

Mountain Whitefish Closure Reels In Recreation This Fall

Confluence of Fish Creek & Yampa River Focus of Mandatory Closure

Steamboat Springs, Colorado-September 24, 2025-While most of the Yampa River remains wide open for recreation, a small stretch where Fish Creek meets the Yampa River will be closed to fishing starting Wednesday, October 1 through Saturday, November 15, 2025. This includes the pool at the confluence of Fish Creek and the Yampa, as well as Fish Creek upstream to the Rollingstone Drive Bridge (about 0.4 miles).

In addition to the closure on Fish Creek, the closure is also in place 100 feet upstream and 200 feet downstream on the Yampa River from the Fish Creek confluence. Signage will be in place to alert river users, so no one is left floundering.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), in partnership with the City of Steamboat Springs, is reeling in recreation in this section to protect one of the valley's most unique residents—spawning mountain whitefish.

“This closure is a vital management tool,” Rachael Gonzales, Public Information Officer for CPW. “By giving whitefish the space to spawn, we’re working to keep this native species from slipping away.”

Mountain whitefish are one of only two native sport fish swimming in northwest Colorado's Yampa and White River drainages. Their population has dropped to concerning levels, and with spawning season underway, protecting them and their habitat is critical. In November 2024, CPW's commission approved to implement the fishing closure starting October 1 through November 15 every year.

“We appreciate the community's cooperation,” added Julie Baxter, Water Resource Manager with the city. “With everyone's help, we can help turn the tide for native whitefish.”

The effort ties into the Yampa River Health Assessment and Streamflow Management Plan, which outlines how the city and partners are working to promote healthy native fish populations and ensure these waters remain a thriving ecosystem for generations to come.

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