

Photo Credit: Colleen Miniuk

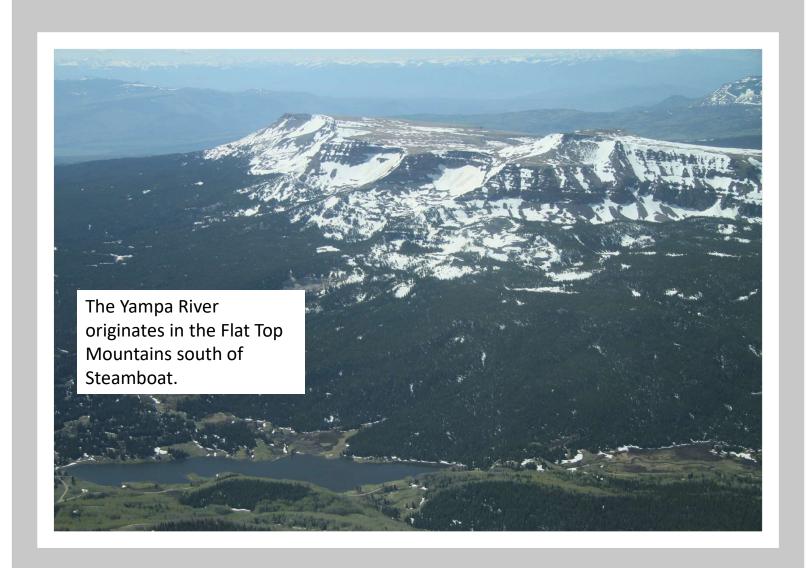
Friends of the Yampa's mission is to protect the environmental and recreational integrity of the Yampa River and its tributaries through stewardship, advocacy, education, and partnerships.

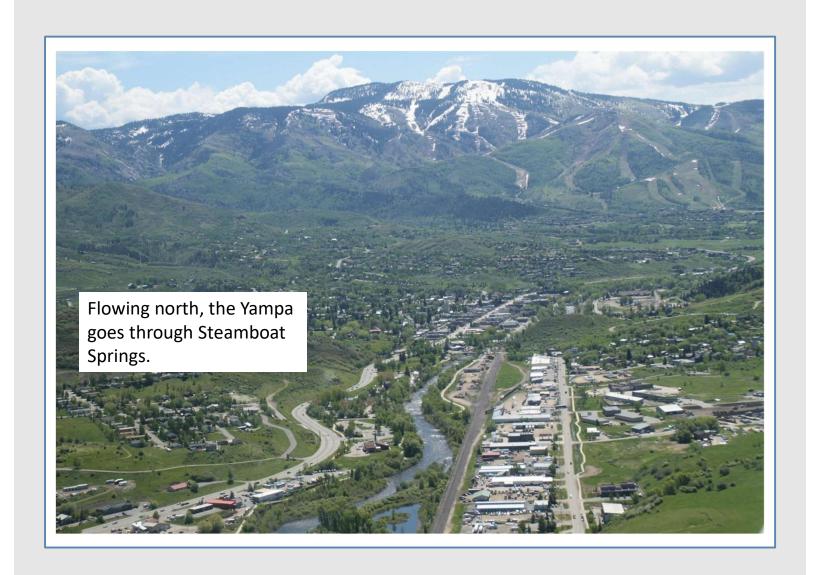


#### Presentation Agenda:

- Yampa River overview
- CO State Water Plan and basin-level SMP's
- Yampa River Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP)
- Yampa River Fund
- Yampa River Scorecard Project



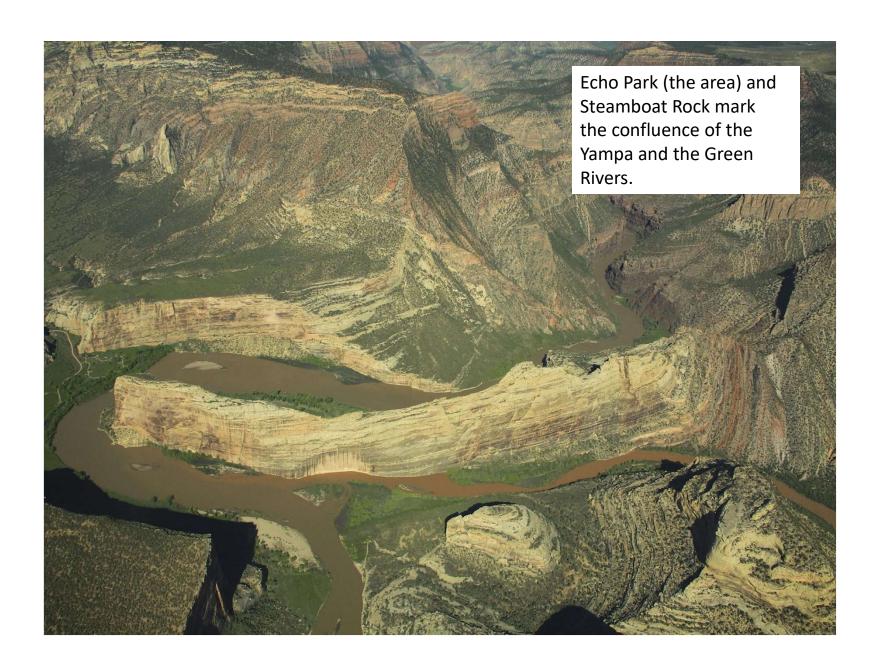












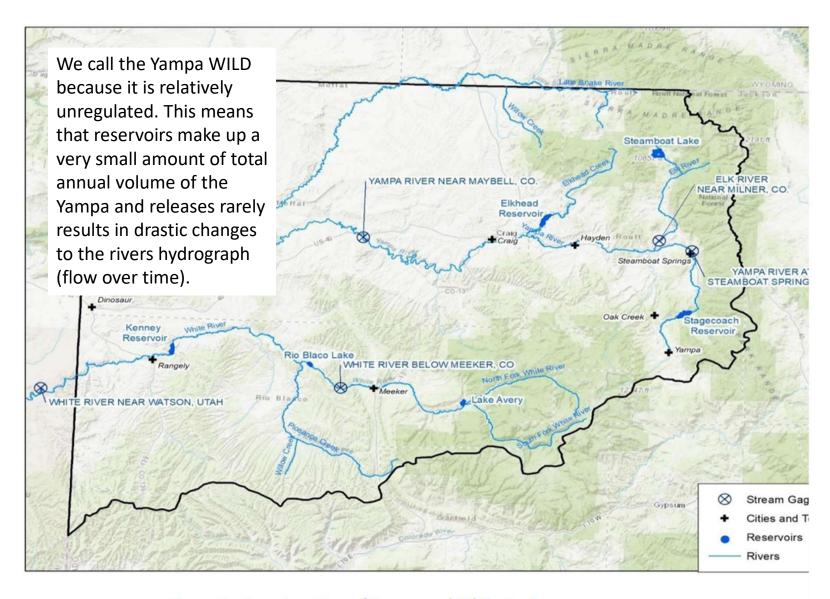


Figure 2: Overview Map of Yampa and White Basins

#### Colorado's 2015 State Water Plan:

In 2015 the state published its first ever water plan to bridge the gap between available water and demand. The plan is built on three values:

- A productive economy
- Efficient and effective water infrastructure
- A strong environment

Stream Management Plans (SMPs) are a priority activity in Colorado as a result of the state's 2015 Water Plan, which calls for 80% of locally-prioritized streams to have an SMP by 2030



The Yampa White Green Basin Implementation Plan (BIP)- our stream management plan- was completed in 2015.

This sparked the idea for the Yampa Integrated Water Management Plan in 2019.

The Yampa Integrated Water
Management Plan was intended
to accelerate progress on the
goals of the SMP by creating a list
of ranked issues that stakeholders
want to tackle, as well as plans
and funding options to implement
priority actions.



## Goal and Focus Areas of the IWMP:

- IDENTIFY ACTIONS to protect existing and future water uses and support healthy river ecosystems
- FOCUS AREAS:
  - Water Shortages and Low Flows
  - Riparian Habitat and Erosion
  - Infrastruture upgrades and lack of drought planning
- IWMP FINAL REPORT 2022- <u>Recommendations</u>
   <u>& Strategies</u>





Four years of hard work and collaboration across interests resulted in a **set of 20 prioritized strategies** to benefit

- communities,
- economy,
- environment, and
- agriculture.

This list of strategies is serving as a blueprint for united action across multiple organizations and agencies to achieve common goals.





If your basin is interested in pursuing this type of collaborative work, River Network can help. Contact Nicole Seltzer at nseltzer@rivernetwork.org

The Yampa River Fund and the Yampa River Scorecard Project can provide FUNDING and DATA to support and inform project recommendations from the IWMP final report.





YAMPA RIVER
SCORECARD
PROJECT









## Origins of the Yampa River Fund

- A water fund is a tested approach for investing in water when collective action is needed.
- TNC has water funds in 11 countries
- Find out more at The Nature Conservancy's <u>Water Fund Toolbox</u>
- TNC founded the Yampa River Fund to help CO Water Trust establish a sustainable funding mechanism for reservoir releases from Stagecoach Reservoir.
- Friends of the Yampa took over as the managing entity in 2022.



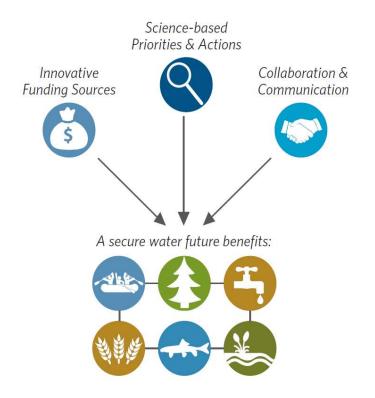


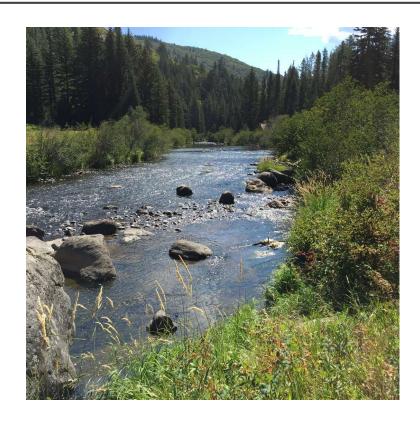


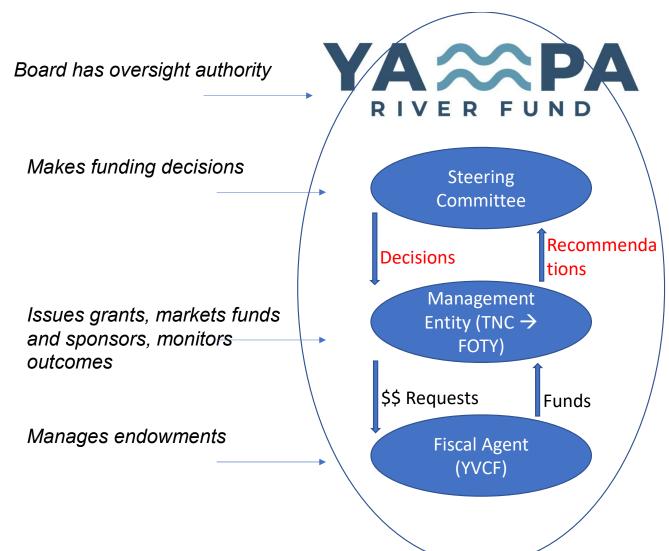


### How does the Yampa River Fund work?

• \$5M endowment allows for \$200K + in project funding each year!









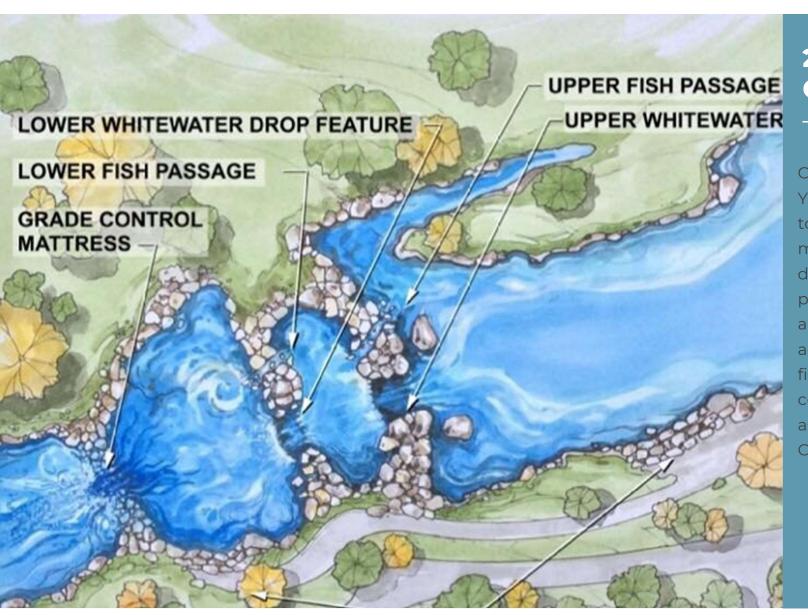
How are decisions made?

#### What will the Yampa River Fund do?





A project to release a potential of 1,000 acre-feet of water (of the max total 5100 acre-feet of water the Water Trust has contracted for in 2022). This project, in partnership with the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District, began releases July 21 to support the Yampa River, the fish and wildlife that depend on it, as well as the recreational uses on the river. The Water Trust's releases were made when the Yampa River fell below healthy levels for fish and riparian habitat and it was the most water the Water Trust has ever had available to add to the river in a single year.



### 2022 Yampa Corridor Project — CITY OF CRAIG

Construction phase of the Yampa River Corridor Project to replace existing degraded municipal water diversion dam. Implementation will promote safer boater passage and create enhanced aquatic/riparian habitat and fish passage, in addition to converting to a recreational asset for Craig and Moffat County.

Located on the lower Yampa River, a tributary to the Colorado River, the Maybell diversion provides water for 18 agricultural producers in Northwest Colorado. The diversion structure, built in 1896, channels water through a broken, antiquated headgate into the Maybell Ditch, an 18-mile canal that flows roughly in line with the river and irrigates hay pasture and ranchlands. The three parts of the project — lining the ditch, replacing the headgate and rehabilitating the diversion — will improve efficiency, water flow and habitat for native fish.



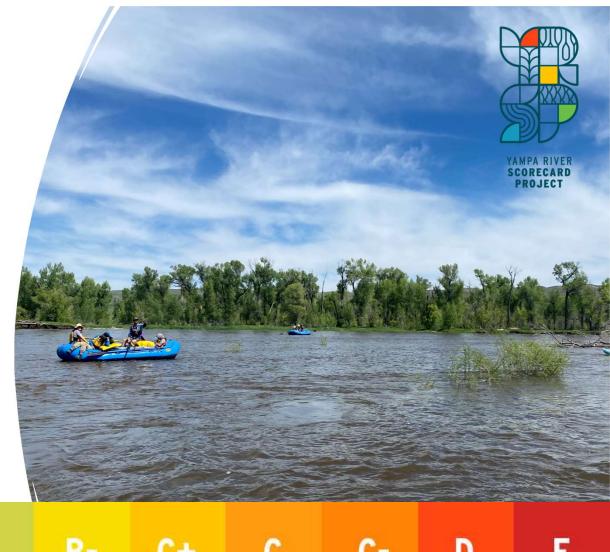






What is the Yampa River Scorecard Project?

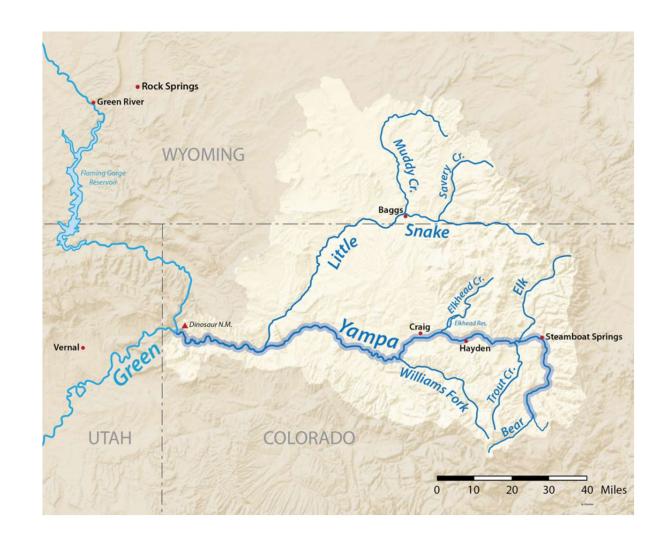
The YRSP is a long-term river health monitoring and evaluation program for the Yampa Basin that will rate the overall condition of different segments of the Yampa River and articulate results through a "scorecard". A comprehensive long-term monitoring program has yet to exist in the Yampa Basin.



A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D F

# YRSP Process YAMPA RIVER SCORECARD PROJECT

 The river will be evaluated in its entirety one segment at a time, over the course of five years. The cycle will then repeat. The goal is for the YRSP to be a source of ONGOING data collection on the Yampa River.



## YRSP outcomes

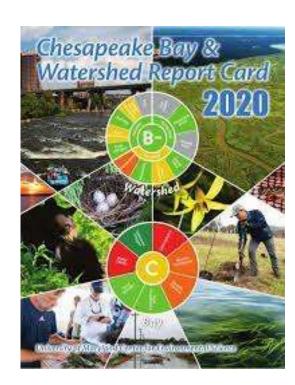


- 1. Serve as a source of consistent long-term monitoring of river condition/attributes to track their changes over time for all interested parties including the public
- 2. Present data and science in an easily digestible and visually appealing, multimedia format to foster engagement and science education to everyone.
- 3. Provide a resource that helps inform future river management projects/decisions.



### Funders, Partners, Technical & Stakeholder Group Members:

• Visit the <u>YRSP website</u> to find a detailed list of funders, partners, and technical and stakeholder group members. The indicators that we measured, as well as the process, final product, and problem statement were decided upon using a collaborative process informed by <u>other scorecard projects</u> and input from a strong local coalition.





# First Scorecard to be released in March 2023!

- A 39-mile section of the Yampa River main stem spanning from Pump Station to South Beach was identified as the initial focus segment
- Find out more at <u>Yampascorecard.org</u>
- If you have questions about the YRSP process and timeline, please contact Jenny Frithsen at <a href="mailto:jenny@friendsoftheyampa.com">jenny@friendsoftheyampa.com</a>
- Thank you!

