

Useful Recreation Links

- [Rafting Map - Upper Rio Grande](#)
- [Rio Grande & Conejos River Boatable Days Study](#)
- [American Whitewater Reach Description – Wagon Wheel Gap](#)
- [Colorado Low Head Dam Safety Initiative](#)
- [Aquatic Nuisance Species \(CPW\)](#)

Note: Information on stream flows (like this page on the Rio Grande below Rio Grande Reservoir) are available on the Dept. of Water Resource's webpage on stream gages. You can navigate to other stream gages by clicking on "stations."

Safety

Safety always comes first on the water. Please remember to always wear a life jacket and research your boating destination ahead of time. Low bridges, low head dams (LHDs), fences, and other navigational hazards pose a risk to boaters. These hazards are not always shown on maps and can be difficult to spot.

A variety of groups around the state, including the Department of Natural Resources, is working to map hazards and improve safety. However, it is important to know where hazards exist and plan accordingly.



Recreational Boating Photo Credits: Rio Grande Headwater Restoration Project (above), Christi Skeie (header), and Curt Howell (background)

Recreational Boating 101

The Rio Grande Basin boasts excellent water-based recreation activities, and boating is particularly popular. Many recreators enjoy "float fishing" on lakes and rivers while others seek out whitewater boating opportunities. No matter what type of craft floats your boat, there is sure to be a time and place to use it in this Basin!

River Access and Where to Boat

The Rio Grande mainstem features several boating segments from Rio Grande Reservoir to the New Mexico state line (and beyond). From the Texas Creek ramp to the Town of Del Norte you will find world class float fishing and some class II and III rapids. The Box Canyon below Rio Grande Reservoir offers more technical whitewater boating. For leisurely inner tubing, check out Collier State Wildlife Area. See the map on the back page to find river access points as well as reservoirs with boat access.

Note: the Rio Grande from Del Norte to the City of Alamosa is not navigable due to lack of public access and hazardous instream structures.

When to Boat?

The boating season can vary depending on streamflows, weather, and preference, but generally lasts from April through October. Some people prefer to boat when flows are high for an exciting technical trip, while others prefer lower flows. Keep an eye on stream gages (see links on right) to plan when and where to boat!

Another useful resource is the [Rio Grande & Conejos River Boatable Days Study](#), available on American Whitewater's website. This study, and [others like it around the state](#), quantified the number of "boatable" days on several segments of each river, utilizing streamflow preference data provided by boaters familiar with the rivers.

Note: Boating is not permitted from Lobatos Bridge to Lee Trail (New Mexico) from April 1st to May 31st to protect sensitive wildlife breeding areas, including nesting raptors.

Aquatic Nuisance Species

Aquatic species such as mussels, fish, and aquatic plants, can be transported between water bodies via boats, vehicles, and clothing, especially wading gear. To prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS), it is important to inspect and disinfect your equipment and watercraft before traveling. Motorboats and sailboats must have an ANS Stamp prior to launching in Colorado waters.

Lakes & Reservoirs

Lakes and reservoirs also offer unique recreational opportunities. From remote, high mountain lakes to reservoirs accessible by vehicle and outfitted with boat ramps and handicap amenities, you'll be sure to find water suitable for your style. While some lakes/reservoirs, such as Smith Reservoir and Continental Reservoir, allow motorized boats, others do not.



