



## River Awareness & Safety Surge During Spring Runoff

*Warm Temperatures Bring Higher Water Volumes to Yampa/Elk Rivers*

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-May 4, 2023**-With spring runoff surging along, and warmer weather settling in, river levels are on the rise for the Yampa (2,100+ cfs) and Elk (5,000+ cfs) Rivers, creating potentially hazardous conditions.

The National Weather Service issued a flood watch through Saturday afternoon for the Yampa River Basin of northwest Colorado, including the main stem of the Yampa River and associated tributaries across Routt and Moffat Counties. The region should be prepared for a prolonged flooding season through May and into June.

Public safety agencies are urging residents and guests to exercise extra caution around fast-moving streams and rivers, especially during the runoff season, which continues to show increased signs of strengthening.

"It's easy to be complacent around the Yampa River and our other water bodies because there is so much recreation on them," said Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue Fire Chief Chuck Cerasoli. "This time of year, the high water and cold-water temperatures pose significant risks and should never be underestimated."

The Yampa River is one of Steamboat Springs' popular recreation locations. Rafters, kayakers, and SUPers should always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and always practice river safety. Tubing is NOT recommended until flows drop below 700 cfs, which will be quite a while with current volumes. In addition, bridges such as the railroad bridge (behind the Flower Mill), 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and the ones downriver near Steamboat II and the Steamboat Golf Club bring additional hazards and low clearance issues. When flows exceed 2,400 cfs, traveling under these bridges is not recommended.



If you're not an experienced boater or with a professional outfitter, it's best to stay out of the water. These tips should always be followed:

- Never Kayak/Raft/SUP Alone
- Wear A PFD & Helmet
- Be Prepared For Extremes In Weather
- Never Mix Alcohol and River Use
- Watch Out For Your Kids and Pets along Water Edge
- Carry A First Aid Kit & Know How To Use It.

If you lose a watercraft on the river, let public safety responders know you're okay. Each year numerous calls of concern are received when an empty craft is seen floating downriver. If you do lose your kayak/SUP/raft, call the non-emergency dispatch number 970.879.1144 with the location and description of your vessel. First, dispatch will be happy to know you're okay; and, that there's no cause for emergency services to respond.

SSFR is trained in swift water rescue and ready to respond; however, the best deterrent to requiring their assistance is individual responsibility, river awareness, safety knowledge and common-sense.

-WeServeTheCity-

### Contact

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