



Press Release — For Immediate Release

Unique agreement supports the longest rafting season on Colorado's Arkansas River



SALIDA, Colo. — *July 10, 2017* — A successful water management agreement on the Arkansas River exemplifies Colorado's dedication to its natural resources and the visitor experiences they support, according to the Arkansas River Outfitters Association (AROA).

The Arkansas River Voluntary Flow Management Program helps ensure there is water for whitewater rafting on the river well into August. The cooperative agreement among water users is unique in that it includes recreation in water management decisions. AROA is part of the agreement with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and other agencies that not only supports summer flows for whitewater rafting, but also manages water year-round for a healthy fishery.

The program, which started in 1990, is a model management technique for all other rivers in the American West. It allows whitewater rafting outfitters to offer the longest boating season in Colorado, AROA Executive Director Bob Hamel said.

“The water program recognizes that recreation is part of our lifestyle, and that its economic impact is important,” Hamel said.

Whitewater rafting generated \$179.8 million in spending among the state’s commercial users last year, according to the Colorado River Outfitters Association.

The Arkansas River is America’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. The river hosts more than 40 percent of the state’s commercial rafting market, in part due to the longer season, but also because its 100-plus miles of whitewater rapids offer something for nearly everyone.

Technical boating, mild family float trips, multi-day camping and inn-to-inn rafting, plus standup paddle boarding and kayaking, are popular trips among families and friends of all ages. With the mountain towns of Salida, Buena Vista and Cañon City nearby, visitors lengthen their stays and plan additional outdoor fun like horseback riding, ATV tours and hiking the area’s concentration of 14,000-foot peaks.

More than 100 miles of the Arkansas River was designated Gold Medal in 2014, meaning anglers can expect trophy trout fishing on a long, contiguous river segment that constitutes nearly a third of the state’s Gold Medal miles. 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.