

WESTERN RIVER DESCRIPTIONS AT A GLANCE

ARIZONA:

- **Grand Canyon** *RiverMaps: The Grand Canyon, Belknap: The Grand Canyon River Guide*
 - The Colorado River through the Grand Canyon is often considered a mecca trip for most boaters, and ample river running and camping experience is recommended. Typical trips range in length from 226 miles to 297 miles depending on your takeout, and last 16 to 25 days. The Grand Canyon runs a weighted lottery system, meaning each year you apply the better chances you'll get of being drawn. **NOTE:** Applications submitted between Dec. 1, 2015 and Jan. 31 2016 are for **2017 season**.
- **Upper Salt River** *RiverMaps: The Upper Salt River*
 - With headwaters rolling out of the White Mountains of eastern Arizona, the Salt River flows through more than 50 miles of canyon scenery and has 33 named rapids ranging from class II thru IV that can be run in three to five days. Runnable water levels are often short and unpredictable, but can be very rewarding if your trip is timed properly.

COLORADO:

- **Dinosaur National Monument** *RiverMaps: Dinosaur NM, Belknap: Dinosaur River Guide*
 - Permits for the Yampa and Green rivers through Dinosaur National Monument are highly sought after, and odds of being drawn are fairly slim, but don't let that discourage you! The canyons through the monument offer some of the best scenery in the country. There are other sections of these rivers that can be run out side of DNM, some permitted, some not. Novice boaters are encouraged to strengthen their skills elsewhere before attempting these runs.
 - **Gates of Ladore**
 - This 68 mile run should be completed in no more than four days during peak season, and five days during the off season. Rapids in Ladore present more challenges and technical water than those of Yampa Canyon.
 - **Yampa Canyon**
 - The harder of the two permits to pull, this run should be completed in no more than six days during peak season. Although the run is longer (96 miles), there is less whitewater compared to Ladore, but more hiking opportunities.
- **Ruby-Horsetheif** *Belknap: Canyonlands River Guide, Kelsey: River Guide to Canyonlands NP*
 - An excellent run for boaters new to the sport, families, and those that like leisurely days on the river; this desert run offers a wide variety of hiking, camping and scenery. Easy access and quick shuttle runs make this a great weekend get-away. Permits are now required 60 days in advance from May through September during peak usage. This run can be extended from mild to wild by adding a Westwater permit (see **UTAH**).

IDAHO:

• **Four Rivers**

- The Selway River, the Middle and Main fork of the Salmon, and Hells Canyon on the Snake River are all permitted under the Four Rivers Lottery System. Each run has its own distinct beauty and treasures, and each are for expert boaters with advanced rapid running skills and ample camping experience. Expect extreme temperature and climate changes, hypothermia is a real risk in this region!

▪ **The Selway River**

RiverMaps: Guide to the Selway River

- The hardest of **all** permits to pull with one private trip launch per day, many consider this to be the premier multi-day whitewater trip with challenging, steep rapids and truly remote wilderness. The Selway has been dedicated Wild and Scenic and has 38 named rapids, many of which are Class IV. This trip is not for those weak in spirit.

▪ **Middle Fork of the Salmon**

RiverMaps: Middle Fork and Main Salmon,

Leidecker: Middle Fork of the Salmon River

- The Salmon River system is undammed and uncontrolled, relying solely on snow melt and runoff. The Middle Fork is considered to be steeper than the Main, and river runners are given very little time to relax between rapids.

▪ **Main Salmon**

RiverMaps: Middle Fork and Main Salmon

- The float between rapids on the main Salmon is more leisurely than the Middle Fork, but that doesn't mean the rapids are any easier. The Salmon River Canyon is one of the deepest in North America, and is deeper than the Grand Canyon. Sections above and below these runs are non-permitted.

▪ **Snake River in Hells Canyon**

RiverMaps: The Snake River in Hells Canyon and

Lower Salmon

- The deepest river-carved canyon in North America, Hells Canyon offers spectacularly rugged scenery and steep rapids to start, but the Snake is controlled by heavy dam activity upstream and quickly turns to flat water, compared to the natural flows of the Salmon. This area is not as remote as the other three rivers with motor and jet boating allowed through Hells Canyon.

MONTANA:

• **Smith River**

- Renowned for trout fishing and breathtaking scenery, the Smith River is an ideal trip for the oarsman who prefers fishing to rapid running. This float runs through 59 miles of remote canyon with an occasional Class II or III, and should be completed in four nights or less.

NEW MEXICO:

• **Rio Chama**

- This Wild and Scenic River is well known for multi-colored canyons, fishing, wildlife viewing and hiking. This run is ideal for scenic floats, offers Class II rapids though this 31 mile segment, and can be run in canoes, SUPs and open kayaks too. Trips are typically completed in two to three days. No permits required for day runs on the lower section.

OREGON:

- **Rogue River** *RiverMaps: Rogue River Wild & Scenic River, Leidecker: The Rogue River*
 - Not for the faint of heart, this Class V run is a truly unique experience because the trip *can* end where the river empties into the Pacific Ocean, if you choose to proceed 11 miles past where the permit ends. Although most of the run is sprinkled with Class II and III rapids, there is an occasional IV and one V in the run that makes an otherwise easy run much more challenging.

UTAH:

- **Cataract Canyon** *Belknap: Canyonlands River Guide, Kelsey: River Guide to Canyonlands NP*
 - Cataract Canyon starts just south of Moab and permits are easily acquired any time of year on a walk-up, first-come first-serve basis. This desert run has 13 miles of world class rapids, some of which can reach Class V when water is high, but they are isolated by extensive sections of unavoidable flat water on either side. Parties should be prepared for long days on the water, variable weather and high winds. This trip can be shortened substantially with motor assistance.
- **Desolation/ Gray Canyons** *RiverMaps: Green River in Desolation and Gray Canyons, Belknap: Desolation River Guide*
 - Despite the name, Desolation and Gray Canyons offer outstanding scenery, unique geologic formations and has evidence of prehistoric human activity in some places. The 84 mile stretch is typically completed in six or seven days. Mild whitewater makes this a great run for beginners and families, but the remoteness of these canyons should not be taken for granted.
- **San Juan River** *RiverMaps: San Juan Rive, Kearsley: San Juan River Guide*
 - This relaxing desert run can be a great introduction to overnight expeditions, and is ideal for families, novice boaters and those looking for a slow float through desert canyons that resemble the surface of Mars. Trips can vary in length and duration depending on put-in and take-out locations. The San Juan can reach extreme temperatures during mid-summer and proceeding past Mexican Hat can be treacherous if flows are below 700cfs (very muddy banks and revealed river bed can occur).
- **Westwater Canyon** *Belknap: Canyonlands River Guide, Kelsey: River Guide to Canyonlands NP*
 - A classic Southwest run, Westwater canyon picks up where Ruby/ Horsetheif ends and continues towards Moab though a set of narrow and steep rapids. Great for an action-packed weekend, Westwater offers Class IV rapids and is an ideal intermediate run for boaters who are looking to test their skills in bigger, more technical water.

Non-permitted Rivers to Consider

- **Colorado** – Dominguez Canyon, White River
- **New Mexico** – Gila, Rio Verde
- **Oregon** – Grand Ronde, John Day, Owyhee
- **Utah** – Escalante, Dolores
- **Wyoming** - Northgate