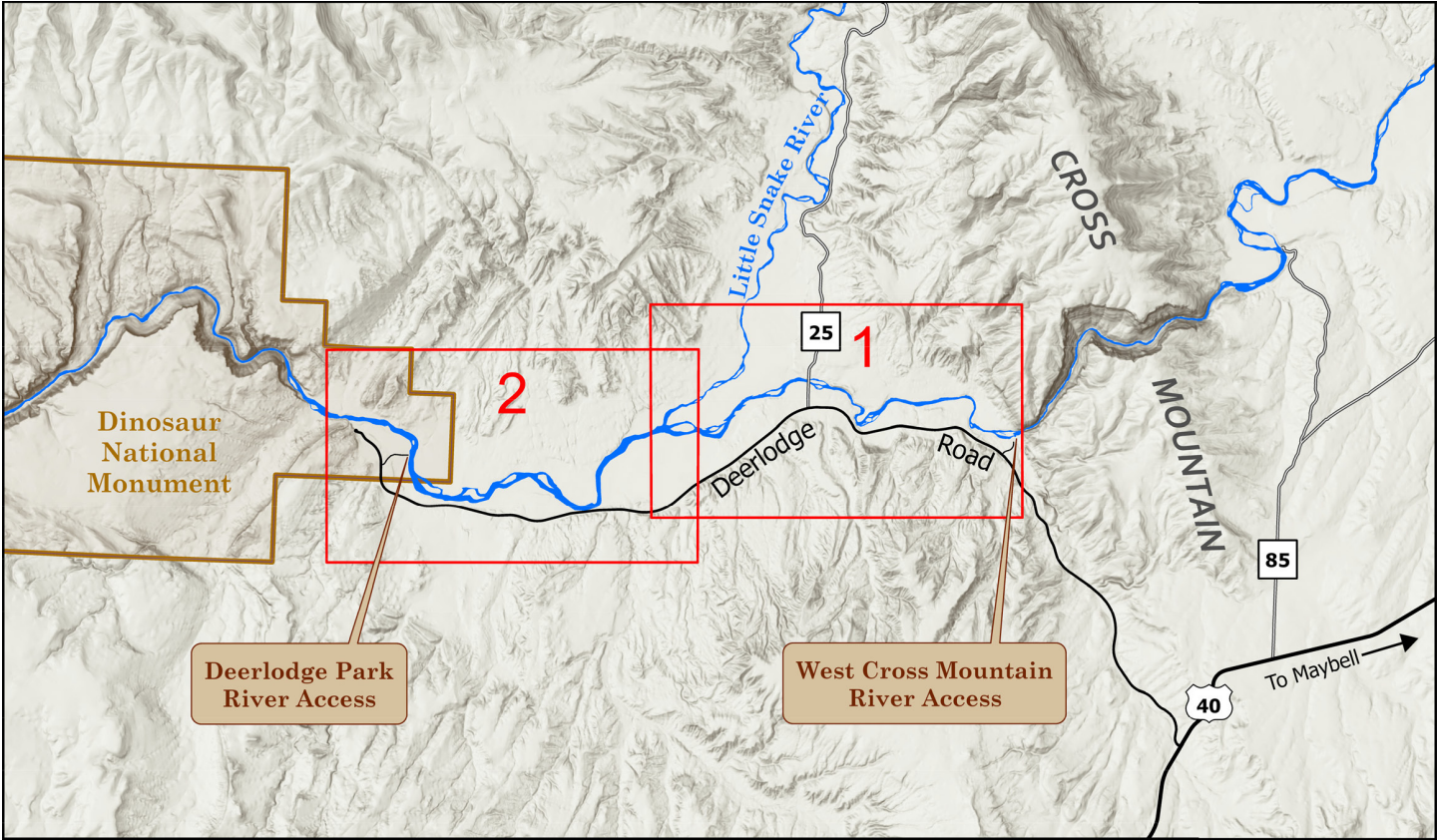


YAMPA RIVER GUIDES

LILY PARK REACH



LILY PARK REACH LEGEND

HYDROGRAPHIC FEATURES

- Stream or Mainstem Ditch
- Intermittent Stream
- Irrigation Pump
- River Mile

ROADS AND STRUCTURES

- 4WD
- Graded Road
- Paved Road
- Buildings

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dinosaur National Monument

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

- Active or Prehistoric Floodplain
- Riparian Herbaceous/Short Shrub
- Riparian Tree/Tall Shrub Canopy
- Upland Tree/Shrub Cover
- Fluvial Sand or Gravel

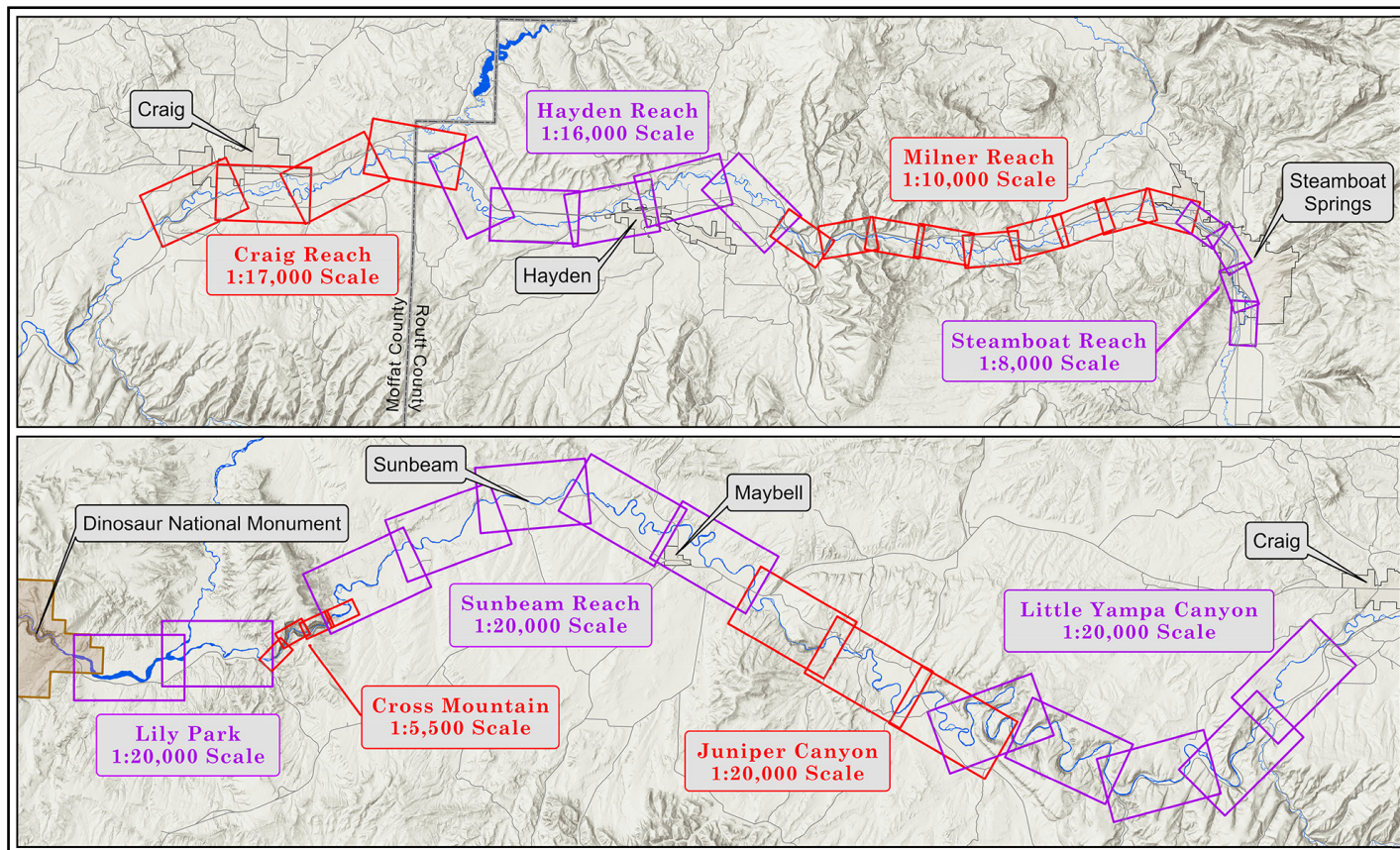
RECREATIONAL AREA SYMBOL SIGNS

- Fee Area
- Picnic Tables
- Rest Rooms
- Camping
- No Camping
- Longterm Parking
- Trailerred Craft Access
- Small Craft Access

YAMPA RIVER GUIDES

Yampa River Guides are a FREE, downloadable series of map guides in PDF format, designed for recreational users of the Yampa River. When the entire series is completed they will cover approximately 158 miles of river, from the Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area upstream of Steamboat Springs to the Deerlodge Park boat ramp on the eastern boundary of Dinosaur National Monument.

The Yampa River Guide Series



How to Download and Print Your Guides

Go to <https://guides.wildyampa.com> to download the most recent versions of the Yampa River Guides. Every attempt will be made to keep these guides up-to-date as boater access and river conditions evolve in the future. You can check the version date of your download at the bottom of the front cover and on each map page.

PRINTING ON LEGAL PAPER

Ideally, your Yampa River Guide should be printed on legal-size paper, using a duplex (prints to both sides) printer. Whether you can print to both sides of the paper or not, be sure to select the “ACTUAL SIZE” option in the print wizard (this keeps the printer software from adding an extra margin to the printed page).

Duplexed pages will lay out like a book, with each map page on the right and its corresponding text page facing it on the left. Your pages can then be stapled, or laminated and spiral bound for a more durable guide. You might also consider printing on waterproof paper.

PRINTING ON LETTER PAPER

Yampa River Guides can also be printed successfully on letter-size paper—the maps and print will just appear smaller. When printing on letter-size paper, be sure to select the “FIT” or “FIT TO PAGE” option in the print wizard.

Help Keep These Guides Accurate

The Yampa River is always in a state of flux, so over time even the best map is destined to become inaccurate. Legal river access for boaters is also a moving target. And of course, the author of this guide makes no claim to infallibility. If you discover errors or have suggestions for improvement, please E-mail Pete@wildyampa.com with “Yampa River Guides” in the subject line. Or just let me know if you are finding these guides helpful!

Terms of Use

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Maps, text and uncredited photographs © Peter A. Williams

About The Maps

As has become the convention with river guides, the Yampa River Guide maps and their accompanying text are laid out with the river running from the **bottom to the top** of the page.

The river channels and environmental features depicted on these maps were originally drawn directly on top of the 2019 National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) **aircraft overflight photography**. However, since 2019 there have been several significant changes in the river channels, and more should be expected in the future. Yampa River Guide maps are regularly revised as the river evolves, using as reference the most recently available photography. NAIP offers superior resolution and detail, but is only updated every two or three years (most recently 2023). During the interim, the online version of Copernicus/Sentinel-2 satellite photography, although much lower in resolution, is conveniently updated weekly.

An aerial photograph, or the map drawn from it, can only capture a dynamic, seasonally evolving river in one moment of time. These maps depict the river during a period of low flows, when the river channels are filled with **exposed sand and gravel bars**. Higher flows in the spring will inundate many of these features, and normally dry backwater channels may even be floatable under those conditions. Conversely, it is assumed that during lower flows boaters will appreciate having some idea of where the sand and gravel is likely to emerge.

The **river miles** (RM) depicted on these maps are measured upstream from the confluence of the Yampa and Green rivers at Echo Park, in Dinosaur National Monument. They were created specifically for these maps, and follow a line up the center of the main river channel as it existed in the fall of 2019. Note that there has never been a formal, “official” set of designated river miles for the Yampa River. River miles depicted on maps elsewhere have typically been based on long out-of-date hydrographic data, and can vary from the Yampa River Guide maps by as much as a mile or more.

Private Property

Private property boundaries are not represented on any of these maps. The only property boundaries depicted in the Yampa River Guides are for publicly owned (or publicly leased) properties that specifically allow for public boating access. ***Everywhere else should be treated as off limits to or from watercraft traveling the Yampa River.***

Under Colorado law, ownership of the river bank does not stop at the high water line. While the water and fish may belong to someone else, the **river bottom is the property of the abutting landowners**. Under these circumstances, standing on the river bottom, even in moving water, is trespassing. This can especially be a problem once river flows drop enough to require dragging your craft over obstacles. Please avoid floating the Yampa River when and where such conditions exist.

Much of the Yampa River from Steamboat Springs to Dinosaur National Monument flows through private land. Please help us stay on good terms with our private landowning neighbors, so boaters can continue to float the Yampa River without further restrictions in the future. Always stay in your boat when floating through private property.

Safety

The Yampa River Guides are intended for use as a general resource for boaters. ***They are not a substitute for staying alert to hazards and practicing good boating skills.*** Rivers are dynamic environments, and conditions can change dramatically as water levels rise and fall.

With the exception of the Cross Mountain and Juniper canyons, experienced boaters will find the “whitewater” character of the portions of the Yampa River covered by the Yampa River Guides to be mild. Nevertheless, natural hazards such as strainers or entrained wood may still be encountered. Human-made structures, especially bridges and diversion structures, can also create significant hazards to boaters. The most notorious (but certainly not all) of these structural hazards have been identified on the maps with **red-bordered labels**. When you see these labels, pay close attention to the “**Hazard!**” description in the accompanying text.

Always come prepared for the unexpected. Pay attention, and always keep an eye out downstream. Proper personal equipment should always include a PFD (Personal Flotation Device), appropriate footwear, and sunscreen. And, although much of the Yampa is flatwater, the knowledge gained from a swiftwater rescue course might one day help you save a life, even in downtown Steamboat Springs. In Cross Mountain and Juniper canyons such knowledge is essential.

Ultimately YOU are responsible for your own and your companions’ safety.

Disclaimer

The author and distributors of the Yampa River Guides are not responsible for trespass, property damage, personal injury, or death resulting from activities involving anyone using or possessing these river guides.

Lily Park Reach Map 1

River Mile (RM) topics follow the flow of the river, from the bottom of the page to the top.

RM 51.3 While today the confluence of the Yampa and Little Snake rivers is nearly a mile downstream from this spot, prior to the summer of 1975 it was located right here. Vegetation may now disguise where **the Little Snake once entered on river right**, but the full extent of the old “active channel” (the area influenced by the flood stage) is represented by the blue hashed area on Map 1. A diversion dam was constructed where the old channel veered south, and the river was redirected into a newly excavated ditch that carried it farther to the west. An aerial photograph taken later in 1975 shows the new channel to be unnaturally straight and narrow, but over the decades the river has renewed its meandering character.

The relocation of the Little Snake to the west conveniently connected the large area of cottonwood bottomlands, originally isolated on the far side of the river, to the ranch properties along the east side, making access by vehicles and livestock considerably easier.

RM 52.3 You are now passing under the **County Road 25 bridge**.

During the early years of Lily Park homesteading, poor wagon roads provided access to both sides of the Yampa River (the north side via the Little Snake River valley, and the south side via Twelvemile Gulch). However, residents on the opposite sides were frequently cut off from one another during high water. Legislation to fund a bridge across the Yampa was first introduced to the Colorado legislature as early as 1909, but to no avail. After Moffat County was formed in 1911, one of the first requests put before the new county commissioners was for a Lily Park bridge. That petition was also unsuccessful, as was the next, made in 1916, which detailed both the perils of mail delivery and the plight of the children who were “obliged to row across the river, a fourteen-year-old girl doing the rowing,” in order to attend their school.

Sometime in the 1920s the locals built a narrow “swinging” footbridge across the river, at a spot just downstream of today’s modern bridge. It may have been a little better than rowing, but just barely. Esther Campbell, who started teaching at the Lily Park school in 1927, described how the cables supporting the bridge “were so loose and sagging that as I walked, the bridge would buck and jump up and down . . . and if the wind was blowing, it also swayed from side to side.” In 1936 the county school superintendent reported that, even if the Lily Park schoolhouse had no swings, “little Reva Jackson, seven, crosses a swinging bridge over the Yampa River night and morning. At present the river is high and so is the wind.”

Of course, the presence of the swinging bridge still did nothing for getting ranch vehicles across the river. Despite continuing requests, an actual plan for funding an automobile bridge had to wait until the late 1950s. In anticipation of federal legislation authorizing what would later become the Deerlodge Road, the Colorado Game and Fish Commission offered to help Moffat County with the cost of a bridge, provided that in return the county build a county road north from the federal highway and up the Little Snake valley (today’s County Road 25). The Game and Fish Commission’s interest was in improving hunter access to public lands. The county commissioners agreed to the deal, and in December 1959 they moved the old Thornburg trestle bridge from Sunbeam to Lily Park. A couple decades later that creaky old second-hand bridge was finally replaced with today’s modern steel girder bridge.

RM 55.5 Today, the **West Cross Mountain river access** is primarily used as a take-out for boaters finishing an exciting whitewater run through Cross Mountain Canyon. It’s also your **put-in for the Lily Park Reach**. There is no boat ramp, but it’s a short carry to the water.

The spur road and parking lot at the West Cross take-out were not built with boaters in mind—when the National Park Service surveyed the rights-of-way for their Deerlodge Park entrance road in 1964, attempts to run Cross Mountain Canyon were an extreme rarity. The spur to the canyon’s mouth was intended as a rest stop and scenic overlook for visitors taking a leisurely day to drive a highway connecting U.S. 40 to Echo Park (and the Harpers Corner entrance road), via the south rim of the Yampa Canyon. That travel corridor had been a key element of Dinosaur National Monument’s master plan since the mid-1950s, and the Deerlodge entrance road was laid out as its first leg. But by 1969 (the year the entrance road was paved) the monument’s planners were already having second thoughts, and the highway to Echo Park was dropped from the master plan in 1971. With monument visitors now just focused on arrival at Deerlodge Park, the pull-out at Cross Mountain saw little use for a few decades—until the growing popularity of the Cross Mountain run gave it a renewed purpose.

Information courtesy:

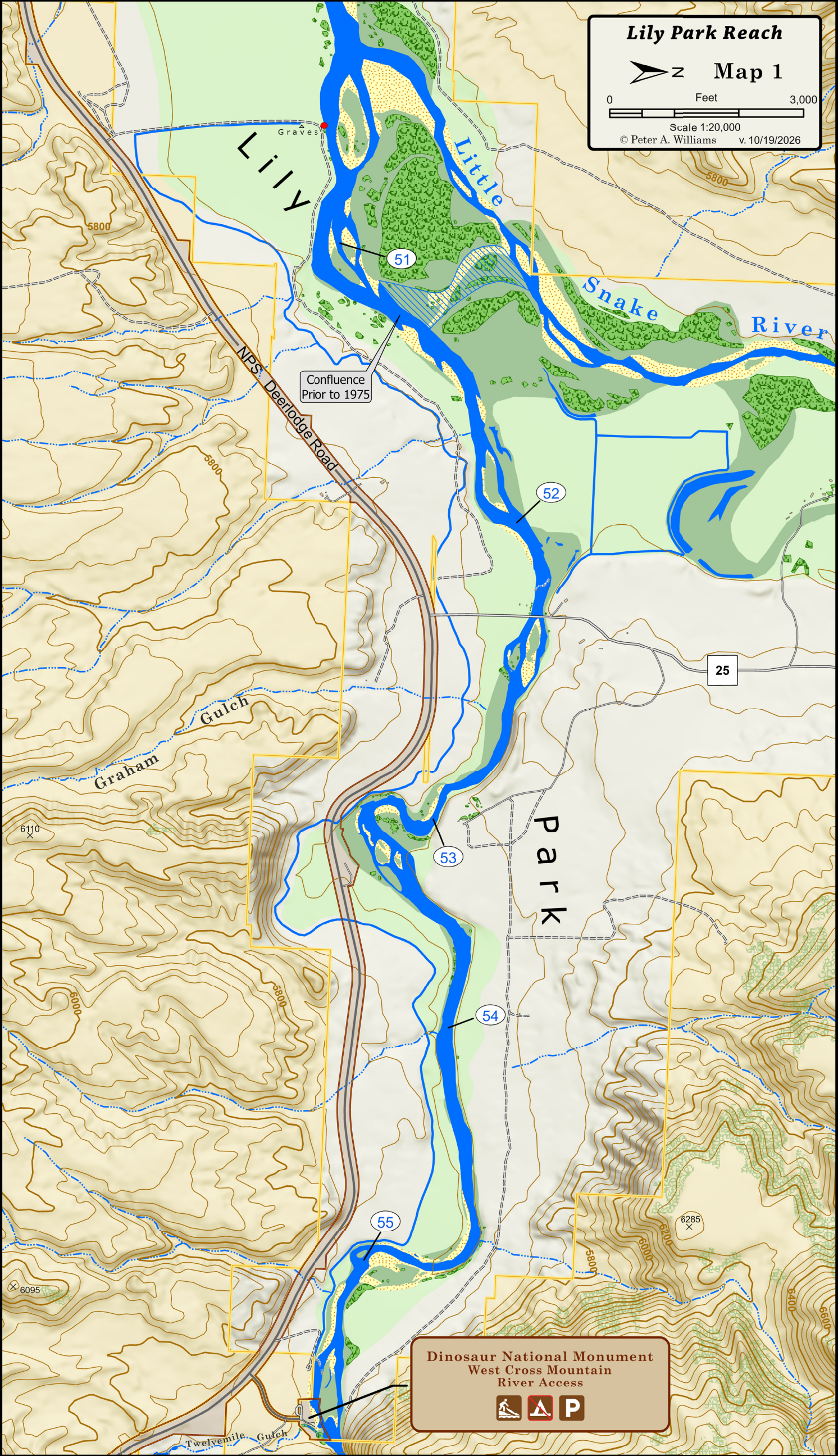
Burton, Doris Karren, *Blue Mountain Folks* (revised edition, 2003)

Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection, Colorado State Library

Griffiths, R.E., et al., **U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2023-1070** (2023)

Management Plans and Planning Records, Dinosaur National Monument Archives

Please respect private property. Unless marked specifically as public, all property shown on these maps is privately owned and closed to the general public.



Lily Park Reach Map 2

River Mile (RM) topics follow the flow of the river, from the bottom of the page to the top.

RM 46.6 Look for the **Deerlodge boat ramp** on river left. This is your take-out. Travel downriver beyond the ramp requires a Dinosaur National Monument river permit (available only through recreation.gov), and a check-in with the Deerlodge river ranger.

RM 46.9 You are now **entering Dinosaur National Monument**. River travelers entering from upstream are required to possess a “**play permit**.” Unlike the river permits required for whitewater trips within the monument, play permits are free, and issued directly by the monument’s River Permit Office. See <https://www.nps.gov/dino/planyourvisit/boating-and-rafting.htm> for more information. Plan ahead—don’t assume a last minute phone call or E-mail will get you a timely response from the River Permit Office.

When Dinosaur National Monument was enlarged by presidential proclamation in 1938 (from the original 80-acre monument surrounding the Carnegie Quarry), the eastern boundary was set along a north-south line a mile west of Deerlodge Park. However, in 1960 Congress passed **legislation** that **modified the exterior boundaries** in a number of areas, including the extension of the east boundary to include Deerlodge Park. The same legislation authorized the acquisition of the Deerlodge and Harpers Corner access road rights-of-way, and provided a path for sunsetting grazing within the monument. But what conservationists had also hoped for was conversion of the monument into a national park. Congress specifically retained the “Dinosaur National Monument” name—yet by establishing the new boundaries in statutory law (unlike the original proclamations under the Antiquities Act), they did, in essence, give Dinosaur a more enduring legal status **similar to that of a national park**.

RM 49 As you can see on the map, the Deerlodge Road right-of-way now extends out into the river along the outside of this bend. That was not the case when it was first surveyed in 1964. The big water of 1997 caused **major bank erosion on river left**, undercutting the shoulder of the roadbed and requiring the road to be relocated farther south in the right-of-way. Further bank erosion during the big water of 2011 prompted a major bank stabilization project, including the boulder rip-rap you can see at the base of the bank during lower flows.

RM 50.4 Look for the Little Snake River coming in from north. Below the **confluence of the Little Snake and Yampa rivers** the character of the Yampa changes dramatically, as a quick comparison of Maps 1 and 2 will show. The Little Snake River contributes only an estimated 27 percent of the mean volume of water passing Deerlodge Park annually, yet it is responsible for an estimated 69 percent of the mean annual sediment load. More intriguing, recent studies have determined that a majority of that sediment was contributed to the Little Snake by just two tributaries (near Baggs, Wyoming), during a series of relatively large, rare flash flood events between about 1956 and 1966. Those exceptional sand-supplying events haven’t been repeated in the years since. Thus, the sandbars you are now floating past formed from a series of “**sand waves**” that have been migrating downstream from the Wyoming line for over 50 years, and which haven’t been substantially restocked with sand in all that time.

RM 50.6 The **small graveyard shown on river left** is on private property—please don’t trespass. The first burial at the spot was Allen Heard, a local homesteader who drowned in 1893 while attempting to cross the Yampa. He was buried on what was at that time Lily Park Ranch property. **Pat Lynch**, the second and most famous tenant of the site, joined Heard in 1917. Lynch died just two months shy of his 99th birthday, after spending the last six years of his life in the care of the Baker family, local homesteaders. Three years later, William Baker, the elderly father of the Baker family, also passed away, and his is the third and final grave.

Around the time of Lynch’s death the graveyard was occasionally referred to as the “Lily Park Cemetery,” but it never had public status and has always been on property owned by a succession of ranch corporations. In the mid-1960s, the fields surrounding the spot were leveled for flood irrigation, which then left the graves perched atop a small mound amid a sea of alfalfa. That briefly raised some local attention, prompting calls for the graves be relocated—and in particular for Pat Lynch to be relocated to a new gravesite in Echo Park (aka Pat’s Hole), or perhaps to Charlie Mantle’s ranch on the Yampa at Hell’s Canyon. But no one took the initiative, and today the graves remain just where they have always been.

Information courtesy:

Andrews, E.D., **U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Investigations 78-105** (1978)

Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection, Colorado State Library

Smith, Thomas G., *Green Republican*, pp.109–118 (2006)

Topping, D.J., et al., **Long-term evolution of sand transport through a river network**, in *Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface*, 123:8 (2018)

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Lily Park Reach



Map 2

0 Feet 3,000

Scale 1:20,000

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Stream Gauge
USGS 09260050

Dinosaur
National
Monument

Deerlodge Park

Vale of Tears

46

47

Dinosaur National Monument
Deerlodge Park
River Access



48

Bay Gulch

NPS Deerlodge Road

Lily

Sawmill Canyon

49

50

Buffalo Gulch

Park

Little
Snake

Graves

THE BACK PAGE

Lily Park Reach Stream Gauges

RM 45.7 [USGS #09260050](#) Yampa River at Deerlodge Park
N/A [USGS #09260000](#) Little Snake River near Lily

The **Yampa River at Deerlodge Park** gauge is located on river left just downstream of the Deerlodge area. The **Little Snake River near Lily** gauge is located by the Moffat County Road 10 bridge, about 9 river miles north of the Little Snake's confluence with the Yampa.

The Lily Park "Land Jumpers"

Individual homesteaders began settling in Lily Park around 1882, and the earliest homestead patents were issued in 1886. John W. Lowell, a prominent Salt Lake City businessman, arrived in 1884 and received a patent in 1890. In addition to homesteading, Lowell was also serving as the "superintendent" for the Lily Park Stock Growers Association (LPSGA), a newly formed Salt Lake corporation. Under Lowell's guidance, the LPSGA began buying up large tracts of the western Routt County range (Moffat County didn't separate from Routt County until 1911), as well as many of the homesteads of Lowell's Lily Park neighbors. By the early 1890s the LPSGA, known locally as the Lily Park Ranch, had grown to include over 5,000 acres of land, of which more than 3,000 acres were located within Lily Park itself.

However, in their pursuit of dominance over the Lily Park range, the LPSGA also acquired significant debt. After several failed attempts to sell the ranch during the late 1890s, George M. Scott, the majority stockholder, finally had to transfer his shares to the Wells Fargo Express Company in lieu of that debt. Meanwhile, Lowell had ended his association with the LPSGA in 1896, and moved to Denver to serve a term as the state auditor. However, he hadn't lost his interest in Lily Park. Recognizing that Wells Fargo would now be looking for a quick sale, Lowell assembled a few Denver investors in 1901 and began preparations to purchase the ranch. He had big plans, including irrigating the entire valley from a 60-foot dam to be built inside the mouth of Cross Mountain Canyon. He also commissioned a land survey to plat the valley properties.

It was this land survey that undercut Lowell's plans, while at the same time creating a huge headache for Wells Fargo. It revealed that the original federal cadastral survey of 1881 (on which all of the original homestead patents had been based) was a sham, having been, as one reporter put it, nothing more than "a haphazard proceeding, conducted mostly in a tent." Very few section corners had been monumented, and where monuments had been set they were up to a mile in error. This had serious consequences—the cadastral language of the original patents, if applied to the newly surveyed corners, now placed the old homestead properties up in the dry foothills, while the valuable bottomlands, where the homesteaders had actually made their improvements, still remained federal property, unclaimed and open to homestead filings.

As word of the implications of the survey spread during the spring of 1902, a host of opportunists descended on Lily Park. While a few observers saw the new arrivals as industrious settlers taking honest advantage of a corporate bank's misfortune, most of the state's newspapers took a different perspective, describing them as "land jumpers," a rabble of "squatters" intent on stealing the fruits of the original hard-working settlers. The Denver Post declared that "the latest feature of land selling in Routt County is to enter a man's alfalfa field, take possession of the houses, and file on the property at the Glenwood land office." Undeterred, by the fall of 1902 over 30 "jumpers" had filed claims on (and many had moved into) the Lily Park properties.

Wells Fargo's push-back began in March 1903, when state Senator Edward T. Taylor (the same Taylor who would later, as a U.S. Representative, author the Taylor Grazing Act) filed a petition in federal circuit court, calling for the physical ejection of the new filers from the Lily Park Ranch properties. While Taylor's petition was successful, the ejection was not, prompting yet more rounds of court petitions and injunctions. Then, in December, Taylor represented Wells Fargo at a hearing before the General Land Office (GLO) in Glenwood Springs. The testimony lasted 38 days, and the decision was finally handed down in May 1904, in Wells Fargo's favor. The new homestead filings were all canceled, but the filers were still given another 30 days to appeal to the GLO commissioner in Washington, D.C. When the commissioner ruled that the local office's decision had been correct, the "land jumpers" next took their appeal directly to the U.S. secretary of the interior. When the secretary announced his own decision in late March 1905, he confirmed the GLO rulings, and established it as official U.S. policy that "the rights of a settler to land actually occupied by him will not be disturbed by reason of erroneous surveys."

By this point Lowell and his associates had moved on, but within a month of the secretary's decision the Cary brothers (of the Cary Ranch west of Hayden) announced their own purchase of the Lily Park Ranch, commencing the next chapter in Lily Park's history.

Information courtesy:

Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection, Colorado State Library
[George Montgomery Scott Papers](#), J. Willard Marriott Digital Library