

Chalk Basin

The best way to see Chalk Basin is by either backpacking in or making it a stop on an Owyhee River float. There is a route on significantly rough roads into the area, which should only be attempted in a high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle under dry conditions. This road is not good enough to be traveling after even a quarter inch of rain: Do not leave the road if this is the case. There are no services.

From Oregon's west side, travel through Central Oregon to Highway 20. Continue into Burns, then follow the signs for Highway 78, the Steens Highway. Continue along for just more than 90 miles, then turning east on Highway 95. It's advisable here to either get gas at the junction of Highways 78 and 95 or to continue to Rome to fill up and then backtrack. In about 8 miles, turn left onto Kiger Road. Follow the road for about 5.9 miles. Then Tub Springs Road will be on your right. Turn, and follow it for about 15.2 miles to your destination.

From Jordan Valley, take Highway 95 west for 37.2 miles to Kiger Road. Turn right, and follow the road for about 5.9 miles. Then Tub Springs Road will be on your right. Turn, and follow it for about 15.2 miles to your destination.

About the Owyhee Canyonlands

The Owyhee Canyonlands require preparation, awareness and self-sufficiency. Once you leave the blacktop you will not find services or amenities. Top off your gas tank when leaving gateway communities like Jordan Valley or Rome, and carry a spare gas can.

Driving conditions in the Owyhee can be challenging. Roads are often unmaintained, rocky and rutted. Check each destination write-up for road conditions and advice on clearance and four-wheel drive recommendations. A small amount of precipitation makes the road surface slippery, creating mud buildup that clogs wheel wells and limits travel.

Each vehicle should contain a full-size spare tire, towing straps/chains, a jack, some flat boards, Fix-a-Flat, a lug wrench, jumper cables and a five-gallon water jug.

Your best bet for traveling in the Owyhee Canyonlands is to purchase the Malheur Canyon Country and Owyhee Canyon Country maps from the Bureau of Land Management.