

# The Golden Hour

*Lighting up the fade of fall*

BY KRIS MILLGATE

EAST IDAHO outdoors

THE GEM STATE FROM RIVERS TO RIDGES



STEVE SMEDE PHOTO



KRIS MILLGATE PHOTO



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LESLIE WELLS PHOTO

**The scene is empty** of traffic and full of color. The flicker of foliage and the ripple of river are the only sounds. And the smell? It's fantastic. It's not movie theater popcorn for this show. It's better. Breathe deep. Smell that? That's a potpourri of water, wind and earth. This is where the three meet to drop the curtain on another growing season of wild.

That's why now is the time to drive, or float, the South Fork of the Snake River. It's spectacular during its season of shimmer. The season when those of us who fight winter's solitude and share summer's abundance have our watershed to ourselves. Fall is for us, the ones who don't migrate. The ones who know this wet ribbon hydrates desert life bordering its banks.

And the color on those banks? Stunning. Gold is tumbling in piles. The West's largest cottonwood gallery is at its finest in fall with its yellow leaves falling on green seams. We're lucky enough to see this. So are the eagles. The ospreys left with the tourists, but the eagles, bald and golden, stay with the locals. Feathers of the former and feet of the latter convene riverside to bask in one last water run, the fall before the freeze. [LE](#)