

IDAHO MUSEUM OF MINING AND GEOLOGY



Field Trip Road Log

April 12, 2014; Volcanoes and Floods Near Twin Falls, Idaho

Leader: Dr. Paul Link

Note: odometers vary, mileages are approximate. Also, GPS values vary over time, but the listed points will get you within visual range of the features described.

To Stop 1: From the Museum, drive to Warm Springs Avenue, turn **Right** and go to Broadway Avenue, turn **Left** and proceed to the **I-84 Eastbound Onramp**. Travel east on the Interstate to Exit 173, U.S. 93 and turn **Left** (North). Proceed to the Town of Shoshone and Zero your odometer at the junction of U.S. 93 and Highway 75 just north of the railroad tracks. Drive approximately 17.6 miles to a faint two-track dirt road on the **Left** (to double check this location, it is 1.2 miles north of the Ice Caves turnoff). GPS location is N 43.182729; W 114.330810. **The road toward Black Butte is very rough, high clearance and all-wheel drive is recommended; also, there is risk of scratching from sagebrush.** If you choose to park on the side of Highway 75, the hike in is about 0.4 miles. At GPS N 43.182810; W 114.334598, there is a fork to the right. This dirt road winds around to the north and eventually climbs up the flank of the volcano to a location (GPS N 43.183729; W 114.349211) where you can maneuver to get a look into the Black Butte Crater that was once a lava lake. The flows from here split the Big and Little Wood Rivers, forcing them west and east, respectively. The total hike is about 1.5 miles to the crater. Footing is very unstable on coarse lava, take abundant caution; hiking poles are highly recommended. Take lots of water in all seasons; watch for snakes in warm weather; carry a cell phone, let someone know where you are going and your expected return time.



To Stop 2: Return to Highway 75 and reverse your course toward Twin Falls. Pass under the Interstate and turn **Left** on Shoshone Falls Road (Golf Course Road to the right) at the traffic light just before the Perrine Bridge. Take Shoshone Falls Road for 2.5 miles and park on the **Right** just before the road changes to Canyon Road and heads downhill. Walk about 120 yards to get a good look at Shoshone Falls (don't fall over the edge of the cliff!). Shoshone Falls is formed by a ledge of light-colored rhyolite that is more durable than the black basalt above it. The Bonneville Flood carved the canyon above and below the falls about 17,500 years ago, with flows estimated at 10,000,000 cubic feet per second.



Shoshone Falls from the north side

To Stop 3: Return to U.S. 93 and take the on-ramp toward Boise. Drive on the Interstate to Exit 147 (Malad Gorge State Park Exit) and follow the signs to the Park. From the parking area you can walk out over the Gorge on the pedestrian bridge after reading the interesting information in the kiosk. The Malad River begins just upstream from here as the extension of the Big Wood River. There is some controversy about how the Gorge was formed – one catastrophic flood of the Big Wood River, or many floods over centuries. Some dating methods place the age of the Gorge at about 45,000 years ago, well before the Bonneville Flood. The amount of water needed to carve the Gorge seems out of scale from what the Big Wood could have passed through its “Black Canyon” upstream near Stop 1. (See the 10/5/2013 Field Trip Log).

