

## Canoeing the White River

**Born from snowmelt in mountain headwaters above Trappers Lake in Western Colorado, the White River flows due west in a serpentine search for its confluence with the Green River.**

- This is a place to paddle, watch wildlife, and occasionally leave the river for an unforgettable hike.
- This is one of the quiet places, where solitude and a sense of adventure are still very much a part of the outdoor experience.

The **White River is a gem of a river**, uncrowded and undiscovered by the canoeing, rafting, and kayaking public.

It is **a friendly and accommodating river**, not demanding but with a variety of water experiences - fast water (Class I and II rapids) slow water, a lake, and a reservoir.

There are **ranch lands interspersed with deserted areas, deep and rugged canyons, and flatland meanders through Indian reservations.**

Also the location of the renowned Maybe Annual Almost Meeker to Rangely Canoe Race.

**At 11 miles downriver from Rangely the river enters federal land, and you are free to step ashore any where.**

Note ... At the Mountain Fuels Resources Bridge, the river enters the Indian Reservation, and trespassing laws are in force.

**A good place to start a float is where State Highway 13 crosses the White River just downstream from Meeker.**

- The river twists and turns, mainly through ranch lands.
- The water's fast but uneventful all the way to Rio Blanco Lake (about 23 river miles).
- Rio Blanco Lake is a good place to camp, but you can float right past the lake if you aren't watching for it because the lake is fed only by a narrow ditch from the river,
- There is no potable water at the lake but there are shelters and restrooms.
- There is good fishing at the lake - crap-pies, perch, and northern pike.

Note ... there is a narrow strip of land between the lake and the river. You'll know you're at the lake when you see a small outhouse on the right. You'll have to carry your watercraft to the lake.

**From Rio Blanco Lake all the way to Kenney Reservoir just outside of Rangely - about 40 miles — the White River is placid but the current remains strong.**

Most of the river passes through ranch lands, but there are deserted areas with much wildlife.

**Watch for the hundreds of geese that nest along the river, as well as bald eagles and a variety of bird life in the wetlands** at the head of the reservoir.

To continue downriver, **you will have to portage past Taylor Draw dam:**

- keep to the far left.
- For a campground with showers and potable water, continue about eight river miles to Rangely.
- The campground is on the left just beyond a high shale bluff.
- You'll know it when you see it because the bluff is the first and only one you will encounter on the left. The bank is steep and you'll have to scramble to get to the top.

**Past Rangely, the White River passes through ranch lands for about 21 miles** from the campground.

**Another 3.5 miles farther is the Utah line**

**Another 4.5 miles is Cowboy Canyon**, a great place to camp.

- This stretch of the river passes through deep canyons and is wild country.
- There are old pioneer cabin ruins along the way.
- The Bonanza Bridge is about 7.5 miles below Cowboy Canyon.
- The river continues through canyon country for another 32 miles or so to the takeout site on BLM land; watch for the sign.
- The choice of places to camp here is up to you.
- no potable water.
- Few signs of civilization along this stretch of river,
- try hiking up some of the draws to get a real feel for the wildlands.

About **three miles downriver from the BLM takeout point is the Mountain Fuels Resources Bridge.**

**It is another 21 miles from this bridge to the confluence of the Green and White rivers.**

- The water run slow through flatlands leading up to the confluence.
- There are takeout sites where the rivers come together and at the Mountain Fuels Resources Bridge.
- Both takeouts are on Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation lands.
- You must have permission park at these locations. Call 801-722-5511 for permission.

**The best time of year to run the river is from late April to mid June when there is spring runoff.**

There is usually plenty of water in the river from mid June through July,

**But be warned** ... the infamous hordes of black gnats hatch in mid-June, and you'll need some heavy duty bug protection along the river.

*Do not* bring dogs or any other pets with you if you float the river in mid-June or later; the gnats will be unbearable for them.

In the **latter part of summer, the water level drops to the point where you will carry your watercraft more than you'll float in it.**

There's **plenty of wildlife along the river - geese, ducks, eagles, herons, deer, feral goats, an occasional elk, coyotes, beaver, wild horses, and antelope.**

There are **trout in the river near Meeker and below Kenney Reservoir.** Elsewhere there are catfish. Occasionally you may land a squawfish, humpback chub, or razorback suckers. If you hook one of these, throw it back unharmed immediately, they are endangered species and it's a Federal offense to harm one.

Squawfish were once at the top of the food chain in the rivers of the West.

They are not 'trash' fish as many settlers saw them, but habitat degradation and competition from imported species has drastically reduced their numbers.

**The White River is very important to all that live in the White River Valley.**

**We canoe it, fish it, float it, and take water from it for irrigation and drinking.**

**IT'S WITH RELUCTANCE THAT WE MAKE IT KNOWN TO OTHERS.**

**But, not to do so would be selfish and deprive people who love rivers from savoring one of the last best places in a part of Colorado yet untrammled and unspoiled.**

We hope you'll keep our campsites clean, respect private property, and enjoy the river as we do.