

Yampa Basin Rendezvous: A Dialogue on Drought, Water Availability, and Conservation

*Organized by the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes (CW3E),
Colorado Mountain College, Friends of the Yampa,
Yampa Valley Sustainability Council, Steamboat Powdercats, the Integrated Water Management
Plan, the Yampa River Fund, the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District, Steamboat Ski and
Resort Corporation, and Steamboat Springs community members*

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The Yampa River is one of the wildest remaining major tributaries of the Colorado River and supports a rich ecosystem, local agriculture and ranching, and a robust recreation industry. It also provides crucial water supplies to local stakeholders and locations as far removed as Arizona and Southern California. However, warming temperatures, rising snowlines, and increased drought occurrence and severity pose serious risks to the boreal, alpine, and riverine ecosystems of the Yampa River Basin. **How are we, as a community, developing conservation practices and adapting to manage the impacts of current and expected droughts and water availability challenges?** This question will be at the forefront of the 2021 Yampa Basin Rendezvous. This 2-day event will provide an overview of the current state of, and future planning for, water resources in the Yampa River Basin. It will also include a discussion of the role of economic, environmental, and cultural factors that influence conservation planning. The overarching goal is to provide a venue that encourages a science-based, community-centered approach to create informed, adaptive, and resilient management strategies for drought resilience and water conservation.

During the fourth-annual Yampa Basin Rendezvous, participants will examine the Yampa River Basin with a focus on drought and water conservation. The Rendezvous will include morning talks by regional experts, discussion panels, afternoon field learning, and a community event, and will be conducted in person as local guidelines allow. Options for virtual participation will be provided when possible. We will explore the impacts of drought in the Yampa River basin, science behind the projected changes in water availability and its effects on resource management and water conservation. Through this dialogue with the local community, we hope to pair CW3E's research directions with the community's expertise on the challenges and successes of resource management and conservation practices in the Yampa to identify how additional information and research may be beneficial.

This event is an ongoing effort to connect graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, researchers, staff and faculty from the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes (CW3E; cw3e.ucsd.edu) to river basins throughout the west. CW3E is based at the University of California San Diego's (UCSD) Scripps Institution of Oceanography and is building a regional community of scientists and engineers to work on western weather and climate problems. Building deep, meaningful connections with people who live, work, and steward rivers in the west is essential and it is preferable that this happen at an early career stage.

YBR Mission: The YBR strives to be an opportunity for reflection, communication, appreciation, and collaborative, interactive learning about the Yampa Basin ecosystems, environment, weather, climate, people, and culture and their intersections, for members of the Yampa Basin community as well as all the communities downstream who rely on the Yampa's water.

YBR Goals: Connect students, researchers, institutions, and community members who live and work in the Yampa River Basin to share knowledge regarding climate variability and change that has impacts on the environment, people and the economy. Build community and encourage collaborative problem-solving and planning, and provide an opportunity for citizens and visitors to be informed about the state of the Yampa Basin and the people and plans in place and in process to protect it.

2021 YBR Steering Committee Members:

Anna Wilson, *Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, UC San Diego*

Sarah Jones, *Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation*

Jill Bergman, *Artist*

Matt Jost, *Colorado Mountain College*

Holly Kirkpatrick, *Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District*

Marty Ralph, *Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, UC San Diego*

Mike Sierks, *Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, UC San Diego*

Nathan Stewart, *Colorado Mountain College*

Tim Sullivan, *Yampa Valley Sustainability Council*

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Lindsey Marlow, *Integrated Water Management Plan and Yampa River Fund*

Madison Muxworthy, *Yampa Valley Sustainability Council*