



Reservoirs release water to help endangered fish, river lovers

For more information

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Attached photo: coloradorafting.jpg

Cutline: Rafters on the Colorado River downstream from the Shoshone Power Plant in Glenwood Canyon emerge from some low-water rapids. Water released from three dams starting on Aug. 16-17 to improve flows for endangered fish in the river by Grand Junction also will serve to improve the river experience for rafters and kayakers.

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GLENWOOD SPRINGS – Low water levels in the Colorado River prompted the operators of a trio of reservoirs to release water starting on Aug. 16-17 to help endangered fish and, as a side benefit, the recreation industry.

The Colorado River Water Conservation District increased its releases from the Wolford Mountain Reservoir near Kremmling in Grand County by 100 cubic feet a second (cfs).

Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation upped its releases from Green Mountain Reservoir at Heeney in Summit County by 150 cfs and increased releases from its Ruedi Reservoir above Basalt in Pitkin County by 50 cfs.

The primary purpose of the extra water is to assist in recovery of four species of endangered fish in the Colorado River. A critical habitat for these fish is located along a 15-mile stretch of the Colorado River in and around Grand Junction.

The additional releases will improve overall river flow in the Colorado River in Gore Canyon to about 800 cfs, in Glenwood Canyon to about 1,100 cfs and below Glenwood Springs to about 2,600 cfs.

The Colorado River above, the confluence of the Roaring Fork River has been impacted by low flows and resulting warmer water temperatures as recently up-stream junior water users have not been called to supply water to the Shoshone Power Plant in Glenwood Canyon and to Grand Valley irrigators.

The Shoshone Power Plant, down for maintenance for the last few weeks, is expected to be back on line any day. Its senior water right should return the river back to its normal levels for this time of year as soon as it resumes operations.

While the water flows toward Grand Junction and the endangered fish, rafters and kayakers along the Colorado River will enjoy an improved experience.

The releases are especially timely for the Gore Canyon Festival and Whitewater Cup competitions scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Aug. 19-20. Events take place on the Pumphouse and Shoshone sections of the river.

On the web:

Colorado River Water Conservation District: www.h2oinfo.org

Gore Canyon Festival: www.rapidpulse.com

Endangered Fish Recovery Program: www.r6.fws.gov/coloradoriver