

# **New Mexico Whitewater**

A Guide to River Trips



# New Mexico Whitewater

## A Guide to River Trips

---

Published by  
The New Mexico State Park Division  
Natural Resources Department  
141 East De Vargas, P.O. Box 1147  
Santa Fe, NM 87503

© 1983 New Mexico State Park Division

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 83-620012

---

How Many Whitewater  
Rafts in the West?



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### WHITewater BOATING

Introduction .....	Page 2
Rights of Boaters.....	Page 2
Care of the Environment .....	Page 4
Recommended Craft .....	Page 5
Basic Equipment Checklist.....	Page 6
First Aid .....	Page 7
Safety .....	Page 8

### WHITewater RIVERS

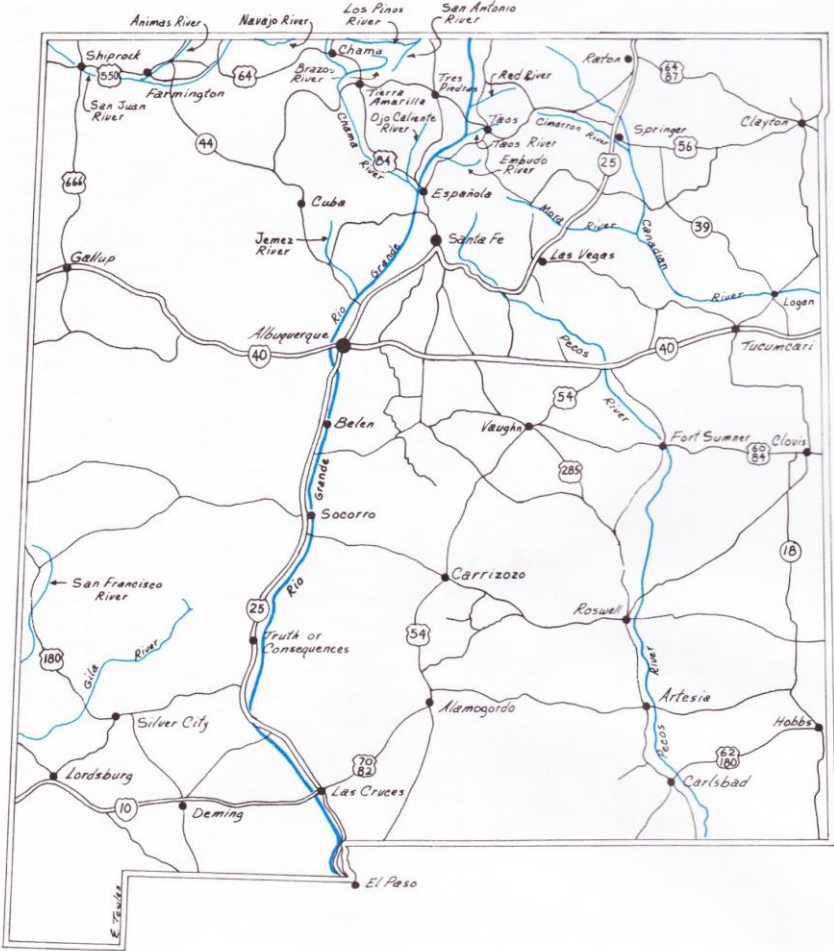
The River Survey .....	Page 10
Difficulty Rating Scale .....	Page 10
Animas River .....	Page 11
Brazos River.....	Page 12
Canadian River (A) .....	Page 13
Canadian River (B) .....	Page 14
Chama River (A) .....	Page 16
Chama River (B) .....	Page 17
Chama River (C) .....	Page 18
Chama River (D) .....	Page 20
Chama River (E) .....	Page 22
Cimarron River .....	Page 23
Embudo River.....	Page 24
Gila River (A).....	Page 26
Gila River (B).....	Page 28
Gila River (C).....	Page 30
Gila River (D) .....	Page 32
Gila River (E).....	Page 34
Jemez River.....	Page 35
Los Pinos River .....	Page 36
Mora River .....	Page 37
Navajo River .....	Page 38
Ojo Caliente River .....	Page 39

Pecos River (A) .....	Page 40
Pecos River (B) .....	Page 42
Pecos River (C) .....	Page 44
Red River.....	Page 45
Rio Grande Wild River.....	Page 46
Rio Grande (A).....	Page 48
Rio Grande (B).....	Page 49
Rio Grande (C).....	Page 50
Rio Grande (D).....	Page 51
Rio Grande (E).....	Page 52
Rio Grande (F) .....	Page 54
Rio Grande Flatwater .....	Page 55
Rio Pueblo de Taos .....	Page 56
San Antonio River .....	Page 58
San Francisco River (A) .....	Page 59
San Francisco River (B) .....	Page 60
San Juan River (A).....	Page 62
San Juan River (B).....	Page 63
San Juan River (C).....	Page 64
Whitewater Boating References.....	Page 65
Glossary of Common River Terms.....	Page 68

### MAPS

Whitewater Rivers of New Mexico.....	Page 1
Chama River (Lobo Lodge).....	Page 15
Chama River (El Vado Dam).....	Page 19
Gila River (Wilderness Run).....	Page 25
Gila River (Mogollon Creek) .....	Page 29
Gila River (Middle Box).....	Page 31
Pecos River .....	Page 41
Rio Grande (Upper and Lower Box) .....	Page 47
Rio Grande (White Rock Canyon) .....	Page 53

# WHITEWATER RIVERS OF NEW MEXICO



# New Mexico Whitewater Boating

## INTRODUCTION

The popular image of New Mexico is of a dry, cactus-studded region of desert landscapes. Yet each spring, as the deep high-mountain snows of winter melt, water courses down to swell the state's streams and rivers, the most prominent of which is the Rio Grande — the "Great River" which offers some of the best whitewater boating in the West.

Arid New Mexico has, in fact, a surprising number of other rivers with the potential for whitewater boating. Many are shallow and narrow with highly variable water levels and boating conditions, but if they are floated at the right time of year, they can offer river runners challenging rapids and ample opportunities for both excitement and solitude in wild natural settings.

This booklet is designed to provide a ready reference to New Mexico's whitewater rivers, along with guidelines for safe enjoyment of the sport of river running. Information is included covering physical characteristics, rapids, recommended craft, running seasons, hazards, maps, permits, and access points for individual stretches of rivers throughout the state.

The rivers discussed were surveyed by boat, whenever possible, or by riverside hiking when circumstances did not permit floating observation. *It cannot be guaranteed that every danger and river characteristic has been identified in this guide*, since conditions on these streams are constantly changing. Hazards like diversion dams, fences crossing rivers, and debris jams are common and may be encountered on one occasion but not the next. It is therefore imperative that boaters get the most current information available and, when in doubt, scout rivers before traveling them — always keeping in mind the inherent dangers of whitewater boating.

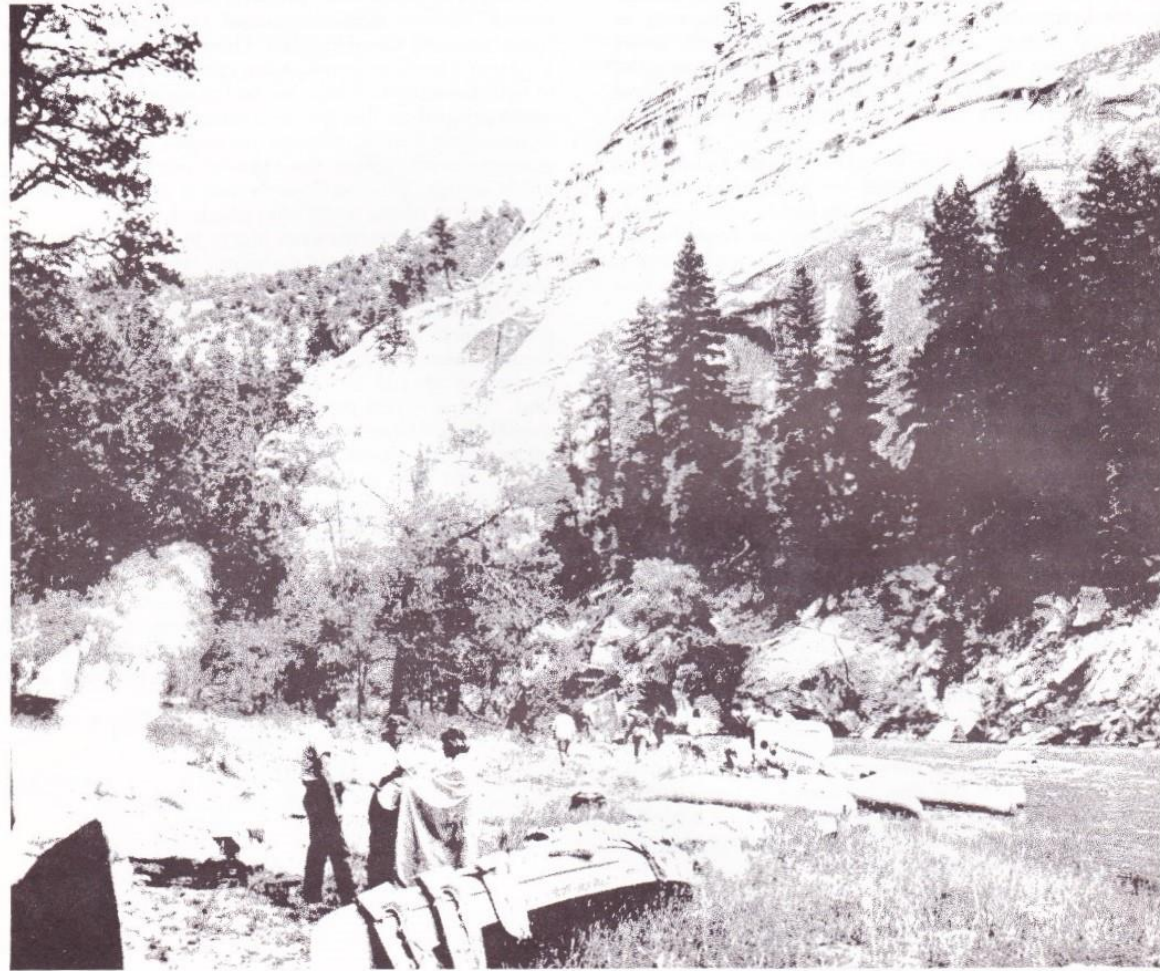
It is hoped that the data contained in this guide to New Mexico's rivers will help boaters choose trips that match their interests and abilities, and will serve as an aid to planning safe whitewater adventures.

## RIGHTS OF BOATERS

The rights of boaters and property owners with respect to natural streams were interpreted by the New Mexico State Supreme Court in 1945. The court determined that although a landowner may have exclusive property rights to both banks as well as to the bed of the river, it does not necessarily follow that the landowner has exclusive rights to the water flowing through his or her land. State law guarantees all citizens the right to recreational use of public waters. Floating down a river is not a trespass on the property of the underlying riverbed.

Many of the whitewater rivers in New Mexico run through privately owned property, where one or both banks of the river or islands in midstream are not public. It often becomes necessary to leave the water and go onto private land to scout rapids or hazards or to portage around them. Whenever possible, permission of the landowner should be obtained before entering private land. If this is not practical, the landowner's property should always be respected — gates and fences should be left as they are found, firewood should not be cut or collected, and care should be taken in the disposition of trash and human waste (see "Care of Environment" section). Unless permission is obtained ahead of time, camping is an infringement on a property owner's rights.

A party's behavior on private property may influence a landowner's attitude toward future boating activity on his land. In many cases, the only access to a stretch of river is provided through the courtesy of a private landowner, so any damage done to that property may preclude its use by other boaters.



## CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

---

With increasing numbers of people floating New Mexico's rivers each year, it is essential that boaters minimize their impact on the natural environment. "No-trace" camping means using a piece of land and leaving it exactly as it was. It also represents an ethic — a respect for the land and the rights of those who will follow. High-quality river environments and experiences cannot survive without this ethic.

To preserve the natural appearance of rivers and adjacent lands, it is important that river runners be particularly careful in dealing with human waste, soap, fire, and trash. The following guidelines will help ensure that riverways remain beautiful and unimpaired for future boaters:

1. Carry out solid human waste in portable toilets whenever possible. This can be accomplished by using large ammo cans, heavy-duty plastic garbage bags, and deodorant chemicals such as formaldehyde, chlorine bleach, or quicklime (consult the Bureau of Land Management's handout entitled *Human Waste Carry-Out Method* for more details). If for some reason the waste cannot be carried out, it should be buried in holes six to eight inches deep and at least 100 feet from the river's high-water line. Toilet paper should be burned when burying human waste.
2. Bathe and wash dishes well away from camp and from water sources; use biodegradable soap.
3. Burn only fallen deadwood or driftwood; locate fires in a safe place well away from vegetation; never leave fires unattended; carry out excess charcoal. To prevent forest fires and environmental scarring, when building a fire it is best to use a fire pan (e.g., garbage can lid) to confine ashes. An even better precaution is to use a portable stove and not build a fire at all.
4. If campfires are used, all combustible trash should be burned, and everything else should then be compacted and packed out. Never sink cans or bottles in a river and do not bury trash, since it decomposes slow-

ly (see "Decomposition Time Schedule") and attracts flies, ants, and other pests.

In some areas, historic and archaeological artifacts may be encountered. According to Federal law, the collection of Indian artifacts or disturbance of other cultural resources is prohibited.

To protect fragile vegetation and soils, camps should be set up on beaches or sandbars whenever possible. This also allows high water to remove all evidence of the camp.

### Decomposition Time Schedule

Orange peel: 6 months or more  
Paper containers: 2-5 months  
Wool socks: 6 months-2 years  
Plastic-coated cartons: 5 years  
Plastic bags: 10-20 years  
Leather (shoes): 25-50 years  
Nylon: 30-40 years  
Polyester: 50-80 years  
Plastic containers: 50-80 years  
Aluminum: 80-100 years



## RECOMMENDED CRAFT

---

Since most of New Mexico's whitewater rivers are shallow and narrow, small, durable craft are recommended for maximum maneuverability. If much portaging is anticipated, a lightweight boat is advantageous. The types of craft recommended for New Mexico's rivers include:

**Small rafts** — eight to 12 feet long, with four to six chambers (compartments) and durable floors. On a few larger rivers, longer rafts can be used.

**Kayaks** — tough, lightweight Kevlar boats with breakaway decks. Plastic boats work well for all but the most rocky stretches of river and those that require long portages.

**Canoes** — strong, durable ABS or other plastic boats.

## REPAIR KIT

### Rafts

- Contact cement
- Thin patching material (same material as raft)
- Scissors
- Rolling tool
- Felt pen (for marking patch outlines)
- Roughener (sand paper)
- Needles and heavy-duty thread
- Air pump
- Spare parts for boat and frame (valve assembly, "D" rings, oarlocks, etc.)
- Duct tape

### Fiberglass Canoes and Kayaks

- Fiberglass cloth
- Resin (one pint) and catalyst
- Rubber gloves
- Plastic spreading tool
- Paper cup
- Scissors

## BASIC EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Without the proper equipment and clothing, river running can be a cold, miserable, and even deadly experience. The following checklist is intended to serve as a basic guide for planning a safe and comfortable river trip:

- Fast-drying, warm clothing (synthetics like polypropylene, pile, and thinsulate are best; wool is warm but absorbs water and does not dry quickly)
- Wetsuit (especially necessary in spring, when water and air temperatures may be very cold; rule of thumb is to wear wetsuit if air and water temperatures combined are less than 100° F.)
- Matches in waterproof container (keep spare matches on person at all times)
- First-aid kit (see detailed "First Aid" list)
- Boat repair kit (see detailed "Boat Repair" list)
- Throw rope (for rescues; keep in an accessible storage bag)
- Boating safety accessories (i.e., life jacket, bailing buckets, extra rope; see "Safety" section)
- Waterproof storage bags (several garbage bags will suffice on short trips)
- Portable toilet (composed of large ammo can, toilet seat, heavy-duty garbage bags, and deodorant chemical).
- Ammo box or other waterproof containers (for camera and other personal gear that must be kept dry or easily accessible)
- Maps, compass, trip logs, and other navigational aids
- Plastic bags with fasteners (for separating items and keeping out sand)
- Garbage bags for carrying out trash
- Wide-brimmed sun hat with chin strap
- Sunglasses with head strap
- Insect repellent
- Wire cutters (to be used only in emergency situations when life is endangered; e.g., person entangled in fence)
- Tennis or deck shoes (to protect feet during all river activities; going barefoot can be extremely dangerous)

- Hiking boots or land shoes
- Raingear
- Towel
- Knife
- Food
- Water

### Additional Items for Overnight Trips

- Sleeping bag and pad
- Tent or other shelter
- Ground cloth
- Flashlight
- Cooking gear
- Cook stove and fuel
- Personal toiletries

## FIRST AID

---

The whitewater rivers described in this booklet are often in remote locations, so boaters must rely on their own resources for medical aid. Parties floating these rivers need to be well-equipped and prepared to handle any problems or emergencies that might occur in the event of injury or illness.

The following items are highly recommended basics for a river runner's medical kit:

- Aspirin
- Antibacterial soap
- Triangular bandages
- Gauze pads
- Adhesive tape
- Band-aids
- Sun block and sunburn ointment
- Scissors or razor blade
- Tweezers
- Signal mirror
- Matches (for sterilization)
- Several dimes (for emergency phone calls)
- Needles and safety pins
- Water purification kit (consult New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division's pamphlet entitled *Water Disinfection for Campers and Backpackers* for latest recommendations)
- First-aid handbook

For more extensive first aid recommendations, consult the list available from Grand Canyon National Park (see "Whitewater Boating References" section).

## SAFETY

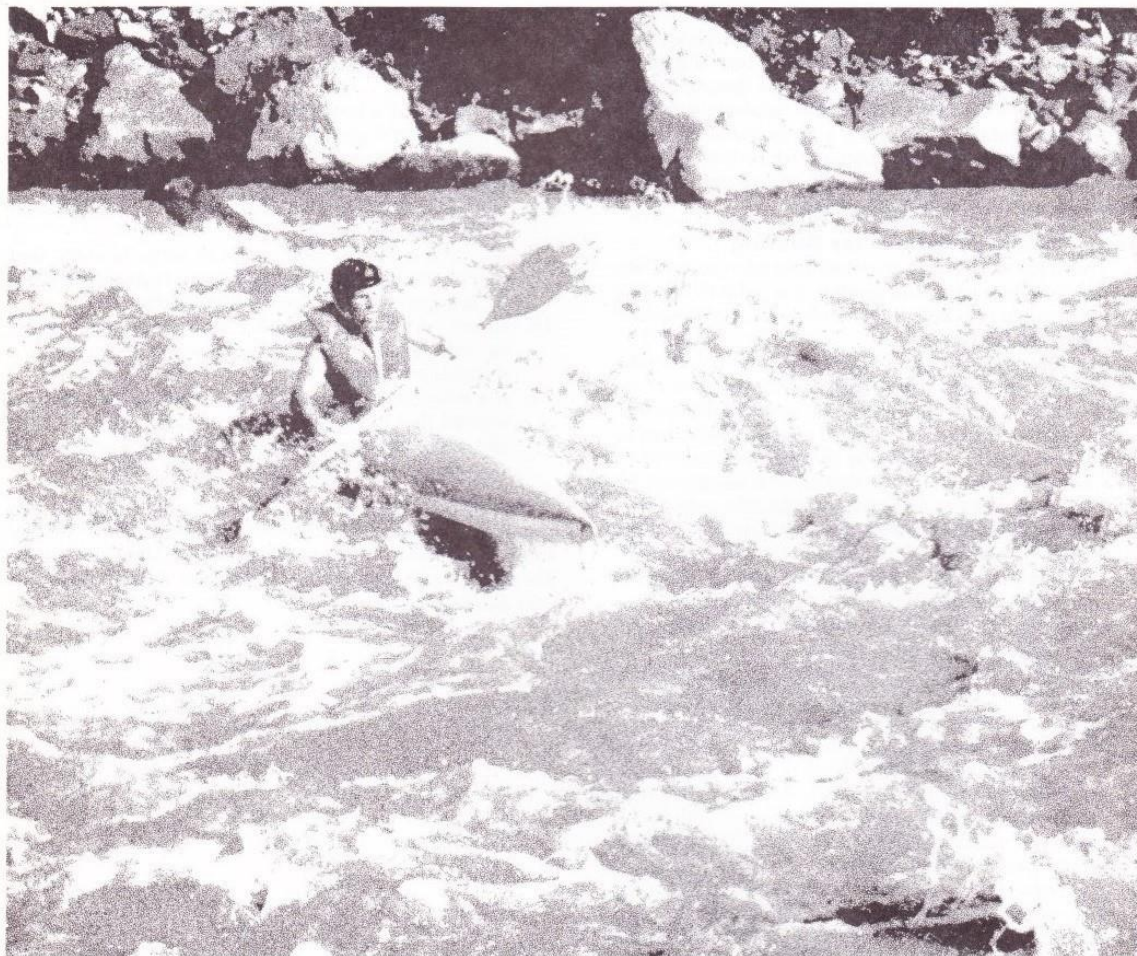
---

Since whitewater boating is a potentially dangerous sport, it must be pursued thoughtfully and with a keen respect for established rules of safety. Although observing safety guidelines does not eliminate risk, it does greatly reduce the chances of calamity. A powerful, rushing river can provide tremendous challenges and excitement to the river runner, but it is not something to be taken lightly. The importance of adequate preparation, caution, and alertness cannot be overemphasized.

### **Safety Code for Whitewater Boating**

1. Thoroughly research any river you plan to run; obtain detailed maps and guides; learn the river's present volume, gradient, difficulty classification, and special hazards.
2. Carry a first-aid kit adequate to handle common river injuries (see "First Aid" checklist).
3. As required by New Mexico State Law, a U.S. Coast Guard Type I or Type V life preserver must be worn by every person in the party when on the river. Carry an extra life jacket for each craft (except for kayaks), as well as a spare oar or paddle, extra rope, and a bailing device (one gallon capacity minimum for open vessels).
4. Check all required equipment to make sure it is in serviceable condition.
5. Carry patching and repair equipment for emergency repairs (see "Repair Kit" list).
6. Wear crash helmets on rocky, hazardous river stretches.
7. Be aware of and avoid river hazards when possible.
8. Have a frank knowledge of individual boating ability and do not attempt waters that are too difficult.
9. Be practiced in emergency procedures; know how to handle swamping, flips, and collisions with rocks, as well as major injuries and illnesses. Remember to rescue people before equipment!
10. Test new and unfamiliar pieces of equipment on easy water before relying on them for difficult runs.
11. On extended trips, carry food, camping gear, and survival equipment in waterproof bags securely lashed to the craft (the shortest possible lashing cords should be used to avoid possible entanglement if the boat flips).
12. Do not load a boat beyond its rated capacity.
13. Avoid twilight and night rafting, since poor visibility greatly increases the difficulty and danger of running rapids; make camp early.
14. Do not operate a craft while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
15. As a courtesy and safety alert to other boaters, flag fences stretching across rivers with high-visibility red or orange material whenever possible.
16. Leave an itinerary with the appropriate authorities or with someone who will contact them after a designated period of time.
17. If a member of a boating party is lost or so seriously injured that he or she cannot be safely moved, contact the local State Police office (this agency is in charge of search and rescue operations).

For more detailed information about safety, equipment, and regulations, contact the New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division's Boating Safety Section for the current edition of *New Mexico State Park Regulations and Boating Laws*.



# New Mexico Whitewater Rivers

## THE RIVER SURVEY

## DIFFICULTY RATING SCALE

Nineteen of New Mexico's whitewater rivers are described and evaluated for their boating potential in this guide. All the river segments surveyed may be runnable, but some may have either no season or a short one (less than a week) in a given year.

While this survey identifies the state's whitewater resources, it does not necessarily recommend all the river stretches described. Attempting several of these runs is, in fact, strongly discouraged because of the extreme danger of man-made or natural hazards. The decision to run a particular river is up to the individual boater (and in some cases the administering agency), and it is urged that plans be made, and hazards and whitewater boating skills evaluated, with great care.

Water levels and river conditions may fluctuate dramatically as a result of variable snowmelt, rainfall, irrigation diversions, and dam controls. Since these are major factors in determining the feasibility and safety of a trip, it is imperative that one check a river's status before departing. Besides the agencies managing particular rivers, other sources of up-to-date information include the following offices, all located in Albuquerque:

- National Weather Service (505) 243-0702  
Provides daily weather and flow reports from April through June on selected rivers.
- U.S. Geological Survey (505) 766-6506  
Provides gauge readings used by National Weather Service year-round.
- Bureau of Reclamation (505) 766-3719  
Provides outflow and inflow information about dams under its control.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (505) 766-2636  
Provides outflow and inflow information about dams under its control.

Stretches of runnable rivers are commonly rated according to their degree of difficulty for boaters. The International Scale, which classifies whitewater rivers from I to VI (I is easy, and VI only runnable with extreme danger to life), is used in this booklet to help river runners select a route geared to their abilities.

A river's difficulty rating is usually based on the classification of its most challenging rapids. Exceptions occur when single rapids far exceed the river's general level of difficulty or if dangerous obstructions such as fences, fallen trees, and diversion dams are a factor.

All ratings in this guide are based on average water flow conditions. Fluctuations in water level may affect the difficulty of the run, so it is wise to check current river volume when planning a trip.

### International Scale

**Class I** Easy. Waves small; passages clear; no serious obstacles.

**Class II** Medium. Rapids of moderate difficulty with passages clear.

**Class III** Difficult. Waves numerous, high, irregular; rocks; eddies; rapids with passages clear; narrow, requiring expertise in maneuvering; scouting usually needed. Requires good operator and boat.

**Class IV** Very difficult. Long rapids; powerful, irregular waves; dangerous rocks; boiling eddies; passages difficult to scout; scouting mandatory first time; powerful and precise maneuvering required. Demands expert boatman and excellent boat and outfit.

**Class V** Extremely difficult. Exceedingly long, violent, and difficult rapids, following each other almost without interruption; riverbed extremely obstructed; big drops; violent currents; very steep gradient; close study essential but often difficult. Requires exceptionally talented boatman, and boat and outfit suited to the situation. All possible precautions must be taken.

**Class VI** Almost unrunnable. Navigable by experts only, *with definite risk of life.*

## ANIMAS RIVER

Colorado Border to Farmington

### General Description

Near the Colorado border, the Animas winds through beautiful sandstone cliff country, with many birds and small mammals in the groves and wetlands along its banks. The river gradually becomes a suburban, pastoral run.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private; contact local landowners for special access and information on current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Aztec 15'  
Flora Vista 7½'  
Farmington (North and South) 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 25 miles from Cedar Hill to Farmington City Park; eight to ten hours at 500 CFS.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Canoes and kayaks at lower water levels (below 800 CFS); any craft at higher levels; lightweight boats best due to possible portages.

5. **Rapids**

Class I and II at most water levels; many riffles, especially at low water; diversion dams may increase difficulty.

6. **Gradient**

15 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Runnable much of the year in kayaks and canoes; highest flows of 3,000 CFS occur in May and June; need 200 CFS minimum.

8. **Access**

- Bridge south of Holmberg Lake is usable for emergencies only (County Road A-140).
- Bridge on county road just south of Cedar Hill provides first good access.
- Cedar Hill bridge on Highway 550 southwest of town offers fair access.
- Four miles north of Aztec, a diversion dam road leads west to a poor, but possible, access point.
- Aztec city bridges provide fair access, but traffic is

heavy and parking difficult.

- Bridge south of Flora Vista provides a poor, but possible, access point.
- Farmington hydro plant bridge provides poor, but possible, access in the midst of heavy city traffic.
- Farmington truck route bridge at city park offers excellent access and parking before confluence of San Juan River.

**Shuttle:** 25 miles from Cedar Hill to Farmington on paved roads.

**Emergency:** Since roads and houses border much of the river, it is possible to take out almost anywhere and get to a phone for help.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; all runnable at high water; one rated Class II-III just north of the Farmington hydro plant bridge.

**Bridges:** Several; be on the alert for debris at high water.

**Fences:** Always possible in farm country. They are a most dangerous hazard, so be on the alert; portaging may be necessary.

10. **Camping**

Best on islands in wooded areas; heed private property signs.

11. **Water**

None potable; bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful; because land is private, not many places to have campfires.

13. **Hiking**

Short walk up Ditch Creek near Cedar Hill.

## BRAZOS RIVER

Corkin's Lodge to Chama River Confluence

### General Description

A swift mountain stream that offers a short, exciting run through spectacular country, beginning at the base of the sheer, granite Brazos Cliffs.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
Private; obtain permission and information from Corkin's Lodge if launching from there.
2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**  
Tierra Amarilla 15'  
Cebolla 15'  
Brazos 15'  
Also: Carson National Forest (U.S. Forest Service, Taos)
3. **Length of Trip**  
Approximately nine miles from Corkin's Lodge; about two hours at 300 CFS.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Canoes, kayaks, and small rafts, because the river is shallow and narrow in spots; may be necessary to portage around fences.
5. **Rapids**  
Class II and III for upper few miles; I and II thereafter; very fast water.
6. **Gradient**  
80 feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
Mid-April through May in wet years; early May in average years; runnable above 200 CFS.
8. **Access**
  - Corkin's Lodge, at end of road east of Highway 84 north of Tierra Amarilla, provides good access; call ahead for permission to launch.
  - Walk-in access exists on private land about five miles up Corkin's road after entering gate with "private" signs; boats must be carried 50 yards down a dirt road.
  - Highway 84 bridge just south of Tierra Amarilla offers good access, but parking is difficult.
  - Highway 95 bridge, after confluence with Chama River on Heron Dam road west of Highway 84,

provides excellent access and parking.

**Shuttle:** Approximately seven miles; 30 minutes on paved and dirt roads; watch for deer on dirt roads.

**Emergency:** There are roads and houses along much of the river, so it is possible to take out almost anywhere for help except for the first few miles, where canyon walls limit access.

### 9. Hazards

**Fences:** Possibly a few; be on the alert for them.

**Logjams:** May be a factor in heavy runoff.

**Rapids:** Extreme swiftness of river demands quick reactions.

### 10. Camping

None available; all private land.

### 11. Water

Bring your own.

### 12. Firewood

Plentiful, but do not build fires on private land.

### 13. Hiking

None recommended.



## CANADIAN RIVER (A)

Raton to Taylor Springs

### General Description

A lazy meander through rolling hills and a shallow canyon; runnable only when swollen by infrequent heavy rains.

#### 1. Land Ownership and Permission

Private; no permit required; use public access; check with local residents for current conditions.

#### 2. U.S.G.S. Maps

Clifton House 7½'  
Eagle Tail Mountain 7½'  
Maxwell 7½'  
French 7½'  
Springer 7½'  
Taylor Springs 7½'

#### 3. Length of Trip

Approximately 50 miles; two to three days, depending on water level and obstacles.

#### 4. Recommended Craft

Any lightweight boat that can be moved quickly to shore for portaging.

#### 5. Rapids

None of note; rated Class I and II because of hazards.

#### 6. Gradient

Seven feet per mile.

#### 7. Time When Runnable

Unpredictable; extremely ephemeral stream; need heavy, sustained rainfall; check with local residents for water level information.

#### 8. Access

- Along I-25 there are several places where river is near highway.
- Maxwell bridge on road to Dorsey Mansion provides adequate access and parking.
- Taylor Springs bridge offers good access and parking.

**Shuttle:** 45 miles by highway.

**Emergency:** When highway is nearby, help is easy to find. Otherwise, float downstream until highway

is accessible. Habitation is sparse.

#### 9. Hazards

**Fences:** Frequent fences and debris jams can make run very dangerous; portaging likely.

#### 10. Camping

Many possible campsites.

#### 11. Water

Bring your own.

#### 12. Firewood

Sparse; fires in canyon may be dangerous because of the abundance of brush.

#### 13. Hiking

None recommended.

## CANADIAN RIVER (B)

Taylor Springs to Conchas Reservoir

### General Description

When there is enough water, this run offers exciting, continuous rapids through a spectacular, wild canyon with tiered sandstone walls reminiscent of the Grand Canyon. Historic ruins and an abundance of golden and bald eagles make for an interesting trip.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private, state, and U.S. Forest Service (Kiowa Grasslands); no permit required; check with U.S. Forest Service, Santa Fe, for current information.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Taylor Springs 7½'  
Jaritas Ranch 7½'  
Cañon Colorado 7½'  
Mills West 7½'  
Beaver Canyon 7½'  
Alamito 7½'  
Cañon Encierro 7½'  
Sabinoso 7½'  
Arroyo Alamocito 7½'  
Wade Canyon 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 75 miles from Taylor Springs to Sabinoso; four to six days, depending on paddling speed and flow. End of run approaching Conchas Reservoir possible but not recommended because of mud flats.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Canoes, kayaks, and paddle rafts best for easy locomotion during flatwater stretches.

5. **Rapids**

Class III and IV with continuous rapids, especially through red rock country.

6. **Gradient**

18 feet per mile

7. **Time When Runnable**

Unpredictable; only runnable in extremely wet, rainy periods or after heavy snowmelt; 400-1,000 CFS best; contact local residents, U.S. Forest Service, or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for current

conditions.

8. **Access**

- Taylor Springs bridge, on Highway 56 east of Springer, provides good access and parking.
- Mills Canyon, eight miles west of Mills to jeep road descending to river, has good access and parking.
- Highway 120 bridge east of Wagon Mound provides good access and parking.
- Sabinoso, northwest of Highway 65, offers good access and parking.
- Highway 65 bridge southeast of Sabinoso offers good access and parking.
- Conchas Reservoir is a possible take-out point but not recommended due to mud flats.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 90 miles between Taylor Springs and Sabinoso; about two hours on highways 56, 39, and 65. Some incidences of vehicle vandalism reported.

**Emergency:** There are ranch roads on top of the rim, but they are seldom traveled; use topographic maps to locate major ranches for help; major roads are far away.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Possible near Taylor Springs and Sabinoso.

**Bridges:** Watch for debris jams nearby.

**Fences:** May be a few.

**Logjams:** Possible anywhere.

**Flash Floods:** Possible from side canyons; river may fluctuate quickly and severely.

10. **Camping**

Abundant campsites.

11. **Water**

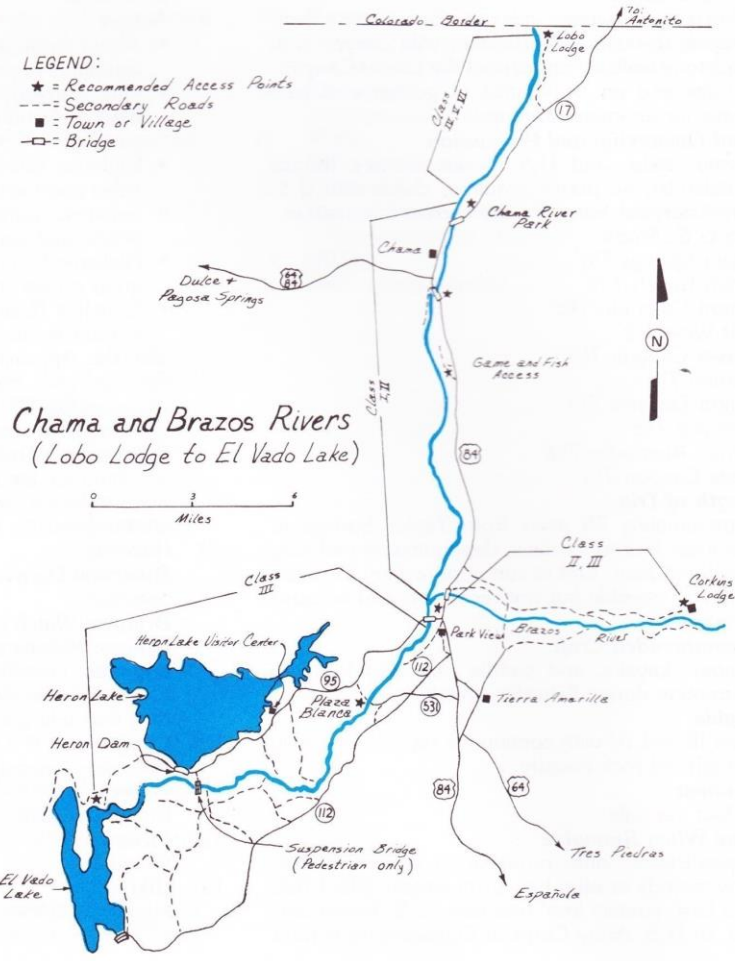
Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Many possibilities up side canyons.



## CHAMA RIVER (A)

Lobo Lodge to Chama River Park

### General Description

A highly scenic run through a V-shaped gorge, requiring maximum concentration because of narrowness, fast water with tumbling drops, and intermittent logjams. **For experts only!**

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private (Lobo Lodge); obtain permission and information on current flow conditions from Lobo Lodge (756-2150).

2. **U.S.G.S. Map**

Chama 15'

3. **Length of Trip**

Six miles; travel time highly variable, depending on extent of scouting and portaging.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks only; too narrow and difficult for other craft.

5. **Rapids**

Class IV to VI continuously; for experts only!

6. **Gradient**

60 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Late May and early June for highest water (desirable for clearing rocks and obstacles).

8. **Access**

- Lobo Lodge, on forest road north of Highway 17 (six miles north of Chama), offers good access and parking.
- Take-out is possible anywhere along Highway 17 or at Chama River Park at Highway 17 bridge crossing.

**Shuttle:** Highway 17 is paved, forest road is dirt; 20-minute drive; high-clearance vehicles recommended for dirt road; may be snowdrifts in spring.

**Emergency:** Can take out anywhere to get help.

9. **Hazards**

**Logjams:** Intermittent; be on lookout.

**Fences:** May be a few; portaging may be necessary.

**Rapids:** Dangerously fast water with sudden drops.

10. **Camping**

None; private land.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Do not build fires on private land.

13. **Hiking**

None; private land.

## CHAMA RIVER (B)

Chama River Park to Park View

### General Description

Many fences make this a dangerous suburban run through a broad valley.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
Private; no permit required.
2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**  
Chama 15'  
Tierra Amarilla 15'  
Also: Carson National Forest (U.S. Forest Service, Taos)
3. **Length of Trip**  
Approximately 15 miles to Highway 95 bridge north of Park View; four hours at 200 CFS.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Kayaks and canoes because of frequent hazards and portages.
5. **Rapids**  
Mostly Class I; Class II near Chama River Park and at Highway 95 bridge; several sharp turns.
6. **Gradient**  
33 feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
Mid-April to late May; minimum 150 CFS required; no maximum; call Bureau of Reclamation for flow information.
8. **Access**
  - Chama River Park, just north of Chama and northeast of Highway 17 bridge, provides excellent access and parking.
  - Highway 84 bridge south of Chama offers good access, but on private land.
  - New Mexico Game and Fish Department campground, south of Chama on east side of river, offers public access and parking.
  - Highway 95 bridge just after confluence of Brazos River provides good parking and access on northeast side.
  - The ford at Plaza Blanca, one mile southeast of Highway 95 bridge, offers good access and parking.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 15 miles, all highway; 25 minutes.

**Emergency:** Highway and houses always nearby for help.

### 9. Hazards

**Fences:** Frequent and dangerous; fence below Highway 84 bridge; some may be portaged; take extreme care.

**Bridges:** Debris and rapids below Highway 95 bridge.

### 10. Camping

At Chama River Park and New Mexico Game and Fish Department campground (free).

### 11. Water

Bring your own.

### 12. Firewood

Plentiful; use in campgrounds only.

### 13. Hiking

None recommended.

## CHAMA RIVER (C)

Plaza Blanca to El Vado Lake

### General Description

A challenging stretch that runs through meadows in a deep canyon with an abundance of ponderosa pine and wildlife. This is an interesting and exciting day-run that passes through Heron Lake and El Vado Lake state parks.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private and New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division; no permit required; for current conditions call Heron Lake State Park.

2. **U.S.G.S. Map**

Tierra Amarilla 15'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 15 miles from Plaza Blanca to El Vado Lake take-out; four to six hours.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks, canoes, and small rafts if below 800 CFS; anything, if greater than 800 CFS.

5. **Rapids**

Primarily Class III; first half has a few easy Class II rapids, second half has many Class II-III rapids; "Big Mama Chama" rapid (located one mile above Heron Spillway) is Class III and may need to be portaged because of debris clogging channels; El Vado Lake is flatwater with frequent winds, so rafts are discouraged.

6. **Gradient**

22 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

April and May, when 200 CFS and higher.

8. **Access**

- Highway 95 bridge just after confluence of Brazos River offers good access and parking.
- Ford at Plaza Blanca, one mile southeast of Highway 95 bridge, provides good access and parking.
- Rio Chama Trail off Highway 95 provides difficult, but possible, access under suspension bridge.
- Heron Dam spillway just past suspension bridge

is sporadically open (check with dam or state park) and provides excellent access and parking.

- At El Vado Lake, the first access road off Highway 95 offers good access and parking; dirt road difficult when wet.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 10 miles; one-half hour on Highway 95; dirt road difficult in wet weather.

**Emergency:** Can take out at ranches and farms on first leg; second part is in deep canyon, so proceed to suspension bridge or spillway for help.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Below Plaza Blanca there is a runnable, Class II concrete dam; scout before running.  
**Fences:** Several possible; could be dangerous, requiring portaging.

10. **Camping**

Many attractive sites.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Some short side-canyon hikes.



Chama River  
(El Vado Dam to Rio Grande Confluence)



## CHAMA RIVER (D)

El Vado Dam to Abiquiu Lake

### General Description

A highly scenic, isolated run beneath red sandstone cliffs and through forested canyons with abundant wildlife.

#### 1. Land Ownership and Permission

Private, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and U.S. Forest Service (Santa Fe National Forest); no permit required, but necessary to request permission from private landowner if launching from El Vado Ranch; boaters must register at ranch.

#### 2. U.S.G.S. Maps

Tierra Amarilla 15'  
Navajo Peak 7½'  
Laguna Peak 7½'  
Echo Amphitheatre 7½'  
Ghost Ranch 7½'  
Cañones 7½'  
Abiquiu 7½'

#### 3. Length of Trip

Approximately 33 miles; allow two days.

#### 4. Recommended Craft

Kayaks, rafts, and canoes are suitable.

#### 5. Rapids

Class I, II, and III; most rapids are below the Christ in the Desert Monastery.

#### 6. Gradient

15 feet per mile.

#### 7. Time When Runnable

Usually late April until early July; unpredictable water levels because of dam control; fast changes in flow occur throughout season; always check El Vado outflow with Bureau of Reclamation in Albuquerque before departing.

#### 8. Access

- El Vado Ranch, off El Vado Reservoir Road 112 south of Park View, offers excellent access; there is a parking/launching fee; contact El Vado Ranch (588-7354) for information.
- Numerous good take-out points exist along five-mile stretch above Abiquiu Lake.
- Adobe ruins take-out is reached by Forest Road

151, one-half mile north of Ghost Ranch Museum; road can be treacherous when wet.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 50 miles; mostly paved; dirt access road may be difficult when wet.

**Emergency:** Best to float to access point north of Abiquiu Lake.

#### 9. Hazards

**Bridges:** A low concrete bridge about five miles south of monastery may be dangerous at high water; must be scouted.

**Fences:** None when surveyed, but always a possibility.

#### 10. Camping

Many possible sites; avoid private land.

#### 11. Water

Bring your own.

#### 12. Firewood

Plentiful.

#### 13. Hiking

Many short hikes possible.





## CHAMA RIVER (E)

Abiquiu Dam to Rio Grande Confluence

### General Description

A flat, meandering run through ranchland with many irrigation diversions.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private, Indian, and U.S. Forest Service (Santa Fe National Forest); no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Abiquiu 7½'

Medanales 7½'

San Juan Pueblo 7½'

Española 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 25 miles; one long day.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks and canoes best because of probable portages.

5. **Rapids**

Class I and II: several diversion dams have chutes with three- to five-foot drops that make run more difficult; Class II rapids below Medanales bridge.

6. **Gradient**

Less than 10 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Unpredictable; dependent on Abiquiu Dam releases; call U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Abiquiu outflow prior to departure.

8. **Access**

- Below Abiquiu Dam there are several good access points from dirt side roads.
- Highway 96 bridge near Abiquiu provides good access.
- Medanales bridge offers good access.
- Highway 285 bridge north of Española gives good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 25 miles, on paved roads except for dirt access road below Abiquiu Dam.

**Emergency:** The highway is close to the river, so there are numerous emergency take-out points.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; some require portaging;

very dangerous dam near Highway 285 bridge, with steep drop and hazardous reversal.

**Fences:** A few; be on the lookout.

10. **Camping**

None; private land.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Do not build campfires on private land.

13. **Hiking**

None recommended.

## CIMARRON RIVER

Eagle Nest Dam to Springer

### General Description

The upper section is a challenging, fast-flowing mountain run past the palisaded granite cliffs at Cimarron Canyon State Park. Below Cimarron, the lower section meanders through dry, rolling cattle country and seldom has enough water for boating.

#### 1. Land Ownership and Permission

New Mexico Game and Fish Department, New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division, and private; no permit required.

#### 2. U.S.G.S. Maps

Ute Lake 15'  
Cimarron 15'  
Miami 15'  
Springer Lake 7½'  
Springer 7½'

#### 3. Length of Trip

**Upper section:** Eagle Nest Dam to Cimarron; approximately 25 miles; six to eight hours at normal flow.

**Lower section:** Cimarron to Springer; approximately 25 miles; eight to ten hours at runnable flow with paddling.

#### 4. Recommended Craft

**Upper section:** Kayaks only.

**Lower section:** Any craft, if water is high enough.

#### 5. Rapids

**Upper section:** Continuous Class III to IV+; extremely narrow and rocky with many sweepers.

**Lower section:** Class I to II; debris and sweepers may make it more difficult.

#### 6. Gradient

35 feet per mile.

#### 7. Time When Runnable

**Upper section:** Runnable any time Eagle Nest Dam is releasing enough water (call 377-3921 for current flow information).

**Lower section:** Only runnable after heavy spring runoff or major rains.

#### 8. Access

- Highway 64 from below Eagle Nest Dam to Cimarron offers numerous good access and parking points.
- Bridge south of Cimarron on Highway 21 provides good access and parking.
- Bridge on County Road G-12, one mile off Highway 58 south of Cimarron, offers good access and parking.
- Other county roads off Highway 58 north of river offer good access and parking.
- Springer bridge on Highway 85 offers good access and parking.

**Shuttle:** 45 miles on highways 64 and 58; one-hour drive.

**Emergency:** The upper section is always close to the highway and houses, while the lower part is further from civilization and frequently traveled roads.

#### 9. Hazards

**Diversion Dams:** Many in slower stretches; easy to portage if necessary.

**Bridges:** Some debris pileups near bridges.

**Fences:** Frequent and dangerous, especially in Ute Park and area below Cimarron; portaging likely.

**Culverts:** A few on upper stretch that are often runnable; look carefully before entering.

#### 10. Camping

Available in Cimarron Canyon State Park; private land below state park.

#### 11. Water

Bring your own.

#### 12. Firewood

Available on upper portion; scarce around campgrounds, but plentiful along river.

#### 13. Hiking

Some possibilities in Cimarron Canyon.

## EMBUDO RIVER

Rio Lucio to Rio Grande Confluence

### General Description

The upper stretch runs through a remote, heavily wooded, deep gorge and becomes progressively more difficult as one proceeds downriver. There are Class V and VI rapids in this section that are **extremely dangerous** and should be avoided, or attempted only by a team of experts with lightweight and very tough gear. The lower section, which begins below the mouth of the canyon, is a fast, dangerous, rough-and-tumble run through a wide, pastoral valley.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Indian, private, and state; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Peñasco 7½'

Trampas 7½'

Velarde 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 15 miles; about one-half hour.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Only kayaks and canoes; river is too narrow and shallow for wider craft.

5. **Rapids**

**Upper Section:** Class II and III for first four to five miles, then several Class IV rapids followed by continuous Class IV, V, and VI. Extremely difficult and dangerous; be prepared for major repairs and long portages; best to run at 150-250 CFS. An expert kayaker drowned on this river in May 1982.

**Lower Section:** Continuous Class II and III; very fast with tumbles down short drops.

6. **Gradient**

120 feet per mile in upper section; 40 feet per mile in lower.

7. **Time When Runnable**

May, during wet years; call U.S. Geological Survey for Embudo gauge reading.

8. **Access**

- Rio Lucio bridge on Highway 75 toward Peñasco provides poor, but possible, access.
- Fishermen's trail (one and one-half miles after pavement ends east of Dixon, take jeep road

north) gives very difficult, but possible, access.

- Martinez bridge northeast of Dixon (the first bridge after canyon widens) offers adequate access and parking.
- Delfin Martinez bridge (the next one downstream — follow signs to orchards) provides adequate access and parking.
- Highway 285 bridge offers good access, but parking is difficult.
- Historic marker turnout, one mile south of 285 bridge, gives difficult, but possible, access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 12 miles; about 30 minutes on highways 285 and 75.

**Emergency:** On the upper stretch it is possible to climb out of the canyon on the north side of the highway; if more than four miles downriver, it is best to hike to fishermen's trail (one mile east of canyon mouth) or hike downstream on north rim to ranches at mouth. There are roads all along the lower run, with a clinic and phone near the Highway 285 bridge.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Small one at mouth of gorge; several others downriver.

**Bridges:** Highway 75 bridge has only a few safe passages; scout carefully.

**Fences:** Many in lower section; difficult to stop and scout.

**Logs and Sweepers:** Always possible, especially on upper stretch where logs may catch on large boulders or block entire river.

10. **Camping**

Upper portion has numerous beautiful sites; camp well above flood levels. No camping on lower part, which is on private land.

11. **Water**

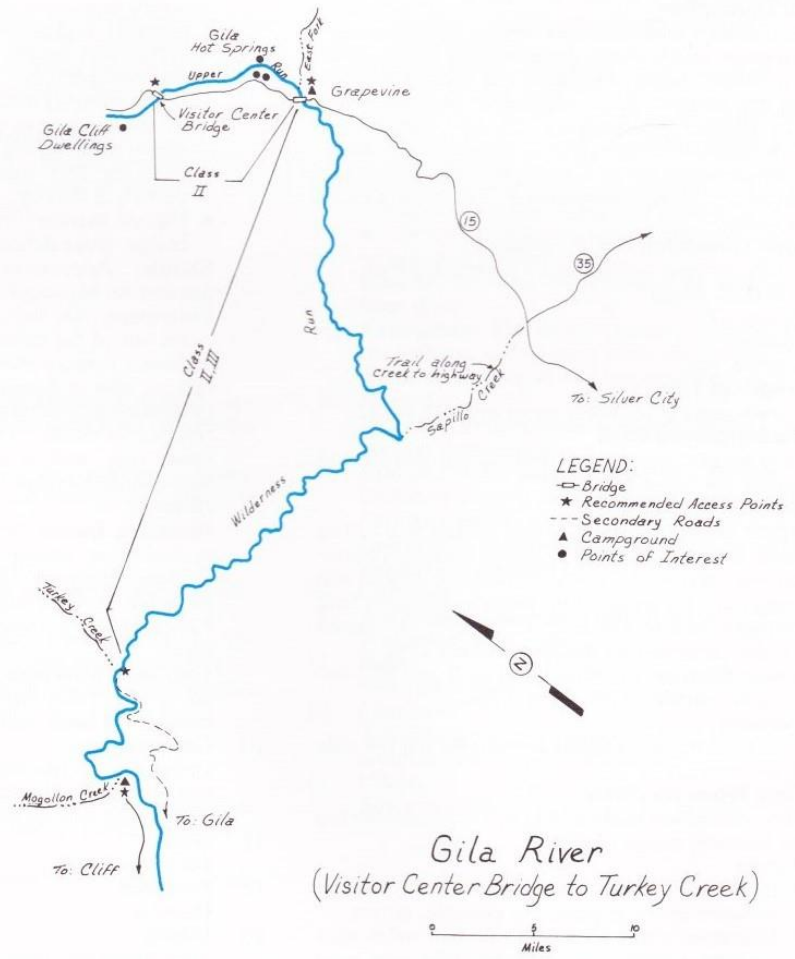
Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Short climb and walk up Trampas Creek.



Gila River (Visitor Center Bridge to Turkey Creek)

## **GILA RIVER (A)**

Visitor Center Bridge to East Fork

### **General Description**

A quick suburban run through a scenic canyon with groves of cottonwoods and sycamores.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
Private, state, U.S. Forest Service (Gila National Forest); no permit required; contact Forest Service (Silver City) for information and current conditions.
2. **U.S.G.S. Map**  
Gila Hot Springs 7½'
3. **Length of Trip**  
Approximately seven miles; one hour minimum with moderate paddling.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Kayaks and canoes are best because of narrow, dangerous passages and the need to portage.
5. **Rapids**  
None, but hazards make this stretch Class II.
6. **Gradient**  
20 feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
Whenever flow exceeds 100 CFS; usually in March or early April.
8. **Access**
  - Bridge near Gila Cliff Dwellings Visitor Center at north end of Highway 15 offers good access.
  - Bridge at East Fork (Grapevine Campground) provides good access.

**Shuttle:** 10 miles on Highway 15; 15-minute drive on paved road.  
**Emergency:** Road and residences near river; can exit almost anywhere on west side of river; call ranger station or State Police for help.
9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** Several near Gila Hot Springs that are very dangerous because they are in moderately fast water and are hard to see; require portaging.  
**Logjams:** Always a good possibility, especially after floods.
10. **Camping**  
Forks and Grapevine Forest Service campgrounds.

### 11. **Water**

Bring your own.

### 12. **Firewood**

Much driftwood available; make campfires only at Forest Service campgrounds (check with Forest Service for fire restrictions).

### 13. **Hiking**

A few short hikes possible.

IN RIVER A.D.  
AFTER THE RAIN



## **GILA RIVER (B)**

Wilderness Run—East Fork to Turkey Creek

### **General Description**

An extremely beautiful, multi-day wilderness run through broad, green canyons with lush springs, abundant wildlife, and many rapids. Almost unlimited hiking potential.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service (Gila National Forest); wilderness use permit required by Gila National Forest, Silver City (available at Visitor Center); contact Forest Service for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Gila Hot Springs 7½'  
Little Turkey Park 7½'  
Granny Mountain 7½'  
Canyon Hill 7½'  
Canteen Canyon 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 32 miles; four to five days depending on water flow; trip may be extended six miles to Mogollon Creek where there is a take-out point.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks, canoes, and small rafts.

5. **Rapids**

Class II and III; very few totally calm spots.

6. **Gradient**

25 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Peaks usually in early March; runnable above 200 CFS; best at 400-750 CFS; extremely dangerous above 1500 CFS because of logjams and debris; some years no season or a short, one- to two-week season; call National Weather Service or U.S. Geological Survey for current flow information.

8. **Access**

- East Fork bridge, at Grapevine Campground on Highway 15 north of Highway 35 junction, offers good access on either side of river.
- Good access anywhere on south side of river, one mile after Turkey Creek.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 100 miles between East Fork and Turkey Creek; three- to four-hour drive; all on good road with exception of Gila to Turkey Creek stretch, which is very muddy when wet.

**Emergency:** Exit at Sapillo Creek, approximately a six-mile hike out.

9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** Many; some do not have warning signs; may require portaging.

**Logjams:** At higher flows; be on lookout.

10. **Camping**

Many beautiful campsites; some cattle present.

11. **Water**

Abundant spring water, but of questionable quality due to presence of cattle; best to bring your own or purify.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful; be especially careful with campfires due to fire danger; fire permit required.

13. **Hiking**

Numerous side canyons including Sapillo Creek and Turkey Creek.





## **GILA RIVER (C)**

Mogollon Creek to Forest Road 809

### **General Description**

A lazy, pastoral run that is seldom floated because of barbed-wire fences and irrigation diversions.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private, state, and U.S. Forest Service (Gila National Forest); no permit required; private land for most of run — check with landowners if using private access.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Canteen Canyon 7½'  
Cliff 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 20 miles from Mogollon Creek to end of Forest Road 809; six to eight hours with moderate paddling at 400 CFS.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks and canoes usually best because of slow water; rafts usable at high water (greater than 1,000 CFS).

5. **Rapids**

Class I; no rapids, but logjams may create hazards at high water levels.

6. **Gradient**

Less than 10 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Best in March during wet years.

8. **Access**

- Mogollon Creek on Forest Road 755 offers good access.
- Bridges on Highway 180 and on road between Gila and Cliff provide poor, but possible, access.
- End of Forest Road 809 southwest of Riverside offers good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 20 miles on good paved and dirt roads; a 30- to 40-minute drive.

**Emergency:** May take out almost anywhere; houses nearby.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several.

**Fences:** At least a few requiring portaging; poten-

tially dangerous.

10. **Camping**

Sites at Mogollon Creek and at end of Forest Road 809; private land between these sites.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

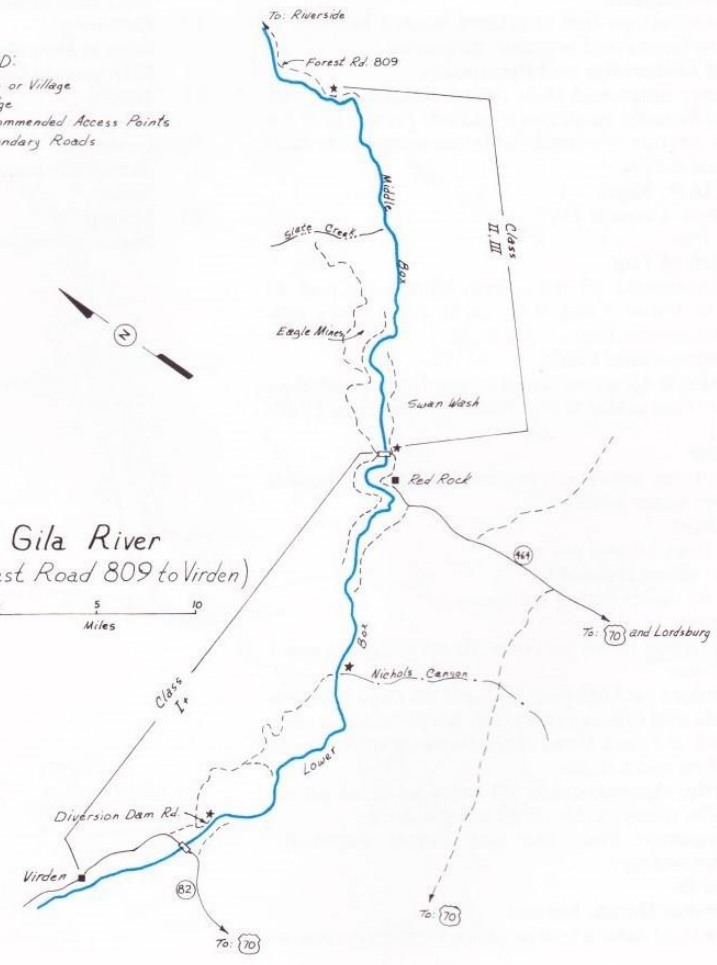
12. **Firewood**

Scattered; build campfires only in Forest Service areas.

13. **Hiking**

None recommended.

LEGEND:  
■ Town or Village  
— Bridge  
★ Recommended Access Points  
--- Secondary Roads



## GILA RIVER (D)

Middle Box — Forest Road 809 to Red Rock

### General Description

A short, wild trip through a narrow, rocky canyon that is seldom run.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and New Mexico Game and Fish Department; no permit required; contact U.S. Forest Service, Silver City, and BLM, Las Cruces, for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Cliff 15'  
Red Rock 15'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 18 miles; eight hours with moderate paddling at 400 CFS.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks, decked canoes, and small rafts best because of narrow channels and need to maneuver.

5. **Rapids**

Primarily Class II and III rapids (possibly Class IV at highest water levels), with a quarter-mile calm stretch and no rapids toward end.

6. **Gradient**

10 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Mid-March to mid-April; best at 400-1,000 CFS; call National Weather Service or U.S. Geological Survey for current flow information.

8. **Access**

- End of Forest Road 809 southwest of Riverside offers good access.
- Red Rock Game Management Area gives difficult, but possible, access.
- Swan Wash on south side of river, two miles after end of Middle Box, provides good access on private land; requires crossing fence.
- Bridge at Red Rock provides good access.

**Shuttle:** 46 miles by way of Tyrone/Red Rock road; easy traveling in dry weather; very muddy when wet. Approximately 105 miles by way of

alternate route through Silver City on highways 90, 70, and 464; about two hours.

**Emergency:** Best escape route is downriver; isolated from habitation.

9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** Watch for them at beginning and toward end of run.

**Logjams and Debris Jams:** Watch for them (primarily after floods) clogging narrow passages.

10. **Camping**

Some available, but campsites difficult to find because of steep canyon walls.

11. **Water**

Slate Creek and some springs may have potable water; best to purify or bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful at beginning of run.

13. **Hiking**

Slate Creek and several side canyons.

STATE OF TEXAS

10 DECEMBER 2007

Department of State, The State

and the University of Texas at Austin

---



## GILA RIVER (E)

Lower Box—Red Rock to Virden

### General Description

An interesting run through a beautiful, undeveloped box canyon with abundant bird life. Many Indian petroglyphs may be seen, and hikes are possible.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private; no permit required; contact BLM, Las Cruces, for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Red Rock 15'  
Canador Peak 15'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 20 miles; four hours with moderate paddling at 400 CFS.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks and canoes best for low water (below 500 CFS) because of possible dragging on bottom, and because slow water stretches require paddling; any craft usable at high water levels.

5. **Rapids**

Class I and I+ rapids at all water levels.

6. **Gradient**

Less than 10 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Best in March; intermittently throughout spring and summer

8. **Access**

- Red Rock bridge, off of Highway 464 north of Lordsburg, offers good access.
- Dirt road through Nichols Canyon, several miles downstream from Red Rock, provides good access.
- Point before Virden bridge, past diversion dam on north side of river, offers good access.

**Shuttle:** 30 miles from Red Rock bridge on good dirt road (except for sandy stretch in Nichols Canyon, which may require vehicle with high clearance); about a 45-minute drive.

**Emergency:** No difficulty getting out of the canyon anywhere, but best to exit near Virden if possible,

since this area is more populated.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dam:** At end of Box; runnable only at higher water levels (greater than 800 CFS); easy to portage on right.

**Fences:** None when surveyed, but likely in future; be on lookout.

**Logjams:** Possible after floods.

10. **Camping**

Abundant, but area heavily grazed by cattle.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Abundant driftwood.

13. **Hiking**

Hikes to Box Canyon and Cottonwood Canyon; many Indian petroglyphs.

## JEMEZ RIVER

Battleship Rock To Zia Pueblo

### General Description

The upper Jemez is a very dangerous canyon run due to man-made hazards such as fences, debris, and dams. The lower part is a relatively slow, aimless meander with some additional hazards.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private, U.S. Forest Service (Santa Fe National Forest), and Indian; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Jemez Springs 15'  
Jemez 15'  
San Ysidro 7½'  
Bernalillo NW 7½'  
Santa Ana Pueblo 7½'  
Also Santa Fe National Forest (U.S. Forest Service, Santa Fe)

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 50 miles; average flow of four miles per hour at 100 CFS.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Only kayaks in upper part because of tight maneuvering and narrow channel; canoes acceptable below Guadalupe River when water level is up; lightweight craft best for numerous likely portages.

5. **Rapids**

Continuous Class IV rapids below Battleship Rock to Soda Dam; Class V and VI through Jemez Springs because of extremely dangerous man-made hazards; stretch to Guadalupe River is Class III to IV because of narrowness of canyon and large number of rocks; Guadalupe River to end is Class I to III, depending on man-made hazards.

6. **Gradient**

25 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

April in average years, extending through May in wet years; boatable above 100 CFS; call U.S. Geological Survey for Jemez Dam inflow reading.

8. **Access**

- Battleship Rock picnic area, several miles above Jemez Springs, offers good access and parking.
- Highway 4 bridge below Soda Dam provides good access.
- Private bridge north of prominent church at Jemez Springs offers good access and parking.
- Between Jemez Springs and confluence of Guadalupe River, many good access opportunities exist along highway.
- Jemez Pueblo bridge offers good access and parking.
- Highway 4 bridge north of San Ysidro provides good access.
- Zia Pueblo bridge off Highway 44 offers good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 50 miles on highways 4 and 44.

**Emergency:** Highway and houses nearby on upper stretch; can take out almost anywhere.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several dangerous ones; concrete dam near Jemez Springs difficult to avoid; huge dam near Cañon dangerous, but easy to stop and portage; Soda Dam requires portaging.

**Bridges:** Several around Jemez Springs that catch debris and/or have fences across them.

**Fences:** Frequent and extremely dangerous; necessary to portage.

**Logjams and Sweepers:** Frequent.

10. **Camping**

Forest Service campgrounds above Battleship Rock and in lower rangeland areas.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Trail into Santa Fe National Forest from Battleship Rock.

## LOS PINOS RIVER

Atencio Canyon to Los Pinos

### General Description

A fast run with many hazards through a beautiful canyon forested with the pine trees for which this river is named. Beaver may be seen.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service (Carson National Forest), New Mexico Game and Fish Department, and private; no permit required; contact U.S. Forest Service, Taos, and New Mexico Game and Fish Department, Santa Fe, for information.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Los Pinos 7½'

Bighorn Peak 7½'

Also: Carson National Forest (U.S. Forest Service, Taos)

3. **Length of Trip**

12 miles; two hours at approximately 400 CFS.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Only kayaks and canoes at all water levels because of swift water and need for quick reaction to hazards.

5. **Rapids**

Begins at Class III+ and is then generally Class II-III; because of extremely fast water, it is necessary to be cautious and on alert for hazards.

6. **Gradient**

30 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Usually in May when water is above 100 CFS; sometimes into June; check with local residents in Antonito for current river flow conditions.

8. **Access**

- Poor, but possible, access and parking exist on private land at Atencio Canyon where road goes to north (permission required).
- Area below Ortiz bridge offers poor, but possible, access.
- Ortiz bridge provides poor, but possible, access on private land (permission required).
- Forest Service campgrounds offer good access

and parking.

- Lagunitas bridge offers good access and parking west of San Miguel.
- New Mexico Game and Fish Department area has three miles of good access and parking west of San Miguel.
- In the vicinity of large stone building on Forest Road 284, a runnable diversion dam provides excellent access and parking.
- Upper Los Pinos village bridge provides poor, but possible, access and parking.
- Lower Los Pinos bridge gives good access, but parking is difficult.
- San Antonio bridge after confluence of San Antonio River offers fair access with difficult parking.

**Shuttle:** 10 miles; high-clearance vehicles recommended because of mud and ruts when wet.

**Emergency:** Generally easy to get to road, but not much traffic; may be necessary to cross pastures and fences for help.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; usually runnable.

**Bridges:** May catch debris; some low ones; be alert.

**Fences:** Several dangerous ones in fast water; scout carefully; may have to portage.

**Sweepers:** Probable; especially on upper part.

10. **Camping**

Forest Service and State Game and Fish Department campgrounds along upper stretch.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful deadfalls and debris for fires.

13. **Hiking**

None recommended.



## MORA RIVER

Shoemaker to Canadian River Confluence

### General Description

Starts as a lazy, pastoral run, but becomes increasingly spectacular as the river flows beneath colorful, steep-tiered cliffs in a remote canyon with challenging white-water stretches.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Cherry Valley Lake 7½'

Fruitosa Lake 7½'

Cañon Ancho 7½'

Alamito 7½'

Sabinoso 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 30 miles; two to three days, depending on flow and difficulty of rapids.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Small, lightweight boats that are easy to maneuver and portage.

5. **Rapids**

Progresses from Class I up to Class VI on lower stretch, but dangerous areas may be portaged because canyon bottom is relatively wide.

6. **Gradient**

Average is 50 feet per mile, but may be up to 100 feet per mile on lower stretch.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Whenever there is heavy rain or substantial spring snowmelt.

8. **Access**

- Shoemaker, on State Road 97 east of Watrous, provides adequate access but difficult parking; private land (permission required).

- Sabinoso, on Canadian River northwest of Highway 65, offers good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 90 miles on paved road.

**Emergency:** Some ranch roads along river; not much habitation; may have to hike many miles for help.

9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** Extremely likely, especially in upper part; may require portaging.

**Sweepers:** Likely in places.

10. **Camping**

Many possibilities.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful in lower canyon.

13. **Hiking**

Many possible side trips.

## NAVAJO RIVER

Dulce to Colorado Border

NAVAJO RIVER  
Dulce to Colorado Border

### General Description

A seldom-run river with some moderate rapids that flows through a deep V-shaped valley bordered by cliffs.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
Indian; permit required from Jicarilla Apache Tribe (there may be a use fee); call 759-3255 for current river information from tribe.
2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**  
Lumberton 15'  
Wirt Canyon 7½'
3. **Length of Trip**  
20 miles; three to five hours; may continue into Colorado until confluence with San Juan.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Kayaks, canoes, and small rafts are best at all water levels for maneuverability and ease of portaging.
5. **Rapids**  
Several Class II rock gardens and bend rapids; many rocks covered above 300 CFS.
6. **Gradient**  
23 feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
In May during wet years; need minimum 100 CFS; flow is channeled to Heron Lake through Chama River diversion, so check with Bureau of Reclamation for current conditions prior to trip.
8. **Access**
  - Highway J-2 bridge, three miles northwest of Dulce, offers good access and parking.
  - North side of river provides almost continuous good access.
  - End of J-9 river road (near a cattle guard and cable crossing) offers good access and parking.**Shuttle:** Approximately 75 miles by river road; may be very muddy in wet weather. Approximately 20 miles by paved road through Dulce; reached from Narrow Gauge Street west of Dulce highway junction.  
**Emergency:** Road is always nearby and take-out is possible anywhere; not much traffic.

### 9. Hazards

**Fences:** A few in first several miles that are hard to see; one directly below J-2 bridge.

**Sweepers and Logjams:** Always possible; be on lookout.

### 10. Camping

Many pretty sites on south side of river; need camping permit from Jicarilla Apache Tribe.

### 11. Water

Bring your own.

### 12. Firewood

Plentiful; be especially careful with campfires.

### 13. Hiking

A few side canyons to south.

## OJO CALIENTE RIVER

La Madera to Chama River Confluence

REYER BLAYAN  
ARTIST/ILLUSTRATOR

### General Description

A pleasant, but sometimes dangerous, run that begins in a moderately narrow sandstone canyon and then proceeds through farm and ranch land.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private; check with landowners if launching from private access.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

La Madera 7½'

Ojo Caliente 7½'

Lyden 7½'

Also: Carson National Forest Map (U.S. Forest Service, Taos)

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 28 miles; allow eight hours with moderate paddling.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks and canoes at all water levels for maneuverability and ease of portaging.

5. **Rapids**

Generally Class I and II; diversion dams (when runnable) more difficult.

6. **Gradient**

Less than 10 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

End of April in average years; through May in wet years; runnable at any flow above 100 CFS; call Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs resort (583-2261) for current information.

8. **Access**

- La Madera bridge on Highway 519 offers good access and parking.
- Highway 111 bridge, three miles south of La Madera, provides good access and parking.
- Cañada de los Comanches ford, on sandy dirt road west of Highway 111, offers good access and parking.
- Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs bridge, one-half mile west of Ojo Caliente, has adequate access but difficult parking.

- Bridge three miles below Gavilan with sign reading "Registered Herefords" offers good access and parking.
- Highway 285, after confluence with Chama River and before diversion dam, provides many good access points.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 30 miles on paved roads; a 45-minute drive.

**Emergency:** Highway with farms and ranches nearby, so can take out almost anywhere.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; dams below Highway 111 bridge, Gavilan bridge, and after Chama River confluence are especially dangerous; necessary to portage.

**Bridges:** Several; be on the alert for debris.

**Fences:** Many that are especially dangerous because hard to see; may require portaging.

10. **Camping**

Many possibilities; area heavily grazed by cattle.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Possible side trips, but not recommended.

## PECOS RIVER (A)

Cowles to Pecos

### General Description

A swift, mountain run through a beautiful, wooded, limestone canyon, with challenging rapids and some hazards that require portaging.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service (Santa Fe National Forest), New Mexico Game and Fish Department, and private; permit needed for access in public areas; contact Santa Fe National Forest, Pecos, for current information.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Cowles 7½'  
Rosilla Peak 7½'  
Pecos 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 20 miles; ordinarily a two-hour run, varies with amount of portaging and scouting necessary.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks and canoes best due to shallow water and narrowness of channel.

5. **Rapids**

Continuous, fast, Class II and III, with some Is and IVs; dams may be Class IV when runnable; Forman Falls extremely narrow Class IV; easy to portage when necessary.

6. **Gradient**

Approximately 60 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

May and part of June in most years; need minimum 150 CFS; 300-400 CFS ideal; call National Weather Service for current flow information.

8. **Access** (all off Forest Road 63)

- Bridge near Cowles on the way to Winsor Creek Campground offers good access and parking.
- New Mexico Game and Fish Department area one mile below Cowles provides good access and parking.
- Area near Elk Mountain Road provides good access.
- Terrero offers good access and parking for one-

half mile on both sides of the river.

- Forest Service day-use and fishing areas at end of private land after Terrero offer good access and parking.
- Bridge north of Pecos offers adequate access and parking.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 20 miles on Forest Road 63; passable with any vehicle, but last four miles from Terrero to Cowles are very muddy when wet.

**Emergency:** Forest Road 63 is always nearby, but may require a 200- to 300-foot climb out of the canyon in places; usually best to float further downriver, if possible, for easier take-out.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several small ones below Cowles; the Tres Lagunas Dam (below Terrero); and the fish hatchery dam.

**Fences:** Several dangerous ones, especially in private stretches; five in first mile-and-a-half below Terrero; try to flag for others if not done already.

**Bridges:** Several low private road and foot bridges that may catch debris.

**Sweepers:** Logjams, fallen trees, and branches are common.

**Other Obstacles:** Watch for fishing lines and hooks; beware of narrow passages where boats can get stuck sideways.

10. **Camping**

Many New Mexico Game and Fish Department sites on Forest Road 63; a Forest Service campground near Pecos.

11. **Water**

Side streams may be potable; best to purify or bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful away from camping areas.

13. **Hiking**

Numerous Forest Service trails and canyons without improved trails. Terrero Cave about two-and-one-half miles downriver on west side.



Pecos River  
(South San Ysidro to Tecolotito)

## PECOS RIVER (B)

South San Ysidro to Villanueva State Park

### General Description

A pastoral canoe run that meanders through small canyons with steep rock walls and past several picturesque Spanish Colonial villages.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division and private; no permit required; use public access.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Rowe 7½'  
North San Ysidro 7½'  
Villanueva 15'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 25 miles; eight to twelve hours, depending on amount of paddling and portaging.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Canoes and kayaks at all water levels.

5. **Rapids**

Mostly sluggish Class I with some Class II; dam below Pueblo bridge is a Class IV run at high water levels.

6. **Gradient**

22 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

May through June during wet years; runnable above 200 CFS.

8. **Access**

- South San Ysidro bridge, located off frontage road south of I-25 and opposite Pecos River campground, offers excellent access and parking.
- North of Rowe, take road to old bridge that begins at stop sign, seven-tenths of a mile north of freeway underpass, then continue north 1.8 miles to river, where there is good access between fences.
- Off San Juan exit from I-25 there is limited access and parking.
- Old San Jose bridge north of I-25 provides fair access and good parking.
- Site of San Jose bridge ruins south of freeway of-

fers good access and parking.

- Ribera bridge on Highway 3 offers fair access, but parking is difficult.
- Bridge in town of Pueblo on Highway 3 offers good access and parking.
- Villanueva State Park offers good access and parking almost anywhere.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 25 miles; 45-minute drive; use high-clearance vehicles in wet weather to cope with muddy roads.

**Emergency:** Highways and habitation never too far away for help.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; worst ones below ruins of San Jose bridge (after San Miguel) and below Pueblo bridge; most are easy to portage.

**Bridges:** Several that can catch debris; be on alert for low private bridges.

**Fences:** Very frequent and dangerous; flag for others when possible.

**Sweepers:** Always possible; be on alert.

10. **Camping**

At commercial campground or Villanueva State Park.

11. **Water**

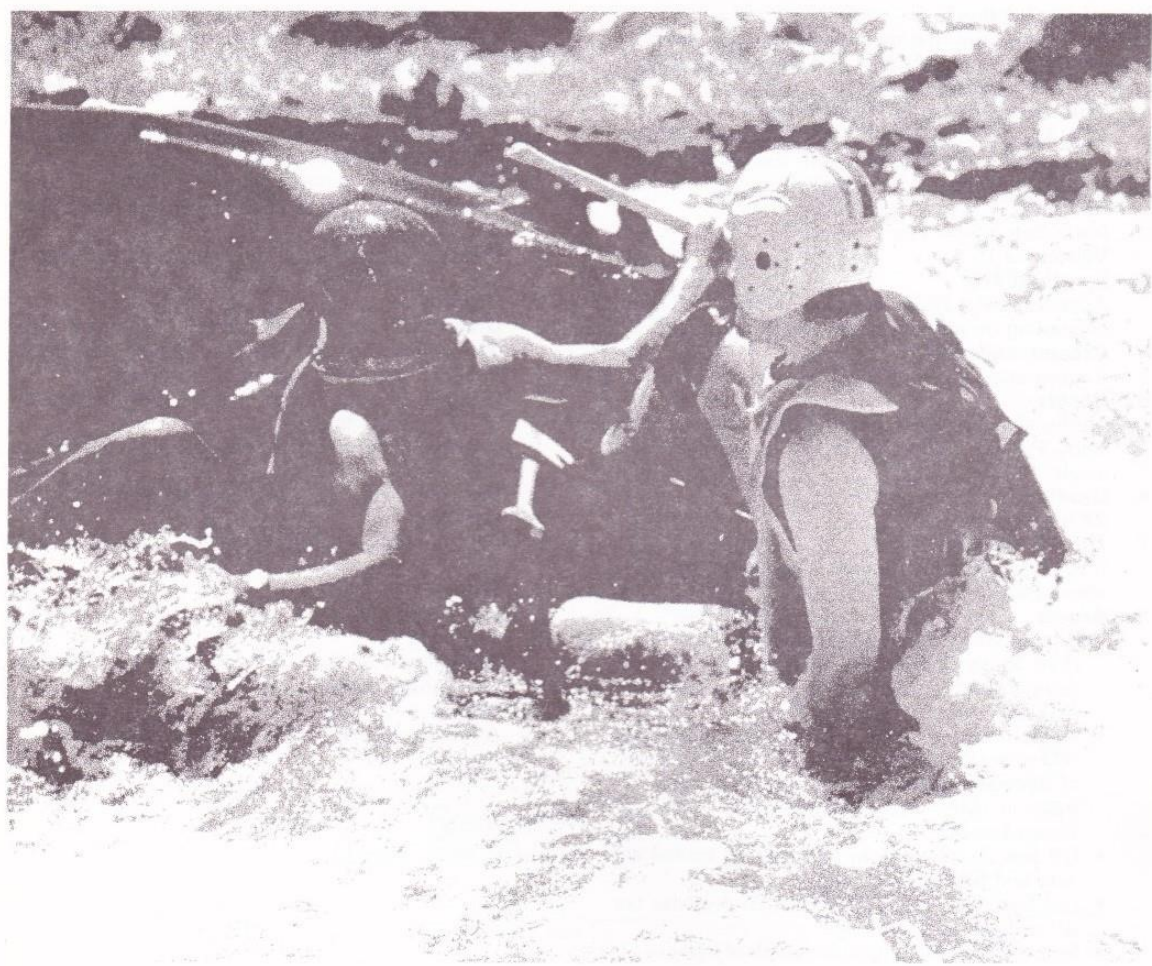
Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Available; campfires not recommended because land mostly private.

13. **Hiking**

A few short trails from Villanueva State Park.



## PECOS RIVER (C)

Villanueva State Park to Tecolotito

### General Description

A challenging and potentially dangerous one-day run through the steep-walled canyon at Villanueva State Park. The Pecos here seldom has sufficient water for boating.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division and private; no permit required.
2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**  
Villanueva 15'  
San Juan 15'  
Anton Chico 15'
3. **Length of Trip**  
19 miles; one long day.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Canoes, kayaks, and small rafts at all water levels for ease of portaging.
5. **Rapids**  
Many Class II and III; a few Class IV.
6. **Gradient**  
29 feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
May and June during wet years after extended snowmelt; call National Weather Service for flow information.
8. **Access**
  - Villanueva State Park offers excellent parking and access.
  - Tecolotito bridge, southwest of Highway 84 towards Dahlia, offers adequate access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 60 miles; one and one-half hours on paved roads.  
**Emergency:** It is possible to climb out of canyon north of Forest Service roads; better to travel down canyon to inhabited ranch.
9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; the one in Anton Chico Canyon cannot be run safely and usually requires a difficult portage.  
**Bridges:** A few; watch for debris.

**Fences:** Several barbed-wire fences, including one at end of Villanueva State Park campground.

**Logjams and Sweepers:** Always possible, especially at high water levels.

10. **Camping**  
Villanueva State Park campground; many other possible sites.
11. **Water**  
Available at Villanueva State Park.
12. **Firewood**  
Plentiful.
13. **Hiking**  
Many side canyons to explore.



## RED RIVER

Molycorp Mine to Rio Grande Confluence

### General Description

A tiny, difficult river through a deep gorge, with highly unpredictable rapids, depending on water level. Stretch below Red River Fish Hatchery is often Class VI and should be avoided.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service and private; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Red River 7½'

Questa 7½'

Guadalupe Mountain 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 16 miles; a long one-day run.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks only, at all water levels, for maximum maneuverability on shallow, dangerous river.

5. **Rapids**

Extremely variable, from Class I to Class VI, depending on water levels; very fast water; most difficult rapids at beginning and end below Red River Fish Hatchery; scouting mandatory.

6. **Gradient**

60-120 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

April and May when there is sufficient snowmelt.

8. **Access**

- Highway 38 between Moly and Questa provides several good access points.
- Questa bridge offers good access and parking.
- Bridge at Red River Fish Hatchery offers poor, but possible, access.
- Trails to Arsenic Springs, upstream from confluence with Rio Grande, offer emergency access; difficult because much carrying is required.
- John Dunn bridge, on Rio Grande west of Arroyo Hondo, provides excellent access and parking (extends trip eight miles from confluence).

**Shuttle:** Approximately 16 miles on highways 38

and 3; dirt roads to Arsenic Springs trails and John Dunn bridge may be difficult in wet weather.

**Emergency:** Roads are nearby except in lower stretch, where they run above the canyon rim to the north.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** Several; dangerous and unrunnable; portaging necessary.

**Bridges:** Several low ones above Questa are very dangerous; portaging necessary.

**Fences:** Very frequent; portaging necessary.

**Sweepers:** Many in upper part.

10. **Camping**

Sites on road to Red River Fish Hatchery.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful; be especially careful with campfires because area is very dry.

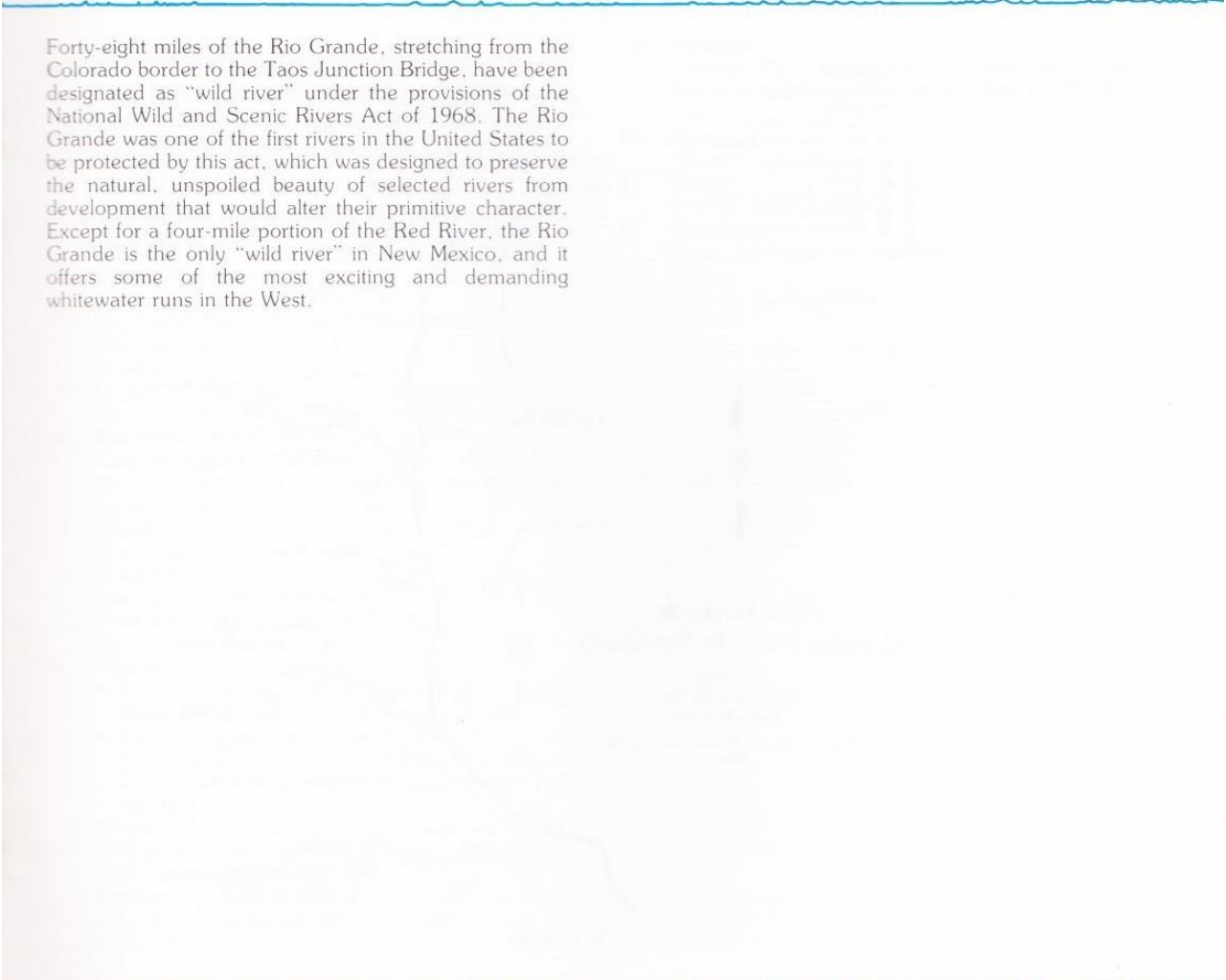
13. **Hiking**

None recommended.

## **RIO GRANDE WILD RIVER**

---

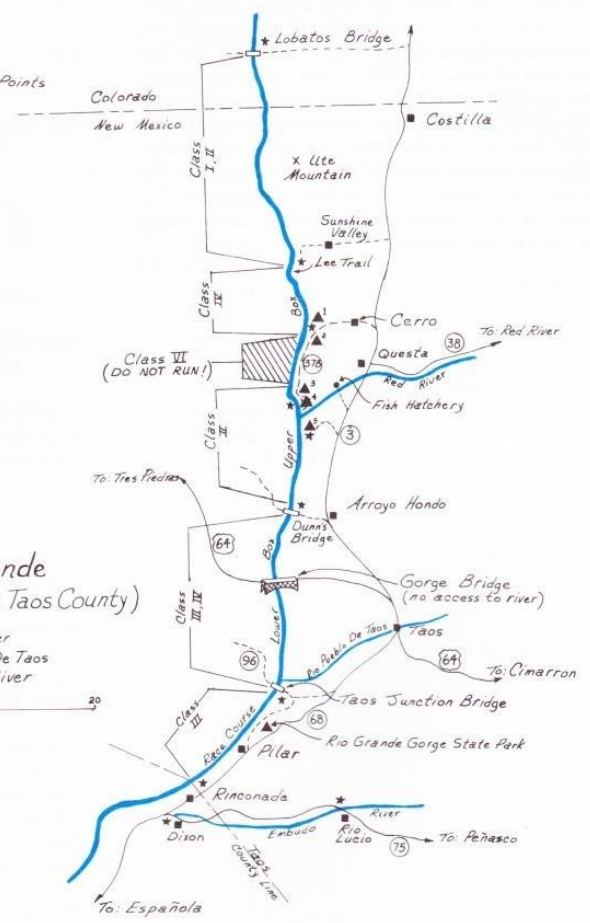
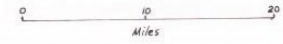
Forty-eight miles of the Rio Grande, stretching from the Colorado border to the Taos Junction Bridge, have been designated as "wild river" under the provisions of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The Rio Grande was one of the first rivers in the United States to be protected by this act, which was designed to preserve the natural, unspoiled beauty of selected rivers from development that would alter their primitive character. Except for a four-mile portion of the Red River, the Rio Grande is the only "wild river" in New Mexico, and it offers some of the most exciting and demanding whitewater runs in the West.



- LEGEND:**
- Town or Village
  - Bridge
  - - - Secondary Roads
  - \* Recommended Access Points
  - ▲ Sheep Crossing
  - ▲ Chiflo
  - ▲ Little Arsenio Springs
  - ▲ La Junta
  - ▲ Cebolla Mesa
- Campgrounds**
- ▲ Chiflo
  - ▲ Little Arsenio Springs
  - ▲ La Junta
  - ▲ Cebolla Mesa

**Rio Grande**  
(Lobatos Bridge to Taos County)

Red River  
Rio Pueblo De Taos  
Embudo River



## RIO GRANDE (A)

Lobatos Bridge to Lee Trail

### General Description

Beginning in Colorado, this wild and beautiful run passes across the broad lava plain of northern New Mexico, where the Rio Grande has cut a sheer-walled gorge with long, quiet pools and several Class II rapids. This stretch of the "Great River" is noted for its abundant bird life.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private and Bureau of Land Management (BLM); permit required by BLM, Taos Resource Area; contact BLM for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Kiowa Hill (Colorado) 7½'  
Sky Valley Ranch (Colorado) 7½'  
Ute Mountain 7½'  
Sunshine 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

24 miles; allow two days for run.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Canoes, kayaks, and small rafts are all suitable; lightweight craft best because of the difficult climb out on a steep, unimproved trail.

5. **Rapids**

Class I and II.

6. **Gradient**

Averages 15 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

May through July in most years.

8. **Access**

- Lobatos Bridge, west of Highway 3 on State Road 248 in Colorado, offers good access.
- Lee Trail, reachable from dirt road west of Highway 3 near Sunshine Valley, offers good access but requires three-quarter-mile climb out on steep trail.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 50 miles, all on paved road except for dirt access road to Lee Trail, which is almost impassable when wet.

**Emergency:** Best to float downriver to Lee Trail; canyon too steep to exit elsewhere except at Costilla Creek.

9. **Hazards**

**Caution:** Do not miss Lee Trail take-out; beyond this point is a long Class IV run that is difficult to exit.

10. **Camping**

Along Costilla Creek.

11. **Water**

Best to bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Some driftwood, not plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Best up Costilla Creek.

## RIO GRANDE (B)

Upper Taos Box — Lee Trail to Chiflo Campground and Red River Confluence to Dunn Bridge

### General Description

The upper five-mile portion of this stretch is a very challenging whitewater run with boulder-choked rapids beneath the high, vertical lava walls of the Taos Box, while below the Red River confluence are Class II waters. Avoid the extremely dangerous Class VI stretch between the Chiflo and Little Arsenic Springs campgrounds.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (Carson National Forest); permit required by BLM, Taos Resource Area (available at Rio Grande Wild River Visitor Center and Taos BLM office); contact BLM for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Sunshine 7½'  
Guadalupe Mountain 7½'  
Arroyo Hondo 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

**Upper Section:** Lee Trail to Chiflo; five miles; approximately a two-hour run.

**Lower Section:** Red River confluence to Dunn Bridge; eight miles; a four- to six-hour run.

4. **Recommended Craft**

**Upper Section:** Kayaks best for maneuvering in difficult rapids and for portaging.

**Lower Section:** Kayaks, rafts, and canoes suitable.

5. **Rapids**

**Upper Section:** Class IV "Razor Blade" run (named for sharp rocks in channel).

**Lower Section:** Class II.

6. **Gradient**

**Upper Section:** 80 feet per mile.

**Lower Section:** 17 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

May through July; best to run when above 1,500 CFS.

8. **Access**

- Lee Trail, off dirt road west of Highway 3 near Sunshine Valley, offers good access.

- Sheep Crossing Campground, off State Road 378 west of Cerro, provides good access.
- Chiflo trail off State Road 378 provides good access; steep trail to campground.
- Little Arsenic Springs Campground off State Road 378 offers good access; steep trail to campground.
- La Junta Campground near Red River confluence provides good access; steep trail to campground.
- Cebolla Mesa Campground, off forest road south of Questa, offers good access (less driving for shuttle than La Junta access and better trail to campground).
- Red River confluence off State Road 378 offers good access; long, steep trail.
- John Dunn Bridge west of Arroyo Hondo provides excellent access.

**Shuttle: Upper Section:** Approximately 15 miles (dirt access roads difficult when wet).

**Lower Section:** Cebolla Mesa to Dunn Bridge approximately 15 miles (Little Arsenic Springs to Dunn Bridge, 30 miles).

**Emergency:** Use trail at San Cristobal Creek below Red River confluence, or float downriver to Dunn Bridge.

9. **Hazards**

**Rapids:** "Razor Blade" rapid in upper section can be treacherous; **do not float beyond Chiflo** on upper section because of extremely dangerous Class VI rapids.

10. **Camping**

Several developed BLM and Forest Service campgrounds.

11. **Water**

Natural spring water available at most campgrounds.

12. **Firewood**

Not plentiful; some driftwood.

13. **Hiking**

Trails from most campgrounds.

## RIO GRANDE (C)

Lower Taos Box — Dunn Bridge to Taos Junction Bridge

### General Description

Perhaps the most popular whitewater run in the state, the Lower Box is a deep, majestic canyon with numerous drops and Class III and IV rapids.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Indian, and private; permit required by BLM, Taos Resource Area (available at John Dunn Bridge or Taos BLM office); contact BLM for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Arroyo Hondo 7½'  
Los Cordovas 7½'  
Taos SW 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

16 miles; four to eight hours, depending on water level.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks and rafts (minimum 11 feet) best for easy maneuverability in rapids; larger rafts fine at higher water levels.

5. **Rapids**

Class III and IV; at highest water, this run can rate up to Class V; the "Rock Garden" is a continuous four-mile stretch of Class III-IV rapids after Powerline Falls.

6. **Gradient**

Averages 28 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

April to July; best boating above 1,000 CFS.

8. **Access**

- John Dunn Bridge west of Arroyo Hondo offers good access.
- Taos Junction Bridge off Highway 96 offers good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 25 miles, mostly paved; access to Dunn Bridge difficult when wet.

**Emergency:** It is possible to exit at Manby Hot Springs, two miles below Dunn Bridge, for a trail; or float downriver to Taos Junction Bridge.

9. **Hazards**

**Rapids:** Can be very dangerous, especially at high water.

10. **Camping**

Undeveloped campsites at Manby Hot Springs and near the Ski Jump rapid; campgrounds at Rio Grande Gorge State Park.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Some driftwood; fire pans required if not using campground grill.

13. **Hiking**

Trails by Manby Hot Springs.

## RIO GRANDE (D)

### Taos Junction Bridge to Taos County Line

#### **General Description**

The upper stretch of the river to Pilar is relatively tranquil, passing through a deep canyon with black basalt walls at Rio Grande Gorge State Park. The popular "Race Course" run (site of annual whitewater races) below Pilar offers four and one-half miles of Class III rapids.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division, Bureau of Land Management, and private; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Taos SW 7½'  
Carson 7½'  
Trampas 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 10 miles; half-day trip.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Rafts and kayaks best for maneuverability in rapids.

5. **Rapids**

Class III; some challenging Class III water below Pilar, including the three-quarter-mile-long "Boulder Field."

6. **Gradient**

Averages 25 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

April through July in average years.

8. **Access**

- Taos Junction Bridge off Highway 96 offers good access.
- Below Pilar, a gravel bar pull-out just off Highway 68 provides good access.
- Good access exists at Taos County line north of Rinconada.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 10 miles on paved road.

**Emergency:** Road alongside river throughout run, with numerous exit points.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** One dam, one-half mile north of Pilar, which is runnable (Class III).

**Bridge:** Glen Woody bridge at halfway point is very

low and may require portaging at high water.

10. **Camping**

Several Rio Grande Gorge State Park campgrounds.

11. **Water**

Available at Rio Grande Gorge State Park.

12. **Firewood**

Some available along river; fires may be built only in established state park campgrounds.

13. **Hiking**

Some trails within Rio Grande Gorge State Park.

## RIO GRANDE (E)

Taos County Line to Otowi Bridge

### General Description

An easy float trip through the cottonwood *bosque* ("woods") bordering the Rio Grande. Somewhat marred by diversion dams and fences, this is a good run for canoeists and beginning kayakers.

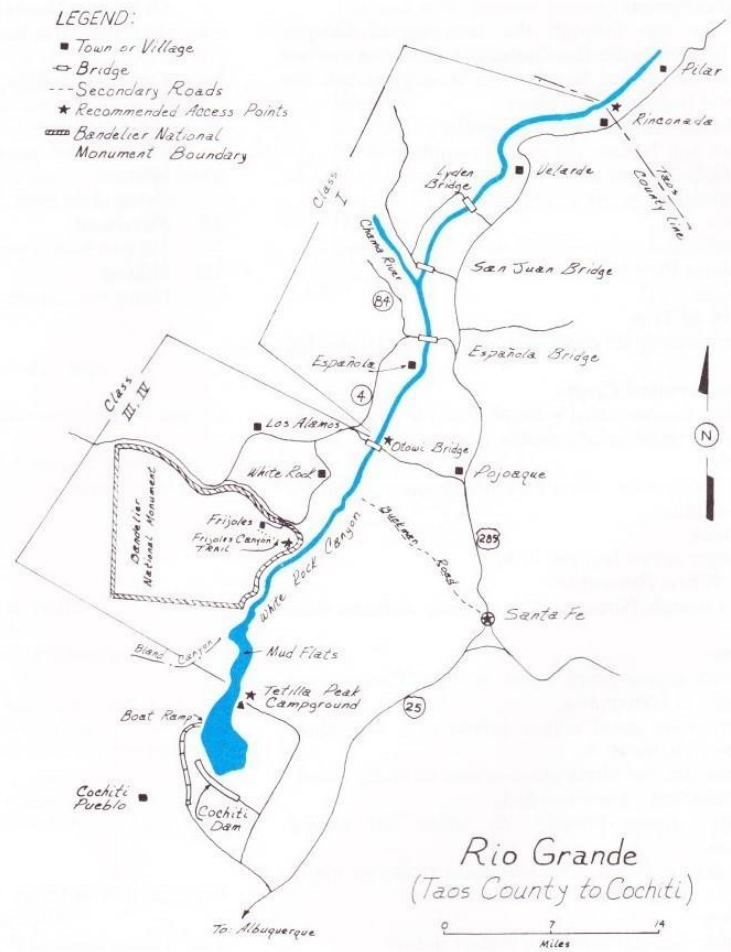
1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
Private and Indian; no permit required.
2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**  
Trampas 7½'  
Velarde 7½'  
Lyden 7½'  
San Juan Pueblo 7½'  
Española 7½'
3. **Length of Trip**  
Approximately 25 miles; two days, or long one-day run.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Kayaks, canoes, and rafts all suitable; lightweight craft best because of possible portages.
5. **Rapids**  
Class I; diversion dams may be dangerous and require caution.
6. **Gradient**  
Averages seven feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
April through November; a colorful autumn float trip.
8. **Access**
  - Good access point exists at Taos County line north of Rinconada.
  - Numerous good access points exist at bridges along Highway 4.
  - Otowi Bridge offers good access on Indian land; permission recommended.**Shuttle:** Approximately 25 miles on paved highway.  
**Emergency:** Road runs alongside river, so many possible exit points.
9. **Hazards**  
**Bridges:** Several that may collect debris.

**Diversion Dams:** Several that may be dangerous, especially the dam below confluence with Chama River.

**Old Car Bodies:** Near Española bridge; be on the lookout.

10. **Camping**  
None on private and Indian lands.
11. **Water**  
Bring your own.
12. **Firewood**  
Do not build campfires on private or Indian lands.
13. **Hiking**  
None recommended.





## RIO GRANDE (F)

White Rock Canyon — Otowi Bridge to Cochiti Reservoir

### General Description

A popular, scenic run through White Rock Canyon featuring waterfalls, side-canyon hikes with Indian ruins, and Class III and IV rapids.

#### 1. Land Ownership and Permission

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service (Bandelier National Monument), Indian, and private; no permit required for boating (need permit for camping or hiking at Bandelier National Monument); contact Bandelier National Monument, Los Alamos, or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cochiti Reservoir, for information and current conditions.

#### 2. U.S.G.S. Maps

Española 7½'  
White Rock 7½'  
Cochiti Dam 7½'

#### 3. Length of Trip

Approximately 24 miles if taking out at Cochiti Reservoir boat ramp; two days or one long day-run; best to exit at Frijoles Canyon at Bandelier National Monument to avoid paddling long distance on reservoir's slack water and mud flats.

#### 4. Recommended Craft

Kayaks, canoes, and small rafts all suitable for this run.

#### 5. Rapids

Class III and IV; Ancho Rapids may be Class IV at highest water.

#### 6. Gradient

Averages 10 feet per mile.

#### 7. Time When Runnable

Usually year-round.

#### 8. Access

- Otowi Bridge offers good access on Indian land; permission recommended.
- Buckman Road from Santa Fe offers good access.
- Frijoles Canyon trail at Bandelier National Monument provides good access (two-and-one-

half-mile trail).

- Bland Canyon, south of Dixon Orchard on Road 22 provides possible, but difficult, access on private land (permission needed).
- Tetilla Peak Campground offers good access on east side of Cochiti Reservoir.
- Boat ramp on west side of Cochiti Reservoir offers good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 45 miles on paved roads (unless using dirt Buckman Road access).

**Emergency:** Because of high canyon rim, can exit only at above-noted access points; call Bandelier National Monument (672-3861), or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (242-8302 or 465-2726) in case of emergency.

#### 9. Hazards

**Rapids:** May be hazardous at high water.

**Reservoir:** Wind and waves may cause swamping or overturning.

#### 10. Camping

Sites at Bandelier National Monument (no facilities along river); improved campgrounds at Cochiti Reservoir.

#### 11. Water

Bring your own.

#### 12. Firewood

Some available, but not plentiful.

#### 13. Hiking

Numerous good trails in Frijoles Canyon at Bandelier National Monument.

## RIO GRANDE FLATWATER BOATING

---

### ***Cochiti Dam to Albuquerque and Downriver***

This long stretch is runnable by kayaks and canoes when there is enough water. Frequent diversion dams withdrawing water may make boating difficult. This problem, combined with the numerous barbed-wire fences crossing the river, make it a more popular area for fishermen than for boaters. There are many good access points from side roads off I-25. Contact Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico, Inc., P.O. Box 1656, Corrales, NM 87048 for detailed information.

### ***Elephant Butte Dam to Caballo Lake***

This is a pleasant 20-mile run with abundant wildlife and is ideal for canoeists and beginning kayakers. There is ordinarily enough water for boating between March and September, and the annual Truth or Consequences festival races are held on this stretch. Contact the Adobe Whitewater Club for detailed information.

### ***Below Caballo Dam***

With multiple access points from U.S. 85, there is generally sufficient water for canoes and kayaks to float this stretch from March to September. Contact the Adobe Whitewater Club for detailed information.

## RIO PUEBLO DE TAOS

Taos Pueblo to Taos Junction Bridge on the Rio Grande

### General Description

A short, dangerous run that begins in pastoral country with a maze of fences and then descends into a deep canyon with raging water and multiple rock hazards. **Runnable by experts only!**

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Taos 7½'  
Los Cordovas 7½'  
Taos SW 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately seven miles; several hours, due to necessary portages.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks only; maximum maneuverability is required for difficult rapids and hazards.

5. **Rapids**

Very dangerous; up to Class VI.

6. **Gradient**

60 feet per mile; last three-quarters of a mile greatly exceeds this.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Late April and May; upper stretch only runnable at peak of season, and even then not recommended because of multiple hazards.

8. **Access**

- Taos Pueblo bridge one mile north of Highway 3 offers adequate access and parking.
- Upper Highway 240 has several bridges with good access points.
- A point four miles down Taos Junction Road, southwest of Ranchos de Taos, offers excellent access.
- Taos Junction parking area near bridge over Rio Grande provides excellent access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 15 miles on paved and excellent dirt roads; allow 30 to 40 minutes.

**Emergency:** Roads usually nearby; travel downriver until reaching one.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversion Dams:** A few in upper stretch that are not too difficult to run.

**Bridges:** Many low and dangerous bridges in upper part; require portaging.

**Fences:** Extremely frequent and dangerous (at least 20 in upper stretch); run is therefore not recommended.

10. **Camping**

Only at Rio Grande Gorge State Park at Taos Junction.

11. **Water**

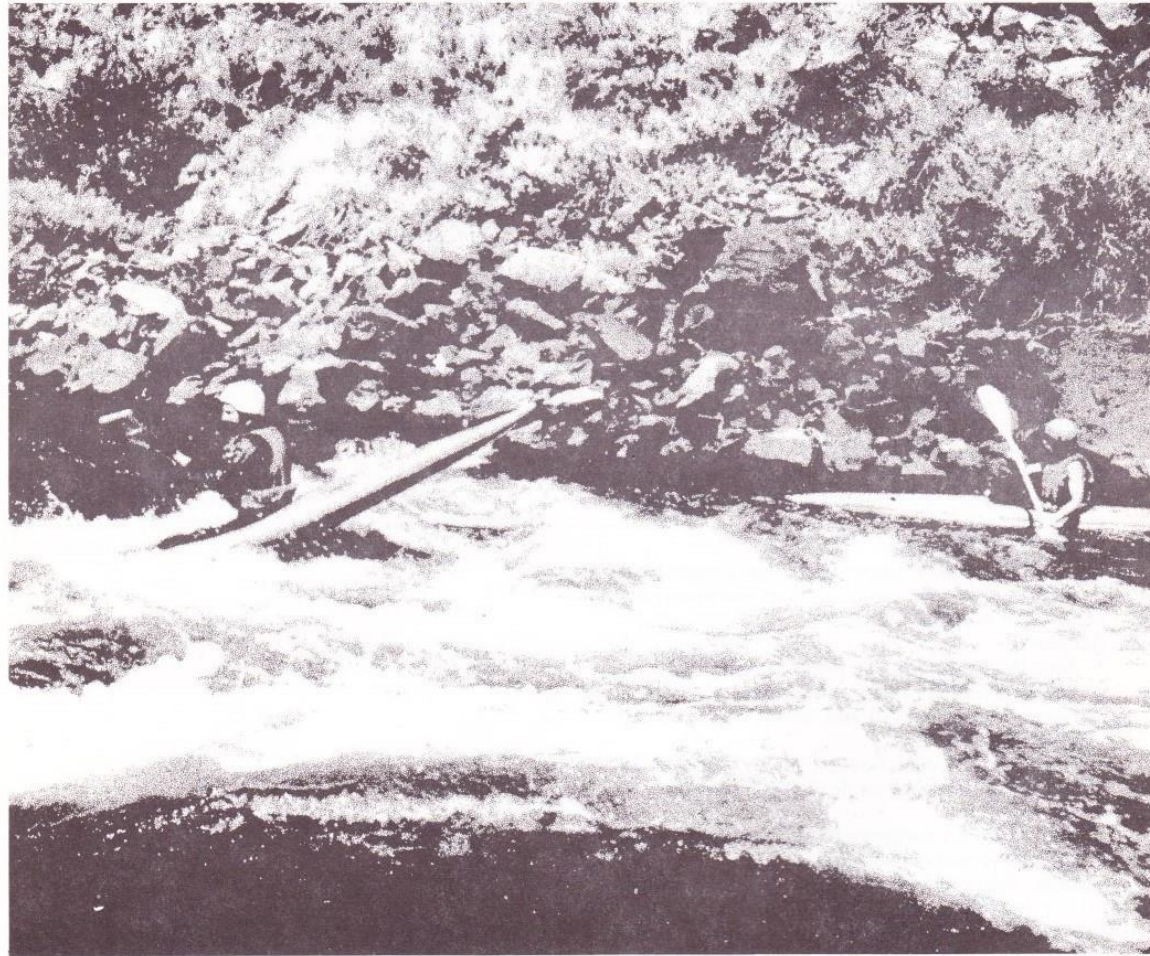
Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Some available; make campfires only in lower canyon away from habitation.

13. **Hiking**

None recommended.



## SAN ANTONIO RIVER

Lagunitas to Los Pinos

### General Description

A wild run through a little-known, steep-walled volcanic canyon. Access is difficult, but this trip is worth the effort.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and private; no permit required.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

San Antonio Mountain 7½'

Broke Off Mountain 7½'

Los Pinos 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 20 miles; four to six hours, depending on flow.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Kayaks best at all levels because of river's narrowness and speed.

5. **Rapids**

Primarily Class II and III, but may be more difficult toward Lagunitas.

6. **Gradient**

50 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Late April and early May best; whenever flow exceeds 100 CFS.

8. **Access**

- Difficult, but possible, access exists where Forest Road 118-A runs near the river.
- Forest Road 87 offers difficult, but possible, access.
- Lagunitas, at end of Forest Road 87, is a possible access point if there is enough water.
- The town of Los Pinos, after confluence with Los Pinos River, offers numerous take-out points.

**Shuttle:** 35 miles along dirt forest roads; passage may be difficult in wet weather.

**Emergency:** Use forest roads or proceed downstream; many places to exit.

9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** Several barbed-wire fences likely, may re-

quire portaging.

**Sweepers and Logjams:** Likely, so be on the alert.

10. **Camping**

Plenty of quiet, isolated sites.

11. **Water**

May be potable spring water, but best to purify or bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

A short side-trip possible up Montoya Canyon.

## **SAN FRANCISCO RIVER (A)**

San Francisco Plaza to Pleasanton

---

### **General Description**

An interesting trip through a broad, desert canyon and pastoral area. This river is seldom run because of lack of water.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service (Gila National Forest) and private; no permit required; contact Gila National Forest, Glenwood, for information and current conditions.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Block Canyon 7½'  
Alma 7½'  
Saliz Pass 7½'  
Glenwood 7½'

3. **Length of Trip**

Approximately 40 miles; two to three days, depending on water level and amount of paddling.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Rafts and kayaks best because of rocky channel and probable low-water spots.

5. **Rapids**

Several Class II rapids; logjams may create Class II to III rapids anywhere on run, especially after flood.

6. **Gradient**

25 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Usually for only a few days in March or after heavy summer rain; need minimum 150 CFS; call National Weather Service or U.S. Geological Survey for current flow information.

8. **Access**

- San Francisco Plaza five miles south of Reserve provides good access and parking.
- Bridge eight miles north of Alma on Highway 180 offers good access on private land (permission needed).
- Alma ford on dirt road west of town offers good access and parking.
- Pleasanton ford provides fair access and parking.

- Lower San Francisco Hot Springs, on Forest Road 519 southwest of Pleasanton, offers good access and parking.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 50 miles; paved roads with exception of Forest Road 519, which may be difficult in wet weather.

**Emergency:** Exit anywhere on public land where road is close to river.

9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** Several; there are five in a one-mile stretch near Kelley Ranch; portaging necessary.

**Logjams:** Always probable.

**Rocks:** Large rocks in channel throughout run.

10. **Camping**

Sites plentiful in Gila National Forest; avoid camping on private land.

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Usually plentiful.

13. **Hiking**

Many short side-trips in upper section.

---

## **SAN FRANCISCO RIVER (B)**

Lower San Francisco Hot Springs to Clifton, Arizona

### **General Description**

A wild run through a deep, narrow desert canyon. The area is closed annually between March 15 and July 15 by the U.S. Forest Service as part of a wildlife study and preservation project.

#### **1. Land Ownership and Permission**

U.S. Forest Service (Gila National Forest); permit required by Forest Service at times when area is not closed (available at Glenwood or Clifton ranger districts or at entry points on river).

#### **2. U.S.G.S. Maps**

Glenwood 7½'  
Wilson Mountain 7½'  
Big Sue Mountains 15'

#### **3. Length of Trip**

Approximately 40 miles; two to three days depending on water level and amount of paddling.

#### **4. Recommended Craft**

Small durable boats for low water and narrow chutes through logjams; need maximum maneuverability; canoes not recommended.

#### **5. Rapids**

Class II; most difficult near Arizona state line; possibility of logjams creating new rapids and making existing rapids more difficult.

#### **6. Gradient**

25 feet per mile.

#### **7. Time When Runnable**

After summer rains in late July or August; peaks from 200-800 CFS; need minimum of 150 CFS; call National Weather Service or U.S. Geological Survey for current flow information.

#### **8. Access**

- Lower San Francisco Hot Springs southwest of Pleasanton offers good access and parking.
- Big Dry Creek off Soldier Hill turnoff provides good access and parking.
- Martinez Ranch off Dix Mesa turnoff in Arizona offers good access.
- Sliger Ranch north of Highway 78 in Arizona

offers good access and parking.

- Clifton bridge, on Highway 666 in Arizona, provides good access and parking.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 70 miles, mostly on paved roads; dirt stretches may be difficult when wet; high-clearance vehicle may be needed.

**Emergency:** Isolated from habitation, so continuing downriver is best; Sliger Ranch access possible.

#### **9. Hazards**

**Fences:** Always possible.

**Logjams:** Always possible.

#### **10. Camping**

Plentiful sites.

#### **11. Water**

Bring your own.

#### **12. Firewood**

Plentiful.

#### **13. Hiking**

Several side canyons, including Mule Creek Box and Blue River.



DAY 10: RIVER RIFTS AND THE WESTERN CANYONLANDS



## SAN JUAN RIVER (A)

Navajo Dam to Blanco

### General Description

An enjoyable, pastoral run with abundant waterfowl and beavers. The San Juan here passes through Navajo Lake State Park and is runnable at any time of year.

#### 1. Land Ownership and Permission

New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division and private; no permit required; contact Navajo Lake State Park for information and current conditions.

#### 2. U.S.G.S. Maps

Navajo Dam 15'

Aztec 15'

Bloomfield 15'

#### 3. Length of Trip

17 miles; six hours with moderate paddling.

#### 4. Recommended Craft

Canoes and kayaks best because of hazards and likely portages; rafts usable above 1,000 CFS, but extra care must be taken.

#### 5. Rapids

Class I near the beginning; some dams are Class II.

#### 6. Gradient

10 feet per mile.

#### 7. Time When Runnable

The minimum Navajo Dam outflow of 500 CFS is adequate year-round for canoes and kayaks; above 2,000 CFS the hazards on this run become especially dangerous; call National Weather Service or U.S. Geological Survey for current flow information.

#### 8. Access

- Below Navajo Dam on south side, gear may be carried one-quarter mile to "quality water" fishing area, which offers good access.
- New Mexico Game and Fish Department area, reached from Highway 173 bridge northeast of Archuleta, provides several hundred yards of good access.
- Highway 173 bridge offers difficult, but possible, access.

- Blanco bridge on Highway 64 toward Bloomfield offers excellent access on north side.

**Shuttle:** 17 miles, mostly on paved roads; dirt access road may be difficult in wet weather.

**Emergency:** Highway and habitations usually nearby; may require crossing fences onto private land; call Navajo Lake State Park superintendent if emergency occurs within the first three miles.

#### 9. Hazards

**Diversion Dams:** At least three that are runnable, but potentially very dangerous (drownings have occurred); portages are easy and recommended.

**Fences and Cables:** Many throughout the run without warning signs; very dangerous at high water level; may be necessary to portage.

**Bridges:** Possible debris pileups.

#### 10. Camping

Sites at Simon Canyon on north side of river.

#### 11. Water

Available at Navajo Lake State Park.

#### 12. Firewood

Use driftwood and deadfall; cutting of green wood not permitted at Navajo Lake State Park.

#### 13. Hiking

Some short side-canyon walks; Indian ruins up Simon Canyon.

## SAN JUAN RIVER (B)

Blanco to Shiprock

### General Description

A suburban, pastoral run through river wetlands most suitable for canoeists. The Salmon Indian ruins east of Bloomfield may be approached by river.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**

Private and Indian; obtain permission locally from private landowners if possible; otherwise use public access.

2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**

Bloomfield 15'  
Horn Canyon 7½'  
Farmington South 7½'  
Kirtland 7½'  
Fruitland 7½'  
Waterflow 7½'  
Hogback North 7½'  
Chimney Rock 15'

3. **Length of Trip**

50 miles; at least two days.

4. **Recommended Craft**

Canoes and kayaks are best due to need for paddling and portages.

5. **Rapids**

No natural rapids; Hogback and Westland Park dams may be Class III to IV; general frequency of hazards makes this river Class II overall.

6. **Gradient**

10 feet per mile.

7. **Time When Runnable**

Year-round if dam releases are 500 CFS or greater; rises to 2,000+ CFS above Farmington and 3,000-4,000 CFS below Farmington in the spring.

8. **Access**

- Blanco bridge offers good access, but land is private and permission should be obtained.
- County Road A-87, approximately five miles northwest of Blanco, offers good access and parking.
- Bloomfield bridge provides good access, but parking is difficult.

- Bridge at County Road A-94, six miles east of Bloomfield, offers good access.
- West Farmington bridge, west of hospital, offers good access on north side of river.
- Westland Park Dam on west side of Farmington offers good access.
- Fruitland bridge on road to Four Corners power-plant offers good access.
- Park northeast of Shiprock bridge provides good access.

**Shuttle:** Approximately 50 miles on paved road.  
**Emergency:** Highways and habitations usually nearby; can take out almost anywhere.

9. **Hazards**

**Diversions Dams:** Several; concrete dam one mile east of Fruitland is especially dangerous because of "jaws" — **do not run**; others may be runnable.

**Bridges:** Some have cables and wires that tend to collect debris; approach with caution.

**Fences:** Likely, considering number of farms and ranches nearby; potentially very hazardous; bring flagging material to mark for others.

**Miscellaneous:** Be on the alert for old car bodies and construction debris.

10. **Camping**

Best sites are on river islands and on either shore after entering Navajo Indian Reservation (west of Hogback).

11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**

Plentiful; be especially careful with campfires because of potentially high fire danger.

13. **Hiking**

Salmon Ruins, several miles east of Bloomfield, may be approached by river.

## SAN JUAN RIVER (C)

Shiprock to Four Corners

### General Description

An easy, pastoral run past sandstone bluffs and badlands, and through cottonwood glens.

1. **Land Ownership and Permission**  
Indian (Navajo); no permit required.
2. **U.S.G.S. Maps**  
Chimney Rock 15'  
Rattlesnake 15'
3. **Length of Trip**  
Approximately 31 miles; 10 to 15 hours with moderate paddling at 500 CFS; slow water.
4. **Recommended Craft**  
Canoes and kayaks; canoes best because much paddling is necessary and winds are possible; rafts usable, but slow, above 1,000 CFS.
5. **Rapids**  
None; debris and other hazards make this a Class I run.
6. **Gradient**  
Eight feet per mile.
7. **Time When Runnable**  
Any time of year when river is running over 500 CFS; highest water level between May and June.
8. **Access**
  - Municipal park on the northeast side of Shiprock bridge provides adequate access point.
  - Bridge at Highway 164 near Four Corners Monument provides good access.

**Shuttle:** 35 miles on paved and dirt roads; high-clearance vehicle recommended for dirt roads.  
**Emergency:** Roads and habitations are often nearby, but help may be difficult to locate.
9. **Hazards**

**Fences:** None when surveyed, but be on lookout since this is grazing country.  
**Logjams and Debris Pile-ups:** Possible at high water.
10. **Camping**  
Plentiful sites.
11. **Water**

Bring your own.

12. **Firewood**  
Plentiful driftwood and deadfall.
13. **Hiking**  
A few short side-canyon walks.

## WHITEWATER BOATING REFERENCES

### Outfitters and Guides in New Mexico

The following is a current listing of New Mexico-based organizations that lead whitewater boating trips in the state. Other states also sponsor New Mexico river expeditions, and new outfitting businesses and wilderness schools are opening all the time. For the most current information on whitewater outfitters and guides, contact the New Mexico Travel Division, Commerce and Industry Department, Bataan Memorial Building, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503 (505) 827-6230/31 or (800) 545-2040 for out-of-state calls.

- Artemis, P.O. Box 1178, Taos, NM 87571 (505) 758-1774
- Best Adventure Tours, 1707C West Alameda, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 983-9478
- Far Flung Adventures, Plum Tree Motel, Pilar, NM 87571 (505) 758-4696
- Four Corners Expeditions, Box 103N, Buena Vista, CO 81211 (303) 395-8978, in Taos (505) 758-8242
- Kellstedt Trading Company, Route 6, Box 134A, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 471-7077
- Los Rios River Runners, P.O. Box 68, El Prado, NM 87529 (505) 758-9855
- New Wave Rafting Company, Route 5, Box 302A, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 455-2633
- Outdoor Adventures, P.O. Box 759, Placitas, NM 87043 (505) 867-2194
- Rio Bravo River Tours, P.O. Box 524, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 988-1153
- Rio Grande Rapid Transit, Box A, Pilar, NM 87571 (505) 758-9700
- Sierra Outfitters and Guides, P.O. Box 2756, Taos, NM 87571 (505) 758-1247
- Southwest Wilderness Center, P.O. Box 2840, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 982-3126
- Western Outdoor Leisure Frontiers (W.O.L.F.), Inc., P.O. Box 60, Sandia Park, NM 87047 (505) 888-7277
- Wild Water Rafting Experiences, 1208 Roma NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 (505) 247-2770

### Clubs

- Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico, Inc., P.O. Box 1656, Corrales, NM 87048

### Boat Rentals

- Kellstedt Trading Company, Route 6, Box 134A, Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 471-7077
- Mountains & Rivers, 2320 Central SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 (505) 268-4876
- Nemco, 9140 Montgomery, Albuquerque, NM 87111 (505) 296-9583
- Rio River Runners (Chip Brenn), 9705 Avenida del Oso NE, Albuquerque, NM (505) 821-3596

### Books and Periodicals

- American Whitewater Journal*. P.O. Box 1483, Hagerstown, MD 21740.
- Anderson, Fletcher, and Ann Hopkinson. *Rivers of the Southwest*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1982.
- Canoe*. P.O. Box 10748, Des Moines, IA 50349.
- Currents*, National Organization for River Sports (NORS), P.O. Box 6487, Colorado Springs, CO 80934.
- Evans, Jay, and Robert B. Anderson. *Kayaking*. National Organization for River Sports, P.O. Box 6487, Colorado Springs, CO 80934.
- Huser, Verne. *River Running*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1975.
- Jenkinson, Michael. *Wild Rivers of North America*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1973.
- Kuhne, Cecil. *Advanced River Rafting*. Mountain View, California: Anderson World, Inc., 1980.
- McGinnis, William. *Whitewater Rafting*. New York: New York Times Book Company, 1975.
- Murphy, Doug. *New Mexico River Notes*. Albuquerque: Mountains and Rivers, 1979.
- River Runner*. Pringle, OR 97754.
- Urban, John T. *Whitewater Handbook for Canoe and Kayak*. Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club, 1974.

---

#### **Other Sources of Information**

- Bureau of Land Management, Moab District Office, P.O. Box 970, Moab, UT 84532 (*Human Waste Carry-Out Method*)
- Bureau of Land Management, Taos Resource Area, P.O. Box 1045, Taos, NM 87571
- Grand Canyon National Park, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023 (*First-Aid List for River Trips*)
- Holman's, Inc., 401 Wyoming NE, Albuquerque, NM (U.S.G.S. topographic maps)
- New Mexico Game and Fish Department, 6511 Domingo Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110
- New Mexico Health and Environment Department, Environmental Improvement Division, P.O. Box 968, Santa Fe, NM 87504 (*Water Disinfection for Campers and Backpackers*)
- New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division, P.O. Box 1147, Santa Fe, NM 87503 (*New Mexico State Park Regulations and Boating Laws*)
- United States Geological Survey, Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225



## GLOSSARY OF COMMON RIVER TERMS

<b>Channel</b>	A boatable route through a section of river.	<b>Sleeper</b>	Submerged rock or boulder just below the surface, usually marked by little or no surface disturbance.
<b>Chute</b>	A narrow drop or small fall.	<b>Sweeper</b>	Brush, fallen trees, bridge pilings, or anything else that allows the current to sweep through but pins boats and boaters.
<b>Confluence</b>	A point where two or more water-courses meet.	<b>Tongue</b>	A smooth, downstream-pointing "V" or chute of fast water found at the head of rapids.
<b>Drop</b>	An abrupt descent in a river.	<b>Volume (CFS)</b>	The water volume of a river is a crucial variable for boaters. In order to measure this changing flow, the volume/time unit of cubic feet per second (CFS) is commonly used. CFS indicates the amount of water flowing past any given point along a river in one second. The volume of a free-flowing river fluctuates greatly in the course of a year. Good flow and weather for boating are possible anytime from March to November in New Mexico.
<b>Eddy</b>	A place behind an obstacle where the current turns to head upstream.		
<b>Fall</b>	A drop over which the water falls free at least part of the way.		
<b>Gradient</b>	A river's gradient or slope is measured in foot drop per mile and provides a rough indication of its speed and level of difficulty. Rivers with gradients of less than 10 feet per mile are ordinarily slow and easy, while rivers with gradients exceeding 30 feet per mile are usually fast, difficult, and dangerous.		
<b>Hole</b>	An abrupt drop in the river created by a rock underwater.		
<b>Logjam</b>	A dam of logs across a river.		
<b>Pool</b>	A deep and quiet stretch of river.		
<b>Portage</b>	The carrying of craft around a rapid or hazard.		
<b>Rapid</b>	A fast, turbulent stretch of river, often with obstructions.		
<b>Reversal</b>	A place where the current swings upward and revolves back on itself, forming a treacherous meeting of currents that can drown swimmers and slow, swamp, trap, or flip boats.		
<b>Riffle</b>	A shallow rapid with very small waves, often over a sand or gravel bottom.		
<b>Scout</b>	To examine a rapid or hazard from shore.		



## CREDITS

---

**River survey data provided by:** Kelly Kellstedt; the Bureau of Land Management, Taos and Las Cruces resource areas; the United States Forest Service.

**Compiled and edited by:** The New Mexico State Park Division.

**Photographs by:** William Clark (cover, page 57), Alan Kennish (page 67), Karl Kernberger (pages 1, 9, 33, 43), Edward Klamm/FotoWest (pages 27, 61), Museum of New Mexico (pages 3, 21).

**Graphic design:** Dick Hogle/Multi Media Studio, Inc.

**Production:** Multi Media Studio, Inc.

**Acknowledgments:** For their technical and financial assistance in the preparation of this booklet, the New Mexico State Park and Recreation Division would like to thank the Adobe Whitewater Club, Best Adventures, Explorer Post 20 (Los Alamos), Ohio Knox, Los Rios, the National Park Service, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, the New Mexico State Engineer's Office, New Wave Rafting, Joan O'Donnell, Rio Bravo River Tours, Rio Grande Rapid Transit, and the United States Geological Survey.

**Funded by:** The New Mexico State Park Division, Boating Safety Section; and the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund.

In memory of Robert Brewer, who died on the Embudo River in May 1982.

---