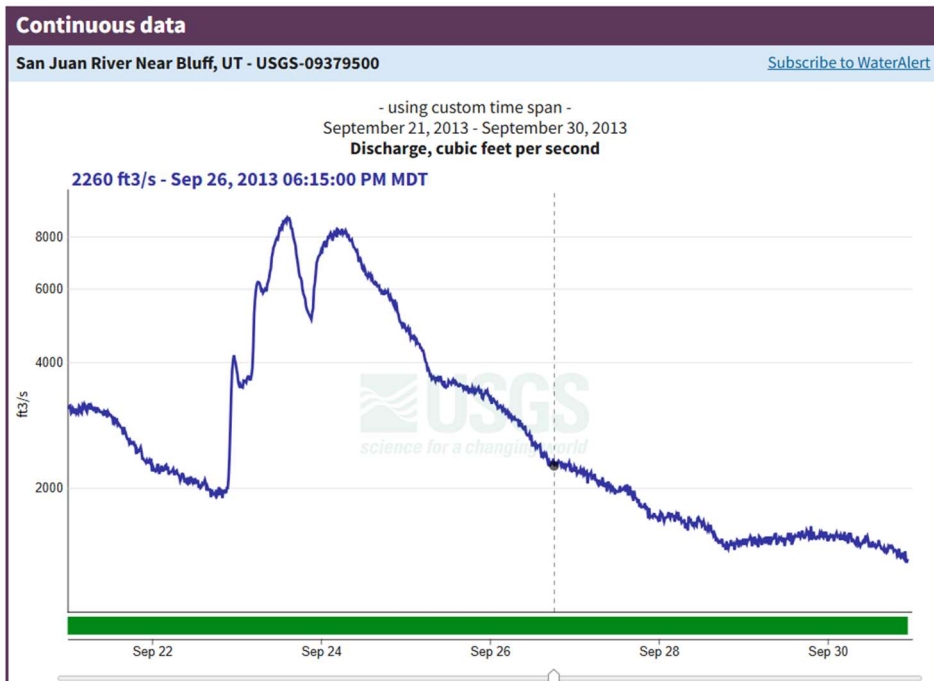


Carol and Werner Duecker, Candace Winkle and Karen A. did the **San Juan from Montezuma Creek to Sand Island** on 9-21-2013 and took off on 9-22-2013. The main attraction is the exquisite 17 room Casa del Eco ruin. Here is the chart of water levels:



So we had about 3200 to start, dropping to about 2200cfs. It was a good flow. On that trip we camped at Sand Island the night before. Had time to enjoy those petroglyphs quite a bit:





We put in on the Navajo side of the Montezuma Creek bridge and left 2 cars there.



We saw 2 fairly small ruins not far from the river the 1st day, but did not stop:





Finally we found the river left concrete support for the foot bridge that was washed away and landed there. We hiked the 2 miles RT to the Casa del Eco ruin (17 rooms) and were very impressed:







Nice rock work on the previous photo, 1 of 2 sets of petroglyphs, and a great view of the valley below:



We camped overnight and had a bug tent with fairly bad mosquitoes in late September!



In the early evening an Indian stopped by to look at cottonwood trees. They wanted to cut 1 down and use it in a ceremony for someone who was about to go into the military service. He was pleasant and did not mind us being there fairly close to the river.

Next day we got up and paddled out to Sand Island. We did not notice any more ruins or places that looked like they might be good for hiking. It was a good trip.

HELPFUL TRIP INFO for hopefully doing it again in 2026.

I called and got a lot of information from Carrie at the Monticello BLM on Jan. 28, 2026. Here it is:

She recommends putting in near a water tank not far from the High School. So this would be on river right. It is Navajo land on the left bank the whole distance to Sand Island. The first mile on the right is Navajo; this is around mile -18. Then it is private property for about a mile around MM -17. She has camped on an island around -14 and says it is very brushy on the right bank and no camp spots until you get past Recapture Wash, so it is too much trouble to try and find petroglyphs that are likely to be on that side. At that point you are in a very large area that is Bluff city limits, so BLM has ended and much of it is private land. It is best to camp on an island or get a permit to camp on the Navajo side.

The foot bridge concrete platform is on the left at about -7.5. From here it is better to take the left side of the Foot Bridge Road to get to the ruins rather than the right side. There is a farm in the middle. She says there is the "Dance Hall" ruin down river from Casa del Eco, but did not give a mile marker or a description of how to find it. She just said that there are a couple of ruins between the ex-swinging bridge and Sand Island.

She says that in June you can expect about 500cfs; 350 from below Navajo Reservoir and the rest from the Animas; but see the graph below. The river is fairly braided at this water level and progress could be slow. The BLM requires that you have a self-contained toilet and a firepan to do this section.

To get the BLM permit, email blm_ut_sanjuan_permits@blm.gov about a day or 2 ahead and give them your dates, phone number and email address. There is no fee. To get the \$15/day for camping and hiking in the Navajo territory, call 435-727-5871 at least a week ahead. We want 1000 to 3000cfs if possible so early June looks pretty good; see chart:

