



Draft Principles for Safe and Lawful River Passage in Colorado
(Revised April 2026)

What a proposed bill would do:

1. Provide that a river, stream, or other natural channel capable of supporting recreational navigation by any vessel as defined in section 33-13-102(5)(a&b) is open to recreational navigation so long as the put-in and take-out for such stretch of river, stream, or natural channel is on public land (or private land with landowner consent).
2. Allow for incidental contact with the bed and banks of the river, such as using the bed and banks to scout, portage, and avoid dangerous obstacles when necessary to continue downstream progress. This incidental contact would occur only as necessary for safe navigation and boaters would be required to avoid unnecessary intrusion onto adjacent private lands. Incidental contact would not include activities such as walking, wading, anchoring, or wade fishing.
3. Establish liability protections for landowners so that liability attaches only where willful or wanton misconduct is found.

What a proposed bill would not do:

1. It would **not** make determinations as to title of the beds and banks of any waterway.
2. It would **not** create water rights or impact existing or future water rights.
3. It would **not** impact the construction, modification, rehabilitation, or operation of reservoirs, diversion structures, or other facilities necessary for the storage, diversion, or conveyance of water as permitted by law.
4. It would **not** create or establish a public trust.
5. It would **not** prohibit federal, state, local, or tribal entities from exercising established rights to regulate the use of waterways, including to protect public safety, cultural resources, or environmental values.