

Ruby-Horsethief Canyons of the Colorado River

Loma, CO to Westwater, UT

Tuesday, October 11 – Friday, October 14, 2022

Put-in: Loma boat launch

Take-out: Westwater Ranger Station, UT

Paddling distance: 25 miles – planning to take it easy over 4 days.

River difficulty: Class I

ACA Event Status: ACA sanctioned trip. CURRENT ACA membership or \$10 event fee required.

Estimated Cost: \$15 for camping

Meet-up time at Loma boat ramp put-in: 8:00am or earlier if you are a solo or slow packer.

Estimated time of Westwater take-out: late-afternoon after hiking in the morning to late afternoon

Estimated shuttle time: 45 minutes (each way)

Trip Coordinator: Kathryn Mutz, 303-499-1092 (landline) or 303-243-4296 (on the road); gvmutz@gmail.com

Registration requirement: Non-refundable camping fee (\$15) to Kathryn by September 15.

Maximum number of paddlers: 10 – 12.

Overview:

This four-day / three-night trip to the Ruby-Horsethief canyons is set for October 11 – 14. This trip is for those who want to enjoy hiking and camping in the canyons. We will have hikes before the day's paddle, during the day, and/or from our evening campsite. See planned itinerary below and the link below to a map of the R-H camps. Boaters certainly don't have to hike, but our BLM permit will require that we "launch, travel (stay within visual contact) and camp together as a group". Be prepared to start with and stay with the group and to paddle in the late afternoon when winds may be a problem. If either you or your boat are not willing or able to deal with likely wind, please opt out.

Monday, October 10: Since Loma is a 4-5 hour drive from the Front Range, most paddlers will arrive in the area the night before with everyone on their own for camping. There's a state park in Fruita about 7 miles from Loma and numerous others farther away. Another option is Rabbit Valley, 16 miles/20 minutes west of Loma on I-70. Lots of campsites, although some require 4wd to access, especially if there has been rain. No water. Colorado National Monument is a short distance away from Fruita. Note that overnight parking, but no tent camping, is allowed at the Fruita Welcome Center/Rest Area. (I plan to be there.)

Tuesday, October 11: After assembling at Loma at 8:00 am, we'll off-load boats and river gear and start the 1.5 hour shuttle. Non-drivers will start rigging the boats and plan to launch by 10:00 in order to hike most of the day in Rattlesnake Canyon (at Mile 3.2). If you are boating solo or need extra time to pack your tandem, please arrive before 8 so you are almost ready to paddle when returning from the shuttle. In the late afternoon we will paddle less than .5 mile to Beavertail 2 camp (Mile 3.6).

Wednesday, October 12: We'll paddle about 10 miles to Mee Canyon (Mile 13.6), hiking up Mee Canyon in the afternoon/evening and/or the following morning to early afternoon.

Thursday, October 13 in the late afternoon: We will paddle about 3 miles down to Black Rocks 5 (Mile 16.5). There is a ridge to climb east of the Black Rocks camps (Mile 16) and Moore Canyon is accessible from the downstream end of the Black Rocks camps: "John Wesley Powell explored this area [Moore Canyon] in the late 1860s, and much of it remains as it must have looked to him back then. This canyon is entered by passing between and beneath enormous sandstone

pillars that form a natural gateway.”

(https://www.montrosepress.com/news/outdoors/colorado-river-s-appealing-side-canyons/article_71942064-0b42-11e5-9e12-4fefa86ffb3a.html)

Friday, October 14 is takeout day: But don't expect to get to Westwater before late afternoon. We will start early and paddle about 1.5 miles to McDonald Creek to find the petroglyphs (somewhere near the mouth of the canyon) and then another .2 mile to Knowles Canyon (“a huge canyon system”) at about Mile 18 to hike. I have never hiked in Knowles, so this is a high priority for me. See this blogpost <https://adventr.co/2020/04/lower-knowles-canyon-via-mcdonald-creek/> for a description of both Knowles and McDonald Creek. After hiking, we will have about 8 miles to paddle to takeout at Westwater.

Paddlers must bring:

- Boats suitable for Class I paddling
- All pertinent items from the RMCC Requirements and Recommendations for ACA-Sanctioned Events at <https://rockymountaincanoecub.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RMCC-Boating-Requirements-and-Recommendations-2020.pdf>
- Standard overnight canoe camping gear – It can be chilly in October on the river (low 40s last year)! Check out the REI suggestions <http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/canoe-multiday-touring-checklist.html>
- Food and WATER (or filter)
- All personal gear required by the BLM permit, see **Permit Conditions, Ruby Horsethief Permits** - <https://www.recreation.gov/permits/74466/additional-information>
- CO Parks and Wildlife hunting, fishing, or state wildlife area pass (annual or day) for launch at Loma. See the CPW website <https://www.cpwshop.com/purchaseprivilege.page> , indicate your age and residency and they will tell you which passes you can buy. Click on “Lands & Trails” on the left to get the SWA passes:
 - General annual SWA1 = \$36.08
 - General daily SWA8 = \$9
 - Youth (17-)/Senior (65+) SWA2 annual = \$10.23

If you want to buy in a store, try Search for Agent Locations at <https://www.cpwshop.com/issuerlist.page>

RMCC will provide, but participants will need to share carrying:

- Group toilet (unless you opt for a personal waste disposal system – let me know when you pay for your portion of the camping permit.
- Fire pan – There will likely be a fire ban in place, but we still need to carry the pan.

Additional information:

Ruby-Horsethief Permit Applications and miscellaneous info

https://www.recreation.gov/permits/map_of_Ruby_Horsethief_Canyon_Permits/r/wildernessAreaMap.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=74466

Ruby-Horsethief Campsites with mileage -- <https://relocategv.com/maps-charts/ruby-horsethief-campsites/>