY-47

10-VY-51

10-VY-40

10-VY-43

10-VY-68

10-VY-31

10-VY-32

10-VY-33

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10-VY-65

10-VY-42

10-VY-41

10-VY-36

10-VY-67

10-LH-192

10-LH-193

10-VY-27

10-LH-41

10-LH-18

MIDDLE AREA