



October 2015
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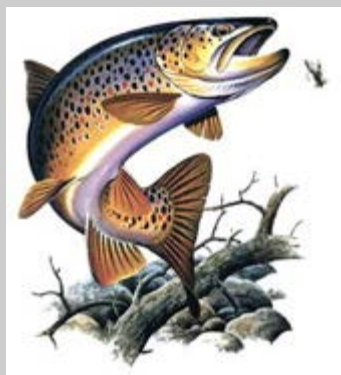
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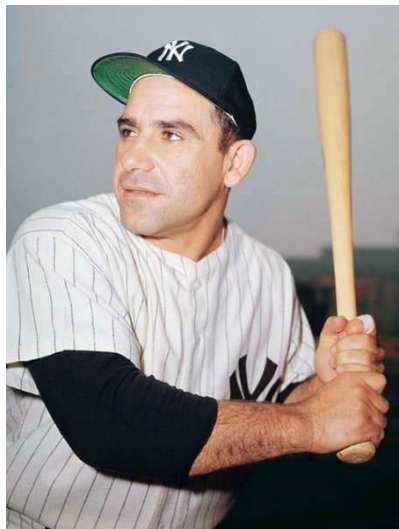


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From our President



Lawrence Peter "Yogi" Berra 1925-2015

Predictions.

We just lost Yogi Berra, a great baseball player/coach and one of our favorite folk philosophers.



Wil Huett, Rocky Mountain Flycasters
President and Lifetime Member of TU

As a kid I remember listening to Yankees games broadcast by famous voices like Red Barber, Dizzy Dean and Mel Allen, and there behind the plate was Yogi Berra. I don't know exactly why, but he became one of my favorites. I have no idea whether Yogi fished or not, but some of his famed pronouncements strike me as hitting home runs with the TU/RMF mission. Example: "If you don't know where you're going, you might wind up someplace else."

Well, TU and RMF know where they are going. We are on the path of cold water conservation, not just because it's good for fishing, but because it's good for people and ecosystems. Good fishing is an enjoyable by-product but not our whole reason for existing. Right?

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Forward to a Friend

Try this one: "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is." I can buy into that. In theory every member of a conservation organization like TU/RMF would put in time conserving the waters that support the sport we love, just as they do in using them; but in practice we see very few new faces on conservation work projects year-to-year. And not because there aren't plenty of opportunities. Are you part of the theory or the practice?

And then there is: "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." I'm mixed on that one. It may be tough to predict the next wildfire, or flood or other catastrophe which will effect our area waters, but it's easy to predict that if we don't pitch in to restore and rehab the damage from the last one, the next one will have even worse consequences.

Another easy prediction is: "great programs coming up". Program Chair **Domingo Rodriguez** is lining up stellar speakers (Ty Churchwell coming up and Pat Dorsey for our **November Guest Night**), past president Lee Evans is setting up the December holiday party, and immediate Past President Dick Jefferies has already scheduled a Spring Celebration to kick off next year's conservation season - and it will be held at one of our favorite places, Odell Brewing (a great supporter in many ways).

Arguably most famously, Berra said: "It's like *deja vu* all over again." On this one I have questions. We all know our rivers are not as nature made them or our ancestors found them. They have been dammed, ditched and degraded by human activity for years now. We also now know a lot of those things could have been done more wisely and beneficially. Will our children and grandchildren echo Yogi when they review our stewardship of these waters? Or will we use the scientific knowledge and tools we now possess to make better decisions and a better future? If all eight hundred plus of our members would yearly **Give A Day Back to the Fish**, I'll bet the future wouldn't mirror Yogi's famous phrase. Here's another good one: "It ain't over 'til it's over."

And before newsletter editor Bob Green says this is over because I've run out of space, let me call your attention to other articles of interest in this edition: Bob has **his own story** about about taking his Tenkara rod to an Alaskan salmon camp, **David Cunningham** will tickle your funny-bone again, we have two reports on recent RMF member/guest **fishing trips**, and a welcome Thumbs Up from The Coloradoan. Check them all out.

Now it's over. See you October 21

Wil Huett, President
Rocky Mountain Flycasters

Chapter Event Calendar

From Our Editor

Pacific Salmon on a Tenkara Rod



RMF Editor Bob Green, his Tenkara Rod, and a Chum Salmon on the Alagnak River, Alaska

Although I'm serving my third year as editor of *The Flypaper*, I've published only a single article in the RMF newsletter. Our regular contributors are competent, experienced and well-informed writers with lots to say. So, my job has been very easy. For the most part it has involved cutting and pasting, stuff I learned in the first grade.

In the first article (**January, 2015 Flypaper**) I contrast my recent experiences of learning to fly fish with classic (western) methods and the increasingly popular Tenkara (eastern) methods. Until a trip to Alaska during the past summer, my Tenkara fishing experience had been limited to local (Fort Collins area) streams and mountain lakes. I had great fun with this minimalist approach to catching smaller fish in Rocky Mountain National Park, on the Poudre, and in Red Feather Lakes.

In this edition, however, I describe my Alaskan experience pursuing large Pacific Salmon with a Tenkara rod on the Alagnak River. To read this article, a description of the match-up between these fish and your editor with a reel-less rod, continue reading in our **Fish Stories**.

From Our Program Chair



Domingo Rodriguez, RMF Program Chair

Don't miss the October 21 meeting of the Rocky Mountain Flycasters. Our speaker will be local favorite Ty Churchwell of Colorado Trout Unlimited. Ty learned algebra under the tutelage of RMF former president Lee Evans and wrestled against me in high school. He wants me to say that I never pinned him. So be it!



Ty Churchwell, October 21 RMF Meeting Speaker

Ty will be discussing draining mines, water quality, the Animas spill and TU's effort to pass Good

Samaritan legislation, along with what TU does to remediate mines in CO. He is the San Juan Mountains Coordinator for national TU's public land programs - the **Sportsmen's Conservation Project** (SCP) - headquartered in Durango, CO. He has been with TU for over a decade. Ty is a graduate of Loveland High School and received his bachelor's degree in horticulture from Colorado State. His current work with SCP is primarily legislative in nature at the federal level. He coordinated the effort by sportsmen to pass the Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act (a wilderness bill) in 2014 - one of TU's biggest wins in recent memory. Ty is now working to pass Good Samaritan legislation so that groups like TU can assist with abandoned mine cleanups, the topic of his presentation.

The General Meeting is free and open to the public. Social hour (and fly tying demo) begins at 6:30 pm **October 21** at the Fort Collins Senior Center, and the program follows at 7:00 pm. We will have local fly tyers at the meeting and an equipment raffle. The Fort Collins Senior Center is located at 1200 Raintree Drive off Shields Avenue between Prospect and Drake.

David's Lines: A Flypaper Column



David Cunningham, *The FlyPaper* Columnist

"I am an Englishman who is very happy to live in Colorado. I am semi-retired from the business world and have renewed my interest in writing. Some of my pieces will relate to actual events, others will be fiction. (My friends tell me I have trouble knowing the difference.) The "David's Line" column will feature the mysteries of our sport, restoration, and the pleasures of good company. Let me know whether or not these stories are worth reading. Life is short—go fishing first "

—David Cunningham.

An essential boat.

Once in a while I realize that I desperately need to do a bungee jump before I turn 80. Fortunately bungee jumping, hang-gliding, sky-diving, motorcycle racing, and ice climbing, all require a day or two of preparation, and by that time the buzzing sound in my head disappears and I forget ever having told fifty people that I was leaving to defy death again. Still, the buzzing noise sometimes drifts back to provoke me into believing that there really is something missing in my life - like another boat! The fuzzy logic manages to ignore the fact that I have a 13ft sailboat, a canoe, and a Sevylor inflatable. It whispers, "But none of them fold up!" Bingo. A man needs a boat that he can fold up and carry to

places. And right in front of me was an ad for a used 10 ft PortaBote. I did a quick internet search and found that 50,000 of these things are out there, slung from floatplanes, strapped to Winnebagos, lashed to the roof in Minis. Unsinkable, unbreakable, stable as a diving platform. One went to Everest!

This was an essential boat.



Photo of "An Essential Boat" by David Cunningham

I called the seller and arranged to meet the same day. (Buyers would surely snap this up if I waited another day.) In the hallway, I explained to my wife that I had found a bargain that was the answer to the constant problem of fishing from the shore when the fish were “Way out.” Before she could say, “Canoe”, I was on my way to Ward. Ward, Colorado is a Home Rule Municipality community in Boulder County that has made the most of its freedom from the trappings of civilization and boasts the states’ best collection of junked trucks and hip cabins, often wreathed in funny smelling blue-grey smoke. **Images of Ward.**

I met the sellers, 30 something Californians, by the side of the road a mile out of town. They had arrived in one of the famous junked International Harvester trucks, a dark orange beast that was missing a passenger side door. The PortaBote stuck out of the bed like white tombstone, surrounded by a pair of thick wooden oars and a pile of boat parts. The ad was for a 10 ft boat but this looked bigger, and sure enough it was a 12 ft model. I’m not totally stupid! If they didn’t know the length of the boat, they probably didn’t own it. I thanked them for showing it to me but let them know it was not the size I wanted. The asking price was \$1,200—cash—and I was glad that the money was hidden under a seat in my Jeep. I also kept my fist closed around a roll of pennies in my pocket, in case any trouble surfaced. As I turned to leave the lady said, “Please think about it. Here’s the title and the bill of sale. I bought it new from the Mountain View factory. Sandy Kaye is a friend.”

Now the CEO Kaye’s name is not shown on the website. My internet search had found another link to Kaye as the owner. I paused.

“It’s the wrong size.”

She countered, “The 10 ft is too small. This takes a 15 HP motor and only weighs 8 lbs more.” “I’d buy

it for \$500.”

“Deal.”

Damn. I owned 12 ft of plastic and three gazillion pieces of paraphernalia.

Back home I proudly displayed my prize and proceeded to assemble it on the lawn that is beachfront to Lindenmeier lake. Assembly takes one person just ten minutes. My wife elected to let me prove that this was accurate. The boat opens along its length and assembly consists of inserting the seats laterally to keep the sides of the boat separated, and give you somewhere to sit. Two hours later I lay in the bottom of the boat with my feet jammed against one side wall, a seat over my head, one hand on the brace, a screw driver in my teeth, and bleeding fingers trying to tighten a nut. Laughter drifted from the deck where friends and family were sipping fine wines.

In fairness to the PortaBote company, I have to admit that I had not read the instructions and the piece of scrap that I had left in the bed of the seller’s truck turned out to be the spreader that eliminates the need to bench press two hundred pounds while performing unique contortions. The following day I achieved a twenty minute assembly and launch. The boat was a dream. It was a quiet boat, tracked straight when rowed, cruised at 4 knots with a small trolling motor, and was steady as a rock when I stood to fly cast. Perfect.

So perfect that two years later the boat had never left the lake. My canoe was occupied by raccoons and my inflatable had melted into the landscaping. At this point it was not unreasonable for my wife to point out that I had bought the boat to fish distant lakes.

“Whatever happened to that idea?”

My reply was instant and unthinking. “I’m taking it to Delaney on Wednesday.”

The Delaney Butte lakes are at Walden, a three hour drive from Fort Collins. It was late October and the weather forecast was grim. Strangely, my friends all had plans for Wednesday. But fear not, the PortaBote was the epitome of portability. I would go alone.

At the crack of dawn on Wednesday I dragged the boat across the lawn and lifted it up to the roof of the Jeep. Well actually I got it up on the hood. I had given up my gym membership to buy flies and there were consequences. I had built a frame for the roof rack on the Jeep so that I could mount the boat assembled with one seat in place. I did not have the strength to heave the 100 lbs boat above my head and I was in no mood to fold the boat. A quick review showed three options, 1) wake my wife to lend a hand, 2) go back to bed, or 3) use the juniper bushes as a ramp to get to the roof of the Jeep. 1) and 2) had major flaws, so ten minutes later the boat was securely fastened to the Jeep and it only took another ten minutes to repair most of the damage to the junipers.

The drive to Walden was uneventful and by mid-morning I pulled the boat off of the roof and slid the rig into S Delaney Butte. I had never launched a boat on a distant lake before and I was very pleased with myself – until it became apparent that I had chosen a lee shore for the event and I now faced a 15 knot on-shore wind. The water was too shallow for the trolling motor, so I rowed hard to reach deeper water, then scrambled to the stern to set the motor – by which time the wind had blown me ashore. My next ploy was the Cunningham running launch that consisted of a pounding run, pushing the boat in front of me into deep water, followed by the Cunningham roll over the transom and into the boat. The last part of the roll included a flip that carried me to the bow. By the time I reached the stern I was aground again.

The humiliating conclusion of the launch was to drag the boat around the shoreline until I was no

longer downwind. I made many friends as I pulled the boat past guys casting from the bank. Finally I was afloat. I dropped my small anchor, rigged a scud combination, and began to fish. My success was limited by the difficulty of seeing my indicator among the whitecaps that were sweeping down the lake. The boat rode the waves with no problems but the anchor was no match for the gale that was developing. I decided that trolling with a wooly bugger might be more productive. That was complicated by the requirement to steer the boat into the chop while handling the rod, as I never use a rod holder on my home lake. Steering and motoring became more and more important as the wind rose to a point where I feared getting a gust across the beam and being rolled into that nice warm water.

They say the hypothermia sets in gradually. BS. I went from chilly to brain-dead-frozen in about four minutes. My last reasonable thought was to sit on the windward side of the boat and swing a downwind turn. The next thing I remember was sitting in the Jeep watching my boat get pounded on the beach. The heater was running full blast and I was eating cheery pie, so all was well.

An hour later the wind exhausted itself and I emerged warm and dry. I was also alone. Totally alone. My new friends from the morning were long gone. A few trailers may have had life in them but they were a fair way off. The light was beginning to fade and the forlorn wreckage of my boat littered the beach. Closer inspection showed that the boat was undamaged. I collected the oars and my fishing gear, collapsed the boat and pulled it up the bank to the Jeep. The folded boat was easier to manage and tie to the rack.

At 11 pm I rolled into the garage, exhausted.

My wife greeted me warmly, "How did it go? It was a bit windy here."

"It was a wonderful day. I've got to do this more often. What a great way to fish."

It's three years later. I'll write about my second solo trip whenever it happens.

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October Conservation Notes



Dave Piske, Conservation Chair

Last call for Electrofishing in RMNP this Year

If you have not yet helped Chris Kennedy in this year's electrofishing studies of trout in Rocky Mountain National Park, here is your last opportunity to get in on the fun. Chris still needs help on Wednesday, October 7th on the Big Thompson River in lower Forest Canyon. This site is a 3-mile hike with 1200 feet of elevation gain. Mules are not available, so the volunteers will have to share carrying the electrofishing gear into the site. While it's not an easy trip, you will be rewarded by the pristine old-forest at the electrofishing site. Contact **Austin Condon**, to tell him you will be there, and Austin will tell you when and where to

meet Chris.

Sheep Creek Project an Awesome Success

Saturday, September 26 was the perfect day to be high in the alpine forests adjacent to the Comanche Wilderness Mountains. That's where a crew of 25 energized volunteers from Rocky Mountain Flycasters (RMF) and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers (WRV) tackled two reconnect projects on cutthroat trout streams. The projects had been on RMF's project list for three years. But in each prior year it was postponed by Mother Nature's supreme control of weather and her other natural powers, including ignition of the nearby High Park wildfire by lightning. On September 26, 2015 all systems and people were "GO", and the key tasks were attacked and accomplished on that one day.



West Fork of Sheep Creek as it Flows Under Crown Point Road

The project sites were on the East Fork and West Fork of Sheep Creek where each fork flows under Crown Point Road near its western terminus at an elevation of 10,500 feet. This is U. S. Forest Service land. The streams and the fish are managed by Matt Fairchild, the lead fisheries biologist for Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest.

Before September, a contractor had replaced the old, small-diameter culverts that supported Crown Point Road over the forks of Sheep Creek. During earlier years, flows through those old culverts had eroded the stream channel beds, creating barriers to the spawning migration of the cutthroats. The goal of the project was to restore easy fish passage between the upper and lower reaches in each of the two Forks. The new culverts are custom-designed, 14-feet wide, 7-feet high semi-circle culverts with cast-in-place concrete floors.

Until August this year, tasks for the volunteers were expected to be simple re-vegetation of the stream banks upstream and downstream of the new culverts. But a mid-August inspection of the newly completed culverts revealed that much more needed to be done. The full set of volunteers' tasks also included: (1) redirecting the creek inflow route to the culverts, (2) creating rock benches to stabilize the creeks' banks leading into the culverts, (3) building rock check dams in the roadside ditches that convey road surface and cut-banks' runoff into the culverts, and (4) constructing a 10-foot diameter catch-basin to capture sediment that otherwise would be deposited in the creek. A mid-August site inspection revealed that the work would be more than an all-RMF crew could accomplish in one day.

Having in mind earlier successful cooperative projects involving WRV and RMF, such as the Skin Gulch project in May of this year, we jointly investigated the possibility of cooperating at the Sheep Creek culverts project. Fortuitously, September 26 turned out to be an excellent day for another collaboration of RMF and WRV volunteers. And the RMF volunteers who made the Sheep Creek project such a success are: Bob Cogswell, Dennis Cook, David Cunningham, Tim Gaines, Mickey McGuire, Tim Meyer, Roger Slocomb and Liz Slocomb. Many thanks to all of them, and to the WRV volunteers for the success of the project.

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From Our Youth Outreach Chair

"THUMBS UP!" *Coloradoan* Recognition



Youth Day Camp volunteer mentors over the past six years have received **many** isolated compliments from parents and campers, some directly and others relayed indirectly. We've also attempted to relay some of the many other complimentary remarks to our mentors. Several well intended parents in past years have also said they planned to write a "Thumbs Up" for placement in *The Coloradoan* newspaper. This year a thoughtful parent commended our many deserving RMF member volunteers, and her letter published in the September 27th Sunday issue can be read below:



I wanted to provide a big thank you to all of the wonderful members and volunteers at the Rocky Mountain Flycasters Chapter of Trout Unlimited for all their efforts in putting on the 2015 Day Camp. This group does a great job in teaching our Youth how to fly fish while gaining an appreciation and understanding of the importance of conservation, ecology and the need to protect our watersheds. In addition to the classroom educational opportunities the kids engage in outdoor activities such as electroshocking the river to facilitate fish counts, snorkeling the river and touring the fish hatchery. The kids also get to fly fish almost every day. Lastly, a big thank you to the corporate sponsors that donated equipment allowing the students to learn how to tie flies, and for each participant to be able to bring home a brand new fly rod and reel.

The RMF Chapter Leadership Team very much appreciates Mrs. Fine's extra effort to write her letter. We frequently commend our member volunteers for their willingness to devote personal time to help with our many youth development activities, but it's always much more noteworthy when a parent extends their recognition and appreciation.

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Let's Go Fishing

2015 RMF Trips



Mark Miller, Let's Go Fishing Coordinator

At this writing the penultimate 2015 RMF fishing is taking place. Ben Zomer has again organized and is hosting the annual Frying Pan River trip! Our only remaining trip, an excursion to the Poudre River (Gateway Park) is scheduled for November 7, weather permitting. If you want to join us for this trip **contact me** or call 970-744-8229 (cell).

Trip Reports

Trip Report 1: Bighorn River - Sept 3 -7

Eight trout bums loaded up the vehicles and boats and made the 8 hour trek north to Ft Smith, Montana, to spend a few wonderful days fishing the Bighorn River. Bob, Gil, Larry, Dave, Bill, Domingo, Dan, and Mark left town on Thursday Sept 3rd, and fished Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and a few hours Monday morning before heading home.

The town of Ft Smith is tiny. It has three fly shops (yes, three!), some cabins and hotel rooms, two gas pumps, and a small "ma and pa" grocery store where you can get the essentials, as well as freshly made sandwiches to take on the river. With all that and over 4,000 trout per mile, I can't think of anything else a "feller" might need. Well, maybe a drift boat and a good horse?

What a wonderful fishery with tons of trout averaging about 15-17" long. Unknowingly though, we had picked a rather difficult time to fish this river, as it gets very weedy the last part of August through September (similar to Gray Reef on the North Platte). This condition made nymphing very difficult, as we needed to check or clean our flies before every cast.

Luckily for us, the Trico hatch was on full bore while we were there, which was a boatload of fun, but also a difficult hatch to fish. Trico mayflies are very small - we used size 20-22 dries and spinner patterns which are almost impossible to see on the water, especially when your fly is one of a few hundred floating over the feeding fish. The trout were so tuned in to these bugs that your fly had to float almost directly to the fish's nose for it to be taken. Even with a perfect drift right to the fish's nose, the second part of the equation was timing. If a certain trout was rising once every 4 seconds, when he was ready to rise again, you had to be lucky enough to have your fly right there when he poked his snout up to the surface. Many times I had a fish take a natural 1-2 inches in front of my fly. I think I needed at least 30-50 nice drifts for each hit I had. But after all that effort, when the fish was on, it was as sweet as it could be!

Each morning, we would launch the 3 boats, quickly move to some nice looking water, anchor or beach the boat, and wade fish all morning (the Trico hatch lasted until about 1100 or even as late as 1200 noon each day). Once the hatch tapered off, we floated the rest of the section (anywhere from 3 miles to 8 miles depending on where we launched) while nymphing, with a little hopper fishing thrown into the mix, just for fun. We didn't get many on hoppers, but those few fish were really fun. After throwing a size 20 Trico pattern, tossing a huge hopper towards the bank was fun even if not catching anything. Just being able to see your fly was fun! One afternoon Bob netted two really nice fish on his favorite Chubby Chernoble pattern.

A beautiful river, challenging but fun fishing, and great times with good (and some new) friends - it doesn't get much better than that! To see a slide show of the 4 day trip, click on the image below. (Yes, that's Dr. Gil kissing yet another fish)

—Mark Miller



RMF Big Horn Trip

Trip Report2: Yampa River September 18-20

Over the September 18-20 weekend RMF members Dean Block, Stan Woodring, Dennis Cook, and Dave Morse and his house guest Van Hartman, journeyed to Steamboat Springs to fish the Yampa River. The 3½ hour scenic drive from Fort Collins was made even more enjoyable by the early leaves color change that began near Cameron Pass and continued through the Colorado State Forest past Gould. The Yampa is noted for multiple public fishing waters sporting a healthy population of both broad shouldered browns and rainbows, and we sampled several—the river through town is public, the famous tail water stretch below Stagecoach Reservoir, both the Chuck Lewis and Sarvis State Wildlife Areas (plus a new public stretch enlarging Sarvis) and the Elk River—and we weren't disappointed. Not surprisingly, the tail waters were the most productive both numerically and by poundage, excitement and many long line releases, and we're already looking forward to next summer's trip.

For those not familiar... The Chuck Lewis SWA is located immediately outside of town on its upriver, southeast edge. Extensive in-river river habitat improvements have been made during the past decade to provide about a 1½ mile stretch of varied water textures that will occupy an angler all day with dry and nymphing challenges. Access is easy from US-40 using CO-131 southeast for about 1/10th mile; then CR-24 for about 100 yards to a small parking lot near the bridge. Water is public both directions from the bridge.

These two pictures offer views of the three sections that make up the tail waters, and I'd estimate that these public tail waters total about ¾ mile long. Very desirable in-stream habitat, flow control improvements and riparian restoration have been completed in the lower stretch, with accompanying trails, access points and directive fencing. The middle section and the higher gradient upper section that extends into the canyon to the dam structure (not visible in the picture) appear to remain pretty much unchanged. River below the tail water stretch is private for about a mile, and then the river enters the Sarvis SWA. Access is an easy 18 mile, 25 minute drive from US-40 using CO-131 southeast from town and following signs for Stagecoach State Park. Stay to the left as soon as you hit the dirt entrance road, and proceed to the dam where you'll turn left down to the river. The tail waters are part of Stagecoach State Park and a \$7.00 fee pedestal is located at the parking area near the river.

—Dennis Cook



Upper & Middle Reaches Below Stagecoach Reservoir



Lower Reach Below Stagecoach Reservoir

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