



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Robert Viehl, Chief
Marielle Sidell, Hydrologist
Stream and Lake Protection Section

DATE: March 19, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5a. Public Notice of 2026 Instream Flow and Natural Lake Level Recommendations

Staff Recommendation: This is an informational item with no Board action required.

Background

Pursuant to Rule 5c. of the Rules Concerning the Colorado Instream Flow (ISF) and Natural Lake Level (NLL) Program (“ISF Rules”), Staff is providing notice that the following 25 stream segments have been recommended for ISF appropriation (See Table 1). At the January 2026 CWCB meeting, Staff may request that the Board form its intent to appropriate ISF water rights on recommendations where sufficient information and outreach has been completed.

The list below includes 4 new recommendations (identified with an *) and 21 recommendations received in previous years. The previous recommendations have not moved forward due to the need for additional scientific data and/or ongoing attempts to address stakeholder issues.

Outreach

Staff will complete several outreach efforts to raise awareness about these recommendations. This includes providing public notice of the recommendations in March and November of 2025 to the ISF subscription mailing list. Staff will offer to give presentations to County Commissioners in counties with ISF recommendations. Staff will mail letters to landowners adjacent to the proposed ISF reaches and inform them about the ISF Program and the recommendation. In addition, staff will publish notices in newspapers located near the recommended ISF reaches. Lastly, staff plans to contact water commissioners, water right holders, and others when possible to discuss the recommendations.

Detailed information regarding these stream segments is also available on the CWCB website located at: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/2026-isf-recommendations>



Table 1 2026 ISF Recommendations

Div	Stream	Watershed	County	Length (miles)	Upper Terminus	Lower Terminus
1	East Fork Roaring Creek	Cache la Poudre	Larimer	3.49	headwaters	confluence Roaring Creek
1	Garber Creek	Upper South Platte	Douglas	4.75	confluence North and South Garber Creeks	confluence West Plum Creek
1	Platte Gulch	South Platte Headwaters	Park	1.54	headwaters	confluence MF South Platte River
1	West Plum Creek	Upper South Platte	Douglas	22.6	headwaters	confluence East Plum Creek
2	Cottonwood Creek	Arkansas Headwaters	Fremont	9.42	confluence Salt Creek	Giem Ditch headgate
2	Cottonwood Creek	Arkansas Headwaters	Custer	6.00	headwaters	F. Keuhn Ditch No. 2 headgate
2	East Gulch	Arkansas Headwaters	Fremont	8.81	confluence Antelope Gulch	confluence Arkansas River
4	Pine Creek	Upper Gunnison	Gunnison	16.7	headwaters	confluence Morrow Point Reservoir
4	Steuben Creek	Upper Gunnison	Gunnison	9.96	confluence West Steuben Creek	confluence Blue Mesa Reservoir
4	Taylor River*	East-Taylor	Gunnison	10.9	confluence Eyre Creek	confluence Italian Creek
6	Bear Creek	Upper White	Garfield	3.09	headwaters	confluence NF White River

Div	Stream	Watershed	County	Length (miles)	Upper Terminus	Lower Terminus
6	Big Fish Creek	Upper White	Garfield	4.30	headwaters	confluence NF White River
6	East Marvine Creek	Upper White	Rio Blanco	7.31	headwaters	confluence Marvine Creek
6	Hauskins Creek	Upper White	Garfield	2.11	headwaters	confluence NF White River
6	Hill Creek	Upper White	Rio Blanco	3.84	headwaters	Hill Creek Ditch #2 & #3 hdgt
6	Lost Dog Creek*	Upper Yampa	Routt	4.13	headwaters	confluence NF Elk River
6	Lynx Creek	Upper White	Garfield	1.58	headwaters	confluence NF White River
6	Mirror Creek	Upper White	Rio Blanco	2.16	headwaters	confluence NF White River
6	Paradise Creek	Upper White	Garfield Rio Blanco	2.98	headwaters	Paradise Ponds Diversion Hdgt
6	Picket Pin Creek	Upper White	Garfield	2.66	headwaters	confluence NF White River
6	South Fork White River	Upper White	Rio Blanco	8.07	Flat Tops Wilderness Area Boundary	confluence Swede Creek
6	West Branch Willow Creek	Little Snake	Routt	5.26	headwaters	confluence Willow Creek

Div	Stream	Watershed	County	Length (miles)	Upper Terminus	Lower Terminus
6	Willow Creek	Little Snake	Routt	4.67	Outlet Boyer Reservoir	confluence West Branch Willow Creek
7	Mill Creek*	Animas	San Juan	4.01	headwaters	confluence Cascade Creek
7	Pando Creek*	Animas	San Juan	1.87	headwaters	confluence Cascade Creek

*Recommendation received at February 2025 ISF Workshop