



Echo offers an array of trips suitable for all members of the family.

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## Snowpack Rounding into Form as Echo Canyon River Expeditions Prepares for Rafting on the Arkansas River; Outfitter Again Offering Private Rafts After 2020 Introduction

CAÑON CITY, Colo., Feb. 26, 2021 - It's easy to believe that as the owner of a rafting company, Andy Neinas has been known to work long stretches of the spring and summer without taking any time off. It's a bit of a stretch, however, to accept his straight-faced claim that those days he recently spent on the Colorado ski slopes were workdays.

"I am happy to report that the mountain snowpack is in good shape," said Neinas, owner of [Echo Canyon River Expeditions](#), Colorado's largest rafting outfitter. "After a stretch of dry weather things are rounding into form."



Snow melting from the mountain snowpack makes its way down the Arkansas River and through the Royal Gorge.

Statistics confirm his “research.” According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Arkansas River Basin Snowpack sits at 98 percent of normal. With the state’s snowiest months still ahead, whitewater rafting season is on track.

The snowpack statistically reaches its peak April 11, and the subsequent melt sends water flowing down the state’s drainages for the next several months. Much of that water ends up in the Arkansas River, the nation’s top whitewater rafting destination.

Rafting season with Echo Canyon typically begins in April and ends in September, and whitewater conditions change significantly during the long season. Spring snowmelt results in fast river flows, and early in the season experienced paddlers seeking challenging waters will find it on the Arkansas. As the initial, fast snowmelt slows, the flows become gentler, making the Arkansas a great choice for rafters seeking a more relaxed adventure.

Neinas and other rafting outfitters are preparing for a busy 2021 after 2020 saw a slow start followed by a rush of guests who discovered that whitewater rafting was a terrific activity during the pandemic.

“Between being an inherently conducive outdoor adventure and the protocols we outfitters followed, rafting was strong once the season got going,” said Neinas. “Small groups, space to spread out, fresh air and clear water make a great combination.”

An option that Echo introduced last year that proved popular was to allow groups of up to five people to reserve their own “private” rafts for a flat fee. Rafters interested in this arrangement need to call 1-800-690-3246 in advance to reserve.

Located eight miles west of Cañon City on U.S. 50 and within sight of the entrance to the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park, Echo Canyon has been in business for 44 years. In addition to rafting, the company offers luxury cabins and glamping tents, a restaurant and event space.

#### **Rafting trips:**

The **Bighorn Sheep Canyon** trip is recommended for families with children six and up as well as intermediate rafters. The trip combines mild whitewater with calm stretches featuring wildlife watching in a spectacular natural setting. Rates per person are \$79 and \$395 for private rafts for half-day trips and \$139 per person for full-day trips. Full-day trips include a gourmet boxed lunch.

The **Gentle Family Float** is a half-day, five-mile excursion that also takes place in the Bighorn Sheep Canyon. This trip is suitable for multiple generations, including kids as young as four and grandparents. Easy Class II and gentle Class III rapids are mixed with plenty of floating time. Rates are \$79 per person and \$395 for private rafts.

Experienced rafters looking for an adrenaline rush can choose the **Royal Gorge Rafting Trips**. With rapids ranging from challenging Class III up to Class V, this trip makes its way through the 1,000-foot deep Royal Gorge of the Arkansas. Suggested minimum age is 14. Rates are \$95 per person and \$475 for private rafts for 10-mile, half-day trips and \$159 for 20-mile, full-day trips. Full-day trips include gourmet boxed lunch served at a scenic private site overlooking the river.

Echo Canyon provides all rafters with a personal flotation device and helmet and offers rentals of water shoes, wetsuits and splash jackets. Echo Canyon pioneered the use of GoPro cameras mounted on all rafts, enabling both photos and videos to be captured throughout the trip. Due

to advanced technology at Echo Canyon headquarters, rafters can view and purchase photos and videos of their adventures shortly after they arrive back to the office.

Located across the street from Echo Canyon River Expeditions are the [Royal Gorge Cabins](#), a complex of one- and two-bedroom [luxury cabins](#) with fully equipped kitchens, living areas and private outdoors spaces, and queen and double-queen [Glamping Tents](#) with private patios and fire rings.

The [8 Mile Bar and Grill](#) is currently open on weekends and features a 16-tap bar with Colorado brews and popular favorites as well as a menu offering salads, burgers, sandwiches and entrees. More than half of the restaurant's seating is outside, and large bay doors allow for plenty of fresh air.

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[Echo Canyon River Expeditions](#) is the leading whitewater destination resort in central Colorado and one of the country's top [adventure resorts](#), according to *U.S. News & World Report*. The region offers an array of outdoor adventures and attractions including [whitewater rafting](#) on the Arkansas River, mountain biking on an acclaimed [trail system](#) and the [Royal Gorge Bridge & Park](#). Drive time is approximately two and one-half hours from Denver and one hour from Colorado Springs. The Colorado Springs Airport (COS) offers non-stop service from several major cities throughout the country including Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Chicago and Phoenix.

Contact Echo Canyon by email at [info@raftecho.com](mailto:info@raftecho.com) or by calling 1-800-690-3246, or follow the resort on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) or by signing up for the resort's [newsletter](#). Travelers can also read about visitors' experiences on [TripAdvisor](#) and see why Echo Canyon is consistently named the No. 1-rated tour in Cañon City.

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