



## COLORADO WATER TRUST

July 23, 2013

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# STAGECOACH WATER LEASED TO BENEFIT YAMPA RIVER

*Colorado Water Trust pays to release 4,000 AF for second year*

Last week, the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (Upper Yampa) signed a contract with the Colorado Water Trust (CWT) to lease the nonprofit organization 4,000 acre feet of water in Stagecoach Reservoir for a second year in a row. CWT is working with Upper Yampa; Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW); Catamount Development, Inc.; and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) on planning releases to provide environmental benefits to the Yampa River. In coordination with CWT, Upper Yampa began releasing water from Stagecoach Reservoir on Tuesday, July 23 to bolster streamflows in the Yampa.

“Last year, we saw that adding water to the Yampa River was of tremendous value not only to the natural environment but also to Steamboat Springs and other communities along the river,” said Zach Smith, staff

attorney for the Colorado Water Trust. “We look forward to working with Upper Yampa to create similar benefits again this year.”

Colorado Parks and Wildlife aquatic biologist Bill Atkinson has been surveying the Yampa River, and recently, water temperatures have been climbing near the 80’s in the afternoon. Atkinson has suggested to the Water Trust that beginning releases from Stagecoach Reservoir at a rate of 30 cfs could help reduce these high water temperatures, which stress wildlife and the river ecosystem. Catamount Development, Inc. will support the collaborative efforts again this year by adjusting its operations to increase fish habitat below the reservoir.

“Right now, flows on the Yampa are holding, and flows are what keep this precious ecosystem intact. A couple of weeks of hot weather could change that,” said Peter Van De Carr, owner of Backdoor Sports in Steamboat Springs. “There have been flow issues for years, and CWT is stepping up to help the river.”

The 5.4 mile instream flow water right, appropriated in 2001 and located on the reach of the river between Stagecoach and Catamount reservoirs, was water-short before monsoons brought flows up. CWT, CWCB, and CPW anticipate flows to drop off shortly. CWT and the CWCB are developing an agreement to legally protect water in the instream flow segment of the Yampa River.

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The Colorado Water Trust is a private, nonprofit organization that engages in and supports voluntary efforts to restore and protect streamflows in Colorado to sustain healthy aquatic ecosystems. These efforts include water acquisitions, other creative transfers of water, on-the-ground physical solutions, and providing technical assistance to land trusts. More information about the Colorado Water Trust is available at [www.coloradowatertrust.org](http://www.coloradowatertrust.org).

The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District was formed in 1966 to provide legal authority to plan and construct water conservation projects in the Yampa Valley. More information about the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District is available at [www.upperyampawater.com](http://www.upperyampawater.com).

The Colorado Water Conservation Board, an agency within the Department of Natural Resources, was created in 1937 to provide policy direction on water issues. Governed by a 15-member board, the CWCB’s responsibilities range from protecting Colorado’s streams and lakes to water conservation, flood mitigation, watershed protection, stream restoration, drought planning, water supply planning and water project financing. The CWCB administers Colorado’s Instream Flow Program and is the only entity in the state authorized to hold instream flow water rights. More information about the Colorado Water Conservation Board is available at <http://cwcb.state.co.us>.