

RIO CHAMA FACTS

Length: 31 miles El Vado Ranch to Big Eddy takeout
22½ miles El Vado Ranch to Chavez Canyon (wilderness run)
8½ miles Chavez Canyon to Big Eddy

Gradient: 15 feet per mile

Rating: Class II-III (on scale of I-VI) require intermediate river skills, and are not recommended for beginner canoeists.

Minimum Flow Needs: For kayaks (inflatable or hard shell), canoes, and rafts less than 12', at least 300 cfs is recommended. For rafts over 12', a minimum of 500 cfs is recommended.

Access: Put-in is at El Vado Ranch, off NM 112, west of NM 84, between El Vado Lake and Abiquiu Reservoir. Take-outs at Chavez Canyon and Big Eddy are accessed by Forest Road 151, which begins two miles north of Ghost Ranch Living Museum on NM 84. Forest Road 151 may be hazardous when wet.

Group Size: 16 person maximum

Shuttle: 50 miles one-way. Shuttle service is provided by *Up the Creek Shuttle Service* at 575-588-7704.

USGS Maps: Abiquiu, Cañones, Echo Amphitheater, Ghost Ranch, Laguna Peak, Navajo Peak (all 7.5").

If you need more information, please contact:



Taos BLM recreation staff for questions on boating or resource management in the upper stretches of the Rio Chama (575-758-8851 or write to BLM Taos Field Office, 226 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571).



U.S. Forest Service, Coyote Ranger District for questions on recreation in the lower stretches (Chavez Canyon and downstream), or resource management of the lower stretch (575-638-5526);

El Vado Ranch for questions about fees and services at the privately-owned launch site, or about fishing (575-588-7354).

www.blm.gov/nm/riochama



BOATING THE RIO CHAMA - 2016

Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River

Congress designated the Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River in 1988. It is jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service, and Army Corp of Engineers. This brochure explains what you need to do to reserve a launch for the period of May 6 - September 3, 2016. Outside of that period, no reservation is needed, but you will still need to fill out a registration form and pay the per person launch fees at El Vado Ranch.

Lottery Information

Because of the demand for trips in late spring and summer, the BLM uses a lottery system to reserve **weekend (Friday-Saturday)** launch dates. To request an application packet, please call 575-758-8851. Applicants must be 18 years old. Fill out the postcard application completely, and send it back to the BLM Taos Field Office, 226 Cruz Alta Road, Taos NM 87571, with a check for \$6 made out to USDI-BLM. Your chance for success will increase if you give us up to three weekends that would work for your group. Applications must be postmarked no later than January 31, 2016.

During the week of March 1, all applicants will be notified if they were successful, and for which weekend. Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified.

The lottery is only for **weekend** launches. If you want to reserve a launch for **Sunday through Thursday**, call 575-758-8851 on or after April 1, 2016.

Float Trips from El Vado Ranch to Chavez Canyon or Big Eddy

Trips from May 1 through Labor Day require two steps: ① reserve a launch in advance. Weekends (Friday or Saturday) are assigned by a lottery system, as described above. For weekday launches (Sunday-Thursday), call BLM Taos at 575-758-8851 on April 1 or later. ② Trip leaders register the trip and pay the \$5 per person fee at the launch site (please note that Federal recreation passes do not give a discount).

There is an additional fee charged by El Vado Ranch to launch and to park vehicles. You can also arrange for a shuttle for your vehicle(s) before launching.

For trips between Labor Day 2016 and May 5, 2016, only step ② is needed. No reservations are required, but do check about expected flow levels.

Float Trips from Chavez Canyon to Big Eddy (Below the Monastery)

No advance reservations or fees are required for trips launching from Chavez Canyon just below the Monastery. All that is needed for this day run is a filled-out Boater Registration Form available at the Chavez Canyon launch site.

Planning Your Trip

Before leaving home, boaters should find out flow information at [http:// nm.water.usgs.gov](http://nm.water.usgs.gov), as flows are not guaranteed, and may change with little notice. Although the wilderness run above the Monastery is limited to groups of 16, there are no groups size limits from Chavez Canyon to Big Eddy.

Rules, Permit Stipulations and Other Requirements

- » Solid human waste must be carried out in a washable/reusable container. Plastic bags are not allowed. Liquid waste should be strained into the river. The human waste vault at Big Eddy remains closed. Please flush your toilet at an RV dump station, available in Española, Santa Fe, Taos, and Durango.
- » Washable/reusable toilets that meet our requirements are available at river or outdoor equipment outlets. Contact your local boating supplier, or search the internet.
- » Dogs must be leashed and under your control at all times to avoid harassment of wildlife or other river users. Dog feces must also be carried out.
- » No more than 16 people in a group between El Vado Ranch and Chavez Canyon.
- » **Mandatory Equipment**
 - An approved Type I, III, or V U.S. Coast Guard life preserver must be worn by every person in the party while on the river.
 - For non-self-bailing rafts, an appropriate bailing device must be on board each craft.
 - A rope at least equal to the length of the boat.
 - A throw line at least 50' in length must be on board each primary boat.
 - All fires must be in a fire pan. You must carry out all ashes and coals.
 - Patching and repair equipment, including an air pump.

Cancellations

If the entire launch has to be cancelled, please contact the BLM at 575-758-8851 as soon as possible, so we can try to reassign the launch to another group. If a trip leader cannot make a trip, the permit can be reassigned to another member of the group. Please call the number above to notify us of the change.

Leaving No Trace on the Rio Chama

Plan Ahead and Prepare/Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces

- Choose an established, legal site that will not be damaged by your stay;
- Restrict activities to areas where vegetation is compacted or absent;
- Keep pollutants out of water sources; and
- Stay on existing trails, or choose the most durable surfaces available such as **rock, gravel, dry grasses, or snow.**

Minimize Use and Impact of Fires

- Use only fire pans if you must have a fire (lightweight stoves are a much less impacting way to cook in the backcountry);
- Collect only dead and down wood for your fire, or bring a supply from home; and
- Remove all ashes and coals from the fire pan, and pack them out.

Pack it In, Pack it Out/Leave What You Find

Flow Information

Flows are highly variable, based on water availability, irrigation demand, and rainfall in spring and summer. Often spring time flows are released to coincide with inflow to reservoirs above El Vado Dam. Summer flows are often increased for weekends (Friday-Sunday) for boater needs.

If you are in a canoe or kayak, you can have a good run from El Vado to Chavez Canyon at flows as low as 200 cfs, or to Big Eddy, at flows of 300 cfs. For small rafts, minimum recommended flows are 300 to 400 cfs. For large rafts (14' or bigger) minimum flows of 500 cfs are recommended.

For flow information, visit the USGS website at:

<http://nm.water.usgs.gov> (Rio Chama below El Vado) or call 888-882-6188 to hear a recording of flow status or other current information about the Rio Chama.

www.blm.gov/nm/riochama