



GRAND COUNTY

LEARNING BY DOING

Learning By Doing partnership works to bolster flows in Grand County

In response to hot stream temperatures, Denver Water makes 200 acre-feet of water available to reduce stream temperatures and help fish and aquatic habitat.

September 1, 2022 — Through the Learning By Doing partnership, Denver Water was able to offer an extra 200 acre-feet of water for the Fraser River in Grand County to help with rising stream temperatures.

In early August, the hot temperatures were causing stress to the health of the trout fishery and aquatic habitat, so the partners came together to identify strategic releases from tributaries to best cool the hot river conditions.

“Each year, Learning By Doing partners coordinate weekly to monitor the stream temperature conditions in the upper Fraser River watershed during the warm summer months,” said Ed Moyer, Grand County manager. “Based on this partnership, Denver Water has made multiple environmental bypasses over the last few years to help the river, when possible, under the expertise and collaboration of the partners.”

In the first few weeks of August 2022, Denver Water began making environmental bypasses from its diversion structures in the upper Fraser River basin to proactively mitigate high-stream temperatures observed in the preceding weeks.

This action was immediately followed by rainfall, which in turn began to reduce instream temperatures. In order to maximize the environmental bypasses Denver Water committed to, the LBD partners held off on additional releases until water could be released at a time to have a better impact on the river.

“Learning By Doing ensures that the appropriate experts are providing real-time information and data so that we can identify the most ideal time to make the releases,” said Denver Water’s environmental planning manager Rachel Badger. “In this case, we held off for a few weeks and were ready to respond as soon as the additional bypass flows could be maximized.”

That time came Aug. 11, as water temperatures reached record highs in Grand County, and Denver Water resumed making environmental bypasses from its diversion structures in the upper Fraser River basin. Water was strategically released from Ranch Creek at the recommendation of the Learning By Doing partners to help the fish and aquatic habitat. Denver Water released 140 cfs on Ranch Creek as of August 24. The remaining 60 AF is planned for release between August 31 through September 6.

“This is another great success story for Learning By Doing as it led to Denver Water giving us that safety net,” said Kirk Klancke, president of the Colorado River Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited. “We had all the complex agreements worked out so that when it turned hot again, we were able to immediately respond to the conditions and cool the river.”

During the runoff season every year, Learning By Doing partners coordinate on weekly operations calls to discuss flows and the impacts from weather conditions in Fraser River Basin waterways so that adjustments can be made, when possible.

To learn more about Learning By Doing and the partners, please visit:
<https://www.grandcountylearningbydoing.org/about.html>