

# The Five Units

## Malad Gorge Unit

This 692-acre park unit is located just off Interstate 84 at the Tuttle exit. Weary travelers can easily stop to stretch while taking in the spectacular canyon views and use the restrooms. Visitors can take in a self guided interpretive tour that includes the canyon views, a man made wildlife viewing pond, rare plants and native plant restoration. Malad Gorge is open for hiking, picnicking and day outings.

**Kelton Trail** – The Kelton Trail can be accessed on the east side of Interstate 84. Here on the Kelton Road you can see the abutments for the bridge that carried wagons traveling the Oregon Trail. From about 1864 to 1883 this was on the regular route that carried mail, freight and passengers between Boise and the railhead at Kelton Utah. The trail had so much traffic that grooves were cut into the rocks, but by July 1884, a traveler on the old route noticed that “grass grows over the defunct overland Kelton stage road where a weary traveler once traveled in clouds of dust...”

## Billingsley Creek Unit

You can enjoy Billingsley Creek from sunrise to sunset. The park offers spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities, an indoor horse riding arena, excellent fishing and featured events.

**Vardis Fisher Day Use Area** – The Vardis Fisher Day Use Area is located along Billingsley Creek and includes access to Fisher Lake and the ruins of Vardis Fisher’s home. Vardis Fisher was a nationally renowned writer of regional fiction. From the ruins of the home site there is the beautiful vista which surely inspired Fisher in the writing of 22 novels, including *Mountain Man* (1965), which was the basis for the movie *Jeremiah Johnson*.

## Ritter Island Unit

The island allows visitors to step back in time to an era when Minnie Miller ran her then state of

the art dairy with her prize-winning Guernsey cows. The island became known as Ritter Island after Mrs. Miller sold the Thousand Springs Farm to Judge Willis W. Ritter in 1954. Today Ritter Island hosts the annual Thousand Springs Arts and Craft Festival. There is an abundance of wildlife to view including deer, waterfowl, upland birds, many small mammals, song birds and birds of prey. Hiking trails provide wonderful vistas of the Hagerman Valley. The southern end of the old Thousand Springs Farm is a historic area that was the favorite spot of Minnie Miller’s daughter Bonnie. It was named Bonnieview in her honor. It is also the home of a ferry crossing known as the Payne Lewis Ferry Crossing. Among the sites to view here is an adobe structure from the days of the ferry. This crossing was important to freighters before railroads, as it linked both sides of the Kelton Road from Utah to Boise. The springs in this area are important to the rare Shoshone sculpin (*Cottus greenei*).

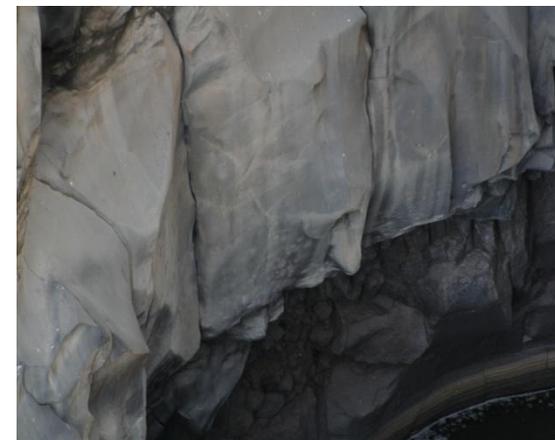
**Earl M. Hardy Box Canyon Springs Preserve** Box Canyon Springs flows at a rate of 180,000 gallons per minute. The natural area offers views of the springs, a hiking trail and viewing platform that overlooks a 20-foot waterfall. The area is also a great place to see bald and Golden eagles from December thru February and white pelicans from March thru July.

## Niagara Springs Unit

Tumbling down the canyon side at 250 cubic feet per second, Niagara Springs is a sight you won’t soon forget. The churning water is the icy blue of glaciers and the springs are a National Natural Landmark. This park unit provides a great opportunity to drive into the 350-foot-deep Snake River canyon. Once inside the canyon, you’ll find year-round fishing in **Crystal Lake**, including handicap-accessible fishing and restrooms. Wildlife—especially waterfowl—is abundant. Niagara Springs also features restrooms, grills, picnic tables and a group picnic shelter.

# Thousand Springs State Park

Thousand Springs State Park, with its five beautiful units, is a testament to why the area is called the Magic Valley. Visitors can explore the magnificent Malad Gorge, view wagon ruts and bridge abutments at Kelton Trail, access the riding arena at Billingsley Creek, get writing inspiration at the Vardis Fisher home site, step back in time and tour historic structures at



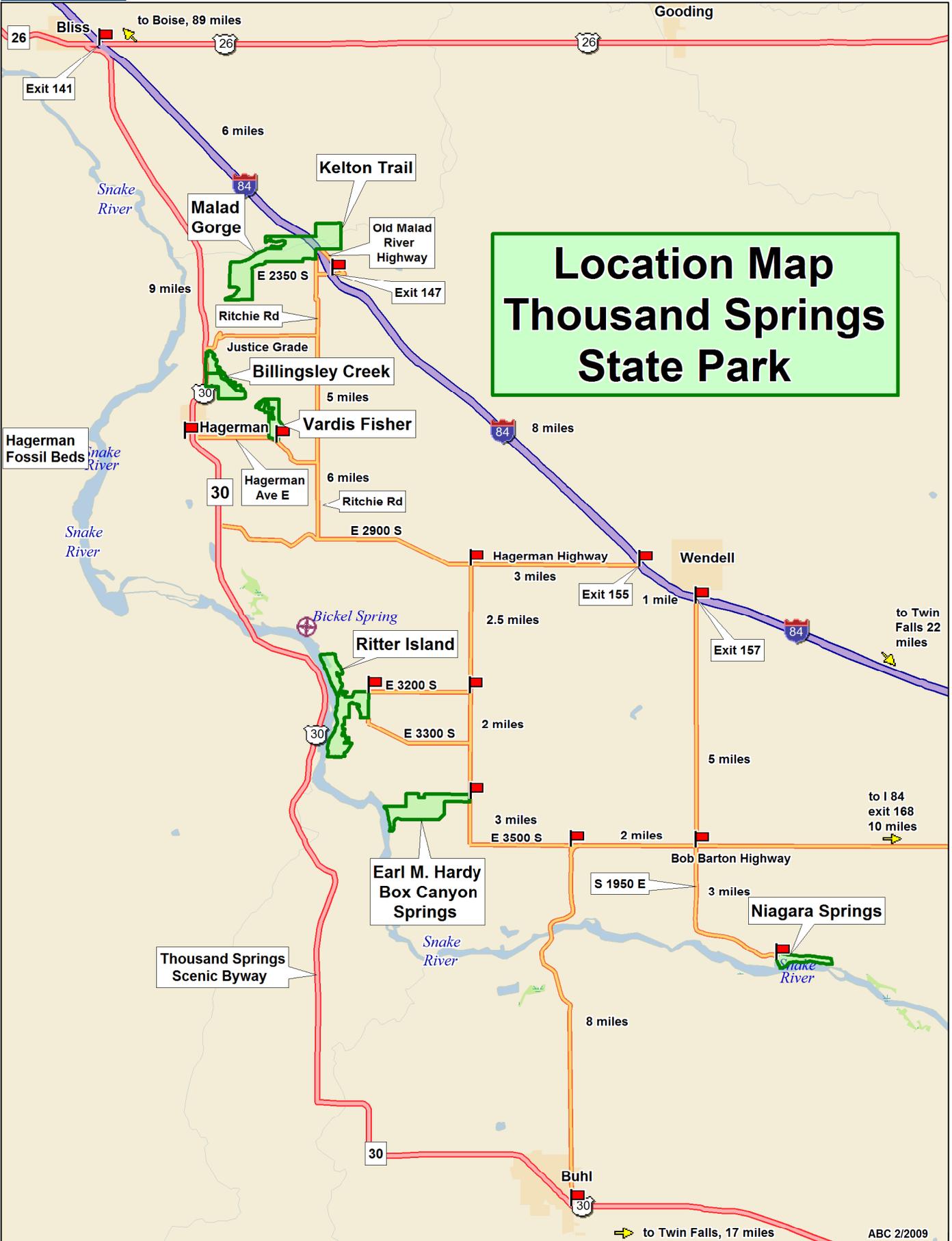
Ritter Island, take in the scenery at Earl M. Hardy Box Canyon Springs Preserve, view Niagara Springs, and fish at Crystal Lake. Day use opportunities abound within the units of Thousand Springs State Park.



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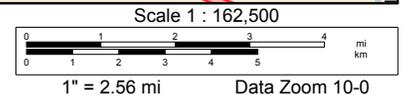
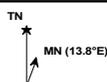
# Location Map Thousand Springs State Park



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ABC 2/2009