



# 2023 Yampa/White/Green River Basin Tour

June 6-7, 2023

*Tour Itinerary*

## Day 1 - June 6, 2023

**7:00-7:30am Meet at Holiday Inn - Steamboat Springs**

*Check in with WEco and begin loading personal bags*

**7:50am Load Onto Bus for 8:00 Departure to Yampa and the Nickel Ditch**

Discussion Topics

Introduction to Water Education Colorado and the tour itinerary

Speakers

Jayla Poppleton, Executive Director, Water Education Colorado

Sabrina White, Programs Director, Water Education Colorado

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Discussion Topics

Overview of the Yampa/White/Green Basin's characteristics and priorities, with a focus on the Yampa and Green (the White will be a focus of Day 2), connection to the 7-State Colorado River system, and implications for management

Speakers

Jackie Brown, Yampa/White/Green Representative to the Colorado Water Conservation Board

Kelly Romero-Heaney, Assistant Director for Water Policy, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Board Member, Water Education Colorado

**8:40am Arrive at Nickel Ditch**

Discussion Topics

Agricultural uses near the headwaters of the Yampa, history and operations of Nickel Ditch, local water administration dynamics

Speakers

Andi Schaffner, Shareholder and Bookkeeper, Bear River Reservoir Company



(tentative) Jeff Clinkye, Water Coordinator, Community Ag Alliance

**9:25am Load Onto Bus for 9:35am Departure for Stagecoach Dam and Reservoir**

Discussion Topic

Broader Division 6 water administration dynamics and measurement rules update

Speaker

Erin Light, Division 6 Engineer, Colorado Division of Water Resources

**10:00am Arrive at Stagecoach Dam and Reservoir**

Discussion Topics

Stagecoach Dam is an essential aspect of the work the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District does. Controlling water reserves, stream temperature, and production of hydropower are critical to maintaining a healthy river system and a thriving community in the region. Here you'll learn more about the history and purpose of the dam and reservoir within the overall Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District system and hear about the challenges that high snowpack years pose to standard operation.

The group will also have the opportunity to hear from Colorado Parks and Wildlife about management and operation objectives related to the tailwater fishery, and the dynamic between managing for native and non-native fish.

Speakers

Andy Rossi, General Manager, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District  
Holly Kirkpatrick, Public Information and External Affairs Manager, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

Emily Lowell, District Engineer, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District  
Billy Atkinson, Aquatic Biologist, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

**11:30am Load Onto Bus for 11:40am Departure for Stagecoach Picnic Area**

**11:50am Arrive at Stagecoach Picnic Area for Lunch**

Discussion Topic

Overview of the state park's management priorities

Speaker

Craig Preston, Manager, Stagecoach State Park



**12:50pm**      **Load Onto Bus for 1:00pm Departure for Morrison Creek Water & Sanitation**

**1:15pm**      **Arrive at Morrison Creek Water & Sanitation**

Discussion Topics

Sanitation plants are an essential part of daily life, and managing the expansion of nearby housing developments can pose challenges. The intersection of new developments with the rural setting of Morrison Creek Water and Sanitation has resulted in the redevelopment of this treatment plant. Here you'll hear about the challenges of daily operation of a small-scale, regional water treatment plant, the new plant being built and the benefits of it over the old system, and the possible expansion of service area caused by new development.

Speakers

Geovanny Romero, District Manager, Morrison Creek Water and Sanitation District

Jeff Erickson, Assistant District Manager, Morrison Creek Water and Sanitation District

Bill Queen, Water Distribution Field Engineer, Morrison Creek Water and Sanitation District

**2:15pm**      **Load Onto Bus for 2:25pm Departure for Fish Creek Falls**

Discussion Topics

Mt. Werner/City of Steamboat cooperative interactions, water conservation, nutrient management, river health, and the Walton Creek Confluence project

Speakers

Julie Baxter, Water Resources Manager, City of Steamboat Springs

Frank Alfone, General Manager, Mt. Werner Water and Sanitation District

**3:10pm**      **Arrive at Fish Creek Falls**

Discussion Topics

Steamboat's Community Wildfire Protection Plan, forest treatment and mitigation, and the unique benefits of high elevation wetlands

Speakers

Julie Baxter, Water Resources Manager, City of Steamboat Springs

Frank Alfone, General Manager, Mt. Werner Water and Sanitation District

Carolina Manriquez, Lead Forester, Colorado State Forest Service



**4:10pm Load Onto Bus for 4:20pm Departure for Charlie's Hole on the Yampa River**

**4:35pm Arrive at Charlie's Hole, the Steamboat Springs Recreational In-Channel Diversion**

Discussion Topics

Charlie's Hole is a Recreational In-Channel Diversion (RICD) in the center of Steamboat Springs. It created a recreation area in the Yampa River that people use throughout the year, and also secured water rights on the flow of the Yampa through the city. When this project was first being proposed, a lengthy legal battle ensued around the water rights. Learn about the history of the RICD as well as current issues and ramifications for Steamboat Springs and surrounding cities.

At this stop you'll also learn about Steamboat Springs' Stream Management Plan, restoration areas, healthy areas, water releases, and more.

Speakers

Ken Brenner, Board Member, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (tentative) Craig Robinson, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager, City of Steamboat Springs (tentative) Lindsey Marlowe, Executive Director, Friends of the Yampa

**5:10pm Load Onto Bus for 5:20pm Departure for Yampa Valley Brewing Company**

Discussion Topic

The Brown Ranch development is an area to the West of Steamboat Springs that has been a site of proposed expansion for years. The project has faced water rights acquisition issues, failed acquisition attempts, difficulties connecting the area to the Elk River Treatment Plant, and debate around how much of the development should be affordable housing. While these issues have impacted development, the project is moving forward!

Brown Ranch development and expansion issues for Steamboat Springs, including water rights acquisition, past failed acquisitions, the Elk River treatment plant, and connection to affordable housing

Speaker

Julie Baxter, Water Resources Manager, City of Steamboat Springs

**6:10pm Dinner at Yampa Valley Brewing Company**

**8:00pm Load Onto Bus for 8:10pm Departure for Quality Inn**



## Day 2 - June 7, 2023

**7:20am**      **Check out of Quality Inn and Load Onto Bus for 7:30am Departure to Meeker and White River Basin**

Discussion Topic

White River Basin characteristics and priorities

Speaker

Alden Vanden Brink, Chair, Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable, and Executive Director, Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District

**8:30am**      **Meeker Loop Stop**

Discussion Topics

Before European settlers made their way to Colorado, the land that Meeker sits on was the historical territory of a Ute band. The mixing of people when Europeans came to the area ultimately resulted in the Meeker Incident, a series of events that resulted in 61 dead, 44 wounded, and 7 missing people. Here you will learn more about the Meeker Incident and its ramifications.

This site also overlooks the only natural aquifer in the Meeker area. This is an essential aspect of local water administration, and is a cornerstone of the sustainability for the local agricultural economy. Hear about a groundwater flow modeling study being completed by the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts.

Speakers

Alden Vanden Brink, Chair, Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable, and Executive Director, Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District  
Callie Hendrickson, Executive Director, White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts  
Luke Trout, Ute Tribe Member

**9:20am**      **Load Onto Bus for 9:30am Departure for White River Museum**

**9:45am**      **Arrive at the White River Museum**

Discussion Topic

The White River Museum keeps the history of Meeker alive. Through the formation of the town in the years following the Meeker Incident to the



development of industry and technology, the museum showcases the varied and storied history of an incredible slice of Colorado. Here you'll learn more about the Meeker Incident and some of the lives of those who lived in Meeker.

Speaker

Teresia Reed, Executive Director, White River Museum

**10:15am Load Onto Bus for 10:25am Departure for Craig and the Lowdy-Simpson Park**

**11:20am Arrive at Lowdy-Simpson Park**

Discussion Topics

The Yampa River Corridor Project is a local economic development project that includes a new boat ramp, retrofit of the municipal intake structure and a new whitewater park.

Speakers

Melanie Kilpatrick, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, City of Craig  
(tentative) Jennifer Holloway, Executive Director, Craig Chamber of Commerce

**11:50pm Lunch**

**12:50pm Load Onto Bus for 1:00pm Departure for the Craig Station**

**1:10pm Arrive at the Craig Station**

Discussion Topic

Craig Station is a three-furnace, coal-fired power plant owned by PacifiCorp, Platte River Power Authority, Salt River Project, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, and Xcel Energy, and operated by Tri-State, that is slated to be decommissioned or repurposed by 2030. Learn about the history and operations of the plant, on-site water management, and future plans for Tri-State as it works to decarbonize and support a just transition for the local economy.

Speaker

Jackie Brown, Water and Natural Resource Policy Advisory, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association  
Travis Sondrol, Plant Manager, Craig Station  
Stan Darveau, Craig Station

**2:40pm Load Onto Bus for 2:50pm Departure for Elkhead Reservoir**



Discussion Topic

Purposes and operations of Elkhead Reservoir as storage, timed releases, and coordination with Upper Colorado Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Speakers

TBD

**3:40pm Depart Elkhead Reservoir for Carpenter Ranch**

**4:05pm Arrive at Carpenter Ranch**

Discussion Topics

The Nature Conservancy manages Carpenter Ranch as an ecological sustainability research site working to develop and model sustainable ranching practices to protect the rare riparian forest. Carpenter Ranch also has the oldest water rights on the Yampa. The Nature Conservancy has completed or are in the process of completing three irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation projects on Gibraltar Ditch, Maybell Ditch, and Williams Ditch. Hear from a local area rancher about the local ag economy's characteristics and challenges and why participation in these projects is helpful to irrigators.

Speakers

Matt Ross, Carpenter Ranch Manager, The Nature Conservancy  
Jennifer Wellman, Project Manager, The Nature Conservancy  
Doug Monger, Rancher, Monger Ranch, President, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

**5:05pm Load Onto Bus for 5:15pm Departure for Steamboat Springs**

**5:45pm Arrive at Steamboat Springs - Tour Ends**