



## Yampa River Commercial & Voluntary Closures Lifted

*Recent Snow Brings Improved River Flows & Colder Water Temperatures*

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-October 28, 2020**-The commercial and voluntary closures on the Yampa River implemented earlier this summer/fall will be lifted starting tomorrow, Thursday, October 29, 2020.

“We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone for respecting the closures,” commented Parks & Recreation Director Angela Cosby. “Your continued support in protecting the community’s #1 natural resource is greatly appreciated.”

Given the recent snow, around a foot in many locations, and the projected forecast of daytime air temperatures in the 50s over the next week, Colorado Parks & Wildlife experts believe that water flows will continue to rise as valley snow melts over this next week.



Over the past several weeks, flows consistently ranged below 50% of average due to continued drought conditions across not only this region but much of Colorado resulting in the continued closure. With significant snowfall, river flows are projected to continue their upward trend to acceptable levels.

Water flows are one factor in the equation of a healthy river. When flows are coupled with colder water temperatures and less stress/pressure by users during this time of year, aquatic life can coexist in a healthier environment. Currently, water temperatures have been holding steady in the upper 30°s and flows are sitting above 75 cubic feet per second (cfs).

“The fishery has been exposed to challenging environmental conditions this year,” commented Colorado Parks & Wildlife Aquatic Biologist Bill Atkinson. “As we get back in the water, please practice appropriate fish handling techniques and conservation ethics.”

When the river dropped below the 85 cfs threshold this summer, several agencies worked together to keep water flowing. Due to strong relationships and funding from the Yampa River Fund, the Colorado Water Trust upped the initial Stagecoach release amount when the city’s 350-acre-foot pool expired in late August. The increased amount was in addition to the Upper Yampa Water District’s bypass and drawdown releases. This marked the seventh year in the past decade that the Water Trust leased water from Stagecoach River was used to help maintain flows and water temperatures.

“The collaboration we saw this season shows that we can have a tremendous impact on river health working in partnership,” said Kelly Romero-Heaney, Water Resources Manager. “While we exhausted our resources to get to this point, the river is in a healthier position and Mother Nature will now take over.”

-WeServeTheCity-

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