

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

Issue:	Should CPW update its river outfitter regulations to implement HB 26-1197, which revised the statutory definition of “vessel” and to allow the limited use of single-chamber vessels on regulated trips?
Discussion (facts and figures, explanation of issue):	
CPW licenses and regulates river outfitters, meaning people who provide river-running services to the public for compensation (regulated trips). No person may serve as a professional river outfitter without first obtaining a river outfitter license from CPW (ROL). River outfitters must meet the regulatory safety standards for river-running established by the Commission. HB 26-1197 revised certain statutory terms relating to the ROL program. This issue paper proposes the Commission adopt amended rules to implement the bill. This issue paper also seeks to adopt a revised rule allowing the use of single-chambered vessels that are designed to carry one person. Current regulations require vessels to have at least two chambers on regulated trips. Considering technological advancements, the Division believes the use of single-chambered vessels on regulated trips that are designed to carry one person, like paddleboards and packrafts, is appropriate. HB 26-1197 revised the statutory ROL definition of “vessel” as follows: “Vessel” means every description of watercraft type of watercraft, except a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation of persons and property on the water, including all types of stand-up paddleboards but does not include fishing aids, air mattresses, beach and water toys, or inner tubes. (b) “Vessel” does not include: (I) Any single-chambered, air-inflated devices that are not stand-up paddleboards; or (II) Seaplanes. C.R.S. § 33-32-102(8). After discussions with various stakeholders, including state and federal agencies that deal with commercial swift water boating enforcement, the CPW River Outfitter Licensing Program has outlined the proposed changes in the next section.	
State law requires CPW to solicit input from stakeholders that may be affected positively or negatively by the proposed rules. The following stakeholders have been advised of and invited to provide input on the regulatory changes proposed in this issue paper:	
It is assumed that all necessary internal parties have been notified.	
ROL advisory Committee (2 Outfitters and a CPW staff member) was supportive of the change and understands the changing of the vessel definition allows for other types of craft to be used on regulated trips. They also support the changes on spare paddles and helmets to hold all similar crafts to the same standards. The Committee helped draft the proposed regulation language. CROA (Colorado River Outfitters Association) was supportive of the changes to this regulation. AHRA (Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area) was supportive of these changes. The Commission shall e-mail a notice of every proposed rule to each licensee. Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 33-32-103 (3).	
Alternatives (possible outcomes or possible regulations):	
1. *Preferred Alternative*: Changing the language of regulation #305 to the following:	

1. A river outfitter shall provide all vessels and associated equipment required during all regulated trips. When equipment is lost, damaged, or used during a bona fide on-the-river emergency, then the river outfitter shall ensure that every vessel is reequipped as required prior to use of the vessel on any successive trip.
2. All vessels used during a regulated trip shall be marked with the vessel owner's name, current address, and telephone number in a legible, clearly visible and durable fashion.
3. The trip leader shall ensure that every regulated trip carries aboard at least one of the vessels a first-aid kit which shall be immediately available for emergency use. The first-aid kit shall contain, at a minimum, adhesive bandages, sterile pads, flexible gauze bandages, first-aid tape, antiseptic or soap and triangular bandages in quantities sufficient to meet the size and needs of the regulated trip. These supplies shall be maintained in a clean and dry condition in a durable container suitable for river use.
4. The trip leader shall ensure that every regulated trip carries aboard at least one of the vessels a throwbag containing a minimum of fifty feet of rope. The throwbag shall be in a serviceable condition and shall be stored so as to be readily accessible in an emergency.
5. River outfitters shall not provide, use, operate or permit the **on water** use or operation of **fishing aids, air mattresses, beach or water toys**, innertubes, ~~air mattresses~~, or any **other** single-chambered, air-inflated devices during any regulated trip.
6. If an inflatable raft or dory is used during a regulated trip, then each such vessel shall:
 - a. Display the river outfitter's company name or logo or abbreviation, which shall read from left to right in characters of good proportion, a minimum of four inches in height above waterline, of a color which contrasts with the color of the background, and be maintained so as to be clearly visible and legible from a distance of one hundred and fifty feet.
 - b. Be equipped with a rope attached to the bow or stern, which shall be a minimum of ten feet long and suitable for tying up and securely holding the vessel to the shore of the waters being traveled. All loose ropes not in use shall be stored and secured so as not to present a danger of entanglement in case of an accident.
 - c. Be equipped with at least one suitable container of sufficient size for bailing water out of the vessel, except that self-bailing vessels are exempt from this requirement.
 - d. Be adequately equipped with durable and substantially undamaged oars or paddles and spares, taking into consideration the size of the vessel and river conditions.
 - 1) For oar-controlled and powered vessels or combination oar and paddle-controlled and powered vessels, there shall be a minimum of two oars and one spare oar aboard each such vessel.
 - 2) For paddle-controlled and powered vessels, there shall be a minimum of one spare paddle per vessel. The spare paddle(s) may be carried in another vessel on the same trip so long as the spare(s) is/are readily accessible. A spare paddle is one in addition to one paddle per participating adult.
7. ~~If an inflatable raft, inflatable kayak, or other multi-chambered~~ Any air inflated ~~device~~ vessel is used during a regulated trip, ~~then:~~ must be multi-chambered if it is designed to carry more than one person. Air inflated vessels must be of durable construction, designed for and capable of river use.
 - a. ~~Every inflatable raft, inflatable kayak, or other inflated type vessel shall be multi-chambered, containing a minimum of two separate air chambers.~~
 - b. ~~Every regulated trip including one or more inflatable rafts, inflatable kayaks, or other inflated vessel type shall have immediately available a minimum of one patch/repair kit and one air pump. Both the kit and the air pump must be adequate to meet the size~~

~~and needs of the trip and they must be compatible with the vessel(s) in use. The kit shall be maintained in good and serviceable condition and stored in a durable container suitable for river use.~~

8. Every regulated trip including one or more air inflated vessel(s) shall have immediately available a minimum of one patch/repair kit and one air pump. Both the kit and the air pump must be adequate to meet the size and needs of the trip and they must be compatible with the vessel(s) in use. The kit shall be maintained in good and serviceable condition and stored in a durable container suitable for river use.

~~8.9. If a canoe, whitewater or decked canoe, hard shell kayak, inflatable kayak, or sit-on-top kayak~~ a vessel designed to carry a single person is used during a regulated trip, then a minimum of one spare paddle per every five such vessels shall be readily accessible aboard one of the vessels on the trip. In addition:

- a. For canoes, whitewater canoes, and hard shell kayaks, every such vessel shall be equipped with flotation bags securely fixed in the vessel so as to provide enough flotation that when the fully equipped vessel is full of water, it will remain afloat.
- b. Every river outfitter, guide, guide in training, guide instructor, trip leader, and commercial passenger aboard a ~~whitewater or decked canoe or hard shell kayak~~ vessel designed to carry a single person shall wear a securely fastened crash helmet at all times while on the river.

- 1) All inflatable kayaks, canoes, hard shell kayaks or similar vessels that are designed to carry two persons shall also wear a securely fastened crash helmet at all times while on the river.

~~9.10.~~ If a motorboat, as defined in 33-13-102 (1), C.R.S., is used during a regulated trip, all State boating statutes and regulations pertaining to motorboat registration, use, operation and required equipment apply, except that the personal flotation device requirement shall be as stated in regulation # 304. In addition to the equipment otherwise required by law, each motorboat used during a regulated trip shall also:

- a. Display the river outfitter's company name, logo, or abbreviation, as specified in # 305-6.a.;
- b. Be equipped with one spare motor or adequate alternate means of propulsion and control;
- c. Be equipped with a rope, a minimum of ten feet long, attached to the bow and stored when not in use as specified in # 305-6.b.;
- d. Be equipped with a bailing device as specified in # 305-6.c., except that self-bailing vessels are exempt from this requirement; and
- e. Be equipped with one suitable size ladder, capable of accommodating persons boarding from the water and stored so as to be readily accessible.

2. No Change: Status quo

Issue Raised by:	Grant Brown (Boating Safety & Registrations Program Manager), Michael Haskins (Swiftwater Investigator)	
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):		
CC:		
Approved for further consideration by:		Ty Petersburg
Requires new space in the brochure?		NO

Does this change comply with BGSS?	NA
Are adequate staff and funding resources available to implement?	YES
Region, branch, or section leading implementation:	Boating Section
Any additional regions, branches or sections involved in implementation:	NA
Recommended for consent agenda?	YES