



**NEWS
RELEASE**



United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
Salmon - Challis National Forest
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CAUSE OF STODDARD PACK SUSPENSION BRIDGE COLLAPSE IDENTIFIED

NORTH FORK, IDAHO –The Stoddard Pack Bridge collapsed late in the day on March 15th or in the early morning hours of March 16th and is no longer serviceable to the public. The south tower, across the Salmon River from the Salmon River Road, river left was struck by a rock fall originating from a rock outcrop approximately 150 feet above the tower base. At least one of the rocks was at least 8 feet in diameter.



Stoddard Pack Bridge Collapse

The 348 foot suspension bridge, which crossed the Salmon River just below the mouth of the Middle Fork, was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corp in 1937. It provided the only bridge access from Salmon River Canyon to the remote Stoddard and Papoose Creek portion of the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

The main cables remain attached to anchors at both ends. The lowest hanger cable ends are approximately 25' above water surface as of March 17, 2017. There were four large sections of wood decking and reinforcement several miles downstream of the bridge site. The first and largest was located approximately five miles downstream. They were currently all grounded on rocks when personnel left the site on March 17th. However, it is likely that these sections of decking will move downstream

as river levels rise. The biggest hazard is for boaters when the wooden segments refloat and move downstream. It is likely that the sections of decking will lie relatively flat on the water and be difficult for jet boaters, rafters, and kayakers to see.



Decking in river, downriver of Stoddard Bridge site

It remains unknown when the bridge will be considered for re-construction. "This event was an unfortunate natural disaster and emphasizes the instability of the Salmon River Canyon Corridor during the later winter and spring seasons. The loss of the Stoddard Pack Bridge is enormous as it provides important access into the wilderness for many recreationists including hunters, fishers, and hikers" said Ken Gebhardt, North Fork District Ranger.

For additional information, please contact the North Fork Ranger District at 208-865-2731.

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