

Grandjean, Idaho

September 2009 by Rob Adams.

Description: 5400-foot elevation. 31 campsites near the border of the Sawtooth Wilderness. The Idaho Centennial Trail heads south along the Payette River, ultimately reaching a lush alpine paradise filled with lakes. Once in the lake area, you can complete the loop back to Grandjean. Fishing in the South Fork of the Payette. Sawtooth Lodge and swimming pool is one mile away. Natural hot springs 1.5 mile away. Horse trips out of the Sawtooth Lodge. Ten sites for horse campers. Campground is located in an old growth ponderosa pine forest.

Amenities: It's a typical Forest Service campground, with an outhouse, drinking water, fire pits and picnic tables.

Season: late May – September

Reservations: NO

Fee: day use \$5; camping \$10 (Large no-fee area along the river perfect for horse camping)

Sawtooth National Recreation Area
Stanley Ranger Stanley
HC 64, Box 9900
Stanley, ID 83278

208-774-3000

Location: From Stanley, go 35 miles northwest and south on ID 21, then 7 miles east on Forest Road 524. Turn left on Forest Road 824 at the Sawtooth Lodge.

To travel to Grandjean is to journey into Idaho's rugged heart and the epicenter of the state's rich history of public land and forest management.

Grandjean is in the northwest corner of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area where ponderosa pines tower and the Sawtooth Mountains scrape the sky. In Grandjean, named for one of the state's earliest foresters, time itself seems to slow.

Though less popular than Sawtooth Valley trailheads, it is a key access to the Sawtooth Wilderness Area. It is a place to hike, camp and ride horseback. It is a place to soak in the nearby Sacagawea Hot Springs. It is a place to fish the green, pristine waters of the South Fork of the Payette River as it tumbles northwest out of the towering Sawtooths.

Sawtooth National Recreation Area Special Uses Administrator Dave Fluetsch said the area is increasingly used as a wilderness access.

“One of the things that’s growing in popularity is that it’s an access to the wilderness area. I was there (recently), and the trailhead parking was completely full,” Fluetsch said. “You’ll see a lot of through hikers. Some people will meet in the middle (of the wilderness area) and trade car keys.”

Grandjean has a storied history that has been the subject of newspaper and magazine articles for 100 years. It is where one of the West’s most educated early forest rangers hung his hat for a spell. And that is where this story really begins. Before a colorful woman by the name of Babe Hansen opened a hunting lodge in Grandjean, the U.S. Forest Service occupied the area as a short-lived ranger station. Emile Grandjean, for whom the valley, a nearby mountain and a nearby creek are named, was one of the earliest supervisors of the Boise National Forest. He lived for a spell in a cabin he built

Grandjean, 74 at the time of his death in Caldwell, was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. He moved to Nebraska at the age of 17 and later moved to Idaho, first to the Wood River Valley and then to the Grandjean area in the late 1880s. Although he was a Dane, his name belies the country of his birth. His family was among the many Huguenots who fled France in the religious wars of the 17th century.

As a third-generation student of forestry in his native country, Grandjean was years ahead of the first Americans to receive formal academic training in the subject. When the Sawtooth National Forest was created in 1905, he finally had the opportunity to apply for the work for which he was educated. So rare were trained foresters in the West at the time that Grandjean was promoted to supervisor of the Sawtooth and Payette national forests after only a year of service.

In 1908, the 5.5 million-acre national forest was divided into the Sawtooth, Boise and Payette national forests. From it also emerged parts of the modern-day Lemhi and Challis national forests. Grandjean was named supervisor of the Boise National Forest, with headquarters in Boise.

Then and now, the Boise National Forest included the upper South Fork of the Payette River valley, where the hamlet of Grandjean is still nestled among tree-enshrouded ridges and the inspiring backdrop of the Sawtooths.

Although the Grandjean area has remained in public ownership, the way it is governed changed in 1972, when Congress established the 756,000-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area, which includes three national forests, five Idaho counties and the headwaters of 10 Idaho rivers. “The enabling legislation of the SNRA then provided direction of the management of the lands,” Fluetsch said.

According to Congress, the SNRA is to be managed so that “the conservation and development of scenic, natural, historic, pastoral, wildlife, and other values” are preserved. The enabling legislation continues to state that the use and disposal of natural resources like timber, grazing

and mining “will not substantially impair the purposes for which the recreation area is established.”

And that, it appears, is what the managers of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area have done in the Grandjean area. It’s a place where history and recreation meld together like the ancient granite of the Sawtooth Batholith, which created the towering crags of the Sawtooth Mountains and Grandjean Peak.

Pictures of trips out of Grandjean:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/sbbchidaho2006/SawtoothPackTrips#>