

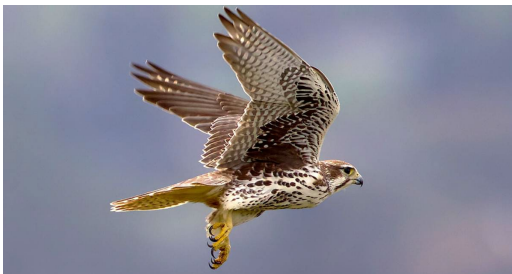
In 1954, the farm was sold to Federal Judge Willis W. Ritter, who used the island as a private hunting and fishing retreat. The Ritter family owned the island for 32 years.

In 1986, The Nature Conservancy purchased the property. The Conservancy believed that protecting the springs of the area was important for the Middle Snake River's clean water and wildlife habitat.

The Conservancy purchased the 385 acres, including Ritter Island, two miles of riverfront, and many springs and spring creeks along the canyon.

In 2006 the Conservancy donated the island to Idaho State Parks and Recreation. To this day it remains one of the beautiful units of Thousand Springs State Park.

Ritter Island remains a real haven for wildlife. Waterfowl use the wetland habitat, especially in the spring and fall. Herons nest on the island, and raptors like golden eagles and prairie falcons nest along the canyon walls. During annual Christmas bird counts, Ritter Island often has one of the highest counts of bird species in the state.



Weddings and House Reservations



Yellow House – Sleeps 4



Pink House- Sleeps 2



Rock House – Sleeps 10

To reserve a wedding, contact the park at 208-837-4505. To reserve one of the houses on Ritter Island, contact 888-922-6743 Or

Visit our website at

www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov

All houses on the island are off limits unless you are renting them. Please respect the privacy of our guests.



ADDRESS:

17970 U.S. HWY 30

HAGERMAN, ID 83332

PHONE:

(208) 837-4505

Thousand Springs State Park *Ritter Island*

History and Self-Guided Tour



The Thousand Springs area near Hagerman offers some of the most interesting geology in Idaho. The springs that burst out of the canyon walls represent the end of a journey of water that begins in the Craters of the Moon area nearly 100 miles away. Ritter Island is one of the best places to see this geology firsthand.

The "lost rivers" of south central Idaho are known for trout fishing and their importance for area farms and ranches. But as these rivers flow over the extensive lava fields of the Craters of the Moon area, the water sinks into the porous lava and disappears underground.

The water stays underground for perhaps 200 years, until it flows as waterfalls out of the canyon walls of the Middle Snake River. The water is crystal clear and pure, creating beautiful springs and pools.

The recorded history of this area began with the arrival of French trappers in the 1800s. Pioneers began traveling the Oregon Trail in the 1840s, and entrepreneurs settled in the area to provide services.

The property was purchased in 1918 by Minnie Miller, a Salt Lake City businesswoman who wanted to make the property a demonstration farm. Miller was a big game hunter, traveler, and entrepreneur who appreciated the unique setting of the island and its proximity to the springs.



She set up what was then a state-of-the-art dairy with the intent to breed the world's finest herd of Guernsey cattle. The Rock House on Ritter Island was built in 1920, as was the barn. The primary purpose of the farm was to produce breeding cattle rather than commercial milk production. The Minnie Miller Farm became known for the finest Guernsey's in the world, just as Miller wished. These cattle were featured in agricultural and popular magazines around the country during the time.



Take a tour around Ritter Island!

The Island is open:
Thursday – Monday 10am-3pm
Memorial Day through Labor Day

When you make it down the narrow dirt grade, you will see a small area to park. Due to limited parking, it is not recommended to take RVs or camp trailers down the grade. The Island is walk-in only and pet friendly. We do ask that your pet stays on a leash.

As you come on to the island, you will see the Rock House on your right. All houses on the island are off limits. Please respect the privacy of our guests and admire from a distance.

Continue down the gravel driveway and you will see the old dairy barn. If you head into the barn and make your way up to the hay loft, you just might see some screech owls that nest there. Just beyond the dairy barn is the horse barn where old harnesses and tack are on display.

Continue on the gravel road and stay to the right to be taken to Minnie Miller falls. Here is a picnic table which makes a great place to stop and have lunch while enjoying the falls.

There are a few benches scattered around the island to rest and take in some amazing views. The island is 1.72 miles if you walk all the way around.