



WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: December 17, 2014

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A Cherished Reach of the Upper Yampa River Forever Conserved and Open to the Public

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo. - Western Rivers Conservancy, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service completed conservation of a historic property at the confluence of the Yampa River and Sarvis Creek today.

The project conserves outstanding fish and wildlife habitat and opens new public access to a prime stretch of trophy trout water and elk hunting grounds only 13 miles from Steamboat Springs.

The property, which WRC calls Hubbard's Summer Place, lies three miles downstream from Stagecoach Reservoir on the banks of a classic tailwater fishery. According to local anglers, this stretch of the Yampa River is coveted for its large rainbow and brown trout and native mountain whitefish. Until now, Hubbard's Summer Place was closed to the public.

The 45-acre property was both an inholding and an edgeland in the Routt National Forest. The parcel is also adjacent to the USFS Sarvis Creek Wilderness Area, BLM lands and the Sarvis Creek State Wildlife Area.

“This property is extremely important, both from a conservation perspective and as a place where people can fish, hunt and hike,” says Tim Wilson,



The upper Yampa River is a classic tailwater fishery, with rainbow and brown trout and mountain whitefish.. Photo by Dave Dietrich, 2013.

associate field manager for BLM Little Snake Field Office. “Now that it is publicly owned, we can manage it for its valuable fish and wildlife habitat and to open access to experience exceptional angling in Colorado.”

Early efforts to conserve the Hubbard property date back to 1995 with the completion of the Routt County Sarvis Creek Area Plan. Conservation efforts gained momentum in 2011 when the Yampa River Legacy Partnership sought inclusion of this parcel in the America’s Great Outdoors initiative. It was then that the BLM approached WRC about acquiring and conserving the property. WRC was in the process of conserving a 920-acre ranch on the lower Yampa River to protect 2.5 miles of the Yampa and open new public access to the BLM’s vast Cross Mountain Wilderness Study Area.

“When we learned about Hubbard’s Summer Place,” says WRC President Sue Doroff, “We immediately recognized the need to protect it and make it accessible. It’s a special place, with outstanding conservation values and tremendous potential for low-impact recreation.”

WRC purchased the property in 2013 and began working to assemble the funding to allow the BLM and USFS to acquire the lands.



The Yampa River, near its confluence with Sarvis Creek, three miles downstream from Stagecoach Reservoir. Photo by Dave Dietrich, 2013.

“We are excited to help provide access to this unique reach of the Yampa River,” says Jack Lewis, USFS Yampa District Ranger, “For recreationists and sportsmen, both locally and nationally, this is a major accomplishment to improve public access.”

Along with adjacent public lands, Hubbard’s Summer Place supports a variety of wildlife habitat, including Rocky Mountain elk, mountain lion and Canada lynx. It possesses extensive stands of cottonwood and red osier dogwood, as well as serviceberry, within its signature box canyon, which are important for conserving biodiversity. The Hubbard’s Summer Place also serves as an important source of late summer nutrition for black bear and dusky grouse.

“The Yampa River remains one of the wildest, freest rivers in the West,” says Doroff. “Our work on both the lower and upper Yampa is about conserving a great river for the sake of the river, for its outstanding fish, its incredible wildlife and so people have a healthy stream to return to as anglers, boaters, hikers or wildlife watchers.”

“The site is also significant to the rich rural heritage in the upper Yampa valley and can now be preserved for future generations,” said Wilson. The Hubbard Summer Camp Cabin, built in 1956, will remain on the land and be managed as a historic structure by the USFS and BLM. And for the first time in memory, this stretch of the Yampa is open to everyone.

About Western Rivers Conservancy

Western Rivers Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that protects outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States. WRC acquires lands along rivers to protect critical habitat and to create or improve public access for compatible use and enjoyment. By working in partnership with agencies like the Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service, and by applying decades of experience in land acquisition, WRC is able to effectively secure the health of whole ecosystems. It has protected hundreds of miles of stream frontage on great rivers like the Yampa, Gunnison, Salmon, Hoh, Snake, Madison and John Day. Founded in 1988, WRC is the nation's only conservation program dedicated solely to the protection of riverlands. To learn more about WRC, visit www.westernrivers.org.

About the U.S. Forest Service

The mission of the U.S. Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

About the Bureau of Land Management

BLM Colorado manages 8.3 million surface acres in the state for multiple uses with sustained yield. The lands range from alpine tundra, colorful canyons, and mesas in the southwest, to rolling sage-covered hills in the northwest. These public lands play a vital role in providing open space and contribute to Colorado's quality of life.