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Reservoir Releases and Coordination Bolster Flows in 2016

Steamboat Springs, Co., (September 22, 2016) – Today, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District began releasing water purchased by the Colorado Water Trust and its partners to bolster flows in the Yampa River from Stagecoach Reservoir through the City of Steamboat. The purchase of 264 acre-feet, to be released at a rate of 10 cfs for 13 days, provides a gap measure between other local entities' efforts to keep the Yampa flowing in this dry late summer.

The Yampa River, although forecasted to run at normal streamflow levels this summer, began dropping in the late summer and remained well below average, impacting fish, recreationalists, and water quality. Noting dropping water levels, the City of Steamboat began releasing water from its 552 acre-foot pool in Stagecoach on August 19th to improve water quality – the first time the City has used its water in Stagecoach in such a way. When that water ran out on September 14, Upper Yampa maintained that 10 cfs release by generating hydropower as part of a winter drawdown of Stagecoach it performed earlier than normal to coordinate with this purchase. The Water Trust's purchase will continue adding water to the Yampa until the Catamount Metro District lowers levels in Lake Catamount to prepare for the winter sometime in early October.

“Watching the local community now lead the streamflow restoration effort on the upper Yampa River is the best outcome for the work the Water Trust has accomplished in the Yampa valley since 2012,” said Zach Smith, staff attorney for the Water Trust.

“A healthy Yampa River is important to our community on so many levels,” said Kelly Romero-Heaney. “The City was fortunate to be able to release its Stagecoach Reservoir water this year to improve water quality in the river.”

The Water Trust's partners, The Nature Conservancy, the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, Tri-State Generation & Transmission and the CAN'd Aid Foundation funded the \$10,000 for the 2016 purchase and costs related to the transaction.

In 2012, 2013, and 2015 the Water Trust purchased water out of Stagecoach for release to the Yampa River to help maintain healthy stream flows and water quality.

As always, the project wouldn't be a success without the help of Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Catamount Development, Inc., Catamount Metropolitan District, and other cooperative water users.

ABOUT COLORADO WATER TRUST: The Colorado Water Trust is a private, nonprofit organization that facilitates voluntary, market-based water rights transactions to restore and protect streamflows in Colorado to sustain healthy aquatic ecosystems. It also works on physical solutions and provides technical assistance on other projects.

