

Here are some things at Dinosaur National Monument you might be interested in:  
There is a new phone system for the river office. A menu will allow you to find river flows, road conditions, water availability (echo Park, Lodore, Lily Park, etc) and other information. 1 (866) 825-2995. In addition you can email questions to the river office, get the information from a link at the Dinosaur National Monument web site.

The fire blanket regs for 2010 will be a fire blanket of *appropriate size* is required.

The Lodore and Deerlodge boat ramps have been improved significantly. (Remember to use boat ramp courtesy and not block the ramps for lengthy periods.) The structures in Jones Hole (outhouse, store shed, and old ranger cabin) have been removed.

There was a fatal at Triplet (bottom rocks) in 2009 on a private river trip at 2000cfs.

Shell Oil has been buying Yampa Junior water rights. The Yampa still has significant Junior Rights appropriations that are unused. The Shell project is around 375 cfs for 45,000 acre feet reservoir. It will come from a pump station on the river 7 miles west of Maybell, CO and use an existing pipeline to a reservoir, then via Cedar Wash (via Co road #23) in another existing pipeline to the White River and the Piceance Basin where the oil shale project is. Much of the reservoirs are on private lands, but the project will cross BLM land; thus issues like NEPA, endangered species, Wild & Scenic Rivers and other federal issues will have to be studied. The NPS feels that it can't stop the project because of a previous filing on water for recreational boating that was rejected by the Colorado Water Court. However my feeling is that enough case law exists to contest the District Court (remanded the case back to the State of Colorado) decision and appeal on recreational and a variety of other needs (endangered species for example). Dinosaur and the Water Rights folks plan to re-apply for water rights. Steamboat Springs has applied for water rights based on recreational boating. Stay tuned.

The Million Project proposes to take 250,000 acre feet from Flaming Gorge and pipe it via I\*) to the Colorado Front Range and as far south as Castle Rock (a new reservoir is already being built near there!). In 2007 the Bureau of Reclamation found there is 155,000 acre feet that can be withdrawn. At present Colorado is doing a statewide survey to determine the availability of water. The Million Project is, at present, poorly thought out with a plethora of holes in it. The Department of Interior Agencies involved, at present, are united against the project. There is boisterous opposition from Uintah County and some near-by downstream users... but Utah is reticent to oppose because of the St. George project to withdraw water for its golf courses from the Colorado River.

Besides the Yampa there is still unappropriated water on the White, lower Green and Colorado Rivers. There is a large irrigation withdrawl on Hastings Road (to Swayseys) in Green River. Some think the large pump stations there are a precursor to the proposed nuclear power plant in Green River.

Oddly enough in all of this the BIG downstream Senior and Junior users (California) has been suspiciously silent!!!

Issues involving oil and gas development will, under present BLM leases and requirements affect the air quality of Dinosaur NM as well as the Uintah Basin (You want to hear people scream - just wait until the Utards have to get their vehicles emission inspected!). Last year in downtown Vernal there was an Ozone alert... and Ozone and particulate from drilling, the new burgeoning network of roads and other O&G development are the culprit. The dust from as far away as Nine Mile Canyon apparently has a significant affect upon Dinosaur.

Dinosaur NM received 14 million from the Federal Stimulus Program, 13.1 million goes toward the new Quarry Visitor center(s) which should be in place in about 2 years. In the meantime the old Wilkins Store at the Monument Boundary has been donated to the Natural history Association and it will be operated as an interim VC during demolition and construction.

The Weed Removal program has completed tamarisk removal at all river camps and the Weed Warriors are working on removal at lunch stops in Whirlpool and Split Mountain lunch beaches. The tamarisk eating beetles have been very successful at defoliation and stressing the plants in the river corridors. They are most likely to be observed at the head of Whirlpool Canyon around the Mitten Park Fault. Several studies related to the beetles are being conducted, including one on the breeding bird populations.

Because of the opportunity, climate and flow changes the tamarisk is being replaced by willow thickets. It's a problem as the NPS has no plans to remove them, and they are especially prevalent along some Yampa camps. Almost all Russian olives have been removed from along the river corridors.

Colorado Pikeminnow populations are increasing slightly, but Humpback Chub populations in the Monument are declining. Some Chubs were taken to 2 USF&WS hatcheries (to keep genetics separate) and Bonytail Chubs were returned to the river. The USF&WS is releasing larger fish (7-14") to decrease the chances of being taken by non-native fish. There was a small local decline in peregrine populations this past year, probably due to weather fronts moving in at the wrong time. Mature bighorn ewes are declining and there is some worry about the future of breeding ewe availability. The NPS, USF&WS and states are studying and monitoring all of the above.

Whew that was a lot, but hope its been helpful to you.

Herm