

# The Nationwide Rivers Inventory 55 Segments for the State of Colorado

Reference Source: <http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/rtca/nri/> Note: Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs) Definitions at List Bottom

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River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Animas River	San Juan, La Plata	Animas City to Mineral Creek	45	1982		S, R, G, F, W, H	See Animas River Comments	

**Animas River Comments:** Excellent scenery, deep canyons, surrounding mountains; popular recreation attraction, including the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway, float trips; highest-value fishery resource (FWS); very important habitat providing diverse wildlife populations; historic gold and silver mining district, historic Animas City.

Arikaree River	Yuma	NE/KS State line to Alder Creek	48	1982		F, W, H, C	See Arikaree River Comments	KS
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**Arikaree River Comments:** Exceptional fish and wildlife habitat along river, especially wetlands; highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); significant waterfowl use; historic Beecher Island Indian Massacre site; Jones-Miller Hell Gap Paleo Buffalo Kill-Storage site.

Arkansas River	Lake/Chaffee	Pine Creek to Buena Vista	10	1982/ 1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See Arkansas River Comments1	
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**Arkansas River Comments1:** High mountain stream in rural setting with fisheries, cultural sites, recreation, scenic vistas, etc. with 46% public land ownership.

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Arkansas River	Chaffee	Salida to Pine Creek (continues downstream to Canon City in Section 13f)	39	1982		S, R, G, F	See Arkansas River Comments2	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments2:</u></b> Deep, narrow canyon; excellent white water boating, world class kayaking above Buena Vista; diverse fishery habitat, highest-valued fishery resource (FWS).								
Arkansas River	Chaffee, Fremont	Canon City to Salida (continues upstream to Pine Creek in Section 16)	52	1982		S, R, F, W	See Arkansas River Comments3	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments3:</u></b> Excellent canyon scenery, Royal Gorge; good white water boating; diverse fishery habitat, highest valued fishery resource (FWS); important wildlife habitat.								
Arkansas River	Chaffee/Fremont	Salida to Vallie Bridge	20	1982/ 1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See Arkansas River Comments4	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments4:</u></b> Mountain stream in a rural setting with fisheries, recreation, scenic vistas, etc. with 41% public ownership								
Arkansas River	Chaffee	From Buena Vista to the town of Salida	29	1982/ 1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See Arkansas River Comments5	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments5:</u></b> High mountain stream in rural/semi-urban setting with fisheries, cultural sites, recreation, scenic vistas, T & E species, etc. with 40% public ownership.								

Arkansas River	Fremont	Vallie Bridge to the west edge of Royal Gorge Park	31	1982/ 1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See Arkansas River Comments6	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments6:</u></b> Mountain valley stream in a rural setting with fisheries, recreation, scenic vistas, T & E species, etc. with 70% public ownership.								
Arkansas River	Otero	Entire segment within Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site	2	1993	R	R, H	See Arkansas River Comments7	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments7:</u></b> Within Historic Site, associated with reconstructed fort and river crossing of the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Minor recreational boat use and trail horseback crossings.								
Arkansas River	Lake/Chaffee	USFS boundary north of Leadville to Pine Creek	37	1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See Arkansas River Comments8	
<b><u>Arkansas River Comments8:</u></b> High mountain stream in rural setting with fisheries, cultural sites, recreation, scenic vistas, etc. with 46% public land ownership.								
Badger Creek	Fremont, Park	Arkansas River to source	25	1982		S, R, G, F	See Badger Creek Comments	
<b><u>Badger Creek Comments:</u></b> Deep canyon with exceptional scenery; popular with recreationists; highest valued fishery resource (FWS).								
Beaver Creek	Fremont	Skagway Reservoir to east side of State Refuge	20	1993	W	S, R, G, F, W, O	See Beaver Creek Comments	
<b><u>Beaver Creek Comments:</u></b> High rugged mountain stream in wilderness setting with fisheries, limited recreation, scenic vistas, T & E species, etc. with 100% public land ownership.								

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Big Thompson River	Larimer	Entire segment within Rocky Mountain National Park	14	1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See Big Thompson River Comments	
<b>Big Thompson River Comments:</b> Fishery values in upper 11 miles and geologic values in lower 2.6 miles. Habitat for threatened greenback cutthroat trout, beaver, black bear, and endangered peregrine falcon.								
Big Thompson River, North Fork	Larimer	Entire segment within Rocky Mountain National Park	9	1993	W	S, R, F	See Big Thompson River, North Fork Comments	
<b>Big Thompson River, North Fork Comments:</b> Habitat for threatened greenback cutthroat trout. In upper reach, river flows through alpine tundra, and mountain peaks are very accessible due to the open topography of the valley.								
Blue Creek	Gunnison	Curecanti National Recreation Area boundary downstream to Morrow Point Reservoir	2	1993	W	S	Towering canyon walls and undisturbed vegetation provide aesthetic values unequaled in the surrounding area.	
Cache la Poudre, North Fork	Larimer	Dale Creek to source	31	1982		S, F, W, H	See Cache la Poudre, North Fork Comments	
<b>Cache la Poudre, North Fork Comments:</b> Exceptional scenery, varied topography; diverse fishery, highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); exceptional riparian habitat for game and non-game wildlife; Cannibal Phil historic site.								

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Chacuaco Canyon	Las Animas	Purgatoire River to Highway 160	37	1982		S, G, W, C	See Chacuaco Canyon Comments	
<b><u>Chacuaco Canyon Comments:</u></b> Deep, scenic red canyon with intermittent stream, potholes; beautiful sandstone formations and exposed geologic processes; excellent wildlife habitat; dinosaur tracks and bones; Indian paintings, dwellings, camps, and artifacts.								
Coal Creek	Gunnison	Curecanti National Recreation Area boundary downstream to Blue Mesa Reservoir	0	1993	W	S, F, W	Scenic, fishery, and wildlife values.	
Colorado River	Grand, Eagle	State Bridge to Blue River	23	1982		S, R, G, F	See Colorado River Comments1	
<b><u>Colorado River Comments1:</u></b> Exceptional mountain, canyon scenery; varied high quality recreation opportunities, notably white water boating; excellent visibility of geologic processes; highest-valued fishery resource (FWS).								
Colorado River	Grand	Entire segment within Rocky Mountain National Park	21	1993	S, R	S, R, W, H	See Colorado River Comments2	
<b><u>Colorado River Comments2:</u></b> Prehistoric sites, historic mining and lumbering camps, early homesteads, and the earliest transmountain water diversion structure in Colorado. Alpine peaks, talus slopes, and broad glacial valley.								

Conejos River	Conejos	North, Middle, and El Rito Azul Forks from sources to confluence with Conejos River, thence Conejos River to confluence with South Fork	57	1993	W, R	S, R, G, F, W		
Crystal River	Gunnison, Pitkin	National Forest boundary to sources of North and South Forks (including the North and South Forks)	45	1982		S, R, F, W, H	See Crystal River Comments	
<b><u>Crystal River Comments:</u></b> Excellent scenery; popular with recreationists; good diversity of fish and wildlife, excellent habitat, possible Colorado cutthroat waters; highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); marble quarry for Lincoln Monument; historic mines, mining towns.								
Crystal River	Pitkin	Sweet Jessep Headgate upstream to source, including both North and South Forks	40	1982/ 1993		S, R, H		
Curecanti Creek	Gunnison	Curecanti National Recreation Area boundary downstream to Morrow Point Reservoir	1	1993	S	S, F	Scenic and fisheries values.	

Dolores River	Montezuma , Dolores, San Miguel, Montrose	1.3 miles below McPhee Damsite downstream to point 1 mile above Colorado Highway 90 bridge near Bedrock	105	1993	W, S, R	S, R, G, C, O	Challenging white water boating and rafting during spring and early summer. Archeological values.	
East River	Gunnison	Gunnison River to source	20	1982		S, F, W, H	See East River Comments	
<b><u>East River Comments:</u></b> Exceptional scenery, varied topography; diverse fishery, highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); excellent riparian habitat important to many wildlife species, including the wintering bald eagle, a federally listed endangered species; historic mining area, town of Gothic.								
Elk River	Routt	Main stem upstream from confluence with SF, NF and SF to headwaters, and MF to confluence of Gilpin and Gold Creeks	29	1993	W, S	S, R, F, O		
Encampment River	Jackson	Main Stem from Wyoming state line to headwaters. West Fork from confluence with main stem to headwaters at West Fork Lake	20	1993	W	F, W, O		

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Fall River	Larimer	Headwaters of Fall River to Fan Lake (within Rocky Mountain National Park)	10	1993	W	S, R, W	See Fall River Comments	
<b>Fall River Comments:</b> Excellent recreational and scenic opportunities. Wildlife is visible to visitors. Self-guided auto tour teaches about historic, geologic, and recreational features.								
Gunnison River	Montrose	Entire segment within Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument	12	1993	W, S	S, G, O	Outstanding scenic canyon resources, wilderness values, and geologic features.	
Gunnison River, Lake Fork	Gunnison	Curecanti National Recreation Area boundary downstream to Blue Mesa Reservoir	1	1993	R	S, R, F, W, H	See Gunnison River, Lake Fork Comments	
<b>Gunnison River, Lake Fork Comments:</b> Primarily fishing and rafting. Good breeding population of brown and rainbow trout, a small herd of bighorn sheep, and refuge for migrating bald eagles. Remnants of temporary railroad camps for construction crews.								
Gunnison River, Lake Fork	Gunnison	Sloan Lake to Wager Gulch	13	1993	R	S	Spectacular scenery important for recreation.	

Huerfano River	Pueblo	Huerfano Cucharas Ditch diversion to Cucharas River	9	1982		S, C	See Huerfano River Comments	
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**Huerfano River Comments:** Excellent scenery with steep-sided canyon, various geological formations; scattered pinyon-juniper at upper end; prehistoric occupation, petroglyphs, artifacts.

Los Pinos River	Hinsdale	Confluence of North Fork and Rincon La Vaca downstream to northern boundary of Granite Peak Ranch. Tributaries from headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River.	54	1993	W	S, R, G	Tributaries are Lake Creek, Flint Creek, Rincon La Vaca, Rincon La Osa, Snowslide Canyon Creek, and Sierra Vandra. Within Weminuche Wilderness.	
North St. Vrain Creek	Boulder	Ralph Price Reservoir to source	19	1982		S, F, W, O	See North St. Vrain Creek Comments1	

**North St. Vrain Creek Comments1:** Excellent scenic and natural values in this last, virtually roadless canyon on the urban front range. Elevations range from over 6000' to 14, 215' at Longs Peak Summit. Alpine meadows, talus slopes, nearly unmodified subalpine and montane forests, habitat for threatened greenback cutthroat trout, also golden eagle, big horn sheep, cougar and elk habitat as well as highest-valued fishery resource (FWS).

North St. Vrain Creek	Boulder	Entire segment within Rocky Mountain National Park	8	1982/ 1993	W, S	F, W, O	See North St. Vrain Creek Comments2	
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**North St. Vrain Creek Comments2:** Alpine meadows, talus slopes, and nearly unmodified subalpine and montane forests. Habitat for golden eagles, bighorn sheep, cougar, elk, deer, and threatened greenback cutthroat trout.

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Piedra River	Archuleta, Hinsdale, Mineral	Main stem from confluence with Indian Creek to boundary between Sec. 8 and 9, T.36 N., R.3 W. Middle Fork from boundary between Sec. 10 and 15, T.37 N., R.3 W. to headwaters	32	1993	W, S	S, G, F, W		
Purgatoire River	Otero, Las Animas	Smith Canton to Trinchera Creek (continues downstream to Arkansas River in Section 13f)	75	1982		S, G, F, W, C	See Purgatoire River Comments1	
<b><u>Purgatoire River Comments1:</u></b> Deep, scenic red canyon with good flowing stream; beautiful sandstone formations and exposed geologic processes; excellent fish and wildlife habitat; dinosaur tracks and bones; Indian paintings, dwellings, camps, and artifacts.								
Purgatoire River	Bent, Otero	Arkansas River to Smith Canyon (continues upstream to Trinchera Creek in Section 13g)	42	1982		S, G, F, W, C	See Purgatoire River Comments2	
<b><u>Purgatoire River Comments2:</u></b> Deep, scenic canyon at upper end; good flow; excellent fish and wildlife values; heavy prehistoric use in adjacent flats and canyon walls; petroglyphs; dinosaur tracks.								

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
Rio Grande River	Costilla/Conejos Boundary, Alamosa	Alamosa Wildlife Refuge to Lasauoes	19	1993	S	S, R, W, C	Wetlands, cultural sites, scenic vistas.	
Rio Grande River	Costilla/Conejos Boundary	Lasauoes to 1/4 mi. north of Labatos Bridge	14	1993	S	S, G, W, H	Rugged landscapes, scenic vistas.	
Rio Grande River	Costilla/Conejos Boundary	Lobatos Bridge to New Mexico state line	8	1982/ 1993	W	S, R, G, W, C	See Rio Grande River Comments1	
<b><u>Rio Grande River Comments1:</u></b> Vertical rock walls. Uplifting, faulting, and volcanic action. Raptor nesting sites.								
Rio Grande River	Conejos	NM/CO Line to Lobatos Bridge	8	1982		S, R, W	See Rio Grande River Comments2	
<b><u>Rio Grande River Comments2:</u></b> Deep narrow canyon, adjoins designated Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River in New Mexico; good floating opportunities; good riparian habitat for many wildlife species, including migratory whooping cranes.								
San Juan River (including East and West Forks)	Rio Grande, Mineral, Archuleta	Fourmile Creek to sources of East and West Forks	50	1982		S, R, F, W, H	See San Juan River (including East and West Forks) Comments	
<b><u>San Juan River (including East and West Forks) Comments:</u></b> Excellent scenery through varied topography; diverse fishery, highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); very important habitat providing for diverse wildlife populations; route of first trans-continental telephone lines.								

South Platte River	Douglas, Teller, Park, Jefferson	Cheesman Reservoir to Elevenmile Canyon Reservoir	28	1982		S, R, G, F, W	See South Platte River Comments1	
<b><u>South Platte River Comments1:</u></b> Deep, narrow canyon with many rock outcrops in generally forested area; exceptional recreation including fishing, backpacking, hiking, hunting; highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); important habitat for many wildlife species, wintering and migratory bald eagles, a federally listed endangered species. Exceptional scenery, nestled between majestic mountain ranges; varied high-quality recreation activities; historic freight route.								
South Platte River	Douglas, Teller, Park, Jefferson	Eleven-Mile Canyon Dam downstream to private land in vicinity of Lake George	8	1982/ 1993	R	S, R, G, F, W	See South Platte River Comments2	
<b><u>South Platte River Comments2:</u></b> Rocky outcrops in defined canyon with interspersed forest cover and scattered meadows. Developed campgrounds and picnic grounds.								
South Platte River	Douglas, Teller, Park, Jefferson	Lake George to mouth of Beaver Creek	6	1982/ 1993	R	S, R, G, F, W	See South Platte River Comments3	
<b><u>South Platte River Comments3:</u></b> Wide flat canyon bottom with ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir on slopes.								
South Platte River	Douglas, Teller, Park, Jefferson	Beaver Creek to head of Cheesman Lake	9	1982/ 1993	W	S, R, G, F, W	See South Platte River Comments4	
<b><u>South Platte River Comments4:</u></b> Rocky outcrops in defined canyon with interspersed forest cover and scattered meadows. Used primarily for fishing.								

South Saint Vrain River, North Fork	Boulder	Rocky Mountain National Park Boundary to high water mark of Ralph Price Reservoir (Sec. 18, T.3N., R.71W., 6th PM.)	11	1993	S, R	S, R, F, W	Steep incised canyon of granite rock with ponderosa pine on south facing slopes and Douglas fir on north facing slopes.	
Taylor River	Gunnison	Illinois Creek to source	21	1982		S, R, F, H		
West Elk Creek	Gunnison	Curecanti National Recreation Area boundary downstream to Blue Mesa Reservoir	0	1993	W	S, W	Free-flowing and possesses outstandingly remarkable scenic values.	
White River, North Fork	Rio Blanco, Garfield	White River to source	25	1982		S, R, F, W	See White River, North Fork Comments	

**White River, North Fork Comments:** Excellent scenery, deep canyon heavily forested with aspen and conifers, unusual and varied geologic features; very popular with recreationists; excellent game and non-game wildlife habitat; highest-valued fishery resource (FWS).

White River, South Fork	Rio Blanco, Garfield	White River to source	35	1982		S, R, F, W	See White River, South Fork Comments1	
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**White River, South Fork Comments1:** Excellent scenery, deep canyon heavily forested with aspen and conifers, unusual and varied geologic features; very popular with recreationists; varied wildlife habitat provides for diverse game and non-game populations; highest valued fishery resource (FWS).

River	County	Reach	Length (miles)	Year Listed/ Updated	Potential Classification	ORVs	Description	Other States
White River, South Fork	Rio Blanco, Garfield	White River to Source	38	1982/ 1993		S, R, G, W	See White River, South Fork Comments2	
<b><u>White River, South Fork Comments2:</u></b> Fishing, hunting, camping, and hiking. Spring Cave, third largest cave in Colorado. Underground lakes and waterways.								
Yampa		The segment within the boundaries of the Dinosaur National Monument.	0	1982/ 1995			See Yampa Comments	
<b><u>Yampa Comments:</u></b> This river is under Congressional study for designation to the Wild and Scenic River System. It is currently under the full protection of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act pursuant to Section 7 (b) of the Act.								
Yampa River	Moffat	Little Snake River to Williams Fork	83	1982		S, R, G, F, W, C	See Yampa River Comments	
<b><u>Yampa River Comments:</u></b> Excellent varied scenery through largely natural environment, open areas, canyons, precipitous rock walls through Cross Mountain, in canyon areas; Colorado squawfish, humpback chub, bonytail chub, all federally listed endangered species; highest-valued fishery resource (FWS); excellent wildlife habitat for numerous species; walls of Cross Mountain contain notable Indian rock art site.								

## Outstanding Resource Values (ORV) Definitions:

**Scenery (S):** The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors -- such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed -- may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment.

**Recreation (R):** Recreational opportunities are, or have the potential to be, popular enough to attract visitors from throughout or beyond the region of comparison or are unique or rare within the region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. River-related opportunities could include, but are not limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing and boating.

- Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and attract, or have the potential to attract, visitors from outside the region of comparison.
- The river may provide, or have the potential to provide, settings for national or regional usage or competitive events.
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**Geology (G):** The river, or the area within the river corridor, contains one or more example of a geologic feature, process or phenomenon that is unique or rare within the region of comparison. The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a "textbook" example, and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, or other geologic structures).

**Fish (F):** Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations, habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions.

- *Populations:* The river is nationally or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."
- *Habitat:* The river provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region of comparison. Of particular significance is habitat for wild stocks and/or federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."

**Wildlife (W):** Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either terrestrial or aquatic wildlife populations or habitat or a combination of these conditions.

- *Populations:* The river, or area within the river corridor, contains nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous wildlife species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique, and/or populations of federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."
- *Habitat:* The river, or area within the river corridor, provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, and/or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."

**Prehistory (P):** The river, or area within the river corridor, contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must have unique or rare characteristics or exceptional human interest value(s). Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory; may be rare and represent an area where a culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; and/or may have been used by cultural groups for rare sacred purposes. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the NPS.

**History (H):** The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or one-of-a-kind in the region. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A historic site(s) and/or features(s) is 50 years old or older in most cases.

**Cultural (C):** The river or area within the river corridor contains archaeological sites or areas significant to traditional cultures. Examples might be American Indian burial grounds, petroglyphs, the oldest known human use site in a region, or streams that support traditional agriculture, subsistence fishing, or religious ceremonies.

**Other Values (O):** While no specific national evaluation guidelines have been developed for the "other similar values" category, assessments of additional river-related values consistent with the foregoing guidance may be developed -- including, but not limited to, hydrology, paleontology and botany resources.