



Press Release — For Immediate Release

Spring runoff brings high water to Colorado's Arkansas River



SALIDA, Colo. — *May 23, 2017* — High water season on America's most popular whitewater rafting river is just around the bend. Warming temperatures on Colorado's highest peaks have been melting an above-average snowpack into the state's creeks and rivers, to the delight of boaters anticipating an exciting season, according to the Arkansas River Outfitters Association.

High water brings chocolate-colored, cresting waves inside the rocky walls of the Royal Gorge, a 1,200-foot-deep chasm in Cañon City, Colo.

"It's about big waves, big holes and big moves so there is big fun," said Andy Neinas, owner of Echo Canyon River Expeditions and a member of the Arkansas River Outfitters Association. "High water in the Royal Gorge gives you that classic flavor of Western rivers that is a phenomenon of nature you just don't get to see every year."

This is the third year in a row that Colorado snowstorms precluded a strong boating season. Snowpack piled up this year to 120% of average in parts of the state.

“Here we go for the third straight year of fantastic whitewater on the Arkansas River,” Neinas said. “Come rafting with any outfitter and you’ll feel like you’re winning the whitewater lottery.”

Colorado river guides wait all winter to see what the snowpack brings during peak flows.

“I love the fifteen hundred pounds I can collect in the raft and get the inertia to crash into the break of the wave,” said 19-year Royal Gorge river guide David Bonogofsky. “I love the energy transfer in the exchange. It fires me up.”

Peak flows on Colorado’s rivers begin in late May and last until the third week of June. Difficult sections of whitewater during this time attract active and adventurous paddlers willing to get wet and paddle hard.

With more than 150 miles of Colorado’s best whitewater, the Arkansas River from above Buena Vista through Salida to Cañon City offers trips suitable for most people any time of the season. Rafting during high water in Browns Canyon National Monument delivers faster-moving water and big waves as rocks become covered and create hydraulic river features.

“The character of Browns Canyon changes continuously as the water increases,” said Joe Greiner, owner of Wilderness Aware Rafting in Buena Vista and a member of AROA. “It is super-fun. At some water levels, outfitters raise minimum age requirements but there is always a trip suitable for most people.”

The Arkansas River is Colorado’s most popular whitewater rafting destination, hosting nearly a quarter of a million visitors last season and attracting kayakers and private rafters from around the world. This year’s generous snowpack will carry boaters well into September.

“If you’re a powder hound, peak flows in June are like a great powder day at any ski area,” said Neinas, of Echo Canyon River Expeditions. “But if you can’t join us for first chair, we’re going to have good water all season.”

For information about current water levels and booking a Colorado whitewater rafting adventure, contact an Arkansas River outfitter at www.ArkansasRiverOutfitters.org.

About Arkansas River Outfitters Association

Arkansas River Outfitters Association (AROA) consists of knowledgeable, experienced and licensed professionals who are dedicated to offering world-class outdoor fun on one of the most popular rivers for rafting in United States, Colorado's Arkansas River. AROA's members offer a wide range of whitewater experiences for all ages and adrenaline levels, and are truly committed to providing exceptional service for a memorable adventure.



AROA, partnering with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Chaffee County Visitors Bureau are grantees of the 2017 Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) Marketing Matching Grant program.