





Yampa River Commercial Use Guidelines - 2003

These guidelines are based on City Ordinance requirements (No. 1763) with input from local river outfitters, the Trails and River Advisory Committee, and City staff. They should be followed to ensure compliance with relevant ordinances, to provide a quality recreational experience for customers, and to protect the rights of private landowners and residents who live along the river. Adherence to these guidelines will also minimize potential conflicts between the multiple recreational uses occurring on and around the river, and ensure that recreational uses do not exceed sustainable levels.

1. Use Limits

Companies that provide flotation device rentals or guide services that use City property for river access shall adhere to the following restrictions:

A. Tubing

- Customers may not put on the river before 10:30 am.
- Customers may not put on the river after 4:00 pm.
- No tubing upstream of 5th Street Bridge.

B. Guide Services

- No time restrictions.
- Each permitted fishing guide service will be allowed four (4) clients per day on the downtown river corridor. Half-day guide trips will be counted as a full day of usage.

C. Kayak/Canoe Rentals or Lessons

- No time restrictions.
- No trip caps.
- Use of ponds at Fetcher, River Creek (aka Polumbus), West Lincoln or Casey Parks counts as “trips”.

D. Number of Trips

- No outfitter shall outfit more trips than authorized by their Planning Department permit. Second trips on the same day will be counted against each operator’s cap.
- It shall not be a defense to a violation of trip limits if they were exceeded by reason of use of a flotation device for additional trips, even if no additional rental fee was charged or collected for such additional trips and no transportation was provided by the outfitter for such additional trip.

E. Parking

- Vehicles (commercial or private) in Fetcher, Rotary or Lion’s Park or the library/community center parking lots may not be left unattended for more than 2 hours between the hours of 10:30 and 4:00 pm. during the summer season. Companies and their customers are encouraged to use the parking lots at Howelsen Hill and at the Stockbridge multi-modal center.

2. Flow Conditions

Outfitters shall restrict the size of rafts and canoes provided to customers using any public river access according to the following:

- From peak runoff to 800 cfs – no rafts over 14’ in length and no canoes over 18’ in length.
- From 800 cfs to 400 cfs – no rafts over 12’ in length and no canoes over 17’ in length.
- Under 400 cfs – no rafts allowed on the river corridor.
- After July 6 in any year – no rafts allowed on the river corridor.
- Commercial tubing companies should consider suspending or reducing tubing operations when Yampa River flows drop to less than 100 cfs as measured at the 5th Street Bridge (and reported by the USGS), and discontinue tubing if flow levels drop below 85 cfs.
- If maximum water temperatures at the 5th Street Bridge exceed 75 degrees for two or more consecutive days, or if dissolved oxygen (D.O.) levels average less than 6.0 mg/l at the 5th Street Bridge for the preceding 48 hour period, the City may close the river to certain recreational uses.

3. Access Points

All commercial river users must comply with the operating plans approved in their respective Use with Criteria permits, including use of the following designated public river access points or ponds:

- Canoes, Kayaks, Rafts
 - River Creek Park (Polumbus)
 - Rotary Park
 - Fetcher Park
 - Emerald Park
 - Dr. Rich Weiss Park
 - West Lincoln Park
 - Stockbridge Park
 - James Brown Bridge
 - Ponds at Fetcher, River Creek, West Lincoln and Casey Parks



Boaters at Rich Weiss Park



- Tubing
 - Ski Town Lions Club Park
 - Yampa River Core Trail between 5th and 12th Streets
 - Stockbridge Park
 - James Brown

Outfitter use of City owned or controlled public river access points and associated parking areas shall not unreasonably interfere with other user’s access.

4. Customer Education

Outfitters will post a legible map in a prominent spot showing public put-in and take-out points, places where public restrooms are available, and designated Quiet Zones. The stretch of river from just above Dream Island Trailer Park to the downstream end of the trailer park is a designated No Trespass, Quiet Zone! This should be clearly marked on all maps and carefully explained to every tubing customer. In addition to a map, a list of the river etiquette rules (Item # 6) must be posted in a highly visible location at each business for customers to view. A reduced version of the map with a plastic laminated cover must be available for customers upon request, and a list of operating rules, safety tips and river etiquette rules will be printed on waivers/releases to be signed by customers. Outfitters will sponsor public service announcements (in newsprint and radio) to educate the public about etiquette and courtesy while on or along the river.

5. Identification

Each company will make their flotation devices easily identifiable by color codes and/or names of the company printed on the flotation device or client (vest, hat, arm bands, etc.). Currently, the following tube identification scheme is approved:

- Backdoor Sports/Rock and Roll – Black or white tubes with rainbow-striped straps.
- Lockharts – Yellow or red seats with red straps.
- Blue Sky West – Green seats with black straps.
- One Stop Ski Shop – Tubes with orange/yellow nylon covers.
- Bucking Rainbow – Black seats with gray or khaki straps.



Kayaker with proper safety gear

Any changes to these designated color schemes require prior approval of Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Services staff.

6. Rules and Etiquette

River Outfitters have the primary responsibility of informing their customers of the following rules that apply to all river users within the City limits:

- No glass allowed.
- No littering – pack out all trash.
- No Styrofoam coolers.
- Respect other river users (i.e. fisherman, kayakers, waders, etc.).
- Respect private property- obey QUIET ZONE signs!
- No dogs allowed.
- No nudity.
- No alcohol.
- Avoid standing or walking on river bed (except fishermen).



View downstream from Stockbridge

Community Service Officers will enforce these rules and may cite individuals or companies whose customers are found in violation. River outfitter’s permits may be revoked for repeated violations of these rules by their customers.

7. Safety

The safety of all customers should be a primary concern. Clear, concise descriptions of conditions and potential hazards that might be encountered should be relayed to all customers. All customers should be informed of the availability of life jackets and the potential dangers involved on the river. Flotation devices should not be tied together for the customer’s own safety, and proper clothing and footwear should be worn. Children 11 years old and under will be required to wear life jackets. Additionally, customers should not be allowed on the river during any periods when the Sheriff’s Office has a closure in effect, typically due to high water levels.

8. Litter Control

In the interest of maintaining the health of the river and providing an enjoyable recreational experience for all, commercial river companies will:

- Supply re-usable nylon or mesh trash bags that can be attached to each customer’s flotation device.
- Tubing companies are responsible for clean up of the river and its banks from the 5th Street Bridge down to the James Brown Bridge during tubing season. Float trips by company employees for this purpose will not count against tube caps.



- At the end of the season, all commercial use permittees and other organized river groups (Yampa Valley Fly Fishers, Friends of the Yampa, etc.) will plan and participate in a cleanup sweep of the stretch of river that they and their customers or members predominantly use. The cleanup will begin at River Creek (Polumbus) Park and continue downstream to the Riverbend Golf Course, or some other pre-determined point. Permission from all private landowners will be necessary to access their lands.

9. Use Log, Fees, and Reporting

All companies shall maintain all records required by their permit and make them available for review upon request of any City POSR, Public Safety, Legal or Planning Department staff. The use log will provide the basis for calculating and paying the 5% user fees specified by Ordinance No. 1843. Use reports with corresponding fees should be submitted no later than 10 days after the end of any month during which commercial services were provided.

10. Fishing Guides

Fishing guides authorized to provide services on the Yampa River within city limits are presently limited to five (5) as noted below:

- Straightline Sports
- Blue Sky West
- Bucking Rainbow/High Adventures
- Steamboat Fishing Company
- Elk River Outfitters

The addition of any other fishing guides is subject to review and approval by the Trails and River Committee and the Parks and Recreation Commission.



Fly fisherman in downtown area above 5th Street Bridge