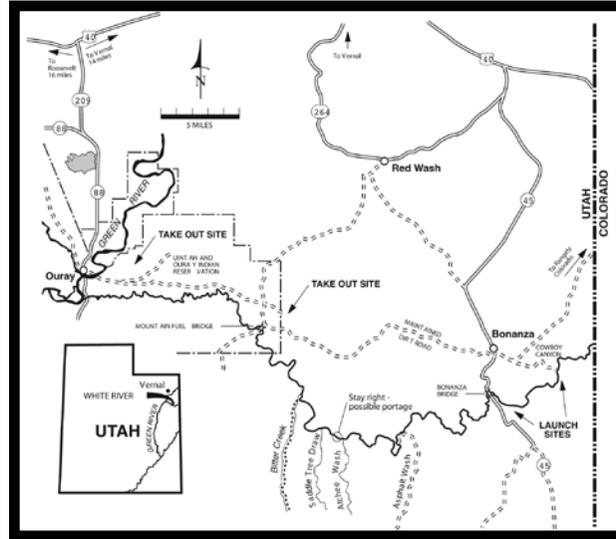


Born from snowmelt in mountain headwaters above Trapper Lake in western Colorado, the White River flows due west in a serpentine search for its confluence with the Green River. Near the Utah-Colorado border the river course turns spectacular-canyon style. For 100 miles between the town of Rangely, Colorado, and the river's confluence with the Green River, the White River cuts a rugged, scenic trough into the high desert plains of the Uintah Basin. 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.

## Where is the White River?



### Maps

BLM surface maps (1:100,000): Vernal, Seep Ridge and Rangely. USGS topo maps (1:24,000 quads): Southam Canyon, Asphalt Wash, Weaver Ridge, Archy Bench, Red Wash Southwest, Walsh Knolls Utah/CO, Banty Point, CO, and Rangely, CO.

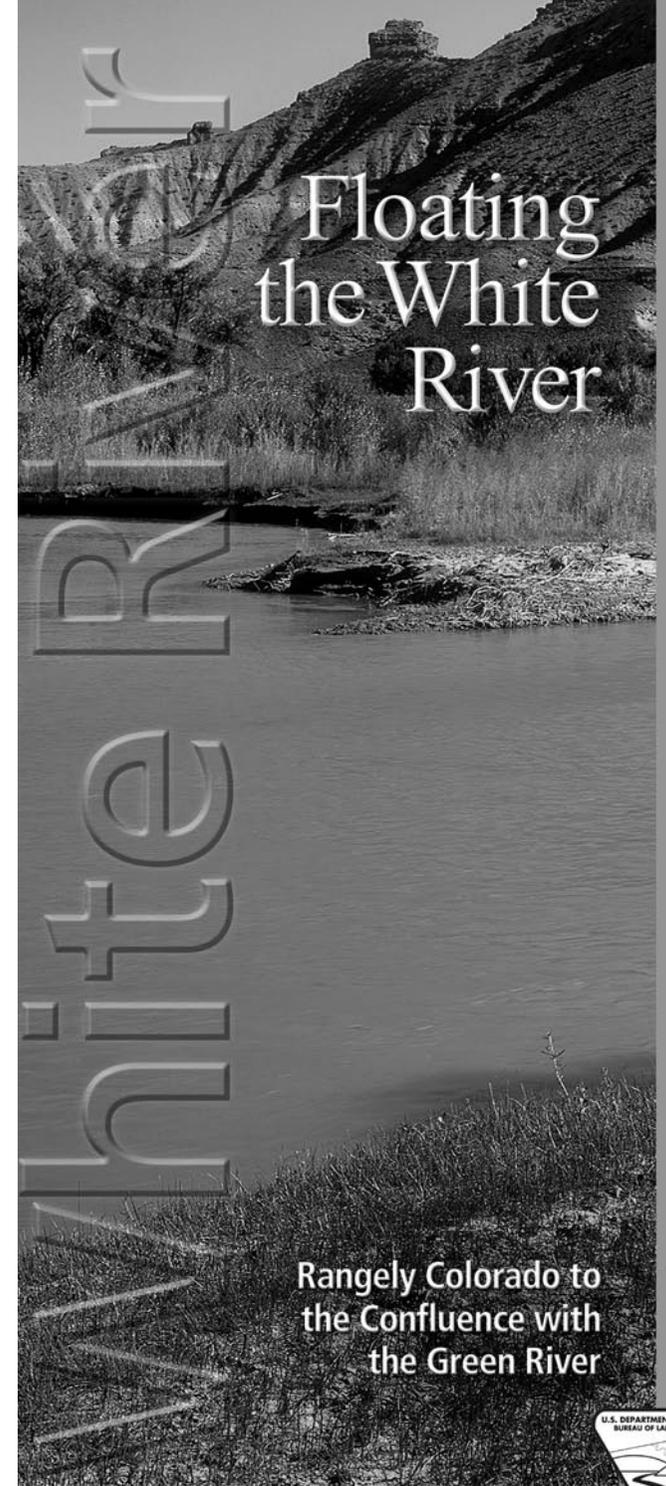
1:24,000 maps available  
**Bitter Creek Books**  
 684 West Main Street  
 Vernal, UT 84078  
 435.789.4742

1:100,000 maps available  
**Vernal Field Office**  
 170 South 500 East  
 Vernal, UT 84078  
 435.781.4400  
 TDD 435.781.4512

For more information in Colorado and floating 65 miles of the White River from Meeker to Rangely contact:

**BLM White River Field Office**  
 220 Market  
 Meeker, CO 81641  
 970.878.3800  
 TDD 970.878.4227

**Rangely Area Chamber of Commerce**  
 209 East main Street  
 Rangely, CO 81648  
 970.675.5290

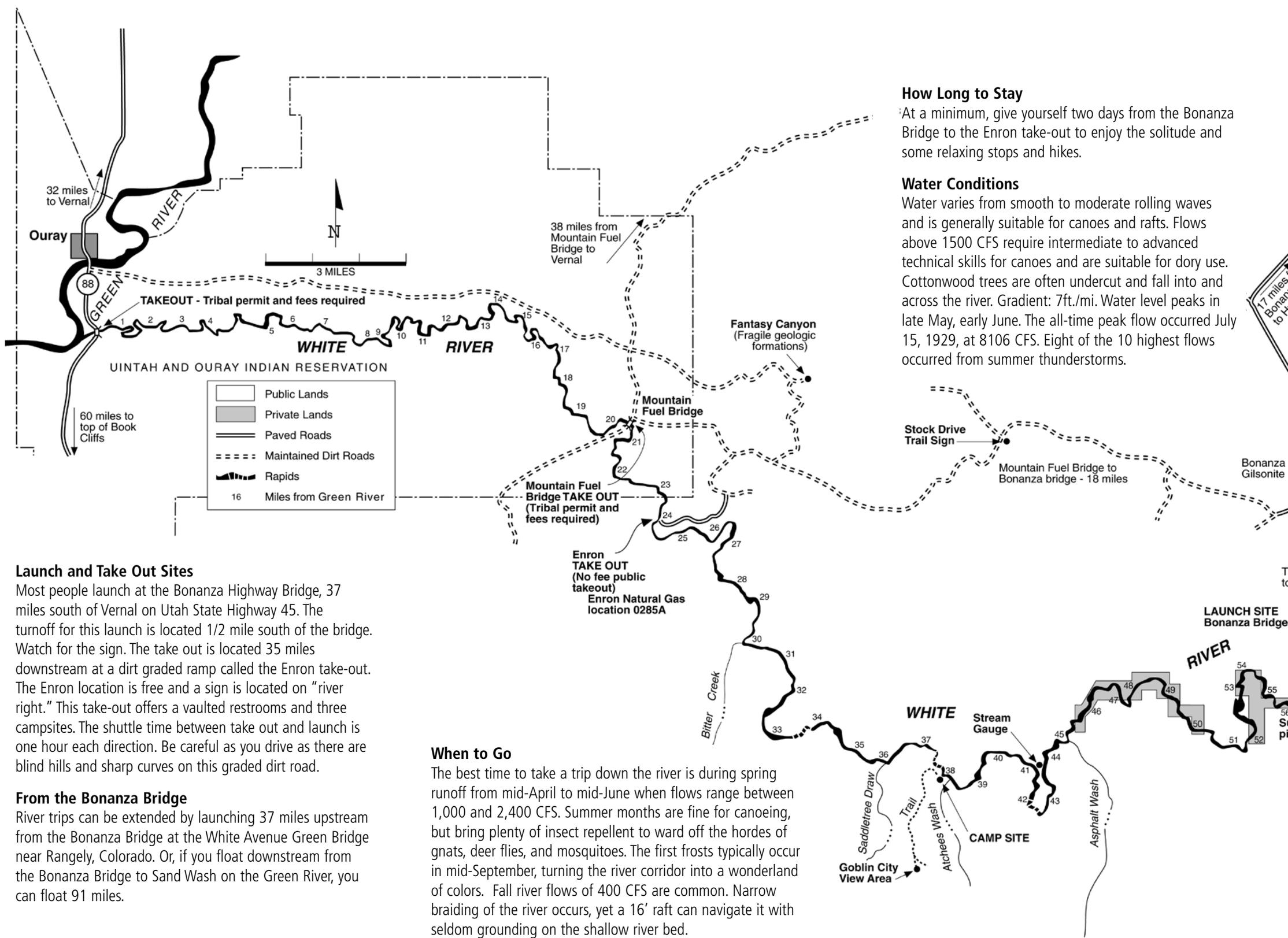


# Floating the White River

Rangely Colorado to the Confluence with the Green River

Vernal Field Office Bureau of Land Management





**How Long to Stay**

At a minimum, give yourself two days from the Bonanza Bridge to the Enron take-out to enjoy the solitude and some relaxing stops and hikes.

**Water Conditions**

Water varies from smooth to moderate rolling waves and is generally suitable for canoes and rafts. Flows above 1500 CFS require intermediate to advanced technical skills for canoes and are suitable for dory use. Cottonwood trees are often undercut and fall into and across the river. Gradient: 7ft./mi. Water level peaks in late May, early June. The all-time peak flow occurred July 15, 1929, at 8106 CFS. Eight of the 10 highest flows occurred from summer thunderstorms.

**Launch and Take Out Sites**

Most people launch at the Bonanza Highway Bridge, 37 miles south of Vernal on Utah State Highway 45. The turnoff for this launch is located 1/2 mile south of the bridge. Watch for the sign. The take out is located 35 miles downstream at a dirt graded ramp called the Enron take-out. The Enron location is free and a sign is located on "river right." This take-out offers vaulted restrooms and three campsites. The shuttle time between take out and launch is one hour each direction. Be careful as you drive as there are blind hills and sharp curves on this graded dirt road.

**From the Bonanza Bridge**

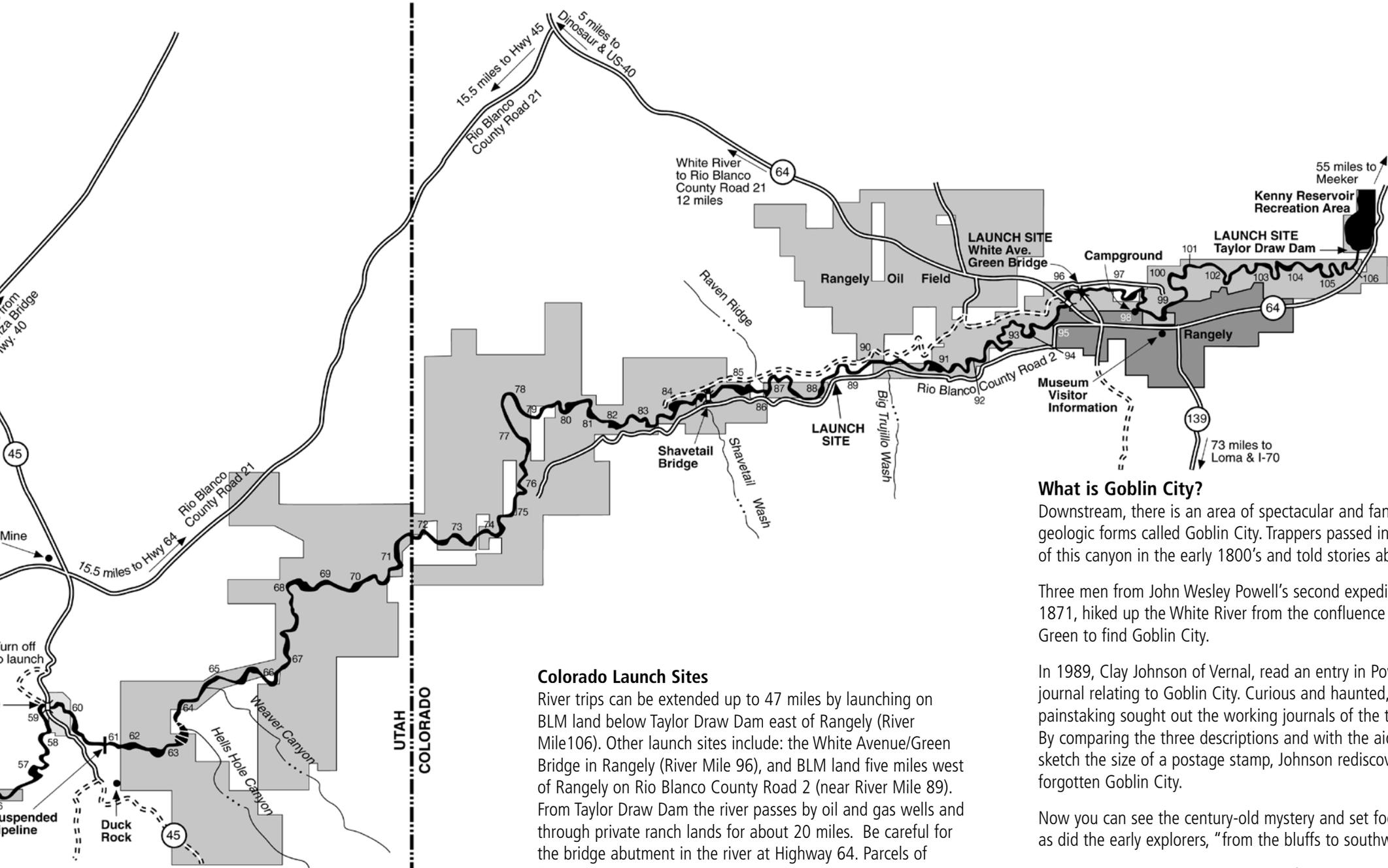
River trips can be extended by launching 37 miles upstream from the Bonanza Bridge at the White Avenue Green Bridge near Rangely, Colorado. Or, if you float downstream from the Bonanza Bridge to Sand Wash on the Green River, you can float 91 miles.

**When to Go**

The best time to take a trip down the river is during spring runoff from mid-April to mid-June when flows range between 1,000 and 2,400 CFS. Summer months are fine for canoeing, but bring plenty of insect repellent to ward off the hordes of gnats, deer flies, and mosquitoes. The first frosts typically occur in mid-September, turning the river corridor into a wonderland of colors. Fall river flows of 400 CFS are common. Narrow braiding of the river occurs, yet a 16' raft can navigate it with seldom grounding on the shallow river bed.

**LAUNCH SITE**  
Bonanza Bridge

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Watch out for snag trees

**Colorado Launch Sites**

River trips can be extended up to 47 miles by launching on BLM land below Taylor Draw Dam east of Rangely (River Mile 106). Other launch sites include: the White Avenue/Green Bridge in Rangely (River Mile 96), and BLM land five miles west of Rangely on Rio Blanco County Road 2 (near River Mile 89). From Taylor Draw Dam the river passes by oil and gas wells and through private ranch lands for about 20 miles. Be careful for the bridge abutment in the river at Highway 64. Parcels of BLM public lands provide camping areas or lunch stops in six locations between Rangely and the Utah border. Respect private property and do not trespass. All services are available in the town of Rangely including a campground with drinking water and showers.

**Hiking**

Hiking the river corridor and side canyons rewards the energetic with solitude, wild flowers, distant sandstone vistas and an appreciation of the vastness of this massive landscape.

**What is Goblin City?**

Downstream, there is an area of spectacular and fanciful geologic forms called Goblin City. Trappers passed in and out of this canyon in the early 1800's and told stories about it.

Three men from John Wesley Powell's second expedition in 1871, hiked up the White River from the confluence with the Green to find Goblin City.

In 1989, Clay Johnson of Vernal, read an entry in Powell's journal relating to Goblin City. Curious and haunted, he painstakingly sought out the working journals of the three men. By comparing the three descriptions and with the aid of a sketch the size of a postage stamp, Johnson rediscovered the forgotten Goblin City.

Now you can see the century-old mystery and set footholds as did the early explorers, "from the bluffs to southward."

A strenuous two-hour hike, departing from the Atchees Wash Campsite, will take you to the overlook. The primary view is to the east and a late afternoon sun provides the best shadows. What will lie before you is a series of stacked ridges with towers, spires,... numerous small buttes and square rocks, almost in rows and about the size of small buildings, so that there is a striking suggestion of a town." (Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, artist and assistant topographer to Powell's expedition.)

## Leave No Trace Camping

While it is possible to float the river in a day, most people are choosing a slower pace and enjoying an overnight stay along the river. If you do camp, here are a few guidelines:

- Use a fire pan. It provides warmth and light and it prevents scarring of the land. Please collect only driftwood or bring a portable stove. Minimize your use of open fires.
- Use of a self-contained personal porta-potty is highly recommended. The alternative is to bury human waste in a 6-8 inch cathole at least 200 feet from your camp and the river.
- Camp on sand bars or in unvegetated areas. Select hardened sites, this way the campsites or dispersed public lands greenery will have time to rejuvenate before the next river users camp.

## A Few Safety Reminders

- Wear a life jacket (required in Colorado) at all times.
- Take an extra paddle, a bailing device and an extra life jacket for each boat.
- Bring your own drinking water. No fresh water is available.
- Don't forget sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Pets are allowed, but can tip a canoe.
- When approaching a family of geese, please pull over and wait along the shoreline until both the adults and juveniles "escape." Inadvertently people have "pushed" young geese miles down the river separating them from their parents.
- Watch for submerged trees and rocks.

## We're Getting Crowded

Memorial weekend is a very busy time of the year for the White River. Therefore, if you like solitude and that feeling of being alone, try and avoid the two weeks on either side of Memorial weekend and you'll have a lot more of the river and the big canyons to yourselves.

## Registration and Permits

### BLM Public Lands

Non-commercial use on BLM land is free, no permit is required.

### Tribal Lands

Three separate permits (and fees) are currently required for use of Uintah and Ouray Reservation properties. This includes the occasional use of the takeout point below the Mountain Fuel Bridge, which is located approximately three miles inside the reservation boundary.

Tribal permits and fees are as follows: (You can request your user days, money order your fees, and they will record the dates all by phone.)

- \$5 parking fee per vehicle per day.  
(fee applies even if just picking up people from the river)
- \$10 annual conservation stamp per group.
- \$10 daily access/boat permit for each raft, canoe, kayak, etc.

Non-Indian citations for violations are treated as federal offenses and will require a mandatory court appearance in federal court in Salt Lake City, UT.

You may obtain permits by contacting the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation: P.O. Box 190, Fort Duchesne, UT 84026. Phone: 435.722.5511 Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

There is a no fee public takeout location on BLM administered lands approximately 3.5 miles before the Mountain Fuel Bridge. Boaters will find the takeout point on river right. Watch for the sign at the river's edge. This is the last opportunity for a no fee public takeout before joining the Green River.

## Baby Goose Alert

### Families Should be Together.

Just like your family likes to stay close when you travel, so do the geese who have been born on the White River. New babies called "goslings," just 2-3 weeks old, are clinging to the close security of their parents in May.

When large and colorful canoes with swirling paddles and happy loud voices come around corners, goslings scurry down river, often away from the comfort of mom and dad, sometimes for a mile.

To help keep these families together, keep your craft single or in a group of three at most. (Your group of canoes should be around the corner before seeing the next group.)

If goslings are being "pushed" down river, pull over to the opposite bank, let them pass you or "escape" to shoreline vegetation and then quietly push off and continue down stream.

There won't be geese all the time, and they won't be everywhere, so you'll have time to play by yourselves, on the open water...just like the geese.



Old Photo of Bonanza Toll Bridge. There once was a busy stage stop town called Ignatio on the launch side of the river. It was established around 1905 and was a crucial crossing point for the booming Gilsonite mining industry.