

Multi-Day River Trip Information for 2022 Season

Class I-II Rivers

Yampa River - Highway 13 near Craig, South Beach to Duffy Canyon. 32 miles, class I. 1-2 nights. No permit needed. Easy float through sage and pastures. Do not miss take out; dangerous dam comes after.

Green River in Utah - Labyrinth Canyon

Website: <https://www.blm.gov/documents/utah/public-room/permits/labyrinth-canyon-trip-permit>

Lottery: No Lottery

Process: Electronic permit system, recreation.gov - can reserve up to four months in advance. Permits needed year round, but available on request. No one is turned away.

Comments: Class I. There are multiple put ins, including Green River State Park, Crystal Geysers, and Ruby Ranch; the ranch and the park have fees. 68 miles from Green River to Mineral Bottom, or 45 miles from Ruby Ranch. Generally 4 to 5 days. The good scenery starts at Ruby Ranch. The takeout is Mineral Bottom, which is the put in for Stillwater Canyon. Shuttle 70 miles one way; consider Tex's Riverways for shuttle. Road down to Mineral Bottom impassible when wet, steep.

Green River in Utah through Canyonlands - Stillwater Canyon

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/riverpermits.htm>

Phone 435-259-4351, opens 8 to noon

Lottery: No lottery

Process: Electronic permit system, recreation.gov - can reserve up to four months in advance. Permits needed year round, but available on request. No one is turned away.

Comments: Stillwater is generally a four or five day trip, 50 miles, Class I, and can be done back to back with Labyrinth. I recommend Tex's Riverways for a shuttle on the Green River, leave your car in their locked parking lot in Moab. If you float Stillwater Canyon, the take out will be by jet boat, going up the Colorado.

Smith River in Montana, Camp Baker to Eden Bridge.

Website: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/smith-river/>

Phone (406) 454-5840

Lottery Season: You need a permit anytime. Peak season May 15 through July 15

Lottery Deadline: Feb 16th.

Lottery Notification: results on line in March - successful applicants will be notified by mail

Cost to enter lottery: \$10

Low season process: NA. Call 406-454-5861 after March 13th for open dates.

Comments: Rafts need 250 cfs. Canoes need 150 cfs. Generally a five day maximum trip length, unless off peak season. Class II, barely. The biggest challenge at low water is dodging rocks. Can apply on line or with paper application. To pick up a cancellation call 406 454-5861. No groover needed due to pit toilets, but this may change. Bear proof food storage required.

Ruby-Horsethief on the Colorado

Website: <https://www.recreation.gov/permits/74466>

Permits available 60 days in advance. Class I-II. Canoes not recommended above 10000 cfs. Rafts need 2500 cfs. Below 5000 cfs best for families. Generally an overnight trip. Permits are only for campsites; no permit needed for one day trip. If you are flexible about campsites, you can usually get something.

Gunnison River - Delta to Whitewater. Class I-II. 44 miles. Put in at Confluence Park in Delta. Usually 3 days. No permit needed, but this may change.

Class II-III Rivers

Green River - below Flaming Gorge Dam. Put in below the dam, Class II-III, up to 38 miles from the dam to Browns Park, shorter with other take outs. Usually one night. Good fishing. No permit needed.

Six Mile Gap on the North Platte in Wyoming

No permit needed, 38 miles, usually 3 days. High water, over 2500cfs, can require quick maneuvers in heavy waves. Class II, although Douglas Rapid may be class III. Get to wilderness campsites early, or they may be taken. Pickeroon campground is closing. Second night often at Corral Creek or Bennett Peak campgrounds. Need to check if it can be done after the fires. Hot Spring at Saratoga often visited after the trip.

Rio Chama in New Mexico. El Vado to Big Eddy, 31 miles - updated for 2017

Website: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-passes/lotteries-and-permit-systems/new-mexico/rio-chama-river>

Phone 575.758.8851, recorded info 888.882.6188, call

Lottery Season: May 15 to Sept. 15 (lottery for Friday and Saturday launches only)

Lottery Deadline: January 31st

Lottery Notification: Feb. 15, win or lose.

Cost to enter lottery: \$6

Success rate: Approximately 10%

Process: Now on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Unclaimed and cancellations available on April 1st. River controlled, may turn it on for weekends. Flow not predictable, can drop suddenly.

Comments: El Vado launch site privately owned, fee. Minimum flow around 300 cfs for canoes. Can be a two day trip, better at 3 days. Class II-III. A permit holder can transfer the permit to another person.

Launch Friday or Saturday, on the weekend releases, but can launch any day in high water. Class II+-III is last 3-4 miles, can take out above that. Beautiful campsites.

San Juan River in Utah. Sand Island to Mexican Hat to Clay Hills crossing. 84 miles for both sections.

<https://www.recreation.gov/permits/250986>

Phone 435-587-1544, 8 AM to noon.

Lottery Season: April 15 to July 15th

Lottery Deadline: received by January 31st

Lottery Notification: Feb. 12th

Cost to enter lottery: \$6

Process: Electronic application. Must pay per person fees by March 15th or you will lose your permit, so consider paying for a small number of people out front; can add people later.

Low season process: For launches before April 15th, can apply December 1st. For launches after July 15th, can book on March 16th.

Comments: Class II except for Government rapid, which can be lined or portaged. Popular in May and June, may be easy to get permit at other times. Can run lower section, upper, or both. Upper section is generally two to three days, lower section generally four to five days, both is generally 6 to 7 days.

Some rafters do this faster. Ask about the maximum number of days allowed, perhaps 7 days on the lower section. 500 cfs is reportedly minimum to run rafts, which could be an issue in August or September. Canoes and kayaks can probably run it year round. After you get a permit, you can

designate alternate trip leaders in case the permit holder cannot go on the trip. Consider applying for a tribal permit to hike or camp on river left. Must reserve campgrounds below Government rapid.

Dolores River - Class II-III. Several different sections to paddle, Slickrock to Bedrock the most popular, 50 miles, 3 nights, or 35 miles with Gypsum Valley put in. Snowpack dependent, short season if any, controlled by McPhee Reservoir. McPhee reservoir low, so probably will not run in 2022. No permit needed. Consider going after Memorial Day, when flows under 750 cfs stop rafts. A spectacular trip.

Section from Bradfield put in below McPhee to Dove Creek campground, 15-20 miles, class II. Can run to slickrock, but portage Snaggletooth Rapid, Class IV or IV+, and watch for poison ivy. Then 15 miles of lovely class III.

Deso-Gray on the Green River

Website: <https://www.recreation.gov/permits/233393>

Phone 435 636-3600

Lottery Season: May 1 to Sept. 30th - recreation.gov

Lottery Deadline: Jan 31

Lottery Notification: February 15

Cost to enter lottery: \$6

Success rate: NA, but curiously, July 4 and 24 are often available. August not popular due to heat and bugs, more and more folks going for September, better weather.

Non-Lottery season: Apply on line starting Dec. 1

Process: On line.

Comments: If you get a launch date, you must accept (pay) by March 14th. Unclaimed launches are available first come first serve starting March 15. Cancellations can appear on line at any time. The season is mid-March to late November, with water reliably adequate during that period. High use season is approximately May 15-August 14. Ice dams a problem in March. Generally five to seven days on the river. Generally rated Class II-III, but perhaps IV in high water. The tribe may not permit you to camp or hike on Ute lands, which is a change from the past.

Yampa River in Dinosaur National Park.

Website: <https://www.nps.gov/dino/planyourvisit/boating-and-rafting.htm>

Phone: 970 374-2468. Best time to call for questions 11:30 to noon.

Lottery Season: May 10 to July 10.

Lottery Deadline: January 31st

Lottery Notification: Mid-February

Off season and cancellation available: March 6

Cost to enter lottery: \$15. If don't win the lottery, may apply the \$15 to non-lottery permit.

Comments: One permit system for Yampa and Lodore. Minimum flows 1000 cfs for rafts. May need to drag canoes at 400 cfs or lower. More class III above 2000 cfs Average streamflow is 500 cfs at end of July, as in 2009. Generally hard to get permits unless you go late season and risk cancellation due to low water. Check if water available at Echo Park campground. 30% cancellation rate for lottery permits. Usually a 5 day trip, but can pay extra to get 6 days. Note that with the low success rate, the \$15 application fee may not be a great investment. Class II-III, although Warm Springs rapid can be IV at high water, can be portaged with some difficulty.

River: **Lodore Canyon of the Green River** in Dinosaur Nat. Park

Website: <https://www.nps.gov/dino/planyourvisit/boating-and-rafting.htm>

Phone: 970 374-2468

Lottery Season: May 11 to September 11.

Lottery Deadline: January 31st - now on line

Lottery Notification: Mid-February

Off season and cancellation available: March 6

Cost to enter lottery: \$15.

Comments: One permit system for Yampa and Lodore. Usually 4 days, but can pay extra to get 5 days. Class III, however Hells Half mile may be Class IV, can be portaged.

Lower Owyhee River in Oregon. Generally class III. No lottery, fill out a form at the put in, which is Rome, Oregon. Take out at Birch Creek, 48 miles, three to five days. The Leslie Gulch takeout is on the reservoir, 65 miles. A relatively short season, minimum 1000-700 cfs for rafts. Beautiful scenery and geology.

Class IV Rivers

Westwater on the Colorado River in Utah

Website: <https://www.recreation.gov/permits/621744>. also

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/passes-and-permits/lotteries/utah/westwatercanyon>

Phone 435-259-7012, 8 AM to noon.

Lottery Season: NA

Process: On line. Available two months prior to launch, at 8 am. Permits needed year round.

Comments: 17 miles. Usually done as a two day trip, but can be done in one day. Class IV, perhaps lower at lower flows. Reportedly more difficult/dangerous above 8000-13,000 cfs. Can list alternate trip leader on application. Swims can be long.

Middle Fork of Salmon River in Idaho, put in at Boundary Creek. updated for 2017

Website: http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/scnf/passes-permits/recreation/?cid=fsbdev3_029568

Phone: (208) 879-4101 or 1-877-550-6777

Lottery Season: May 28 - September 3

Lottery Deadline: Jan 31st

Lottery Notification: early Feb (check on line). must confirm by March 15.

Cost to enter lottery: \$6

Low season process: Log in anytime after October 1st.

Comments: Apply on line for lottery, cancellation, or low season on recreation.gov. A tough permit to get in peak season, maybe 500 to 1 odds. If get a permit, must pay by March 15th. 850 cfs? minimum for rafts at Middle Fork Lodge gauge. Some parties fly in downstream if water is low. Reported that kayaks and canoes can run in September most or almost all years. Rafters take 4 to 6 days. Class IV at higher water, perhaps III+ at lower water. 4 feet or more is big water. When we ran the Middle Fork in September, 1.7 feet, the upper section was tough due to low water, and the trip was hard on gear.

River: **Main Fork of Salmon** Put in at Corn Creek. updated for 2017

Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/recreation/4rivers/> , click on passes and permits

Phone: (208) 865-2700 or 1-877-550-6777

Lottery Season: June 20 - September 7

Lottery Deadline: Jan 31st.

Lottery Notification: early Feb (check on line). Must confirm by March 15th.

Cost to enter lottery: \$6

Low season process: Log in anytime after October 1st. Low season permits unlimited.

Comments: Apply on line for lottery, cancellation, or low season at recreation.gov. One source says "The river is never too low for boating". If get a permit in the lottery, must pay by March 15th. Wilderness River Outfitters runs guided canoe trips in late August. A pool-drop river. Shuttle 400 miles one way, around \$300 per vehicle plus gas. Trip length for rafters is usually 5 to 6 days, maximum trip length 8 days. Class III-IV, harder with higher water. Unlimited permits in post season.

Selway and Hells Canyon are on the same permit system as the Salmon. You can put in one application for each river. The Selway is class IV-V, lottery season May 15-July 31. The Selway may be the hardest permit to get, one launch per day. Hells Canyon lottery season late May to Sept. 10, class IV rapids, perhaps easier than Selway.

Salt River In Arizona. Upper Salt river, Highway 60 to 288.

Website: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tonto/passes-permits/recreation/?cid=fsbdev3_018757.

Phone (928) 402-6200 or FAX 928 402-6236

Lottery Season: March 1 to May 15

Lottery Deadline: January 31st

Cost to enter lottery: \$10 - apply on line

Success rate:NA

Non-lottery process: No permits required, but usually no water. Watch for rattlesnakes in summer.

Process: www.Recreation.gov.

Comments: Will need tribal permit, not available in 2021. Water level unpredictable, some years have low water, 2000-3000 cfs preferred. Minimum for canoes 300 cfs, for rafts 1200 cfs. Class III-IV. The Upper Salt River is 52 miles, usually 4 days. Max group size 15 people. Ranger Don Sullivan canoes, thinks that the river gets harder as it gets lower, sharp rocks, call him at 928 595-1647 for specific low water advice. Cancellations go up as river goes down; look 3 weeks before you want to go, as that is when money is due. Some permits available 10 days before, first come first serve. February and March generally best months to run.

Rogue River in Oregon. Grave Creek to Foster Bar - updated for 2017

Website: <http://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/rogue/permit.php>

Phone 541-479-3735 - Smullin Visitor Center

Lottery Season: May 15 to October 15

Lottery Deadline: January 31st

Lottery Notification: approximately February 15th.

Cost to enter lottery: \$6

Process: Now on Recreation.gov. The process for picking up cancellations was complex in the past, may be simpler now, enquire. Waterway Access Permits required.

Comments: 34 miles, Grave Creek to Foster Bar, Class III-IV. Rainie Falls is class IV+ to V, can be portaged, or run the fish ladder, Class III. Four days typical, milage can be extended with class I-II sections. July-Oct streamflows typically around 2000 cfs, flows below 1200 cfs considered low. 1250 miles Loveland CO to Grants Pass Oregon. Can list alternate leader, if alternate does not also apply for permit.

Cataract Canyon in Utah through Canyonlands

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/riverpermits.htm>

Phone 435-259-4351, opens 8 to 12:30

Lottery: No lottery

Process: Electronic permit system, recreation.gov - can reserve up to four months in advance. Permits needed year round, but available on request. No one is turned away.

Cataract is generally three to seven days, class III-IV or V; the rapids are reportedly on the same scale as the Grand Canyon, and become difficult above 30,000 or 40,000 cfs. Note that to determine the cfs through Cataract you need to add the Green River and Colorado river flows, as there is no stream gauge in Cataract canyon. A common takeout is near the Dirty Devil River. Takeouts can be muddy. Ask about possible take out locations relative to the current lake level. Road Runners Shuttle and Coyote Shuttle offer shuttles for Cataract, may not be cheap.

General notes and disclaimers

I review the available information each year, and attempt to identify the changes for that year, if any, and update this sheet. However, errors may exist in this sheet; please bring any errors to my attention. This summary is not a substitute for a careful reading of the permit rules, or careful research on each individual river. A phone call to the river ranger before you file the permit may ensure that you understand the permit rules, as well as helping you assess the advantages and disadvantages of the dates you are considering. I find discussions with the river rangers during non-rush times to be very helpful. I recommend that you say that your trip is a private trip, even if you do plan to offer it to club members.

Generally, it is better if everyone does not apply for the same dates; ideally, everyone would apply for different dates, but this may not be feasible in a large group. This might be especially true in terms of first choices.

For rivers with lotteries, June is generally the most popular and competitive month. Your best chance of getting a permit is usually at the end of the lottery season. The low water in late season often works well for canoes and kayaks, although in a dry year there may not be enough water. Early season can be high water and cold.

Richard Ferguson